



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
ISILC Laboratory
POLICA Research Unit
PRFU: H02L01UN070120200001



National Conference on

Mapping (In)Security in Western and Postcolonial Spaces

April 26-27, 2022

RETHINKING THE GOALS OF US GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR IN THE SAHEL:

DETER OR DEFEAT?

Abdellatif DJEDEI ¹/ Dr. Salim KERBOUA ²

Abstract

Almost two decades since the US global war on terrorism started, the United States is nowhere near defeating its shadowy enemy. A vexing challenger that resurges and expands after two major large-scale interventions and a plethora of security partnership initiatives, train and equip programs and capacity building of local allies, in addition to Billions spent on homeland security institutions to counter the threat of terrorism. The appalling withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan and the surge of attacks in the Sahel provide ample indices about the failure of earlier strategies to defeat terrorism. Deter instead of defeat gained momentum in the fourth wave of deterrence research. Deterring terrorism is at the heart of Alex Wilner's contemporary deterrence theory (CDT) which advocates three pillars of deterrence by Punishment, deterrence by denial and deterrence by delegitimization. This paper commences by an overview of Wilner's CDT emphasizing the conceptual delineation between 'defeat' and 'deterrence' and between 'defense' and 'denial' as well as a brief explanation of the pillars of CDT. The empirical part applies CTD analytical framework to the US counterterrorism effort in the Sahel region and makes use of the US global terrorism database (GTD) and maps of The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). The paper concludes that the model of counterterrorism in the Trans-Saharan region presented by the United States and its partners is largely dominated by much punishment, less denial and poor delegitimation deterrents.

Key words: Contemporary Deterrence, Counterterrorism, Sahel, TSCTP, United States
