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EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

US Military Aid: Unlikely to Impact Boko Haram

In September, the United States pledged \$45 million to a Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin to combat Nigeria-based terrorist group Boko Haram. Through a scenarios-based analysis,* we evaluated three possible ways in which Boko Haram will respond to the MJTF over the next year.

Key Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boko Haram's leadership structure remains intact. The MJTF will have an uneven role in fighting Boko Haram in Nigeria. Nigerian President Buhari remains in power.

Key Intelligence Gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's status and well-being. Status of peace negotiations between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government. Type and extent of support the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) provides to Boko Haram.



SCENARIOS	INDICATORS: Boko Haram will...
<p>Status Quo: <i>Increased military assistance has no effect on Boko Haram</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attack civilians and military personnel in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin at the same pace. Exploit the low morale of Nigerian soldiers through bribery and intimidation to abandon military posts and bases. Maintain a relatively consistent level of Nigerian recruits.
<p>Acceleration: <i>Boko Haram gains momentum despite increased military aid.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalate attacks beyond traditional West Africa areas of operation and rebuff the Nigerian government's negotiation attempts. Acquire manpower, training, and other resources from ISIS. Consolidate territorial holdings to establish an "Islamic State" in West Africa.
<p>Strategic Defeat: <i>Boko Haram is overpowered by the multinational force.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffer losses in key northeast Nigerian strongholds. Lose local support as Nigerian government addresses poverty and other local grievances. Experience infighting and desertions of foot soldiers.

Leading "Wildcard" Variables		
Shekau dies.	Nigerian government and Boko Haram reach a ceasefire.	Nigerian government collapses.

*Scenarios analysis identifies multiple ways in which a situation may evolve. It is most useful when a situation is complex or when the outcomes are too uncertain to trust a single prediction.