FOREIGN POWERS'AMBITIONS FOR AFRICA'S RICH RESOURCES AND ITS LINKAGE WITH CONFLICT IN AFRICA

Kakuba Sultan Juma
Department of Political Science, Islamic University in Uganda, Uganda

ABSTRACT

Africa is a vast home of natural resources which defines its attractiveness to foreign powers. This has brought about foreign powers rush to Africa because the continent has huge resources which are either under-exploited or unexploited that can address dramatic challenges that have occurred in the global economy.This paper explores foreign powers ambition for Africa's rich resources and its interrelation with conflict in Africa. It brings out arguments why foreign powers have uncontrollable interest in Africa's resources and how this desire for Africa's resources create conditions that generate terrorism, sectarianism and extremism in Africa.Thorough extensive review of document of records on Africa's relations with foreign powers reveals that foreign powers' desire for Africa's resources resides in economic strategic interest, security and political power challenges they face. Critical analysis of the arguments raised in this paper however, reveals that there is interrelationship between foreign powers' desire for Africa's rich resources and conflict. The data obtained reveals that proceeds from Africa's resources are used to support terrorist, sectarian and extremist activities.

Key Words: *Terrorism, Sectarianism, Extremism, Natural Resources, Conflict*

Introduction

Africa's Resources in the 19th and 20th Centuries

European colonial rulers developed Africa's natural resources for export to their home government.The European explorers and missionaries in the 1800s sparked off foreign powers'ambitions for Africa's vast resources after realising Africa had strategic importance to supply resources that were most needed in Europe. Currently, there is renewed demand for various Africa's natural quality resources such as oil, diamonds and gold among others by many countries from Europe, Asia including United States to meet their resource demands and protect their national interests. Naidu & Davies (2006) point out that oil sector in Africa is dominated by foreign investors due to its good quality for environmental protection.

According to WTO (2010) a total of 74% of Africa's natural resources is exported to foreign countries. This clearly shows that there is a high ambition of foreign powers for African resources. For instance, United States alone imports 60% of African oil besides other resources Hugon, (2010). Cotula et.al (2009) noted that foreign powers especially the emerging powers like China have been increasing their interest in African resources.This is due to the fact that some African countries have large amounts of petroleum. Africa is home to 1/10th of the world's oil reserves. Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, and Angola are among the world's leading oil producers. Besides oil, Africa has mineral resources.Table 1 below illustrates Africa's resource richness against world reserve.

Table 1: Africa's Resource Richness

Resource	Percentage (%)
Gold	50
Copper	13
Diamonds	11
Manganese	64
Coal	7.5
Cobalt	90
Oil	9.5
Iron ore	3
Natural Gas	12
Phosphates	50
Platinum	40
Uranium	30
Hydroelectric power supply	40
Forest	17

Source: www.africawecare.org

The prevalence of these natural resources in the continent is what the foreign powers are seeing as tremendous money making potential and it is driving their ambition for Africa's resources. Thus, different foreign powers are using various strategies to have access to this range of resources. That explains Africa's attractiveness to foreign powers.

The renewed growing interest for African resources by foreign powers has partly whetted conflict particularly terrorist, sectarianism and extremist activities such as creating fear, killing, civil wars, armed conflict, ethnic conflict etc. in Africa. Since September 11th, terrorism, sectarianism and extremism have received a credible attention in Africa and in other parts of the world with the United States, taking the lead to fight this vice. The United States raises several issues such as the need to protect Americans and American interests, and fighting against terrorism in a wider perspective to justify the fight against terrorism.

In order to explore critically foreign powers' ambition for Africa's resources and its link with conflict such as terrorism, extremism and sectarianism in Africa, it is essential to restrict the discussion by defining key concepts i.e. foreign ambition, conflict, terrorism, extremism and sectarianism. There is no single universally accepted definition of terrorism. According to UN report (2004) terrorism is defined as any act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatant with the purpose of intimidating the population or compelling a government or international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act. In that regard, terrorism seeks to hurt a few people, create fear in the minds of the audience and to scare a lot of people in order to make a point. This is done in a well-organized network of the terrorists. In fact, the terrorist network has posed a wider threat not only to Africa but also to other parts of the world.For natural resources, this adopts OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) definition. It refers to raw materials that occur in nature and can be utilized for production processes and consumption (http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1740).While, sectarianism on the other hand refers to intolerance between/among members of the same group on account of differences in religious values or principles, for instance Muslim subscribing to Islam split into Sunni and Shia because of slight differences with beliefs or practices. Finally, extremism refers to beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. In this paper, all these concepts are used interchangeably to mean conflict.

This paper is divided into two sections; the first section provides insights into the high ambitions of foreign powers for African resources. While section two examines the linkage between foreign powers' interest in African resources and conflict with focus on terrorism, sectarianism and extremism as a major threat not only to Africa, but also to world peace today. This conflict is seen in the socio-economic and political confusion and frustration context ignited by the actions of both foreign powers and Africans.The objective of this paper is to examine reasons behind foreign ambitions for resources in Africa and to explore the linkage between foreign powers' ambitions for Africa's resources and conflict

Theoretical Framework for Analysis

Theories are very important in the explanation, prediction, description, and analysis of political events (Baylis and Owens, 2008). The theoretical framework therefore sheds light that Africa's rich resources attract foreign states to exploit them leaving these African rich resource countries in poverty, unemployment and generally in an underdevelopment situation which are among the major causes of conflict in Africa.This paper taps its explanations from the Realist School of Thought and Neo-colonialism Theory.One of the theoretical arguments raised by the Realist school of thought is that abundance of natural resources in a state creates competition over these resources not only internally but also externally. According to Dunne and Schmidt (2008) the central idea in this school of thought or rather realist theory is that it considers states as the dominant actors in the international system,which is characterised by anarchy and chauvinism.Also, there is no central international body or system that can govern state behaviours. In that regard, they further point that in a situation of absence of central government to regulate states' behaviour, defending national interests such as security becomes the main concern of the states.

Neo-colonialism theory was conceptualised way back in 1956 by Jean Paul Sartre.It gained momentum in the 1960s as decolonisation movement swept across the globe. Neo-colonialism is the survival of the colonial system in developing countries in spite of formal recognition of the independence of these countries. Kwame Nkrumah cited in Fischer (2012) defined the neo-colonialism that developing independent states have as characterised by the phenomenon of having all the outward trappings of international sovereignty where their economic system and political policies are directed from outside. The theory of neo-colonialism discourse is that former colonial powers such as Britain, France, Germany, and new emerging powers such as the United States (US) and China as well as International

organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) among others have been labelled as key neo-colonialism actors (Nyikal 2005).

Arguably, neo-colonialism pursues similar mission colonialists had of exploiting its former colonies and keeping them dependent (Haag 2011, 10) with little attention to full transformation of these colonies. The theory further claims that neo-colonialism is more disastrous than colonialism because the neo-colonial powers do not legitimize the occupation of other countries but uses multifaceted means which demands economic, technological, cultural and military power domination in controlling and exploiting the dominated states. In this regard, the theory argues that this control is done in a non-transparent manner by keeping leaders and officials who serve the interest of neo-colonial power (Haag 2011).

The theory further stresses that neo-colonial powers determines trade relations which in most cases economic agreements favour neo-colonial powers. For instance, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation have often used tactical neo-colonial control to encourage African countries to implement Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Neo-colonising countries, finance government programmes and support political processes.This is done in accordance with their national interests. The neo-political control is also related to the cultural control. This is done according to Sappor (2009) through education and provision of scholarships to promote their values such as culture, language and religion.

Methodology

Presence of foreign powers in Africa involves complex issues of economic, social and political issues. This paper uses secondary research method of data collection and analysis. It relies on collection and extensive review of relevant documents on foreign powers' ambition for African resources. The data explored includes: reports on foreign powers' relations with Africa, books, journals and other related published and unpublished materials on the topic. There are many reasons why foreign powers have interest in the African continent includingeconomic, strategic and security and power. But the arguments in this paper focus on an economic issues specifically drawing insight into foreign powers' desire for Africa's resources and its linkage with conflict i.e. terrorism, extremism and sectarianism in Africa. However, this paper suffers from some limitations. Most importantly, the paper heavily relied

on secondary data. However, given the fact that African countries have similar characteristics the arguments raised in this paper may not be dismissed entirely.

Issues Underpinning Foreign Powers' Interest for African Resources

The inroad of foreign powers into Africa is driven by the need for resources to address their own development challenges brought by dramatic change that has taken place in the global economy (Arezki, et.al (2011).This suggests that foreign powers' ambitions for African resources are directly linked to the promotion and protection of their national interest. This strikingly shows that behind every country's relations with other states there are always reasons of self-interest. Lahiri cited in Gupter (1999) argues that relations of states carry specific interests or motives. The interest of foreign powers in African resources centres on economic, strategic and security and political power issues.This paper focuses basically on economic dimension. In the course of writing this paper, the author carried out thorough extensive literature review on the topic.

First, the economic challenges in United States, Europe and other parts outside Africa has been whetting foreign powers interest for African resources. Generally speaking, foreign powers ambition for Africa's resources has been substantially increasing, since colonial period. In the 1800s, several major events took place in Europe, which motivated Europeans to embark on adventure mission in the interior of Africa. One of these events was the industrial revolution. This ushered in new technology which led to development of modern industries with new working technology. These industries required raw materials, such as coal, iron ore, gold, silver, tin, and copper among others. Interestingly, these raw materials could be easily got from Africa. In that regard, Europeans saw it as an important opportunity for them to gain influence and control on these huge treasures.

In line with the above, neo-colonisation is perhaps the most important lure of foreign powers to secure Africa's resources. In that regard, Africa is being split into many areas of foreign powers influence to exploit Africa's rich resources. For instance, China has extended its influence over the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia for copper and cobalt, to South Africa for resources such as iron ore and platinum, and to Gabon, Cameroon and Congo-Brazzaville for timber. For oil, it has been in friendly talks with Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, and Equatorial Guinea to exert its influence in the extraction of their resources.

Related to above, the data obtained from UNEP (2009) report indicates that the desire to access strategic resources like non-fuel minerals has for a long time been a centre of attractiveness to foreign powers in Africa. African continent has many resource rich countries which stand as chief producer of minerals such as gold, copper, diamond and iron ore among others. Africa's richness in minerals has credibly energised foreign powers ambition for these resources and made Africa a remarkable resilient supplier. This can arguably be concluded that the existence of strategic resources has driven foreign powers not to only Africa but to every part of the world with these resources.

Many foreign powers such as China have taken the opportunity to exploit Africa's natural resources through giving more concessions. In fact, one other reason foreign powers have consistently renewed their interest in Africa's resources, is their increasing commercial interest competition for Africa's rich resources to boost their economy. This has made African continent a search centre for resource security for foreign powers from European countries and many other countries outside Africa. It can be added that the interest of one foreign power to dominate a particular resource sector is translated by other foreign powers as a threat to its interest and relationship with its "development partner" states. Also evidence from the literature consulted reveals that foreign powers such as China have had their demand and consumption of resources like oil doubling (Alden and Alves, 2009). These views are in line with Tull (2008) discovery in his work that Europe has renewed its interest in Africa as a result of China's increasing relations with many African countries. He stresses that China's approach of providing loans in return for concession and mining contract has made it to gain more popularity and influence to exploit African natural resources for example in 2009 alone 86% accounted for exports of resources such oil, gas and minerals to China (Ibid.) Tiffen (2014) echoes the same voice in his work specifically that "Chinese government-owned companies are granted rights to huge tracts of land for timber or exclusive access to copper and iron ore mines". Tull (2008) concludes that this has threatened and undermined Europeans and other foreign countries' ambition for African resources. It is believed that China's investment in African natural resources is a major threat to western interests and concerns in Africa (Dannreuther, 2012).

In addition, foreign powers have continuously expressed interest in supporting Africa's security matters to enable them protect their interest. This argument is confirmed by Banks et.al. (2013) study finding which revealed that countries such as United States, consider the

security in African countries in which its interests reside as having an impact on global security. This clearly demonstrated in the current campaign to fight against terrorism and extremism worldwide. The argument raised here is that African countries that are incapable of maintaining sufficient control over their territories or of fulfilling the basic needs of their people can build fertile ground for terrorist networks. In that regard, foreign powers like United States allure to "war on terrorism, war against corruption and struggle for good governance" (Xu, 2008).

Another tactical explanation for foreign powers drive for Africa's resources such as oil is to gain more influence and lessen their dependence on the supply from Middle East. A country like United States had in its foreign policy marginal focus on Africa but at the beginning of the millennium, America has developed high interest in Africa's rich resources (Xu, 2008). It is quite clear that like other countries such as China, India and those from Europe, United States is striving to dominate African oil resource. This reflects the earlier colonial scramble for Africa which took place in the 19th and 20th century in which foreign powers strategically shared Africa among themselves. Watts (2006) points out that United States does not only have strategic interest in cheap and reliable oil in Africa but also fighting potential other foreign powers such as China and South Korea so that they do not effectively compete for the oil in Africa

Linking Foreign Powers' Ambition for African Resources with Terrorism, Sectarianism and Extremism
After the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers in the United States terrorism extremism and sectarianism gained centre stage in security and academic circles. However, whether foreign powers ambitious interest in African resources has a linkage with the growing conflict in Africa particularly terrorism, sectarianism and extremism in Africa are poorly understood. This part of the paper examines how foreign powers ambition for Africa's resources breeds conflict particularly terrorism, extremism and sectarianism in Africa.

Conflict in Africa has been ignited by foreign powers' high appetite for Africa's rich resources. Evidence from data obtained from SIPRI (2016) (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) report, shows that foreign powers ambition for Africa's resources is part of a nerve centre which fuels conflict not only in Africa but also in many other countries like Mexico, Azerbaijan and those in the Middle East. For example, the report stresses that the flow of arms from United States and Europe to Africa and other parts like Asia and Middle

East increased in the period 2006-2015 (SIPRI, 2016). The report specifically points out that Algeria and Morocco arms imports from United States increased by 19 per cent. This suggests that despite the low prices Africa's resource fetch from foreign powers, the delivery of arms to Africa seem to be continuous. It can be argued therefore, that foreign powers such as United States remain the largest supplier of arms not only to Africa but also worldwide. This can pre-empt one to say that the continuous flow of arms to Africa is encourages terrorist activities.

UNEP (2009) report states that "natural resources issues can play an important role in starting conflict". Foreign powers investment in industries to answer foreign powers demands for Africa's resources in some way has generated conflict in Africa and remains a potential catalyst. Africa Economic Analysis report (2008) acknowledges that "environmental and social impact created by extractive industries has been a key factor in conflicts in Sudan, Nigeria Sierra Leone, the DRC, and Liberia. This clearly confirms findings that natural resources are associated with lower levels of democracy and poor governance which breeds conflict such as terrorism, sectarianism and extremism (Blattman and Miguel 2010).

Furthermore, protection of foreign powers economic companies while depriving African citizens' economic opportunities in Africa was also mentioned by respondents contacted in the process of this study as one of the issues that fuel conflict in Africa. Many foreign powers such as China have taken the opportunity to exploit Africa's natural resources through giving more concessions. This consequently, has encouraged different countries especially resource rich countries to provide better packages such as free land or land lease agreements designed to lure foreign investors in their countries while satisfying elite interest. This has deprived many poor African citizens of their future welfare. This is because land owned by these poor Africans is given to foreign companies without proper compensations. This has greatly contributed to poverty and economic inequality.This confirms the view that United States in its effort to protect economic companies such as ExxonMobil and Chevron in Equatorial Guinea, hailed President Teodoro Obiang Nguema as a "good friend" despite the fact that the government of President Nguema was accused of terrorist activities such as torture as well as electoral fraud, and corruption (Heller, 2006).

Perhaps in connection with the above, continuous exploitation of Africa's resources by foreign powers companies has played a crucial role in the development of injustice that has

resulted into the emergence of terrorist, extremist and sectarianism rebel groups in Africa. For instance, a conflict in Nigeria in the 1990s rose between foreign companies and minority ethnic groups the Ogoni and Ijaw who felt that their resources were being exploited by foreign extractive industries protected by the government to maintain its largest Oil export(Mailey, 2015).Similarly, Angolan government used money from oil production to pay for long running civil war that started shortly after the country gained independence from Portugal.

It is observed that in 2013 alone Nigeria's export from oil was 94% of its total exports however, revenue from extractive resources is squandered creating imbalance between the existence of resources and access to them by Nigerian citizens because government expenditure on the provision of services does not correspond with the money obtained from oil revenue. Africa's resource rich governments in collaboration with foreign powers companies in their process of exploiting resources in African countries like Nigeria have failed to improve welfare of the citizens. Also, corruption among government officials managing natural resources sector such as Oil is widespread (Ibid). This has created inequitable distribution of resources wealth creating grievances in different counties in Africa; the emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria, civil war in Sudan is partly intimately linked to inequitable distribution resources wealth (Suazo, 2014). It can be concluded with little fear that imbalance in the distribution of revenue got from resources facilitates the creation of conflict. Many citizens feel cheated and are left with no option but to engage in conflict to pursue their interest.

Ambition of foreign powers for African natural resources is credibly linked to conflict in Africa. It can be observed that Africa's resource rich countries are characterised by conflict such as terrorist activities which are supported by proceeds obtained from the sale of natural resources (Mailey, 2015). The data obtained from available records revealed that foreign demand for Africa's resources such as Ivory has encouraged armed groups such as Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under the leadership of Joseph Konyto who kill elephants in the Garamba for cash to buy ammunition and for meat(Christy, 2015). It is observed that most of the ivory is exported to foreign countries like China (Ibid). This clearly shows that some militia and terrorist groups in Africa in order to sustain themselves use proceeds from the sale of looted natural resources. For instance, LRA has sustained its terrorists activities partly

from money obtained from poaching elephants and using ivory. In addition, insurgency in Liberia and Sierra Leone was majorly fuelled by proceeds from sale of diamonds (Ibid).

Natural resource exploitation and its associated stress are potential drivers of conflict. The other underlying concern raised by the respondents was the resource inspired environmental degradation caused by the foreign companies' natural resource extraction. This has created grievances that have spurred conflict in Africa. They emphasised that natural resource depletion cause environmental terrorism which in turn creates poverty giving rising to conditions which support terrorism activities. This was consistent with the data obtained from UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG(2015) report which states that "illegal natural resource exploitation particularly of gold, charcoal and timber" by foreign powers (transnational organized criminal networks) in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), fuelled a cycle of conflict in this country.

Interesting to know also is that foreign powers ambition for Africa's natural resources has nurtured authoritarian government in Africa. Interaction with the respondents suggested that natural resource rich countries in Africa are painted with autocratic and dictatorial practices which have courted many especially the youth in terrorist activities. This is in agreement with Mailey's (2015) argument that natural resource revenue of Africa's resource rich countries is used to fund government security agencies which leaders utilise for self-enrichment and maintain themselves in power without popular mandate of the people and potential threat as well as for patronage.

Table 2: Countries where Conflicts have been fuelled by Natural Resources in Africa

Country	Year	Natural Resource
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	1996-2008	Timber, Gold, Copper, diamond etc.
Sudan	1983-2005	Oil
Angola	1975-2002	Diamond, Oil
Ivory Coast	2002-2007	Diamond, cocoa, cotton
Nigeria		Oil
Liberia	1989-2003	Timber, diamond, gold, iron etc.
Sierra Leone	1991-2000	Diamond, coffee etc.

Source:SIPRI (2016)

Way forward to Eliminate Terrorism, Extremism and Sectarianism

There is need to promote and protect human rights, have vibrant civil society, and independent media operation. Muslim World League in collaboration with African Union and other intergovernmental organisations as well as Non-Governmental Organisations need to amplify and support voices calling for respect for human rights, rule of law, accountability and transitional justice mechanisms, and independent media. In addition, effort must be made to empower vulnerable groups such as the youth, women and generally marginalized people. Among its objectives, the African Union will need to establish a common defence and security policy focusing on peaceful conflicts resolution; respect and adherence to democratic principles, respect of human rights, the rule of law and good governance; and promote respect for human dignity, condemn acts of terrorism, extremism and sectarianism activities.

There is also a need to promote accountable, transparent, and responsive governance with limited influence from foreign powers. African states with the support of foreign powers partners need to incorporate responsive governance practices such as transparency, and accountability to promote sound governance.

African states also need to ensure a sustained focus on the credible democratic Processes that reflect the values of African people. African states need to take a strong and consistent stand against actions of foreign powers that undermine African democratic institutions. Consider adherence to the principle of civilian control of the army and other security agencies and discouraging groups that threaten governments elected by the people.

African states further need to promote Pan-Africanism and strong democratic culture. Africa needs to radicalise African Union's African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance and ensure commitment to the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

Finally, there is a greater need to strengthen and promote regional integration to create larger markets, improve economies of scale, and reduce transaction costs for local, regional, and global trade organisations such as ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, IGAD etc. in partnership with foreign powers, should create investment Initiatives to create employment opportunities, reduce the barriers to trade and increase investment flows across the continent. This should

target ensuring transparency; improvement of infrastructure to strengthen regional and continental trade and access to global markets.

Conclusion

By and large, foreign powers ambitions for Africa's natural resources and its linkage with conflict has a long history. Exploitation of African natural resources has been a huge substantial activity of foreign powers. For several decades, foreign powers have been in search of lucrative resource opportunities to answer the dramatic change in the global economy. An analysis of foreign powers ambitions for Africa's resources is depicted by many reasons and it clearly shows there is a linkage between foreign powers ambitions for Africa's natural resources and conflict in Africa.From economic sphere it is clear from the arguments raised above that exploitation of Africa's rich resources are more susceptible to foreign powers influence compared to other spheres. It is therefore important for Africa to maintain strong relations with foreign powers to seek advantages of the economic collaboration such as job creation, technology transfer, and improved infrastructure development. Nonetheless there is no doubt that Africa can benefit from increased revenues obtained from resource extraction if corruption or rather mismanagement of this revenue is abolishd.Therefore, it can generally be concluded that foreign powers' urge for Africa's resources can be considered neo-colonial because of extensive range of neo-colonial practices that they use to have influence to control socio-economic, political, military or cultural spheres within Africa.

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