The Political Economy of the Niger Crisis: Implications for the Superpowers.

By

Ominini Brother Asako Walson
Department of History and Diplomatic Studies
Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Email: evibros.ng@gmail.com Phone: 08038877492

Abstract

This examined political economy and the Niger crisis: Implications for the super powers. Data were collected using secondary and multi-disciplinary approach. The discussion was guided by the frustration-aggression theory propounded by John Dollard and his associates in 1939. The paper explained the concept of political economy, crisis, super powers with an elaborate discussion on Niger as a Republic in a way to understand the discourse. The paper identified the causes of the crisis in Niger, and the various implications on super powers. The paper observed that the causes of the Niger crisis were: low wages and unemployment, racism and discrimination, psychopathology, external economic attacks, and poor educational and health facilities etc. The paper found that following the July 26 events, Niger is losing its place in global politics. The super powers have also suspended certain aid programs to Niger, including funding for international military education and training as programs that supports Niger's counter terrorism capacities; The overthrow of Bazoum also signal a bill in alliance toward Russia because, in 2016, Niger and Russia signed an agreement to allow the two countries to deepen their security and development co-operation, There was a major ending of a defense agreement between Niger and France that authorized the presence of France soldiers on Nigerien soil; The crisis has also affected Niger's hope for economic development in the coming years which rest heavily on exploiting the country's remarkable hydroelectric potentials, exploration of oil, and consolidation of expansion in the mining of uranium. Finally, most investors are leaving the country for instance the kanji dam aimed at harness the hydroelectric potentials had been suspended due to the economic and financial sanctions imposed by ECOWAS after the coup. The paper therefore suggested that: a way to put

an end to the crisis amid the military coup in Niger is reshuffling the democracy and the military system of the country. ECOWAS and other world leaders should continually engage the military Junta to conduct another free and fair election to restore democratic rule to ensure that the sanctions meted on the country are relieved.

Key Words: Political, Economy, Political Economy, Crisis, Super Powers,

Introduction

Niger is nearly 500,000 square miles of landlocked country boarded by no less than seven neighbouring states, it's a country saddled with a history of military intervents. However, most recently, under the leadership of President Mohammed Bazoum. It has been regarded as a model of stability and model of democracy in a region marred by political instability. Bazonm's election in 2021 and the subsequent peaceful transition of power raised expectations of democratic rule and a renewed commitment to good governance. However, the military coup shattered those projects and exposed the fragility of democracy in West African.

In the current political upheaval, the key players include not just the domestic military forces, but also international powers. A legacy of French colonization and the U.S Global War on Terro looms large over the region, casting its shadow on a complex narrative. However, the militarized ambitions of both regional and global actors prevail in West Africa and Niger is caught in the crosshairs. As this papers, considers the nuances of the situation one provoking question is what are the implications of the Niger crisis on the World Super Powers, this question will be discussed forth with and other inguitriging issues.

Theoretical consideration

This paper was guided by the frustration-aggression theory propounded by John Dollard and his associates in 1939. This theory posited that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Frustration, in this context implies disappointments, disillusionment, feeling of abandonment from goal expectation in behaviour. Frustration does go beyond inability to achieve set-goals, but also that one's access to reinforcers is being thwarted, and that the reaction is one of annoyance, Aggression is always

based on frustration. This theory posits that where expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those responsible for frustrating their ambitions. This means frustration instigates behaviours that may be hostile, and that hostile or aggressive behaviour may be caused by frustration. The exponents of this theory explained that aggression points to the difference between what people want or deserve to what they actually get, the "want-get-ratio" or the difference between "expected need satisfaction" and "actual need satisfaction",

From the perspective of the military coup d'état in Niger which ousted president Buzuom from power, there has been protest against neglect, poverty, under development, as well as socio-political helplessness, resulting to frustration. The greater the discrepancy and marginalization, between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result. This theory is relevant in understanding why oppression and poor governance led to aggression from a frustrated situation of exploitation, desecration and abuse of power by the president. This theory makes it easy for one to understand how frustration on the part of people Nigerien's is manifested through the takeover of power by the military junta.

Concept of Political Economy

Political economy emerged in the 18th century as a precursor to modern economics with Adams Smith and Karl Max making significant contribution. Political economy is a social science that examines the inter-connectedness of political and economic systems, focusing on how political forces shape economic outcomes and vice versa. It analyses how economic forces like supply and demand, trade and wealth distribution relates to laws, the political environment, and the state. Political economy draws from economics, political sociology, and other disciplines to understand complex societal issues. It examines how power dynamics and interest influence economic policies and outcomes. Unlike traditional economics, political economy considers the nature of the state institutions, and social structures in shaping economic systems.

In the study of political economy (Thakur,1987) noted that issues like "how political institutions affects trade, the impact of economic policies on different

social groups, the role of the state in regulating markets and addressing inequalities, and the relationship between economic growth and political stability are treated for a clearer understanding of their influence and power dynamics of the state. One factor which affects the political economy of a state is crisis and a notable one is that of the Niger Republic which has implications super powers. An understanding of the political economy of "Third World" countries, like Niger a term now often replaced with "developing nations," is important to examine the complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors that shape development and inequality within these nations to explore how internal power structures, external global forces, and historical legacies contribute to economic disparities and challenges. According to Chizea (2012), the political economy of developing nations is a complex and evolving field of study that seeks to understand the forces that shape their development trajectories. By examining the interplay of internal and external factors, scholars can gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing these countries.

Concept of Crisis

A crisis, in its broadest sense, is a difficult or dangerous situation that requires immediate attention and a decisive change. It can be a turning point, either for better or worse, in a sequence of events, and often involves instability or danger. A crisis situation according to Wali (2007), is described as unpredictable and often sudden. It can be life-threatening and life-changing, which creates a high level of uncertainty and leaves people feeling out of control and overwhelmed. The situation in Niger can best explained as a crisis since Niger continues to suffer significant humanitarian needs due to conflicts, displacement, food insecurity, child malnutrition, climatic hazards and epidemics (Nwobueze, 2025). The violence affecting several regions, especially in the border areas with Nigeria, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali, continues forcing people to leave their homes. There is political instability in Niger following a military takeover in July 2023. The security situation remains highly volatile. Protests and civil unrest could occur and turn violent quickly without notice. People avoid government buildings, demonstrations, large crowds and political gatherings because of the unknown.

Concept of World Super Power

A world superpower is a nation that exerts significant global influence and power projection, often characterized by its military, economic, and political strength, as well as its cultural and technological advancements. These nations have a substantial impact on the world stage, influencing international relations and shaping global affairs. **Superpower** describes a sovereign state or supranational union that holds a dominant position characterized by the ability to exert influence and project power on a global scale. This is done through the combined means of economic, military, technological, political, and cultural strength as well as diplomatic and soft power influence. Traditionally, superpowers are preeminent among the great powers. While a great power state is capable of exerting its influence globally, superpowers are states so influential that no significant action can be taken by the global community without first considering the positions of the superpowers on the issue. In 1944, during World War II, the term was first applied to the British Empire, the Soviet Union, and the United States. During the Cold War, the British Empire dissolved, leaving the United States and the Soviet Union to dominate world affairs. At the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States became the world's sole superpower (Keili, 2008) a position sometimes referred to as that of a "hyper power". Since the late 2010s and into the 2020s, China has increasingly been described as an emerging superpower or even an established one, as China represents the "biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century" to the United States, as it is "the only country with enough power to jeopardize the current global order". The term was first used to describe nations with greater than great power status as early as 1944, but only gained its specific meaning with regard to the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II. This was because the United States and the Soviet Union had proved themselves to be capable of casting great influence in global politics and military dominance. The term in its current political meaning was coined by Dutch-American geostrategist Nicholas Spykman in a series of lectures in 1943 about the potential shape of a new post-war world order. This formed the foundation for the book *The Geography of the Peace*, which referred primarily to the unmatched maritime global supremacy of the British Empire and the United States as essential for peace and prosperity in the world.

A year later, William T. R. Fox, an American foreign policy professor, elaborated on the concept in the book *The Superpowers: The United States, Britain and the Soviet Union – Their Responsibility for Peace* which spoke of the global reach of a super-empowered nation. Fox used the word superpower to identify a new category of power able to occupy the highest status in a world in which - as the war then raging demonstrated—states could challenge and fight each other on a global scale. According to him, at that moment, there were three states that were superpowers, namely the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom. The British Empire was the most extensive empire in world history and considered the foremost great power, holding sway over 25% of the world's population and controlling about 25% of the Earth's total land area, while the United States and the Soviet Union grew in power before and during World War II. The UK would face serious political, financial, and colonial issues after World War II that left it unable to match Soviet or American power. Ultimately, Britain's empire would gradually dissolve over the course of the 20th century, sharply reducing its global power projection.

According to Lyman Miller, *"the basic components of superpower stature may be measured along four axes of power: military, economic, political, and cultural (or what political scientist Joseph Nye has termed '**soft power**'.*

Characteristics of Super powers

1. **Military Strength:** Superpowers possess powerful militaries capable of projecting force and influencing global security.
2. **Economic Power:** They typically have strong economies, large GDPs, and significant influence over global trade and finance.
3. **Political Influence:** Superpowers often hold key positions in international organizations and have the ability to shape global policy.
4. **Cultural and Technological Advancement:** They may have a strong cultural influence and lead in technological innovation, further solidifying their global presence.
5. **Geographic and Demographic Factors:** Large land areas, large populations, and strategically important locations can also contribute to a nation's superpower status.

Examples of Superpowers:

a) **United States:** Historically considered the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US maintains a strong military, economy, and political influence.

b) **China:** Emerging as a global economic power, China is increasingly asserting its influence in international affairs.

c) **Russia:** With a powerful military and significant geopolitical influence, Russia also competes for superpower status.

d) **Japan:** with her technological prowess has significant influence in international relations.

e) **Other Potential Superpowers:** India, with its large population and growing economy, and the European Union, with its economic and political weight, are also often mentioned as potential future superpowers.

The Niger Republic and recent Crisis



France colonized Niger, starting with a military campaign in 1899 and established formal colonial rule in 1922. Niger became a French colony in 1922, part of French

West Africa. French rule lasted until 1960 when Niger declared independence, with **Hamani Diori** becoming the first president. Key event doing the period of colonization was that by **1899,** French military campaign to expand control in West Africa, leading to the beginning of French rule in Niger. By 1**912,** the military territory of Niger was split off from Upper Senegal and Niger, and by **1922,** the civilian Colony of Niger took control of most of the southern and western areas, with a lieutenant governor reporting to the Governor General of French West Africa. However, by **1946-1958,** the French Union conferred a limited form of French citizenship and some self-governance. Niger became an autonomous state within the French Community in **1958** and was finally declared independence, becoming the Republic of Niger in 1960.

Republic of Niger is a land locked country in West Africa, located between Algeria and Libya to the North, Chad to the East, Benin, and Nigeria to the South, and Burkina Faso and Mali to the west. It is situated in the heart of West Africa, at the cross roads of North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Its capital is Niamey. Niger Republic is the largest country in West Africa covering an area of almost 1.2 million square kilometers.

The Niger crisis is a complex and protracted humanitarian emergency which stems from a combination of factors which led to a coup d'état on 26th July, 2023 during which the countries presidential guard (**Abduraham Mane Tiani)** removed and detained president **Mohammed Buzuom**. The united states, France and many other countries and group have been included in the crisis because of the Islamic insurgency in the Sahel, which in turn triggered the Jihadish insurgency in Niger led by the Al-Quada, the Islamic state group and boko Haran.

The major causes of the Niger crisis are traced to high sensitivity or the agricultural sector to agro-chemical hazards and the high poverty rate which has made citizens highly vulnerable to food, with nearly 50% of its popular living in rural areas, soil degradation and limited access to arable land and water are the major divers of food shortage. The political instability in the Niger Republic has brought untold hardship to its citizen and has led to massive displacement of the citizens. The crisis in Niger Republic has implication on Super Powers which will be addressed in this paper vice versa the effects and influence of political economy of the state.

The Niger Republic crises is one which degenerated from several factors which lead to the coup d'état on July 26th 2023. The crisis was a buildup of extreme poverty accessioned by:

1. Low wages and unemployment where most people who work full-time or multiple jobs do not earn to make ends meet,
2. Lack of affordable housing,
3. Racism and discrimination,
4. Poor educational and health facilities,
5. Soil degradation and limited access to arable land,
6. External economic attacks,
7. External attacks,
8. Breakdowns,
9. Psychopathology and,
10. Human resources factors.

The effects of the Niger Crisis are enormous with consequences in the lifes of citizens. Some of the effects are as follows: the number of Nigeriens in need of humanitarian assistance has reportedly increased (Joel, 2024) by 65% from 2.3million in 2019 to 3.8million in 2023. Children in Niger have been impacted by the crisis in the country and need humanitarian assistance. The citizens of Niger continue to suffer significant humanitarian needs due to the conflict. For instance, displacement, food insecurity, child malnutrition, climate hazards and epidemics are common. The violence affecting several regimes, especially in the border areas with Nigeria, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mali, continually forcing people to leave their homes.

The Influence of Niger Crisis on Political economy of the nation

The Overthrow of President **Mohammed Bazoun** on July 26, 2023 by the military lead by **Abduraham Mane Tiani** has thrown the government of Niger in Shables with serious political and economic implications. In spite of the interventions of ECOWAS which issued altimation to the coup leader and junta, their efforts have been futile. On August 20th 2023, the main coup leader and self-proclaimed head of state **Gen. Abduraham Mane Tiani** presented his roadmap in a televised address: *a transition period of not more than three years and an inclusive national*

dialogue, and reterected that has country would defend itself in the event of military intervention.

The latest coup in West Africa is a major blow to Niger, the Sahel region, and West Africa as a whole. The janta has publicly accused France, which has some 1,500 troops in Niger by trying to destabilize the country. The crises have also been closely uninvited in Washington given the presence of its military bases and political engagements in the landlocked country at the heart of the Sahel (Gilles, 2023). While Niger's economy and social indicators place it at the bottom of global development indices, these metrics also understate the country's strategic importance of this vast country. Its mineral and oil resources, its potential for development of renewable energies; and its demographic growth helps explain the seemingly outsized interest of medium and large powers in the current crises. Following the July 26 events:

1. Several bilateral and multilateral **ties between Niger and the neighbors have been damaged.**
2. The United States obviously wants to keep its military bases in Niger and continue its intelligence gathering and offensive operation against terrorist groups because of her invested interest in the economy of Niger, however it has suspended certain aid programs to Niger, including funding for international military education and training as programs that supports Niger's counter terrorism capacities;
3. The overthrow of Bazoum also signal a bill in alliance toward Russia because, in 2016, Niger and Russia signed an agreement to allow the two countries to deepen their security and development co-operation,
4. There was a major ending of a defense agreement between Niger and France that authorized the presence of France soldiers on Nigerien soil;
5. The crisis has also affected Niger's hope for economic development in the coming years which rest heavily on exploiting the country's remarkable hydroelectric potentials, exploration of oil, and consolidation of expansion in the mining of uranium.
6. Finally, The Chinese company-***Gezhonba Group***, which is building the dam, to harness her hydroelectric potentials announced that it had suspended all construction activities due to the economic and financial sanctions imposed by ECOWAS after the coup.

Implicit of the Niger Crisis on Super Powers like: France, USA, Russia, Europe etc.

Below is an exploration of major implications of the Niger crisis on Super powers and how it has rippled through the country, regions and the world.

A contest of fragile democracy

The ousted president - **Bazoum** succeeded **Mahamadon Issoufon** in **April, 2021** in the first transfer of power between two civilians since the countries" independence in 1960 from France colonial rule. The electoral process was marked by controversy and disputes between the various political forces, and the result were also disputed. Bazoum, a philosopher by training and a well-known political figure for three decades had held several senior positions under Issoufou, notably in the interior and foreign affairs ministries. Bazoum has strong convict but is pragmatic on difficult issues, such as the response to armed Jihadism. He does not exclude dialogue as a tool to obtain the disengagement of some of the fighters from armed terrorist group alongside military action, such as Nigeriens.

Democracy in Niger, as almost everywhere else in the region, is fraught. The democratic practice largely reduced the procedural dimension of elections and the tricks of political competition has not produced a management of public affairs perceived as effective and fair for the benefit of the population. The most likely reason for the coup is that certain army officers wanted to maintain their positions and influence over political power and block any attempt by the civilian president to sideline the military's influence. Niger has a tradition of military intervention in the political arena, and the list of former presidents includes more military officials than civilians since independence in 1960, Niger has had 4 successful coups and dozens of attempted coups including one two days before Bazoum took office, signing a desire within the army to prevent him from taking office.

In March, U.S secretary of state **Anthony Blinken** visited Niger, the first visit by the top diplomat in the country's history and evidence of its note as a key strategic partner for Washington. Niger is the largest recipient of state department military assistant in Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington has provided training and equipment to Niamey's military and security forces to help fight terrorism and trans national crime. In addition, the United States is also Niger's leading bilateral development

partner. Following the July 26 events, United States suspended certain aid programs to Niger, including funding for international military education and training as programs that supports Niger's counter terrorism capacities. However, **President Joe Biden's administration** has not officially labelled the military takeover "Coup", a designation that could end all its secretary assistance and result in a supervision of the country's privileges for daily free exports to the US market through the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

In another sign of importance of the U.S to the Niger crisis, the acting Deputy Secretary of State, **Victoria Jane Nuland** made a surprise visit to Niamey on August 7, 2023. She was not allowed to meet with **Bazoum nor Tiani** but spoke with the chief of staff. Until July 26, 2023 Niger has benefited from the US Army Training Programs.

In recent years, Niger has become most important U.S. military hub in West Africa. The United States 1,100 troops in the country, as well as critical reconnaissance air assets. The country's "discreet" military bases which are found in almost every region of the world including several in Niger are one of the most effective ways for the United States to project power and maintain its status as a military super power in the face of China, and Russia. Northern Niger is a strategic location for surveillance of Libya and the entire Sahel- Saharan region and beyond.

In another dimension, the U.S in January 2013 signed an agreement allowing Washington to use drone based in Niger. The Drone base, known as Air Base 201 was built near Agadez in Central Niger and is the second-largest U.S C.I.A. drone base in Africa, after one in Djibouti. Since 2018, it has been used to target the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda affiliate Jama'et Nnsrat al-Islam wal muslimeen in the Sahel. The central intelligence also operates a drone base in the country, as the New York Times revealed in 2018.

The United States obviously wants to keep its military bases in Niger and continue its intelligence gathering and offensive operation against terrorist groups in which can only be achieved by military privileged diplomatic and military relations with the country's political authorities. The U.S president Joe Biden emphatically stressed the release of Bazoum and his family for the preservation of Niger's hard-

earned democracy. Though in a statement in **August 10, 2023**, *Biden* appreciated the determination of ECOWAS to explore all options for peaceful resolution of the crisis "However, in the absence of an immediate restoration of constitutional order, which is now highly unlikely, it is reasonable to assume that the United States would like to see a transition that would ensure a rapid return to the constitutional order.

Russia's Visibility

The overthrow of Bazoum may also signal a bill in alliance toward Russia. The appearance of Russian flags waved by some coup supporters suggest a repeat of Mali and Burkina Faso sceneries. Niger like many African countries also have a long industry of co-operation with Russia. In 2016, Niger and Russia signed an agreement to allow the two countries to deepen their security and development co-operation. In a sub quest meeting in November 2016, with the Mali-base Russian Ambassador to Niger, the Nigerien defense minister revealed that more than a hundred Nigerien officers had benefited from training in Russia and that several aircraft used by the Nigerien Air Force were Russia made.

According to Oshodi (2012), Niger is not one of the closest countries to the Russian capital Moscow, yet in March, 2022, Niger voted for a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly calling for the end of Russia's use of force against Ukraine. Niger has been the target of apparent Russian disformation campaigns in recent years especially after the October 2022 coup in Burkina Faso. These Campaigns also were possibly behind rumors of a coup area February 2023.

However, Blinken publicly denied the possibility of Russian involvement in July coup and Russia condemned the Junta and called for a return to constitutional order. But relations are very good between the junta in Niamey and the transitional regime in Mali, the Wagner groups base in West Africa. An opportunistic Wagner security offer to Nigerien military rulers cannot be ruled out making the question of shifting alliance even more complex. The august 2023 death of anger leader **Yevgeny Prigizhin** adds a new layer of uncertainty to Russians ability to take advantage of the crisis in the Niger which once again puts France in a difficult position.

The Influence of France and Europe

The events in Niamey the capital of Niger republic is yet another blow to Paris's influences in the Sahel. Niger's former colonial power and an influenced actor in Francophone West Africa –warned against any attack on the security of its citizens on Nigerian said after a demonstration in support of the coup targeted the French embassy in Niamey. As in Mali and Burkina Faso, the crisis in Niger according to Kosi (2023), has become a crisis between France and Niger at least in the media and on social networks, Paris decided to evacuate any of its citizens who visited to do so. The junta made reminiscent of the steps that led to the hasty departure of French troops from Mali and Burkina Faso, such as ending a major defense agreement between Niger and France that authorized the presence of France soldiers on Nigerian soil.

It must be recalled that Niger was included in the scope of operation **Barkhame**, the French military operation that began in 2014 as an extension of a 2013 operation targeting armed jihadi groups in Mali (where the majority of French military actions was concentrated. But as tensions rose and all French soldiers departed Mali in 2022, Niger became the host country for France force. The cornels in power in Mali had openly sided with Russia which facilitated the deployment of Wagner groups fighters by Malian government. However, Bozuom, who made no secret of his opposition to military regimes, emerged as France's most reliable and least controversial ally in the region.

France other major ally in the Sahel is Chad, led by **General Mahamat Idris Deby Itno,** who came to power in violation of the constitution after the death of his father. One of the criticisms leveled at France is the inconsistency between its support for dynastic succession and, the military domination transitional regime in Chad and its strong condemnation of the military coups in Mali and Burkina Faso. A forced withdrawal of France from the central Sahel, leaving only Chad and the West African Coastal states of Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and possibly Benin as host countries for a significant French presence.

Even in these countries, it had to imagine a stronger military presence for the former colonial power, which has become very unpopular with public opinion in West Africa Sahel beyond the cooperation of France in security matters in no

longer perceived as indispensable and irreplaceable, rightly or wrongly by the countries of the region, which have noted the mixed results of almost ten years of French military intervention in the Sahel and decades of military corporation.

Underlying factor of unequal economic relationship between France and Niger

Niger's geopolitical importance has grown over the last decade or so, in the context of the fight against armed Jihadi groups, in the region, the collapse of the state in Libya an, and irregular migration to Europe – a much older economic link lies at the heart of special relationship between Niger and France. It has to do with Uranium, a strategic mineral for both civilian and military. Purposes. Niger is currently the 7th Uranium producer in the world and produces about 5% of the world's Uranium output.

Uranium was discovered in Northern Niger in 1957, three years before the country became independent state. As other colonies, with particular valuable natural resources, France took care to secure agreements guaranteeing supplies of these valuable commodities on very favorable terms. Since France civil **Nuclear industry** is the cornerstone of its energy independence, a controlled supply of Uranium is necessary and strategic objective of Paris. Niger is the key country in the strategy. It must be noted the from 2005 to 2020, Niger was France's third largest supplier of natural Uranium, behind Kazakhstan and Australia and ahead of Uzbekistan (Omotayo, 2012).

The often-violent condemnation of French policy in Niger is based primarily on the decades of long exploitation of the country's Uranium deposit by ORANO- the Uranium company formerly known as AREVA- that supplies France with the resource essential for nuclear power generation. Orano holds significant interest in three Niger's Uranium mine, only one of which is operating. The company has announced trial in 2024 to explore the giant **Imouraren mine**, whose reserves are estimated at 200,000 tons of natural uranium. Development of this project has been delayed severally and the plans thwarted with the crisis in Niger. The unequal balance of power between France and Niger in the negotiation of contracts is also a factor, especially in the context of the strong political influence of ex-colonial power.

The Surprise of Germany and Italy

The crisis and subsequent coup in Niger also came as a surprise to Germany and Italy. Germany has troops in Niger to provide logistical support to its soldiers deplored in neighboring Mali both as part of the United Nations stabilization mission and for trading missions with local armed forces. Germany had about 100 soldiers in Niger at the time of the coup. Italy on the other hand, motivated primarily by the fight against irregular migration, has also made the establishment of a military presence in Niger a priority. It repatriated 65 soldiers after the coup, but about 250 remained in Niger.

Niger economy at a crossroads

In reality, the discovery of oil in large quantity in Niger has made the usefulness of uranium less important. The production of oil began in 2011 with a daily output of 20,000 barrels. The oil is extracted by the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and piped to Zinder, a city in the South-Central part of Niger, where it is refined. Niger continued the rights on construction of a refinery, making China the Niger governments strategic partner in the development of its oil resources.

The construction of a 2,000 – kilometer of pipeline between Niger and Benin was expected to be completed in 2024. This noble plan has been thwarted by the current crisis in the country. The pipeline will allow Niger to increase its daily oil production 110,000 barrel, of which 90,000 will be exported, and the country would produce 200,000 barrels per day by 2026. Authorities export the oil industry to generate a quarter of Nigeria's GDP and almost 50% of tax revenues. *New discoveries also have been made by the British Company Savannah petroleum and by the Algerian State Company.* So Natrach oil development looks to be much more important than uranium revenues for the country's economic growth. Niger's hope for economic development in the coming years also rest heavily on exploiting the country's remarkable hydroelectric potentials.

The Kandadji Dam and hydropower plant on the Niger River is proof of an ambitious program to regenerate ecosystems and good domestic energy production (as 70%) Niger's electricity is imported from Nigeria). It will also increase agricultural yields, improve food security, preserve and revitalize river

ecosystems, and ensure the drinking water supply for Niamey region. At a cost total cost of 740 billion CFA Franc (about 1.2 billion), the project is financed by several partners, including the world bank, the Africa Development Bank, French Development Agency, and the Islamic Development Bank. On August 7th the Chinese company-***Gezhonba Group***, which is building the dam, announced that it had suspended all construction activities due to the economic and financial sanctions imposed by ECOWAS after the coup. The dam's inauguration was scheduled for 2025 but is now likely to be delayed. Some of the financial external financial partners of the project might consider pulling or suspending their commitments. The coup could also delay progress on the promising oil development.

The prospect of oil development may have been one of the factors that led to the over throw of Bazoum, due to rumors that he planned reforms in the Management of future oil revenues. Bazonm's changes which strengthen his grip on the sector were not the liking of the oil minister, who is also the son of the former president. It's unclear whether a conflict between Bazoum and his predecessor led to the coup leader's decision to act against Bazoum before the took over the oil sector. But what's certain is the negative impact of the coup on the immediate economic and social implement of programmes that were well under way.

Major Uncertainties about Niger's future

For the people of Niger, the coup already seem irreversible while many are opposed to the military take over and do not believe the arguments put forward by the coup leaders, some hope for a new political beginning through a military – civilian transition that could create the conditions for more open and fair political competition at election time. But the experience of many countries on the continents showed that new military rulers quickly use transitional periods to their own advantage, transforming themselves into political actors and entrenching themselves into power by reproducing the same governance practice they loudly denounced in the past (Inokoba & Imbua, 2010). *Niger was on a promising economic path with high economic growth rate and ambitious reforms and investment plans in education, an indisputable priority area for the country's future that future is now uncertain.*

For the Sahel, West Africa, and ECOWAS, Niger's development in the coming years will also be crucial. It is essential to avoid external military interventions, the threat of which has given the junta the opportunity to further mobilize the population by playing on patriotic sometimes, and the consequences of which would be incalculable. Important neighbors of Niger, especially Algeria, publicly opposed any military intervention as an option to solve the crisis

France and U.S will have to make some tough choices in the short term. The continued military presence these two countries will not be possible of a government hostile to them is installed in Niamey for more than a few months. But while France is directly implicated by the demonstrators supporting the coup, the U.S whose military presence and political influence have always been more discreet has some room for maneuver in managing the period of uncertainty that has opened up in Niger.

Regardless of external interest, the coup leaders must be prevented from taking total control of political power and deciding alone on the modalities of a transitional government. The very narrow path of a political compromise for a transition in terms of which would be decided through dialogue among Niger's main political, social, and military actors appears to be the only realistic option and the best chance to limit the immerse damage already caused by the political shock July 26. America Diplomacy can play a constructive role in this perspective, supporting the initiative of the countries of the region, ECOWAS and the African Union. Further, a **delegation from Nigeria and that of the Republic of Niger met in Niamey on Wednesday, in a move to restore the damaged bilateral ties between the two neighbors.** Daily Trust gathered that Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Yusuf Maitama Tuggar**, arrived in Niamey on Tuesday, 16th April, 2024 leading a high-level delegation aimed at restoring and strengthening diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the Republic of Niger. This effort came in the heels that Nigeria had made earlier effort by sending high-level delegations to Niger to mediate and foster dialogue. Former Nigerian Head of State, **General Abdulsalami Abubakar,** played a key role in these efforts, emphasizing the importance of restoring constitutional order and maintaining regional stability.

Analysis of pre-coup democratic leadership and post-coup military junta

The military coup in Niger has impacted every sector of Nigerien society, demonstrating the centrality of governance to security, economic, and social outcomes. A snapshot of an array of these outcomes according the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2024) reveals a marked shift in Niger's trajectory since the coup. his reversal in trajectory will have wider ramifications for the region given that this historically peaceful, landlocked country of 25 million people shares borders with seven neighbors. **Table 1** below gives a comparative analysis of stability indicators like: security, economics, democratic landscape, independent media, information space, transparency, and national sovereignty. Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, Niger had realized discernable progress in the decade prior to the coup under democratically elected Presidents Mahamadou Issoufou and Mohamed Bazoum. Many of those gains have since been upended. With tightening restrictions on the media and information space under the junta, the full extent of this deterioration is difficult to ascertain.

Stability Indicators: Security

Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership	Post-Coup Military Junta
1. Fatality rates linked to militant Islamist group attacks in Niger declined by 53 percent in 2023 relative to 2022, prior to the coup. 2. Military expenditures increased 64 percent under Bazoum—to $309 million in 2023. 3. Disarmament and deradicalization programs were encouraging defections from violent extremist groups in the Sahel. 4. In the Southeast, where Niger has faced threats from Boko Haram, there were no violent events between 2021 and 2023 and	1. Fatalities linked to extremist groups are projected to reach more than 1,600 in 2024—a 60-percent increase from 2023. 2. At least 8 militant Islamist group attacks have claimed a dozen or more soldiers' lives since the coup. This is a marked increase in the level of violence against the armed forces not seen since 2021. 3. With militant Islamists gaining greater control over key roads to Niamey, the capital is increasingly isolated.

displaced communities were returning to their villages.	4. Disarmament and deradicalization efforts have stalled since the military coup.

Stability Indicators: Economics

Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership	Post-Coup Military Junta
1. In the decade under Issoufou and Bazoum, per capita income in Niger expanded by 26 percent.	1. The Nigerien junta has already missed four debt payments and has now defaulted on $519 million in debt.
2. The World Bank had projected economic growth of 7 percent in 2023 and 12.5 percent in 2024.	2. World Bank-projected economic growth in 2024 is expected to decline by 45 percent from previous estimates.
3. Despite global spikes in food prices, Niger had managed to keep its inflation rate at around 4 percent, the lowest in the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union.	3. Grain prices such as millet, sorghum, corn, and rice had all increased by more than 12 percent since the same period in 2023, with rice experiencing the highest inflation of 35 percent in the country.
4. 2022 was Niger's first year without a single school day lost to strikes from teachers or students.	

Stability Indicators: Democratic Landscape

Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership	Post-Coup Military Junta
1. The election of Bazoum, with 56 percent of the vote in February 2021, was widely seen as free and fair.	1. Within the first week of coming to power, the junta replaced all regional governors in Niger with military loyalists.

2. Bazoum succeeded Issoufou, who stepped down after completing his constitutionally limited second term in office, representing the first peaceful transfer of power in Niger's history. 3. This democratic trajectory was emerging from Niger's long history of military government, including four military coups between 1974 and 2010.	2. A petition signed by dozens of university administrators and academics demanding that the junta return constitutional order and sovereign will of Nigerien people resulted in dismissals and intimidation against signatories by the junta. 3. The junta dissolved all local and municipal councils in April 2024, replacing many of them, such as the Mayor of Niamey, with military officials.

Stability Indicator: Independent Media

Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership	**Post-Coup Military Junta**
1. Nigerien investigative journalists were central to exposing the diversion of millions of dollars from military procurement contracts. 2. Press freedoms were respected under Issoufou and Bazoum, including some independent media outlets being highly critical of a cybercrime law written during the Issoufou administration that journalists argued were overly restrictive and used to target	1. Journalists have experienced violence, surveillance, and intimidation since the coup—and have subsequently engaged in self-censorship for fear of arrest and harassment. 2. Journalists are regularly detained for reporting on issues deemed threatening to the junta, including renowned investigative journalist Samira Sabou who has exposed defense procurement irregularities and was charged with

journalists with defamation suits unfairly.	"disseminating data likely to disturb the public order." 3. In January 2024, the junta shut down the country's Association Maison de la Presse, an umbrella association for 32 professional media organizations, after it "denounced the interruption of democracy and reminded the military of the respect for fundamental freedoms." 4. Pro-junta groups have attacked and intimidated local and international media crews since the coup.

Stability Indicator: Information space

Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership	**Post-Coup Military Junta**
1. Niger's legislators adopted a law on human rights defenders in June 2022 that protected these activists from attacks, reprisals, or unjustified legal restrictions.	1. Since the July 2023 coup, Niger's digital media platforms have been flooded by Russian-linked networks using coordinated inauthentic techniques to distort the information space about Niger and the junta.
2. The Council of Ministers approved a 2022 bill amending the Repression of Cybercrimes Law, removing prison sentences for defamation and insults via information systems.	2. Very few of the coordinated accounts amplifying disinformation in Niger are based in country.

Stability Indicator: Transparency	
Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership 1. Audits of the security sector in 2020 found $120 million of unaccounted-for procurement spending (40 percent of budgeted expenditures between 2017 and 2019.	**Post-Coup Military Junta** 1. In February 2024, the junta revoked oversight laws that require transparent accounting of the defense sector. 2. Government and junta leaders are reported to be facilitating artisanal gold smuggling to the United Arab Emirates.
Stability Indicator: National Sovereignty	
Pre-Coup Democratic Leadership 1. Negotiations with mining firms under Bazoum for better terms for Nigerien citizens created millions of dollars in additional education and social investments.	**Post-Coup Military Junta** 1. Indicative of the Russian tactic of reflexive control, whereby one state actor causes another to make decisions to its own detriment by providing carefully selected information, the junta has taken decisions that undermine Niger's security, economy, and sovereignty. This includes undermining Nigeriens' democratic voice and agency. 2. The junta has reportedly agreed to pay for the deployment of the Russian Africa Corps troops in cash and by granting mining rights to

	Nigerien gold mines at what junta leaders have characterized as a "high cost" to Niger.

Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2024).

Suggestions

The paper has made the following suggestions.

1. A way to put an end to the crisis amid the military coup in Niger is reshuffling the democracy and the military system of the country.
2. ECOWAS and other world leaders should continually engage the military Junta to conduct another free and fair election to restore democratic rule with those who have the political will enthrone to power to ensure that the sanctions meted on the country are relieved.

3. The need for the super powers in providing essential services based on their technological prowess in inimical for the development of Niger, however, while providing such services, the need for balance of power is essential in other not to exploit Nigerian.

Conclusion

The coup in July 2023 rattled Niger's political scene, leading to widespread instability and accelerating the nation's existing humanitarian plight. Tensions between the new military regime and neighboring regions intensified, with Western nations pulling back security aid, heightening the potential for armed group engagements. The military coup in Niger has highlighted the urgent need for a shift in the international community's approach towards the country. Military interventions and the War on Terror's security paradigm have failed to bring lasting peace and stability to Niger. Instead, a diplomatic and humanitarian approach is necessary to address the root causes of instability and promote democratic governance.

Niger continues to suffer significant humanitarian needs due to conflicts, displacement, food insecurity, child malnutrition, climatic hazards and epidemics. The violence affecting several regions, especially in the border areas with Nigeria, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali, continues forcing people to leave their homes. Most

significantly is the effect on trade and investment with super power leaving the country. The response to the Niger coup will define the future trajectory of democratic governance in the region. Given the increasing number of military coups, regional and international actors must reaffirm their commitment to democratic norms and state sovereignty. This crisis presents a test for the global community's commitment to democracy. A united, firm, yet empathetic approach could play a pivotal role in steering Niger and the wider region towards stability and democratic governance.

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