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NIGERIA ON THE BRINK?

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health,

Global Human Rights and International Organizations,

Committee on Foreign Affairs,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:09 p.m., in Room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. Pittenger. Thank you.

Has the administration found any connection between the use of the girls unwittingly suicide efforts that have been kidnapped by Boko Haram, and do you believe that any Chibok girls may have been used in this manner?

Mr. Jackson. There has been a lot of speculation about this, but I don't think we have confirmed that any of the children who participated in the suicide bombings, certainly involuntarily, were from Chibok.

I would note that there are four Chibok girls who are now resident in the United States, and we have certainly talked with them about their experience, and we make an effort to debrief people who have been in Boko Haram activity.

Cameroon has done a great job of doing debriefings of hostages, and we encourage the Nigerians to follow suit.

Mr. Pittenger. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. Smith. Thank you.

If I could, just for clarification, Mr. Jackson. As you know, there are fundamental differences in the United States over the whole LGBT issue. I am a strong believer in traditional marriage and do not construe homosexual rights as human rights. Others have a different view, and I certainly respect them. But I want to know, has the administration, and I would ask for a clarification on this, has the administration's view on LGBT affected in any way or in any way hindered U.S. support to Nigeria to combat Boko Haram?

And, secondly, when it comes to humanitarian and money for IDPs and money for health issues, has the administration held back or in any way affected funding to the faith community, whether it be Muslim or Christian, in the dissemination of those funds to combat malaria or any other problems faced by Nigerians?

Mr. Jackson. Mr. Chairman, to my knowledge there has been no impact to the same sex marriage prohibition bill on any of our activities, be it financial assistance, humanitarian assistance, or what organizations we work with in Nigeria.

Mr. Smith. I appreciate that. Could you also, I know that is your reasoned opinion, but get back to us if there is anything that would contradict that?

Mr. Jackson. I will be happy to inquire, but I feel quite clear, since I see all of our assistance numbers, but I would have to check on whether we have decided not to work with any specific organizations. But I will get back to you.

Mr. Smith. Good.

And finally, again on the U.S.-Nigeria task force idea, if you could follow up and get to us on that as well. This would be a multidimensional approach to get complete and full buy-in from the Nigerians. I think for whatever reason, there was a cessation of the training of their military. That needs to be resumed. We have got to find out what it was that encumbered that and get back so that hopefully thousands of Leahy-vetted Nigerian soldiers and officer corps can get the training they need to vanquish Boko Haram.