



INTERNATIONAL POLICY REPORT

CONVERGENT INTERESTS: U.S. Energy Security and the “Securing” of Nigerian Democracy

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Over the past 15 years, amidst a deepening crisis in the Middle East and tightening petroleum markets, the U.S. has quietly institutionalized a West African-based oil supply strategy. Nigeria, currently providing 10-12 percent of U.S. imports, serves as the cornerstone of this Gulf of Guinea strategy. But since the end of 2005, the on- and off-shore oilfields of the Niger Delta—the major source of Nigerian oil and gas—have essentially become ungovernable. Political instability and violent conflict have deepened to the point that some of the oil and oil-service companies working there, 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. More recently, the emergence of a shadowy group 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. 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.

Approaching 140 million citizens, Nigeria is not only the most populous country in Africa, it is also a major supplier of petroleum to American and European markets. During the next two decades, it is expected to become even more critical, along with other oil-producing countries in the West African “Oil Triangle.” As Vice President Cheney’s *National Energy Policy Report* stated in 2001,

Along with Latin America, West Africa is expected to be one of fastest-growing sources of oil and gas for the American market.... Nigeria, in partnership with the private sector, has set ambitious production goals as high as 5 million barrels of oil per day over the coming decade.¹

Not long after the 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; strategy shifted primarily from training for peacekeeping missions in Africa to training for counter terrorism and energy security. Nigeria has been a particular target of this shift in energy security policy, not only as a strategic ally in the region but also as a “front line” state in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Like its predecessor, anti-communism, the GWOT is a timeless, borderless geopolitical strategy whose presumptions lead to defining all conflicts, insurrections and civil wars as terrorist threats, regardless of the facts on the ground.

Today, American energy security concerns and the GWOT have spearheaded a Department of Defense campaign to create a unified and separate African Command—AFRICOM—a long time objective of neoconservative lobbyists. In August 2006, *Time* magazine published an exclusive story saying then-Defense Secretary Rumsfeld was close to announcing the formation of AFRICOM and that a four star general, William “Kip” Ward, currently second in command at EUCOM and the highest ranking African-American officer, was to be appointed head of AFRICOM.² By

2 December, Secretary Rumsfeld announced that AFRICOM “should happen...in a matter of a month or two...but it’s important that we do that, and that this department recognizes the importance of Africa.”³ In a Reuters interview 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.”⁴

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. “This island seems destined to be America’s un-sinkable aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Guinea, much like Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Guam in the Pacific.”⁵ Additional strategic advantages of STP are: its isolation from the mainland, location within the Nigerian sphere of influence, and richness of oil and natural gas deposits within its territorial waters. Securing Nigerian energy resources will be, of course, a major strategic goal of the new AFRICOM command.

Endemic violence, insurgency and corrupt elections in the Niger Delta and elsewhere in the country underscore exactly how Nigeria’s numerous internal security problems threaten America’s energy security. While democratic forces

rallied in May 2006 by successfully blocking a constitutional amendment allowing President Obasanjo to serve a third term, Nigerian democracy remains fragile, dominated by an oligarchy of “godfathers,” compromised by staggering poverty, and divided by religious, ethnic and regional conflicts. Like many petro-states, the mismanagement of petro-rents determines the structure of political opportunity. Dominated by the competition for access to petro-rents by political and economic elites, the productive sectors of the economy—manufacturing and commercial agriculture—have been marginalized and neglected by policymakers and international investors. Even more problematic are the social and political consequences of the oil revenues flowing into the

country, which have rendered it more impoverished, organizationally weak, and increasingly violent. 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.⁶ Overlaid on this complex geo-political mosaic are the effects of powerful transnational forces: the oil companies and their security services, the growing military presence of the United

States, France and the United Kingdom, multilateral development and financial agencies, a powerful human rights constituency promoting business ethics and corporate social responsibility, and the mobilization of global religious identities, both evangelical Christian and Muslim. All of these challenge democratic governance and, of course, the policy

Figure 1



value of simplistic political slogans like the “Global War on Terrorism.”

In this policy brief, we lay out the developing situation in the “African Oil Triangle” (figure 1) centered on the Gulf of Guinea, where a wide range and broad number of factors and actors come together. We begin with an overview of the United States’ “petroleum problem” and its relentless search for new sources of oil. We then address oil and turmoil, as the two have intertwined in Nigeria to generate both corruption and political instability. In the third section, we discuss U.S. security strategy in the West African region and why it is misguided in the northern states and severely constrained in the Niger Delta. The final section of the brief asks, “What is to be done?”

U.S. Energy Security and the Petroleum Problem

Over the next 10 to 20 years, a number of converging trends in the global petroleum sector are likely to have major impacts on both oil markets and geopolitics. These include:

- rapidly growing global demand for oil, especially by China and India as well as the U.S.;
- declining production among several key suppliers, and perhaps globally, as a result of rapid depletion and underinvestment in the Persian Gulf region; and
- increased political instability in the Middle East, site of the largest reserves, due to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Sunni-Shi’a rivalries and Islamist-based resistance movements.

In the short and medium term, these and other instabilities, such as assertive petro-nationalism in Iran and Venezuela and political conflict in the Andean and Caspian oil zones, pose risks to the energy security of the United States: by

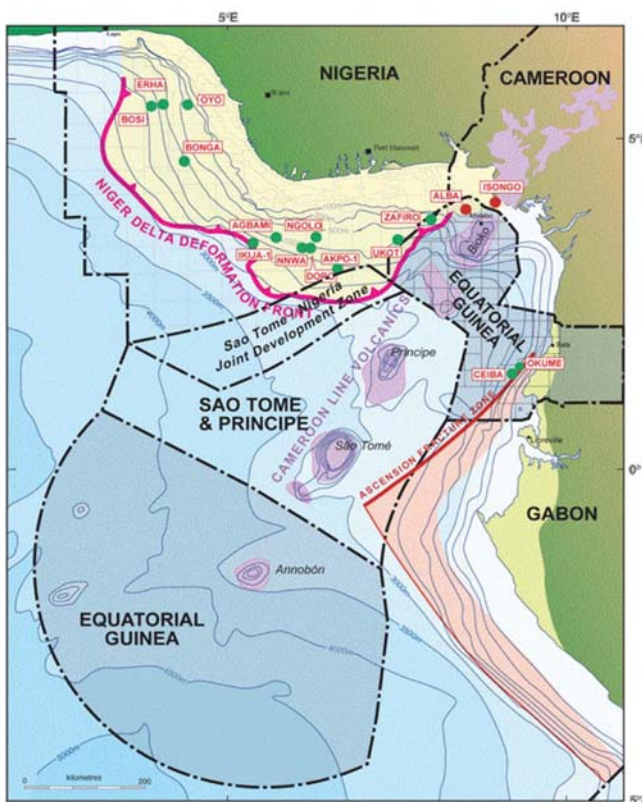


Figure 2: The Gulf of Guinea Source: Equatorial Oil “Technical Review—Petroleum Potential,” at: <http://www.equatorialoil.com/pages/TechReview.html>

making oil less available and more costly, perhaps rising as high as \$100 per barrel or more; by contributing to the fragmentation of weak polities (such as Iraq or Sudan); by making oil-producing countries more prone to social violence; and by intensifying international competition for reliable sources.

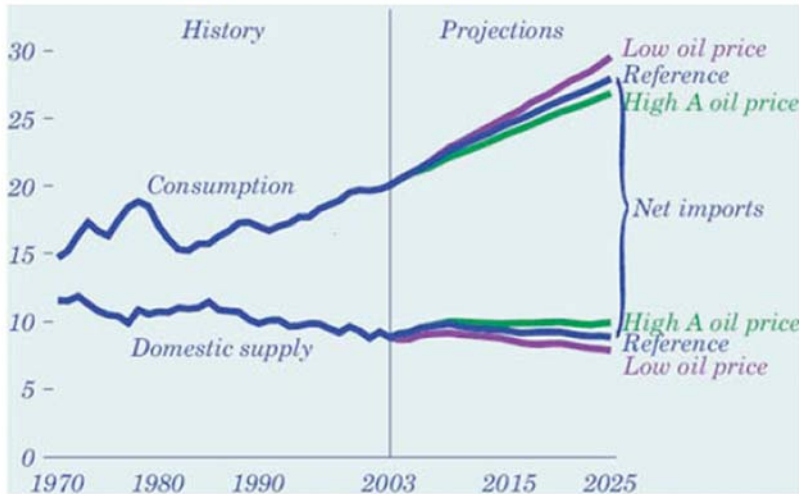
These possibilities have been foremost in the minds of Washington policymakers. Not long after President George W. Bush took office in 2001, the National Energy Policy Development Group, headed by Vice President Cheney, argued that the United States should look to West Africa’s Oil Triangle as a future source of reliable supply.

And in March 2005, a National Intelligence Council report pointed out that “global demand for hydrocarbons will be extremely robust in the next 15 years and these [African] countries will face the nominally happy chore of disposing of large amounts of export revenue.”⁷

Oil from the Gulf of Guinea is especially attractive for American consumers because it has a transport advantage to oil terminals on the east coast of the U.S. and a low-sulfur, lightweight content that fetches a premium for gasoline production. Oil lobbyists and neoconservative interest groups aggressively promoted, well before September 11, 2001, the security advantage of oil from the Gulf of Guinea compared to that of the Persian Gulf (figure 2). In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. military began to deepen its imprint on the West African region, drawing up military cooperation agreements with governments there (see text box 3 of this brief).⁸

According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), by 2025 American imports will rise from today’s 13 million barrels (bbl) per day to more than 18 million, depending on price (figure 3). From where will that oil come? Roughly two-thirds of the world’s oil and gas reserves are found in the Middle East, a geological reality that no grandiose rhetoric about “extending freedom” to that region can change (figure

Figure 3: U.S. Oil production, consumption, imports



US oil consumption through 2025 is projected to grow by at least 50% above today's level of 20 million bbl/day. Imports are likely to rise from 12 million bbl/day to as much as 20 million bbl/day. More than half of these imports will come from members of OPEC, of which about 57% will be imported from the Persian Gulf and about 42% from Latin America. Note that a figure like the one at left did not appear in the Department of Energy's Annual Energy Report Outlook 2005.

bbl/day	production 2005	US imports 2005	production 2020	production 2025	US imports
US	6,830,000	12,960,000 total	9,130,000	8,120,000	18,300,000
Middle East	25,119,000	2,345,000 from	31,570,000	33,980,000	5,730,000 from
West Africa	4,895,000	1,943,000 from	3,700,000	4,300,000	1,080,000 from
Nigeria	2,580,000	1,080,000 (2004)	3,400,000	3,800,000	not available

(Sources: Energy Information Administration, Annual Energy Outlook 2005; BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2006)

4). Indeed, reports DOE, by 2025 the Middle East's share of world oil production could increase from 21 to 34 million bbl per day or more.⁹ Yet, since 2001, notwithstanding oil prices in the \$50 to \$60 per barrel range, the prospects for a dramatic growth in Persian Gulf output have dimmed—in large part due to the civil war in Iraq and rising tensions over Iran's nuclear research program—and there is growing skittishness about investing heavily in the region.¹⁰

Oil from other sources could increase the security of supply and make the United States less beholden to potentially unstable or hostile regimes. As a result, American energy security planners have redefined the Gulf of Guinea as a strategic interest of the United States, a more

stable and secure source of future petroleum needs,¹¹ with potential reserves as high as 60 billion barrels.¹² Most production to date has been onshore, but new offshore finds have made the Gulf a major and growing global supplier of high quality and relatively low cost oil.¹³ In fact, the West African Oil Triangle currently supplies about 15 percent of daily imports into the United States,¹⁴ which some predict could rise to 25 percent by 2015.¹⁵ Furthermore, vast supplies of natural gas have made Nigeria a major player in the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry—attracting enormous investments from U.S. and European companies (with another \$30 billion expected through 2010).

Nigeria is the energy exporting giant and most attractive leg of the Oil Triangle. Currently, its proven oil reserves are estimated at 40 billion barrels, but new offshore discoveries will raise reserves significantly. Most of this oil derives from onshore fields in the Niger Delta (figure 5), but offshore discoveries like the Bonga fields are rapidly changing this picture. Depending on the future price of oil, and internal security in Nigeria, annual production could rise from 2.5 million bbl per day in 2005 to as much as 5 million bbl per day in 2020. Achieving these historically unprecedented output levels, however, requires extending and deepening democratic governance across Nigeria and strengthening internal security in the Delta as much as increasing foreign

investment or G8 interest. In global terms, the stakes are high and rising.

Today, Nigeria accounts for over 60 percent of the Gulf of Guinea's oil wealth. Its output makes Nigeria the eleventh largest oil producer in the world. It also contains the largest natural gas reserves in Africa (176 trillion cubic feet) and now possesses a

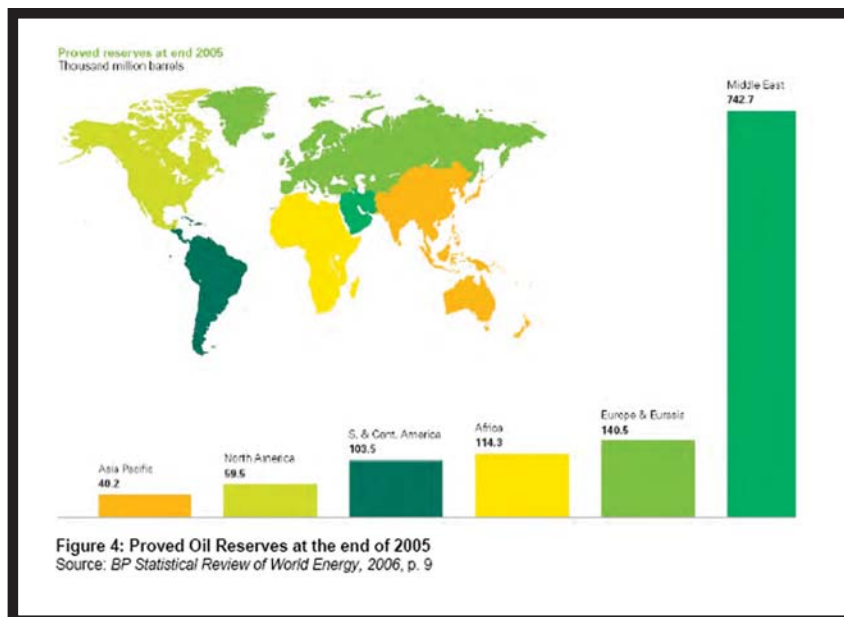


Figure 4: Proved Oil Reserves at the end of 2005
Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2006, p. 9

6 elements of the “oil complex” are: a federal statutory monopoly over mineral exploitation (the 1969 Petroleum Law; Revenue Allocation Decree 13 in 1970; the Land Use Decree of 1978), a nationalized oil company (the NNPC; see text box 1) that has majority holding in its production arrangements with foreign companies, the security agencies of the Nigerian state along with the private security forces of the companies (to ensure that costly investments are secured), multilateral financial and regulatory agencies, and the oil-producing communities themselves within whose customary jurisdiction the wells, refineries and pipelines are located.

Text Box 1: National Oil Monopolies

The Petroleum Act of 1969 provides “the entire ownership and control of all petroleum in, under or upon any land to which this section applies (i.e., land in Nigeria, under the territorial waters of Nigeria or forming part of the continental shelf) shall be vested in the state.” The spirit and intent of the Petroleum Act was further consolidated in 1978 when the government enacted the Land Use Decree, removing land from the control of local communities to be held in trust for the central government by the state governors, and extended in 2003 by the inclusion of deepwater offshore oil reserves. Control is vested largely through the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC), Nigeria’s largest company, with a turnover of more than N200 billion (\$1.6 billion). It operates through five joint ventures with oil supermajors (accounting for 95 percent of total output) that are granted territorial concessions. The largest joint venture accounting for half of Nigerian output is between Shell and NNPC (its full title is the Shell Petroleum Development Company) in which the latter has a 55 percent holding. Since the mid-1980s, the Nigerian oil industry has been under pressure to privatize, and in 1988 NNPC created eleven subsidiaries with the expectation of sale.

Oil has brought neither prosperity nor tranquility to the Delta or the country as a whole. At the heart of petro-states such as Nigeria are the politics and management of oil revenues. Oil-dependent economies like Nigeria, in spite of their vast resource wealth, represent some of the most sordid, chaotic, socially unjust and inequitable of all political economies. In practice, the petro-states are “paradoxes of plenty,” enormously wealthy on the one hand (with vast orgies of con-

sumption for a tiny oligarchy), yet marked by poor economic performance, toxic environmental pollution and growing inequality on the other. More than anything, petro-states are haunted by the absence of revenue transparency and accountability, distinguishing themselves each year by being ranked lowest in Transparency International’s annual World Corruption Index. As the proportion of GDP accounted for by oil increases, economic underdevelopment, state corruption, and political violence grow in equal measure. The “curse” of oil is one of the few issues on which the IMF, Jeffrey Sachs, the human rights community, the Catholic Church and millions of urban poor are in full agreement.

But rather than view this situation as attributable simply to venal or greedy officials and businessmen, the Nigerian dilemma is best explained by understanding the structural institutions and incentives produced by the “oil complex.”²⁰ First, vast revenues have accumulated in the hands of political elites whose practices lack any social discipline normally associated with production for a competitive market. This frees the state from the need to rely on taxation which would, in turn, induce taxpayers to make demands on state authorities for transparency, performance standards and meaningful political representation (taxation breeds the desire for representation and accountability).²¹ Second, opportunities to skim or appropriate revenues are legion in the absence of an institutionalized private or public agency committed to transparency and fiscal discipline (especially when a president like Obasanjo assumes direct personal control of the petroleum ministry). Third, the environmental and social costs of resource extraction are imposed on groups that are underrepresented or even excluded from power while the resource flows are captured by a political oligarchy skilled at spreading the petro-rents among a network of cronies. An auditor-general report issued in 2001 noted that government expenditures were riddled with fictional expenses, corruption and influence peddling.²² In a situation where no one can explain where the vast petro-revenues go, the resulting popular disillusionment causes class, ethnic, religious and social tensions to turn violent as each makes claims for a cut of the petro-spoils. Once corruption is institutionalized, as in the Niger Delta, democratic reform and fiscal accountability are extremely difficult to implement.²³

Since the 1960s, political mechanisms have been developed to allocate the oil rents (in Nigeria, the so-called revenue allocation process; see text box 2). Petro-dollars inserted into a fragmented and contested polity have fed a cycle of state decapacitation: a government radically weakened by corruption and institutional decay, even as intra-

What is on offer in the name of petro-based development is, in other words, the catastrophic failure of post-colonial nationalist development. A succession of military governments provided the cover (and the military protection) for companies like Shell, Chevron, Agip and Elf to avoid local litigation, to circumvent any responsibility for environmental damage (except in the most egregious cases, such as the massive *Funima* spill in 1980), and to neglect the life-chances of the oil-producing communities in which they operated.

Thus, between 1960 and 2004, national annual per capita income remained largely static, between \$200 and \$250 in constant dollars, while income distribution deteriorated markedly.²⁵ According to World Bank sources, today some 80 percent of the oil monies are accrued by 1 percent of the population with 70 percent of private wealth held abroad,²⁶ even as it is estimated that at least three-quarters of the country's inhabitants live on roughly \$1 per day.

The paradoxes and contradictions of oil are nowhere greater than in the oilfields of the Delta, or “Nigeria’s Kuwait,” as it is popularly known. By most estimates, there are somewhere between 250 and 300 different ethnic groups in Nigeria, with perhaps sixty living in the Niger Delta alone. One of the great deltaic regions in the world, the Niger Delta covers almost 75,000 square miles and 185 local government areas. Home to the world’s third largest mangrove forest and the most extensive freshwater swamp forests in west and central Africa, the Delta is a “hot-spot” of global biodiversity. Thus the Delta is much more than the source of most of Nigeria’s oil output; it is also a vital and fragile natural environment, a world resource that demands protection.

According to recent estimates, the population of the eight Delta states, standing at the political crossroads of the country, is roughly 28-30 million, a third of whom live in the three main oil-producing states—Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers. The Delta itself is a region of enormous ethnic and linguistic complexity (figure 6), dominated by five major linguistic categories (Ijoid, Yoruboid, Edoid, Igboid and Delta Cross). Of the many ethnic minorities in the region, however, the Ijaw, integrated as a nation by conflict over oil resources, represent the largest “nationality,” and are assumed to account for 10 percent of the Nigerian population.²⁷

state conflicts and civil democratic forces paradoxically are consolidated. Although Nigeria has earned over \$400 billion in oil revenues during the last 35 years, perhaps \$50-100 billion of these petro-dollars have simply “disappeared” through massive fraud and corruption. Transparency International regularly ranks Nigeria as one of the most corrupt states in the world. The anti-corruption chief, Nuhu Ribadu claimed that, in 2003, 70 percent of the country’s oil wealth was stolen or wasted; by 2005 it was “only” 40 percent.²⁴ Hardly a consolation for the country’s poor, it is a measure of the extent to which the Nigerian state is pillaged by a rapacious criminal oligarchy.

Text Box 2: The Politics of Oil Revenue

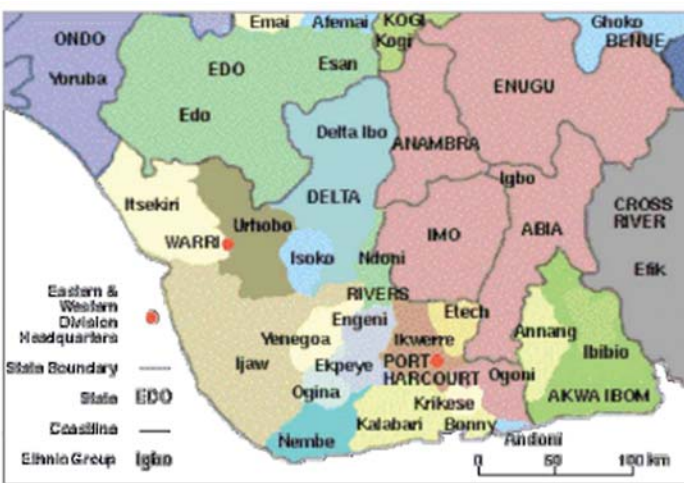


Figure 6: Major ethnic groups in the Delta Region
 Source: Mbong Foundations Int'l, at:
www.mbong.20m.com/images/ethnicDelta2.gif

The post-colonial history of Nigeria is in large measure the history of revenue allocation. A political mechanism determines the means by which federal oil revenues are distributed to the federal government and the states. In practice it is affected by four means: a federal account (rents appropriated directly by the federal state), a state derivation principle (the right of each state to a proportion of the taxes that its inhabitants are assumed to have contributed to the federal exchequer), the Federation Account or States Joint Account (which allocates revenue to the states on the basis of need, population, and other criteria), and a Special Grants Account (which includes monies designated directly for the Niger Delta). Over time, the derivation revenues have fallen (and thereby revenues directly controlled by the oil states have shriveled), while the States Joint Account has grown vastly (the nine oil-producing states received 886 billion

8 Despite their location in the petro-lands, oil-producing Delta states fall below the national average on virtually every measure of social and economic development. In the oil-rich states of Bayelsa and Delta, for example, there is one doctor for every 150,000 inhabitants (by comparison, the rate for the country as a whole is around 20 per 100,000).²⁸ The UNDP Niger Delta Development Report released in August 2006 offers a massive condemnation of the state's failure concluding that "vast revenues" have "barely touched the Niger Delta's own pervasive poverty."²⁹

It was precisely an abiding sense of disenfranchisement and exclusion among the Delta minorities, and of the Ijaw in particular, that sparked the first insurgency within the oil-producing regions three decades ago. That revolt was crushed within a couple of weeks—hence the name "Twelve Day Republic"—but the short-lived revolution dramatized the widespread feeling of powerlessness across the oilfields and nurtured ethno-nationalist insurgencies demanding local "resource control."

In the 30 years that followed, much has changed throughout Nigeria, but conditions in the Delta remain, as the UNDP report says, "dismal." In 1999, after a terrifying period of military authoritarianism under Sani Abacha, during which his repression of the Ogoni movement and execution of renowned writer Ken Saro Wiwa and six others (in 1995) further deepened the tensions within the oil producing regions, Olusegun Obasanjo became the first democratically-elected president in sixteen years. He inherited an economy in shambles, vast political and economic resentments among minorities in the oil-producing regions, an authoritarian legacy, and the daunting prospect of building a democracy on the backs of long-standing regional, ethnic and religious animosities.

After 1998, there was a substantial escalation of violence across the Delta, with major attacks against oil facilities led by excluded citizens immersed in toxic petro-waste. A 2004 report prepared for Royal Dutch Shell describes the insurrection but fails to acknowledge the need for local empowerment:

The recent history of the Niger Delta has been associated with communal disputes

and conflict, accentuated by the oil factor in criminal actions of youth against oil and gas companies, violent confrontations between the security forces and emerging militias, hostage taking, piracy and seizure or destruction of oil platforms and installations, pipeline vandalism and crude oil theft or illegal oil bunkering.³⁰

For example, in 2002, a large group of Ijaw women occupied Chevron oil refineries near Warri, demanding company investments and jobs for local inhabitants.³¹ That marked a deepening crisis over what is called "resource control"—a debate with its origins in the 1950s but now reactivated by the consequences of oil wealth amidst regional neglect. Subsequently, seven oil company employees were killed in March 2003, prompting all the major oil companies to withdraw staff, close down operations, and reduce output by more than 750,000 barrels per day (40 percent of national output). This in turn provoked President Obasanjo to dispatch a large troop deployment to the oil-producing districts.³²

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In April 2004, another wave of violence erupted around oil installations (by the end of that month, Shell had lost production of up to 370,000 barrels per day, largely in the western Delta),³³ this time amid the presence of armed insurgencies. Two so-called ethnic militia led by Ateke Tom (the Niger Delta Vigilante) and Alhaji Asari Dokubo (the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force), each driven and partly funded by oil monies and actively deployed (and paid) by high ranking politicians to be political thugs during elections, transformed the political landscape of the Delta. According to Amnesty International, oil-related deaths in the Niger Delta in 2003 and 2004 were 680 and over 1,000, respectively.³⁴

Since late 2005, the situation in the Delta has only worsened. Following attacks on oil installations and the taking of hostages in late December 2005 and early 2006, MEND began calling for the international community to evacuate from the Niger Delta by February 12th or "face violent attacks." Two weeks later, the group claimed responsibility for attacking a federal naval vessel and for the kidnapping of nine workers employed by the oil servicing company

Willbros, allegedly in retaliation for an attack by the Nigerian military on a community in the western Delta.

MEND also claimed a goal of cutting Nigerian output by 30 percent and has apparently succeeded. Within the first six months of 2006, there were nineteen attacks on foreign oil operations and over \$2.187 billion lost in oil revenues; the Department of Petroleum Resources claims this figure represents 32 percent of “the revenue the country generated this year.”³⁵ More than fifteen Nigerian soldiers were killed, and between May and August 2006, there have been at least three kidnappings per month (typically the hostages have all been released following the payment by the government of substantial ransoms).³⁶ For the time being, high oil prices have limited the magnitude of the loss, but tensions are sure to rise again during the next downward phase of the petro-price cycle.

In a deteriorating environment in which many oil companies have cut back production and withdrawn personnel, Julius Berger, the largest construction company operating in the country, announced its withdrawal from the Niger Delta.³⁷ President Obasanjo has sent in additional troops to bolster the Joint Military Task Force in the Delta and, in a recent conflagration, at least 60 militants were reported killed and another 100 arrested in two days of fighting in Bayelsa State during late August 2006.³⁸ A decade after the hanging of civil rights and democracy activist Ken Saro Wiwa and the military occupation of oil-producing Ogoniland, the tinderbox that is the Niger Delta appears more combustible than ever.³⁹

The costs of the insurgency are vast. A report prepared for the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) and published in 2003 under the title “*Back from the Brink*” paints a gloomy “risk audit” for the Delta. NNPC estimated that between 1998 and 2003, there were four hundred “vandalizations” on company facilities each year (and 581 between January and September 2004), with oil losses amounting to over \$1 billion annually.⁴⁰ Since 1999, the cost of instability in the region has been \$6.8 billion in lost oil revenues according to the Nigerian federal government.⁴¹ Again, only the institutionalization of democratic governance can eliminate these escalating costs.

The entire edifice of corruption, violence and sabotage is, in large measure, fed by the organized theft of oil, as distinct from oil revenues, by various sorts of “syndicates.” While low level operatives take their cut in and along the creeks, it is clear that so-called oil bunkering (large-scale

theft) involves the military, businessmen and reaches to the highest levels of government. Ijaw militants, struggling to get a cut of the illegal oil bunkering trade—some estimates suggest that this innovative form of oil theft siphons a staggering 15 percent of production threatened to destroy eleven captured oil installations.⁴² A confidential report commissioned by Shell in 2003 estimated that between 275,000 and 685,000 barrels of oil are stolen each day, generating anywhere from \$1 to \$4 billion annually for the “bunkerers.”⁴³ In 2005, Shell estimated that oil theft in 2004 was the equivalent of one-month’s production (almost 10 percent of annual output).⁴⁴ Earnings from oil theft bankroll local Delta militias, who are centrally involved in the theft in collusion with military and state officials at the highest levels, who acquire large caches of weapons, including small arms and rocket launchers. The Shell report concluded that violence could compel the company to abandon on-shore production and that its “social license to operate is fast eroding.”⁴⁵

Environmental degradation is also becoming a trigger of conflict between residents and the oil companies. According to a study by the Institute for Pollution Studies in Port Harcourt, between 1976 and 1996 there were more than 6,000 oil spills totaling more than 4 million barrels⁴⁶ (equal to almost 50 percent more than the country’s entire daily output)—equal to each 100-square-meter plot within the Niger Delta receiving roughly 3-4 gallons of spilled crude oil. Matters have not improved greatly: in 2004, according to Shell, there were over 200 spills.⁴⁷ Nigeria is also the largest flarer of gas in the world—historically, more than 80 percent of locally produced gas has been flared—accounting for 12 percent of world flaring (down from more than 20 percent in the late 1990s).⁴⁸ Flaring spews toxic chemicals upon adjacent Delta communities, generating an eerie “permanent daylight” along with concomitant health risks. The commitment of the oil companies to end gas flaring by 2008 has now been postponed.⁴⁹

As the clamor for resource control has taken center stage over the last decade, and as the Niger Delta has consequently become more ungovernable, the federal government has gradually increased derivation for oil producing states to 13 percent, but this remains a point of bitter contention. A National Confab in June 2005 took on the question of revenue allocation and the principles by which oil wealth was to be distributed. The so-called “derivation” debate—the proportion of oil revenues derived from a state to be retained—ended in shambles as the delegates from the Niger Delta walked out.⁵⁰

10 The moral in the Nigerian story is clear: the strategic imperative driving American energy security interests in West Africa is increasingly reliant on crude military power for policing oil installations and increasingly dependent on joint Nigerian-American strategic planning to suppress threats to production in and exports from the Oil Triangle. As in the Persian Gulf, the imperative to keep the oil flowing to American consumers drives U.S. policy makers to prize stability at all cost, and thus they find it expedient to support authoritarian governments in the Oil Triangle. Other sorts of instabilities, insecurity and conflict are also created in and around the oil production system which threatens both American energy security and Nigeria's capacity to maintain internal security through democratic governance. Overlaid on this complex mosaic are the effects of powerful transnational forces, in particular the oil companies and their security forces and the growing military presence of the United States, France (in Chad) and the United Kingdom as well as transnational religious, ethno-nationalist and criminal networks. This, in turn, will foster more instability, more ethno-nationalist reactions and, ultimately, increase the risk of reproducing the destabilizing forces now seen around the Persian Gulf. Indeed, such problems are already evident in U.S. strategic policy in and around the Oil Triangle. It is to these matters that we turn next.

U.S.-Nigerian Security Interests: Searching for Solutions

The growing insecurity of U.S. oil supplies reflects what Michael Klare has called the "economization of security," an important strand of U.S. foreign policy since the 1930s, which has focused on global oil acquisition policy.⁵¹ After 9/11, American energy security was overtaken by and slowly merged with the amorphous, borderless GWOT. Active counter terrorism displaced earlier emphasis on training for peacekeeping and human rights. Fears that China is gaining control over African energy resources, e.g. Angola, are important to the new emphasis on securitization of energy policy, as well as bureaucratic competition for control over resources among the regional commands of the U.S. military.⁵²

Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's strategic doctrine—*Force Transformation*—which emphasized mobile, lean, flexible forces rotating through a network of "lily pads" located close to conflict centers (e.g. Sao Tome and Principe), rather than the large, static bases like Stuttgart (Germany) so typical of Cold War strategy, also reinforced the strategic shift to counter-terrorism in Africa. With the end of the Cold War, the European Command's (EUCOM) strategic worth

withered dramatically and troop strengths declined by roughly two-thirds. Because promotions depend overwhelmingly on combat experience, it is not surprising that ambitious EUCOM officers searched for a new mission. The GWOT offered EUCOM strategists an attractive opportunity to reclaim lost relevance and resources by looking southward to North and West Africa, where they repositioned some of their forces to the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea.⁵³ To fund this shift, the Pentagon has marketed several West African initiatives to Congress: the Gulf of Guinea Guard, the Pan-Sahel Initiative, the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) and the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy (GGESS). Finally, as documented in the "tool kit" box (text box 3), the strategic shift was nurtured by an unlikely coalition of neoconservative "fixers," energy lobbyists, politicians, former diplomats and Africanist humanitarians committed to raising the strategic profile of West Africa in American foreign policy, all embracing the GWOT discourse of counter-terrorism as they and climbed on the energy security bandwagon.

Text Box 3: Tool Kit: How to Promote an American Energy Security Zone

How did Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea become America's "vital interest" and new energy security zone? The story begins with a campaign promoted by a neoconservative think tank and Paul Michael Wihbey, a lobbyist and energy "expert" who has tirelessly promoted American military intervention in that region's oil-producing states. Baptized "the leading evangelist of West Africa's [oil] potential" by the conservative National Review's editor, Rich Lowry, Wihbey wears many hats. Not only is he a "strategic fellow" at Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (IASPS) headquartered in Jerusalem (www.iasps.org) and president of the Global Water and Energy Strategy Team, a shadowy private sector energy consultancy in Washington, (www.gwest.net), but he is also a "senior fellow in energy studies" at the American Foreign Policy Council (<http://www.afpc.org/>) and president of The Center for Strategic Resources Policy, "a non-profit Washington policy institute" (no website).

In a mere eight years, with the support of IASPS, Wihbey's lobbying has contributed to increased American military involvement in and around the Gulf of Guinea as well as greater American-Nigerian cooperation in managing security in the Niger Delta. In 2002 he

networked with allies across several U.S. government agencies, cultivated support from Republican and Democratic members of the House Subcommittee on Africa, and recruited U.S. government officials and energy industry executives to participate in an IASPS-supported organization, the African Oil Policy Initiative Group (AOPIG) (which appears to be a neocon shell organization—no official membership list seems to exist—but among its prominent supporters is Congressman William J. Jefferson (D-LA), currently under investigation on corruption charges by the FBI). Since 9/11, Wihbey has issued a “white paper” on African oil, held promotional meetings with both the president and vice president of Nigeria and was, most recently, “lead author” of a report on West African oil sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF).

As long ago as 1998, Wihbey warned that Atlantic Equatorial Africa was “completely disregarded as a region containing vital U.S. interests” and that a “new security architecture is needed to reduce and eliminate current and potential threats to U.S. interests.”⁵⁴

In March 2000, he presented his strategic vision to the House Subcommittee on Africa, calling for a U.S. Navy “home port in the Gulf of Guinea, possibly on the islands of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.” This, he claimed,

was needed to sustain a forward military

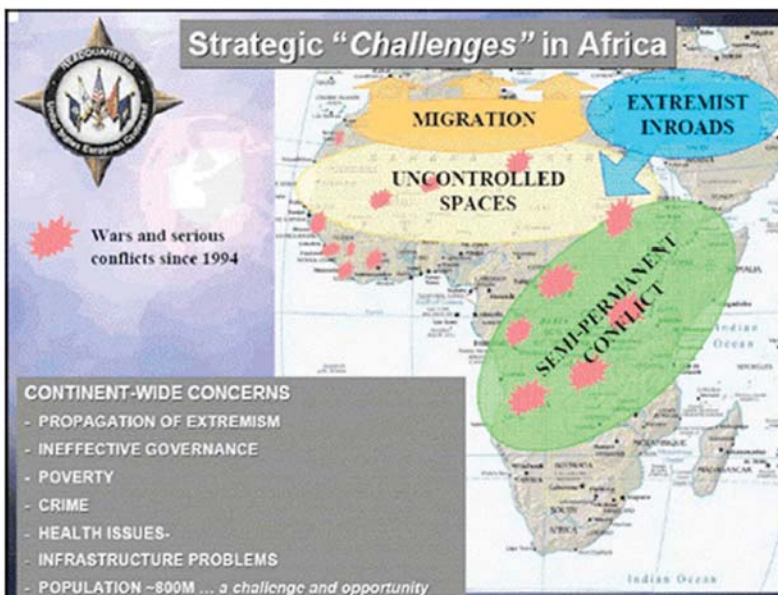


Figure 7: Threats from “Ungoverned Spaces”
Source: http://www.aei.org/docLib/200404141_wald.pdf



Figure 8: EUCOM Africa Strategic Resource Map
Source: http://www.aei.org/docLib/200404141_wald.pdf

presence such as petroleum support facilities, warehousing, deepwater port and air strips [that] would provide the United States with a below the horizon capability. Presence of a U.S. base in the Gulf of Guinea would signify a clear and long term commitment to the region further enhancing U.S. credibility...⁵⁵

To further grease the bureaucratic wheels at the Pentagon, he also recommended “selecting a permanent home for The African Center for Security Studies,” which is now housed at the National Defense University in Washington. (www.africacenter.org)

In April 2001, Wihbey collaborated with Barry M. Schutz, an active member of the State Department’s Africa Bureau. They published a short paper recommending “a U.S. South Atlantic Command that would create a new U.S. military command structure in the South Atlantic, confirming the U.S.’s strategic interest in West Africa as the U.S. redraws its energy supply lines for the 21st century....”⁵⁶ Support for their views grew when Vice President Cheney’s National Energy Report (May 2001) cited West African oil as a valuable resource for diversifying America’s rapidly increasing energy imports.

On January 25, 2002, just four months after 9/11, IASPS sponsored an AOPIG symposium, orga-

12 nized by Wihbey, his IASPS colleagues, Robert Heiler and Frederick Cedoz, and Barry Schutz. Speakers included Walter Kansteiner, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, who declared “African oil is of national strategic interest to us, and it will increase and become more important” This was followed by an AOPIG white paper, “African Oil: A Priority for United States Security and African Development,” launched by Wihbey, Schutz, DOE officials, and members of Congress at a June, 2002 press conference. In language almost identical to Wihbey’s testimony in 2000, AOPIG recommended a “strategic commitment” in the region, including a new regional command or a “sub-unified command,” a “regional homeport” at STP, and increased military aid to member states of the Economic Community of West African States, a regional organization dominated by Nigeria.⁵⁷ Congressman Jefferson enthusiastically participated in all of these events.⁵⁸

In 2005, during Congressman Jefferson’s chairmanship of the CBCF, Wihbey was recruited as “lead author” of the CBCF-sponsored report, “Breaking the Oil Syndrome: Responsible Hydrocarbon Development in West Africa.”⁵⁹ More curious, perhaps, is the absence of any disclosure of his affiliation with IASPS from publicity surrounding the report. Wihbey is described as the president of the Global Water and Energy Strategy Team (GWEST), “a leading advisor to sovereign nations, integrated oil and gas exploration, production and services companies, construction companies and financial institutions on the politics of the global energy market

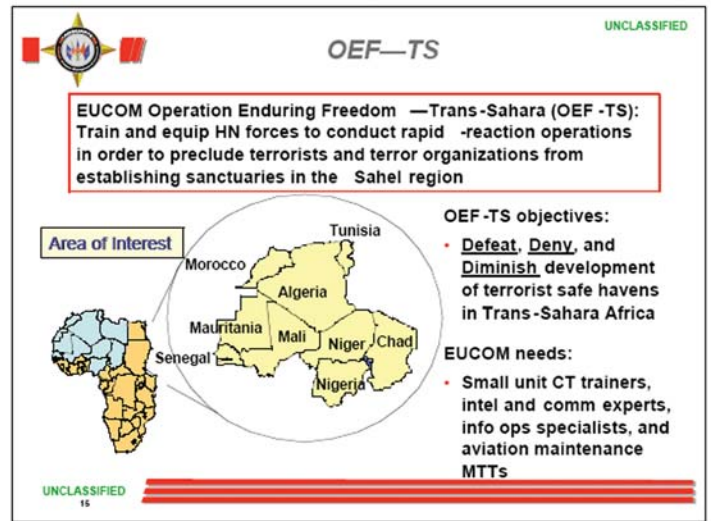


Figure 10. EUCOM Marines Counter-Terrorism Mission (OEF-TS/TSCTI)
Source: <https://www.mccdc.usmc.mil/FeatureTopics/Africa/files/Products/EUCOMVIS.pps>

issues.” But GWEST seems to be another neocon “shell,” linked to IASPS through at least two of its four vice presidents, (Heiler and Cedoz), with a third vice president who is chairman of the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs in Washington, another right-wing think tank (www.gwest.net).

The CBCF report, vetted by congressional staff, offers many progressive recommendations about transparency, justice, sustainability and human rights in the region’s states. But material published for a November 2005 promotional appearance, sponsored by the Sullivan [Principles] Foundation and Congressman Jefferson, casually announced that “Farragut Advisors has hired Mr. Wihbey to represent the interests of [oil-rich] Equatorial Guinea in Washington DC.”⁶⁰ That country is brutally ruled by one Teodoro Obiang, charged by the U.S. State Department Human Rights office and Amnesty International with a staggering list of human rights violations including torture, starving prisoners, unfair trials, human trafficking, violence against women and politically-motivated murders.

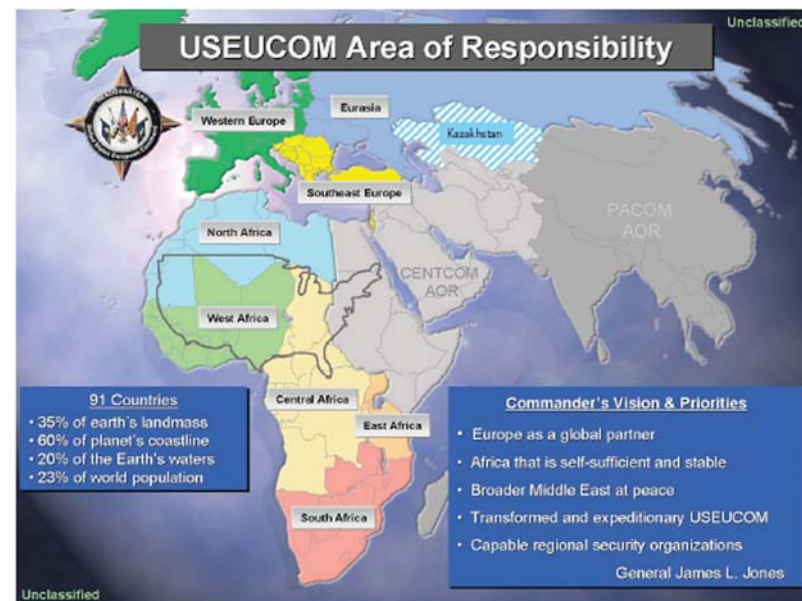


Figure 9: The U.S. vs. Africa
Source: <http://www.centcom.mil/sites/uscentcom1/CCJ8/4%20EUCOM%20PD1%20Brief.ppt>

In the aftermath of 9/11, then, when the strategic value of West African oil for American energy security rose significantly, is it not a bit ironic, even hypocritical, that Bush is embracing the pariahs of the human rights community—Equatorial Guinea and Algeria—even as neocons are attacking the reliability of supply and human rights records of Saudi and other Persian Gulf suppliers? If the Gulf of Guinea

offers America an opportunity to avoid such corrupt alliances, as Wihbey and other neocons contend, why has President Bush met with Obiang, why did Rumsfeld embrace Algeria and why does Wihbey represent Equatorial Guinea's interests in Washington?

Building on the foundation laid by neoconservative promoters and opportunistic Washington players like Wihbey and Congressman Jefferson, strategists at the Pentagon have invented a new security threat to increase funding for EUCOM's footprint in West Africa. Recently, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Theresa Whelan announced the discovery of a "new threat paradigm"—the threat of "ungoverned spaces"—in Northwest and West Africa (figure 7).⁶¹ Significant numbers of terrorists, currency smugglers, and criminals, assumed to be active in the sands of the Sahara, have become the threatening agents legitimating EUCOM's new mission. "Enhancing regional peace and security," the U.S. military's stated objective for the Sahara's and Sahel's impoverished and often famine-ridden people may be a noble ideal in the abstract, like promoting democracy in Iraq, but it obscures and glosses over America's interest in securing recent oil discoveries in the Sahel, especially in Mauritania, Niger and the Chad Basin.

Maya Rockey Moore of TransAfrica Forum argues that "the United States is creating this [military] build-up under the guise of counter-terrorism. The reality is they're protecting the oil resources from the encroachment of other nations that are also interested in the oil, such as China."⁶² (figure 8) But a naked oil-security strategy is too cynical, even for politicians and generals to defend overtly. Hence, the public relations face put on the GWOT's dispatch of Marines and Special Forces to train and advise local armies to police these vast "ungoverned spaces" is rationalized by the claim that terrorists affiliated with al-Qaeda are threatening American strategic interests in northwest and West Africa.

On the map, the Sahara and Sahel do look virtually empty, with only a scattering of towns and cities spread across porous national borders. On the ground, however, they are hardly empty, ungoverned spaces. And historically, while the inhabitants have engaged in pastoralism, agriculture, trade, smuggling, and piracy for centuries, and express indifference or hostility to the laws and rulers living in distant capital cities, they have nevertheless developed indigenous forms of governance, conflict mediation and law, both tribal and Islamic. None of these practices is necessarily connected to

terrorism. Caravan routes across the region are thousands of years old; smuggling is managed by transnational extended kinship networks, kidnapping for ransom and raiding enemies have long histories well before the GWOT. The GWOT, however, is premised on the assumption that the institutional weaknesses of the region's post colonial states, their lack of legitimacy among their citizens, and the relative absence of effective policing constitutes a dangerous geopolitical "vacuum" into which terrorists are sure to flow.

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2005, EUCOM's then-commander, General James Jones, emphasized that his command's "objective in Africa should be to eliminate ungoverned areas, to counter extremism, and to end conflict and reduce the chronic instability" because of Africa's "potential to become the next front in the Global War on Terrorism."⁶³ Viewed more realistically, however, the fact is that decades of multilateral neglect, devastating poverty, endemic famine and institutional decay in the Sahelian states render EUCOM's mission to eliminate ungoverned spaces a very tall order indeed, if not a dangerous delusion.

The grandiosity of EUCOM's plan to eliminate ungoverned spaces in West Africa becomes readily apparent when the region in question is superimposed upon a EUCOM map of the contiguous territory of the United States (figure 9). Examine the spatial dimensions of these maps. Where will the resources and troops come from that will be required to train and advise local troops to police an area equivalent to the continental forty eight states? Will the presence of American troops in Muslim lands provoke Islamic radicalism, as many analysts acknowledge has happened in the Middle East? Worse still, will counter-terrorism intervention here risk reproducing bungled outcomes in Somalia where, laments John Prendergast of the International Crisis Group, "U.S. counter-terrorism efforts designed to contain foreign al-Qaeda operatives have accelerated the expansion of jihadi Islamist forces. . . . [and] misguided U.S. policy has produced the largest potential safe haven for al-Qaeda in Africa."⁶⁴ Is there a not a serious risk that the Pentagon's Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative will inadvertently provoke another proxy war like current the Ethiopian-Somali conflict?

Hugh Roberts, a respected expert on North Africa with the International Crisis Group recently warned: "The idea that you could have major jihadi units holing up there always struck me as implausible. . . the quickest way to generate a jihadi movement is to send some U.S. soldiers in there to

14 swagger around. The more visible the U.S. military presence, the bigger the target.”⁶⁵ Largely obscured by the meltdown of American policy in Iraq and Afghanistan, a fierce debate rages among American policy makers over whether a serious threat of terrorism in the Sahara and Sahelian regions actually exists or, alternatively, whether the extension of the GWOT to these regions will only provoke this threat.⁶⁶

Standing on one side in this debate are interventionist American military advisors, led by Generals Charles Wald and William Ward, former and current deputy commanders of EUCOM; on the other are State Department officials, regional specialists and human rights activists. Predictably, the military favors sending aggressive American advisors from the Marines and Special Forces, teaching offensive counter-terrorist tactics, and increasing lethal support for indigenous army units (figure 10). Justification rests on an unsupported claim by the Pentagon that 25 percent of the foreign jihadists captured in Iraq came from North Africa, a generalization commonly reduced by pro-interventionists and the media to “Africa.” Those opposed to a military solution argue for realistically and critically reassessing the outcomes provoked by the GWOT: the escalating catastrophic break up of Iraq, the crumbling situation in Afghanistan, and an accumulation of failed military interventions into Muslim societies like Somalia. What is virtually certain, however, is that sending additional American “advisors,” eager to earn combat promotions, and delivering more lethal weapons into Sahelian states will, once again, provoke fierce Muslim resistance to what they perceive as foreign occupation, validate the most extreme worldviews, and ultimately encourage the very anti-American alliances and insurrections EUCOM military planners fear most—a classic self-fulfilling prophecy.

The interventionists’ brief for ramping up American military intervention largely rests on a 2004 confrontation between American and Sahelian state army units on one side, and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) on the other. The GSPC, a small insurrectionist splinter of the Armed Islamic Group, born during the Algerian civil war, kidnaps tourists and commits terrorist acts in Africa and Europe. The GSPC has pledged solidarity with al-Qaeda but no operational linkages have been verified between the two groups. During the incident in question, an American P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft based in Tamarasset (Algeria) tracked a GSPC band across Mali, Niger and Chad in order to enable American advisors deployed from EUCOM’s Special Forces to assume operational control and direct an assault by Chadian army units. Before the combined force

could eradicate the GSPC band, however, the Chadians had to be resupplied with 20 tons of equipment from American bases in Germany.⁶⁷

Serious doubts have been raised about the U.S. military’s representation of the GSPC affair.⁶⁸ Human rights advocates and regional experts like Jeremy Keenan at the University of Exeter (UK) argue that the GSPC is merely a cat’s-paw or a double agent of the shadowy Algerian security forces, who have manipulated the affair in order to legitimate this outcast regime and attract more U.S. military aid under the GWOT.⁶⁹ The International Crisis Group (ICG) has also expressed deep skepticism about the contention that the Sahara and Sahel are terrorist “swamps” that must be drained by the Americans and their local allies. In light of a long history of active Islamist politics and periodic revolts against governments in the region as well as the widespread hostility to American military intervention in the Muslim world, the ICG argues that increases in American military intervention could, in fact, tip the balance of local forces in opposition to American interests.⁷⁰

ICG’s warning, ironically, is reinforced by the recent National Intelligence Estimate conclusion that “the war in Iraq has become a primary recruitment vehicle for violent Islamic extremists, motivating a new generation of potential terrorists around the world...”⁷¹ As Congress considers expanding the funding of the TSCTI (see text box 4) to \$500 million, it should wonder what the local Muslim inhabitants will see when those “boots on the ground” arrive in the Sahel. In a global era where even remote areas have access to graphic satellite TV broadcasts of American counter-insurgency practices in Iraq, the proposed TSCTI build-up will almost certainly be perceived by the local Muslim inhabitants as yet another American occupation of a Muslim country.

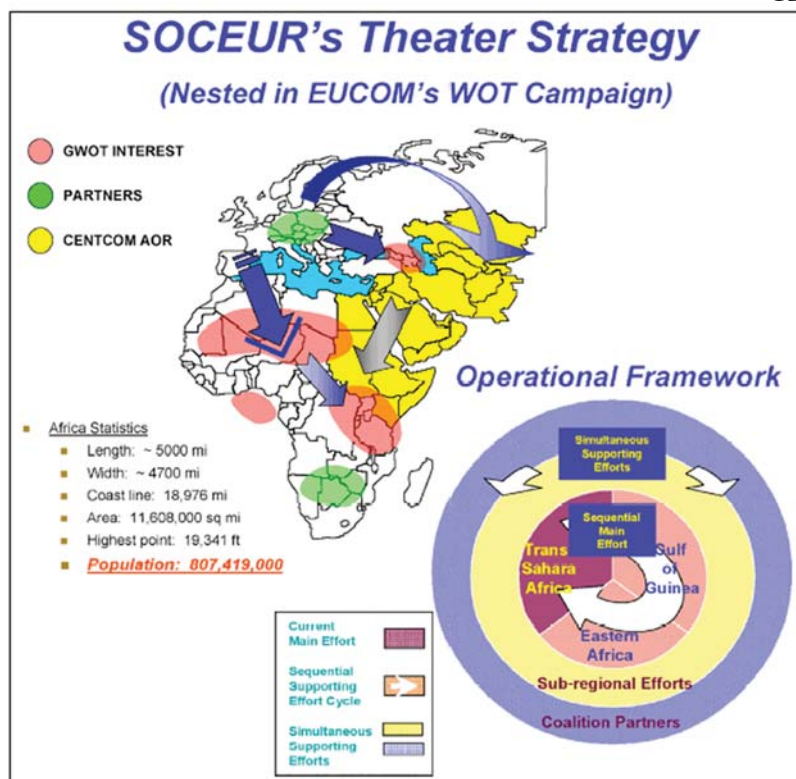
No discussion of the relationship between foreign occupation and terrorism is complete without referring to the brilliant work of Robert Pape. A former instructor at U.S. Air Force’s School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Pape concludes that the 5,000 American troops formerly stationed in Saudi Arabia, were a mobilizing and motivational issue for the 9/11 terrorists.⁷² (The BBC reports that they were withdrawn because “Saudis see them as proof of the country’s subservience to America.”⁷³) Pape argues that for both religious and secular insurgents “suicide terrorism is an extreme form of a national liberation strategy...” designed “to compel a modern democracy to withdraw combat forces.” He further proposes that “the key driving factor, is a deep

anger over the presence of foreign combat forces on territory that the terrorists prize greatly. Absent that core condition, we rarely see suicide terrorism.”⁷⁴ More ominously, he warns “the sustained presence of heavy American combat forces in Muslim countries... is likely to increase the odds of the next 9/11.”⁷⁵ Avoiding even the perception of foreign occupation, therefore, is a precondition for a successful American foreign policy in Muslim West Africa.

We have suffered the consequences of this perverse logic before. Because the blurred lens of the GWOT labels virtually all Islamist reform movements as terrorist or, at least, highly suspect, military interventionists make the same error as Cold War ideologues did when all regional conflicts, nationalist movements, civil wars and local insurrections were coded as part of an international communist conspiracy, regardless of local histories, national injustices or facts on the ground. American energy security, unfortunately, will not be enhanced by greater military intervention into this impoverished and politically fragile region.

Moreover, as the GSPC affair confirms, the U.S. training mission easily evolves into “active advising” and equipping of African units engaged in counter-terrorism. Investigative journalist Raffi Khatchadourian has documented numerous clandestine operations and joint operations by American Special Forces and/or intelligence agents in Mali, Algeria and Chad.⁷⁶ The obvious political risk contained in mission expansions arises when U.S. troops advise and train armies engaged in suppressing the domestic opponents of allied regimes (Chad) or become involved in local civil wars (Somalia). Algeria provides a poster-child portrait of such a brutal authoritarian regime, warmly embraced by former Secretary Rumsfeld on his last visit, regardless of the fact that it is composed of “eradicators” who provoked a civil war when, in the early 1990s, the military overturned the result of democratic elections won by an Islamist political party. Muslims in West Africa constantly ask: who is supporting democracy here? Experts familiar with covert operations in the Sahel are convinced that American forces and advisors are directly engaged in counter-terrorism. As John Pike of GlobalSecurity.org puts it, “They’re not just training. They’re going in there and tracking down evil-doers...they have a license to hunt.”⁷⁷

Despite these doubts and debates, U.S. military involve-



Title: Col. Mark R. Rosengard "COMSOCEUR's Strategic Vision"
 Figure 11: GWOT Pincer movements in Nigeria
 Source: <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2005solic/rosengard.ppt> (accessed on Oct 10, 2006)

ment in West Africa has only mushroomed since 2001, focusing on three broad goals: (i) getting U.S. forces on the ground in order to advise and upgrade the region's militaries in support of the GWOT; (ii) establishing maritime dominance in the Gulf in order to secure offshore oil installations and, if necessary, unilaterally defending American energy assets; and (iii) building or subcontracting access to new air and naval bases, to provide both forward supplies, surveillance and air cover capacities. As EUCOM's General Jones recently told the *Wall Street Journal*, "Africa plays an increased strategic role militarily, economically and politically..." for his command, which now spends "70 percent of its time and energy on Africa... up from nearly none when he took it over three-plus years ago."⁷⁸

Despite the ambitions of EUCOM, it is only fair to say that countervailing forces among American policy makers are limiting the aggressive plans of strong advocates like General Wald. Scarce funding has limited ground American troops in the region to fewer than 10,000 at any one time. Overstretched and burned out by the deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, many professional officers resist deeper American involvement. And local hostility to U.S. bases in countries like Nigeria has, thus far, prevented EUCOM from establishing a "Forward Operating Base" in West Africa as

16 they have established in Djibouti. Given these constraints, EUCOM has pursued intervention through training, equipping and actively advising West African militaries, all in the name of the GWOT. This also allows the command to put private contractors, Special Forces operatives, intelligence agents and support troops on the ground, ostensibly for training, but also for gathering human intelligence, building “interoperability” with local army units as well as for providing cover for clandestine missions.

Text Box 4: U.S. Military Activities in West Africa

All four military services are involved in the “new scramble for Africa,” with EUCOM taking responsibility for North, West and Central Africa. To bolster intelligence on Africa, EUCOM has created an Africa Clearing House on security information, supported by a Pentagon think tank, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, housed at the National Defense University. Finally, General Jones has recommended that EUCOM “change its name to EURAFRICOM, or that the Pentagon establish a separate command for Africa, AFRICOM.” Indeed, according to reports cited above, the Pentagon is preparing to create a separate African Command to take over from EUCOM, the Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Pacific Command.

Unlike EUCOM, CENTCOM managed to set up a forward operating base in East Africa. Its Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa is based at Camp Lemonier, built on a former French Foreign Legion base in Djibouti, a tiny nation strategically located where the Red Sea opens to the Gulf of Aden. Camp Lemonier will soon be expanded from “88 acres to nearly 500” so that it can house at least 1,800 personnel, rotating in and out from all four services and the CIA.

The U.S. Navy is also becoming a semi-permanent fixture in the Gulf of Guinea, represented by EUCOM’s Sixth Fleet. General Jones has stated that he expects EUCOM’s navies to spend about half of their time off the coast of West Africa and, to sustain this effort, he has requested congressional funding for the Gulf of Guinea Guard, a ten-year initiative to train navies, imple-

ment a maritime radar system, the Automated Identification System, and securitize oil supplies in the Gulf.

Congressional funding for this initiative has proved difficult due to inter-state rivalries, uneasiness about Nigeria’s domination of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, and the absence, so far, of terrorist attacks on oil facilities. Yet there is little question that the U.S. presence will increase in

the region. At a West African oil and gas conference held in London in June 2005, General Wald reassured producers with a talk on “Measures to protect oil operations in the Gulf of Guinea.” In July 2006, the Center for Strategic and International Studies issued a report recommending that “security and governance in the Gulf of Guinea [should be] an explicit priority in U.S. foreign policy.” And, during an August 2006 appearance in Washington, Navy Secretary Gordon England said the Navy was looking to enhance its operations in what he termed “the ungoverned areas of Africa.”⁷⁹

Even while the Navy laments a shortage of ships and resources, the American naval presence in the Gulf has continued to grow. According to Navy Captain Thomas Sumner Rowden, head of a 6th Fleet task force on the Gulf of Guinea, U.S. military activity in the Gulf increased exponentially “from almost no activity in 2004 to 130 ‘ship days’ in 2005,” with more planned for 2006. His forces “have worked with the navies of Sierra Leone, Congo, Cameroon, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Sao Tome and Principe, Liberia, Gabon, Cape Verde,



Title: Col. Mark R. Rosengard "COMSOCEUR's Strategic Vision"
 Figure 12: The "Empty Spaces" of North and West Africa
 Source: <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2005sollic/rosengard.ppt> (accessed on Nov 1, 2006)

Senegal and Ghana.”⁸⁰

The Marine Corps is also gearing up for growth in its Africa deployments. In January 2006, the Marine research center at Quantico sponsored a conference attended by over 130 participants on “The 21st Century Marines in west and central Africa.” The conference report reads like a recruitment proposal or a “jobs fair,” detailing the specializations required in Africa. Not to be missed, either, is an informative conference presentation entitled “Marines in Africa—Now and in the Future,” which provides mundane but nitty-gritty information about job opportunities, prior deployments, upcoming trainings, joint task forces, and overall goals for fighting terrorism in West Africa.⁸¹

Ashore, the TSCTI, successor to the Pentagon’s Pan-Sahel Initiative, pursues training and advising support for West African states in the GWOT. It reflects America’s most aggressive shift from peace-keeping and stability operations to active counter-terrorism. Modeled on America’s initial successes in Afghanistan, the strategy is called “netwar”—an innovative melding of U.S. intelligence and manpower with local forces.” According to EUCOM’s Admiral Tallent, TSCTI is intended “to build indigenous capacity by strengthening regional counter-terrorism capabilities..., enhancing weaponry skills, communications, land navigation, patrolling and medical care... [and] training forces to protect... borders through the detection and elimination of terrorist enclaves” (the last term indicating use of active lethal force).⁸²

What does the U.S. military gain from TSCTI? According to EUCOM sources, hard intelligence about the terrain, local cultures and leadership of counterpart armies are being entered into databases. Training develops “a high degree of interoperability” and points to

future management of local militaries by American 17 commanders. Growth in resources is also important to EUCOM: in FY2005, the TSCTI received \$16 million; in FY 2006, nearly \$31 million. “The big push comes in 2008, when the administration hopes to get \$100 million each year for five years.” All of this far exceeds the \$7.75 million allocated to the earlier Pan-Sahel Initiative. If and when the new Africa Command is approved by President Bush, funding will be ramped up accordingly.

How does EUCOM’s support of the GWOT in the Sahel relate to democratizing Nigeria’s internal security regime, and sustaining American energy security? General Jones’s appeal to Congress for funding of EUCOM’s initiatives in West Africa constantly invokes the security and stability of Nigeria. He presents Nigeria as threatened from the north by jihadists hiding in the “ungoverned spaces” of the Sahel, allegedly supported by transnational Islamist networks extending into Nigeria. Overall, while recent oil discoveries in the Sahelian states matter, (e.g. one off-shore field in Mauritania produces 225,000 bbl per day), EUCOM’s main strategic objective focuses on securing Nigerian and Gulf energy supplies.

To achieve this strategic goal, American

military planners have launched a two pronged *pincer* movement (figure 11) whose main objective is “Ring-Fencing Nigeria,” from the north and south. To the south, the Navy is rapidly increasing their patrols in the oil fields of the Gulf of Guinea, bolstered by U.S. funding of an \$800,000 port and airfield feasibility study of STP. To the north, American troops funded by the TSCTI are being deployed in training and advising missions designed to monitor and, if necessary, seal Nigeria’s northern border. An intensive search is on for any evidence linking northern Nigerians with international Islamist terrorism. A Reuters story describing the TSCTI as a “ring fencing” strategy reports that “privately, some (Ameri-

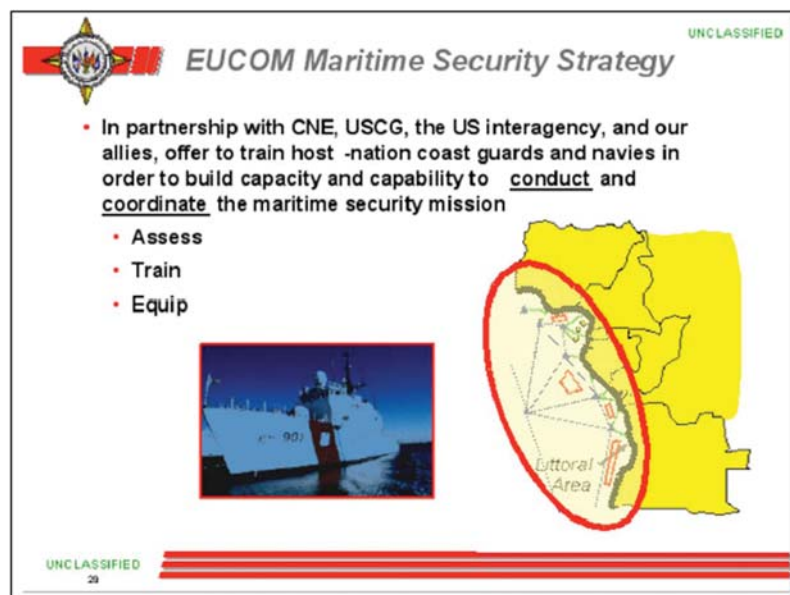


Figure 13: EUCOM: Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy
Source: <https://www.mccdc.usmc.mil/FeatureTopics/Africa/files/Products/EUCOMVIS.pps>

18 can) officials acknowledge that the main concern in the region is protecting Nigeria, the continent's biggest oil producer...⁸³

This pincer strategy is, of course, extremely troubling to many Nigerians. Most offended are the 50 to 60 million northern Muslims who, as nationalists, view the GWOT as a provocative threat to their country's sovereignty, a misguided perception of the rule of law in Muslim political life and, even worse, a pretext for American military intervention in the event of domestic instability. Unfortunately for American energy security interests in Nigeria, the fears of northern Muslims that they are being inaccurately represented by the planners of the GWOT are validated by maps published by EUCOM on the Internet. Examine figure 12, a map published on the Internet as part of a 2005 Powerpoint authored by a EUCOM Special Forces intelligence officer. Not only does this map display an appalling ignorance of the political and security situation in Muslim northern Nigeria, it confirms the worst suspicions of northern Muslims that, in practice, the GWOT is really a "War Against Islam."

This map raises serious doubts whether EUCOM has the competence to assess energy security issues in northern Nigeria. First, it represents most of the Sahelian states as an ungoverned, terrorist region; second, it tarbrushes a broad swath of Muslim northern Nigeria as a "Terrorist Area," including Nigeria's federal capital territory of Abuja; and most importantly for future American relations with Nigerian leaders, by including Katsina State within this alleged "Terrorist Area," it suggests that Umaru Yar 'Adua, the presiding governor, who has just been nominated by the ruling Peoples Party of Nigeria to succeed President Obasanjo in the 2007 election, has been administering a "Terrorist Area" for the past eight years. Intelligence representations like this map not only misinform American security officials, but they undermine Nigerian confidence in American intentions and intelligence capacity. This representation is incorrect since, as any international visitor or State Department security officer knows, the Muslim north is one of the best governed and most secure areas of Nigeria.

Just as Pendergast warned above in the case of Somalia, the militarization of American foreign policy so deeply embedded in the GWOT threatens to alienate Muslim communities in northern Nigeria whose confidence is required to sustain American energy security interests. To be fair, one or two maps in a EUCOM intelligence presentation published on the Internet by an uninformed intelligence officer do not define American foreign policy toward Nigeria. Yet,

a blunder of this magnitude does confirm the danger posed by misinformed interventionists at EUCOM and the potential negative impact their misguided perceptions of Muslim northern Nigeria will have on American energy security.

In terms of policy, representations like figure 12 underscore the need for Congress to conduct investigations in order to correct intelligence errors and contain military adventurism while, at the same time, vigorously supporting State Department programs that defend democratic institutions and civil society groups in northern Nigeria. It is important to recognize that when the American ambassador to Nigeria and other State Department officials publicly affirmed America's democratic principles by rejecting Obasanjo's scheme for a third term in 2006, the U.S. gained far more in terms of "soft" security and goodwill than a score of EUCOM-sponsored "Operation Flintlocks" will ever achieve in the region. Given the appalling poverty in this region, and the dearth of development funding, spending \$500 million on the TSCTI constitutes a misappropriation of funds that will only reduce American energy security in the long run. To be sure, northern Nigeria has its fair share of crime, extremists and insurrections but, when its large population size is taken into account, the proportional incidence of radical Islamist violence in northern Nigeria is very low. With the exception of a youthful, 2004 jihadist rebellion in Yobe and Borno states, modeled rhetorically on the Taliban, northern Muslims have not posed any threat to securing American energy supplies, which are mostly in the south. Ironically, as most State Department professionals acknowledge, the implementation of Shari'a criminal law in the twelve northern states has made the north safer and more secure, especially when compared to southern Nigeria. Most of the northern bloodshed has involved violence between Christians and Muslims, between rival Muslim sects or between ethnic groups struggling over indigenous land rights. None of this has anything to do with terrorism or Islamic extremism. Accordingly, American and Nigerian security interests do converge, not through the implementation of the TSCTI in the northern states, but in the need to institutionalize democracy in the Niger Delta by working cooperatively to eliminate ethnic conflict, local insurrections, criminal syndicates, kidnapping, environmental pollution, and oil piracy.

Convergent Interests: The Shift to Joint Security Operations

Caught between the need to secure the flow of oil and to avoid offending Nigerian nationalist sensibilities, the U.S. Embassy in Abuja constantly repeats that America does not

have or desire permanent bases in Nigeria. But news stories about American bases, collaborative exercises, security cooperation meetings and alleged local sightings of Special Forces are on the increase, suggesting precisely the opposite. Indeed, the breakdown of social and political order in the Delta has become so serious that journalist Greg Zachary reports some “Nigerians themselves are pondering whether they should invite U.S. intervention into the troubled Niger Delta.”⁸⁴ In contrast, experts like Ike Okonta of Oxford University report that local people fear that “the U.S. government is preparing a military strike force to attack insurgents and release kidnapped oil workers.”⁸⁵

By July 2005, the spiraling crises in the Delta forced American and Nigerian officials to overcome their misgivings about the downside risks associated with deepening their security cooperation. After consultations with the United Kingdom and other European allies, the GGESS plan for a joint working group on security in the Niger Delta evolved (figure 13). By December 2005, the American ambassador and the managing director of NNPC made a joint announcement that the two countries had agreed “to establish four special committees to coordinate action against trafficking in small arms in the Niger Delta, bolster maritime and coastal security in the region, promote community development and poverty reduction, and combat money laundering and other financial crimes.”⁸⁶

The formation of the GGESS working groups on the Delta emerged in a wider discussion of energy security in the Gulf. Never shy about demanding free security, and with billions of dollars of investments at stake in the Gulf, international oil companies actively promoted American naval intervention into the Gulf to cover their risks. When Bush met with Obasanjo in Washington in March 2006, insurgency and criminality issues were a high priority on their agenda. Charles Dragonette, a senior maritime analyst at the U.S. Office of Naval Research, revealed to participants at a March conference in Fort Lauderdale: “Shell led a group of oil companies in an approach to the U.S. military for protection of their facilities in the Delta,” and warned that “Nigeria may have lost the ability to control the situation.”⁸⁷ The business intelligence press has also raised red flags. GlobalInsight.com, a high level corporate research service, reports that, should more Nigerian oil be “shut in” by militant activity, “it is possible that the United States will provide security in the Gulf of Guinea to secure oil exports” and that in March “this issue was discussed when Obasanjo visited Bush.”⁸⁸

19
Additional evidence confirming the increasing deployment of American naval power to secure Gulf of Guinea energy supplies appeared at a press conference during the May 2006 African Seapower Conference in Abuja. Responding to Nigerian journalists’ questions about reports of American naval patrols at Shell’s Bonga oil field, Admiral Harry Ulrich, EUCOM’s Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, frankly acknowledged that American ships were patrolling Nigerian oil fields within the 200 mile limit: “We are concerned for Nigeria and we want to help her protect the region from the hands of the maritime criminal. In all parts of the world, the U.S. and any good nation want a safe coast for countries who are supplying their energy and that is why we are often there. So there is nothing to fear for Nigeria.”⁸⁹

Ulrich’s reassuring admission that the U.S. Navy is “often there” protecting Shell’s Bonga oil field is a revealing confirmation of EUCOM’s mission creep; it is an especially interesting admission given Dragonette’s reported comments about Shell’s security request. Developed by Shell, not only is Bonga Nigeria’s largest oil field, costing \$3.6 billion to develop and potentially producing 225,000 bbl per day (10 percent of Nigeria’s production) and 150 million cubic feet/day of natural gas, it also lies squarely within Nigeria’s territorial waters at 75 miles offshore.⁹⁰

Securing Nigerian oil exports prompted the United States to recruit the UK and EU observer states to join Nigeria at the August 2006 GGESS meeting in Abuja. At this meeting, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, American deputy assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs said, “The United States was eager to help Nigeria address security challenges in the Niger Delta through offshore surveillance and interdiction.”⁹¹ In addition to assisting Nigeria in “offshore surveillance and interdiction,” the GGESS group announced that the U.S. and the UK will forward a joint reconnaissance team to assist in the training and equipment requirements of three amphibious brigades, upgrade the training of Nigerians in computer and radar capacity as well as strengthen the ability of maritime security to “fingerprint” illegal oil cargos.⁹² So, while the Marines have not landed yet in the Delta, it is nevertheless important for congressional committees and foreign policy monitors in the NGO community to recognize that American ground forces are engaged in advising and training Nigerian security forces in the Delta, and the American navy is patrolling the offshore oil fields of international firms in Nigerian territorial waters.

20 Again, given our thesis that Nigeria and the United States have convergent security interests, it is entirely predictable that security cooperation is moving forward in the Delta and the Gulf of Guinea. As a sovereign power, moreover, Nigeria has the obligation to secure its territory, natural resources and, if necessary, to enter into agreements to achieve these objectives. But, at the same time, it is also true that the American and Nigerian people and, most importantly, their legislative representatives, are entitled to be fully informed and to participate in the formation of this policy according to their constitutional prerogatives. Historically, informal agreements, made without proper legislative oversight, between President Obasanjo and U.S. presidents, have provoked bitter turmoil, led to high level resignations from the Nigerian army and, in general, undermined democratic and constitutional principles embedded in the separation of powers. Both nations would be well served if legislators concerned with these issues met regularly to enforce their constitutional right to maintain oversight of the executive branch.

What is to be done?

In this brief, we have marshaled evidence confirming the scale of mission creep into West Africa since 2001 on the part of American forces. Today, the U.S. military is patrolling the Gulf, training Nigerian security forces in the Delta and “ring fencing” Nigeria’s northern border with the help of American advisors. No large scale American military intervention in Nigeria is on the horizon, however, because of the reluctance of the overstretched and distressed U.S. military to become mired in another quagmire like Iraq. Nonetheless, there is an unmistakable trend toward increased American military involvement in West Africa’s oil regions and, more specifically, in Nigeria’s Niger Delta. As long as the United States’ energy security policy relies on increasing amounts of imported oil, and Nigeria depends completely on oil and gas exports to fund its mono-export economy, the security interests of Nigeria and the U.S. will remain deeply intertwined.

In the Niger Delta, however, militarization cannot guarantee stability of supply. Naked force, even with the best American technical advisors and electronic gadgets, is doomed to failure and risks sliding more deeply into a low grade civil war—with the prospects of a massive escalation of violence and attacks on oil installations—that could result in a severe threats to American energy security. More ominously, the increased presence of American forces in the Gulf, coupled with the widespread perception within Nige-

ria of encirclement by the U.S., could ignite not only a strong anti-American “petro-nationalism,” but also contribute to a radical destabilization of an already fragile political situation in the run up to the 2007 elections.

Terrorism, to be sure, is a serious global problem. But, given current American foreign and defense policies, Africans are justifiably skeptical of both American intentions and U.S. security strategies. According to Festus Boahen Aboagye, a former Ghanaian army colonel and military adviser at the African Union, “the best way to defeat terrorism... [is] to more aggressively encourage democracy and support the economies of the nations involved.”⁹³ Indeed, the lavish funding of military programs like the TSCTI, which include the U.S. military providing medical and dental services to Africans in the Gulf, while State Department programs for development, gender equity, democracy, governance and conflict resolution are starved for money, constitutes a distortion of American foreign policy priorities.

Why are civilian functions formerly housed under the State Department’s agencies—health, water, education—increasingly funded by the TSCTI and under military management? In the United States, progressives and their representatives in Congress should demand a redress of the balance between civilian activities in the State Department and military activities in the Pentagon. Unfortunately, the GWOT has militarized American foreign policy, and encouraged the gutting of funds for democracy and governance programs that historically have supported a robust and effective civil society in Nigeria. Any objective “cost-benefit” analysis of these policies will confirm this conclusion.

A failure on the part of American policymakers to vigorously support both Nigeria’s democratic forces and the legislature’s oversight of the presidency not only threatens American energy security, but risks derailing what is arguably one of the most important – yet fraught – elections since the end of the Nigerian civil war. Only a properly funded democratization program will secure American and Nigerian security interests and quell the insurgencies, criminality and social banditry now rampant in the Delta. Democratization requires institutionalizing free and fair elections, addressing youth unemployment, compensating communities for damages, raising living standards, empowering civil society groups to monitor public funds and negotiating local resource control. We encourage civil society groups and legislators on both sides of the Atlantic to take up these challenges.

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