

Environment and the Economics of Nationalism: Revisiting the Oil Issue and the Restless Run of Locusts in the Niger Delta

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1. Introduction

The Niger Delta crisis has, in very recent times, taken a dangerous dimension, underscoring the degeneration of the issue due to the failure of the government at all levels, and other non-state actors, including multinational companies (MNCs), to bring the crisis to an end. The emergence of militias and cult groups in the last three years points to the aggravation rather than the resolution of the conflicts. The government's seeming complicity in protection of the MNCs, using instruments of state force to protect foreign companies, has multiplied illegal means and instruments to fight the cause of "economic and social emancipation", as some militants claimed in February 2007 in an interview by Jeff Koniange of the American Cable News Network (CNN). This study examines the protracted Niger Delta crisis, exacerbated by oil, ecological and socio-ethnic factors, and its implication for Nigeria's external relations. It does this by revisiting the many unresolved issues, including the Ogoni crisis, which explain the escalation of the crisis.

However, it has been observed that studies on the crisis largely demonstrate neglect or ignorance of the centrality of ecological undercurrents and attendant deprivations in the crisis which accounted for its internationalization and ultimately culminated in the pariah status Nigeria earned in the 1990s because of its mishandling. Put differently, while social and relative deprivation is considered primary and environmental issues are looked at as the secondary causes of the problem in some studies (in some, it is reduced to political and some ethnic or communal causes), the impact of the Niger Delta problem on Nigeria's relationship with the international community is the only consideration in some others; efforts to situate the environmental issues in the eventual

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world attention are infinitesimal and insignificant, or almost non-existent. This paper attempts to correct that and strengthen the perspective that the activities of the oil companies created enormous ecological problems in addition to the abjection of the people, which led to internal strife, government highhandedness in the matter, and mounting international concern. The prejudicial condemnation and murder of environmentalist leaders of the Movement for Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) fuelled world consternation and eventual isolation of Nigeria in the international system, while the increasingly deplorable condition of the peoples to date, is the major cause of the illegal means of warfare, as we can now see.

This study therefore considers the role of environmental issues in the Niger Delta crisis. The link between the environmental issues and conflict in the Niger Delta is established, while the role of the government in the crisis, its protection of Multinational Oil Companies at the expense of its own people, and elimination of environmental activists including Ken Saro-Wiwa in the mid 1990s, are discussed. However, the emergence of vicious militant groups, such as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) etc., and their many incursions on the economic and resource base of the region which constitute a setback to Nigeria's economic development, coupled with the huge environmental crisis in the region, represent the economic cost of the phenomenon and also explain the international dimensions of the crisis.

Clarification of Terms

The following terms are the key words in the paper which must be clarified to make the discourse comprehensible:

Economics of Nationalism - This explains the huge economic burden that Nigeria experiences as a result of the conflict in the Niger Delta. It includes vandalization of oil pipelines, abduction of oil workers including expatriates, intermittent fighting among groups, impeding activities of oil companies, oil spillage and gas flaring that damage the environment and other natural resources. The abduction of workers, vandalization, conflict in the Niger Delta and the emergence of militant groups are manifestations of the extreme "nationalism" aimed at fighting perceived injustices and committing oil companies to perform their so-called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These militant activities stall economic development in the country.

Restless Run of Locusts - "Restless run" refers to the perpetual

restiveness or persistent agitations of the militant groups and other peoples of the Niger Delta. Such people use different means to fight perceived injustices, including constitutional, illegal, political and passive means to fight the oil companies and the government which they believe are responsible for their economic, social and environmental woes. Locusts connote "pests" that charge up the Niger Delta. These pests are the 'leaders of thought', militants and terrorists operating in the region.

2. Background to the Niger Delta Crisis

The Niger Delta region covers an estimated area of 20,000 km² within wetlands of 70,000 km² formed primarily by sediment deposition. It is located in the south-south geographical region of Nigeria and has a population of about 20 million people made up of many ethnic nationalities. The region comprises nine states which include Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. However, the core Niger Delta region includes the three states of Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers. The vegetation of the Nigerian coastal area is characterized by mangrove forests, brackish swamp forests and rain forests. The country's extensive mangrove ecosystem, a great proportion of which lies within the Niger Delta and found mainly in the Rivers, Delta, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Lagos and Ondo states, is estimated to cover between 500,000 and 885,000 hectares. Freshwaters start at the northern limit of the mangrove ecosystems and extend to the Sahelian region (Kuruk, 2004). The Delta environment is made up of four major ecological zones which include: mangrove swamp forests, fresh water swamps, coaster barrier islands, and lowland rainforests. Thus, the well-endowed ecosystem of the Delta is simply incredible as it can naturally sustain more species of fresh water fish, economic trees, and a wide variety of crops than any other ecosystem in West Africa.

In 1956, Shell British Petroleum (now Royal Dutch Shell) discovered crude oil at Oloibiri, a village in the Niger Delta, and commercial production began in 1958. Today, there are 606 oil fields in the Niger Delta, of which 360 are on-shore and 246 off-shore. (Nigeria Country Analysis Brief, 2005). Nigeria is now the largest oil producer in Africa and the sixth largest in the world, averaging 2.7 million barrels per day (bbl/d) in 2006. Nigeria's economy is heavily dependent on earnings from the oil sector, which provides 20% of the GDP, 95% of foreign exchange earnings, and about 65% of budgetary revenues (CIA World Fact Book, 2005 cited in Nwilo and Badejo, 2006).

The Niger Delta crisis is unarguably related to environmental problems

in the area, which surprisingly, is closely linked to the activities of its oil industry. It is surprising because the region holds some of the world's richest and finest deposits of crude oil but ironically the people living in the area are poorer than ever, no thanks to the MNCs and successive national and regional governments. According to Friends of the Earth, (FOE, 2004), Nigeria's oil wealth has been exploited for more than 45 years. But while oil companies including Shell, ExxonMobil and TotalFinaElf, have profited from the resource, local communities in the oil rich but conflict-ridden areas live with the daily pollution caused by non-stop gas flaring – where the gas associated with oil extraction is burnt off into the atmosphere. More gas is flared in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world – in Western Europe, 99 per cent of the associated gas is used or re-injected into the ground. But in Nigeria, despite regulations introduced more than 20 years ago to outlaw the practice, most associated gas is flared, causing local pollution and contributing to climate change.

Besides, the problem of oil spills, deliberate destruction of the mangrove to pave way for pipelines, disappearance of the aqua-life (again due to oil spills and the frequent movement of heavy ships), etc are common occurrences in the Niger Delta. With the rate of degradation, the region could suffer a loss of some very significant percentage of its inhabitable terrain in the foreseeable future if nothing urgent is done to salvage the ugly situation. In fact, the experiences of the people of this region over the years can accurately be described as the tragedy of exploitation and has re-echoed the resource-curse argument.

Niger Delta communities had expressed discontent and ventilated their grievances through political and constitutional means against the marginalization and environmental abuses of their soil and water from the time of independence (The News, 2006). In more recent times, particularly from the 1990s, they had become more restive and violent in their protests against the activities of foreign oil companies, notably Royal-Dutch Shell (Shell Petroleum Development Company). Their grievances have focused on the deteriorating conditions of life brought about by air and water pollution, land degradation and the socioeconomic impact of oil exploration on the local communities. The 1990s witnessed an outburst of violence against transnational oil corporations and the seeming government conspiracy with them, and the use of one ethnic group against another or infiltration by TNCs/government of ethnic groups with black-sheep, which bred grave intra and inter ethnic hostilities (Agbese, 2002).

The government's complicity in the crisis found manifestation in the deployment of heavily armed military personnel to guard oil facilities,

operations and expatriates and the MNCs (Ikpatt, 2001). In addition, oil companies have had to recruit jobless local youths to watch over oil interests, thus setting local people against themselves. The official reason given however, was that the presence of heavy security would act as deterrence to aggressive communities from destroying oil installations. The rationale behind this was controversial as it also showed insensitivity to the fundamental causation of persistent conflict, namely, abjection and denial.

3. Impact of Oil Industry on the Environment in the Niger Delta

Some of the major environmental concerns of the negative exploratory activities of oil companies in the Niger Delta include **oil spillage** and **gas flaring** in the area. The net effect of these shortcomings have expectedly made life extremely difficult in the region. Nwilo and Badejo, (2006) in support of the foregoing, have pointed out that "since the discovery of oil in Nigeria in the 1950s, the country has been suffering the negative environmental consequences of oil development. The growth of the country's oil industry, combined with a population explosion and a lack of enforcement of environmental regulations has led to substantial damage to Nigeria's environment, especially in the Niger Delta region". Akpofure et al, (2000) cited in Nwilo and Badejo (2006), clarify that "when there is an oil spill on water, spreading immediately takes place. The gaseous and liquid components evaporate. Some get dissolved in water and even oxidize, and yet some undergo bacterial changes and eventually sink to the bottom by gravitational action. The soil is then contaminated with a gross effect upon the terrestrial life. As the evaporation of the volatile lower molecular weight components affects aerial life, so the dissolution of the less volatile components with the resulting emulsified water, affects aquatic life". Other studies have also shown that oil on the water surface also interferes with gaseous interchange at the sea surface and dissolved oxygen levels will thereby be lowered. This will, no doubt, reduce the life span of marine animals. Micro-organisms also degrade petroleum hydrocarbons after spillage (Atlas, 1981; Leahy and Colwell, 1990; Atlas and Bartha, 1992).

Oil spill incidents have occurred in various parts and at different times along our coast. Some major spills in the coastal zone are the GOCON's Escravos spill in 1978 of about 300,000 barrels, SPDC's Forcados Terminal tank failure in 1978 of about 580,000 barrels and Texaco's Funiwa-5 blow out in 1980 of about 400,000 barrels. Other oil spill incidents are those of the Abudu pipe line in 1982 of about 18,818 barrels, the Jesse Fire Incident which claimed about a thousand lives and the Idoho Oil Spill of January 1998, of about 40,000 barrels. The

most publicized of all oil spills in Nigeria occurred on January 17, 1980, when a total of 37.0 million litres of crude oil got spilled into the environment. This spill occurred as a result of a blow-out at Funiwa 5 offshore station. Nigeria's largest spill was an offshore well blow-out in January 1980 when an estimated 200,000 barrels of oil (8.4million US gallons) spilled into the Atlantic Ocean from an oil industry facility, that damaged 340 hectares of mangrove (Nwilo and Badejo, 2005). Table 1.0 below provides a summary of oil spill incidents in Nigeria between the period 1976 and 1998. These figures are official figures which in most cases may not adequately report all cases of oil spillage.

TABLE 1.0: OIL SPILL DATA FOR NIGERIA

S/NO	Year	Number of Spill Incidents	Quantity spilled (barrels)
1	1976	128	26,157.00
2	1977	104	32,879.25
3	1978	154	489,294.75
4	1979	157	694,117.13
5	1980	241	600,511.02
6	1981	238	42,722.50
7	1982	257	42,841.00
8	1983	173	48,351.30
9	1984	151	40,209.00
10	1985	187	11,876.60
11	1986	155	12,905.00
12	1987	129	31,866.00
13	1988	208	9,172.00
14	1989	195	7,628.161
15	1990	160	14,940.816
16	1991	201	106,827.98
17	1992	367	51,131.91
18	1993	428	9,752.22
19	1994	515	30,282.67
20	1995	417	63,677.17
21	1996	430	46,353.12
22	1997	339	59,272.30
23	1998	390	98345.00
Total		5724	2,571,113.90

Source: The Department of Petroleum Resources, Nigeria (cited in Nwilo & Badejo, 2001)

It is important to note here that spilled oil is most of the time lost to the environment. For example, Nwilo and Badejo, (2006) pointed out that "Available records for the period of 1976 to 1996 indicate that approximately 6%, 25%, and 69% respectively, of total oil spilled in the Niger Delta area, were in land, swamp and offshore environments. Also, between 1997 and 2001, Nigeria recorded a total number of 2,097 oil spill incidents."

The other major negative consequence of oil exploration and exploitation is the incidents of gas flaring. This is a practice whereby the associated gas accompanying the production of crude oil is burnt off so as to maximize the production of crude oil. However, the prevailing consensus worldwide regarding gas flaring is that it is wasteful economically and environmentally. The burning of gas by flaring leads to the emission of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas. Venting of the gas without burning, a practice for which flaring seems often to be treated as a synonym, releases methane, the second main greenhouse gas. It is therefore very disturbing to note that associated gas flaring continues unabated in Nigeria. For instance, a report by Friends of the Earth (2005) shows that, "More gas is flared in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world. Estimates are notoriously unreliable, but roughly 2.5 billion cubic feet of gas associated with crude oil is wasted in this way everyday. This is equal to 40% of all Africa's natural gas consumption in 2001, while the annual financial loss to Nigeria is about US \$2.5 billion. The flares have contributed more greenhouse gases than all of sub-Saharan Africa combined. And the flares contain a cocktail of toxins that affect the health and livelihood of local communities, exposing Niger Delta residents to an increased risk of premature deaths, child respiratory illnesses, asthma and cancer."

The same report further disclosed that "The flaring of associated gas (AG) in the Niger Delta is a human rights, environmental and economic monstrosity. Nowhere else in the world have communities been subjected to it on such a scale. It is estimated to cost Nigeria US \$2.5 billion annually, whilst the roaring, toxic flares affect the health and livelihoods of Delta inhabitants."

In terms of how much is flared, the Friends of the Earth (2005) report estimated that "For the first 20 years or so of the industry, almost all the AG was flared: 2.1 billion cubic feet per day (bcf/d) or 92% in 1981 for example. This percentage barely declined during the 1980s, standing at about 88% in 1989. It seems to have reached about 2.6 bcf/d in the late 1990s, including venting, though by then this was about 75% of all gas

production. Whilst OPEC has suggested that flaring has since dropped below 2 bcf/d, and whilst both OPEC and the Nigerian Department of Petroleum Resources have suggested that gas flared as a percentage of all gas production has dropped below 50%, this is not universally accepted." Whatever is the situation, the figures are still alarming particularly when a comparative analysis of the situation is undertaken. The table below provides a summary of the estimated volume of flared gas in some selected countries.

TABLE 2.0: BEST ESTIMATE OF GAS-FLARING TRENDS IN
SELECTED COUNTRIES (2000)

Country	Flared Gas	Share of World total (%)	Ratio of Gas Flared to Total Produced	
			1990	2000
Algeria	6.8	6	79	101
Angola	4.3	4	n/a**	118
China	3.2	3	n/a**	74
Egypt	0.9	1	37	23
Indonesia	4.5	4	66	66
Iran	10.5	10	70	56
Nigeria	17.2	16	250	166
Mexico	5.6	5	n/a	33
North Sea*	2.7	3	18	9
Russia	11.5	11	n/a	77
Venezuela	4.5	4	30	27
United states	2.8	3	10	22
Other countries	33.0	30	-	-
World	107.5	100	-	-

Source: Cedigaz, USEIA, OPEC, IEA, World Bank, HIS Energy Group

*North Sea - Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom. Germany and Netherlands do not flare gas, (Cedigaz, 2000)

**n/a - Not available

A careful consideration of the above Table shows that Nigeria comes out as the world's number one flarer and venter on both absolute and proportionate bases, whether based on OPEC figures for Nigeria for 2001, which is 16.8 bcm/y, or on Cedigaz data, in which case, Nigeria

accounted for 19.79% of the global amount estimated to be a total world flaring volume of 84.87 bcm, in 2001. This amount surprisingly is more than those of the second and third countries combined, and four times higher than the nearest African country, Algeria, which is recorded as having flared and vented 4 bcm. European flaring is put at 2.54 bcm, or 0.76% of gross production; US flaring is at 2.97 bcm, or 0.43% of the gross production, while world total gross production in 2001 was 3150.13 bcm, with 84.87 bcm or 2.69% flared and vented.

Gas flaring contributes significantly to climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC (2001) in its report stated that "the global average surface temperature increased by about 0.6°C over the 20th century, that it was 66-90% confident that most of the observed warming over the second half of the century was due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations, and projected that the temperature would increase from 1990-2100 by 1.4 to 5.8°C. It also stated that global mean sea level is projected to rise by 0.09 to 0.88 metres between 1990 and 2100, due primarily to thermal expansion and loss of mass from glaciers and ice caps." This has serious implications for northern Nigeria where the problem of desertification has become very disturbing. According to UNEP (1997), "Desertification in Africa has already reduced by 25% the potential vegetative productivity of more than 7 million km², or one-quarter of the continent's land area. It will lead to more people being unable to live in the countryside and to an increase pressure on urban areas." Flaring in Nigeria is widely believed to have contributed more emissions of greenhouse gases than all other sources in sub-Saharan Africa combined. The World Bank (2002) sums up the scale of Nigerian flaring as follows: "The most striking example of environmental neglect has been in the oil sector, where natural gas flaring has contributed more emissions of greenhouse gases than all other sources in sub-Saharan Africa combined."

Within the Niger Delta, there is a common but firm belief that gas flaring is damaging the health of the local people. This stems from the fact that flaring of AG from oil production facilities is like setting a match to a large container of petrol. The enormous heat they emit simply would not permit any life (plant and animal) around them to survive. The content of the toxic emissions resulting from the combustion of AG in this open, uncontrolled manner usually "is a mix of smoke, more precisely referred to as particulate matter; combustion by-products, including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxides and carcinogenic substances, such as benz[a]pyrene and dioxin; and unburned fuel components, including benzene, toluene,

xylene, and hydrogen sulfide." (Friends of the Earth, 2005).

Exposure to these pollutants impact human health adversely. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA): "Many scientific studies have linked breathing particulate matter to a series of significant health problems, including: aggravated asthma, increases in respiratory symptoms like coughing and difficult or painful breathing, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, and premature death." Also, according to the U.S. EPA: "It has been clearly established and accepted that exposure to benzene and its metabolites causes acute nonlymphocytic leukemia and a variety of other blood-related disorders in humans." (Cited in; Friends of the Earth, 2005). Gas Flaring is thus considered to be a likely cause of premature deaths and cases of leukemia in the Niger Delta.

One other well established health damaging consequence of gas flaring includes high incidences of acid rain which the Delta residents have long complained about; particularly, how their corrugated roofs have been corroded by the composition of the rain that falls as a result of flaring. The primary cause of acid rain are emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), which combine with atmospheric moisture to form sulfuric acid and nitric acid, respectively. Acid rain acidifies lakes and streams and damages vegetation. In addition, acid rain accelerates the decay of building materials and paint. Prior to falling to the earth, SO_2 and NO_x gases and their particulate matter derivatives, sulfates and nitrates, contribute to visibility degradation and harm public health. In the Delta, an oily hue is often observed on collected rain water (Friends of the Earth, 2005).

The report further added that the observation that gas flaring in the Niger Delta is causing acid rain is also backed by the U.S government's Energy Information Administration, which states: "The continued process of gas flaring has not only meant that a potential energy source and source of revenue - has gone up in smoke, but it is also a major contributor to air pollution and acid rain."

4. The Spatial Economy of the Debased Environment and Conflict

Social deprivation constructs an economy of abjection (Folarin, 2007) The term 'abjection' literally means the state of being cast down. For Robert Barnhart (1996), abjection refers to abasement. In contemporary critical theory, it is often used to describe the state of often- marginalized groups. The concept finds expression in the works of Kristeva (2005) which denotes rejection.

The connexion of abjection to spatial economy is the habitation of the former in the compelling outcome of the latter. A growing number of the abjected naturally increases an empty economic space of poverty that the abjected or socially and economically debased essentially occupy. 'Spatial' denotes a large habitation with no expected economic reward or leverage *vis-à-vis* the privileged other. A spatial economy of abjection finds multitudes, including the downtrodden, social outcastes and economically deprived, competing for space and scarce resources. In his study, Lyotard (1990) reflects on "the Jews' predicament", positing that the trauma of racism, the violence of such forms of exclusion and abjection, introduce another excess which cannot be translated, for the monolingual discourse of "identity" has no place for the excluded, except as reminders, or as supplement; the other is thrown into the forgetting of disavowal. For the minoritarian other who is the abjected, the identity mirrored in the gaze misses or misrecognises its phantasized ideal and must recognize its lack-of-being at both levels of the psychic and the social.

The inevitable results of the spatial struggle in an economy of abjection is the further engraving of disempowerment and cleavages that erode the possibility of a united front to engender change in status, prevail on policy, or compel favourable outcomes as was the case in the Niger Delta and more particularly in Ogoniland. Such divisions are perpetuated by the hegemonic class through systematic policies of divide and rule and the full utility of physical force. In post-colonial Nigeria, there is a conspiracy between the military-political class and the bourgeoisie who represent the metropolitan powers and use foreign policy to fester the nests of the neocolonial lords who keep them in power. What results is relative and social deprivation. Relative deprivation connotes socio-economic denials that ultimately culminate in abjection.

According to Lea and Young (1984) who see relative deprivation from the group perspective, deprivation occurs when a group feels deprived in comparison to other similar groups, or when its expectations are not met. Deprivation is in diverse manifestations. However, Townsend (1987) identifies material and social deprivation. Material deprivation covers dieting, clothing, housing deprivations, and deprivations of home facilities, environment, location and deprivation of work. Social deprivation, on the other hand, covers lack of employment rights, deprivation of family activity, lack of integration into the community, lack of participation in social institutions, recreational deprivation and educational deprivation.

Social alienation would inevitably result. The alienated finds himself more and more isolated and alienated from society, alienation not only from his work, but alienation from society, state (and) from those with whom he is working, and alienation even from himself. In the final analysis, for Varma, such individuals or groups are haunted by an inferiority complex and remain in a state of perpetual anxiety, fear, and worry (Varma, 2000). This is symptomatic of the completion of the process of subordination and humiliation by the powerful class that has always wanted him out of the economic space.

Such a state of abjection arising from conspired suppression, when it peaks, will culminate in conflict. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1971) in agreement with the postulates of John Dollard, Leonard Doob *et al* (1939), for instance, argue that the long-term consequence of the deprivations and alienations is usually conflict— it becomes a battle of wits between two unequal classes, but with the weaker classes or the minoritarian other, losing out in tussle. This has characterized the Niger Delta area from independence to our period of study and beyond.

5. Niger Delta Conflicts, Global Response and Nigeria's External Relations

By 1970, about 300,000 barrels of crude oil had been spilled in the Niger Delta area (Earth Action, 1994). According to Shell, the spillage was an act of sabotage by the Biafran army as they were losing in the civil war (Shell, 1995). Shell figures also show that from 1985 to early 1993, 5,352 barrels of oil were spilled in 87 incidents in Ogoniland after their staff had been withdrawn. The tendency had been for state officials and oil companies to blame the problems on sabotage by local communities. For instance, Shell claimed that out of 87 instances of oil spillage in Ogoniland between 1985 and 1993, 60 (about 70%) were sabotage acts. The figure tallied with government claims that out of 11 incidents in Ogoniland in 1990, eight or 73% were due to sabotage (cited in Okerenta, 2006).

Damages to the environment in Ogoniland went along with deprivation. Consequently, local leaders protested against these injustices. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) reduced public spending, and subsidies to goods such as petrol, which led to the rise of pump price of petroleum products from N 0.75/litre in 1986 to N 11/litre in 1996. These severely affected standards of living and hardship everywhere, particularly in the oil-producing areas. Evidence of conflicts began to show before 1980, but the situation worsened in the second half

of the 1980s and in the 1990s. However, because oil exploration by multinational oil corporations had increased with the expanding space of squalor, the Niger Delta people began to hold oil companies and the government responsible for their deprivation. They lamented, for instance, the failure of the two institutions to construct new (or at least rehabilitate existing) roads, schools, hospitals, and provide opportunities for employment, support for farming, and indeed do everything to improve their livelihood. Oil companies and the government insisted that these claims were exaggerated as they were sometimes outrageous and indecorously demanded (Rowell and Kretzmann, 1999).

For instance, in the *Ogoni Bill of Rights*, which was presented to the government in October 1990, the Ogoni people claimed that their land had provided Nigeria 30 billion dollars in oil revenue from 1958 with little or no infrastructure development in Ogoniland to justify the oil exploration: no representative whatsoever in institutions of the Federal Government, or pipe borne water, electricity, jobs or inclusion in the opportunities available at the oil companies, etc.. Further, the Ogoni claimed in the *Bill of Rights*:

Ogoni languages of Gokana and Khana are underdeveloped and are about to disappear, whereas other Nigerian languages are being forced on us. Shell Company does not employ Ogoni people at a meaningful or any level at all, in defiance of the Federal Government's regulations. The search for oil has caused severe land and food shortages in Ogoni, one of the most densely populated areas of Africa. Ogoni people lack education, health and other social facilities. It is intolerable that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution (1992).

In response, Shell, the government and seven other neighboring oil-producing communities like Asa-Ndoki, dismissed these claims (Shell, 1995); Daily Champion, 1994; The News, 1995). However, it was relative deprivation, the gap between expectation and actualization, like the one in the foregoing claims that explain why men rebel (Gurr, 1974), and more importantly, that explicates the Niger Delta conflicts.

Osaghae (1995) argues that the approach of minorities in their demand for better living condition hitherto were passive, namely through delegation and petitions to the state and oil firms. The failure of these means to engender meaningful changes may explain why the Ogonis decided on a different line of action in the early 1990s. In 1990, a non-political organization comprising Ogoni elite and traditional rulers

known as *KAGOTE*, whose origin dates back to the 1970s, drew up and presented to the state, the Ogoni Bill of Rights. Among other things highlighted earlier, they demanded political autonomy within Nigeria and a fair access to and use of oil revenue derived from Ogoniland to develop their homeland and language, as well as protection from Shell. As an instrument to pursue the actualization of the demands in the Bill of Rights, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) was set up in 1990. The organizational structure of MOSOP consisted of the following subgroups: National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA), Ogoni Teachers Union (OTU), National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS), Conference of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COR), Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP), Ogoni Welfare Association (OWA), Council of Ogoni Churches (COC), and the Council of Ogoni Leaders of Thought (COLT).

MOSOP followed up the Bill of Rights with intense campaigns at both the national and international levels with a view to publicizing the Ogoni predicament. In that effort, the Bill was presented to the United Nations Sub-Committee on Human Rights on the Prevention from Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the African Human Rights Committee and several other non-state actors such as the General Assembly of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples' Organization at the Hague in 1993 (Okonta, 2000). The government and Shell initially responded to the Bill with indifference. However, as MOSOP began to secure public and international support, the state reacted by banning ethnic organizations and others such as MOSOP and the Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa (EMIROAF), both led by Saro-Wiwa. These two organizations and the National Youth Council of Ogoni People were the three main organizations, which spearheaded the Ogoni insurrection.

Relating it to the Bill of Rights, MOSOP wrote to Shell, Chevron and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in December 1992, asking for a favourable disposition to Ogoni demands or evacuation from the land. Other demands included the payment of \$6 billion in accumulated rents and royalties for oil exploited in Ogoni fields from 1958; reparation of \$4 billion for soil, water, and air pollution; cessation of gas flaring; and commencement of negotiation with the Ogoni people. According to Osaghae (1995), the significance of the letter to the companies was that it demonstrated the people's loss of confidence in the state. According to them, it was time for 'the Ogoni to fight for their own salvation because there is no government to deliver us.' (ibid).

No wonder on January 4 1993, a day set aside by the UN for

celebration of the World's Indigenous Peoples, also declared as Ogoni Day, in spite of the government ban on all public gatherings and demonstrations and a decree making self-determination struggles treasonable and punishable by death, an estimated 300,000 Ogoni staged a massive demonstration in Ogoniland against Shell. The previous day, at a thanksgiving service held by the tomb of Timothy Paul Birabi, a frontline Ogoni leader highly revered the Ogoni history, orations and speeches inciting the Ogoni to fight against the social and environmental injustices had been given. The first Ogoni graduate, Paul Birabi, organized the Ogoni State Representative Assembly to join other minorities in Rivers province to demand a separate Rivers State from the Eastern region in the 1960s. In his speech, one of the vice presidents of MOSOP, Edward Kobani, had said:

We have come to this sacred ground to reaffirm our determination to fight with every drop of blood in our vein that the Ogoni man cannot be a slave in our God given country. We have come to get inspiration to carry us through the days ahead (Osaghae, 1995).

On 13 March 1993, MOSOP organized a night vigil throughout Ogoniland. The vigil, which took place in churches, involved prayers for deliverance and processions. By Thursday 29, April, Wilbros, an American Company, contracted by Shell to lay oil pipelines from the Bomu oil fields in Ogoni across the River Niger, started bulldozing community forests and freshly planted farmlands in the village of Biafra, under armed protection. The security forces brutalized a female farm owner who challenged the destruction and protested. The following day about a thousand Ogoni protesters marched against Wilbros and their military escort. In the ensuing confrontation, many Ogoni were wounded, a mother of five, K. Kogbara was shot, and her hand was subsequently amputated, and Mr. Friday was shot dead. At the funeral for the dead, MOSOP leader, Edward Kobani remarked: "The death of (Friday) will no doubt act as a tonic for the Ogoni Struggle. When blood is spilled, the fight can no longer be abandoned" (Amanyie, 2001).

In a move that was to infuriate most Ogoni, particularly the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), the youth wing of MOSOP, a handful of prominent Ogoni traditional chiefs and elite took a full page advertisement in a newspaper in which they apologized to the government over the incident leading to the death of Friday. Moreover,

the signatories disowned MOSOP and called on the government to clamp down on the organization. Predictably, the public denunciation incensed Ogoni youths who felt betrayed by their elders. The latter were quickly labelled anti-Ogoni elements and feeling unsafe in the ensuing anger that followed, they escaped and ran for government shelter in Port Harcourt. On June 2, 1993 the Ogoni voted to boycott the approaching June 12 presidential election. While President Babangida canvassed for participation of Ogoni, Saro-Wiwa and some MOSOP members called for a general boycott in Ogoniland. But Kobani and others wanted participation and this led to dissent in the group. Saro-Wiwa and a few other leaders were arrested and arraigned (Baxter, Horsman, Kretzmann, 1996).

Violent communal clashes followed, with the Andoni, another oil producing community attacking the Ogoni town of Kaa on August 5, 1993. The Kaa market and several buildings were set ablaze. When the dust settled, casualties on the Ogoni side stood at 150 persons dead. Subsequent violent clashes resulted in the deaths of over a thousand Ogoni and the displacement of some 3,000 persons (Greenpeace, 1996).

Survivors' account of the attacks emphasized the use of sophisticated assault weapons; grenades and mortars were used in the fight. The Ogoni argued that a small fishing Andoni community could not muster the expertise and military skill required to use such military instruments effectively. Following the clashes, the Rivers State government, in October 1993 set up a reconciliation committee, the Rivers State Peace Conference Committee under Professor Claude Ake to broker peace between the Ogoni and their Andoni neighbours. Reacting to a hastily drawn up peace accord to which he was not privy, Ake resigned his chairmanship of the body arguing that,

...reports on the conflict have noted the scale and systematic nature of destruction as well as the sophistication of the operations. These features raise questions about whether the conflict is merely communal clash and the possibility that the two communities might have been victims of other forces exploiting a local situation (Amanyie, 2001).

Ake referred to the peace accord as cosmetic, unable to expose the deep causes of the clashes as unconcerned about the fate of its displaced victims. Saro-Wiwa also refused to sign the peace accord for, among other things, the Clause 6 of the document tacitly opened the way for return of Shell leading to "The immediate resumption of full economic

and social activities within Ogoni and Andoni areas." This suggested a ploy to smuggle Shell back into Ogoniland. Shell had earlier pulled out of Ogoniland in 1993 following the massive anti-Shell demonstrations, spearheaded by MOSOP, Greenpeace and other environmental organizations and the severe beating of a Shell worker in January 1993 (Greenpeace, 1996).

Violence was again unleashed on the Ogoni, but this time, from the Okrika. Regardless of explanations given for the attacks, the *Amayanabo* (king) of Okrika, S.P.U. Ogan and Saro-Wiwa affirmed that there was no land dispute between the two. But the aftermath of the Ogoni-Okrika dispute was brute force, which soldiers deployed to suppress the crisis, with hundreds of Ogoni being the victims, a development believed to be 'politically contrived' to deal with the Ogoni (*African Guardian*, 1993).

The Ogoni crisis reached a head in 1994. On May 21, 1994, a mob, chanting war songs, stormed the palace of the *Gbenemene* (traditional ruler) of Gokana, where certain Ogoni chiefs were holding court. An Ogoni youth who saw some "vultures" at the meeting was alleged to have mobilized other Ogoni youth who invaded the palace. Four of the "vultures" were clubbed to death, as the fifth one, Alhaji Mohammed, saved himself by taking refuge inside the shrine of the Ogoni spirit, a place which the assailants regarded too sacred to desecrate. Meanwhile, earlier in the day, a detachment of security operatives had mounted a roadblock a short distance away, preventing Saro-Wiwa from entering the village. Later in the evening, when news of the mayhem reached Port Harcourt, Major Paul Okuntimo's Rivers State Internal Security Task Force invaded Ogoniland. At least fifty Ogoni were killed, hundred arrested and properties worth millions of naira destroyed (Maier, 2003). A few days later, Saro-Wiwa, his deputy, Ledum Mittee and eight others were arrested and charged before a military tribunal for murder. Although the evidence of the prosecution were fraught with contradictions, and despite the fact that no credible witness was produced to substantiate the allegation that the nine organized the murder, the tribunal convicted and sentenced Saro-Wiwa and eight others to death by hanging. While disagreeing with the procedures and verdict of the tribunal, Saro-Wiwa's attorney pressed him to accept responsibility for the killings because of the climate of intolerance he engendered.

The Ogoni crisis attracted international attention and reactions. The matter had been internationalized earlier by the adoption and presentation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights in October 1990, and the

presentation of the Ogoni case before the United Nations, as well as the recognition bestowed on MOSOP by the UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization) meeting held at the Hague. The agitations, human rights abuses by federal and state authorities and ecological degradation by the Shell oil company, and the excesses of state terror in Ogoniland by the dreaded Rivers State Internal Security Task Force, inevitably externalized the domestic crisis. It is pertinent to note that in contemporary global politics, human rights and the environment are no longer issues of domestic concern. Because such issues may explode the international system, world leaders and states intervene positively and swiftly. This explains the limits of sovereignty in international organizations, particularly when states are contracting parties to some conventions on human and environmental issues. The defence by the Nigerian Minister of External Affairs that the world had no business in the happenings in Nigeria and the government handling of the Ogoni crisis, was, as such, a ruse. Among other diplomatic blunders, Tom Ikimi, accused the United States of arrogating to itself the role of global policeman of democracy and lampooned the South African President, Nelson Mandela, for advocating sanctions against Nigeria in the aftermath of the hanging of Saro-Wiwa and eight others. In one of his characteristic unguarded remarks, Ikimi retorted,

We in Nigeria have held President Nelson Mandela in high esteem. Nevertheless, our experience as a people and a nation in world affairs, tells us that the successful struggle for liberation does not automatically endow a newcomer to the international arena with all the miances to perform creditably. And also, whoever gave the South African the song sheet to read has not done him honour (Fawole, 2004).

This came on the heels of Abacha's uncomplimentary remark on Mandela when he said: "I don't blame Mandela because, having spent 27 years in detention, he has lost touch with the socio-political trend in the world" (*The News*, 1995). Instead of tactful diplomatic fence-mending with Nigeria's traditional friends and allies in the Commonwealth, an unguided propaganda was mounted to launder the regime's soiled image and condemn perceived and imagined enemies. This did not do much good as the regime was unable to regain the confidence and support of the international community (Fawole, 2004). The two-year suspension by the Commonwealth was not reversed in spite of all entreaties by the junta, leading a frustrated Ikimi to decry the Commonwealth as "not a

serious Organization. They have done nothing for Nigeria. They have only come out with declarations or statements which they cannot carry out." (Fawole, 2004).

As noted earlier, it was on account of Nigeria's violation of the Harare Declaration on Human Rights in 1991, to which Nigeria was a contracting party, that compelled the Commonwealth to suspend Nigeria in 1995. The 1991 Harare Commonwealth Declaration also included the resolve of member-states of the organization to promote democracy and good governance. Also, as a member of the UN, Nigeria was aware of existing treaties and conventions on fundamental human rights and freedoms to which it was bound by being a signatory. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1948) which is a general but yet comprehensive document dealing with Human Rights and whose provisions were breached in the Ogoni case. Articles 5 and 9 specifically provide for safeguards against subjecting human beings "to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" and against "arbitrary arrest, detention or exile" (UNDR, 1948).

The Ogoni crisis, which complicated the country's existing national crisis, exacerbated by the lingering "June 12" problem, called for the prompt response of the world community, most of whom reacted by recalling their ambassadors, or the imposition of visa and travel restrictions on military personnel and government officials. The European Union placed restrictions on Nigerian sportsmen, and Canada broke diplomatic relations with Nigeria. Nigerians had to obtain traveling visas from Canada's consular office in Accra. Worse still, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) contemplated more comprehensive sanctions, and the UN also sent a fact-finding team whose comprehensive report severely indicted the regime for gross violations of human rights in Ogoniland (Maier, 2003).

Perhaps the Ogoni issue might not have elicited much passion and concern if not for the fact that the problem of environmental pollution and degradation had become a global concern. The world had come to terms with the fact that the environment was the common heritage of mankind and that environmental degradation in any country could not be overlooked because it carried trans-border harm across nations. The issue of environment thus focused the global searchlight on the activities of multinational oil corporations, whose relentless drive for oil exploration and the attendant unscrupulous drive for profit often culminated in environmental abuse and lack of concern for their host communities, especially in the developing countries. In the Niger Delta,

the ruthless activities of the Royal Dutch Shell oil company had to come into sharp focus because it was the main culprit in Ogoniland. The Ogoni protest further raised national and international concerns about the oil company's culpability in the wanton destruction of the entire Niger Delta environment (Okerenta, 2006).

Rather than take the necessary measures to assuage the wounded feelings of the Ogoni people, the Abacha regime embarked on a ruthless military pacification by establishing and deploying the notorious Rivers State Internal Security Task Force in Ogoniland. The regime took steps that further made it lose credibility in the international system. For instance, it set up in November 1995 a 50-man National Committee of Traditional Rulers and Leaders of Thought, to advise it on sensitive diplomatic problems. Made up of illiterate traditional rulers, old politicians from the First and Second Republics and other apologists of the regime, it was headed by General Jeremiah Useni, Abacha's personal friend. The *ad hoc* body did more damage than good because its real purpose was to shore up the junta's sagging legitimacy, organizing huge rallies in all the state capitals and Abuja where rented crowds on television, were impelled to openly condemn the Commonwealth and other international organizations.

The hangings increased negative global reactions, which had trailed the junta from its infamous cancellation of the democratic process in November 1993 and the arrest and detention of Chief Abiola, winner of the 1993 presidential elections. It was quite obvious to observers of Nigeria's military dictatorship that by the arrest of Saro-Wiwa and the others, their detention without charge for nine months under the most primitive prison conditions, their eventual trial and conviction by a special tribunal without the slightest pretense of adhering to due process, the junta's haste in confirming the sentence without having received the full records of the proceedings of the tribunal as required by the Civil Disturbances Act, and the gruesome execution of the convicts barely 48 hours later without having been allowed to plead for clemency, the Abacha regime violated every known rule of civilized conduct (Fawole, 1999).

The recourse to state violence to crush internal rebellion was considered uncivilized by the international community, and had, in the past, even been instrumental in the interventions in Cambodia, Panama, Uganda, South Africa during apartheid, and more recently Iraq. The global community condemned the regime and called for sanctions against it. The timing of the execution of the Ogoni Nine coincided with

the Commonwealth Summit in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1995. It was embarrassing to a global community that had pleaded for clemency so much and had been assured even by Ikimi at the Summit that the Abacha regime was redressing the issue. Nelson Mandela had even staked his personal integrity to persuade the Summit not to take a hard-line action against Nigeria, having been assured by General Abacha that all would end well (Fawole, 2004).

It was even more ridiculous that just when Ikimi had finished addressing the Summit and had granted an interview to the world press that the Nigerian government was not and had not hanged the Ogoni leaders, he was confounded when news reached him that they had been hanged. Unable to secure any concession to ease its international isolation, the regime, using Ikimi and other sycophants, including former members of the June 12 winning team, and high profile emissaries, embarked on the search for new allies in and out of Africa. In Africa, fellow dictators and states isolated in the international system like Nigeria, gave their endorsement to the regime. They included Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, General Omar El-Bashir of the Sudan, Colonel Barre Mainassara of Niger Republic and President Yahya Jammeh of Gambia. In fact, Colonel Gaddafi was allowed to defy a subsisting UN air embargo by flying to Nigeria in a highly publicized visit. Both Gaddafi and Mainassara were also awarded Nigeria's highest national honour, that of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (GCFR) during their solidarity visits to the country. With the European Union countries maintaining their sanctions and the Commonwealth unrelenting in its criticism, and with the breaking of diplomatic relations with Canada, the international isolation became compounded. High profile delegations were also dispatched to other unpopular dictatorships like Iraq, Iran and North Korea, the rather simplistic justification being that "since the Western allies have decided to abandon us, we might have to look elsewhere." An attempt was even made for Nigeria to become a member of the D-8, a group of eight developing Islamic nations spearheaded by Turkey, to further shore up its international credibility. Overtures were also made to the Francophone Community in the face of Commonwealth hostility, and France gave its support to Abacha.

The international reprisals of the mismanagement of the domestic Ogoni crisis were also manifested in sports and other social events. For instance, the much advertised hosting right for the FIFA World Youth Championship, to be given Nigeria, was withdrawn, and Nigeria's

participant at the Miss World Beauty Pageant in South Africa was disgraced as she was not recognized in the pageant. Nigeria could not overly press its claims to the disputed Bakassi Peninsula and had to follow Cameroon to the World Court for judicial settlement.

Further, the UN Commission on Human Rights at its 52nd session in Geneva in April 1996 condemned the regime for continued violation of human rights; the Commonwealth through its Commonwealth Ministerial Action Committee proposed the freezing of the personal assets of Nigerian rulers, imposition of a comprehensive ban on sporting activities, severance of air ties unless the regime took urgent measures towards speedy restoration of democratic rule and showed respect for human rights. The report of the Fact-Finding Mission of the UN Secretary General to Nigeria also severely indicted the regime for gross violation of Human Rights and the rule of law, and recommended a quick return to democracy, among other things.

The Abacha regime, in short, simply sacrificed Nigeria's age-long hard-earned international respect and goodwill on the altar of incompetence and inordinate ambition to crush all local and external challenges in Abacha's quest to consolidate his powers. He might have wanted to arrest a repeat of the 1994 Rwanda ethnic violence and genocide, which came after and soon occurred side by side with the Niger Delta communal skirmishes in 1993-1994 which probably explains his highhandedness in Ogoniland; but the acts earned his regime and Nigeria a place in the pantheons of infamy.

6. The Economics of the Niger Delta Conflicts

The cost of the Niger Delta struggle/conflicts in economic terms may never really be adequately estimated. Every party in the conflicts (the oil MNCs, the Nigerian state, the people of the Niger Delta, and of course, the international community) appears to be mostly concerned with immediate benefits to interests represented. However, the overall adverse consequence of the situation is rarely considered.

The people who have been in the struggle over the claim to a decent living as well as a decent environment, have been abused, oppressed, and suppressed by the elite using the instrument of the state. The reason for this is quite obvious; the people are of little or no economic relevance to the government. This is because the government need not depend on them for raising any significant revenue needed to run the state. The state thus over the years has misplaced its primary responsibility of protecting lives and property to that of protecting the multinationals at

the very expense of the people it is meant to govern. The masses of the Niger Delta people have gradually become an undesirable "liability" to the government instead of an asset. The people have, in turn, made the region much more expensive to govern and to do business, through the activities of militant groups in the area. This, in any case, is completely avoidable in the first instance.

The multinationals who seek more profits at the expense of the region, have over the years opted for the cheaper but immoral and criminal alternative of flaring and venting gas, and have, in the process, messed up the environment and wasted resources even in the midst of hunger in the faces of so many around them. As stated earlier, it is on record that a financial loss to Nigeria of about US \$2.5 billion annually is traceable to gas flaring. Besides, the associated loss of lives and failing health can never be sufficiently evaluated. The international community at large is also paying heavily as these MNCs contribute their unsolicited fair share of toxic emissions to the environment, thereby increasing the problem of global warming and rising sea levels all over. Moreover, every disruption in the supply of crude from the Niger Delta has consistently had its adverse impact on the world prices of crude oil. What this means is that everybody all over has had to pay more for petroleum products.

The international community has not done enough to stem the ugly tide. For example, the World Bank has been widely criticized over its inability to require the use of AG before approving its credit guarantees for the financing of the West African Gas Pipeline Project. Yet, the bank has since November 2004, approved US\$125 million in guarantees supporting the construction of a 678 km gas pipeline to transport natural gas from Nigeria to Benin, Ghana and Togo - the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP).

7. Conclusion

This study has been able to review environmental issues central in the Niger Delta crisis. It relocated the issues and subsequent conflicts within the uncommon perspective of the effective impact of domestic policies on the foreign policy or external relations of a state. More importantly, the study has looked at the different costs of the emergent militant nationalism in the delta on national development and the international relations of Nigeria. The study also discovered that the successive regimes in Nigeria considered the oil TNCs with which they had personal business, paramount in Nigeria's national interest ranking,

and that probably explains the disposition of their foreign policies to protecting their business interests and securing their stakes in the Niger Delta.

The Abacha approach seemed to have reared its ugly head again in the President Obasanjo era. The continued neglect of the Delta areas despite increased exploration activities of many new foreign oil companies, a development prodded by an aggressive campaign by the Obasanjo administration for foreign investment, exacerbated the Delta crisis. Several other militia movements have emerged in reaction to government over-protection of the exploitative oil companies, growing impoverishment, the emergence of more slum settlements, and above all, increased environmental degradation. The NDPVF under Alhaji Asari Dokubo, among others in the struggle, has been abducting expatriates, holding MNCs and their home government to ransom and sometimes asking for ransom fee, and have been asking the same old question, namely, good living for Deltans, social responsibility on the part of the oil companies and the government's attention by way of physical and economic development, meaningful allocation from the huge revenues coming from oil-producing areas, as well as the control of activities capable of destroying the eco-system in the Delta region. It is hoped that the Yaradua-Jonathan initiative to dialogue with all stake holders and deploy resources to the Delta for social rehabilitation and structural development would be faithfully implemented and yield some dividends.

It is pertinent that the oil companies be more perceptive of the plight of the people and be more socially responsible by contributing to their welfare, provide jobs for them, construct good roads, build decent low-cost housing for them, increase academic scholarship awards to their children, build schools and hospitals, provide water and electricity to the communities, etc. Put differently, the problem would be lessened when oil companies get more committed to their agreement with the government and the host communities of ensuring that they carry out their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to their host communities and avoid indulging in unethical activities.

Talking about Corporate Social Responsibility, companies and government should pay attention to the problem of infrastructure (including roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, drinkable water, electricity, etc) in the Niger Delta, which is long overdue. There is the need for both the government, at various levels, and the multinational oil companies, to invest massively in infrastructure in this region just as it

has been done in Lagos and Abuja. This will ensure that the environment is tidied up, made much more comfortable to live in, and the economically idle but restive youth in the area are engaged in the meantime, and of course provided some profitable means of livelihood.

Further, the youth can be more profitably engaged if they are encouraged to go to school. This can be engendered by a policy of provision of scholarships (compulsory and free quality education up to the tertiary level) to children from this area so as to empower them economically and make them much more useful to the state in the future.

Moreover, the question of who controls the natural resources located in a given region can be answered by the convocation of a national conference whose recommendations should first be subjected to a referendum. This will allow for a consensus by all stakeholders and a more enduring arrangement for the smooth operation of the oil industry, which is urgently needed for the stability of the world market and the Nigerian economy.

On the political frontier, there is a need to shift presidential power to the region, so as to complete the cycle among all the geo-political regions in the country. This will allow for equity in the polity, give the people a sense of belonging, and douse tension that is already mounting. This expectation has been partially satisfied now since the incumbent Vice President of the country is from the region. However, it must be emphasized here that nothing short of the position of the President of Nigeria will adequately pacify the Niger Delta people in their quest for a taste of political office in the country.

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