U.S. Security Policy in Support of Nigeria

by

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Abstract

The spread of Islamic extremism has many destabilizing factors that are raising economic and security concerns in the United States (U.S.) government and the international community. In today’s security environment, the evolution of terrorism is more violent and robust, and proves no nation’s security is impenetrable. Nigeria is no exception. Since 2009, Boko Haram has waged an insurgency in the northeast that challenges Nigeria’s sovereignty and has spread into neighboring countries Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. The U.S. government has come under heavy scrutiny from the Nigerian government for failing to provide enough support to combat Boko Haram’s advances. Although the U.S offers support to combat Boko Haram through various forums, the Nigerian government cites human rights abuses and corruption allegations as reasons support fails. The purpose of this study was to examine how adversity fuels fundamentalism in Nigeria and why a cohesive U.S. security policy is necessary to prevent Boko Haram from becoming an international security matter. The data and analysis support the thesis demonstrating that since 1960, U.S. aid to Nigeria to combat Boko Haram was ineffective. If counterterrorism efforts in Africa are a priority the in the global war on terrorism, the U.S. must increase its support for Nigeria to defeat Boko Haram.

Keywords: Boko Haram, terrorism, counterterrorism, policy, national security, Nigeria
Dedication

I dedicate this paper to all service members and veterans for their sacrifice in the service of our country. We will never forget your dedication, selflessness, and sacrifices from you and your families to protect our country.
Acknowledgements

To my family, thank you for your support during my service and many deployments that have kept me away from home. To my committee, thank you for your support, dedication to education and patience with me during this humbling process.
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<tr>
<td>AFRICOM</td>
<td>Africa Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>Area of operations</td>
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<td>AQI</td>
<td>al Qaeda in Iraq</td>
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<td>AQIM</td>
<td>al Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bayaat</td>
<td>Pledging spiritual allegiance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>A radical Islamist group from northeastern Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>Combatant Commands</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>Congressional Research Service</td>
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<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<td>Domestic Terrorism</td>
<td>Involve acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law; appear intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction (FBI, 2015, n.p.).</td>
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<td>Epochal Liberator</td>
<td>An entity considered unique or significant, much like a cult leader.</td>
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<td>Failed State</td>
<td>A central government that does not exert effective control over, nor is it able to deliver vital services to, significant parts of its own territory due to conflict, ineffective governance, or state collapse (Rice, 2003, p. 2).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failing State</td>
<td>A central government’s hold on power and/or territory is fragile.</td>
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<td>FTO</td>
<td>Foreign Terrorist Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hisba</td>
<td>The duty of promoting what is good and preventing what is evil. It is a collective duty or obligation of the Muslim community (OnIslam, 2009, n.p.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>A value system or belief system accepted as fact or truth by some group. It is composed of sets of attitudes towards the various institutions and processes of society (Crothers, 2003, p. 17).</td>
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<td>International Terrorism</td>
<td>Involves violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law; appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction…or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum (FBI, 2015 n.p.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Islamic State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maitatsine</td>
<td>Mohammed Marwa, best known by his nickname Maitatsine, was a controversial Islamic preacher in Nigeria. Maitatsine is a Hausa word meaning &quot;the one who damns&quot; and refers to his curse-laden public speeches against the Nigerian state (<a href="http://www.wikipedia.com">www.wikipedia.com</a>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEND</td>
<td>Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Militant</td>
<td>Having or showing a desire or willingness to use strong, extreme, and sometimes forceful methods to achieve something.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUJAO</td>
<td>Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa</td>
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<td>Military Government</td>
<td>“the government established by a military commander in conquered territory to administer the military law declared by him under military authority applicable to all persons in the conquered territory and superseding any incompatible local law” (“military government,” 2015).</td>
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<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
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<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Security Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terror Group</td>
<td>A political movement that uses terror as a weapon to achieve its goals (<a href="http://www.freedictionary.com">www.freedictionary.com</a>).</td>
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<td>TSCTP</td>
<td>Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>WARSII</td>
<td>West Africa Regional Security Initiative</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The spread of Islamic extremism has many destabilizing factors that are raising economic and security concerns in the United States (U.S.) government and the international community. In 2006 Ibrahim al Gambrari, then Undersecretary General for Political Affairs United Nations, gives note that 36 out of 53 African countries have taken steps to prevent and combat terrorism. The steps to which Mr. Gambrari refers include removing illegal aliens, closing terrorist-linked financial institutions, and sharing information on terrorist activities (Gambrari, 2006, pp. 16-17). In Nigeria, the security challenge grows from within as Boko Haram carves out a swath of territory in the northeast to establish an Islamic caliphate.

Nigeria has a strong military; however, it is limited in its ability to sustain operations and effectively use its capabilities against the Boko Haram insurgency. A compounding factor to the inefficiency of combat effectiveness is the lack of knowledge or training in Islamic fundamentalism by Nigeria’s military. To create an effective strategy to defeat Boko Haram is for a government to align its policies and its security environment.

In today’s security environment, the evolution of terrorism is more violent and robust and proves that no nation’s security is impenetrable. Breaches in sovereignty by groups and individuals who receive sophisticated training tailored to exploit lapses in security systems and establishments is becoming more attractive and vastly growing. Nigeria’s history is rich with conflict deriving from a host of factors such as socio-economic, religious, ethnic, and political reasons. Fundamentalist groups, past and present, seek to exploit lapses in security and challenge the government for one or several of these reasons. The exploration of the conflict between Nigeria’s government and Boko Haram is necessary so a cohesive security policy may exist to prevent an outpouring of fresh attacks on the international community.
Dr. Abdalla Bujra, a professor and academic in Oriental and African studies and chairperson for Africa Center for Economic Growth, uses the term conflict to describe a violent and armed confrontation and struggle between groups, between the state and one or more groups, and between two or more states. In such confrontation and struggle, some of those involved are injured and killed. Such a conflict can last anything from six months to over twenty years (Bujra, 2002, p. 3). U.S. analysts and policy makers have described the struggle between the Nigeria’s military and Boko Haram as a conflict and not a war because it is an internal issue involving two parties from within the same country.

Conflict in Nigeria is nothing new; however, this newer level of violence emanating from the insurgency by Boko Haram is without equal. Prior to Boko Haram, the factors that have contributed to the series of crises, which Nigeria has witnessed since its independence [1960], can be attributed to the endemic level of interethnic tensions and religious indifferences between the country’s nearly equal divide between Christians and Muslims (Finotan & Ojakotoru, 2014). The Boko Haram group is an extremist Islamist group, formed in 2002 by fundamentalist Muslim cleric Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, a Hausa/Fulani from the north of Nigeria, based in Kanamma, Yobe State.

Boko Haram loosely translates to western education is evil and is premised on the imposition of Sharia Islamic law in the north of Nigeria where the Hausa/Fulani is the dominant ethnic group (Finotan & Ojakotoru, 2014). Figure 1 is a geographical depiction of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Hausa/Fulani ethnic group makes up the majority of the population which stretches from east to west of northern Nigeria. Since Nigeria’s independence, several events unfolded within the new government that prevented it from becoming prosperous regionally and internationally.
David Adams and Maurice Ogbonnaya (2014) of the National Institute for Legislative Studies in Abuja, Nigeria, offer insight into the continued spate of conflict that has gripped the nation. Adams and Ogbonnaya (2014) submit that conflict and insecurity in northern Nigeria traces back to the British colonialists creating an antagonistic ruling class along ethnic and religious lines. Between the years 1960 to 1966, the characterization of the first republic, led by Sardauna Ahmadu Bello who ruled the Northern Region, is that of a power struggle and intense competition between the north and the south. The north sought to enhance and preserve their
Muslim religious and cultural identity for northerners inherited from the caliphate era however, disruption by colonial rule would not allow this perseverance to continue. The south benefited from Western education, a majority representation in politics, and the economy (INR, 2010, p. 7).

As the north developed its culture and religious identity, a successful campaign ensued to convert non-Muslim minority groups to Islam. This campaign further boosted the number of Muslims living in the north leading non-Muslim minorities to fear the creation of an Islamic hegemony. In January 1966, a group of Christian officers conducted the first military coup against the Northern federal government. The coup and subsequent killing of Bello and several key political and military leaders exacerbated damaged relations between the north and south and led to civil war from 1967 to 1970 (INR, 2010, p. 9).

The return of democracy after 1999 brought many changes and benefits and an increase of new leaders into government. This would cause an increase in tensions across the regions of Nigeria between ethnic and religious groups. This rift caused a political fracture in the far north resulting in the creation of new states, and the Hausa/Fulani bloc found it challenged by increasingly assertive minorities. Economic dissatisfaction, growing corruption in government, the distortion, and decline of social institutions and the rise of criminality all created a sense of disillusionment (INR, 2010, p. 9).

Adams and Ogbonnaya (2014) offer several instances of how unbalanced politics has played a crucial role in creating the fragile security environment that exists in Nigeria today. Since the return to democracy in 1999, there were many outbreaks of bloody violence between ethnic communities in Plateau State. There have also been riots in the urban centers of Kaduna and Kano, and for several decades, there has been simmering conflict in Bauchi State. In addition
with these instances of conflict and violence is the heavy-handed response of security services and institution of politics, which further widened the trust gap between the government and many civilians who were often innocent bystanders to the violence. Andrew Walker (2012) writes,

a weakness in the institutions of politics and the security services has created a political situation where such threats to stability are not dealt with until violence is a certainty.

When a politician in control of a state is convinced a threat is unmanageable to his advantage, he will order any action against it. (Walker, 2012, p. 2)

The reactionary state of mind to a security threat is a major setback that goes against the very nature of providing security and protecting a country’s citizens. This lends to the perception that Nigeria is unable effectively to combat Boko Haram because politicians cannot control the situation to suit their advantage or agenda.

The media paints a startling picture of Boko Haram’s kidnapping and indiscriminate killing activities to capture and hold key territory in northeast Nigeria with near impunity. This security challenge has the potential to mimic to the Islamic uprising throughout the Middle East and Afghanistan where large areas of territory is falling into the hands of extremists, terrorists are establishing training camps, and the conduct of planning operations transnationally and internationally, to include in the U.S. and Europe. If this threat continues constant without a sincere determination to destroy Boko Haram and its affiliate, Ansaru, then the U.S. will face a significant challenge in maintaining political and economic ties with Nigeria. Professor Ade Adefuye, Ambassador of Nigeria to the U.S., signifies the political and economic importance of the Nigeria-U.S. relationship. On economic cooperation in recent years, Professor Adefuye submits:
Nigeria is America’s largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa. A two-way trade between both countries in 2013 was valued at $18.2 billion. The United States (sic) is the largest foreign investor in Nigeria, with a stock of foreign direct investment in Nigeria worth $8.2 billion in 2012 concentrated largely in the petroleum, mining and wholesale trade sectors. In the political arena, Professor Adefuye explains the Nigeria-U.S. relationship based on a convergence of strategic goals consisting of democracy, human rights, rule of law, and other freedoms. (Adefuye, 2014, para. 5; 8)

The U.S. foreign policy in Nigeria is transparent at best and warrants consideration for revision to encompass the overall strategy of the Global War on Terror. Lauren Ploch, a specialist in African affairs at the U.S. Congressional Research Service, suggests gains must outweigh the risks when determining whether resources are going to be committed toward a certain goal. Ploch (2010) writes, “U.S. policymakers must determine the various risks, benefits, and tradeoffs associated with the different counterterrorism and counter-radicalization measures in their toolkit and weigh their effects against other U.S. policy goals in the country and the wider region” (Meehan & Speier, p. 10). As a threat to the region, Boko Haram stands to gain invaluable influences from other groups who seek to overthrow the governments of countries in which they operate. By expanding its area of influence, containment of Boko Haram will be a difficult security matter to manage.

**Boko Haram Threat to the Region**

In Mali, Boko Haram played a pivotal role in supporting operations of Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Support included preventing the local population from leaving the city to use them as human shields and a raid on the Algerian consulate in Gao to kidnap the vice-consul that resulted in the
vice-consuls death. Reportedly, Boko Haram received training at MUJAO-run camps to transit Niger en route to Mali on a daily basis. U.S. Africa Command General Carter Ham, who in January 2012, said Boko Haram has links to AQIM and al Shabaab, said in November that Boko Haram militants train in camps in northern Mali and most likely receive financing and explosives from AQIM (Zenn, 2013, n.p.). The use of explosives for suicide bombers is an al Qaeda trademark, one that Boko Haram has been associated with while utilizing small children during attacks.

Several videos released in November 2012 by the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, raises questions as to whether he was coordinating attacks in Nigeria from Mali. The conditions, which triggered where Shekau was during that time, centered on how the leader was dressed, the language he spoke, and the outside conditions in which his videos were recorded. Shekau’s recordings include him speaking Arabic while wearing camouflage fatigues and surrounding himself with veiled gunmen in the desert. His usual location for videos is in an undisclosed area and seen wearing traditional Muslim garments and speaking his native language of Hausa. Shekau’s language dialect and wardrobe are indications of whether he is in Nigeria or potentially hosted in another country (Zenn, 2013, n.p); determining the significance of where and when he releases his videos.

In the Borno state region, the majority of Boko Haram fighters come from Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Boko Haram is highly active in this area and the group’s center of gravity whether that is the leadership, support networks, or logistics network has remained elusive to security forces. In Cameroon, Boko Haram members have been able to blend into primarily Baggara Arabic-speaking cities of Far North Province, Cameroon, including Fotokol, Kousseri, Mora and the border town of Banki-Amchide and establish a logistic network that facilitate
“trans-border operations” that also serves a dual purpose for Boko Haram to “regroup after attacks in Nigeria and prepare for further attacks.” Cameroon’s similar characteristics to Nigeria, such as a relatively poor majority Muslim north, which has seen trade effectively reduced because of Boko Haram attacks on border markets and stricter border monitoring, and a wealthier majority Christian south, also make it an ideal recruiting ground for the group (Zenn, 2013, n.p.).

In the border region of Niger, the desert provides an ideal training grounds and refuge for Boko Haram, while the Mandara Mountains along the Nigeria-Cameroon border, where state authority is weak and smuggling is pervasive, provides an ideal supply route, hideout, and staging ground. The recent upsurge in Boko Haram attacks in rural towns at the foothills of the Mandara Mountains in Adamawa State, where in 2004 Muhammad Yusuf’s followers had their first major battles with the Nigerian security forces, support the claims made by high-level Nigerian and Cameroonian officials that Boko Haram is operating from bases in Cameroon (Zenn, 2013, n.p.).

Analysts and experts speculate that Boko Haram resisted attacking Chad specifically in order to avoid causing Nigeria’s neighboring countries from creating a coalition to oust the group from the region. This speculation has changed since Boko Haram launched an early 2015 attack in Chad as retribution for a coalition attack that included Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Benin on its camps. Boko Haram is not the only movement that is threatening the fabric of Nigeria’s sovereignty in the northeast. In the Niger Delta, militias, criminal groups, and militants are looking to achieve their own agenda by staging attacks on the oil industry. These groups conduct sabotage attacks on oil pipelines, infrastructure, and kidnapping of international oil workers as
retribution for decades of neglect, mistreatment by the government, poverty, environmental pollution by foreign oil and gas companies, and ethno-religious indifferences.

**Niger Delta Crisis**

Nigeria’s second security crisis threatening its sovereignty and territorial rights, further constricting the development of nation building emanates from the Niger Delta. A large mixture of ethnic groups exists who have lost their trust in the government’s will and ability to provide fundamental basic needs. In this region also lies Nigeria’s over 35 billion barrels of proven oil reserves (Eyinla & Ukpo, 2006), along with an even larger deposit of natural gas.

A state’s fundamental responsibility is to ensure the security of the life and property of its citizens and the guarantee of its socio-economic and political stability. However, this protective function of the state has been threatened by terrorism and terrorism-related activities by incidences of kidnapping, hostage taking, oil theft, sabotage against oil companies and infrastructure (Ogbonnaya, Ehigiamusoe, & Kizito, 2013, p. 1). There are three separate struggles taking place in Niger Delta. The first struggle involves self-autonomy with complete separation from the Nigeria state. The second struggle dwells in the realm of criminal activity at the behest of corrupt government officials and the utilization of opportunistic criminal elements. The third struggle involves preserving the nationalistic identity by the least threatening citizens concerned for the survival of present and future generations.

Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) expound upon the struggles, which divide the Niger Delta into three exclusive dimensions. In the first dimension is the quest for autonomy by the Ijaw ethnic group. This is a struggle late Ijaw patriot, Isaac Adaka Boro spearheaded in the 1960s. Omenma (2011) submits on the issue of the Kaiama Declaration:
Within the Niger Delta there are elements working with and against one another who each seek to accomplish separate agendas in the region. The Ijaw are a militant group who seeks to accomplish the political goal of self-autonomy. Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) write in their research that the Ijaw’s founder, Isaac Adaka Boro sparked the establishment of several other movements in the Niger Delta, during the beginning moments of the struggle beginning in the 1960’s. This revolution includes a large criminal element in the Niger Delta consisting of various bands of criminal cult gangs established, encouraged, and funded by political godfathers. These groups are dedicated to the theft of crude oil, kidnapping for ransom, assassination of political opponents, various acts of brigandage and piracy in the creeks, and upon the territorial sea. (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009, p. 193)

The Kaiama Declaration by Ijaw National Congress summarize their concerns: The political crisis in Nigeria is mainly about the struggle for the control of oil mineral resources, which account for over 80% of GDP, 95% of national budget and 90% of foreign exchange earnings. From which, 65%, 75% and 70% respectively derive from within Ijaw nation. Despite these huge contributions, our reward from the Nigerian state remains avoidable deaths resulting from ecological devastation and military repression (Kaiama Declaration, 1998).

The struggle for the Ijaw has changed with the election of Goodluck Jonathan as President of Nigeria and now consists of nonaggressive engagements and organized assaults on oil installations with no human casualties. In the second dimension, there exists the opportunistic aptitude of criminal elements to take advantage of lawlessness. Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) write that various bands of criminal cult gangs established, encouraged and funded by corrupt political officials and dedicated to the theft of crude oil, kidnapping for ransom, assassination of
political opponents, various acts of criminality and piracy in the creeks, and upon the territorial sea (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009, pp. 192-193).

In Afinotan and Ojakorotu’s (2009) third dimension there is the more mature group of indigenes who are the more sophisticated citizens that value a peaceful resolution to conflict rather than resort to violence to achieve their goals. The struggle of this group consists of those who are genuinely concerned with the struggle for the actualization of a truly developed Niger Delta, free from poverty, degradation, unemployment, environmental pollution, economic and socio-political alienation, disease, and squalor. They are mainly members of the intelligentsia, political and economic elites, as well as enlightened traditional institutions. However, most especially the enlightened middle class citizens of the Niger Delta (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009, p. 193). The core of the Niger Delta crisis dwells in the first two struggles, the Ijaw breakaway from the Nigerian state and the criminal elements’ activities of stealing crude oil, kidnapping for ransom and other various acts of criminality and piracy in the creeks, and upon the territorial sea.

Adding to the struggles mentioned above are the social circumstances of the youth in Niger Delta and their perception through the societal looking glass. The youthful-charged militancy in the Niger Delta is rooted in socio-economic grievances from the residents of the southern most states that border Cameroon to the east, Benin to the west and the Gulf of Guinea, as shown in Figure 2.
Research conducted by Ujeke and Iwilade (2012) suggests that youth marginalization is not only existent in Nigeria but in all of Africa. Through marginalization, youths are often associated with violence due to varying social circumstances such as colonialism and its continued salience, Africa’s marginal place in the international system, and severe governance deficits as examples of underlying circumstances (Ujeke & Iwilade, 2012, p. 341). The grievances leveled against the government of Nigeria and oil companies formed when it became apparent that both of these entities were benefitting from the billions of dollars in revenue from oil exports while the citizens of the Niger Delta suffered from endemic poverty, environmental degradation, and underdevelopment (Akinola, 2011, p. 65).

Charles Ukeje and Akin Iwilade (2012) defend the youth through thoughtful insight on the importance of understanding the discourse of a younger generation in Africa who cannot
escape the narratives of violence. Charles Ukeje and Akin Iwilade’s (2012) defense contends the older generation consider the youthful generation as threats while ignoring the underlying social meanings of violence, for instance with regard to legitimate claims against an authoritarian and incapable state (Ukeje & Iwilade, 2012, p. 341). Ukeje and Iwilade (2012) continue as they suggest that crisis (with its disruption of politics, rule of law deficits, and progressively weakening value systems) creates opportunities (for instance for fraud and violence) which when taken by youth often generate further crisis. This situation is illustrated by the in the Niger Delta. Governance deficits in the area of petroleum refining (Figure 3) has allowed the emergence of a shadow economy of illegal refineries (crudely constructed and with only rudimentary technology) controlled by armed youth gangs who steal crude oil from pipelines, refine it, and export the products along the West African coast. In this regard, youth seize the opportunity provided by governance deficits to accumulate capital, a significant proportion of which funds militancy and criminality in the region (Ukeje & Iwilade, 2012, p. 341).
The region also accounts for over 80 percent of Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product and represents the economic jugular of the country. Here in this intricate network of creeks and crisscrossing streams also lie the operational bases of a plethora of ethic militia and insurgent groups of various kinds, with differing goals and objectives ranging from nationalism and freedom fighting to criminality and terrorism. This region is therefore Nigeria’s hot bed of ethnic violence, terrorism, and insurgency. However, in the midst of unchecked violence and a revolving criminality, together with the resultant widespread anxiety to saturate tension and appease the militants, the real issue seems forgotten, and prescribed solutions rendered fatuous. (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009, pp. 191-192).

Data collection revealed that foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy were quite low, particularly in Bayelsa, Omuku, and Bori. Some of the participants who had claimed to
complete secondary school education could not read the survey questionnaires administered by the assessment team. Similarly, graduates and polytechnic students in Bayelsa and Bori were unable to interpret some of the basic vocabulary used in the questionnaire.

**Boko Haram Threat to the Niger Delta**

The origins of the Niger Delta crisis dates back to the oil boom in the 1970s when Nigeria was a decade into its independence and the government was still trying to find traction as the nation apparatus. Elias Courson (2011) submits that Nigeria enjoyed increased oil production as well as the returns that came from higher global oil prices, which propelled the country from a relatively poor cash crop export into the ranks of a wealthy petro-dollar dominated economy (Courson, 2011, p. 25). The increase in Nigeria’s economy from the oil revenue caused an oversight in the other areas of economic subsistence such as agriculture and industry. The government’s neglect in these areas caused it to rely totally on the oil export sector as its main gross domestic producer. The collapse in global oil prices in 1980 reverberated throughout Nigeria’s economy that caused the government to rely on the international Monetary Fund and the World Bank to bail it out of its financial crisis. The downfall of Nigeria’s economy causal of a socioeconomic crisis as partly the result of the collapse of the external oil sector, prolonged misrule, and the continued neglect of the Nigeria Delta by the government-oil company’s partnership (Courson, 2011, p. 26). The mistrust of international oil companies contributes to ordinary citizens to take it upon themselves to go against the government and intervene in what they realize is a total shutout from economic prosperity.

The people of the Niger Delta identify with a sense of reparation in that they believe that due to the socio-economic disaster the government has created, this is reason for restitution. It is in this context that several militant groups would emerge demanding the government of Nigeria
to reverse the misfortunes that forced on them. The militancy in the Niger Delta is complex. There is no specific group in conflict with the government. Instead, many fall under the umbrella term Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The movement does not have a command structure, which allows for the flexibility of groups to self-govern and remain difficult to track. Agbiboa (2013) cites the MEND spokesperson, Jomo Gbomo, who clarifies the identification of MEND:

MEND is an amalgam of all arm-bearing groups in the Niger Delta fighting for control of oil revenue by indigenes of the Niger Delta who have relatively no benefits from the exploitation of our mineral resources by the Nigerian government and oil companies over the last fifty years (Agbiboa, 2013, p.52).

The following list, although not all encompassing represents many of the militant groups in the Niger Delta:

- Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
- Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta
- Movement for the Reparation to Ogbia
- The Chikoko Movement
- The Oron National Forum
- Egi Peoples Coalition
- Ikwere Youth Convention
- The Ijaw Youth Council
- Egbesu Boys of Africa
- Supreme Egbesu Asembly
- The Atangbala Boys
• Niger Delta Vigilante
• Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
• Niger delta Freedom Fighters

The non-violent protests by these groups against oil companies and infrastructure caused the government to react by using military force to quell the violence. Courson (2011) inserts that the militarization of the Niger Delta region and the repression of the nonviolent protests that followed left trails of sorrow, tears, blood, anguish, and death. The heavy toll in terms of human rights abuses in the region only worsened matters. In some cases, the military destroyed entire oil-bearing communities after receiving information by oil companies that protesting communities were threatening oil facilities or staff (Courson, 2011, p. 27). It is here where accusations of the majority of human right’s abuses by Nigeria’s military come to light for brutal acts while operating in the Niger Delta.

The transformation from military dictatorship to democratic rule did not change the way in which the government reacted to the disturbance in the Niger Delta. In fact, the situation caused by further deployment of troops only exacerbated the situation causing further outbreak of violence. During President Olusegun Obasanjo’s term in office, the invasions and massacres of the military was attributed to the need to arrest a certain youth gang accused of murdering nine police officers in the community (Courson, 2011, p. 28). This would set off a campaign of retribution killings from both sides.

It became apparent by corrupt government officials to use violent youth groups to interfere with oppositional parties to effect election outcomes at all level of government. Courson (2011) suggests that youth groups backed by those in power and loyal to politicians were armed and used to rig the elections, while some oil corporations reportedly aided the effort. Youth
groups operated with impunity and recklessly in collaboration with compromised agents of the state to ensure the victory of the ruling party (PDP) (Courson, 2011, p. 28) in return for state protection and easy cash. When there was no further use of the militant groups, their benefactors abandoned them. This abandonment prompted these youth groups to return to militancy against the oil industry and along the way adopting other criminal activities to make money.

According to Akinola (2011), militant activities and violent crime such as hostage taking and kidnapping of oil workers and frequent disruption of oil production activities through the destruction of oil and gas installations and facilities (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013, p. 8) grew significantly. The resulting effects were severe disruptions in the energy production activities and creating broad instability across the nine states that make up the Niger Delta. Rather than acting on calls to improve living conditions, the central government responded to growing security issues with continued aggressive military operations that used air and land campaigns. Persistent poverty, underdevelopment, and environmental degradation gave birth to a region where grievances are high and distrust in the government and international oil companies were mounting. Militancy in the region turned a more destructive corner in the early 2000s bringing along with it a considerable amount of disruption to oil production (Akinola, 2011, p. 66).

The government’s response to militancy and criminal activities through aggressive means gives testimony that the welfare of its citizens were not in the forefront of fundamental responsibilities to include providing a sustainable security apparatus such as a local police or security force and a progressive justice system. The heavy-handed response to unrest indicates a transparent consideration for the safety and security of the people of Niger Delta and a closed mindedness of how exactly to deal with violence other than with violence.
The Nigerian government and its military, despite its size and wealth, have not been able to effectively control or defeat Boko Haram on its territory or any other territory in the region and must rely on neighboring countries and the international community for assistance. Although the Niger Delta crisis is a separate security matter, the commonality between Boko Haram and militants in the Delta is worth mentioning. In Niger Delta, the points of contention center on economic, religious, poverty, and government neglect of the people of this region at the behest of international oil companies. In the northeast, economic, poverty, and government neglect are the genesis of movements against the government; however, the religious fundamentalism is overshadowing these other concerns. Both groups are fighting for similar goals and this is putting a strain on military resources to deal with both issues at once. In recent years, the Nigerian military has not been active in the Niger Delta due to the 2009 amnesty program put in place around the time of election of Goodluck Jonathan into office. The election of a new president is raising concerns that the 2009 amnesty program will not renew and this may drive militants to become active once again. This split in attention could play in the favor of Boko Haram.

The 2009 amnesty program, initially introduced by then-President Yar Adua, was an initiative established in 2008 by the Niger Delta Technical Committee (Agbiboa (2013) to help build peace and reduce attacks on oil facilities in the Niger Delta. Daniel Agbiboa (2013) writes the amnesty policy stated that militants who freely surrender their arms within 60 days avoid prosecution for the crimes committed in the process of disrupting the Nigerian oil industry (Agbiboa, 2013, p. 53). The policy to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate militants back into society as productive citizens had its issues as it was written with ambiguous language. Government officials saw the program as erroneous with concerns that there was no clear
definition of who the intended beneficiaries should be. This left open the possibility that youth could claim to be a part of the militancy after realizing they could make easy money.

The amnesty program has been successful in minimizing violence in the Niger Delta but that success is showing signs that former militants may regress depending on the outcome of the March 2015 elections. Most are concerned that if President Goodluck Jonathan suffers a loss in the presidential election, the amnesty program will end and a resumption of violence will continue. Chris Stein (2015) writes that one of the program’s responsibilities in concert with payouts of a meager $325 per month is to train former militants for job opportunities; however, these promises remain unfilled. Activists in the Niger Delta have acknowledged that little improvement since the beginning of the amnesty program, also a sign that the Nigerian government has not changed its view or considerations to address seriously the underlying issues of government corruption, political sponsorship of violent offenses and environmental degradation (Agbiboa, 2013, p. 53; Stein, 2015, n.p.).

As globalization continues to transform the world so must the foreign policies be able to shift focus where the most severe threats are being sowed. The spread of fundamentalism and the display of attacks in the media are giving cause for groups to realize the benefits of converging to advance their goals. This is taking place in the Middle East and now taking place in Africa. A reformed U.S. policy to support Nigeria against Boko Haram will send a clear message that extremism is running out of places to go.

Nigeria’s Political History

The relationship between the U.S. and Nigeria has been central to political and economic cooperation, mutual growth benefits, and a sustainment of mutual political respect. In 1960, during a National Security Council (NSC) meeting, several general considerations identify West
Africa for its growing political significance, with Nigeria at the forefront, and increasingly an important influence in world events. The NSC identified a developing awareness of West Africa where the people are determined to govern themselves. The NSC notes that political alignment with the U.S. and Western European nations will further affect West Africa’s role in world events and within the international community. Many African nations rapidly became members of the United Nations (UN), where political figures voted on issues with the less-developed countries. The UN membership serves as a gateway for the acceptance of African nations as equals within the international community (Lay, 1960, p. 1).

With its size, wealth, and appeal by western countries to the immense amounts of oil, gas, and natural resources Nigeria also harbored a pro-Western political orientation. This realization proved to be a key point made during the NSC meeting ascending Nigeria’s role as a potential force for political moderation and to lead other countries to emulate it as a way forward in politics and economic stability (Lay, 1960, p. 11). These expectations of the NSC were short lived as Nigeria began its independence with an uncertainty of whether or not it would evolve into a flourishing democratic society.

From 1966 to 1999, Nigeria experienced a series of military coups, excluding a short-lived democratic republic from 1979 to 1983. A power struggle, led by General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, consumed the country at the beginning of 1966. General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi’s plan was to unite the regions under one government. The General’s plan precipitated riots and retaliation by a group of northern army officers that revolted against the government. The northern officer’s actions resulted in Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi’s death, and the appointment of the army chief of staff, General Yakubu Gowon, as the head of the new military government. General Gowon attempted to divide Nigeria into 12 states; however, the plan was rejected by the
eastern region’s leader, Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who declared his region autonomous from the rest of Nigeria, an action that led to the 1967 to 1970 Biafra War, resulting in one to three million casualties.

Military rule continued after the war ended, when, in 1979, democratic elections brought into power a civilian government to lead the nation into a new era and remained until 1983. During this same time, U.S. interests in Nigeria were modest with about one percent of the area accounted for by U.S. trade. As Nigeria struggled diplomatically, trade relations were minimal until 1985 when the government began showing signs of stability. This led to the establishment of full trade relations with the U.S in the form of health, food, development assistance, and agriculture.

Military rule also remained in place throughout 1980s and into the early 1990s. The country once again held civilian presidential elections in 1993, concluding with the Social Democratic Party candidate, Moshood Abiola, winning with 58 percent of the vote. General Ibrahim Babangida, a former member of the Nigerian Army Supreme Military Council and 1985 coup leader, dissolved the election to retain control of the government. A series of events unfolded after the 1993 elections to include the arrest of Abiola for declaring himself president. The dissolution of the 1993 election prompted the U.S. to suspend aid during Nigeria’s political crisis and General Babagida subsequently concedes control of military rule to General Sani Abacha (Nigeria Special Report, 1999, n.p.). After resolution, the new government faced a crisis initiated by Nigeria’s oil industry. In 1994, Nigerian oil workers declared a strike forcing the military to replace the workers, a move that drove up the price of crude oil. General Sani Abacha continued control of the military government in 1993 and worked to restore order in the
government and country by ordering return the government over to civilian rule after three years and the release of political prisoners, including Moshood Abiola.

In 1998, the political crisis improved with the release of over 100 political prisoners. Subsequently, a proposal by President Clinton promised improved relations pending release of all political prisoners and a move toward democratic reform (Nigeria Special Report, 1999, n.p.). During the 1999 presidential elections, Nigerian and international election monitors declared fair elections with the populous electing the second civilian leader, Olusegun Obasanjo, ironically a former military ruler. Following the inauguration of a civilian president, the U.S.-Nigerian relationship improved, as did cooperation on foreign policy goals such as regional peacekeeping and trade agreements (State Department, 2014, n.p).

Figure 4 illustrates trade relations between the U.S. and Nigeria spanning nearly two decades.

![Figure 4. Trade in Goods with Nigeria](https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c7530.html#1985)
From 1985 through 2014, imports and exports favored the U.S. From 1985 to 1990, import and export of goods fluctuated moderately with exports for the U.S. peaking in 1990 at $553.2 million per month while imports for the same year climbed to $5,283.9 million per month. From 1991 to 1999 U.S. exports saw moderate increases and decreases with a significant increase at the turn of the century due to high economic growth, low unemployment, and low inflation because of developments on both the demand and supply sides of the economy (Boehne, 2000, n.p.).

These statistics echo President Obama’s National Security Strategies (NSS), when in 2010 he stated:

As African states grow their economies and strengthen their democratic institutions, and governance, America will continue to embrace effective partnerships. Our economic, security, and political cooperation will be consultative and encompass global, regional, and national priorities including access to open markets, conflict prevention, global peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and the protection of vital carbon sinks. (NSS, 2010, p. 53)

In 2011, Nigeria was Africa’s largest supplier of oil, and ranked as the fifth-largest global supplier of oil to the U.S. Instability in the country’s Niger Delta region has reduced output periodically by over 25 percent. World oil prices endure negatively by Nigerian political developments and by periodic attacks on pipelines and other oil facilities in the Delta. Ploch (2011) cites a senior Department of Defense official who commented, “A key mission for U.S. forces (in Africa) would be to ensure that Nigeria’s oil fields...are secure” (p. 15).
U.S. National Security Interests

It is important to have a broad understanding of U.S. national policy in Africa to appreciate how Nigeria fits into the scheme of U.S. foreign policy interests. The presidential NSS are annual reports, published as required by law to Congress, to satisfy the domestic and foreign policy interests, goals, and objectives of the U.S. The law that requires the submission of the NSS is the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986. Absent a major conflict, the U.S. security strategy for Africa has many responsive, attainable goals beneficial to the U.S. and the country of interest if African governments worked toward the common goal of democracy and free society.

Table 1 lists each NSS by year, from the Reagan to Obama administrations, to demonstrate how various administrations communicated with Congress to carry out foreign policy interests, goals, and objectives to improve U.S. national security. Each NSS carries the theme conveying the overall U.S. mission is to support those nations who will benefit the most from democratic processes that will satisfy U.S. interests and the national security agenda. The texts of key insertions, by year are:

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>African issues demand increasing attention because of the continent's extensive natural resources; its growing role in international forums; the threat posed to regional security by the escalating racial conflict in South Africa; and Soviet, Libyan intervention. East European and Cuban adventurism throughout the region...denial of democratic processes, extreme poverty, and great disparities of wealth, ethnic frictions, unsettled borders, and religion are threatening to increase widespread denial of basic human rights, and religion. (NSS, 1987, p.18)</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The threats that continued to undermine growth and security in Africa at this time emanated from Soviet Union actions throughout the continent and Libya, a state sponsor of terror, whose aggression towards sub-Saharan countries heightened tensions in an already fragile environment. Africa still maintained its appeal as an important source of strategic minerals and a potential growth market for U.S. exports. It represents a significant voting group in the United Nations and other international organizations. The Soviet Union and its surrogates have made the Horn of Africa an</td>
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arena for East-West competition. The Soviet Union has viewed southern Africa as an opportune area for its expansionist policies. (NSS, 1988, pp. 32-33)

**1990**
Africa is a major contributor to the world supply of raw materials and minerals and a region of enormous human potential. In the strategic dimension, the U.S. has pressed hard throughout the 1980s for the liquidation of all the Soviet/Cuban military interventions in Africa left over from the 1970s. (NSS, 1990, p. 13)

**1991**
The end of the Cold war should benefit Africa in that it will no longer be seen (sic) as a battleground for superpower conflict. As attention turns to rebuilding, concerns shift to the endemic trends resulting from economic decline, AIDS, and environmental degradation, showing the prospects of accelerating. The concepts of democracy and market economics must prevail in a continent where initially the rejection of these concepts was acceptable by socialist ideologies. (NSS, 1991, p. 10-11)

**1993**
In Africa, the U.S. policy was to continue to participate in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations. The U.S. also sought to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and the rule of law, support friends, and allies to improve their self-defense capabilities in order to deter and defend against regional aggressors, and continue to maintain and improve crisis response capabilities. (NSS, 1993, pp. 26, 27)

**1994**
Africa is one of our greatest challenges for a strategy of engagement and enlargement. The U.S. policy seeks to help support democracy, sustainable economic development, and resolution of conflicts where ethnic, religious, and political tensions are acute through negotiation, diplomacy, and peacekeeping. We also encourage democratic reform in nations like Nigeria...to allow the people to enjoy a responsive government. (NSS, 1994, p. 26)

**1996**
Subtle changes occurred in the NSS during 1996. The NSS mentions strong condemnation of the Nigerian government’s human rights violations and supporting efforts to encourage the return to democratic rule. (NSS, 1996, p. 44)

**1997**
The most significant threat in Africa during at this time is Libya, its support for terrorism, efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction, and its military capabilities that threatened it neighbors. The internal issues of most African countries remained the same; however, significant changes were beginning to occur. Increasingly, more nations saw the advent of multi-democratic parties, the rewriting of constitutions was including citizens in the decision making process through more frequent elections, and a better understanding and management of budgets and financial discipline became more apparent.

In order for Africa to overcome impediments to development, conflicts had to be resolved diplomatically and peacefully and the overall goal of the U.S. was to assist African nations to implement economic reforms, create favorable climates for trade and investment, and achieve sustainable development. In addition, U.S. companies were encouraged to trade with and invest in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) represents one of the world’s largest remaining untapped markets. The U.S. exports more to SSA than to all of the former Soviet Union combined; yet, the U.S. benefited from only seven percent of the market share in Africa. Increasing both the U.S. market share and the size of the African market will bring tangible benefits to U.S. workers and create wealth in Africa. (NSS, 1997, pp. 32-33)

**1998**
Libya and Sudan continue to pose a threat to regional stability and the national security and foreign policy interests of the U.S. The actions of Libya during this time included undermining other governments in the region, defying UN Security Council regulations and refusal to turn over the bombers of Pan Am 103. Sudan as a threat to the region included supporting international terrorism, to include providing safe haven for Osama bin Laden. The first sign in supporting African initiatives as outline in the NSSs was then-President Clintons announced the establishment of the African Center for Strategic Studies. (NSS, 1998, p. 55)
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<td>1998</td>
<td>The goal is for ACSS to be a source of academic yet practical instruction in promoting the skills necessary to make effective national security decisions in democratic governments, and engage African military and civilian defense leaders in a substantive dialogue about defense policy planning in democracies. (ACSS, 2015)</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Within Sub-Saharan Africa, the U.S. national security strategy continues to support multi-party democracy, hold free and fair elections, promote human rights, allow freedom of the press and association, and reform their economies. The immediate objective is to increase the number of capable states in Africa; that is, nations that are able to define the challenges they face, manage their resources to effectively address those challenges, and build stability and peace within their borders and their sub-regions. (NSS, 2000, p. 45)</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>The sharp increase of this NSS focuses for the first time on a specific region of Africa, most notably in Sub-Saharan Africa. After 9/11, the U.S. sought to broaden its scope in Africa and strengthen its relationship with countries that have shown the most progress throughout the continent. With specific attention to Nigeria in comparison to all of the NSS’s to date, several steps bring reform to light. Nigeria restored its civilian democratic government to help return to its place as the model nation for democracy in Africa. The government freed political prisoners, lifted heavy restrictions on labor unions, and worked to restore the authority of the judicial system. Nigeria’s new civilian government has taken large strides to ensure the military remains a sufficient fighting force and fighting corruption will be a top priority. The peaceful elections in February 1999 and inauguration of the new civilian government in May 1999 were important steps in this transformation. (NSS, 2001, p. 82)</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>President Bush calls for an essential commitment to focus politically and militarily in Africa to protect the interests and investments of U.S. capital invested into the continent for decades. President Bush submits, &quot;Africa’s great size and diversity requires a security strategy that focuses on bilateral engagement and builds coalitions of the willing. This focus should work to strengthen Africa’s fragile states, help build indigenous capabilities to secure porous borders, and help build up the law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny havens for terrorists.&quot; Nigeria is included in a list of nations that are the anchors for regional engagement and requires focused attention. (NSS, 2002, p. 10)</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance and is a high priority of this Administration. It is a place of promise and opportunity, linked to the U.S. by history, culture, commerce, and strategic significance. The goal is an African continent that knows liberty, peace, stability, and increasing prosperity. The U.S. recognizes that its security depends upon collaborating with Africans to strengthen fragile and failing states and bring ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies. Support for African nations against terrorist organizations who seek to take control of key territory and establish Islamic caliphates is detrimental to protecting national interests. This includes denying the terrorists control of any nation that they would use as a base and launching pad for terror. The terrorists’ goal is to overthrow a rising democracy; claim a strategic country as a haven for terror; destabilize the Middle East [and Africa], and strike America and other free nations with ever-increasing violence. (NSS, 2006, pp. 14, 42)</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>The diversity and complexity of the African continent offer the U.S. opportunities and challenges. As African states grow their economies and strengthen their democratic institutions and governance, America will continue to embrace effective partnerships. Our economic, security, and political cooperation will be consultative and encompass global, regional, and national priorities including access to open markets, conflict prevention, global peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and the protection of vital carbon sinks. The administration will refocus its priorities on strategic interventions that can promote job creation and economic growth; combat corruption while strengthening good governance and accountability; responsibly improve the capacity of African security and rule of law sectors; and work through diplomatic dialogue to mitigate local ...</td>
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and regional tensions before they become crises. We will also reinforce sustainable stability in key states like Nigeria and Kenya that are essential sub regional linchpins. (NSS, 2010, p.53)

**Africa Command Mission**

Since 9/11, the U.S. government has spent a considerable amount of time and effort in reforming foreign policies and approving new cabinet-level positions and establishments such as the Office of Director of National Intelligence, the National Counterterrorism Center, and Department of Homeland Security into the U.S. government. These reactionary reform efforts aim to bolster security and expertise at the national level to prevent an attack on the scale of September 11, 2001 from occurring again. Among these reforms, on February 6, 2007, the Bush Administration announced the establishment of Africa Command (AFRICOM), as a sub-unified command once under European Command. AFRICOM became an independent command 18 months later (Meehan & Speier, p. 2) with the sole purpose of promoting national security objectives in Africa and its coastal and other strategic waters. The persistence of political instability and civil wars throughout the continent raise security concerns to U.S. interests through diminishing security programs in troubled hot spots while under-governed areas become more troublesome. The expectation for AFRICOM is to work more closely with African to reduce these concerns.

Political and military instability heightens human suffering and retards economic development, which may in turn threaten U.S. economic interests. Due to instability, the export of natural resources and investment initiatives are directly affected. Africa’s exports of crude oil to the U.S. were at one point roughly equal to those of the Middle East, further emphasizing the continent’s strategic importance. Prior to the 1998 embassy bombing in Kenya, the U.S. saw little strategic value in Africa outside of these economic interests. It was not until after the
embassy bombings that the U.S. reached a turning point in its view toward the region. The 2002 Bush Administration NSS addressed the importance of increasing focus and support toward the areas concerning U.S. interests. The 2002 NSS states:

Together with our European allies, we must help strengthen Africa’s fragile states; help build indigenous capability to secure porous borders, and help build up the law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny havens for terrorists. An ever more lethal environment exists in Africa as local civil wars spread beyond borders to create regional war zones. Africa’s great size and diversity requires a security strategy that focuses on bilateral engagement and builds coalitions of the willing. (National Security Strategy, 2002, pp. 10-11)

In the 2010 NSS, the Obama administration continued the theme of support in Africa. The NSS states:

No single nation can nor should shoulder the burden for managing or resolving the world’s (sic) armed conflicts. To this end, we will place renewed emphasis on deterrence and prevention by mobilizing diplomatic action, and use development and security sector assistance to build the capacity of at-risk nations and reduce the appeal of violent extremism. But (sic) when international forces are needed (sic) to respond to threats and keep the peace, we will work with international partners to ensure they are ready, able, and willing. We will continue to build support in other countries to contribute to sustaining global peace and stability operations, through U.N. peacekeeping and regional organizations, such as NATO and the African Union. (Obama, 2010, pp. 47-48)

Ploch (2011) writes the establishment of AFRICOM reflected an evolution in policymakers’ perceptions of the continent’s security challenges and U.S. strategic interests there
AFRICOM also serves as a provision of greater continuity in Africa, a role shared once between the Combatant Commands (COCOMs): Pacific Command, Central Command, and European Command. The establishment of AFRICOM allows for the execution of its responsibilities by ensuring protection of U.S. security interests in the continent and that partnerships with African states are healthy and moving forward. Each of the preceding COCOMs is located in its respected region with the exception of AFRICOM; an indication the location of AFRICOM has been a point of contention. Ploch (2011) asserts locating the headquarters within the area of operations (AOR) had several benefits in terms of proximity. Deploying AFRICOM’s staff could enable efficient interaction with African counterparts and place key leadership within close geographic proximity to U.S. diplomatic missions on the continent (Meehan & Speier, p. 10). For example, flight time from Stuttgart, Germany, where AFRICOM is located, to Nairobi, Kenya is approximately nine hours, and flight time from Stuttgart, Germany to Johannesburg, South Africa, is approximately 11 hours. Flight time from Washington, DC, to the African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is approximately 16-20 hours. By locating AFRICOM within its AOR, U.S., government and military representatives will have greater access to counterparts similar to other COCOMs located in their respective continents.

Some negative reactions to locating AFRICOMs headquarters in Africa include the perception the U.S. military was pushing an agenda for a more permanent presence on the continent. A likelihood of a permanent presence is a “threatening gesture” to the sovereignty of some countries, a purview that the U.S. is interfering into internal affairs of the would-be host nation and its neighbors.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The study of U.S. policy in support of Nigeria against Boko Haram is necessary because of the proven affects Islamic fundamentalism has in unstable security environments and the challenges it presents to the political and economic climates between these two nations. It has been nearly 13 years since President Bush presented to Congress the 2002 NSS calling for an essential commitment in Africa to focus politically and militarily to protect the interests and investments made over several decades (NSS, 2002, pp. 10-11). During a July 20, 2015 state visit by newly elected Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, President Obama called Nigeria one of the most important countries on the African continent and praised Mr. Buhari for tackling corruption, an issue that compromised Washington’s relationship with the Nigerian leader’s predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan (BBC, 2015, n.p.). The disparity between supporting an ally against terrorism and protecting interests and investments warrants further examination, which is why it is important to examine the reasons why the U.S. security policy in support of Nigeria against Boko Haram are ineffective. The literature review examines religious fundamentalism in Nigeria and examines the discourse of U.S. policy toward Nigeria.

Evolution of Religious Fanaticism

A sufficient understanding of the factors in Nigeria is necessary to identify what drives religious fanaticism and why groups such as Boko Haram wage campaigns of terrorism against governments and civilians who do not align with its beliefs. Religious fanaticism is dependent on strong the beliefs of a group’s leader and his or her ability to motivate followers through dialogue and an unfettered commitment to a cause. On the eve of Nigeria’s independence, the British limited the scope of Sharia Law, formally excluding it from Nigeria’s legal system leading to the abolishment of an Islamic court in 1967. British colonial authorities left in place
many elements of Sharia Law, however gradually reducing its scope as it introduced common law codes. Sharia Law continued in some locales as area or customary law, however it did not rise above the village level. In 1987, the issue of Sharia Law again came to the fore, in the context of drafting a new civilian constitution. The drafting of a new constitution led to heated debates focusing on the word secular to describe the state and on the proposed creation of a federal-level Sharia Law court of appeal (ICG, 2010, pp 13-14). The separation of Sharia Law from the constitution and politics set the course for a rise in radical fundamentalism, an opportunity taken by the Maitasine to impose its brand of religious ideology. The imposition of religious ideology by the Maitasine also set the early stages for other violent conflict throughout Nigeria. From the early 1980’s through 2010, there were a reported 46 riots throughout Nigeria for various reasons such as police brutality, extrajudicial killings, ethnic injustices, religion, and political misrepresentation, poverty, economic inequalities, and unemployment (Adejosi, 2010, pp. 96-97).

Prior to the adoption of its current name, Boko Haram emerged in 1995 under the leadership of Abubakah Lawn and were known as the Ahlulsunna wal’jama’ah hijrah (Waldek &Jayasekara, 2012). Salaam (2012) notes Boko Haram’s name originated from a different moniker, Jama’atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda’Awati Wal Jihad, which is Arabic for ‘People Committed to the Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad’. Muhammad Yusef, the founder of Boko Haram, was a member of numerous Islamic movements such as the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, the Jama’atu. Tahididi Islam, Borno State Sharia committee, and the Taliban (Waldek &Jayasekara, 2011, p. 170). As a member of these groups, Yusef formed a long-standing dream of reforming society in Nigeria. Adejosi (2010) implies Yusef collated his knowledge and experiences from these groups and led to the creation of Boko Haram.
The 2009 killing of Muhammed Yusef, while allegedly in police custody, and a known sponsor of the group and businessperson, Alhaji Buji Foi, sparked a Boko Haram riot that has morphed into Bamidele’s (2012) description of the group as catastrophic terrorism. Bamidele (2010) submits, “dealing with catastrophic terrorist or militia groups has over the years become one of the most pressing security challenges to the regimes of Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Yar Adua, and Goodluck Jonathan, who have ruled Nigeria since the democratic awakening of 1999” (p.34). Yusef’s death was a turning point set by Nigerian security forces that allowed radical fundamentalism to be born.

According to Bagaji (2012), Adejosi (2010), and Waldek & Jayasekara (2011), Boko Haram draws its philosophy and objectives from the Maitasine and its modus operandi from the Taliban. There is little information on the Taliban’s influence on Boko Haram or the links between the two groups, other than inspiration. However, Adejosi (2010) implies Muhammad Yusef was a member of the Taliban and left not only because of its extremist tendencies but also because he harbored dreams of reforming Nigeria in accordance to his beliefs. Boko Haram built its organization on precedents set by the Maitasine and other groups that sought to impose a religious ideology omitted from constitutional reform efforts during the early years of Nigeria’s independence. Now under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram continues to expand the range of Islamic fundamentalism. Boko Haram far exceeds past attempts to impose religious ideology by using suicide bombings, and other methods of explosions and attacks to inflict casualties against its enemies. These efforts are resilient despite the brutal suppression of previous attempts. They show resolve of Boko Haram fighters, demonstrate the range and alacrity of its military organization, and express belief that it could successfully engage a modern state in a military conflict.
Many African nations participate in peacekeeping operations, which has been effective in ensuring that peace and stability prevail in fragile security environments. Despite a willingness to participate in these operations, many African militaries lack the command and control, training, equipment, and logistics capability to effectively participate in such efforts and control the outbreak of armed conflict (Meehan & Speier, p. 21). This is especially true for Nigeria as it continues its struggle to defeat Boko Haram permanently. The growth of Boko Haram and the intensity of its attacks have demoralized the Nigerian military and caused many soldiers to refuse to fight, desert, or both. Ploch (2011) asserts instability in Africa has demanded substantial humanitarian and defense resources from the international community, and the U.S. and other donor countries have acknowledged the utility and potential cost-effectiveness of assisting African forces to enhance their capabilities to participate in these operations. The issue that remains is an effective policy is still absent to back-up the proposed conditions in which the U.S. has committed to support.

Since 2009, Boko Haram’s attacks have not concentrated only in the northeast where a majority of attacks previously occurred. Rather, attacks conducted across the country characterize the growing reach and training Boko Haram received. Figure 5 illustrates the locations where Boko Haram has conducted attacks since returning to its extremist activity operations.
Of note, during 2006, when the U.S. government published the NSS, Boko Haram was actively training in the Sahel with al Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and providing cooperation until 2013. Since 2009, Boko Haram has been operating in northeastern Nigeria with near impunity and seeking safe haven in desolate places near neighboring countries Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The increasing lethality and sophistication of Boko Haram’s attacks have raised its profile among U.S. national security officials. The U.S. continues to offer support for Nigeria against Boko Haram, however this support is limited for several reasons including human right abuses, corruption, and distrust with the military. An examination of literature revealed the fragmentation of U.S. security policy in Nigeria and the importance of reducing inconsistencies so the U.S. can develop a comprehensive policy.
**U.S. Policy toward Nigeria against Boko Haram**

The U.S. government has come under scrutiny from the Nigerian government for not doing enough to provide support against Boko Haram. Several news articles highlight the gravity in which U.S. support is purportedly lacking. In the article, *Nigeria says U.S. support lacking in Boko Haram battle*, the Nigerian envoy to the U.S. describes support as being insufficient, failing to share enough intelligence, and selling needed weaponry to fight the Islamist group (Stewart, 2014, n.p.). In the article *Rifts between U.S. and Nigeria impeding fight against Boko Haram*, Cooper (2015) expresses the strain in the relationship between Nigeria and the U.S. deteriorated to the point that Department of Defense (DOD) often bypasses Nigeria on Boko Haram issues and by choosing to work with security officials in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. In May 2015, the U.S. agreed to support Niger, Chad, and Cameroon with US$35 million in military and defense support services while Nigeria was not included in the agreement (Cooper, 2015; Obaji, 2015; Stewart, 2014). In 2014, the Office of the Whitehouse Press Secretary released a statement after the abduction of 217 female students in Chibok, Nigeria that reveals a different scenario.

The statement purports the U.S. supported Nigeria with a multi-disciplinary team, expanded intelligence-sharing, sanctions against Boko Haram members, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) initiatives, and military and law enforcement cooperation. In an article that suggests otherwise, Cooper (2015) reports the U.S. blocked a weapons deal between Israel and Nigeria because the equipment was American made, and the Israeli’s needed permission to sell the equipment. In return, Nigeria cancelled a U.S.-led military training program, a move that could signify an impending loss of influence by the U.S. in the region. The statement also includes continued engagement efforts to counter Boko Haram through a Security
Governance Initiative, a program meant to enhance vulnerable security sectors. Open source reporting refutes claims of U.S. intelligence support due to fear of infiltration by Boko Haram of the Nigerian military and the subsequent compromise of raw information (Cooper, 2015, n.p.). Another program meant to counter Boko Haram initiated by the State Department and DOD is the Global Security Contingency Fund. This program provided technical expertise, training, and equipment to the four countries to develop institutional and tactical capabilities to enhance respective efforts to counter Boko Haram, and to lay the groundwork for increased cross-border cooperation.

According to Obaji (2015), U.S. defense analysts believe another possible reason why the U.S. refused to sell arms to Nigeria was fear of sophisticated military equipment ending up in the hands of Boko Haram. This is a possibility since Nigerian troops left weapons while fleeing fighting. The U.S. has several attractive programs aimed at supporting Nigeria against Boko Haram. One program is the West Africa Regional Security Initiative (WARSI). The establishment of WARSI is to confront, in concert with African allies, the growing danger from transnational criminal organizations, particularly narcotics traffickers, whose activities threaten the collective security and regional stability interests of the U.S., our African partners, and the international community (WARSI, 2014, n.p.). For Boko Haram to participate in narcotics trafficking would be against its brand of ideology, therefore undermining its goal of defeating western influence.

Another initiative sponsored by the U.S. is the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). This partnership is an extension of the successful Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), completed in early 2004, which focused on Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad. Its goals support two U.S. national security interests in Africa: waging the war on terrorism and enhancing
regional peace and security. The program consisted of five goals aiming to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments to confront the challenge posed by terrorist organizations in the region (TSCTP, 2010, n.p.). An argument between conservatives and liberals insists the underfunding of the programs, which are only in place to pay lip service to cover policies, are knowingly, or considered ineffective.

U.S. government officials through various forums state repeatedly support for Nigeria against Boko Haram, however, human rights abuses and corruption are often cited as reasons support does not real its full extent. The literature review of U.S. policy toward Nigeria is absent discourse on a cohesive strategy against Boko Haram. The research and conclusions in this paper fill that gap.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the qualitative method of research for this study conducted primarily using sources located via internet searches. Qualitative research is an inductive process, which illustrates working back and forth between the themes, and the data until a comprehensive set of themes is established (Creswell, 2009, p. 180). The Internet is a reliable resource for information that enables access to information from multiple sources. In addition, web-based catalogs are available from many libraries to assist in locating printed books, journals, government documents, and other materials. Possibly the biggest obstacle facing researchers on the Internet is how to effectively and efficiently access the vast amount of information available (FCIT, 2013, n.p.).

There are advantages and disadvantages, as described by Creswell (2009), to using documents from the internet. The advantages to using documents on the internet include access information at a time convenient to the researcher - an unobtrusive source of information. As written evidence, it saves the researcher time and expense of transcribing. Some limitations for using documents on the internet include not all people are equally articulate or perceptive or lack authenticity and accuracy (p. 182). Therefore, the ability to establish the validity of documents falls upon the researcher through cross-referencing sources against one another.

Data Collection

A literature search, based on the search terms such as U.S. policy and national security, Boko Haram, terrorism, counterterrorism, and Nigeria, yielded a vast number of sources written by experts in terrorism, Boko Haram, and Nigeria. Initially the researcher limited source document searches to scholarly and peer reviewed articles using Henley-Putnam University’s e-library, and by conducting Boolean searches on the World Wide Web, applying filters to
improve search accuracy, including correlations with the topic, biases, and currency. This allowed for coverage of relevant key research topics with a focus on the most important information. However, numerous news reports from organizations such as Al Jazeera, BBC News, Washington Post, and The Daily Beast surfaced during initial searches. The researcher determined news reports augmented academic and scholarly sources because these articles added local viewpoints the academic and scholarly sources lacked.

During the research process, the researcher studied and related data to the research statement. If the characteristics of the documents supported U.S. policy in Nigeria and Boko Haram’s insurgency, the documents were included during the collection of research data. If the data did not support the policy, the researcher considered them as alternative positions to ensure a well-rounded analysis of the research statement. After categorizing source documents in this manner the researcher organized information into two primary categories: evolution of religious fanaticism and U.S. policy toward Nigeria against Boko Haram. Finally, two themes emerged that provided a framework for analysis; first was how religious fanaticism plays an intricate role in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Nigeria, and second was how Boko Haram is setting a precedence for future terrorist groups in Western Africa.

Data Analysis

The author studied the data, drawing conclusions to support or refute the hypothesis. The determination of information accuracy included studying and analyzing similar topics from the viewpoints of multiple authors and enabled the researcher to identify bias and connections between authors. A review of the data collected revealed academics, experts, and authors who live in Nigeria provided first-hand accounts of day-to-day living in a violent atmosphere.
The analysis included evaluating each reference and then correlating the various references within the two primary categories and the two sets of analyses combined in a process similar to the Meta interpretation, which focuses on the interpretive synthesis of qualitative research as discussed by Weed (2005). The qualitative analyses included a modified version of a meta-interpretation process supported by a synthesis of related sets of open source information; meta-interpretation focuses on highlighting differences in studies not accounted for in the immediate situation (Weed, 2005).

**Assumptions and Limitations**

The main assumption throughout the research process was the researcher was able to identify a sufficient information base to support or refute the thesis statement. The limits on the research were time, containing the search, and identifying biases in research sources. As the researcher identified biases, the researcher attempted to locate additional sources, written from an alternative perspective, to counter the biases to maintain the integrity of the research. Another limitation related to the authors of news stories because it was difficult for the researcher to verify writers’ credentials, therefore, creating a limitation.
Chapter 4: Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine how adversity fuels fundamentalism in Nigeria and why a cohesive U.S. security policy is necessary to prevent Boko Haram from becoming an international security matter. This is important because as a world leader the U.S. will need to address the issue of expansion by extremist threats to national security and interests in uncontested areas. This thesis included information from multiple open sources to include extensive research from state and government internet resources, peer-reviewed and scholarly case studies, and library research.

The U.S. faces a major obstacle in providing all-inclusive support to Nigeria, which derives from political terms under the *Leahy Law*. This law prohibits the provision of military support to a country accused of human rights abuses but provides the necessary flexibility to allow the U.S. to advance foreign policy objectives (Leahy, 2015, n.p.). Discussed earlier, the U.S. pledged support to Nigeria on several occasions and forums ranging from the president to political, counterterrorism, and regional experts. In contrast to this support, human rights violations by the Nigerian military are one of the key factors that prohibit the U.S. from providing further support against Boko Haram. The military, law enforcement and intelligence support Nigeria receives from the U.S. sustains the military where it is deficient in these areas however, are not enough to defeat Boko Haram.

**Inconsistencies in U.S. policy towards Nigeria**

During President Obama’s 2012 speech, to the Ghanaian Parliament on U.S. efforts in Africa, he suggested a robust support approach to counterterrorism toward African allies. President Obama’s speech with regard to the advancement of peace and security insinuates the U.S. stance to support its allies to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat not only al Qaeda and
its affiliates and adherents is a primary objective for the security of U.S. citizens and its partners. This task entails that all partners must work together to strengthen the capacity of civilian bodies to provide security for their citizens and counter violent extremism through more effective governance, development, and law enforcement efforts (Obama, 2012, pp. 4-5). An inconsistency found during research is how the media reports U.S. support to Nigeria. Premium Times said President Barack Obama ordered the release of $35 million worth of U.S. military and defense assistance to France, which has been backing the military of Chad, Niger, and Mali in the fight against jihadist group, Boko Haram, ignoring Nigeria (2015). Analysis of academic works show that Boko Haram continually undermines efforts to strengthen Nigeria’s security environment as it continues to inflict suffering and loss of life among its population.

In 2015, Boko Haram increased its attacks in northeast Nigeria as well as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, where before it was Cameroon and Niger. These incursions claim thousands of lives and caused tens of thousands of refugees to displace internally and to neighboring countries to escape violence. Figure 6 illustrates a geographical representation of Boko Haram attacks from 2009 to 2015. This graph is not a total depiction of every attack; however, it illustrates the reach and mobility of Boko Haram throughout northeast Nigeria and the propensity to conduct attacks closer to the central government locations. In 2011, Boko Haram attacked the UN building in the capital Abuja. This attack demonstrates Boko Haram’s reach and boldness to attack hardened targets close to Nigeria’s nerve center.
Figure 6. Geographical location of Boko Haram Attacks.

Figure 7 illustrates the reported deaths caused by Boko Haram’s attack of over 15,000 lives over a span of six years, according to Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, an initiative run by the University of Sussex to collect data on political violence in developing states (Economist, 2015, n.p.).
Another issue identified during research of this work is the determination of whether Nigeria is a failing or failed state. Susan E. Rice (2003), a senior fellow in *Foreign Policy Studies and Governance Studies* at the Brookings Institution, highlights important points from President Bush’s 2003 NSS that addresses this issue. Nigeria has a relatively strong central government; however, the concern remains, due to their lack of control over parts of its territory (p.2). Determining Nigeria as a failed state is difficult to consider since it held its fourth successful election in March 2015. In contrast, Bamidele (2012) offers a different perspective for Nigeria’s government strength. Bamidele (2012) considers Nigeria a failed state because the federal government seems weak in maintaining law and order and lacks a viable strategy to contain Boko Haram from carrying out its atrocities. Therefore, it is often able to operate freely, plan complex attacks, and stockpile weapons (p.32).
In a statement released by the U.S. State Department on November 13, 2013, the designation of Boko Haram and its offshoot Ansaru as foreign terrorist organizations (FTO). The statement referenced section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and as Specially Designated Global Terrorists under section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224 as the authority that enacted this designation. These designations assisted U.S. and other law enforcement partners in efforts to investigate and prosecute terrorist suspects associated with Boko Haram and Ansaru (State Department, 2013, n.p.).

The U.S. designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru as FTOs set off an unpopular debate with the Nigerian government and within the U.S. government. Rogin (2014) relayed that the State Department’s refusal to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organization in 2011 prevented U.S. law enforcement agencies from fully addressing the growing Boko Haram threat in those crucial two years. Thomas Jocelyn (2014) cited Josh Rogin of The Daily Beast who reported that Clinton's State Department

[F]ought hard against placing the al Qaeda-linked militant group Boko Haram on its official list of foreign terrorist organizations for two years. Other government representatives and federal agencies such as the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency insisted that Boko Haram be designated a terrorist organization. (Jocelyn, 2014, p. 2)

The inconsistency in this type of national security is cause for concern because it gives groups such as Boko Haram time to continue its operations while stipulations on how to move forward with the nation’s national security policy continues to move slowly.

U.S. government officials who argued for an earlier designation of FTO imply Boko Haram’s growth and intention to plan operations that could harm U.S. critical interests abroad
went underestimated. In contrast to the internal debate of whether or not to designate Boko Haram as a FTO, Nigeria’s government considered designation a step in the wrong direction because it would empower the group instead of causing isolation. Kessler (2014) inserts that Nigerian ambassador Adebowale Adefuye and academic experts insisted that a FTO designation would do more harm than good. According to this Nigerian panel, a FTO designation would have a negative impact on financial flows, risks hindering humanitarian and commercial activity, and create a fertile environment for Boko Haram recruitment. These concerns would hurt efforts to combat Boko Haram, the government would not be able to receive support, and it would interfere with USAID support to the northeast region.

**Threat to Nigeria’s National Security**

Boko Haram’s current leader, Abubakar Shekau, continuously challenges the Nigerian government’s sovereignty and its ability to provide adequate security for its citizens. The terrorist group controls vast territory in the northeast and has taken thousands of lives in the process of its uprising. It continues to work toward the overall goal to control territory and establish an Islamic caliphate. Dealing with catastrophic terrorist or militia groups has over the years become one of the most pressing security challenges to the regimes of presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Yar Adua, and Goodluck Jonathan, who ruled Nigeria since the democratic awakening of 1999 (Bamidele, 2012, p. 34).

**Examining Boko Haram**

After emerging in the early 2000s as a small Sunni Islamic sect advocating a strict interpretation and implementation of Islamic law for Nigeria, the group’s leadership did not initially call for violence; however, some its followers engaged in periodic skirmishes with police during its formative years, acts defined as militant. During the early 2000’s, Boko
Haram’s activities were limited in scope and contained within several highly impoverished states in the predominately-Muslim northeast (Blanchard, 2014, pp. 1-2). Since 2009, Boko Haram has ascended in scope and status from low-level militancy to adopting a global terrorist ideology aligned with al Qaeda. Furthermore, Boko Haram’s linkages with like-minded groups across the sub-Saharan region are indications that the group has an extensive reach and operational capability (Bamidele, 2013, p.11).

During the beginning of Boko Haram’s activities against the government it initially focused on state and federal targets, such as police stations and other government building, yet it also targeted civilians in schools, churches, mosques, markets, bars, and villages. In addition, it attacked cell phone towers and media outlets, likely for both tactical and ideological reasons. The group also assassinated local political leaders and moderate Muslim clerics (Blanchard, 2014, p. 4). The scope of Boko Haram’s attacks was oriented to affect as large an audience as possible, something that is traditionally associated with terrorist attacks. Boko Haram attacks against soft targets such as relief agencies present in remote areas decreased aid due to the heightened risks of attack or kidnapping, resulting in thousands of displaced people left without much needed access to food, clean water, or healthcare. The conflict also disrupted farming, limited the transit of basic goods to local markets, and deterred investment (Blanchard, 2014, p. 4).

The U.S. policy toward Boko Haram reflected the Obama Administration’s perception of the threat the group poses and the strategic importance of the U.S. relationship with Nigeria. In 2014, Boko Haram appeared to pose a threat primarily to stability in northern Nigeria, and potentially to surrounding areas in neighboring countries (Blanchard, 2014, p. 2). Since the beginning of 2015, Boko Haram’s actions have carried across the border of Nigeria and into Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. However, there has been a turn in events that may solidify this
speculation as untrue. In February 2015, Boko Haram launched an early morning attack in Chad as retribution against a coalition of nations that included Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon.

Boko Haram has proven its capability to fund operations activities and operate cells, and acquire weapons and other materials needed for attacks. McCoy (2014) inserts that the origins of Boko Haram funding is elusive and would be difficult to cut off through sanctions. However, information available in open source for Boko Haram funding indicates that it receives financial support through human trafficking, black market dealings, local and international benefactors, and links to al-Qaida and other well-funded groups in the Middle East (McCoy, 2014, n.p.). As discussed in the literature review, Boko Haram’s ties to AQIM and al Shabaab served as a force multiplier by providing invaluable training and operational experience to carry out its attacks.

Blanchard (2014) submitted Boko Haram appeared to draw support from a broader group of followers, predominantly young men from the northeast. Experts, she continued, speculate that the drivers behind the Boko Haram’s actions stem from frustration with perceived disparities in the application of laws (including sharia), the lack of development, jobs, and investment in the north, and/or the abusive response of security forces in the region (Blanchard, 2014, p. 2). Bamidele (2013) offers that the contradiction in federal government and the contrasts of Sharia Law and the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion is also responsible for Boko Haram’s insurgency. He argued the same constitution allowed states to establish its own court systems without the interference of federal government in its application (Bamidele, 2013, p. 16).

**Boko Haram Extremists Associations**

As discussed in the Literature Review, Boko Haram draws its inspiration from the early associations of its founder with past Islamic movements, the Taliban, al Qaeda, AQIM, al Shabaab, and Islamic State (IS). The U.S. Director of National Intelligence warned the
decentralization of the al Qaeda movement would “lead to the emergence of new power centers and an increase in threats by networks of like-minded extremists with allegiances to multiple groups” (Blanchard, 2014, p. 7). Boko Haram pledged allegiance to IS on two separate occasions, initially in May 2014 and again in March 2015. In the latest pledge posted on social media, Abubakr Shekau states:

We pledge allegiance [to ISIS] because there is no cure of the dissimilarity that Ummah have except the Caliphate, we also call all the Muslims to join us in this goodness, because it would enrage the enemy of Allah, by Allah, other gathering under one banner, under one Imam is more heavy to the enemy morality than for them [subtitles indistinct, remainder of sentence translated from Shekau's voice is: ‘to suffer 1,000 victories in the field of battle.’] Allahu Akbar [God is great], Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, and to Allah belongs (all) honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know, May Allah bless our Prophet (Al Jazeera, 2015, n.p.)

Blanchard (2014) asserts U.S. military officials identified Boko Haram as a “threat to Western interests” in the region for several years, referencing indications in 2013 that the group and AQIM were “likely sharing funds, training, and explosive materials.” This level of cooperation suggests, “[T]here are elements of Boko Haram that aspire to a broader regional level of attacks, to include not just in Africa, but also with aspirations to attack Europe and the U.S. (pp. 7-8). The rise in kidnappings by Ansaru and Boko Haram of Western and other foreign citizens may also be an indication of AQIM influence. In addition to Boko Haram’s links to AQIM and its affiliated groups, some members of Boko Haram reportedly received training from the Somali terrorist group al Shabaab in East Africa.
Thomas Jocelyn (2014) described Boko Haram as al Qaeda’s Nigerian Franchise. The reason for Jocelyn’s moniker of Boko Haram as an extension of al Qaeda come from his assessment of documents retrieved after the killing of Osama bin Laden in May 2011. The State Department has attempted to deny or acknowledge a relationship existed while he points out that the Obama administration has evidence, which ties the two groups together.

During his speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center on April 30, 2012, John Brennan, then-assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, remarked, on the anniversary of bin Laden’s death and the status of the U.S. position in the global war on terrorism. Brennan noted bin Landen’s death in 2011 did not dismantle al Qaeda nor did it alter the determination of the U.S. to destroy al. Qaeda. Instead, Brennan suggested that attacks on al Qaeda put it in a position to rely on affiliated and adherents to continue its cause. For Nigeria, Boko Haram is included in al Qaeda’s registry of affiliates as evidenced earlier during operations with AQIM in Mali. Brennan stated:

Nigeria’s (sic) a particularly dangerous situation right now with Boko Haram that has the links with al Qaeda, but also has links with al Shabaab, as well as AQIM. It has this radical offshoot, Ansaru, which really is focused (sic) on U.S. or western interests, and so there is a domestic challenge that Boko Haram poses to Nigeria, and as we all know, there’s (sic) the north-south struggle within Nigeria, and tensions between Christian-Muslim communities. Therefore, we are trying to work with the Nigeria government…to try to [support] capabilities to confront the terrorist threat, but then also the issue is the building up of those political institutions within Nigeria so they can deal with this. This is not just from a law enforcement or internal security perspective, but also to address those needs that are fueling some of these fires of violent extremism. (Brennan, 2012, n.p.)
Thomas Jocelyn (2014) submitted in May 2011, during the raid on Osama bin Laden's safe house in Abbottabad, Pakistan, was the recovery of hundreds of thousands of documents and files. The Obama administration has released only 17 of them, plus a handful of videos, to the public. According to U.S. intelligence officials, some of the files that remain in the administration's possession catalog al Qaeda's dealings with the ultraviolent Nigerian group. On April 27, 2012, the Washington Post reported that bin Laden's files “show that through his couriers, bin Laden was in touch not only with al Qaeda's established affiliates but also with upstarts being groomed for new alliances. Among them was Nigeria's Boko Haram, a group that has since embraced al Qaeda and adopted its penchant for suicide attacks” (Jocelyn, 2014, n.p.).

Terrorist groups that wish to emerge with al Qaeda must go through a vetting process before an official emergence can take place. Sean Gourley (2012) outlines this process by using al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and AQIM as examples. Gourley (2012) wrote that Abu Moussab al Zarqawi was familiar with bin Laden and Zawahiri and had tactical linkages with al Qaeda’s core leadership. Zarqawi’s AQI proceeded to bomb both the Jordanian Embassy and the United Nations Headquarters in Iraq in 2003 but it was not until October 28, 2004 when he requested that his group receive al Qaeda franchise status. Osama bin Laden verbally granted the merger of AQI two months later, making it official in June of 2006 with AQI swearing bayaat, a timeline expanding two years (Gourley, 2012, p. 7).

AQIM did not receive immediate membership into the al Qaeda franchise and went through the same process as AQI even though the group had a longer tactical relationship with al Qaeda’s core leadership. Gourley (2012) opined al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) embraced global jihad shortly after a year of coalition forces conducting operations in Iraq. It would be nearly two years later when al Qaeda’s core leadership would release an official
communique confirming to their franchising. Almost immediately, there was a significant improvement in tactics as well, which involved transitioning away from traditional guerrilla tactics and towards terrorism tactics with a focus on mass casualties and civilian targeting, as well as al Qaeda’s signature tandem strikes (Gourley, 2012, p. 7).

Boko Haram purportedly had a diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia to negotiate in Mecca with a Nigerian government team led by National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki and advised by General Muhammed Shuwa. President Jonathan rejected new talks with Boko Haram, however, on the grounds that “there can be no dialogue” with Boko Haram because it is “faceless (Zenn, 2013, n.p.).” During the beginning years of Boko Haram’s existence, Muhammad Yusuf sought refuge in Saudi Arabia to escape a Nigerian security forces crackdown in 2004. Boko Haram reportedly received funding with the help of AQIM from organizations in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia; and Boko Haram’s spokesperson claims Boko Haram leaders met with al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia during the lesser hajj in August 2011 (Zenn, 2013, n.p.)

Boko Haram, as discussed earlier, is an internal security issue that Nigeria must confront and dispose of if there is to be any restoration of peace and security. The view that Boko Haram will remain an internal issue has the potential to be short lived. By forming alliances, Boko Haram will establish connections that lead to significant improvement in tactics, financial support, weapons, and training. The more backing and experience Boko Haram fighters gain will lead to more confidence, boldness, and the propensity to attempt to conduct attacks internationally.

Motivation for Attacks

The make-up of Boko Haram’s ideology is two-fold. Internally, social-economic, ethnic, and religious tensions are some of Boko Hарамs driving factors. The other segment is like-
minded fanaticism, with groups such as the Taliban, al Qaeda, and IS who harbor hatred against the west and its allies. The commonality of these group calls for violence to break away from all outside influences that do not conform to strict Islamic beliefs, exhibiting a form of warfare in which Taliban, al Qaeda, and IS fight. Boko Haram uses guerilla-style attacks to avoid direct, decisive battles, opting instead for a protracted struggle consisting of many small clashes. The principle is always to prevent the government forces from employing their full might during armed engagements (Chaliand & Blin, 2003, p.21).
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The data and analysis support the thesis of this paper in which U.S. aid to Nigeria against Boko Haram is not effective considering the dynamics if the internal security matters taking place and the numerous social, political, and economic challenges Nigeria faced since its independence in 1960. United States law requires the publishing of the NSS as an annual document by the U.S president to Congress. The purpose of the NSS is to communicate to Congress the president’s foreign policy plan. After 9/11, beginning with George W. Bush’s administration and carrying over to the Obama administration, the NSS focused attention on counter terrorism efforts in Africa amid concerns of on failing or failed states. In the absence of major conflict, the U.S. security strategy for Africa has many responsive attainable goals that will only be realistic if African governments work toward the common goal of democracy and free society. Due to Nigeria’s history as a military ruled country with a spotty democratic record, a debate continues on whether to classify this country as a failing or failed state. As the U.S. began to cultivate its relationship with Nigeria after independence, both countries prospered politically and economically through mutual trust and respect on world issues. There is no consideration for Africa to be of any strategic value prior to President Reagan’s administration. The Reagan administration came to the realization of the threats that undermined growth and security in Africa due to Soviet Union actions throughout the continent.

President Obama’s shift in U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa aligns with four-pillars described in his speech to Ghanaian parliament. The advancement in peace and security identifies the inability of some governments to meet the basic security needs of their people, which continue to be the key obstacles to effective democratic governance, economic growth, trade and investment, and human development.
The *Leahy Law* prohibits the provision of military support to countries who are accused of human rights abuses counters much needed support. The *Leahy Law* lists Nigeria as a country that has committed human rights abuses and therefore full military support is affected. The inconsistencies with this law require reexamination to include a holistic approach or none at all.

The history of conflict in Nigeria illustrates fighting has mainly been focused on political and economic grievances due to government mismanagement and corrupt government leaders yet never led to long, drawn out wars over the time frame in which the Biafra war was fought, which was three years. The rise of radical Islam in Nigeria perpetuates neglect from poor ethnic representation in government, religious marginalization, and the continuing disillusionment of promises of reform and improvement in basic needs by military and civilian governments. None of these governments was able to fulfill the promises. As Nigeria withdrew from under British colonial rule authorities left in place many elements of Sharia Law but gradually reduced its scope as they introduced common law codes. This marginalization created a void resulting in opposition to western influence by Islamic fundamentalists who sought to restore religious and moral heritage by implementing Sharia Law. To do this, the religious elders empowered *hisbah* organizations to ensure observance to the strict laws of Islam and report all breaches to the Islamic police.

After six years of relative calm, the Niger Delta is once again on the verge of becoming a crisis area. While there are no signs of a merger between Boko Haram and militants in the Niger Delta, if violence erupts regardless of depending on the outcome of the March 2015 elections and a potential end to the amnesty program, the crisis in the Niger Delta this could swing in the favor of Boko Haram. A resumption of violence would overwhelm the struggling Nigerian military
taking away attention from Boko Haram in the northeast. Nigeria would be against allowing foreign countries to operate in its northeast while the military operates in the south.

One danger Boko Haram does bring to the Niger Delta is its recent pledge of allegiance to IS. The Islamic State has been successful in controlling oil fields in Iraq and selling crude oil on the black market to fund its activities. As a connection to Africa, Boko Haram could serve as an inlet for IS should it become interested in spreading its existence into West Africa. The cooperation of Boko Haram, IS, and potentially AQIM would create a catastrophic security issue for Nigeria, something the international community would be demanded to address as a global issue. The U.S. policy to support Nigeria to enhance its security and stabilization would surely meet further scrutiny as more would have to be done in order to avoid failing to provide counterterrorism support against Nigeria’s enemies.

The ability for Boko Haram to extend its influence in Nigeria goes beyond its ability to acquire independently, training and weapons to conduct its attacks. Boko Haram received training and support from AQIM and pledged allegiance to IS. Should a merger be granted to Boko Haram by the IS leadership, it will enhance the group’s capabilities in training, funds, and other support from external resources. The U.S. Director of National Intelligence warned the decentralization of the Al Qaeda movement “has led to the emergence of new power centers and an increase in threats by networks of like-minded extremists with allegiances to multiple groups” (Blanchard, 2014, p. 7). The threat Boko Haram presents to the region is continuously rising. Internally, successive attacks have become increasingly more violent since 2009 along Nigeria’s borders with Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Boko Haram has used al Qaeda style attacks such as suicide bombings, shootings, and machetes to terrorize and displace tens of thousands of citizens. Boko Haram played a pivotal role in operations on behalf of AQIM in Mali, which enabled it to
receive invaluable training and operational experience. Boko Haram presents several challenges for all of the above-mentioned countries that must contend with a rising insurgency while dealing with other domestic issues such as poverty, famine, food shortages, and disease. A decisive victory against Boko Haram is necessary if Nigeria is to change its direction from becoming a potential failed state to one of strong democratic backbone of Africa. The fruition of a decisive victory is dependent upon a holistic approach to providing increased support for Nigeria to defeat Boko Haram if counterterrorism efforts in Africa are to remain a top priority for the U.S. in the global war on terrorism.
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