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L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
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إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**'Unscrambling' the Struggle for Nigeria's Oil:
What Developmental Options for an Emerging
'African Power' in the 21st Century?**

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the various forces, interests and consequences of the increased struggle for the oil resources of Nigeria's Niger Delta, in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. Of note are the two levels of the struggle, between and within Nigeria's governing elites and youth militias seeking control of a larger share of the 'oil pie', and the transnational elite, principally but not exclusively organized through Western Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs), and State Oil Corporations (SOCs) from Asia: China, India and Russia. Given the intensified competition over the world's finite but highly-prized hydro-carbon resources, African oil producers potentially stand to gain a lot from increased demand from energy-hungry established and emerging powers, and higher oil prices, which in turn will have far-reaching developmental implications for oil-endowed Nigeria. Given the background of over two decades of largely failed neo-liberal economic reforms, and the opportunities represented by the entry of Chinese, Indian and Russian oil companies into the Nigerian oil scene, this paper explores the possible alternative developmental options for this emerging African giant in the 21st century.