

BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY AND NIGERIAN POLITICAL RELATIONS (2015–2026)

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Abstract

This study investigated the political and military relationships between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the United States of America within the context of the counter-insurgency campaign against Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) from 2015 to 2026. It evaluated how internal security vulnerabilities within a regional power cross international boundaries to affect bilateral diplomacy with a global hegemon. Theoretically, the study integrated James Rosenau's Linkage Theory and Hegemonic Stability Theory. Methodologically, a descriptive and analytical survey research design was adopted, utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative primary data were gathered via a structured four-point Likert scale questionnaire administered to a sample of 383 respondents across the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria Army War College, and the American Embassy in Nigeria, yielding a 95.75% response rate. Qualitative data were generated through in-depth elite interviews with strategic defense planners and diplomats. The empirical findings indicated that the structural nature of Nigeria–U.S. security ties is characterized by a moderate but consistent partnership, driven by a high level of institutional reliance (88.51%) on advanced U.S. defense public goods. The study isolated high-value arms procurement and USAID-led non-kinetic stabilization funding as the most impactful pillars of bilateral cooperation. However, the investigation revealed significant structural challenges, notably a deep trust impasse in intelligence sharing, bureaucratic delays, and a clear divergence in threat perception between Washington's global containment lens and Abuja's existential border sovereignty goals. The strict statutory application of the U.S. Leahy Law regarding human rights compliance acted as a major point of friction, where localized military operational excesses triggered automated external policy freezes and weapon transfer delays. The study concluded that while shared counter-terrorism anxieties lock both nations into cooperation, the partnership remains structurally constrained by competing domestic regulations and clashing views on state sovereignty. Consequently, the study recommended the institutionalization of a permanent Joint Civil-Military Legal Compliance Desk within frontline commands, the negotiation of streamlined geospatial data-processing protocols, and the strategic expansion of local defense manufacturing via increased capital allocation to the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) to systematically de-escalate extreme external hardware dependencies. **keyword : Nigeria–U.S. relations; counter-insurgency; Boko Haram; ISWAP; Linkage Theory; Hegemonic Stability Theory; Leahy Law; intelligence sharing; DICON; bilateral security cooperation.**

Introduction

National security serves as the foundational matrix upon which both the internal socio-political stabilization and external diplomatic linkages of sovereign states are predicated. Within contemporary political discourse, asymmetric security vulnerabilities manifested through persistent kinetic and non-kinetic offensives by violent non-state actors increasingly challenge the sovereign authority of contemporary African states. For over two decades, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has confronted structural vulnerabilities and persistent restiveness that have collectively impeded the state from maximizing its political, economic, and leadership potential within the sub-Saharan corridor. This protracted precarity became acutely localized following the radicalization and expansion of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram, within the Northeast geopolitical zone. The analytical timeline spanning 2015 to 2026 captures a highly critical phase in Nigeria's political trajectory, transitioning across two distinct democratic administrations: the entire two-term tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari (2015–2023) and the foundational governance years of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (2023–2026). Rather than experiencing complete resolution, this period witnessed complex mutations within the terror ecology, including the strategic fracture of the group, which led to the ascendancy of ISWAP, and a notable resurgence of tactical village raids, extortion loops, and mass abductions.

Crucially, the persistent nature of this insurgency has deeply penetrated Nigeria's domestic and external political relations. Internally, the crisis reshaped federal-state interactions concerning defense budgeting friction, executive-legislative oversight over military spending, and the politics of humanitarian management and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) resettlement. Externally, the evolving threat environment forced Nigeria to continuously adjust its foreign policy and security cooperation within the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), underscoring the delicate balance of regional diplomacy.

This escalating threat environment has long made the Nigerian counter-terrorism space a critical node of concern for international state actors, particularly the United States. Driven by its broader global counter-terrorism policies and strategic national interests within sub-Saharan Africa, the United States has actively integrated Nigeria into its security architecture, strengthening the Nigerian military's kinetic capabilities through intelligence sharing, tactical training, and the sale of advanced military hardware, such as the A-29 Super Tucano aircraft. Washington's formal designation of Boko Haram and ISWAP as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) institutionalized a collaborative, cross-border framework aimed at dismantling the groups' financial and logistical networks.

Because Nigeria functions as a regional hegemon within West Africa, it is indispensable for the maintenance of sub-regional stability. Consequently, within the 2015–2026 political landscape, the United States cannot afford to decouple its foreign policy from Nigeria's domestic security realities. This interdependence has prompted consistent demonstrations of diplomatic solidarity, security assistance, and strategic cooperation from Washington to support Abuja's efforts to bring perpetrators of terror to justice, while stabilizing the broader Lake Chad Basin and Sahelian frameworks.

Statement of the Problem

The intersection of asymmetric warfare and bilateral diplomacy remains a critical area of concern in contemporary political science and international relations. Despite extensive scholarly documentation of the Boko Haram insurgency, a major gap persists in the empirical literature regarding how the group's evolving tactics and ideological mutations have

influenced Nigeria–United States political relations. Most existing studies focus primarily on the domestic socio-economic consequences, human rights violations, and internal security challenges within the Northeast geopolitical zone. However, there is a distinct lack of deep, systematic analysis exploring how the security challenges from 2015 to 2026 have directly shaped bilateral diplomacy, defense cooperation, and strategic political alignments between Abuja and Washington.

The core problem is rooted in the structural incompatibility between Boko Haram's foundational ideology and the democratic governance models shared by Nigeria and the United States. The sect rejects Western education, democratic jurisprudence, central banking, and state taxation, labeling these institutions as un-Islamic. This ideological stance strikes at the heart of U.S. foreign policy objectives in West Africa, which rely on partnering with a stable, democratic, and market-oriented Nigeria to help maintain sub-regional security. Therefore, the persistence of the insurgency directly undermines the institutional foundations that support Nigeria–U.S. political and economic cooperation.

Furthermore, a significant shift has occurred in how the international community views the scale of this threat. While early political analysts initially classified the group as a localized, domestic menace, its tactical evolution toward transnational terrorism marked by the 2011 bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja and its subsequent alignment with global networks like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIS through the formation of ISWAP has permanently globalized the conflict. This expansion forced the United States to designate the group as an FTO. However, it also introduced structural friction into bilateral relations, shifting the dynamic from a partnership based on economic trade to one increasingly dominated by counter-terrorism security assistance and strict oversight on human rights. During the 2015–2026 governance cycles, this friction reappeared in new ways. The U.S. government's application of the Leahy Law, which restricts military aid due to human rights concerns, frequently delayed the delivery of critical weapons like the A-29 Super Tucano aircraft. This structural tension highlights a key contradiction: while the U.S. views Nigeria as an indispensable partner for maintaining regional peace, it often applies restrictive diplomatic policies that Nigerian policymakers view as an overreach into state sovereignty.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to critically evaluate the intersection between the Boko Haram insurgency and Nigeria–U.S. political and military relations from 2015 to 2026. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the underlying nature and character of Nigeria–United States political and military relations as shaped by the changing dynamics of the Boko Haram/ISWAP insurgency.
- ii. Interrogate the specific areas of diplomatic, intelligence, and military cooperation between Nigeria and the United States in the counter-terrorism campaign.
- iii. Analyze the structural, institutional, and human-rights-related challenges confronting Nigeria–United States political and military relations in the fight against the insurgency.

Conceptual Framework

The trajectory of United States foreign policy and its strategic engagements in resource-rich developing nations had historically oscillated between direct military interventionism and institutional capacity-building. Within contemporary international relations discourse, the shift in Washington's strategic calculus is often analyzed through the lens of hegemonic stability and threat perception. Following the transformative geopolitical shocks of the

September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the George W. Bush administration formalized an aggressive, interventionist framework known as the “Global War on Terrorism,” predicated on the absolute cessation of state-sponsored terrorism, the forceful replacement of autocracies with democratic governance models, and the pre-emptive deployment of advanced kinetic capabilities to sustain global hegemonic stability.

However, the subsequent transition through the Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden administrations witnessed a profound shift toward integrated, multi-sectoral, and less overtly interventionist counter-terrorism strategies. Early institutional assessments argued that the structural emergence of Boko Haram was fundamentally tied to localized governance deficits, systemic corruption, and severe socio-economic marginalization within Northern Nigeria. Consequently, initial academic consensus warned that heavy-handed, unilateral external military intervention would exacerbate regional instability rather than solve it.

This debate over policy direction created significant friction within the U.S. foreign policy establishment. A prominent coalition of Africanist scholars consistently petitioned the U.S. Department of State, arguing that countering Boko Haram required a demilitarized, diplomatic, and developmentally focused framework rather than strict security measures. Conversely, legislative actors within the U.S. House Homeland Security Committee pushed for the formal designation of the sect as an FTO, arguing that waiting for localized solutions would allow the group’s transnational networks to expand unchecked across the Sahel.

Despite initial debates, the group’s tactical evolution—the 2011 bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja, the 2014 Chibok abductions, and the subsequent 2016 split that birthed ISWAP—permanently globalized the security crisis. This evolution forced a convergence in U.S. foreign policy, leading to the formal FTO designation of the groups. Within the 2015–2026 governance cycle, the United States deployed a sophisticated, multi-departmental, non-confrontational approach designed to support the Nigerian state while preserving its own strategic interests.

Empirical Review

The structural composition of Nigeria–U.S. bilateral relations under the counter-terrorism umbrella has undergone a profound paradigm shift, transitioning from a historical partnership rooted in economic trade and energy interdependence to an irregular, security-heavy, and deeply securitized diplomatic engagement. Historically, the foundational matrix of engagements between Abuja and Washington was anchored on the secure flow of Nigerian sweet crude oil to Western markets and the cultivation of a business-friendly, democratic environment in sub-Saharan Africa.

Campbell and Harwood (2020) argued that the nature of U.S. engagement is fundamentally cautious, conditional, and risk-averse. While Washington officially acknowledges Abuja as an indispensable regional anchor whose stability is critical to international security, U.S. foreign policy architectures hesitate to integrate directly or unrestrictedly with Nigeria’s military infrastructure. This hesitation is empirically tied to deep-seated institutional distrust, concerns over operational transparency, and systemic leakages within the domestic defense procurement system. This pervasive caution manifests as an unequal partnership where security assistance, intelligence sharing, and hardware transfers are granted as short-term concessions tied to behavioral benchmarks, rather than as an open-ended, institutionalized strategic alliance.

Amao (2023) found that the nature of Nigeria–U.S. relations during the Buhari administration and extending into the Tinubu governance cycle became increasingly reactive and cyclical rather than proactive or institutionalized. Whenever the terror ecology mutated, the bilateral relationship temporarily intensified, featuring high-level diplomatic visits and expanded surveillance agreements. However, these engagements quickly plateaued once immediate structural threats to the central government subsided. This recurring pattern confirms that the relationship operates as a series of short-term, crisis-driven management responses lacking the long-term planning needed to build a durable defense alliance.

Scholars tracking the functional dimensions of the security alliance have documented substantial, albeit structurally uneven, progress across several critical operational areas. Ojo (2022) examined the procurement and deployment of the A-29 Super Tucano light-attack aircraft, revealing that high-value defense procurement represents the most tangible manifestation of military cooperation. The transaction extended far beyond simple hardware transfer, serving as an institutional framework requiring multi-year training programs for Nigerian Air Force pilots and maintenance engineers at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, focusing on precision-strike capabilities and digital target acquisition to minimize collateral damage.

Onuoha and Ugwueze (2023) showed that the United States has integrated Nigeria into its regional surveillance architectures across the Sahel, leveraging advanced drone hubs and satellite infrastructure to provide Nigerian field commanders with actionable geospatial intelligence. Okoli and Iortyer (2021) revealed that the United States, primarily through USAID and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, serves as the largest bilateral donor of humanitarian, nutritional, and structural stabilization aid in the Lake Chad Basin region, critical in maintaining IDP camps and institutionalizing de-radicalization frameworks such as Operation Safe Corridor.

Despite these milestones, empirical literature highlights persistent structural challenges. Human Rights Watch (2025) documented how allegations of extrajudicial killings and civilian casualties triggered Leahy Law restrictions, causing prolonged delays in transferring critical military technologies. Onuoha and Ugwueze (2023) found a clear divide in threat perception: for Nigerian policymakers, Boko Haram and ISWAP represent an existential threat requiring total military victory, while Washington often views the conflict through a global, transactional lens, prioritizing containment of transnational networks over localized stabilization.

Theoretical Framework

This study applied James Rosenau's Linkage Theory alongside Robert Keohane and Charles Kindleberger's Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) to uncover the micro-level behavioral interactions and macro-level geopolitical structures defining this conflict environment.

Linkage Theory: Penetrative and Reactive Dynamics. Rosenau's Linkage Theory explains the artificial barrier between domestic upheavals and international political calculations. The Boko Haram insurgency serves as a powerful domestic independent variable triggering two primary linkage processes. The penetrative process occurs when external actors insert themselves directly into the political or security space of a sovereign state. The internal mutation of the insurgency, specifically the 2016 split leading to ISWAP, directly linked localized actions to the global jihadist movement, inviting direct U.S. penetration through multi-million-dollar bounties, blacklisted financial pipelines, and specialized military

advisors. The reactive process occurs when internal developments force a distinct policy reaction from an external state. Documented human rights violations by Nigerian security forces led directly to the application of the U.S. Leahy Law, causing Washington to temporarily withhold or delay advanced weaponry transfers, turning routine defense procurement into complex diplomatic negotiation.

Hegemonic Stability Theory: The Strategic Conservation of a Regional Anchor. HST argues that global order requires a dominant global power to absorb the costs of maintaining international stability. Because a global power cannot police every localized conflict directly, it relies heavily on strong regional hegemony to maintain order within their sub-regions. Within West Africa, Nigeria has historically acted as this essential regional power, anchoring ECOWAS and driving regional peacekeeping initiatives. From the perspective of HST, the United States views the Boko Haram/ISWAP insurgency as a direct threat to global stability. If the Nigerian state were to collapse under asymmetric warfare pressure, it would destabilize the entire West African sub-region and the wider Sahelian corridor, disrupting global oil supply lines, triggering unprecedented humanitarian crises, and creating a territorial vacuum for global terror networks. Therefore, the United States supplies critical security resources to preserve Nigeria's role as a stabilizing regional power.

Theoretical Synthesis. Combining these theories creates a comprehensive framework. HST explains the macro-level motivations, showing that the global system compels the United States to protect its long-term interests by supporting Nigeria as a vital sub-regional power. Concurrently, Linkage Theory captures the micro-level political realities, illustrating how this strategic partnership is constantly shaped and challenged by domestic human rights issues, changing insurgent tactics, and shifting political decisions in both Abuja and Washington. Together, this integrated framework shows that the Boko Haram insurgency is not merely a domestic military issue, but a powerful factor that actively reshapes Nigeria's internal political stability and its broader standing in international diplomacy.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive and analytical survey research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. A research design serves as the operational blueprint that structures the mechanisms of data collection, presentation, and empirical analysis. The choice of a descriptive survey design is justified because it allows the researcher to systematically collect empirical data, map out opinions, and examine current trends regarding how the independent variable (Boko Haram/ISWAP insurgency) influences the dependent variable (Nigeria–U.S. political and military relations). The target population consisted of institutional actors, diplomatic personnel, security experts, and strategic stakeholders possessing reliable, direct information regarding Nigeria–U.S. security cooperation from 2015 to 2026. This elite target population was drawn from four primary institutional sectors: diplomatic and administrative staff within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Embassy; defense and intelligence officers at the Defence Headquarters and National Defence College; strategic security scholars at Nasarawa State University and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs; and civil society and humanitarian actors partnering with USAID on stabilization programs. The total accessible population across these institutional frames was estimated at 4,673 personnel. The sample size for the quantitative survey was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for finite populations:
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
 Where $N = 4,673$ and $e = 0.05$ (5% margin of error). The computation yielded a sample size of 368 respondents. Proportional stratified random sampling was applied across the target institutions, dividing the population into uniform strata based on institutional affiliation. Concurrently, purposive sampling was used to select specific key informants for qualitative interviews, targeting senior

diplomats, military commanders, and defense attachés with deep, firsthand experience managing Nigeria–U.S. joint counter-insurgency operations. Primary data were gathered via a highly structured, close-ended questionnaire built on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1), administered to the sampled respondents. Qualitative primary data were generated through structured, in-depth elite interviews. Secondary data were systematically extracted from official publications of the U.S.–Nigeria Bi-National Commission, defense white papers, reports by Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group, and peer-reviewed academic journals. Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistics supported by SPSS, organized into frequency distributions, and analyzed using simple percentages. To test the validity of research propositions, a Weighted Mean Score model was applied, with a criterion mean cutoff of 2.50. Qualitative data were analyzed using dominant content analysis, extracting thematic patterns and interpreting them through the integrated theoretical framework.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collection process gathered primary insights from core military, legal, and foreign policy institutions. A total of 400 structured questionnaires were distributed, and 383 completed questionnaires were successfully retrieved and validated, yielding a response rate of 95.75%. The institutional distribution revealed: Ministry of Justice (190 respondents, 49.61%); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (170 respondents, 44.39%); Nigeria Army War College (20 respondents, 5.22%); and American Embassy in Nigeria (3 respondents, 0.78%). The demographic breakdown indicated that the study was heavily anchored by mid-career and senior professionals. The largest cohort was the 41–50 age range (101 participants), closely followed by the 31–40 bracket (93 respondents). The 18–30 age bracket accounted for 79 individuals, the 51–60 range constituted 75 respondents, and 35 participants were 61 and above. Regarding years of relevant experience, the largest group comprised 162 individuals with 7–10 years of direct professional experience. This was followed by 98 respondents with 4–6 years, 71 respondents with 10 years and above, and 52 participants with 1–3 years of experience. This diverse and deeply experienced distribution ensured robust, balanced data reflective of seasoned institutional expertise.

Data Analysis

The empirical evaluation of questionnaire items provided critical statistical insights into institutional perceptions of Nigeria–U.S. military relations. Regarding the overarching description of the relationship, 201 respondents (52.48%) characterized bilateral security ties as moderate but consistent, while 102 (26.64%) viewed them as strong and collaborative. Conversely, 57 respondents (14.88%) characterized the partnership as weak and inconsistent, and 23 (6.00%) expressed uncertainty. The quantitative data exposed significant structural dependence on advanced U.S. defense public goods. When evaluating Nigeria's reliance on the United States for military operations, 182 individuals (47.52%) identified a very high reliance, reinforced by 157 respondents (40.99%) who observed a high reliance. Combined, 88.51% of the sample acknowledged heavy external operational reliance. Only 31 respondents (8.09%) characterized this reliance as moderate, and 13 (3.39%) claimed no operational reliance existed. Regarding coordination frequency, 137 respondents (35.77%) indicated frequent coordination, while 75 (19.58%) noted very frequent coordination. However, 103 individuals (26.89%) stated coordination occurred only occasionally or rarely, and 68 (17.75%) asserted effective coordination never materialized. The survey measured consensus regarding whether U.S. military support significantly impacted Nigeria's operational campaign. A combined 50.13% agreed that U.S. intervention had a significant positive impact (98 strongly agreed, 94 agreed). Conversely, a combined 49.87% expressed disagreement (116 disagreed, 75 strongly disagreed).

Proposition Testing

The analytical verification relied on responses from 383 validated institutional officers against a criterion cutoff of 2.50. Proposition One posited that strategic cooperation is heavily predicated on military intelligence sharing, tactical training, and advanced hardware transfer. The data showed 168 respondents strongly agreed and 145 agreed, while 48 disagreed and 22 strongly disagreed. $WMS = [(168 \times 4) + (145 \times 3) + (48 \times 2) + (22 \times 1)] / 383 = 1225 / 383 = 3.20$ Since $3.20 > 2.50$, Proposition One is accepted. Proposition Two stated that Nigeria–U.S. relations shifted from historical trade interdependence to a security-centric, high-surveillance diplomatic partnership. The survey showed 142 strongly agreed and 161 agreed, while 54 disagreed and 26 strongly disagreed. $WMS = [(142 \times 4) + (161 \times 3) + (54 \times 2) + (26 \times 1)] / 383 = 1185 / 383 = 3.09$ Since $3.09 > 2.50$, Proposition Two is accepted. Proposition Three posited that institutional policy divergence, state sovereignty frictions, and strict regulatory frameworks such as the Leahy Law constitute primary structural challenges. The data showed 189 respondents strongly agreed and 124 agreed, while 45 disagreed and 25 strongly disagreed. $WMS = [(189 \times 4) + (124 \times 3) + (45 \times 2) + (25 \times 1)] / 383 = 1243 / 383 = 3.25$ Since $3.25 > 2.50$, Proposition Three is decisively accepted. Qualitative elite interviews reinforced these metrics. Respondents confirmed that the shift from Abubakar Shekau's localized JAS faction to ISWAP's bureaucratic structure caused Washington to view the Lake Chad Basin as a dangerous node of the global ISIS network, intensifying penetrative tracking but rendering assistance highly transactional. Defense planners consistently described Leahy Law application as creating an "unequal partners dynamic," where unverified reports of civilian casualties triggered statutory pauses in weapon deliveries, generating strategic frustration among field commanders who viewed such restrictions as infringements on state sovereignty.

Findings

The empirical findings indicate that Nigeria–U.S. military relations from 2015 to 2026 can be characterized as moderate yet consistent, reflecting a highly securitised, defensive partnership primarily driven by shared geopolitical anxieties regarding regional stability and global counter-terrorism mandates. Institutional stakeholders widely acknowledged the significance of the partnership, particularly in high-value arms procurement and structural funding, exemplified by the A-29 Super Tucano acquisition.

The investigation revealed that while hard kinetic assets and procurement assistance were the most visible elements of collaboration, non-kinetic interventions, tactical training, and geo-spatial intelligence sharing also played vital roles. However, professional perceptions regarding their field effectiveness were deeply divided, pointing to substantial challenges in aligning Western standardized doctrines with Nigeria's specific counter-insurgency context.

Critical structural challenges were identified, including political policy differences, extensive bureaucratic delays, and a severe trust impasse regarding security clearances. Over half of the validated sample (52.22%) characterized the overall level of institutional trust between Abuja and Washington as low or very low. Furthermore, 51.39% of respondents stated that persistent political disagreements significantly damaged field collaboration.

Fundamentally, the strict application of the United States' Leahy Law regarding human rights compliance acted as the primary structural obstacle. Sub-national operational excesses and civilian casualties committed on local battlefields triggered automated legal freezes in Washington, delaying key technology transfers and disrupting continuous intelligence pipelines. This finding confirms that the domestic conduct of Nigerian security forces acts as

a powerful variable that directly crosses national boundaries, creating systemic barriers even when both nations share strong strategic interests in defeating the insurgency.

Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of Nigeria–U.S. political and military relations in combating the Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies while safeguarding state sovereignty and human rights compliance, the following recommendations are advanced:

- i. The Nigerian Ministry of Defence, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, should institutionalize a specialized human rights compliance and monitoring desk within frontline counter-insurgency commands. This institutional node will provide real-time legal oversight, ensure adherence to international humanitarian law during asymmetric operations, and maintain transparent communications with Western defense attachés, thereby sustaining uninterrupted procurement pipelines.
- ii. The Federal Government of Nigeria should significantly increase strategic funding to the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON). This long-term investment should focus on standardizing local capacity to manufacture tactical defense equipment, light weaponry, and armored vehicles, thereby reducing the state's extreme structural dependency on Western suppliers and preserving national autonomy.
- iii. The Office of the National Security Adviser should negotiate a streamlined, bilateral data-processing protocol under the auspices of the U.S.–Nigeria Bi-National Commission. This dedicated channel should focus on clearing security-clearance bottlenecks, mitigating mutual mistrust, and converting high-altitude U.S. satellite data into fast-moving, actionable tactical intelligence contextualized for the fluid, asymmetric movements of insurgent cells within difficult terrains.
- iv. The leadership of the Nigeria Army War College and the National Defence College should collaborate with U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) instructors to systematically redesign joint training programs. Collaborative capacity-building initiatives should shift away from conventional warfare exercises toward specialized, low-intensity asymmetric drills, focusing on counter-IED maneuvers, night combat operations, and local language tracking to ensure that Western technical expertise aligns with the concrete operational needs of the Lake Chad Basin.
- v. Both nations should execute quarterly, high-level diplomatic dialogues involving the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Department of State. Establishing dedicated joint task forces to resolve policy and regulatory discrepancies will enhance the strategic agility of the partnership, allowing both states to confront transnational jihadist mutations effectively while maintaining sub-regional stability.

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