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Notes to Contributors

Preamble

Journal of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Research (JISSIR) is published by Gregory University, Uturu, Abia State – Nigeria. The Journal is published twice a year: June and December. It provides an academic platform for scholars, policy makers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and professionals from diverse backgrounds to promote dialogue, exchange of views; sensations and reflections on contending national and international developments. JISSIR welcomes the Scientific analysis of issues with lines of policy and strategic relevance.

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Preparation of the Manuscript

Manuscripts submitted for Publication must not be an already published paper. It must not also be previously submitted for consideration in any other journal or book project. While originality, currency, conceptual and theoretical

ALL FOR OIL: THE UNITED STATES, CHINA AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY INTEREST IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

Luqman Saka, Solomon I. Ifejika, Fatima O. Aliu

Abstract

The increasing volatility of the international energy market; the instability in the Middle East and the new discovery of major off-shore oil fields in the Gulf of Guinea have all contributed to amplifying the geo-strategic importance of the region in the perception threshold of major powers and their energy companies. The authorization of the United States' Africa Command, AFRICOM, signifies the increasing strategic importance of the Gulf of Guinea to the major powers. While the US and China have defined the GoG as of great strategic national interest, the resource area is also strategic to Nigeria for number of reasons. Nigeria has continued to discover new super oil fields off its coast. There is also the fluid security situation in the Niger Delta and the diminishing contribution of onshore oil fields to the nation's annual oil production. There is also steady rise in incidence of piracy/terrorism in the waters off Nigeria coast, as well arms smuggling among others. The paper employs the theory of political realism, which places high premium on the struggle for and use of power in the pursuit of national interest. The paper argues that security threats against Nigeria's national interest are real in the GoG. Given the military dimension of the threats, Nigeria should strengthen its military presence as well as networking with key GoG states.

Key Words: Oil, Multinational Corporations, Major Powers, National Interest, Gulf of Guinea,

Introduction

The larger Gulf of Guinea has had a long history that dates back to the late 17th century. The Gulf of Guinea was central to European nations search for economic opportunities during the pre-colonial and colonial eras as it provided the haven of resources needed for driving early industrialization process in Europe. A great number of slaves shipped from Africa to the New World were also taken from the region. It was aided by the region's oceanic freeway. Now amidst threats of energy insecurity arising from political instability in the Middle East, the rise in oil production and proven reserve in the Gulf of Guinea,

the region has come to the fore once more as a region of great potential for addressing global energy (oil and gas) security concerns. Thus, it seems that the age long significance of West Africa to global commerce by all appearance is not dwindling. It will not diminish in the foreseeable future irrespective of the fluctuating nature of global energy market (Allen, 2012: 132).

Countries of the Gulf of Guinea are not by any means new entrants in the global energy market. In the early neo-colonial era in the 1960s, hydro-carbon deposits were discovered in commercial quantities. Production of oil and gas commenced in Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo-Brazzaville. Major multinational oil corporations (MNCs) such as Shell British Petroleum, Chevron, Total, Mobil, Texaco and Elf have had to pump hundreds of billions of barrels of crude oil in the international oil market. As conflict and political instability pushed major oil consuming nations to diversify their supply bases, the Gulf of Guinea became an attractive focus for strategic energy investment. The increase in investments led to the emergence of new oil producers; Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Sao Tome and Principe and of recent Ghana (Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

Increasing investment and the discovery of super-size offshore fields have made the Gulf of Guinea the leading sub-Saharan Africa oil production region. The region alone produces around five million barrels of oil per day out of the total of nine millions barrels produced in sub-Saharan Africa. A substantial per cent of this daily production is exported to Europe and the United States. Presently, China, India and other emerging economies have become major importers of Gulf of Guinea's oil and gas (ICG, 2012: 2-3). In particular, China continues to make substantial investment in the energy sector in the Gulf of Guinea. China is seen as a potential rival to the dominant Western interest in the region. The renewed international interest in the region has been accompanied by a military rapprochement strategy especially on the part of the United States. The United States' Africa Command, AFRICOM, in 2007 is expected to be the anchor of the military component of United States' energy security drive in the Gulf of Guinea. It is expected to coordinate broader United States security agenda in Africa. The motives for the creation of AFRICOM include containment of terrorism, and the entry of China oil in Africa' (Hanson, 2007; McFate, 2008; McCaskie, 2008).

While the major powers notably, the US and China, have defined the GoG as a key strategic national interest, the area is also strategic to the national interest the Gulf of Guinea states particularly Nigeria, which has continued to discovery new super oil fields off its coast. The fluid security situation in the Niger Delta and its implications on the security of offshore oil fields

installations are also sources of anxiety. The rise in incidence of piracy/terrorism in the waters off Nigeria coast and steady arms smuggling are security threats to Nigeria. In the face of these challenges, the increasing presence of major powers (notably United States and China), and continued dominance of the region's oil sector by major multinational corporations challenge Nigeria power and influence in the Gulf of Guinea.

Gulf of Guinea: the Geo-Political Context

The Gulf of Guinea spans the Atlantic littoral, including territories in West, Central and Southern Africa. The international priority accorded to energy security brings considerable world-wide attention to the important hydrocarbons resources in the region. With the exception of Chad and Sudan, all oil producing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are located in the Gulf of Guinea. The countries include Angola, Cameroon, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, and Sao Tome and Principe. The number oil producing nations in sub-Sahara Africa is witnessing substantial increase as prospecting and exploration rights and agreements have been signed in Ghana; Liberia; Sierra Leone; Senegal and Niger and host of other states (Copinschi, 2007: 124). Ghana of late has joined the list of the sub-region oil producers. Conflicts and disputes have arisen among the countries of the area. Inter-state and regional tensions have been heightened as competition for control of oilfields becomes more of a reality. Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe have all been involved in oil-related boundary disputes, litigations and settlement mechanisms.

Lack of adequate corporate social responsibility by the multinational corporations in the GoG has generated tensions and social protests in oil producing communities. To make a bad situation worse, State repression of social protests and dissents has bred a culture of violence among the youth. The situation in the Niger Delta of Nigeria has been the most extreme violence or against the State and Oil Multinational Corporations. (Watts, 2008; 2007; 2004).

Oil, AFRICOM and United States Interest in the Gulf of Guinea

The quest for energy security has increasingly become a paramount concern among global powers due to the rapidly changing phase of events in the international oil and gas environment. Thus, the strategic importance of oil and the need for a secure (national) energy future by world powers has renewed interest in Africa, particularly the Gulf of Guinea with proven huge oil deposit.

Since the turn of the millennium, the deteriorating security situation in the Persian Gulf (the major supplier of US energy needs) has necessitated a shift of foreign policy focus to areas, such as the Gulf of Guinea. Starting from 2005, there has been growing US special attention to the GoG. Arguably it exemplifies Washington's global policy framework, pursued since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (Forest et al. 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The US interest in the Gulf of Guinea should be viewed from the political realist perspective. The realist approach contends that nations compete in an anarchic international system and must engage in self help to survive (Rosecrance et al. 1993). It also holds that in pursuit of their interests, states will attempt to amass military resources. Relations between and among states are determined by their relative levels of military power. (Morgenthau, 1948; Krueger 2002; Art, 2003; Klare et al. 2004). The implication of the realist maxim is that the more powerful and influential a state is, the better and greater its position and chances of actualizing its national interest in relations to the weak or less privileged states in the ever continuous struggle for survival among nations in the international system. Of course, protection of each state's interest lies in its own strategies to project power from a position of strength.

Alluding to the foregoing, therefore, states' behaviour in an anarchical international system is moderated by their desire for survival, knowing that no supranational institution or government exists absolutely to protect them. Therefore, countries cannot rely absolutely on other states to protect them, even if they share a common ideology or political form. Each state has the liberty to think only of its own interests. More importantly, events in the international arena since September 11, 2001, have shown that the world has progressively become a more dangerous place. Hence, military force now looms larger than ever as a key instrument and organizing principle of the US foreign policy (Osaretin, 2011). In 2007, the US declared the Gulf of Guinea an area of strategic national interest and one that would require military intervention to protect its national resources (an apparent renaissance of the Carter Doctrine) (Osaretin, 2011). Also, not long after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, citing energy security and terrorist concerns, the U.S. military radically revised its strategic vision for the West African region. The US strategy shifted primarily from training for peacekeeping missions in Africa to training for counter-terrorism and energy security (Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz, 2007). This active presence and competition among leading global economic powers in Africa, especially the US and China is undeniably to gain substantive ground

in the Gulf of Guinea's energy market.

Unarguably, according to ECOM Analysis (2007), 17 percent of the US oil imports come from sub-Saharan Africa and expected to hit 25 percent in 2015. Corroborating this position, the United States Department of Energy (2006) affirms that African oil imports to the United States have been steadily rising and already account for some 20 percent of total US imports. Indeed, the United States already imports more oil from Africa than from the whole Persian Gulf. Underscoring the importance of Sub-Saharan oil to US market, a former US Assistant Secretary of State, Walter Kanstenier III, notes that: "that African oil is critical to us, and it will increase and become more important as we go forward" (African Oil Policy Initiative Group, 2002). However, according to a recent report by the Council on Foreign Relations, the region's importance to the United States is not only because of the scale of investment, its share of US imports, and the US citizens who help explore and produce those volumes, but also because the Gulf of Guinea countries produce high-quality low-sulphur oil that is highly valued by the US market (Lake, 2006).

However, the volatile security situation in the Gulf of Guinea as a direct result of the persistent internal conflicts bedevilling the political life of the countries in the sub-region has been perceived as having dangerous implications for the entire continent. Neighbouring states have been lured into them. Obviously, this was true of the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Congo, where other states from the sub-region became parties in those conflicts (Osaretin, 2011). Generally, the trend of conflicts in the Gulf of Guinea not only undermines the stability of the sub-region, it also constitutes a major threat to the economic advancement of Nigeria.

In this regard, the US establishment of AFRICOM to provide funds, military technology and hardware, and training as part of her security partnership with the sub-region are, to a large extent, linked to US threat perception in the area. Nevertheless, the generally held views of the people of the sub-region do not correspond to those of the US. While some in the sub-region see AFRICOM as a welcome development and a mechanism for abrogating the continuous conflicts ravaging countries in the Gulf of Guinea, many construe it as a tool for protecting the US interest in the zone. They are critical of the impacts or achievements of AFRICOM in terms of stabilization of security in the controversial oil and/or energy rich zone so far. This is the plight of the critical minds who have constantly called for the establishment of a sub-regional security body by African countries to serve as alternative to AFRICOM in the Gulf of Guinea.

Energy Security and China's Strategic Interest in the Gulf of Guinea

Crude oil is one of the world's most important strategic resources. Africa has attracted a lot of attention among corporate and political decision-makers because of growing global oil demand (Frynas and Paulo, 2006). The recent intensification of search for energy resources in Africa has placed China side-by-side with the United States as major contenders for stable supply of oil in the Gulf of Guinea. Indeed, it has been suggested that Africa is experiencing a 'New Scramble' due primarily to its oil and gas wealth, with the United States and the People's Republic of China actively competing for access to Africa's resources (Frynas and Paulo, 2006). Ultimately, Africa is of little relevance because no important economic interests are greatly affected (Strange, 1998), but Africa's oil and gas is one of the few outstanding exceptions to the perceived insignificance of Africa. Africa already accounts for more than a quarter of China's oil imports today. According to the BP chief executive, John Browne, 'unless geologists succeed in finding new and so far unidentified provinces, as consumers, we will all be dependent on supplies from just three areas: West Africa, Russia and, most important of all, the five states around the Middle East Gulf' (Frynas and Paulo, 2006).

A preoccupation with China and the United States reflects discussions at the corridors of power in Washington and Beijing about a new Sino-American rivalry in Africa, coming only less than a decade after talk of a developing US-French rivalry on the continent (Schraeder, 2000). Hence, there is evidence of greater involvement of the United States and China in Africa, in terms of both commercial interests and political engagement. The recent expansion of Chinese interests has caught particular attention (French, 2007). Unarguably, China is currently Africa's third most important trading partner, ahead of the United Kingdom and behind the United States and France (Pan, cited in Frynas and Paulo, 2006). Foreign direct investment (FDI) to Africa from China reached US\$900 million in 2004. As at 2004, 28.7 per cent of Chinese crude oil imports already derived from African oil-producing countries (Zweig and Jianhai, 2005).

In April 2006, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) announced that it had completed a US\$2.3 billion deal to buy a 45 per cent interest in an offshore oil-mining concession in Nigeria (*BBC News Online*, 2006). Indeed, according to the *Economic Observer*, Angola has overtaken Saudi Arabia in terms of the quantity of crude oil supplied to China in the first six months of 2006 (Portuguese News Agency, 2006). Aside, more than 800 Chinese companies are reported to be operating in 49 African countries, and

Chinese trade with Africa was said to have surpassed US\$50 billion in 2006. This represents a five-fold increase from five years ago (Xinhua News Agency, 2006). This apparently explains China's relentless competition and ever increasing interest in Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. American investments in Africa have not risen at the same exponential rates over the past decade, but they are still enormous (Frynas and Paulo, 2006). According to the US Department of Commerce (2006), US direct investment to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2004 amounted to US\$13.5 billion, 23.4 percent more than in 2003 and oil-producing countries (Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Angola, Chad, and Nigeria) were the top five recipients.

For China, energy security is a primary motive for its involvement in Africa, but it has been shown that it is not the only one. Beijing's engagement with Africa is thought to have two components: diplomatic and economic. Diplomatically, China seeks African support for its status as a major power in world affairs as well as to diminish Taiwan's chances of diplomatic recognition in Africa (Alden, 2003). Economically, China's rapid economic boom requires African raw materials (particularly oil) and a market for its goods. According to the US Energy Information Administration, China accounted for 40 percent of total growth in global demand for oil in the last four years (Frynas and Paulo, 2006). In 2003, China ranked second just after the United States and ahead of Japan in oil consumption and Beijing estimates its consumption will rise to 450 million tons in 2020, 60 percent of which would be imports (*Le Monde*, 4 February 2004). To this extent, the United States-China rivalry and competition over Africa's oil and gas resources is undoubtedly a stiff one, and both countries have generally expanded the scope of interests in African oil globally. *Fundamentally, in pursuing the oil riches of African*, the US government used diplomatic instruments (e.g. re-opening its embassy in Equatorial Guinea and invitations to Washington), economic incentives (e.g. financial facilities offered by the US Export-Import Bank for doing business in Nigeria), and military aid (the largest portion of US military aid to Africa was aimed at Nigeria and Angola) (Klare and Volman, 2006). All these are strategies targeted at maintaining close political and economic relationships with the oil rich African countries.

However, while the US government assisted private US firms in obtaining oil concessions for oil exploration and production, the Chinese government focused instead on securing oil supplies through bilateral agreements. As the most notable example, Sinopec, a Chinese state-owned oil company acquired oil concessions in Angola's Blocks 3 and 18 on the back of a US\$2 billion oil backed

credit from China's Eximbank in 2004 to rebuild the country's railway, government buildings, schools, hospitals, and roads (Frynas and Paulo, 2006). Indeed, Block 3 once belonged to France's Total, which the Angolan authorities declined to renew to Total in favour of Sinopec. Sonangol has also recently agreed with Sinopec on a joint venture to build a new refinery on the south coast of Angola, a project that international oil companies deemed economically unviable (*Petroleum Economist*, May 2006). As Frynas and Paulo (2006) clearly point out, the Angolan example demonstrates how China has adopted an aid-for-oil strategy that has resulted in increasing supplies of oil from African countries to China.

Thus, while foreign governments continue to intervene to safeguard their strategic interests in Africa, the US-Chinese rivalry provides a marked contrast to the externally driven scramble of the 1880s. Indeed, the appearance of new economic powers in world affairs such as China has marginalized the Western driven economic model based on externally imposed conditionalities on issues ranging from the respect of human rights and good governance, to liberal economic reform, in exchange for financial assistance. Energy hungry nations such as India, Brazil, South Korea, Malaysia, and China have proven more supportive and have provided loans, debt relief, scholarships, training, and provision of military hardware without political or economic conditionalities, in exchange for a foothold in the oil business. In turn, incumbent African leaders have identified Chinese unconditional financial resources, cheap products, and know-how as an important tool to fend off pressure for political and economic reform from international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Western governments (Frynas and Paulo, 2006). It is, however, pertinent to state that the Gulf of Guinea or Africa's new rising importance is due to the need by oil and gas dependent countries to secure a strategic alternative source of oil supply to the Middle East. Therefore, the increasing world's oil and energy requirements and the proven capacity of Africa to contribute enormously to meeting it has renewed interests and drawn the attention of major economic powers to the continent, albeit with the People's Republic of China demonstrating a uniquely outstanding interest in the oil riches in the Gulf of Guinea.

Playing in a crowded Field: Assessing Nigeria's Strategic Interest in the Gulf of Guinea

The security situation in the Gulf of Guinea presents enormous challenges to Nigeria's strategic interest. Nigeria has come face-to-face with two major

obstacles, namely the Niger Delta militancy and the rising trend of pirate attacks on Nigerian territorial waters. These on-shore and off-shore security threats constitute the major challenges confronting the Nigerian state in the Gulf of Guinea. Both pose fierce threats to governance of the country and the entire region. Fundamentally, the activities of the Niger Delta militant groups complicate the tenuous security climate in the sub-region. The activities of militants include disruption of oil terminals and flow station operations, hostage taking, illegal bunkering, terrorism, piracy and the destruction of oil installations. Experts say these highly organized criminal activities cost the sub-region around \$1.2 billion annually in lost revenue (Gilpin, 2007). In addition, militants attempt to force the government to change its commitment of political, economic and social policies towards the Niger Delta. Recent evidence suggests that the weaponry is becoming more sophisticated and lethal as the youth and criminal gangs try to evade national law enforcement agencies (Iheme, 2008).

Notably, since the end of 2005, the on-shore and off-shore oilfields of the Niger Delta have essentially become ungovernable. Political instability, violent conflicts and criminal activities have deepened to the point that some of the oil and oil-service companies working in the areas, including Chevron, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon-Mobil, and Julius Berger, feel that their "social license to operate" is rapidly eroding. In 2003 and 2004, armed insurgencies and attacks on oil installations cut national oil output by forty percent (Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz, 2007). And more recently, the emergence of a shadowy groups of insurgents in the western Delta in late 2005 the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) marked a major escalation of insurgent activity. In the first three months of 2006, \$1 billion in oil revenues were lost and national output was cut by one third. As *Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz, (2007)* explained the escalating political crisis in the Delta threatens American energy security, the security of Nigeria's fledgling democracy and, indeed, the entire West African region as a source of reliable energy. Thus insecurity in the Niger Delta is, therefore, not just a problem for the Nigerian government. It is also a problem for the United States and the wider world (Goldwyn, 2008; Asuni, 2009). As a consequence, the trend leads to a downturn in the country's oil production capacity, revenue and sustainable economic development in the long run.

Nigeria's maximum **production** capacity is about 3.2 million barrels per day. However, the current production is often half of that, even without OPEC quota limitations. Much of the country's production is disrupted or shut-in-the oil stays in the ground because of security threats to oil facilities and their staff.

Of the crude oil that is produced, a significant proportion is lost through pipeline vandalism, acts of sabotage and theft (Goldwyn, 2008). Therefore Nigeria offers an archetypal example of the "paradox of plenty" by which vast oil wealth begets extravagant corruption, deep poverty, polarized income distributions, and poor economic performance (Ross, 2004). According to the IMF, in 2005 oil revenues accounted for 99 percent of all Nigerian export revenues, 88 percent of government income, and 50 percent of Nigerian GDP, amounting to over \$50 billion (International Monetary Fund, 2006).

Based on an oil price of \$50 per barrel, between 2006 and 2020 Nigeria alone could pocket more than *\$750 billion* in oil income; the whole of West Africa, more than *\$1 trillion*. For Africa, these are colossal numbers. However, as the proportion of GDP accounted for by oil increases, economic underdevelopment, state corruption, and political violence grow in equal measure. The social and political consequences of the oil revenue have rendered it more impoverished, organizationally weak, and increasingly violent. (*Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz, 2007*). The on-shore activities of the Niger-Delta militants currently threatens the prospects of Nigeria's interest in the Gulf of Guinea by disrupting the exploration activities of the oil multinational companies, reducing the oil production volume of the country and posing serious security threats to the entire states in the Gulf of Guinea triangle.

Aside the on-shore violence posed by the Niger-Delta militants, the trend of sea piracy as a result of lack of proper protection of the Nigerian territorial waters has also remained another obstacle militating against the country's interest in the Gulf of Guinea. Not until 2014 – 2015, the activities of pirates on the Nigerian territorial waters have been greatly worrisome, creating instability and affecting off-shore oil production much more than the on-shore activities. This has been generally attributed to the fact that Nigerian Navy is perceived weak, undertrained and ill-equipped. It does not have the capacity platforms to effectively police the water boundaries of Nigeria. In Nigeria and other countries in the Gulf of Guinea, this has led to increased rate of all sorts of illegal activities including poaching, transnational or trans-border drug trafficking, illegal fishing, illegal migration to Europe, bunkering, kidnapping of expatriate oil workers, all of which scares away foreign investors and disrupts oil production. These illegal activities amount to a great lost on the part of Nigeria and the countries of the sub-region. To lend credence, for instance, due to the increased rate of oil bunkering, the exact amount of oil stolen per day in the Niger Delta is unknown, but it is somewhere between 30,000 and 300,000 barrels. The loss to the Nigerian economy from illegal oil bunkering between

2003 and 2008 totals approximately US\$100 billion (Asuni, 2009). Hence, the trade in stolen oil, or "blood oil," poses an immense challenge to the Nigerian state, harming its economy and fueling a long-running insurgency in the Niger Delta. It also undermines security in the Gulf of Guinea and adds to instability on world energy markets (Asuni, 2009). More importantly, the security situation in the Gulf of Guinea also presents a daunting challenge to Nigeria's geo-strategic political interest in the region as it has apparently led to a struggle for primacy between the US, China and Nigeria.

The US has taken steps to establish a military outfit as a collaborative effort with the regional governments for policing the Gulf and to protect its investments and interests in the region. Either to protect its interest or to tackle the security challenges of the region, the establishment of the US-African Command (AFRICOM) obviously presents a real challenge to Nigeria's geo-strategic political interest as a regional hegemon. Nigeria's political aspiration is to remain relevant as a leading power in the region (economically and militarily), but her inability to successfully manage the security challenges in the Gulf and the establishment of AFRICOM by the US is perceived as having the tendency to undermine Nigeria's sustenance of its status as a regional hegemon. (Smith, 2004; Saliu and Aremu, 2006; Ruiters, 2007; Onuoha, 2008a; Onuoha, 2008b; Davis, 2009).

As logic expects, with the establishment of AFRICOM, Nigeria will no longer enjoy the respect and dignity accorded to her by the rest of Gulf of Guinea states. Any country in the region that faces an upsurge of any internal crisis would likely seek the support of AFRICOM instead of Nigeria. The logic is that the US is obviously known to be superior to Nigeria militarily wise. So, Nigeria needs more collaboration with other regional governments in the region by equipping and retraining personnel of its forces (Navy, Army and Air force) to respond adequately and positively to the security challenges in the entire Gulf of Guinea. How much and how well Nigeria succeeds in bringing the Gulf's security challenges under control would determine how far her interest and image as the regional hegemony would be advanced, protected and guaranteed.

CONCLUSION

The increasing strategic importance of the Gulf of Guinea is due to the recent discoveries of its proven enormous reserves of oil and other energy minerals capable of meeting greater proportion of the steadily growing world oil and energy demands. The search for the Gulf of Guinea's oil and gas resources has evolved stiff international competition and rivalry among major powers. The United States of America and the People's Republic of China are

major contenders.

The security dilemma in the Gulf of Guinea has consequently attracted international and sub-regional concerns. To the national governments in the Gulf region, it has resulted in various degrees of security threats and small wars. Thus, the inability of the Gulf of Guinea States and Nigeria to guarantee dominant stability in the area has led to the establishment of a foreign military formation-AFRICOM by the US. AFRICOM. The establishment of AFRICOM by the US has been in response to the persistent security challenges in the sub-region. Yet, it poses a real geo-strategic-political threat to the Nigerian state. While Nigeria aspires to remain highly respected and widely recognized as the most powerful and influential nation in the GoG, it needs to strengthen the military capability to arrest the heightened insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria has come to accept the contending challenges posed by the USA and China.

More than this, since 2014, Nigeria has acquired sophisticated naval patrol vessels and enhanced surveillance mechanisms against increasing oil theft in its territorial waters. As Nigeria could not effectively police the GoG alone, networking more strongly with GoG states is a strategic imperative. Beyond the lens of the US and China as sources of threats, Nigeria needs to take the lead in working closely with these great powers in controlling the activities of oil thieves, pirates and militancy in GoG. This strategic option is in Nigeria's national interest in the short and even long runs.

Notes

1. AFRICOM (i.e. US African Command): A special US Military Formation in Africa established to ensure the stability of the Gulf of Guinea as a means of safeguarding her oil investments and to guaranteeing interrupted oil supply from the region. See also Trevelyan, M. (2006). In a Reuters interview, William Kip Ward acknowledged a U.S. interest in safeguarding oil supplies and stated, "The protection of critical infrastructure and energy infrastructure is a concern all sovereign nations have. We clearly have a concern about that". Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz, (2007). "Observing that the Pentagon strategy is to lie low and work through African institutions to train troops and strengthen security, John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, predicts that the tiny island state of Sao Tome and Principe (STP; population: 193,000) will become the AFRICOM base". Motlagh, J. (2006). "This island seems destined to be America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Guinea, much like Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Guam in the Pacific".

2. See Williams, B. (2005). 'Wrong advert for transparency'. *Africa Today* October. Recently, South Korea National Oil Corporation (KNOC) obtained 65 percent oil and gas production rights in two Nigerian offshore blocs. KNOC emerged the preferred bidder over traditional Western oil majors like Exxonmobil, Shell, Chevron, Total, ConocoPhillip and Devon, to win Oil Processing Licenses (OPL) 321 and 323, estimated to have a reserve of about 2 billion barrels of oil".
3. Aside Nigeria, there are other oil-rich countries in the Gulf of Guinea recognized for their enormous capacity to contribute to the increasing global energy need. Some of these include Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Chad, Cameroon, and Gabon. In some cases, oil production and supply by some of these Gulf countries can be said to have reach marginal levels.

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BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Onyi, A.J. (2014). *An Overview of Human Resource Management: The Nigerian Experience*. Ebenezer Productions Nigeria Limited, Uwani – Enugu. ISBN: 978-014-961-7.

Onyi Akachukwu Joseph has ventured to provide a much - needed text to enhance understanding Human Resources Management from Nigerian perspective in his book entitled *An Overview of Human Resources Management: The Nigerian Experience*. His goal is to write a basic Human Resources Management text that is unique in several ways. This book is marked by a lengthy focus on explaining the concept of human resource management. It seeks to avoid spreading its coverage too thinly by treating its subject matter at length. The author believes that Human Resource Management has become a popular course of study in institutions of higher learning in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

Onyi Akachukwu Joseph argues that an understanding of theory, or explanations of concepts, must provide the foundation for studying Human Resource Management as a field of study. In his view, human resource (people) is the back-bone of any organization and as such, their motivation should be a priority to the management of the organization to achieve its set objectives. This book provides basic understanding of human resource management to students and managers in any organization. Also readers will be equipped with the knowledge, understanding and fundamentals of managing people or talents in organizations.

Onyi Akachukwu Joseph text is very much rooted in the belief that human resource management is the "life wire of an organization," and one cannot even imagine a proper organization or company functioning well without an effective Human Resource Management Unit. The author explores circumstances that may have played a role in demonstrating how lack of effective organization management could cause economic crisis of immense degree in any economy. For each circumstance, the underlying assumptions and policy implications are delineated in the book and examined. Finally, he has sought throughout this book to offer illustrations that fall within the experiences and concerns of students and managers in Human Resource Management, so that they may relate these themes to matters that are