

From: Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
To: Jeffrey Epstein <Jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Talking Points Polio Nigeria
Date: Sun, 01 Jun 2014 22:12:52 +0000

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Andrea Pfanzelter <[REDACTED]>
Date: June 1, 2014 at 6:11:48 PM EDT
To: Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Fwd: Talking Points Polio Nigeria

1. Boko Haram: a long history

The recent story of the kidnapping of the girls has brought Boko Haram (BH) dramatically into the international spotlight, which makes it appear to many to be a new phenomena, or a sharp escalation in BH's activities. In fact this is a major misinterpretation.

BH has been an active destabilizing force for some time now, and has historically not been a problem that has been well responded to. On the part of the international community there has been little attention paid to the considerable destruction, attacks on government installations and civilians committed by the group – 2-300 people can be killed and it barely warrants a mention in the international press.

Even nationally, the political elite in the coastal cities have largely viewed BH as a marginal concern. Recognising the roots of the BH movement is important, however. The group began as a group of disenfranchised youth who felt marginalized by the government and thus antagonizing state institutions is part of the core modus operandi.

Arguably, the BH conflict has been a simmering civil war for some years now, just not recognized as such. And the current crack down is likely to cause conflict to flare up significantly.

2. A problem poorly handled

The militarized response under Goodluck Johnson has served to make BH more provocative and flamboyant rather than less so. The human rights abuses perpetuated by the military has further exacerbated the legitimacy that BH may have with their constituents and has inflamed their mandate.

Whereas Nigeria, because of its economic power, appears to be a strong state, in fact the capacity of their institutions is quite weak. The way that the government has responded to the most recent incident shows the clumsiness of their capacity to engage on this issue.

Under the pressure of the international spotlight, and the demand from the international community to “get serious” about BH, the Nigerian government is likely to become more violent and militaristic.

The possibilities for international oversight of the Government's response are limited, given that Nigeria projects the capacity of a strong state and has sufficient funding to manage their own affairs.

3. Implications for security

It is almost certain that the levels of violence in Northern Nigeria will increase significantly, and the conflict is unlikely to resolve quickly. Access to the North is already almost impossible, and this can be expected to remain the status quo for some years.

Spillover is already occurring into southern Niger, and given the fragility further north in the Sahel, in Mali and in Libya, as well as the conflict in Central Africa, this is going to be compounded by and exacerbate regional insecurity.

4. Implication for the polio campaign

The situation now is highly politicized and the political implications of any policy decision must be carefully considered. Having a clear sense of where individuals and groups are positioned and allied will be essential to avoid doing harm in an already volatile environment.

The BH issue has become polarized into a direct conflict between pro and anti-state (us against them), and the approach that GPEI historically taken will place the campaign firmly on the pro-government side. This increases the possibility that polio will be used as an ideological tool by BH, and that polio workers will be suspected of ulterior motives and targets of violence.

The overabundance of cash that GPEI has channeled through the government for the campaign has allowed local governments to misappropriate funds, and is broadly seen to have fuelled a corrupt regime.

Any suggestion that the military should be used to deliver vaccines in Nigeria should be avoided, given the political context described above.

In insurgent conflicts, delivery of social and economic goods in the most vulnerable regions is a proven conciliation strategy. Broad Health care services and meeting basic needs of populations should be considered as a part of the polio campaign. Local approaches are likely to gain more traction than high profile national campaigns.