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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

BOKO HARAM: AFRICA'S NEW JV TEAM?

by

Kitefre K. Oboho
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June 2015

Thesis Advisor:
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the threat Boko Haram poses to Nigeria and its neighbors in West Africa, and determines the extent to which ensuing regional instability may or may not threaten United States (U.S.) national interests in the region. Among our conclusions, from the examination of U.S.-Nigerian relations over time, is that the United States generally acts in response to the media's ability to incite a public outcry and less in regard to threats to perceived national interests.

Boko Haram, initially viewed as a problem internal to Nigeria given its Nigeria-focused agenda, has since developed relations with influential transnational and international terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS). It is our position that sponsorship from other terror organizations will make Boko Haram more dangerous and capable of threatening regional stability, ergo impacting U.S. security interests. On the basis of whether a terrorist group seeks state-level sovereignty or inclusion into an existing state, we propose several stop-gaps that, if applied effectively, could serve as countermeasures to hinder Boko Haram's ability to move from being a peripheral to an important or even vital threat to United States interests in West Africa.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEP	Almajiri Educational Program
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunities Act
AMZ	Abu Musab Al-Zarkawi
APC	All Progressive Congress
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
BH	Boko Haram
BP	British Petroleum
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CVE	Counter Violent Extremism
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
EIA	Energy Information Administration
ETA	Euskandi Ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
FTO	Foreign Terror Organization
GoN	Government of Nigeria
HB	Harri Batasuna
HHSC	House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State in Ash-Sham
ITO	Inclusion-Seeking Terror Organization
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTORO	Joint Task Force Operation Restore Order
LNG	liquefied natural gas

MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MUJWA	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	National Security Strategy
NSSM	National Security Strategy Memorandum
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDP	People’s Democratic Party
PINE	Presidential Initiative for Northeast Nigeria
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSI	Safe School Initiative
SSTO	Sovereignty Seeking Terror Organization
U.N.	United Nations
U.S.	United States
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency of International Development
WIR	World Investment Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

In May 2014, 80 United States (U.S.) military personnel deployed to Chad to aid in the search for nearly 300 missing schoolgirls abducted from their school in Chibok, Nigeria. The group, comprised mostly of Air Force personnel, had the timely charge of supporting the Government of Nigeria (GoN) with “intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft for missions over northern Nigeria and the surrounding area.”¹ That same month, a U.S. team of 30 advisors, experts in logistics, communications, and information sharing, also arrived in Nigeria to assist in the same mission.² Both groups sought to provide the GoN with actionable intelligence in its goal of recovering the missing girls and addressing the decades-long insurgency instigated by Boko Haram.

Since its inception in 2002, the radical Islamic group, commonly known as Boko Haram (BH), has been responsible for killing over 13,000 people, while displacing roughly 1.5 million residents, primarily from northeastern Nigeria.³ As a reference, see Figure 1, which depicts the intensity and locations of BH attacks from July 2009–January 2015. Although these numbers attracted only episodic attention from the international community until the capture of the girls in April 2014, the lethality, frequency, and increased sophistication of the group’s attacks had been a significant concern for Africa’s most populous country and its neighbors for some time.

¹ Katie McDonough, “U.S. Deploys Troops to Chad to Aid in Search for Schoolgirls Abducted in Nigeria,” *Salon*, May 22, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/05/22/u_s_deploys_troops_to_chad_to_aid_in_search_for_schoolgirls_abducted_in_nigeria/.

² Brian Bennett, “U.S. Officials Frustrated by Nigeria’s Response to Girls’ Kidnapping,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/africa/la-fg-us-nigeria-schoolgirls-20140515-story.html>.

³ Jeff Moore, “Boko Haram’s Resiliency Spells Trouble for West Africa,” *Small Wars Journal* (January 23, 2015): 2.

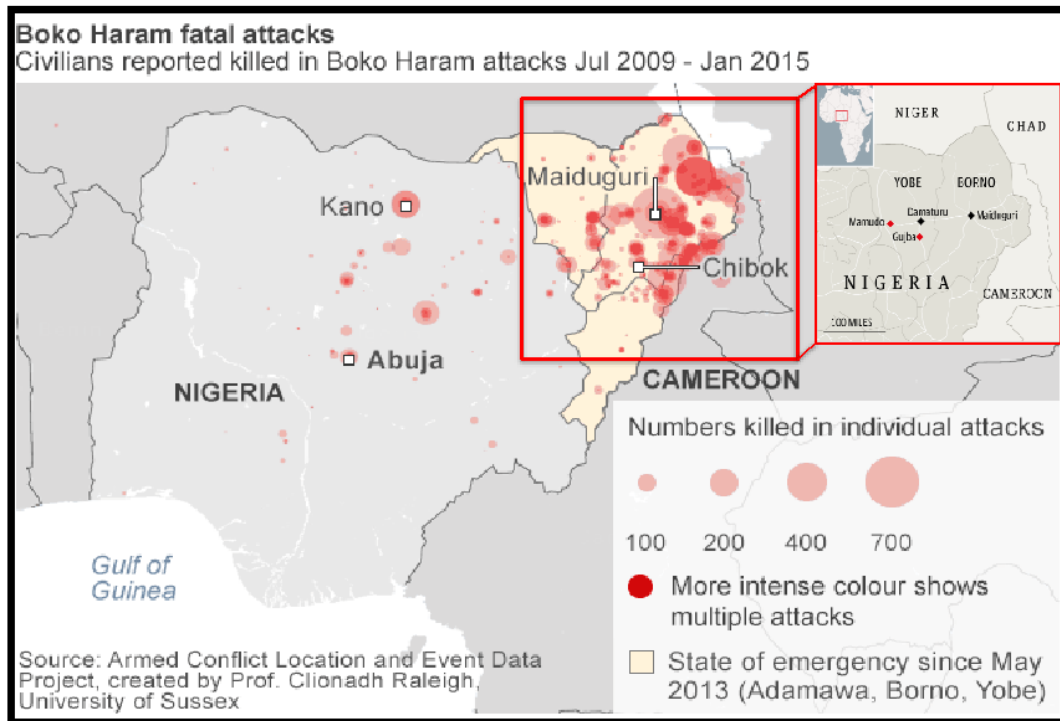


Figure 1. Map of Nigeria Depicting BH Fatal Attacks⁴

BH's overarching aim is to eject the prevailing political establishment and supporting Western influence, overthrow the national government, and eventually establish an Islamic State (IS) in its place.⁵ The name Boko Haram is a combination of the Hausa-derived word *boko*, meaning "book" and the Arabic word *haram*, meaning something sacrilegious or sinful.⁶ Literally, BH means "the sacrilegious book," but it is often interpreted as "Western education and civilization are sinful, ungodly, and should

⁴ Map of Nigeria depicting BH fatal attacks. The map depicts the number of civilian deaths concentrated between July 2009–January 2015. Will Ross, "Boko Haram: Regional Threat Spilling Out of Control," *Peace and Freedom*, January 20, 2015, <https://johnib.wordpress.com/2015/01/20/boko-haram-regional-threat-spiralling-out-of-control/>.

⁵ Patricia Asufura-Heim and Julia McQuaid, "Diagnosing the Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria," *CNA Analysis and Solutions*, III, January 21, 2015, <http://www.cna.org/research/2015/diagnosing-boko-haram-conflict>.

⁶ Abbeb Olufemi Salaam, "The Psychological Make-up of Mohammed Yusuf," *e-international relations*, November 4, 2013, <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/04/the-psychological-make-up-of-mohammed-yusuf/>.

therefore be forbidden,”⁷ thereby accounting for BH’s attacks on institutions that promote education and democracy.

BH is also known for conducting frequent attacks on religious institutions. Specifically, attacks on churches are rampant in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria and are often viewed by many in Nigeria as an attempt to provoke Christian retaliatory attacks to destabilize the government further.⁸ Unfortunately, BH’s actions are not simply restricted to promoting sectarian conflict. BH has also attacked Muslim establishments, most notably the Grand Mosque in Kano in November 2014.⁹ Such conspicuous attacks on Muslim establishments are customary for BH, which “accuses ‘the Nigerian Islamic establishment’ of failing to defend the interest of Nigeria’s 80 million Muslims” in the face of corruption and the perversion of Islam.¹⁰

Islamic radicalism is hardly a novel concept and has existed in Northern Nigeria since the 1800s. This period witnessed the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate—the ruling Islamic order of the time—and the implementation of Sharia law in the region and in contiguous portions of West Africa.¹¹ Indeed, as the colonial era began, confrontations with British forces prevented the Caliphate from fully instituting sharia law throughout northern Nigeria.¹² A by-product of this confrontation has been episodic social and sectarian conflict between Muslims and Christians, resulting in existing socio-economic rifts.

The effects of these fractures are among the many reasons for the social unrest currently witnessed in northern Nigeria.¹³ Also worth noting, since Nigeria gained

⁷ Salaam, “The Psychological Make-up of Mohammed Yusuf.”

⁸ James J. F. Forest, “Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria,” *Joint Special Operations University Report* 12–5, May 2012, 2.

⁹ Tim Lister, “Boko Haram Steps Up Attacks Aimed at Islamic Established in Nigeria,” *CNN*, November 30, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/28/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram/>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Valerie Thompson, “Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria,” *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 47–48.

¹² *Ibid.*, 47.

¹³ Hakeem O. Yusuf, “Harvest of Violence: The Neglect of Basic Rights and the Boko Haram Insurgency,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 6, no. 3 (September 2013): 376.

independence in 1960, northern Muslim populations perceive the state as coming under the control of the Christian southern populations.¹⁴ As unrest began to brew in the area during the late 1990s, the need for a charismatic leader to amalgamate all Muslims and represent the voices of the disenfranchised was widely felt. Mohammad Yusuf proved to be such a leader.

Mohammad Yusuf, considered the founder of Boko Haram, provided clarity and cohesion to the disparate Islamic movements in northern Nigeria. He is credited with developing BH's ideology, which targets Western influence in the region, promoted by the Christian-dominated government. As Yusuf's influence grew, he encouraged the rejection of Western literature, teachings, and influence. Yusuf also established religious centers and schools in Maiduguri, and began preaching for a return to Islamic rule in the North.¹⁵

The Nigerian military elite, sensing Yusuf's potential to unsettle the North, established a joint task force (JTF) to counter BH. The JTF successfully captured Mohammad Yusuf in 2009; unfortunately, Yusuf inexplicably died in captivity, prompting followers to believe the government murdered him.¹⁶ This event, coupled with security forces killing or displacing thousands of Nigerian Muslims, is credited with swelling BH's ranks, leading to the installation of an even more radical leadership structure led by Yusuf's successor, Abubakar Shekau.¹⁷ Abubakar Shekau revitalized the organization and embarked on a campaign of terror designed to increase BH's notoriety throughout West Africa.

Attempts by the Nigerian government to capture Shekau have thus far failed, resulting in false reports of his death on several occasions. One such incident occurred in

¹⁴ Babjee Pothuraju, "Boko Haram's Persistent Threat in Nigeria," *Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis*, 3–7, 2012, http://www.idsa.in/backgrounders/BokoHaramsPersistentThreatInNigeria_BabjePothuraju_190312.

¹⁵ Thompson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," 51.

¹⁶ Pothuraju, "Boko Haram's Persistent Threat in Nigeria," 3.

¹⁷ Jacob Zenn, "Ansaru: A Profile of Nigeria's Newest Jihadi Movement," *Terrorism Monitor* 11, no. 1 (January 2013), http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=40287&cHash=bd00ee2691b7992de9fe4f8e2241841a#.VT_IOFyRafQ.

October 2014, when media reports indicated that combined Nigerian and Cameroonian forces killed Shekau during a raid in Cameroon. Within days, Shekau re-emerged and re-affirmed his pledge to challenge the Nigerian government with renewed vigor.¹⁸ With Shekau at the helm, BH has created an organization capable of sustaining regional unrest by maintaining relations with other Al-Qaeda (AQ) affiliates, consequently expanding its profile beyond the borders of Nigeria.¹⁹

Organizationally, BH is comprised of several dissident factions, to include *Jama'atu Ansaril Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan*, commonly known as Ansaru.²⁰ Ansaru emerged in 2012 and is often hailed as the “most imminent threat to foreign interests in Nigeria”²¹ because of its close alliance with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA).²² Although Ansaru and BH are distinguished by ideological, tactical, and geographical differences and sometimes have strained relations, Shekau has worked diligently behind the scenes to consolidate his organization in the face of an organized offensive by the Nigerian military and its neighbors.²³ In March 2015, Shekau successfully brought Ansaru and other dissident groups under the BH umbrella, establishing himself as sole ruler. Soon after, Shekau swore *bayat* (allegiance) to Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State, elevating his “stature and legitimacy in the international Jihadist arena and re-affirmed his role as the BH’s sole leader with respect to other factions in Nigeria and West Africa.”²⁴

¹⁸ Adam Taylor, “Dead’ Boko Haram Leader Tells Nigeria: ‘I’m Still Alive’,” *Washington Post*, October 2, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/10/02/dead-boko-haram-leader-tells-nigeria-im-still-alive/>.

¹⁹ Zenn, “Ansaru: A Profile of Nigeria’s Newest Jihadi Movement.”

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Jacob Zenn, “A Biography of Boko Haram and the Bay’a to Al-Baghdadi,” *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (March 2015): 17–21, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CTCSentinel-Vol8Issue322.pdf>.

²⁴ Ibid.

Collusion between ISIS and BH is likely to force BH to adjust its tactics and its local focus. BH has often been criticized for its exclusively domestic agenda, although it has attacked international targets, such as the United Nations (U.N.) building in Abuja in August 2011.²⁵ In fact, it was this attack in Abuja that elevated the group onto the world stage and drove the head of the U.S. House of Representative Homeland Security Committee (HHSC) to comment that the Abuja attack “signaled a threat to U.S. and Western interest[s].”²⁶ As a result, the U.S. Congress introduced the Boko Haram Terrorist Designation Act on January 31, 2013, which labeled BH as a Foreign Terrorist organization.²⁷

As for why the United States should be sufficiently concerned with the growing insecurity and instability in Nigeria to send advisors to Chad and Nigeria, there are several reasons. Among them: U.S. interests throughout West Africa are inextricably linked with those of Nigeria, a key U.S. ally that not only boasts the largest population in Africa, but also consistently plays the role of African regional hegemon. Nigeria is a key member of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the largest producer of crude oil on the African continent. In April 2010, the United States and Nigeria signed the U.S.-Nigeria Bilateral Commission agreement as a mechanism to address issues of transparency, energy and power, food security, and regional security.²⁸ The bilateral agreement represents the U.S.’s commitment to engage existing regional powers in strategic dialogue.²⁹

In 2012, Nigeria temporarily became the world’s fourth leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG)³⁰ and provided over 15% of the oil consumed in the United

²⁵ Forest, “Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria,” XIII.

²⁶ Caitling Poling, “U.S. Congress and Boko Haram,” *Foreign Policy Initiative*, October 13, 2013, <http://www.foreignpolicyi.org/content/us-congress-and-boko-haram>.

²⁷ Boko Haram Terrorist Designation Act of 2013 (S. 198), <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s198#summary/libraryofcongress>.

²⁸ “U.S. Political Counselor Discusses Foreign Policy and Bilateral Relationship with Nigeria’s Ahmadu Bello University Students,” *Targeted News Service*, January 25, 2011, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/849364321?accountid=12702>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Independent Energy Data and Analysis,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, updated December 30, 2013, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=NI>.

States.³¹ Nigeria is also one of the world's largest contributors to U.N. peacekeeping efforts and is the single largest troop donor in Africa. Nigeria has deployed soldiers to trouble spots in West and Central Africa, and Darfur, and played a central role in returning Sierra Leone and Liberia to stability.³² For these reasons alone, strengthening the existing relationship with Nigeria—a democratic, multi-ethnic, multi-religious state governed by the rule of law—would seem to be in the interests of the United States, Africa, and the international community.³³

Boko Haram's emergence and the insurgency in Nigeria are worrisome because the unrest has the potential to leave lasting scars on the Nigerian economy. Economically, the actions of BH, along with other militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), have reduced the country's oil production, displacing Nigeria from 5th to 8th on the list of America's largest foreign oil suppliers.³⁴ This reduction can be viewed as a referendum on the Nigerian security apparatus, a concern shared by foreign investors who are increasingly wary about investing in an unstable state. Through crafty messaging depicting BH's skill in attacks, and by publicizing the torture and killing of its adversaries, BH's activities have discouraged not only investors, but also the Nigerian military from direct confrontation.³⁵ Accounts of soldiers dropping weapons and fleeing instead of facing BH are frequently reported, diminishing Nigerian's faith in their government.

³¹ Levi A. Nwachuku, "The United States and Nigeria—1960 to 1987: Anatomy of a Pragmatic Relationship," *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 5 (May 1998): 584, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784795>.

³² *Africa: Examining the U.S.-Nigeria Relationship in a Time of Transition, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs by Johnnie Carson Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs Opening Statement*, April 2010, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/189997412?accountid=12702>.

³³ John Campbell, "U.S.-Nigeria Relations," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 2010, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/831089025?accountid=12702>.

³⁴ "Independent Statistics and Analysis," U.S. Energy Administration, Updated December 30, 2013, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=NI>.

³⁵ Hussein Solomon, "Counter-Terrorism in Nigeria: Responding to Boko Haram," *The RUSI Journal* 157, no. 4 (2012): 9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2012.714183>.

BH's strategy and messaging bear striking resemblance to those of other terror organizations seeking sovereignty, such as the former Islamic State in Ash-Sham (ISIS), now the self-proclaimed IS.³⁶ Comparable to IS's dissatisfaction with the skewed allocation of resources between Shia and Sunni Muslims—which has propelled it to seek sovereignty in parts of Iraq and Syria—BH is attempting to recreate similar conditions in Nigeria, neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and the Niger Republic. BH consequently threatens more than just Nigeria. It has the potential to create regional instability. Even so, is BH's defeat truly critical to U.S. interests in Africa, or is BH simply a nuisance?

To examine this question in greater detail requires treating Boko Haram as a *Sovereignty-Seeking Terror Organization* (SSTO) as opposed to an *Inclusion-Seeking Terror Organization* (ITO). We define SSTOs as organizations that seek ethnic or theological primacy through the acquisition of sovereign territory. Specifically, an SSTO seeks to acquire territory, and in exchange for their support, populations within captured territories can expect the “sanctity of the social contract”³⁷ to be upheld. Conversely, ITOs recognize a degree of ethnic, political or sectarian underrepresentation and seek to utilize a variety of means to gain wider political recognition, or societal inclusion in a pre-existing state. In sum, ITOs seek a degree of inclusion in the established government or state structure while SSTOs seek autonomy or separation, ranging from partial to full independence. Given this dynamic, we suggest that the BH insurgency, and that of IS, represent yet another form of sovereignty-seeking organization, which is not novel in its goals but rather in its approach to achieving autonomy.

Hezbollah represents an organization that has adopted both approaches. The southern Lebanese separatist group grew into the de facto government and security apparatus in the under-governed regions of southern Lebanon following the vicious Lebanese Civil War during the 1980s, and wars against Israel through the 1990s and

³⁶ Graeme Wood, “What ISIS’s Leader Really Wants: The Longer He Lives the More Powerful He Becomes,” *New Republic*, September 1, 2014, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/119259/isis-history-islamic-states-new-Caliphate-syria-and-iraq>.

³⁷ Anna Simons, Duane Lauchengco, and Joe McGraw, *The Sovereignty Solution: A Commonsense Approach to Global Security* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 43.

2000s.³⁸ Later, Hezbollah transitioned to a recognized Lebanese political party.³⁹ Likewise, in the wake of the observed failures of “brutal dictatorships” in the Arab world, groups such as the Taliban progressed from violent revolt to providing a government structure to fill the void left after the defeat of apostate regimes.⁴⁰ A more contemporary example of an exclusive SSO is IS, which has to a large degree achieved territorial sovereignty in northern Iraq and Syria following a successful military campaign in the summer of 2014. The result has been IS’s capture of Raqqa in northern Syria, where IS governs by providing rudimentary services through administration by *walis*, who act essentially as governors or local administrators responsible to the larger organization.⁴¹

We do not mean to suggest that BH has signaled its desire or the capability to provide social programs in Northern Nigeria, even though it has captured several towns and villages in northern Nigeria.⁴² Although the group physically controls the region and has rebuffed government efforts to recapture some villages, the group has failed to provide the level of social services that IS is delivering in captured portions of Iraq and Syria. BH has instead enacted a reign of brutal violence, public beheadings, mass murders, rape, and extortion akin to the level of coercive violence IS uses, but without its social programs.⁴³

Indeed, BH has effectively paralyzed the region and created a humanitarian disaster that has since spread to neighboring countries in the form of a flood of refugees.

³⁸ Thanassis Cambanis, *A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah’s Legions and Their Endless War Against Israel* (New York/London/Toronto/Sydney: Free Press, 2010), 9.

³⁹ Augustus Richard Norton, “The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Politics,” *International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 42, no. 4 (2007): 480.

⁴⁰ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 92–93, 212.

⁴¹ Miriam Karouny, “In North West Syria, Islamic State Builds a Government,” *Reuters News Agency Online*, September 4, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/04/us-syria-crisis-raqqa-insight-idUSKBN0GZ0D120140904>.

⁴² Tim Cooks, “Boko Haram ‘Leader’ Claims Baga Attacks in New Video,” *Reuters News Agency Online*, January 20, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/20/us-nigeria-boko-haram-idUSKBN0KT2JO20150120>.

⁴³ Julia Payne, “Nigerians Face Killings, Hunger, in Boko Haram’s State,” *Reuters News Agency Online*, January 19, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/20/us-nigeria-boko-haram-insight-idUSKBN0KS1S120150120>.

BH professes to aspire to a “Caliphate” similar to that which IS seeks, one which is reminiscent of the majestic Kanem-Borno empire of the late 1300s.⁴⁴ However, the group has yet to achieve either the model set by IS in Iraq and Syria, much less that of Hezbollah. In our view, *if* BH adopts the IS approach to achieving a “Caliphate” in northern Nigeria, by continuing violent coercion *and* introducing social programs, the group will present a far greater threat to the GoN, to the broader region of West Africa, and to U.S. regional interests. However, for BH to reach IS’s current level would require it seizing resource-producing infrastructure, which is non-existent in Northern Nigeria, it would require sponsorship by others.

At the moment, BH is still largely perceived as a local phenomenon, though as James Forest, former Director of Terrorism Studies at West Point, contends “BH’s emergence has strategic implications, which need to be addressed within its local context, along with the grievances that motivate its terrorist activity.”⁴⁵ In other words, Forest implies that BH has the potential to undermine regional efforts if its grievances are ignored.

B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the degree to which the defeat of Boko Haram and its surrogates is strategic to U.S. interests in Nigeria and in neighboring states. To accomplish this requires examining relations between Nigeria and the United States over the past six decades to assess why Nigeria’s stability might be important to the United States. This thesis will also consider the importance of Nigeria to West Africa and to Africa more broadly, namely in its role as a regional hegemon, thanks to its economic and demographic dominance.

To gauge Nigeria’s significance requires that we examine BH’s impact on Nigeria’s economic, ethnic, political, and military institutions, BH’s impact on regional stability, as well as BH’s potential to morph into a more dangerous organization. In our

⁴⁴ Atta Barkindo, “Boko Haram: Ideology, Ethnicity and Identity,” *Tony Blair Faith Foundation*, September 2014, <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/opinion/boko-haram-ideology-ethnicity-and-identity>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

view, BH *does* have the potential to rapidly evolve into a strategic threat akin to IS in Iraq and Syria. This thesis is not intended to cover in depth conditions that gave rise to BH, nor will it review BH's history, as a multitude of works already cover both topics. Instead, this thesis is intended to advance the debate about BH as a potential radical threat to U.S. interests in Nigeria.

C. RESEARCH QUESTION

To what degree might the persistence and expansion of BH threaten the strategic interests of the United States in Nigeria and its neighboring states?

D. METHODOLOGY

To better understand how the persistence and expansion of Boko Haram threatens U.S. critical interests, we will examine SSTOs. SSTOs are terror entities whose goals lie beyond simply accomplishing acts of terror, as they seek to carve out a new space for themselves rather than seek inclusion within an existing state. In this regard, we will use IS as a comparative case study. We will also review U.S. strategic interests broadly to gain a macro perspective, and then focus on U.S. strategic interests in Africa and Nigeria to ascertain whether Nigeria and Boko Haram actually affect U.S. strategic interests. What we want to know is: if so, in what capacity? And if not, why not?

Furthermore, making the comparison with IS should also bring us back to our main question of whether the United States should be concerned about Nigeria in the face of other global competing requirements. Could U.S. efforts in Nigeria be limited to security concerns only? Or should they extend to political, economic, and social factors as well?

As mentioned earlier, the United States maintains a limited footprint in Nigeria focused on assisting the Nigerian military rescue the captured schoolgirls in northern Nigeria. *Is* this operation strategic to U.S. interests in Nigeria? Or does it merely represent a political window-dressing exercise by the Obama administration in response to an international outcry? Last, in light of the Nigerian Presidential elections conducted

in March 2015, we will reflect on how the new government might neutralize BH's effects in Nigeria and prevent them from having long-term strategically crippling effects.

E. CHAPTER REVIEW

In Chapter II, we will review existing U.S. economic and security interests in Nigeria and Africa to determine whether instability in Nigeria can indeed impact U.S. interests in the African region. Chapter III will examine BH's effect on Nigeria's economic, ethnic, political, and military infrastructure. Chapter IV presents our SSTO and ITO typology and describes how BH poses a threat to regional stability. Finally, we offer policy recommendations based on our overall findings and present options for addressing the BH problem in Chapter V.

II. U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS IN NIGERIA AND AFRICA

A. INTRODUCTION

Deciphering U.S. national interests in Nigeria and the broader African region requires an understanding of how the United States perceives its national security objectives and priorities. The *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues* provides relevant guidance on the definition of national interest. The manual defines national interests as “that which is deemed by a particular state (actor) to be a ...desirable goal.”⁴⁶ Presumably, these goals include political, economic, security, environmental, and moral well-being since these feed into “national power employed to implement a designated policy or strategy.”⁴⁷ Because national interests drive policy and strategy, much care should be taken when defining them, which explains why Henry Kissinger somberly remarked, “when you are asking people to die, you have to be able to explain it in terms of the national security interest.”⁴⁸

Two common approaches to understanding national interests are realist and morality-based approaches. For realists, who perceive national security as the primary basis of a state’s national interest, power and security are the key terms that define what is in the state’s best interest.⁴⁹ This is because realists consider disorder and confusion in the international system and the ensuing “threat of anarchy and constraints on sovereign states”⁵⁰ to be an existential threat. As Hans Morgenthau describes it, the result of this realist perception creates a “need to focus an actor’s national interests on meeting its security requirements by protecting its ‘physical, political, and cultural identity against

⁴⁶ Alan G. Stolberg, “Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century,” in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Volume II: National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. 5th ed. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 2012), 14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁴⁸ Henry Kissinger is quoted in Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4.

⁴⁹ Stolberg, “Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century,” 17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

encroachments by other nations.”⁵¹ By this measure, the realist constantly acts with solely his best interests in mind.

In contrast, morality-based interests should benefit more than just the actor crafting the interest. Supporters of morality-based interests value human rights, freedom from economic deprivation, and freedom of disease and support humanitarian intervention as seen in actions undertaken in places, such as Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo.⁵² Or, as Joseph Nye, subscriber to the morality-based school, puts it,

National interests are a set of shared priorities that often include issues of human rights and democracy. A democratic definition of the national interest does not accept the difference between a morality-based and an interest [realism]-based foreign policy.⁵³

Peter Trubowitz offers another alternative for assessing national interests. By identifying America’s regional diversity as the most critical source of tension and conflict over foreign policy, he argues that the very definition of national interests is a product of politics.⁵⁴ Trubowitz believes national interests should be “defined by those societal interests who have the power to work within the political system to translate their preferences into policy.”⁵⁵ This assertion drives Trubowitz to conclude that national interests should more appropriately be defined in social terms due to the existing relationship between the social base and national interests.⁵⁶

Tellingly, Allen Stolberg lists the United States’ four core national interests as: security of the homeland, economic well-being, promotion of democratic values, and the establishment of a secure world order. The first three interests have remained pseudo-constant over time, but the fourth is a consequence of the delayed realization that global stability requires the following:

⁵¹ Stolberg, “Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century,” 17.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The establishment of a peaceful international environment in which disputes between nations can be resolved without resort to war and in which collective security rather than unilateral action is employed to deter or cope with aggression.⁵⁷

Determining which resources should be dedicated to these core interests requires prioritizing their importance. This prioritization is key because often these core interests conflict with one another depending on the policymaker.⁵⁸ In addition, by prioritizing which core interest to pursue, other issues, such as time available to attain the interest and the intrinsic value of the interest, may also come to light.⁵⁹ After all, Sun Tzu, one of the greatest strategists of our time, constantly emphasized the notion that “it is never enough to know the enemy; you also have to know yourself.”⁶⁰ Hence, by understanding the relationship between U.S. core interests and the resources they demand, a state’s goals become easier to achieve.

Alternatively, interests can be typed according to whether they involve survival, vital, important or peripheral concerns, which Alan Stolberg refers to as intensities. Alan Stolberg defines survival interests as those interests associated with the very essence of the state’s existence, such as the protection of its citizens and institutions from imminent attack.⁶¹ For the purposes of this thesis, we will refer to survival interests as existential interests. Stolberg goes on to define vital interests as those interests that provide some room for compromise up to a certain point, beyond which compromise becomes intolerable because of its potential to harm the state. Important interests, on the other hand, are those that are significant but not crucial to the state’s well being, while peripheral interests do not involve either a threat to the state’s security or to the well being of its populace.⁶² Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between U.S. core interests and the intensity of those interests in greater detail.

⁵⁷ Stolberg, “Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century,” 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Sun Tzu quoted by Simons, Lauchengco, and McGraw, *The Sovereignty Solution: A Commonsense Approach to Global Security*, 45.

⁶¹ Stolberg, “Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century,” 18.

⁶² Ibid.

Using the criterion of intensity to differentiate among existential, vital, important, and peripheral interests, the next section will begin to gauge where BH ranks in the priority of interests for the United States by first visiting the relationship between Nigeria and the United States. Our research has led us to conclude that the nature of the relationship between the United States and African countries depends primarily on public opinion and Americans' *perceptions* of their interests in the region.

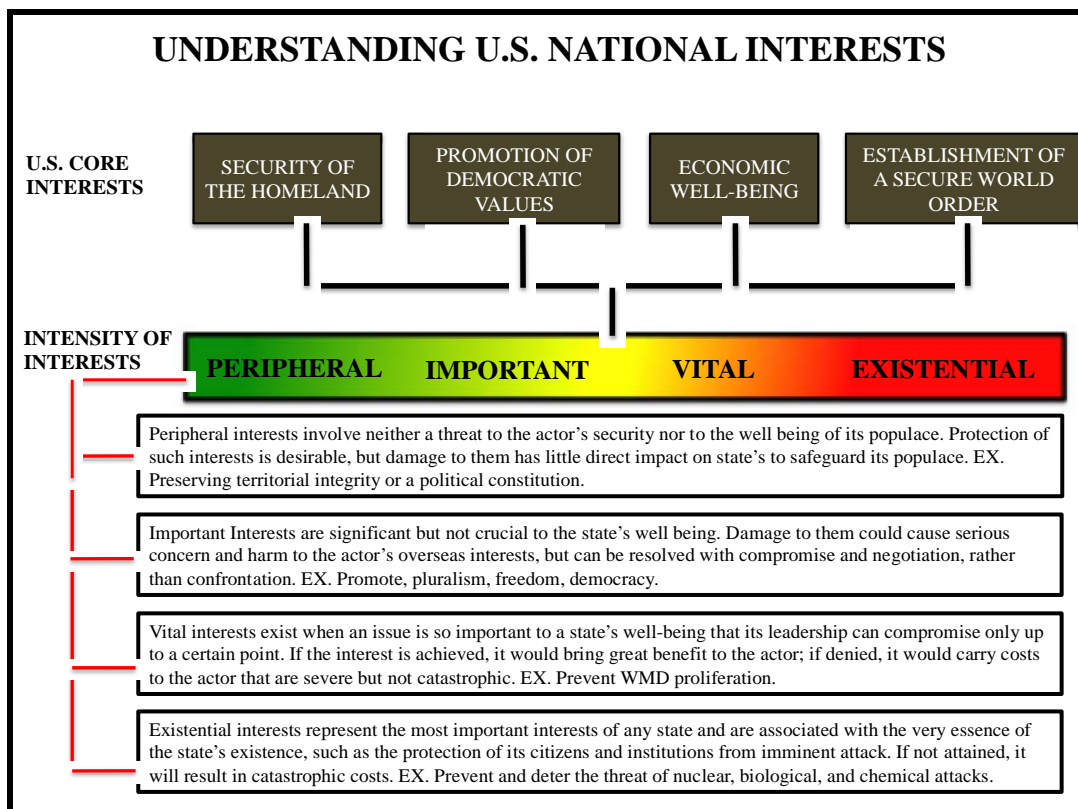


Figure 2. Understanding U.S. National Interests⁶³

B. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES AND NIGERIA'S BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between Nigeria and the United States has been a long and inconsistent one, and began prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960.⁶⁴ According to Levi

⁶³ Stolberg, "Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century," 18.

⁶⁴ Nwachuku, "The United States and Nigeria—1960 to 1987: Anatomy of a Pragmatic Relationship," 575.

A. Nwachuku, by 1958, the United States had already provided assistance via Britain to 10 GoN projects totaling \$700,000, ergo demonstrating Washington's interest in Nigeria's economic development.⁶⁵ After Nigeria's independence, President Kennedy commissioned a special economic study to examine Nigeria's 6-year development plan. Following the report's recommendations, Kennedy increased his economic and military assistance to Nigerian to the tune of over \$170 million between 1962 and 1966.⁶⁶

In May 1967, the southern region of Nigeria—Biafra—seceded and declared its independence from Nigeria, signaling the start of a four year-long civil war.⁶⁷ As the United States evacuated its citizens from Enugu, the capital of Biafra, the Nigerian federal government began a blockade to prevent much needed resources from entering Biafra. In response, Europe and the United States sought to provide humanitarian relief to the 5–6 million residents hit by famine and disease. This event created an emotional support for Biafra so powerful in the United States that it prompted Senator Charles Goodell to visit Biafra and adopt a Biafran baby in a show of both compassion and political zeal.⁶⁸

William Haven North, who served as the Director for Central and West African Affairs for the Agency of International Development (USAID) from 1966 to 1970, described the period as producing “the most frantic and intense pressures one can experience.”⁶⁹ North revealed the U.S.'s confused political stance at the time when, in an interview, he attempted to define the administration's view of Nigeria:

Initially under President Johnson the U.S. policy had been “one Nigeria.” We would not support any attempt to split up the country. Then Nixon became President in 1969 and the word “one Nigeria” was dropped. Because of the tremendous public support for Biafra, U. S. policy became

⁶⁵ Nwachuku, “The United States and Nigeria—1960 to 1987: Anatomy of a Pragmatic Relationship,” 576.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “The Famine in Biafra—USAID's Response to the Nigerian Civil War,” Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training,” May 2014, <http://adst.org/2014/05/the-famine-in-biafra-usaids-response-to-the-nigerian-civil-war/>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

more ambivalent about Biafra's secession and the principle of "one Nigeria" and the uncertainties about the outcome of the war. I believe that Nixon was somewhat partial to the Ibos [also known as Igbos] but largely wanted to do whatever was necessary "to get the issue off my back."⁷⁰

Seeking a solution to the crisis, Henry Kissinger, then the National Security Advisor, urged the State Department to prepare a National Security Strategy Memorandum (NSSM) for the president and the Cabinet on what the future policy of the United States toward Nigeria should be. The NSSM eventually characterized the U.S. government's primary interest and objectives for Nigeria/Biafra as humanitarian only.⁷¹ However, oil interests further complicated U.S. concerns in Nigeria because the major oil producing regions lay within Biafra. As North further admits,

The issue of supporting Biafra was also tied up with the question of oil interests; the major part of the oil reserves in Nigeria were in the Eastern Region with substantial American oil company investments. Were our interests in these oil resources better protected by supporting Biafran secession or the preservation of Nigeria as one country?⁷²

Ultimately, the United States assumed a position of neutrality during the conflict, and denied a request for arms from the GoN to combat the Biafrans. The U.S. neutrality policy angered the GoN, and the United States did little to mollify it even as the United States committed \$9 million for relief efforts in southern Nigeria after Biafra's surrender.⁷³ The lack of full participation by the United States in the Nigerian civil war suggests that, from the perspective of national security interests, the United States considered the conflict in Nigeria to be important enough to merit playing a supporting role, but not vital enough to threaten its core interests.

After the civil war, the Nigerian government remained at odds with the United States over its unsanctioned humanitarian support to Biafra. President Nixon, in an attempt to ease tensions between both countries, sent a congratulatory note to General

⁷⁰ "The Famine in Biafra—USAID's Response to the Nigerian Civil War."

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Nwachuku, "The United States and Nigeria—1960 to 1987: Anatomy of a Pragmatic Relationship," 580.

Yakubu Gowon, the Nigerian military leader, in which he praised the general for not being vindictive toward the defeated Biafrans.⁷⁴ Nixon's Secretary of State, William Rogers, also visited Nigeria in 1970, evidently "to demonstrate to the Nigerian government American satisfaction over the outcome of the war."⁷⁵ However, when General Gowon visited the United States for five days in 1973 as the Nigerian head of State, President Nixon refused to meet with him, causing further damage to an already strained relationship.⁷⁶

President Jimmy Carter later visited Nigeria in 1977 in order to help repair the rocky relationship. As a result, throughout his administration, Nigeria's relationship with the United States continued to improve, especially since Nigeria began supplying over 15% of the oil consumed in the United States by the late 1970s.⁷⁷ The two countries also sustained amicable trade relations through the 1980s and 1990s, a fact highlighted by the United States forgiving \$80.5 million in Nigerian debt in 1989.⁷⁸ However, by 2000, corruption, political developments, and militant violence in the Niger-Delta resulted in more than a 25% drop in production and export levels of oil,⁷⁹ driving Nigeria from being America's 5th largest foreign oil supplier in 2011 to 8th by August 2013.⁸⁰ Still, the United States and Nigeria have remained allies despite these missteps.

These persistent efforts to extend the olive branch to Nigeria begs the question: why did the United States so strongly seek friendly relations with Nigeria? Levi Nwachuku argues that, although Nigeria attracted U.S. interest because of a shared colonial master in Britain, the United States was more intoxicated by "the prospect that

⁷⁴ Nwachuku, "The United States and Nigeria—1960 to 1987: Anatomy of a Pragmatic Relationship," 581.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 584.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 591.

⁷⁹ Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa* (CRS Report No. RL34003) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), 15, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>.

⁸⁰ "Independent Energy Data and Analysis."

Nigeria would assume a leadership role in the African continent.”⁸¹ The United States viewed Nigeria as “the one nation whose support was most critical for a U.S. relationship with black people everywhere,”⁸² necessitating a continued investment to promote economic and political stability in Nigeria.

In his assessment of the U.S.-Nigeria relationship, Robert Shepard contends that the nature of the relationship depended on who sat in the Oval Office. Shepard takes the position that, depending who was in the White House, Washington maintained two views of Nigeria. One view, adopted by President Reagan and most Republicans, focused on the primary goal of curtailing Soviet influence, with a secondary focus on “narrow economic interests.”⁸³ In contrast, Democrats like Presidents Kennedy and Carter believed that U.S. policy in Africa should be expanded from “narrow strategic and economic matters” to larger issues, such as eradicating “hunger, poverty, civil war, racism, and human rights.”⁸⁴ In Shepard’s view, relations between the United States and Nigeria would have been healthier if only the United States paid constant attention to Nigeria, as opposed to only when the media and world opinion required it to do so.⁸⁵

In the BH era, the media once again forced Washington into action in response to the kidnapping of the nearly 300 girls referenced in the previous chapter. Prior to the hostage incident, BH had captured or killed *thousands* of Nigerians and foreign nationals while inciting a refugee crisis. Yet, Washington paid these crimes minimal attention.⁸⁶ Not until the public reacted thanks to a powerful social media campaign to free the girls, did Washington jump into action and provide military support to the GoN.⁸⁷ This

⁸¹ Nwachuku, “The United States and Nigeria—1960 to 1987: Anatomy of a Pragmatic Relationship,” 577.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Robert B. Shepard, *Nigeria, Africa and the United States: From Kennedy to Reagan* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 5.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁶ Farouk Chothia, “Will Nigeria’s Abducted School Girls Ever Be Found?” *BBC Africa*, May 12, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27293418>.

⁸⁷ Tracy McVeigh, “Michelle Obama Raises Pressure over Kidnapped School Girls,” *The Guardian*, May 10, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/10/michelle-obama-nigeria-presidential-address>.

common pattern of only participating in conflicts at the urging of the American public has caused many Africans beyond just Nigerians to question Washington's commitment, and to speculate that Western interests are more often driven by an affinity for oil and other natural resources than people's plight. Similarly, this unsystematic response by Washington to the crisis in Nigeria reflects an unclear foreign policy to combat BH, a lapse which has been identified and exploited by mass media.

This news cycle approach to foreign policy, better known as the "CNN effect," is not new. In fact, the media has long maintained the capability to drive government action, thus "encapsulating the idea that real-time communications technology could provoke major responses from domestic audiences and political elites to global events."⁸⁸ As a result, media influence is frequently blamed for the U.S.'s involvement in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia in 1992, and recent operations to combat Joseph Kony and the Lords Resistance Army in Central Africa. Taking not only syndicated media's impact but also the power of social media advocacy into account, it is quite easy to see how Washington can be maneuvered into taking action in Nigeria.

C. U.S. STRATEGIC SECURITY INTERESTS IN AFRICA

To better understand U.S. security interests in Africa, we examined historic and current national strategic documents, particularly those focused on the role of the U.S. military in the pursuit of U.S. strategic interests in Africa. For instance, Lauren Ploch, a Congressional Research Service analyst on African affairs, sheds some interesting light on the 2007 formation of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in her 2011 report. Ploch argues that AFRICOM came into being due to "violent extremist activities and other potential threats posed by under-governed spaces, such as maritime piracy and illicit trafficking."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Piers Robinson, "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?" *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 1999): 301.

⁸⁹ Ploch, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*.

In addition, these illicit enterprises sought to gain control over Africa's vast natural resources; their success would be highly detrimental to African progress.⁹⁰ According to Ploch, AFRICOM sought to promote "U.S. strategic objectives and protect U.S. interests in the region by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen their defense capabilities ... to contribute to regional stability and security."⁹¹ As a result, AFRICOM's mission differed from that of the other existing combatant commands in that its mission encompassed broader objectives, which included a "soft power" mandate for building a stable security environment.⁹² In essence, with the formation of AFRICOM, the United States underpinned the importance of partnering with African nations to pursue long lasting development initiatives and strengthen local security in the face of such radical elements as AQ in Africa.

Consequently, by 2011, the U.S. National Military Strategy designated AQIM in Mali, and Al-Shabaab in East Africa as threats to the United States. Emphasis on these terrorist organizations signified recognition of the need to thwart African terrorist organizations from remotely planning, coordinating, and extending their operational reach.⁹³ Subsequently, the 2012 Department of Defense Strategic Guidance also mentioned the increased threat to U.S. interests in Africa and, specifically, the need to "develop innovative, low cost, and small footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives..."⁹⁴ Both the 2011 and 2012 strategic guidance directives reveal an awareness on the part of U.S. security decision makers that Africa was becoming a battle ground in the War on Terror.

As for BH specifically, the U.S. Congress released a report entitled "Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland" in November 2011. This report highlighted the

⁹⁰ Ploch, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 4.

⁹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), 6, <http://www.army.mil/info/references/docs/NMS%20FEB%202011.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Department of Defense, *Strategic Guidance, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), 3, http://www.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf.

risks Boko Haram presented to U.S. interests in Africa at the time and concluded that Boko Haram posed an emerging threat to U.S. interests and the U.S. homeland.⁹⁵ The report further indicates “Boko Haram has the intent and may be developing the capability to coordinate on a rhetorical and operational level with AQIM and Al-Shabaab.”⁹⁶ Not surprisingly, the report recommended that Washington work with the GoN to build counterterrorism and intelligence capabilities to effectively counter Boko Haram.⁹⁷

However, the State Department did not share Congress’ view, as evidenced in its delay before designating BH a foreign terror organization (FTO), which is the clearest indicator that a group poses a threat to U.S. national interests.⁹⁸ It was not until January 2013 that the 113th U.S. Congress finally passed a bill requiring the State Department to designate BH as an FTO.⁹⁹ This was in part thanks to the chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, Rep. Patrick Meehan, who believed that the FTO designation would “curb [BH’s] financing, stigmatize and isolate it internationally, heighten public awareness and knowledge, and signal to other governments the U.S. takes the threat from Boko Haram seriously.”¹⁰⁰ His assertion finally led the State Department to successfully designate BH as an FTO in November 2013.¹⁰¹

The FTO designation, although late by many standards, represents what is now the consensus view that BH poses a threat: But to whom? The absence of an intensity

⁹⁵ Patrick Meehan and Jackie Speier, “U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence report: Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland,” U.S. House of Representatives, November 30, 2011, <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Boko%20Haram-%20Emerging%20Threat%20to%20the%20US%20Homeland.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁹⁹ S.198—*Boko Haram Terrorist Designation Act of 2013 (Introduced in Senate-IS) January 31, 2013*, 113th Cong., 1 (2013).

¹⁰⁰ Meehan and Speier, “U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence report: Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland,” 27.

¹⁰¹ Scott Menner and Erin Miller, “FTO Designation: Boko Haram and Ansaru,” START Background Report, November 2013, http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/br/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaram_Nov2013.pdf.

specification as to the level of threat BH poses, specifically when it comes to the issue of whether BH's defeat should be considered of existential, vital, important, or peripheral interest to the United States remains open for debate. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) attempted to answer this question, but fell short. The QDR, however, did envisage an increase in the current threat to the homeland from Africa, and the need to improve the U.S.'s ability to effectively target threats as they evolve, even under significant fiscal constraints.¹⁰²

Likewise, the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) also failed to stress how seriously to consider the severity of BH's actions in relation to U.S. interests in the region. Although the NSS emphasized the need for the United States to strengthen the organizational capacity of the African Union (AU) and increase its ability to rapidly deploy to emerging crises, it glosses over the implications of the declining security challenges surrounding BH.¹⁰³ This omission perhaps indicates that BH poses a less severe threat than other AQ affiliates operating in North and East Africa. Is that the case, however, when one looks at the degree to which BH impacts U.S. economic interests in West Africa?

D. U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN AFRICA AND NIGERIA

Africa, the world's second largest continent, is filled with enormous quantities of natural resources ranging from oil to cobalt. Africa contains vital metals and minerals that are exported to all parts of the world, such as uranium, used in nuclear energy production; platinum, used in jewelry and industrial applications; nickel, used in stainless steel, magnets, coins, and rechargeable batteries; bauxite, a main aluminum ore; and cobalt, used in color pigments.¹⁰⁴ The two most consistently profitable mineral resources found in Africa are gold and diamonds. In 2014, South Africa and Ghana were among the top

¹⁰² Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014): V, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf.

¹⁰³ Barack Obama, *United States National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 11, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ "African Resources: Environment and Economy," National Geographic Education, accessed September 12, 2014, http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/africa-resources/?ar_a=1.

10 gold producers in the world.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Botswana, Angola, South Africa, and other African countries were the source of 50% of the world's diamonds in 2014.¹⁰⁶

When it comes to oil, countries, such as Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, and Angola dominate Africa's oil industry. According to a 2012 estimate by British Petroleum (BP) and the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), Africa will be the world's fourth most important region for oil and gas production by 2035.¹⁰⁷ This prediction is especially relevant considering that Nigeria was the 8th largest exporter of oil to the United States in 2013. Yet, as indicated in Table 1, oil imported from Nigeria and other African regions is down significantly since 2003, indicating a declining dependence by the United States on African petroleum products. As confirmation, in 2014, the United States imported over 70,000 fewer total barrels of oil from Nigeria compared to 2013 (a 33% reduction), and there are no indications this trend will change in the near future.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Michelle Smith, "Top 10 Gold Producing Countries," *Gold Investing News*, April 9, 2015, <http://goldinvestingnews.com/28894/top-10-gold-producing-countries-of-2011-australia-us-ghana-indonesia-china-peru-canada-russi.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Mbendi Information Services, "Diamond Mining in Africa," accessed 14 May, 2014, <http://www.mbendi.com/indy/ming/dmnd/af/p0005.htm>.

¹⁰⁷ David E. Brown, "Africa's Booming Oil And Natural Gas Exploration and Production: National Security Implications for the United States and China," *Strategic Studies Institute*, 30, December 2013, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub1186.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ "U.S. Imports from Nigeria of Crude Oil and Other Petroleum Products," U.S. Energy Information Administration, release date April 29, 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=MTTIMUSNI1&f=M>.

Table 1. Where the United States Got Its Oil in 2013¹⁰⁹

Country	Imports	% of Total in 2013	% Change since 2003
1. Canada	2.57	33.3%	65.8%
2. Saudi Arabia	1.33	17.2%	-23.2%
3. Mexico	0.85	11.0%	-45.8%
4. Venezuela	0.76	9.8%	-36.2%
5. Colombia	0.37	4.8%	121.1%
6. Iraq	0.34	4.4%	-29.1%
7. Kuwait	0.33	4.2%	56.7%
8. Nigeria	0.24	3.1%	-71.3%
9. Ecuador	0.23	3.0%	64.0%
10. Angola	0.20	2.6%	-44.4%

Data from Energy Information Administration © Robert Rapier

The reasons for the decline in oil imports to the United States are many. Among them is the uncertainty borne of conflict in the region and characterized by the unequal distribution of wealth. Attacks on oil infrastructure by militant groups in Nigeria have led to reductions in production and local income.¹¹⁰ In addition, methods of extracting resources like oil have had negative long lasting environmental impacts. For instance, the use of out-of-date equipment for drilling in Nigeria has severely polluted air, soil, and water resources leading to losses in arable land and fish stocks.¹¹¹ Lacks of oversight from the government coupled with pervasive corruption have caused ethnic minorities to conclude that “foreign oil companies have exploited their labor while keeping most of the wealth.”¹¹² This sentiment is not restricted to Nigeria, but resonates more broadly there.

To combat this perception both in Nigeria and in Africa, the United States has ramped up its rhetoric about China’s influence. China has acquired a reputation over the years as a voracious consumer of African natural resources while serving as one of the most dominant trading partners for corrupt regimes, but doing little to help alleviate

¹⁰⁹ Robert Rapier, “Where the U.S. Got Its Oil in 2013,” Oil Price.Com, July 1, 2014, <http://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Where-The-US-Got-Its-Oil-in-2013.html>.

¹¹⁰ “African Resources: Environment and Economy.”

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

poverty, or improve local well-being.¹¹³ At the same time, the United States has tried improving its trade relations with African countries. In August 2014, the United States hosted a historic three-day long U.S.-African summit in Washington, DC, where leaders from over 50 African countries gathered to discuss ways to bolster trade opportunities and improve economic ties between Africa and the United States. During the summit, President Obama expressed his commitment to Africa by promising to “build genuine partnerships that create jobs and opportunity for all our people and that unleash the next era of African growth.”¹¹⁴

Other trade initiatives, such as the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) and Trade Africa, have improved trade relations between the United States and African countries. AGOA offers tangible incentives to encourage countries to continue to open their economies and build free markets,¹¹⁵ while Trade Africa incentivizes trade within Africa and expands economic ties between Africa, the United States, and other global markets.¹¹⁶ Other smaller initiatives at work similarly stress the importance of Africa to the United States. Nevertheless, the question remains about how greatly the U.S. values its economic ties to African countries. For instance, if Africa’s economies matter to the United States, should not domestic terrorism in Africa’s most populous country and the U.S.’s largest trading partner in the region, namely Nigeria, matter more?

Generally, the United States relies on countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as consumers for its manufactured goods. In 2014, the total trade between the United States and SSA totaled \$48 billion, with exported goods to SSA countries accounting for more than half the total at \$23.56 billion.¹¹⁷ Despite what sound like impressive numbers, U.S. imports from SSA countries accounted for only 1.7% of total goods imported into the United States in 2013. The small overall number is considered by some to indicate just

¹¹³ Alexis Okeowo, “China in Africa: The New Imperialists?” *The New Yorker*, June 12, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/china-in-africa-the-new-imperialists>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ “African Growth And Opportunity Act,” accessed October 15, 2014, <http://trade.gov/agoa/>.

¹¹⁶ “Africa,” accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa>.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

how little the United States depends on African goods, with the exception of petroleum products. These figures are illustrated more clearly in Table 2.

Table 2. U.S. Trade in Goods with Sub-Saharan Africa (\$ Billions)¹¹⁸

U.S. TRADE IN GOODS WITH SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA														
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014
IMPORTS	23.49	21.29	17.89	25.63	35.88	50.36	59.09	67.36	86.05	46.9	65.03	49.62	39.29	24.43
EXPORTS	5.93	6.94	6.03	6.87	8.34	10.21	11.86	14.3	18.47	15.16	17.11	22.5	23.94	23.56
TOTAL	29.42	28.23	23.92	32.5	44.22	60.58	70.95	81.65	104.52	62.06	82.14	72.13	63.23	47.99

Of course, one reason African nations may not produce more could be protracted internal conflicts combined with endemic corruption, disease, poverty, and other factors that sap people's energy, optimism, and willingness to invest at home. This could help explain these numbers, but so too, could be the rise of terrorism.

For instance, consider Boko-Haram-affected regions in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. The United States relies on these four nations to produce the goods listed in Table 3, with two products—oil and cocoa—being especially important. As exports from the region decreased markedly, by contrast goods imported from the United States increased between 2012–2013 (see Table 4). The data from Table 4 suggest that the decrease in exports might be related to BH's activities. We will explore these activities further in the next section.

Table 3. Top Imported Goods from BH Affected Regions in 2013(Dollars)¹¹⁹

NIGERIA		NIGER		CHAD		CAMEROUN	
Goods	Amount	Goods	Amount	Goods	Amount	Goods	Amount
Oil and Petroleum	11.6B	Special Provisions	783K	Oil	2.4B	Oil	270M
Cocoa	29M	Electric Machinery	478K	Resins	12M	Wood	33M
Special items	21M	Art	274K			Rubber	25M
Food Waste	9M					Cocoa	22M
Art/Antiquities	5M						

¹¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Trade in Goods With Sub-Saharan Africa," accessed April 15, 2015, <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c0019.html>.

¹¹⁹ "Top Imports from BH Affected Regions in 2013," accessed May 14, 2015, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/afrika>.

Table 4. Total Trade between U.S. and BH Afflicted Countries in Dollars
(2012–2013)¹²⁰

	NIGERIA		NIGER		CHAD		CAMEROON	
Year	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Import	\$19B	\$11.7B	\$4.5M	\$2.3M	\$2.8B	2.6B	\$426M	\$367M
Export	\$5.1B	\$6.5B	\$35.5M	\$46M	\$36.50	\$41M	\$253M	\$331M

E. BH’S EFFECTS ON THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY AND ITS NEIGHBORS

Since BH rose to prominence in 2009, many have speculated on its potential effects on foreign direct investments (FDI).¹²¹ Through acts of indiscriminate violence and crafty messaging via YouTube and Twitter, BH has scared Western businesses away from northern Nigeria. As evidence, the World Investment Report (WIR) indicated a 2.1% drop in FDI in Nigeria, from \$8.9 billion in 2011 to \$7 billion in 2012, a net loss of \$1.9 billion.¹²² This decline is significant because FDIs have a direct impact on trade, and are an indicator of economic health, and thus can be considered integral to the Nigerian domestic economy and to the country’s economic development.

This is why BH’s indiscriminate killing of civilians is so concerning. The massacres have caused a mass exodus of citizens from northern Nigeria to calmer areas. This outflow has reduced the number of skilled laborers in the north. This migration has also led to declines in agricultural production, causing food prices to skyrocket, rising 9.8% in June 2014 alone. The inflation rate has also risen to 8.2%, the highest in almost a year.¹²³ Additionally, the exodus has forced businesses and institutions that normally

¹²⁰ “Total Trade Between U.S. and BH Afflicted Countries (2012–2013),” accessed May 12, 2015, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/Nigeria>.

¹²¹ Angus Gillespie, “Boko Haram and its Impact On The Nigerian Economy,” *The African Business Journal*, June 14, 2014, http://www.tabj.co.za/features/june14_features/boko_haram_and_its_impact_on_the_nigerian_economy.html.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Kathleen Caulderwood, “Boko Haram and Nigeria’s Economy: Why the Poor Suffer the Most,” *International Business Times*, July 31, 2014.

cater to large populations to close or relocate due to a significant decrease in economic activity.¹²⁴

Ripple effects from the impact of BH's attacks on churches, banks, and commercial agencies have likewise been felt in neighboring countries, such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Traders from these regions who usually travel to northern Nigeria to trade iron and steel in Kano are afraid to visit because of the declining regional security.¹²⁵ Tourism in the north has also dried up as a result of BH's actions. This once-booming industry, a key source of economic capital in the north that usually generated \$400m (N80b) annually, is now at a standstill.¹²⁶

Beyond the impact on the economy, refugees fleeing Nigeria are also creating a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conservatively estimates that upward of 135,000 Nigerians fled into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.¹²⁷ Other assessments place refugees fleeing to Cameroon and Niger alone at 160,000.¹²⁸ Considering that Niger and Chad are poor countries on the bottom rung of the U.N. Human Development Index, and given that Cameroon is already harboring 200,000 refugees who fled the unrest in the Central African Republic,¹²⁹ the likelihood of the refugee crisis further straining these countries and potentially having destabilizing effects, is extremely high.

For instance, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian affairs (OCHA) estimates that 54% of households in Northern Cameroon are facing food

¹²⁴ Angus Gillespie, "Boko Haram and its Impact on the Nigerian Economy," *The African Business Journal*, June 14, 2014, http://www.tabj.co.za/features/june14_features/boko_haram_and_its_impact_on_the_nigerian_economy.html.

¹²⁵ Okechukwu Innocent Eme and Jide Ibietan, "The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria," *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* (Oman Chapter) 2, no. 2 (September 2012): 22.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹²⁷ Joshua Meservey, "Nigerian Refugees Fleeing Boko Haram Are a Crisis in the Making," *The Washington Post*, January 29, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/joshua-meservey-nigerian-refugees-fleeing-boko-haram-are-a-crisis-in-the-making/2015/01/29/316ce5d0-a674-11e4-a2b2-776095f393b2_story.html.

¹²⁸ "Boko Haram Refugees Risk Lives to Cross Lake to Chad Camps," *Associated Press*, March 5, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/03/05/boko-haram-refugees-risk-lives-to-cross-lake-to-chad-camps/>.

¹²⁹ Meservey, "Nigerian Refugees Fleeing Boko Haram are a Crisis in the Making."

shortages and are at risk of famine, and 70% of farmers have deserted their farms or missed out on timely planting because of the threat of BH.¹³⁰ The hunger crisis is expected to worsen with the temporary settlements for the refugees becoming permanent and inhospitable, all of which only provides BH with “a convenient source of prey, recruits, and succor.”¹³¹ At the time of this writing, the attacks in Cameroon and Chad are intensifying thanks to these interlinked vicious cycles created by BH.

Not everyone agrees, however, that the economic situation is dire. Some observers like Dr. Usman Muttaka, a professor in the Department of Economics of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, argue that BH’s effects on the Nigerian economy have been minimal. Muttaka roots his argument in his faith in a resilient Nigerian economy.¹³² He argues that there is no economic crisis in Nigeria, and investors are free to conduct business in Nigeria so long as they stay away from the north, where BH is most active.¹³³

Angus Gillespie also supports Muttaka’s argument by citing updated statistics on FDIs, which indicate a resurgence of foreign interest in the Nigerian economy despite recent BH escalations. Gillespie reports, “more than \$21B of FDI poured into Nigeria in 2013, a 28% increase from 2012,” though he then concedes, “...but all of that could be quickly eroded if the violence is not snuffed out.”¹³⁴ Meanwhile, if these critics are correct and Nigeria is safe for business so long as the conflict zones are avoided, then economic and other disparities between the north and other parts of the country will only widen and deepen. That would only play further into BH’s hands.

F. SUMMARY

The United States and Nigeria share a long historical relationship, albeit a non-committal one. Although the United States has come to Nigeria’s aid in its times of need, U.S. involvement in Nigerian affairs often only occurred in response to a public outcry.

¹³⁰ “Boko Haram Refugees Risk Lives to Cross Lake to Chad Camps.”

¹³¹ Mesurvey, “Nigerian Refugees Fleeing Boko Haram are a Crisis in the Making.”

¹³² Eme and Ibietan, “The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria,” 19.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Gillespie, “Boko Haram and its Impact on the Nigerian Economy.”

The relationship has ebbed and flowed based on the incumbent administration's perspective on the importance of Africa. Post-9/11, and with the emergence of Islamic extremism in Africa, the need for regional stability in less governed spaces and fragile states has piqued the U.S.'s interest in increased security in Africa. With the establishment of AFRICOM, the United States has communicated its intent to play a larger role in assisting African countries attain stability.

Economically driven initiatives, such as the African Growth and Opportunities Act and Trade Africa, have likewise led to expanded trade within Africa, and strengthened economic ties between Africa, the United States, and other global markets. But although economic relations between some African countries and the United States have improved over time, the figures indicate that the amount of goods imported from SSA countries in 2013 amounted to only 1.7% of total goods coming into the United States. This discouraging figure hence tracks what is often only a passing interest in Africa.

Meanwhile, BH continues to impact the Nigerian economy and those of Nigeria's neighbors in profound ways. BH's actions have caused an exodus from northern Nigeria and exacerbated an already fragile refugee problem in Cameroon. With inaction, the situation is sure to worsen, creating space for BH to achieve its goal of establishing an IS on Nigerian soil. If that were to happen, would further instability threaten U.S. interests in the region? And if so, in what capacity? Should the threat posed by BH be perceived as existential, vital, important, or peripheral?

The next chapter attempts to shed light on these questions by illustrating how BH, through its actions and messaging, is on course to destabilize Nigeria's ethnic, political, and military institutions.

III. BOKO HARAM'S EFFECTS AND MESSAGING ON NIGERIA AND AFRICA

Since the end of the civil war no calamity of enormous proportion has befallen [Nigeria] more than the horror unleashed by the dreadful Boko Haram sect....on a daily basis there is panic. The fear of the invisible agitators has become the beginning of wisdom¹³⁵

—Emmanuel Oladesu,
The Nation Newspaper, 2013

A. INTRODUCTION

Determining whether BH poses a threat to U.S. national interests also requires that we better understand BH's effects on Nigeria and its neighbors. Following the death of its former leader, Mohammed Yusuf, at the hands of the Nigerian police, BH has employed a crafty messaging strategy to target the Nigerian military for revenge. BH's primary tool in this regard has been to recruit disenfranchised youth, destitute children, and unemployed high school and university graduates willing to do its bidding. The ease with which BH has recruited a large number of youth begs the question, what is the impetus for so many Nigerian youth to join BH?

A study commissioned by the U.S. Institute of Peace cites ignorance of religious teachings as the top reason for youth radicalization and recruitment into armed groups.¹³⁶ To be more precise, the lack of a deep understanding of the Quran by young Muslims allows charlatan Islamic scholars to propagate Qutbist ideology in support of BH's quest to form a revolutionary vanguard (*jama'a*), capable of challenging the status quo (*jahiliyyah*).

To reinforce its recruitment strategy, BH has adopted a messaging campaign that advertises its operational links with Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other organizations. For example, in 2003, BH capitalized on Osama Bin Laden's comments that singled out

¹³⁵ Brown Zainab Peterside, "A Threat to National Security: The Case of Boko Haram in Nigeria," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 3, no. 4 (July 2014): 287, <http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/ajis/article/view/3101>.

¹³⁶ Freedom C. Onuoha, "Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram," *United States Institute of Peace Special Report* 348, June 14, 2014, 5.

Nigeria as one of the countries requiring liberation from infidels,¹³⁷ and in 2010, also leveraged AQIM Emir Abdelmalek Droukel's statement of solidarity with BH in Nigeria.¹³⁸ By doing so, BH propagated an image many argue is actually larger than its true capacity.

However, the actual relationship between AQ and BH is more rhetorical than real,¹³⁹ and has failed to reach its full potential for several reasons. For one, BH's focus is on a domestic conflict in Nigeria, which runs counter to AQ's global jihad aims. Second, BH's leader, Abubakr Shekau, is thought to be "too unstable, impetuous, and unreliable to attract professional terrorists."¹⁴⁰ In fact, though, Shekau's quixotic reputation has actually proven to be a blessing in disguise for BH since IS found him worthy enough to invite BH to join its growing list of affiliates.¹⁴¹ Of course, one reason ISIS has been drawn to Shekau and BH is their impact on Nigeria's ethnic, political, and military infrastructure.

B. UNDERSTANDING THE NIGERIAN ETHNIC LANDSCAPE

With a population of over 150 million, Nigeria is by far the most populous country in Africa, boasting over 250 distinct ethnic groups speaking more than 500 languages and dialects.¹⁴² The major ethnic groups locations are shown in Figure 3. The two largest tribes—Hausa and Fulani—who reside in northern Nigeria, are predominantly Muslim, and comprise 29% of the population.¹⁴³ The Kanuri, another Muslim tribe in the north, make up another 4% of the population. The large southern tribes include the

¹³⁷ "Transcript of Osama bin Laden Tape, Translation of the Purported Osama Bin Laden Tape Broadcast on al-Jazeera," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 12, 2003, <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/02/12/1044927652254.html>.

¹³⁸ Olivier Guitta, "How ISIS Ate Al-Qaeda," *The Daily Beast*, March 12, 2015, <http://www.the-dailybeast.com/articles/2015/03/12/how-isis-ate-al-qaeda.html>.

¹³⁹ Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, September 2014, 18–19.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴¹ Zenn, "A Biography of Boko Haram and the Bay'a to al-Baghdadi," 17–21.

¹⁴² Amy Pate, "Boko Haram: An Assessment of Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and Policy Options," *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*, January 2015, 3.

¹⁴³ Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, "Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria," 8.

Yoruba (21%), Igbo (18%), Ijaw (10%), Ibibio (4%), and Tiv (2%), and are largely Christian.¹⁴⁴

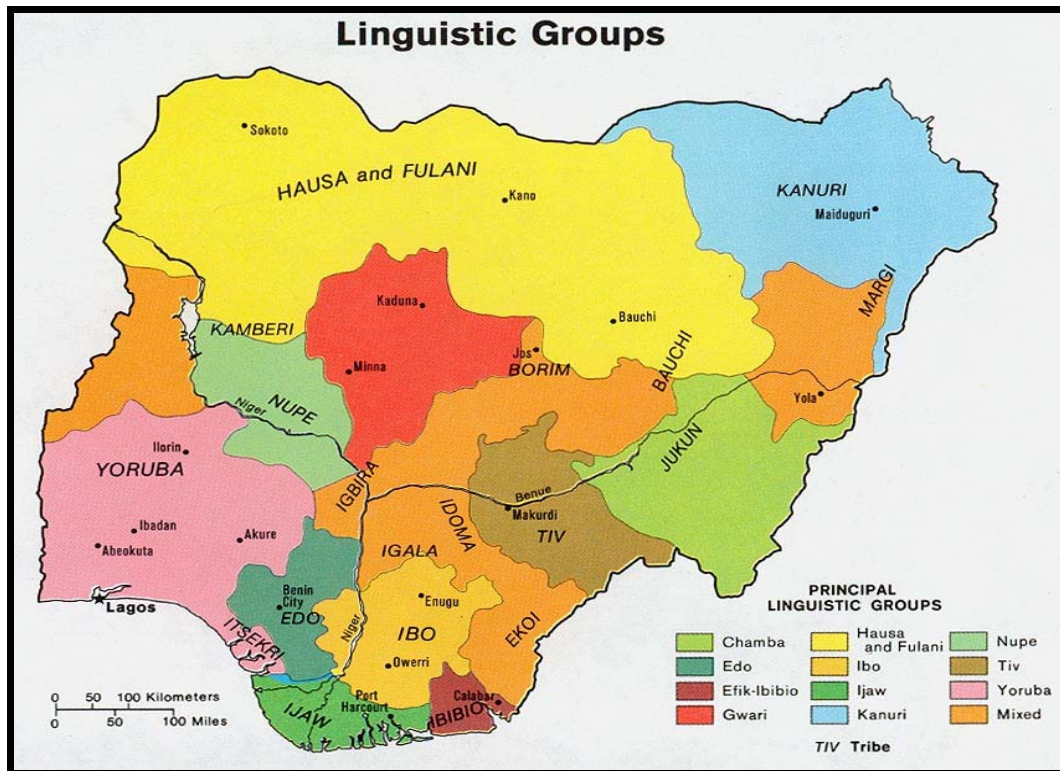


Figure 3. Map of the Major Ethnic and Linguistic Groups in Nigeria¹⁴⁵

Muslims make up about 50% of the population in Nigeria and mostly reside in the north, while Christians, about 40%, reside in the south. The final 10% of the population, which practices traditional, animistic religions, also resides in the south.¹⁴⁶ The divide between mostly Sunni Muslims in the north and Christians in the south is prominent and dominates the national competition for political power.¹⁴⁷ One especially sees this in the middle belt of Nigeria, which is beset by inter-ethnic tensions and sectarian conflicts.

¹⁴⁴ Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria,” 8.

¹⁴⁵ “The 250+ Tribes/ethnic Groups in Nigeria,” Nairaland Blog, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.nairaland.com/55383/250-tribes-ethnic-groups-nigeria/1>.

¹⁴⁶ Pate, “Boko Haram: An Assessment of Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and Policy Options,” 3.

¹⁴⁷ Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria,” 8.

However, even in the Muslim north, there are tensions, particularly between the Kanuri and Hausa-Fulani. The Kanuri converted to Islam centuries before their Hausa-Fulani counterparts and hence “view themselves as the rightful standard-bearers of Islam in Nigeria.”¹⁴⁸ The Kanuri northeast, once part of the former Kanem-Borno empire, is ruled by the Shehu of Borno. This region has largely remained outside the influence of the Hausa-Fulani Sultan of Sokoto, the dominant ruler in the northwest.¹⁴⁹ Lately, the Kanuri have been marginalized both politically and economically and accuse local Hausa-Fulani leaders of corruption and collusion with the Christian government.¹⁵⁰ This narrative has been very useful for BH’s recruitment of Kanuri.

C. BH’S EFFECT ON THE NIGERIAN ETHNIC LANDSCAPE

People in northern Nigeria are familiar with the Caliphate that existed there in the early 1800s. Indeed, most Nigerian Muslims are quite aware of the Sokoto Caliphate established by Osman dan Fodio during the early 1800s.¹⁵¹ Dan Fodio’s Caliphate elevated the north and established sharia law and Islamic schools to supplant Western-based educational systems.¹⁵²

Because BH is indigenous to Borno State, which bears the footprint of the celebrated Kanem-Borno empire, BH has also invoked the Kanem-Borno empire to rally support for its cause. The Kanem-Borno empire (1380–1870) as seen in Figure 4, thrived as an Islamic state during the 1400s, “conquered other kingdoms, controlled sub-Saharan trade routes and entered into diplomatic relations with kings from Cairo to Turkey.”¹⁵³ The empire was so respected and illustrious that it drew numerous Islamic scholars from

¹⁴⁸ Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria,” 9.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ John Azumah, “Boko Haram in Retrospect,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 33, no. 52 (November 24, 2014): 34–35.

¹⁵² Roman Loimeier, “Boko Haram: The Development of a Religious Movement in Nigeria,” *Africa Spectrum* 47, no. 2–3 (2012): 139.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Sudan and North Africa to the burgeoning capital city of Birnin Gazargamo, situated about 150km west of Lake Chad in Yobe State, Nigeria.¹⁵⁴



Figure 4. Map of the Kanem-Bornu Empire (1380AD–1870AD)¹⁵⁵

In its recruitment pitches, BH leaders frequently allude to the historical significance and dominance of the powerful Islamic Kanem-Borno empire and preach passionately about reclaiming its lost lands, which stretched through Chad, eastern Niger, northern Cameroon, and northeastern Nigeria. In fact, Mohammed Yusuf, inspired by the writings of medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya,¹⁵⁶ claimed, “our land was an Islamic state

¹⁵⁴ Loimeier, “Boko Haram: The Development of a Religious Movement in Nigeria,” 139.

¹⁵⁵ “The Kanem-Bornu Empire: Linking Ancient Chad, Libya, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria,” African Heritage, December 30, 2011, <http://afrolegends.com/2011/12/30/the-kanem-bornu-empire-linking-ancient-chad-libya-and-nigeria/>. The Zaghawa people of Kanem established their capital city at N’jimi. Although the exact location is unknown, it is believed to be near Lake Fitri. Ngazargamu became the capital of the Kanem-Borno Empire around 1472.

¹⁵⁶ “Boko Haram: Assessment of Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and Policy Options,” START, May 9, 2014, <http://www.start.umd.edu/news/background-report-boko-haram-recent-attacks>.

before it was turned into a land of *Kafir* (infidels)...the current system is contrary to true Muslim beliefs.”¹⁵⁷

During the mid-2000s, Yusuf further blended his “Caliphate” narrative, with that of Saudi Salifist cleric *Bakr Din Abdullah Abu Zayd*, whose writings profess a rejection of Western education. Yusuf used this narrative to appeal to a wider band of curious and disillusioned Muslim youth in northern Nigeria.¹⁵⁸

Abubakr Shekau has followed Yusuf’s lead, and has also promoted the Caliphate concept as a means to establish a more functional Nigeria, free from the failings of the apostate Western-oriented government. In doing so, Shekau has tried capitalizing on the north vs. south and Muslim vs. Christian divide as a means to solidify sharia law and religious reforms in the North. However, using religious reforms as a wedge issue has not upset most southerners as long as BH’s actions remain confined to the north. Moreover, because most of the oil production—the major source of wealth in Nigeria—is in the south, most southerners do not feel particularly threatened by BH’s ability to undermine Nigeria’s economy.

However, southerners may be making a mistake, since the problems are not quite as simple as Muslim north vs. Christian south. As journalist Andrew Walker notes:

When viewed from outside, it can appear that these conflicts boil down to religious differences, tensions between blocs of Muslim and Christian inhabitants. When one looks deeper, however, one finds that politics—more precisely, control of government patronage—is the primary cause of many of these conflicts... When violence erupts in these circumstances, the genesis is usually in one group asserting control of the apparatus of government over another group or groups in a very heterogeneous and ethnically diverse part of Nigeria.¹⁵⁹

Walker’s point is that it is myopic to simply focus on ethnic and regional or religious differences, because the overall political landscape also matters.

¹⁵⁷ Barkindo, “Boko Haram: Ideology, Ethnicity and Identity.”

¹⁵⁸ Azumah, “Boko Haram in Retrospect,” 39–45.

¹⁵⁹ Andrew Walker, *What is Boko Haram*, Special Report 308 (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace 2012), 2.

D. UNDERSTANDING THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Since it achieved independence in 1960, military juntas ruled Nigeria until 1998. In 1998, elites of the popular People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC) arranged to alternate the presidency between the primarily Muslim north and the largely Christian south.¹⁶⁰ In 2011, after serving almost a year as president following the expected death of ailing President Umaru Yar'Adua, southern Christian President Goodluck Jonathan unexpectedly rose to the top of the political system. Regarding the prior arrangement, President Jonathan campaigned and won election over a northern candidate, albeit with the support of some members of the northern Islamic establishment, whom he allegedly bribed.¹⁶¹ Former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, quite critical of President Jonathan, has argued:

Jonathan's failure to replace the system of alternate Christian and Muslim presidents with a new balancing structure during a period of accelerating political appeals to ethnic and religious identities has been an important driver of northern [marginalization] and a catalyst for the current wave of conflicts there.¹⁶²

Essentially, what Campbell suggests is that dissolution of the previous arrangement created a vacuum for Boko Haram.¹⁶³ Indeed, as newly elected Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan took the oath of office in May 2011, BH detonated three bombs at an army barracks in Bauchi state, killing at least 14 people.¹⁶⁴

Although most Nigerians accepted the election results as fair, public opinion polls revealed that most voters also felt the "government is not on the side of the people; and that their poverty is a result of government neglect, pervasive corruption, and abuse."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ John Campbell, "Boko Haram: Origins, Challenges, and Responses," *The Norwegian Peace building Resource Centre*, October 2014, 3.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Eme and Ibietan, "The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria," 11.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 12.

Indeed, under Jonathan's reign, Nigerian politics catered primarily to the elites.¹⁶⁶ Nigeria's oil wealth came to increasingly reside in "the hands of a small group of wealthy Nigerians,"¹⁶⁷ making its "income distribution among the most unequal in the world."¹⁶⁸ This left millions of Nigerians wallowing in poverty; lacking food, shelter, primary health care, education, roads, basic utilities, and sustained employment.¹⁶⁹ This is perhaps best captured by the high unemployment rate, which was 37% in 2013 compared to 21% in 2010.¹⁷⁰

Beyond its neglect of large segments of society, Jonathan's administration is also often accused of enabling BH's rise. Jonathan's critics alleged that Jonathan himself abetted the group to make Northern Nigeria so ungovernable as to prevent the 2015 elections and remain in power.¹⁷¹ This assessment is based on the view that Nigeria's military is more than capable of defeating BH if it truly wanted to, and the perception that President Jonathan required instability instigated by BH to ensure his political survival.¹⁷² Regardless of whether the accusations are accurate, BH did seize the initiative and launched its own offensive against Nigeria's political establishment.

E. BOKO HARAM'S EFFECT ON THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

In 2012, the World Bank released a report on governance indicators and ranked Nigeria in the 10.4th percentile on the rule of law, in the 15.8th percentile in government

¹⁶⁶ President Jonathan's re-election run in 2015, during the writing of this thesis, was taken as a further slap in the face for northerners, considering the pervasive corruption associated with his administration.

¹⁶⁷ John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 13, <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/collapse-nigerian-state-would-threaten-us-interests-region-cautions-former-ambassador-john-campbell-new-book/p23445>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Benjamin Maiangwa, Ufo Okeke Uzodike, Ayo Whetho, and Hakeem Onapajo, "Baptism by Fire: Boko Haram and the Reign of Terror in Nigeria," *Africa Today* 59, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africatoday.59.2.41>.

¹⁷⁰ Kayode Asaju, Samuel Arome, and Silas Felix Anyio, "The Rising Rate of Unemployment in Nigeria: The Socio-economic and Political Implications," *Global Business and Economics Research Journal* 3, no. 2 (2014): 13, <http://journal.globejournal.org/index.php/GBERJ/article/view/96/78>.

¹⁷¹ Peterside, "A Threat to National Security," 286.

¹⁷² Ibid.

effectiveness, and in the 11th percentile for corruption.¹⁷³ Even in terms of health care, Nigeria ranks at the bottom. According to the United Nations, Nigeria ranked 187th out of 191 nations in healthcare in 2010.¹⁷⁴ Such statistics reflect abysmal lapses in how the country is managed, particularly when it has so much economic potential. Tellingly, in 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan fired the head of the Nigerian Central Bank for failing to account for \$20 billion in oil revenue missing from the Treasury,¹⁷⁵ signaling his intent to fight corruption. However, in a sad irony, the message this transmitted to the Nigerian public was that “politicians and the[ir] supporters have been helping themselves to the country’s oil largess.”¹⁷⁶

Meanwhile, in northern Nigeria, the poverty rate is nearly double that of the rest of the country, and one in four children is severely malnourished. In addition, the child mortality rate in the north is alarming; for every 100 babies born, 20 are expected to die.¹⁷⁷ The 33% literacy rate in the north also cannot be overlooked, as it directly reflects the lack of schools and feeds a youth unemployment rate of 41%, which is among the highest in the world.¹⁷⁸ Particularly in Borno State, the birthplace of BH, the illiteracy rate is an alarming 83% among youth, and 48.5% of children do not attend school.¹⁷⁹

As these glaring statistics indicate, extremists have a vast pool from which to recruit, and they consequently have little trouble tapping into armed gangs, such as the *Almajirai* (street children) to do their bidding.¹⁸⁰ BH favors the *Almajirai* because traditionally, it is customary in Nigerian Islamic communities for the *Almajirai* to be

¹⁷³ Robert Looney, “The Boko Haram Economy,” *Foreign Policy*, 3, July 15, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/07/15/the_boko_haram_economy.

¹⁷⁴ Campbell, *Nigeria*, 13.

¹⁷⁵ Looney, “The Boko Haram Economy,” 3.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Eme and Ibietan, “The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria,” 12.

¹⁷⁸ Iro Aghedo and Oarhe Osumah, “The Boko Haram Uprising: How Should Nigeria Respond?” *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 5 (2012): 865.

¹⁷⁹ Daniel E. Agbibo, “Peace at Daggers Drawn: Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37, no. 1 (2014): 51.

¹⁸⁰ Solomon, “Counter-Terrorism in Nigeria: Responding to Boko Haram.”

beholden to those who provide them with basic necessities.¹⁸¹ Thus, such groups can be put to use by whoever provides them with basic necessities, such as food, clothes, and shelter. This act in itself is an adroit attempt by BH to establish a new social contract while undermining the underpinnings of the existing social contract between the populace and the state.

BH also publishes sermons and records condemning the corrupt attitudes of the *yan boko*, elites who have power thanks to their Western education. BH discredits the current un-Islamic and corrupt system represented by the *yan boko*, who are deemed to be “unjust, secular, and [without] divine origin.”¹⁸² This narrative resonates with the *Almajirai*, as well as the “impoverished, alienated and jobless northern Muslim youth,”¹⁸³ causing significant concerns within the Nigerian military.

F. UNDERSTANDING THE NIGERIAN MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE

Prior to the establishment of the Nigerian Army, local towns possessed loose military organizations consisting of able-bodied men who were called upon in time of crisis to defend the town. At the culmination of the crisis, the men usually returned to their homes and resumed their everyday life.¹⁸⁴ However, as the British gained control over Nigeria in the early 1860s,¹⁸⁵ they established a professional military, which no longer owed its allegiance to towns and villages, but rather to the state. This newly formed standing Army was paid, trained, and maintained to fight wars on behalf of the colonial government, and did so until the eve of Nigerian independence in 1960.¹⁸⁶

In preparation for independence, the incoming civilian GoN began to make adjustments to existing policies within the military, especially since colonial practice had

¹⁸¹ Alex Thurston, “Northern Nigeria: Qur’anic Schooling and the Almajirai,” *The Revealer*, May 1, 2012, <http://therevealer.org/archives/11086>.

¹⁸² Onuoha, “Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram,” 7.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ S. C. Ukpabi, “The Changing Role of the Military in Nigeria, 1900–1970,” *Africa Spectrum* 11, no. 1 (1976): 61.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

been to draw most of the infantry from the North and technical units from the South.¹⁸⁷ The new GoN instituted recruitment quotas of 50% from the North, and 25% each from the West and East.¹⁸⁸ The GoN also applied similar quotas to officer recruitment. The GoN intended the army to be above politics and focused the army's role on protecting the country from external attacks, assisting in internal security issues, and undertaking relief and welfare duties in the event of natural disasters.¹⁸⁹ These changes proved successful in establishing a more ethnically balanced and professional force. In fact, the army performed so well in resolving several domestic skirmishes and inspired such high confidence among Nigerians, that the civilian leadership asked it to supervise the 1964 presidential elections.¹⁹⁰

As a consequence of being perceived to be above politics, Nigeria's first military Junta, which toppled the elected civilian regime in 1966, took the country by surprise and changed the country's trajectory. As S. C. Ukpabi puts it, "by that single act, the Nigerian military changed its role from being the willing tool of the civilian government to becoming rulers of the country."¹⁹¹ Yet, as surprising as the coup was, Nigerians welcomed the "rigid discipline, austere nature, ability to get things done, devotion to duty and less corrupt attitude in public matters" associated with the military. This perception allowed the military to begin to dominate all aspects of Nigerian politics, to include military members and uniformed personnel serving as State governors, ambassadors, and even heads of corporations.¹⁹²

Yet, the inability of the military to mend the widening cracks within its own ranks, along with other issues, led to military members from Eastern Nigeria deciding to

¹⁸⁷ Ukpabi, "The Changing Role of the Military in Nigeria, 1900–1970," 70.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 74.

secede from Nigeria and establish the Republic of Biafra in 1967.¹⁹³ The ensuing civil war saw the Nigerian military grow from its prewar size of 8,000 to 250,000 by 1970,¹⁹⁴ ultimately defeating Biafra. Continued unrest within the institution nonetheless led to several successive coups. Indeed, there were seven (not counting failed attempts) between 1966 and 1998,¹⁹⁵ when Nigeria finally transitioned to civilian democratic rule.

In the five decades since Nigeria's independence, the military has served as the governments force of choice whenever it has faced uprisings that challenge the government. For example, in 1980, the GoN called upon the military to address the Maitatsine uprising.¹⁹⁶ Maitatsine, the nom de guerre of the sect's leader, Alhaji Muhammadu Maroua (also known as Mohammed Marwa) stirred up religious unrest in Kano, northern Nigeria.¹⁹⁷ Maitatsine drew inspiration from Abubakr Mahmud Gumi, who had previously revitalized Islamic "scholarship and activism" in the north, utilizing the narrative of Dan Fodio's "Golden Era" of Nigerian Muslim self-determination.¹⁹⁸ The military aggressively pursued Maitatsine and his followers, resulting in his death and 5,000 members of the sect, lending credence to the idea that the army should be turned to in such matters.¹⁹⁹

In 2006, Nigeria once again used its military to confront the threat posed by MEND.²⁰⁰ MEND consisted of several militant groups in the Niger Delta, an oil-rich region in southern Nigeria who "object to the environmental degradation and

¹⁹³ Kalu N. Kalu, "The Praetorian Orthodoxy: Crisis of the Nigerian Military State," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 28 (2000): 274, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=f9cc3cc9-93ce-4533-8ccf-59bbe2551bce%40sessionmgr112&hid=123>.

¹⁹⁴ Ukpabi, "The Changing Role of the Military in Nigeria, 1900–1970," 74.

¹⁹⁵ "Nigeria: A History of Coups," *BBC News*, February 15, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/83449.stm>.

¹⁹⁶ Muhib Opeloye, "The Socio-Political Factor in the Christian-Muslim Conflict in Nigeria," *Islam & Christian Muslim Relations* 9, no. 2 (July 1998): 231.

¹⁹⁷ Raymond. Hickey, "The 1982 Maitatsine Uprisings in Nigeria: A Note," *African Affairs* 83, no. 331 (April 1984): 251–256.

¹⁹⁸ Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect," 36.

¹⁹⁹ Opeloye, "The Socio-Political Factor in the Christian-Muslim Conflict in Nigeria," 231.

²⁰⁰ Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group," *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/mend-niger-deltas-umbrella-militant-group/p12920>.

underdevelopment of the region, and the lack of benefits the community has received from its extensive oil resources.”²⁰¹ After several failed attempts to defeat MEND, the GoN negotiated a cease-fire and amnesty for the group in 2009. The cease-fire resulted in over 15,000 gunmen turning in their weapons and the GoN committing \$1.3 billion to economic development packages in the Niger Delta.²⁰² Although MEND has significantly reduced its attacks, it remains active in the Niger Delta.

In 2011, the GoN set-up an internal JTF to address the BH threat.²⁰³ The JTF, also known as “Operation Restore Order” (JTORO), met with initial success, including “the September 2011 arrest of a top Boko Haram commander, Ali Saleh, and five accomplices in Maiduguri, BH’s spiritual capital.”²⁰⁴ In 2011, the JTF deployed 30,000 Army, police and state security personnel to enforce a state of emergency and curfew in Borno, Yobe, Plateau, Niger and Adamawa states.²⁰⁵ The operation was somewhat successful, but the military’s inability to mount consistent offensives to ensure BH’s demise is a testament to BH’s resiliency and is indicative of the problems within the military establishment.

This could also help explain why the Nigerian government has hired mercenaries. The *New York Times* confirmed reports of a senior Nigerian official admitting to the presence of South African mercenaries in the country to assist in the fight against BH. From what officials stated, South African mercenaries were remotely housed in Maiduguri and only conducted operations at night to prevent their presence from being widely known.²⁰⁶ By outsourcing the country’s internal security, Nigeria is confirming to the world the inadequacy of its military, causing Nigeria scholar, Paul Lubeck, to refer to the episode as “the destitution of Nigerian nationalism.”²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ Hanson, “MEND: The Niger Delta’s Umbrella Militant Group.”

²⁰² “Nigeria: Timeline of Recent Unrest in the Niger Delta,” *Irin News*, February 4, 2010, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/88002/nigeria-timeline-of-recent-unrest-in-niger-delta-region>.

²⁰³ Solomon, “Counter-Terrorism in Nigeria: Responding to Boko Haram,” 7.

²⁰⁴ Agbibo, “Peace at Daggers Drawn: Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria,” 60.

²⁰⁵ Solomon, “Counter-Terrorism in Nigeria: Responding to Boko Haram,” 7.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

G. BOKO HARAM'S EFFECT ON THE NIGERIAN MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE

Although Nigeria's military has achieved moderate success, its indiscriminate use of force has alienated the population it is charged to protect, making it less effective than it could be. Its militaristic approach often results in civilian deaths, regardless of how much care is taken because separating the insurgents from the population is always difficult.²⁰⁸ For instance, a 2014 confrontation between BH and the JTF in Baga village, near Nigeria's border with Cameroon, resulted in 187 civilian deaths and 77 injured in the crossfire. When interviewed, "Baga residents accused the JTF, not Boko Haram, of firing indiscriminately at civilians and setting fire to much of the fishing town."²⁰⁹ Such disparaging actions run in stark violation of the Hobbesian social contract model where citizens give up their individual liberty for common security.²¹⁰

Woefully, these reports are not isolated, but are emblematic of a broader pattern. Some, like Daniel Agbibo see a military whose legacy has been rooted in "arbitrariness, ruthlessness, brutality, vandalism, incivility, low accountability to the public and corruption."²¹¹ Sadly, the government's tactics of repression, extra-judicial killings, and arrest without trials have caused residents to become more scared of the police and the Army than of the insurgents.²¹² Frustrated, villages have formed their own self-defense forces to combat BH instead of rely on an untrustworthy military. These Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), or *Yan Gora*, track down BH members in their communities, whom they turn in to the state or often kill themselves.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Agbibo, "Peace at Daggers Drawn: Boko Haram and the State of Emergency in Nigeria," 62.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 61.

²¹⁰ Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²¹¹ Ibid., 208.

²¹² Yusuf, "Harvest of Violence: The Neglect of Basic Rights and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," 379.

²¹³ Daniel E. Agbibo, "Can Nigeria's Youth Destroy Boko Haram's Caliphate?" *Al Jazeera*, August 31, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/08/can-nigerian-youth-destroy-boko-h-2014831729932280.html>.

To combat the CJTF, BH has leaned on its messaging, releasing a video on March 25, 2014 of Abubakr Shekau commanding his followers not to spare women, the elderly, mentally disabled, or false converts. BH then followed up with a heightened strategy of terrorizing entire villages.²¹⁴ The barbarism associated with BH's actions—specifically, publicized executions and beheadings—have had their intended effect, resulting in reports of Nigerian soldiers shooting themselves, feigning illness or, even worse, defecting rather than engaging in open conflict with BH.²¹⁵ In essence, BH's impact on the military culture is such that external intervention is increasingly sought.

The growing discontent and region wide frustration resulting from the Nigerian military's failure to neutralize BH has energized the AU to take action. In February 2015, the AU's Peace and Security Council deployed a 7,500 man Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) sourced from Benin, Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon to confront BH and assist with the associated humanitarian crisis. At the time of this writing, the AU is also seeking a U.N. security mandate to increase financial and logistical support to the MNJTF.²¹⁶ The assistant secretary for the U.S. Bureau of African Affairs, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, has also offered training and technical assistance to the MNJTF troops explaining that "Boko Haram's activity in the region is now a focal point for the United States."²¹⁷ If Linda Thomas-Greenfield's claim is true, then the Nigerian military will benefit from the much-needed help it requires to combat BH effects and messaging.

As of April 2015, the MNJTF had made considerable gains against BH, regaining some key terrain previously under BH's control, to include the town of Damasak

²¹⁴ Perouse de Montclos, "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency: Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis," 15.

²¹⁵ Jola Sotubo, "Soldiers Shoot Selves, Fake Illness to Avoid Fighting Terrorists," Pulse.ng, October 13, 2014, <http://pulse.ng/news/boko-haram-soldiers-shoot-selves-fake-illness-to-avoid-fighting-terrorists-id3192872.html>.

²¹⁶ Obinna Anyadike, "Boko Haram Facing Mounting Regional Military Pressure," *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis*, February 4, 2015, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/101088/boko-haram-facing-mounting-regional-military-pressure>.

²¹⁷ Johnny Magdaleno, "Mugabe Picked As Next African Union Leader As Fight Against Boko haram Ramps Up," *VICE News*, February 1, 2015, <https://news.vice.com/article/mugabe-picked-as-next-african-union-leader-as-fight-against-boko-haram-ramps-up>.

in Nigeria, which served as BH's regional headquarters.²¹⁸ Although the gains are encouraging, the mere fact that the Nigerian military, a once revered force in West Africa, has proven unable to solve what was initially a Nigerian problem, is telling. In fact, after seizing Damasak and waiting several days for relief from the Nigerian military, Chadian and Nigerien members of the MNJTF joked that the Nigerian military was uninvolved in the offensive due to fear.²¹⁹ This perception is a far cry from that of a military once reputed to be the best in the region.

To counter BH's effect on the civilian populations of northern Nigeria, President Jonathan recently implemented the following initiatives: Presidential Initiative for Northeast Nigeria (PINE), a \$25 million "Marshall plan" aimed at using government and private philanthropy to link security to social and economic interventions in northern Nigeria;²²⁰ Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives focused on counter-radicalization, de-radicalization, and strategic communication; Almajiri Education Programs (AEP) aimed at ending the dependency of millions of Muslim children in the north, schooled under the Almajiri system and susceptible to radicalization;²²¹ and the Safe School Initiative (SSI), whose primary goal is ensuring a safe learning environment in the northeast through the rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools in the wake of the abduction of the school girls from Chibok.²²² The jury remains out on whether all of these reforms will have the desired effect.

H. SUMMARY

The on-going conflict between BH and the government is a zero-sum game that requires a serious strategy and commitment of resources to combat BH's messaging. BH

²¹⁸ Adam Nossiter, "Nigerian Army Noticeably Absent in Town Taken from Boko Haram," *New York Times*, March 20, 2015, http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/03/21/world/africa/nigerian-army-noticeably-absent-in-town-taken-from-boko-haram.html?referrer=&_r=0.

²¹⁹ Nossiter, "Nigerian Army Noticeably Absent in Town Taken from Boko Haram," 20.

²²⁰ Obinna Anyadike, "Softly, Softly: The Humanitarian Schemes Aimed at Countering Boko Haram," *IRIN News*, February 6, 2015, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/101101/softly-softly-the-humanitarian-schemes-aimed-at-countering-boko-haram>.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

has proven over its relatively short lifespan to be resilient and crafty in its ability to affect Nigeria's ethnic, political, and military institutions. Its actions have frayed Nigeria's social fabric by furthering the divide between Christians and Muslims, and even among Muslims. BH has also succeeded in exploiting gaps between the government and the population, and in weakening confidence in (and of) the military.

The formation of the MNJTF by the AU will improve Nigeria's odds against BH, but Nigeria will still bear the burden of addressing the core grievances that gave rise to BH in the first place. The offer of technical assistance from the U.S. government is also critical as it can potentially counter BH's propensity to morph into a more sinister organization capable of achieving territorial sovereignty. We will explore this more in the next chapter.

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IV. LEARNING FROM THE ISLAMIC STATE EXPERIENCE

From your brother in Allah Abu Mohammad Abu Bakr Bin Mohammad Shekau The Imam of Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnah Lidda Awati Wal Jihad...we announce our alliance to the Caliph of Muslims, Abubakar Abu Bakr Ibrahim ibn Awad ibn Ibrahim al-Husseini al-Qurashi, and will hear and obey in times of difficulty and prosperity.²²³

—Abubakr Shekau pledges *bayat* to the Islamic State
March 7, 2015

A. INTRODUCTION

Beginning in late 2014, BH began a campaign of terror focused on capturing population centers within northern Nigeria, ostensibly to achieve a territorially sovereign Caliphate. This successful military effort later extended into under-governed regions of neighboring nations, first Cameroon, then Chad and Niger. BH acquired a contiguous land area of approximately 200,000 square miles,²²⁴ roughly the size of the U.S. state of Missouri. Countless predominantly Muslim communities exist in the region, where BH has massacred many and forced others into sexual slavery or impressed militia service. BH has also imposed strict sharia law in accordance with the group's radical ideology.

These actions by BH parallel the abrupt rise of IS, and have led many Nigeria experts, political scientists, and journalists to suggest that BH began modeling its activities after the successes of the radical Salafist group in Iraq and Syria.²²⁵ Whether the group develops the organizational and material ability to govern captured regions akin to IS during 2014 and 2015 remains to be seen. However, BH has striven to achieve a Caliphate and exclusive sovereignty within the borders of not only Nigeria, but also neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Another impetus is the historical success some

²²³ Aaron Y. Zelin, *Jihadology*, March 7, 2015, <http://jihadology.net/category/individuals/leaders/imam-abu-bakr-shekau/>.

²²⁴ Tom Rogan, "The New Islamic State: Boko Haram," *The National Review*, January 20, 2015, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/411819/new-islamic-state-boko-haram-tom-rogan>.

²²⁵ Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram Is Acting Increasingly Like the Islamic State. Why Don't We Treat It That Way?" *The Washington Post*, November 13, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/11/13/boko-haram-is-acting-increasingly-like-the-islamic-state-why-dont-we-treat-it-that-way/>.

separatist groups have achieved in gaining aspects of sovereignty that has then forced not only recognition from the governments they fought, but also from the international community.

B. TERROR IN THE PURSUIT OF SOVEREIGNTY

Terror is utilized by organizations as a means to promote fear within populations, for purposes of gaining political concessions and often achieving regime change. Consequently, much of the available literature analyzes the use of terror as a means to gain political recognition. Aggrieved groups throughout history have sought to achieve recognition, whether on ethnic, sectarian, or political grounds. Groups typically begin to seek recognition through non-violent movements, with the goal of forcing the state to address grievances.²²⁶ Those groups that seek sovereignty almost always transition to the use of violent means. This transition to violence may be coerced by internal or external agitators and consequently, the established government will attempt to swiftly and often violently suppress them.²²⁷

Self-determination is the goal that drives groups to seek both political concessions and, in some cases, outright territorial sovereignty.²²⁸ The commonly observed coalescence of self-determination groups does not suggest that these groups are in turn a collective homogeneous grouping of a single aggrieved ethnic, sectarian or political collection, but are often a stratum of society that believes it is not expressed within the recognized governing majority.²²⁹

The modern international system has evolved from the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia.²³⁰ Sovereign states are recognized within the international system as consisting of “bordered territory occupied by a settled population under effective and at

²²⁶ Oliver P. Richmond, “States of Sovereignty, Sovereign States, and Ethnic Claims for International Status,” *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 382.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid., 394.

²²⁹ Alexis Heraclides, *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 16–17.

²³⁰ “The Treaty of Westphalia,” accessed March 13, 2015, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp.

least to some extent civil—or civilized—government.”²³¹ However, within these borders not all ethnic, sectarian and political groups have equal representation within the society. To the contrary, minorities often suffer a degree of “identity suppression” by governing groups.²³² Minorities, and those with no power, actively resist assimilation into broader society. Instead, they seek autonomy.²³³

The Treaty of Westphalia also created a system of states in which, as Max Weber describes the dynamic, rulers and ruled enter a *contract* where contributors receive a degree of representation and security from the state, and in turn, the state receives “voluntary obedience” from the population.²³⁴ According to Weber, this “voluntary obedience” from society lends the ruling entity the authority to maintain order and gain revenue through taxation; in exchange the population receives goods, services and protection.

While Weber’s description of the state is ideal, Mancur Olson describes how rulers often behave by distinguishing the separation between “stationary and roving bandits.”²³⁵ Olson suggests “roving bandits” settle and seize terrain to become “stationary bandits.”²³⁶ Eventually, the stationary “bandit-turned-ruler” enters into a contract with society, or at least some members of society, whereby some profit from the goods protected by the regime have to go to support both the regime and its defense. Problems arise when the state fails to manage its recourses or these relationships appropriately.²³⁷ Then, as both Weber and Olsen acknowledge, the authority of the ruling

²³¹ Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States, Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 38.

²³² Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Identity, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination,” in *Sovereignty at the Crossroads*, ed. Lewis E. Lugo (New York/London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 106–108.

²³³ Richmond, “States of Sovereignty, Sovereign States, and Ethnic Claims for International Status,” 388.

²³⁴ A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, trans., Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 224–331.

²³⁵ Mancur Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy and Development,” *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (September 1993): 568.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 568–570.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 571.

entity is no longer regarded as legitimate and members of society no longer remain acquiescent.

Secessionist and irredentist groups have utilized both violent and political means to achieve complete or partial autonomy.²³⁸ What often begins as non-violent protest evolves into organized armed revolt, typically assisted by harsh suppression by the ruling or governing entity. As movements expand, the potential to achieve a degree of sovereignty increases. Depending on the nature of the grievances during revolt, the movement will either seek inclusion in the current or reformed government, or autonomy in the form of partial or total sovereignty.

C. INCLUSION VERSUS EXCLUSION-SEEKING GROUPS

This dynamic, we suggest, places rebel, insurgent and other groups at either end of the Sovereignty-Seeking Terror Organization or Inclusion-Seeking Terror Organization continuum. During the 20th century, several insurgent movements fit these typologies. The Irish Republic Army (IRA) and its political wing Sinn Fein, fought Great Britain nearly a century before it sought inclusion in the newly reformed Irish Government.²³⁹ Likewise, the Shia protectionist group Hezbollah successfully combated rival Lebanese separatist groups and the State of Israel, yet shifted its focus to eventually hold seats in the Lebanese parliament.²⁴⁰ Conversely, Euskandi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and its political wing Harri Batasuna (HB), sought political and territorial separation from Spain, based on historic rights of autonomy or *Fueros*,²⁴¹ the realization of which continues to elude the Basque people due to political disunity.²⁴² Finally, Hamas represents one of the most powerful and legitimate military and political entity in the

²³⁸ Richmond, "States of Sovereignty, Sovereign States, and Ethnic Claims for International Status," 382–385.

²³⁹ Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), 39.

²⁴⁰ Norton, "The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Politics," 481.

²⁴¹ Paddy Woodworth, *Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, The GAL and Spanish Democracy* (Ireland: Cork University Press, 2001), 27.

²⁴² Eduardo Ruiz Vieytez, "A New Political Status for the Basque Country?" *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 12, no. 2 (2013): 81–82.

isolated Gaza Strip,²⁴³ but is unable to achieve full autonomy from the State of Israel due to its continued use of violence. In all of these cases, sovereignty and either political or ethnic recognition, or both, were key factors in the efforts to gain either political inclusion or complete political and often territorial exclusion from the existing state.

The relationship between SSTO's and ITO's and the use of violent means to achieve political concessions is depicted in Figure 5. As the model illustrates, Inclusive groups seek an aspect of inclusion and representation within the established government. Conversely, exclusive groups seek complete separation, either symbolically or territorially, from the established government or regime. The star indicates the point at which groups begin to seek autonomy from the state.

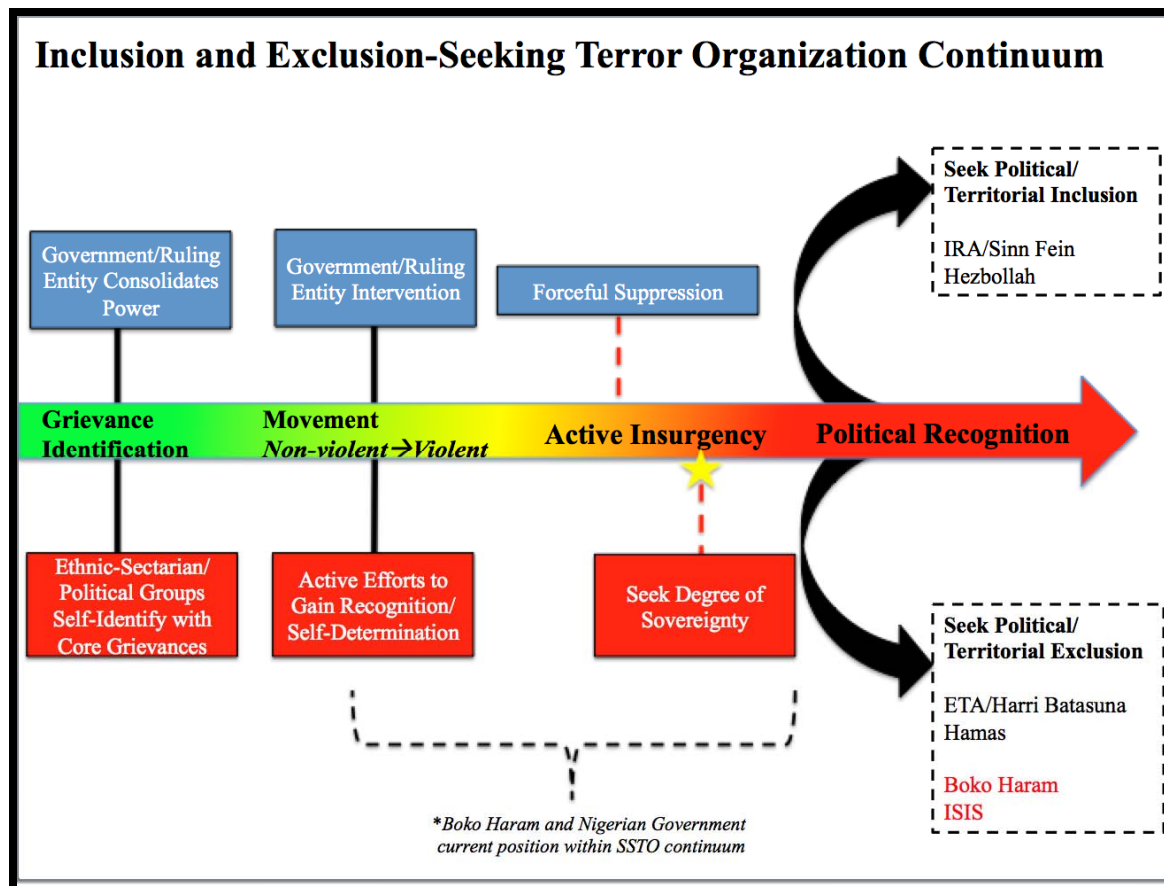


Figure 5. Inclusion and Exclusion Seeking Terror Organization Continuum

²⁴³ Tavishi Bashin and Maria Carter Hallward, " Hamas as a Political Party: Democratization in the Palestinian Territories," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25, no. 1 (2012): 79–81.

Inclusive terror organizations seek a degree of representation within the established government or state structure. Many alienated groups initially seek inclusion, within a state system established through previous social unrest and subsequent reconstitution.²⁴⁴ Again, we see this with Hezbollah's evolution from extremist organization to political party following the decades long Lebanese Civil War.²⁴⁵ This also describes the inclusion of Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Movement into the Irish Republic following the Belfast Accords in 1998.²⁴⁶ In each case, separatist groups coalesced during a period of national reunification. These groups began as single ethno-sectarian aligned organizations, intent on establishing protected semi-autonomous regions within the defined borders of established state. The initial tactical goal of these groups was to form a separate society within the confines of the larger state, but they later refocused their efforts on injecting themselves into the established state. As a result, both Hezbollah and Sinn Fein sought political inclusion.

In contrast, SSTOs persist in seeking a degree of exclusion, ranging from partial to full autonomy, from an existing state. Likewise, SSTOs seek to dominate a particular area, or what might be described as distinct and bounded terrain. For instance, while the Basque separatist group ETA sought political and territorial sovereignty in the Pyrenees region,²⁴⁷ the Palestinian group Hamas continue to seek the full independence of Palestine.²⁴⁸ In 1996, as a result of the civil war following the overthrow of the Communist Afghan regime under President Najibullah, the Taliban's focus transitioned from violent upheaval to the provision of government services within the newly acquired country.²⁴⁹ As a result of seeking varying degrees of autonomy, each group regardless of

²⁴⁴ Heraclides, *Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics*, 19.

²⁴⁵ Benedetta Berti, "Armed Groups as Political Parties and their Role in Electoral Politics: The Case of Hizballah," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34, no. 12 (2011): 944–946.

²⁴⁶ Anthony Richards, "Terrorist Groups and Political Fronts: The IRA, Sinn Fein, the Peace Process and Democracy," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, no. 4 (2001): 76–77, 84.

²⁴⁷ Woodworth, *Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, The GAL and Spanish Democracy*, 27–30.

²⁴⁸ Hamas Covenant, "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement," *Yale Law School*, August 18, 1988, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

²⁴⁹ Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, 96–102.

their position within the SSTO/ITO continuum, became responsible to provide services and representation to a broader, often cross-sectarian constituency.²⁵⁰

D. “THE ISLAMIC STATE” AS AN EXCLUSIVE SSTO CALIPHATE SYSTEM

The Caliphate that both BH and IS seek, we suggest, is a form of an exclusive SSTO. Both BH and IS have displayed a desire to establish a territorially distinct region where they can practice self-rule. IS, in particular, rejects the “apostate regimes” of neighboring Arab countries, and seeks the subsequent liberation of Muslim lands.²⁵¹ Again, this is not a new concept. In 1996, prior to his military campaign to seize Afghanistan, Mullah Omar declared himself the Caliph of all Muslims and Afghanistan the Emirate.²⁵² In both cases, the Taliban and IS justified their actions by suggesting that apostate regimes do not adhere to the tenets of sharia law but instead accept the Western system of state sovereignty.²⁵³ Although a wide range of people, from politicians to theological experts, label IS and BH as “nihilistic” groups, focused on the use of violence for propaganda purposes and to achieve an apocalyptic vision, the groups do in fact adhere to an existing radical Salafist Muslim ideology.²⁵⁴ Both groups agree that Islamic Lands, or “*dar al-Islam*,” must be acquired and defended militarily through violence waged within the Land of Jihad, “*dar al-harb*.”²⁵⁵ Although theological discrepancies exist when it comes to how to envision the modern Caliphate,²⁵⁶ both groups believe it is incumbent upon them to establish territorial sovereignty. As Stuart Elden suggests:

There is therefore a crucial spatial element to ideals of Islamic political rule. This may operate within existing territorial boundaries, seek to

²⁵⁰ Heather S. Gregg, “Setting a Place at the Table: Ending Insurgencies Through the Political Process,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 22, no. 4 (2011): 649.

²⁵¹ Stuart Elden, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (London/Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 33.

²⁵² Rashid, *The Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, 42.

²⁵³ Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants,” *The Atlantic*, March 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Elden, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty*, 45.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 46.

redraw them, or transcend them entirely into a more open regional or even global system.²⁵⁷

To achieve this goal, IS seized large portions of north, west and central Iraq and portions of southwest Syria beginning in June 2014. This non-state actor's aim has been to gain physical territory and to create an alternative government."²⁵⁸ The charismatic and spiritual leader of IS, Abu-Bakr Al Baghdadi uses this vision to incite regional Jihad and lay claim to the resurrection of a regional Islamic Caliphate.²⁵⁹

By late 2014, IS had captured towns along the Syria-Iraq border, establishing a "capital" within the Syrian city of Raqqa, as it continued to vie for control of larger Iraqi cities in the western province of Anbar. Although IS has had considerable military success and has subdued the inhabitants of conquered territories by applying brutal violence, ethnic cleansing, and engaging in the savage murder of members of captured Iraqi and Syrian forces, the organization has also advocated providing governmental infrastructure. Moreover, Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi has repeatedly emphasized "state-building" in his rhetoric.²⁶⁰ IS has endeavored to institutionalize social grievance adjudication processes, seize infrastructure to acquire revenue and even attempted to create a *state* monetary system.

E. THE BRIEF EVOLUTION OF IS

"The Islamic State," has adopted several identities since its inception during the U.S. war in Iraq.²⁶¹ The group began by announcing itself as the "Islamic State of Iraq and Al Sham" (*al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham*).²⁶² The U.S. invasion of Iraq

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Harleen K. Gambhir, "Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State," *Institute for the Study of War: Backgrounder*, 6, August 6, 2014, <http://www.reteccp.org/biblioteca/disponibili/guerraepace/guer-ra/guerredireligione/ISIS-magazine2.pdf>.

²⁵⁹ Gary Anderson, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the Theory and Practice of Jihad," *Small Wars Journal*, 2, August 12, 2014, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-and-the-theory-and-practice-of-jihad>.

²⁶⁰ Gambhir, "Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of The Islamic State," 4.

²⁶¹ Richard Barrett "The Islamic State," *The Soufan Group*, 13, November, 2014, <http://soufan-group.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>.

²⁶² Ibid., 3.

attracted jihadis from other regions of conflict, notably a prominent native Jordanian Al-Qaeda member named Abu Musab Al-Zarkawi (AMZ).²⁶³ Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) became the vanguard of the AQ-sponsored Iraqi insurgency.

U.S.-led coalition efforts to dismantle remaining elements of the Ba'ath members from the government and military led to a security void.²⁶⁴ The Iraqi insurgency took advantage of this environment and AMZ's newly formed organization targeted both coalition forces and segments of Iraqi society to create instability and to provoke sectarian conflict.²⁶⁵ AMZ's initial terror campaign was conspicuously marked by video recorded executions of foreign contractors and *takfirs*, or non-believers.²⁶⁶ Its message was one of sectarian exclusivity; a tactic later adopted by its protégé group, IS.

By June 2006, with AMZ's terror campaign at fever pitch, coalition forces succeeded in killing the AQI commander during a successful special-operations-led air strike.²⁶⁷ This is when Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi's predecessors, Abu Ayyub Al-Musri and Abu Omar Al Baghdadi renamed the organization "The Islamic State in Iraq" (ISI), and began to promote the group's goal of Islamic self-determination.²⁶⁸ With Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi, now elected as the leader of the organization in 2011, the group gained a much needed respite from coalition counter-terrorism efforts and proved able to reorganize under the cover of the chaos created by the growing civil conflict in Syria.²⁶⁹

²⁶³ Zachary Laub, "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria," *Council on Foreign Affairs: Backgrounders*, August 8, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state-iraq-syria/p14811>.

²⁶⁴ Laub, "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria."

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Barrett, "The Islamic State," 11.

²⁶⁷ Erica Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, "Insurgent Leader Al-Zarkawi Killed In Iraq," *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2006/06/08/AR2006060800114.html>.

²⁶⁸ Barrett, "The Islamic State," 21.

²⁶⁹ Eliot Friedland, "The Islamic State," *Clarion Project Special Report*, 9, November 2014, <http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/islamic-state-isis-isil-factsheet-1.pdf>.

The group took further advantage of the Syrian civil war to expand and reinvent itself as the “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.”²⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, the group’s rapid and forceful expansion put it in fierce competition with staunchly loyal Al-Qaeda affiliates, such as the Al-Nusra Front. Much of this friction was a result of conflicting ideologies; Al-Nusra favored a more cooperative approach to gaining territory alongside other separatist groups, as opposed to IS’s view of exclusive sharia based governance.²⁷¹ Ayman Zawahiri, Osama Bin Laden’s successor, attempted to neutralize the conflict between the two groups. However, Al-Baghdadi rejected Zawahiri’s efforts, which eventually led to IS’s separation from Al-Qaeda.²⁷²

As IS gained symbolically significant physical territory in Syria, as depicted in Figure 6, the group established its capital in the city of Raqqa, the historical location of the Abbasid Caliphate,²⁷³ in the northwest region of the war-ravished country.²⁷⁴ Meanwhile, with the U.S.-led coalition’s very public and swift withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, latent sectarian grievances again began to re-materialize in the Sunni-dominated western provinces of Iraq, a region where U.S. forces had previously worked with the Sons of Iraq during the Anbar Awakening.²⁷⁵ IS capitalized on Sunni grievances against the predominantly Shia government led by former Iraqi Prime Minister Noori Al-Maliki, whose government was perceived by many within the Iraqi Sunni population as having not adequately provided representation or distribution of services.²⁷⁶ The result presented an opportunity for IS to grow its insurgency among the aggrieved Sunni populations in Iraq.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Friedland “The Islamic State,” 10.

²⁷² Barrett, “The Islamic State,” 12–13.

²⁷³ Ibid., 36.

²⁷⁴ Mariam Karouny, “In Northeast Syria, Islamic State Builds a Government,” *Reuters News Online*, September 4, 2014, <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSKBN0GZ0D120140904?irpc=932>.

²⁷⁵ Greg Bruno, “The Role of the ‘Sons of Iraq’ in Improving Security,” *The Washington Post*, April 28, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/28/AR2008042801120.html>.

²⁷⁶ Friedland “The Islamic State,” 10.

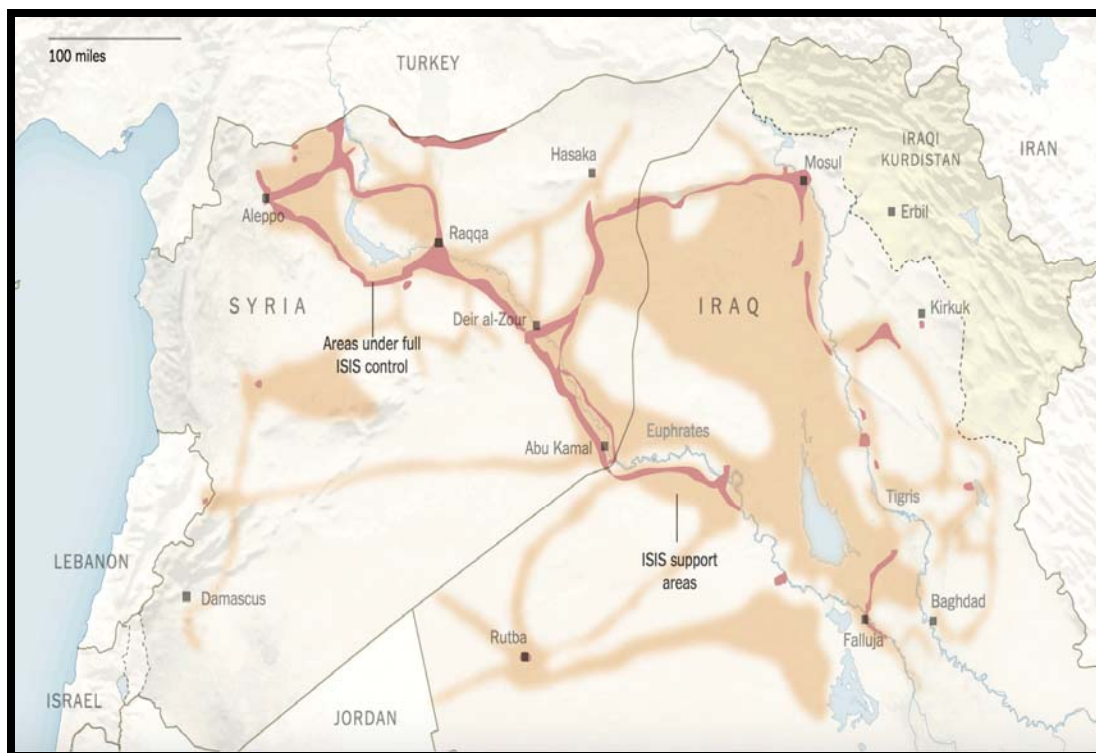


Figure 6. Regions Captured by IS during 2014 and 2015²⁷⁷

F. “IS” AS A GOVERNING SСТО

IS’s *governing* body is very sophisticated, comparable to that of established nation-states. Ironically much of IS upper echelon leadership have been widely connected to the Coalition Detention Center Camp Bucca, which operated during the U.S.-led war in Iraq.²⁷⁸ Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi himself was reportedly interned at the U.S. facility as a lower echelon member of the Iraqi insurgency.²⁷⁹ The three elements of the IS governing body: The Sharia Council, The Shura Council, and the Military Council, draw on the experience of former Ba’ath government and military figures, in addition to former AQI members.²⁸⁰ The combination of both former military and government officials and

²⁷⁷ “ISIS Conflict in Maps, Photos and Videos,” *New York Times*, April 7, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/06/12/world/middleeast/the-iraq-isis-conflict-in-maps-photos-and-video.html?_r=0.

²⁷⁸ Craig Whiteside, “Catch and Release in the Land of Two Rivers,” *War on the Rocks*, December 18, 2014, <http://warontherocks.com/2014/12/catch-and-release-in-the-land-of-two-rivers/>; Barrett, “The Islamic State,” 25.

²⁷⁹ Barrett, “The Islamic State,” 19.

²⁸⁰ Barrett, “The Islamic State,” 19, 36–40.

experienced insurgents presented IS with the ability to draw from a wide range of experience.²⁸¹ The fact that individuals from such divergent and formerly hostile backgrounds have joined forces seems a direct consequence of their shared internment in Camp Bucca, and other coalition internment camps.²⁸²

Meanwhile, most of the territory recently acquired by IS has been in regions of Iraq where the state has failed to grant adequate representation to certain populations, or in the case of Syria, where there has been a complete deterioration of the state. From the outset of IS's military campaign in Iraq and southern Syria, Abu Bakr-Al Baghdadi has stated that the organization seeks to create a governmental structure under the auspices of a "Caliphate" evocative of the "Four Rightly Guided [Sunni] Caliphs" who ruled over the newly established Islamic empire within the region until the 13th century.²⁸³ IS has justified its actions by following Salafist Islamic principles (*dawa*), whereby any entity resistant to its rule is deemed "apostate (*murtad*) or Infidel (*kafir*)," and is subsequently subject to "death, or taxation (*jizya*)."²⁸⁴ By basing its actions on these principles, IS presents itself as justified in the attempt to rule populations.

With regard to governance, IS has established local governmental structures in captured cities, such as Aleppo and Mosul. Disregarding sub-populations, such as the Yazidis, Kurds, and Christians,²⁸⁵ IS has provided some grievance adjudication and rule of law. The Sharia council, one of IS's three established councils, creates legislation and oversees enforcement of sharia law within occupied regions.²⁸⁶ Perhaps IS's greatest benefit from the combination of rule of law and near exclusive utilization force has been the recognition of the organization as the only ruling authority in the regions it occupies. Syrian and Iraqi forces have achieved few decisive victories against IS. Likewise,

²⁸¹ Ibid., 24–26.

²⁸² Whiteside, "Catch and Release in the Land of Two Rivers."

²⁸³ Wood, "What ISIS's Leader Really Wants: The Longer He Lives the More Powerful He Becomes."

²⁸⁴ Barrett, "The Islamic State," 5, 23.

²⁸⁵ Isabel Coles, "Kurds Battle for Kobani Unites People Divided by Borders," *Reuters News Agency Online*, October 31, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/31/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-idUSKBN0IK0DN20141031>.

²⁸⁶ Barrett, "The Islamic State," 36.

Kurdish groups have yet to completely defend against IS domination. Notably IS's successes have emboldened its leadership and its members, and also convinces frightened skeptics that the organization is legitimate through the control considerable territory, if only through the use of uncontested force.

G. STATE REVENUE

In a quite brief period of time IS has become materially and monetarily wealthy. IS capitalized on seized assets from local inhabitants of occupied regions, captured military hardware following successful engagement against Iraqi and Syrian forces, and criminal enterprises. One of IS's most notable initial criminal acts occurred after the successful and lucrative robbery of an Iraqi National Bank branch in Mosul.²⁸⁷ The robbery provided IS with a tremendous amount of capital with which to fund operations. However, this event also meant that IS did not mutually invest in market formation or management of a state's assets.

Early on IS sought to seize critical Iraqi infrastructure in areas, such as oil rich regions of northern Iraq. International organizations and scholars estimate that the daily revenue collection from oil attained by IS ranges between \$1–2 million,²⁸⁸ which helped sustain the group through 2014. With this revenue collection, IS has attempted to implement more socially focused programs. Similarly, IS has created a system of taxation that closely resembles extortion. Taxes (*Jizya*), a level of extortion, have been leveled heavily against ruled populations. Likewise, IS has established a "Fighter Benefit Plan,"²⁸⁹ similar to Hezbollah's Martyrdom Foundation,²⁹⁰ which provides payments to the families of IS fighters killed in combat. As previously mentioned, IS publicizes and welcomes the emigration of foreign professionals (*hijrah*), ranging from medical field

²⁸⁷ Yochi Dreazen, "ISIS Uses Mafia Tactics to Fund Its Own Operations without Help from Persian Donors," *Foreign Policy Online*, June 17, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/17/isis-uses-mafia-tactics-to-fund-its-own-operations-without-help-from-persian-gulf-donors/>.

²⁸⁸ Keith Johnson, "Putting the Islamic State over a Barrel," *Foreign Policy Online*, November 18, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/18/putting-the-islamic-state-over-a-barrel/>.

²⁸⁹ Bennett, "U.S. Officials Frustrated by Nigeria's Response to Girls' Kidnapping," 45.

²⁹⁰ Cambanis, *A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah's Endless Legions and Their Endless War Against Israel*, 156.

workers and social workers to teachers and intellectuals.²⁹¹ Assuming that IS takes greater care with its finances, “The Islamic State” should be able to increasingly provide some of the same services as a functioning government.

H. MEDIA AND MESSAGING

IS’s terror campaign has been well publicized thanks to its internationally broadcast acts of violence, from the beheadings of Western journalists in 2014 to the immolation of a captured Jordanian pilot in 2015.²⁹² Media operations remain a foundation of IS’s campaign to frightening Western audience, legitimizing and justifying their extremist Salafist ideology, and aiding in the recruiting of new members.²⁹³ IS maintains a sizable following on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, which are largely managed by foreign sympathizers.²⁹⁴ Much like Hezbollah’s Al-Manar news agency,²⁹⁵ IS created similar English subtitled platforms, such as the Al-Hayat news station and the *Islamic State News* printed publication and magazine *dabiq*,²⁹⁶ whose primary focus is intimidating the West. Of course, these media operations also help inspire potential recruits and serve as models for groups, such as BH, when it comes to refining their otherwise crude media efforts.²⁹⁷

Another pragmatic use of media operations is a means to decentralize IS’s vast support network while still remaining highly connected. Similarly, it can professionalize its military wing through the collection and presentation of tactical documents available.²⁹⁸ This professionalization of the organization’s military wing, coupled with

²⁹¹ Gambhir, “Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State,” 2.

²⁹² Polly Mosendz, “ISIS Executes Jordanian Pilot Muadh al-Kasabeh,” *Newsweek World*, February 3, 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-execution-jordan-pilot-302659>.

²⁹³ Barrett, “The Islamic State,” 55–56.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Cambanis, *A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah’s Endless Legions and Their Endless War Against Israel*, 132.

²⁹⁶ Gambhir, “Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State,” 2.

²⁹⁷ BBC Monitoring, “Is the Islamic State Shaping Boko Haram Media,” *BBC News*, March 4, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31522469>.

²⁹⁸ Barrett, “The Islamic State,” 55–56.

ideological fervor, has aided IS's continued tactical successes against U.S.-trained Iraqi forces throughout mid-to-late 2014 and into 2015.

I. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND "STATE" FAILURE

IS has made a more than concerted effort to alienate neighboring states and, more conspicuously, Western states. In *Daqib* magazine, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi unambiguously threatens to bring about an apocalyptic "end of days" struggle against the West.²⁹⁹ Given, military targeting of U.S.-backed Iraqi government forces, and the documented murder of five international journalists, an aid worker, and a captured coalition pilot, IS has proven to be unwilling to participate in negotiations or in the international system. IS, as of the writing of this research, continues to try to seize Kurdish regions in northern Iraq, most notably the village of Kobani and outlying areas of Mosul, to rid the region of ethnic groups in which the organization deems undesirable.³⁰⁰

The deplorable human rights abuses conducted by IS not only in these well-documented cases, but also its daily prosecution of its skewed version of rule of law, demonstrate IS's lack of desire to comply with any aspects of international law. Some theorize that the instability that IS exploited to rapidly gain and govern territory will prove to be its eventual undoing.³⁰¹ This argument assumes that if the international community continues to pressure IS, both economically and militarily, and helps support a legitimate alternative to IS, then IS will not continue to expand, gain revenue and continue to rule. However, as of 2015, IS has not shown signs of imminent decline. Nor has the Iraqi Government displayed the capacity to provide an alternative to IS's brutal yet effective brand of governing.

Given IS's success in Iraq and Syria, we have to consider if BH and its rapid rise in northern Nigeria and neighboring regions of Chad, Niger and Cameroon could follow a

²⁹⁹ Gambhir, "Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State," 2–4.

³⁰⁰ Coles, "Kurds Battle for Kobani Unites People Divided by Borders."

³⁰¹ Thomas E. Ricks, "The Coming Fall of the House of ISIS," *Foreign Policy*, January 14, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/14/the-coming-fall-of-the-house-of-isis/>.

similar trajectory. IS has impacted U.S. national interests in the Middle East, in so much as the United States has expended tremendous resources and promoted a coalition air campaign to counter the organization.³⁰² U.S. policy reflects the elevated threat that IS (or ISIL, as it is called in the 2015 National Security Strategy) presents to U.S. national interests and the existential threat it poses to its allies in the region.³⁰³ We suggest that IS presents an *important threat* to U.S. national interests based on the assessment of U.S. national interests discussed in Chapter III. This is largely due to the fact that IS's efforts in 2014–2015 destabilize Iraq, a nation that the U.S. government and military spent over a decade to stabilize.

J. BOKO HARAM AS AN SSTO CALIPHATE SYSTEM, GIVEN THE “IS EXPERIENCE”

Although BH is mentioned in the NSS published in February 2015, the organization is not treated with the same gravity as its comparable Levantine organization.³⁰⁴ Nevertheless, given the impact of IS on stated U.S. national interests and regional security in the Middle East, one has to ask whether BH might not have similar impacts in west Africa?

In August 2014, BH proclaimed the establishment of the Caliphate in the captured regions of Borno State, and continued to expand into surrounding regions of northern Nigeria, as illustrated in Figure 7.³⁰⁵ Abubakr Shekau announced that the Caliphate was established to free Muslim lands from GoN and subsequently, the Caliphate refuses to “recognize the State of Nigeria.”³⁰⁶ However, this announcement deviated from the

³⁰² Zeke Miller, “U.S. Launches Airstrike Campaign against ISIS in Syria,” *Time*, September 22, 2014, <http://time.com/3419906/u-s-launches-airstrike-campaign-against-isis-in-syria/>.

³⁰³ Obama, *United States National Security Strategy*.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Jeremy Ashkenas, Derek Watkins, and Archie Tse, “Boko Haram: The Other Islamic State,” *The New York Times*, January 15, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/11/world/africa/boko-haram-nigeria-maps.html>.

³⁰⁶ Laura Grossman and Thomas Joscelyn, “Boko Haram Focuses on Seizing Territory,” *The Long War Journal*, August 28, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/08/new_emerging_goals_o.php.

previously stated goal of uniting all of Nigeria under Islamic sharia law.³⁰⁷ One major difference between BH and IS is that BH exists in the failing seams of states with marginal to well functioning governments and militaries. Likewise, BH's success during 2014 to acquire territory was as much of a surprise to the organization as it was to nations within the regions and the international community. BH has not displayed either the ability or the desire to govern to the extent that IS has proven to be successful. Finally, it has provoked a coalition response from neighboring countries, which in contrast to Iraq and Syria, have not been destabilized by years of civil war and sectarian conflict.

BH's violent actions against the Nigerian state have been widely categorized as mere acts of terror since 2009. Boko Haram's ideology and rhetoric suggests its desire to not only destabilize the Nigerian state, but to similarly achieve an "...independent and just state devoid of anything *haram* (ungodly or sinful)."³⁰⁸ This statement made by Boko Haram founder Mohammad Yusuf further suggests that Boko Haram ultimately seeks a space or territory independent of rule by the secular GoN.

³⁰⁷ Grossman and Joscelyn, "Boko Haram Focuses on Seizing Territory."

³⁰⁸ Mohammad Yusuf quoted in Abimbola Adisoji, "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria," *Africa Spectrum* 45, no. 2 (2010): 98.



Figure 7. Regions Captured by BH throughout 2014 and 2015.³⁰⁹

K. BH AS A GOVERNING SSTO

Throughout 2014 into 2015, BH achieved shocking military successes in northern Nigeria, seizing several towns, such as Maiduguri, and sparse villages within Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states. These regions were captured with relative ease due to minimal to non-existent government presence. Through a campaign of ethno-sectarian cleansing, particularly of non-Muslim and Christian minorities in the north, the group focused on the brutal establishment of sharia law. The Chibok School Girls mass abduction is one of the more irrational acts taken by the group—since BH claims to a safe-haven for Islamic culture—yet the group has purposely destabilized Nigerian Muslim communities. Much like Al-Qaeda’s treatment of early elements of IS, Abubakr Shekau was rebuked by founding members of Mohammad Yusuf’s movement due to his unrestricted use of violence.³¹⁰ This unrestricted use of violence limits the group’s ability

³⁰⁹ David Blair, “Boko Haram Is Now a Mini-Islamic State, with Territory of Its Own,” *The Telegraph*, January 10, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11337722/Boko-Haram-is-now-a-mini-Islamic-State-with-its-own-territory.html>.

³¹⁰ John Campbell, “U.S. Policy to Counter Nigeria’s Boko Haram,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 9, November 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/us-policy-counter-nigerias-boko-haram/p33806>.

to secure a legitimate base among the populations of captured regions, and furthers the group's inability to achieve its stated goal of creating a sovereign Islamic state.

L. STATE REVENUE

BH's violent campaign has displaced nearly 2 million people from communities in northern Nigeria and bordering regions of Chad, Niger and Cameroon.³¹¹ Although BH has claims to offer social programs to support the remaining inhabitants of these captured regions, the group instead taxes and extorts.³¹² Ransom received from the repatriation of a handful of foreign captives has yielded the group several thousand in U.S. dollars.³¹³ However, the group has not found a consistent revenue source, unlike IS, which controls a large portion of the oil trade in northern Iraq. This is in part due to BH's inability to access to the oil rich southern region of Nigeria.

BH does maintain checkpoints to control the flow of commerce into and out of regions it has captured. These checkpoints serve as yet another means of extorting civilians, impressing new fighters, and affecting the broader Nigerian economy³¹⁴ because most inhabitants of northern Nigeria subsist by agrarian means. BH's campaign has caused communities to miss harvests, one effect of which has been the drastic inflation of food prices and mass starvation.³¹⁵ Although these efforts seemingly support BH activities, in contrast to that of IS, the effects of the BH insurgency does not create conditions to promote the sustained revenue stream required to support a large organization intent on controlling and maintaining territory.

³¹¹ "IMO Highlights Need for Regional Response to Boko Haram Displacement," International Organization of Migration, February 15, 2015, <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2015/pbn-listing/iom-highlights-need-for-regional.html>.

³¹² Siobh  n O'Grady, "Boko Haram turns Robin Hood's Strategy on its Head: Forget Oil or Gold. West Africa's Most Dangerous Terror Group Is Funding its Rampages by Ignoring the Rich and Targeting the Poor," *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/05/boko-haram-turns-robin-hoods-strategy-on-its-head-nigeria-niger/>.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ Lucy Fleming, "Boko Haram Crisis: The Nigerian Truckers Risking Attack," *BBC News*, March 8, 2015), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31533391>.

³¹⁵ "How Boko Haram Brought Hunger to Northern Cameroon," *IRIN*, January 28, 2015, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/101059/how-boko-haram-brought-hunger-to-northern-cameroon>.

M. LEGITIMACY OF THE CALIPHATE IN AFRICA AND ALLEGIANCE TO IS

Although increasingly ideologically linked, BH has been argued to resemble more of a violent social movement, devoid of the centralized leadership structure that is evident in the highly structured' IS system.³¹⁶ Due to BH's lack of mature leadership council structure, the group has previously clung to more established Jihadi groups; primarily Al-Qaeda affiliates, such as AQIM.³¹⁷ The newest pledge of *bayat* by BH to IS has been argued to be the latest in BH attempts to gain support and legitimacy the organization perceives it is lacking.³¹⁸ The lack of support BH received from AQ—and in turn, the patron group's support of BH rivals, such as Ansaru—serve as factors that pushed the organization to depart from its original claim of support.³¹⁹ As opposed to AQ, IS offers financial support and emissaries to professionalize affiliated groups.³²⁰

BH cannot ignore the military success of IS, and the organization's desires to emulate similar success in Africa.³²¹ A natural progression for an organization that has achieved rapid progress, but cannot support the gains of its military campaign, is to receive external support. This is evident in the evolution of groups, such as Hezbollah, which arguably would not have survived the post-Lebanese Civil War era without the support of the Iranian and Syrian regimes.³²²

Given AQ's inconsistent support of BH, and IS's offers of financial and institutional assistance, it makes sense that BH subsequently pledged *bayat* to IS. In return for BH's *bayat*, IS receives a willing affiliate and moves closer to its stated goal of

³¹⁶ John Campbell, "Nigeria's Boko Haram As a Peasants Revolt," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 17, 2015, <http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2015/02/27/nigerias-boko-haram-as-a-peasants-revolt/>.

³¹⁷ Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram, Islamic State and the Archipelago Strategy," *Terrorism Monitor* XII, no. 24 (December 19, 2014): 23.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., 20–23.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God From Revolution to Institutionalization*. (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2009), 209–211.

expanding the Caliphate into Africa, Asia and parts of southern Europe.³²³ Not only does BH's claim legitimize IS's specific brand of Caliphate governing systems, it also further pushes AQ loyal affiliates into the periphery.³²⁴ As BH struggles to become an effective organization, the potential welcoming of more seasoned administrators from IS presents a pragmatic move for the organization.³²⁵

N. BH AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM—POTENTIAL FACTORS OF DECLINE

As with IS, BH has fully rejected the international system and fundamentally rejected the existing system of government within Nigeria. As observed in the cases of Sinn Fein, Hezbollah and to a degree ETA and HB, the ability for SSTOs and ITOs to transition to political dialogue greatly enhanced the group's likelihood of attaining some dimensions of self-determination. However, these groups projected a degree of governing power or at least parity for popular support with the governments in which they were combatting. BH does not maintain this advantage. As of early 2015, the MNJTF launched a relentless military campaign focused on the recapture of population centers seized by BH the previous year.³²⁶ As BH's hold on seized areas grows more tenuous—due to the group's inability to effectively govern—with the growing intensity of coalition military efforts, it is unlikely the organization will achieve or maintain the exclusionary status it initially intended to achieve.

Hakeem O. Yusuf, Law Professor and author of Boko Haram studies, suggests that a source of ethno-political grievance stimulating societies that revolt is the “governance gap” existing between the government and sub-portions of populations.³²⁷ In essence, governments fail to recognize or redistribute goods and services to certain

³²³ Gambhir, “Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State,” 4–5.

³²⁴ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, “The Islamic State's African Long Con: After Months of trying to Unseat Al-Qaeda on the African Continent the Jihadis from Syria have Locked Arms with Boko Haram,” *Foreign Policy*, March 16, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/16/islamic-state-boko-haram-nigeria/>.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Nossiter, “Neighbors of Nigeria Take on Boko Hara.”

³²⁷ Yusuf, “Harvest of Violence: The Neglect of Basic Rights and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria,” 374–375.

sub-populations, and in return underrepresented portions of the society become “disconnected” from the state.³²⁸ Yusuf argues that such a dynamic has existed in Nigeria since the country received independence from Great Britain in the 1960s.³²⁹ Nigeria’s rapid economic growth has not been equally distributed to northern Nigerian populations, and as a result Yusuf argues, the population in the north began to “disconnect” from the rest of the country.³³⁰ Successful separatist groups typically provide services to fill the void created by the “governance gap” and in return, gain credibility and authority within the population. As witnessed in 2015, BH has not measured up in this regard.

Yusuf argues that at the beginning of the BH insurgency, the group focused on several social programs intended to provide basic services to populations in northern Nigeria previously neglected by the government.³³¹ However, the atrocities committed against the civilian population during BH’s 2014–2015 campaign prove the organization has since distanced itself from offering social programs. BH failed to seize the opportunity to fill the “governance gap” created by the GoN’s inability to become a “stationary bandit”³³² and provide equitable wealth and service distribution in the north. In essence, BH actions make it akin to the GoN in failing to provide for the population in the north. But rather than acting as a “stationary bandit, BH has remained a “roving bandit,”³³³ which added to the overall humanitarian crisis in northern Nigeria and further prevented the group from achieving sovereignty.³³⁴ Although, if BH became an effective “stationary bandit” and restricted the use of violence against civilians and implemented social services, this would potentially increase the threat it would pose to the state of Nigeria and U.S. interests. The inability of the GoN to similarly behave as an effective

³²⁸ Yusuf, “Harvest of Violence: The Neglect of Basic Rights and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria,” 374.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 375.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 374.

³³² Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” 568.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria,” 58, 63.

“stationary bandit” presents perhaps the greatest obstacle to fully defeating the root causes of the BH insurgency.

O. SUMMARY

Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and As-Sham represent the most recent examples concept of exclusive SSTOs. Adherence to a narrative rooted in radical Salafist ideology and invoking the ancient, celebrated age of Islamic Caliphate rule in the Middle East and Africa have presented a means of attracting membership and legitimizing both movements. However, at the root of BH and IS efforts to establish a Caliphate is the desire to bring about a sovereign environment in which to rule. As of 2015, IS has acquired territory carved from the failing regimes of Bashar Al-Assad in Syria and Haidar Al-Abadi in Iraq.³³⁵ BH has attempted to gain similar autonomy, but has ultimately failed to provide services for the populations that inhabit its newly acquired territory. Likewise, the government of Goodluck Jonathan, now inherited by Muhammadu Buhari as of 2015, is far from failing or willing to cede large portions of territory to a separatist organization.

The adhesive that helps keep an SSTO and ITO from collapsing is the legitimacy it gains from constituent populations. This legitimacy is earned from the group’s ability to provide services and protection to the population. The social service aspects of governing ensure the organizations survival and ability to remain sovereign, as witness by the success of groups, such as Hezbollah. While BH has signaled its aspiration to achieve a degree of autonomy and territorial exclusivity, as of 2015, BH has proven unable or unwilling to provide services to populations in northern Nigeria. This fact, coupled with the external pressure from the governments affected by the insurgency, will likely set in motion BH’s temporary decline. Without considerable efforts by the GoN to reclaim the territory and populations of northern Nigeria from BH influence, the insurgency or similar movements will likely reemerge.

³³⁵ Note: Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi replaced Iraqi Prime Minister Noori Al-Maliki in August 2104, during the writing of this thesis.

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V. CONCLUSION

Each of those three independently, I think, presents a significant threat not only in the nations in which they primarily operate but regionally and...to the United States. Those three organizations [Boko Haram, AQIM, and Al Shabaab] have very explicitly and publicly voiced an intent to target Westerners and the U.S. specifically...If left unaddressed, then you could have a network that ranges from East Africa through the center and into the Sahel and Maghreb, and I think that would be very, very worrying.³³⁶

—Former AFRICOM Commander General Carter Ham

A. THESIS SUMMARY

Without question, the United States faces myriad challenges and obligations in its role as a global hegemon. It is for this reason that the need to prioritize national power as a means to implement a designated policy or strategy is crucial. Furthermore, the U.S.'s obligations in Africa are complex, made more so with the establishment of AFRICOM in 2007 and its unique soft power mandate. Yet, the relations formed between AFRICOM and partner countries in Africa and beyond have become critically important to fighting the Global War on Terror in Africa, which brings us back to BH. The organization is predominantly focused on domestic attacks but also maintains relations with AQ and IS, each of which says it will target the United States. How seriously should the United States take the threat that BH poses? Is it even the U.S.'s responsibility to tackle the BH problem when Nigeria is more than capable of doing so on its own, if it truly desired to?

Among the challenges presented by the BH insurgency, Nigeria is a fragile state with failed governance, unprecedented poverty, endemic corruption, a deteriorating military, and a protracted ethnic and religious conflict in the Nigerian middle belt. Even though Nigeria successfully held quasi-peaceful presidential elections in March 2015, BH has and will continue to take center stage until its grievances are properly addressed or ultimately rendered moot. BH has claimed over 13,000 lives and displaced over a million

³³⁶ David Alexander, "African Islamist Group Seen As U.S. Threat—General," *Reuters*, September 15, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/15/us-usa-defense-africa-idUSTRE78E13920110915>.

others while striving to accomplish its goals of removing the current political structure and its Western supports, while implementing sharia law across Nigeria.

The goal of this thesis has been to highlight how BH's persistence and expansion could threaten the critical interests of the United States in Nigeria and neighboring states. In doing so, we borrowed a continuum of intensities against which U.S. core interests can be weighed. These intensities (existential, vital, important, and peripheral) clarify the nature of the threat potential enemies pose and aid in prioritizing resources required to defeat the threat. Using this lens, we can measure BH's strategic impact on the United States.

This assessment is crucial given BH's effects on Nigeria's economic, ethnic, political, and military infrastructure. Through crafty propaganda that exploits violence, BH has used videos of beheadings to advance its sovereignty-seeking goals while simultaneously exposing the weaknesses in the GoN. More importantly, BH is forcing not only Nigeria, but also the larger global order to consider the core grievances that helped BH rise so rapidly. Endemic corruption and resulting economic disparities between the "haves" and "have nots" have paralyzed the GoN, confirming the belief of many that defeating BH is too monumental a task for the GoN.

Consequently, U.S., British, French, and Canadian forces have deployed to Nigeria to serve in an advisory capacity. Nigeria's neighbors have also been forced into major roles in the fight against BH. Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, frustrated with the Nigerian military's lethargic response, now form the nucleus of the JTF, which is having a modicum of success as of the time of this writing. The JTF has wrested territory from BH's control and forced the organization to adapt or be defeated. As a result, BH swore *bayat* to the IS in March 2015, becoming the largest terror organization to date to do so.³³⁷ It is still unclear what this relationship means or what the outcome of the relationship will be. However, IS sponsorship is likely to bring about an increase in funding and recruitment for BH.

³³⁷ Thomas Joscelyn, "Boko Haram Leader Pledges Allegiance to the Islamic State," *The Long War Journal*, March 8, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/03/boko-haram-leader-pledges-allegiance-to-the-islamic-state.php>.

BH and the IS share certain similarities, the most important being their desire for sovereignty. This desire further supports their classification as SSTOs, meaning, that they have goals beyond simply accomplishing acts of terror. Both have gravitated to carving out a new space for themselves rather than seeking inclusion within an existing state. Exclusive SSTOs often prey on under-governed spaces characterized by political, ethnic, and economic marginalization. As a result, they turn this territory into a petri dish for similar-minded separatists to gather and share radical ideological beliefs aimed at disrupting the establishment of a secure world order, one of the U.S.'s core national interests.

B. BH AS A THREAT TO U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS

BH's impact on Nigeria's economic environment and that of its neighbors is significant. By ensuring insecurity in northern Nigeria, BH has stimulated a decline in the educational, commercial, and employment infrastructure. As a result, agriculture has suffered as skilled farmers flee to safer locations. The tourism industry has also taken a major hit. However, these issues by themselves do not seem significant enough to affect U.S. economic interests in Nigeria considering that the most important resource to both countries is oil/petroleum products, which remains safely protected within the confines of southern Nigeria and away from BH. Additionally, although the United States relies on Nigeria's BH-affected neighbors for cocoa, wood, and rubber, the amount of these goods exported to the United States is so miniscule that the average American would hardly feel their loss.

In this sense and from a U.S. centric point of view, BH's impact on Nigeria's economy is too small as yet to be a major concern. As long as Nigeria's oil continues to flow, the United States has little to worry about. However, were the situation to worsen and drive Nigeria far from being the U.S.'s 8th largest exporter, the level of concern would surely rise. Likewise, from a Nigerian perspective, if FDIs continue to remain as high as they were in 2013 (\$21 billion), Nigeria should remain capable of weathering the BH storm. However, were the FDI numbers to drop dramatically, the government would be forced to take immediate action to restore the faith of its foreign investors. Overall,

economically, from these perspectives, the threat posed by BH is probably at best considered *peripheral*.

C. BH AS A THREAT TO REGIONAL STABILITY

Nigeria's unwillingness to defeat BH at its inception has resulted in BH's emergence as a threat to regional stability in West Africa. As a consequence, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and the larger AU have joined Nigeria to form the MNJTF to combat BH's advance. The AU has to be concerned that BH has the ability to incite and exploit ethnic rivalries and destabilize economies via the refugee problems it has created. With BH's recent alliance with IS, neighbors also have to worry about jihadists travelling to Nigeria. Such a situation could exacerbate the crisis beyond just Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. In light of this possibility, BH presents an *important* threat to U.S. interests.

D. BH AS A THREAT TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

The Center for Naval Analyses proposes four potential trajectories the conflict in Nigeria can take. The trajectories are listed as: devolution to criminality or terrorism; expansion and secession; fracture and co-option; and civil war.³³⁸ As an addition, we posit a fifth trajectory characterized by sponsorship that increases the ranks, resources, and territory controlled by BH. Should BH travel down this path to 'stationary banditry' it is likely to lead to increased attacks on U.S. interests and citizens in Nigeria, with the goal of forcing international recognition—like IS—and causing the United States to have to enact similar policies to ensure BH's ultimate defeat.

In sum, examining BH through the lens of *existential*, *vital*, *important*, and *peripheral* interests, we would position BH in its current state to the far right side of the continuum, meaning that BH currently represents a *peripheral* threat to U.S. interests due to its inability to mobilize effective mass support. BH's use of heavy-handed tactics, as well as its alienation of other Muslims, may have contributed to its failings. However, were conditions to change and should BH embark on the trajectories listed above, then here is what we predict:

³³⁸ Asufura-Heim and McQuaid, "Diagnosing the Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria," 63.

If BH chooses the **criminality** trajectory, it will remain a *peripheral* threat to the United States. This assertion is supported by the recent success of the MNJTF, which is likely to severely weaken BH's effectiveness in the region, reducing the likelihood of a negotiated settlement, and forcing BH to live on the fringes of society. Such a scenario will reduce BH's impact on Nigeria and its neighbors, as well as the need for continued U.S. intervention.³³⁹

Expansion and Secession is likely if BH undergoes a leadership change or reforms its violent tactics. Such a course of action, coupled with failure by the GoN to address BH's core grievances may ignite a spark that builds mass support for BH. If this were to occur, the potential for BH to legitimize its claim of being an Islamic State would become more plausible.³⁴⁰ In this scenario, BH will achieve its goals as an SSTO, elevating the threat level it poses to others from *peripheral* to *important* on the intensity scale, since it would then present a successful model for secessionists elsewhere.

With the **Fracture and Co-optation**, the momentum gained from the MNJTF's success would force BH to either seek a negotiated settlement with the state, or would provoke a splintering into smaller radical groups, which could potentially become more dangerous than BH. Ansaru has already displayed the propensity to stray from BH's radical ideology in its disagreement with BH over BH's attacks on other Muslims. Thus, if the MNJTF continues to achieve success, the potential to convince less belligerent members into negotiations is highly likely.³⁴¹ If the insurgency were to fracture, it would likely either evolve into a criminal organization or be decisively defeated, and as such would become more of a *peripheral* threat to U.S. interests.

Civil War is the least likely trajectory, but is possible if BH can exploit and take greater advantage of the complex ethno-religious conflicts, power politics, and economic disparities plaguing Nigeria. By preventing the Nigerian military from having a

³³⁹ Asufura-Heim and McQuaid, "Diagnosing the Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria," 63.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

monopoly on the use of force³⁴² and by reducing the government's ability to govern, BH could place Nigeria on the path to civil war. If the policies of the incoming Buhari administration resemble those of the Jonathan administration, this might become more likely. If this situation were to occur, BH could gain credibility by proving the GoN to be ineffective, thereby ensuring increased regional instability. This path would place U.S. interests in the region at risk, allowing the United States to classify BH as an *important* threat to its interests.

A more ominous outcome is possible if BH's alliance with IS amounts to one in which best practices are shared between both organizations. Specifically, if BH were to receive administrative assistance, funding, and recruitment by jihadists who deem Iraq and Syria too far to travel to, but who are interested in playing a role in securing the Caliphate, BH could present a more credible threat to U.S. interests. In this situation, we should expect an increased number of attacks on Western interests through the activation of BH's sleeper cells in northwestern Nigeria,³⁴³ prompting the United States to commit more resources to facilitate BH's demise as it is currently doing with the IS. If this were to come to fruition, BH would arrive at the zenith of the SSTO journey as a **stationary bandit** and would pose a *vital* threat to U.S. interests in the region. See Figure 8 for an illustration of how U.S. core interests interact with these intensities and trajectories.

³⁴² Max Weber, "Politics As Vocation" or 'Politik als Beruf,'" *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Muenchen, 1921), 396–450. Originally a speech at Munich University, 1918, published in 1919 by Duncker & Humboldt, Munich, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/ethos/Weber-vocation.pdf>.

³⁴³ Zenn, "A Biography of Boko Haram and the Bay'a to al-Baghdadi," 17–21.

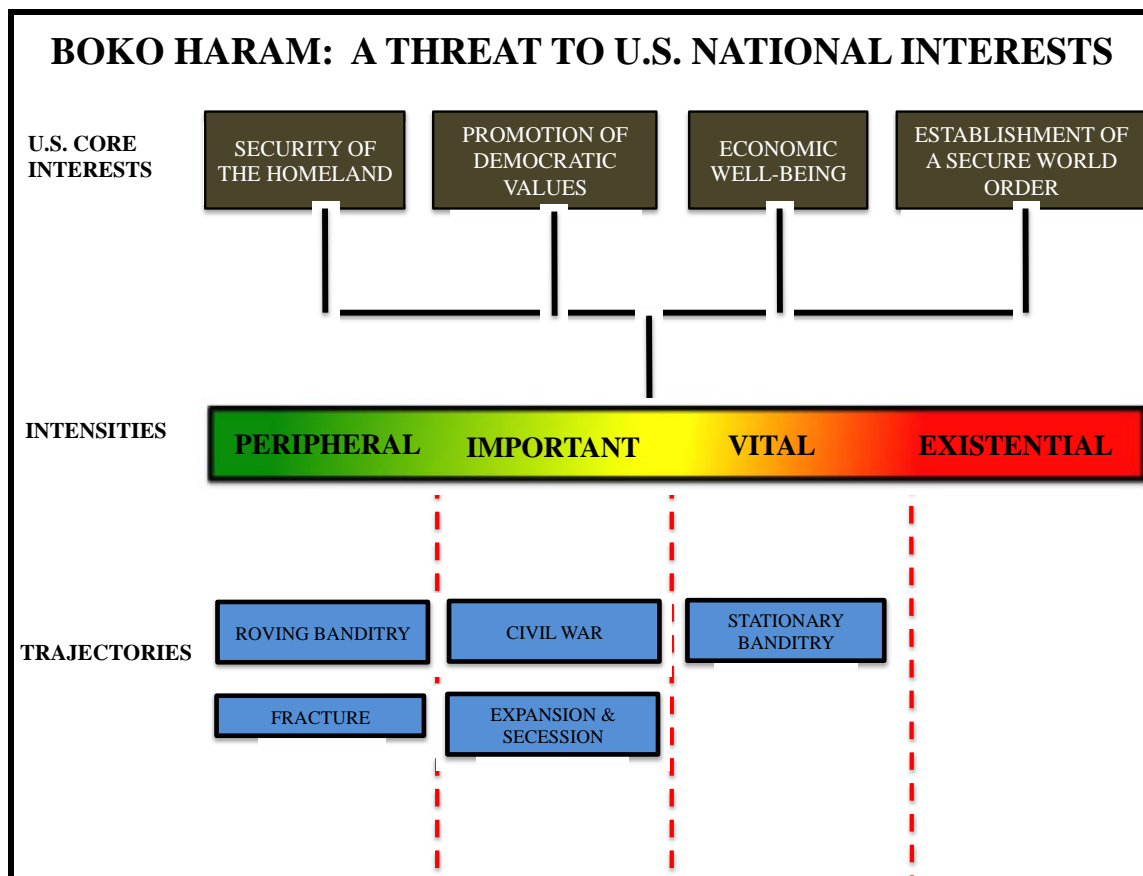


Figure 8. Boko Haram as a Threat to U.S. National Interests

E. PREVENTING A WORSENING SITUATION

Because the BH situation continues to unfold, it is necessary to conceive of stop-gaps or actions the United States should consider undertaking to prevent the situation from fluctuating on the intensity scale as depicted above. In Figure 9, we have placed these stop-gaps where they are most likely to be needed to prevent the situation in Nigeria from worsening. These stop-gaps are intended to suggest to those interested in a positive resolution to the conflict in Nigeria what they can proactively do and how best to anticipate and pre-empt BH's actions. These stop-gaps include but are not limited to the following.

- Increase economic, diplomatic and military engagement with the GoN
- Assist the Nigerian government to address core grievances in northern Nigeria
- Disarm, demobilize, re-integrate less belligerent members of BH

- Expand existing counter-radicalization programs to counter the spread of extremist ideology
- Address refugee and humanitarian concerns caused by the BH insurgency
- Enhance military-to-military relationships to foster training, advising, and equipping
- Increase coordination with the AU to ensure nested goals
- Influence the incoming Buhari government to be a more inclusive government
- Establish U.S. special operations forces (SOF) regional forward base in West Africa
- Synchronize international and regional efforts
- Actively target BH leaders to deny them safe havens
- Consider committing limited number of conventional forces to protect security interests
- Assist the Nigerian government to identify and prosecute BH sponsors, to include members of the Nigerian Diaspora

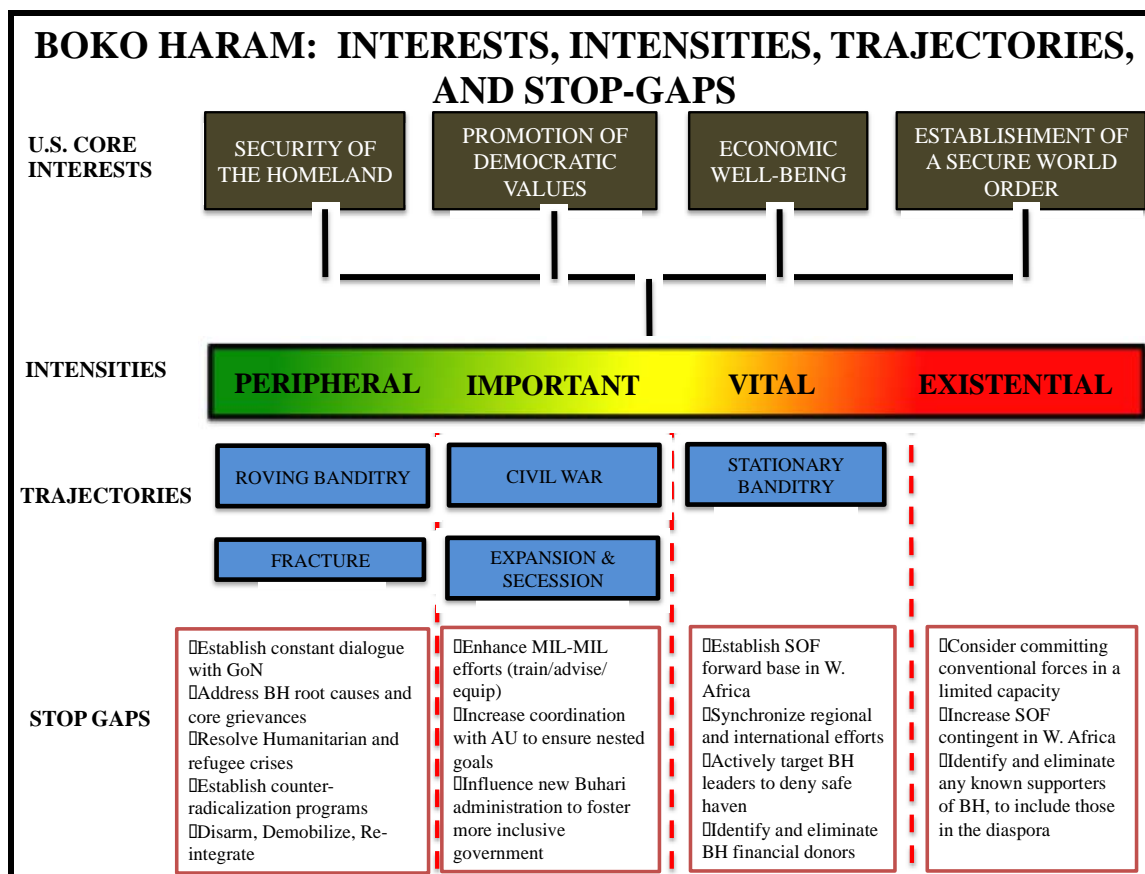


Figure 9. Boko Haram and the Relationship between U.S. Core Interests, Intensities, Trajectories, and Stop-gaps.

F. FINAL THOUGHTS

The BH insurgency has grown in the span of nearly a decade from an innocuous localized religiously-based movement in northern Nigeria to a surprisingly successful guerrilla organization. The military coalition of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad has had some success in degrading BH and reversing its rapid expansion, organizational scope, and territory. Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 election to the office of the presidency has so far been a welcome relief to Nigerians who formerly despaired over the possibility of change.

Without observable changes implemented by the incoming Buhari government as of this writing (June 2015), it is impossible for us to gauge accurately the effect of this change in political leadership. However, the United States now has gained the opportunity to restructure future U.S.-Nigerian relations via renewed engagement efforts, and to focus these efforts on aligning U.S. security and economic interests with those of the newly formed government.

To accomplish this, it is imperative that the U.S. government emphasize engagement efforts that will reinforce the stop-gaps identified. Although not exhaustive, the proposed stop-gaps not only promote increased regional engagement for the U.S. government, but also help identify what the GoN needs to do. The United States should continue to help coordinate as necessary with the European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and AU to ensure a coordinated approach is applied. Last, severing BH's links to IS and other jihadist groups like AQIM and Al-Shabaab is critical. By doing so, the United States can then both strengthen its relationship with the lion of Africa while simultaneously preventing BH from becoming a larger regional threat than it already is.

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