

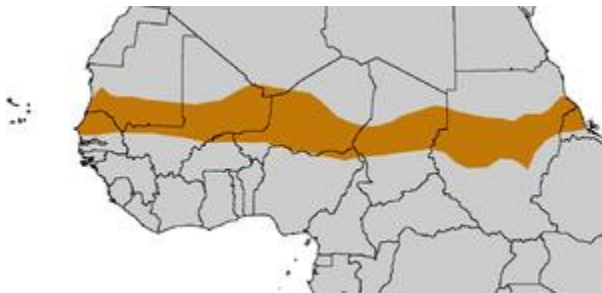


PF January 2014 Con Analysis

The current NFL Public Forum resolution, **Resolved: Development assistance should be prioritized over military aid in the Sahel region of Africa**, asks debaters to weigh the relationships between economic development and military security in one of the earth's most challenging regions. Today, we're going to look at how to approach this topic on the con side.

The con team will be defending that development assistance is not more important than military aid. To begin, let's determine the meaning of some key terms. If you've already read our topic analysis for the pro side, you can skip to the middle of page 3.

Where is the Sahel region? The Sahel region is a specific geographic area in Africa, spanning the continent from East to West. It marks the area between the Sahara desert, to its North, and Sudanian Savanna, to the South.



(Here's a map, courtesy Wikipedia)



According to the [Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture](#), the countries included in the Sahel region are Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. As you can see from the map, not all of each country is included. This is because the Sahel is defined biogeographically (meaning based on physical conditions: climate, topography, vegetation, soil, etc.) rather than geopolitically (meaning determined by national borders). However, it's unlikely that your debates will come down to questions of where *exactly* to draw the edges of the Sahel. The easiest way to be safe, if you're concerned, is to cut cards that refer directly to the Sahel region by name.

What is development assistance? According to the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), which is an international organization focused on trade and economic growth, "development assistance" is defined as:

"Flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount). By convention, ODA flows comprise contributions of donor government agencies, at all levels, to developing countries ("bilateral ODA") and to multilateral institutions. ODA receipts comprise disbursements by bilateral donors and multilateral institutions. Lending by export credit agencies—with the pure purpose of export promotion—is excluded."

In other words, in order to be considered development assistance, financial transfers (money given) must be primarily "concessional," which means at least 25% of it must be a *grant* (given without expectation of repayment) rather than a *loan* (given with the expectation of repayment, usually with interest). Additionally, the purpose of the money must be to encourage economic development and/or citizen welfare within the target country.

What is military aid? There isn't just one legal definition of "military aid," and existing United States programs in this category take many shapes. However, MA can be broadly understood as any aid given



to assist another nation (or, sometimes, nongovernmental entity) in its national security and defense efforts. For example, it might include money, weapons, equipment, or military training. It might be given to fight terrorism or insurgency within some country, or to help rebels fight a revolution against a hostile sitting government. The important component is that the assistance concerns itself with *military or defense objectives*.

What does it mean to prioritize? This might seem obvious, but it's an important consideration. Intuitively, [Merriam-Webster](#) defines it as "to organize (things) so that the most important thing is done or dealt with first." In order to win this debate, then, the con side needs to establish that development assistance is not more important than military aid. To do this, you will need to set up a weighing mechanism that benefits you. Keep in mind that your weighing mechanism should be one which benefits you in the context of the rest of the arguments you want to make. So, if you say "we should prioritize the method that saves the most lives," you better be ready to win that military aid saves more lives than development assistance!

Because of the word "prioritize," winning con debates doesn't necessarily require you to win that development assistance is bad, or even that it isn't important. It only requires you to win that development assistance shouldn't be *prioritized over* military aid. That allows you three different angles in this debate:

1. Development assistance is bad.
2. Development assistance isn't necessarily bad, but military aid is more important.
3. We should treat development assistance and military aid as *equally* important.

My preference, from a strategic standpoint, would be to begin the debate by arguing both that development assistance is bad and that military aid is good. This diversifies your strategic options. If, however, you fall behind on the question of development assistance being bad, you can still win the debate by winning that military aid is *equally or more important*. Remember, you only need to win that



development assistance *shouldn't be prioritized*. It's ok to concede that sometimes development assistance is good, if you need to.

Now that we know exactly what we're debating about, let's consider some possible angles for con-side argumentation.

First, you may want to argue that **development assistance is ineffective or harmful** for one reason or another. This will help you defend against pro team impacts, improving your chances as you weigh your case. For example, you could say that aid benefits dictators or causes dependency.

Here is an excellent piece of **evidence** from a Kenyan economist who says development assistance is responsible for ongoing poverty in Africa:

(James Shikwati, Kenyan economist, Spiegel Online, International Magazine, "For God's Sake, Please Stop the Aid," interview conducted by Thilo Thielk June 11 2007)

An Kenyan expert in economics, James Shikwati, was interviewed by the German magazine Der Spiegel. The interview got off to a quick start as Shikwati surprised the journalist. **SPIEGEL:**Mr. Shikwati, the G8 summit at Gleneagles is about to beef up the development aid for Africa... **Shikwati:** ... for God's sake, please just stop. **SPIEGEL:** Stop? The industrialized nations of the West want to eliminate hunger and poverty. **Shikwati:** Such intentions have been damaging our continent for the past 40 years. If the industrial nations really want to help the Africans, they should finally terminate this awful aid. The countries that have collected the most development aid are also the ones that are in the worst shape. Despite the billions that have poured in to Africa, the continent remains poor. Massive injections of money, good intentions, and virtually nothing to show for it. Sounds just like the welfare state here. The journalist is confused, bewildered. **SPIEGEL:** Do you have an explanation for this paradox? Why is it a paradox if it simply a case of doing what doesn't work on a much larger scale? This exposes the incredibly simplistic assumption on the part of liberal ideology that throwing money a a problem really should work...in theory. As conservatives have been arguing for decades, however, an understanding of economics helps explain this "paradox". In answer to the question, Shikwati explains. **Shikwati:** Huge bureaucracies are financed (with the aid money), corruption and complacency are promoted, Africans are taught to be beggars and not to be independent. In addition, development



aid weakens the local markets everywhere and dampens the spirit of entrepreneurship that we so desperately need. As absurd as it may sound: Development aid is one of the reasons for Africa's problems. If the West were to cancel these payments, normal Africans wouldn't even notice. Only the functionaries would be hard hit. Which is why they maintain that the world would stop turning without this development aid. Being taught to be beggars, dependence on government, dampening entrepreneurship, and government corruption involved in the cash transfer. Sounds just like the welfare...well, you get the idea. Well, now our journalist is flummoxed. Doesn't *someone* have to help them? Shikwati slaps down this dependency thinking, and explains how food shipments both prop up corrupt governments and at the same time destroy the local economy's incentive. **SPIEGEL:** Even in a country like Kenya, people are starving to death each year. Someone has got to help them. **Shikwati:** But it has to be the Kenyans themselves who help these people. When there's a drought in a region of Kenya, our corrupt politicians reflexively cry out for more help. This call then reaches the United Nations World Food Program -- which is a massive agency of apparatchiks who are in the absurd situation of, on the one hand, being dedicated to the fight against hunger while, on the other hand, being faced with unemployment were hunger actually eliminated. It's only natural that they willingly accept the plea for more help. And it's not uncommon that they demand a little more money than the respective African government originally requested. They then forward that request to their headquarters, and before long, several thousands tons of corn are shipped to Africa ... **SPIEGEL:** ... corn that predominantly comes from highly-subsidized European and American farmers ... **Shikwati:** ... and at some point, this corn ends up in the harbor of Mombasa. A portion of the corn often goes directly into the hands of unscrupulous politicians who then pass it on to their own tribe to boost their next election campaign. Another portion of the shipment ends up on the black market where the corn is dumped at extremely low prices. Local farmers may as well put down their hoes right away; no one can compete with the UN's World Food Program. And because the farmers go under in the face of this pressure, Kenya would have no reserves to draw on if there actually were a famine next year. It's a simple but fatal cycle. And it just gets better after that. It included an admission from a tyrant that they indeed waste the aid, a exposure of exaggerated AIDS numbers for profit, and an African biochemist stuck being a chauffeur to aid workers. You simply must read the whole thing. It really turns on its head the idea that huge amounts of aid helps a nation, or even a continent. Giving to the poor is one thing. Destroying the individual spirit by destroying their livelihood is entirely another. The interview concludes with the journalist, playing the part of the liberal to the hilt (and, based on the full interview, not really play-acting) asking in desperation... **SPIEGEL:** What are the Germans supposed to do? **Shikwati:** If they really want to fight poverty, they should completely halt development aid and give Africa the opportunity to ensure its own survival. Currently, Africa is like a child that immediately cries for its babysitter when something goes wrong. Africa should stand on its own two feet.



Here is more **evidence** claiming that development assistance is bad because it doesn't reach its targets, doesn't lead to political reforms, and often props up repressive regimes:

(Jim Peron, "Foreign Aid to Africa Won't Help, and it May Very Well Hurt," Objectivistcenter.org, 3/21/2002)

Just an extra \$100 billion or so can eradicate world poverty, says Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs.

His claim is that if the West, particularly the United States, were to give this money to poor countries, it would meet the "needs of the world's poorest people" and this generation could "free humanity from poverty's iron grip".

Sounds nice. But there are problems. In his editorial, which appeared in numerous papers around the world, Sachs never actually lays out where the money should go. He wants to dramatically increase aid to the poor but he neglects to mention how.

And that's critical. Foreign aid historically has gone to governments in the third world - governments that, even by the most liberal of standards, are corrupt and tyrannical. Aid, instead of helping the poor, helps those who oppress the poor. Government to government aid does nothing to diminish poverty and probably increases it.

Aid money is routinely diverted to military projects and often used to finance policing techniques that make sure the ruling elite stays in power. This doesn't even include the huge sums of aid that end up in Swiss bank accounts as a "retirement" plan for African dictators in case the policing fails. And aid in the form of food only destroys the ability of local farmers to make a living.



Here is **evidence** demonstrating that development assistance doesn't lead to economic growth, and may actually hurt target nations' economies. This card also answers the claim that better management of aid would solve the problem:

*(Doug Bandow, economist & senior fellow at the Cato institute, USA Today, "foreign aid does not prevent social breakdown,"
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Foreign+aid+does+not+prevent+social+breakdown.-a020409127>, March 1 1998)*

Nevertheless, there is little evidence that better targeting and management would enable foreign aid to assist poor nations in achieving self-sustaining economic growth. Steady financial transfers have not stopped developing countries from stagnating economically; indeed, many, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have been losing ground economically. The United Nations Development Programme calls the 1980s the "lost decade" for many poorer states. "Over much of this period," it reported in 1996, "economic decline or stagnation has affected 100 countries, reducing the incomes of 1,600,000,000 people -- again, more than a quarter of the world's population. In 70 of these countries, average incomes are less than they were in 1980 -- and in 43 countries less than they were in 1970."

International comparisons obviously are fraught with difficult, but over-all aid levels do not correlate positively with economic health. Many of the recipients of the most foreign assistance -- such as Bangladesh, Egypt, India, the Philippines, Sudan, and Tanzania -- have been among the globe's worst economic performers. Even a positive correlation would not be enough to prove that aid actually works. The real issue is causation, and there is no evidence that aid generates growth.

Additionally, you will want to **prepare a conceptual defense of military aid**. Pro teams might choose to indict the American military aid system, such as by arguing it props up dictatorships, accelerates conflicts, or simply fails to achieve its goals. Make sure you are ready to defend against these types of attacks.



Here is evidence claiming that military aid is necessary and effective in the Sahel region:

(Jemal Oumar, Mauritanian journalist, Magharebia Magazine, "Sahel countries boost military capacity," http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2011/11/04/feature-02,4/11/11)

"The desire of the Sahel countries to improve their military arsenal comes from their situation," security expert Abdallahi Ould Mohamed said, "which forces them to confront security challenges, particularly terrorism and smuggling operations."

"It also must be taken into account that these countries, especially Mauritania, Mali and Niger, were seen as the weakest link militarily in the Sahel countries compared to Algeria and Morocco, leading al-Qaeda to exploit that vulnerability and implement its operations with ease. Thus, they cannot address those risks unless their military capacities are developed," Ould Mohamed added.

Strategic expert Ibrahim Ould Vall explained, "It is known that military cooperation between the countries of the Sahel and countries with high military experience is very important, and the Sahel countries realized this recently and so focused on strengthening the capacity of their armies."

"The threat of terrorism in these countries has become an incentive to strengthen military cooperation between these countries and other countries like the United States... training their armies to track terrorist elements, benefiting from some military equipment in order to protect and monitor the borders, and combating smuggling of all kinds, especially the smuggling of light weapons," he added.

According to an October 29th report by MaliWeb, "The US government gave military aid to the Malian army valued at \$9 million, including 75 vehicles, among them 44 SUVs, 18 Mercedes 1517 trucks and six ambulances, in addition to large quantities of clothing and military communications equipment and spare parts."



The chargé d'affaires at the US embassy in the Malian capital Bamako has said that the assistance served to support Mali's efforts in the fight against terrorism, according to MaliWeb.

"This assistance came at the right time given the new security challenges facing Bamako as a result of the Libyan war," El Khabar quoted the Malian president saying on Monday (October 31st).

He added that his country's approach in the fight against terrorism was "focused on the need for security and peace as a basic condition for development".

In order to win your debates, you will also need to identify some problems you can win that military aid solves best. Pro impacts are likely to focus on humanitarian concerns such as human rights, democracy promotion, hunger, and poverty, as well as issues of global economic growth. It would be very strategic for you to build a case that has inroads to some of these impacts, as well. For example, you could argue that military security is a prerequisite to economic development, because investors don't want to do business in unstable nations. Attempts to improve the economy without achieving stability, then, will always fail. This allows you to capture solvency for your opponents' impacts, which is extremely strategic.

Here is **evidence** supporting the argument that security must come before development. This card explicitly makes the claim that instability destroys development aid's effectiveness:

(European Union External Action Service (EEAS), "Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel," http://www.eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf, 2011)

The states of the region have to face these challenges directly. The three core Sahelian states, and the focus of this Strategy, are Mauritania, Mali and Niger, though the geographical conditions – and therefore challenges – also affect parts of Burkina Faso and Chad. Many of the challenges impact on neighbouring countries, including Algeria, Libya, Morocco and even Nigeria, whose engagement is necessary to help resolve them. The current political



developments in the Maghreb have consequences for the situation in the Sahel, taking into account the close relations between the countries of the two regions, a significant presence of citizens of Sahel countries in the Maghreb and the risks that arise from the proliferation of arms in the region. The problems facing the Sahel not only affect the local populations but increasingly impact directly on the interests of European citizens. In few areas is the inter-dependence of security and development more clear. The fragility of governments impacts on the stability of the region and the ability to combat both poverty and security threats, which are on the rise. Poverty creates inherent instability that can impact on uncontrolled migratory flows. The security threat from terrorist activity by Al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM), which has found a sanctuary in Northern Mali, is focussed on Western targets and has evolved from taking money to taking life, discouraging investment in the region. AQIM resources and operational capacities are significant and growing. Deteriorating security conditions pose a challenge to development cooperation and restrict the delivery of humanitarian assistance and development aid, which in turn exacerbates the vulnerability of the region and its population.

More evidence:

(Daniel Fiott, Hans Hoebeker, Esther Marijnen and Alexander Mattelaer, Institute for European Studies, "The Sahel Crisis: Where do European and African Perspectives Meet?," Issues 2013/02, March 2013)

Before any longer-term focus on economic development, political inclusion and government accountability can be achieved in the region the immediate concern is restoring security. Without security there can be no sustainable political and economic development– but security will depend on a legitimate political process. While the French prevented a bad situation from getting much worse through Operation Serval, the immediate military phase is about ensuring security while the French withdraw militarily from the country. French military withdrawal from Mali raises many questions about whether AFISMA is able to fill the security vacuum that will be left. One must also question the Malian army's abilities to regain full control of the North of the country, and whether they will be prepared to engage rebel groups if they resort to



asymmetric tactics. Indeed, the Malian government and security forces should not assume that Operation Serval has secured Mali for good. This last point was particularly stressed by the conference speakers.

I would also encourage you to do some targeted research on aid's relationship to inflation and the concept of the "Dutch disease," as well as the large body of literature suggesting that foreign aid disrupts local markets and actually increases poverty. All of these related ideas will help you craft in-depth arguments about why development assistance may actually weaken economies in the Sahel, if you are interested in setting your con case up that way.

Additionally, you may want to claim impacts based on terrorism, instability, and organized crime. You can say that only military aid is able to successfully address these threats.

Here is **evidence** that says terrorist groups in the Sahel region constitute the biggest security threat to the West:

(Michael R. Gordon, the New York Times, "State dept. warns of new terrorist group posing threat to u.s. interests in Africa," http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/19/world/africa/state-dept-warns-of-new-terrorist-group-posing-threat-to-us-interests-in-africa.html?_r=1&, December 18 2013)

The State Department warned Wednesday that a new terrorist group linked to an Algerian militant has emerged as "the greatest near-term threat to U.S. and Western interests" in the Sahel region of Africa. The State Department's move underscored the resilience of the militant factions and their ability to forge new terrorist alliances, even in the face of Western pressure.

"We are seeing a dangerous mutation of the threat," said Bruce Hoffman, an expert on terrorism at Georgetown University. "Splinters can become even more consequential than their parent organization."

The source of much of the concern is Mokhtar Belmokhtar, an Algerian militant who has long been a notorious figure in the Sahel region — a vast area on the southern flank of the Sahara that stretches from Senegal to Chad — and



who appears to have become more dangerous even as his ties to Al Qaeda seem to have become more tenuous. Known as Laaouar, or the one-eyed, after losing an eye to shrapnel, Mr. Belmokhtar fought against a Soviet-installed government in Afghanistan.

After returning to Algeria in the 1990s, he joined a militant Algerian group and took refuge in Mali, where he was involved in smuggling and kidnapping for ransom, including the abduction of a Canadian diplomat in 2008.

Mr. Belmokhtar became a leading figure in Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or A.Q.I.M., the Qaeda affiliate in North Africa.

But in 2012, he split with the group to lead the Al Mulathameen Battalion, which was officially designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department on Wednesday.

"The finding reflects the fact that the terrorist groups in the region are in flux, although certain individuals remain constant," said Michael R. Shurkin, a former C.I.A. analyst who is now at the RAND Corporation.

Since breaking with the Qaeda affiliate, Mr. Belmokhtar has shown a penchant for carrying out headline-grabbing attacks against Western interests.

"He is a more adventurous, perhaps even more reckless operator than the A.Q.I.M. leadership has shown itself to be," said Daniel Benjamin, the former senior counterterrorism official at the State Department who is now a scholar at Dartmouth College. "And that translates into a threat."

This card is great because it establishes that this impact has large magnitude (it is the "greatest threat") as well as timeframe ("near-term") and probability ("penchant for carrying out... attacks," "adventurous...reckless"). This should make weighing your impacts against your opponents a breeze.



Here is **evidence** from a source which names the Sahel as one of the regions most likely to see war in 2014. It describes the area as insecure, prone to terrorism and conflict, and unable to resolve these problems without outside assistance:

(Louise Arbour, president of the International Crisis Group, The Register Citizen, "Column: 2014's most likely places for war or settlements," <http://www.registercitizen.com/opinion/20140102/column-2014s-most-likely-places-for-war-or-settlements>, January 1 2014)

The Sahel region and Northern Nigeria have emerged as major sources of instability for parts of West and Central Africa, as last year's watchlist foretold. In 2014, expect separatist movements, Islamist terrorism, and north-south tensions to continue to spark violence, which the region's weak or stressed governments are ill-equipped to address.

In Mali, a French military intervention in early 2013 successfully wrested control of northern cities from a coalition of Islamist militant groups. Subsequently, presidential and parliamentary elections were held without major incident. Still, the country is far from stable today. Terror attacks, inter-communal clashes and bouts of fighting between armed Tuareg groups and the Malian army have continued, while representatives of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), the primary Tuareg separatist group, have repeatedly threatened to withdraw from peace talks. A U.N. mission has deployed to the country, but still lacks adequate resources and personnel.

You could also construct con impact scenarios based on drug trafficking, as numerous reports describe the region as key to international narcotics trafficking. Another possibility would be discussing the value of United States leadership in the region from an international relations standpoint. There are numerous routes you could take.

That wraps it up for this month! Of course, there are countless other arguments you could make that are not discussed here. You are encouraged to do your own research, pursue your own ideas, and get creative. Hopefully this guide provided some solid ground on which to find your footing in this topic.



Now you should be ready to go craft an excellent case and win all of your con debates! As always, you can email completed cases to **Rachel.Stevens@NCPA.org** for a free case critique. Don't forget to also join the discussion in the comments below, and keep checking back for more Debate Central postings about this month's PF topic. Good luck!