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Mali, Factor 7: Good Governance

Good Governance in Mali

Global hunger is one of the largest problems facing the world today. It is a major contributor to terrorism, governmental instability, and corruption. This is the case in the country I will be focusing on, Mali, and their governance in the status quo.

Mali has been affected in recent years by a severe case of drought. This has caused a very large problem to them concerning their food and economic stability. For the past 18 years, Action Against Hunger has provided humanitarian assistance to Mali and neighboring countries, but unfortunately very little progress has been made. With over 80 percent of the country's population being engaged in agricultural activities, it is a necessity that proper and efficient farming practices are in place, and even more so considering that 30 percent of their people are suffering from malnutrition.

However, due to a massive amount of terrorism, Mali has not substantially changed since Action Against Hunger has implemented their humanitarian assistance. Also, the lack of governmental and national stability in the region has only made things worse. For this reason, I believe that it is a necessity that foreign military aid must be prevalent to stop the terrorism that is so rampant throughout this region.

Humanitarian assistance is just not effective for the long term. It only solves the problem for a short while, and its effectiveness is only maximized in an already developed community. This is also why I believe that developmental aid is a necessity. These people are using outdated technology and obsolete farming practices, such as improper irrigation and chisel plowing and no crop rotations. These practices are a leader of excessive land erosion in the area

One of the largest barriers in this region is terrorism. Many people have fear of developing a large scale profiting business for the reason that it would cause them to be a greater target for terrorists. By removing terrorism, the people of this country would feel safe to create and expand businesses. After that, it would be possible for organizations such as UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and other developmental assistance agencies to come in and educate the local population. With hunger being such a large problem facing them, people turn to terroristic organizations for help with simple tasks like having a home or even feeding their family.

A common thought is that developmental assistance is increasing political stability, is not completely true. I believe that security is a necessary prerequisite for economic/political growth and stability. The next step would be to cleanse the area of terrorism and enforce their porous borders. Then it would be necessary that we bring unique crop production to the area, such as hydroponics, greenhouse production, and other ways to conserve water. This would be necessary because Mali is forty-percent desert and one-third semi arid desert. It is also not uncommon for Mali to undergo extremely extended periods of drought. Another large problem facing them is they have saturated the area with cattle and continue to over populate. This creates the problem of over grazing and a lack of space to produce crops that would be more effective at feeding a large population of malnourished people. Currently, a very limited number of types of crops are grown in Mali. These include millet, rice, corn and other basic food crops. However, by teaching them techniques such as hydroponics, they would be able to grow more nutritious crops that wouldn't normally grow there.

The reason that military aid is necessary is for the simple fact that it is not safe for educators to move into the region. Developmental assistance just would not work in an area taken over by terrorism because it is

just not safe. If we teach one man how to farm properly, he can start a business, employing several more people and strengthening a community. I believe that above all else, we should teach proper agricultural techniques and insure its safety in the region. I say this for the reason that wherever efficient agriculture is, a strong economy and government follows. An example of this is India; in 1954, Norman Borlaug created a wheat hybrid that could stand up to the harsh environment extremely well. This quickly became their largest export and they soon thereafter developed a stable government.

Another task would be to make sure that the future generations are well educated. One large problem many agencies encounter when they go into a country with developmental assistance and/or military aid is that they often forget to educate the future generations. So often what happens is the country returns to the state that it was in before the assistance. Therefore, it would be necessary that schools would be built in the area. This is especially important considering over twenty percent of children under eighteen do not attend school. We would also need to educate local parents and doctors on proper childcare considering the IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) is at 10.6 percent. The reason the mortality rate being so high is because of the state Mali is in, such as bacterial and viral infections, underage pregnancies, malnutrition, and improper childbirth techniques. We can solve this by developing their economy through the creation of businesses and allowing for purchasing and imports of medical equipment that would allow them to protect themselves against these diseases.

Mali's most fertile region, Sikasso, still is not productive enough to keep their under-five malnutrition rate under control. This is the most important age group to nourish because that is when the develop many necessary neural connections and also being malnourished at that age often leads to many later in life complications.

If we were to end hunger in Mali, it would be a necessity to not only make sure they have enough food for a week, or a month, but also make sure that they have the knowledge to produce their own food, purify their own water, and create and enforce a stable government. While we may be able to help them on the short term, we would only be causing them to have a reliance on humanitarian aid. It is only they who can help themselves for the long term. The most effective and valuable thing we are able to give them is knowledge.

A typical farm in Mali is currently not much larger than our typical family garden. This creates a problem for Mali's disabled population and those who cannot produce enough to feed themselves and their family. On top of that, many of the crops they grow, such as corn, millet, or rice, are not very nutritious. Also, the conditions that they are grown in cause the plants to produce an abnormally small yield. This can be improved by unique crop production being brought to the area, allowing for recycling the little precious water that they have.

Mali, and much of the surrounding area of the Sahel region, consists of mostly nomadic people. The average family size is fairly large compared to America. It is not uncommon for three generations of a family to live in the same household. This causes a large amount of people per household or per family farm, but a very strained amount of space for food to be produced efficiently, which, in turn, leads to hunger and malnutrition. On top of that, Mali has a very limited amount of healthcare because the hospitals are constantly being abandoned due to the employees' fear of terrorism. This is also why military aid must be provided in order to protect these hospitals so that the people of Mali have sufficient health and medical care.

Terrorism will only get worse as the food and economic stability worsen. Simply put: Poverty is the greatest driver for crime and terrorism. This is not just the case in Mali, or even Africa. This is the case for the entire world; you can even see this in America. If you go into a poverty-stricken area of a city, the crime rate will be higher. This is the same for Mali. The state of terrorism is far too high in Mali, and it is

only getting worse. By removing terrorism, we would free up the country to increase agricultural production and better their economy.

All in all, for us to resolve Mali's internal conflict and, in turn, create a platform for a stable government that would make it safe for individuals to create a profiting business, which would bring a stable economy to the area. This would allow for food imports or even a self-sustaining community. We would first have to stabilize them and vastly decrease the amount of terrorism they face. Without doing that, whatever governmental structures we create would soon crumble and the country would soon return to the state of turmoil that they are currently in.

Resources

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