

to the United States, is now embroiled in turmoil. The United States, in partnership with the international community, must show leadership in helping it rebuild its democracy and restore its territorial integrity by reclaiming northern Mali from terrorists and extremists. So this morning, as the chair of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee, I chaired a hearing to assess the developments and the path forward for U.S. policy in Mali.

What I heard from our experts, from the Department of Defense, from the State Department, from the USAID, as well as a range of outside experts and one witness who testified from Bamako, the capital of Mali, was of real concern to me.

Northern Mali today is the largest terrorist-controlled area in the world. In the north, extremists have imposed a harsh and strict version of Sharia or Islamic law and committed gross violations of human rights. Many folks have heard of Timbuktu but don't know that it is an ancient city in northern Mali, a site where these Islamic extremists have behaved much as the Taliban did in Afghanistan before 9/11. They destroyed sacred religious and historic artifacts in Timbuktu, imposing a harsh version of Sharia that has meant amputations, stonings, violations of women's rights of free speech, religious exercise of rights, fundamentally changing the tolerance and exclusive history of Mali.

This created a humanitarian crisis as more than 400,000 Malians have fled, either internally displaced within Mali or going into neighboring countries as refugees.

With growing ties between these terrorists and Nigeria, Libya, and throughout the region, AQIM, we believe, may now use its safe haven in northern Mali to plan for regional or transnational terrorist attacks. Just as we should not have ignored developments in Afghanistan, which seemed a remote and troubled country when the Taliban took it over more than a dozen years ago, so too we would ignore the chaos in northern Mali at our peril.

In fact, Secretary Clinton has said that Mali has now become a powder keg of potential instability in the region and beyond. The top American military commander in Africa, GEN Carter Ham, said publicly just this week that al-Qaida is operating terrorist camps in northern Mali and is providing arms, explosives, and financing to other terrorist groups in the region. So I believe it is critical that the United States has a strong and comprehensive policy to deal with this threat.

I am concerned that the current U.S. approach may not be forward leaning enough to address all three crises—security, political, and humanitarian—in a coordinated, comprehensive, and effective way at the same time. Given the compelling U.S. interest in stability, security, and good governance

in Mali, we must ensure that we don't miss the bigger picture of what this situation means for the future of Mali, to our allies, and to our security.

The U.N. Security Council is now considering what they call a concept of operations for an African-led military operation. The United States can and should play a more active role in supporting this and preventing the country from becoming a permanent home for extremists and a safe haven for terrorists.

An active role does not mean putting American boots on the ground. Instead, we can provide operational support for a regionally led, multilateral, African-led force being organized by ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, and the African Union. In the weeks ahead the U.N. Security Council will likely vote on a resolution authorizing this coalition to lead a military intervention to dislodge the terrorists in the north. We have seen models like this work in Cote d'Ivoire and Somalia, so there is reason to believe in the potential of a regional military solution to the security crisis in the north.

However, even if this intervention works, it will take time to train, equip, and assemble the regional force and to develop the appropriate plans for what happens during and after a military intervention. Frankly, Mr. President, security and stability can't be restored to Mali with military action alone. The current crisis is as much about governance as it is about security. A stronger Malian democracy is the best way to ensure security and societal gains in the short term and the long term, but democracy doesn't just begin or end with an election.

One of the reasons Mali's democracy crumbled so quickly was that Malians didn't feel connected to, represented, or well served by their government. Voter turnout in the last few elections was lower and lower, with the government viewed as corrupt, social services not benefiting the relatively sparsely populated north, and institutions nationwide that were weak.

The political and security challenges in Mali are two sides of the same coin; they are not separate issues. I will urge that we break down silos between departments and agencies in our government and take a comprehensive view.

If we focus on the political only and insist on Mali moving forward briskly with an election even when the security situation will prevent most northern Malians from meaningfully participating, I think we risk unintentionally strengthening the hands of those who want to ensure that Mali's regional divide is permanent and hand a symbolic victory to al-Qaida.

On the other hand, if we rush forward with a security solution, with a regional military intervention before it is adequately planned, before they are responsibly trained and equipped, we risk defeat on that front as well.

I think we can and should do better. We can work closely with our allies,

with regional partners in the international community to address all the security, political, and humanitarian crises unfolding in Mali. Effective, inclusive elections early next year should be one goal but not the only one. We also have to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis of the 400,000 displaced persons and refugees, the more than 4.5 million people in need of emergency food aid in the region, and the security crisis of terrorists controlling an area this large.

To bring long-term peace and stability to Mali and to ensure northern Mali doesn't slide into being the base of operations for the next al-Qaida attack on our allies, our interests abroad, or even the United States, we can't afford to ignore any of the pieces of this complex puzzle. The United States simply cannot afford, despite the many distractions and other priorities facing us, to ignore Mali.

I pledge to work in close partnership with my colleagues in the Senate and with my friends on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to ensure an effective engagement by the United States in this important area.

I yield the floor.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING HOUR

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent morning business be extended until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, last week I came to the floor and spoke about our Nation's military and intelligence leaders acknowledging, along with our Nation's scientific leaders, the clear evidence that carbon pollution is changing our climate. Unfortunately, there continues to be some confusion among many Americans regarding the clear scientific consensus, but that is confusion caused by coordinated and deliberate attempts to mislead the American people.

For more than two decades now, the climate denial movement has been well-organized and funded by the fossil fuel industry and conservative ideologues and foundations. The mission of these paid-for deniers is to "manufacture uncertainty," to manufacture doubt so the polluters can keep on polluting.

This isn't a new strategy. We have seen self-serving strategies such as this before. These strategies questioned the merits of requiring seat belts in cars. They questioned CFCs causing deterioration of the ozone layer. They questioned the toxic effects of lead exposure for children. They questioned whether tobacco was really bad for people—the same strategy to manufacture