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Mainstreaming Peace and Security in the Niger Delta: Resource Control, Ethnic Nationalism and Conflict Cessation in a Turbulent System

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Abstract - As a metaphor of collective resistance to the "politically motivated assault by the majority nationalities on the economic rights of minority communities", resource control expresses the exponential challenge to the "politics of dispossession" of oil producing communities in the federation of Nigeria. The Nigerian federal system, as incisively articulated in the protest literature, embody the tyranny of the majority over hapless minority formations whose struggle for relevance constitute in generational terms a challenge to the "coercive presence" of the majority. The phenomenological exploration of this theme of hegemony in the Nigerian federalism has found multiple expressions in the works of Saro-Wiwa, Okonta and Douglas, Otite, Osaghae, Agbese and Suberu).

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Mainstreaming Peace and Security in the Niger Delta: Resource Control, Ethnic Nationalism and Conflict Cessation in a Turbulent System

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"The contest between state and nation is an ancient one, and for a simple reason – the interests of state and nation seldom coincide. On the contrary, we find that both are constantly at loggerheads with each other. Do not be fooled by appearance, exceptions or political punditry".

Wole Soyinka (2009)

I. PREAMBLE

As a metaphor of collective resistance to the "politically motivated assault by the majority nationalities on the economic rights of minority communities", resource control expresses the exponential challenge to the "politics of dispossession" of oil producing communities in the federation of Nigeria. The Nigerian federal system, as incisively articulated in the protest literature, embody the tyranny of the majority over hapless minority formations whose struggle for relevance constitute in generational terms a challenge to the "coercive presence" of the majority. The phenomenological exploration of this theme of hegemony in the Nigerian federalism has found multiple expressions in the works of Saro-Wiwa, Okonta and Douglas, Otite, Osaghae, Agbese and Suberu). The latent expressiveness of Nigerian federalism and the intractability of structural and distributive issues like fiscal federalism have created the "terrain for violent and often mutually destructive confrontations between contending social forces representing the state and vectors of civil society. Thus, the Nigerian state, in Gramscian terms, lacks the "organic relations between political society and civil society" which characterizes the "integral state" where hegemony implies "consent rather than domination, integration rather than exclusion, and cooperation rather than suppression". (Gramsci, 1971:56). The reproduction of this catastrophic balance in state-society relations in Nigeria is manifest in the protracted social crisis in the Niger Delta.

This paper argues essentially that, the path to Sustainable peace and security in the Niger Delta resides unalterably in "mainstreaming peace building and development programming" as a paradigm of

societal reconstruction in the zone. In other words, in a turbulent system such as the Niger Delta, peace as a policy objective could only be predicated on transformational activities which address "structural issues, social dynamics of relationship building, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for peace" (Leaderach 2006:21). In this regard the peace dividend "cannot be separated from the question of the struggle for social and human dignity; "economic longevity and ecological sustainability". In other words, the peace problematic is not unrelated to the "issue of extant social and political conditions and the distribution of power". Thus, peace has become essentially a security issue ("Securitization of peace"): peace and security are "two sides of the same coin" one cannot exist without the other- and both are mutually reinforcing". Security in this context designates the "capacity of groups (and individuals as their agents), to provide their physical and psychosocial needs and livelihoods". Given the centrality of the state (the federal government) as a defining characteristic of the socio-political process, the need to address significant structural and distributive problems in the Niger Delta should now be the focus of security analysis and policy responses to the malignant social context of the region.

II. RESOURCE CONTROL AND ETHNIC NATIONALISM

Central to the dialectics of confrontation in the Niger Delta is the intractable issue of resource control characterized by peripherality, isolation and negation of the oil producing communities perpetuated through a system of domination based on coercive economic and legislative controls within the structure of Nigeria's "centralizing federalism". This coercive and overbearing control is well articulated by prominent fudiciary of the dominant ethnic nationalities: the Nigerian Economist, Pius Okigbo. According to the Pius Okigbo Commission on Revenue Allocation:

The owners of the minerals on which royalties are levied are indisputably, under the existing laws and under constitution, the Government of the Federation. It follows that the payment of a part or the whole of the revenues from this source to the State (or community) where the mineral is produced does not derive from a

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legal right but from political or other considerations. To transform this political act into a legal claim of right, as the producing states seem to want is to do violence to reality (1980:93)

It is not surprising that in line with this determination through the majority fiat, another majority ethnic fiduciary, Olatunde Aboyade, "completely extinguished the- principle of derivation from fiscal federalism" (Oyovbaire, 1985: 193). Rotimi Suberu (1999) has rightly observed that "this change in the rules for allocating revenues has been denounced by ethnic minority elements as a politically motivated assault by the majority nationalities on the economic rights of minority communities who are perceived as too small and weak to threaten the stability of the federation". The phenomenological exploration of this theme of hegemony (the structure of superogation and subordination) in the Nigerian federalism has found multiple expressions in the works of critics such as Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ike Okonta and Oronto Douglas.

Ken Saro-Wiwa's critical interventions in the Nigerian melodrama found expression in his analysis of the structural determination (as well as the structural position) of the ethnic minorities in two critical spheres of dispossession: politics and economics. Politics addresses the ethnic question of "unequal citizenship for the minorities and the instrumentalist construct of Nigeria's multi-state federalism which facilitates the appropriation of surplus by majority ethnic communities. This structural domination, as Ken Saro Wiwa notes, has engendered a condition of domestic colonialism which has turned politics in Nigeria into the "harsh oppression of the minorities, the unabashed and remorseless exploitation of those handicapped by their numbers". (Saro-Wiwa, 1989:11). In this context, "federal .instrumentalities" reinforces patterns of subordination and supererogation in a wide spectrum of activities, resulting in a structural reproduction of the core of the periphery (majority ethnics) and periphery of the periphery (minority ethnics).

The second and interrelated sphere of dispossession addressed by Saro-Wiwa is in the domain of "oil curse" and the instrumentalization of disorder. As he trenchantly notes:

Oil was very much at the center of the civil war... Twenty years after the war, the system of revenue allocation, the development policies of successive federal administrations and the Inactivity of the Nigerian elite have turned the delta and its environs into an ecological disaster and dehumanized its inhabitants. The notion that the oil-bearing areas can provide the revenue of the country and yet be denied a proper share of that revenue because it is perceived that the inhabitants of the area are few in number is unjust, immoral unnatural and ungodly (1995: 63-64)

This and similar passages in Ken's prolific writings express in the most graphic manner the level of

conscientization and psycho-cultural disposition now fueling armed militancy in the Niger Delta. Psycho-cultural disposition, determines the overall level of conflict in a society in terms of shared assumptions, perceptions and images about "what people in a society values, their definition of friends and foes, and the means by which groups and individuals pursue their goals" (Ross, 1993). The perception of dialectics of control is critical to understanding the existential dilemma of minority oil-producing states in the Nigerian, federal dispensation. The legalization of expropriation of oil resources in favor of majority ethnics through a series of draconian decree has been a subject of passionate debate in the literature. This spate of protest literature and critical interventions on the Niger Delta vortex has no doubt generated extensive debate and searing examination of the structure of Nigerian federalism and "resource control" agitation. The establishment and status quo option has been equally propagated and defended as a 'systemic necessity' bearing on the political economy of state – society relations in Nigeria.

Specifically, the term "resource control" betrays a deep tension between two contending social forces: first, those who own the land where the oil resource is located but do not derive a corresponding benefit from the exploitation of the resources. Second, those who wield political power, control the state, and are the greatest beneficiaries of the oil wealth. How best to distribute the oil resource between these two groups in a way that will lead to socio-economic development has generated an enduring set of debates and conflicts between the oil producing communities and the state and its multinational oil partners. Given the activities of militants, which disrupt oil exploration and exploitation activities in the Niger Delta region of the country these debates and conflicts have taken on renewed urgency, and now engages scholars and policymakers alike.

Recurrent questions have been raised in defence of the status quo: can a monocultural economy like Nigeria allow the control of her critical national resources from which over 90 per cent of her GNP is derived to constituents units (states)? What is the implication of resource control for the enormous federal government responsibility reflected in the exclusive list of the 1999 constitution? Given the history of ethnic strife and distrust, what will also be the fate of states that depends exclusively on revenue from the federation account for survival?

A survey of extant literature on fiscal federalism suggests that in all federations horizontal and vertical distribution of national resources between the central government and the federating units is one of the most contentious issues. This issue is even more critical in federations with a monocultural economy like Nigeria. In fact, there are no universally acceptable principles for sharing national revenues from which federal states or provinces can borrow and adopt when the need arises.

This is because no two federations are identical in terms of histories, politics, economies and ethnic/racial compositions. Consequently, the principles of revenue allocation adopted by federating units (states) depend on many factors.

The two fundamental ones are, first, how the country became federal. Second, the political economy of the country greatly influences the control and distribution of the nation wealth among its constituent units. The political economy of the state determines the pendulum swing between centralisation and decentralization of fiscal powers and control of critical national resources. In other words, the nature and pattern of federalism is congruent upon the political economy of the state. Empirical evidence in federations shows that states with diversified industrial economy tilts toward decentralization of fiscal powers and control of critical national resources, whereas federations with weak monocultural economy tilt toward centralization of fiscal powers and control of resources.

However, in both models the central government collects the largest share of the national resources. It also enjoys a wide range of jurisdictional powers over critical national resources and-uses taxation/constitutional powers to limit the powers of the federating units over resources in their locality. There is no federation today where the federating units enjoy more fiscal powers than the central government. It is also apparent that in federal states, if the essence of federalism as a tool for managing conflicts in plural societies and correcting vertical imbalances generated by revenue and expenditure assignments are to be realized, the federating units cannot be economically and politically stronger than the central government (Okediji 2006; Osaghae 1991; Elaigwu 1979; Aaron and Samuel 2005).

In older federations such as America and Canada, federal experiment has responded to the changing dynamics of their political economy: from preindustrial social formation based on extractive industries to sophisticated industrial systems of the 20th/21st century. Consequently, the fundamental permutation in the theory and practice of American federalism, reflecting its tumultuous history and political economy: "dual federalism", "centralizing federalism", "cooperating federalism", "creative federalism", "permissive federalism" and "new federalism". (AAPS special issue, vol. 419, May 1975).

Each pattern was quite distinct from the other. Nonetheless, all of them responded to the changing dynamics of the United State's economy. As the United States moved from an agricultural to industrial economy new problems arose and with them new demands for government action: the United States moved from a system of dual federalism to one of cooperative federalism, in which the national and state governments share responsibility for public policies. The Great

Depression brought about an end to dual federalism (under dual federalism, the states and the national government each remain supreme within their own spheres) and a dramatic shift to a strong central government and what became popularly known as cooperative federalism. The economy and the exigency of the time forced the central government to cooperate with all levels of government to implement President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal policies.

Under the "New Deal" the center (Federal Government) became unequivocally assertive through the institution of regulatory agencies (the Treasury and Office of budget Management) which marked a fundamental departure from the neo-classical economic tenet by legitimizing and rationalizing the right of the state to intervene in the market. Under the complimentary Keynesian principles of "positive definition of the neutral state" and "circular flow of income", the Federal Government became not only an umpire but the ultimate arbiter in the management of American economy in fiscal and monetary relations. The rising welfare states in North America and Europe marked the supremacy of the centre over he constituent parts, determining a range of governmental intervention from Agriculture to Education and unemployment benefits.

The "New Deal" became the programmatic expression of the "positive conception of the "neutral state" and "circular flow of income". Since the Keynesian system "regards the capitalist economy as a leaking tyre that must be pumped continuously if it is not to go flat and grind to a halt", the heightened role of the federal government – which is constantly required to pump the economy thrust fiscal – monetary policies – became supreme in the management of centre-periphery relations in American Federalism.

The neo-Richardian system of Reagan era ("Reagonomics") endeavored to reduce the powers and responsibility of the central government in favour of greater responsibilities by the states governments, the federal government has continued to assume greater power of the exchequer as the current intervention of the Obama administration to save American monetary and corporate institutions from collapse suggests. This financial strength has enabled the federal government to obtain the compliance of the states and counties through its Grant-In- Aid Schemes.

The federal government has increased greatly in size and influence, both in terms of its influence on everyday life relative to the state governments. This is because no state can tax as effectively as the federal government. This keeps the states in check since they depend on aid from the federal government to meet their responsibilities.

The highlight of our discussion of the congruency between political economy and patterns of federalism is that there is no federation that the



federating states/provinces control more revenues than the central government. In addition, where the states/provinces enjoy jurisdictional powers over the resources found in their areas such resources are not exceptionally critical to national resources. In other words, the federation does not depend solely on such resources for its survival. Lastly, to correct vertical imbalances and set national standard in service delivery the central government is allocated more funds by the constitution through either taxation and/or direct control of essential resources within the federation.

In line with the observation above, architects of fiscal federalism in Nigeria have sought to strengthen the powers of the federal government through differential powers of control and allocation, which ensure the subordination of the state components to federal control. The justification for this development derives from the centrifugal pressures on the system by the regions in the First Republic, as each region felt viable economically enough to join the League of mini-states in Africa. As a consequence, for the oil-producing minority states of the ND, the development of hegemonic rentier federal system has unleashed a systemic process of structural abnegations as the power elite at the centre reinforce and legitimise allocative system through majority controlled Fiscal Commissions (especially Aboyade, Okigbo and Danjuma Commissions), which permanently relegated the principles of derivation. This heightened the process of "surplus accumulation" from oil revenue to majority ethnic formations based on questionable criteria, which clearly compromised the interest of the minorities in the ND. Thus, through Decree 15 of 1967, Decree 13 of 1970, Decree 9 of 1971 and Decree 6 of 1975 the "balance of control and access to revenue" titled Towards Fiscal Centralisation at the Federal Level". The process of transformation was "effected through the progressive reduction of the principle of derivation and the strengthening of the principle of the Distributive Pool Account (DPA)". The cumulative effect of this skewed allocative mechanism on the oil-producing states was asymmetrical structure of benefits in which the majority ethnic nationalities, to paraphrase Thucydides, get what they may while the weak ethnic minorities concede what they must.

By a calculated act of creating and proliferating more states and local governments areas in the non-oil producing geographical majority ethnic zone, the systematic transfer of oil resources to their benefit became a major feature of inter-government fiscal relations. As Christopher Orubu (1999:189) aptly concludes:

The view is strongly-held among many critics from the oil producing states that the historical blow dealt upon the principle of derivation is the product of the political game play and the overwhelming propensity

of the majority to play down on the preferences of the minority. It turns out that Nigeria's oil is produced in the minority states, where access to political power at the national level is Herculean, if not an impossible task.

As a consequence of this powerlessness of the minority social formations, Orubu (1999:187) contends, the "people have no effective politic-kinetic framework to address the issue of unfair distribution of revenue, as each dominant group in the country struggles to maximize its own benefit from the "God given" petroleum resources". Seen in this context, the structure of revenue allocation has had profound impact on the configuration of Nigerian federalism. Cyril Obi (1998:263) has similarly noted that, "with revenue allocation largely implying the allocation of oil revenues, oil is central to the politics of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria, the economic crisis, and the transcendence of the destabilizing tendencies within the system".

Fiscal federalism, therefore, as conditioned by the "politics of oil revenue acquisition and distribution strikes at the very basis of the existence of the Nigeria federation and the rules of entry and exit from the ruling class". Conversely, as the widespread communal protests in the Niger Delta suggest, the evolution of a "non-crisis generating approach to revenue allocation is germane to the stability and development of the Nigerian society". This dialectics of revenue generation and denial constitutes the source of deepening crisis of Nigerian federalism. The current crisis in the Niger Delta is one definite consequence of "feelings of neglect which have been suppressed for quite a long time". This is obvious from the quantum of protest actions from NGOS and community-based social action groups. The Kaima declaration of the Ijaw Youth Conference held on December 11, 1998, was even more explicit in terms of the range and depth of grievance of oil producing communities:

- i. That the quality of life of Ijaw people is deteriorating as a result of utter neglect, suppression and marginalization;
- ii. Despite the huge contribution of Ijaw nation's territory to oil revenue, our reward from Nigerian states remains avoidable deaths resulting from ecological devastation and military repression;
- iii. That the unabating damage done to our fragile natural environment and to the health of our people is due in the main to uncontrolled exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas which has led to numerous oil spillage, uncontrolled gas flaring, the opening up of our forests to loggers, indiscriminate canalization, flooding, land subsidence, coastal erosion, earth tremors etc. Oil and gas are exhaustible resource and the complete lack of concern for ecological rehabilitation, in the light of Oloibiri experience, is a signal of impending doom for the people of Ijaw land.

- iv. That the degradation of the environment of Ijaw land by transnational oil companies and the Nigerian State arises mainly because Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources through instrumentality of undemocratic Nigerian state legislation such as the Land Use Decree of 1978, the petroleum Decree of 1969 and 1991, the Land (Title Vesting etc) Decree No.52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree No. 13 of 1997.
- v. That the principle of derivation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive regimes of the Nigerian state; and
- vi. that 70 per cent of the billions of dollars being looted by military rulers and their civilian collaborators is derived from our ecologically devastated Ijaw land (The Guardian, 1998).

In the light of the above, it has become a central assertion in the oil producing states that the claim of marginalization is not theoretical but existential reality in the ND. This awareness and conscientization has provided the basis of revolt against the structure of Nigerian federation constructed to advance the interest of majority ethnic nationalities. Thus, the contradiction arising from oil production and maximal neglect fuels demands by oil producing states for adequate "compensation, basic infrastructure, community development projects, employment of indigenes, payment of reparations for past exploration and degradation" of the oil producing environment. The consequence of this groundswell of discontent in the ND was a violent eruption of youth militancy, which threatened the petroleum industry and hence the sources of 95% of the Federal Governments foreign exchange earnings. Between the period 1993 and 2009, several attacks and occupation of oil platforms, flows stations, operating rig terminals, pipelines, refineries and power installations have incapacitated petrobusiness in the region. For instance, Shell has been forced to shut down operations in many parts of the ND costing the company and government an estimated one million dollars daily.

These social forces accelerated the dissension against the over-centralization of the polity by the military and subsequent governments, the control of oil and the distribution of its benefits among the constituent units of the federation and the state and multinational oil companies' policies and practices that disadvantaged the region, destroy its environment and impoverished its people. The reactions of these organizations state and multinational policies over their rights and access to the resources found in their territory culminated in heightening the clarion demand for resource control.

III. CONFLICT DISORDER AND STATE RESPONSE

As noted above, what sparted as non-violent protest by youths and civil society organizations in the late 1980s against marginalization and environmental degradation later developed into a fearsome resistance involving heavily armed militant factors of MEND, NDVF, MOSIEND, etc) against the Joint Task Force deployed in the Niger Delta. It could, therefore, be argued that one grave dimension of the instrumentalisation of disorder is transformation of immanent social movements into armed militancy, especially following the execution of key leadership of MOSOP: Ken Saro-Wiwa and the "Ogoni 9". For instance, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) under Asari Dokubo has undergone tremendous transformation from a social movement "employing discourses of ethnic identities and solidarities with a wide public appeal, into a privatized militia" dedicated to self-determination of the "Ijaw Nation". Departing from the cautious and less confrontational posture of its forebear, the Ijaw National Council, the IYC drew on the "strategy successfully championed by MOSOP", and rose to "national and international prominence with the Kaiama Declaration that paralleled its foundation in December 1998". The Kaiama Declaration, as noted by Obi (2001, 71) was:

Reportedly adopted by representatives of 500 Delta communities and 25 organisations in the Bayelsa town of Kaiama. It denounced social marginalization and environmental damage and central state repression and oil exploration, and called for the "withdrawal from Ijaw land of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigeria State.

This Declaration marked a vital watershed in the campaign for social and environmental justice and set the stage for the tragic events currently unfolding in the Niger Delta in terms of reciprocity of force as a mean of prevalence. The volatile space of the Niger Delta is now characterized by the "establishment of extra-state political formations, their legitimizing discourses and social practices". Thus, IYC presented the Delta minorities with a novel alternative; "the chance to root peripherally, isolation, and silence in resisting action" (Said, 1994). As Bade Onimode once observed in relation to this deadly dialectics of hegemony and counter-hegemony, the Nigerian federal system is "evolving by fission rather than aggregation". The manipulation and politicization of ethnicity turned governance into struggle for control of state which, in conditions of monolithic political structure and generalized material scarcity-, under the military became "Hobbesian, violent and deadly". In this unnerving condition (as demonstrated by the Ogoni experience), social policies and the social order are "imposed by direct domination on those who do not consent either

actively or positively to the rule of the governing classes" (Rothchild, 1998).

From the standpoint of libertarian theory and praxis, the politics of resource control represents a challenge by civil society groups and communities in the ND over the control of oil and the distribution of its benefits among the constituent units of the federation. In other words, the people of the region are simply saying since the state and its multinational oil partners cannot take care of their developmental needs, they should give them back what naturally belongs to them so that they can take care of themselves. This is the core-complex of the ND conflict.

The activities of civil society groups in the ND region have emerged as the most serious threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. Their activities have been characterized by popular mobilization, social protest, opposition, advocacy and criticisms in favour of reform, change and accountability in the exploration, exploitation and management of the oil resources found in their territory. The high points of their grievances, agitation and protests are, first, that they want a fair share of the resource generated in their territory by whatever legal means. Second, they want compensation for the past neglect, marginalization, injustice and inequity they had suffered in the hands of both the state and multinational oil companies in the exploitation of the oil resources. All these are legitimate claims, which subsequent governments since independence have been unable to address and the consequences are telling on the country now (Ikelegbe, 2001:437).

Over the years, the federal government has tried to address the problems of the region through administrative agencies such as the NDDB, OMPADEC and NDDC. However, because of the enormity of the problem, corruption and the lack of commitment on the part of the government/multinational companies these efforts have amounted to nothing (Fraynas, 2000; Akpan, 2004). In fact, these measures have further aggravated the situation, which makes the government to rely more on repressive policy in response to the activities of civil society groups in the ND region (Suberu, 1998). State repressive policies in the region have changed the manner of conduct of the struggle and resistance of youths in the ND.

Thus, civil society has been able to transform the ND grievances from a mere demand for development from the multinational oil companies and the state, into a political and comprehensive agitation that challenges the authority and legitimacy of the state over the control and allocation of national resources. The failure of the state to find a political solution to the problem has led to very sensitive demands of resource control and self-determination within the federation (Ikelegbe 2001). As a consequence, "the tempo, activity, cohesion and commitment of the civil groups indicate

that, somehow, the state-resource authority and state-regional/ethnic resource distribution would have to be negotiated, redefined and reconstituted if national stability and unity is to be sustained" (Ikelegbe, 2001; 464).

This issue raises fundamental questions pertinent to revenue allocation, which protagonists of state' rights have overlooked over the years. The questions are, first, can a federal state like Nigeria with a mono-cultural economy relinquish the control of critical national resource from which it derives over 80 per cent of her GNP to its constituent units? Second, what are the implications of that for funding federal establishments, especially defence, education, health and foreign policy? Third, given the history of ethnic strife and distrust, what will also be the fate of states that depend exclusively on federally allocated revenues for survival? Primarily, it is important to note that, in all federations, the degree to which the central government/constitution allows the constituent units jurisdictional powers over particular resources depend on the importance of the resources to fiscal outlay as a percentage of the gross national product, and by implication to the ability of the central government to meet is a statutory responsibility: defence, foreign policy, education; health; industrial development etc. For instance, in the United States, oil-producing states enjoy certain jurisdictional powers over the oil found in their locality, because oil is not a crucial national resource. In other words, the United States Government does not depend on oil revenues for its survival, as is the case in Nigeria. The American economy is so diversified and industrialised that the contribution of oil revenues to her GNP is less than 10 per cent, whereas in Nigerian oil contributes over 80 per cent of her GNP. In the US, the manufacturing sector, science and technology, telecommunications and entertainment industries provides more to the economy than the mineral sector.

In the case of Nigeria, the country possesses enormous resources, but the inability of the leadership to harness these resources for the development of the country explains the over dependence on oil revenues. The federal government relies on the oil resources to perform its colossal responsibility as contained in the exclusive legislative list: defence, education, roads, electricity, health, foreign policy, power and steel among others. The states also depend on the same federally collected revenues for virtually everything. Nwabueze (1983) puts it trenchantly when he wrote:

Federally collected revenue is the main stay of the finances of state governments, accounting for a little over 90 per cent of their total revenue upon this revenue, therefore, depend on the ability of the states to maintain services-to pay their staff, pay for essential supplies and execute capital projects (1983:56).

From the foregoing, defenders of federal rights

and prerogative have argued that any fiscal adjustments that would affect state-resource authority and state-regional/ethnic distribution radically given the nature of the country's political economy would be unsettling for the federation. What this translates to in real terms is that the political sway and financial might that the federal government is currently exercising in both national and international politics is simply due to the size of her pocket. That Nigeria is a major player today in most International, Regional and Sub-regional organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) is mainly due to a combination of factors, the most prominent being her financial capacity. There are numerous instances where the Nigerian government has used her financial strength to swing and influence many international and regional decisions in favour of her national interests and that of the African continent in general.

Similarly, the argument goes, on the domestic scene, we cannot over emphasize federal presence in all facets of the Nigeria's national life such as defence, education, health, environment, science and technology, aviation, iron and steel, including over sixty - seven items on the exclusive legislative list reserved for the federal government. Thus, agitation for the federal government to surrender her jurisdictional powers over the oil resources to the oil producing states will simply mean that the "Crippled Giant" (Osaghae, 2002) will simply become a basket case.

IV. MAINSTREAMING PEACE AND SECURITY

Advocates of resource control like Ken Saro-Wiwa have point to the vast differences in infrastructural developments of the core (majority nationalities) and peripheral (minority nationalities) areas in the Nigerian federation and the differential incorporation of its elements into strategic sectors of its economy.

Ken's diagnosis of the structural subordination of the minorities in the Nigerian federation is unflattering in its exposure and criticism of the system that breeds institutionalized deprivations, but does his prognosis for action -confederation of ethnic nationalities - provide a way forward? There is no doubt, as he noted that the Nigerian constitution "offered a stronger central government and left the ethnic minorities totally unprotected in terms of their economic resources and their culture". Thus, for Ken, the existential problem that arises, is that since the constitution vest the entire mineral resources in the country in "parliament to share as it pleases," in:

A situation where the ethnic minorities provided most of the mineral resources (oil) and yet Were a minority in parliament, and where oil was the "be-all" and "end-all" of Nigerian politics and the economy, as

well as the central focus of all budgetary ambitions, there was no way the ethnic minorities, including the Ogoni, could protect their great inheritance (1995:55)

The solution to this existential dilemma for the ethnic minorities in the entropic federation of Nigeria lies in the reconsideration of its constitutive principles of co-existence or engagement. Ken Saro-Wiwa (1995: 90-98), therefore, advocates unequivocally that:

The only way forward for Nigeria was to allow each ethnic group to exercise autonomy and grow at its own pace using its genius and its political system...!, therefore, suggest that elected representatives of all ethnic groups in Nigeria should gather at a National Conference to select an interim government consisting of twenty reputable Nigerians men and women...from all parts of the country.

Ken's panacea for the reconstruction of state-society relations in Nigeria, however, raises serious epistemic and ontological questions bearing on sociological assumptions about the character of the state in plural social formations. His position is no doubt consistent with the sociological assumptions about "plural societies (commonly referred to as "salad model") which stresses the enduring nature of plural divisions, the discontinuities between sections differentiated by ethnicity, religion or culture and the high probability of violence in the process of political change.

The contradictions, contentious and inherent dilemma of the Nigerian federation in terms of asymmetrical relationship between federalism (state boundaries) and pluralism (ethnic dusters) as competing units of representation, distributive and redistributive policies (fiscal federalism) and the unsettled problem of constitutional design for democratic dispensation persist. The configuration of these issues has turned the Nigerian state into a cauldron of incendiary conflict dominated by hegemonic propensities of contending majority ethnic social forces and in recent times, an equally vehement resistance of minority ethnics social movements, especially in the Niger Delta region. Thus, the peculiar attribute of the Nigerian federation currently is the ethnic base of state (regime) power reproduced in the context of politics of support or what Enloe (1973: 29) calls "state security ethnic map."

It is, however, becoming clear that the contending positions on the resource control divide (defenders of federal or state/oil communities rights and privileges) cannot be exclusively sustained in the accelerating and complex condition of the management of modern state as well as the imperatives of constitutional theory and practice of democratic governance in a federal system. Over centralization of fiscal control in the federal government lacks ontological justification in the poor state of the roads, health, education and other infrastructures under FGN exclusive responsibilities. This requires fundamental restructuring



in inter-governmental relations and extensive devolution of powers and responsibilities to states and local governments (especially in areas of education, health and social welfare). Certainly some of the state Administrators in the Fourth Republic such as Donald Duke of Cross Rivers, Babatunde Fashola of Lagos State and Godwill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom have demonstrated what is possible in terms of infrastructural transformation if sustained quantum of resources and responsibilities is devolved to the states.

On the other hand, despite these manifest realities, prescription such as Ken Saro Wiwa's for the cure of Nigeria's structural pathology (confederal Nigeria) may satisfy widespread popular minorities' sentiment, but as a sustainable project in constitutional practice and development, it may be worse than the disease. At the global level hardly any confederation has so far survived the systemic turbulence of the twentieth century and the accelerating forces of micro-nationalism which saw the end of such experiments in state-building as Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and USSR is gathering momentum all over the world, especially in the artificial state context of Africa. A prescription for a confederation of ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, is in the final analysis a "trap for the overbold and unwary". Even the surviving experiment in confederation (Switzerland) in the 20th century has now irreversibly moved towards a strong central control to meet the increasingly complex challenges of managing a modern state-especially fiscal and monetary regime.

In the light of current global condition where only heavy weights increasingly call the tune and where Lilliputs are equally finding relevance and influence through regional integration, it would certainly be a sad development to a potentially rewarding historical accident that creates a primal economy of scale through the location of sixty percent of the current population of West Africa in what became Nigeria. What perhaps Ken should have argued for and invested his energy in consummating would have been, first, a heightened derivation based on the principle that governed fiscal allocation in the First Republic and, second a mechanism that ensures direct impact of this resources on oil producing communities such as Ogoniland. In other words, the infrastructural crisis and environmental disorder in Ogoniland is to a considerable extent a systemic resultant of fiscal failure on the part of the elite that dominate federal and state governments and parastatals.

The above review of prevailing argumentation on resource control controversy and the assertiveness of the federal state in support of its statutory functions (as entrenched under military tutelage in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) suggests the imperative need for the restructuring of intergovernmental relations to correct the structural imbalance in fiscal allocation and marginalisation of

oil producing communities. The responsibilities of the Federal Government under the exclusive list of the constitution may demand greater arrogation of fiscal resources. In terms of fiscal federalism, however, this translates into the disproportionate appropriation of oil revenue by the majority ethnic nationalities at the expense of the oil producing communities and states. Ken Saro-Wiwa has noted in this regard that:

The way and manner in which the states and local governments were created were an affront to truth and civility, a slap in the face of modern history; it was robbery with violence. What Babangida was doing was transferring the resources of the delta, of the Ogoni and other ethnic minorities to the ethnic majorities - the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbo and the Yoruba - since most of the new states and local governments were created in the homes of these three. None of the local governments or states so created was viable: they all depended on oil revenues which were to be shared by the states and local governments according to the most outrageous of criteria such as expanse of land, equality, underdevelopment and all such subsidies. The brazen injustice of it hurt my sensibilities beyond description.

Thus, from Ken Saro-Wiwa's standpoint, Nigerian federalism is in the final analysis a captive state dominated by powerful ethnic social forces constantly in conflict over material reward of state power. The struggle for control of the federal power structure either through the "ballot box" or the "barrel of a gun" has been a recurrent decimal in the dynamics of power calculus among fiduciaries of the tripolar action-set that constitutes the arena of politics in Nigeria. Irrespective of periodization and regime type, the paramount goal has been the same: ethnic power is fundamentally dependent on control of state power.

Addressing these "negative externalities" in Nigerian federalism is crucial to the mainstreaming of peace and security in the Niger Delta. As an operative concept in peace-building, mainstreaming designates the "art of integrating a given set of values from one primary domain into a secondary one with the aim of bringing the insights from the former to bear on the latter and to achieve by this process a value-added outcome for the resulting practice". Thus, one of the cardinal conclusions from peace and conflict studies bearing on development programming is the extricable linkage between sustainable peace and the struggle for social and human security: "economic longevity and ecological sustainability". Security in this context designates the "capacity of groups (and individuals as their agents) to provide their physical and psychological needs and livelihoods".

In a turbulent system such as the Niger Delta, peace as a policy objective could only be predicated on transformational activities which address "structural issues, social dynamics of relationship building, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for peace".

(Leaderach, 2006: 12). The general assumption in this context is that the conflagration in the Niger Delta reflects, as Mats Friberg (1992) argues, the "failure of governing structures to address fundamental needs, provide space for participation in decisions, and ensure an equitable distribution of resources and benefits that makes identification with a group so attractive and silent in a given setting". Since the elimination of deprivation is the primary concern of the oil-bearing communities of the Niger Delta, the path to peace and sustainable development lies in empowerment through a policy regime which recognizes the systemic linkages between security, economic empowerment and development.

This is the crux of "mainstreaming peace building in development programming" in the Niger Delta. That is, the progressive "elimination of objective conditions" that limits the capacity for groups to satisfy their physical quality of life indices, as well as "reduction of years and anxieties about their abilities to meet these needs" (Ibeanu, 2000). This is so because, as widely reflected in the literature, the root causes of the crises in the Niger Delta are political and economic which "engendered marginalization, poverty and environmental degradation (proximate causes). These in turn trigger widespread social deprivation (Idemudia and Gte, 2006: 393). As Cyril Obil (1997) has aptly noted, "the region is by far the most central to the nation's economic and political survival", but paradoxically, it is one of the "poorest, least developed and reciprocated for its contributions to national wealth". In this regard, John Lederach (2006: 25) has noted that:

Contemporary conflicts necessitate peace building approaches that respond to the real nature of those conflicts..... demands innovation, the development of ideas and practices that go beyond the negotiation of substantive interests and issues. This innovation I believe pushes us to probe into the realm of the subjective – generationally accumulated perceptions and deep-rooted hatred and fear.

In policy terms, given the centrality of the federal government as the ultimate arbiter in the socio-political process, the need to address significant structural and distributive problems in the Niger Delta should now be the locus of security analysis and policy responses to the malignant condition of the region. In the final analysis, the infrastructural development of ND will depend on how available derivation resources are structured and allocated. This entails, (i) a fiscal regime, which allows the oil producing communities to benefit directly from revenue allocation and (ii) how the federal government can ensure that the greater proportion of allocation to states/local governments based on the derivation is committed to capital projects. The federal government can achieve (i) and (ii) above by tying allocations derived from oil revenues to specific developmental project in the oil producing areas to prevent the governing elite of the state and Local

Government from the diverting these resources to projects of ostentation across the Region.

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