

## *France's Wars in Chad*

Examining the continuous French military interventions in Chad during the two decades after its independence, this study demonstrates how France's successful counterinsurgency efforts to protect the regime of François Tombalbaye would ultimately weaken the Chadian state and encourage Libya's Muammar Gaddafi to intervene. In covering the subsequent French efforts to counter Libyan ambitions and the rise to power of Hissène Habré, one of postcolonial Africa's most brutal dictators, Nathaniel K. Powell demonstrates that French strategies aiming to prevent the collapse of authoritarian regimes had the opposite effect, exacerbating violent conflicts and foreign interventions in Chad and further afield. Based on extensive archival research to trace the causes, course, and impact of French interventions in Chad, this study offers insights and lessons for current interveners – including France – fighting a 'war on terrorism' in the Sahel whose strategies and impact parallel those of France in the 1960s–1980s.

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# France's Wars in Chad

Military Intervention and Decolonization  
in Africa

NATHANIEL K. POWELL  
*Lancaster University*



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*To Zenobia*

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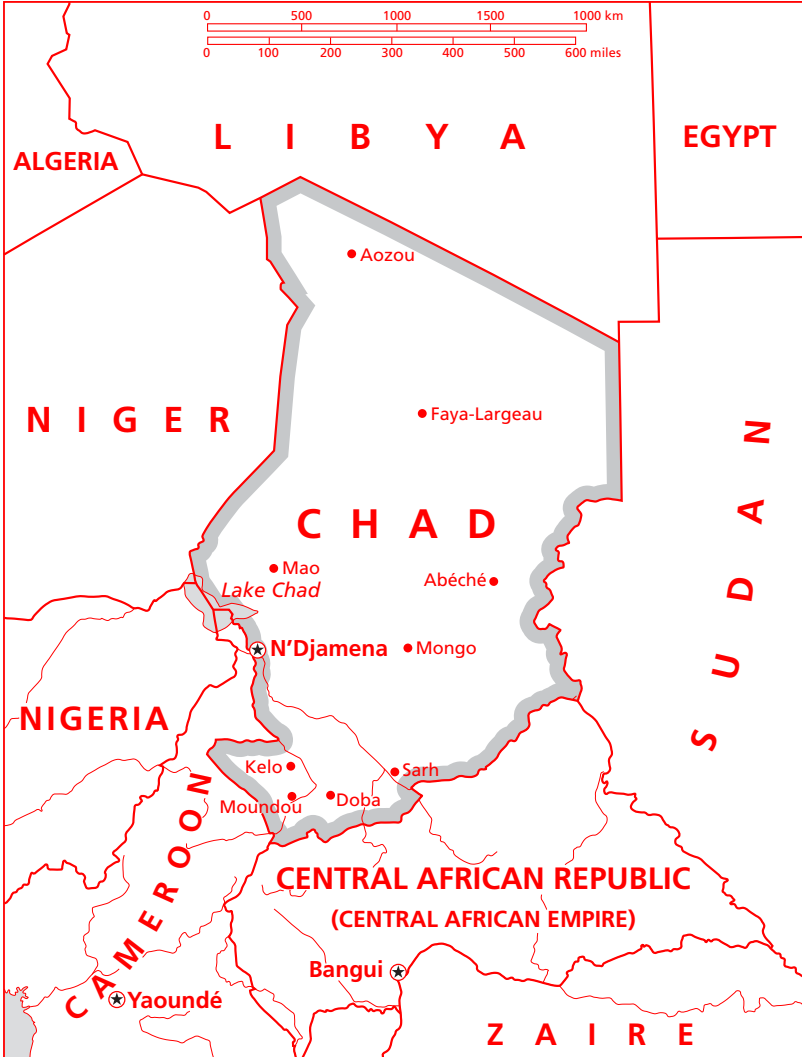
<sup>1</sup> And therefore it certainly deserves a citation: Aviva Guttman, *The Origins of International Counterterrorism: Switzerland at the Forefront of Crisis Negotiations, Multilateral Diplomacy, and Intelligence Cooperation (1969–1977)* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

## *Abbreviations*

AML	Auto-mitrailleuse légère (light armored vehicle)
AMT	Assistance militaire technique
ANI	Armée nationale intégrée
ANT	Armée nationale tchadienne
BCSR	Bureau de coordination et de synthèse du renseignement (Chadian intelligence agency)
BEAC	Banque des Etats de l'Afrique centrale
BET	Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti region of Northern Chad
BFCE	Banque française du commerce extérieur
CAE	The Central African Empire
CAR	The Central African Republic
CCER	Centre de coordination et d'exploitation du renseignement (Chadian intelligence agency)
CCFAN	Conseil de commandement des Forces armées du Nord
CDR	Conseil démocratique révolutionnaire
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
compara <sup>3</sup>	3rd Chadian Airborne Company
CMIAP	Comité militaire inter-armées provisoire
CSM	Conseil supérieur militaire
CTS	Compagnies tchadiennes de sécurité
DAM	Direction des affaires africaines et malgaches
DDF	Documents Diplomatiques Françaises
EMT	Etat-major tactique (tactical command)
EMFT	Etat-major franco-tchadien (Franco-Chadian Command)
FAN	Forces armées du Nord
FAO	Forces armées occidentales (Frolinat 3rd Army)

FAP	Forces armées populaires
FAT	Forces armées tchadiennes
FCMGT	Fonds des chargés de mission géographique au Tchad
FLT	Front de libération du Tchad
Frolinat	Front de libération nationale du Tchad
GUNT	Gouvernement d'Union nationale de transition
MAE	Ministère des affaires étrangères (French Foreign Ministry)
MPLT	Mouvement populaire pour la libération du Tchad
MRA	Mission pour la réforme administrative
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCAM	Organisation commune africaine et malgache
PLR	Poste de liaison et de renseignement
PPT	Parti progressiste tchadien (Chadian political party)
2nd REP	2nd Régiment étranger de parachutistes (of the French Foreign Legion)
3rd RIMa	3 Régiment d'infanterie de Marine (3rd Marine Infantry Regiment of French forces)
SDECE	Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage (French foreign intelligence agency)
UDEAC	Union douanière et économique de l'Afrique centrale (Central African Customs and Economic Union)
UNT	Union nationale tchadienne (Chadian political party)

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Map 1 Regional map