

The Surge of Terrorism and U.S Military Intervention in Africa: Experience from the Gulf of Guinea

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Abstract: The economic and strategic importance of the Gulf of Guinea which is currently the source of around 5.4 million barrels of oil per day and several other natural resources, which is unfortunately located within institutionally and politically weak West African sub-region made it vulnerable to external interference and spread of different forms of insurgence activities. Thus, the continued importance of oil in the global market necessitate the focus of this paper to examine whether the presence of the United States military in the Gulf of Guinea actually posed any serious threat to security, economic and political interests of the West African sub-region which dominated the Gulf of Guinea. Similarly, it is instructive to investigate what are the core motives and expected benefits of the United States in protecting, ensuring political stability and waging war against terrorists in Gulf of Guinea? This paper argues that the continuing US military presence in the Gulf contributed to inability of most governments within the Gulf of Guinea to maintain control over the coastal waters and on access and security along the coast itself due to their over- reliance on US for defence and military assistance. Consequently, the inability of the majority of West African sub-region governments to guide and secure the coastline within the Gulf of Guinea has also encouraged the spread of terrorism and other forms of insurgency groups which has continued to pose a serious threat to oil production and other water resources.

Keywords: terrorism, military intervention, Gulf of Guinea, United States, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The Gulf of Guinea is a vast, diverse and highly important area of land which constitutes about 6 000 kilometres of unbroken coastline from the north-western coast. The countries covered by this region includes Sierra Leone, Senegal, Ghana, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Gabon, Central African Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Angola on the southern fringes. The Gulf of Guinea is endowed with several natural resources, making it a very important geographical space within the West African sub-region. The Gulf is currently the source of around 5.4 million barrels of oil per day. According to Fred Agwu [1], the Gulf of Guinea is not coterminous with all the countries that are physically within its prescient. Rather this region is used to designate the oil producing states at the fringe of the Atlantic Ocean.

It has been argued that the level of oil production in this region is more than the total amount of crude oil imported by 27 European countries in 2008 (4.9 mbbl/d) and also represents more than half of the crude oil imported by the United States of America in that same year, which was around 9.8 mbbl/d (Chatham

House 2012). Thus it is obvious that oil constitute a major resource in the global market, therefore, the vast quantities of this resource found in this region of mostly weak African states brings to fore the interest in this paper. It is important to note that the presence of the United States military in the Gulf of Guinea posed serious questions of what are really the gain and interest of the United States in protecting, ensuring political stability and waging war against terrorists in that region?

There seems to be quite generalized notion that, while democracy is not unimportant, it is not at the core of the relationship between oil producing African countries and Europe-America. United Sates interests in the Gulf of Guinea's oil has always remain predominant among other factors in which the relationship with and assistance to countries within this region were based. For instance, the net hydrocarbon deposit in Nigeria alone is estimated to be between 40 to 50 billion barrels (Musah, 2009). Countries like Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and those in the Mano River Union (MRU) basin have huge hydrocarbon potentials. It was forecasted that by year 2015 (two years ago) deep water drilling will account for 25 per cent of the regions offshore oil production [2]. In the same vein, Ndiaye, [3] argued that the region

is also one of the best-endowed fishing grounds in the world with a very high diverse fish and invertebrate fauna largely due to an upwelling along the coast of Senegal and Mauritania and other parts of the gulf. Ndiaye further stated that apart from providing revenue to governments through royalties and other fees collected under various fishing agreements by countries in the region, fisheries resources also play an important role in meeting the nutritional needs of populations with low purchasing power. It also provides full time employment to more than 3 million West Africans, representing more than 10 per cent of the region's workforce (ibid).

It is important to note that on 27 October 1986, the UN General Assembly, through its Resolution 41/11 declared the South Atlantic Region, part of which the Gulf of Guinea is, as "a zone of Peace and Cooperation." (Akinyemi 2004). This suggests that, the countries within the zone are expected to coalesce meaningfully so as to ensure socio-economic development, environmental protection, and guarantee the peace and security of the whole region. However, recent developments in the Gulf of Guinea have continued to provoke fundamental questions about the prospects of achieving such goals, and the status of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and cooperation. These challenges include the current growing scramble for oil and gas resources of the region; a desire that rides on the crest of Middle-East becoming a boiling cauldron of instability, and the knowledge of the peak oil thesis. More so, the desire to deepen other extra-regional powers interests of mining solid mineral resources, market for their products, and counter-terror moves have also come into play. Some of which might become the bull eye for terrorists.

The Gulf of Guinea has been witnessing a resurgence of local terrorism although, unlike the other parts of oil producing regions such as the Middle East and North East Africa where international terrorism are prevalent. Given trending scramble for the oil and gas resources of the zone, to which General Brantz J. Craddock of the United States insisted that West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, are becoming more and more important, because of the energy situation" (Cappacio, 2009).

It is noteworthy that States bordering the Gulf of Guinea coastline face many of the challenges familiar to countries throughout Africa. Thus, the recent increasing focus on the threats emanating from the lack of control over the coastal waters and the weak control over access and security along the coast itself pose a particular challenge to the states of the region.

The consequences include growth in criminal and terrorist activity, which also pose a growing threat

to the United States. The threats in this region take various forms and are often interlinked across borders and can, collectively, lead to contagious criminal activity and linkages with terrorist networks, putting at risk the stability of states and reducing their chances of successful economic development or of reducing poverty.

The main threats include illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, illicit dumping of waste, piracy and armed robbery at sea, including kidnap, trafficking of human beings, narcotics, arms and counterfeit goods, smuggling of migrants and that which is of greatest interest to America, oil theft, illegal bunkering, and criminal acts in ports which threatens the American oil market owing to the fact that the gulf is a major supplier.

The Dynamic Challenges to the Gulf of Guinea

The Gulf of Guinea currently faces an array of very pressing security challenges such as piracy, bunkering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, unreported and unregulated fishing, and marine pollution. Since the attack on the Seaborne Spirit off the Somalia coast in November 2005, the incidence of piracy in Africa as a whole has assumed a rather disturbing proportion. Above all challenges to the Gulf is the surge of terrorists' activities which posed a serious threat to functionalities and productivities of the Gulf of Guinea.

Between 2005 and 2011, a total of 237 ships were attacked by pirates with millions of dollars collected as ransom payments. The increase international anti-piracy naval operations along the Somalia coast has led to a reduction of this trend but Schubert demonstrates that the average ransom (per vessel), however, continues to grow: from around 150,000USD in 2005 to approximately 4.7 million USD in 2011 with the total ransom payments reaching an all-time high of 135 million USD in 2011 alone (Schubert & Lades, 2013). The Gulf of Guinea is gradually beginning to see an increase in pirate activities. According to the United Nations Security council [4] the incidents of piracy and related criminal activities have risen significantly, making the region the second most dangerous piracy zone on the African continent.

The Security Council report (2013) shows that a total of 58 attacks were reported in the region during the first 10 months of 2011, which was an increase from the 45 attacks recorded in 2010. Twenty-one of the reported attacks in 2011 occurred off the coast of Benin, 14 off the coast of Nigeria, 7 off the coast of Togo, 4 off the coasts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2 off the coast of Ghana and 1 off the coasts of Angola and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2010, Nigeria reported 25 attacks, Guinea 6, Cameroon 5, Côte'voire 4, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo 3, and Congo and Liberia 1 respectively. This increase infrequency, apart from being alarming is made more paradoxical by the fact that, relatively, unlike the rather lawless situation in the horn of Africa, the countries bordering the gulf region have relatively very stable and functioning governments in place, a situation which should make it very difficult for this canker to be entrenched in the region.

A threat assessment conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [5] shows that the Gulf also presents a very safe transit passage for the trafficking of narcotics from South America through West Africa to North America and Europe. Findings from the assessment show that the current flow of cocaine through the region is around 18 tons a year and worth about US \$ 1.25 billion. The UNODC assessment also indicated that countries in the region have begun to feel the impact of the drug routing in several ways. The most affected was Guinea Bissau, which is yet to come out of the destabilizing effects of cartel interests in that country.

Ndiaye [3] argues that the fishing industry in Africa earns the continent about 10 billion dollars a year and serves as the means of livelihood to millions of fisher folks along its coastal stretch. The current threat posed by illegal, uncontrolled and unreported fishing in the Gulf of Guinea is also becoming very alarming and seriously affecting the annual projected earnings of coastal states from fishing. The livelihoods of about 2million artisanal fisher folks are also being affected negatively. Because of the drastic reduction in fish stocks in the open ocean due to illegal, uncontrolled and unreported fishing activities, most people living in fishing communities along the coast are now forced to fish in the marine riverine areas. According to the Environmental Justice Foundation 2012 report, global illegal, uncontrolled and unreported fishing has a net value of between \$10 billion and \$23.5 billion per year. The practice in the gulf of guinea is the highest in the world and accounts for over 30 per cent of the total fish catch from the gulf.

According to the report, the fishing industry plays a very critical role in the development and survival of countries within the gulf region: In Senegal, it accounts for 7 per cent of the GDP, representing about 30 per cent of exports and contributes almost 75per cent of the protein needs of the population; fish also provides 64 per cent of the animal protein needs of the people of Sierra Leone and serves as the only source of protein for coastal communities in most countries in the gulf of Guinea.

An article by Jon Gambrell in the Washington Post, 20th July, 2013 edition argues that, Illegal oil bunkering, which is very prevalent in Nigeria and

gradually spreading to other countries in the Gulf region, is a dangerous development which has the potential of entrenching the impunity of sea-borne criminal elements in the gulf. According to the Washington Post article, about 200,000 barrels a day (equivalent to 10 per cent of Nigeria's oil production) are stolen through illegal bunkering. The discovery of more oil and gas deposits in the coastal and offshore regions of the countries bordering the gulf is gradually leading to an increase in the number of exploratory platforms and a corresponding increase in the number of oil tankers and ships traversing the region. According to the Interim Guinea Current Commission, the patterns of offshore winds and ocean currents depict that any massive oil spill from any of the offshore or shore-based petroleum activities will lead to a major environmental calamity within the Gulf region.

The recent discovery of more crude oil in commercial quantities indifferent parts of the gulf and the rather disturbing increase and sophistication in criminal activities in the area warrants very swift actions. The resultant impact of these activities, if not checked, will have very far reaching consequences on countries in the region. On 19th October, 2012, during an open debate in the Security Council on the subject of 'Peace and Security in Africa: Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea', convened by Nigeria in its capacity as President of the Security Council, the devastating effects of piracy on maritime navigation and on the economies of the countries in the region was well highlighted. During the deliberations it was concluded that the fight against piracy should be a collective responsibility. The Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations also stressed that: 'If piracy was not addressed properly, it could jeopardize socio-economic development and foreign investment in the region'.

The most disturbing scenario is well highlighted by the work of Jensen-Jones, who establishes a possible link between piracy and criminal actors engaged in the smuggling of people, arms and narcotics within West Africa and other criminal and terrorist organizations in the region such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Boko-Haram and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Jenson-Jones, 2012). The importance of ridding the gulf of guinea off the rapidly creeping scourge of piracy and making it a very difficult area for criminal actors cannot be over emphasized. This calls for a strong and tightened maritime security and good order at sea. Francois Vreÿ has demonstrated that maritime security warrants a deeper cooperation between different actors in the realization of national and international interests in securing the seas [6].

The sub-region has witnessed several good initiatives on the part of stakeholders aimed at addressing issues pertaining to maritime security: these include the African Maritime Transport Charter; the Maritime Transport Plan of Action; and the Durban Resolution on Maritime Safety, Maritime Security and Protection of the Marine Environment in Africa. The Durban Resolution for example, encouraged member states to harmonise and review maritime, port and inland water way legislations to let them conform to international norms. It also gave prominence to the importance of information sharing in matters relating to piracy and other criminal activities at sea and encouraged member states to establish a maritime communication network to enhance better organization of maritime traffic. The current security architecture for the Gulf of Guinea has very notable organizations such as the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), the Maritime organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) playing what should be complementary roles in ensuring that the Gulf of Guinea is protected and made safe for general maritime purposes and the extraction of its natural resources for the development of the region. However, the expected positive impact from this collaboration is not so encouraging.

The above narrative clearly demonstrates the maiming effect that bad order at sea can have on the socio economic development of countries in the Gulf of Guinea. There is, therefore, the need for a critical look at how best the canker could be eradicated through proper collaboration between all the relevant stakeholders and forging of strategic partnerships. The biggest problem in the fight against piracy and other maritime threats in the gulf of guinea was adduced to be the lack of the needed naval capacity of the countries bordering the Gulf region and the inertia on the part of some political leaders to settle for a Symbiotic Effective and Comprehensive Long Term Strategy.

Understanding U.S Interest and the Surge of Terrorism in the Gulf of Guinea

The beginning of the century marked what can be said to be the United States war on terror. Its longest war was in Afghanistan while it was embroiled in military interventions in the Balkans with the invasion of Iraq following the Afghanistan war. Despite this, the country was also laying the groundwork for subordinating the African continent to a new military command. The United States has a 4.5 per cent of the world's population and it accounts for approximately 30 per cent of crude oil consumption. The US is the world third largest producer of crude, but it also imports 60 per cent of its national consumption which is pegged at about 12.4 of 20.7 million barrels daily.

A decade ago 15 per cent of those imports came from the Gulf of Guinea region on Africa's Atlantic Ocean coast, mainly from Nigeria, and it is projected that the proportion will increase to 25 per cent in the next four years. The National Energy Policy Report issued by the Office of former Vice President Richard Cheney of the United States on May 16, 2001 stated that West Africa is expected to be one of the fastest-growing sources of oil and gas for the American market. African oil tends to be of high quality and low in sulphur...giving it a growing market share for refining centres on the East Coast of the U.S.

Former US Congressman, William Jefferson once noted that "African oil should be treated as a priority for U.S. national security post 9-11. I think that post 9-11 it's occurred to all of us that our traditional sources of oil are not as secure as we thought they were." As is customary in regards to American foreign policy objectives, the Pentagon was charged with taking responsibility. It immediately went to work on undertaking three initiatives to implement U.S. energy strategy in the Gulf of Guinea: U.S. Africa Command, the first overseas military command inaugurated since 1983. The U.S. Navy's Africa Partnership Station as what has developed into the major component of the Global Fleet Station, linked with worldwide maritime operations like the 1,000-ship navy and the Proliferation Security Initiative and piloted in the area of responsibility of U.S. Southern Command and the U.S. Fourth Fleet reactivated in 2008: The Caribbean Sea and Central and South America. The NATO Response Force designed for rapid multi-service (army, air force, navy and marine) deployments outside of the bloc's North American-European area of responsibility.

When Ghana joined the ranks of African oil producers pumping crude oil for the first time from an offshore field in the Gulf of Guinea, it was stated that "The Jubilee oil field, discovered three years ago, holds an estimated 1.8 billion barrels of oil, and will begin producing around 55,000 barrels per day in the coming weeks. Oil production is expected, however, to rise to about 120,000 barrels over the next six months, making the country Africa's seventh largest oil producer." (Associated Press, 2010).

The Ghanaian oil exploitation is run by a consortium led by Tallow Oil Plc., which is based in London and has 85 contracts in 22 countries. It was further stated that 'The Gulf of Guinea increasingly represents an important source of oil, with the US estimating that it will supply over a quarter of American oil by 2015. It has already sent US military trainers to the region to help local navies to secure shipping. Nearby Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo Republic

are already exporting oil from the Gulf, while Liberia and Sierra Leone remain hopeful of joining the club.

In March of 2010 95 U.S. Marines led by General Paul Brier, commander of U.S. Marine Forces Africa, deployed to the Bundase Training Camp in the Ghanaian capital of Accra for a three-week exercise with the armed forces of the host country, “part of the Africa Partnership Station,” which also included the participation of the USS Gunston Hall dock landing ship and “embarked international staff” in the Gulf of Guinea. According to the government of Ghana, “The US and Ghana [are] at the highest level, work together and at the military level inter-operate, train together, share ideas and skills and...it is important for the two countries’ militaries to come together so that Ghana can be at par with the US Army.” (Ghana Government, 2010).

While, for example, Chinese companies are expanding oil exploration in the African nation of Chad and are embarked on a program to build the country’s first refinery and a 300-kilometer pipeline, a U.S.-led consortium has been extracting oil in the south of Chad and sending it by pipeline through Cameroon to the Gulf of Guinea, paralleling U.S. strategy in the Caspian Sea Basin vis-a-vis Russia and Iran. The Atlantic Council, the preeminent pro-NATO think tank on either side of the Atlantic, co-released a report entitled “Advancing U.S., African, and Global Interests: Security and Stability in the West African Maritime Domain.” It proceeds from the fact that “The Gulf of Guinea is at the brink of becoming a greater supplier of energy to the United States than the Persian Gulf and is therefore of far higher strategic importance than has historically been the case’ (Atlantic Council, 2010).

Given the AFRICOM achievement of full operational capability on October 1, 2008, Africa was assigned to U.S. European Command (EUCOM) except for Egypt, the nations of the Horn of Africa and four Indian Ocean Island states that were under Central Command and Pacific Command. The top commander of EUCOM is jointly NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe. AFRICOM, then, was created as the Pentagon’s first post-Cold War foreign military command. AFRICOM and the Africa Partnership Station (APS) have been envisioned since their inception as U.S. military operations that included the involvement of NATO, especially its member states that are the former colonial masters in the Gulf of Guinea area: Britain, France, Portugal and Spain (NATO, 2010). In 2005 the U.S. submarine tender Emory S. Land led naval exercises in the Gulf of Guinea with naval officers from Benin, Gabon, Ghana, and Sao Tome and Principe along with counterparts from Britain, France, Portugal and Spain.

APS deployments include military officers from other NATO states and the African Standby Force is modelled after the NATO Response Force. In 2005 the Washington, D.C.- based Centre for Strategic and International Studies’ Task Force on Gulf of Guinea Security released a report reiterating and updating U.S. strategy in West Africa which stated that “The Gulf of Guinea is a nexus of vital US foreign policy priorities.” The Task Force consisted of “oil executives, academics, diplomats and retired naval officers under the chairmanship of Nebraska’s Senator Chuck Hagel and received briefings from serving US ambassadors, oil companies, the CIA and US military commanders.” (Agence France-Presse, 2005).

While it has been difficult to get policymakers and analysts to accord it the attention that it deserves, there is no denying Africa’s increased strategic significance to overall U.S. national interests. The data available in this area speaks volume to testify to this, despite the fact that the continent boasts of the world’s fastest rate of population growth, by 2020, today’s more than 900 million Africans will number more than 1.2 billion—more than the combined populations of Europe and North America, the more instructive of this is that more than 45 per cent of this population will be between the age of 15 and 35. Also, the region supplies the U.S. with 16 per cent of its petroleum needs. According to a report prepared for the National Intelligence Council, within a decade, the West African sub-region will play an increasingly important role in global energy markets, providing more than one-quarter of North American oil imports soon, thus surpassing the total volume of oil imports from the Middle East [7].

The countries in this region also suffer from many woes. These countries remain the world’s economic basket case, with a per capita GDP of barely \$575. The United Nations Development Program’s Human Development Report 2005 determined that of the thirty-two countries found to have “low development,” thirty-one were in Africa.⁵¹ While sub-Saharan Africa is home to only 10 per cent of the world’s overall population, more than two-thirds of the people living with HIV are sub-Saharan Africans—and they are the relatively fortunate: the vast majority of the estimated 25 million people worldwide whose deaths are attributable to HIV/AIDS are Africans, including two million in 2005 alone [8].

Consequently, the United States’ National Strategy for Combating Terrorism of February 2003 correctly acknowledged that while many terrorist organizations have little in common with the poor and destitute, they exploit these conditions to their advantage in their attacks [9]. Former President George W. Bush noted in his September 2005 address to the United Nations High-Level Plenary to commemorate

the organization's sixtieth anniversary: We must defeat the terrorists on the battlefield, and we must also defeat them in the battle of ideas. We must change the conditions that allow terrorists to flourish and recruit, by spreading the hope of freedom to millions who've never known it. We must help rise up the failing states and stagnant societies that provide fertile ground for the terrorists. We must defend and extend a vision of human dignity, and opportunity, and prosperity—a vision far stronger than the dark appeal of resentment and murder. To spread a vision of hope, the United States is determined to help nations that are struggling with poverty (Bush, 2003).

The Impact of Terrorism on the Gulf of Guinea

Realising that the conditions conducive to the growth of terrorism within sub-Saharan Africa -around the Gulf of Guinea particularly- is increasing, the US especially, has expressed concerned about the "conditions of Islamic fundamentalism, failed states, and the lack of effective territorial control- that can provide high-quality operating social-justice movement." (Padraig, 2005). This realisation become evident after the 9/11 attacks on the US, and the desire of extra-African powers to diversify the sources of their oil supply, the abundant possession of which has accorded geo-strategic significance on the Gulf of Guinea. As such, it is believed that extra-territorial powers parading the Gulf of Guinea can't allow areas like that to be ungoverned, to become a haven for terrorists [10].

Thus the Gulf of Guinea was made one of the sites for the global war on terror; with the US and its G8 allies co-opting the governments of the region and ECOWAS in a counter-terrorism partnership. An act that Rita Abrahamsen explains as drawing Africa and the Gulf of Guinea particularly into the debate about security in this way may help to legitimate the war on terrorism. This lends credence to Jacques Chirac submission that it is not the West against terrorism. It is the world against terrorism. (Newsweek, October , 2001).

Going by the apocalyptic statement traced to bin Laden that "kill me, a hundred Osamas will rise to take my place" (Le Monde diplomatique, 2003), the call by bin Laden in 2003, on all terrorists to focus their attention on Nigeria, and the threat of retaliation by his lieutenants; the "new challenges, according to a respondent, "become more obvious and even robust." (Le Monde diplomatique, 2003)

Really the US and the G8 counter-terrorism initiatives have been greatly successful; however, such initiatives might negatively impact on the Gulf of Guinea. This is because oil and gas resources of the region are the major factors that lured the US and its

Western friends to the region; and not terrorism. This position is better appreciated when one realizes that sequel to the demise of the Cold War, Africa was said to have fallen off the global map; and even former US President George W. Bush insisted that Africa (the Gulf of Guinea inclusive) "does not fit into the national strategic interest as far as he could see." (Newsweek, 2001).

However, the manner that the US made a volte face from Bush's insistence to vie for the oil resources of the region along with China and other global powers becomes particularly instructive. Thus, in order to partake of the determination of the quantity of the oil produced and who gets what quantity, the US and its allies real hegemonic interests in the region, which has a predominance of fragile and/or weak states that they can easily lure into their hegemonic drag-net, prevail over the acclaimed desire to stop terrorism. This notion is underlie by US perception of the intensification of Chinas interests in Africa and its entrance into the zones oil scramble in particular, as a challenge. A critical consideration of this oil scramble thus reveals that extra-regional powers interests transcend the extirpation of terrorism.

More than the hegemonic tussle that terrorism/ counter-terrorism have brought to bear on the Gulf of Guinea is the challenge of terrorism. It is a known fact that "capturing or killing one individual will not rid ... the world of the scourge" [11], of terrorism; and that late bin Laden led "a movement that cannot, according to former President Bush, be silenced by simply silencing its leader" [11].

Going by the aforementioned 2003 admonition of bin Laden that terrorists should concentrate on Nigeria and the imminent retaliation of his extermination, the form that the attack would take and the region where it would be perpetrated provoke crucial thoughts. If the Gulf of Guinea is chosen, then extra-regional interests in oil and gas might become the targets of such attacks. If this be, one wonders what would become of the regions citizens, environment, security and development. This is because the region has some of the densest population in Africa. Nigeria for example, boasts of about 150 million citizens. If this population is added to that of the remaining states of the region, the scenario then becomes gloomier.

The fearsome aspect of this is the terrorist's wanton desires for nuclear weapons. This concern about nuclear terrorism keeps growing to new heights because A.Q. Khan, the revered father of Pakistans nuclear bomb, confessed in a not too distant past, to peddling nuclear weapons technology to Libya and other rogue states; and that "terrorist groups bent on destroying the United States -like Osama bin Ladens al-Qaeda

network- may be closer than anyone had realized to acquiring nuclear weapons.” (Newsweek, 2001). This situation is compounded by Bush’s revelation that “another crisis could hit us, more terrible than this one ... It could be more terrible –biological, chemical or plutonium. I don’t have direct evidence, but I have enough evidence” [11].

Though the extra-regional powers parading this zone (and thereby making the region a target of terrorism) might have prepared themselves for such an attack. However, a region that is predominated by states, whose citizens continuously witness the paradox of plenty, and where there is some level of distasteful unconcern about security, proffers only gloomy picture. This stance becomes important because two A-bombs, dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the World War II altered the history of Japan, and “... within weeks of bombings, the death toll had climbed to more than 100,000 people –mainly civilians” (Levy and Kelly, 2002)

Though as Matthew Burn has argued “the essential ingredients of nuclear weapons are very hard to make and don’t occur in nature” (Awake, 2004), however the secret of making it is what Khans network has been peddling. These terrorists may not have the delivery device; they can still stage full scale nuclear attack through the use of conventional explosive device containing radioactive waste –a so called dirty bomb. This becomes dangerous for the states of the Gulf of Guinea because dirty bombs are meant to poison “targets rather than destroying them with blast and heat.” (Levy and Kelly, 2004). Thus the detonation of a dirty bomb around urban centres might “contaminate dozens of city blocks, fomenting panic and costing tens of billions of dollars in lost revenues and devalued real estate, even if it claimed no human lives.” (Mahmood, 2004).

What makes this situation worrisome is the growing poverty within the states of the region. Thus, a wealthy terrorist could easily recruit and/or train some of the inhabitants of the region (for monetary gain) for unleashing attacks against US and/or Western interests within the zone. This might attract serious reprisals from the extra-regional powers, who will not mind who and what would be destroyed within the zone. This is particularly so because “if the perpetrators of (terror attacks) refuse to distinguish between official America (and/or other extra-African powers) and the American people (and other extra-regional powers citizens), target and victim, “the war on terror (will proceed) by dishing out collective punishment with callous disregard for either “collateral damage” or “legitimate grievances” [12]. What flows from the foregoing is the readiness of the US to direct every resource at our command –every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every

instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence and every necessary weapon of war- to the defeat of the global terror network- our response involves ... a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have seen.

The situation becomes worsened by the porosity of the borders within the region, which might be explored by the perpetrators; thereby presenting the whole region as a zone for war. This will, in the long run, lead to the haemorrhage of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region. Security is highly important for any investment to thrive, and investors are mostly concerned about profit. An unsecured region is considered not good enough for investment. As such, there will be both dearth’s of FDI as well as capital flight. If these happen, unemployment will become robust, thus leading to frustration. Much more, the authoritarian rulers of the region might be tempted to brand their political rivals as terrorists: thus, using it as the reason to run the opposition out of the state or into the gulag. In other words, the Gulf of Guinea governments might exploit such opportunity in order to crackdown on opposition, sometimes terming them to be terrorists.

If this is done, it might create fear, thus inhibiting freedom of speech as well as any constructive criticism that might help the administration in leading the regions states into development. If all these agglutinate to become the order of the day within the region, the military might become a preferred option for the power throne, thereby re-assuming such, and putting an end to the few years of tortured democratic experience within the zone. As such, “the fate of the emerging democracy”, according to Fawole, “is hanging in the balance as long as African armies are yet to divest themselves of the propensity for political violence at the slightest pretext.” (Fawole,2003) Given the foregoing, the neo bridal status of the Gulf of Guinea, which is caused by its becoming the hotspot of the oil industry, might soon come to an end. This study is not to paint a canvas of doom. Rather, it is meant to serve as a clarion call to all the states of the region on one hand, and to let extra-regional powers have fore knowledge of what might happen to their interests.

CONCLUSION

The major point of concern in the Gulf of Guinea is the growing threat of terrorism in that part of Africa. Though the greatest possibilities might come at a time when terrorism would have caused so much discomfort that people, most likely those that can cause tangible change locally would have been haemorrhage from the zone. Such time may not be the only moment when successful policies would preclude such threat to life and property. The opinion of the group in this matter is that it is possible to make policies that could

tackle every phase of terrorism in the Gulf, particularly Nigeria. The first way to go becomes the examination of the linkage between terrorism and poverty within the zone.

In many African countries, people live in a society where the majority of agile youths both educated and non-educated cannot find paying jobs to become useful to the society and meet the basic needs of life such as; (feeding, clothing and housing) this situation copiously signal security threats: because abject poverty is a veritable driver for resentment. In as much as people have been encouraged to get some bit of education or non-formal training through vocational skill acquisition, the best thing that could happen to such individual is getting commensurate jobs, alternatively, getting a conducive environment that will encourage small scale businesses and artisanship growth. Otherwise, such unemployed youth will become available tools for all sorts of anti-developmental, anti-government and terrorist agents.

This paper also submit that instead of the governments in West African sub-region, the Americans and international community to focus excessively on military actions as effective means of counter the threat of terrorism, perhaps, more attention is needed to be focus on how to rethink economic problems which has led to wide spread of poverty and gross inequality among the populace in the West African sub-region: the governments of the zone would do well in tackling the festering poverty that has eaten deep into the foundational existence of their countries, even to the extent that majority of the populace could be incite against the governments.

The resources and attention given to the continent since September 11, 2001, have been impressive given the history of United States engagement on the continent. Nevertheless, US attentions are still less than adequate, considering the scope of what is at stake if the Gulf of Guinea is ravage by terrorism. Hence, it is not enough to track terrorists and providing military training, it is more important for US to sustain a long-term strategic engagement, diplomatic and developmental strategies with minimum military approach—that is anchors on genuine and mutual benefits between the US and countries within West African sub-region.

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