
National Security And Oil Pipeline Vandalization In Nigeria: A Cause- Effect Analysis

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Abstract

This paper explored the nexus between national security and oil pipeline vandalization in Nigeria. We appropriated abstractions emanating from the basic propositions of Marxist theory of the post colonial state and argued that Nigeria is mono-cultural, extractive and exploitative. The increased consciousness of the Niger Delta people about the exploitative character of the Nigerian state led the militants into oil-pipeline vandalization and this threatens the survival of the national economy. This paper recommends among others that an urgent diversification of the Nigerian economy to reduce the excessive dependency on oil as the mainstay of government revenue.

Keywords: *National Security, Post Colonial economy, Niger Delta, oil pipelines and Vandalization.*

Introduction

The dialectical linkage between the security of the Nigerian economy and Niger Delta oil cannot be analyzed 'sui generis'. Obviously, most states in Africa depend on the foreign revenue that accrues from one or more natural resources for survival. Oil revenue has not only sustained provision of food, shelter, industrial production and trade in Nigeria but has also helped in the strengthening of the national security. Meanwhile, Nweke (1985:19) posited that "it is rather not fanciful to argue that the quality and quantity of African security can be measured by the quantity and quality of human and natural resource endowment of Africa and of African productive base". Nweke's argument is sustained here because the large deposit of oil in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria has turned into a security threat for Nigeria and by implication the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Much that Nigerian economy more than ever depends on oil revenue for survival, the stability of Nigerian economy usually trickles down to the economies of the other sub-Saharan African countries. Specifically, Nigerian government derives about 85% of her revenue from oil while about 90% of the national income also comes from oil (Retrieved from <http://www.ogbus.ru/eng> on 8th June 2008)

Remarkably, since the discovery of oil in Ogoniland in 1957, struggle and competition for ownership and control of oil blocs have led to increased light weapon proliferation and conflict among and between host communities, oil multinational corporations and federal government. Ibaba (2001: 30) however agreed that "the

psychological quality of life of the society and its members both in domestic and regional setting" (Al-Mashat 1985:14).

(b) Oil pipeline vandalization

This refers to the destruction of oil pipelines. The vandals puncture the pipelines especially the ones conveying petrol, they in turn siphon the petrol into tanks, plastics containers and drums for sale in the black market. It is an act of sabotage and a capital offence under the Petroleum Act and also covered by the Criminal Justice Decree of 1975. Vandalization of oil pipelines is prevalent in the Niger Delta. It is mainly conducted by the "ethnic militants" (Eze, 2004:278). NNPC reported that "as at the year 2000, over 400 cases of oil pipeline vandalization were recorded as against 50 cases recorded in 1999" (Eze, 2004:278). This implies that the act of oil pipeline vandalization has geometrically increased especially with the inception of Nigeria's modern democracy (Retrieved from <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/company/cna70545.htm> on 3rd August 2009).

Theoretical Perspective

We employed the Marxist theory of the post colonial state to concretely address the problem under study. The major proponents are Marx and Engel (1977). They argued that the executive aim of modern state is only a committee for managing the common affairs of the ruling class. Jakuboski (1973: 41-42) added that "the ruling class are both politically and economically dominant and constantly creates new avenue for holding down and exploiting the ruled or proletarian class".

Among other Marxist epigonists that have contributed to the explanation and understanding of the character of states in the periphery are Miliband, (1977); Ake (1985); Alavi, (1973); Ekekwe, (1986) and Lenin (1988).

Miliband (1977: 109) succinctly puts that "states in the periphery are sources of economic power as well as an instrument of production and hence the highest employer of labour". Ake (1985:3) also noted that "states in Africa are products of imperialism". Thus Ake maintained that the major goal of the colonial state which later became post colonial state was to create conducive environment for capital to thrive, expand and exploit human and natural resource. Alavi (1973: 146) further adumbrated that "post colonial state are instrument of primitive accumulation by the dominant class and their collaborators". Similarly, Lenin (1984: 10) noted that "the state is a product of irreconcilable antagonism between classes that exist in society".

Ekekwe (1986: 12) exploring the difference between advanced and peripheral capitalist state noted among others that "the advance capitalist states maintain the economic and social relation under which bourgeoisie accumulation takes place while the level of development of peripheral capitalism makes the state a direct instrument for primitive accumulation".

In application of the theory to the subject matter under discourse, we argue that the Nigerian state is a post colonial state hence an instrument for primitive accumulation

leadership" (Achebe, 1985: 11). The other threats to national security noted by Eke (2007) include Nigeria's porous border and religious violence.

Oil as Major Threat to National Security

In early 1970's the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in Nigeria attracted both negative and positive attention to Nigeria. Nigeria had become an oil economy as the production of agricultural products gradually disappears. The foreign Minister of Nigeria in a public address in Washington remarked that money is not our problem. By 1978, "the boom turned into burst and Nigeria accepted her first jumbo loan from World Bank since our years of boom was over" (Braithwaite 1988: 15). Notably, the activities of oil MNCS in Niger Delta pollutes environment, causes death, poverty and diseases. Worst, the federal government appears to have abandoned the region as basic infrastructures virtually do not exist. This qualifies as what many called killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

No doubt oil had become the mainstay of the Nigerian economy since 1974 and successive regimes both military and civilian governments make Nigeria's foreign policy bearing in mind oil as the corner stone of the national economy. These governments use both carrot and stick that is both peaceful/diplomatic and violent/ war/ military (JTF) means in securing the Niger Delta oil from domestic threats. This is however understandable though unjust since oil constitutes over 90% of Nigeria national income and over 85% of federal government revenue (Retrieved from <http://www.ogbus.ruleng/on> 18th June 2008).

The resistant groups formed by various Niger Delta communities constitute a major threat to continual exploration of oil and Nigeria political economy. Hence the history of Niger Delta conflict has transcended the history of ecological war where no guns are used, no bones are broken while the people die. Today the extractive state of Nigeria intervenes with guns, breaks bones and conducting pogrom in oil rich Niger Delta communities in defense of oil MNCS staff and oil installations.

Possible causes of Oil Pipeline Vandalization

The most fundamental cause of oil pipeline vandalization is related to relative deprivation of the Niger Delta people hence aggression on oil installations and even oil companies workers. The Niger Delta people are conscious of the value of oil extracted from their farm lands and that the difference between the value extracted and what they get as monthly allocation goes into the hands of corrupt politicians. This disease of exploitation engendered by capitalism, Marx argued should be cured by enthroning socialism and destroying of all exploitative relations. The two million man march in Abuja in 1998 exposed the Niger Delta people to how the oil wealth has transformed Nigeria, leaving the goose that laid the golden egg to die in hunger and decayed infrastructure.

Pathetically, the by-products of crude oil is not readily available for the people or at worst petroleum products sell at exorbitant prices in Niger Delta area Ezirim

By the end of 2009 the country lost about \$38.8 billion or ₦5.8 trillion excluding the cost of repairs to damages caused by the war on oil installations in the region, cost of arms for both government and the militants and it was estimated that Nigeria lost about ₦200 trillion naira by the end of 2009 (Okereocha 2009: 7).

The decline in oil production level meant shrinking of government revenue and economic hardship. In 2009 for instance, Nigeria's oil quota in OPEC fell from 2.2 million bpd to 1.7 million bpd leaving the ceiling at 1.69 million bpd and 28.8% short fall in revenue generation (Okereocha, 2009:8). This has implications for savings, investment, infrastructural development and national security.

Determined to correct this ill in the economy, "President Yar'Adua financed the 7-point agenda and designed a special programme to pardon and rehabilitate the militants in a programme touted amnesty" (Ezeibe, 2009: 35). Remarkably, since the launching of this programme, the incidences of attacks on oil pipelines have reduced especially towards the end of the first quarter of 2010 when President Yar'Adua died after a protracted illness. The emergence of Goodluck Jonathan from the Niger Delta area as the President of Nigeria in fact has helped to control the restive activities in the region and increased oil supply and peace in the region.

Despite this success towards peace building in the Niger Delta, the Nigerian state is perceived by an average citizen in the region as a leviathan. The clashes between the locals and government eroded people's perception of the states as the guarantor of security and rather seen as a source of threat to the people's lives and resources.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a post colonial state is mono-culture extractive and exploitative. Beyond the problem of ethnicity, Niger Delta oil constitutes a major source of threat to national security in Nigeria. Hence, the control of the violent activities of the Niger Delta militants usually expressed through oil pipeline vandalization is core to the national interest of Nigeria since oil forms the corner stone of Nigerian economic survival. The state's application of various ploys to guard her national interest in the Niger Delta has always met with a strong resistance. Some observers now speak of the Niger Delta militant clash with the members of the JTF as a condition of war in the creeks of the Niger and this puts Nigeria on the risk of total collapse. Thus Niger Delta people insist on secession.

This paper recommends an intensive diversification of the economy for the Nigeria state to survive. The success of this diversification will reduce Nigeria's over dependency on Niger Delta oil, the rising incidence of oil pipeline vandalization and guarantee national security.