

**The Potential Power of West African Oil to the Economics and Energy Security
Interest of Euro-America in the 21st Century**

By

Austin Ikein

The strategic resources of West Africa have attracted Europeans, Americans, Arabs and lately Asians to have political and economic relations with West Africa where Nigeria stands today since the 13th century. The historical significance of the European African Relations from the slave era through colonization is that the European territories in Africa became the treasure lands for the strategic resources deemed necessary for European development. Essentially, from the era of the Triangular Slave Trade through the industrial revolution, West Africa or the Gulf of Guinea has been the main entrepot of the Black Gold the Europeans found in the labor value of Black slaves exported to the Americas and later the Palm Gold in the lucrative West African palm oil trade in the 18th century that was a major lubricant to the wheels of European industrial revolution and today crude oil is the latest in a series of Black Gold treasures from the Gulf of Guinea, particularly Nigeria that is of utmost importance to the economic and military security of Euro-America and other major consumers around the world.

The importance of Africa's treasures to the development of Euro-America is felt to this day in the same way the European leaders felt in the 1800s. Reflecting historically, a European leader, King Leopold II of Belgium, upon reading news about the rich natural resources on the Continent of Africa, came to the conclusion that Africa indeed was a magnificent cake. Then he said, "I, Leopold, king of Belgium, am determined to have my share of this magnificent African cake." He succeeded in getting his share which was

the former Belgian Congo, today known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From king Leopold's share came uranium, used to manufacture the world's first atomic bomb dropped on Japan on August 6, 1945, radically ending the Second World War and simultaneously making the United States the world's first nuclear power. From the share has also come columbite and tantalite, strategic minerals used today for the manufacture of cellular phones, which has brought a communications revolution in the world. Belgium, for its part, became the first European country to revive its manufacturing industries after World War II, enabling Brussels to become the capital of the European Commission. While the Europeans tapped Africa's strategic resources for their development, it also true that Africa has benefited from European technological advancement. For example, Africa has benefited tremendously in communication technology in cell phone revolution. On November 12, 2005 Andrew England reported in the Financial Times Magazine that all across Africa people are investing in mobiles, from slum-dwellers and shoeshine boys to nomadic tribesmen and politicians running election campaigns. A communication revolution is sweeping across the impoverished continent, now enjoying the fastest cell phone growth in the world. In Nigeria, on August 17 2005, Ernest Ndukwe reported that since the year 2001 Africa has become the world's fastest growing regional mobile market in the world with Nigeria as a major growth driver and in fact the fastest growing national mobile market in the world. The African mobile industry has been a success story with its attendant benefits of economic stimulus as well as providing the launch pad for African countries towards the process of transition to information societies and knowledge economies. Here lies Euro- America development links with Africa and Nigeria in particular as been a strategic treasure base for Euro-America economic security interests since the 1500s. Today, Nigeria is the major producer of oil and gas in the Gulf of Guinea

Since its creation, Nigeria has a performance record as a beacon of hope for the rest of Africa for she effectively utilized its sovereign rights and the power inherent in her strategic resources to liberate sister African States under the yoke of colonial bondage to gain flag independence. The country's success in liberation movements in Africa was essentially fueled and leveraged by oil power. The same oil power and influence could be replicated for the economic liberation of Africa in the 21st century. Indeed, oil has been the Black Gold of the 20th century and it has the same promise to be the gold treasure to the world in the 21st century and Nigeria is the kingpin on the African axis of oil and global power in the 21st century.

With oil wealth, Nigeria wielded incredible power and influence in Africa and world affairs. The potency of

Nigeria's oil-fueled power has a strong likelihood of being replicated in the twenty-first century. Nigeria is a formidable power in the world oil scene with potentials to act alone or in concert with other major actors to influence the direction of the world's oil trade, particularly in the thorny area of oil pricing and global economic security. A review of oil and Nigeria in retrospect reveals that in the 20th century, the country's political power and influence was propelled by the use of its oil wealth as a leverage in economic development, strong foreign policy and effective diplomacy in the promotion of African liberation and Africa's interest in world Affairs.

At the dawn of the 21st century, the power and influence of Africa's Black Gold treasures had begun to rise again and, once more, Nigeria holds most of the Black Gold reserves in oil and gas in Africa. Hence, there are already great insights to the possible power and influence of West African Black Gold in the 21st century. We know that much of the world is greatly endowed with onshore and offshore oil and gas deposits of which the major producing areas are Russia and CIS, North Africa (Libya and Algeria), Middle East, North America, Latin America (Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil and Ecuador), Trinidad, and Asia (China and Indonesia). Europe's North Sea and today the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa is also a major oil and gas province of the world.

The West African region has been producing oil and some gas for over fifty years, but in recent times a number of huge deposits of oil and gas have been discovered in the deep sea waters (Continental Shelf) of the West Coast of Africa or the Gulf of Guinea. These new discoveries, both onshore and offshore, have attracted both Europe and America to seek partnership with oil endowed African nations.

Today, the Europeans and Americans are building partnerships with Sub-Saharan African nations in the energy sector because the Gulf of Guinea is likely to account for one in four barrels of U.S. oil imports in the future.² Equatorial Guinea is now producing more oil percapita than Saudi Arabia. Therefore, in West Africa, there is a new dawn of gas-powered economy. West African governments, in partnership with multinational oil companies, are building energy intensive industries for better economic performance in the 21st century. Nigeria, the largest oil producer in the region, has taken the lead in the construction of a \$500 million West African gas pipeline through Benin, Togo and Ghana.

Chevron, an American multinational oil company, is a major investor in the 1,000 kilometer West Africa gas pipeline project. Nigeria holds over 180 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, while oil reserves are estimated at 33 billion barrels. Therefore, Nigeria has great optimism in the future of its energy industry. As President Obasanjo, stated by 2010, “we hope to make almost as much revenue in gas as in oil.”³

Another major oil producer in the sub-region, Angola, holds about 10 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves and another American multinational, Texaco, has built a \$2.5 billion gas project in partnership with the government of Angola. Angola has the capacity to produce over three metric tons per year of liquefied natural gas.

Also, South Africa’s own SASOL (South Africa Oil Company) has built a network of gas pipelines to both Mozambique and Namibia’s Kudu field as major points of power generation. Thus, Africa is destined to be a key player in the world’s energy market of the 21st century.

West Africa, very much like Algeria and Libya in North Africa, is now strategically ready and well positioned to produce and export Africa’s “Gas Gold” to the world as in LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) market in the 21st century. As Jennifer Kelly, of Environmental Media Services, Washington, DC puts it:

the new wave of activities in the oil industry is gradually transforming Africa into a major hub of the world’s oil business even as it is helping to bridge the gap between the so-called ‘clean nations’ and the ‘dark continent.’ For Africa, the trend may well mark the beginning of a non-retractable march towards industrialisation.⁴

The attractiveness and increased importance of West Africa’s oil deposits will most likely contribute to the enhancement of political and economic power of Africa’s emerging regional oil cartel named APPA (African Petroleum Producers Association). All the major oil producing countries in the Gulf of Guinea hold membership in Africa’s regional oil cartel. The oil power of the APPA could emerge to become a strong and competitive world class regional energy cartel similar to OAPEC (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries).

Furthermore, other than the strong emergence of a regional energy cartel, one could also envisage the emergence of a new world-class energy cartel in the 21st century that would be the leader in the production and marketing of natural gas. Natural gas is known to be the clean energy choice of the future to which OPEC member countries like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Nigeria, Abu Dhabi, Venezuela, Libya, Qatar, Iran, Iraq and Kuwait are highly endowed with gas reserves. The world natural gas endowment is dominated by Russia and Third World producers could inspire the formation of another powerful energy cartel that is likely to be named “Organization of Gas Exporting Countries [OGEC].” The success of OPEC in the 1970s should lead us to think that the energy market of the 21st century could see the emergence of OGEC—the Gas Exporters Cartel. An expert observer in the world energy scene has also envisaged the new energy cartel of the future. ⁵Therefore, there is strong possibility that the natural gas producing countries could aggregate to form a new concert geopolitical power bloc in the world energy scene in the 21st century.

For Nigeria, as the largest oil and gas exporting country in West Africa and a major regional power in Africa, will most likely be a member of OGEC just like she is an influential member of OPEC and APPA. Nigeria could redouble her influence and power not only in regional context, but in the world energy and political scene as it did in the era of OPEC power. Therefore, Nigeria and the rest of oil endowed countries of Africa could become major energy powerhouse of the world similar to the Middle East.

Then, Nigeria’s position and influence in the concert power of oil and gas exporting countries in the 21st century will produce and replicate the use of oil leverage of the 20th century into the use of new gas leveraged oil power in the 21st century so that Nigeria can again champion with the same vigor and dynamism in African economic liberation and for promoting Africa’s interest in world affairs. Nigeria will have a strong partnership with oil producing nations of the Gulf of Guinea with the view to tap the onshore and deep water oil wealth of the region for the benefit of Africa and its partners..

Africa is the new front of oil wealth in the deep sea. The idea that the world will turn to the mineral wealth of the seabed (Continental Shelf) to complement the already heavily exploited onshore reserves is nothing new, for it has long been believed that the Continental Shelf holds a great promise of oil and gas reserves to meet the ever growing energy needs of the world.

In 1975, the Soviet dominated International Oil Congress predicted that the world oceans contained about 50% of the accessible oil resources. In 1981, Igor Kozlov of the former Soviet Socialist Republics had a vision about the great potential in oil and gas deposits that exist in the world oceans. He thought of the possibility of creating an expanded utilization of the energy resources of the Continental Shelf to solve the pressing problems of power production in his book, *Socialism and Energy Resources*, he wrote: One of the pressing problems of power production today is the expanded utilization of the resources of the continental shelf.

Igor thought of the gradual extension of oil extraction to the zone of the continental slope. The countries of the socialist community have favourable opportunities for extending co-operation to the study of oil and gas resources on the shelf of the Baltic and Black Seas and in other promising areas of the sea.⁶

One of such other promising areas Igor Koslov predicted to hold large quantities of oil and gas in the deep oceans is the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. Koslov's prediction is now made substantive today and there is a new race for oil pontiffs and magnates to grasp the Black Gold treasures in the deep sea waters of West Africa.

THE PROMISE OF OIL AND GAS ECONOMY TO AFRICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The promise and growth of West African oil wealth has been well anchored in onshore production, mainly in Nigeria's Niger Delta which has made the country to become the 6th largest oil producer in the world. The deep sea water oil and gas reserves have the same potential to make Nigeria great again.

Two expert analysts, Roger Knight and John Westwood reported in the *Oil and Gas Journal* of 18 January 1999, that the long-term prospects are very bright for deep waters (offshore West Africa). They noted that:

- As a hydrocarbon province, West Africa, with 220 fields in production already, bears itself well in comparison with other areas of the world.

- But it is the immense promise of the giant deepwater fields that is setting hard-pressed oil executives' pulse rates pounding.
- In a recent study of future global deepwater activity, we rated West Africa as being the region with probably the best long-term prospects.¹¹

With this promising outlook, at the dawn of the 21st century, Africa's renaissance has truly begun and given the continent's great potential, together with the right measure of political will, the future can be said to be bright and Nigeria the largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa can lead the way for Africa's economic prosperity in the 21st century.

THE WEST, AMERICA AND THE RUSH FOR AFRICAN DEEP SEA OIL WEALTH

An *Insight* report (June 2004) indicates an imminent task force strength deployment by the United States in the oil rich Gulf of Guinea, off Nigeria's coast labeled one of the ungoverned regions of Africa to safeguard the former's strategic interest in the face of heightening instability in the Middle East, a region that had to date remained the major US crude oil supply source.¹²

The United States has real interests in Africa. We ignore the continent at our peril. Africa will provide up to 30 percent of US oil in the next ten years. A lot of this new oil is actually offshore. There is no one to protect it unless we build up African coastal fleets .

Further, Snyder noted in particular that planners hoped to secure Africa's coast to prevent an influx of Islamic extremists driven out of the Middle East and seeking sanctuary in areas like Nigeria's mainly-Muslim north.

To further shore up the mission's *raison d'être* a report by the military authorities spoke of the need for security and stability in the Gulf of Guinea, in part because of the growing offshore oil operations there.¹³ It quoted the deputy commander of the US European Command, Gen. Charles Wald, as likening Sao Tome in potential strategic importance to the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, which is home to an American naval base.¹⁵

The on-going Al Qaida activities in Saudi have increased its discomfort. All this is anchored in the objective reality of Richard Cheney's report, Vice President, National Energy Policy Development

Group which revealed a growing demand for oil and gas in the US which see it increase its oil import by about 50 per cent by 2020. This will see the US importing two of every three barrels of oil that it will require. The only way to guarantee this is by looking abroad. Failure to meet this projection amount to real threat to US national security. So the diversity plan centres on the Caspian Sea area, Latin America and Africa, especially West Africa, whose deposit of light sweet crude is cost effective for being easy to refine or as the US Department of Energy puts it, 'Tailor-made for US East Coast markets.' Currently, Nigeria oil constitutes about 9.7 per cent of US imports and certainly covets Nigeria's estimated 22.5 billion barrels of crude reserve. Its concerns in Nigeria include Exxon/Mobil and Chevron/Texaco; both are also operating in Angola; in Equatorial Guinea Exxon/Mobil, Marathon Oil, Amerada Hess, and Ocean Energy dominate the oil production and its allied activities; in (the) Sudan, it is currently trouble-shooting in order to take over oil production there.¹⁹

In the face of this, Akhaine went on to note that national security is problematic, an issue that has dominated all US transactions with virtually all African countries. Sao Tome has conceded to it the space to build a so-called deep-water port while it is discussing an airfield access agreement with another Nigeria next door neighbour, Benin Republic. It was not surprising when the NATO Supreme Commander, U.S. General James Jones, admitted that there was a US plan to boost its troops presence in Africa. And Theresa Whelan, the Director of the Pentagon's Office of African Affairs drove the point home when she said that the US has security concerns over off-shore oil.²⁰

Diplomats generally believed that the deployment of its battle group carrier to the Gulf of Guinea is a dress rehearsal for US military involvement in the region. The broad implication of this is that by the roll call, all Sub-Saharan African countries will become US satellites and dependants without sovereignty. Once the US has its boot on the ground in Africa, the region will witness a replay of the dynamics in the Persian Gulf. The prospect is best imagined than experienced.²¹

Akhaine further expressed his deep concerns about the great importance is the word employed by General James Jones to the effect that they would be enhancing their operations in the ungoverned regions of Africa is indicative of US colonial design, which must be vehemently resisted. This design (according to him) is not only against Nigeria's national interest but also the destiny of the Blackman as this may well be the

beginning of the second transatlantic slavery. Nigerian state actors need to heed the words of Eric Margolis, author of *War at the Top of the World—The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir and Tibet*, that where geopolitics and oil are the issues, there are no friends, only competitors and enemies.²²

Therefore, Sylvester Odion Akhaine was prompted to recommend the following, that the Nigerian government needs to repudiate all forms of subservient and compromising agreements it may have entered into with the US, especially under the Obasanjo Administration; Nigerian oil should be open to all manners of honest buyers; the Nigerian Army and the government should make it clear that we will not tolerate pax Americana in our backyard. A constructive and quiet diplomacy should immediately be adopted to engage with our neighbours, especially Sao Tome and Benin, that Nigeria will not countenance any form of agreement with any power that undermines our security. The issue of the US threat to Nigeria and African security in general should be top on the agenda of AU [African Union] summit. Above all, the popular groups in Nigeria, including labour, need to embark on an immediate protest. It is imperative as it took such actions to forestall the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact in the 1960s. Before we all find ourselves in dishonourable graves, my clarion call to all Nigerian patriots: your country needs you.²³

At the new dawn in post-Cold War energy politics, Ken Silverstein has identified the importance of the ‘Kuwait’ of Africa to Euro-America. The ‘Kuwait’ of West Africa is the oil rich Gulf of Guinea in Sub-Saharan Africa where Nigeria is the dominant producer of oil and gas. In his article, “U.S. Oil Politics in the Kuwait of Africa,” Ken Silverstein wrote:

*During the Cold War, the United States viewed Africa as a major battleground with the Soviet Union and poured billions of dollars of economic and military aid into the continent. After the collapse of Communism, though, American interest waned. As recently as 1995, a Pentagon report concluded that the United States had “very little traditional strategic interests in Africa.” But during the past few years, Africa has become a growing source of American oil imports—especially West Africa, which in oil parlance is considered to include Angola as well as Nigeria, Congo Republic, Gabon, Cameroon and . . . Equatorial Guinea. The United States already buys 15 percent of its oil from West Africa—nearly as much as comes from Saudi Arabia—a figure expected to grow to 20 percent within the next five years and, according to the National Intelligence Council, to as high as 25 percent by 2015.*²⁴

Thus, West Africa has the great promise to provide Euro-America's energy security in the 21st century. In May 2002, the Bush Administration's national energy policy expert predicted that West Africa would become "one of the fastest-growing sources of oil and gas for the American market." Paul Michael Wihbey of Washington's Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies described West Africa as "an area of vital US interest" in testimony before Congress. He proposed the creation of a new South Atlantic Military Command that would "permit the US Navy and armed forces to more easily project power to defend American interests and her allies in West Africa." To reiterate the *Insight* report in June 2004, indicates an imminent task force strength deployment by the United States in the oil rich Gulf of Guinea off Nigeria's coast labeled one of the ungoverned regions of Africa to suggest that the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon further heightened American attention to Africa, with national security planners urging that the United States seek to diversify supplies of oil away from the Middle East.²⁹ Further attestation to oil and gas potentials of West Africa, the Secretary General of OPEC, Dr. Rilwanu Lukman, stated "The international financial community believes that Africa holds great promise for economic growth, especially in the energy sector and particularly in oil and gas."³⁰

Also, U.S. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson unveiled an American initiative to promote African economic growth through private sector energy investment. The U.S. Energy Initiative is aimed at fostering energy trade and investment, encouraging the development of regional energy markets, improving environmental conditions and complimenting moves towards free market principles and democracy in Africa.³¹

With the United States working to decrease its dependence on Middle East petroleum, Africa is quickly becoming a key supplier. The United States already imports 17 percent of its petroleum from sub-Saharan Africa. Within a decade, nearly a quarter will come from the oil fields of the continent, with Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, the Congo Republic, Cameroon and Chad as leading suppliers. Oil now represents 70 percent of African exports to the United States.

For Nigeria, there lies another great promise that, in the same region of the Niger Delta which produced most of Africa's Black Gold of the 20th century, has again the promise to produce the oil and gas-gold of the 21st century because the region holds the highest proven natural gas reserve in Africa and it is one of the major oil and gas provinces the world has ever known.

Nigeria is situated in one of the world's major oil provinces in sub-Saharan Africa. The oil sector in this region is one of the fastest growing areas in the world. The production has taken off in the Gulf of Guinea which includes Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Gabon, Angola, Central African Republic Congo, Chad and Sao Tome. Nigeria is the major producer and leader in this region. When President Bush launched his anti-terrorism initiatives, and on his visit to Africa in 2003, he also highlighted the growing importance of oil imports for the United States.

The U.S. imports two-thirds of its oil needs and about 15 percent of it comes from West Africa and the figure is projected to increase roughly to about 25 per cent or more in the future. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack, America is looking to reduce its dependence on the Middle East by looking elsewhere for energy supplies and West Africa offers a major consumer like the United States the leverage to diversify its energy needs from the Middle East dependency. In July 2003, the President of Oxford Institute for Energy Studies stated that

There is a move to reduce reliance on the Middle East but Africa has its problems. Look at the recent strikes in Nigeria.³² While we acknowledge some potential problems, the crucial importance of African oil to the United States is not in dispute. The United States has even nursed a military presence to secure oil supplies in the region.³³

The battle for access to world oil resources continues unabated, resulting in some interesting decisions emanating from Washington and London. In this regard Pamela Ann Smith (2004) wrote:

While Europe and the US, as well as other parts of the world, gear up for another round in the global war against terror, President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair are also casting their eyes on another global battle: The struggle to control the world's new oil and gas fields. At stake are not only the interests of politicians and the oil companies, as well as western consumers, but also geopolitical power in the 21st century. However, recent evidence from places as far as West Africa and Central Asia, as well as the Middle East itself, suggests that both leaders have a lot of catching up to do if they are to regain their once almighty supremacy in the 'Great Game' of international oil. The first indication of trouble, at least as far as the mass media were concerned, came shortly after the bombings in Madrid in March. With the world's eyes on Spain's search for the suspects, and the arrest of a cell of Islamists from North Africa, a few intrepid reporters also discovered what many

*politicians, oil company executives and aid workers in Africa already knew: Bush has slowly, but surely, begun his battle for control of the large new energy fields being discovered in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as for others already existing, or being expanded on the continent in countries such as Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Mali and Angola.*³⁴

Although the US military's massive publicity campaign in March highlighted the potential threat the Bush Administration sees from alleged Al Qaeda operatives in the region, the focus on Africa comes amid a push by some in the US, especially conservative think-tanks, to do more to secure alternatives to oil from the volatile Middle East.

According to Ann Smith,

Washington's justification for the new high military profile in West and North Africa stems from what it claims is intelligence showing that groups linked to Al Qaeda now have an interest in the region. In February, the Deputy Commander of the U.S.'s European command, which also covers almost all of Africa, said that armed Islamists 'are going to look for a place where they can do the same thing they did in Afghanistan, Iraq or other places'. The Commander, General Charles Wald, added that 'They need a haven to train, equip, organise and recruit. As you squeeze the balloon and move them', he maintained, 'they are migrating toward Africa'.³⁵

This observation appeared to be crucial. The US-UK collaboration to secure interest in West African oil might also be extended to Western strategic geopolitical interest to keep out the Russians from the West African oil belt just as the US-UK gave very strong support to British Petroleum led consortium to build a pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey to keep the vast quantities of oil out of Russian hands (similar to the then Russian-led USSR and its Communist allies had an accord in 1975) to have exclusive rights to the utilization of the Baltic Sea under the "Petrobaltic" arrangement. In line with this interest,

The report on the initiative known formally as the [US-UK energy dialogue]—also addresses another oil rich part of the world, saying that the UK and US 'have noted the huge energy potential of Russia, Central Asia and the Caspian'.

In our discussions on how to move forward in approaching Russia and the Caspian Central Asian countries, we have concluded that we have similar political, economic, social and energy objectives. Both governments have given strong support to a BP-led consortium to build a huge and strategically important pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey, to keep vast^f quantities of oil out of Russian hands.³⁶ The Union had then Russian led Soviet similar had a similar plan to keep the west out from their oil pot.

To this end, Koslov wrote:

Attributing great significance to the development of geological surveying at sea and wishing to heighten the effectiveness of this research, in 1975 the governments of the GDR (German Democratic Republic), Poland, and the USSR signed an agreement on setting up a joint organisation called "Petrobaltic," to carry out geological prospecting for oil and gas in the Baltic Sea within the bounds of the continental shelf and the territorial waters of the USSR, the GDR, and Poland. The seat of this joint organisation was in the town of Gdansk in Poland. Besides conducting geological prospecting by prospects working in the given region, "Petrobaltic" will co-ordinate the joint exploitation of the commercially valuable deposits of oil and gas discovered. The participating countries decide on the setting up of a joint enterprise to work the deposit which would have exclusive right to the utilization of this deposit. At the same time, it is envisaged that the country, on whose continental shelf or in whose territorial waters the deposit was discovered has the right to 50 per cent of the raw material obtained from the given deposit and other two countries to 25 per cent each. Petrobaltic is provided with the necessary material resources and is financed by the partner countries on an equal basis.³⁷

In November 2003, the United Kingdom and United States of America reached an accord to collaborate to secure West African oil. President George Bush Jr. and Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain, in a joint initiative, agreed that both governments are keenly aware that, while the demand for oil is likely to rise, they cannot depend on the volatile and hostile Middle East as a safe source. Africa owns 8 percent of the world's oil reserve and part of the official document read:

We have identified a number of key oil and gas producers in the West Africa . . . on which our two governments and major oil and gas companies could cooperate to improve investment conditions, good governance, social and political stability and thus underpin long term security of supply.³⁸

Moreover, to drive home the essential nature U.S.-UK Cooperative for their oil security future, Pamela

Smith argues that:

Both Bush and Blair are under increasing pressure to use the flag to support the needs of their own national oil producers and to help them 'catch up' with their international rivals. The problem both leaders face is that Bush's top advisers, notably the neo-conservative Paul Wolfowitz, remain convinced that the 'war on terrorism' cannot be defeated without cutting off the terrorists' source of finance. And most of these, the neo-cons insist, come from the revenues accruing to the Arab oil

producing countries in the Middle East. Which may explain why the ‘war on terrorism’ is now being promoted in North and West Africa. Aside from fomenting divisions in OPEC and shoring up the weak governments of the new oil rich among the smaller non-OPEC African states, a military and security presence in the region seems vital if the US and Britain want not only to ensure their own supplies but also those of Europe.³⁹

Thus, Euro-America has begun a new rush for Africa’s Black Gold at the dawn of the 21st century, just like it had previously scrambled for Africa’s “gold treasures” in the preceding centuries and Nigeria has long been known as one of Africa’s major treasure bases for Black Gold reserves.

Nigeria is the most populous country in the African sub-region and holds most of Africa’s oil and gas reserves. Nigeria must ensure that she plays the proper leadership role in promoting internal stability, along with measures that encourage Africa’s political and economic security interests that benefit all members of the sub-region. Nigeria’s resource endowment for nation building and foreign policy must then seek first to sustain stability in its own domestic order and then extend its influence and power to assist sister African states in its complex political, economic and diplomatic interests for the enhancement of her national security and economic prosperity that ensures the protection of her national prestige and the promotion of regional security and world peace. This is the new political, economic and diplomatic challenge Nigeria has to face for her own betterment and well being of others in the sub-region.

Nigeria is a nation of promising possibilities with visions and dreams for its own unique sense of greatness. It has endured, over time, its own challenges in nation building, but it has also admirable record of achievements and moments of greatness in nation building.

On the international front, first, Nigeria is a viable member of the International Community of Nations. However, its role in world affairs can be influenced by the complex interrelationships between various economic and geo-political forces, particularly the role of superpowers and the direction of the new world order and the possible implications for Nigeria’s national interest and African affairs. This is important in that the new world order has consequences for regional and international order or disorder. The political and economic changes in Europe, Russia, Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Americas are testimonies on the direction of the new world order. The exact position Nigeria is going to take in the future is difficult to say

at this time, except when the events unfold themselves. However, one position seems obvious, that Nigeria's interest in the African sub-regional security and development will always stand in the nation's foreign policy and security interests. Historically, since independence, Nigeria has played a significant role in Africa and world affairs. Nigeria is a member of all major international bodies such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, OAU (now AU—African Union) and non-aligned movements like G77 and China. Nigeria has played or participated in maintaining regional security and international peace initiatives. Here are some highlights of Nigeria's role in regional security and world peace:

1. Nigeria was a major UN peacekeeping force in the Congolese Crisis in the early 1960s and also participated in the UN peace-keeping force in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the world.
2. In the 1990s, Nigeria took direct responsibility for the peacekeeping force in Liberia (ECOMOG) and also participated in the peacekeeping force in Somalia (in the Horn of Africa).
3. Nigeria took direct responsibility for the emancipation of sister African states from colonial rule.
4. Nigeria had been highly influential in ending apartheid in South Africa.

Nigeria has shown remarkable leadership in Africa and world affairs. Nigeria headed the UN Commission against apartheid. Nigeria has also held a number of high positions in international organizations. For example, Nigeria's Joe Garba was President of the UN General Assembly during 1991-92. Also, Nigeria's Simeon Adebayo was Director of the UNCTAD. Chief Emeka Anyaogu was Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations. Three Nigerian Heads of State, General Gowon, General Murtala Mohammed and General Ibrahim Babangida have each held the position of chair of the Organization of African Unity and/or played key roles in African political liberation. A prominent Nigerian physician, Dr. Adeoye Lambo, had been a Director of the World Health Organization and Justices Taslim Elias, Onyeama and Karibi Whyte of Nigeria, sat at the International Court of Justice. Nigeria has held both the presidency and Secretary-Generalship of OPEC at different periods. Above all, Nigeria utilized its diplomatic skills and oil power to assist Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia to gain political independence. Nigeria, again with its diplomatic skills, was able to harmonize a diplomatic relationship with the State of Israel without losing its friendly ties with the Arab Nations. At the dawn of the 21st century, Nigeria led the group of 77 and China,

and in the year 2004, Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo was elected Chairman of the African Union. Obasanjo said:

*Nigeria [is] destined to lead Africa. Since one in every four Africans in the world is a Nigerian and one in every five black people is a Nigerian, there is a purpose for God to make it so. Nigeria as a nation has to play a great responsibility, which if she fails, would be irresponsibility.*⁴⁰

Thus, there is hope that Nigeria will continually offer its diplomatic skills to maintain regional and global peace, depending on the seasoned geo-political circumstances in the 21st century.

REFERENCES:

1. Kayode Soremkun, *Economic Development and Foreign Policy in Nigeria*, edited by O. Olusanyaga, et. al (1988), p. 105.
2. *The Washington Times*, May 13, 2004, p. A18.
3. As quoted by *The Guardian*, January 1, 2002.
4. *The African Economy*, *The Guardian*, January 1, 2004, p. 24.
5. Howard Lax
6. Igor Kozlov, *Socialism and Energy Resources* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984), pp. 124-125. [English translation of the revised Russian text].
7. "Texaco and Statoil Announce Major Deepwater Oil Discovery Offshore Nigeria," <http://www.excite.com/news/bw/99309/tx-texaco>
8. *Vanguard*, April 27, 1999, p. 13.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. *Oil and Gas Journal Special*, January 18, 1999, p. 33.
12. "Insight," *THISDAY*, June 20, 2004, p. 24.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. As quoted by Olusegun Adeniyi, "The Sunday Politics," *THISDAY*, July 4, 2004, p. 13.

19. *The Guardian*, June 20, 2004, p. 13.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ken Silverstein, "U.S. Oil Politics in the 'Kuwait' of Africa," *The Nation*, April 22, 2002, p. 2.
24. "Insight," *THISDAY*, June 20, 2004, p. 24.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. *The Guardian*, July 12, 2003, p. 10.
30. Ibid.
31. *The Middle East*, June 2004, p. 38.
32. Ibid., p. 39.
33. As quoted by Hector Igbikiowubo, "UK & US Collaborate to Secure West African Oil," *Vanguard*, November 18, 2003, p. 21.
34. Koslov (1984), pp. 125-126.
35. Ibid.
36. *The Middle East*, June 2004