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A Multilateral Vision for a Secure West Africa:

How the US Can Leverage
European and African
Relationships to Forge Sustainable
Civil and Military Security in the
Gulf of Guinea

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Ben Schroeder
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Executive Summary

Broadly speaking, five competing forces currently pull at the countries along the Gulf of Guinea: pirates and insurgents attack and disrupt institutional resources in pursuit of political, economic, religious, and, in some cases, environmental objectives; local African state actors vie for political power, military security, and economic and humanitarian development; private corporations target the region and its waters for financial opportunities, partnerships, and profit; foreign state actors eye the region with regards to maintaining global military stability, economic reach, political influence, and humanitarian welfare; and finally, there are the people of these countries, the citizenry caught among more powerful competing players.

For the United States, challenges in the Gulf of Guinea can be categorized as pertaining to maritime security, land-based political and military stability, and civilian welfare. Across these domains, one point is evident: America cannot accomplish their objectives alone. China's economic investment in the region far outstrips, and will continue to outpace that of the United States. Meanwhile insurgents, terrorist cells, and pirates span the region and its vast waters. Finally, political and diplomatic uncertainty permeates the region, including the wealthier countries like Nigeria. In order to attain long-term stability in the region, our recommendations capitalize on the United States' existing military prominence, European diplomatic expertise, and the local political voice of the African people for a multilateral, multichannel strategic vision.

Background

Overview:

In the Gulf of Guinea, several factors contribute to the maltreatment and marginalization of ethnic communities within regional nations, leading to the rise of piracy, trafficking and illegal trade goods. The discovery of new economic sectors in the region, the investment of various foreign corporations, and the increased use of trade routes have spurred the Gulf's economic development. This background section will explore the recent history of foreign and domestic economic and security investment as well as its implications for relevant actors in the region. It is broken down into the following categories: recent history and contextualization of the Gulf of Guinea, Africa's perception of U.S. involvement, Africa's perception of European involvement, and Africa's perception of Chinese and Russian involvement. Although conflicts in the Gulf of Guinea have affected various African countries, this introduction will center around Nigeria due to its leading role in countering piracy.

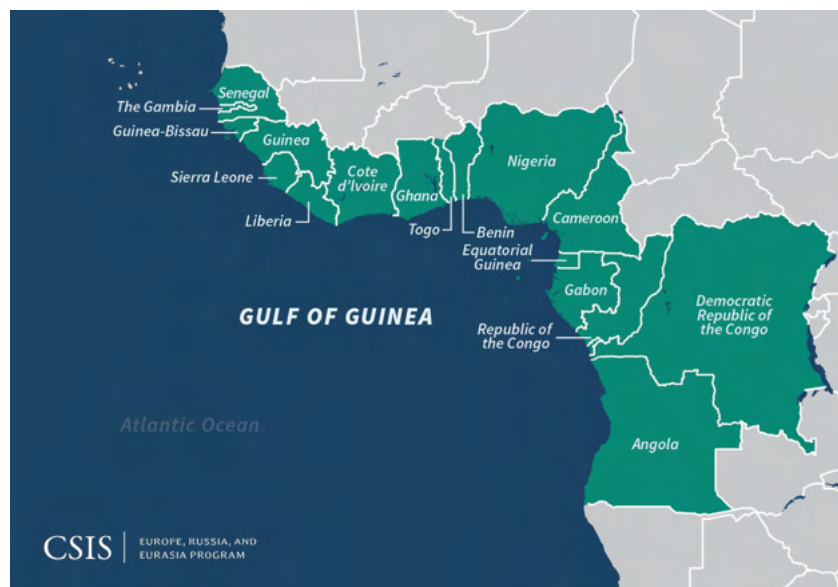


Figure 1: Gulf of Guinea region¹

¹ “A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.” A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea | Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 13, 2021. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea>.

Background I. Regional Introduction: Gulf of Guinea

Background I.a: Recent History and Contextualization of the Gulf of Guinea

One of Africa's most economically valuable regions, the Gulf of Guinea, is home to 60% of Africa's oil production, 4.5% of the world's proven oil reserves, 2.7% of the world's proven natural gas reserves, and 25% of African maritime ship traffic as of 2021.² In Nigeria specifically, approximately 10% of the country's GDP is attributed to oil production in the Gulf.³ Oil production and export in Nigeria makes up over two-thirds of the government's actual revenue.⁴ These statistics demonstrate the importance of the Nigerian maritime trade towards economic growth, development, and modernization for other nations in the region. Due to the revenue oil provides for the nation, the government of Nigeria has decided to prioritize the burgeoning oil market over other services such as agriculture, even if it is done at the expense of the inhabitants of the various oil rich regions. Most of these nations also have significant agricultural economies, comprising, on average, roughly 20% of Nigeria's GDP. Only 15% of farmers are engaged in commercial activity. The other 85% are subsistence farmers, mostly ethnic minorities who populate Nigeria's less developed regions⁵. In addition to farming, across West Africa 6.7 million people directly depend on fishing activities for their food and/or livelihood⁶, and Nigerian fishing alone contributes 4% of the global fish production, making it a highly valuable industry in the region.⁷ Thus protection of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is of the utmost importance to ensuring the viability of these crucial industries.

The discovery of large oil reserves in the Niger Delta within Nigeria has directly contributed to the rise in piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. The Niger Delta is a region primarily inhabited by marginalized ethnic communities characterized by poor infrastructure and job development as well as economic exploitation targeting the oil found in the region⁸. Oil companies moving into the region to extract and refine oil has caused displacement of ethnic communities, a loss of jobs (especially in the fishing industry), and a loss of food supply due to land pollution. Communities are forced to relocate if they are in the way of oil producers. Other communities that are further inland but rely on various rivers or waterways for subsistence farming now experience bad harvests due to polluted water caused by the oil extraction.⁹ From 2011 to 2017, the U.S/Dutch company Shell and the Italian company ENI have spilled

² Morcos, Pierre. "A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea." A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea | Center for Strategic and International Studies. Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 1, 2021.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea>.

³ Annual Statistical Bulletin 2020. "Nigeria Facts and Figures." Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries . Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries , 2021. https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/167.htm.

⁴ The World Bank. "Nigeria: Economy." Global Edge: Global Business Knowledge. Michigan State University , 2021. <https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/nigeria/economy>.

⁵ "Nigeria's Agricultural Sector Still Dominated by Subsistence Farming; as Farmers Call for More Support." NOI Polls. NOI Polls , December 11, 2018.

<https://noi-polls.com/nigerias-agricultural-sector-still-dominated-by-subsistence-farming-as-farmers-call-for-more-support/>.

⁶ Belhabib, Dhyia; Sumaila, U. Rashid; Pauly, Daniel. "Feeding the poor: Contribution of West African fisheries to employment and food security." *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 2015.

⁷ Morcos. "A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea." 2021

⁸ Campbell , John. "Delegitimizing Armed Agitations in the Niger Delta." Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, December 4, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/delegitimizing-armed-agitations-niger-delta>.

⁹ Greyl, Lucie. "Multinational Oil Companies on the Niger Delta, Nigeria: Ejatlas." Environmental Justice Atlas. EJ Atlas . Accessed November 9, 2021. <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/multinational-oil-companies-on-the-niger-delta-nigeria>.

over 5.7 million gallons of oil combined.¹⁰ The Nigerian government has not supported the communities by offering money or other goods to compensate the people, while the oil companies have offered little in the way of monetary compensation to these communities. These factors have spurred piracy recruitment with some communities even forming organized piracy groups that are primarily motivated by desire to receive fair treatment by the Nigerian government.¹¹

The Gulf of Guinea witnesses the most piracy related crimes globally. In 2020, 96.3% of the world's crew kidnappings and all of the vehicle hijackings took place in the Gulf. Nine out of eleven vehicles reportedly fired upon in the world were located in the Gulf. In the first three months of 2021 alone, the Gulf witnessed pirates boarding 33 vessels and firing upon two others.¹² In 2018, piracy cost the Nigerian government \$2.8 billion in revenue.¹³ Originating in the Niger Delta¹⁴ and spreading across the region from there, the instability resulting from the piracy has caused an increase in human trafficking and illicit trade of arms and drugs and illegal fish farming. Illegal fishing is estimated to cost the local governments \$1.5 billion a year.¹⁵

Type of Attack	2018	2019	2020
Attempted incidents	19	15	20
Suspicious approaches	9	7	19
Boarding	43	15	22
Thefts	11	17	22
Kidnappings	20	24	26
Fired upon incidents	8	12	8
Hijackings	4	2	5
Armed robberies	21	29	8
Total	135	121	130

Figure 2: Overview of Gulf of Guinea Incidents¹⁶

¹⁰ Amnesty International . “Niger Delta Negligence.” Amnesty International, June 6, 2021.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/niger-delta-oil-spills-decoders/>.

¹¹ Amaize, Emma. “Nigeria: Endsars - Tension as N'DELTA Militants Roll out 11-Point Demand.” allAfrica.com, October 27, 2020. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202010250017.html>.

¹² ICC Staff. “Gulf of Guinea Records Highest Ever Number of Crew Kidnapped in 2020, According to IMB's Annual Piracy Report - ICC - International Chamber of Commerce.” International Chamber of Commerce. International Chamber of Commerce, January 15, 2021.

<https://iccwbo.org/media-wall/news-speeches/gulf-of-guinea-records-highest-ever-number-of-crew-kidnapped-in-2020-according-to-imbs-annual-piracy-report/>.

¹³ Najia. “Maritime Piracy Crime Costs Nigeria \$2.8 Billion Revenue Loss in 2018, Says UN Report.” Hellenic Shipping News Worldwide. Hellenic Shipping , January 9, 2019.

<https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/maritime-piracy-crime-costs-nigeria-2-8bn-revenue-loss-in-2018-says-un-report/>.

¹⁴ UNODC Staff . “Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.” UNODC.org. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime , 2021. https://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/Reports/TOCTAWestAfrica/West_Africa_TOC_PIRACY.pdf.

¹⁵ Morcos, Pierre. “A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.” A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea | Center for Strategic and International Studies. Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 1, 2021.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea>.

¹⁶ “Maritime Governance BRIEF Gulf of Guinea: Piracy-Graphics 2020,” safety4sea (CEMLAWS Africa, April 2021), https://safety4sea.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CEMLAWS-AFRICA-Gulf-of-Guinea-Piracy-Graphics-2021_04.pdf.

Many of the pirates in the region are small decentralized groups looking for economic opportunities, but there are many organized actors within the region as well. As mentioned above, many of the organized groups have political objectives. Organized groups in the Niger Delta have used piracy as a form of protest, issuing demands such as clean-up of waterways and territories, a “more equitable distribution of oil revenues, and broader compensation for ecological damage.”¹⁷ In late 2020, the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers issued 11 demands to the government with the threat of a resumption of attacks on oil, gas facilities, and ships if their demands were not met. Some of the demands include recompensation for environmental damage and infrastructure connecting the Niger Delta to the inland cities. Another nation of security focus is Cabo Verde, which is particularly vulnerable to piracy, terrorism, and trafficking due to its weak infrastructure and lack of monitoring. In 2019, President Jorge Carlos Fonseca called for more military cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to address these issues, given that they already have joint agreements with U.S. and EU militaries.¹⁸

Out of all the Gulf nations, Nigeria has contributed the most towards security measures, mostly because it is the only nation in the region with a modern navy capable of regularly and quickly responding to pirate activity. Nigeria can also afford modern equipment as the wealthiest nation in Africa. Furthermore, most pirates come from within Nigeria (Niger Delta Region). In June of 2021, Nigeria bought \$195 million worth of sea and air vehicles, drones, and patrol technology to combat piracy in the Gulf. These purchases were part of Nigeria’s Deep Blue campaign, which is a joint force campaign comprising all branches of the Nigerian military with the goal of ending piracy in Nigerian waterways. Nigeria has not cooperated with other Gulf nations as part of this campaign, however. Currently, the campaign has the limited objective of securing Nigerian waters. Since June and the beginning of Deep Blue, reports¹⁹ indicate that piracy in Nigerian waters has decreased steadily on a monthly basis. For example, compared to the 98 incidents of piracy and armed robbery that occurred last year, the IMB reported only 68 incidents globally in 2021. This statistic marks the lowest number of incidents since 1994 and the lowest level of crime in the Gulf of Guinea specifically since 2019.²⁰

In addition to piracy, the Gulf of Guinea’s security challenges are compounded by terrorist activities in the neighboring Sahel region by groups such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), and al-Qaeda. Since the 1990s, Boko Haram²¹ has sought to replace the Nigerian government with an Islamic regime who, along with al-Qaeda, their ally since 2010, have committed crimes against humanity across the Sahel. According to OSD Regional and Conflict Policy Analyst of African Affairs Sarah Minot Asrar, Boko Haram’s offshoot group ISWA has also been a major threat, especially in the

¹⁷ Greyl, Lucie. “Multinational Oil Companies on the Niger Delta, Nigeria: Ejatlas.” Environmental Justice Atlas. EJ Atlas . Accessed November 9, 2021. <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/multinational-oil-companies-on-the-niger-delta-nigeria>.

¹⁸ Solutions, EIU Digital. “The Economist Intelligence Unit.” Cabo Verde calls for more regional military cooperation. Accessed November 13, 2021. <https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=967601080&Country=Cabo+Verde&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=International%2Brelations>.

¹⁹ Clowes, William. “Nigeria Deploys Drones Choppers to Combat Rampant Sea Piracy.” Bloomberg.com. Bloomberg, July 10, 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-10/nigeria-deploys-drones-choppers-to-combat-rampant-sea-piracy>.

²⁰ Adedapo Adesanya, et al. “Deep Blue Project Curbs Piracy Attacks on Gulf of Guinea: Business.” Business Post Nigeria. Business Post Contributor, August 31, 2021.

<https://businesspost.ng/general/deep-blue-project-curbs-piracy-attacks-on-gulf-of-guinea/>.

²¹NCTC. “National Counterterrorism Center: Boko Haram .” National Counterterrorism Center. Office of the Director of National Intelligence , 2021. https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/boko_haram.html.

northeast of Nigeria.²² Suppressing Boko Haram and ISWA has remained at the forefront of the Nigerian government's agenda and will likely grow in importance as Boko Haram attempts to expand its influence into the Gulf of Guinea region. Reports have found evidence of piracy hauls in the possession of Boko Haram, revealing a potential partnership between the terrorists and the pirates.²³ ISWA's recent absorption of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's faction in late May 2021 has also raised concerns about the greater threat this consolidated group may pose against the Nigerian government and the surrounding region.²⁴ As Boko Haram transitions from the Sahel into the Gulf of Guinea, Burkina Faso has increasingly become a target, given that the country borders key Gulf of Guinea states like Benin, Togo, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast. The Directorate-General for External Security of France has also confirmed al-Qaeda's expansion project in the Gulf of Guinea.²⁵ al-Qaeda is suspected to have been responsible for the attack on a convoy of gendarmes returning from a gold mine in Burkina Faso that killed at least six people and wounded at least seven. The increasing violence by this terrorist group has also caused the displacement of at least 275,000 people and the death of hundreds in Burkina Faso.²⁶

Background I.b: Africa's Perspective of American Involvement

Perspective on American Economic Involvement

The perception of U.S. economic involvement in the Gulf varies depending on the regional actors. In general, the state actors support U.S. economic investment. In the oil sector,²⁷ the largest foreign contributors to oil and gas related revenues are American oil companies.²⁸ The local governments, especially Nigeria, have been granting more assets to these foreign companies due to the revenue they bring in. The organized pirate groups,²⁹ however, have denounced foreign oil companies, especially prominent American companies, due to their having the largest presence³⁰ in the region. However, the U.S. aims to increase their economic investment in the region for various reasons such as competing with China and accessing the burgeoning African market. Thus, an effective solution to piracy in the Gulf

²² Hazel Koh, and Sarah Minot Asrar. Expert Interview on U.S.-EU cooperation to support African security interests in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 18, 2021.

²³ Miktar, Malik. "Terrorisme : Cinq Ans Après Grand-Bassam, L'ombre Des Djihadistes Plane Sur Le Golfe De Guinée." TV5MONDE. TV5MONDE, March 14, 2021.

<https://information.tv5monde.com/afrique/terrorisme-cinq-ans-apres-grand-bassam-l-ombre-des-djihadistes-plane-sur-le-golfe-de-guinee>.

²⁴ John Campbell, "Islamic State in West Africa Now Dominates in Northeast Nigeria," Islamic State in West Africa Now Dominates in Northeast Nigeria (Council on Foreign Relations, May 27, 2021), <https://www.cfr.org/blog/islamic-state-west-africa-now-dominates-northeast-nigeria>.

²⁵ Le Figaro. "Al-Qaïda Veut Progresser Vers Le Golfe De Guinée." Le Figaro . AFP, February 1, 2021. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/al-qaïda-veut-progresser-vers-le-golfe-de-guinee-20210201>.

²⁶ "Burkina Faso: Attack on Convoy Kills 6 as Jihadist Violence Surges." DW.COM. Deutsche Welle, September 14, 2021. <https://www.dw.com/en/burkina-faso-attack-on-convoy-kills-6-as-jihadist-violence-surges/a-59170914>.

²⁷ Giuliani, Luca, and Luca Giuliani Luca is an International Relations postgraduate from Queen Mary. "The Gulf of Guinea's Blue Economy: From Oil through Fish to People." The Organization for World Peace. The Organization for World Peace, April 12, 2021. <https://theowp.org/the-gulf-of-guineas-blue-economy-from-oil-through-fish-to-people/>.

²⁸ Bureau of African Affairs. "U.S. Relations with Nigeria - United States Department of State." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, April 29, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-nigeria/>.

²⁹ Desai, Raj M, and George E Shambaugh. "Measuring the global impact of destructive and illegal fishing on maritime piracy: A spatial analysis." *PLoS one* vol. 16,2 e0246835. 24 Feb. 2021, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0246835

³⁰ Egbejule, Eromo. "Maritime Piracy Increases Business Costs in the Gulf of Guinea." *Economy | Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera Media Network, December 27, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2019/12/27/maritime-piracy-increases-business-costs-in-the-gulf-of-guinea>.

would involve appeasing the ethnic groups who feel used by American oil companies without actually ceasing any oil production.³¹

Perspective on American Military Involvement

The U.S. has also made efforts to help counter piracy in the Gulf of Guinea through military deployment. For the Brazil-led Operation Guinex, the U.S.'s most recent involvement from August to September 2021, the U.S. Africa Command assembled navies from 10 African nations with its first Expeditionary Sea Base in the Gulf of Guinea, the USS Hershel "Woody" Williams.³² Hershey "Woody" Williams provided various training drills and maritime security exercises with the Brazilian forces, Nigerian Navy, and members of Ghana's Special Boat Squadron. Permanently stationed in the Gulf of Guinea, Hershey "Woody Williams" plans to continue to provide logistical support and forces.³³ In addition to military deployment, America has provided geopolitical aid, with investments and donations to the Nigerian military totaling up to more than \$559 million.

The Nigerian government remains opposed to direct military intervention but has increasingly viewed U.S. military involvement favorably. Despite its initial opposition, Nigeria recently urged the U.S. Africa Command to relocate its headquarters from Germany to a location in the continent of Africa, a request that implies the Nigerian government hopes that the U.S. will assume a larger role in this security challenge by providing equipment and training. However, U.S.-Nigerian relations are not seamless. Following rumors of crimes against humanity carried out by the Nigerian government soldiers against terrorist suspects, the U.S. has frequently withheld the sale of lethal weapons to Nigeria and has mostly recently refused to carry out their \$1 billion weapons sale plan. This form of oversight frustrates the Nigerian government, whose officials believe they deserve the resources to fight Boko Haram and do what they think is best for Nigerians.³⁴ Burkina Faso, on the other hand, has shown far less hesitancy towards American military involvement due to their struggle to handle the daily extremism attacks and may prove to be a more important African partner moving forward.³⁵

³¹ Desai, Raj M., and George E. Shambaugh. "Why Pirates Attack: Geospatial Evidence." Brookings.edu. Brookings, March 15, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2021/03/15/why-pirates-attack-geospatial-evidence/>.

³² "Hershel 'Woody' Williams Joins Brazilian Navy for Inaugural Operation Guinex." United States Navy. US Navy Office of Information, August 24, 2021. <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2743180/hershel-woody-williams-joins-brazilian-navy-for-inaugural-operation-guinex/>.

³³ U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Public Affairs. "USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams Joins Allies, Partners for Exercise Grand African NEMO." U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa / U.S. 6th Fleet. U.S Navy, October 10, 2020. <https://www.c6f.navy.mil/Press-Room/News/News-Display/Article/2378913/uss-hershel-woody-williams-joins-allies-partners-for-exercise-grand-african-nemo/>.

³⁴ Campbell, John. "In a Reversal, Nigeria Wants U.S. Africa Command Headquarters in Africa." Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, April 28, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/reversal-nigeria-wants-us-africa-command-headquarters-africa>.

³⁵ Hazel Koh, and Sarah Minot Asrar. Expert Interview on U.S.-EU cooperation to support African security interests in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 18, 2021.

Background I.c: Africa's Perspective of European Involvement

Africa shares strong humanitarian interests with European countries, as their sailors have fallen victim to kidnappings in the Gulf of Guinea.³⁶ In April of 2020, pirates seized a Portuguese ship off the coast of Benin and kidnapped the crew. In addition to American sailors, French sailors have also been particularly targeted, since pirates believe they are most likely to receive ransom for them.

Gulf of Guinea trips have also shown interest in cooperate on numerous initiatives with these European countries. Currently, African and French sailors are partaking in NEMO, a training program. In September 2021, Italy sent frigate Antonio Marceglia, initiating Operation Gabinia in collaboration with Brazil's Operation Guinex. Turkish officials take visits to the region to formalize military cooperation on suppressing terrorism in the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel.

Although it is unknown if Danish sailors have fallen victim to kidnapping, Denmark has economic incentives to help counter piracy, given that the world's biggest shipping company, Maersk, is based in Denmark and is responsible for more than a third of maritime trade in the Gulf.³⁷ Denmark has decided to send a naval vessel equipped with a helicopter to patrol the Gulf of Guinea, provide escorts to civilian shipping, and carry out rescue operations. However, this decision was negotiated without Nigeria's consent. Nigeria appears to be cautious of accepting aid from Denmark and other European countries it has not made explicit agreements with, as it refuses to allow commercial ships travel through their territorial waters with weapons.

Background I.d: Africa's Perspective of Chinese and Russian Involvement

Africa does not share America's hegemonic rivalries and is willing to accept assistance from America's two biggest great-power threats. As a result, China has forged strong economic ties with Nigeria. In 2018, Nigeria agreed to move some of its foreign reserves to China as part of a three-year currency swap agreement. Two years later, in 2020, Nigeria's main trading partner was China. In September 2021, China also expressed intentions to establish banks³⁸ in Nigeria. However, these deals are less mutually beneficial than China has portrayed them to be, as Africa has become severely economically dependent on China. Yet, the likelihood of China succeeding in its most recent banking initiative reveals that Africa does not appear to be very concerned with the extent of imbalance in their relations with China.

³⁶ Reuters Staff . "Pirates Seize Portugal-Flagged Ship off Benin, Kidnap Bulgarian Crew." Reuters. Reuters, April 21, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-benin-piracy-bulgaria-idUKKCN22321E>.

³⁷ Clowes , William. "Danish Vessel to Fight Piracy in Most Perilous Shipping Area ." Bloomberg.com. Bloomberg, March 17, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-17/denmark-dispatches-vessel-to-west-african-gulf-to-fight-piracy>.

³⁸ Adeshokan, Oluwatosin. "Why Is China Looking to Establish Banks in Nigeria?" The Diplomat . Diplomat Media , October 19, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/why-is-china-looking-to-establish-banks-in-nigeria/>.

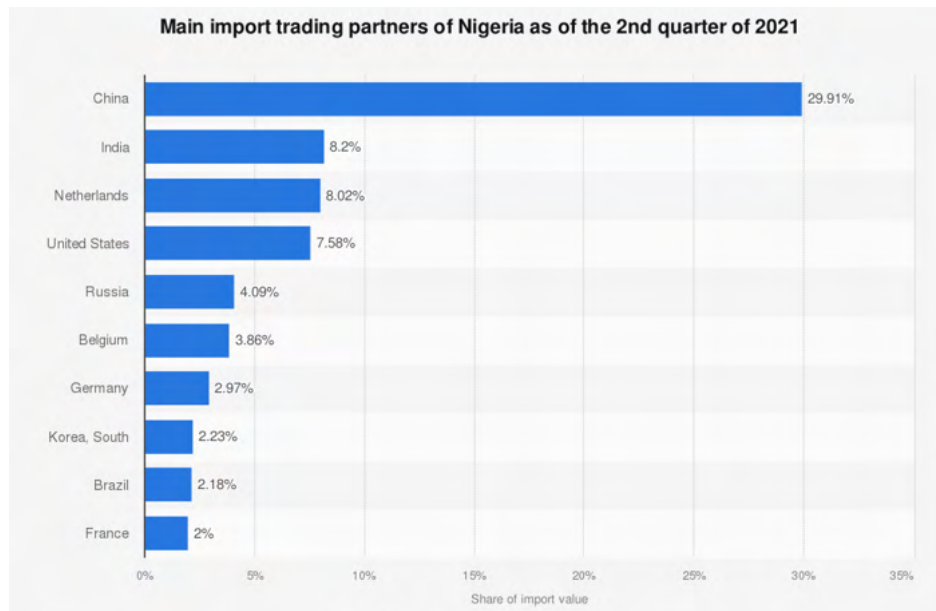


Figure 3: Import Trading Partners of Nigeria³⁹

Nigeria has also been eager to receive geopolitical aid from and make trade agreements with Russia. When the U.S. refused to carry through with the \$1 billion weapons plan, Nigeria turned to Russia. In less than a month, Russia agreed to supply military equipment, training, and technology to Nigerian forces.⁴⁰ As of August 2021, Nigeria has not yet made new purchases, but the establishment of this legal framework reveals that Nigeria will welcome increasing Russian political and military influence⁴¹ in Gulf of Guinea affairs. Nigeria and Russia have also been strengthening their economic ties through the inauguration of a Nigeria-Russia Chamber of Commerce and Industry in September 2021.⁴² The President of the new Chamber has expressed hopes that Russia would become Nigeria's number one trading partner. Despite this, Nigeria would still much rather have American equipment due to better maintenance and sustainability. The Nigerian government mostly turns to Russia and China, because acquiring resources from the U.S. comes as part of a package and requires a much slower process.⁴³

³⁹ Simona Varrella, "Nigeria: Main Import Trading Partners 2021," Statista (Statista, September 15, 2021), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1193493/main-import-trading-partners-of-nigeria/>.

⁴⁰ Campbell, John. "Nigeria and Russia Sign Military Cooperation Agreement." Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, August 31, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/nigeria-and-russia-sign-military-cooperation-agreement>.

⁴¹ Smith, Elliot. "Russia Is Building Its Military Influence in Africa, Challenging U.S. and French Dominance." CNBC. CNBC, September 13, 2021.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/13/russia-is-building-military-influence-in-africa-challenging-us-france.html>.

⁴² Nan. "Nigeria-Russia Chamber of Commerce to Consolidate Bilateral Trade ." The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News. The Guardian , September 27, 2021.

<https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-russia-chamber-of-commerce-to-consolidate-bilateral-trade-osinbajo/>.

⁴³ Hazel Koh, and Sarah Minot Asrar. Expert Interview on U.S.-EU cooperation to support African security interests in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 18, 2021.

Background II. Strategic Perspective: Europe

European countries invested in Africa are primarily concerned with the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea for economic and security purposes, although neither region is a priority in their foreign policy agendas. In the Gulf of Guinea, Europe has conducted efforts to curb piracy and armed sea robbery, oil theft, large-scale trafficking of drugs and other illegal products, and illegal fishing. Yet, Europe currently remains mostly focused on the Sahel where their main concern of terrorism is more prevalent. The most actively invested country is France, whose Barkane counterterrorism operation was the inspiration for the Takuba Task Force, a group of elite European soldiers engaged in the war against terrorism.⁴⁴ France also leads the Sahel Alliance alongside Germany, and is the organizer of several effective military exercises currently used to train Gulf country forces. Other highly invested regions include the UK, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, and Italy.⁴⁵

Background II.a: European Economic Priorities

Illegal trafficking efforts are not only inhumane and damaging to local and international security but also prevent trade within a region. Europe has begun addressing these threats primarily through naval security efforts and the Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP), which started in 2015. SEACOP seeks to build local government capacity against illegal maritime trafficking and associated criminal networks on the trans-Atlantic cocaine route through the use of Joint Maritime Control Units (JMCUs) in selected countries in West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. SEACOP has been extended to 2021-23, and has joined efforts with “Strengthening Criminal Investigation and criminal justice cooperation along drug trafficking routes” (CRIMJUST)⁴⁶ to tackle drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in West Africa, among other regions.

Approximately 13% of European oil and 6% of its gas runs through the Gulf of Guinea, making oil theft an economic threat to Europe. Illegal fishing is also a problem, with West African waters containing the highest levels of illegal and unregulated fishing in the world;⁴⁷ illegal fishing alone makes up 37% or more of the region’s catch and costs an estimated \$2.9 billion to the fish industry.⁴⁸ Local coastal areas suffer greatly from loss of food supply, and those who make their living by fishing are at a financial disadvantage.⁴⁹ To help target this problem, Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in Western Africa (PESCAO) was launched in 2018 with a budget of €15 million.⁵⁰ PESCAO aims to strengthen the regional approach to the sustainable use and management of fishery resources, including combating illegal unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing). PESCAO works closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to ensure the decline of IUU fishing, while protecting local communities and their investors.

⁴⁴ Person, and Paul Lorigerie. “New European Taskforce Takes on Mali’s Elusive Militants.” Reuters. Thomson Reuters, October 6, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/new-european-taskforce-takes-malis-elusive-militants-2021-10-06/>.

⁴⁵ Hazel Koh, and Sarah Minot Asrar. Expert Interview on U.S.-EU cooperation to support African security interests in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 18, 2021.

⁴⁶ Interpol Staff. “Project CRIMJUST.” Interpol.int. Interpol, 2021. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Drug-trafficking/Project-CRIMJUST>.

⁴⁷ Rai, Neena. “Global Piracy at Five-Year Low.” The Wall Street Journal. Dow Jones & Company, January 16, 2013. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323468604578245740533645604>.

⁴⁸ Tempest, Mark. “Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Illegal Fishing: Expensive Crimes for the Neighborhood.” Eaglespeak.US. Eaglespeak, October 2, 2019. <https://www.eaglespeak.us/2019/10/gulf-of-guinea-piracyand-illegal.html?m=1>.

⁴⁹ Oirere, Shem. “New Monitoring Center Boosts War against IUU in Gulf of Guinea.” SeafoodSource Official Media. Seafood Source, May 25, 2021. <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/new-monitoring-center-boosts-war-against-iuu-in-gulf-of-guinea>.

⁵⁰ FCWC Staff. “PESCAO Improving Fisheries Governance in Western Africa.” Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea. FCWC, August 17, 2020. <https://fewc-fish.org/projects/pescao>.

Background II.b: European Security Priorities

Since 2014, the EU has contributed over \$66.7 million dollars to the fight against piracy, and a number of European countries have deployed members of their navy to the region as well. The EU as a body has also invested in several programs to increase maritime security, including the Critical Maritime Routes Monitoring (CRIMSON)⁵¹ project, the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network (GoGIN)⁵², and West and Central Africa Port Security (WeCAPS).⁵³ Following two successful phases, CRIMSON is now sponsored by the Royal United Services Institutes in its third and final phase until 2024. Not only does CRIMSON work to regulate all monitoring and evaluating activities, but it is also in place to enhance the public image of CMR components and maintain diplomacy and transparency. WeCAPS has similar goals, working off of a threefold objective plan to strengthen compliance until International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) standards are met, increase preparedness to risks, and increase resilience when crisis events occur. These projects collectively work as portions of the Critical Maritime Routes Programme⁵⁴ (CMR) established by the EU to provide coherence, visibility and communications, monitoring and evaluation, policy analysis and expert recommendations for projects covered under the umbrella CMR. Furthermore, in January 2021, the European Union introduced the Coordinated Maritime Presences to ensure a persistent presence of maritime forces in the region and enable EU member states to share intelligence effectively between each other.⁵⁵ The initiative has limited funding, since it is not an EU effort but rather a concept to increase cooperation between countries who have a presence in the GoG. However, the creation of CMP highlights that the European Union has begun to show more interest in the GoG's security situation and is willing to invest more into maritime security as it expands upon CMR.

The Council of the EU released the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020⁵⁶ in early 2015 outlining provisions for further support to nations in the Gulf of Guinea battling maritime crime of varying degrees such as piracy and armed robbery at sea, illegal fishing, smuggling of migrants, and trafficking of human beings, drugs, and arms. The plan aims to assist these nations by building stronger governments and long term stability in the region, preventing current threats from multiplying. The plan works in correspondence with the Yaoundé Code of Conduct which involves regional actors and is supported by the EU as it pledges to condemn acts of piracy at sea.⁵⁷ The EU has a strong interest in protecting its assets at sea from maritime theft and supports international policy in doing so. The Yaounde Code of Conduct is signed by 25 countries and includes 5 zones, 2 regional centers, and one Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) that watches over 6000 kilometers of coastline and 12 major ports.

⁵¹ CMR. "CRIMSON." Critical Maritime Routes. The European Union, February 24, 2020. <https://criticalmaritimeroutes.eu/projects/crimson/>.

⁵² "GoGIN." Critical Maritime Routes. European Union, Rusi Europe, December 10, 2020. <https://criticalmaritimeroutes.eu/projects/gogin/#:~:text=Launched%20in%20December%202016%20by,efficient%20regional%20information%20sharing%20network.>

⁵³ CMR. "WeCAPS." Critical Maritime Routes. The European Union, February 24, 2020. <https://criticalmaritimeroutes.eu/projects/wecaps/>.

⁵⁴ Critical Maritime Routes Staff. *Critical Maritime Routes, a European Programme to Secure Maritime Transport*. YouTube. YouTube, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoymidSsjvQ>.

⁵⁵ Council of the EU Staff. "Gulf of Guinea: Council Conclusions Launching the Pilot Case for the Coordinated Maritime Presence Concept." Consilium.europa.eu. European Council of the European Union, January 25, 2021.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/01/25/gulf-of-guinea-council-conclusions-launching-the-pilot-case-for-the-coordinated-maritime-presences-concept/>.

⁵⁶ Council of the EU Press Release. "Council Conclusions on the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020." Consilium.europa.eu. European Council of the European Union, March 16, 2015.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/16/council-conclusions-gulf-guinea-action-plan-2015-2020/>.

⁵⁷ Africa Defense Forum. "Yaounde Code of Conduct Taking Shape in the Gulf of Guinea." Defense Web. Paramount Group, August 4, 2020.

<https://www.defenceweb.co.za/security/maritime-security/yaounde-code-of-conduct-taking-shape-in-the-gulf-of-guinea/>.



Figure 4: Yaoundé Code of Conduct Zones⁵⁸

Background III. Strategic Perspective: United States

As in most regions, U.S. strategic objectives in the Gulf of Guinea are multidimensional due to the diverse agents in the region and the variety of interests that are represented. For purposes of contextualization, this section will break down these objectives into the following categories: African partner capacity building, China competition, military force projection, economic and business transactions, and democracy/human rights promotion.

Background III.a: U.S. Interest in African Partner Capacity Building

Regarding African partner capacity building, the United States is looking primarily at decreasing ungoverned maritime space, supporting regional stability, and strengthening relationships with regional partners (Department of Defense Strategic Evaluation). The 2007-2018 Department of Defense Strategic Evaluation reported that the Gulf of Guinea faces major challenges with piracy, IUU fishing, trans-Atlantic drug-and human-trafficking, and coastal infrastructure attacks.⁵⁹ The issue of IUU fishing is also a major concern for the region's local economies given the major role played by the fishing industry in employment. This economic challenge undermines not just immediate financial wellbeing, but also the long-term development of countries in the region. Furthermore, lack of state enforcement capabilities, military and civilian, undermines government resilience to any political turbulence.

Thus far, the United States has pursued strategies of expanding monitoring capabilities and building operational capacity while limiting deployment of non-educational US forces. This approach has had a positive impact on bolstering at-sea capacity and expanding territorial coverage. Impressive results have been seen in strengthening the Senegalese Navy, and the building of Benin's own at-sea capacity.

⁵⁸ Boniface Konan, "Yaounde Architecture for Maritime Security and Safety," africacenter.org (africa center, May 2019), <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-05-MSS-Namibia-Session-3-Bell-Bell-EN.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Department of Defense Staff, "Department of Defense Strategic Evaluation: U.S Maritime Security Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea (2007-2018)." [Open.defense.gov](https://open.defense.gov). Department of Defense, 2018. https://open.defense.gov/Portals/23/Documents/Security_Cooperation/Maritime_Security_Cooperation_Gulf_of_Guinea_2007-2018.pdf.

Long-term professional education programs with Nigeria’s navy have also demonstrated great promise in establishing measured interoperability. Despite these steps, progress remains constrained by local infrastructure challenges such as fuel, electricity, and internet service, as shown by the cases of Nigeria, Cameroon, and the aforementioned Benin. These challenges suggest the importance of holistic support in the future.

Background III.b: U.S. Competition with China

The second categorization of U.S. objectives involves competition with China. With China’s growing presence in Africa, both countries are taking measures to safeguard their political and economic interests in strategic regions such as the Gulf of Guinea⁶⁰. At present, certain important distinctions can be drawn between the two countries’ engagement with Africa: the U.S. is much more heavily involved in West Africa, while China has established its foothold more firmly in Eastern and Southern Africa; the U.S. deals significantly more with military (particularly naval) leaders, while China engages leaders in a variety of sectors. In responding to China’s growing presence in the Gulf of Guinea, however, the United States has two primary objectives: preventing the neocolonial aspects of China’s Belt and Road Initiative⁶¹ from changing the balance of power or destabilizing the region while avoiding direct confrontation, and reasserting the merits of membership in the Liberal International Order and engagement with U.S. led institutions for development.

Background III.c: U.S. Military force projection interests

The Gulf of Guinea is also a region critical to U.S. military force projection. The United States has two primary interests in maintaining a presence in the Gulf of Guinea: staging areas to conduct counter-terrorism operations and strengthening global power projection capacity. Fighting terror in across is critical to U.S. national security interests. The Office of the Director of National intelligence has asserted that while many of the terrorist groups operating in Africa are focused on regional targets in the short-term, some also aspire to attack the United States.⁶² Furthermore, AFRICOM officials connect local terror to regional instability, regional instability to power vacuums that attract larger terrorist entities, and those entities to threats to the United States. Thus, the U.S. remains heavily invested in countering terror and promoting stability preemptively.

The second component involved U.S. global power projection capacity. Whether it is the system of Global Fleet Stations, or the network of army and air bases around the world, the United States military relies on a web of staging points to be able to engage adversaries anywhere in the world. The Gulf of Guinea’s naval and strategic positioning close to the Sahel make preserving this foothold in the face of Chinese encroachment and regional instability critical to military operations well beyond the region.

⁶⁰ Pairault, Thierry. “China’s Presence in Africa Is at Heart Political.” *The Diplomat*. The Diplomat, August 12, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/chinas-presence-in-africa-is-at-heart-political/>.

⁶¹ Chatzky, Andrew, and James McBride. “China’s Massive Belt and Road Initiative.” Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, January 28, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

⁶² “Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community.” Dni.gov . Office of the Director of National Intelligence , April 9, 2021. <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2021-Unclassified-Report.pdf>.

Background III.d: US Economic and Business Interests

The Gulf is a very economically valuable region, as it is home to 4.5% of the world's oil reserves. 60% of Africa's oil is produced in this area, 2.7% of the world's natural gas reserves, 4% of the global fish production, and 25% of African maritime traffic passes through the gulf. Due to the economic importance and growth in the area, non-state actors engage in crime due to lack of economic opportunities elsewhere. The area has become the world's number one hotspot for piracy which includes crimes such as kidnapping, smuggling, hijacking, trafficking, illicit trades, and illegal fishing. There are multiple nations involved in the long term economic development of Africa, particularly the French and German-led Sahel Alliance and China. The US is competing with China economically on the continent but does not come close to the level of investment and interest China gives to the continent. The Biden administration may pay more attention to Africa but few believe they will match China's current engagement level.

Background III.e: U.S. Democracy and Human Rights Interests

The Gulf as a region has a number of unstable governments. One example is Mali, which has experienced 3 coups since they gained independence in 1958, with the latest one occurring in September 2021. There is also a high prevalence of violent extremism and a growing linkage between terrorism, organized crime and intercommunal violence. After the coup, the U.S. subtly implemented aid restrictions related to the coup. In general, though, the U.S. and other partners have seemed to focus a bit more on counterterrorism efforts and competing with China and Russia than implementing and promoting a democracy, though their counterterrorism efforts naturally help with halting democratic backsliding.

Analysis I: Goal Setting and Prioritization

Analysis I: I. Naval Security

Analysis I: I.a American Engagement

Given that the Gulf of Guinea is home to roughly a quarter of Africa's maritime traffic as well as over half of the continent's oil production, increased naval capacity in the region is critical to protect trade and export business.

Like many other nations, the U.S. seeks oil access in the Gulf of Guinea, and Nigeria is consistently one of their biggest oil suppliers. They share a mutual interest with Africa in preventing maritime crimes and preserving Africa's access to international markets, so they have taken some steps in collaboration with Gulf of Guinea nations. Nigeria is a particular point of interest given that, outside of its oil supply, the nation also has the largest navy in the Gulf of Guinea region.

One example of steps taken by the U.S. in the Gulf's maritime affairs includes a maritime security capabilities exercise they conducted in August 2021. Using USS Hershel "Woody" Williams, AFRICOM's first permanently assigned warship, the US collaborated with and trained the Nigerian Navy, the Spanish Navy, and the Special Boat Squadron of Ghana.⁶³ The exercise was intended to strengthen safety standards and security as well as boost communication between navies. The goal of collaboration like this is to lower the crime rate of the Gulf's maritime traffic and deepen the US's ties with an economically valuable region.

As previously mentioned, the U.S. also has a joint military agreement with Cabo Verde in the effort to address the nation's vulnerability to maritime crimes. This agreement, along with a separate one with the EU, has proven to be effective in reducing piracy and drug-trafficking. The U.S. aims to build up Cabo Verde's military capacity to properly respond to these threats, particularly through a 2019 bilateral agreement that conducts training and provides information to the Cabo Verde military.⁶⁴ In addition to the U.S.'s security goals in Cabo Verde, they also aim to strengthen their economic ties to the nation.

It would be in the United States' best interest to work in coordination with the European Union in combating piracy and protecting economic routes and assets. Many of the pirates in the Gulf of Guinea operate in two ways: near shore piracy and/or open sea piracy.⁶⁵ It has proven hard for naval defense forces to arrive at a piracy scene on time because of these dual threats. The amount of security assets needed to protect from any given attack has proven itself to be a challenge. For example, both offshore and near-shore patrol technology is needed to identify any potential threats, and then quick response vehicles are needed to get security personnel to the scene. In January of 2021, a Turkish shipping container ship was attacked by pirates who spent six hours on the ship before leaving. The Turkish ship and crew on board did send out a help signal but there was no security response during the entirety of the

⁶³ "Gulf of Guinea Partners Complete Maritime Security Exercise." United States Navy. Accessed November 13, 2021.

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2727817/gulf-of-guinea-partners-complete-maritime-security-exercise/>.

⁶⁴ "U.S. Relations with Cabo Verde - United States Department of State." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, April 14, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-cabo-verde/>.

⁶⁵ Anna Larsson and Margi Van Gogh, "How to Address Piracy and Protect Seafarers," ed. David Loosley, Guy Platten, and John Butler, World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, May 21, 2021), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/05/unsung-heroes-piracy-in-the-gulf-of-guinea-and-the-need-to-protect-seafarers/>.

six hours they were on board.⁶⁶ This example highlights the need for naval security cooperation within the Gulf.

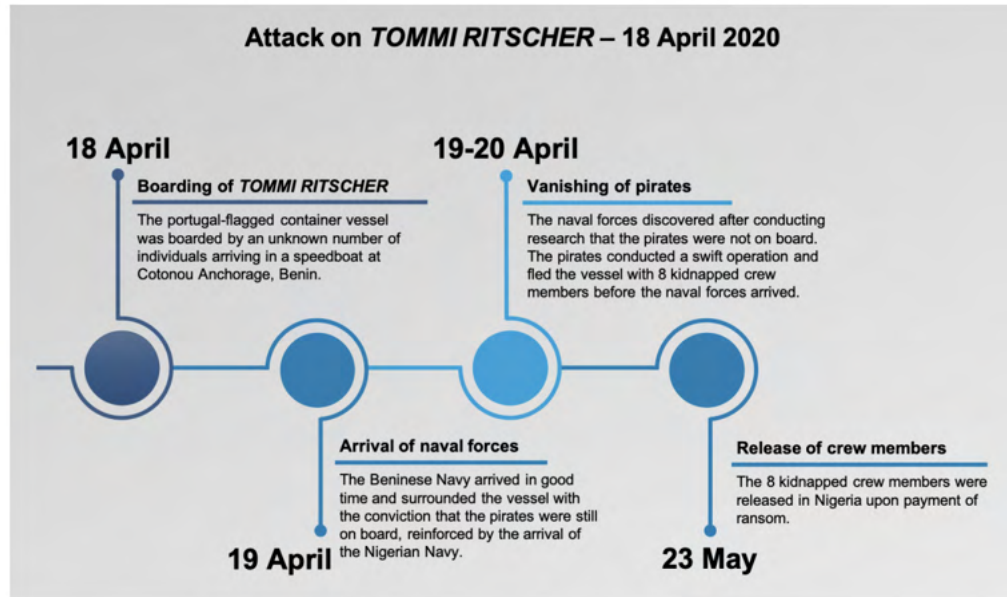


Figure 5: Timeline of a Pirate Attack on Tommi Ritscher Demonstrating Slow Naval Response Times⁶⁷

Analysis I: I.b European Engagement

The European Union already has many active initiatives within the Gulf, including the aforementioned Coordinated Maritime Presences project. As previously stated, intelligence is crucial to security in the Gulf due to the difficult nature of locating and responding to pirate attacks. For this reason, comprehensive intelligence gained through shared channels across actors in the region will be vital to the United States' aim to stabilize the region.

The U.S. and the EU can leverage their military assets and diplomatic influence respectively to coordinate regional stability and economic growth. The United States does not have any significant land presence in West Africa, so most of its physical interactions with allies in the region have been through military activities such as naval exercises. Training procedures such as the exercises involving the USS *Hershel Williams*, mentioned previously, have been highly successful. These types of exercises are crucial to U.S. security and diplomatic projection in the region because it offers U.S. and ally troops a chance to practice drills, and it creates opportunities for the U.S. to strengthen ally relationships and capabilities through military interaction.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ The Maritime Executive, "One Killed, 15 Abducted in Gulf of Guinea Pirate Attack," *The Maritime Executive* (The Maritime Executive, January 24, 2021), <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/one-killed-15-abducted-in-violent-gulf-of-guinea-pirate-attack>.

⁶⁷ "Maritime Governance BRIEF Gulf of Guinea: Piracy-Graphics 2020," *safety4sea* (CEMLAWS Africa, April 2021), https://safety4sea.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CEMLAWS-AFRICA-Gulf-of-Guinea-Piracy-Graphics-2021_04.pdf.

⁶⁸ Gidget Fuentes, "Deployed to Africa, USS 'Woody' Williams Key Platform to Train, Engage Partners in Piracy Hotspot," *USNI News*, September 6, 2021,

Conversely, the EU and individual European states have strong, established diplomatic ties and physical onland presence in the Gulf of Guinea region. Throughout the last two decades, the European Union has created and implemented various programs designed to promote stability (political and economical) and regional cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea. A couple of these programs include Critical Maritime Routes Monitoring, Support and Evaluation Mechanism, (a project that promotes economic coherence and communication among the Gulf nations) the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network, (a program which aims to improve maritime security and safety for trade routes), and the Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security (a program which focuses on improving law enforcement and governance frameworks with the aim of increasing regional political stability). The EU has many other projects similarly focused on solving issues through diplomacy.⁶⁹ The substantial diplomatic ties the EU has with the Gulf of Guinea nations presents the U.S. with an opportunity to maximize stability in the region. By working together, the U.S. could leverage Europe's diplomatic ties to increase its own influence with nations in the region, while advancing security and economic growth through its various military training programs. Both the U.S. and Europe stand to benefit from such cooperation. *For specific recommendations on cooperation see pages 20-21*

Analysis I: II. Land-Based Security

The naval security challenges experienced by the Gulf of Guinea nations are compounded by terrorist activities in the northern bordering Sahel region. Radical Islamist groups such as Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province), and JNIM (Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin) seek to capitalize on the instability in the Sahel by expanding into the neighboring Gulf of Guinea nations. In 2020, the Sahel region had an average of eighty attacks per month. On a whole, terrorist attacks across the region have risen, (18% from 2019 to 2020). This can be attributed to the drastic increase of terrorist attacks in Mali (56% from 2019 to 2020) and Niger (51% from 2019 to 2020) due to the 2020 Mali coup. While this terrorism is mostly concentrated in Mali, the instability and weak borders of surrounding nations has facilitated crossborder migration and attacks in countries such as Burkina Faso.⁷⁰

<https://news.usni.org/2021/09/06/deployed-to-africa-uss-woody-williams-key-platform-to-train-engage-partners-in-piracy-hotspot>.

⁶⁹ "EU Maritime Security Factsheet: The Gulf of Guinea," European Union External Action Service (European Union, January 25, 2021), https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/52490/eu-maritime-security-factsheet-gulf-guinea_en.

⁷⁰ African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism and NATO Strategic Direction South - Hub, "Facts and Figures on Terrorism in the Sahel," thesouthernhub (NATO Strategic Direction South, May 11, 2021), https://thesouthernhub.org/resources/site1/General/NSD-S%20Hub%20Publications/20210413_NSDS-HUB_ACSRT_%203rd_Terrorism_in_the_Sahel.pdf.

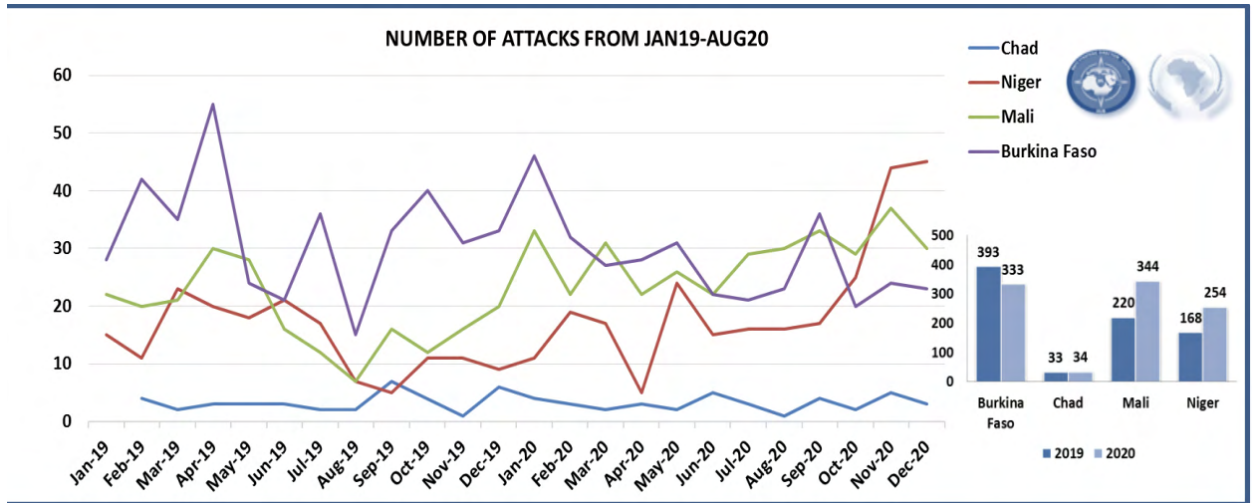


Figure 6: Trends in Number of Terrorist Attacks in Chad, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso from 2019-2020⁷¹

The locations of terrorist attacks indicate a southern movement trend among terrorist groups. From 2019 to 2020 attacks in the Mali/Niger/Burkina Faso region of the Sahel have been moving southward. Furthermore, attacks in central-western Mali and Western Niger increased over the past year. Attacks by the terrorist group JNIM have also been trending southward, now concentrating in south eastern Burkina Faso on the border of the Gulf of Guinea state Benin. The southward movement of these groups could be due to various factors. One correlation is the proliferation of smuggling routes coming out of the Gulf of Guinea nations up to the Sahel. The terrorist actors may be driving southward due to the lucrative smuggling business flowing from the Gulf. If this is a potential factor, it is crucial for the Gulf of Guinea nations to find and destroy these routes to disincentivize the southward movement of these groups. It would decrease the internal crime and instability caused by the smuggling, and more importantly it would offer the GoG respite from dealing with the terrorist attacks coming from the Sahel and piracy from the South. Currently, the terrorist groups are in a migratory state. They are attracted to the instability of the GoG governments and the porous borders. Because of the transitional nature of the terrorist actors, it is in the United States' and Europe's best interest to counter the problem now before the issues are intensified in both the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea.

Both the U.S. and the European Union have substantial business, long-term economic, and security interests in the region. Notably, both entities have private companies operating within the GoG, so American and European business would be negatively affected by political instability caused by migrating terrorists within the region. The U.S. is the largest foreign investor in Nigeria and the two way trade in goods totals over \$10 billion.⁷² The U.S. bilateral trade in Cote D'Ivoire totals over \$500 million,

⁷¹ African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism and NATO Strategic Direction South - Hub, "Facts and Figures on Terrorism in the Sahel," thesouthernhub (NATO Strategic Direction South, May 11, 2021), https://thesouthernhub.org/resources/site1/General/NSD-S%20Hub%20Publications/20210413_NSDD-HUB_ACSRT_%203rd_Terrorism_in_the_Sahel.pdf.

⁷² Bureau of African Affairs, "U.S. Relations with Nigeria - United States Department of State," U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, April 29, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-nigeria/>.

so it is critical to U.S. influence and total economic growth for both America and the region to combat instability caused by piracy and disincentivize the terrorists from moving southward.⁷³ These examples indicate the depth of U.S. investment in the Gulf of Guinea region economically and politically. Securing and strengthening preexisting economic assets and relationships by combating piracy and preserving stability would expand U.S. influence among the Gulf of Guinea nations, therefore placing significant pressure on China as they also compete for regional influence. Furthermore, creating and sustaining stability would ultimately lead to economic growth among all the actors in the region, spurring development and progress which would further decrease piracy.

Analysis I: III. Non-Military Priorities

One negative consequence of the investment in the oil industry in the Gulf of Guinea is the rise of piracy due to environmental degradation. The industry-caused environmental issues have contributed to increased marginalization and exploitation among the communities in the Niger Delta. Environmental degradation is one of the leading factors in rising pirate recruitment and resentment against the Gulf of Guinea governments.⁷⁴ Stemming the pollution occurring in affected areas would lead to increased stability. One of the pirate groups operating within the Niger Delta Region, the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers, have issued an 11-point list of demands to the Nigerian government. Most of the points demand less environmental pollution and some form of reparations for the environmental damage and displacement that has already occurred. The U.S. and Dutch company Shell has decided to completely divest its onshore oil facilities. They are doing so for many reasons, but one of the cited reasons is the protection of the environment. This or some other form of mitigating the damage done to communities near oil facilities is necessary to stabilize the region and discourage pirate recruitment. It would solve the root of the issue, as most pirates operating in the Gulf originate from the Niger Delta. However, this is not a problem within the DoD's jurisdiction. The solution needs to be an initiative by the Gulf of Guinea nations to further regulate the oil industry and develop their poorer regions with civil and human infrastructure.

⁷³ US Embassy in Cote d'Ivoire, "Doing Business in Cote D'Ivoire," U.S. Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire (U.S. Embassy in Cote d'Ivoire, June 3, 2021), <https://ci.usembassy.gov/business/>.

⁷⁴ Greyl, Lucie. "Multinational Oil Companies on the Niger Delta, Nigeria: Ejatlas." Environmental Justice Atlas. EJ Atlas . Accessed November 9, 2021. <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/multinational-oil-companies-on-the-niger-delta-nigeria>.

Analysis II: Policies

Analysis II: I. Maritime Security

Addressing the security threats in the Gulf of Guinea begins with enhanced maritime security, increased naval capacity, and a plan to expedite the advancement of African naval forces through various security initiatives and short term American and European maritime patrols. To address these goals, the United States should look to coordinate a Gulf of Guinea joint maritime security initiative with European forces. By leveraging American leadership to convene leaders and facilitate resource pooling and joint-African operations, African leaders will be given the opportunity to grow their naval capacity in order to expand their trade, export more business, meet the needs of their local communities, and ensure that the threat of piracy dissipates.

Analysis II: I.a Enhanced Maritime Security

Considering EU's current projects, including the CMP Concept and CMR, our team feels that an effective procedure would be to encourage the European Union to further their diplomatic ties by continuing to funnel aid into successful projects such as those encompassed within the CMR, and to support these and similar projects with American patrols in the Gulf. Another successful project is WAPIS,⁷⁵ which has had a positive impact on improving internal cooperation and data security among police forces in Niger and Benin to provide coordinated responses to terrorism and strengthen overall in the region. As WAPIS aims to expand into new member countries, including Nigeria and Gambia, the DoD should consider joining the EU's efforts in funding this important initiative and providing equipment such as servers for the mirror site and workstations.

Analysis II: I.b Increased Naval Capacity

Countries within the Gulf of Guinea face a naval disadvantage⁷⁶ in terms of limited equipment and capacity, poor relations between civilians and armed forces, and unstable regimes. To maintain proper maritime security, we recommend that the US partner with the EU to offer their naval support in the region and thus assist the region in building the capacity of their forces. By protecting economic interests from piracy and accelerating infrastructure development by removing the piracy impediment, African navies will gain the opportunity to expand their capabilities unharmed by constant attacks. If offered this protection, our team believes that this will guarantee that Gulf countries promise access to ports for American and European ships, securing long term force projection interests.

U.S. Naval Forces Africa conducted a successful run of the exercise Obangame Express in March 2021 (OE21),⁷⁷ following a successful conduction in 2019 that was initially going to be followed by a 2020 version before the COVID-19 pandemic cut the flow of trade. 32 nations were scheduled to participate in the exercise, consisting of European nations such as Denmark, France, Germany, and Italy

⁷⁵Interpol Staff. "WAPIS Programme." Interpol.int. Interpol, 2021.
<https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Capacity-building/WAPIS-Programme>.

⁷⁶ Hugo Decis, "Gulf of Guinea: Stepping up to the Maritime-Security Challenge?," IISS.org (IISS, April 17, 2020),
<https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2020/04/gulf-of-guinea-maritime-security-challenges>.

⁷⁷ "Obangame Express." United States Africa Command. United States Africa Command, 2021.
<https://www.africom.mil/obangame-express>.

and African nations in the Gulf of Guinea and Northern African regions. OE21 was conducted with the intent of improving regional support in accordance with the Yaounde Code of Conduct, improving maritime security and tactical operations, and increasing information sharing practices. Similar training exercises such as Cutlass Express, the Phoenix Express, and the Saharan Express⁷⁸ have been conducted off the coast of Africa in efforts to better the flow of trade, halt piracy and off shore crime, and enhance maritime security and the flow of information between countries. Most recently in November 2021 the Grand African Nemo exercise led by France was conducted with prominent Gulf countries as well as with foreign countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom⁷⁹. The Grand African Nemo is one of three or four regional exercises a year that the French Ministry of Defense has planned in the Gulf of Guinea as a response to the 2013 Yaounde Summit. Exercises such as these have the potential to drastically increase the capacity of African naval forces.

In addition to direct naval presence and assistance, other practices such as a “friendly approach” of meeting with local crews of fishing and trading vessels has been shown to work in several projects include EU NAVFOR⁸⁰ and can be done by American or European patrols at relatively little cost. This would include conversing with locals to gain a better understanding of current practices and procedures in place as well as to provide training for shipmasters on the Best Management Practices (BMP)⁸¹ to deter piracy and enhance maritime security. The BMP include briefing crew on risks and procedures, utilizing past experiences as safety drills, ensuring that there are plans in place for pirate attacks, learning how best to avoid becoming a target, ensuring constant 360 security on ships is maintained to the utmost ability of those aboard, and having the resources to call for help as soon as possible. Giving ships their own training and means of protection further allows the African naval capacity to continue growing and to better respond to threats.

Analysis II: I.c Joint Security Initiative Between the United States and Europe

American leadership has the capacity to create greater cohesiveness between American and European forces while solving a major security crisis. One example of a past European operation which dealt effectively with multinational groups and which has drastically lowered the piracy rates in the Horn of Africa and Somalia is Operation ATALANTA⁸², formerly EU NAVFOR. Operation ATALANTA is a global initiative against piracy sponsored by the EU which has worked alongside the prior NATO Ocean Shield as well as the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 whose mission is to deter, disrupt, and suppress piracy. The operation has drastically reduced the amount of piracy in the Horn of Africa and Somalia; at the height of Somali piracy in January 2011 there were 736 hostages as well as 32 ships being held

⁷⁸ Special Operation Force Staff. “Special Operations Forces Field Training Exercises in Africa.” Codebookafrica.wordpress.com. Codebook Africa, November 6, 2013.

<https://codebookafrica.wordpress.com/2013/11/06/special-operations-forces-field-training-exercises-in-africa/>.

⁷⁹ Archus , Dorian. “France Leads Grand African Nemo Exercise in the Gulf of Guinea.” Naval Post- Naval News and Information. Naval Post , November 6, 2021. <https://navalpost.com/france-leads-grand-african-nemo-exercise/>.

⁸⁰ EU NAVFOR Staff. “EU NAVFOR Conducts Friendly Approach with Somali Fishermen.” EU NAVFOR. European Union, July 9, 2018. <https://eunavfor.eu/eu-navfor-conducts-friendly-approach-with-somali-fishermen/>.

⁸¹ Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO), Inter. Chamber of Shipping, Inter. Group of I&P Clubs, INTERTANKO, and Oil Companies Inter. Maritime Forum. *BMP5: Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea*. 5th ed. Livingston, Scotland: Witherby Publishing Group Ltd, 2018.

⁸² Operation ATALANTA. “Military and Civilian Missions and Operations.” European External Action Service . European Union, 2021. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/430/Military%20and%20civilian%20missions%20and%20operations.

captive, providing a stark contrast to the data following October 2016 which routinely reports no hostages or ships held. There has also been a complete success rate with providing protection to WFP (World Food Programme) ships delivering food and aid to Somalia as well as shipments contributing resources to EU projects in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Though different regions, the threat of piracy and its roots remain similar, and thus our team recommends adopting similar methods in the Gulf of Guinea to these past successes in order to achieve similar outcomes. This will build the potential of the project to be a sustainable long term solution that will resist political instability and potential destructuring of efforts following the exit of American and European forces in the future.

Analysis II: II. Political and Economic Stability

Another critical concept is the fundamental inter-relations between military, economic, and political factors in the region. While typically a complicating factor, in this case the connections between facets may provide the United States a unique opportunity to effect desirable progress in the region. The two primary recommendations for this section on holistic stability and security are:

- i) leveraging military connections to promote holistic development
- ii) emphasizing not just tactical but bureaucratic military education as well.

For both, strategic collaboration and sharing of responsibilities with European allies will significantly amplify the actions' effectiveness.

Analysis II: II.a Leveraging Military Connections

Regarding the first recommendation, our team finds that there is great potential for increased collaboration between the military and civilian development agencies to advance military, geopolitical, and economic goals for the region. This recommendation is situated within the broader grand strategy goal of contesting China's growing influence in Africa, but holds potential for independent progress as well. Though China's military support in Africa is growing, as evidenced by its \$100 million offer of free military aid to the African Union between 2017 and 2022 and leading the world in number of UN Peacekeepers deployed on African missions, "China engages with top African security chiefs at less than half the rate of the United States. China has engaged less than one-fifth (19 percent) of current and former African security chiefs, while the United States has engaged almost half (43 percent)."⁸³ "A mere 1 percent of Chinese engagement with African security chiefs takes the form of security training, signifying a major difference compared to the United States."⁸⁴ China's Belt and Road Initiative does however present a much more coherent political and economic development agenda than that the United States brings to the table. Although the U.S. does not necessarily need to counter every Chinese initiative per the recommendation of Dr. Torrey Taussig, our team suggests that leveraging American military relationships and renowned European diplomatic ties could be a critical factor in tipping the scales in our favor.⁸⁵

Though the United States and its European allies have provided significant naval capacity building support in the Gulf of Guinea, progress in the independent capabilities of African governments to make use of new equipment and materiel are constrained by unreliable electricity, internet, and

⁸³ Harris, Marielle. "Personal Ties: Measuring Chinese and U.S. Engagement with African Security Chiefs." Personal Ties: Measuring Chinese and U.S. Engagement with African Security Chiefs | Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 12, 2021. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/personal-ties-measuring-chinese-and-us-engagement-african-security-chiefs>.

⁸⁴ Harris. Personal Ties: Measuring Chinese and U.S. Engagement with African Security Chiefs." 2021

⁸⁵ Koh, Hazel, and Torrey Taussig. Expert Interview on U.S.-Europe Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 9, 2021.

infrastructure. Our team recommends that by emphasizing the importance of this kind of infrastructure development for security needs, and facilitating productive dialogues between African leaders and American and U.S-Europe agencies/organizations such as USAID or the IMF, American military leadership could:

- I. Eliminate key constraints on African maritime capacity
- II. Upgrade U.S. strategic competitiveness with China
- III. Bring about important development in the Gulf of Guinea that would benefit local Africans, American business interests, and earn valuable good-will towards the United States.

This is a situation where the complementarity of the US-Europe relationship can be leveraged to amplify the impacts of ally engagements. European allies, according to Harvard Kennedy School Professor Zoe Marks, are recognized for having much more developed diplomatic ties with African countries than anyone else besides China.⁸⁶ This means that while their military involvement outside of France in the Sahel may be limited, Europe maintains close ties with many African governments. The United States brings two key strengths: first a heeded voice through defense ties, but secondly an incredibly well rounded military. U.S. military contingents go well beyond traditional combat troops— civil affairs personnel, doctors, engineers, and more, all capable of supporting the providing of flexible and effective services and infrastructure in any environment.⁸⁷ Prioritizing the deployment of these personnel would allow for U.S. engagement to support these goals of long term development, stability and capacity building. If the United States and European allies can coordinate an approach wherein the U.S. leverages diverse military support personnel and influences military leaders, and European allies utilize their diplomatic strength to influence civilian leaders, collectively they can recommend and support a critical, coherent development path as an alternative to China’s Belt and Road Initiative. The divide between military, diplomatic, and commercial connections serve critical purposes in some areas, but in this vein they are a liability. Using American and European relationships established through specialty domains to enable success in others will be critical moving forward.

Per the recommendation of Sarah Minot Asrar, the U.S. could also diplomatically help to facilitate deals with China by becoming more involved in the legal process. While African countries enter deals with China while thinking of more short-term benefits, the U.S. could help advise them on how such deals could be concerning in the long-run for so-and-so reasons.⁸⁸

Analysis II: II.b Emphasizing Bureaucratic Military Education

The second key recommendation ties into the overarching theme of military education. American and European training of African forces has been critical to building their effectiveness in maintaining peace and combatting terrorism. While other sections will emphasize important aspects of training goals for the future, this section emphasizes the importance of bureaucratic education in the military on top of combat training. Ensuring high level military leadership, both civilian and field, receives comprehensive training is critical to the effectiveness of provided aid as well as the long term political stability of the countries.

⁸⁶ Akwei, Arjun, and Zoe Marks. Expert Interview on U.S. addressing of Political Violence in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 8, 2021.

⁸⁷ Akwei-Marks. Expert Interview on U.S. addressing of Political Violence in the Gulf of Guinea. 2021.

⁸⁸ Koh, Hazel, and Sarah Minot-Asrar. Expert Interview on U.S.-EU cooperation to support African security interests in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 18, 2021.

Regarding the first component, it is critical that military leadership is trained to properly handle aid provided by the U.S. and European allies. Ensuring fiscal responsibility, management, and other bureaucratic skills are developed amongst military leadership is necessary to make sure financial aid reaches its intended destination, orders and training are properly given out and executed, and so forth. This education, likely leveraging military Civil Affairs personnel, is critical to the success of any other aid.

The second component has to do with the familiar concept of ensuring the military is powerful enough to do whatever the government requires it to do, but obedient enough to only do what it is commanded to do. Proper military bureaucratic training is an important part of ensuring long-term political stability as it is successfully achieving military objectives, and can be achieved through a number of means. First there is the issue of training leaders about adverse selection challenges and how to mitigate them through the selection of people representative and loyal to the population.⁸⁹ On this topic HKS Professor Zoe Marks notes that in many instances, military strongmen holding leadership roles tend to pack their deputy circles with people of the same faction or ethnic background in hopes of ensuring loyalty. This leads to either strictly minority or majority militaries that are frequent triggers for social tension and unrest while failing to prevent mutinies or disloyalty. A representative commander corps as practiced by the United States is a much safer option, and thus something that can be shared. A second issue is that of moral hazard and minimizing the principal-agent problem wherein deputies do not strictly follow the wishes of leadership. The United States has dealt with this problem largely through increased internal monitoring of personnel and swift punishment for disloyalty and disobedience, as this proves to be a more democracy-conducive and sustainable approach than the bribery and personal relationship methods currently employed in certain Gulf countries.⁹⁰ Marks notes that it is critical to recognize that while in the United States the military and the police are two highly distinct institutions, in some countries in the Gulf of Guinea that distinction is much more blurred. The professionalism in conduct of the U.S. military is something that can be shared through joint training, however it is also critical to recognize the track record of U.S. empowered militaries conducting coups. Thus, favoring humility and collaboration rather than paternalistic instruction is key. Once again, this is an area where European militaries recognized for instilling professionalism and ethical conduct standards in their militaries (German post-WWII military reform) could contribute a great deal. It is important to recognize that the U.S. and European countries are not just training soldiers who will fight terrorists and pirates during conflict, they are training security forces that will be charged with maintaining safety and order among civilians in times of peace. Thus, ethical conduct and even some of the support functionality of the U.S. military mentioned earlier must be a primary focus of joint training exercises. To prevent issues regarding civilian treatment and human rights, such as the Nigerian military committing human rights abuses in the name of countering Boko Haram, the DoD should invest in military education initiatives that place an emphasis on rules of engagement and ways to properly deal with civilians. The DoD should also continue including this training as a mandatory part of arms packages sent to these African nations.

⁸⁹ Saunders, Elizabeth. "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making." International Organization 71. 2017

⁹⁰ Saunders. "No Substitute for Experience." 2017

Analysis II: III. Hearts and Minds: Requests of the People

The Department of Defense should address the root of the problem of piracy by helping to ensure that all U.S. companies operating in the Gulf of Guinea region abide by agreed upon standards. Although some groups of pirates interfere with businesses for economic profit, other pirates are incentivized by political objectives related to the detrimental effect of oil companies on the environment and local community. We propose two recommendations regarding how the U.S. could support the protection of the Niger Delta and its local community:

1. Training African navies for future oil spills
2. Address illegal fishing.

Analysis II: III.a Preventing Oil Spills

The U.S., and by extension the DoD, should take measures to preemptively mitigate the damage of oil spills by better preparing local African navies to respond to future disasters. Every year over the past fifty years, the Gulf of Guinea has experienced thousands of oil spills that add up to around 250,000 barrels of oil.⁹¹ This pollution, often by U.S. or European companies like Shell, not only jeopardizes the wildlife of the Niger Delta but also compromises the health of those who rely on the delta as a source of water, including millions of fishermen and farmers. To protect the livelihoods of the local community and effectively reduce one of the root causes of terror and piracy, the U.S. should help ensure African navies are properly equipped and trained for such situations. This effort could include providing boomers and skimmers to clean up existing oil spills, but even more importantly, the DoD should consider incorporating the U.S. Coast Guard into African naval training. The Coast Guard is the branch that responds to oil spills in American waters, and thus has the most experience in such disaster efforts. This goes back to the idea of training militaries to function in non-combat roles as well. Navies trained in such a way would be better equipped to deal with such problems, and in the absence of such disasters would face fewer enemies. Both align squarely with American interests for African partners.

⁹¹ Kizzi Asala, “The History of Exploitation behind the Gulf of Guinea Piracy,” Africanews (Africanews, February 9, 2021), <https://www.africanews.com/2021/02/08/the-history-of-exploitation-behind-the-gulf-of-guinea-piracy//>.

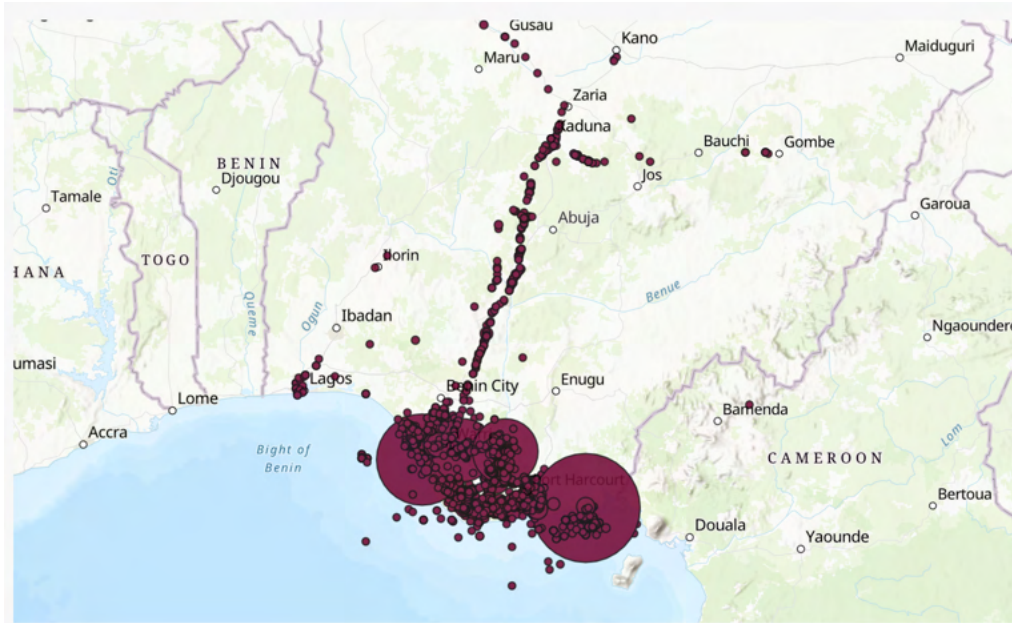


Figure 7: Oil Spills in Nigeria from 2010 to 2017⁹²

Analysis II: III.b Addressing Illegal Fishing

The U.S. should also help address illegal fishing in the Gulf of Guinea. In addition to costing the local governments \$1.5 billion, illegal fish farming jeopardizes the livelihood of the local communities by depleting the supply and increasing the price of fish.⁹³ The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea has devised projects that aim to protect, preserve, and manage fishery resources in the Gulf of Guinea. However, the FCWC has struggled to effectuate these initiatives due to a lack of funding and technical and financial partners (TFP). The U.S. should consider becoming a TFP of the FCWC to support its efforts in suppressing illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing. The U.S. should also apply for membership in the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), which aims to “improve responsible fishing through transparency” about the quantity of fish caught in a given country, holders of fishing rights, and the amount of payment for the fishing right. Currently, no FCWC Member State has applied for membership and only Cabo Verde, Madagascar, and Senegal have committed to the initiative. If the U.S. demonstrated interest in the project, it might afford the initiative more legitimacy and encourage other countries to join this effort to strengthen transparency mechanisms which would disincentivize illegal fishing. In addition to the FCWC, one main focus of these African nations has been to implement laws to prosecute and arrest illegal fishers. Per recommendation of Sarah Minot Asrar, America should continue to help with the process of devising these laws.⁹⁴

⁹² Amnesty International . “Niger Delta Negligence.” Amnesty International, June 6, 2021.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/niger-delta-oil-spills-decoders/>.

⁹³“A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea,” A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea | Center for Strategic and International Studies (Center for Strategic & International Studies, October 13, 2021),

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea>.

⁹⁴Hazel Koh, and Sarah Minot Asrar. Expert Interview on U.S.-EU cooperation to support African security interests in the Gulf of Guinea. Personal, November 18, 2021.

Conclusion

The Gulf of Guinea remains a dynamic region with diverse challenges but also significant potential for growth. The United States, through its well developed presence and in partnership with its European allies, could be a major catalyst for said growth. Current military engagement in the region has focused on security interests in their most direct sense: combating piracy, countering terror, and maintaining peace. The ultimate means of addressing security concerns though, both from the perspective of American as well as African interests, is leveraging the complementarity of the U.S.-Europe Alliance to bolster state capacity, accountability, and efficiency in the long run. This paper recommended three primary avenues for such action: Maritime Security, Political and Economic Stability, and Hearts and Minds. By embracing a holistic approach to all three avenues -building strong multilateral maritime security coalitions, leveraging military connections to drive infrastructure and bureaucratic development, and mitigating causal factors of piracy and criminal activity- the United States can help promote security, stability, and prosperous peace in the Gulf of Guinea for the benefit of all.

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