



CODESRIA

13

عموم

Assemblée générale
General Assembly
Assembleia Geral
الجمع العام الثالث عشر

L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI
إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**Hegemonic Competition and Civil Society Response
in the Gulf of Guinea in the 21st Century**

Henry Kam Kah
University of Buea

5 - 9 / 12 / 2011

Rabat Maroc / Morocco

This paper examines the critical engagement of China, the US, France and Britain in the identification and exploitation of natural and human resources in the strategically located Gulf of Guinea in Africa. The engagement is informed by global competition for control of strategic regions, depleting resources, promotion of democratic virtues, fight against drug and child trafficking, piracy and the debilitating effects of climate change. This critical engagement of these countries for multifarious reasons has produced spheres of hegemonic influence and neocolonial clashes of various kinds. On the sidelines has emerged competing strategies for control which are continuously contested and competed for especially by China and the US to the disadvantage of earlier arrivals like Britain and France. The spheres of influence have remained fluid and explains the war of words and other unorthodox practices initiated by these powers and supported by some African surrogates. This has unleashed the mobilisation of civil society in some areas to checkmate the excesses of these countries. The pace and systematic mobilisation of civil society organisations is likely going to produce results that are meant to renegotiate the terms of engagements of China, the US, Britain and France to benefit the masses who are most affected by the present trend of events. The hegemonic competition notwithstanding, it is becoming clear that the civil society is doing a lot to checkmate the excesses of these countries and give back power to the people to have greater control of their destinies than is the case now in the Gulf of Guinea and other strategic regions of the continent like the Horn of Africa.