
THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY: EXTRA-AFRICAN INTERESTS AND AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

That Africa is well endowed with mineral resources is no news; neither is the search for such resources, which are considered vital to extra-African powers' interests. What is news however is the take on how such extra-territorial interests would impact on Africa's development. On one hand, it is believed that extra-regional interests would impact African development immensely; and this is particularly against the background of the influx of foreign direct investment (FDI), needed machineries and expertise that are necessary for development. On another, it is believed that these 'flavour' of external interests notwithstanding, they would serve as the fault lines through which the continent would be negatively impacted. On this note, this study seeks to explain that there is a third paradigm to the argument. As such, the paper, while adopting a desktop research style, seeks to grapple with the problematic of: in what ways are extra-African interests influencing development in Africa? How vital are African resources to major global powers and how are such powers assisting in harnessing African resources to equally benefit the continent? Is Africa permanently consigned to underdevelopment? This study seeks to answer these questions and many more.

INTRODUCTION

The literature on the present scrambling for Africa is burgeoning. This is because there is a surge in the foreign direct investment (FDI) that is finding its way into varying countries and/or sectors of the continent. This is consequent upon the unprecedented attempts of Western countries and their emerging Asian counterparts to diversify their energy sources; search for some other precious and necessary metals and mineral resources, access requisite markets for their mass produced consumables and machines; as well as find security frontiers against terrorism. This is being celebrated to high heavens in governmental quarters of diplomacy, economics, politics, as well as among certain academics.¹ Thus it is believed that Africa is witnessing an "unprecedented boom in oil and gas investment"²; and that

¹ Daniel T. Hart, 'AFRICOM as a New US Security Framework for Africa', paper presented at the workshop organized by the NIIA in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja, 2-3 May 2008, p. 1, (unpublished); and Daniel T. Hart, 'AFRICOM as a New US Security Framework for Africa', in *Nigeria's Security Interest in Africa*, ed. Osita C. Eze, Chike Anigbo and Charles Dokubo, NIIA, Lagos, 2010, p. 210.

² Dino Mahtani, 'The new scramble for Africa's resources', *Financial Times*, January 28, 2008.

"rising prices for (Africa's) minerals are leading international companies to 'hot' new destinations."³ These views are partially borne out of the fact that the United States is presently getting upwards of 15% of its oil intakes from the Gulf of Guinea. This zone is equally important to China, which is the second largest guzzler of oil resource, particularly with Angola becoming the preferred oil supplier than Saudi Arabia, especially from 2006. Differently put, African economies have been recording tremendous growth since the beginning of the millennium; even as some African countries, prior to the crippling financial crisis of 2008, attained significant annual economic performances. Africa Development Bank (AfDB) thus hinted that "Ghana was growing at 13.7%; Ethiopia at 8.5%; Angola at 7.8%; Uganda 7.6%; and Mozambique at 7.5%. In fact, as the AfDB commented, in the period 2000-2008, six of the world's fastest growing economies were in Africa."⁴ The foregoing is partly serving as the driver for Africa's renewed relevance in global politics. The United States is thus said to have

*forcefully reevaluate its regional engagement, counter long-standing French influence and rising Chinese stakes there, reopen deserted diplomatic outposts, establish a Africa Command and plan a regional military base The "rise" of the Gulf of Guinea (Africa) has provided a set of Realpolitik arguments ...across the region and prioritises alliances with reliable partners instead.*⁵

On another count, these interests are seen as having serious egocentric ulterior motives behind them. There is no other *raison d'être* that could be adduced for this than that in international relations, "developed countries are not known for their altruism when it comes to providing assistance.... Nations on the receiving end of external assistance' according to Fawole, 'often have to abide by some stringent demands from donor nations who can use the provision or withholding of aid to extract undue concessions."⁶ As such, extra-territorial powers would first seek to actualize their national interests wherever the materials for such interests are found, even if such is to the detriment of their host(s). And this is borne out of the complexities of international politics in which "the setting always is entirely Darwinian, where nations eat one another in order to survive and advance to the next stage of the diplomatic evolution."⁷ In order not to get our assessment warped, it is imperative to raise the horizon beyond the celebrated influx of fund that is serving as the concomitant of the myriads of external interests that Africa is currently witnessing. This stance is underscored by the view that alongside the global interests and/or engagements that span the oil and gas,

³ 'Great expectations for continent's hidden asset', *Financial Mail*, December 9, 2005.

⁴ 'One million opportunities: Building Human Capital', *Africa Business*, June 2012, p.32.

⁵ Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf of Guinea*, Hurst and Company, London, 2007, p.3.

⁶ W. Alade Fawole, 'The Illogic of Radicalism: Reflections on Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Thoughts for the 21st Century', in *Nigerian Administration. Beyond the Year 2000 A.D. Challenges and Opportunities*, ed., Tale Omole and Lanre Nassar, Strategic International Press Ltd., Lagos, p. 202.

⁷ Abraham Ogbodo, 'Diplomacy of Survival: Arming Nigeria', *The Guardian*, 31 August, 2003, p. 5.

mining, educational, agricultural, real estate and construction sectors to mention a few, there are certain developmental issues that are evolving and which the continent might need to grapple with in order to ensure its self enlightened interests. This becomes so since extra-African powers are mostly out to first satisfy their national cravings; and these might, as proven in historic present, be underpinned by egocentric ulterior motives. These hidden motives would dovetail in the establishment of extra-continental spheres of influence within a continent, which is made of countries that had been troubled at a point in time by ethno-religious clashes, war, political unrest or serious economic dislocations. Flowing from the foregoing is the view that there is a seam between the two paradigms. This becomes the third paradigm, which serves as the thesis of this study. The starting point therefore becomes a chronicle of some of the factors responsible for the renewed extra-African interests in the continent, and its probe transcends the trigger factors in order to expose the fundamental causes. This is followed by an examination of the problematic, which such extra-African engagements might pose for the continent and/or the unit state's development; while the remaining section analyses the prospects of the neo-scramble for Africa.

Extra-Territorial Interests in Africa: The Underlying Factors

That the deepening of external interests in Africa is not an issue is an axiom; factors that underpin such entrenchment are what one needs to consider. In this vein, the issue of globalization, being the broad factor, to which all other factors are attached, becomes important for consideration. Globalization, like most concepts, does not lend itself to easy classification; rather, it is a contested phenomenon, the understanding of which is still being grappled with. Put differently, this factor comes in different streaks that make it feasible for almost everybody to have personal conception of it. It is thus said to be "a flexible concept for flexible times, one that is much evoked by commentators and capable of being articulated in a variety of ways."⁸ In spite of its being a "major site of contestation"⁹ however, the two sides of the coin that evolve are those which concern those in support of, and those against it. Those in support of it regard the phenomenon as being sacrosanct to the present age, particularly because of its serving the purpose of connecting the different areas of the world together, thereby making it easier for man to satisfy his needs, irrespective of the capacity of his location to produce what is needed for satisfying such need or not. On this note, "the basic fact of the concept being linked to global flows", as Ohmae puts it, 'makes globalization the central distinguishing fact of this moment in history.'¹⁰ And this is more so because it reduces poverty, even as "more integrated economies tend to grow faster and this growth is usually widely diffused. (Thus) as low-income countries break into global markets for manufactures and services, poor people can move from the vulnerability of grinding rural

⁸ E. Kofman and G. Youngs, *Globalization: Theory and Practice*, Pinter, London, 1996; and J. Mittelman, ed., *Globalization: Critical Perspectives*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Colo., 1996.

⁹ Ian Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.

¹⁰ K. Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies*, Zed Books, London, 1995.

poverty to better jobs, often in towns or cities."¹¹ Against the backdrop of its generating much anxiety about growing inequality, shifting power, and cultural uniformity, those who oppose it, see it in the light of its being a "bogus ideological project characterized by economism, economic reductionism, technological determinism and political cynicism."¹² They thus argue that "it has further marginalized developing parts of the world, making the people poorer and objects of development."¹³ The importance of globalization to the present deepening of extra-continental interests in Africa is underscored by the factor of comparative cost advantage. The relevance of this, which forms one of the strands of globalization, is based on the view that regions of the world are differentially endowed. And that every region should concentrate on its area of strength. Thus, given the importance of international resources to development, Africa, which is robustly endowed with natural resources like, and the list is not limited to uranium, copper, cobalt, coltan, gold, platinum, diamond; has since time immemorial become the continent where the transnational 'vultures' come to scavenge. Differently put, Africa is well endowed in mineral resources, which are seriously needed by the factories of the major powers that are engaging in the neo-scramble for resources on the continent. As such, its sumptuous endowment in these resources by Providence becomes its area of strength in international political economy. This thereby forms part of the *raison d'être* for the present extra-African interests being deepened in the continent. Another of these germane elements is the issue of terrorism. This, like the umbrella term of globalization, constitutes another variant of social science phenomena that hardly lend themselves to easy definition.

However, being an awesome mechanism that certain disgruntled individuals, both within and/or outside the government circles, have adopted in gaining their passion, for responding to perceived grievances and/or denied ambitions, this study adopts the explanation given by Schmid, Jongman et al that "terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by clandestine individuals, groups, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby -in contrast to assassination- the direct targets of violence are not the main targets."¹⁴ This terrorism angle is because of the perception that there is an abundance of situations that could engender attacks on major powers' interests in Third World countries, amongst which are African units. This lends credence to the view that such countries could serve as havens for terrorists. Given this, Cyril Obi perceptively explains

¹¹ World Bank, *Globalization, Growth, and Poverty: Building An Inclusive World Economy*, World Bank and Oxford University Press, Washington D. C./ New York, 2002, p. 1.

¹² See Osita C. Eze, 'Globalization and the Dynamics of External Interests in Africa', in *New Scramble for Africa*, ed. Osita C. Eze and Chike A. Anigbo, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 2010, p. 92.

¹³ Tade Akin Aina, *Globalization and Social Policy in Africa*, CODESRIA Working Report Series 6/96, 1997; and Martin Khor, *Rethinking Globalization*, Zed Books, London, 2001.

¹⁴ A. Schmid, A. Jongman et al, *Political Terrorism*, 1998, cited in L. Weinberg et al, 'The Challenges of Conceptualising Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Winter 2004, p. 780.

that "political instability largely driven by zero-sum games for power involving the manipulation of ethnic religious and communal identities could take a turn for the worse and threaten regional security."¹⁵ As a way of addressing such threats, the Western powers of the United States and its allies have been establishing military outfits, and seeking strategic locations for the establishment of their military bases that would take care of such menace to their physical or perceived interests. As such, the American government recently decided for the establishment of Pan Sahel Initiative [PSI]. This was a scheme meant to dispatch "some 1,000 US special forces, marines and contractors ... into Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad in January 2004 to help train and beef-up local military units in counter-terrorism."¹⁶ Specifically, the initiative was meant to train 150 soldiers each from the above-mentioned countries, which were seen as harbouring extremist groups that could have been conniving with the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat [GSPC] in Algeria. As such, "drawing Africa into the debate about security in this way", as claimed by Rita Abrahamsen, 'may help to legitimate the 'war on terrorism."¹⁷ There were some other counter-terror initiatives by and/or from America, such as International Military Education and Training Programme [IMET], the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Programme [ACOTA], which replaced the African Crises Response Initiative [ACRI]; and in 2004, the G8 introduced its Global Peace Operations Initiatives [GPOI], a programme that was meant to have created a self-sustaining peacekeeping force of 75,000 troops, majority of them African. More than these initiatives, there was the establishment of Africa Command, popularly referred to as AFRICOM in 2007; which is meant to, among other things, assist African states in ensuring stability on the continent.

More than the foregoing is the desire of each of the extra-territorial powers to conflate the continent into a single market for its machineries and mass produced goods. Thus, the United States for instance, established its African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as an avenue for accessing African markets. In this light, the former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations not only adopted the policy, but equally extended it till it underscored the place of Africa to US' trading relations. The AGOA trading relationships were however predominated by US exports, particularly manufactured high technology goods and machineries, meant for African markets in "return for the import of oil, strategic minerals and other natural resources" according to Henning Melber, 'that meet the demands of US industries."¹⁸ In another stead, the Chinese equally see in Africa a major market for their

¹⁵ Cyril I. Obi, 'Terrorism in West Africa: real, emerging or imagined threats?', *African Security Review*, Vol. 15. No. 3, 2007, p. 88.

¹⁶ Jeremy Keenan, 'Terror in the Sahara: the Implications of US Imperialism for North & West Africa', *ROAPE*, No. 101, 2004, p. 477.

¹⁷ Rita Abrahamsen, 'A Breeding Ground for Terrorism? Africa & Britain's War on Terrorism', *Review of African Political Economy*, 31: 102, 2004, p. 682. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080> (16/02/2010)

¹⁸ Henning Melber, 'Global Trade Regimes and Multi-Polarity: The U.S. and Chinese Scramble for African Resources and Markets' in *A New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development*, ed. Roger

goods. Thus China "exports about 45% of manufactured products and 31% machinery and transport equipment to Africa. These include a considerable amount of weaponry."¹⁹ Alongside the two countries mentioned above, major powers of Britain, France, Brazil, Russia, Germany, Japan and India also perceive Africa as a large market for their goods. For instance, motorcycle and tricycle from India are widely used in parts of Nigeria for the conveyance of citizens. It is therefore claimed that India "has discovered that Africa is where the resources and future markets that will fuel its economic growth are."²⁰ The inordinate crave for Africa is also characterized by the desire to sell small arms and light weapons (SALW). This submission is predicated on the proclivity for conflict between or amongst African states on the basis of their ill-delineated boundaries, which to a great extent could snowball into cataclysmic war; and on the desire of certain individuals within the African units, who may not be satisfied with the insecurity level within their respective countries and therefore, decide to have guns they could handle. Beyond this, there are those with the tendencies for crime, who could yearn for the possession of such in order to actualize their desires. In this vein, some of the major powers, who are producers of SALW, and pant for markets for such arms, see Africa as (potential) buyers of their arms products. This is more so as "... Germans and Britons have been identified as masterminds of arms deal ... meant for (Africa)."²¹ Hence, the plea to major arms producer of Europe and elsewhere to assist in addressing the scourge of proliferation of arms that are presently undermining security and economies of the units of the continent. It is axiomatic that some of these arms are legally imported. These purchases are made possible by the need to modernize arms, and be in possession of combat-ready forces. However, "illegal civilian importation is also continuing."²²

The Good of Extra-continental interests for Africa's Development

This section investigates the development that extra-territorial interests have been able to, and could still bring to Africa. This is so since the preceding section has served the purpose of examining the factors that necessitate such interests in continent. Thus, being of the bias that certain levels of good exist in every evil; then, extra-African engagements and/or presence cannot be divested of intrinsic beneficial elements meant for the continent. The influx of fund, expertise and machinery, as well as increase in employment opportunities that most often follow extra-territorial interests cannot be taken away from such presence in Africa. As such, with the influx of extra-continental interests, particularly in this century,

Southall and Henning Melber, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, South Africa, 2009.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Sanusha Naidu, 'India's Engagements in Africa: Self Interest or Mutual Partnership?', in *New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development*, ed. Roger Southall and Henning Melber, University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, South Africa, 2009, p. 116.

²¹ Chiawo Nwankwo, John Alechenu, Adelani Adepegba, and Allwell Okpi, 'Mystery Bombs: Police disown explosives imported in their name', *Sunday Punch*, 12 February 2012, p. 2.

²² Jennifer M. Hazen and Jonas Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: the Niger Delta in Perspective*, Small Arms Survey, Geneva, 2007, p. 25.

would serve to bring about robustness of foreign direct investment, new technologies, and robust knowledge in resolving problematic that could arise; as well as help reduce the level of unemployment, which double as a veritable source of poverty. With such presence increasing on the continent, one should not be in doubt that African resources, both human and natural, would be well explored, and to a large extent, exploited. Put differently, such extra-African interests would assist Africa to exhale. As known, Africa is a sumptuously endowed continent, but with low level of technological development and finance to effectively use its resources. In this way, the extra-territorial interests are, to a large extent, assisting in exploiting such African resources, till its units, which are in possession of such resources, benefit immensely. Such interests would thereby assist in ensuring that there is a burst of flames in African countries that are in possession of necessary resources. On another plane, the new additions to the ranks of extra-regional interests in Africa are currently enhancing the manoeuvrability of the African countries. This is underscored by the strong bilateral relations that are developing between African states and the newcomers, particularly China, whose relationship with the African countries is predicated upon non-interference in the internal situations of these countries, many of which are leaned towards authoritarianism, a condition, hypocritically considered as anathema to the major powers of the West. In this vein, it is advised that African countries should "... turn their backs on Western countries (especially Britain and the US) and', as President Robert Mugabe points out 'to focus on better relations with China, which he said represented Africa."²³ Really, the U.S. and its conventional allies made multilateralism their guiding principle; however, the newcomers less emphasis on 'what goes on within you' would allow the units of the continent to still access requisite funds for development, as against the U.S. and its allies bent on certain hypocritical conditions before such assistance is accessed by authoritarian African governments that oftentimes perpetrate 'financial orgy'. More than the foregoing is the need for diversification by African countries from a resource earner. The current engagements of extra-African powers in the continent are for securitizing their resources, particularly oil interest. Thus, with their readiness to engage African countries on the various resources front, the African countries are getting more funds which could be used in divesting their respective economies from being mono-economies. This could therefore assist in reducing the level of unemployment in the continent; this is more so since some of the citizens of African units would be wise enough to gather the necessary wherewithal needed to embark on not just self development, but investment in personal business.

As concerns insecurity, particularly the growing menace of piracy and terrorism, extra-African powers are using their security expertise in addressing such. This is because their interests and/or their citizens are considered very important to them, and these, extra-African powers would seek to protect. Although this would have its fallout for the continent, but they still would have assisted Africa in developing a formidable bulwark against insecurity, which is

²³ See *Cameroon Tribune* (Yaounde), 17 December, 2003, p. 6.

currently assuming a deadly template. This would thus assist in waking African security forces up to their responsibility of protecting their countries. This view is against the backdrop of the need of each unit to maintain its territorial integrity and/or sovereignty. In order for these states not to be written off outright as puppets therefore, their armed forces might make attempts at proving their temerity.

External Interests and Its Bad Omen for Africa's Development

Presently, there are umpteen extra-continental interests in Africa, which perhaps, are vying for either supremacy or survival! The level of existence and survival of these interests notwithstanding, it has already been proven that Africa is a business destination and an investors' delight. This has drawn out predictions from experts that "the GDP in Nigeria and South Africa may reach \$2.6 trillion by 2020, the year Nigeria aspires to join the premier league of the top 20 global economies"²⁴ This projection is coming at a time when Africa is seen as possessing an improved investment landscape. Flowing from the above is the notion of Africa assuming the template of the 'last frontier', even as it becomes the newest and greatest growth pole. An Indian government minister therefore did not mince words in explaining that "if you are not in Africa, you are not on the global playing field."²⁵ Of course, Africa is perceived as becoming the salvation of the global economy in the face of challenges that nearly swept the world economy away as dust. This is so because, the continent has proffered international investors the opportunity of investing and/or deepening their investments. This has led certain persons in governmental, military and academic circles to celebrate the influx of extra-African interests on the continent to high heavens. This has however been devoid of reflections on the negative impacts that could be the concomitant of such external interests for the continent. As such, that external interests bode some good omen for Africa is not in question; what is being interrogated is the view that such interests are meant, in totality, to support Africa's development.

On this plane, one can submit that the success of such interests is ensconced in zero-sum game; and oozes out of the desire to permanently consign Africa on the journey of perpetual underdevelopment. This could be because Africa's development, which would mean African units rank amongst the first world countries and, Africa become a producing continent other than its current status of supplier of raw materials and consumer of finished goods; would limit, if not eventually lead existing developed countries into oblivion. Given the above, this juncture becomes an apposite point for explicating the intrinsic 'bad' in extant external interests in Africa, which may not bode well for Africa in the long run. Thus, this study puts it forward that irrespective of the data that any country rating organization might be using in rating African units; such could be a measure to lure Africans away from grasping the whole truth of the hidden intentions behind external interests on the continent. This is better said

²⁴ Frederick Mordi, 'Nigeria leads African rebirth change', *African Business*, June 2012, p. 78.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

by stating that one of the major evils inherent in external interests in the continent is their being characterized by neo-colonial agenda. A major item on neo-colonial transcript is the liberalization of the economy; a measure that most African states have and/or are working towards. FDI do not just flow into an economy without some signals of liberalization being perceived or already well in place. This is to ensure an easy influx and outflow of capital on the basis of investors' whims. Africa is therefore joining the club of preferred investment destinations of the world. This action is nothing short of the continent being opened up for amoral entrance and exit of capital. A situation that translated and could still translate to capital flight as time goes by. And this has the proclivity of hurting Africa's *amour propre*, because, its resources would be exploited, without leading to any serious development, and with critical ecological destruction for its citizens. More than this, there would be continuous subjection of African citizens to the caprices of foreign investors; even as the grips of the varying governments of the continent over the affairs of their countries are being loosened. Perhaps, this could be better explained if we look at the deepening of external interests in the continent from the perspective of its being a struggle between the major powers of the West that see Africa as their conventional hub; and the emerging powers of China, India, Brazil to mention a few. This competitive scenario is leading extra-African powers to making efforts at out performing others; especially by making policies that could ensure regime security, and releasing funds to African governments.

Thus, 'the increased Chinese presence', as Melber and Southall claim '... constitutes a challenge to codes of conduct prescribed in numerous treaties, international documents and aid conditionalities, formally promoted by the Western powers.'²⁶ This modus operandi is in no way limited to China. In view of this, the United States that oftentimes, is regarded as 'guardian of democracy' recently re-opened its embassy in Malabo, which it closed on the basis of violation of human rights by the same regime that it is currently relating with; thus rubber stamping the administration of President Obiang Nguema. Against this backdrop, it can be said that external interests in the continent work to guarantee regime security, which somewhat negates human security in a continent that has persistently and is in the present witnessing chronic poverty, even in the face of plenty. In the face of its buoyant economic growth therefore, Africa is bedevilled with a situation in which "almost half of Africans still live on less than \$1.25 a day."²⁷ And this is so since accruing earnings are delivered to governments, most of which lack transparency, accountability and fairness. Thus, on one count, majority of the citizens of the continent are languishing in wanton poverty, even as the huge funds haemorrhage from the continent through the money laundering activities of

²⁶ Henning Melber and Roger Southall, 'A New Scramble for Africa?', in *A New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development*, ed. Roger Southall and Henning Melber, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Scottsville, 2009, p. xx.

²⁷ 'Africa's progress under threat', *African Business*, June 2012, p.22.

the political elites, most of whom should be regarded as 'pocketicians'. A good instance of this is James Ibori, of whom Judge Anthony Pitts said:

You lived modestly in London in the 1990s and no-one, I think, at that time, would imagine the multi-millionaire high profile governor that you became some eight or nine years later. It was during those two terms [in office, from 1999-2007] that you turned yourself in short order into a multi-millionaire through corruption and theft in your powerful position as Delta state governor.²⁸

More than the foregoing, the current presence of external interests in Africa, though cannot be done away with, except Africa wants to revert to the Stone Age; however, such presence continues posing grave inhibition to Africa's industries. And this is on the basis of the capability of such interests to asphyxiate African industries. The inflow of external capital into the continent might clash with the local capital that may not be enough for contestation of place at the international market. Thus, foreign direct investments could sound the death knell of such African capital. This is simply because presently, Africa has been projected into the centre-stage of international politics; which has complex ramifications. Since some of these extra-African capital and/or companies represent major powers stake in Africa, serious diplomacy might be involved. And this is mostly because major powers engage their African counterparts at diplomatic level; either adopting the 'carrot and stick' approach or making some bogus promises, to which quid pro quo would be attached. In ensuring that its three main firms of CNPC, Sinopec and CNOOC²⁹ (these form the arrowheads of Beijing's new international diplomacy) secure unlimited access to supply Beijing has been engaging Africa at high official level. For instance, sequel to President Hu Jintao's visit to Nigeria in 2006, "Chinese oil companies ... benefited from being allocated, and given the right of first refusal for, four oil blocks (two in the Chad basin and two in the Niger Delta)"³⁰, valued at US\$4 billion. These diplomatic engagements many not be devoid of gimmicks like outbidding other companies, alongside which would be some perks for the officials involved. In this vein, external interests serve the purpose of not just sidelining African capital, but could lead to the demise of African companies. This is more so since large Chinese companies for instance, are state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and can use the companies' funds as they see fit. Much more, such external companies bring in expatriates from the countries, thereby having little or no need for African workers, except at junior cadre. There is therefore no gainsaying that overall progress, as against the much vaunted development that is the supposed outcome of external interests in Africa, remains low and uneven; even as most Africans are firmly caught in the web of poverty, insecurity and marginalisation. Put differently, as against extant

²⁸ Osasu Obayiuwana, 'When Wole Soyinka cracked the whip', *NewAfrican*, June 2012, p. 34.

²⁹ China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec), and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC).

³⁰ Cyril Obi, 'Enter the Dragon? Chinese oil companies and resistance in the Niger Delta', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2008, p. 422.

literature on the impacts of external interests in Africa, which has privileged the multiplier socio-economic effects of the convergence of key international (state and non-state) actors in the continent, too few Africans have benefited from the perceived continental growth trend. Thus, Africa's 'neo-bridal' status, which has accorded it geo-strategic importance, has not really been of tangible benefit, economically to majority of the citizens. This is predicated upon the resource wealth of the continent remaining with the political elites and increasingly, foreign investors; with little impact of such on the lives of the people. This, coupled with extreme disparities in income, which is the direct consequence of differential payments, tend to reduce the pace at which poverty is reduced; thus hindering the development of broad-based economic growth. These disparities serve the purpose of limiting social and economic advancement, and thus, prevent millions of Africans from attaining their potentials. In this vein, the current development format that external interests are attracting to Africa leaves many a people frustrated, because too many people are wallowing in poverty. Consequently, too many children are hungry and too many able bodied youngsters are jobless. And those willing to take to traditional employment of agriculture lack the capital to venture into it. This might snowball into serious upheaval, which forms part of the ugliness of extra-African interests in the continent; a situation that could hasten the continent's retrogression.

The Ugly Presence of Extra-Territorial Interests in Africa

The preceding section of this study appears too bad to happen continent-wide. Truly, the whole countries of Africa may not combust concurrently. However, if the negative impacts of external interests in the continent are not promptly and well addressed, this situation might play out. At least, there was no premonition that the Arab Spring would sweep through North Africa, and have far-reaching impacts that are presently with us. Agreed that the 'bad' is too to the extreme, the seam between the good and the bad could be worse, and it is explained in this section. The way to go becomes an examination of the current pattern of trickle down growth. This growth type mainly impacts on the political elites and their cohorts. This is so because they oftentimes have a near-total access to the funds that accrue from the dealings with extra-African countries which are securing their interests in and/or through Africa. And rather than allow such influx of funds to flow freely downwards, they mostly corner it for their selfish aggrandizement, with little or nothing flowing down to the citizens. In other words, the earnings that accrue to the African units mostly end at government level, with little to show for it in terms of real development, which ought to assist the citizens; most of whom are youths, in attaining their potentials. Such situation may feed into a groundswell of frustration. And this is so because the situation could nurture rebellion till it sparks off in the direction of cataclysmic revolution as witnessed during the Arab Spring in 2011. This is more so since it could lead to "aggressive demeanour", which John Dallard claimed 'always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise –that the existence of frustration leads to some form of aggression.'³¹ Thus, "...the potential for collective violence is a

³¹ John Dallard et. al., 'Frustration and Aggression', quoted in Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton University

function of the extent and intensity of shared discontents among members of a society'; claiming further, Ted Gurr holds that 'the potential for political violence is a function of the degree to which such shared discontents are blamed on the political system and its agents.'³² When this plays out, African leaders and their cohorts, as well as their extra-African partners would think that the African

... house is full of strange bed fellows of lunatic fringe, elements of the black-sheep of a dysfunctional family. One (could be) turbaned and goes around the bend bowing to the crescent moon and star, suffering from a very contagious Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease of his mad cows. The other has gone loco from sniffing too much hydrocarbons in his littoral state at the bottom of the river Niger.³³

Most persons of African origin are not of this bias until incited by the disservice done to humanity by the corruption of most African leaders, and the attendant festering poverty, which intrinsically is not a trap. In view of this, the desire of major powers to see Africa become a major market for their products, arms in this respect, would play out. This would be so since they would sell arms to both parties to the upheaval as witnessed in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Angola to mention a few. With this, life would become unsafe, even as Africans become refugees, and diseases and death become prevalent. Beyond the above is the tendency of African countries, in their bid to attract FDI, to transfer pathological loyalty to extra-African powers. There is no doubt that African countries presently need FDI, and the technical expertise that comes with. The Multinational Companies (MNCs), which mostly are the custodians of Western and emerging Asian interests, might get to a point when they would threaten to alternate their African host for another. This seem so because of the abundance of mineral resources in Africa; and in any African country where they (MNCs) could not achieve their interests, which oftentimes are egotistic, they would seek to leave. In this vein, African elites, who are mostly concerned about financial largesse that accumulate to their pockets rather than the welfare of their citizens, would get side-blinded by their selfish cravings to please the foreign investors. Thus, they would not hesitate opening their countries up for external interests and/or presence to peruse at will. A situation that is synonymous to supping with the devil without a long spoon; and this relationship would go on until they get bitten, then realizing how deadly the relation had been all along. It therefore becomes important for African states and their leaders to take cue from a statement traced to Lobengula:

Did you see a chameleon catch a fly? Lobengula, King of Ndebele asked of the missionary Helm. The chameleon gets behind the fly and remains motionless for some time, then it advances very slowly

Press, Princeton, NJ, 1969, p. 33.

³² Ted Gurr, *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³³ Michael Chima Ekenyerengozi, 'In the House of Dogs', *Sunday Guardian*, 1 January 2012, p. 40.

*and gently, first putting forward one leg and then another. At last, when well within reach, it darts its tongue and the fly disappears. England is chameleon and I am the fly.*³⁴

This is because as the chameleon is always careful while advancing so as to get the fly, so are external interests being carefully deepened in Africa, and some are meant to disrupt bilateral relations between two contiguous African countries. Another ugly attendant of external interests in Africa is the division it may cause amongst African units. Sometimes, mineral resources are found at border towns between two contiguous countries. When exploring such mineral resources, there is the tendency of such being on both sides of the divide. This could engender claim and counter-claim to ownership of the border area. A case in point is oil; which could cause territorial conflicts whenever its fields fall across national boundaries of proximate neighbours. And this could be worse when such boundary is yet to be properly delineated. This could arise during the exploitation process, which entails both seismic research and test drilling. The seismic research and test drilling are respectively supposed to lead to indications and confirm availability. Depending on the viscosity of oil, its mixture with sands, and the location of the oil field, oil could flow from one end of tapping to another. This could engender suspicion, thereby leading to strained relations amongst or between neighbouring countries. In the face of this, the extra-continental interests could worsen the existing relations between or amongst African countries, irrespective of the level of cordiality that such relations enjoy.

In line with this, it is claimed that "there is hardly any African state without a frontier problem with its adjacent neighbours ... But let me suggest that this fatal relic of colonialism will drive us to war against one another as our unplanned and uncoordinated industrial development expands ..." ³⁵ Flowing from the foregoing is the perception that this problematic avenue may be explored by extra-African powers while deepening their interests; and this might be at the expense of the relative security and stability of the continent. Consequently, the newly found level of development would go up in flames. This is because without security and stability, no new investor would be so interested in committing his fund into any sector in the continent, while existing ones would be looking for an opportunity of expropriating their capital, thereby resulting in capital haemorrhage. This lends credence to Olusegun Obasanjo's view that "...economic and technical assistance from whatever source and under whatever ideological label are not in themselves adequate solutions to our socio-economic problems." ³⁶ Another item on the ugly agenda of external interests in Africa is the unequal

³⁴ See Sir Sydney Shippard to Sir Hercules Robinson, 24639/65: March 1889, Africa (South), No. 369, quoted in Philip Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia*, Oxford University Press, London, 1958, p. 105.

³⁵ See Kwame Nkrumah, 'The people of Africa are crying for unity', *New African*, July 2012, p. 28.

³⁶ Olusegun Obasanjo, *14th Summit Conference of the Organisation of African Unity, Gabon*, Carmen Press, Lagos, 1977, p. 29-33.

partnership that is in the growing between African countries and their extra-African partners. Although African countries have gone pass taking strictly agricultural raw materials to international trading table; their articles of trade are still mostly mineral resources, which serve as raw materials in extra-continental factories. On the other hand, they import mostly refined products and machineries. At the international market, African products attract low prices, while their imports predominate on the pricing table. In this vein, they (African countries) turn out to be minor partners in their trading relations. This continues to foist on them the second fiddle status in their relations with extra-territorial partners. In lieu of encouraging them to develop so as to make use of their raw materials of oil and gas, and other mineral resources in their factories, and/or to gain mastery over the production of what they currently import; extra-African powers are however, encouraging the deepening of African countries in the status of exporter of raw materials. This they do by channelling huge sums to the buying of African products. This situation has led many individuals down the path of seeing such purchases as bringing development to African states. For instance, Oluonye Ubaka claimed that:

*Germany is Nigeria's third most important source of import (after the U.K. and U.S.A) and the fifth most important export market (after the U.S.A, Italy, France and the Netherlands) ... Although Nigeria accounts for an insignificant proportion of the overall trade of West Germany she is the country's most important partner in Africa south of the Sahara.*³⁷

While Ian Gary and Terry Karl in 2003 explained that "over \$50 billion, the largest investment in African history, will be spent on African oil fields by the end of the decade"³⁸ Since this game is being played by all the extra-territorial powers that have turned African countries to their bus-stops, Africa assumes the status of neo-grand chess-board on which international politics would be played. If this be so, then it would become another template for geopolitics amongst the extra-regional powers that seek to deepen both their interests and presence in Africa. This scenario would be because each of the older powers, particularly Britain, France and the United States see Africa as their conventional terrain, which to an extent is an extension of their homelands; while the emerging powers, though in historic present, had relations with Africa, but currently seek to be recognised as equals of, if not superior to the Western countries, by Africans. On this note, a scenario of struggle for supremacy might ensue amongst the extra-African powers. Though yet to reach full stage, it is already unfolding, particularly in how the modus operandi they employ in pursuing their interests in Africa.

³⁷ Oluonye Andrew Ubaka, 'Nigerian/German Economic Relations: Looking Beyond Oil', *Nigerian Forum*, Vol. 30, Nos. 9-10, 2009, p. 330.

³⁸ Ian Gary and Terry Lynn Karl, *Bottom of the Barrel: Africa's Oil Boom and the Poor*, Catholic Relief Services, Baltimore, MD, 2003.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis has been used in revealing some of the good and the bad elements inherent in extra-African interests in Africa; as well as the ugly seam between the two. In this vein, rather than grapple issue with the views of those celebrating or criticizing the influx of external interests into Africa, the study explains a third facet to the discourse. As such, it points out the ugly paradigm that evolves out of the intended good and bad that external interests might be bringing to Africa. Beyond this however, this study believes that rather than keep holding to the apron of external powers for development, African countries should look within for their development. Their search lights should then be cranked on the solutions they could bring out of themselves. This is so since all the extra-regional powers presently parading the continent at a time had to look within for solutions to the numerous financial and developmental challenges bedevilling them. And if they find this too hard to do, they should follow the pattern of the Asian powers, which once borrow or steal technology, as the case may be, from the West. Africa should not allow Nkrumah's statement that:

No independent African state today by itself has a chance to follow an independent course of economic development, and many of us who have tried to do this have been almost ruined or have had to return to the fold of the former colonial rulers³⁹,

to be true again. Other than this, they should use the accruing funds from the current sale of their resources to further both their economic development and search for technological independence. Perhaps, a sure path to follow is the extirpation of corruption, whittling down of poverty, even if it cannot be totally addressed in the present; abstinence from embarkation on unnecessary white elephant projects; as well as adequate funding of research which is the bedrock of development.

³⁹ Nkrumah, op. cit., p. 29.