# Breaking Boko Haram and Ramping Up Recovery

## US Engagement in the Lake Chad Region

### 2013 to 2016

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Making Peace Possible

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SEPTEMBER 2017

## Executive Summary

This is one of three case studies that the US Institute of Peace (USIP) developed to explore how the US Defense, Development, and Diplomatic (3D) communities can effectively collaborate and coordinate to respond to complex crises in fragile states. The case studies document efforts and draw lessons from where US government leaders believe deepening crises were staved off through collaborative inter-agency engagement.

## Case Background

The Lake Chad region (LCR) is an example of a region in which violent extremist activity has arisen from and exacerbated an environment of resource shortage and underlying state fragility. The extremist activity spurred a cross-border security and humanitarian crisis that existing regional cooperation mechanisms were unprepared to address.

Originally an Islamist criminal group in northeastern Nigeria, Boko Haram (BH) acquired new leadership that began in 2009 to take the group down a violent extremist path. BH rapidly amplified the lethality and frequency of its attacks on government and civilian targets in Nigeria, while recruiting from marginalized, exploited, and impoverished populations across the region. BH withstood the Nigerian authorities' poorly planned, poorly resourced, and half-hearted attempts to beat it back. By 2013, BH had conducted hundreds of attacks and killed thousands. Hundreds of thousands of civilians fled to safer communities within Nigeria and to nearby Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, even though BH mounted cross-border attacks. LCR countries' security forces played a cross-border cat-and-mouse game that kept BH on the run but failed to degrade the group until regional cooperation drove BH from captured territory in 2015.

| The Complex Crisis | US Objectives | Applicability of Lessons |
|---|---|---|
| *The crisis was shaped by the following interacting challenges:* | *The United States focused on three objectives:* | *Lessons from the LCR may best apply to circumstances in which:* |
| • *Water crisis and related human insecurity* | • *Degrade and defeat* BH so that it is no longer a threat to the region | • A *subnational VEO is growing* in one or more fragile states |
| • *State fragility:* a frayed relationship between government and citizens | • *Mitigate BH's impact* on the people of the region | • A crisis in *one country threatens to destabilize a region* |
| • *Violent conflict fueled by violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and regional upheaval* | • Address the *underlying conditions* that gave rise to BH | • The *region has the will* to address a cross-border threat |
| • *Displacement and refugee populations* | | • *Military action alone cannot definitively end* a security crisis |
| • *Poor regional problem-solving capabilities* | | • *Mutually reinforcing regional and bilateral approaches are necessary* to stem a crisis |

### *The US Defense, Development, and Diplomatic Response*

The United States took special note of BH in 2011, concerned that the group would converge or cooperate with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and develop the ambition and capability to threaten US national security. The United States implored Nigeria to remedy poor governance and address corruption and serious abuses by government and security forces, which BH leveraged to recruit members in northeast Nigeria and in some cases prevented the United States from offering requested security assistance. By 2014, these attempts had failed, so the United States tried a new approach: treating BH as a regional problem and working to convince the LCR countries to cooperate to defeat BH. The 3Ds used bilateral approaches to help these countries fight BH and mitigate its impact, while also organizing regionally focused platforms, working groups, programs, exercises, and plans to support cooperation and undermine BH recruitment. The 3Ds delivered humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, supported community resistance to BH, and advised and built the capacity of partner security forces. US support was key to helping LCR countries' forces collaboratively clear and hold territory the size of Belgium.

## Summary of Lessons from the LCR

The case study review process yielded a series of lessons in two parts:

1. The use of **bilateral approaches to meet country-specific challenges to stemming crisis** in the region
2. Efforts to stitch together **bilateral approaches to holistically stem a regional crisis**

   The table below summarizes these approaches, as well as some key takeaways.

| | What Was Done | How It Was Done | Lessons |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Bilateral Approaches to Meet Country-specific Challenges** | Nigeria Planning and Operations Group (NPOG) created. | In 2014, the State Department's (State's) undersecretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, and State's Bureau for African Affairs formed the NPOG—a team of State's technical and regional experts, plus a military liaison who had worked for US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and with USAID's Office of Civil Military Cooperation. | ▪ Define objectives, priorities, and processes for *quickly arbitrating disagreements in interagency fora* at the outset of a new task force or similar structure. |
| | Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) planning in Nigeria begun. | USAID and US Embassy Abuja secured permission from Congress to use an appropriations rule enabling them to help the Nigerian military develop a framework to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate former members of BH. | ▪ Recognize exceptional circumstances—and *iteratively work with Congress to pursue creative solutions* when a policy of "business as usual" will not further US objectives. |
| | Civil-military cooperation in Niger fostered. | A USAID/Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) assessment team traveled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) to identify ways to prevent the destabilization of Niger; this resulted in a USAID-OTI program that closely consulted with SOF, including via a 3D CT-CVE working group at US Embassy Niamey. | ▪ *Coordinate military assistance with civilian assistance* that builds communities' long-run resistance to violent extremist threats.<br>▪ Consistently *cultivate relationships to build civil-military cooperation* around shared objectives. |
| | Interagency coordination run out of US Embassy Abuja. | Most initial responses to the BH-induced complex crisis were run out of the USAID mission in Abuja. USAID brought together all elements of the US government that worked on northeastern Nigeria to meet three times per week. | ▪ Use field-based interagency structures to *enable adaptive crisis response coordination where the action is.*<br>▪ Assign interagency coordination to the *US agency with the most experience* working in the crisis-affected region. |
| **Bilateral Approaches to Holistically Stem a Regional crisis** | USAID West Africa Regional CVE Unit formed. | USAID's West Africa Regional Mission, based in Accra, Ghana, brought together a team of democracy and governance, USAID/OTI, and AFRICOM personnel to work in a CVE unit that coordinated activities and shared information among US 3D partners in the LCR. | ▪ Use field-based regional interagency coordination mechanisms to *better align US bilateral 3D engagements.* |
| | Senior coordinator on Boko Haram appointed. | In February 2015, State formed a regionally focused interagency coordination structure headed by a retired US ambassador that worked to ensure clarity of objectives and strategy in the fight against BH. The senior coordinator on Boko Haram coordinated development of a strategy to defeat BH, bring relief to affected populations, and address conditions that gave rise to BH. | ▪ Create *processes for broad interagency communication and information sharing* to set the stage for coordination and collaboration on a common strategy.<br>▪ Supplement regular updates with *intermittent deep dives* on select issues.<br>▪ *Invest the time needed* to help a regional collaborative approach take hold. |
| | Resource planning processes for regional 3D coordination leveraged. | The need to make decisions about how the United States would use globally, regionally, or thematically assigned resources sometimes served as a forcing function for 3D (or 2D) coordination across a regional portfolio of bilateral initiatives (e.g., CTPF, GSCF funds). | ▪ *Use requirements to develop and justify budgets to deepen collaboration* and build relationships among 3D institutions and Congress to work toward a set of broader regional objectives. |

## Glossary of Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| AFRICOM | US Africa Command |
| AQIM | al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb |
| BH | Boko Haram |
| CTPF | Counterterrorism Partnership Fund |
| CVE | countering violent extremism |
| DDR | disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| Flintlock | Annual security cooperation exercise directed by the US joint chiefs of staff and sponsored by AFRICOM in West Africa |
| FTO | Foreign Terrorist Organization |
| GSCF | Global Security Cooperation Fund |
| IDPs | internally displaced persons |
| ISR | intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance |
| LCB | Lake Chad basin |
| LCRB | Lake Chad Basin Commission |
| LCR | Lake Chad region |
| LNO | liaison officer |
| MNJTF | Multinational Joint Task Force |
| NDAA | National Defense Authorization Act |
| OSD | Office of the Secretary of Defense |
| P4P | Partnerships for Peace |
| PDEV | Peace through Development |
| SGI | Security Governance Initiative |
| SOCAF | Special Operations Command Africa (a component of AFRICOM) |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| State | Department of State |
| State/AF | Bureau of African Affairs |
| State/CT | Counterterrorism bureau |
| State/INL | International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs bureau |
| State/J | Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights bureau |
| SVTC | secure video teleconference |
| UN | United Nations |
| USAID | US Agency for International Development |
| USAID/OTI | Office of Transition Initiatives |
| USAID/WA | West Africa Mission |
| VEO | violent extremist organization |

## Foreword: Who Should Read This Case Study and Why?

This is one of three case studies (Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region) designed to examine how the United States (US) government defense, development, and diplomacy (3D) communities worked together to prevent or manage different types of complex crises in fragile states.

This review explored a complex crisis that is most acutely felt by populations who live in close proximity to Lake Chad in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. Therefore, this review uses the phrase "Lake Chad region" (LCR) to refer to this narrower area rather than "Lake Chad basin" (LCB), which refers to the contiguous territory spread across areas of seven countries that drains water into Lake Chad.[1]

The LCR is an example of a region in which violent extremist activity has arisen from and exacerbated an environment of resource shortage and underlying state fragility. The extremist activity spurred a cross-border security and humanitarian crisis that existing regional cooperation mechanisms were unprepared to address.

Unlike some cases in which the US government engaged prior to full-blown crisis to avoid catastrophe, by the time US crisis mitigation efforts in the LCR gained traction, the region's security and humanitarian situation had deteriorated significantly.

LCR populations depend on the depleted water reserves of Lake Chad to eke out livelihoods that leave them impoverished and vulnerable, and they receive very little, if any, state support. Adding to this, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria are surrounded by conflict and violent extremist groups on all sides, including in Mali to the west, Libya to the north, Sudan to the east, and the Central African Republic to the southeast. Illicit trafficking routes that move conflict-fueling weapons, drugs, money, and people cut across the region. Stemming a violent extremist-fueled crisis in the LCR before it became inextricably entwined with other conflicts and extremist activities in the region became a US national security imperative, requiring the United States to work with and across LCR countries to address both unique internal challenges and transborder issues.

The US 3D institutions had to innovate and constantly adjust *what* they did to assist LCR governments and communities and to counter Boko Haram (BH), the most virulent violent extremist organization (VEO) in the LCR. They also had to adjust *how* they worked together to do so.

In crafting this case study, the project sought to identify other settings where lessons from US engagement in LCR might apply. Regional approaches to transnational problems like those in the LCR are important to addressing violent extremism and conflict in the Middle East (including Iraq and Syria) and South Asia (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India), criminal networks in Central America, and outbreaks of infectious disease anywhere.

At a minimum, lessons from this case study might apply in environments characterized by one or more of the following conditions:

- **A subnational violent extremist group (or other threat) is gaining strength in a fragile state that the state is unable to address and contain within its borders:** The LCR crisis was first and foremost a governance crisis that gave rise to and failed to remedy a security crisis. BH emerged as a result of extremely fragile state-society relations in northeastern Nigeria. Many residents believed that Nigeria's government and state security forces were corrupt and abusive. This underlying fragility set the conditions for BH to skyrocket from a criminal outfit to one of the world's most vicious terrorist organizations.

- **A crisis in one country threatens to destabilize a region:** VEOs are just one example of the kind of transnational threats that can threaten to destabilize a broader region. Epidemics such as Ebola, natural disasters, and economic crisis do not recognize borders. In the LCR, as BH grew more violent and ambitious, it began reaching beyond Nigeria's borders, recruiting new members and perpetrating shocking attacks. The need for regional cooperation to corner and defeat the group was essential.

- **The region has the will to address a cross-border threat:** Early in the crisis, there was insufficient political will for a regional approach to counter BH. However, as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger became increasingly anxious about the rapid spread of violence and the movement of refugees into their territories, the LCR countries needed to band together to degrade and clear BH from territory it controlled.

- **Military action alone cannot decisively end a security crisis:** Although the complex crisis in the LCR was catalyzed by a security threat, kinetic activity alone cannot decisively end the crisis. Ending the crisis will require long-term political and development solutions that address the grievances that gave rise to BH. Thus, means of building resistance against VEOs, such as community cohesion and resilience and addressing the lack of services, economic livelihoods, and governance are especially crucial.

- **The US government must use mutually reinforcing regional and bilateral strategies and tools:** Not only did local governments in the LCR need to think regionally, but the US government also needed to evolve from an exclusive focus on Nigeria to a regional approach to the crisis. The US government's engagement in the LCR crisis today is organized by multiple country desks in Washington, D.C., and US embassies in Abuja, N'djamena, Niamey, and Yaoundé, as well as by regional entities in Accra, Dakar, Stuttgart, and Washington, D.C., that focus on transnational issues.

This case study explores both *what* the United States did in the LCR and *how* it did so, looking at some of the approaches—resources, authorities, structures, and processes—the US government employed to achieve its objectives.

## About This Project

Some public servants are all too accustomed to dealing with crises, when both information and time are at a premium. In the throes of crisis, there is little opportunity for careful consideration or reflection, and civilian agencies rarely have readily available lessons that they can leverage in real time as a crisis unfolds. Complexity further challenges the response, as the interacting influences of a plethora of actors and events make it difficult to draw direct causal links between US actions and outcomes. Amid a steady drumbeat of crisis over the past decade, learning has not kept pace. The result is lost time, money, and even lives.

The report of the Fragility Study Group, *US Leadership and the Challenge of State Fragility*, states that amid "the simultaneity of proliferating challenges [in fragile states] and constrained appetite and resources to address them," the United States has not sufficiently captured lessons from past efforts to inform future endeavors. Although the Department of Defense (DOD) invests heavily in lessons processes, the Department of State (State) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have not as thoroughly institutionalized processes for identifying lessons and elevating them for agency leaders and personnel. This situation can be partially attributed to a lack of requisite resources, but it is also due to different organizational cultures.

**About the 3Ds**

This report refers extensively to defense, development, and diplomacy (3D) "communities." Broadly, these communities may include international and partner-country civil society organizations (CSOs), partner-country institutions, and implementing partners that assist the US government in developing strategy and policy as well as executing programs that further US government goals. This project focuses on the actions of three primary US 3D institutions: the Department of Defense (defense), the US Agency for International Development (development), and the Department of State (diplomacy). This simplification is made for the benefit of the reader, and the authors acknowledge that these agencies' respective capabilities may overlap in some programmatic areas.

This project, "3D Learning from Complex Crises," seeks to help senior policymakers and working-level managers close this gap by identifying lessons from 3D coordination and collaboration efforts in such environments. To uncover these lessons, this project takes a case-based look at how the US government has made strides toward achieving a systemic approach to foreign policy and crisis response that "tackle[s] security, political, and capacity challenges in relationship to one another and not in isolation" by uniting the 3D toolkits in service to a common goal.[2] The project looks at both *what* the United States did in three crisis-stricken environments and *how* US actors cooperated and collaborated in order to do so.

It is important to note that these case studies are not evaluations; rather they document efforts and draw lessons where US government leaders believe deepening fragility and crises were staved off through collaborative inter-agency engagement. In many cases, policy and decision-making involved fierce debate; while the colorful discussions are not always presented, the stories underlying the lessons and presentation of facts are important to understanding the challenge of systematizing and aligning security, political, and capacity development efforts in fragile states. The authors have done their best to distill the key insights into applicable, replicable lessons.

The cases covered in this series—Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region—offer three distinct snapshots of complex environments that involved actors, approaches, and tools from all 3Ds. Although many other organizations, processes, and toolkits were essential to US goals in these environments, the 3Ds were indispensable to the promulgation and execution of US foreign policy across all cases. This report is not designed to be comprehensive or exhaustive; as a narrative, retrospective case study, it tells a story in an effort to help current and future generations of US national security practitioners access important lessons from hard-earned experience in difficult circumstances. It attempts to synthesize many different perspectives about the periods and cases in question, and it does not claim to make judgments about the future. At a time of transition in the US government, as personnel and sources of institutional memory may change roles or move on, the practice of capturing lessons is especially important.

The authors hope that this process of discovery, and the written products that have emerged, will assist US government agencies in the crucial work of institutionalizing lesson capture and future learning.

## *Methodology*

The three case studies in the series were selected following extensive consultations to identify where government leaders believed the 3Ds were working together in fragile environments more systematically and with greater effect. Each case study seeks to answer the following four guiding questions:

1. **What:** What did the United States do to further its goals and objectives in the LCR?

2. **How:** What coordinated, cooperative, collaborative, or integrated 3D approaches did the United States employ to pursue these objectives? What actors, organizational structures, processes, mandates or authorities, and resources enabled defense, development, and diplomatic engagement to achieve more together than each can achieve alone?

3. **Why:** Why did the United States choose to pursue its aims in these ways? How can one recognize similar situations in which US 3D actors might benefit from employing similar approaches?

4. **So what:** Why is this topic worth studying? How can one recognize similarly complex situations in which US 3D actors might benefit from employing similar approaches?

This report draws from an extensive literature review of more than one hundred unclassified documents about the LCR and US government involvement in stemming crisis in the LCR. These sources include official US government publications such as departmental websites, after-action reviews, departmental factsheets, public laws, Congressional Research Service reports, congressional testimony, and Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports. All materials reviewed were unclassified so that lessons identified could be shared broadly. Researchers also examined reports from nongovernmental and multilateral organizations, as well as third-party publications such as news and journal articles and think tank analysis. In addition to this extensive literature review, the authors conducted more than twenty-five consultations with former and present US government officials at both working (e.g., action officer) and senior levels (e.g., deputy assistant secretary and above) from across the 3D communities who had worked the LCR portfolio. This primary research was supported by a series of working-level workshops, as well as a "senior leader" session that tested, refined, and validated the report's overarching findings. All consultations were off the record, but the stories and lessons shared throughout the report reflect these experts' experiences and perspectives. A selected bibliography of key sources on this case is available at www.usip.org/3dlessons/LCR.

## Lake Chad Region: Understanding the Complex Crisis

### The Backdrop of Complexity

Complex environments are almost ubiquitously uncertain, unstable, and opaque.[3] Whereas complicated environments feature testable, observable phenomena, complex environments have many unknowable features, making it difficult to discern clear causal relationships and rendering outcomes unpredictable and emergent.[4] Complex environments make it difficult for policymakers or implementers to reach certainty or agreement about what is to be done, making planning and programming particularly challenging.[5] Put simply, in complex environments, policies and programs often provoke unforeseen, unintended outcomes, whereby attempts to influence one aspect of a problem affect other dynamics in entirely unpredictable ways.

Complexity is a useful frame for thinking about US engagement in Burma, Jordan, and the LCR because of the plethora of actors and dynamics present in these cases that demanded an integrated, adaptive, and aligned US government approach. Additionally, complexity describes not only the operating environment in these locations, but also the nature of the US policymaking apparatus, a heterogeneous set of various (and sometimes competing) interests, processes, actors, and dynamics. This project does not attempt to map the full complex ecosystem of each case, but offers an organizing concept under which various issues and dynamics such

**Figure 1.  Complex crisis in the LCR**
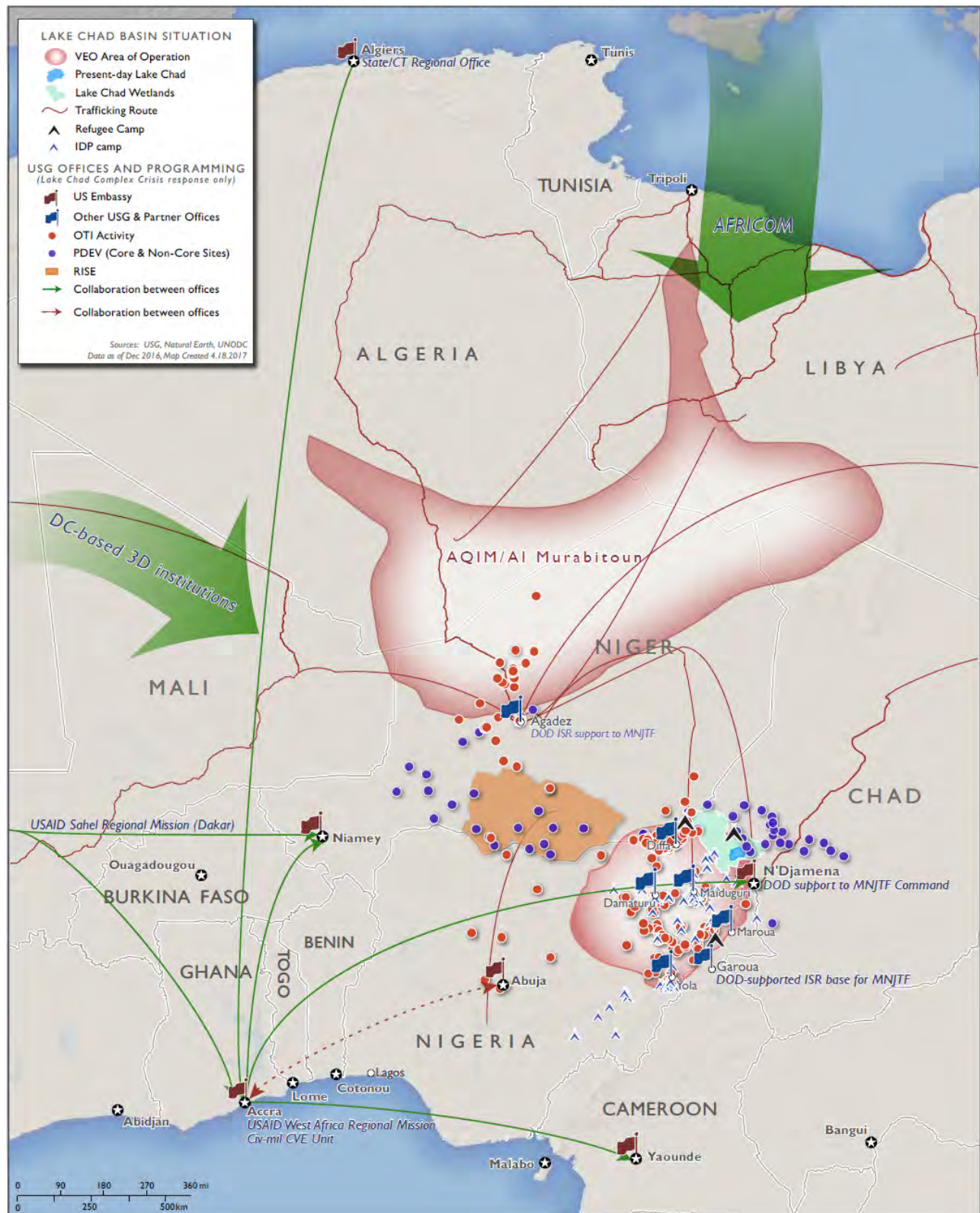


*Source*: USAID/OTI.

as state fragility, violent conflict, and humanitarian disaster may take root, affecting the efficacy of US policies and actions.

## Complex Environment in the Lake Chad Region

In 2010, the LCR began a rapid deterioration into full-scale crisis. As this report went to press, some conditions in the LCR had improved, but the region remained saddled with significant fragility and the humanitarian fallout of BH marauding. The fight against BH has had success but continues. Understanding the factors that characterized the LCR's vulnerability and continue to hinder a more expeditious recovery is an important first step in understanding the efforts that the United States put forth to mitigate the crisis in the region.

The LCR is an example of a region in which violent extremist activity has arisen from and exacerbated an environment of resource shortage and underlying state fragility. The extremist activity spurred a cross-border security and humanitarian crisis that existing regional cooperation mechanisms were unprepared to address.

Because BH emerged from Nigeria and, ultimately, must be dismantled in Nigeria, this case study maintains a primary focus on Africa's most populous state.[6] Nevertheless, several interrelated factors have contributed to the LCR's complex situation.

**Factors of Complexity in the LCR**

- Water crisis and related human insecurity
- State fragility: Frayed relationship between state and citizen
- Violent conflict fueled by VEOs (especially BH) and regional upheaval
- Displacement and refugee populations
- Poor regional problem-solving capabilities

## Water Crisis and Related Human Insecurity

Lake Chad's depletion helped set the stage for crisis in the LCR. Lake Chad today is 10 percent of the size it was in the 1960s, leaving the region's 22 million inhabitants vulnerable to drought and desertification, and costing many individuals their water-based livelihoods (e.g., agriculture, grazing, and fishing).[7] Climate change, excessive irrigation, downstream damming, and overgrazing by livestock have contributed to the lake's depletion (see figure 2; conditions today are roughly the same as in 2001).[8] Dried-up rivers have cut off water-born trade shipments, harming extremely poor communities both upstream and downstream. This desiccation has also contributed to food shortages, forcing people to move elsewhere. These conditions have left many inhabitants feeling helpless and desperate, without secure livelihoods and, in most cases, without any government support.

## State Fragility: A Frayed Relationship Between State and Citizen

The LCR comprises territories belonging to some of the world's most fragile states.[9] LCR governments largely lack the will or capacity to provide for their people, resulting in poor or absent relationships with them. Therefore, some LCR communities feel closer to ethnically and linguistically similar communities in other states than they do to people in their own countries. Extremely poor communities in northern Cameroon and eastern Niger have historically carried on with only negligible support from their national governments, which in some areas has fueled a sense of grievance against state authorities.

**Figure 2. Chronology of changes to Lake Chad's water content, 1963 to 2001**
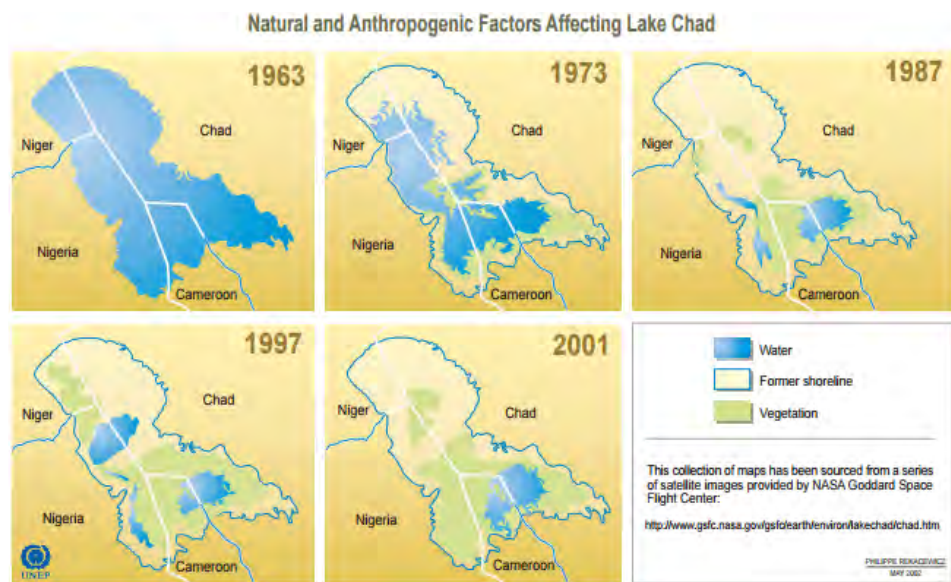


*Source:* GRID Arendal, *Chad Almost Gone,* image, www.grida.no/resources/5593. Philippe Rekacewicz, 2006.

## Spotlight on State Fragility in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger

BH emerged in Nigeria, but conditions in other LCR countries are also fragile, providing opportunities for BH to make cross-border incursions and recruit new members from other countries.

Cameroon was forged from British and French colonies. Its diverse population has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. President Paul Biya has governed Cameroon since 1982. The country remains plagued by persistent state corruption and a history of state-inflicted human rights abuses. It faces a banned secessionist movement in the south and BH in the Muslim-majority north. Estimates suggest that BH has recruited up to 4,000 fighters, logisticians, and leaders from the north.[a]

Chad is rich in gold, uranium, and oil, but the government, led by President Idriss Deby since his 1990 coup, has not adequately distributed resources across Chad's vast desert. Chad's population is poor and suffers from poor governance, high illiteracy, and conflict, including a civil war from 2005 to 2010. Tensions exist between the Muslim-majority north and the Christian south, and the country hosts sizable populations of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Niger is an extremely poor country rife with traffickers who traverse the Sahel with illicit goods, weapons, and people. Trafficking has been amplified in Niger's northern areas since the 2011 Libyan revolution unleashed the former Libyan regime's weapons across the region. In 2013, the International Crisis Group suggested that "Niger appears contradictorily to be fragile and yet an island of stability." By then, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) fighters were in the north, and BH fighters from Nigeria were known to take breaks in Niger's Diffa region. Additionally, the growing "marginalization of poor, rural societies" has led to increasing protests as Nigerien President Mohamadou Issoufou's agenda to build trust between the state and the people has fallen short.[b]

a. International Crisis Group, "Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram," Report No. 241, November 16, 2016, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-confronting-boko-haram.
b. International Crisis Group, "Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante Groups Fighting Boko Haram," Report No. 244, February 23, 2017, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/244-watchmen-lake-chad-vigilante-groups-fighting-boko-haram.

In northeastern Nigeria, the cradle of the LCR crisis, the government has done little to address human security challenges that "pit people against each other to survive."[10] Despite Nigeria's vast oil wealth—much of which is pilfered by a host of government officials, businesses, and outright thieves—most of Nigeria's 186 million people lack decent livelihoods and struggle to meet basic needs.[11] Nearly three quarters of the population in Nigeria's north live in poverty.[12] Many Nigerians in the Lake Chad area believe that the government could be doing more to share wealth, improve access to food and water, increase opportunities for livelihoods, and generally ease their burdens. They are disgusted by the corruption that they continue to see at all levels of government. They are outraged by rampant harassment, extortion, and abuse that security forces commit with impunity, including internationally documented allegations of extrajudicial punishment, executions, and other violence.[13] This anger has, unsurprisingly, created a baseline of mistrust and animosity toward the government.

## Violent Conflict Fueled by Violent Extremist Organizations and Regional Upheaval

The underlying fragility in Nigeria set the stage for BH, originally a northeastern Nigerian Muslim sect with criminal proclivities, to make a rapid transition into a lethal fighting force and prolific VEO.[14] The mutation was "a symptom of decades of failed government and elite delinquency finally ripening into social chaos."[15] BH gained prominence through acts of vicious violence, intimidation, and kidnapping that began to escalate in 2010. Fueled by copious weapons flows released during upheavals such as Libya's 2011 revolution, and by training from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Mourabitoun (a VEO that in December 2015 joined AQIM) in Mali, BH carried out attacks beyond northeastern Nigeria that targeted security forces and civilians in other areas of Nigeria and neighboring countries (see figure 3).[16] BH's activities have most affected northeastern Nigeria, Cameroon's far north region, Chad's Lac region, and Niger's Diffa region.[17] The terror nexus of AQIM and BH threatened the

**Figure 3. BH attacks on civilians from 2011 to April 2016**
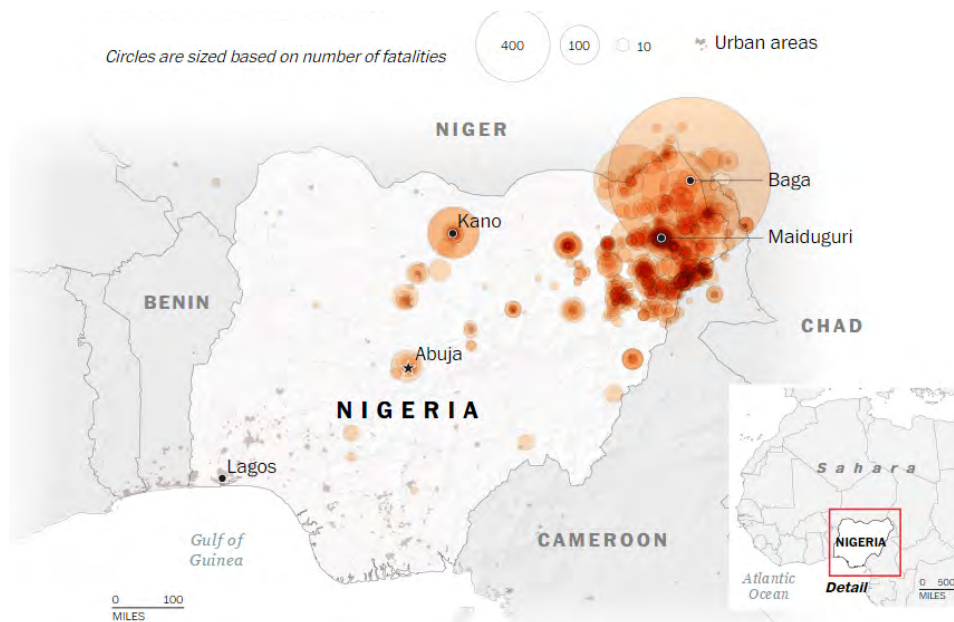


*Source:* © 2016 *Washington Post;* used with permission.

Central Sahel region (Libya's south, Niger, and the broader LCB and contiguous areas of the Sahel that are also affected by jihadi groups).[18] As the two groups began to sandwich Niger, it became clear that AQIM was training and advising BH operatives.[19] This relationship weakened after BH declared allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in March 2015, but the cooling down did not spell relief for the United States; in the latter half of 2016, ISIS publicly appointed a BH member to lead a splinter group loyal to ISIS, stoking fears that BH could become even more threatening regionally, if not globally.[20]

The US government estimates that 4,000 to 6,000 BH fighters are "hardcore" fighters.[21] More than any other single factor, the presence of terrorist organizations has provoked a US response in the LCR.

### Displacement and Refugee Populations

By December 2016, BH-related violence had displaced 2.3 million people within the LCR—triple the number from 2014—including 1.82 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northeastern Nigeria, 109,000 in Niger, 198,900 in Cameroon, and 95,100 in Chad.[22] That same month, the International Organization for Migration reported that 85,779 Nigerian refugees had arrived in Cameroon, 7,917 in Chad, and 96,940 in Niger, and they took refuge in some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities.[23] Many refugees in Niger have simply settled in makeshift structures along the single paved road that heads west from Lake Chad.

### Poor Regional Problem Solving: The Absence of Political Will, Capability, and Regional Cooperation

Prior to US involvement, the inattention and inefficacy of Nigeria's government and security forces, combined with a lack of cooperation among LCR governments, resulted in a failure to corner and defeat BH. Security forces from one country typically pursued BH fighters only until they crossed the border into a neighboring country. Cameroon and Nigeria, in particular, had a history of poor state-to-state relations at the highest levels of government, and Cameroon was loath to grant Nigeria the "right of hot pursuit" across their common border.[24] The only vestige of regional security cooperation was a decades-old and dormant structure for combatting transnational criminal networks and trafficking.[25] Efforts to address the underlying resource allocation and Lake Chad water usage issues proved equally difficult despite the existence of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), formed in the 1960s to enhance cooperation on water resource management in the broader LCB. Today the LCBC still lacks the resources, expertise, and coordination to execute a strategy to manage the water crisis.[26] As a result, some LCBC countries have constructed dams and reservoirs that serve their own interests, but contribute further to lake depletion.

With this grounding in the immense complexity of the LCR, the report turns now to the story of what the United States did over time in this challenging environment.

## The United States in the LCR: Key Objectives and Accomplishments

### Introduction: The Fight Against Boko Haram

In 2009, members of BH were traveling on motorbikes to a funeral in northeastern Nigeria when they were stopped by Nigerian police. The police demanded that the riders comply with

a nationwide law requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets. BH harbored various longstanding feuds with police and other state-level authorities in northeastern Nigeria, and this insult was a tipping point. The BH members refused to comply with the police request, causing police to fire upon and injure seventeen men.[27] Over the next month, BH responded with force, bombing and setting fire to government buildings. In turn, Nigerian security forces raided BH headquarters in Maidugari, the capital of Nigeria's Borno State, culminating in a violent three-day confrontation that left more than seven hundred people dead.[28] In the melee, Nigerian forces captured BH's leader, who they promptly turned over to the Maidugari police. By most accounts, he was executed in the courtyard of the police facilities within hours of being handed over.

These events lit the fuse of dramatic changes in BH's aims and tactics when a new leader, Abubaker Shekau, took power. With tacit support among some locals who shared the group's resentment of government security forces, BH went on the offensive, launching a campaign of violence and intimidation.[29] Members marauded through the streets in armed pickup trucks and carried out assassinations from motorbikes. They bombed civilians and security forces and executed suicide attacks. They seized territory and, in the process, innocent civilians as well, leading them to an uncertain fate. As BH continued its march of violence, it expanded its zone of conquest into Cameroon, forcing refugees to flee to Chad and Niger and the government of Nigeria to declare a state of emergency in three northeastern states.[30] At the peak of its strength, in 2015, BH killed nearly 11,000 people, bringing its victim count to more than 15,000, a record among contemporary terrorist organizations.[31] This total surpassed that of ISIS.[32]

The scale and intensity of BH's campaign of terror eventually did what little else could: it galvanized a regional and international response that stoked more effective cooperation and collaboration among LCR countries, the United States, and other international supporters. Sustained efforts by this coalition have helped push BH out of towns and villages, freed thousands of captives, and left the group splintered and in retreat.[33] Today, humanitarian assistance reaches many of the previously unreachable areas. Programs to strengthen the rule of law, demobilize combatants, and counter violent extremism offer a path out of perpetual conflict. The region has taken a step toward offering its citizens freedom from violence and fear. LCR governments have established a platform for continued cooperation. Unfortunately, the crisis is not over. BH has left a trail of death and destruction that will take years to repair, and the group maintains the ability to execute isolated attacks. There is no doubt that significant progress has been made toward restoring stability and security, but there is more to be done.

This case study tells the story of how the US government helped mitigate this crisis and reduce BH, once the world's most lethal terrorist organization, to a group on the run. How did the LCR get here? What role did the United States play? These are some of the questions that this case study seeks to answer.

## The Case for Engagement

Fragility in Nigeria, Africa's most populous state and one of its two largest economies, has been a long-standing concern of the United States.[34] Displacement and humanitarian crises across the LCR have also been the subject of US government attention. But the potential for BH to threaten regional stability and US security was the galvanizing force for increased US focus on the LCR in 2011. Above all, the United States wanted to avert the potential catastrophic convergence of VEOs in the LCR and the Central Sahel.[35]

## US Bilateral Goals and Objectives in LCR Countries

In parallel to the United States' regional counter-BH objectives, the United States continues to advance bilateral priorities in LCR countries.

**Cameroon:** The United States partners with Cameroon to counter regional threats to stability—including those posed by BH—and to address issues of democracy, regional security, environmental protection, public health, and economic development.

**Chad:** The United States supports Chad to advance good governance, enhance regional stability and security, respect human rights and the rule of law, and cooperate on counterterrorism initiatives. The United States provides humanitarian assistance to refugees and IDPs.

**Niger:** The United States works closely with Niger on regional peace and security issues, including bolstering Niger's ability to withstand political volatility, food insecurity, and regional instability. Among other initiatives, the United States and Niger have partnered to create and support a strategy to improve Niger's security sector governance.

**Nigeria:** Since 2010, the United States and Nigeria have used Binational Commission meetings to discuss key areas of mutual interest, including good governance, transparency, and integrity; energy and investment; regional security; the Niger Delta; and agriculture and food security. In 2016, the Binational Commission focused on security cooperation, economic growth and development, and governance and democracy. 3D assistance to Nigeria aims to support security, democratic institutions, transparency and accountability, professionalization of security forces, economic stability and diversification from oil, agricultural improvements, and social services.

The 3Ds became increasingly involved in the LCR as evidence mounted that BH was being both fueled by and adding additional impetus to the growing regional inferno.

BH's violent campaign drove northeastern Nigerians into other towns and across international borders. At the same time, Libya's rebellion, Mali's Tuareg rebellion, and the vast ungoverned desert area in Algeria's south and Niger's north provided broad operational space for AQIM. Raids on deposed dictator Mohmar Qadhafi's vast weapons depots during and after the 2011 Libyan revolution unleashed a wave of weaponry that made its way across the Middle East and Sahel into the hands of rebels and nonstate actors in Tunisia, Mali (via Niger), the Central African Republic (via Chad), and Sudan.[36] As AQIM operated with near impunity in the Libya-Niger-Mali corridor, BH fighters began crossing the border into Niger's Diffa region and Cameroon's Far North province. They came to rest, loot for food and supplies, preach violent extremist versions of Islam, recruit new members, and carry out attacks. Although movements of specific weapons through the Sahel were difficult to track, evidence suggests that BH was receiving arms trafficked from Libya to fuel its campaign of violence.[37]

AQIM and BH were beginning to enclose Niger, one of the United States' few relatively stable and willing security partners in the Sahel, and US intelligence indicated that AQIM and BH were in communication and cooperating with one another.[38] Lesser-known and underestimated al-Qaeda affiliates had attacked US targets in the past, and the United States did not want to risk letting its guard down again.[39] As the world witnessed ISIS rampaging across Iraq and Syria, capturing towns and ruthlessly destroying any obstacle in its path, the stakes grew higher. There could be no tolerance for BH trying similar tactics to expand its territory and influence.[40]

## Goals for Engagement

US policies throughout Africa have been guided by four strategic imperatives in recent years:[41]

- Strengthen democratic institutions.
- Support economic growth and development.
- Advance peace and security.
- Promote opportunity and development.

As a result of the BH crisis, the United States has also pursued a regional strategy since 2015 that has aimed to counter BH in the LCR.

The strategy to defeat BH has three interconnected objectives:

- Degrade and defeat BH so that it no longer threatens the safety and stability of people and governments in the LCR.
- Mitigate BH's impact on the people of LCR.
- Undermine the conditions that gave rise to BH.

### The Evolution of the US Approach to BH

It is important to note that the United States has not always applied a regional approach to countering BH. Until late 2013, the United States largely viewed BH as a Nigerian problem. Although the 3D leaders repeatedly implored Nigeria to focus greater attention and resources on the issue, Nigerian leadership largely rebuffed them and rejected most security and humanitarian assistance.

As the BH crisis grew in Nigeria and the broader LCR, the United States concluded that Nigeria was an unwilling and incapable partner and that a solely Nigeria-focused counter-BH strategy would not succeed. The United States and its international partners began shifting to a more regional approach that required strategies, programs, and resources to counter BH across all LCR countries.

The next sections trace the United States' shift from a strictly bilateral to a regional approach to the BH crisis and the corresponding evolution of US goals, objectives, and strategy.

## Early Days: Nigeria Fails to Stem BH Alone, 2011

After Abubakr Shekau took leadership of BH in mid-2010, the organization ramped up its offensive, attacking government, police, and religious leaders. It attracted widespread international attention with its brazen December 2011 attack on a United Nations (UN) facility in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, that killed twenty-three people and injured more than eighty people.[42] In 2012, BH's gunfire and bomb attacks killed nearly a thousand people—a roughly eightfold increase from the previous year.[43] This uptick in violence pushed inhabitants of BH-affected communities in northeastern Nigeria to seek refuge across international borders and resulted in BH members themselves seeking respite in neighboring Chad and Cameroon when they were not fighting. Although Nigerian forces could chase BH fighters to the border, pursuing them beyond would have violated international law and risked sparking conflict with neighboring countries. That is not to say there were not close calls. For example, in 2013, tensions between Nigeria and Cameroon reached a fever pitch when Nigerian leadership twice ignored Cameroon's refusal to allow Nigerian forces the right of hot pursuit into Cameroonian teritory.[44]

The United States feared the prospect of conflict among LCR states, which would have further complicated the fight against BH. With each passing day, it became more obvious that Nigeria alone could not decisively defeat BH.

## The United States Designates BH a Foreign Terrorist Organization

After the BH attack on the United Nations, US lawmakers became increasingly concerned that BH might target the United States. As a result, the United States began considering ways to stanch the organization's terrorist activities. In 2011, the Homeland Security Committee of the US House of Representatives published a report positing that BH might meet criteria for the Department of State to designate it as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).[45] In parallel, USAID determined that BH's actions had created a humanitarian situation in LCR that merited a "complex emergency" designation. In May 2012, Representative Patrick Meehan of Pennsylvania introduced an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to compel the secretary of state to report to Congress on whether BH met the criteria for FTO designation.[46] Nigeria vehemently opposed the designation of BH as a FTO, believing that the designation would bring unwanted attention to the country and glorify BH.[47] Internal US government disagreement (see text box, "Debate about BH Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) Designation") about whether to designate BH as such resulted in a decision to delay, with the hope that Nigeria would strengthen its own efforts to defeat BH.[48] To the dismay of the United States, Nigeria did not demonstrate commitment or competence in the fight

### Debate about BH Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) Designation

All US FTO designations originate in the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau (State/CT). In 2011, the US Department of Justice, which must weigh in on FTO designation proposals, conveyed to State/CT that BH might meet FTO criteria. State/CT favored the designation, but State's Africa Bureau, the Nigerian embassy, and academic experts on Nigeria adamantly opposed it. They argued that the designation would embolden BH, fuel the global "Muslims versus Christians" narrative, and pose obstacles for US and international actors and their implementing partners by prohibiting interaction with groups being targeted to reduce violence. Additionally, some US officials worried that such a designation would embolden Nigerian military units, some of which had already committed atrocities during US counter-BH operations, to repeat these offenses in efforts to defeat the enemy. This situation would have imperiled the US military's legal ability to train and assist counter-BH forces in the long run due to existing laws and safeguards against providing assistance to forces with a track record of human rights violations, such as "Leahy vetting."[a]

Because the Leahy Law and other statutes prevent the United States from offering certain types of assistance to some of Nigeria's security forces, officials hoped that they could leverage the FTO designation to incentivize Nigeria to address BH's human rights abuses, corruption, and lack of discipline. A compromise was struck in 2012 to pursue the designation of three senior BH leaders as terrorists, while delaying a designation of the whole BH organization.

a. Nina M. Serafino, June S. Beittel, Lauren Ploch Blanchard, and Liana Rosen, "'Leahy Law' Human Rights Provisions and Security Assistance: Issue Overview," Congressional Research Service, January 29, 2014, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43361.pdf.

against BH, and, accordingly, the group's attacks did not abate. Consequently, the number of displaced persons and refugees only climbed higher.

In early 2013, senior US leaders watched with alarm as AQIM and BH gained ground in the north and south of Niger, respectively, bringing the groups into dangerously close proximity to each other. Pressure for a full-scale FTO designation mounted with a September 2013 US congressional committee report that found that "BH ha[d] evolved into an al Qaeda ally through their connections with (AQIM) and al Shabaab, . . . [and] threaten[ed] the stability of Nigeria by risking religious civil war [that] would further destabilize West Africa, . . . [and] now requires enhancing capability of neighboring states such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger to defeat the threat."[49] State designated BH a FTO in November 2013.[50]

## The United States Pressures Nigeria to Address the BH Problem

As frustration mounted with the Nigerian government led by Goodluck Jonathan, the United States began to increase the pressure on Nigeria to address the grievances that were driving tacit support for BH throughout the country, especially abuses committed by security forces. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with the Nigerian president twice in August 2012, first at a conference in London and then in Abuja, but failed to achieve any change in attitude or behavior. As the situation escalated further, President Obama met President Jonathan on the margins of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York in September 2013, at which time Jonathan requested US assistance to get the security situation under control.

As a direct result of Obama's conversation with Jonathan, US National Security Advisor Susan Rice assembled a high-level interagency delegation to travel to Abuja. The delegation included the commander of US Africa Command (AFRICOM); top officials on Africa from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), State, and USAID; and National Security Council staff, a rare interagency power-team visit. The delegation tried to help the Nigerians understand why their existing approach to countering BH would continue to fail, especially if Nigerian security forces were allowed to commit human rights abuses with impunity. The Americans extolled the benefits of partnership and urged the Nigerians to pursue a more coordinated regional effort to address the problem. But the Nigerians were fixated on requests for equipment and assistance that the United States would not accommodate given Nigeria's lack of commitment to correcting human rights abuses. Goodwill evaporating, the frustrated

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**Spotlight on Early US Counterterrorism and Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Support in Nigeria**

While senior US officials pressured the Nigerian government to address the BH threat, Embassy Abuja's Public Affairs Section worked closely with DOD's Military Information Support Team, which helps US government leadership exert the US government's influence through information dissemination, to implement projects that served counterterrorism and CVE objectives. These included public affairs training for the Nigerian military and police force and the production of programs for Nigerian radio stations.[a]

a.  US Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors Office of Inspector General, "Inspection of Embassy Abuja and Consulate General Lagos, Nigeria," February 2013, https://oig.state.gov/system/files/207009.pdf.

US delegation left convinced that a "Nigeria-only strategy" to counter BH would be ineffective and insufficient to defeat BH; a cooperative regional approach would be essential.

## The United States Spurs Initial Efforts for a Regional Approach to Counter BH

One component of a regional approach to countering BH was focusing greater attention on Nigeria's neighbors. To that end, Special Operations Command-Africa (SOCAF, a component of AFRICOM) urged USAID's Africa Bureau to have USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) conduct an assessment in Niger. The assessment would identify potential opportunities to help Niger remain a stable US partner in the tumultuous Sahel region. This move was welcomed by US Embassy Niamey. The resulting report highlighted the need to support community engagement with the government in Niger's Agadez region, as well as in southern areas near Diffa that might be vulnerable to violence during the country's 2013 elections. The recommendations gave rise to a program focused on building social cohesion for resistance to internal and regional threats, including violent extremism. This program also aligned with USAID/OTI's regional efforts to support stability amid tenuous political transitions in Libya, Mali, and Tunisia.

As the security situation worsened in 2014, the United States was determined not to allow Nigeria's intransigence to harm the region further. 3D officials began to consider how the United States might provide more significant assistance to Nigeria's LCR neighbors. Unfortunately, the LCR countries did not have a track record for effective cooperation; they

**Spotlight on US Humanitarian Assistance to IDPs**

By 2013, the United States had begun providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and some IDPs. Assistance levels increased from virtually nothing in fiscal year (FY) 2012 to $42.25 million and $67.77 million in FY 2013 in Chad and Niger, respectively (figure 4). Aid was expanded to Cameroon in 2014 and to Nigeria in 2015. The United States provided $13.7 million to Nigeria in 2015 and $11.4 million in 2016, as Nigeria's leadership became more open to external assistance. Assistance to populations in northern Cameroon also dramatically increased from less than $1 million in 2013 to $8.5 million in 2014 and $23 million in 2015. This assistance, provided by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace, as well as by State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, was channeled through the United Nations.

**Figure 4.  Humanitarian Assistance to Lake Chad basin**
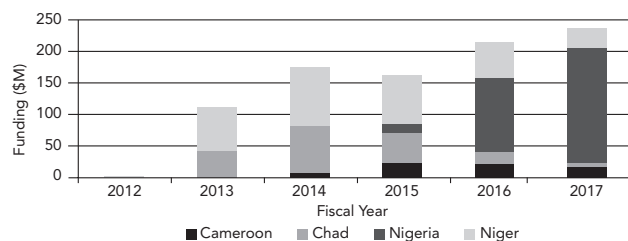


*Source:* FY 2012 to FY 2015 totals are dollars spent, from foreign assistance.gov; FY 2016 to 2017 data are from USAID Lake Chad Basin Complex Emergency Fact Sheet No. 14, April 27, 2017, and represents USAID/OFDA, USAID/FFP, State Population, Refugees, and Migration bureau, and USAID Nigeria funding.

lacked the institutional capabilities and political will to assemble and resource a common plan. Niger and Chad were also preoccupied by their own internal security challenges. State's assistant secretary for African affairs, USAID's assistant administrator for the Africa Bureau, the commander of AFRICOM, and US embassy officials in LCR countries together made overtures to civilian and military leadership in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger to push the notion of improved cooperation. The United Kingdom, France, and others made the case in parallel.

Encouraged by these conversations, the LCR countries began discussions about reenergizing a long-standing but inert regional security mechanism dating back to the 1990s: the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).[51] At the March 2014 Ordinary Summit of the four LCBC member states plus Benin, all parties committed to reactivating the MNJTF. Chad, Niger, and Nigeria agreed to deploy up to seven hundred fighters to a base in Baga, Nigeria, that would serve as headquarters. The talks were promising, but without detailed implementation plans or follow-through on deployments, the MNJTF stalled until the security situation deteriorated further during the next year, rendering continued inaction unacceptable.

While US embassies in the LCR continued to go about their bilateral business, some new initiatives to address regional issues were taking shape in Washington, D.C., at AFRICOM headquarters and at USAID's West Africa Regional Mission (USAID/WA) platforms in Accra, Ghana, and Dakar, Senegal. For example, the Peace through Development (PDEV) program that USAID began implementing in 2012 evolved from focusing primarily on conflict prevention to also reducing the risk of instability and increasing resistance to violent extremism. Program activities originally aimed to help youth in Chad, Niger, and elsewhere began to implement projects that rally diverse community members in conflict-vulnerable areas to solve problems in their communities, thereby building constructive relationships where there might otherwise be tension. As the crisis in the LCR grew, the PDEV program began to, for example, support radio programming that engaged call-in listeners in discussions about nonviolent conflict resolution in Niger. It also helped youth in Chad and Niger use mobile theater and cinema to convey antiviolent-extremism messages to largely illiterate communities. Additionally, AFRICOM focused attention on countering BH in the LCR; it based its annual "Flintlock" regional security exercise in Niger in early 2014, with attention to issues in the LCR and Central Sahel, and it included participants from all 3Ds. Embassy leadership in LCR countries, with support from senior leaders in Washington, D.C., approached governments in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon to discuss the needs of their security forces to combat BH in the LCR.

## Pivot Point: BH Abducts Schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria, April 2014

In April 2014, Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls from a boarding school in the northeastern Nigerian town of Chibok.[52] Although it was alerted four hours before the attack, the Nigerian military said that it lacked the response capacity to mobilize in time to stop the abduction.[53] The reaction in Nigeria and around the world was explosive. A global social media campaign to "#BringBackOurGirls" pressured President Jonathan to immediately launch an effort to find and rescue the girls. The United States and many of Nigeria's international partners sought to assist in the effort. Although Nigeria's security forces initially balked at assistance offers, President Jonathan compelled them to accept the help.

### The United States Mobilizes Assistance to Help Nigeria Find the Chibok Girls

Adding to technical assistance from Britain, France, and China, the United States sent eighty troops and surveillance drones to a base in N'Djamena, Chad, to contribute to the search.[54]

Although DOD personnel flew several hundred surveillance flights, they lacked a capable partner; US troops reported that Nigerian forces regularly failed to respond to actionable intelligence or did so too late.[55] Washington, D.C., also deployed an Interdisciplinary Assistance Team to augment the capacities of US embassy staff in Abuja, including advisers to the Nigerian government and military on victim support, hostage negotiation, intelligence and imagery use, law enforcement, and strategic communications, among other forms of support.[56]

### The United States Redoubles Efforts to Mobilize the Region Against Boko Haram

Following the Chibok kidnapping, AFRICOM Commander General David Rodriguez and Sarah Sewall, undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (State/J) traveled to Nigeria for meetings with senior Nigerian officials to discuss how they could accelerate cooperation in the fight against BH. In parallel, a US delegation of senior 3D officials headed to the first international counter-BH conference. This conference was the first in a series of meetings that the French convened after the kidnapping to foster cooperation among LCR states.

### The United States Mobilizes in Washington, D.C., to Respond to BH Escalation

The State Department took action on the home front. It established what amounted to a Nigeria task force in Washington, D.C.: the Nigeria Planning and Operations Group (NPOG). The NPOG focused on preventing further atrocities from BH actions and the upcoming Nigerian elections in early 2015, as well as on planning for a rapid response to crisis in Nigeria. While the NPOG worked bilaterally with Nigeria on BH, DOD made plans to use part of a new $5 billion Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF), announced by President Obama in mid-2014, to build capacity of the security forces in other LCR countries.[57] The timing couldn't have been better, because the US relationship with the Nigerian military couldn't have been worse.

### The US-Nigeria Military Relationship Deteriorates

By late 2014, BH held territory in northeastern Nigeria that was roughly equivalent to the size of Belgium.[58] US officials had little confidence in the Nigerian military and were exasperated by its continued human rights abuses.[59] US military advisers in Nigeria were furious to find their partners, soldiers of an oil-rich country, woefully underequipped. The relationship had grown so bad that US advisers hesitated to share raw intelligence with their Nigerian counterparts because they suspected that BH had infiltrated Nigerian ranks. When the United States refused to allow the sale of Cobra helicopters to Nigeria due to these concerns, the Nigerian ambassador to the United States bitterly accused the United States of "hampering the effort" to defeat BH. Humiliated and fed up with the United States, Nigeria turned to China and Russia to purchase helicopters, jets, and drone platforms. In late 2014, Nigeria abruptly rejected a US offer to provide infantry training to an elite group of Nigerian forces that the US government had already tediously vetted.[60]

### *Pivot Point: Regional Coordination Begins in Earnest, October 2014*

Despite conversations about restarting the MNJTF, the effort remained stalled as late as the autumn of 2014. In October, the LCBC countries gathered for an "Extraordinary Summit" in Niamey to discuss collaboration to address the worsening regional security situation. They

**Spotlight on US Support for Nigeria's Elections**

In early 2015, Nigerians were preparing for general elections. They, like the United States, most of Africa, and other international parties, were eager to see whether the self-proclaimed reformer and former head of state Muhammadu Buhari could defeat incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, and, if so, whether a peaceful transition of power would transpire.

The US government had long been concerned that the elections might go poorly and had supported initiatives to support a smooth process while planning for the unexpected. When Goodluck Jonathan did not respond to the election results to acknowledge his loss to Buhari for nearly twenty-four hours, the United States issued a statement threatening to sanction him if he did not accept the results. Jonathan quickly capitulated.

This election support reflected an effective projection of US leadership, and the outcome was critical to avoiding deterioration of the security situation in Nigeria writ large, including the BH-affected areas in the northeast. It also paved the way for newly elected President Buhari to quickly begin initiating critical reforms. These reforms allowed the United States to expand the scope of its defense assistance to Nigeria's security forces, thereby helping to streamline Nigeria's efforts with the regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) efforts to counter BH.

Buhari demonstrated his commitment to improving regional security by visiting all four MNJTF partner countries within two months of taking office and committing up to $100 million to establish the MNJTF.

set deadlines for the November deployment of troops and for the establishment of the command headquarters at the Nigerian military base offered previously near Lake Chad, in Baga, Nigeria. Again, these deadlines were not met. The consequence of the failure to meet these deadlines was underscored when BH attacked Baga and surrounding towns in early January 2015. Fighters overran the military base and town, killing as many as 2,000 civilians and driving at least 15,000 into Chad.[61] These attacks were a strong and urgent warning to the MNJTF countries: they needed to get serious and move quickly.

At roughly the same time that BH was attacking targets in Chad and Niger in February 2015, the MNJTF member countries, with support from the African Union, adopted a strategic concept of operations and rules of engagement.[62] As real political will for action by LCR countries finally emerged, the United States supported efforts with a new, decidedly regional counter-BH approach. Although it had involved painstaking bilateral negotiations with each state and remained bilaterally funded, this 3D approach leveraged CTPF and the Global Security Cooperation Fund (GSCF) to amplify security assistance in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

### Pivot Point: Nigeria Elects President Muhammadu Buhari and Gets Serious in the Fight Against BH, March 2015

The March 2015 election of a reform-minded Nigerian president changed the game. The election cleared the way for improved US-Nigeria relations, as well as enhanced LCR collaboration to defeat BH. President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 campaign was based, in large part, on promising to reform the army's behavior. Buhari was no stranger to serious reform campaigns. During his previous tenure as head of state (by coup) from 1983 to 1985, Buhari had executed

a controversial "War Against Indiscipline" intended to curb a lack of public morality and civic responsibility.[63] After taking office in 2015, Buhari visited all MNJTF partners within two months and quickly began firing corrupt senior military officers.

### The United States Re-Engages Nigeria

Although the United States had shifted to building and supporting a more regional strategy to counter BH, it also knew that Nigeria, as the cradle of BH, would be the linchpin of any successful regional campaign. The election of President Buhari created a buzz of optimism within the US government, raising hopes that he could fulfill his promises to clean out corruption, abuse, and indiscipline in the security services while welcoming greater regional collaboration with LCR countries and international partners. Progress on reforms was slower than hoped, but Buhari was clearly more determined to defeat BH than his predecessor had been. Buhari held many meetings with senior US officials and was far more willing to receive international assistance than Jonathan had been. In the fifteen months after Buhari took office, the United States consistently engaged him with high-level visits from the secretary of state, deputy secretary of state, and ambassador to the United Nations to demonstrate their support and plan for cooperation.[64] These conversations focused on ways for the United States to support a strong security and economic partnership with Nigeria and how the Nigerian security services could improve their human rights record to unlock additional assistance from the United States.

### US Assistance to Nigeria

In late 2015, Nigerian leadership undertook discussions with the US government about military assistance to address the BH situation. DOD responded by resuming previously suspended infantry battalion training and by positioning a small US Special Operations Forces (SOF) team in Maidugari to help Nigerian counterparts plan counterterrorism operaions.

The US government started helping Nigeria rebuild police stations and barracks in key locations so that local authorities could return to postconflict areas to help restore stability and security. This programming was intended to lay the groundwork for future reconciliation and justice sector work and for the deployment of police officers who had received human rights training supported by State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Bureau (State/INL). But the Nigerian police and military remained under intense scrutiny by the US government. For example, after Buhari promised to stem human rights abuses in the security services, the military killed nearly 350 members of a Shia group in Zaria in December 2015.[65] Military detention facilities continue to flout international standards for justice and human rights. State's Bureau of Democracy, Rights, and Labor (State/DRL) puts out public statements when egregious human rights violations transpire so that Nigerians know that the United States has continued to pay attention and will not walk away from demands that the Nigerian government curb these abuses.

### US Military Support to the Multinational Joint Task Force

To make the MNJTF more active and effective, the United States provided logistical support and equipment while advising, assisting, and occasionally accompanying MNJTF security forces on counterterrorism missions.

**Spotlight on 3D Efforts to Improve Security in the LCR**

The 3Ds have provided a range of assistance to LCR countries in the security sector. For example, DOD has trained, advised, and equipped all four LCR countries' security forces to varying degrees. At the end of 2016, State and DOD were in the early stages of a regional border security initiative to help military, law enforcement, and customs forces in LCR countries "strengthen their institutional, strategic, and tactical capabilities . . . to secure border areas."[a] DOD holds an annual exercise (Flintlock) that builds capacity and cooperation among participating countries' security forces to tackle regional issues—including engaging local civilian populations. Flintlock focused on the LCR in 2014 and 2015 and has increasingly included USAID and State representatives, including at the senior level.

USAID/OTI and USAID/WA have implemented activities that use media, intercommunity relationship-building events, and other activities to build community cohesion and resistance to BH. Likewise, the State Democracy, Rights, and Labor bureau (State/DRL) programming has encouraged and helped LCR governments improve their security forces' adherence to international human rights standards in order to mitigate a source of grievance that has historically driven BH membership and violence.

In addition to regional activities, the US government has implemented country-specific programs that target each country's needs. For example:

- At MNJTF headquarters in Chad, DOD supported the command element responsible for coordinating LCR country forces' efforts to defeat BH. In late 2016, DOD began delivering sixty light armored vehicles to help Chad's military defeat BH in the LCR.[b]

- At an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) base established in 2016 in Garoua, Cameroon, DOD began supporting the MNJTF's intelligence capabilities through training and direct transfer of data gathered through drone flights.

- In Niger's Diffa region, the Special Operations Forces (SOF) continued implementing activities to build relationships among traditional leaders, develop counter-BH messaging, and equip communities with metal detectors, mobile phones, and other tools for tracking and resisting BH fighters and preachers. The State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State/INL) has trained and advised Nigerian officials to improve detention practices at prisons that are overcrowded with suspected BH affiliates.[c]

- In Nigeria, DOD's tactical security assistance to help Nigerian forces fight BH has been complemented by US efforts to rehabilitate local government administration facilities in cleared areas, counter BH recruitment, and assist the Nigerian military in developing a framework for eventually disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating BH fighters. State/INL has delivered assistance to the Nigerian police force, including advanced human rights training for officers before they deploy to northeastern Nigeria and to trainers at academies and colleges that will facilitate further human rights trainings for officers. State/INL also provides equipment, training, mentoring, and capacity-building support to Nigeria's law enforcement and justice sector institutions.[d] The trainees go through practical, hands-on exercises that prepare them to provide security for vulnerable populations in BH-affected areas.

BH-related US counterterrorism assistance had totaled more than $400 million by early 2016,[e] drawing from the following funds: the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF), the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF), the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, the Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs, the Economic Support Fund, and the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

a. US Department of State, Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF), Washington, D.C., www.state.gov/t/pm/gpi/gscf/index.htm.

b. US Department of State, US Embassy Chad, "First US Shipment of Light Armored Vehicles Arrives in N'Djamena for Combatting Boko Haram," press release, December 8, 2016, https://td.usembassy.gov/first-u-s-shipment-light-armored-vehicles-arrives-ndjamena-chadian-forces-combatting-boko-haram.

c. US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, INL Work by Country, "Niger," Washington, D.C., www.state.gov/j/inl/regions/africamiddleeast/218995.htm.

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# Timeline of Key Events in the Lake Chad Region, 2013-2016

The following timeline highlights some of the key events and developments in the Lake Chad Region from 2013-2016, including what happened locally, and what the United States did in response.

## 2013 Timeline

BH bombings in Cameroon

BH attacks Baga, overruns new MNJTF base

Nigeria cancels training for a battalion by US military

Nigeria blasts US government for blocking sale of attack helicopters to Nigeria

LCR states and Benin agree to re-activiate Multinational Joint Task Force

BH kidnaps Chibok girls in Nigeria

#BringBackOurGirls campaign begins

MNJTF countries agree to base troops in Baga

Boko Haram (BH) conducts first cross-border raids and kidnappings (Cameroon)

Government of Nigeria declares emergency, deploys military to northeast

BH declares Islamic Caliphate

### Civilians Killed in Boko Haram Attacks

| J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |

**2013:** 1,008 Dead (108 Attacks)  **2014:** 3,425 Dead (220 Attacks)

### US Funding: Humanitarian Assistance

**2013:** $111 Million  **2014:** $174.6 Million

US government senior-level trip to Lake Chad Region

US designates BH an FTO

DOD supports Flintlock Exercise in Niger

USAID/OTI starts Niger program

USAID/WA stands up CVE Unit

Security Governance Initiative launched in Washington, DC

Congressional committee releases report on BH

Congress passes resolution condemning Chibok abductions

President Jonathan of Nigeria meets President Obama in New York, requests assistance

USAID/WA starts RISE program in Niger and Chad

State Department stands up NPOG

US government senior-level trip to Nigeria yields little progress against BH

US sends DOD team to help find Chibok girls

US senior officials attend French summit on regional coordination

President Jonathan and AFRICOM commander have meetings in Nigeria

Nigeria halts DOD training of vetted Nigerian forces

### GLOSSARY

**AFRICOM:** US Africa Command
**CONOPS:** Concept of Operations
**CVE:** Countering Violent Extremism
**DOD:** US Department of Defense
**FTO:** Foreign Terrorist Organization
**ISIS:** Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
**ISR:** Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
**LCR:** Lake Chad Region
**MNJTF:** Multinational Joint Task Force
**NPOG:** Nigeria Planning and Operations Group
**P4P:** Partnerships for Peace
**PDEV:** Peace Through Development
**RISE:** Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced
**ROE:** Rules of Engagement
**SGI:** Security Governance Initiative
**USAID:** US Agency for International Development
**USAID/DART:** Disaster Assistance Response Team
**USAID/OFDA:** Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
**USAID/OTI:** Office of Transition Initiatives
**USAID/WA:** USAID Regional Mission West Africa

## 2015-2016 Timeline

Nigerian President Buhari elected. Begins 90 day reform effort

BH pledges allegiance to ISIS

Chad, Nigeria, MNJTF, & South African mercenaries eradicate BH from large territory

Attacks in Yola, Maiduguri, and Kano target mosques and markets

BH attacks Diffa; takes significant military hardware

Nigerian elections delayed

First BH attacks in N'Djamena, Chad

Abuja Regional Security Summit

President Deby of Chad visits President Biya of Cameroon

MNJTF countries, with international help, regain ground from BH

President Buhari declares BH "technically defeated"

LCR deemed to be on "tipping point" of famine

MNJTF adopts CONOPS and ROE, and commits to deploy troops

Attacks on police HQ in N'djamena

President Buhari visits Cameroon, Chad, Niger

Peak of BH controlling territory

BH retreats into Sambisa Forest

President Buhari appoints new army chiefs

Nigerian military kills nearly 350 in Zaria

Nigerian forces claim they have driven BH entirely into Sambisa Forest

BH splits in two; ISIS endorses new sect

UN requests $1B to address humanitarian situation in LCR

Chadian troops fight BH in Cameroon

Chadian troops lead offensive against BH into Nigeria

President Deby re-elected in Chad

Nigeria launches operation against BH in Sambisa Forest

Cameroonian military conducts counter-BH cross-border operations

BH named "deadliest terrorist group" in 2014

BH attacks Difa region

### Civilians Killed in Boko Haram Attacks

| J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |

**2015:** 6,006 Dead (270 Attacks)  **2016:** 422 Dead (36 Attacks)

### US Funding: Humanitarian Assistance

**2015:** $161 Million  **2016:** $215.1 Million

US pressures President Jonathan to accept electoral defeat

DOD supports Flintlock Exercise in Chad

USAID/OTI opens program in northern Nigeria

Senior Coordinator on Counter BH travels to LCR

After delay, US government trains two infantry battalions in Nigeria

SGI assessment trip: Niger

USAID/OFDA DART team deploys to northeast Nigeria

USAID starts Cameroon Peace Promotion Project

USAID/OTI launches program in Cameroon

US supports elections in Nigeria

Secretary of State Kerry visits

President Buhari visits White House

US sends 300 troops to Cameroon

US counter-BH strategy revision begins. Security assistance expands. USAID CVE project begins

Counter-BH Coordinator & US Ambassador to UN travel to LCR region

Nigeria governors convene in Washington, DC

State Department stands up Senior Coordinator on Counter BH

SOF presence expands in LCR

AFRICOM Commander visits Cameroon & Nigeria

US government completes ISR platform in Garoua

USAID/WA ends PDEV program

Congress introduces bill requesting counter BH regional strategy

President Obama hosts refugee summit: President Biya attends for first time

USAID/WA starts P4P and Moderate Voices Programs

Sources: Kevin Uhrmacher and Mary Beth Sheridan, "The Brutal Toll of Boko Haram's Attacks on Civilians," *Washington Post*, April 3, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/nigeria-boko-haram; Fiscal data derived from www.foreignassistance.com, FY2012-2015 data is dollars spent, FY2016 data represents only dollars planned by USAID/OFDA, USAID/FFP, Department of State/PRM, and USAID/Nigeria. Note: Data for civilians killed in attacks for 2016 is only through March.

DOD also began supporting the MNJTF headquarters in N'djamena and the MNJTF's intelligence fusion unit in Cameroon. DOD finished constructing Cameroon's first ISR base in Garoua in early 2016, using it for flights to collect regional intelligence that is shared with MNJTF partners. For example, in early 2016 drone photos alerted the Nigerian army to a planned BH ambush.[66] DOD sent about 300 US troops to the base, in part to train MNJTF partners in intelligence gathering. [67]

The United States also assisted the MNJTF by providing armored vehicles to Chad and two Cessna surveillance aircraft to Nigerien forces that were assigned to MNJTF activities.[68] These assets later helped Nigerian security forces corner a group of BH fighters in Nigeria with the assistance of Chadian forces, which had been permitted to cross into Nigeria in pursuit of BH for the first time. As a result of improved regional collaboration and local community-based efforts, BH lost significant territory in Borno State in 2015 and was largely driven into the Sambisa forest.[69]

## Pivot Point: Multinational Joint Task Force Launches Offensive Against BH, March 2016

As it lost ground, BH increasingly returned to using suicide attacks that caused mass casualties and stoked fear. Even as BH was driven into the forest, the violence continued. Sometimes shockingly committed by women and children adorned with suicide vests, these attacks caused even more displacement and compelled some communities to forbid women from wearing burkas to ensure they were not concealing bombs.[70] Following a spate of BH attacks and clashes in the early months of 2016, Nigeria, with MNJTF support, began another offensive to clear remaining BH strongholds, especially in the forest. Violence spiked again in June 2016.

### Humanitarian Organizations Gain Access to Liberated Areas of Nigeria

As territory formerly controlled by BH became accessible in northeastern Nigeria, Nigerian military commanders requested international humanitarian assistance, promising assistance organizations secure passage in high-threat areas. As they arrived in these areas, assistance groups were stunned by what they saw. Even as late as October 2016—more than a year after some villages had been liberated—UN teams found that roughly a million and a half victims of BH violence were "living in makeshift camps, bombed-out buildings and host communities, receiving minimal supplies from international organizations."[71] Some people were eating grass and locusts.[72] Oxfam warned in September 2016 that more than 65,000 people were living in famine in northeast Nigeria and that 6.3 million people in the LCR were "severely food in-secure."[73] Worse, Nigeria's government had suppressed information about the enormous food crisis that it had been unable to address—and had likely been exacerbating in efforts to "starve the enemy."[74]

Even as it prepared to address these needs, the United Nations recognized that roughly another 2 million people were probably inaccessible because of BH fighters who still lived in and patrolled villages and surrounding areas.[75] In response, by November 2016, the Nigerian government had agreed to allow the United Nations to set up humanitarian hubs in Borno State. This decision was very important, as Nigeria's military had been providing the bulk of assistance to IDPs over the past few years, provoking criticism that delivery had been riddled with incompetence and included the abuse of civilian victims of conflict. That same month,

USAID sent a disaster assistance response team to northeastern Nigeria. USAID also started incorporating emergency education programming in its support to Nigerian IDPs, aiming to provide some structure, learning, and trauma recovery support to children who fled BH-affected areas.[76] All told, USAID ramped up humanitarian assistance in Nigeria from virtually nothing in 2014 to $291 million committed for fiscal year (FY) 2017.[77]

### Building a Sustainable Peace: Addressing Root Causes of Crisis and Building Community Cohesion and Resilience

In IDP-affected areas in northern Nigeria, USAID/OTI implemented rolling research efforts to learn about how perceptions of governance and IDPs' propensity to return home are evolving.[78] Not surprisingly, many IDPs fear returning to where their livelihoods were destroyed, horrible memories may be triggered, and, in some cases, BH members may still lurk. As the fight against BH continues, the United States has increasingly recognized the need to address the underlying conditions from which BH emerged and to prevent BH from reinventing itself or gaining momentum in the future.

To address some of the long-term challenges in Niger, USAID's Sahel regional platform in Dakar, Senegal, has supported the Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced program.[79] This effort was designed to combine humanitarian assistance with development activities such as agricultural support and irrigation to buffer against shocks to food supplies and livelihoods caused by climate swings, conflict, and other disturbances. USAID/WA has also initiated efforts to reduce bottlenecks in health services, education, and public financial management in Niger. In 2016, the 3Ds (led by State), other US government institutions, and Niger's government started working together via the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) to improve Niger's ability to administer security in its territory; a similar agreement was pending for Nigeria.[80]

To help the Nigerian government provide better services to poor populations, the USAID mission in Nigeria has implemented programs in support of longer-term development. These programs have included improving agricultural production to help create livelihoods and resolve the nutrition problems that are rampant in the country's northeastern regions. For example, third parties have assessed that Nigeria has the potential to feed all its people and become a net exporter of food, rather than the importer it is today, if it could address its governance, development, and security problems.[81] Additionally, State's human rights training for Nigerian police forces aims to build professionalism within an institution whose personnel have historically behaved in unprofessional ways that caused grievances among the population.

In 2016, as MNJTF forces gained ground on BH, the United States recognized the importance of planning activities to prevent the resurgence of BH-fueled conflict. Late that year, USAID/OTI gained agreement from US congressional partners to proceed with a project to help the Nigerian military create a framework for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former BH fighters. The initiative, which is in the early stages as of this writing, has involved a partnership between USAID and members of the Nigerian armed forces. This collaboration is very unusual and has required extensive 3D cooperation, as well as consultations with Congress, to ensure conformity with US laws and regulations.

In addition to these broad-scope initiatives, the United States has supported a range of activities that aim to help communities in BH-affected areas of LCR build resistance to BH's influence. Examples of US government efforts include:

- Partnerships for Peace (P4P) is a USAID/WA regional initiative that began in late 2016. It aims to help regional institutions in West Africa (such as the Economic Community of West African States), civil society organizations, and the governments of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger improve security, develop countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies, and reduce at-risk communities' vulnerability to conflict. The project also plans to support networks of West African advocacy and practitioner groups to improve CVE coordination among traditional and religious leaders, youth, and women's groups.

- Voices for Peace is a USAID/WA regional project that started in late 2016. It helps partners establish or enhance interactive multimedia platforms, including radio stations, social media, interactive voice response, and short message service. It also helps LCR partners amplify local voices (in local languages) to counter violent extremism and promote democracy, human rights, and governance across the four LCR countries. Voices for Peace aims to train and mentor members of media organizations and to encourage media consumption through, for example, discussion groups and national competitions for best radio shows and songs.[82]

- In northeastern Nigeria, USAID/OTI promotes peace through sports competitions that bring together youth from different geographic, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds who are vulnerable to violent extremism. USAID/OTI launched the first local-language shortwave radio program in northeastern Nigeria, broadcasting local voices to promote resistance to extremism.[83]

- In Cameroon, USAID/OTI's program in the north started in late 2016. It works with local leaders, youth, and women in the Far North province to help communities stave off violent extremist threats and influence in order to promote development.[84] USAID's Cameroon Peace Promotion project uses radio programming and community engagement to improve access to factual information, reinforce community values of peace and tolerance, support moderate voices to mitigate extremist rhetoric, and promote dialogue in vulnerable communities on themes that can lead to conflict.[85]

- In Niger, USAID and AFRICOM, with support from Embassy Niamey leadership, have supported community cohesion and resilience. As early as 2014, SOCAF helped bring together traditional leaders in BH-affected regions of Diffa to discuss how they could work together to stem recruitment and beat back BH encroachment. USAID/OTI supported an activity in which Diffa residents received small payments for clearing roadside brush in which BH members had been hiding. Their work cleared the way for Nigerien security forces to perform their first security patrols in this marginalized part of the country. Later, following a devastating BH attack in the area, USAID/OTI responded by supporting a communications caravan to strengthen community confidence in local authorities and security forces. The activity brought together authorities and civilians, transporting them through the Diffa region to discuss the security situation, tension caused by the attack, and how authorities could provide better stability for the communities. In mid-2016, USAID helped SOCAF bring female leaders into a security symposium, supported by SOCAF in Diffa, to aid traditional chiefs and other community leaders in thinking holistically about ways to shore up security in the area. Improved communication and cooperative relationships among these leaders help them track and thwart the presence of BH and its attempts to preach extremist doctrine and recruit youth.

## What Lies Ahead

In early 2016, the Nigerian government collaborated with the World Bank, the United Nations, and the European Union to conduct a "Recovery and Peace Building Assessment" to determine the requirements for "strengthening the citizens' trust in the state, sustainably restoring and improving social services, and fostering opportunities for economic livelihood through reconstruction, rehabilitation, and the improvement of service delivery in affected areas."[86] The assessment was an important step in helping the country and the region recover from the effects of BH, but the United States and other donors will need to build on it by continuing to work tirelessly with LCR governments to build a better future.

By the end of 2016, although BH's fighting force had been largely dispersed, asymmetrical attacks continued to make parts of northeastern Nigeria treacherous for all who lived and ventured there. A state of fear continues to exist throughout the region, and destroyed property serves as a reminder of the wanton destruction of BH's marauding days. Devastated crops contribute to rampant malnutrition and food insecurity, earning the LCR a place on an ignominious list of countries and regions on the verge of famine.[87]

The dark cloud hanging over such efforts is a question: is BH degraded for good, or will it rise again like al-Qaeda, ISIS, and others have before it? The underlying drivers of complex crisis in the LCR have not been addressed. The human insecurity resulting from the diminishing Lake Chad and the fragile relationship between LCR states and their citizens persist. Intensive work at the country and regional levels remains a priority for the 3Ds to help LCR partners keep BH at bay. Nevertheless, the United States and its LCR and other international partners have gained the upper hand by pulling together regional cooperation to begin snuffing out a violent extremism inferno that threatened millions in the LCR. The US government, especially its creative and forward-leading 3D leadership and institutions, has devised innovative approaches to help foster and sustain this momentum in the fight for a better future in the region.

The next section looks at how the United States assisted the LCR in making this progress, so the United States might learn from this experience and continue the critical work of stabilizing this region, and others like it, in the future.

## Unpacking the "How": Differentiating Elements of US Efforts in the LCR

With an understanding of what the US government did in the LCR, the report turns to the question of how it was done. This section presents an exploration of the approaches—resources, authorities, structures, and processes—employed in service to US objectives in the LCR so readers can better understand what worked and why. This section discusses:

- The use of **bilateral approaches to meet country-specific challenges to stemming crisis,** including the use of the NPOG; collaboration for DDR activities in Nigeria; civil-military cooperation in Niger; and interagency coordination to lead crisis response at US Embassy Abuja.

- Efforts to **stitch together bilateral approaches to stem a regional crisis holistically,** including the establishment of a regional CVE platform; the use of a senior coordinator on BH; and the leveraging of resource planning processes for regional 3D coordination, including tapping in to the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF) and the Global Security Cooperation Fund (GSCF).

## Bilateral Approaches to Meeting Country-Specific Challenges to Stemming Crisis

### Overview

The US government's attempts from 2011 to 2014 to convince the Nigerian government to address the BH threat were largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the 3Ds did employ some useful bilateral approaches to working with Nigeria and other LCR countries aimed at stemming conflict in critical parts of the region.

### Key Bilateral Elements of the Effort to Stem the LCR Crisis

#### *The Nigeria Planning and Operations Group*

**Relevance to Goals:** The NPOG aimed to draw interagency attention to the potential for atrocities in Nigeria (related to both BH and the 2015 elections) and prevent them from happening. To that end, the NPOG monitored the risk of atrocities in Nigeria and crafted contingency plans for US preventive engagement in case conditions deteriorated. The goal was to diminish the likelihood that Nigeria's crisis would spread or take on additional complexity, which would have spread instability in the region, created further opportunities for VEOs to gain influence, and required extensive international support to recover.

**How It Worked:** State/J established the NPOG just after the Chibok schoolgirls were kidnapped in mid-2014, in collaboration with State's Bureau of African Affairs (State/AF). The NPOG was a response to concerns raised by members of the White House-convened Atrocity Prevention Board that Nigeria was at risk for atrocities. The NPOG comprised an interdisciplinary team of State functional and regional experts, plus a military liaison who had formerly led a portion of AFRICOM's Sahel portfolio. The NPOG was unable to secure a full-time USAID detailee, but it did include USAID's activities in its coordination efforts. Initially housed in the undersecretary's office suite, the NPOG eventually moved to State/AF's offices and was led by the bureau's director for West Africa. Civilian security, democracy, and human rights functional personnel complemented the State/AF members' regional specialization by providing technical expertise and helping manage the foreign assistance planning process. During most of the latter half of 2014, in the run-up to the February 2015 elections, the NPOG led strategy development for Nigeria. It was also tasked by the head of the Atrocities Prevention Board with drafting an initial version of the counter-BH strategy.[88]

The NPOG was able to claim some important successes, including tracking and elevating US attention to the escalating potential for atrocities in Nigeria; organizing coordination between State and DOD to condition military assistance to Nigeria on improvements to its human rights record, and developing strategies for the United States to engage on aspects of the BH problem set and on the Nigerian elections. Before Nigeria's 2015 elections, the NPOG anticipated that President Jonathan's failure to promptly acknowledge his defeat would stir unrest across the country. Thus, when Jonathan was not seen or heard from after his well-publicized loss to Muhammadu Buhari, the United States already had a plan in place to pressure him to step down (see box, "US Bilateral Goals and Objectives in LCR Countries," on page 16).

Notably, the NPOG struggled to manage differences of perspective between the functional offices that operated under the guidance of State/J and State/AF. State/AF, as the regional bureau, was ultimately responsible for clearing and forwarding recommendations for a single

country or region (as opposed to crosscutting issues such as global violent extremism or climate change, writ large) to senior US government leaders. As a result, State/AF usually prevailed in communicating its perspective to senior leadership at State and the White House. But this situation was not typical of attempts to collaborate across functional and regional divides at State and the other Ds.[89]

**Lesson from the NPOG:**

- **Define objectives, priorities, and processes for quickly arbitrating disagreements in interagency fora at the outset of a new task force or similar structure.** The NPOG was created to assemble objective-specific strategies quickly and to make recommendations for action in response to evolving crises. Although it made strides toward crafting strategy and planning for crisis, the NPOG sometimes struggled to negotiate disagreements internally. As a result, when decisions were passed up to the secretary of state or to the White House, the regional bureau's perspective was typically privileged, rather than a balanced regional and functional view.

### Collaboration for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Nigeria

**Relevance to Goals:** The US government's big picture objectives for northeastern Nigeria included clearing BH out of territory and enabling civil and military authorities to establish a proper government presence and restart recovery and long-term development. During the time that Nigeria wasn't able to make significant progress on the first objective, the second remained impossible. But after Nigerian forces—helped by the United States, other MNJTF countries, and international partners—regained territory formerly held by BH, the stage was set for DDR initiatives to begin paving the way for recovery. DDR activities will be essential to preventing a return to violent conflict and allowing IDPs to return home to rejoin economic, social, and political life in their communities. In an innovative initiative, USAID/OTI will work directly with the Nigerian military on the development of a DDR framework. DDR progress will rely on consultations with Congress to use a statutory authority that permits certain foreign assistance funds to support DDR programs involving former members of FTOs.[90] If Nigeria gives it the required attention, the DDR framework will be a prerequisite for further work by the Nigerians, the United States, and other international actors to implement other DDR initiatives.[91]

**How It Worked:** In many conflict and postconflict environments, DDR programming has proven to be a highly challenging, lengthy, and expensive endeavor. In northeastern Nigeria, the DDR process is being spearheaded by the military, as Nigeria's most capable institution in that region. Accordingly, the US government recognized the importance of partnering with the military in order to move the needle toward lasting peace. A statutory authority exists for the use of certain foreign assistance funds to "support programs to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate into civilian society former members of foreign terrorist organizations," provided that the secretary of state consult with the committees on appropriations prior to the obligation of funds.[92] USAID, with support from State, approached Congress regarding its intent to rely on this provision to work with the Nigerian military to build a DDR framework.

USAID typically does not work with armed actors and must take great care to verify that the Nigerians with whom it directly works are not guilty of serious human rights violations.

**Spotlight on Congressional Engagement in the LCR**

In addition to approving State and USAID engagement on DDR issues, Congress has played an active role in the region, including:

- Holding a House subcommittee hearing on BH and preparing a report on BH, November 2011: US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, "Homeland Security Committee Report Details Emerging Homeland Threat Posed by Africa-Based Terrorist Organization, Boko Haram," press release, November 30, 2011, https://homeland.house.gov/press/homeland-security-committee-report-details-emerging-homeland-threat-posed-africa-based/.

- Releasing a House report on BH, September 2013: US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, "Boko Haram: Growing Threat to the US Homeland," September 13, 2013, https://homeland.house.gov/files/documents/09-13-13-Boko-Haram-Report.pdf.

- Passing resolutions condemning the abduction of Chibok girls, April 2014, and the BH attack on Baga that may have killed as many as 2,000 in a Nigerian town near the Chadian border, January 2015: Condemning the Abduction of Female Students by Armed Militants from the Terrorist Group Known as Boko Haram in Northeastern Provinces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.R. 617, 113th Cong. (2014) and Condemning the Cowardly Attacks on Innocent Men, Women, and Children in Northeastern Nigeria by Boko Haram and Urging a Peaceful and Credible National Election, H.R. 53, 114th Cong. (2015).

- Introducing bills requesting that DOD and State collaboratively assemble a regional strategy to address the threat posed by BH, September 2015: To Require a Regional Strategy to Address the Threat Posed by Boko Haram, H.R. 3833, 114th Cong. (2015).

- Enabling USAID to work with the Nigerian military on a framework to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate former BH members

- Closely tracking allegations of human rights abuses by LCR security forces to which the United States considers providing assistance, as well as the extent to which the United States executive agencies are ensuring compliance with vetting requirements (ongoing).

Congress needed to be certain that careful vetting of USAID's prospective Nigerian partners would precede the provision of assistance for the DDR framework. Extensive consultations among USAID, State, and congressional staff ultimately yielded a workable solution. The agreed-on way forward requires close collaboration between State and USAID to select and vet prospective military counterparts with whom USAID directly works.[93]

US engagement on this issue in Nigeria is in its infancy. Although USAID/OTI and State have been forward-leaning in their pursuit of ways to help Nigeria return BH members to civilian life, this project has yet to produce a DDR framework, and it is unclear if the actors will ever arrive at one. State and USAID aim to help Nigeria develop a framework that meets international legal requirements and best practice guidelines. If the initiative is successful, it will help prevent BH from rising to become the threat it once was.

As formulation of a DDR framework proceeds, Congress, State, and USAID may collaboratively and iteratively re-evaluate the potential for USAID to support further DDR activities in partnership with the Nigerian military. Notably, because defecting BH fighters have arrived in other LCR countries, US officials are hoping to learn from the USAID/OTI effort in Nigeria to evaluate options for supporting DDR elsewhere.

**Lesson from Collaboration for DDR in Nigeria**

- **Recognize exceptional circumstances—and iteratively work with Congress to pursue creative solutions when "business as usual" will not further US objectives.** Although the United States has often supported civilian efforts in foreign countries to promote DDR, in Nigeria it took the unusual step of initiating a partnership with vetted members of Nigeria's military to begin constructing a DDR framework for former members of FTOs. State, USAID, and Congress were able to come to agreement on this plan by proactively communicating with each other—beyond what is routine—and agreeing to support a DDR framework that will be crucial to advancing US objectives in the LCR.

*3D Civil–Military Cooperation in Niger*

**Relevance to Goals:** Niger was the locus of a potential AQIM-BH terror nexus. In 2013, the US government and the government of Niger were becoming increasingly concerned about both AQIM and BH activities and their proximity to each other in Niger. To compound matters, Nigerien security forces were struggling to control territory in the vast northern desert, and the US government and the government of Niger feared that BH fighters would eventually wreak havoc in Diffa and elsewhere in southern Niger similar to what they were visiting upon Nigeria. The 3Ds agreed that it was important to fortify Niger's military capabilities to ward off prospective BH advances and to assist communities around Lake Chad to build longer-term cooperation to resist BH.

**How It Worked:** In 2013, DOD and USAID, in consultation with Embassy Niamey, began to discuss the potential to improve coordination among some of their initiatives in Niger. USAID officers in Niamey already supported ongoing USAID programs in southern Niger, and AFRICOM had worked with community leaders in the Diffa area to organize resistance to BH. AFRICOM was building the capacity of Nigerien military counterparts, gearing up to host its annual Flintlock regional military exercise in West Africa and preparing to install an ISR base in Agadez, a desert town and illicit trade hub northeast of Niamey.[94] USAID and AFRICOM recognized opportunities for USAID to augment activities that build community cohesion and resistance to violent extremism in Diffa and elsewhere. To further reinforce complementarity between development and defense approaches to supporting long-term security and governance in Niger, AFRICOM asked USAID to consider expanding its programming. As a result, USAID/OTI sent an assessment team to Niger to determine whether and how USAID/OTI might be able to reinforce AFRICOM's activities and other USAID programs organized around community stability, governance, and economic growth.

In December 2013, USAID/OTI agreed to start a program. USAID/OTI staff began advising AFRICOM teams about best practices for working with civilian leaders in vulnerable Nigerien communities and for conducting their activities in a way that is consultative with vulnerable and marginalized groups in these communities.

Building on these efforts, a 3D CT/CVE working group was established at Embassy Niamey. The group meets regularly to improve the 3Ds' collective situational awareness about major issues with which Nigerien communities are struggling, share ideas about how the US government might help, and discuss the potential for collaborating on assessments that each

of the 3Ds is considering undertaking in the same towns. USAID/OTI personnel meet frequently with DOD personnel to share updates on programs and new efforts. The small size of the embassy and country team enables direct coordination among all 3Ds.

The extensive communication and collaboration that brought USAID and AFRICOM together at the leadership and working levels kick-started partnerships that grew into relationships valued by all parties. As collaboration in Niger continued, leadership at the embassy, AFRICOM, the joint chiefs of staff, and USAID perceived the value of ongoing civilian-military collaboration in the field. These successes generated interest within Congress for a late 2016 addition to the 2017 NDAA. The addition authorized DOD to make up to $75 million available to civilian agencies to implement foreign assistance programs if commanders determined that doing so would help DOD meet its objectives.[95] As this report went to press, the authorization had not yet been used.

**Lessons from Civil-Military Cooperation in Niger**

- **Coordinate military assistance with civilian assistance that builds communities' long-term resistance to violent extremist threats:** Niger's military is not able to protect Niger's vast borders from threats emanating from neighboring countries, making investment in multifaceted community resistance to threats essential to stemming the crisis in LCR.

- **Consistently cultivate relationships to effectively build civil-military cooperation around shared objectives:** Over time, iterative communication and collaboration between Embassy Niamey's civilian and military personnel fostered the development of a common operational picture and ideas about how additional USAID programming in the country could bolster Niger's security and stability. Results of successful collaboration were recognized at senior levels, feeding into an NDAA provision authorizing DOD to, when appropriate, resource civilian agencies to support DOD objectives.

*Interagency Coordination at US Embassy Abuja*

**Relevance to Goals:** Even after the LCR crisis had spread from Nigeria to neighboring countries, BH remained a Nigeria problem. Before, during, and after US efforts to address the crisis shifted toward a regional approach, US Embassy Abuja organized itself to better understand and manage the dynamics in the northeast and to support Nigerian partners to stem the crisis. The embassy was a critical frontline in the US government's broad response to the regional crisis. Interagency planning and coordination within the embassy were critical to ensure a consistent, coherent approach to countering BH and mitigating the devastating impact it had on communities in northeastern Nigeria.

**How It Worked:** US Embassy Abuja, the largest US embassy in the LCR, is the only one that includes a full bilateral USAID mission. In 2013, Embassy Abuja had an authorized staffing level of 231 US direct hires and 789 locally employed staff members.[96] It had permanent senior representatives from USAID, DOD, the Centers for Disease Control, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The embassy hosted ten long-term, rotating temporary-duty SOF personnel. Despite its vibrancy, Abuja is a hardship post for foreign service officers

(FSOs). As a result, many State positions at the embassy are filled by first- or second-tour officers, including some senior positions that are filled by relatively junior FSOs serving in these key roles for the first time. Although they may be hard-working and ambitious, some of these officers have not benefitted from the experience and mentorship that could help them excel.

Most of US Embassy Abuja's initial responses to the BH-driven crisis originated with the USAID mission in Nigeria (USAID/Nigeria). USAID/Nigeria has been Embassy Abuja's most active agency in northeastern Nigeria and has led interagency coordination regarding most priorities in the northeast. It has significant expertise in and knowledge of the region based on the volume of assistance that it has managed in the area. This expertise has been enabled by the relatively long four-year tours that USAID FSOs serve in country—an important commodity in a complex environment like Nigeria. These officers develop deep country expertise during their years of service at post, compared to shorter tours for State FSOs.

Multiple times a week, USAID/Nigeria leadership convened a broad spectrum of US government personnel who worked on different facets of the crisis in northeastern Nigeria; morning meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were used to organize a holistic approach among US assistance efforts. These meetings brought together USAID transitional personnel (USAID/OTI) with humanitarian assistance experts (USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance), longer-term development experts, embassy political officers, and the intelligence community to develop a shared situational awareness and help US officials learn from one another. The USAID mission also started a CVE Working Group. Having an interagency structure to deal with the crisis has been helpful in enabling the embassy, rather than Washington, D.C., to drive the US agenda in Nigeria. Some coordination is now run out of Borno State, where USAID/OTI and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance disaster aid recovery team work.

**Lessons from Interagency Coordination in Nigeria**

- **Use field-based interagency structures to enable adaptive crisis response coordination where the action is.** Coordination on the ground in crisis can be faster and more streamlined than asking foreign capitals to coordinate from afar. Keeping the process inclusive is essential to enabling interagency learning that can help US officials prioritize activities appropriately.

- **Assign interagency coordination to the US agency with the most experience working in the crisis-affected region.** The US ambassador leads the interagency approach to crisis at Embassy Abuja, and USAID, which has the most activity and situational awareness in northeastern Nigeria, is well positioned to drive interagency coordination.

## Stitching Together Bilateral Approaches to Stem a Regional Crisis Holistically

### Overview

Much of the US government's 3D work to mitigate the LCR crisis was organized and implemented bilaterally to target the unique needs and challenges of individual LCR countries. To meaningfully address the regional BH crisis, the 3Ds have had to carefully calibrate many of their bilateral activities to reflect changing regional dynamics. As the crisis has evolved, the

3Ds have adapted by creating new structures and processes that knit together bilateral initiatives with individual LCR countries so they are mutually reinforcing, creating an effort that has been greater than the sum of its parts. This section includes a few examples of how the 3Ds began and continue to coordinate across borders to mitigate the regional crisis.

## Elements of the Holistic Approach to Stemming Crisis in the LCR

*USAID West Africa Regional CVE Unit*

**Relevance to Goals:** Although not solely focused on the LCR crisis, USAID's CVE unit housed at USAID/WA in Accra, Ghana, has helped USAID programs and AFRICOM elements in LCR countries understand each other's objectives and operational capabilities and coordinate efforts at the program and activity levels.

**How It Worked:** USAID/WA worked from two platforms in the region: the main platform was co-located with USAID's bilateral mission in Accra and the Sahel regional platform was co-located with the USAID mission in Dakar, Senegal. The main platform administered the PDEV and P4P programs. The Sahel regional platform supported the Resilience in Sahel Enhanced program in Niger and Chad.

USAID's CVE unit was situated within USAID/WA's Regional Peace and Governance office. The unit supported regional CVE initiatives and offered technical support to other regional and bilateral initiatives across the West Africa region. It executed research, coordination, convening, and training activities that were aimed at strengthening regional CVE approaches. CVE unit members included six USAID technical specialists, one senior USAID/OTI regional adviser, and one AFRICOM representative. The unit occasionally engaged a State/CT officer based in Algiers who was focused on the Sahel. These members were in close communication with, and sometimes traveled to work with, USAID and DOD teams in LCR countries. As a result of these relationships, the CVE unit was the preeminent hub for coordinating civil-military efforts to counter the violent extremism threat posed by BH. The unit did not directly support Embassy Abuja's CVE Working Group or USAID's activities in the same way that it did in other West African countries where USAID did not have as large a staff. It did, however, communicate with Embassy Abuja's CVE Working Group to share information and best practices.

The CVE unit led, supported, and participated in a variety of important coordination mechanisms, programs, and CVE activities in the LCR. Some of the most notable include:

- *Developing a regional CVE framework:* The CVE unit, including the AFRICOM liaison office (LNO), created USAID's regional CVE framework.
- *Coordinating LCR field teams' work with AFRICOM:* A planner from AFRICOM occasionally visited Accra and was generally engaged with the CVE unit's work. In 2016, he brought a military information support operations team leader from AFRICOM to help design programs that used radio broadcasts to encourage vulnerable populations to resist and counter violent extremism.
- *Conducting assessments:* In 2016, the AFRICOM LNO joined the USAID/WA Regional Peace and Governance Office deputy director to conduct a baseline assessment in Chad for USAID's P4P program and other similar programs.
- *Aggregating CVE reporting:* The AFRICOM LNO aggregated DOD reporting on dynamics in the region, and USAID personnel did the same with reports from pro-

gram staff in West African countries. The CVE unit met once a week to discuss and synthesize an updated situational understanding before sending a report to USAID and AFRICOM teams throughout the region. The CVE unit had an internal-to-USAID online portal (accessible to AFRICOM through the LNO's USAID account) to which CVE analysts in Accra posted reports and other materials of interest for CVE practitioners in the region.

- *Coordinating regional CVE messaging:* After recognizing the need for enhanced program coordination, the CVE unit established a regularly occurring regional call that included the AFRICOM LNO, USAID/WA, and USAID/OTI teams, aimed at better coordinating regional media work.

- *Conducting cross-institutional trainings:* The USAID/OTI regional CVE adviser delivered trainings to AFRICOM teams about USAID/OTI's approach and activities working to defeat BH. He typically did this a few months before the teams deployed to their locations so they were familiar with USAID's work before they hit the ground.

- *Liaising with US Embassy Abuja:* Because USAID/WA was not responsible for supporting assistance in Nigeria, coordinating with teams in Nigeria was not an obligatory function of the CVE unit. However, the unit did so as a matter of good practice because Nigerian actors and US Embassy Abuja were integral players to a successful US government response to crisis in the LCR.

In addition to strengthening US CVE programming and coordination to defeat BH in the LCR, the CVE unit and its internal coordination structures have attracted worldwide attention. For example, AFRICOM field teams in Somalia and Chad have consulted Accra's CVE unit on violent extremism issues. And AFRICOM has requested CVE unit participation in regional MNJTF CVE training sessions to share information on USAID and CVE civilian programming.

**Lesson from the USAID West Africa Regional CVE Unit**

- **Use field-based regional interagency coordination mechanisms to leverage more from US bilateral 3D engagements.** Not only has the CVE unit enabled collaboration among USAID programs in different LCR countries and between AFRICOM and USAID in a single country, but it has also enabled interagency and intercountry coordination throughout a region (LCR and broader West Africa). The CVE unit has helped generate more coherent regional approaches than a series of bilateral engagements could have achieved on their own.

*Senior Coordinator on Boko Haram*

**Relevance to Goals:** Just as the LCR countries were getting serious about the MNJTF, and before Nigeria elected President Buhari, State transitioned from running the country-focused NPOG to relying on an interagency coordination group focused on countering BH in the LCR. Today, the senior coordinator on Boko Haram (the "coordinator") chairs this group, organizing US agencies, bureaus, and offices around the goal of defeating BH, mitigating its impact, and preventing BH or similar groups from (re)emerging in the future. The coordina-

tor ensures that the US government's efforts to counter BH are strategically aligned across State/AF offices, the broader State Department, the interagency in Washington, D.C., and the broader global US bureaucracy, including AFRICOM, the US mission to the African Union, US embassies, USAID missions, and other US government elements working through the LCR. The coordinator also ensures that US efforts are aligned with those of international partners, such as France and the United Kingdom (together with Washington, D.C., known as the "P3").

**How It Worked:** As political will for a collaborative approach to countering BH gathered momentum among MNJTF country governments in late 2014 and early 2015, State/AF dismantled the NPOG. In the NPOG's place, State established a regionally focused interagency coordination structure headed by a US ambassador, Dan Mozena. Ambassador Mozena worked to ensure clarity of vision and ground rules from the beginning. He wrote his own position description and shared it with leadership in State/AF's West Africa office and the country desks supporting LCR country portfolios, accepting the position only when he was certain that doing so would be helpful and not create turf wars.

The coordinator's office includes a full-time assistant, who helped the ambassdor organize a vast array of stakeholders across the US government to conclude the preparation of the US government's holistic counter-BH strategy before it was approved by the Deputies Committee at the National Security Council. Although the strategy is classified and therefore not referenced in this report, versions have been shared within the US government and with select international partners.

The coordinator and his assistant lead the interagency's efforts to counter BH in four ways:

- The coordinator hosts a **weekly secure video teleconference** (SVTC) for US government personnel who work on and in the LCR. Most participants are from headquarters at State, USAID, OSD, AFRICOM, and the joint chiefs of staff, but personnel at US embassies frequently participate as well. An agenda is collaboratively generated by participants before each SVTC, and notes are distributed afterward. The weekly SVTCs help participants know more about what their colleagues are working on and struggling with, as well as about congressional and White House perceptions of the evolving LCR situation. Alhough the number and varying levels of participants' seniority often prevent deep-dive discussions on specific topics during SVTCs, the weekly exchange of information spurs constructive conversations and coordination between US government organizations that do not otherwise regularly interact with one another.

- The coordinator **participates in P3 dialogues with UK and French counterparts in counter-BH every four to six weeks**. The discussions typically include representatives from the three participant governments' 3D institutions; the purpose is to ensure consistency in the P3 approach to supporting regional coordination and cooperation to defeat BH. The discussions also help the US government ensure that its assistance and advice to LCR partners does not conflict with other donors' assistance and advice and that its assistance is not redundant.

- The coordinator established a **Washington, D.C.-based interagency working-level group called the DDR and Defection Action Group** to support US missions that aim to help governments of LCR countries promote defections and manage DDR challenges.

- The coordinator and his assistant act as a **clearinghouse for official documents pertaining to countering BH**, including strategy papers, memos, and any other documents that should be consistent with the counter-BH strategy and messaging. This function has reduced the burden on State's LCR country desk officers and West Africa office leadership by moving papers and aligning activities that would otherwise fall on their shoulders and detract from other priorities across the interagency.

The creation of the coordinator position to serve rather than direct the myriad parts of US government working to counter BH has improved the US government's ability to align its efforts at both senior and working levels.

### Lessons from the Senior Coordinator on Boko Haram

- **Create processes for broad interagency communication and information sharing to set the stage for coordination and collaboration on a common strategy.** A mechanism such as the coordinator's weekly SVTC enables a broad assortment of US government offices and personnel—many of whom might otherwise never interact with other participants—to follow up with colleagues to share information or coordinate.

- **Supplement regular updates with intermmittent deep dives on select issues.** Broad interagency meetings can support coordination through focused, in-depth discussions of specific LCR-related topics or objectives that multiple US government organizations support.

- **Invest the time needed to help a regional collaborative approach take hold.** As early as 2013, US government leadership began considering a regional approach to complement its pressure on Nigeria to mitigate the LCR crisis, but movement toward that goal evolved slowly. A multitude of US government stakeholders across agencies and country portfolios had to commit to spending precious time, effort, and resources to collaborate and to figure out productive ways of doing so. The innovative vehicles for regional coordination and collaboration that various 3D organizations in Washington, D.C., and the field have initiated for the LCR may be laying the groundwork for further progress on developing much-needed regional approaches to longstanding problems.

*Leveraging Resource Planning Processes for Regional 3D Coordination*

**Relevance to Goals:** The need to make decisions about how the US government would use globally, regionally, bilaterally, or thematically assigned resources sometimes served as a forcing function for 3D (or 2D) coordination to maximize the holistic effectiveness of assistance. The 3Ds continue to leverage these opportunities to counter BH in the LCR.

**How It Worked:** Two accounts used in the LCR encouraged collaboration.

*Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF)***:** In May 2014, President Obama announced a $5 billion fund to support the efforts of both DOD and State to build a network of local security partners against terrorism in the Middle East and Africa. The 3Ds worked together to identify ways to use these resources in a complementary manner for FY 2015, 2016, and 2017. DOD received funds that enabled it to help LCR partners, including the MNJTF, "provide an environment where local security forces can degrade and dismantle VEOs" and work interop-

erably and collaboratively with US forces.[97] State led (with USAID participation) on security sector governance improvements (through the Security Governance Initiative) and training law enforcement for border security and counterterrorism operations.

State's Counterterrorism (State/CT) Bureau coordinated with OSD to plan how to use these funds. Following President Obama's 2014 announcement of the fund, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for African Affairs held a series of CTPF roundtables, which included congressional staff, to help executive officials understand lawmakers' thoughts on how the 3Ds should use these funds. Staff indicated that they were concerned that DOD and State were planning to spend too much on equipping LCR security institutions and not enough on building institutions to improve how LCR countries thought about their priorities, strategy, and use of resources—including equipment. Leveraging an opportunity to exchange ideas, as well as other meetings that served as forcing functions for the 3Ds (such as the AFRICOM-initiated 3D Africa Strategic Dialogue) helped the 3Ds build a holistic approach to addressing a regional problem.[98]

*Global Security Cooperation Fund (GSCF):* The GSCF was authorized under the FY 2012 NDAA, section 1207, to "improve the planning and execution of shared State and DOD security assistance challenges in partner countries" by requiring that the two departments jointly plan and fund security sector activities.[99] Although GSCF-funded activities in the LCR were just getting underway in 2016, State and DOD began planning in late 2014 to use these resources to support border security strategy development with LCR governments.

> [GSCF resources] specifically assist the governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria to develop institutional and tactical capabilities to enhance their joint efforts to address security on their shared borders, and to lay the groundwork for increased cross-border cooperation to counter Boko Haram.[100]

Because the GSCF was intended to pilot State and DOD collaborative planning to work toward a common objective, Congress requested a lot of information before consenting to fund the project. Coming to agreement on this initiative involved collaboration among the US chiefs of mission in all four LCR countries, the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, OSD, and State/AF, as well as State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. The GSCF forced these senior leaders to get together to discuss priorities for the region.

**Lesson from Leveraging Resource Planning Processes for Regional 3D Coordination**

- **Use requirements to develop and justify budgets to deepen collaboration and build relationships among 3D institutions and Congress to work toward a set of broader regional objectives.** OSD proactively convened 3D leaders and congressional staff to exchange perspectives on how US 3D institutions should use CTPF funds, expediting the process of assigning funds and building trust across branches of the US government while demonstrating to Congress the utility of making these flexible funds available.

## Crosscutting Lessons in 3D Engagement: Reflections and Conclusions

In looking at US 3D efforts in Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region, and in examining where the United States was able to make some progress toward strategic priorities, a few key ingredients for success arose repeatedly, though they manifested themselves differently:

1. Workforce preparation
2. Shared priorities resulting from joint planning and coordination during crises
3. Purpose-fit authorities and funding
4. Timely adaptation of structures and processes
5. Regional engagement notwithstanding bilateral structures

This section includes an explanation of how the lessons from the LCR support these cross-cutting themes, adding some color to why they matter and how they might be operationalized.

**Workforce Preparation:** Give the workforce 3D experience to groom them to succeed in crisis environments.

The US response to the LCR's complex crisis benefitted from the contributions of 3D leaders who were steeped in experience working with interagency personnel in complex environments. Former SOCAF Commander Major General James Linder and former USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa Earl Gast had both worked extensively in civilian-military contexts in Afghanistan, where they were, respectively, USAID mission director and deputy commander for SOF, NATO Training Mission. Gast had also worked with interagency partners on crises in Colombia, Iraq, and Kosovo. USAID/Nigeria Mission Director Mike Harvey, who oversaw embassy-wide coordination of the US response to crisis in northeastern Nigeria from 2013 to 2016, had been mission director in West Bank and Gaza, as well as Serbia, and served as deputy mission director in Iraq and Jordan, where the 3Ds worked closely together. These individuals initiated new ways for the 3Ds to leverage one another's strengths in the LCR; for example, Gast and Linder created the AFRICOM (specifically, SOCAF) liaison position at USAID/WA's CVE unit in Accra. In Nigeria, Mike Harvey leaped into action to coordinate interagency personnel at Embassy Abuja around the crisis in northeastern Nigeria.

**Shared Priorities Resulting from Joint Planning and Coordination During Crises:** Align planning and coordination to develop a shared framework of top-line priorities.

Addressing a complex crisis that directly affected four countries and threatened to collide with a VEO-driven security crisis to the north (AQIM) required the 3Ds to coordinate extensively both within and across LCR countries. The NPOG kicked off a bilateral planning effort in 2014 to anticipate and prevent triggers for atrocities and instability in Nigeria, while 3D working groups evolved at Embassies Niamey and Abuja to align civilian and military efforts within these countries. Strategy sessions facilitated by the CVE unit out of USAID/WA brought together State and AFRICOM field personnel in efforts to sync the 3Ds' CVE activities. The CVE unit also helped collect and disseminate weekly reports to embassies across West Africa about how the situation in the LCR was evolving and what activities were under way to address it. Finally, the senior coordinator on BH brought together myriad members of the US government's 3D institutions—who otherwise might not have communicated with one another—to better coordinate their activities in support of counter-BH objectives.

**Purpose-Fit Authorities and Funding:** Use existing authorities and funding creatively and seek exceptions, new authorities, or new funding to enable leaders to confront crises in the face of evolving circumstances.

The 3Ds have used funding authorities in creative ways to help address the crisis in the LCR. For example, USAID consulted Congress for authorization to take the unprecedented step of assisting a country's military—Nigeria's—to develop a framework for DDR of former BH members. The implementation of this activity will require consultation with State colleagues, who will vet the involved individuals and units to ensure that they are not guilty of human rights violations. It will set the stage for other donors and US organizations to assist with implementation of a DDR plan—which, if successful, will help prevent former BH members from easily reigniting conflict in the future.

**Timely Adaptation of Structures and Processes:** Adjust foreign policy machinery in crisis.

The US government created new coordination and planning structures to adapt to the evolving crisis in the LCR. The structures brought together personnel and capabilities from across the 3Ds to work toward common objectives. The NPOG initially brought together 3D expertise in Washington, D.C., to plan for the prevention of and response to events and trends that could cause the situation in Nigeria to deteriorate. Roughly concurrent to this, USAID/WA started up its CVE unit, which included an on-site AFRICOM liaison. The CVE unit occasionally consulted with State's Sahel regional counterterrorism officer in Algiers to develop a common picture of VEO threats in West Africa and to support complementarity among USAID, AFRICOM, and State counterterrorism and CVE activities. The CVE unit today participates in a broad weekly discussion hosted by the senior coordinator on BH at State's Bureau for African Affairs in Washington, D.C. The coordinator communicates the US government's LCR policy priorities to a broad spectrum of US and foreign stakeholders. The weekly forum creates opportunities to exchange information and identify ways to coordinate.

**Regional Engagement Notwithstanding Bilateral Structures:** Harness bilateral structures and tools to address transnational challenges.

The US government recognized by late 2013 that stemming the BH crisis would require the cooperation of Nigeria's neighbors. In 2014, the senior leadership of US 3D institutions began finding ways to knit together counterterrorism, CVE, development, and humanitarian assistance approaches across LCR countries. In such a situation, it would not have been unusual for the embassy-based teams to be out of touch; the State Department's standard operating procedures prioritize embassy engagement with Washington, D.C., not between embassies. DOD's combatant commands and forward structures are somewhat better at enabling communication and collaboration among forward operating units, but even SOF elements working in different parts of a region sometimes develop only ad hoc habits of coordination. However, adaptive structures and processes helped the 3Ds achieve more together than they could have alone. The creation of the CVE unit in Accra and the senior coordinator on BH position in Washington, D.C., and the use of CTPF planning processes to engage the 3Ds and Congress in discussions about how funds should be used all helped. The 3Ds' complementary activities in LCR countries have sought to ensure that BH members pushed out of communities in one country don't simply move on to roost in neighboring countries and that the hard work of addressing the root causes of the emergence of VEOs such as BH can be the focus of longer-term strategic efforts.

# Annex: Active US Programs for the LCB Response (USAID)
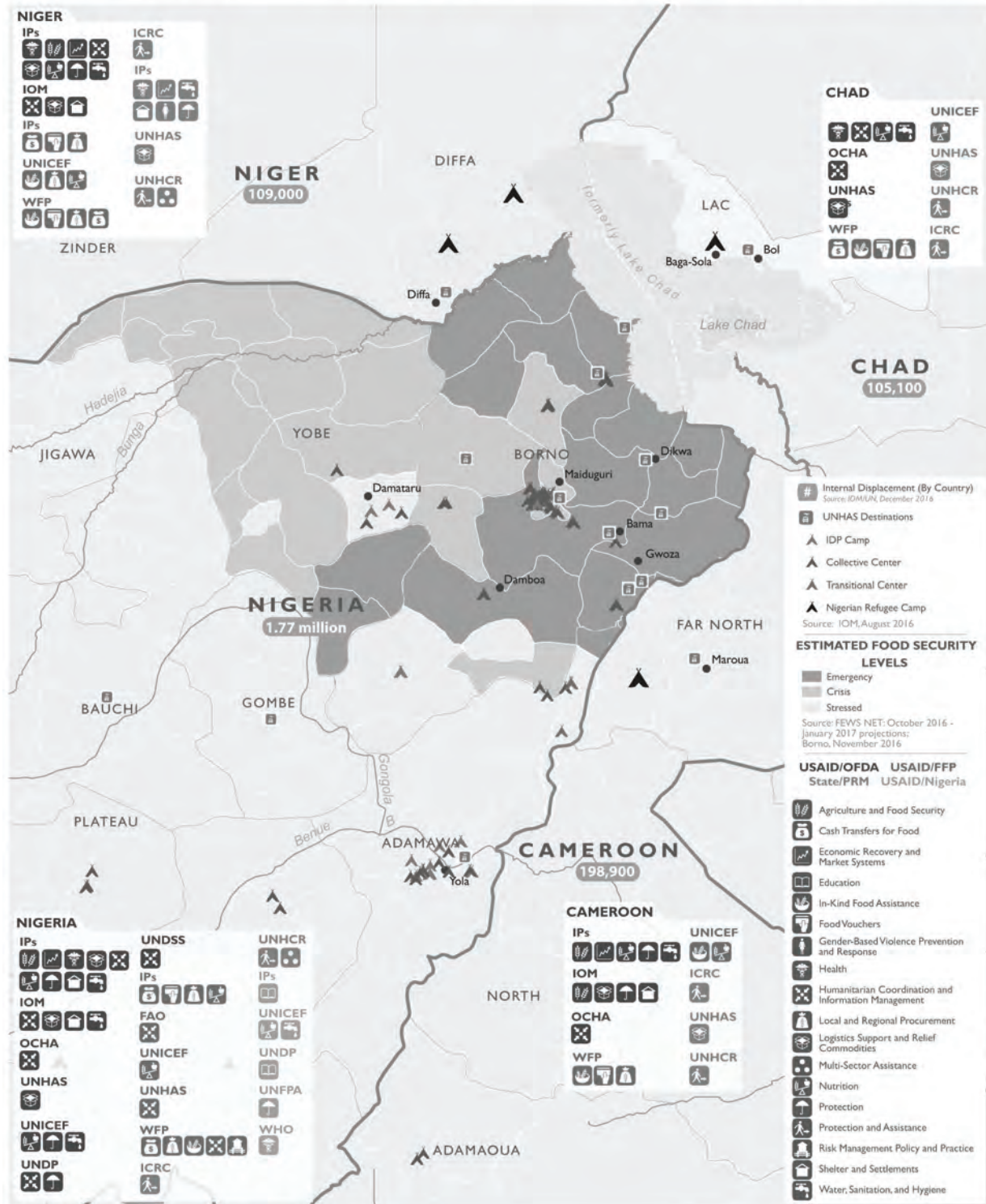
## Notes

1. A broader, geological outlook considers the LCB an endorheic basin (a closed draining basin that retains water and allows no outflow to other bodies of water, but converges into lakes or swamps that equilibrate through evaporation) to include parts of Algeria, Libya, and Central African Republic, reflecting the once vast reaches of the lake's perimeter and the area surrounding it. For an overview of the greater LCB, including the rivers that feed the lake, see "Irrigation Potential in Africa: A Basin Approach," Food and Agriculture Organization, www.fao.org/docrep/W4347E/w4347e0j.htm.

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11. CIA Factbook: Nigeria, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html; Nigeria is the biggest oil producer in Africa, but the sector is rife with corruption and illicit deals to export stolen quantities of crude (Nigeria does not refine its own oil); Former US Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell is noted to have written in his book *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*, "The central purpose of the Nigerian state is to divide up the country's oil wealth among elites." Mohammed Aly Sergie and Toni Johnson, "Boko Haram," Council on Foreign Relations, March 15, 2015, http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/boko-haram/p25739.

12. Roughly 61 percent of Nigerians live on less than $1 a day, and whereas 72 percent of people in the north live in poverty, the same is true of only 27 percent of Nigerians in the south. Sergie and Johnson, "Boko Haram."

13. "Nigeria: Events of 2015," World Report 2016, Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/nigeria.

14. "Who Are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist Group?," BBC News, November 24, 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501. The group's official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad."

15. Sergie and Johnson, "Boko Haram," provides an overview of the evolution of BH in the LCB.

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17. "Lake Chad Basin: Complex Emergency Fact Sheet No. 3, Fiscal Year 2017," USAID, November 10, 2016, www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/lake_chad_ce_fs03_11-10-2016.pdf. Some estimates suggest that at the height of its campaign, BH may have controlled more than 50 percent of Nigeria's Borno State, as well as parts of other states near the border with Cameroon. Lauren Ploch Blanchard, "Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions," Congressional Research Service, March 29, 2016, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43558.pdf.

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26. The strategy entails diverting water from the Congo River into a river that can feed Lake Chad.

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29. Michael W. Baca and Lisa Inks, "Nigeria's Window of Opportunity," *Foreign Affairs*, December 5, 2016, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/nigeria/2016-12-05/nigeria-s-window-opportunity.

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31. Alexander Smith, "ISIS Owns Headlines, But Nigeria's Boko Haram Kills More Than Ever," NBC News, January 1, 2016, www.nbcnews.com/storyline/2015-year-in-review/isis-owns-headlines-nigeria-s-boko-haram-kills-more-ever-n480986.

32. Ibid.

33. Hélène Caux, "Freed from Boko Haram, Nigerians Still Need Help," UNHCR, October 7, 2016, www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/10/57f779bc4/freed-boko-haram-nigerians-still-need-help.html.

34. "South Africa Regains Africa's 'Biggest Economy' Title from Nigeria," BBC News, August 11, 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37045276.

35. "The Central Sahel: A Perfect Sandstorm."

36. Maps produced by Michael Hopfensperger in "Investigating Cross-Border Weapon Transfers in the Sahel," Conflict Armament Research, November 2016, www.conflictarm.com/publications/.

37. Seumas Milne, "Coups and Terror Are the Fruit of Nato's War in Libya," *Guardian*, May 22, 2014, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/22/coups-terror-nato-war-in-libya-west-intervention-boko-haram-nigeria; see also Freedom C. Onuoha, "Porous Borders and Boko Haram's Arms Smuggling Operations in Nigeria," Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, September 8, 2013, http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2013/09/201398104245877469.html. Evidence included the sophistication of the weaponry, as well as information gleaned from intercepting BH fighters moving from and through areas where AQIM is known to arm and train operatives.

38. Indicated by numerous press releases, media reports, and reports produced for the US Congress.

39. Patrick Meehan, "Boko Haram: An Overlooked Threat to US Security," Heritage Foundation, July 24, 2012, www.heritage.org/terrorism/report/boko-haram-overlooked-threat-us-security. This report cites, for example, intelligence community assessments that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and Iran's terrorist proxies would not target the United States. These assessments were undermined by AQAP's 2009 "Christmas Day bomber," TTP's attempted car bombing in Times Square, and revelations of Iranian plans to attack Washington, D.C.

40. For example (according to an interview with a US official), it was questionable whether Niger's security apparatus could have stopped BH from steamrolling past Diffa and into other towns if BH had a mind to do so.

41. US Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, www.state.gov/p/af/.

42. "Explosion Blamed on Nigeria's Boko Haram Kills 32, Wounds, 80," CBS News, November 17, 2015, www.cbsnews.com/news/explosion-blamed-on-nigerias-boko-haram-kills-32-wounds-80/.

43. Uhrmacher and Sheridan, "The Brutal Toll."

44. This happened in Amchide and Fotokol. "Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram," International Crisis Group, November 16, 2016, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-confronting-boko-haram.

45. Glenn Kessler, "Boko Haram: Inside the State Department Debate Over the 'Terrorist' Label," *Washington Post*, May 19, 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2014/05/19/boko-haram-inside-the-state-department-debate-over-the-terrorist-label/?utm_term=.987f07cbb010. The designation makes it illegal for US entities to do business with the designated group, cuts the organization off from the US financial system, and is intended to stigmatize and isolate the organization. Some US agencies may use certain tools to track and disrupt the organization's activities.

46. Congressman Patrick Meehan, "Meehan Amendment Passes House, Urges Terrorist Designation for Boko Haram," press release, May 18, 2012, https://meehan.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/meehan-amendment-passes-house-urges-terrorist-designation-for-boko-haram.

47. Kessler, "Boko Haram."

48. Ibid.

49. Committee on Homeland Security, "Boko Haram: Growing Threat."

50. Critics have speculated that the delay cost US agencies that track and disrupt FTOs precious time to get ahead of and stem the groups' expansion, but there is no evidence that a quicker designation would have taken time and resources away from the myriad other terrorism threats evolving in the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond.

51. The idea for regional security agreement dates to 1994, when LCBC countries (not including Cameroon at the time) decided to establish a force to combat cross-border organized crime and bandits—an initiative that didn't come to fruition until the MNJTF was formally established in 1998. Despite its annual summits and occasional adjustments to mandate, the MNJTF's capabilities remained relatively modest over the years. The mandate of the MNJTF was expanded to include fighting BH at the LCBC Ordinary Summit in April 2012 in N'Djamena, and the task force was formally reactivated in early 2014. Even then the MNJTF struggled—financially, logistically, politically, and otherwise—to get up and running and operate as a truly effective and cohesive organization. For more information, see William Assanvo, Jeannine Ella A. Abatan, and Wendyam Aristide Sawadogo, "West Africa Report: Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force Against Boko Haram," *Institute for Security Studies*, 19 (September 2016), https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war19.pdf.

52. Kevin Sieff, "Boko Haram Kidnapped 276 Girls Two Years Ago. What Happened to Them?," *Washington Post*, April 14, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/04/14/boko-haram-kidnapped-276-girls-two-years-ago-what-happened-to-them/?utm_term=.910040f019a8.

53. Hamish Macdonald, "Nigeria Had 4-Hour Warning on School Raid, Amnesty International Says," ABC News, May 9, 2014, http://abcnews.go.com/International/nigeria-hour-warning-school-raid-amnesty-international/story?id=23652165.

54. Britain, France, China, and Russia also contributed materiel and training. Joshua Hammer, "Hunting Boko Haram," *Intercept*, February 25, 2015, https://theintercept.com/2016/02/25/us-extends-drone-war-deeper-into-africa-with-secretive-base/. See also Shola O'Neil and Augustine Ehikioya, "How Nigeria Rejected Help for Weeks, by US, UK," *Nation*, May 11, 2014, http://thenationonlineng.net/nigeria-rejected-help-weeks-us-uk/.

55. Helene Cooper, "Rifts Between US and Nigeria Impeding Fight Against Boko Haram," *New York Times*, January 24, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/01/25/world/rifts-between-us-and-nigeria-impeding-fight-against-boko-haram.html.

56. White House, daily press briefing, May 14, 2014, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/14/press-briefing-press-secretary-jay-carney-51414.

57. The fund is available to DOD and State and enabled counterterrorism efforts in the Middle East and Africa in FY 2015.

58. Hammer, "Hunting Boko Haram."

59. "Nigeria: Senior Members of Military Must Be Investigated for War Crimes," Amnesty International, June 3, 2015, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/06/nigeria-senior-members-of-military-must-be-investigated-for-war-crimes/. This Amnesty International report states that Nigerian troops had caused the deaths of more than 8,000 civilians since 2009. The report also cites the use of torture; for example, "Former detainees and senior military sources described how detainees were regularly tortured to death—hung on poles over fires, tossed into deep pits or interrogated using electric batons."

60. Cooper, "Rifts."

61. Krista Larson, "Boko Haram Refugees Risk Lives to Cross Lake to Chad Camps," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 5, 2015, www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-boko-haram-refugees-risk-lives-to-cross-lake-to-2015mar05-story.html. Reports of the number of civilians killed vary.

62. Assanvo, Abatan and Sawadogo, "West Africa Report."

63. "Nigeria's Leader Restores 'War Against Indisciplined' Brigades," *Telegraph*, August 17, 2016, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/17/nigerias-leader-restores-war-against-indiscipline-brigades/. The

initiative was controversial because some critics noted that it emboldened some authorities to abuse their powers in the name of advancing "the war."

64. Other senior visits were made for Buhari's inauguration and a "re-engagement visit" soon after Buhari's trip to Washington in July 2015. Monthly phone calls occurred between Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinkin (or another delegated senior official) and senior Nigerian counterparts throughout 2016. Nigeria's chief of defense staff visited AFRICOM Commander Rodriquez in Stuttgart in February 2016.

65. Amnesty International, "Nigeria: Military Cover-Up of Mass Slaughter at Zaria Exposed," press release, April 22, 2016, www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2016/04/nigeria-military-cover-up-of-mass-slaughter-at-zaria-exposed/.

66. Eric Schmitt and Donna Searcey, "US Plans to Put Advisors on Front Lines of Nigeria's War Against Boko Haram," *New York Times*, February 25, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/02/26/world/africa/us-plans-to-help-nigeria-in-war-on-boko-haram-terrorists.html.

67. Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "Obama's 'Boots on the Ground': US Special Forces Are Sent to Tackle Global Threats," *New York Times*, December 27, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/12/28/world/middleeast/more-and-more-special-forces-become-obamas-military-answer.html.

68. US Embassy Chad, "First US Shipment of Light Armored Vehicles Arrives in N'Djamena for Combatting Boko Haram," press release, December 8, 2016, https://td.usembassy.gov/first-u-s-shipment-light-armored-vehicles-arrives-ndjamena-chadian-forces-combatting-boko-haram/; Dan De Luce and Siobhán O'Grady, "US to Boost Military Aid to Nigeria for Boko Haram Fight," *Foreign Policy*, July 16, 2015, http://foreign policy.com/2015/07/16/u-s-to-boost-military-aid-to-nigeria-for-boko-haram-fight/.

69. Hammer, "Hunting Boko Haram."

70. Blanchard, "Nigeria's Boko Haram."

71. Kevin Sieff, "'A Famine Unlike Any We Have Ever Seen'," *Washington Post*, October 13, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2016/10/13/they-survived-boko-haram-now-millions-in-nigeria-face-a-new-threat-starvation/?utm_term=.b7f590941ace.

72. Ibid.

73. Oxfam International, "Hunger Stalks NE Nigeria as Governments and Donors to Lake Chad Basin Crisis Meet," press release, September 23, 2016, www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2016-09-23/hunger-stalks-ne-nigeria-governments-and-donors-lake-chad-basin.

74. Sieff, "Famine."

75. Ibid. Two million people were inaccessible, probably because of BH fighters who still lived in and patrolled villages.

76. "Nigeria: Education Crisis Response Program," Creative Associates International, www.creativeassociates international.com/projects/nigeria-education-crisis-response-program/.

77. As of December 2016. This figure may have increased after this date. "United States Announces $92 Million in Additional Humanitarian Assistance for Nigeria," USAID, press release, December 12, 2016, www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/dec-12-2016-united-states-announces-92-million-additional-humanitarian.

78. Rolling research, in this case, entails the iterative implementation of surveys among affected populations to determine changes in perceptions.

79. "Our Work: Programs in Nigeria and Burkina Faso," USAID, www.usaid.gov/node/46296/our-work.

80. The SGI consists of six engagements with countries on the African continent in which US government and the host government partner assess challenges and opportunities in security sector governance and jointly agree on two to three sectors in which to pursue a bilateral whole-of-government, multiyear diplomatic and programmatic effort to improve security governance. This is called a Joint Country Action Plan. The countries jointly monitor progress against agreed-on metrics to track both US government and partner country follow-through on commitments. SGI's standard operating procedures are responsive to PPD 23 on Security Sector Assistance, the Interagency Security Sector Assessment Framework, and SGI framework documents.

An initial study concerning Niger's security governance challenges and opportunities, followed by in-country consultations, analysis, and discussion with a government of Niger interministerial group, led to recommendations that the US-Niger partnership initially focus on improving interministerial national security planning, supply chain and career management systems, and internal and external communications. The US government and the government of Niger signed their Joint Country Action Plan on October 9, 2015, with plans to immediately begin developing activities to support the focus areas. At US Embassy Niamey, the interagency SGI Working Group oversees all country initiatives.

For Niger, the SGI Country Analytical Team consisted of Ambassador Larry Wohlers, a political-military affairs officer, a Department of Justice OPDAT, a resident legal advisor, a Department of Homeland Security customs and border patrol officer, a USAID regional peace and governance officer, a State/CT regional field coordinator, a State/INL and trans-Sahara counterterrorism partnership program manager, and an analyst from the Institute for Defense Analysis. The lead SGI counterpart for Niger was a two-star general from the president's staff. With respect to Niger, the US government conducted a desk study in

late 2014, and the SGI country assessment team traveled to Niger for consultations from January 25 to February 3, 2015, during a time of heightened BH threats to Niger. The team spoke to the president, the prime minster, numerous other high-level officials, and prominent civil society members, and presented its analysis to an interministerial group.

81. Heather Murdock, "Nigeria Seeks to Become Food Exporter," Voice of America, April 29, 2012, www .voanews.com/a/nigeria-seeks-to-become-food-exporter-149510825/370441.html.

82. "Moderate Voices: Amplifying Local Voices of Peace and Tolerance to Counter Violent Extremism in West Africa," USAID, www.usaid.gov/west-africa-regional/fact-sheets/moderate-voices.

83. "Where We Work: Nigeria," USAID, www.usaid.gov/political-transition-initiatives/where-we-work /nigeria.

84. "Where We Work: Cameroon," USAID, www.usaid.gov/political-transition-initiatives/northern-cameroon.

85. "Cameroon Peace Project," USAID, www.usaid.gov/west-africa-regional/fact-sheets/cameroon-peace-promotion-project.

86. "World Bank Support Towards Implementing a Programmatic Approach to Recovery and Peace Building," World Bank, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/684091490646511059/pdf/113819-rev-WBG-SURR-North-East-Nigeria-2pgr-FINAL-Published.pdf.

87. Emma Batha, "Lake Chad Most Neglected Crisis in 2016 Despite Hunger on 'Epic Scale,'" Reuters, December 21, 2016, www.reuters.com/article/us-aid-poll-crises-idUSKBN14B00G.

88. PSD-10 was an August 2011 directive by the president of the United States declaring the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide to be a "core national security interest and core moral responsibility" of the United States. PSD-10 ordered the creation of an Atrocities Prevention Board (APB). It also directed the national security advisor to lead a comprehensive review to assess the US government's anti-atrocity capabilities and recommend reforms that would fill identified gaps in these capabilities. The APB is made up of representatives from several agencies, including the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security; the Joint Staff; USAID; the US Mission to the United Nations; the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; the Central Intelligence Agency; and the Office of the Vice President—all of whom are at the assistant secretary level or higher. The APB is chaired by the National Security Staff's senior director for multilateral affairs and human rights. For more information, see "The Atrocities Prevention Board Frequently Asked Questions," United to End Genocide, http://endgenocide.org/learn/preventing-future-genocides/the-atrocities-prevention-board/.

89. Although technical office personnel assembled strategies that were mostly well received by their regional office colleagues, some issues about which technical experts in State/J and regional experts in State/AF could not reach consensus, posing serious challenges to the NPOG's effectiveness. One US government official knowledgeable about NPOG observed that this lack of agreement illustrates that State still has a long way to go with respect to encouraging the surfacing of disagreements for high-level arbitration, especially in times of crisis, when delaying can have serious repercussions.

90. State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act 2016 (Div. K. P.L. 114-113), section 7034(b)(3):

    Disarmament, Demobilization And Reintegration: Notwithstanding any other provision of law, regulation or Executive order, funds appropriated under titles III and IV of this Act and prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs under the headings "Economic Support Fund", "Peacekeeping Operations", "International Disaster Assistance", "Complex Crises Fund", and "Transition Initiatives" may be made available to support programs to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate into civilian society former members of foreign terrorist organizations: *Provided*, That the Secretary of State shall consult with the Committees on Appropriations prior to the obligation of funds pursuant to this subsection: *Provided further*, That for the purposes of this subsection the term "foreign terrorist organization" means an organization designated as a terrorist organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

    *Fiscal Year 2016 Appendix: Budget of the US Government,* Office of Management and Budget, budget.gov, p. 889.

91. Although it is unclear what types of provisions Nigeria's DDR framework will include, DDR frameworks in other countries have aimed to define, for example, who will be allowed to participate directly in DDR activities, which institutions and organizations will support different aspects of DDR processes, what those processes will be, the geographic areas where they will focus, the resources necessary, an intended timeline, and linkages with efforts to address other cross-cutting needs like post-conflict stabilization, administration of justice and security sector reform, and a range of special assistance needs.

92. State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, section 7034(b)(3).

93. Military counterparts were vetted by State for human rights abuses that would disqualify them for foreign assistance, per the Leahy Law.

94. "New US drone site to extend reach in Africa," *Stars and Stripes*, September 30, 2016, www.stripes.com /news/new-us-drone-site-to-extend-reach-in-africa-1.431754#.WRoWRFLMxqx

95. "Defense Bill Breakdown: Key Military Aid Issues in the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act," *Security Assistance Monitor*, September 26, 2016, http://securityassistance.org/fact_sheet/defense-bill-breakdown-key-military-aid-issues-fy-2017-national-defense-authorization-act.

96. "Inspection of Embassy Abuja and Consulate General Lagos, Nigeria," US Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors Office of Inspector General, February 2013, https://oig.state.gov/system/files/207009.pdf.

97. "Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund," Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), February 2016, p. 4, http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_CTPF_J-Book.pdf.

98. The ASD occurs on an annual basis and is a classified forum, so its proceedings were not included in the research for this project, but it is an important venue for senior 3D leaders to gather and speak candidly about strategic approaches to various problem sets on the African continent. USAID is invited as a DOD partner, independent of the State Department. The annual Africa Strategic Integration Conference at AFRICOM in 2017 will highlight a comparative discussion about what is being done to address the al Shabaab and BH problem sets; it will be attended by deputy mission directors, the USAID mission director, and defense attaches from countries throughout Africa—the event turns away people every year.

99. "Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF)," US Department of State, www.state.gov/t/pm/gpi/gscf/index.htm.

100. "United States Support to Counter Boko Haram," US Department of State, February 11, 2016, https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/02/252399.htm.

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