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**West Africa:
Bleak Prospects for
the Western Sahel** [Redacted]

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An Intelligence Assessment

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ALA 83-10001
January 1983

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West Africa: Bleak Prospects for the Western Sahel

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations and with the National Intelligence Council. Comments and queries are welcome and should be addressed to the Chief, West and East Africa Division, ALA, on [redacted]

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**West Africa:
Bleak Prospects for
the Western Sahel** [Redacted]

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 17 December 1982
was used in this report.*

We believe that deteriorating economic conditions and growing social and political tensions in the states of the Western Sahel—Niger, Mali, Upper Volta, Senegal, The Gambia, and Cape Verde—make for increasing instability over the decade and that this will be detrimental to US interests. These impoverished, drought-plagued nations are prime targets for Libyan destabilization efforts and attract Soviet political meddling, including efforts to secure airfields and ports. Although substantial Western aid helps meet the region's needs, we believe the underlying political, social, and economic problems are so great that the Libyans and Soviets will for the foreseeable future find openings to exploit [Redacted]

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In our view, the countries of the Western Sahel, with some of the world's lowest per capita incomes, will remain among the poorest and least developed. They probably will become even more dependent than they are on foreign assistance to prevent economic collapse. We agree with World Bank analysts that the region's embattled governments—staggered by global recession and near bankruptcy—have little choice but to continue economic reform measures that include cutting public spending, abandoning socialist policies, and encouraging private enterprise. Despite these efforts, however, we believe these resource-deficient countries will find it extremely difficult in the 1980s to achieve sustained economic growth or assure adequate food for their people. [Redacted]

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We believe deep-seated economic, tribal, religious, and political divisions will be magnified by the inability of whoever governs to reduce population growth rates (now about 2.5 percent annually), stem rural to urban migration, and halt declines in living standards. As a consequence, we expect that support for current governments will erode and that leaders will face widespread urban protest and violence and frequent coup attempts. [Redacted]

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We judge that the Western Sahel will prove increasingly susceptible to Libyan blandishments as the demand for foreign financial assistance becomes more acute. Playing on this need and on internal stresses, the Libyans will prove unrelenting in their efforts to exploit tribal cleavages, urban discontent, and Islamic dissidence. In our view, the ability of Sahelian leaders to respond to these challenges will remain limited. [Redacted]

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We also believe that Sahelian leaders will seek increased economic and military aid from Western governments, Western and international financial institutions, and the conservative Persian Gulf states in an effort to


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maintain their grip on power and to forestall the threat of further Libyan adventurism. We judge that shortfalls in future Western and international aid will leave Sahelian states with little alternative but to seek greater accommodation with Tripoli. We predict that the pressure on the United States to become more involved in propping up Sahelian states will grow if France—the region's traditional benefactor—and other donors prove unable or unwilling to assume a higher aid burden. In our view, the reliability of the United States as an ally of friendly African governments will be measured throughout West Africa increasingly by Washington's willingness to help meet economic needs. 

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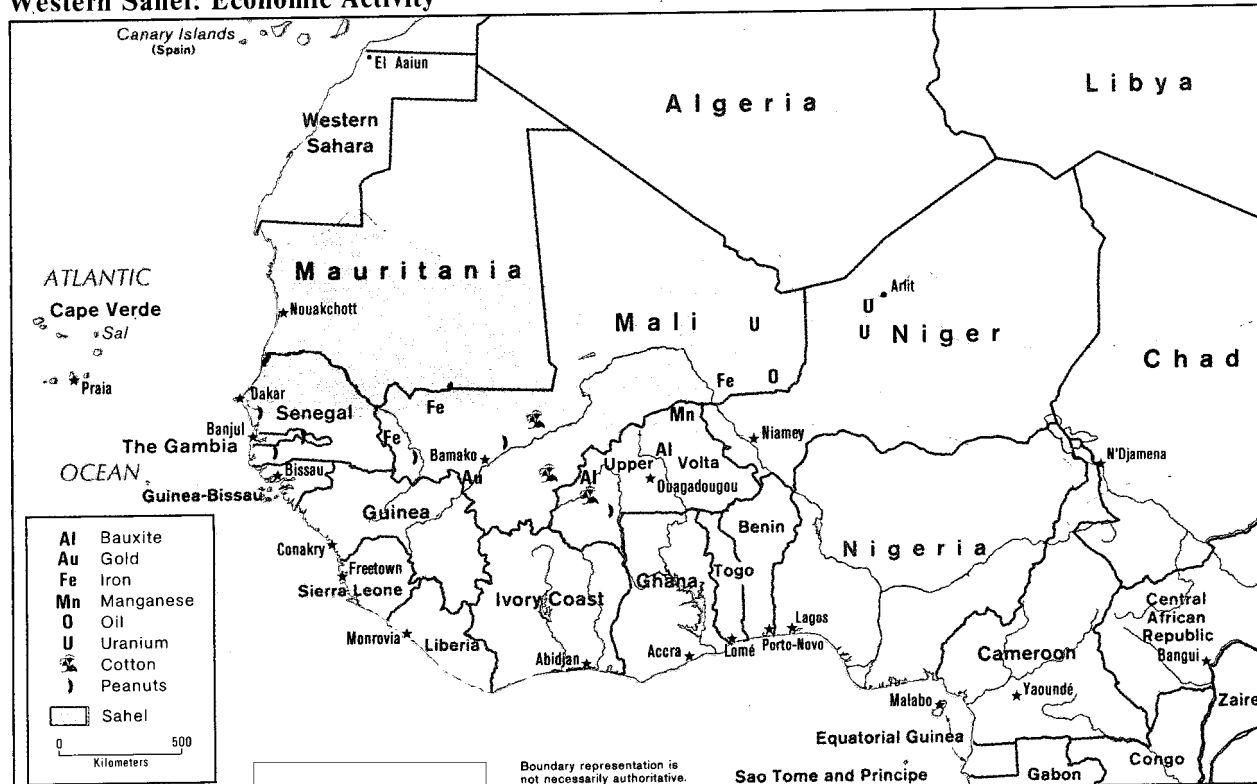
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Figure 1
Western Sahel: Economic Activity



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**West Africa:
Bleak Prospects for
the Western Sahel**

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Introduction

Reporting from US Embassies over the past year indicates that the predominantly Muslim countries of the Western Sahel¹—most of them moderate and pro-Western—will prove increasingly susceptible to foreign meddling, especially by Libya. In our judgment, the ability of these militarily weak and economically fragile governments to respond to threats from more powerful countries in the region is limited. Although many West Sahelian leaders have proved adept at uncovering and foiling coup attempts, they have had little success in dealing with the underlying causes of domestic political instability or the region's severe structural economic problems. As a consequence, the area's leaders increasingly look to Western nations—particularly the United States and France—to provide greater economic and security assistance.

This paper examines US interests in the Western Sahel, the region's growing economic, social, and political vulnerabilities, the threat of outside subversion, and France's role. We thus seek to establish a baseline for estimating the Western Sahel's prospects and the resulting implications for the United States.

US Interests in the Western Sahel

US Embassy reporting indicates that since the early 1970s US interests in the Western Sahel have expanded from largely humanitarian concerns to include a major commitment to the region's economic development and a recognition of its geopolitical importance. In our view, US aid has become an important factor in maintaining the economic solvency and political

stability of the pro-Western governments of Senegal, The Gambia, and Upper Volta, as well as of Niger, which is the fifth-largest producer of uranium in the world. Even left-leaning Cape Verde and Mali, according to US Embassy reporting, consciously strive to project a nonaligned image, in part because of their overwhelming dependence on US and Western financial and technical aid. According to a Department of State study, about 25 percent of all US bilateral development assistance for Sub-Saharan Africa for the 1983 fiscal year—almost \$60 million—is targeted for the six countries of the Western Sahel; an additional \$28 million is earmarked for regional assistance to the Sahel.

In our view, Niger, Mali, and Upper Volta—located at the crossroads between North Africa and coastal West Africa—serve as a buffer between expansionist-minded Libya in the north and Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Ivory Coast, where the United States has significant economic and political interests. The location of Senegal and Cape Verde on the bulge of West Africa sets them astride important mid-Atlantic sea and air lanes. US Defense Attache reporting indicates that Senegal, site of a major French military base, permits ad hoc use of Dakar's airfield by US aircraft for surveillance of Soviet naval task forces in the Atlantic and allowed the United Kingdom landing rights during the Falklands conflict. In addition, the United States is negotiating a 10-year agreement for use of Dakar's airport as an emergency landing site for the space shuttle.

US interests include preventing the Soviets from gaining military access to bases in the Western Sahel. We believe the Soviets place some strategic value on getting such access to compensate for the loss in the mid-1970s of Conakry, Guinea, as a staging site for TU-95 naval reconnaissance flights. These flights presently have to operate from more distant Angola to conduct surveillance of Western naval forces in the Atlantic. Cape Verdian President Pereira, according to US Embassy reporting, has consistently rebuffed

¹ The Sahel (meaning desert's edge in Arabic) is a geographic belt that extends along the southern edge of the Sahara from Chad to the Atlantic Ocean. This paper focuses on the six, little-studied countries of the Western Sahel—Niger, Mali, Upper Volta, Senegal, The Gambia, and Cape Verde—which share common social, economic, and political characteristics despite marked variations in population size, area, and colonial background. Chad, because of chaotic political conditions, and Mauritania, with its heavy Arab heritage, are sufficiently different that we chose not to include them in this study.

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Table 1
Western Sahel: Political Background

Country	Date of Independence	Former Colonial Power	Leader	Tribe	Date Assumed Power	Type of Government	Status of Opposition
Niger	1960	France	President Seyni Kountche	Djerma	1974	Military	Legal opposition not permitted
Mali	1960	France	President Moussa Traore	Mande	1968	Mixed military/civilian	Official one-party state
Upper Volta	1960	France	Head of State Major Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo	Mossi	1982	Military	Legal opposition not permitted
Senegal	1960	France	President Abdou Diouf	Wolof	1981	Civilian	14 legal opposition parties to the ruling Socialist Party
The Gambia	1965	United Kingdom	President Dawda Jawara	Mandingo	1965	Civilian	National Convention Party is the major opposition party to the ruling Progressive People's Party
Cape Verde	1975	Portugal	President Aristides Pereira	Mulatto	1980	Civilian	Official one-party state

[Redacted]

Soviet pressure for military access rights, even though he has allowed Aeroflot, Air Cubana, and Libya's United Arab Airlines to transit Sal island's airport as he has South Africa Airways. In Mali, the Soviets—the main arms supplier—have upgraded several airfields to make them suitable for potential use by Soviet long-range transport or reconnaissance aircraft. Nonetheless, President Traore to our knowledge and that of the US Embassy in Bamako has not signed a formal military access agreement with Moscow. [Redacted]

The Roots of Domestic Tensions

We believe prospects for the economic development of the Western Sahel will remain dim throughout the 1980s. In our judgment, the inability of Sahelian leaders to overcome the region's harsh environmental constraints and halt declining standards of living will be a major cause of growing domestic tensions. These

tensions will be apparent in increasing conflicts between social and religious groups and farmers and city dwellers. From time to time, depending on the behavior of the armed forces, they may lead to the toppling of governments. [Redacted]

Dire Economic Straits. Two decades after independence, the Western Sahel remains one of the poorest and least developed regions in the world with an average per capita income of less than \$200 a year. All Sahelian countries remain overdependent on the export of one mineral or agricultural commodity—uranium in Niger, cotton in Upper Volta and Mali, and peanuts in Senegal and The Gambia. The vast majority of the region's almost 25 million people are small farmers or herders, but inadequate rainfall (less than 20 inches per year in many areas) has hampered attempts to improve agricultural production. Wage earners make up only a small proportion of the total

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work force—for example, we estimate that less than 1 percent of Upper Volta's population is employed in the monetary sector—and no Sahelian state has yet been able to develop a productive and competitive industrial sector. [redacted]

The mounting economic difficulties of Sahelian states stem from faltering demand for the region's exports, a severe lack of technical and administrative expertise, extensive corruption, and misguided economic policies. During the 1970s, the region suffered increasingly from low rates of economic growth, high inflation, and growing deficits in international payments. Particularly troubling have been soaring oil import bills; almost half of the value of Mali's exports in 1981, for example, were used to pay for petroleum imports. Those Sahelian countries that increased borrowing to cover the widening gap between revenues and expenses now find themselves saddled with mounting debt payments. Senegal, for example, had a total debt of almost \$950 million dollars in 1980—and a debt service ratio of over 23 percent—and has been forced to reschedule both its public and its private debt. [redacted]

In an effort to reverse almost two decades of economic decline, West Sahelian states—particularly Senegal and Mali—are turning away from unproductive socialist-inspired policies, radically paring investment budgets, encouraging private enterprise, and calling for nationwide belt tightening. As a condition for receiving IMF and Western aid, Senegal and Mali have agreed to reform their economies by limiting costly consumer subsidies, holding down wage increases, and increasing agricultural producer prices. Mali's left-leaning President Traore also has replaced some socialist ideologues in his cabinet with Western-oriented pragmatists. [redacted]

In our judgment, Sahelian leaders will have little success in dealing with the area's severe economic problems. Considering the region's difficult environment, lack of domestic markets, and poor overall record of economic performance, we believe Western firms will remain reluctant to invest in the region. Even though some countries possess significant untapped mineral resources—iron ore, uranium, gold, and possibly oil in Mali, and manganese and bauxite

in Upper Volta—depressed world markets and high startup costs make prompt development of these assets unlikely. As a consequence, we believe the Western Sahel will become increasingly dependent on foreign assistance to meet even its most basic needs. [redacted]

Social and Political Problems. Although we believe that the vast majority of Sahelians are apolitical and preoccupied with day-to-day existence, we expect that tribal, religious, and urban grievances will intensify as available resources shrink and the competition for them intensifies. Moreover, the inability of Sahelian leaders to reduce population growth, stem rural migration, and increase domestic food supplies will, in our view, result in increasingly open protest, violence, and more frequent coups. [redacted]

Tribalism. We believe tribal identity will continue to be an important focal point for organizing opposition against the region's fragile central governments. Our analysis, supported by academic research, indicates that tribalism remains a pervasive force throughout the region and that most Sahelians still view political and economic issues in tribal terms. Most coup attempts—ranging from Upper Volta's most recent power grab by soldiers representing the dominant Mossi tribe to an attempted Hausa-based coup in 1974 against Nigerien President Kountche—have a tribal dimension. [redacted]

Academic analysis indicates that, although tribal networks help cushion the shock of economic hardship by providing an informal welfare system based on extended family obligations, increasing competition for scarce resources also sharpens tribal tension. In Niger, for example, we and the US Embassy believe that the traditional balance between the commercially dominant Hausa (almost 50 percent of the population) and the ruling Djeramas (about 25 percent of the population and occupants of most military and civil service jobs) could be upset. This could occur if the Hausas perceive that their economic interests are threatened, that they are being forced to bear a disproportionate share of economic hardships, or that they are being blamed for current economic problems. [redacted]

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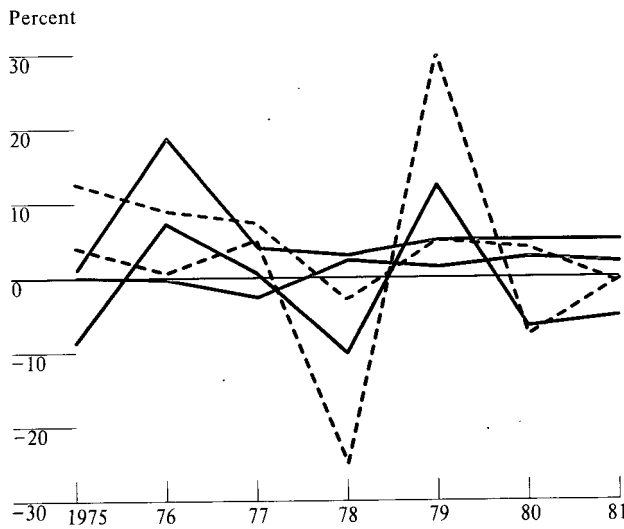
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Figure 2
Western Sahel: Economic Profile

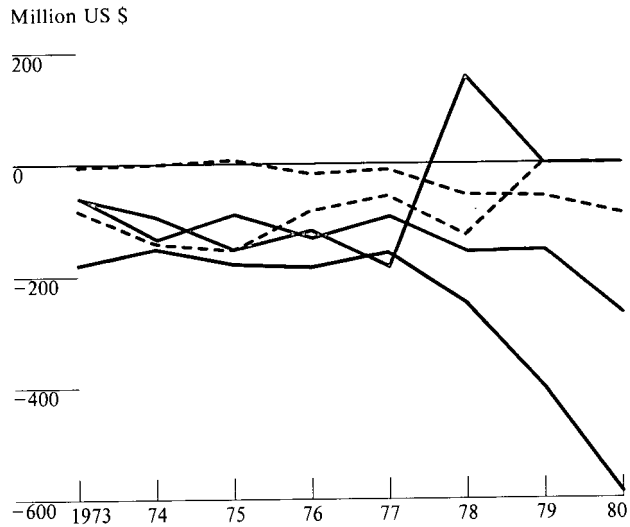
Note change in scale.

— Niger
 - - - Mali
 — Senegal
 - - - The Gambia
 — Upper Volta

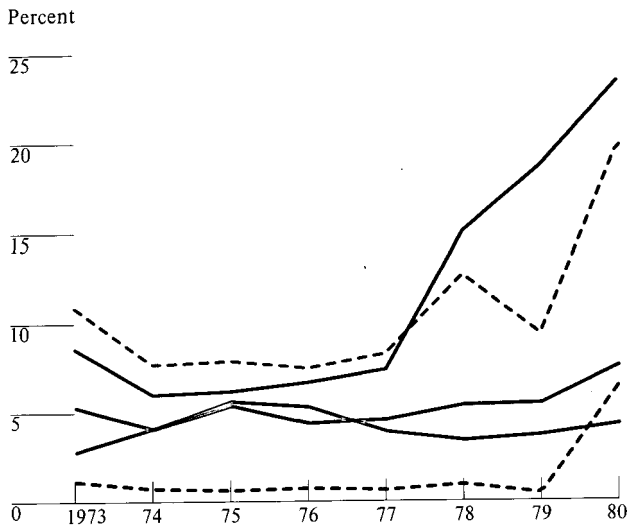
Real Growth of Gross Domestic Product



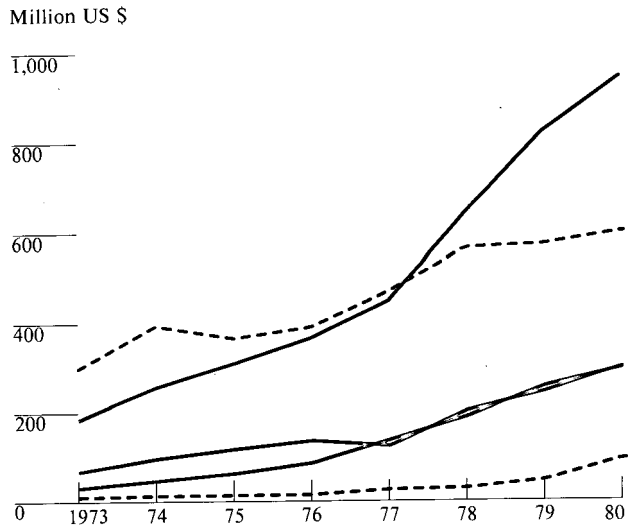
Current Account Balances



Debt Service Ratios



Yearend External Debt



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Aid and Agriculture

Widening budget deficits, growing debt service burdens, and limited access to private borrowing set West Sahelian countries on a constant search for foreign aid. Sahelian leaders need donor assistance to meet recurrent expenditures and are scaling back or eliminating development budgets. Senegal and Mali already have reached agreement with the IMF for assistance, while other Sahelian states are in various stages of negotiation. Even Niger—which enjoyed a moderate economic boom in the late 1970s when world demand for uranium was high—is now in such straits that it is seeking aid from any source. [redacted]

The region's desperate financial condition has made it one of the largest per capita recipients of foreign assistance in the world. Cape Verde, with a population of only 300,000, received \$150 million—or about \$500 per capita—in 1981-82 in foreign assistance grants and concessionary loans. West Africa reports that the aid flows to Upper Volta regularly exceed the country's budget. The Financial Times of London reports that between 1974 and 1980 \$6.8 billion in external assistance was committed to the Sahel region as a whole, and aid is still flowing in at the rate of \$1.5 billion per year. Much of the aid has been regionally directed. Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, and Chad—joined later by The Gambia and Cape Verde—created the Permanent Interstate Committee on Drought Control in 1973 to combat the devastating effects of the Sahelian drought. A donor arm of CILSS—The Club of the Sahel—was formed in 1976 to organize and administer the region's various aid programs. [redacted]

Increasing evidence from the World Bank and other sources indicates, however, that the impact of this aid is limited. Sahelian nations lack the skilled manpower and economic institutions needed to make the most efficient use of aid, and most are unable to support the high recurrent costs of aid projects. As a result, projects often are abandoned after expensive startup costs. [redacted]

This problem is clearest in efforts to overhaul Sahelian agriculture, which is hampered by its reliance on unpredictable and uneven rainfall, poor soils, weak extension and marketing services, high transportation costs, and government policies that traditionally have encouraged farmers to grow export crops. The World Bank and other international organizations report that despite massive economic aid, food production per capita has declined in most Sahelian countries over the last decade. The food supply problem is compounded by the growing preference of urban dwellers for rice and wheat. Because wheat is not grown in the Sahel and rice often is cheaper to import than to grow at home, Sahelian governments either must spend scarce foreign exchange to import popular staples or depend on emergency aid or concessionary sales. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that by 1990 the demand for rice and wheat in the Sahel could exceed local production by almost 2 million tons. [redacted]

Northern Tuareg and Toubou tribesmen in Mali and Niger also have resisted attempts by southern-dominated governments to control their activities and limit their autonomy. US Embassy reporting indicates that these nomadic and fiercely independent minority tribes are difficult for central governments to control

in the remote northern reaches of the Sahel and that they are particularly vulnerable to external influences. For example, the Toubou tribe in Niger spills over into southern Libya and northern Chad, while the Tuareg roam northern Niger and Mali, as well as southern Algeria and Mauritania. [redacted]

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Table 2
Western Sahel: Social Indicators

Percent
(except where noted)

	Niger	Mali	Upper Volta	Senegal	The Gambia	Cape Verde
Population, 1981 (<i>millions</i>)	5.7	6.8	6.1	5.8	0.6	0.3
Average population growth rate, 1971-80	2.9	2.5	2.2	2.6	2.7	2.0
Percent of population in urban areas, 1980	13	20	10	25	24	20
Average urbanization rate, 1971-80	6.8	5.5	5.9	3.5	NA	NA
Literacy rate, 1977	5	9	5	10	15	14
Largest tribe (<i>percent of population</i>)	Hausa 46	Mande 43	Mossi 50	Wolof 37	Mandingo 41	Mulatto 71
Muslim population	85	60	22	82	90	NEGL

Table 3
Western Sahel: Agricultural Indicators

	Niger	Mali	Upper Volta	Senegal	The Gambia	Cape Verde
Major rural food staples	Millet Sorghum	Millet Rice Sorghum	Millet Sorghum	Millet Rice	Rice	Maize
Major urban food staples	Rice Wheat	Rice Wheat	Rice Wheat	Rice Wheat	Rice	Maize
Percent of labor force in agriculture	92	89	84	77	79	58
Average annual per capita food production index, 1976-78 ^a	85	83	67	76	95	NA
Compound annual growth rate, per capita food production, 1965-79	-1.3	-0.1	-2.8	-1.6	NA	NA

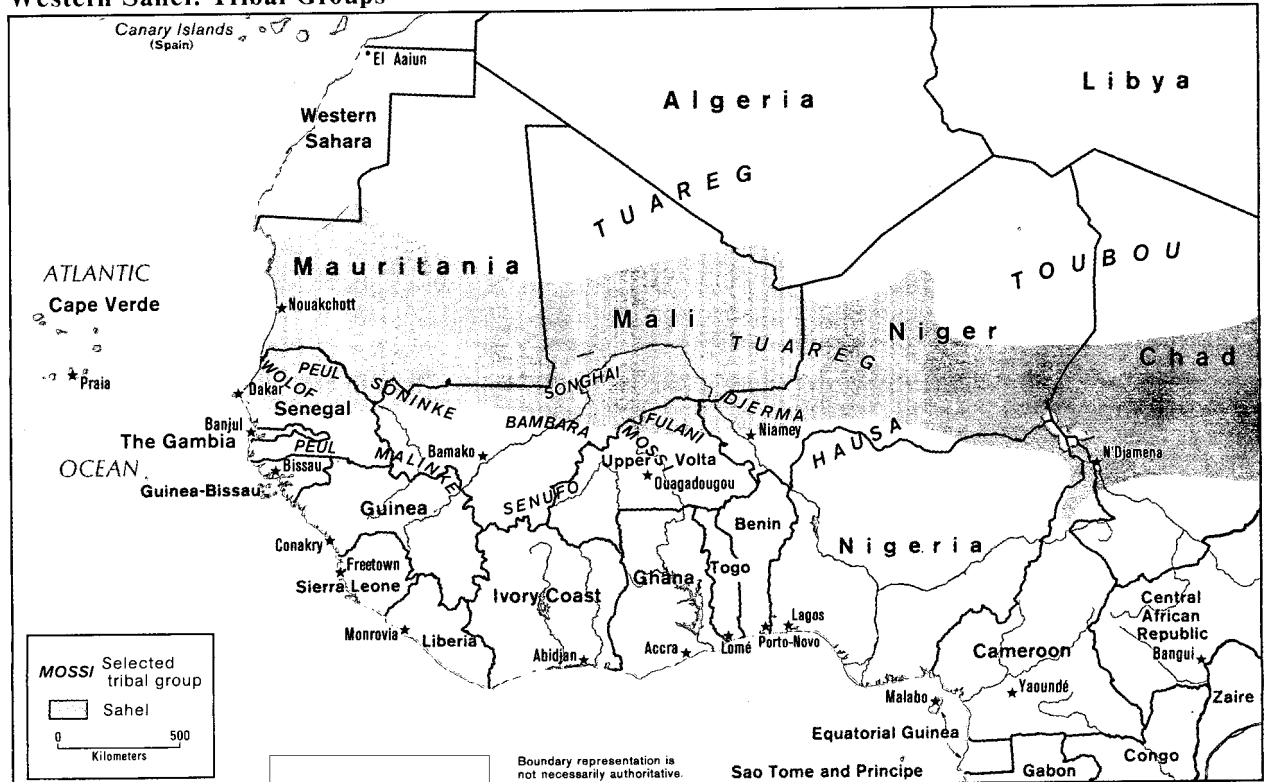
^a 1961-65 = 100.

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Figure 3
Western Sahel: Tribal Groups



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Islam. With the exception of largely Roman Catholic Cape Verde, Islam is the dominant religion in the Western Sahel, with Muslims composing well over half the populations of Mali, Niger, Senegal, and The Gambia. US Embassy reporting and our analysis suggest that, although fundamentalist movements in the region still represent a minority view, a limited Islamic revival is under way in several Sahelian countries.² We believe that a group of Islamic zealots—by resorting to violence—could threaten already weak governments, although in our view radical Islamic fringe groups presently lack the strength, organization, and leadership to mobilize the entire Islamic community. [redacted]

We think the trend toward a greater level of Islamic consciousness and political activity by Muslim groups will continue in coming years and add to local tensions. We note that although all Sahelian leaders—with the exception of President Pereira in Cape Verde—profess at least nominal allegiance to Islam and international Islamic organizations, they are committed to a secular form of government and continue to maintain close ties with the developed, non-Muslim world. We believe discontented Muslim clerics may find urban residents, students, and intellectuals who are searching for an alternative to the political and economic failings of their countries' entrenched, Western-oriented elites a more receptive audience. [redacted]

[redacted]

We believe Senegal may be the most susceptible to rising Islamic ferment. According to the US Embassy in Dakar, as many as 3 million Senegalese—about

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half the population—may belong to the Muridiya and Tijaniya brotherhoods, the two largest and most powerful organizations in the country.³ US Embassy sources also report that Murides hold important positions in military and government circles, in addition to dominating Senegal's economy. [redacted]

[redacted] We believe the brotherhoods will monitor Diouf's actions closely and continue to work behind the scenes to press him to make both the form and the substance of Senegal's government more Islamic. [redacted]

Urban Residents. In our view, one of the most serious threats to the region's domestic political stability will come from the growing dissatisfaction of urban dwellers with their governments' inability to improve living conditions. In particular, we believe urban residents will blame governments for periodic food shortages, cutbacks in services, and rising unemployment—all of which are partly attributable to rapid urbanization and shrinking per capita revenue bases. Although not more than 25 percent of the population of any Western Sahelian country lives in urban areas, urban residents historically have been better organized, more politically active, and more volatile than their rural counterparts. Recent demographic trends in the Sahel leave little doubt that rapid population growth (about 2.5 percent annually in most countries), uncontrolled urbanization (over 5 percent annually in Mali, Upper Volta, and Niger), and the widening gap between rich and poor will make urban residents a more active and potentially explosive force in Sahelian politics. [redacted]

Civil servants make up one of the largest classes of salaried workers in all Sahelian countries, and our analysis indicates they traditionally have provided an important pillar of support for both military and civilian governments. In return, governments have catered to their interests by providing such benefits as subsidized food. Public employees, however, as part of

³ A Muslim Brotherhood is a religious order whose followers are bound by personal loyalty to a single teacher. [redacted]

their countries' small wage sector, are vulnerable to sharp fluctuations in the economy and recently have been hard hit by inflation and rising unemployment. We believe the tolerance of civil servants for austerity measures will wane—especially if governments are increasingly unable to meet payroll schedules—and that in the future they will be less willing to forgo pay raises and accept reductions in their standards of living. In our view, this problem may become acute in Niger, where expectations of prosperity were encouraged by a short-lived uranium export boom in the late 1970s. [redacted]

We also expect that labor union pressure to raise wages and improve working conditions will grow. In Mali, the US Embassy reports that the National Union of Malian Workers—although an adjunct of the country's sole legal political party—has publicly opposed many of the government's economic reform measures and last year demanded a 40-percent wage increase. We agree with the US Embassy's observation that a grass-roots revolt against both the Malian Government and the union leadership could develop if economic conditions—particularly unemployment—worsen. Labor plays a particularly critical role in Upper Volta, where unions claim to represent 60 percent of government workers and 40 percent of private-sector employees. Unions are among the most powerful and radical interest groups in the country and have played a key role in the overthrow of four Upper Voltan governments since independence. [redacted]

Finally, we believe students will become more restive as job opportunities dry up and as government austerity measures reduce their prerogatives and privileges. In Niger, for example, the government last April backed down when confronted with widespread student protests over a new policy requiring parents to pay for part of a student's education instead of the state shouldering all the costs. In the longer term, we believe students may prove more receptive to radical political or religious philosophies that reject current leaders and policies. Our analysis, supported by US Embassy reporting, indicates that this problem may become particularly manifest in the former French colonies of the Western Sahel, where students increasingly resent France's continuing dominant cultural and economic position. [redacted]

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The Military. In all Western Sahelian states, the armed forces—although small and moderately equipped—remain the arbiters of political power. In our judgment, there is considerable evidence that governments—be they civilian or military—will face increasingly frequent threats from disgruntled officers and enlisted men. In particular, we believe junior officers may become more frustrated than they have been by their lack of advancement and by what they see as the corruption of entrenched senior ranks. Even in Senegal's traditionally apolitical armed forces, a [redacted] demoralization over food, clothing, and equipment shortages as well as resentment over alleged favoritism and nepotism among senior officers. Upper Volta has experienced two coups in the past two years, while in Niger, where the Army has governed for over eight years and in Mali where it has governed for 14, Presidents Kountche and Traore have faced numerous plots and occasional coup attempts. [redacted]

We also believe that dissatisfaction among enlisted ranks will grow and that populist, egalitarian-oriented individuals in these ranks will become sources of political instability. Recent West African coups, such as those in Ghana and Liberia, indicate that the ability of officers to maintain control over enlisted ranks may be declining and that lower ranking personnel increasingly feel entitled to play an active political role. Although most Sahelian enlisted men are poorly educated and ill equipped to govern, we do not believe this consideration will prevent ambitious soldiers with a grievance and an opportunity from moving in reaction to eroding popular confidence in the government or growing concerns within the Army over bread-and-butter issues. [redacted]

We believe that the failed coup attempt in July 1981 in The Gambia may be a harbinger of more radical coups to come. US Embassy reporting indicated that the coup was engineered by an obscure Muslim politician with Marxist leanings in league with low ranking members of the defense force. [redacted]

[redacted] although little was known initially about the rebels, they received widespread support from urban residents who were unhappy over food shortages and over the cor-

ruption and mismanagement of the then-16-year-old civilian government of President Jawara. Only the intervention and continued presence of Senegalese troops has kept Jawara in power. We believe the proposed confederation between The Gambia and Senegal—now in the early stages of implementation—will further institutionalize Senegal's prominent role in maintaining stability in The Gambia. In our judgment, the militarily stronger Senegal will not hesitate to crush any efforts to establish a radical regime in Banjul. [redacted] 25X1

The Libyan Factor

Although US Embassies report little widespread popular support in the Western Sahel for Libyan leader Qadhafi or his pan-Islamic policies, the region's fragile central governments, in our judgment, will remain susceptible to Qadhafi's meddling through the 1980s. We believe the proximity of the Western Sahel to Libya, coupled with its large Muslim population, increasing economic vulnerability, and potential for greater political instability will offer opportunities for further Libyan inroads. Domestic opposition groups lacking the resources to mount an effective anti-government campaign may become more willing, in our estimate, to accept Libyan aid. We also believe that new Sahelian leaders, under strong pressure to reverse their country's economic slide, might be particularly receptive to Qadhafi's promises of quick economic aid or security assistance. [redacted] 25X1

Qadhafi [redacted] has visions of ultimately trying to weld Sahelian states into a pan-Islamic political entity dominated by Libya and free of French and other Western influences. We believe Qadhafi has attempted to increase his influence in the region by pursuing a two-track strategy. On the one hand, he has sought to curry favor with existing governments by providing or promising economic support to financially destitute countries. For example, according to the US Embassy in Niamey, Libya purchased—at well above world prices—about 25 percent of Niger's total uranium exports in 1981. Elsewhere, Qadhafi has offered more direct financial aid, such as [redacted] loans of \$3 million over the past several years to Mali's financially hard-pressed government. [redacted] 25X1

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Table 4
Western Sahel: Military Strength, 1981

	Niger	Mali	Upper Volta	Senegal	The Gambia	Cape Verde
Regular Forces	2,700	7,900	5,360	11,457	0	2,310
Army	2,600	7,500	5,200	10,196	0	2,200
Navy	0	0	0	696	0	100
Air Force	100	400	160	565	0	10
Paramilitary	2,500	3,500	2,400	6,895	158	2,000
Gendarmerie	800	2,000	1,000	3,195	158 ^a	2,000 ^b
Republican or National guards	1,700 ^c	1,500	1,400	3,700	0	0
Foreign advisers	70	195	18	27^d	0^e	70
France	65		13	27		
West Germany	5		5			
China		15				
USSR		180				40
Cuba						30

^a Officially known as the Gambian gendarmerie.

^b Militia recruited primarily from party ranks for service in rural areas.

^c Includes 200-man Presidential Guard.

^d France also stations about 1,200 French troops in Senegal.

^e About 600 Senegalese troops have been stationed in The Gambia since the coup attempt in 1981.

Qadhafi also has attempted to encourage discontent by capitalizing on tribal, religious, and social divisions. In a small sampling of Libyan subversive activities in recent years against Western Sahel countries, we find that Qadhafi has:

- Provided paramilitary training for Sahelians. [redacted] hundreds of Malians and Nigeriens—including Tuaregs—as well as dissident Senegalese and Gambians have received training in Libyan camps for eventual reinfiltration to their home countries.
- Publicly referred to Niger as “second in line” after Chad and incited Nigeriens through radio propaganda broadcasts to overthrow the Kountche government. In addition, Qadhafi reportedly has passed out arms to dissident Tuareg and Toubou tribesmen in northern Niger and Mali. Most recently, in April

1982, Nigerien officials alleged that Libya was behind an abortive Tuareg plot to blow up Niger’s major uranium processing plant at Arlit.

- Provided funding and support for dissident Islamic and student groups. [redacted] Qadhafi has been actively involved with the leading opposition party, radical student groups, and such religious dissidents as Ahmed Niasse—a self-styled “Ayatollah.” The leader of Senegal’s strongest opposition party has openly admitted contacts with Libya.
- Bribed government officials and encouraged them to defect to Tripoli. In 1981, several Tuareg officials in Niger resigned their positions and defected to Libya after possible implication in a Qadhafi-inspired assassination attempt on Kountche. [redacted]

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In our judgment, the ability of Sahelian leaders to respond to these and other challenges from Qadhafi is limited. Although Sahelian states have on occasion suspended or downgraded diplomatic relations with Tripoli after particularly egregious examples of Libyan interference, we believe most are reluctant to risk an open confrontation with a militarily stronger Qadhafi. US Embassy reporting also indicates that Sahelian leaders hesitate to turn their backs on any promise of aid or trade. President Kountche in Niger, for example, has openly admitted to US officials that, despite Qadhafi's calls for his overthrow, he has no economic choice but to sell Niger's uranium to any buyer, including Libya. [redacted]

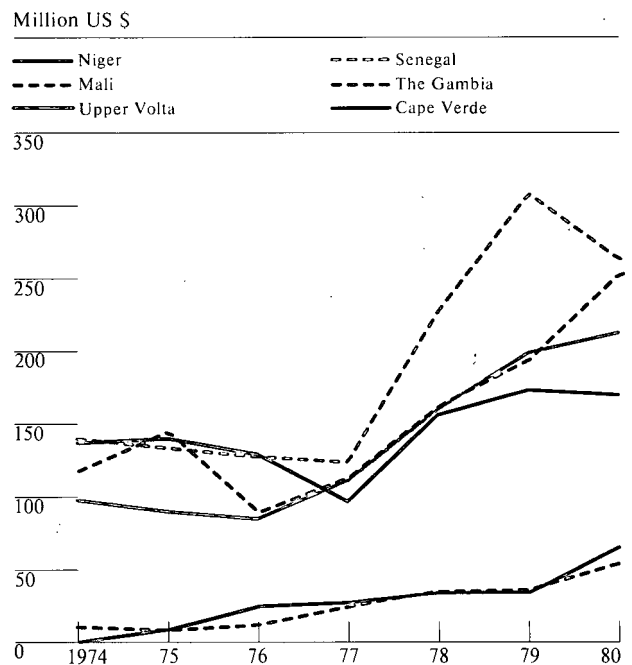
The French Role

The financially and militarily weak countries of the Western Sahel—except for The Gambia and Cape Verde—historically have depended on France for most of their economic assistance. The currencies of francophone states are linked to the French franc, and France remains their preeminent trading partner. According to US Embassy reporting, about half of Niger's trade—both exports and imports—is with France. In addition, France has provided an important military security umbrella for francophone nations by providing arms and training for the armies of the Western Sahelian states. US Embassy and Defense Attache reporting indicates that some 1,200 French troops are stationed in Dakar, and France has promised to come to the defense of states in the region that are threatened by external aggression. [redacted]

In our judgment, Paris—even given its own economic difficulties—is unlikely to sharply cut back on economic aid to the Western Sahel or abandon its military commitments. Nevertheless, recent US Embassy reporting indicates that Sahelian leaders are becoming increasingly sensitive to any sign of a lessening of French interest in the region. We believe that the traditionally close ties between France and its former colonies in the region could become strained if France refuses or is unable to increase its financial assistance. [redacted]

Faced with a constantly escalating need for more economic help, francophone states will intensify their efforts to broaden their Western ties, especially with

Figure 4
Western Sahel: Total Official Development Assistance Disbursements, 1974-80



[redacted]
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the United States. We believe that the newer generation of Sahelian leaders—typified by Senegalese President Diouf—may be willing, within limits, to carve out political positions more independent of France and to express their resentment against what they view as French “neocolonial” control over the affairs of the countries in the region. [redacted]

Options and Prospects

The fate of Western Sahelian regimes will hinge on their ability to satisfy the basic food needs of their peoples, secure essential foreign assistance, and control their domestic and foreign opposition. We see little prospect, however, for significant improvement in Sahelian economies, barring an unexpected strengthening in world demand for Sahelian commodities. Severe debt problems rule out international

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banks as a significant source of funds. As a result, we believe leaders will have little economic choice but to press ahead with retrenchment, seek increased assistance from Western and Arab donors as well as the IMF, and reschedule debts. [redacted]

In our view, however, Sahelian governments will find it harder and harder to balance the need for austerity measures required by international creditors with demands from key political groups that their interests be protected or exempted from economic cutbacks. African experience suggests that civil servants, workers, students, and soldiers will continue to push for more benefits regardless of national economic conditions. We also believe that vested interests within Sahelian governments will press leaders to scrap or modify any economic reforms, thereby weakening their impact. According to US Embassy reporting from Bamako, for example, the Malian Government is divided over how far economic reforms should be carried. Some officials reportedly view reform as merely an effort to repair but not to jettison the socialist economy, while others—including President Traore—favor full-scale structural reform, including allowing the market to set wages and prices, production quotas, and employment levels. [redacted]

If the foregoing analysis proves correct, we believe Sahelian governments may become more concerned with holding onto power and limiting dissent than with dealing with intractable economic problems. In an effort to buy political time, we believe leaders may follow a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, they may bow to domestic pressure and abandon austerity measures, thereby weakening their international creditworthiness. At the same time, beleaguered regimes may resort to more authoritarian measures, but in our view they risk creating more resentment and unrest, especially if economic conditions fail to improve. [redacted]

We believe, therefore, that the politics of the Western Sahel will become more turbulent and unstable as the decade progresses. The weak central governments will have a difficult time garnering popular support for much needed economic reforms. We also believe that future leaders will face better organized and more hostile opposition as the impact of regionwide economic and social changes expands the number of

Table 5
Western Sahel: Selected Sources
of Official Aid^{a b}

Million US \$

	1977	1978	1979	1980
Niger				
France	22.2	29.2	41.1	48.5
United States	7.0	9.0	11.0	9.0
EEC ^c	17.9	32.7	29.1	9.3
Arab OPEC	2.9	5.5	5.9	7.0
Mali				
France	25.1	32.4	30.5	44.6
United States	6.0	15.0	14.0	23.0
EEC	12.0	15.8	31.3	41.6
Arab OPEC	4.6	6.5	3.5	10.3
Upper Volta				
France	28.3	32.7	35.7	55.9
United States	14.0	20.0	23.0	28.0
EEC	14.4	25.2	20.9	10.6
Arab OPEC	3.0	1.5	4.9	6.9
Senegal				
France	54.7	76.7	81.3	107.7
United States	10.0	14.0	27.0	36.0
EEC	10.7	47.8	108.5	24.2
Arab OPEC	1.7	2.8	4.5	9.4
The Gambia				
France	0	0	0	1.1
United States	1.0	1.0	2.0	4.0
EEC	0.2	3.2	6.1	9.4
Arab OPEC	1.7	1.3	2.4	7.2

^a Data for Cape Verde are not available.

^b Net disbursements of bilateral and multilateral aid.

^c European Economic Community aid is multilateral aid only.

[redacted] people who are politically active. Although widespread violence has been relatively rare, we expect the region will experience more frequent spontaneous urban outbursts over such issues as food shortages. [redacted]

Implications for the United States

For the foreseeable future, we believe the Western Sahel will prove increasingly vulnerable to external subversion, particularly from Libya. In our view, the moderate and pro-Western Sahelian leaders may feel

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Table 6 *Million US \$*
Western Sahel: Communist Economic Credits and Grants, 1954-81

	Extended	Drawn	Latest Grant or Credit
Niger	54.6	16.2	
Soviet Union	2.3	2.3	1978
PRC	52.3	13.9	1974
Eastern Europe	0	0	
Mali	248.9	218.1	
Soviet Union	99.4	93.7	1981
PRC	126.9	109.3	1981
Eastern Europe	22.6	15.1	1961
Upper Volta	56.8	15.2	
Soviet Union	5.8	2.6	1978
PRC	51.0	12.6	1978
Eastern Europe	0	0	
Senegal	95.0	47.8	
Soviet Union	8.1	8.1	1977
PRC	51.9	29.2	1978
Eastern Europe	35.0	10.5	1976
The Gambia	17.0	10.2	
Soviet Union	0.2	0.2	1974
PRC	16.8	10.0	1975
Eastern Europe	0	0	
Cape Verde	25.2	6.8	
Soviet Union	2.7	2.7	1981
PRC	16.9	1.5	1979
Eastern Europe	5.6	2.6	1981

for economic and technical assistance. As a consequence, we envision the region becoming more—rather than less—dependent on the generosity of the United States throughout the decade. Moreover, we believe this role may become even greater if France, conservative states in the Persian Gulf, and the IMF cut back or restrict their aid to the region. In our view, the moderate leaders in the region will measure the commitment of the United States by Washington's willingness to respond to Sahelian requests for aid. [REDACTED]

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mounting pressure to reach an accommodation with Qadhafi—in hopes of forestalling future Libyan subversion—if Western and other international economic aid fails to measure up to their expectations. Libyan efforts to undermine Western influence and to install radical regimes in the area also will serve long-term Soviet interests in promoting regional instability. In particular, we believe Moscow will continue efforts to gain access to strategic ports and airfields. [REDACTED]

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Faced with severe economic problems and external subversion, moderate, pro-Western Sahelian leaders probably will intensify requests for food aid as well as

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