

**The Correlation between Resource Wars, War on Terror, and Insecurity in Africa**  
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**Abstract**

This paper establishes that there is a correlation between the U.S. global war on terror, resource wars, and insecurity in Africa. It points out that the U.S., through its global war on terror, is increasingly becoming a threat to African security. The paper shows how American Imperialism is alive and strong and is fostering the endless resource-induced wars. Drawing from the Middle East, the paper insists that America's foreign policy is predicated on its national economic interest. With a special focus on the African Command (AFRICOM), the paper shows that the organization was created in response to the importance of sub-Saharan Africa as an oil supplier, and to counter the dominance of China in the Africa. The paper also examines the fact that state sponsors of terrorism in Africa are being ignored while America concentrates on non-state organizations like al-Qaeda. This paper concludes with a call for African nationalism and urges Africans to take advantage of globalization to become vital or competitive players in the world economy. Only a war on poverty can bring true peace, security, and economic prosperity to Africa.

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## **Introduction**

The history of Africa during the last 50 years has been largely characterized by conflicts. First there was the struggle for independence, but independence soon gave birth to even more conflicts. While some of these conflicts have their roots in the fact that African countries are hardly nation-states in the sense of having a common ancestry or ethnicity, others have been a result of poor leadership and the inability to deliver the promises of independence, or in latter days, democracy (Asongu, 1993; Kouadio, 2007). The consequence has been a series of fratricidal blood baths that modern Africa has experience from the Nigerian-Biafran civil war in the 1960s to the more recent cases in Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire), Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda etc.

Without a solution to the fundamental causes of the problems of Africa, there will hardly be security in Africa. Worse still, Africa is again confronting a new threat to its peace and security – a threat that is subtle, though as devastating as was colonialism to the continent. This growing threat is coming from the sole superpower – the United States. Although one can argue that most of American foreign policy has been geared towards global dominance, the arrogance of the current U.S. administration has made it clear that the country will stop at nothing in its bid to grasp the world's natural resources (Lendman & Asongu, 2007). This paper points out that such a belligerent posture is threatening not just to the Middle East, but also to Africa and it will be foolish for African policy makers to sit in blissful ignorance as the threat against the continent continues to grow.

## Statement of the Problem and Research Methodology

The Bush administration has given the U.S. “rights” that are not available to any other nation – “the right to wage preventive wars against perceived threats or any nations daring to challenge [American] status as lord and master of the universe” (Lendman & Asongu, p. 140). The goal of this strategy is to control the world’s energy reserves starting with the Middle East, but literally extending to the ends of the earth. America needs these resources because domestic resources are not sufficient to satisfy its ever increasing needs. Currently the country has the military might or at least the potential to force its will through the throats of foes and allies alike. With many of these resources in Africa, the hitherto forgotten continent is increasingly moving towards the center stage of American foreign policy, and contrary to intuition this is not a good thing for Africa. This is precisely the point of this paper, and drawing insights from the Middle East experience and the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, it is easy to see why this is the case.

With the above background, this paper examines the relationship between resource wars, war on terror, and insecurity in Africa. The paper defines and clarifies these concepts, while finding out whether within the African context they are correlated. To do this, the methodology employed will be qualitative. As Creswell (2003) notes, qualitative research usually employs one or more of these techniques – observation, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. This particular research will essentially focus on documents for its findings. Documents in this sense include public records such as minutes of meetings, press releases, newspaper articles, and other published materials; private documents such as journals, diaries, and letters; e-mail correspondences; etc.

While the nature of our enquiry does not lend itself to a quantitative study, it should be noted that the advantages of relying on documents is that they enable the researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants; they can be accessed at a convenient time to the researcher (an unobtrusive source of information); they represent data that are thoughtful, in that the participants have given attention to compiling; and as written evidence, they save the researcher time and expense of transcribing (Creswell, 2003). On the other hand, the limitations of qualitative research lie in the fact that some protected information may be unavailable to public or private access (for instance, classified information); the information may be in hard-to-find locations; some of the information may require transcribing or optical scanning for computer entry; the documented material may present an incomplete picture; and some of the documents may not be authentic or accurate (Creswell, 2003). Another problem is that this type of research runs the danger of being subjective.

#### Importance and Limitations of the Research

The importance of this research lies in its practical value. It is hoped that the findings of this research will enable African policy makers and security experts to better appreciate the new threat to African security. While the paper proposes solutions to the problem or threat, the most significant import of the research has been the identification of the problem. Although many authors have written about U.S. policy and insecurity in Africa (Mentan, 2004 & 2007; Keenan, 2006; Bryden, 2003; Mack, 1997), few if any have pointed out the correlation between resource war, war on terror, and insecurity in

Africa. This paper, therefore, fills a lacuna in the literature, while at the same time proposing practical and useful solutions to this growing threat.

Each research has its merits and demerits, and for this one the major weakness is that the researcher did not interview policy makers, especially in Africa, to record their take on the impact of the growing attention the U.S. is paying on Africa. The reason why this could not be done was due to the lack of financial resources on the part of the researcher to actually carry out interviews with African policy makers and leaders. However, the researcher believes that this does not seriously compromise the quality of the study given the available documentation or literature on related issues that the researcher has relied upon. Given these sources, one can adequately draw a reasonable conclusion on how and why the U.S. is focusing on Africa and the likely consequences of American interest on African resources.

### **Literature Review**

There is an abundance of literature about U.S. foreign policy, the global war on terror, the resource war, and security in Africa (Lendman & Asongu, 2007; Asongu, 2007; Mentan, 2004 & 2007; Keenan, 2006; Bryden, 2003; Mack, 1997). However, no one has attempted to link these aspects together and to point out the correlation between them. With the global war on terror still occupying the center stage in world events, this research is addressing a very hot issue. The literature review examines the authors that have addressed various aspects of the study such as resource wars, the global war on terror, and security problems in contemporary Africa.

## The Resource War

Contemporary resource wars can be traced to the period towards the end of World War II (Lendman, 2007). A meeting between U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and Saudi King Ibn Saud on the USS Quincy helped establish a stronghold for the U.S. in the Middle East. This began a six-decade relationship guaranteeing U.S. access to what his State Department called a “stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history” (para. 1). With two-thirds of the world’s proven oil reserves (around 675 billion barrels) in the Middle East, Lendman believes that it explains why the U.S. is at war with Iraq and Afghanistan, and plans maintaining control over both countries. He argues that America wants a permanent military presence in these countries to control the region’s proven energy reserves “with puppet regimes, masquerading as democracies, beholden to Washington as client states.” He further states that puppet regimes are “in place to observe what their ousted predecessors ignored: the rules of imperial management, especially Rule One – [America is] boss and what [America says] goes” (para. 1).

Lendman and Asongu (2007) further argue that American foreign policy is basically imperialistic and contrary to claims that their involvement in military exploits abroad is to the benefit of the various affected countries, the real motive is economic domination. The authors present a list of American military activities since World War II, which shows that America has basically been attacking one country or the other for over half a century. Asongu (2007) also points to how American firms have benefited from such resource wars.

Having natural resources is not a blessing for African nations as Oyefusi (2007) points out. He states that in the 1940s and 50s some development economists believed that natural resource abundance would help poor states to overcome their capital shortfalls. These economists thought that these natural resources will provide their owners with the much needed foreign exchange, attract foreign investment, provide raw materials that could be used for industrial development, and revenues for governments to provide basic public goods and services. This optimism has evaporated in many academic and policy circles after over four decades of betrayed hopes. Instead of seeing natural resource abundance as a blessing, some scholars now consider it very risky and a potential source of conflict.

Oyefusi (2007) examines the rationale for this paradigm shift, and shows that evidence on the “resource curse” is not overwhelming, even among mineral-dependent states. He argues that countries that create or are endowed with the right set of institutions, and adopt the right set of policies at the time of resource discovery or when the resources assume a significant role in their political-economies, are more likely to attain rapid economic growth and development. These countries, he believes, will do better than other countries with equal endowments but without such institutions and policies. The author, therefore, proposes a case-by-case examination of economic and political institutional endowments and other factors, such as the structure of extractive industry, and the management of resource wealth, as a way of gaining greater insight of the role of natural resources in civil conflict and development, and how to assist resource-abundant post-conflict countries to get back to (or enter) the peaceful developmental path.

But Houngnikpo (2006) seems to agree with the concept of “resource curse” by pointing out that despite Africa’s wealth, the continent remains the poorest. Decades of economic assistance mainly from the West have not improved much and he believes that poverty is promoting inhuman conflicts and insecurity in the continent. He argues that inhuman conflicts and insecurity in Africa supports the argument that chaos and anarchy are inevitable in the continent. For there to be peace in Africa, Houngnikpo believes that there is need for serious consideration on how to prevent future conflicts. He also points to the fact that democracy has failed Africans because many in the few democratic countries in the continent continue to suffer from poverty and other kinds of hardship. Democracy has failed to change the living conditions of most Africans and increasing poverty has resulted in increasing crimes.

According to Mentan (2007), America’s war on terror in Africa is influenced by America’s contemporary quest for the occupation and militarization of strategic natural resources like oil fields in the continent. He rejects the narrow definition of terrorism insisted on by Washington that exempts terrorism committed by African governments supporting the war on terror (state terrorism) from the definition, and for political reasons restricts the term solely to “private terrorism” committed by private individuals or non-state organizations like al-Qaeda.

The current interest on Africa, not just by the U.S. and other Western powers, but also by Asian giants especially China is worth studying. Taylor (2004) explains that China’s contemporary policy towards Africa is a reaction to Western attitude towards China following the Tiananmen Square crisis of June 1989. China’s international relations prior to this was focused on the West. Taylor argues that Africa’s importance in

Beijing's foreign policy had declined during the 1980s because China believed that Africa had little, if anything, to contribute to its economic growth. China's 'socialist modernization' project had placed an emphasis on massive foreign investment and technology and in the eyes of the power brokers in Beijing, Africa was the wrong place to go in realizing this dream. Furthermore, the decade preceding the Tiananmen Square incident, Chinese tensions with both Washington and Moscow thawed and this too helped undermine Africa's importance to China. However, after June 4, 1989, China was compelled to re-evaluate its foreign policy given the strong Western reaction to the Tiananmen Square incident. Contrary to Western reaction, many African leaders appeared to be supportive of China. Faced with the new reality, China's honeymoon with the West suffered a setback, while relationship with Africa turned from benign neglect to renewed emphasis. Taylor then concludes that this renewal has continued to today whereby China is actively involved in Africa, promoting trade linkages, while enjoying the support of the African constituency in the international arena.

### The Global War on Terror

The "War on Terror" (also known as the War on Terrorism) is a military campaign that was initiated by the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 on the United States. It includes various military, political, legal, religious, and personal actions taken by the U.S. and some other countries around the world to curb the spread of terrorism. Because of the perceived disingenuous nature of the phrase, many non-American journalists and news organizations, such as Elson (2007) of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, refer to it as the "so-

called War on Terror” (para. 13). The policies denoted by the war on terror have been a source of ongoing controversy, as they have been used to justify unilateral preemptive war, perpetual war, human rights abuses, and other violations of international law (Welsh, 2003).

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 change the American worldview, at least in the short run. It was devastating not only in terms of the people killed and businesses lost, but also because it distorted the ability of many Americans to make critical judgments about American policies (Mentan, 2007). The Bush administration has thus used the 9/11 attacks to mobilize uncritical public opinion behind its domestic as well as foreign policy. The author presents a critical overview of America’s war on terror in Africa, its variants, its historical foundations, and its functional perspectives.

Mentan (2007) also points out that America exhibits a double standard when it comes to its war on terror in Africa (p. 1). The U.S. has made a distinction between terrorism carried out by non-state actors and that perpetrated by the state. While the U.S. is determined to crush the former, but for a few instances it virtually ignores state-sponsored terrorism to the effect that some African states are wrecking havoc on their own people. He believes that such dubiousness does not augur well for the global war on terror. Mentan defines terrorism as “a form of asymmetric warfare... that uses non-traditional methods to counter an opponent’s conventional military superiority” (p. 4). This approach involves the use of unconventional means to attack unsuspecting targets and it exploits vulnerabilities to deadly effect.

The political elite have succeeded in repressive governmental situations in using the discourse of terrorism and fear as public policy in manipulating the people to consent

and subordination (Achankeng, 2007). Using a state-society perspective and post-structural views of reality as constructed by language, Achankeng examines terrorism as manipulation, and argues that the phenomenon is bound to continue for some time because it is fueled by political expediency and sustained by self-serving media establishments. The author notes that the practice, from the French Revolution era, has been for the political elite in different nations to articulate the imminent danger in one situation or another in order to keep a people distracted or to pursue certain political objectives. These elite will create fear in the people in order to manipulate them at home and in the conduct of foreign policy. In the different situations across the world including the lure of empire, the one thing that seems to serve the purpose of politicians who resort to the terrorism discourse to promote their agenda is the political stage, as well as military and media power. Because these politicians control the political stage, the military, and many media establishments, they impose their reality on everyone else such that a good majority seems to believe, as gospel, everything that the powerful media brings to them as they sensitize and frame policy issues. Achankeng concludes that the resort to terrorism as political manipulation can be a successful governance ploy for only sometime.

Becker (2002) has documented how the events of September 11, 2001, have not only reshaped the Bush administration, but America and the rest of the world. First, the tragedy unified most Americans against a new world of transnational terrorism. And Mentan (2007) notes that the “the psychological shock of America discovering its vulnerability began a period of intense national introspection, soul-searching, and profound change to the nation’s self-perceptions – both positive and negative” (p. 5). For

many Americans, this period of reflection ignited a spirited revival of patriotism. President Bush reflected on America's revived divine sense of destiny in his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, and on July 16, 2002, he presented his plan for domestic security by mustering American patriots with his clarion call for Americans to rally together in order to overcome the new and very complex challenge of terrorism (Becker, 2002).

Although Mentan (2004) is critical of American war on terror in Africa, he argues that the emergence of a genuinely African type of terrorism is unlikely. He points out that the inability of African states to control their own territory and to protect potential targets of terrorist assaults suggests that Africa could be the weakest link in a global war against terrorism. He explores the connection between terrorism and weak states, focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, which displays many of the same traits that led the rise of international terrorism in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. His major argument for believing that African states will not fall prey to transnational terrorism is the deep penetration of Western culture in sub-Saharan Africa that makes it unlikely for terrorists to successfully recruit young people from these countries. However, he warns, this situation could change if potential sources of dissatisfaction are not addressed through effective and meaningful aid programs.

Africa is shown as a continent with huge contradictions, among which is the huge gap between the rich and poor. This is made worse by the fact that the elite are determined to prey on both populations and state institutions (Vale, 2004). Because of Africa's poverty, the continent has been sidelined in international relations for decades and studies on the continent are often reduced to explanations of particular social

phenomena. Using critical theory, Vale attempts an explanation of hegemony, power ideology, and political practice in Africa. He believes that what is happening in Africa today has much to do with contemporary international relations. This is the very point that Mentan (2007) reiterates in the context of the war on terror, but the latter argues that Africa might indeed be the weak link in the global war on terror. Both authors, therefore, argue for greater involvement by Western powers in the affairs of Africa.

In a multi-dimensional study of Bush's effort to combat terrorism at a global level, Asongu (2007) has explored the underlying reasons for America's invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. He argues that no matter what reasons were publicly stated, the desire for Middle Eastern oil was a major reason for the invasions. The war on terror is presented as just another ploy for the occupation and militarization of strategic natural resources, like oil fields.

#### Insecurity in Africa

Damu (2007) understands the fact that the U.S. has become a threat to African security better than any other author. He focuses his analysis on the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM or AFRICOM), which is a new Unified Combatant Command of the United States Department of Defense. Damu ridicules the stated purpose of AFRICOM, which according to its public relations office "is to build upon ongoing security cooperation efforts and create new opportunities to strengthen the capabilities of partners in Africa" (AFRICOM, 2007, para. 6). Damu points out that the recent unveiling of AFRICOM by the Bush administration is "the clearest indicator yet of the military establishment's ascendancy over the State Department in formulation and

implementation of foreign policy, a trajectory that began soon after the conclusion of World War II” (para. 1). African nations are warned about the impending danger, drawing examples from previous U.S. military activities in the continent.

The fragile nature of African states is emphasized by Kouadio (2007), who has shown how the democratic experiment that took place in Côte d’Ivoire between 1990 and 2002 failed, leading to a civil war in a country that used to be one of Africa’s most stable and prosperous states. He shows how the various ethno-regional groups in Côte d’Ivoire who had lived together in harmony up to 1993, later in September 2002 took arms against each other. Kouadio brings out an ironical fact that during the reign of the country’s dictator, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, the country enjoyed peace, stability, and prosperity, but when he died in December 1993, a 10-year struggle to institute a democratic system resulted in a civil war in September 2002. The same thing can be said of Iraq after the brutal murder of Saddam Hussein by the Americans and their Iraqi agents (Asongu, 2007; Lendman & Asongu, 2007).

In dissecting the causes of the problem of national unity in Cameroon, Asongu (1993) also identified that Cameroon has been able to stay together as one country partly because the country’s presidents have ruled with iron fists, hardly allowing democratic freedom. If Southern Cameroonians (English-speaking or “Anglophone” Cameroonians) had their way, they would break away from what is clearly a failed experiment of uniting two nations. The Southern Cameroons was a British Trust Territory that was denied independence in 1961 and forced to decide whether to join the Nigerian Federation or French Cameroun. They decided to join the French-speaking Cameroun and have since regretted the decision, but have been unable to exercise any sovereignty over its territory.

Poverty also threatens Africa's security as it is the source of crimes and political agitations. Hounnikpo (2006) explains that despite Africa's wealth, the continent remains the poorest and decades of economic assistance mainly from the West have not improved much. He laments the failure of African democracies to improve the living conditions of most Africans and increasing poverty has resulted in increasing insecurity. It is further regrettable that African leaders in both democratic and autocratic countries do not seem to grasp the real meaning of security. Most African leaders define security in terms of the survival of their regimes. The growing gap between African leaders and the ordinary citizen, between the rich and the poor, can only generate further animosity and sow seeds for future conflicts. African leaders must endeavor to make everyone safe and protected, and to be free from want. In disentangling Africa's insecurity dilemma, it is necessary that an assault on poverty be launched so as to provide a genuine sense of security on the continent.

Ogbaharya (2006) argues that state-building in Africa is far from complete and as Asongu (1993) has noted this could be a major source of insecurity in Africa. Ogbaharya believes that there is a grim decay of governance in Africa, given that many African states continue to struggle with internal cohesion and instability, poverty, and ethnic marginalization and resistance. In the face of these challenges, international organizations, especially the Bretton Wood institutions, have provided "capacity building" by providing funds for institutional development. Unfortunately, as Ogbaharya has shown with examples from the Horn of Africa, the "capacity building" initiatives have not been very successful. The reason, according to Ogbaharya, is that they neglected the role of informal indigenous institutions.

While criticizing the current approaches to institutional development being used by international financial institutions, Ogbaharya (2006) argues that sustainable reconstruction of state institutions in Africa requires greater and enhanced role of indigenous institutions. Ogbaharya challenges the disconnect within conventional capacity building measures between formal and informal institutions and proposes a more holistic approach where indigenous institutions and regimes are recognized and cultivated. He concludes by arguing that a reformation of the dominant policy approaches to “capacity-building” must include greater regional cooperation among African states.

The political economy of conflict is taken up by Shaw (2006), who believes that modern day Africa is very complex. He identifies two categories of African states – the democratic developmental states and fragile states in difficult environments. In each of these types of states, there is a mixture of continental and global state and non-state actors that further complicates the situation. He argues that countries like China and India present both significant opportunities and challenges for Africa. In addition, Shaw highlights the role of the African Diasporas in the North, which is a growing source of critical remittances for basic needs in Africa.

### **Linking the Dots: The Correlation between the Resource Wars, War of Terror, and Insecurity in Africa**

Having reviewed some of the current literature around the three concepts – resource wars, war on terror, and insecurity in Africa – it is important to connect the dots in order to show the correlation between the concepts. A correlation, also called correlation coefficient, shows the strength and direction of a linear relationship between

two random variables. Although this is a qualitative study that has not made use of statistical techniques, it should be noted that in general statistical usage, correlation refers to the departure of two variables from independence. There is a conventional dictum that “correlation does not imply causation.” This means that although a correlation cannot be validly used to infer a causal relationship between the variables, it does not negate the fact that correlations can indicate causal relations. In some cases, the causes underlying the correlation, if any, may simply be indirect and unknown. Therefore, establishing a correlation between two variables is not a sufficient condition to establish a causal relationship (in either direction).

### America’s Imperial Ambitions

When Saddam Hussein was captured in 2003, then Democratic Party front-runner for the 2004 presidential election, Howard Dean, said the Hussein’s arrest did not make America any safer. Even with intense criticism in the media and especially from Republicans, Governor Howard Dean would not be deterred. He continued with his opposition of the war in Iraq, saying that the use of force in America ought to be confined to defense of the country and to stop an imminent military threat (Lendman & Asongu (2007). It is this readiness to use American military might to attack other countries – even those like Iraq who had done nothing against America – that critics of the Bush administration in the U.S., but especially abroad, loosely refer to as the propagation of the “American Empire.”

There is an active debate as to whether or not there is actually an American Empire, but before getting into the debate, it is important to examine the meaning of

“empire.” The term American Empire is usually used to describe the historical expansionism as well as the current political, economic, and cultural influence of the U.S. on a global scale. But what really is an empire? Traditionally, an empire was a territory ruled by an emperor or empress (i.e. a region over which imperial dominion is exercised); a group of countries under a single authority (e.g. the British Empire); or a monarchy with an emperor as head of state. An empire can also be seen as any large, multi-ethnic state ruled from a single center, but with the added characteristic that it maintains its political structure at least partly by coercion (Lendman & Asongu, 2007).

Today, a related term, imperialism, is even more flexibly used. It was first used in the mid-1800s to describe empire-like behavior, carried out by states which might or might not be formal empires (Lendman & Asongu, 2007). In the traditional sense of the word, the U.S. is not an empire, because it lacks a legal emperor, king, despot, or other hereditary head of state. But, if we look at all the various meanings of the term, it would be clear that the U.S. satisfies the definition of an empire, because it possesses sovereignty over territories which it has not annexed as states, such as Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, US Virgin Islands, and in the past the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Cuba, Occupied Japan, Occupied Germany, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Iraq. In addition, as of 2006 the U.S. had over 702 bases in 135 of the 195 sovereign independent nations of the world.

The controversy over whether the U.S. consistently behaves like an empire across the world, and if it would be accurate to describe it as such is an ongoing one. Some people have argued that describing American foreign policy as imperialistic is an abuse of term. Thornton (1978) believes that the overuse and abuse of the term imperialism

makes it nearly meaningless as an analytical concept. He argues that “imperialism is more often the name of the emotion that reacts to a series of events than a definition of the events themselves. Where colonization finds analysts and analogies, imperialism must contend with crusaders for and against” (Lendman & Asongu, 2007, p. 39.)

To deny the fact that American foreign policy is imperialistic, or to say America must consistently behave like an empire to be accused of imperialism is unrealistic. Some of the scholars who reject the fact that America’s activities smack of imperialism seem to have allowed their patriotism to supervene their sense of fairness. Others, as Chomsky (2007) argues, are simply either consciously or unconsciously toeing the “Party Line.” The Party Line in this case is simply the official position that the U.S. is not an empire, regardless of its imperialistic tendencies. The Party Line doctrine makes what an individual believes to be his/her own business and of far less concern. As Chomsky states, in a society like the U.S., where the government has lost the capacity to control by force:

The Party Line is simply presupposed; then, vigorous debate is encouraged within the limits imposed by unstated doctrinal orthodoxy. The cruder of the two systems leads, naturally enough, to disbelief; the sophisticated variant gives an impression of openness and freedom, and so far more effectively serves to instill the Party Line. It becomes beyond question, beyond thought itself, like the air we breathe (para. 2).

As intelligent as some American historians or political scientists are, they have nonetheless been caught in the web of American innocence. Miller (1982) has pointed out that the question of American imperialism has been the subject of agonizing debate ever since the U.S. acquired formal empire at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the 1898

Spanish-American War. Those who reject American imperialism would prefer to ignore this fact and instead cling to a dubious sense of American innocence, produced by a kind of “immaculate conception view of America’s origins” (p. 3). They would want us to believe that when European settlers came to America they miraculously shed their old ways upon arrival in the New World, in the same way as one might discard old clothing, and fashioned new cultural garments based solely on experiences in a new and vastly different environment.

Miller (1982) thinks that the U.S. educational system through the text books used, as well as the patriotic media, and even patriotic speeches on which Americans been reared have helped in cultivating the myth of American uniqueness or unrelatedness to their European ancestors in terms of the government structure. This is actually a disservice to the American nation given that there are many who do not appreciate the origins of the American system of government. Miller has accurately pointed out that the “United States Constitution owes its structure as much to the ideas of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes as to the experiences of the Founding Fathers; that Jeffersonian thought to a great extent paraphrases the ideas of earlier Scottish philosophers; and that even the allegedly unique frontier egalitarian has deep roots in seventeenth century English radical traditions” (p. 1).

### Imperialism is Central to U.S. Foreign Policy

Empire is at the heart of American foreign policy, and American imperialism can be traced back to Jefferson’s purchase of the Louisiana Territory, or even to the displacement of Native Americans prior to the American Revolution, and the Spanish-

American war. American imperialistic tendencies have continued to this day through the numerous U.S. foreign interventions, ranging from early actions under the Monroe Doctrine to 21<sup>st</sup> century interventions in the Middle East. Even the end of the Cold War did not fundamentally change U.S. foreign policy, which has long been driven by the desire to expand access to foreign markets in order to benefit the domestic economy. What America is doing in Africa is not different from what it has historically been known to do. The moralistic reasons given for American foreign intervention (as in the case of the official reasons for the Iraq War) mask the true economic reasons. AFRICOM must, therefore, be seen as a wolf in sheep clothing. U.S. economic/military imperialism (even when disguised as globalization) may not be in the best interests of Africa and to an extent that of the U.S. itself.

America is a very belligerent nation and African countries must understand this fact when dealing with the United States. What may begin as military/security cooperation is actually a strategic positioning of American might for when it might be used in future. The following list of countries that the U.S. has gone to war with, or at least bombed, since the end of World War II makes the point:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Period of Attack</i>
1. Afghanistan	2001-Present
2. Bosnia	1995
3. Cambodia	1969-70
4. China	1945-46 and 1950-53
5. Congo (Dem. Rep.)	1964

6. Cuba	1959-60
7. El Salvador	The 1980s
8. Grenada	1983
9. Guatemala	1954 and 1967-69
10. Indonesia	1958
11. Iraq	1991-Present
12. Korea	1950-53
13. Laos	1964-73
14. Libya	1986
15. Nicaragua	The 1980s
16. Panama	1989
17. Peru	1965
18. Somalia	1992-95 and 2006-Present
19. Sudan	1998
20. Vietnam	1961-73
21. Yugoslavia	1999

What this list reveals is that America has almost continuously been at war with one country or the other since the end of World War II, with few exceptions being the years 1947-49, 1955-57, and 1974-79. It should be noted that since America attacked and defeated Iraq in 1991 following the latter's invasion of Kuwait, American forces remained in the area until the 2003 invasion by Bush. During this period America continuously bombarded Iraq from time to time whenever it accused her of violating the

No Fly Zone. This list does not include Colombia, where the government requested American assistance to help quell paramilitary forces.

America has consistently been at war since the 1991, suggesting that its belligerent posture was not fundamentally provoked by the Cold War. It is, therefore, right to conclude that the Soviet Union was not responsible for U.S. pattern of war making, except negatively, as a deterrent. What the U.S. has faced most of the time (including during the Cold War) is nationalist insurgencies – these are people who are against U.S. taking their natural resources by political device. On the other hand, the U.S. has implemented colonialism by proxy, whereby U.S.-supported armed minorities take control of their countries like the case with Chile in 1973. When this happens, these elite minorities would then allow American companies and military to take control – albeit indirectly.

#### America Military Bases Abroad

There is no better sign of the American Empire than American military bases abroad. Some sources claim that there are more 700 of these bases, many of which are very unpopular within the nations that host them. In addition, the Unified Combatant Command, a military group composed of forces from two or more services that has the entire world divided into five areas of military responsibility, is another sign of the American Empire. Empire as an empirical reality and neo-colonialism by military means, like the invasion of Iraq under the pretext of restoring domestic civil liberties and human rights, is not a new technique (Lendman & Asongu, 2007).

Johnson (2004) sees military bases as the American version of colonialism and notes the secrecy with which the government treats the subject:

It's not easy to assess the size or exact value of our empire of bases. Official records on these subjects are misleading, although instructive. According to the Defense Department's annual "Base Structure Report" for fiscal year 2003, which itemizes foreign and domestic US military real estate, the Pentagon currently owns or rents 702 overseas bases in about 130 countries and has another 6,000 bases in the United States and its territories. Pentagon bureaucrats calculate that it would require at least \$113.2 billion to replace just the foreign bases – surely far too low a figure but still larger than the gross domestic product of most countries – and an estimated \$591,519.8 million to replace all of them. The military high command deploys to our overseas bases some 253,288 uniformed personnel, plus an equal number of dependents and Department of Defense civilian officials, and employs an additional 44,446 locally hired foreigners. The Pentagon claims that these bases contain 44,870 barracks, hangars, hospitals, and other buildings, which it owns, and that it leases 4,844 more (para. 4).

Not only is there secrecy, but there is also a seeming lack of interest on the part of the America people as to what their government is doing. Johnson (2004) says that Americans, unlike other nationalities do not recognize, or do not want to recognize, that their country dominates the world through its military power. Commenting on the global military infrastructure of the United States, Johnson states:

These numbers, although staggeringly large, do not begin to cover all the actual bases we occupy globally. The 2003 Base Status Report fails to mention, for

instance, any garrisons in Kosovo – even though it is the site of the huge Camp Bondsteel, built in 1999 and maintained ever since by Kellogg, Brown & Root. The Report similarly omits bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, and Uzbekistan, although the US military has established colossal base structures throughout the so-called arc of instability in the two-and-a-half years since 9/11 (para. 5).

Although most US bases are located in the continental U.S., 96 of them are in U.S. territories around the globe, and 702 of them are in foreign countries. As Johnson (2004) has stated, the figure of 702 foreign military installations does not include installations in a number of well known locations. He, therefore, thinks an honest count would be closer to 1,000.

There are some who believe that the American Empire is the largest empire ever. Vance (2004) for instance has compared it to previous empires:

The kingdom of Alexander the Great reached all the way to the borders of India. The Roman Empire controlled the Celtic regions of Northern Europe and all of the Hellenized states that bordered the Mediterranean. The Mongol Empire, which was the largest contiguous empire in history, stretched from Southeast Asia to Europe. The Byzantine Empire spanned the years 395 to 1453. In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire stretched from the Persian Gulf in the east to Hungary in the northwest; and from Egypt in the south to the Caucasus in the north. At the height of its dominion, the British Empire included almost a quarter of the world's population.

Nothing, however, compares to the U.S. global empire. What makes U.S. hegemony unique is that it consists, not of control over great land masses or population centers, but of a global presence unlike that of any other country in history.

The extent of the U.S. global empire is almost incalculable. The latest “Base Structure Report” of the Department of Defense states that the Department’s physical assets consist of “more than 600,000 individual buildings and structures, at more than 6,000 locations, on more than 30 million acres.” The exact number of locations is then given as 6,702 – divided into large installations (115), medium installations (115), and small installations/locations (6,472). This classification can be deceiving, however, because installations are only classified as small if they have a Plant Replacement Value (PRV) of less than \$800 million (para. 2-4).

The State Department lists 192 countries in the world as being independent states. Of this number, all but Bhutan, Cuba, Iran, and North Korea, have diplomatic relations with the United States. The Department of Defense publication, *Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country*, states that the United States has troops in 135 of the 192 countries. This means that the United States has troops in 70% of the world’s countries. The average American could probably not locate half of these 135 countries on a map. To this list could be added regions like the Indian Ocean territory of Diego Garcia, Gibraltar, and the Atlantic Ocean island of St. Helena, all still controlled by Great Britain, but not considered sovereign countries. Greenland is also home to U.S. troops, but is technically part of Denmark. Troops in two other regions, Kosovo and

Hong Kong, might also be included here, but the DOD's *Personnel Strengths* document includes U.S. troops in Kosovo under Serbia and U.S. troops in Hong Kong under China. In addition, possessions of the U.S. like Guam, Johnston Atoll, Puerto Rico, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Virgin Islands are also home to U.S. troops. Guam alone has over 3,200 (Lendman & Asongu, 2007).

The number of troops per station varies enormously. For example, there is only one military personnel in Malawi, while Germany has about 75,000 soldiers. According to the September 30, 2003 *Personnel Strengths*, there were 183,002 troops deployed to Iraq, an unspecified number of which came from U.S. forces in Germany and Italy. The total number of troops deployed abroad as of that date was 252,764, not including U.S. troops in Iraq directly from the United States. The report also stated that the total military personnel number was 1,434,377. This meant that 17.6 percent of U.S. military forces were deployed on foreign soil, and certainly over 25% of U.S. troops in Iraq from the United States were included. But regardless of the number of troops the U.S. has in each country, having troops in 135 countries is 135 countries too many (Lendman & Asongu, 2007).

The building of the American Empire has become a permanent aspect of the U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. global empire is today so large that Alexander the Great, Caesar Augustus, Genghis Khan, Suleiman the Magnificent, Justinian, and King George V would be proud of. In spite of these facts, many Americans and a few naïve people elsewhere continue to question the validity of describing the U.S. as an empire. There is another class that admits the fact that the U.S. has imperialistic tendencies, but has argued that America is a "benevolent empire." Nothing could be further from the truth than the

characterization of American foreign policy as benevolent. Research is pointing to the fact that African leaders, policy makers, and security experts must reexamine Africa's relationship with the U.S. in the light of these facts.

#### AFRICOM: America's Imperial War Machine

The fact that the U.S. is ever ready to use its military might to advance U.S. economic interests is no longer in doubt. As Elson (2007) has noted, the leading U.S. economist and former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board of Governors, Alan Greenspan, has stated clearly that "the Iraq War is fundamentally about control of oil, with the so-called war on terror being no more than window-dressing" (para. 13). The lesson to take from this is that this is a resource war, and countries with these resources that America needs are at risk. If African leaders are not careful, they may one day be surprised to hear Americans wondering: "How did our oil find itself under African soil?"

It is not a coincidence that AFRICOM has been created just when America has shown renewed interest on African resources given the volatility of the Middle East. Scheduled to become fully operational in September 2008, AFRICOM is going to be responsible for U.S. military operations in and military relations with 53 African nations (every African country except Egypt). The responsibilities of AFRICOM are currently being shared among U.S. European Command, Pacific Command, and Central Command. By having one command that is focused on the entire continent, AFRICOM (2007) claims that they "can address issues and challenges much more coherently than with three existing commands today" (para. 4). The interim location for AFRICOM headquarters is Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany, but the Department of Defense plans to

eventually locate AFRICOM's headquarters in Africa, but there are many other details to be sorted out. According to an official press release from the organization, its focus will be mainly on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and crisis response missions.

Damu (2007) believes AFRICOM's agenda is not as noble as stated. He argues that the unveiling of AFRICOM by the Bush administration is "the clearest indicator yet of the military establishment's ascendancy over the State Department in formulation and implementation of foreign policy, a trajectory that began soon after the conclusion of World War II" (para. 1). He further argues that the creation of AFRICOM reflects U.S. concerns over sustained access to the dwindling global supplies of oil, and AFRICOM is expected to provide "a vital link in the huge military apparatus that provides 'national security'" (para. 3). Furthermore, Damu hints of long running discussions within the Pentagon that have been focused on Africa. These discussions suggest that among other things, AFRICOM will be used to promote policies of imperialist assimilation, and might even be used to reconfigure the map of Africa to better serve America's interests.

As Lendman (2007) has pointed out, the moralistic reasons given for American foreign intervention (as in the case of the official reasons for the Iraq War) usually mask the true economic reasons. It is, therefore, not surprising that AFRICOM claims its role is to "professionalize" African security forces; help keep the region free of weapons of mass destruction; promote governance that is humane, managerially competent, and accountable; aid in providing intelligence information and warning; and help to maintain an un-threatened natural environment. But Damu (2007) wonders why a new command is necessary for these goals, given that they are already being carried out through various other military organizations such as the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, at Fort

McNair, and various regional alliances, such as the Trans Saharan Counter Terrorism Initiative and the African Contingency Operations Training program. Furthermore, he points out that by the end of 2007, the U.S. was expected to have carried out joint military training exercises with 46 of the 53 countries of Africa.

Both Lendman (2007) and Damu (2007) are highly suspicious of U.S. military activities abroad. The former argues that:

With the world's energy supplies finite, the US heavily dependent on imports, and “peak oil” near or approaching, “security” for America means assuring a sustainable supply of what we can’t do without. It includes waging wars to get it, protect it, and defend the maritime trade routes over which it travels. That means energy’s partnered with predatory New World Order globalization, militarism, wars, ecological recklessness, and now an extremist US administration willing to risk Armageddon for world dominance. Central to its plan is first controlling essential resources everywhere, at any cost, starting with oil and where most of it is located in the Middle East and Central Asia (Lendman, 2007, para. 5).

On his part, Damu (2007) accuses the Pentagon of operating a military base in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa from which Army personnel have been dispatched to aid the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia. He believes the same is true with America’s extensive military presence in Uganda, from where various military adventures are launched in all directions, including into Central Africa and Sudan. He states that the U.S. used Uganda as a base from where they aided in the destabilization of Rwanda – a tragedy that resulted in the 1994 genocide. He makes the analysis that:

These numerous military relationships, designed to shape African militaries into reflections and appendages of the Pentagon, are the source from which notions of imperialist assimilation flow.

This strategy is relevant to Africa in general because colonialism left most sub-Saharan African nations with relatively weak or undeveloped modern social structures in terms of national businesses and student and trade union class sectors of the populations.

The military therefore became the dominant social institution under independence and is seen by the outside world as the class with the most political power - if it chooses to exercise it (para. 12-14).

There are two reasons that can be advanced for the creation of AFRICOM in 2007. The first reason has to do with the fact that in February 2007, oil imports to the U.S. from sub-Sahara Africa surpassed imports from the Middle East. It is not surprising that given this reality, certain branches of the Pentagon that often act as security guards over oil deliveries to the U.S. now have to be restructured to focus on Africa, which is now a region of vital importance to national security. The second reason is that the U.S. has serious concerns over the increasing global influence of China in the global economy, and particularly its activities in Africa, where the country is consolidating oil and trade agreements at a pace hitherto unseen and at prices unheard of. This is allowing some African countries to begin shedding themselves of the stranglehold of the Breton Woods Institutions.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has established that there is a correlation between the U.S. global war on terror, resource wars, and insecurity in Africa. It has pointed out that the United States, through its global war on terror, is increasingly becoming a greater threat to African peace and security. While the U.S. has an uncritical public when it comes to its foreign policy (Vance, 2004), the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 further dealt a devastating blow on the ability of the American people to make critical judgments on policy issues. This explains why the Bush administration has used the 9/11 attacks to mobilize uncritical public opinion behind its domestic as well as foreign policy (Achankeng, 2007; Mentan, 2007).

It is within this background and the need to secure more resources in Africa that AFRICOM was founded in 2007. But AFRICOM is really not intended to benefit Africa and African security experts, policy makers, and leaders must examine its impact on the continent. Damu (2007) believes that AFRICOM could become the greatest security threat that Africa has faced, as it holds the ability of not only ensuring America's economic dominance of the continent, but even more threatening the potential of redrawing Africa's map to serve U.S. interests better.

The paper is, therefore, a critical review of America's war on terror in Africa, its variants, its historical foundations, its functional perspectives, and the way it has been designed to serve the occupation and militarization of strategic natural resources like oil fields in the continent. This is in line with the concept of American Imperialism, which is alive and strong, and is fostering the endless resource-induced wars around the world. Drawing from the Middle East, the paper has served as a warning to so-called American

allies in Africa that the country knows no permanent friends and where such friendship exists, it is predicated on America's national economic interests. America is, therefore, threatening the peace and security of Africa both directly and indirectly. America's insatiable thirst for resources and its predisposition to use force to attain such ends is a direct threat to Africa, especially African states that might want to challenge this system.

As Mentan (2007) has argued, the U.S. poses an indirect threat not so much on African state structures as to individual citizens of the various African countries. This stems from the fact that Washington has insisted on a narrow definition of terrorism that for all practical purposes exempts terrorism committed by African governments that claim to be supporting the war on terror. The American focus on "private terrorism" or terrorism committed by private individuals or non-state organizations like al-Qaeda, while turning a blind eye to "state terrorism" is giving license to the latter to wreck havoc. The situation in Darfur is an excellent example of how foreign powers have allowed what is actually a terrorist regime or government to commit genocide on its citizens. It should be interesting for scholars to continue to examine this aspect of insecurity in Africa, as well as the poverty-crime nexus, which leaves many Africans with a feeling of insecurity as they carry out their daily activities.

While the paper did not focus on how Africa could free itself from the impending security threat, it is possible that a true African nationalism could provide the answer. This nationalism is defined as a sense of pride for one's country, and the ability to identify the country's strategic resources and preserve them from foreign control. This also entails taking advantage of the forces of globalization to become a vital or competitive player in the world economy at least in one aspect. It is only through such

nationalism, which has been exemplified recently by countries like China and India, that the American war machine can be brought to control and African countries can enjoy true peace, security, and economic prosperity.

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