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<center>Nigerian Government and Boko Haram</center>
Background
  Since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Nigeria has experienced back-to-back dictatorships and civil unrest. The instability continued even after the government became a democracy. Nigeria continued to experience a weakening infrastructure, unstable government, poverty and social inequality. This created an environment extremely vulnerable to radical groups. Since 2002, the increasingly militant and radical Islamic group Boko Haram has expanded and gathered support in Nigeria ("Africa: Nigeria" 1). During this time, the safety and rights of Nigerian civilians has deteriorated. With its support and presence in Northern Nigeria continuing to rise, Boko Haram has taken control of most of North Nigeria, furthering the country's divide. Boko Haram has launched campaigns of mass-kidnappings, killings and bombings targeting civilians throughout the country. The Nigerian government has taken many steps to counteract these attacks including targeting Boko Haram leaders and their families which has resulted in escalation of violence on both sides of the conflict.
  The Nigerian government has fought back against actions taken by Boko Haram. They have successfully found and captured many Boko Haram leaders and their families. They even managed to locate and kill Mohammed Yusuf, the creator and leader of Boko Haram. Yusuf was the main figurehead of the organization. When his execution was projected for the whole country to see, many believed this was the beginning of the downfall of the group. Boko Haram did seem to suffer a setback after Yusuf's execution, but the execution was more political symbol than actual impact. It was used by the Nigerian government as proof that they were taking serious and impactful action against the terrorists. However, a new and arguably more enigmatic leader named Abubakar Shekau took Yusuf's place. Shekau unified and strengthened any weakening that may have occurred after Yusuf's death (Chothia 1).
  Due to the corruption of the Nigerian government, its actions against Boko Haram have had less impact than they could. The Nigerian government is notorious for its corruption and incompetence. For example, much of the external aid coming into the country intended for use in fighting terrorism and improving living conditions has fallen into the wrong hands and been used improperly. The government is currently in the process of trying to "clean house" by strengthening its infrastructure, eliminating corruption, protecting natural resources and improving the lives of the civilians of Nigeria. Many Nigerians have been forced to flee to neighboring countries due to the violence and threat of Boko Haram. The government has declared three of the Northern Nigerian areas as in a state of emergency where it has completely lost control and where targeted attacks on civilians have forced people to run for their lives. In 2014, more than 200 girls in the town of Chibok were taken by Boko Haram. They were stolen from their schools and forced to be slaves or wives of the members. Living under Boko Haram's rule means following a strict and oppressive version of Islamic law. This type of "Haram" law is based on an anti-Western sentiment. Its belief system includes excluding women and girls from schools, denouncing the Nigerian government as not truly Muslim and alleging that traditional schools preach Western teachings and ideals (Chothia 1).
  Despite the fact that Boko Haram's power and influence has continued to rise since its establishment in 2002, they have recently released videos which shows a weaker and less passionate leader Abubakar Shekau (Sotubo). Shekau, a member in Boko Haram since its inception and its leader since Mohammed Yusuf was killed, has always been fervent, enthusiastic and fanatical in his video presence. However, in this most recent video, he appears a

changed and lesser man seeming much more reserved and physically weaker. This fact has raised some doubts as to the future of the Boko Haram. In addition, speculation has hinted at a collaboration developing between Boko Haram and ISIS as analysts at the Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium believe that the video shows sign of cooperation between Boko Haram and ISIS (Saul 1). Boko Haram has also recently made strong public statements professing their support for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. This recent show of allegiance has called into question both the strength of Boko Haram now and in the future of Nigeria. Also a Boko Haram splinter group called Ansaru has begun to gain power and support in Nigeria (Smith 1). Ansaru has enjoyed a rising presence in the Northern region of Nigeria where Boko Haram is centrally located. Ansaru's goals are mostly aligned with Boko Haram's and they have carried out similarly violent actions such as kidnappings and targeted killings of civilians. It is unclear how much control Boko Haram has over the new group now and will have in the future. It is also unclear how aligned their views and goals are as Ansaru has expressed more internationally focused aspirations than Boko Haram.

The rising strength of the extremist groups within Nigeria has become a main focus of the Nigerian government's. The violence and oppression of these groups has led to frustration and anger both within the Nigerian government itself and among the people of Nigeria. One difficulties faced by the Nigerian government in its handling of Boko Haram is the lack of intelligence about its power and resources. The organization is so insular that their videos and preaching reveal little of their future plans. Many threats are delayed for years and some are never carried out at all. This lack of information, governmental instability, and rising militant group has created an interesting interaction. Thorough study and research will further the understanding of the strategic interaction between the Nigerian government and Boko Haram. With substantial research whose implications are shown through a detailed model it could provide a deeper understanding of a broader issue. This will help answer the question of how weakened governments can successfully counteract militant insurgent groups rising within the state. This can be applied to similar situations globally.

Strategic Interaction

The strategic interaction between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government is the focus of the research. The model analyzes the Nigerian government's responses to possible actions taken by Boko Haram. It focuses on Boko Haram's actions and the Nigerians government's responses to those actions taken by Boko Haram. The model does not include any possible retaliatory actions by Boko Haram to the Nigerian government responses. Because the Nigerian government has little intelligence on the strength of Boko Haram, the future of Ansaru or the future of its alliances, their responses are based on less than optional information. This creates an interesting and dangerous dynamic in which a lack of information can dramatically change the payoffs for both groups. It also means that Nigeria's responses to Boko Haram's actions have to be carefully calculated in order to stop this extremist group and prevent further growth. The extent of the research will be shown through an extensive game. The two actors in the game are Boko Haram and the Nigerian Government. The game begins with Nature, which has control over determining a weak or strong Boko Haram. The actions available to Boko Haram depend on its strength. The Nigerian government then makes decisions based on the available actions. This extensive game model shows the payoffs and possible outcomes based on actions taken by a strong Boko Haram or a weak Boko Haram.

Possibilities for Boko Haram include having Ansaru's splinter group take control, linking with ISIS, decreasing in size and power, and increasing in size and power. If the splinter group

does take control, then the Nigerian government must choose to either switch attention and actions from Boko Haram onto the splinter group or to continue focus on Boko Haram. If Ansaru's splinter group were to increase in size, it would have both negative and positive effects on the Nigerian government. It would produce another dangerous extremist group to focus on but it would also give them a powerful political ally against Boko Haram. If Boko Haram chooses to ally with ISIS, then the Nigerian government must choose between collaborating with others with similar incentive to fight ISIS or dealing with ISIS unilaterally. Boko Haram would benefit from an alliance with ISIS because they are seeking to grow and this would allow them to move beyond Nigerian borders.

  When Boko Haram is weak then the Nigerian government's least preferred outcome is indifferent between switching focus and facing an ISIS-allied Boko Haram's unilaterally. An alliance would increase the difficulty in defeating Boko Haram. If Boko Haram does lose control of resources and power, then the Nigerian Government would be forced to choose between launching a final military campaign to destroy Boko Haram or focusing on taking out the Boko Haram leadership. If Boko Haram continues to increase in size and power, then the Nigerian government must choose between partnering with neighbors to prevent its spread or increasing the strength of their domestic infrastructure.

  Boko Haram's increasing power through the control of resources and area as well as continued attacks against civilians would be an extreme negative for the Nigerian government. The Nigerian government itself struggles with corruption and lack of development and its options to fight a more powerful Boko Haram are extremely limited. The government would need to choose between fighting for control of resources and focusing on strengthening the internal infrastructure, or partnering with neighbors to control the border and prevent the spread of Boko Haram.

  The payoffs of these available options are based off of Boko Haram and the Nigerian government's preferred outcomes. The preferences also change based on whether Boko Haram is weak or strong as the actions taken would have much different outcomes. Boko Haram would prefer outcomes that result in a shift in focus or unilateral action taken by the Nigerian Government. The most preferred option for Boko Haram would be to ally with other bigger and more powerful organizations in order to strengthen themselves. If Boko Haram is weak then their least preferred outcome is indifferent between the Nigerian government strengthening internal infrastructure in order to gain more control of people, area, and resources and continuing to focus on Boko Haram even if the splinter group rises. If Boko Haram is strong then their least preferred outcome is the Nigerian government focusing on the group even after splinter group power rises. The Nigerian government in both strong and weak Boko Haram would prefer any outcome that results in the complete destruction of Boko Haram and will always prefer action with the help of other states. Multilateral actions or an action through a coalition would strengthen the forces against Boko Haram. The Nigerian government's least preferred action is taking Boko Haram on by themselves.

  It is more difficult to find the equilibrium for this model because of lack of knowledge about Nature's probability and its signaling consequences. After conducting backward induction which lead to Boko Haram at weak and strong choosing to gain more resources. At gain more resources or control of land the Nigerian government chooses between partner with neighboring countries and strengthening internal infrastructure. The next step was to use expected utility theorem for each node of Nigerian government at a Boko Haram decision. This would support the strategy profile of the equilibrium.

The first is the utility of partnering and strengthening versus weak and strong. The Nigerian government will partner when the expected utility of doing so is greater than or equal to -1/2. The expected utility of launch versus weakened was 0 greater than 1 showing that launch will never be the preferred outcome. The expected utility of collaboration versus unilateral actions was any probability less than or equal to 15. The expected utility of switch versus focus showed that when the probability is less than or equal to -5/8 then the Nigerian government would choose to switch attention. The equilibrium strategy profile of the model is Boko Haram at Weak is indifferent between ally and gain more control. The Nigerian government at ally is collaboration and at gain more control is strengthen. Boko Haram at strong would choose to gain more control and the Nigerian government would choose to partner with neighboring states.

Model
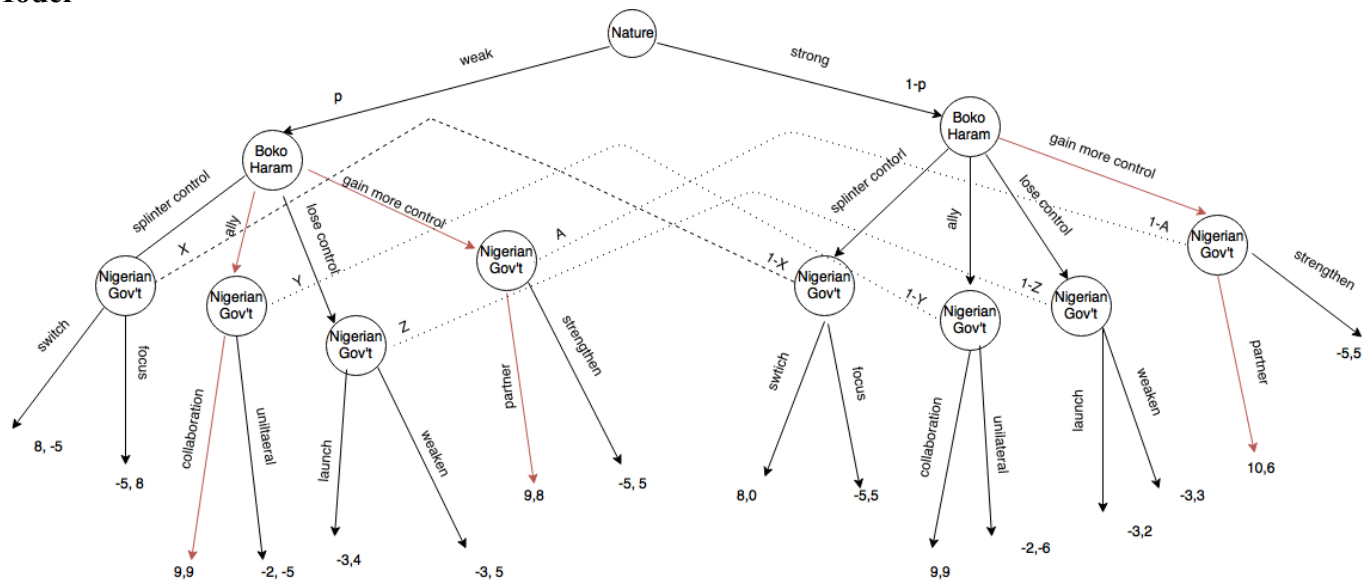
Discussion

This model is an effective way to show the possible outcomes available to both actors and their preferences. While this model could have been organized as signaling model format the many options available to both actors would have made the model more difficult to read and understand. However, there are some limitation to the model choice. Due to the fact that there are many possible actions in the model there are many indifferent preferences between two actions for both strong and weak Boko Haram. Because a weakened and unstable government does have a limited number of options many they are left to choose from outcomes that offer the same benefits and costs. This is a limitation because it makes it more difficult to fully understand the differences in preferences and ultimately the Nigerian government. For example, when Boko Haram is weak the Nigerian government is indifferent between choosing to switching attention after the splinter group, Ansaru, takes control and taking unilateral action after Boko Haram chooses to ally with larger militant groups. Unilateral action is a low preference because Nigeria might not be strong enough to defeat Boko Haram alone but does make it more likely because it is a weak Boko Haram. Switching attention to the splinter group means that Boko Haram is given a chance to recuperate but the chances of defeating the newly created splinter group are higher for the Nigerian government.

The model also shows the implications of this strategic interaction between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government. The research and literature has provided a foundation of understanding to the actions previously taken by both actors and helped to determine the possible

actions, outcomes, and payoffs for each actor. The literature used has provided a full understanding of the interaction between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government including the conflict background, history and any future interaction these two actors may have. The extensive game model is the best way to model the possible decisions for each actor.

This model and research has helped explain the interaction between insurgent groups and governments on a much greater scale. It can provide a template for the outcomes and preferences in many other strategic interactions similar to that of Boko Haram and the Nigerian government. There are many comparable situations globally in which a weakened government must decide between their limited choices in dealing with radicalized insurgent groups. This includes situations such as Iraq and Syria when dealing with ISIS, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestinian territory. All of these groups threaten the stability and security of a state that is struggling to retain control of the government. They are also intrastate conflicts that are top global security threats in the 21st Century. Along with the growing threat of terrorism and an uprising of radical groups comes a struggling government fighting to maintain control.

These also create similar environments for the civilians of these states. Many Nigerians have been forced to flee the state to neighboring countries or are forced to live in Northern Nigerian territories controlled by these groups and suffer under their oppressive rules and laws. Many regions within Nigeria have been officially declared in states of emergency as the government has lost complete control (Agbiboa 1).

Overall, it is clear that states such as Nigeria that have issues with government corruption, instability, and an increasing socio-economic divide do not have the strength to fight these groups on their own. Weakened governments are unable to prevent the undermining of the current regime and simultaneously stop the spread of these groups without assistance. They also are unable to maintain control of natural resources, provide liberation for civilians, and take back control of territory. This only further supports the idea that it is necessary for neighboring nations to strengthen borders, for international organizations to provide aid and relief to civilians, and for other actors to offer military support. It is clear through the model and research that governments like Nigeria would most benefit from and prefer multilateral action and support through allies and coalition.

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President Obama's Strategy in Syria and Iraq

President Barack Obama's stated goal is to degrade and destroy not simply contain ISIS. Therefore, the solution cannot be solely a military solution. In fact, the military option will be a tool for achieving a much bigger political objective. President Obama's National Security Advisor, before making any recommendations, should ask themselves this question: What political structure in Iraq and Syria will result in nation states that are capable of eliminating ISIS permanently? The answer to this question will create the ideal vision for these nations after ISIS is eliminated. This vision includes foreseeing the need to re-establish the map with a clear delineation between the two countries. Within each state, the United States should envision a functioning federal government within a federal system that does two things: provides representation and a voice for all major factions and also allows those factions a significant degree of self-rule. Thus the vision for each is a country divided into semi-autonomous governing units united by a common representative federal government. While the United States has a strong and proud history of spreading democracy worldwide democracies are hard to build and even harder to maintain. In countries that are vulnerable to unrest and suffer from weak infrastructure such as Iraq and Syria maintaining a stable democracy would be extremely difficult. This is why establishing a democracy in these countries should not be an immediate priority. This would only increase the possibility of a second rise of extremism and government corruption.

With this vision in place, the next necessary step is outlining the assumptions and potential sub-optimal outcomes that the United States will need to expect and accept in order to achieve our goal. First, both Syria and Iraq contain the discordant populations of Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds (Jentleson 474). This has historically caused rising tensions in both countries and because many people have been displaced over time including large numbers of refugees fleeing ISIS, there will at least some level of ethnic conflict and self-migration as the populations sort themselves. Secondly, there is likely to be loss of life including US and coalition troops as well as local innocent civilians. This is fight that is going to be costly but necessary in order to achieve success and absolute victory. The National Security Advisor would caution the President that if the US are to enter this mission, we should not turn away from it when the going gets rough. Withdrawing or retreating from these regions has only made success more difficult in the long-term. It is imperative to use caution so that we should avoid the temptation to view events on the ground through a prism of any desired narrative. This will likely mean spending political capital to weather the storm in order to achieve our long-term goal. Lastly, it is crucial to urge the President to allow advice from his military commanders to trump that of his political advisors in matters of military command. Military commanders are trained in a way that political advisors are not. The President should be willingly to take any action necessary and should not be held back by possible political blowback. Political advisors should be able to frame the decisions made by the President in a way that is appealing to a public majority no matter the actions taken.

To reach the political vision for Iraq and Syria, it is crucial to layout a multifaceted approach to begin to degrade ISIS. It is also essential to realize that in order to accomplish the desired political solution, the US will need to significantly weaken and limit ISIS. To do so we need to attack them militarily and financially, and to push them out of Iraq into a small number of pre-designated areas such as Raqqa, Syria. Forcing the forces into pre-designated areas will prevent the continued spreading of ISIS and also enclose them in a more accessible zone. Once contained, it is then possible that the US could begin the destroy phase of the mission. Liberating the strongholds would be the final step. This multifaceted approach would include a military and

intelligence surge to kill and capture ISIS leaders as well as a focus on destroying their economic and military infrastructure. For example, at the request of the Syrian government, Russia has bombed many ISIS-controlled oil tankers. Though the number of oil trucks taken out by Russia is unconfirmed by the Pentagon, in late 2015 Russia released video verifying that the strikes were indeed happening (BBC 1).

A lack of financial means has hurt ISIS in the past and is extremely important when dealing with a group that depends on private funding. ISIS is said to have a complex financial organization which is needed to run military operations, govern occupied towns and pay its member ranks. In terms of hitting their chain of command, the US has been successful in taking out many ISIS leaders. In March 2016, the Pentagon announced that a top ISIS commander and financier Abd Al-Rahman Mustafa Al-Qaduli was killed by a US airstrike (Schmidt). Citing these examples, it is vital that the advisor would urge the President to go after the money and command structure with the goal of seriously damaging both their leadership and foundation. This is a tactic that should and can be implemented immediately.

With regard to Iraq, it is important to accept that the US efforts to train the Iraqis Army were not successful. In 2014, when ISIS pushed into Iraq, the Iraqi Army surrendered or retreated in large numbers (Chulov). The United States needs to find a different approach to create an effective ground force to fight ISIS in Iraq. Knowing that President Obama does not want to commit US ground troops to combat in either Iraq or Syria, the best recommendation is that the US works directly with the Sunni and Shiite militias as well as with the formidable Peshmerga Kurds. This will provide strength to and expand the ground forces such that a real impact can be made in pushing ISIS out of Iraq. All three of these groups have a shared interest in the destruction of ISIS and that can only help fuel the fight. In addition, the US cannot allow military aid to be distributed through the Iraqi central government.

The US should utilize resources such as Special Forces and CIA operatives already located in Iraq to deliver military aid directly to the ground fighters. While making inroads in Iraq, ISIS developed loose ties with other extremist groups, criminal gangs and Baathists from the Saddam Hussein era (Breslow). If ISIS is pushed out of Iraq, then these ties would be broken and the various groups would be less likely to form dangerous alliances in the future.

In dealing specifically with Syria the advisor would urge President Obama to consider that the US must accept the role of all parties involved, even those of whom the US is not fond of. It is critical to successfully convince the President that all parties have legitimate interests and must be included in the final political solution. This is a lesson to be learned from Nouri al-Maliki in Iraq. During 2006 to 2014, al-Maliki worked to marginalize the Kurds and the Sunnis from a having a voice in the national government (Boghani). Many believe this gave rise to a Sunni insurgency which in turn enabled the opportunistic Sunni-based ISIS to gain a foothold in the country. Indeed, during 2014, ISIS was able to expand its reach from Syria into western and northern Iraq (Stack). The lesson learned from this unfortunate turn of history is that to achieve the vision of an inclusive federal system representing semi-autonomous groups, no major local player can be excluded. The players in Syria include Assad allies, Alawites, Sunnis, Kurds and Hezbollah. This may be the hardest step to convince the President of and expect that this will be a bitter pill for the President to swallow. Any group that has a shared interest in the destruction of ISIS is potential for support and assistance while strengthening the forces against ISIS. Despite the fact that Assad is guilty of war crimes and Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organization by the US they are key players. Assad has many supporters who are willing to fight against ISIS. He also is a strong ally of the Russians and Iranians who assistance and continue

relationship stability is crucial to United States success. Hezbollah is an organized, politically-savvy group who can provide needed security during the transitional time. (Pejic 1) Unfortunately, it is unmistakable that their exclusion from the process would cause more long-term issues as groups vie for power and control in Syria.

Finally, it is necessary to encourage President Obama to accept that the Iranians and the Russians are key players in the conflict. Because of President Obama previous actions, it is easier to believe that he would be more accepting of this idea than previous presidents. President Obama prefers multilateral actions and strong coalitions. He also prefers not to have American soldiers involved in ground wars. Lastly, it is required that the advisor would urge the President to appoint a special envoy to lead an American delegation to facilitate Syrian peace talks. It is important that this delegation approach the peace talks without preconditions or hidden agendas such as shutting out the Russians, Iranians or Hezbollah. Similarly, the United States should not insist that Assad leave power or attempt to define the rules for Russian or Iranian involvement in the talks. The one agenda we should have is to derail any efforts by Turkey to have veto power over the negotiations. The Turks are at odds with the Kurds and this cannot be allowed to derail peace. The United States only agenda should be to promote our vision to establish inclusive federal systems governing semi-autonomous groups in both Syria and Iraq. ISIS is not a conventional enemy and must be eradicated. Their leaders and ranks will likely never surrender and their minimum demand of a world-wide Islamic caliphate that does not recognize established borders is one that can never be met. This means that their defeat must be total and complete.

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