

THE NIGERIAN WARS, REGIONAL CRISES AND ETHNIC DISTURBANCES: POLICY RESPONSES AND DEMOCRATIC IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria was incorporated in 1914 when Frederick Lugard (First Governor – General) amalgamated the two British protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria and the Crown Colony of Lagos into a single entity. The primary reason for amalgamation was economic rather than political. It is therefore, a matter for great regret that this country (Nigeria) has suffered as a result of the all-pervasive disunity that has characterized all government action since our accession to independence in 1960. This disunity has distorted, complicated and to a large extent stultified every development effort undertaken by government. This paper therefore argues that the much-celebrated Nigeria reform progress might be rhetoric or much ado about nothing. And that the “BB-, BB and B” rating of the Nigerian economy might have been a baseless exercise. Consequently, the paper recommends the adoption of e-governance (development) as a therapy for a heterogeneous and divisible nation such as Nigerian (*Ceteris Paribus*).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“The 2007 election in Nigeria would be the most important election on the African Horizon and the speculations that Mr. Obasanjo would try to amend the constitution to attain a third term in office was raising political tensions and if proven true, threatens to unleash a major turmoil and conflict. Such chaos in Nigeria could lead to disruption of oil supply, secessionist moves by regional governments, major refugee flow and instability elsewhere in West Africa”

(Negroponte, 2006)

In 1914, Governor-General Frederick Lugard amalgamated the two British protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria and the Crown Colony of Lagos into a single entity. He organized a Central Secretariat at Lagos which was the seat of Government, and established the Nigeria Council (Legislative council) to provide a forum for representatives drawn from the provinces.

However, the process of edification was undermined by the persistence of different regional perspectives on governance between the Northern and Southern Provinces, and by Nigeria Nationalists in Lagos. While Southern Colonial Administrators Welcomed amalgamation as an opportunity for imperial expansion, their counterparts in the Northern province believed that it was injurious to the interests of the areas they administered because of their relative backwardness and that it was their duty to resist the advance of southern influences and culture into the North. This differential attitude signaled that a federal system might be a suitable framework for keeping Nigeria as a single political entity.

In an effort to establish a viable federation, the British modified the constitution four times (1922, 1946, 1951 and 1954). The result was a federation of three regions following the splitting of the southern province in 1946 to create the eastern and western regions while the Northern region was a continuation of the Northern province. This reigned establishment was to the fundamental ethnographic and cultural configuration of Nigeria society as well as an impetus for the further ethnicities of politics. The Northern region was and remains overwhelmingly Muslim in religious background and resisted western education and other cultural importations of the colonial regime they have historically been a significant region of cattle raising and supplies much of southern Nigeria with meat. The region has also been a major producer and exporter of cotton. The western region (including Lagos) emerged the economics hub of the country prior to the discovery of oil. They traditionally reside in urban areas, which is a manifestation of pre-colonial urban pattern of residence in African and which stimulated trade across the region the Yoruba were organized into a series of small kingdoms and chieftaincies, which were reinforced during the colonial period. The Eastern Region is the most heavily Christian in Nigeria having been the site of intensive missionary activity Ibo traders are legendary in their entrepreneurial skills and are found throughout Nigeria. However, their presence has often resulted in ethnic friction.

During the run-up to independence the British responding to Nigerian demands transferred responsibilities to Nigeria leaders by establishing a parliamentary form of Government based on the British models at both the regional and Federal level, and holding elections for each of these bodies. Internal self-government was thus granted to the eastern and western regions in 1957, and to the Northern Region in 1959.

Under the Federal constitution of 1959, Nigeria gained Independence from the British colonial administration on October 1, 1960 and thus Nigeria had three

regional governments (North East, West) with Lagos as the Federal Capital. However, (in 1963) successful agitation for separate states by some minority groups led to the creation of the mid-west Region from the Western Region with headquarters in Benin City. And following the first military coup d'etat on 15th January 1966, and the fear of the break – up of the country, the four regions were further broken into a 12-state structure (in 1967). They were North – Western (Sokoto), North central (Kaduna), Kano (Kano), North – Eastern (Maiduguri), Benue – Plateau (Jos), West – central (Ilorin), Lagos (Lagos), West (Ibadan), Mid - West (Benin City), East – Central (Enugu); South Eastern (Calabar) and Rivers (Port Harcourt).

Indeed, with the granting of independence to Nigeria, all the dirt, swept under the carpet, surfaced (Obasanjo, 1981). Nigeria was now beset by strings of strong political problems, which stemmed mainly from the lop-sided nature of the political division of the country and the type of the existing federal constitution, and the spirit in which it operated. Thus the first post – independence disturbance was over the defense agreement between Britain and Nigeria, which was an attempt (by Britain) to swindle Nigeria out of her sovereignty but contracting with Nigeria to afford each other such assistance as may be necessary for mutual defense and to consult together on measures to be taken jointly or separately to ensure the fullest co-operation between them for this purpose. Unfortunately, it was an unequal treaty and through student demonstrations and vehement opposition by the general public and the opposition members of the house of Reps, the agreement was abrogated in Dec. 1962.

The 1964 general election, however, was the biggest crisis of them all the election was alleged to be neither free nor fair. All devices imaginable were said to have been used by the ruling parties in the regions to eliminate opponents there were boycotts by rival parties and the chairman of the electoral commission himself admitted there were proven irregularities. And yet, maturity and good

sense prevailed to ward off the disruption imminent after 1964 general elections. The same could not be said of the western regional Election of 1965.

The rigging and irregularities in this election were alleged to be more brazen and more shameful. Law and order broke down completely leading to an almost complete state of anarchy. A private army of thugs committed arson and indiscriminate killings. Law-abiding citizens lived in constant fear of their lives and property, and this was the state of affairs when the coup of 15 January 1966 took place.

However, a counter coup on 29 July 1966 swept Idris from power and installed General Yakubu Gowon. Together with Idris, thirty-three officers of Eastern Nigerian Origin (the majority of whom were Ibos) were killed. Then followed a series of riots in the North in which thousands of Easterners living there were killed (Nwankwo, 1980). Thus the exodus movement polarized the Nigeria Crisis into an Eastern Region – Federal government conflict. Unfortunately, all efforts towards settlement failed.

Settlement failed. The most prominent of these efforts was the meeting in January 1967, of the Nigerian Supreme Military Council at Aburi Ghana. However, events so deteriorated that on 27th May, 1967, Gowon promulgated a Decree dividing Nigeria into twelve states. And yet on 30th May 1967 Ojukwu declared the secession of the eastern region of Nigeria and the establishment of the Independent Republic of Biafra. Consequently, a war ensued between the federal government (to prevent secession). Thus, the war, which began on 6 July 1967, ended on 12 January 1970.

Today, more than 30 years after the end of the war, Nigeria is still groping in the dark, searching for the peace and unity that has eluded it as a nation. Twelve administrations have tried without success to unite the disparate people of Nigeria. Despite these attempts, political, social and economic lives of the

people remain at their lowest ebb. In fact, all sorts of ailment have plagued the Nigerian State Socio-Political up heralds, spiraling urban violence, intercommoned clashes, separatist movements, religions violence, monumental corruption, politically motivated assassinations and so on. However, the most important thing is that let Nigerians be aware of what is happening to their lives and future security and those responsible for this. The people should consciously and in an organized way reject this condition and the political leadership that is responsible for it. They should assist themselves by changing the system peacefully and democratically. They are supported by the guarantees contained in sections 16 and 17 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria.

Thus let the people struggle for a change in the system and the leadership produced by the system which is directly responsible for their suffering, backwardness and lack of a national vision.

Unfortunately, the immediate challenger confronting the Nigeria nation is the man ever, intrigues and black mail munted by senior government officials, some state governors, traditional rulers some members of the National and state Assemblies aimed at a fundamental breach of the constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria to guarantee a third term for the president and state Governors. The same forces that looted the treasury of the Nigeria nation, sold the publicly owned enterprises and corporations to themselves and their families, ruined the educational system, ran down the refineries, and made Nigeria a subject of ridicule in the comity of nations, are the same forces in the new odious campaign. The sad truth is that these forces operate within the democratic realm grudgingly and they neither believe in the rule of law nor believe in the due process. This is why the current democratic process is being endangered or scuttle.

Indeed, no form of government in modern day is as good as one that was democratically elected. Therefore, election forms a critical factor in good or bad

governance. This, the future general elections that will usher the current government out and a new one in is as crucial as the totality of the survival of the country therefore, the thrust of this paper is to investigate the role of e-governance (development) as a therapy for a heterogeneous and divisible nation such as Nigeria.

The rest of the paper is divided into five sections. Section two discusses the Biafran / Nigerian Revolution. Regional Conflicts is the theme of section three. Section four looks at ethnic disturbances in Nigeria. Policy Responses and Implications is the subject of section five. Section six concludes the paper.

2.0 THE BIAFRAN (NIGERIAN) REVOLUTION

With the creation in accordance with the Selborne committee Report of 1899 of the protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1900, along with the colony of Lagos, the building of Nigeria as a multi-national state began.

In 1906, further effort at unification and integration was made, here the colony of Lagos and the protectorate of Southern Nigeria, which had existed separately, were amalgamated to become the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria become amalgamated for administrative convenience. Under normal circumstances, the amalgamation out to have brought the various people closer together, and provided a firm basis for the arduous task of establishing closer cultural, social, religions and linguistic ties among the people. For the colonial master, such a Union, if allowed to develop, would have amounted to a major threat to the very economic interested he was striving to protect. It was to remove this unwelcome threat that Vitamin introduced the divide and rule system of government for the country. The important aspect of this system is that it laid emphasis on the differences among the peoples, while encouraging social apartheid. As a result, there was division, hatred, unhealthy rivalry and pronounced disparity in development among the various people of the country.

Thus, the possibilities of a co-ordinated national resistance against foreign domination were reduced if not completely removed (Madiebo, 1980).

No further constitutional development took place until 1922, which made provision for elected members to sit on a Nigeria Legislative council, but did not empower them to make laws for the North.

In 1940, however, Nigerian was divided into four administrative units. The colony of Lagos, Northern, Eastern and Western Provinces. Sir Authur Richard's constitution of 1946 inaugurated Nigeria's Regionalism and achieved a half – hearted political break-through by integrating the North with the South at the legislative level with Macpherson's constitution of 1951, a greater measure of non- interference was guaranteed within the regions by the increased regional autonomy and stronger regional legislatures. In 1953, the central cabinet split and the ugly Kano riot was over for the first time, the North talked openly of the possibility of secession due to humiliation and ill treatment and the west threatened secession over the non-inclusion of Lagos in the West in the 1953 constitution.

The 1954 constitution confirmed and formalized the wishes of Nigeria Leaders to more and remain united consequently, there were constitutional conferences in 1954, 1957, 1958, 1959 and 1960, culminating in the granting of political independence to Nigeria (October 1960). Unfortunately, the failure of the will ink commission to recommend the creation of more states (1958) for the Nigeria Federalism planted the most potent seed of instability into the evolution of Nigeria Nation. With the granting of independence in 1960, all the dirt swept under the carpet, surfaced. Subsequently there were various crises recorded. However, the general election of 1964 was the biggest crisis. The election was alleged to be neither free nor fair and all devices imaginable were said to have been used by the ruling parties in the regions to eliminate opponents. And yet, maturity and good sires prevailed toward off the disruption imminent after the

general election. Here, Nnamdi Azikiwe remained the president while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa remained the prime minister.

However, the rigging and irregularities in the western regional Election (1965) were alleged to be more brazen and more shameful. Law and order broke down completely leading to complete state of warding. And this was the state of affairs when the coup of 15 January 1966 took place. The aim of the coup was to establish a storage, unified and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife.

However, Maj. Nzeogwu's aims for the coup were not born out by its method, style and results. Consequently, the coup hastened Nigeria's collapse. In other words, the Federation was sick at Birth and by January 1966, she collapsed.

The succeeding Government of Maj-Gen J. T. U Aguiyi – Ironsi unfolded its plans for better Nigeria. However, the situation Gradually Changed to resentment, culminating in the May 1966 riots throughout the North after Irons is unification Decree. No 34. The counter – coup of July 29, 1966, which followed the riots, was to revenge upon the East by the North and a break –up of the country.

After three anxious days of fear, doubts and non – government, Yakubu Gowon emerged on 1st August 1966, as the new Nigerian Political leader. The coup planners were unwilling to hand over to Brigadier Ogundipe, who was then the Chief of staff, supreme Headquarters, the observed lack of planning and the revengeful intention of the second coup manifested itself in the chars, confusion and the scale of unnecessary killings which spread throughout the country. It was indeed imaginable the senseless looting and killing which spread through the North like wildfire on 29 September, 1966.

However, in an effort to stop unnecessary killings and to presence the nation in me form or the other, an adhoc conference of the representatives of the regions was called on 9 August 1966 in Lagos. Here, none of the recommendations was

fully carried out except the mollification of the unification decree. Thus, the enlarged ad-hoc conference on the constitution of the country met in Lagos on September and broke up inconclusively in November.

However, the country moved into the year (1967) with the announcement of a supreme military council meeting at Aburi, Ghana. Here all members of the council were either too trusting, too naïve or too ill – prepared for the meeting. Consequently, different versions of what transpired at Aburi were released by Ojukwu in the East and by the Federal Military Government in Lagos. Ojukwu accused the federal government of bad faith and going back on promise while the federal military government accused Ojukwu of distortion and half-truths.

After several meetings, what amounted to the demise of the federation was promulgated in Decree No. 8 of 17 March 1967 in a desperate efforts to implement the Aburi decisions and to avoid further state male and possible civil war. However, Ojukwu rejected the decree as falling short of full implementation of Aburi decisions. Consequently, Ojukwu seized federal government property and funds in the East while LT. Col. Gowon imposed a total blockade in the East Short of Military action at that time, creation of states by decree was the only weapon ready to hand thus, twelve states were created throughout the country on 27 May 1967 by the Federal Military Government. Consequently, on 30 May 1967, there was the declaration of Eastern Region of Nigeria as the independent sovereign state of “Biafra”. The month of June was used by both sides to “prepare for war” and the crack of the first bullet at the dawn of 6 July 1967. In other words, a war ensued between the federal government (to prevent secession) and Biafra (to assert its independence). Thus, the war, which began on 6 July 1967, ended on 12 January 1970 with the defeat of Biafra (Nwankwo, 1980).

However, the people of Biafra, convinced of the justness of their cause, never doubted that Justice would prevail eventually. This faith was what kept Biafrans

slugging on for three years in spite of heart – breaking set backs, to the astonishment of the whole world. They felt that having been so unjustly treated, humiliated and massacred, God and International opinion could not sturdily by and allow them to be exterminated in their homeland. Unfortunately, for these innocently naïve people, political and military logic do not follow sentimental lines. It was therefore in ignorance of this basic fact of life that they made several grievous mistakes, which contributed so much to their defeat (madiebo, 1980). Although Biafrans made many unnecessary mistakes, if they have learnt through those mistakes they have gained a lot of useful experience, which is vital for a mature and progressive society.

3.0 REGIONAL CRISES AND ETHNIC DISTURBANCES

Indeed, the perception that the expediency of the twelve state structure would ensure not only political stability but also the spread of development led to agitations for more states and the creation of seven additional states in 1976, and a new federal capital territory (FCT) at Abuja.

In 1979, another constitution was prepared for the country, under which elections were conducted into various political offices to return the country to a civilian rule and usher in the second republic. Here the presidential system of government, which provided for the position of an executive president, was adopted.

However, the systems were short lived as the military overthrow the government on 29th December 1983. Given further agitation, in 1987, the number of states was increased to twenty-one. The political structure also witnessed a significant change in 1991, as the number of states was increased to thirty. In consequence the former local governments under the twenty-one states structure were subdivided in order to accord the new states the appropriate number of local governments. Yet, the plan to return the country to a civil rule failed to materialize as the June 12, 1993 presidential election was annulled and this led to the inauguration of an interim National government in August 1993.

The ensuing political crisis continued until the military overthrew the interim government in November 1993. To satisfy the demand for additional states, six more states were created in 1996 to increase the number to 36 states and federal capital territory (FCT) along with 774 local government councils.

However, in a renewed drive towards the democratization of the country, a new civilian administration was inaugurated on 29th May 1999 under the leadership of General Olusegun Obasanjo (CBN 2000).

Nigeria is a conglomeration of several ethnic groups, with three major dominant tribes. Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. About 250 ethnic groups could be recognized within the country. Although there is some degree of similarities in the culture of the people, considerable differences exist in the customs and values of each tribe. This has given rise to the cultural polarization of the country and thus the nation is polarized into three main religions: Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion. Consequently, Tribalism, ethnic rivalry and suspicion are part of the national character which portend great problems for national cohesion, and this evolved overtime, because of the differences in the degree of exposure to western education between the North and South.

However, the states that comprise Nigeria today are the product of interplay of regional forces that have unfolded over a period of nearly ninety years. During this time, power shifted back and forth between the center and Nigeria's constituent parts (Provinces, Regions and Later States) and between north and south. Table 3.1 shows the current state structure and power holding at a glance. Here the six geo-political zones are the North – East, North – West, North Central (Middle Belt), South – East, South – West and South – South. Although the six geo – political zones are not formally recognized in Nigeria constitution, the zones are of operational significance.

TABLE 3.1 THE NIGERIA STATE STRUCTRE

S/NO	FOUNDATION DATE	GEOPOLITICAL ZONE	STATE NAME (CAPITAL	ZONAL PRESIDENTIAL POWER HOLDING	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS
1.	1991	South – East	AB/A (Umuahia)	½ Year	17
2.	1991	South – East	Anambra (Awka)	”	21
3.	1996	South – East	Ebonyi (Abakiliki)	”	13
4.	1956	South – East	Enugu (Enugu)	”	17
5.	1976	South – East	Imo 9Owerri)	”	27
6.	1987	South – South	Akwa – Ibom (Uyo)	Nil	31
7.	1996	South – South	Bayelsa (Yenegoa)	”	32
8.	1967	South – South	Cross – River (Calabar)	”	18
9.	1991	South – South	Delta (Asaba)	”	25
10.	1967	South – South	Rivers (Port Harcourt)	”	23
11.	1963	South – South	Edo (Benin City)	”	18
12.	1996	South – West	Ekiti (Ado-Ekiti)	9 ½ Years	16
13.	1976	South – West	Lagos (Ikeja)	”	20

14.	1976	South – West	Ogun (Abeokuta)	“	20
15.	1987	South – West	Ondo (akure)	“	18
16.	1991	South – West	Osun (Osogbo)	“	30
17.	1946	South – west	Oyo (Ibadan)	“	33
18.	1976	North – East	Adamawa (Yola)	6 Years	21
19.	1976	North – East	Bauchi (Bauchi)	“	20
20.	1967	North – East	Borno (Maiduguri)	“	27
21.	1996	North – East	Gombe (Gombe)	“	10
22.	1996	North – East	Taraba (Jalingo)	“	16
23.	1991	North – East	Yobe (Damaturu)	“	17
24.	1991	North – West	Jigawa (Dutse)	12 Years	27
25.	1991	North – West	Kaduna (Kaduna)	“	23
26.	1976	North – West	Kano (Kano)	“	-
27.	1991	North – West	Katsina (Katsina)	“	34
28.	1991	North _ West	Kebbi (Birnin Kebbi)	“	21
29.	1976	North – West	Sokoto (Sokoto)	“	23
30.	1996	North – West	Zamfara	“	14

			(Gusaw)		
31.	1976	North Central	Benue (Markurdi)	18 Years	23
32.	1991	North Central	Kogi (Lokoja)	"	21
33.	1967	North Central	Kwara (Ilorin)	"	16
34.	1996	North Central	Nasarawa (Lafia)	"	13
35.	1976	North Central	Niger (Minna)	"	25
36.	1967	North Central	Plateau (Job)	"	17
37.	1976	Nigerian Capital	Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)	"	6

NB: The North Central Zone is often regarded as Middle Belt.

Indeed history is replete with stories of struggles for the emancipation of man. These struggles always arise from the feeling of humiliation out of a policy of segregation and marginalization. The story of the southeast geographical zone is not different in Nigeria. These people have through a policy of marginalization and segregation pursued by government, been alienated from the society, they have contributed to. Thus the political culture analyst in the south east argue that no person or organ has been outspoken or ferocious in its campaign for the reversal of trend like the MOVEMENT FOR THE ACTUALIZATION OF SOVEREIGN STATE OF BIAFRA [MASSOB]. The organization is founded in the policy of non-violence, populatised by the legendary Mahotima Ghandi of India in

struggle for the liberation of his people from the ditches of colonial Britain. Since inception [1999] MASSOB has remained focused and consistent in its campaign for the restoration of the Biafra state. Over the years, the organization has been seen as a credible mouthpiece of the southeast region and government has come to dread at given its numerous fellowship from every political and economic class in the region. For the students, market people, families, teachers, civil servants, politicians and conscious movement for Ibo liberation.

However, the OHANAEZE apex social cultural organization of the Igbo thinks MASSOB is proper and is a child of necessity, which has operated lawfully and has been law abiding.

A radical Lawyer, chief Raphael Uwazuruike [MASSOB Leader] infact, began with the establishment of the voice of Biafra radio and the Embassy of BIAFRA, in the united state of America on May 22,2000,Uwazuruike declared the new Biafra state and the Ibo [youths] who were given biafran army uniforms gave them the fullest support.

However, the Nigerian ratio was not comfortable with the renewed agitation for Biafra and as such threw Uwazurike into detention camps severally arraigned by the Nigeria authority on flimsy charges. And yet, on May 22,2001,MASSCB celebrated the first anniversary of declaration of the new Biafra state, in Aba.The body affirmed to fight against injustice, marginalization, inequality and annihilation of Ndigbo. They also announce the establishment of the Biafra intelligence Agency and Biafra policy. In September 29,2001 MASSOB commission the first Washington, united state of America and an international conference on Biafra held at the Biafra Foundation 733 15th st nw, suite 700,washington, in October 2003.The conference took a critical look at the situation of Ibo in Nigeria and noted the following;

- [1] Absolute lack of freedom;
- [2] Denial of liberation to live in a place of one's choice, practice one's religious faith unabated, trampling of the individual rights of the Ibo;
- [3] The sustained assault on Ibo culture and the pulverization of Ibo identity;

[4] The undeclared war on those common factors that account for the remarkable successes that the Ibo have recorded in the past few centuries.

The conference focused on the three main goals;

[1] Brainstorming on the strategies for actualising the republic of Biafra;

[2]ex-raying the model of the republic of Biafra with a view to clearly conceptualizing, articulating and appreciating the nature of the society that the Republic of Biafra intends to;

[3] And laying out in broad outlines the plan for achieving the kind of Biafra [Richardson, 2005]

On the issue of the capital city for Biafra, there was a lot of agitation. But this scramble was settled when on Saturday [november, 2003] at the Dan Anyiam Stadium

Owerri, Ojukwu (during his 70th birth day speech) told the crown that Owerri remains the capital of Biafra. For years Uwazurike's agitation for an autonomous Ibo Nation drifted) in and out of public discourse. That was then and today, Uwazurike has made tremendous progress, winning the admiration and support of Ibo at home and in Diaspora. A testimony was evident when Uwuzurike ordered "Biafras" (Ibos) to stay at home as a demonstration of "their anger in the face of intimidation, marginalization and occupation of the Biafran territory by Nigerians.

On a letter date, MASSOB flagged off an alliance with the oil rich Niger Delta, when it signed a memorandum of understanding with the Great common wealth of Niger Delta, GCND. This alliance was founded on the need to challenge Nigeria's Federal Structure, as it is presently constituted. They further stated that having come to terms with glaring realities of Unmitigated internal colonization in the present day Nigeria, they must take their destiny in their hands. However MASSOB is also reducing other groups. The united self-determination Groups of Odua (Amalgam of Yoruba Groups) has expressed support for MASSSOB. They want autonomy for Yoruba people as well as Yoruba people being liberated from

lord Lugard's amalgamation. Indeed, MASSOB has ever preached non – violence, non-exodus and their modus operandi has so much confused the federal government of Nigeria. Despite this stand men of Nigeria Police Force had killed more than 200 MASSOB members in the last five-year while more than 1000 has been clamped into detention.

In April 2004, the newly inaugurated OHANEZE NDIGBO convened a meeting of the South East Governors and Speakers of the House of Assembly in Enugu.

After the meeting they issued a communiqué that the successor to president Obasanjo, come 2004, must come from the South East Zone. The various Houses of Assembly in the Zone also passed motions resolving to work towards the realization of the dream of one of their own leading Nigeria as president in 2007. The Ibo argument is that it is unfair to be allowed only six months while the other two members of the tripod (Hausa and Yoruba) have ruled for 35 years and 11 years and Six months respectively. The available records revealed that.

1. Alh. Abukakar Tafawa Balewa (Northerner) – 5 years / 3 months – October 1960 to January 1966 (Coup d'etat / Assassination).
2. Gen. Thomas Umunakwe Aguiyi Ironsi (Ibo) – Jan 1966 to July 1966 – Seven Months (Assassination / Coup d'etat)
3. Gen. Yakubu Gowon (Northerner) – 9 years – July 1966 to July 1975 (toppled)
4. Gen. Murtala Mohammed (Northerner) – Six Months – July 1975 to February 1976 (Coup d'etat)
5. General Olusegun Obasanjo (Westerner) – Three Years – February 1976 to October 1979 (Transition).
6. Alhaji Shehu Shagari (Northerner) – Four years and three months – October 1979 to December 1983 (Toppled).
7. General Mohammed (Northerner) – One year and eight months – January 1984 to August 1985 (toppled).

8. General Ibrahim Babangida (Northerner) – Eight Years – August 1985 to August 1993 (Step aside).
9. Chief Ernest Shonekan (Westerner) – Two and half months – August 1993 to November 1993 (Sacked)
- 10.Gen. Sane Abacha (Northerner) – four years and eight months – November 1993 to June 1998 (Death).
- 11.Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar (Northerner) – one year – June 1998 to May 1999 (Transition).
12. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo – eight years – May 1999 to May 2007 (Transition).

TABLE 3.2 THE NIGERIA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

PERIOD	GOVERNMENT	TITLE	COUP PLOTTER	REASON
1914-1919	Sir. Frederick Lord Lugard	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1919-1925	Sir Hugh Clifford	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1925-1931	Sir. Graeme Thompson	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1931-1935	Sir. Donald Cameron	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1935-1945	Sir. Benard	Colonial		

	Bourdillion	Governor General of Nigeria		
1943-1948	Sir. Author Richard	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1948-1954	Sir. John Macpheson	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1954-1960	Sir. James Robertson	Colonial Governor General of Nigeria		
1960-1963	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	First Governor General of Nigeria		
1963-1966	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	President of Nigeria		
1960-1966	Sir. Abubarka Tafawa Balewa	First Prime Minister		
1960-1966	Chief Obafemi Awolowo	Premier Western Region		
1960-1966	Sir. Ahmadu Bello	Premier North Nigeria		
1960-1966	Chief S. L. Akintola	Premier Western		

		Nigeria		
Jan. 15, 1966- July 29, 1966	General Aguiyi Ironsi	First Military Head of State	Major Nzeogwu Chukwuma Kaduna (bloody)	To establish a strong united and prosperous nation free from corruption and internal strife
July 29, 1966-July 29, 1975	General Yakubu Gowon	Military Head of State	Group of Northern officers (bloody)	To revenge against Nzeogwu Coup
July 29, 1975 Feb 13, 1975	General Murtala Mohammed	Military Head of State	Dimka Coup Attempt (Bloody)	To revenge against the belief that their kingsmen (General Gowon) was thrown out of power unlawfully
Feb 4, 1976 Oct 1, 1979	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Military Head of State		
Oct, 1979 – Dec 31, 1983	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	1 st Executive President	Ibrahim Babangida Coup (Bloodless)	To save Nigeria from imminent collapse
Dec. 31 1983 – Aug	Maj. Gen Mohammed	Military Head of	Babangida Coup	To restore dignity and

27 1985	Buhari	State	(Bloodless)	more the nation forward
Aug 27, 1985-Aug 26, 1993	Gen Ibrahim Babangida Badamozi	1 st Military President	Mammam Vasta coup (Failed and bloody) Okar Coup (Failed and Bloody)	To remove babangida from office – corruption, mismanagement of economy, murder of delegiwa, human rights violation etc
Aug. 26, 1993 – Nov. 17, 1993	Chief Ernest Shonekan	Head of Interim National Govt	Babangida Annulment of June 12 Election	
Nov. 17 1993-June 1998	Gen. Sanni Abacha	Military Head of State	Obasanjo /Yaradua Coup Diya Coup (failed and bloodless)	Phanton Coups masterminded by Abacha himself to eliminate those he perceived as threats to his administration and his self-succession bid.
June 9, 1998-May 29, 1999	Gen Abdulsalam Abubakar	Military Head of State		

May 29, 1999 – May 28, 2007	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	President of Nigeria	EL- Mustafa Coup (Security Breach) (Failed and Bloodless)	Vice President Atiku foiled the coup by failing to agree to cooperate with the coupists to eliminate Obasanjo in order for him to become president according to their plan.
2007 and				
Beyond				

Infect, it is not only in governance that the Hausa and Yoruba do not want the Ibo's. They are also not wanted in the area of appointments into various juicy offices in the land as well as deliberate policy of the federal powers to starve the Ibo zone of the federal presence. Consequently, the Biafran spirit has refused to die down. The fever has caught up among youths of South – East origin (especially artisans and unemployed) equally.

Ndigbo have been economically squeezed. Added to this was the indigenization decree of 1973, which was deliberately promulgated at the time Ndigbo had not recovered economically from the civil war. Besides, thousands of houses and other properties belonging to the Igbo outside Igboland were confiscated. Related to this is the wanton destruction of lives of Ndigbo and their property through the religious riots in some areas of the country. If these riots were purely religious riots, why have private houses, shops and cars become the first target of the Muslim fundamentalists. In

some other parts of the country, Ndigbo are economically squeezed unjustly in some other ways. They rent or buy stalls and shops built by governments, which dubiously turn around to destroy the structures as illegal. The non – indigene syndrome works mostly against the Ndigbo because they are the most traveled Nigerians and because they are the Nigerians most willing to invest outside their zone.

In a celebrated summit of the South – South political elite in Benin (August, 2000) a 10 – point communiqué was raised. It stated that the leaders had in consultation with the people of the zone, decided to set in motion the machinery to assume full control of its resources within the framework of true federalism. However, six years later, the youths in the area, seen to have fully embraced it as a veritable instrument for attracting attention. Currently this is the nature of the complex situation in the oil – rich zone as the movement of events and men in the region appear to defy precise definition, hence arson, brigandage, kidnap and outright armed banditry seen to be the order of the day.

Indeed, the crisis in the Niger Delta is a classic manifestation of a failed state and Nigeria has failed not only in the Niger Delta, but also in other parts of the country. Since commercial oil exploration started in the region in 1958, there was never really any deliberate plan by the federal government to protect the people against the turbulence and pollution of crude oil exploitation (until 1992 when OMPADEC was established).

Unfortunately, the OMPADEC's (oil and mineral produces, areas development commission) intervention was ineffective and was mired in corruption. In 1998, the commission eventually wound up. In the year 2000, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) set up by Olusegun Obasanjo was hailed as the solution to the restiveness in the oil-producing communities. Set up with the vision to bring sustainable development and

economic prosperity to the oil communities in the Nine Niger Delta States, it has drawn a 15-year master plan for the development of the area. But five years after it was established, the crisis in the Delta has taken a frightening demission. Heavily armed amphibian youths now resort to taking hostages and attacking military personnel and in many cases, outturning them. Their demands have largely remained unchanged since the first insurgency of Isaac Adaka Boro nearly forty year ago.

The latest in the regime of uncertainty actually took place on January 25, 2006. Hence militants who invaded an oil vessel of the shell petroleum Development Company (SPDC) off the Atlantic Ocean took four hostages (foreigners). The attackers struck around 3.00pm in a blistering more that overwhelmed the security personnel of the company. The attack was the second major assault in oil companies in two successive days. In the first offensive (January 24, 2006) militants adorned in military uniforms, launched a bloody attack on the operational base of an Italian oil firm, Agip (Port Harcourt), killing nine people. Consequently, America, in the advisory had declared that there was lack of law and order in Nigeria, a situation that posed considerable risks to its citizens and other expatriates. This warning was sequel to a catalogue of activities by armed youths in the creeks that had caught government security agents napping. The first action took place on January 11, 2006.

In it, an alleged jaw armed group took hostage, four expatriates, working for TIDEX Nigeria Ltd, a haulage firm attached to shell petroleum development company (SPDC), in Ekeremore local government area of Bayelsa State. Much later, another set of milliards blew up an SPDC flow station at Benisede (Peretorugbene) in Southern Ijaw Local Council. This raid dorimed over twenty – two live secluding some soldiers guarding the facility. Consequently the remarks by US Embassy caused considerable ripples in the presidency.

The fear was that the kidnap saga, if not adequately handled, would impact negatively on trade relations between Nigeria and American.

Acting on this apprehension, the president put up a committee, headed by new Bayelsa State governor, to dialogue with the kidnapers on the release of the hostages. Preliminary negotiations between the presidential committee and the marauders did not yield many dividends rather; they gave the government a list of demands to be met before releasing their victims. These abductors, operating under the name of the movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) Allegedly demanded the release of former corrupt Bayelsa State Governor (Diepreye Alamieyeseigha), Leader of the Niger Deltas peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Alhaji Asari Dokubo and payment of N1.5 Billion by shell to Bayelsa state government as compensation for polluting its environment. The militants had on their own, warned that any more by the government at employing military action, would see them coming up with more serious actions.

Informed researchers of history in assessing the groups from the above plank, are tempted to conclude that they may after all, not be operating from the same philosophical convictions as the Late revolutionary Ijaw activist, Isaac Adaka Boro. In February 23, 1966, Boro (Undergraduate students) Organized 159 youths under the Niger Delta Volunteer service and began operations. His mission was to free Ijawland from the shackles of oppression and domination by the Nigeria Authorities. With massive support from the youths, he took off in the creeks of the Niger Delta declaring war against the rest of the country.

With the crash of their dream, Boro and two members of his group / Samuel Owenaro and Nottingham Dick) were tried for treason in March 1966. On June 21, 1966, they were found guilty and sentenced to death but were later pardoned by the then head of state, General Yakubu Gowon (in 1967).

Investigations revealed that is actually the fabled tales of the Adaka Boro exploits that contemporary Youths of the Niger Delta claim as their inspiration.

However, there is a great deal of difficulty in wearing together the diverse demands made by the various groups to achieve a common agenda.

In fact, for the restive youths of the Nigeria Delta, the discovery of the black gold in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State in Mid-1950s by the SPDC and subsequent production in commercial quantities has worsened their condition.

This has become a harbinger of misery, poverty and anguish. Regular Oil spills pollute their land and waters and gas flaring by oil companies pollutes the environment. Efforts by some of the radical Niger Delta leaders to fight for the control of their oil wealth were resisted by the federal might. Unlike Boro, Ken Saro – Wiwa, who formed the movement for the survival of Ogoni people (Mosop) was hanged in 1995.

Yet, at the heart of the struggle was their determination to get a fair share of the oil drilled from the soil. At the heart of the struggle is their determination to get a fair share of the oil drilled from their soil. The people are angry that despite producing more than seventy percent of the nation's wealth, little or nothing trickles down to the oil communities. Thus, the anger of the people is often rested at the oil companies and governments in a militant way.

The kidnapping of oil workers with a demand for ransom is, therefore, a recurring decimal in the region. In July 2000, the Youths of Egi in Rivers State sized the Obagi OM1, 58 fields and demanded an amount of \$2.5Billion from Elf.

In another event a group of militant youths held 165 oil workers hostage in Ekeremor Local Government area of Bayelsa State. Between 2002 and

today, there have been more than seven cases of abduction of oil workers in the region, fueling speculations that this may not be the last. The economic implications of these actions are obvious. Recently, the Nigeria Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), had warned that the country was losing 200, 000 barrels of oil per day to production deferment due to the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta. In monetary terms, this amounts to \$12 Million (N1.6 Billion) daily.

However, by the projections of the Niger Delta Militants, there are more crises ahead. Starting from the month of March, they hope to launch a new military campaign, code – named “Operation Black Mamba”, aimed at crippling Nigeria’s oil production and exportation capacity by one million barrels daily.

Mamba is a very poisonous tropical snake that lives mainly in caves and trees. This symbolizes the philosophy and mode of execution of the new-armed struggle in the Niger Delta made inevitable by the arrest and detention of Asari Dokubo (Leader, Niger Delta peoples Volunteer force). The four major conditions, which the militants gave the federal government for the release of the hostages, are:

1. That Dokubo Asari and Diepreye Almieyesiagha, impeached governor of Bayelsa, must be released.
2. That the federal government should approve an initial 25 percent derivation which would increase progressively by twenty percent annually until complete resource control is achieved;
3. That shell must honor the judgment of Port Harcourt high court, which upheld the directive of the National Assembly. NASS that shell should pay the Ijaw Aborigines of Bayelsa State the sum of \$1.5 Billion as damages for environmental violence caused by oil exploration and drilling activities of the past fifty years in the Niger Delta.

However, at the heart of the conflict is the national question. The militants are saying that they are not interested in 2007 election, as it would not better their lot.

Thus, it is believed that the politics of 2007 and the fate of Obasanjo will be decided in the creeks of the Niger Delta. And yet, Obasanjo may not have anticipated that his attempt to use military might to curb illegal oil bunkering could be so vehemently resisted by the Niger Delta terror gangs. But the resurgence of hostage taking in the oil – rich region has proved to him how desperate operators of the act are in ensuring that the bunkering loop was not tightened. Investigation reveals that illegal oil bunkering is at the center of the prevalent escalation of crisis in the Niger delta. Thus, illegal oil bunkerers with the aim of using them to dislodge the joint Task Force (JTF) deployed to the region to check their activities sponsor the militants in the Niger delta. Among those involved in illegal oil bunkering are top ranking retired and serving military officers, the navy and politicians (mostly indigenes of the Niger delta). Before the introduction of JTF (Operation Restore Hope) the security operatives and the natives Youths) have been having a field day in bunkering and were making their millions from it. But with the coming of the JTF and some changes effected among the security agencies, the bunkering loop was tightened. Consequently, the bickerers who were frustrated by this attempt to block their major sources of income engaged the services of the militants. The militants are provided with sophisticated weapons (dreaded AK 47 rifles) by the blunderers to enable them with stand the firepower of the JTF.

Also, it was revealed that the militants were paid huge sums of money by the wealthy oil bunkerers before the deal was struck. While the militants are fighting to pave way for them and their collaborators in illegal bunkering to have access to barges from where they scoop oil, the security agents are not giving any breathing space.

In fact, the genesis of the latest assault of the militants on hapless expatriate oil workers was an aerial bombardment on perezonweikoregbere, an ijaw community near Okererekoko, Delta State by the JTF on 15 February 2006. JTF claimed the operation was not an attack on the community but an onslaught on

oil bunkerers who were said to have barges of siphoned oil in the area. As the JTF patrol team sighted the ocean going barges of the oil bunkerers at the Okererkoko River, they requested for permission to deploy helicopter gunboat to destroy the barges. The bombardment was directed at Okerenkoko, which is regarded as the strong hold of Ijaw militants and illegal oil bunkerers.

On a latter date, the JTF was alleged to have struck again in some other neighboring Ijaw communities, including Ukpoghere, seighbere and seitonububor in an effort to subdue the militants and illegal oil bunkerers.

However, it is being argued that never before have we seen this level of massive extra-judicial state security operations in response to bunkering anywhere in Nigeria. Even the vessel, African pride, notorious for illegal bunkering in the Lagos seaport of Nigeria was not bombed. Thus, a school of thought argued that it was not quite proper for government to deploy troops to the Niger Delta in abide to check illegal oil bunkering. Those who were involved in bunkening are well know even in government circles. The Niger Delta has been literally turned into a war zone because of the large number of troops deployed to the region to comb the creeks for the militants. In the past six years, it has become clear that the use of force to check their activities has failed and will continue to fail because it will be difficult for the army to withstand the militants in the creeks and thick forests of the Niger Delta. Politicians, who hired them as thugs, armed them and used them to rig the 2003 general elections created these militants. It was the same politicians who used oil bunkering as a way of compensating these armed things. In fact, the mentors of the militants are found among serving ministers, commissioners and legislators because they were those who using for their reign of terror in the Niger Delta. They further blamed the resort of the Youth in the area to violence on bad governance because they discovered that they were suffering from abject poverty in the midst of plenty.

Thus, the militants have devised the strategy of kidnapping expatriate oil workers to embarrass the government and bring international pressure to bear on those in authority to look into their genuine complaints about environmental degradation and under development.

4.0 POLICY RESPONSES (IMPLICATIONS)

Nigeria, Africa's most populous Nation has faced challenges of enormous proportions. It has been battered and bruised and its national history reflects an undulating landscape, made up of curves, hillocks, valleys and little mountains. The Nigeria state is a multinational state in conception, yet the possibility of a Nigeria nation, demanding over arching loyalty from its diverse ethno national groups, seems perpetually constrained and contradicted by the primordial demands of its multinational diversity. This has been and continues to be the fundamental problem of nation – building of democracy and development in the country.

In fact, Nigeria is no more than a mere geographical expression, or who refer to her as the mistake of 1914. Despite the lingering multifaceted and complex crises she has been going through since independence (1960), the country has remarkably held together, always pulling away from the precipice, except for the civil war years between 1967 and 1970.

When the military seized political power in January 1966, there was a general feeling in the country that they were motivated by altruistic intentions and objectives to save the country from descent into political chaos and instability.

As time passed, the country's military rulers and the military as an institution by and large lost their sense of direction. The greed of the military dragged the nation further and further away from the project of nationhood. The result is that

by the end of almost thirty years of military rule, Nigeria is far more fragmented than it was in January 1966, when the military first seized power.

Thus, the democratic struggle against military rule in the country, whose high water mark was the return to democratic civilian rule on 29 May 1999, symbolizes and marks the return to the project of the Rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation, which the military ensilaged after the end of the civil war.

Consequently, two weeks after he was sworn in (14 June 1999) Obasanjo announced the setting up of the human rights violations investigations commission (HRVIC) headed by the retired supreme court, Justice Chukwudifu Oputa. The commission's terms of reference were to establish or ascertain the causes, nature and extent of human rights violations or abuses and in particular, known or suspected case of mysterious deaths and assassinations or attempted assassinations committed in Nigeria since the last demarcations committed in Nigeria since the last democratic dispensation. It was also to identify the person or person's authorities, institutions organizations which may be held accountable for such deaths, assassinations or other violations or abuses of human rights and to determine the motives for the violations or abuses, the victims and circumstances thereof and the victims or the society generally. Also, to determine whether such abuses or violations were the product of deliberate state policy or the policy of any of its organs or institutions or individuals or whether they arose from the abuse by state officials or their office or were acts of any political organization, liberation movement or other group or individuals. And to recommend measures which may be taken whether judicial, administrative, legislative or institutional, to redress past injustices and to prevent or forestall future violations or abuses of human rights.

In October 2001, the commission began public sittings and received over 10, 000 petitions. It sat in five cities in the country. Abuja, Lagos, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Kano and Cases of violations and victims of human rights abuses were heard.

The commission reviewed the evidence submitted before it and concluded that there was really only one central question which was do proceedings before a commission of inquiry constitute a suit at law or a judicial proceeding? In its wisdom, the commission came to the conclusion that: in a commission of inquiry under the act, there does not exist an adversary situation. There is no litigation and as such, there are no parties properly so – called. No judgment is entered or can even be entered for or against the parties that do not in law exist. Every one who appears before the commission appear as a witness whose evidence will enable the commission gather all the facts and make recommendation to the proper authority. From the commission terms of reference, every president or ex-president, every top government fluxionary (January 15th 1966 to May 28th 1999) is a relevant and necessary witness, whether or not the person is specifically mentioned or implicated in any petition before the commission. It is therefore no defense for failure to attend, to say that any particular official was not mentioned in any particular petition. That being so, every head of state during those dark military years will be held uncountable.

He has to give account to the people of Nigeria as well as giving account of his stewardship in respect of all gross human rights violators committed during his period of office.

In its ruling, the commission went to great length to acquaint the former head of state (General Muhammadu Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida and General Abusalami Abubakar) with the fact that it was wrong for them to even speculate that they were being singled out for president (General Olusegun Obasanjo) had been issued with a summons. However, two former heads of state (Alhaji shehu shagari and chief Ernest Shonekan) were not summoned because no petitions

were pending against them. Unfortunately the failure or refusal of out three former heads of state to attend has rudely shaken the faith and confidence of Nigeria in the recondition process. Military rule thrives on the culture of imprinity, which means that the leaders are both above the law and beyond punishment. Impurity, (the refusal to attend portrays) destroys the confidence of the people in the authority and role of the state. Since the three heads of state did not avail themselves of the opportunity to come and tell their onside of the story the commission leaves a blank space on their records. And that they are being left and their side of the story in the court of human history. The commission therefore recommended to the federal government that all the former heads of state be considered to have summered their right to govern Nigeria and Nigerian at any other time in the future. Thus, it is left for Nigerians to judge.

In completion of the commission assignment, summaries of recommendations were made. A buttons up, broad based series of national seminars to discuss our country political and constitutional structure should be held. Human rights education should be integrated into the curricula of our schools with an urgent return to civil and moral education from nursery through secondary schools. There should be harmonization of all education initiatives in the country, especially the UBS programme, to achieve higher national standards anchored on sound moral values. There should be a moratorium of state and local government creation in the country, while caution should be exercised with respect to the creation of more chief doms.

The NDDC should be closely monitored regarding project conception and execution, with local communities playing a central role in the process. The National Assembly should harmonies, in collaboration with the state ligatures, the findings of the various constitution review initiatives. With effect from may 29, 1999, any one who stages a coup d'etat must be brought to trial, no matter for how long and regardless of any decrees or laws, there should be immediate restoration of a climate that guarantees academic freedom in our Universities

and to fund them adequately. The report of the 1997 Kayode Eso panel of inquiry on the Judiciary should be released. The federal ministry of justice in collaboration with the National Human rights commission should publish readable summaries of citizenship rights and obligation in the country. The office of the minister for human rights should be created. A Human rights violations rehabilitation / presidential fund should be established. A national human rights day should be proclaimed and celebrated annually on June 14 and this should coincide with the day the commission was inaugurated.

That in concert with chapter two of the 1999 constitution (Fundamental Objectives and directive of Principle of State Policy), Government should give all Nigerians the chance to participate meaningfully in the socio-economics shall have access to decent shelter, food, clothing and social amenities. This is essential because the imperatives of government is to secure and guarantee the welfare of the people the right to life presupposes the existence of the means to sustain that life closely interwoven with the means to sustain that right. And finally, that a popular reason of the report of the commission should be published. Unfortunately, unlike the South African report, which was made to take its place in the historical landscape of which future generations will try to make sense, searching for clues that lead to a truth, the Nigerian government is bent on burying its own document so that future generations will get lost in the labyrinth of injustice. In other words, Obasanjo government declared "We want to reconcile all those who feel alienated by past political events, heal around inflicted on our people and restore harmony in our country. This administration will do everything possible to address all issues that tend to bring our country into disrepute or perpetuate injustice, conflict and the violation of human rights. Unfortunately the obasanjo administration has done everything possible to kill the report of that panel, thus throwing the country into perpetual injustice.

NEEDS (National Economic)

Empowerment and Development Strategy is a nationally coordinated framework of action in close collaboration with the state and local governments (with their state economic empowerment and development strategy, SEEDS as well as LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, LEEDS) and other stakeholders of the economy. The 35 member committee comprises ministers, Representatives of ministries and agencies, president of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, President of the Nigerian Labor Congress, Coalition of Civil Society Organization National Economic Summit Group and so on. NEEDS builds on the Progress made during the transitional phase of the new democratic dispensation (1999-2003). The president (in his second and last term) is determined to implement the NEEDS and leave lasting Legacies. NEEDS rests on four key strategies. Reforming the way government works and its institutions, growing the private sector, civil society, NGOS and other stakeholders. All the statutory institutions for inter-governmental co-ordination of development programme will be actively deployed for the co-ordination function.

NEEDS will require a heavy investment programme to jumpstart the economy in a manner that is pro-poor and poverty reducing. Apart from the projected investment by the federal and state governments as well as the private sector, there is still a residual financing gap, which requires special efforts to mobilize the required finance. The visiting process has drawn inspiration from the views of a cross section of stakeholders and the provision of the constitution regarding the overall thrust of the aspirations of Nigerians. The vision underscores the necessity and urgency to build a modern Nigeria that maximizes the protections of every citizen to become the largest and strongest African Economy and a force to be reckoned with in the world before the Mid 21st Century. Thus, the mission of president Obasanjo's Government is to use the instrumentality of the National Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (NEEDS) as a nationally coordinated framework of action in close collaboration with the state governments and other stakeholders to consolidate past achievements and build a solid foundation for the attainments of Nigeria's long term vision. In other

words, their mission is the creation of a New Nigeria where all the negative values in our society are reversed and in their place are established enabling values of a caring well-governed society (where justice and equity reign)

Unfortunately, Obasanjo's rejuvenated anti-corruption war machinery may have run into a conundrum as it faces the moral test of distinguishing between "bribery" "lobby", "welfare package", public relations and donation. The resolution of this puzzle may make the difference between sacred cows and scapegoats in the war against corruption and social injustice. However, in the wake of anticraft war facts are beginning to emerge that there may be sacred cows and untouchables. The first of such signs showed up when the sacked minister of housing and urban development (Osomo) was barred by the president from holding a press conference to declare all that she knew about the scandal and reveal documentary evidence to prove that most of the top government functionaries who publicly denied over secretly bidding for the houses were only telling lies. The list of the beneficiaries of the scandalous Ikoyi property sale deal included top government functionaries such as the Vice president (Atiku Abubakar), Minister of finance (Ngozi Okonjo Iweala), Central Bank Governor (Charles Soludo), Special Adviser to the president on Budget monitoring and Due process (Oby Ezekwesili) and president Obasanjo's brothers and sisters in-law amongst others.

Atiku, Okonjo – Iweala, ezekwesili and soludo flatly denied ever bidding for the houses, which had their names as the allottees.

Thus, the presidency's decision to shut Osomo up, was aimed at protecting the top government officials from being looked upon as dishonest men in order to defuse the pervasive impression that the president's blue – eyed economic experts are also neck-deep on corruption. Consequently, Osomo has been made to carry the can while the president's right hand men who succumbed to greed and engaged in secret bidding for government owned property against the much

touted federal government policy of due process “are allowed to walk out from the scandal free”. Another proof that the presidency was keen on protecting some sacred cows from being swept away in the anti-corruption tide was that two weeks after the scandal, no commission of inquiry or investigative panel were being set up by the Federal Government to unravel how the names of those highly placed government officials got into the list without their consent. The reason being that the President wants to avoid a scenario where more corruption muck would be raked up to deplete his kitchen cabinet.

Another popular allegation was concerned with the story of how the chairman of the senate committee on Banking, Insurance and financial institutions (Ambuna Zik Sunday) wrote a letter to the CBN Governor requesting for assistance to enable the committee carry out its legislative duties. Indeed, Soludo gave the sum of N50 Million to the senate and house of Reps committee as requested by Zik Sunday. Many Nigerians thought that the story would climax with more mighty heads fed to the anti-corruption guillotine.

But their expectation has proved to be misplaced not because the story is false but mainly because of the personalities involved. Indeed, it has been ascertained that the committee chairman actually solicited for “help” from the CBN at a time the central Bank Amendment Bill and the Banking and other financial institutions Amendment Bill were before the committee for consideration. Though the senator's letter to Soludo was craftily worded to avoid the use of the word money, the underlying understanding that it was a letter of solicitation for funds was revealed in the sixth paragraph. Two days after the receipt of the senator's letter, the CBN governor gave expeditious approval to the senator's request and payment vouchers for the sums of N20 Million and N30 Million were raised for the senate committee and the house committee on banking and currency respectively.

In the letter titled "Approval for release of funds as Donation to National Assembly Committees, the CBN official stated that the money was to assist them hire consultants legal draftsmen and pay for advertisement and other logistics for the legislative process to amend our laws and exact other bills. Though the CBN named its N50 Million Gift to the National Assembly as "Donation", it is obvious from the Letter of approval that the donation was intended to facilitate the enactment of "our law" which is not very different from what Osuji intended to achieve with his N55 Million gift to the lawmakers.

To Obasanjo's anti-corruption machinery, Osuji's welfare package or PR gift is nothing short of bribe, an act of corruption for which he has been sacked and was arraigned before an Abuja High Court. But soludo's "donation" Seems to have been taken by the anti corruption machinery as mere donation, even though it was obviously intended to serve a similar purpose as Osuji's PR. However, Obasanjo has reiterated his commitment to fight the anti – corruption war to its logical conclusion. But that commitment would be in doubt of r as long as there is the impression in some quarters that corruption is defined in government circle as what the other man does. And the fact that the president has not publicly reprimanded heads of these parastatals that gave or received such donations. In spite of his threat to deal with everyone (including his family) the president sees nothing wrong with grants given to those in his good books. They remain the undeclared sacred course whose condemnable corrupts must be viewed as good. Unfortunately, this is double standard governance and remains unacceptable.

The National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) was inaugurated on Feb. 21, 2005. Here history was providing us with another opportunity to build new bridges of tolerance accommodation, dialogue, patriotism, and unity while strengthening old fabrics of our association and relations in our country.

This programme was initiated in order to have a holistic environment for repositioning the country for peace security, stability, growth, development and sustainable democracy. The conference was also an opportunity for Nigerians to get together to discuss issues of national importance with a view to reaching some common ground in support of our political growth and development.

In other words, the conference was meant to bring together Nigerians from all walks of life, irrespective of regional, ethnic, religious, age, gender or class divisions and differentiations to deliberate on all issues affecting the development and progress of Nigeria.

Unfortunately, what was apparent after several weeks of deliberations at the CONFAB was that the ruling peoples Democratic party (PDP) agenda as presented by the leader of its delegation (Samuel Ogbemudia) might after all be the thrust of the CONFAB. In essence, the secret agenda of the PDP was gradually unfolded at the CONFAB. The Highlights of the party's memorandum as obtained from the confab secretariat have political party reforms, local government administration, and eligibility of persons for elections federal electoral reforms, INEC electoral commissions and so on as the thrust of its pursuit at the conference. Thus, the PDP deployed a large war chest to lobby delegates to ensure that its agenda is achieved. To underscore the seriousness of the party, several motivational meetings by representatives of the party with delegates, from their respective zones have been known to hold, to seek their support and encourages them to present their positions, which is the party's to the CONFAB. It was this ugly picture that made the south-south delegates to stage a walkout at the tail end of the conference in protest against the approval of 17 percent as derivation formula instead of the 25 percent demanded by them.

Consequently, the Ogun State chairman of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Mohammed Tajudeen Bello described the conference as a convention of the PDP. Posers that face the confab were: can the leadership steer the confab

away from a self-serving interest of the PDP; can members of the confab stand for what his progressive and their conscience? As Nigerians await answers to these all important questions with baited breath, the hawks in PDP were already perfecting their plans to ensure a smooth third term ticket for Obasanjo in 2007. Even as the National meeting and lobby of the CONFAB delegates were going on, PDP henchmen are working assiduously to realize their game plan. The linchpin of this crusade was Tony Anenih, PDP board of trustees chairman.

Further agitations led to the conference of Governors, legislators, ministers, traditional rulers socio-political leaders of southern states of Nigeria, held in Enugu on Monday 19, December 2005. Their communiqué resolved that consequent upon the political realities of the conscionable historical data, they restate and firmly resolve that cognizance must be gives and indeed, the presidency – post – 2007 – zoned to, either south – south or south – east. The conference demands that the process of Constitutional Amendments / reform must commerce immediately and be concluded and effected prior to the 2007 elections, failing which south shall boycott the 2007 elections and consider the reconstitution of the country as a confederation on the basis of six geo-political zones, with each zone retaining its resources and contributing to the center on the basis of an agreed principle, failure of which the south shall stop forth with resources derived form its geopolitical zone. That the conference commends president Olusegun Obasanjo as a truly detribalized and visionary Nigeria leader, who has initiated reforms and policies to reposition Nigeria within the country of nation to the promised land. That failure to recognize and respond positively to the stand of the south will leave the southern states of Nigeria with no emption than to seek a conference arrangement for the geo-political zones, therein to address this imbalance. That the conference stands firmly for a united, peaceful, democratic and equitable Nigeria nation with mutual respect amongst its constituent members. And that this conference, which is to be know as the southern forum, has set up a 36-man working committee and secretanat for

communication shall be, but not limited to studying and expanding on the principles of the resolutions of this conference.

However, as at today, the Nigerian polity is overheated the National Assembly joint committee on the Review of the 1999 constitution (as led by deputy senate president Ibrahim Mantu) has submitted his report to the National Assembly as well as a draft bill on the amendment of the constitution. The draft bill entitled "the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (Draft Amendment) Bill 2006, is coming ahead of the debate on the issue by the two chambers of the National Assembly. However some members of the MANTU committee petitioned senate president protesting the methodology adopted in the compilation of the report. In section 130, the bill said that the presidency would rotate among the six geopolitical zones on the basis of North and South, adding that during the tenure of any of the geopolitical zones of the North or south, candidates from each of the zones in that region shall be eligible to contest an election.

The bill modified the practice whereby the vice president succeeds the president in the event of death or removal from office. In section 130, subsection 6, the bill said. "Where the office of president becomes vacant by reason of death removal, incapacity to discharge the function of the office or resignation, the vice president shall hold office for a period of not more than three months during which time an election of a new president from the zone of the former president shall be held to complete the unexpired term of office. Also the draft bill said that the post of governor will rotate among the three senatorial districts in the state, adding that, in the case of death, resignation or incapacity of the governor, the deputy governor would hold forth for three months within which another candidate from the same senatorial district of the former governor would be elected. Section 162, Okays direct allocation to local government areas from the federal account.

Unfortunately, some members of the joint committee on the review of the 1999 constitution have written a protest letter strongly urging the senate and the House

of Representatives to invalidate the recommendations relating to the issue of tenure.

They alleged high handedness and “rule-of-the-jungle attitude by the committee chairman, throughout the public hearing proceedings and in the final memorandum prepared at Port Harcourt. The lawmakers accused Manu of “grossly abusing voice vote of his pre-packaged agenda determining any given issue, especially the third term agenda.

In pursuit of preconceived positions, the chairman routinely ignored rules, law and due process with impurity, using voice vote, as a legal instrument of subverting popular will and mocking and making the spirit of rule of law. They also accused the presidency of tele-guiding Mantu. After the Zonal public hearings, chairman

Of the zonal sub-committees were directed (and they complied to submit their findings in meeting held in the Aso Villa, even when members of the committee had not have the opportunity to see the report. Indeed, this was against the standing rules of the senate and House of Representatives.

Consequently, the third term bid is irrational and capable of destabilizing the sovereignty of the federal republic of Nigeria.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The relationship between economic and political reform (that I, between economic liberalization and an expansion of the use of market mechanisms on the one hand, and political liberalization and democratization on the other) is on extremely complex and uncertain one. Both processes create significant uncertainties, new possibilities, and a continual succession of new institutional arrangements. In particular, political reforms open up new channels of

expression for economic agents, and in some instances can even alter fundamental relationships, including the basis of property rights.

Economic reforms and liberalization can empower actors outside the traditional structures of the state and provide them with the economic resources to construct alternative basis from which to challenge state power. Individual economic advancement is separated from access to state personal and institutions; the probability of increased participation in (and significant challenge to) the processes of state policy is enhanced. At the same time, political reforms can facilitate the institutional flexibility and adaptation necessary for the effective operation. Development and expansion of markets.

The Nigerian experience with the simultaneous introduction of both economic and political reform suggests that the two processes are consistently neither mutually reinforcing nor mutually contradictory. Over the recent past, both relationships have been observed. As participated, the two processes were most reinforcing at the time of the launching of the two transitions. However, as the political transition proceeded and the implementation of economic reform began to stall, it was increasingly difficult to sustain through enhanced repression and within the increasing constraints of limited democracy. As the economic reform program began to show signs of serious failure, the possibility of building a condition to institutionalize core elements of the economic reforms virtually disappeared. In fact, there is not much evidence from the Nigerian experience that the economic reform process has empowered actors outside the state and given them a capacity to act independently of state dictates. The answer to whether new actors are likely to emerge depend ultimately on whether the principal beneficiaries (or the principal losers) are more likely to be motivated to mobilize themselves and pursue their interests in the political arena. There is little evidence to date that the theoretical beneficiaries of economic reform are likely to do so. The principal beneficiaries in the agricultural sector do not perceive themselves as having benefited from the reform program and are not inclined to

act politically to defend it. The beneficiaries in the services sector are small in number and unlikely to organize their interests along these lines.

The principal losers (urban labor, urban middle class, and civil servants) are far more likely to mobilize themselves politically, but against the continuation of the economic reform process.

Indeed, the failed policies of the Nigerian government are perceived not in statist, interventionist terms, but as the policies of economic reform, and the political pendulum is therefore likely to swing in the opposite direction.

Thus, following the controversies that trailed past elections in Nigeria, it is generally agreed by political pundits that a reform of our electoral system and practice has become essential to engender the confidence of the Nigerian public in elections and the democratic process in the country. Here, the goal of any voting system is to establish the intent of the voter, and transfer that intent to the vote counter. The efficiency of the voting method and the accuracy of the vote counter are the crucial determiners of the ability and capacity of the system to correctly determine the wish of the voters. It is therefore important that time has come for serious improvements in the voting methods as part of the reform in the electoral process in preparation for the future general elections. The independent National Electoral Commission should undergo reforms structurally administratively and operationally. Electronic Voting System (EVS) is a major component of the electoral system reform. Electronic voting or e-voting (internet voting and other on-line voting) is any of several means of determining people's collective intent electronically. This includes voting by kiosk, Internet, telephone, punch card and optical scan ballot (Mark – sense). In other words, this means using a computer – based machine to display an election ballot and record the vote. E-voting machines typically use touch screens as the data entry method for a voter's selection.

Direct recording Electronic (DRE) systems, with interfaces, provide instant feedback to the voters, in case of invalid votes, and they can provide instant counts after pooling, with a paper printout of each ballot (verifiable by each voter) they can also offer certain verifiability.

DRE voting machines are often favored because they can incorporate assistive technologies for handicapped people, allowing them to vote without involving another person in the process. In mark – sense voting, the user marks a paper ballot and feeds it into a ballot box. Automatic sensors at a central location or at the precinct may tally the votes. With precinct – tallied votes, the systems usually verify that the ballot is legitimate as they accept the ballot. With punch card ballots, voters create holes in prepared ballot cards to indicate their choices. Here, data vote systems use a cutting tool and vacuum to clean away material from imperforated cards indicating the voted choices while votomatic machines require the voter to punch out a perforated rectangle from the card using a stylus.

With Internet voting people cast their ballots online, generally via a web interface, although email voting has occasionally been tried. With web voting, the voter navigates to the proper election site using a web browser on an ordinary PC and authenticates himself or she to see the appropriate blank ballot form presented onscreen. The voter then fills out the ballot form and when satisfied, clicks the “cast vote” button to send the completed ballot back to the election server. On the other hand, telephone voting allows people to call different telephone numbers to indicate preference by pressing buttons in a menu system. And given the limitations of electronic voting, the six commandments of e-voting have been advocated. Although stated humorously, the assertions made are intended to be taken seriously. The commandments are in estimated order of importance, judged by statutes and willingness of election officials to compromise on the various requirements.

1. Thus shalt keep each voters choice an inviolable secret

2. Thou shalt allow each eligible voter to vote only once, and only for those offices for which he (she) is authorized to cast a vote.
3. Thou shall not permit tampering with thy voting system, nor the exchange of gold for votes.
4. Thou shall report all votes accurately
5. Thy voting system shall remain operable throughout each election.
6. Thou shalt keep an audit trail to detect sins against commandments 2-4, but thy audit trail shall not violate commandment 1.

However, many of today's voting technologies involved computers. Computers tabulate both punch card and optical scan machines. Therefore, the current debate centers on all-computer voting systems, primary touch – screen systems called direct record electronic (DRE) machines.

In these systems, the voter is presented with a list of choices on a screen, perhaps multiple screens if there are multiple elections, and he indicates his choice by touching the screen. These machines are cash to use, produce final tallies immediately after the polls close, and can handle very complicated elections. They can also display instructions in different languages and allow for the blind or otherwise handicapped to vote without assistance yet, they are also more error – prone.

Thus, DRE machine must have a voter verifiable paper audit trails (a voter verified paper ballot). This is a paper ballot printed out by the voting machine, which the voter is allowed to look at and verify. He does not take it home with him. Either he looks at it on the machine behind the glass screen, or he takes the paper and puts it into a ballot box. Here, it allows the voter to confirm that his vote was recorded in a manner he intended and also, it provides the mechanism for a recount if there are problems with the machine software used on DRE machines must be open to public scrutiny.

This allows any interested party to examine the software and find bugs, which can then be corrected. It also increases public confidence in the voting process. Even if we get the technology right, we still won't be done if the goal of a voting system is to accurately translate voter intent into a final tally, the voting machine is only one part of the overall systems. But if we are going to spend money on new voting technology, it makes sense to spend it on technology that makes the problem easier instead of harder.

Finally, the role of external assistance in supporting capacity building and innovation at the three tier levels in Nigeria is seems as critical in this paper, partly to fill a resources gap, but, more importantly, to reinforce success and bring to bear both knowledge that exist across Nigeria and international experience. For the newly created states, the need is basic capacity building while for the established civil service states; support will be for innovation and modernization. However political stability is a sin qua non for economic development. This is because of the fact that frequent changes in the polity bring about unstable macroeconomics policy environment. The country should therefore ensure that political stability is sustained, while good economic policies should not be politicized but be allowed to ensure and run their full cycle Government should also strictly ad here to the philosophy of transparency and accountability in its economics activities and dealings with its corporate and individual citizens.

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