**CLP CURRENT EVENTS – Tuesday November 28, 2017**

**TOPIC: Niger and U.S. Interests in Africa**

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger

Niger is a landlocked nation in **West Africa** located along the border between the Sahara and Sub-Saharan regions. It borders **Nigeria** and Benin to the **south**, **Burkina** Faso and **Mali** to the west, **Algeria** and **Libya** to the **north** and Chad to the **east**.

**Capital and largest city**‎: ‎[Niamey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niamey)‎;

**Currency**‎: ‎[West African CFA franc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_African_CFA_franc)‎ (‎[XOF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_4217)‎)

**Official languages**‎: ‎French

**NEWS SOURCES** (6 total)

# Stakeholders Talk Peace in Niger, Justina Asishana, The Nation (Nigeria), Nov. 21, 2017

“…on the International Day for Tolerance and Peace stakeholders in Niger State were talking with one another and charting a path for peace and harmonious cohabitation…”

<http://thenationonlineng.net/stakeholders-talk-peace-niger/>

*CLP: optimism amid uncertainty*

# In the Area Where U.S. Soldiers Died in Niger, Islamist Extremists Have Deep Roots, by Sudarsan Raghavan, The Washington Post, Nov. 20, 2017

“… the product of forces including poverty, altered weather patterns, and tribal and ethnic conflicts. There is an absence of state authority along Niger’s long, sandy borders with Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, and security forces in the area are ill-equipped... Today, Niger is surrounded by countries where militant groups linked to the Islamic State or al-Qaeda are operating… with the Nigerien security forces spread thin, there’s no law. The militants have filled the void.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/in-the-area-where-us-soldiers-died-in-niger-islamist-extremists-have-deep-roots/2017/11/20/6a892130-c66f-11e7-9922-4151f5ca6168_story.html>?

# Will the Niger Attack Shift U.S. Policy in West Africa?, Interview by Claire Felter, Jason Warner, Interviewee, Council on Foreign Relations, Nov. 6, 2017

“The killing of four U.S. soldiers in southwestern Niger in an October 4 attack has sparked fresh debate over the security assistance role the United States plays in West Africa. The attack is a sign of the ongoing buildup of armed jihadi groups in the region…”

<https://www.cfr.org/interview/will-niger-attack-shift-us-policy-west-africa>

*CLP: Intelligent, forward thinking source.*

# A Month On, U.S., Niger Still Disagree on What Happened on Fatal Mission, from africanews.com with Reuters, Nov. 5, 2017

“A month after an Islamist ambush in Niger killed eight U.S. and Nigerien troops, the two sides’ officials still cannot agree on the sequence of events leading to the incident or even, possibly more importantly, on the nature of the mission itself…”

# <http://www.africanews.com/2017/11/05/a-month-on-us-niger-still-disagree-on-what-happened-on-fatal-mission/>

# *CLP: your go-to piece to begin to sort out what happened in Niger*

# Niger Ambush Highlights Growing U.S. Military Involvement in Africa, by Paul McLeary, The Cable/Foreign Policy.com, Oct. 5, 2017

“… The soldiers, the first U.S. casualties in Niger, were advising and assisting Nigerien troops fighting terrorists, … part of a broader effort by U.S. troops to help African armies better track and combat terror groups that have proliferated across the region in recent years in countries like Niger, Cameroon, and Chad …”

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/05/niger-ambush-highlights-growing-u-s-military-involvement-in-africa/>

*CLP: slightly dated but important background on US role in Africa*

**Niger Green Beret Deaths Expose a Clear Divide Between Soldiers and Civilians** (OPINION), by Nolan Peterson, Newsweek (first appearing in The Daily Signal), Oct. 24, 2017

“… It took the deaths of four Special Forces soldiers and a political feud to make U.s. Military operations in Niger newsworthy. It should be that way. But it is…”

<http://www.newsweek.com/niger-green-beret-deaths-expose-clear-divide-between-soldiers-and-civilians-691726>

*CLP: important viewpoint from combat veteran-turned reporter.*

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER** (30)

* Where is Niger?
* What is the connection between Niger and its West African neighbors?
* What is a “shadow war”?
* Why does the United States have soldiers in Niger? Should the United States be involved with counter-terrorist efforts? How does the United States fight against terrorism? How do humanitarian issues impact US policies? How do security issues affect US policy?
* What is the threat to African security? What is the threat to global security?
* How do the natural resources in Niger connect with US foreign policy? How does the uranium industry affect Niger? How are other countries such as China connected to the energy resources in Niger? Is climate change a factor for Niger? Is economic well-being a key to success in Niger?
* Why is there violence in the Niger delta? Who are the players?
* Does the struggle for representative government in Niger resonate in Africa and around the world? Is stability a necessity to achieve democratic principles?

### What happened in the October 4 attack?

**Will the Niger attack shift U.S. policy in West Africa?**

<https://www.cfr.org/interview/will-niger-attack-shift-us-policy-west-africa>

### How do U.S. military operations in Niger compare with those in other African countries?

### Though the October mission was described early on as a noncombat one, U.S. and Nigerien service members encountered a combat situation. Was this unusual?

### How has U.S. policy in West Africa evolved in recent decades?

### Who is the United States fighting in the region?

### Do these jihadi groups present a serious threat to the United States?

### The Niger attack has spurred calls from Congress for more oversight of U.S. military operations in the region. How do you see this debate?

### Could this attack change the way the United States approaches counterterrorism on the continent?

### **Exploring Africa Focus Questions:**

<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/curriculum/unit-four/module-seventeen/>

* How do we understand West Africa as a distinct region of Africa and the world?
* How is West Africa connected to the rest of the world?
* What kind of diversity can be found within the region called West Africa?
* What are the topography, climate, rainfall, and vegetation like in West Africa?
* How do these geographical features affect human patterns of settlement?
* How do people in West Africa interact with their environments (i.e. agricultural production, pastoralism, environmental concerns)?
* What have the impacts of colonization and globalization been on West Africa?
* What do politics and the economy look like in West Africa today?
* What are some of the current events occurring in West Africa today?

# The real questions we should be asking about Niger:

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/25/opinions/niger-questions-ask-opinion-mudd-liepman/index.html>

* Why are we involved? Why is this still America's fight?
* Who are we still fighting? And do these overseas operations make us safer here at home?
* Is whatever gain the US is seeking to accomplish worth the costs?

**Can a Military Coup Restore Democracy?**

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0701/Can-a-military-coup-restore-democracy>

**BACKGROUND AND More** (5 total)

# The Real Questions We Should Be Asking About Niger, by Philip Mudd and Andrew Liepman, CNN, Oct. 25, 2107

“We need a public and civilized discourse about why US troops are involved in counterterrorism operations around the world, including in Niger. We need to have a better understanding of the risks these operations entail and the security benefits that we might expect from them…”

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/25/opinions/niger-questions-ask-opinion-mudd-liepman/index.html>

# America’s Options In Niger: Join Forces to Reduce Tensions, or Fan the Flames, by Yvan Guichaoua and Andrew Levovich, The Conversation – News 24, Nov. 3, 2017

<https://m.news24.com/Africa/News/americas-options-in-niger-join-forces-to-reduce-tensions-or-fan-the-flames-20171103>

*CLP: helpful history of jihadist groups in the region*

# Niger Country Profile, from BBC News, Aug. 1, 2107

“A vast, arid state on the edge of the Sahara desert, Niger is rated by the UN as one of the world's least-developed nations…”

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13943662>

*CLP: best and most complete background piece*

**The Energy Sector of Niger: Perspectives and Opportunities**, by Salifou Gado, Occasional Paper - Energy Charter Secretariat Knowledge Centre 2015

“… ABUNDANT AND VARIED ENERGY RESOURCES, Niger has significant energy potential, rich and varied, that is weakly exploited… uranium, mineral coal, oil, natural gas, hydroelectricity and solar energy…”

<http://www.energycharter.org/fileadmin/DocumentsMedia/Occasional/Niger_Energy_Sector.pdf>

*CLP: technical paper makes evident Niger’s value*

**The World Factbook: Africa Niger**, from the Central Intelligence Agency

“… Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world with minimal government services and insufficient funds to develop its resource base… Niger is facing increased security concerns on its borders from various external threats including insecurity in Libya, spillover from the conflict in Mali, and violent extremism in northeastern Nigeria…”

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ng.html>

*CLP: updated November 2017, a straightforward, useful tool courtesy of the CIA*

**Lesson Plans** (1 total)

**Exploring Africa – West Africa**, from Michigan State University

<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/curriculum/unit-four/module-seventeen/>

*CLP: excellent lessons on Africa including West Africa.*

**Constitutional & Legal Connections** (1 total)

# Niger Ambush Proves Need for Transparency in US Security Assistance (OPINION), by Tommy Ross, The Hill, Nov. 7, 2017

“Among the many questions around the ambush of U.S. service members in Niger last month is: What laws or policies authorized U.S. troops to be conducting patrols alongside Nigerien military units in a far-removed corner of one of Africa’s most poverty-ridden and remote countries?...”

# <http://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/359017-niger-ambush-proves-need-for-transparency-in-us-security-assistance>

# *CLP: explores government authority needed when using our military*

**OREGON & the NORTHWEST** (1 total)

**Trump’s Call to One Widow Has Dominated the News. Here are the Other U.S. Soldiers Killed in Niger**, by Eli Rosenberg and Kristine Phillips, The Washington Post, Oct. 24, 2017

### “… **Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black** … did not just speak English, French and Arabic; the 35-year-old had also learned Hausa, a language spoken in Niger, because he wanted to communicate directly with the people… Black, of **Puyallup, Wash**., was remembered for his fierce, competitive nature, his [obituary](http://www.fayobserver.com/obituaries/20171013/bryan-black) says….”

[*https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/10/23/trumps-call-to-one-widow-has-dominated-the-news-here-are-the-other-american-soldiers-killed-in-niger/?utm\_term=.d550386797d4*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/10/23/trumps-call-to-one-widow-has-dominated-the-news-here-are-the-other-american-soldiers-killed-in-niger/?utm_term=.d550386797d4)

**For Oregon SOCIAL SCIENCE Standards**

8.8 Evaluate information from a variety of sources and perspectives.

8.26 Examine a controversial event, issue, or problem from more than one perspective.

8.27 Examine the various characteristics, causes, and effects of an event, issue, or problem.

HS.1 Evaluate continuity and change over the course of world and United States history.

HS.5 Examine and evaluate the origins of fundamental political debates and how conflict, compromise, and cooperation have shaped national unity and diversity in world, U.S., and Oregon history.

HS.9 Identify historical and current events, issues, and problems when national interests and global interest have been in conflict, an analyze the values and arguments on both sides of the conflict.

HS.17 Explain how migration, immigration and communication (cultural exchange, convergence and divergence) lead to cultural changes and make predictions and draw conclusions about the global impact of cultural diffusion.

HS.19 Evaluate how different points of view, self-interest, and global distribution of natural resources play a role in conflict over a territory.

HS.20 Analyze the impact on physical and human systems of resource development, use, and management and evaluate the issues of sustainability.

HS.21 Relate trends in world population to current events and analyze their interrelationship.

HS.28 Evaluate how governments interact at the local, state, tribal, national and global levels.

HS.31 Describe United States foreign policy and evaluate its impact on the United States and other countries.

HS.33 Explain the role of government in various current events.

HS.57 Define, research, and explain an event, issue, problem or phenomenon and its significance to society.

HS.58 Gather, analyze, use and document information from various sources, distinguishing facts, opinions, inferences, biases, stereotypes, and persuasive appeals.

HS.59 Demonstrate the skills and dispositions needed to be a critical consumer of information.

HS.60. Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon from varied or opposing perspectives or points of view.

HS.61 Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon, identifying characteristics, influences, causes, and both short- and long-term effects.

HS.63. Engage in informed and respectful deliberation and discussion of issues, events, and ideas.

**For Connections to lessons in *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* texts**

**Middle School, Level 2**

Unit 6, Lesson 29: What are the rights and responsibilities of citizenship?

Unit 6, Lesson 30: How might citizens participate in civic affairs?

**High School, Level 3**

Unit 6, Lesson 34: What is the importance of civic engagement to American constitutional democracy?

Unit 6, Lesson 37: What key challenges does the United States face in the future?