

**BEYOND THE PLATITUDE OF REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION, AND
RECONCILIATION IN NIGERIA: REVOLUTIONARY PRESSURES
IN THE NIGER DELTA**

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ABSTRACT

By the end of the civil war in Nigeria, the Federal government proclaimed the policy of Rehabilitation Reconstruction and Reconciliation intended to reinvent the Nigeria Federalism. But the avalanche of agitations by ethnic nationalities all over the country, rather indicate that much of the taunted policy was just declarative. In the circumstance, this paper examines the basis of the agitations in the Niger Delta against the essence of the 3Rs vis-à-vis the Nigerian Federalism. The paper posits that the agitations in the Niger Delta have gone beyond the platitude of reconciliation. That the clamor for the right to self determination is embedded in the history and political culture of the Niger Delta and cannot be effectively suppressed by the state; that the structure of the Nigerian Federalism does not guarantee the socio-cultural heritage of the Niger Delta ethnic nationalities, hence the intermittent agitations. That given the revolutionary potency of these agitations, the Nigerian Federalism shall yield in strain except if the state is deliberately restructured and development is equitably democratized.

Keywords: Rehabilitation, reconstruction, reconciliation, revolutionary pressures, Niger-Delta

INTRODUCTION

The 30 months Nigerian civil war was preceded by a configuration of pre-independence and post independence constitutional, political, economic, social, cultural, military, and personality crises

within the polity. These crises have been identified by scholars and chroniclers as constituting the remote and immediate causes of the Nigerian civil war.

On 6th July 1967, the Federal Government launched what it described as Police action intended to contain the insurgents of the declared independent state of Biafra in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. The campaign was expected to last for a few weeks or a few months, in not more than perhaps how the hitherto declared Niger Delta Republic was subdued by the Federal troops. But the swift operations with which Biafra over-ran the Midwest State and advanced into Nigeria's Western Region posed a threat even to the seat of Federal Government in Lagos. This development induced the federal government's declaration of total war (Uwechue, 1971). Expectedly, the eastern region, with the Biafran insurgents, was subdued in January, 1970.

By the end of the war, the Federal Government declared "no victor, no vanquished but victory for common sense and the unity of Nigeria". The federal government thus declared a policy of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Reconciliation, but the rift within the military lingered on. This resulted in a *coup detat* and overthrow of the Military Government in 1975. In 1976, there was another fatal *coup*, though contained about belatedly. The elected civil government instituted in 1979 was ousted by the military in 1983. This signaled a span of military dictatorship characterized with alleged coup plots, failed coups, agitations by ethnic nationalities, violent suppression of protests, religious, conflicts, and general tension in the polity.

The enthronement of democratic government in 1999 has rather warranted further agitations by various ethnic nationalities over resources control and alleged marginalization. These have metamorphosed into the emergence of ethnic militias all over Nigeria, supposedly fronting for the interests of the various ethnic nationalities in the crave for dominance within the state apparatus.

The activities of these militias and militant groups – the Arewa People's Congress (APC), Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) Talibans, Bakassi Boys, the Egbesu boys, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), etc. have serious threat implications to national security even as they reflect state decay. It, thus, behooves to ask if the agitations of these militias are in any way different from the essence of the fundamental bases of the civil war. If not, what has the state been doing not to address these issues even after the war in the spirit of reconciliation? Besides, are the operations of

these militias and the state response essentially different from the Police action and or total war ante that was the Civil War?

In the Niger Delta, agitations against suzerainty and violent confrontation with state establishments by the ethnic nationalities in the area has been traced back to about the 15th century and the slave trade era. It is instructive to note that the application of force and state powers to suppress these intermittent agitations has not assuaged the peoples sense of autonomy and preparedness to protect and, or fight for their perceived sovereignty, over the years.

It could be rightly observed that the Nigerian civil war marked a watershed in the barrage of discontentment among the ethnic nationalities constituted to make the present day Nigerian State. This is more so, as the issues for which the war was fought were very fundamental to the corporate integrity of the State and the good life of the peoples of the country. It would not have been out of place, therefore, to expect that the professed reconciliation by the end of the war would have marked the termination or at least effective moderation of the centrifugal forces within the polity, in the spirit of sincere and lasting reconciliation as declared by the post war government.

The agitations in the Niger Delta have a graphic historical and cultural antecedent. The causes for the agitations have not essentially changed over the centuries. The state response methods have not also changed in character. The vision, tactics, and resilience of the Niger Delta peoples have not also fundamentally changed. Essentially, therefore, the internecine violence in the Niger Delta has out lived the too often declared policy of reconciliation and unity of Nigeria.

In consideration of these realities, this paper positions that the Nigerian federalism shall yield in strain and pieces under the voltage force of the persistent revolutionary pressures in the Niger Delta.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

The ideas of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation have essential common features. In general parlance, Reconstruction connotes the process of changing or improving the condition of something or the way it works, the process of putting something into the state it was before, the activity of building again something that has been damaged or destroyed. Rehabilitation connotes the process of helping somebody to have a normal, useful life again after they have been deprived for a long time; to begin to consider that somebody is good or acceptable, after a long period during which

they were considered bad or unacceptable; to return a building to its previous good condition; and Reconciliation represents an end to a disagreement and the start of a good relationship again, the process of making it possible for two ideas, facts, etc. to exist together without being opposed to each other.

In the context of this work these three concepts and the phenomena they describe could subsume conveniently in the essence of reconciliation in the Nigerian State.

Dokun Oyeshola (2005:197) presents that reconciliation as a conflict handling mechanism entails the following core elements namely:

1. Honest acknowledgement of human/injury each party has inflicted on the other.
2. Sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done
3. Readiness to apologize for one's role in inflicting the injury.
4. Readiness of the conflicting parties to 'let go' of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury.
5. Commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury.
6. Sincere effort to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible.
7. Entering into a new mutually enriching relationship.

The consequence of the above processes leading to a new relationship is referred to as reconciliation and one of its by products is the mending of deep emotional wounds generated by the conflict.

Scholars have over the years documented post-war Nigeria economic development, to dominantly involve infrastructural reconstruction and construction of oil related industrial structures (Abiola, 1984; Amuwa, Agbaje, Suberu & Herault, 2004; Okaba, 2005; Obiezuofu-Ezeigbo, 2007; Uwechue, 1971).

There is evidence that whereas government was overwhelmed in the development of the oil and allied industries, no effort was genuinely directed at reconciling the fundamental contending issues for which the civil war was fought. All further agitations have reflected a repetition of the fundamental differences. This accounts in part for the recurrent violent agitations in the Niger Delta.

State Decay

The state is generally presented as a people organized for law and development in a given territory. It is to that extent clear that the State requires the elements of the people, law and order, territory, development encapsulated in sovereignty to operate and be so considered. Whereas this paper does not intend to go into the theoretical debate on the essence of the State, we are disposed to acknowledge that the State serves utilitarian purposes and not an end in itself. The primary purpose of the State is to ensure a secured people for development.

Considering the territorial definition of the State in relation to the nation, Mill argued that it is in general a necessary consideration of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities. But Lord Acton held that the combination of different nations in one state is as necessary a condition of civilized life as the combination of individuals to form society (Appadorai, 2004: 14–17).

State decay connotes the lack or loss of capacity of the State to establish, execute and sustain its fundamental inherent and constitutional responsibilities of ensuring a secured people and territory for sustainable development within a regulated society. Capacity is used to mean the outputs of the State and the extent to which the State can affect the rest of society and economy. It is thus related with governmental performances, particularly the magnitude, scope and scale of political and governmental performances and the conditions that affect such performance (Pam Sha, 2005). Coleman as cited in Pam Sha (2005) argues that the state should possess integrative, responsive, adaptive and innovative capacity. He posits that “it is a capacity not only to overcome the divisions and manage the tedious created by increased differentiations but to respond to or contain the participatory and distributive demand generated by the imperatives of equality...” (Ikonne, William, & Nwagbara, 2005).

Examining the “crisis of the state as a cause of war and an obstacle to development”, Debiel and Klein (2002) observe that the structure of the state, adopted by Europe, exists at best only in formal terms in a large number of crisis regions. In many cases, power cliques have appropriated the state machinery, finance themselves mainly from the revenues that can be creamed off from the value added of the agricultural sector, the earnings of the export sector, and trading in valuable raw materials or even drugs. They also survive through the external support provided by aids donors or through the external support provided by aids donors or through NGOs performing state functions. In some cases, there is even evidence that power elites behave 'rationally' in not combating poverty or

encouraging development in their countries otherwise they would jeopardize the continuing influx of external assistance.

Khadiagala (1995:35) identifies that in crisis countries, the state proves, to a certain extent to be strong and weak at the same time and can be described in terms of the “Lame Leviathan” paradox. This means that on the one hand, it is quite able to keep social relations under control temporarily and appropriate resources in selected areas. On the other hand however, it is ineffective and distended in the performance of its welfare and security functions and thus not in a position to implement coherent policy concepts beyond certain urban centers or to regulate, social relations in comprehensive manner (Migdal, 1988:8). Indispensable public functions, as maintaining social peace and the rule of law, providing infrastructure and services for basic needs, ensuring a minimum level of management in agriculture and industrial production and distribution, and establishing access to affordable food stuffs, and basic goods are not fulfilled.

The hardly consolidated state in crisis countries is, as a rule characterized by high degree of centralization and a lack of legally guaranteed autonomy at the local level. The political class is recruited extensively from urban elites and business people who then secure access to the value added via state machinery. In some cases, so-called “strongmen” establish themselves as a parallel structure at local level, with the urban state class unable to take effective action against them (Migdal, 1988: 136-7).

The widespread clientelistic method of safeguarding power in crisis states has led scholars to speak of the “neo-patrimonial state”. Patrimonial rule can be understood in this context as relating to the social and economic interrelations between the patron and the client, which are based on the reciprocity of favor and loyalty between persons equipped with unequal resources and which can adopt extremely differing forms (for instance, nepotism, clanism, and regionalism).

New patrimonial rule adopts this fundamental principles embedded in traditional societies to the modern states, which should be characterized by bureaucratic – rational procedures. While the classic patron is himself in possession of natural resources, especially land, the modern patron operates as a mixture of “broker and political entrepreneur”, distinguishing himself more through access to the disposal of public resources. The political entrepreneur appropriates resources through occupying public offices. These he uses for purpose of self enrichment and to satisfy his respective clientele (Debiel and Klein, 2002:5).

Implicit from the foregoing are observable characteristics of state failure. These include inability to secure the people and the state, inability to provide for the people's welfare, inability to moderate conflicts emerging from societal differentiations, breakdown of law and order, corruption and conversion of public funds for private use, inability to regulate social relations in a comprehensive manner to cover the local level, a high degree of centralization and lack of legally guaranteed autonomy at the local level, wide spread clientelistic method of safeguarding power, Neo patrimonial rules, inequitable distribution of resources, wide range of violence, agitations and crisis, application of the violence formula (force) by government in attempt to intimidate or contain uprisings, wide spread nepotism, failure of public and governmental institutions, primitive accumulation by political elites, dependence on external support, susceptibility to external manipulations and incapacity to frame up and execute the inherent responsibilities expected of a nation state, etc.

Debiel (2002) posits that state failure is the pivotal issue for explaining intra-state conflicts, the vulnerability of crisis countries to external destabilization and continued obstacles to development. Briggs (2004), examining the dilemma of ethnic militias in Nigeria case study of the "Egbesu" group, posits that the sudden growth of ethnic militias in Nigeria is borne out of cumulative frustrations which metamorphosed into anger and then aggression. He enthused that the analysis of frustration-aggression theory is a perfect description of the actions of ethnic militias in Nigeria, including those in the Niger Delta. The militias see the nation state of Nigeria as an artificial conglomeration that would not be able or is disinterested in meeting their demands, therefore, resorting to violence and other negative methods became a past time. On some occasions government has also used violent methods to address the demands of ethnic militias. These show of strength by government was not so effective in containing ethnic militias rather it gives credence to them, he opined.

Ikelegbe (2006) critically examined youth's involvement in criminal violence and armed rebellion in the Niger Delta. Reviewing extant positions of other scholars which ascribed the phenomena to a disposing youth culture that is rooted in environmental stress, frustrated youths response to state decay, lumpen youths and state weakness and collapse, Ikelegbe advanced that beyond a certain threshold, a frustrated group would challenge even a strong state. He enthused that weak and collapsing state characterized by declining public authorities and legitimacy, and declining control over agencies of coercion tend to be more susceptible to violent challenges.

REVOLUTIONARY PRESSURES AND THE CAUSAL BASIS OF WARS

In general usage a revolution may connote an attempt by a group to effect a drastic change in society usually by violent actions. The concept of revolutionary pressure in the context of the situation in the Niger Delta describes the systematic reign of violence in the area, occasioned by organized agitations by the people against state establishments focused at instituting self autonomy or at worst resenting perceived suzerainty. Available records show that such agitations and the consequent cataclysm in the area had been regular features in the history and political culture of the area, since the era of slave trade.

In a critical examination of the causes of wars, Ziegler identified and critiqued the human nature factor as postulated by Konrad Lorenz, “trouble makers” power groups, merchants of death, wicked states as expounded by Nye and nationalism as presented by Mazzini. The scholar however, cautioned that causation is a multifactor phenomenon (Ziegler, 1987: 110–123). But Stoessinger, in his case studies on why nations go to war, observes that he was less interested in the role of abstract forces, such as nationalism, militarism, or alliance systems or even economic factors per se as being vital in precipitating wars. He posits that the case materials reveal that perhaps the most important single precipitating factor in the outbreak of war is misperception. Such distortion may manifest itself in four different ways: in a leader's image of himself, a leader's view of his adversary's character; a leader's view of his adversary's intentions toward himself; and finally a leader's view of his adversary's abilities and power.

He enthused in conclusion that:

thus on the eve of every war, at least one nation misperceives another's power. In that sense the beginning of each war is a misperception or an accident. The war itself then slowly and in agony, teaches the lessons of reality. Peace is made when reality has won. The outbreak of war and the coming to peace are separated by a road that leads from misperception to reality. The most tragic aspect of this truth is that war itself has remained the best teacher of reality and thus has been the most effective cure of war. Our case material suggests that war lovers will not stop unless they are stopped. (Stoessinger, 2001:260).

This may be perhaps by reality of war with a more powerful adversary. Stoessinger's presentation of the role of leaders' perceptions and dispositions in precipitating war is instructive and valid but the

emphasis on the essence of war as the best cure for war is questionable. Alfred Noble was said to have glorified the dynamite he manufactured in 1892 as capable of ending wars, because by the time two belligerent armies at enmity, by application of the dynamite utterly destroy themselves, even surviving armies would not go to war again for fear of the predictable (Ziegler, 1987). This is an exaltation of the “violence formula”. But not even the bombardment of Horoshima in World War II has ended wars. Rather, the scholar’s position would imply war begets war even as violence begets violence.

CAUSES OF THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

Authors (Nwankwo, 2002; Okaba, 2005, Uwechue, 1971, Amuwo *et al.*, 2004; Chinda, 2004; Maier, 2000; Abiola, 1984; Obiezuofu-Ezeigbo, 2007; Lowe, 1997) have identified remote and immediate causes of the Nigerian Civil War. These are summarized to include but not restricted to: The remote causes were the Kano Riot of 1953, the national census controversy of 1962, the general election crisis of 1964, the Western Region election of 1965; free expression of tribal sentiments in political campaigns; the tendency to suppress opposition in politics, domination of the Northern Nigeria in their own regime by the southerners, introduction of the Northern oligarchy into the administration of Nigeria; desire for each regional party to control the center; the introduction of Decree 34 by the Ironsi’s government who intended to make Nigeria a Unitary State.

The immediate causes of the war include:

1. The 1966 *coup* which claimed the lives of politicians especially from the Northern and Western Regions, and the belief by the Northerners that the 15th January *coup* was an Igbo *coup*, and the Ironsi’s refusal to try the *coup* plotters.
2. The second military coup of 29th July 1966 in which Ironsi and several Igbo officers and men were killed. The Igbos belief that the coup was a Northern *coup* and a retaliation of the first *coup*.
3. The refusal of Ojukwu to recognize Gowon as the new Head of the Military Government. According to Ojukwu, Gowon was not the right person to head the Army, because he was a junior officer and he cannot take orders from him.
4. The pogrom perpetrated against the Southerners especially Igbos by Northerners before and after the second military coup in which Ironsi was killed.
5. The inability of the new Federal Government under Gown to stop the killing of Igbos by Northerners and to guarantee the safety of lives and property of Igbos living in the Northern Region and Lagos.

6. The failure of, or rather, the Federal Government's refusal to affect the Aburi Accord, under Gowon.
7. Gowon's urge to keep the integrity of the country.
8. The determination of the Federal Government to crush the rebellion and deal with the insurgents the way the Niger Delta Volunteer force under Adaka Boro was subdued.
9. The discovery of oil in Oloibiri then in Eastern Nigeria and the expected wealth from oil in the country.

A synthesis of the remote and immediate causes of the civil war in Nigeria would only attest to the fact that the war was brought about essentially by state failure occasioned by the avariciousness, and misperceptions of the operators of government. Incidentally nothing seems to have changed in the character of the operators of the Nigerian state since independence. The same reasons of corruption, nepotism, tribalism, exclusion, marginalization, high handedness, dictatorial tendencies, fraud mal-administration, injustice, human rights abuses and the like vices are usually repeated to justify each change of government in the country but nothing has really changed for the better.

REVOLUTIONARY PRESSURES IN THE NIGER DELTA

The first recorded conflicts in the Niger Delta taking the form of confrontation with State establishment took place as a result of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade in 1472-1830, when European slave merchants destroyed different city states in the region, subdued the weaker ones and captured the able young men for sale as slaves. Some city states fought back and yet the tragic plunder of slaves and raw materials went on for 300years. When it was eventually abolished in 1830, the Europeans diverted their confrontational attitude to the oil palm trade that was initially controlled by the people of the region (Etekpe, 2007).

During the oil palm trade, the Niger Deltans further had cause to challenge the British government policy of using the Royal Niger Company to exploit the indigenes. This resulted in the conflicts that caused the deportation of king Dappa-Pepple of Bonny and king Jaja of Opobo to Fadandapo and Accra respectively. The British also sacked king Nana's Itshekiri Kingdom for obstructing their financial ventures and trade monopoly. Oba Ovonronmwen Nogbaisi who's Kingdom of Benin has expanded to some parts of Niger Delta, was also captured and banished to Calabar. The Benin invasion and massacre was embarked upon like the case cited above to open up the region for legitimate trade.

The Akassa War of 1895 between the British government and the Nembe City State was fought for similar reasons (Etekpe, 2007; Okaba, 2005).

Between 1880 and 1890 various conflicts again ensued when the British Merchants under the auspices of the Royal Niger Company forced the chiefs and kings of the Region to enter into treaties of friendship and protection. This was the situation that preceded the agitations of the people to the 1957/1958 London Constitutional conferences which resulted in the setting up of the Henry Willinks Minorities Commission of Enquiry 1958.

Historically, Adaka Boro and his Niger Delta Volunteer Force started what may be described as militia agitation or liberation struggle in post independent Nigeria, when he declared the Independence of the Niger Delta Republic in 1966 and led the twelve day revolution against the suzerainty of the Nigerian State. In his revolutionary speech Boro, said:

“Nigeria is not the natural creative of Almighty God rather it is the artificial making of the British colonial masters with the support of their Nigerian cohorts. Every permutation points to the fact that a particular region of the country is indeed all out to make itself the Lord and master over the rest. We have done everything within our limited legal powers, using the unpredictable democratic and constitutional factors to draw the attention of the establishment to the intention of some people from a particular region who are trying to make Nigeria uninhabitable for the rest of us. So far, all our cries have fallen on deaf ears, hence the inevitable and avoidable liberation crusade” (Chinda, 2004).

The Adaka Boro’s revolution according to Okoba is one clear manifestation of the frustration of the Niger Deltans and their abilities to resist coercive exploitations.

The military government by the use of superior arms and strategies arrested Boro, hurriedly tried him in manners reminiscent of earlier imperialist jungle Justice, found him guilty of treason and sentenced him to Death. The Boro led revolution was short-lived but not without creating a dramatic impact on the psyche of fellow Deltans.

In the Post Civil war era, the military had deliberately suppressed all agitations while the State was controlled by the hegemony alleged by Adaka Boro. But by the early 1990s the Movement for the

Survival of Ogoni People (MOSSOP) had launched the Ogoni Bill of Rights as articulated and led by Ken Saro Wiwa. The Bill was the struggle against developmental neglect by the state and multinationals and the demand for a positive increase in the allocation of the oil revenues, but the State responded to the Ogonis' demand for social justice by imposing a reign of force on Ogoni land rendering Ogoni in total siege with collateral damages and casualties (Okaba, 2005).

In the words of Okoba, by and large the 1995 hanging of the Ogoni-9 seems to have quickened the pulse of the revolutionary pressure for resource control and democratic inclusiveness in oil-bearing communities. The spirit of the late Ken Saro-Wiwa and his forebears in the vanguard of the revolution seem to be saying "sleep no more". Expatiating in the post-mortem effect of Saro-Wiwa's campaign, Oyerinde declares.

Ken impacted most profoundly and unforgettably on the history of the Delta, and the Nigerian formation. The unexampled examples of his movement building, mass mobilization as well as local and international networking have invested the Ogoni experience with the quality of a model not just for the people of the Delta but indeed for all people who can muster sufficient dignity to challenge marginalization and domination.... His vision, analytical and organizational acuteness, courage and commitment often sum up of the dynamics of social history (Okaba, 2005).

In 1998, the Izon Youth Council proclaimed the Kaiama Declaration, calling for self-determination and demanding an end to oil exploration activities until affected communities were consulted. The result was a war between the Nigerian State and the Ijaw Militias, which has lingered till now. The Niger Delta is now under siege with intermittent military battles between the state and the militias (Okaba, 2005).

The Odua People's Congress (OPC) is fundamentally focused at actualizing the Yoruba agenda of self-determination. They have been fighting both the Police and the public. The *Afenifere* and NADECO operations have also been directed at subverting the structural integrity of the State. The activities of the "Talibans", talakawas, "Yanbagas" and the Jihadists are no less confrontational to the Nigerian State reminiscent of the Kano Riots of 1953.

The resurgence of the Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and their operations have been evidently instructive. The recent activities of the re-emergent Niger Delta Volunteer Force led by Asari Dokubo in the spirit of Adaka Boro are vehement reiteration of

the demands of Adaka Boro. The withdrawal of the Niger Delta people from the National Conference of 2006 was rather a reminiscence of the Aburi discord. The state of insecurity and threats to national security in Nigeria is overwhelming (Nweze, 2004; Imobighe, 1990; Ekoko & Vogt 1990). These and the current rage in the Niger Delta in our opinion indicate that by all sane estimation, Nigeria is in a state of domestic cataclysm, a systematic but pervasive civil war threatening its corporate integrity. But Nigerians are used to it; it is socialized in the policy.

BEYOND THE PLATITUDE OF RECONCILIATION

The violent agitations and insecurity in the Niger Delta is escalating and assuming revolutionary fundamentalism as the decades roll by.

The resilience of the agitators has evidently defied the essence of the state apparatus of force and repression. The Niger Delta peoples are avid about their right to self determination and vocal on their aversion and resentment to any form of suzerainty. An analysis of the history of agitations and conflicts in the Niger Delta from pre-colonial era till date and the main factors of such conflicts affirms this assertion.

Besides, the political arrangements in the Niger Delta, uphold the universal right to self determination. This facilitates the ease with which city states of various size and power considerations have existed autonomously as sovereign kingdoms. And any attempts at annexing smaller kingdoms were /are vehemently resisted. In essence, therefore, the Niger Delta people(s) are historically, politically and socio-culturally inculcated with the values of self determination and the reasons to fight to secure the freedom from suzerainty.

That the application of the violence formula by the state apparatus has failed is obvious. The palliative policies and declarations by the state in the setting up of the Willink's Commission, the institutionalization of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) the creation of the Old River State, the institutionalization of the Oil Mineral producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) the operation of the derivation formula and other interventionist agencies and programs have failed to assuage the grievances of the Niger Deltans, as such policies are usually politicized not to address the cardinal agitations of the people.

An examination of the causes of the Nigerian civil war, the Ogoni Bill of Rights 1990, the Kaiama Declaration and the Operation Climate Change (OCC) 1998 and other related declarations by ethnic nationalities indicate a common indictment on the structure of and operation method of federalism in Nigeria.

There is almost a consensus among scholars, that state failure caused by misperceptions and deliberate actions/inactions of the operators of state apparatus fundamentally precipitated the civil war and have essentially been the cause of the recurrent violent agitations by ethnic nationalities in Nigeria.

Okaba (2005) enthused that owing to the insincerity of government and lack of political will to address the issues at stake, the Niger Delta conflict has escalated. After the brutal killing of Isaac Boro, Saro-Wiwa and other martyrs in the revolutionary struggle, there has been a systematic upsurge of liberation movement in the Niger Delta: the Enaharo-led movement for National Reformation, Senator David Dafionene-led union of Niger Delta. The March 2000 Asaba Declaration of Governors and National Assembly members of 13% derivation and resource control, the Dara led Delta People Academy and the August 2002 uprising and occupation of oil facilities by the combined forces of women of Itsekiri, Ugborodo and Ijo of Escravos are cases that should make any one who had categorized the conflict in the Niger Delta as youth restiveness have a critical rethink. The recent rampageous activities of the Niger Delta volunteer force led by Asari Dokubo, which culminated in their dialogue with the presidency is a warning signal to all who care to bother about the fate of this nation.

The scholar emphasized, which we align in tandem, that the future of the Niger Delta struggle cannot be addressed in isolation from the comatose dynamics of the Nigerian state. The critical issues of corruption, the jaundiced democratic process and the anti-people driven economic liberalization policies of the present (Obasanjo's) administration seem not to have the much needed succor that can redress the historical wrongs in the Niger Delta. Unless this pretence stops and we pursue a rigorous politics of rural transformation in Nigeria and the Niger Delta, the revolutionary pressure in the Niger Delta will continue to assume more damaging dimensions.

The precipitation of the Greek wars in the Niger/Delta in early 2009, the intensity of the of the battles, the resort to amnesty by the Nigerian government to deviant, determined and non repentant

youths and the politics of the amnesty administration further attest to a rather ailing national security and obvious state failure.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The agitations in the Niger Delta evidently have a historical and cultural antecedent. The causes of the agitations have not essentially changed over the centuries.

The state response methods have not also changed in character. The vision, tactics, and resilience of the Niger Delta peoples have not also fundamentally changed. Essentially, therefore, the internecine violence in the Niger Delta has out lived the too often declared policy of reconciliation and unity of Nigeria. This is attributable to and it evidenced state failure.

A genuine improvement in government, the rule of law, equitable distribution of resources, decentralization of government structures and functions, and democratization of development are, thereby, imperative, to sustain, the corporate integrity of the Nigerian State.

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