

# Niger Delta Conflict and the Challenge of Oil Security in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper is concerned with the current unrest bedeviling Nigeria's oil industry which is very instructive in terms of the threat it poses to the entire nation and the world. There is a sign that the crisis is still in its infancy in terms of its potentials to intensify leading to a full scale civil war in the region and possibly the whole country. This creates a great problem for Nigerian government, since disturbances in the oil flow is affecting the fragile but growing economy, and for the world since the general oil supply to the world may be disrupted to a disturbing proportion. In the face of this now monumental problem, there is still a lack of understanding of the interplay between geography and politics and between resources and conflict on the part of the Nigerian government such that their posturing and interventions will necessarily further the conflict and threaten security further rather than ameliorate it. This paper using the philosophical methods of analysis, criticism and theorizing, is submitting that in the present situation, there is a need for a clearer understanding of the conflict to better deal with the problem. It is the position of this paper that the current crisis requires a deep reassessment of government's understanding of the region to better secure oil flows and also avoid full scale civil war.

**Keywords:** Oil, Conflict, politics, geography, economy, security

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Niger delta conflict in Nigeria has become an international conflict in terms of its global implications, especially as it concerns oil production and distribution. In Nigeria itself, Niger delta is an important life blood of the country's economy. Apart from this, the region contributes to the cultural diversity and beauty of the country since it is inhabited by more than 40 ethnic minorities and with a population of 31million people<sup>1</sup>. Nigeria having become independent in 1960 showed a huge potential as an economic giant in the West African sub region, and indeed in the whole of Africa, through high agricultural productivity rate. But sometime in the middle 70s, crude oil was discovered and marketed in commercial quantity awashing the country in petro-dollars and also damaging the agricultural sector. Since the 70s, Nigeria has made several billions of dollars from crude oil sales. Making this much money comes with a price for Nigeria; it fragmented the country into various axis and increased disenchantment among the various ethnic groups in the country, especially those in the southern part of the country. This disenchantment arises from the wanton fiscal irresponsibility of the successive Nigerian governments and the wild-cat drilling of crude oil and abuse of the environment going on in the Niger delta. This disenchantment is now

threatening the very fabric of the nation and the oil industry itself. Leading many to wonder aloud whether this is the end of peace in Nigeria or even whether this is the beginning of the balkanization of Nigeria.

This paper looks at the various dimensions of the conflict in the Niger delta, how it has affected Nigeria's oil production and distribution. Also, the paper looks at the international dimensions of the conflict especially as it concerns oil security and how the government of Nigeria has been mishandling the crisis. It is the position of the paper that the conflict if not handled properly will lead to a global oil crisis that will see supplies plummet and see Nigeria muddled up in civil crises. To prevent this, we need to reappraise our understanding concerning such issues as geography, development, conflict and politics and recourses.

## *Nigeria's History and Niger Delta Oil*

The history of Nigeria is a history of trials. Many events that make up the present Nigeria have been immense trial for the whole country. It is important to note that Nigeria is like no other country in Africa in terms of her maturity as a nation and the sheer breathtaking diversity. Having got her independence in 1960, she moved on to put herself on the economic world map with great difficulties. These difficulties arises from the various bad decisions made by the founding fathers and the eventual bad decisions made by the later leaders of the country. However, Nigeria is still emerging from the cauldron of corruption, irresponsible fiscal management and inter-ethnic conflicts. As a result of extended military rule, Nigeria's emergence has been delayed for many years and is still being delayed by monumental corruption. In the midst of this fragmentary and unstable polity, oil was discovered in Nigeria in the late 60s, just as the colonial masters were packing the last vestiges of their bags and leaving Nigeria.

The discovery of oil offered a great opportunity for Nigeria as a young nation and opens the doors for the highly needed, albeit unplanned resources, (especially during the Middle East war of 1973) resources for infrastructural and human development. But this discovery destroyed one of the most viable agricultural economies in the world. The early period of post-independence up until mid-1970s saw a rapid growth of industrial capacity and output necessitated by high agricultural output, as the contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP rose from 4.8% to 8.2%. This pattern changed

when oil was discovered in Nigeria and it suddenly became of strategic importance to the world economy through its supply-price nexus, as shown in the table<sup>2</sup> below.

Sector	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002
Agriculture	64.1%	47.6%	30.8%	39.0%	35.7%	28.35%
Manufacturing	4.8%	8.2%	8.1%	8.2%	3.4%	5.5%
Crude Petroleum	0.3%	7.1%	22.0%	12.8%	47.5%	40.6%
Others	30.8%	37.1%	39.1%	40.0%	13.4%	25.55%

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria, Changing Structure of the Nigerian Economy (2000) and Annual Report & Statement of Accounts (2002).

Apart from this massive increase in the GDP per capita of Nigeria, oil introduced a more radical nationalistic temper in the part of the oil producing communities. This gave rise to various commissions and government bodies geared towards ameliorating the effects of inequitable resource distribution. Many states that hitherto could individually feed Nigeria abandoned their agricultural prowess and focused on federal government allocations. These allocations depended on the population of a given state. This explains why the oil producing states got so little while a desert states like Boronu in the north got so much. To make matters worse, Nigeria was muddled up in the quest for self definition in terms of what kind of government to follow. Eventually, the country opted for federalism in tune with the structures of the erstwhile colonial masters. But the dream of a federal system which could have forced the states to stay clear of oil and look inward for their own resources did not materialize. Instead, Nigeria practically adapted a unitary system of government while insisting that hers is a federal system. This unitary system of government in a country that is ethnically diverse entrenched a corrupt atmosphere in terms of distribution of resources especially oil.

What we see in Nigeria is a clear case of inequitable distribution of resources that has led to gross conflict in the country. This conflict centers on oil in the Niger Delta and on how to give more federal money to the indigenes of this region. This conflict continues since a large scale political and economic marginalization has been inflicted on the Nigeria Delta region with the view to keeping them out of the economic equation. According to C. Obi, this repression is in a form of infrastructural deprivation since 'Until the 1990s Nigerian state control over the population of the Niger Delta region, or the 'oil minorities', was largely achieved through political marginalization. This marginalization is most apparent in the transfer of locally-derived oil industry profits to the federal level, a marked lack of basic infrastructure connecting popular classes of the region to Lagos, including inadequate roads and insufficient phone lines, as well as ongoing military and police repression of local claims on, and resistance against, the oil industry'<sup>3</sup>. A visit to the Nigeria Delta region will show the environmental and psychological carnage meted out on the inhabitants of this region. Nigerian government has tried to show remorse for the carnage of the region by establishing commissions that could accelerate

development of the region. Commissions like The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has been meant for such exercise, although its contributions could be seen here and there but generally, it has fallen prey to the usual corruption that is the hallmark of government projects in Nigeria, making its contributions lame in the eye of the citizens of the region.

However, the conflict has now degenerated into a full scale guerrilla struggle between the federal government of Nigeria and paramilitary groups in the region. Since the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa of the Ogoni minority by the Abacha government, we have seen a reorganization of the usually rag-tag groups into a well equipped military group determined to achieve their aim of retaking the whole region and possibly declaring it independent from Nigeria. The oil company Royal Dutch Shell had initially bore the brunt of this war fare. Even though she has the highest baggage of guilt for the lack of development of the region, she is not entirely to blame. But now, all the oil companies and installations in the area are threatened by the furor of the militants. We have seen a spate of kidnappings and a few killing of oil workers as a warning and deterrence to these companies, so far the oil workers have continued doing their jobs under heavy but porous security. Nigerian government, with the ghost of Biafra still hovering above them has responded to the militants' threat with military power. A town called Odi was literally demolished with many Nigerians killed by their own army and the military has continued to wreck its own havoc in the region with the view to intimidate and terrorize thereby stopping the militants. Human Rights Watch and the Nigerian Human Rights Law Service have documented these abuses, including the sacking and burning of the town of Odi in November 1999.<sup>4</sup> But the military has not let up in the onslaught. The militants also have sowed the seed of terror among the inhabitants of the city of Port-Harcourt with their ransom based kidnappings geared towards raising more money for weapons and maintenance of personnel.

The oil companies themselves whose only claim in the region is to make profit has contributed to the escalation of the conflict as they have done as far back as 1969 during the Nigerian-Biaran war. The majority of the blame has been leveled against the oil giant Shell. Their complicity in the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni chiefs served as a catalyst for this blame among other things. According to Zalik, commenting on the leaked Shells document of 2004 said that 'Shell companies in Nigeria contribute to violence through an overlapping web of relations between its own staff, contractors, community members and government agents'<sup>5</sup>. Shell of course cannot exclusively be blamed for the activities of other oil companies in the Niger Delta but being one of the largest companies in the area, shares some of the blames. Shell on her part has insisted that she has contributed immensely to the development of the area. Shell points out that it has engaged in social welfare activities in the Delta since the 1950s, through school scholarships and an agricultural extension programs. Shell claims to have been

the principal donor in Nigeria in the mid-1990s, with an approximate \$30 million annual budget for Niger Delta development<sup>6</sup>.

But no matter how we look at the Niger delta conflict, it is a conflict whose implications are yet to be understood by both the world and the Nigerian government. This could be seen in the lackluster manner the government in Nigeria is handling the conflict and the complacency of the world. They are more inclined towards escalating it than solving it through their lack of knowledge about resources and conflicts.

#### *The Niger Delta Conflict, the World and dis-economies*

The Niger Delta Conflict is no longer a Nigerian phenomenon. Since the economic life of the whole world is now inextricably linked, it is affecting the global economy in an important way. That is, preventing the normal supply of crude oil. This conflict is first and foremost an economic one before it is a political one. It equally has a lot to do with power struggle between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria in terms of self determination, preservation and survival. Because of this blend of economics and power struggle, the state as we know it in Nigeria may atrophy affecting the whole world in the process. According to Claude Ake, 'because everyone places the highest priority on controlling (power), political competition becomes immensely intense and unrestrained; indeed, Hobbesian ... The importance of the struggle is that the state disappears in a process of parceling and privatization, its place taken by communities and ethnic groups, nationalities and sub nationalities'<sup>7</sup> Be this as it may, the power struggle in the world demands that Niger delta be peaceful and well equipped to continue to pump and sell oil around the world, but this is not the case. We have all got our hands soiled there in the Niger Delta to the extent that we are not getting what we bargained for. According to the major militant umbrella in the region, MEND (Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta), the purpose of the conflict is to free 'our people from the demagogue called Nigeria and their agents of de-development, which have destroyed our land, our water and air and insult us to our faces. We will fight to the last man'. Words like this can only come from people who are determined to have their way. This was echoed long ago by a national daily, *Concord*, when it said: 'Generally, there is an endless carpet of oil laid perpetually on the surface of the waters in these sorely affected areas thus, destroying the aquatic life over which the people mostly depend for their economic survival. The people are surrounded by a filthy and repugnant body of water which is most unsafe for human consumption, and their major sources of protein permanently devastated. It is under this unenviable condition that the Egbema community exists'<sup>8</sup>.

The effect of this kind of rhetoric and actions following it has a damaging effect on the Nigerian economy, geography and political life. Nigeria's economy has been on a spiral since the government of Olusegun Obasanjo introduced

some far reaching reforms with the view to making the economy competitive. The spiraling of the economy could first and foremost be traced to the power sector which is not able to provide the badly needed electricity to the country. This lack of electricity has prevented the influx of foreign investment despite the abundant cheap labor. The Niger Delta crisis on the other hand is putting paid on the Nigeria's quest for foreign investment.

Nigerian army has been engaging the militants in the Niger Delta in a highly bloody and destructive war of which no one knows the actual casualty statistics. But the destruction of oil infrastructure is clearly visible in the shortages in output of Nigeria's crude. Although the Nigerian government is shifting production offshore, the militants have demonstrated the capability to locate and destroy installations very far from shore. According to the international crisis group, 'Militants have demonstrated intimate knowledge of oil company activities and some have boasted of receiving information from oil men sympathetic to their cause as well as from company employees' wives and girlfriends, some of whom hail from Niger Delta villages'.<sup>9</sup> The main effect of these activities has been the slowing down of Nigeria's economy. It is the hope of the Nigerian government that the present oil windfall will be rechannelled to the development of other sectors of the economy. But so far this is not happening. What we have seen is the dwindling of faith in Nigeria's crisis management capabilities and economy and increasing local fear that the present crisis may spiral out of control. Some oil companies are even considering engaging the militants themselves in security of their installation, a sort of partners in the business of drilling oil. According to crisis group, a senior member of an oil company told them 'that his company was considering expanding security contracts with militant groups as well as with Ijaw ex-military officers who, some in the company felt, had the necessary clout with Ijaw militants to pacify them'<sup>10</sup>. This will mean that the oil companies themselves have lost confidence in Nigeria's government's capability to pacify the militants and it also meant that the oil companies will be creating another sphere of influence outside the control of the Nigerian government. Everyday, the crisis deepens to include incursions into Port Harcourt, a city far removed from the oil fields themselves but is located strategically in the oil producing state of Rivers.

The Nigerian economy will continue to bear the brunt of this crisis to the extent that hard earned funds are now being diverted to finance the war thereby making larger holes in the belly of the economy. This is a great dis-economy. Apart from the economy, the crisis has also cause an untold social disequilibrium in the region. Many people are now being born in the area with the sounds of gun shots in their tender ears. The society in the Niger delta is bleeding with young people anxious to escape the carnage that has befallen them. Many of them wind up in the nearby cities, dangerously detached from their parents and fending for themselves in a largely unknown world and leaving their now destroyed rural



environment behind, for good. According to T. Jike, ‘The rural migrant, anxious to escape the unpalatable consequences of oil exploration, is caught up in a bind in the urban area. As he moves in among kinsmen at the first point of contact in the metropolitan center, he finds to his chagrin that several other migrants have also made the move to this urban destination to better their life chances. Very soon, the little shack meant for two persons is made to accommodate seven with each breathing down the others’ back at night and transmitting, as it were, communicable diseases’<sup>11</sup>. Again, ‘one might, therefore, begin to conceptualize youth violence, restiveness, and rebelliousness as various shades of reactions to a system that has fallen short of meeting the expectations of the youths. Youths feel a sense of alienation and powerlessness to effect a change, and they devise a violent frontal attack to force their collective admittance into the system’<sup>12</sup>. There seem to be no end in sight.

The crisis has been appreciated world wide especially in the West as something that can cause even wide spread economic and political catastrophe in West Africa’s sub region and the world at large. Various world governments understanding the implication of this crisis have tried to reach the Nigerian government to offer assistance in quelling the crisis. According to global insight daily analysis, ‘officials of the United States, United Kingdom and Nigeria have met in recent months under the aegis of a collaborative body known as the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy (GGESS) to discuss possible technological assistance from Western nations to enhance the security capabilities of Nigeria and other West African energy producers’<sup>13</sup>. This in itself is a viable collaborative action which may help in the crisis. But ‘while the desire to improve the security of energy resources and industry personnel is understandable, addressing technological weaknesses will yield less than desirable results – and risk deepening public distrust towards Western oil interests – unless the root causes of the Niger Delta conflict are adequately addressed’. Addressing the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis will require a lot of analysis of the concepts arising in this crisis and a great social engineering will have to be put in place to stem the crisis. So far, this has not been done. The government in Nigeria has continued to wage an unjust war against her own citizens who are suffering under the yoke of a great injustice.

#### *Resources, Conflict and Political Reconciliation*

Putting an end to the Niger Delta conflict does not require the use of force contrary to the sentiments of the Nigerian government. What is indeed required is the thorough understanding of the interconnected meanings of resources and conflict and geography and politics. Analyzing these concepts will require an understanding that their meanings can never be the same any where since what constitute a resource here in Nigeria may mean nothing elsewhere thereby blurring the meaning of resources. Resource for instance is a very plastic term. The oil resources in Nigeria became a resource when the western man discovered the internal combustion

engine and needed oil to run it. Before this discovery, the crude beneath Nigeria’s soils and waters was not a resource. It was not even known to exist! This continued to be the state of affair until contacts with the west was made possible through trade initially and latter through colonialism. By then the world, have been talking about the crude oil, the black gold. It meant nothing to Nigerians until the colonial masters transfer the knowledge of this black gold thereby making it a resource in the Nigerian landscape. So a resource is something that has been located and its usefulness determined. According to Broek and Webb, a resource ‘is an element or property of the earth that is useful to man. Man’s economic needs and technical skills determine what is useful; in other words his cultural appraisal decides what constitutes a natural resource. Obsidian was just a glassy volcanic rock, not resource, until pre-historic man discovered its value as a cutting tool. Base metals and other substances unknown or ignored fifty years ago such as uranium and thorium for nuclear fuel are eagerly sought for today. District and whole regions rise or decline when natural resources are discovered, exhausted or replaced by cheaper substitute’<sup>14</sup>. We can indeed see that oil is not a resource wherever it occurs. In the USA not all oil deposits are drilled simply because the high level of impurities makes that oil unattractive thereby making them a non-resource.

Apart from this, oil is located at a place geographically and therefore must be understood to be entailing a connection between resources and geography. The oil states in Nigeria which include; Rivers, Bayelsa, Imo, Abia, Ondo, Cross River, Delta and Akwa-Ibom states are located where a large deposit of fossils have made it possible for crude to be present. The citizens of these states did not put the crude beneath their land but by sheer chance of nature happen to be citizens there. We must respect this. This crude fact comes with a flurry of interconnected activities which we must handle with respect. The ‘transnational oil corporations lay down pipelines in swamps, build flow stations, and evacuate millions of barrels of crude from oil terminals on coastal ‘beaches’. At sea, vast oil derricks define points of extraction while gas flares shine bright red from dusk to dawn. Seismic markers in oceans, creeks or swamps establish sites where engineers prospect for new sources of crude oil. Oil markers crosscut or follow traditional lines of communication between hamlets linked by inter- marriage, co-ownership of shrines and participation in periodic markets. These are points where global capitalism intersects with local subsistence economies, impoverishing many, polluting water supplies, degrading soils and destroying fisheries’<sup>15</sup>. This is the price some people pay because they have decided to make oil a resource. The same is true everywhere crude oil is found from Siberia to the Black Sea and from Alaska to Texas.

Resources are very important in the lives of all those who by chance have them. It brings enormous developmental opportunity even though careless exploration of these resources will lead to decadence as well. It requires therefore a political will and a healthy state to both temper oil

destruction and ensure equitable distribution. In Nigeria's Niger Delta, an understanding of what resources means and its connection to geography is missing. There is no doubt that that Nigerian state knows the meaning of geography, but it lacks an integral understanding of her geographical condition and how it affects both resource distribution and the general political life of the country. Nigeria being a country that was created out of the whims of the colonial masters has to have a highly sensitive understanding of resource distribution and geography. The unitary system of government practiced in the Nigerian state, has provided room for unjust distribution of resources thereby leading the country into a deep crisis. Studies have shown how mismanagement of resource distribution can easily lead to full scale civil war. According to Collier and Hoeffler, 'states that rely heavily on the export primary resources face the high risk of civil war than resource poor states'<sup>16</sup>.

In Nigeria, there is clear evidence that what Collier and Hoeffler is a plain truth. When there was no oil, in the 60s, Nigeria was going through an economic development free from the conflict resources like oil can bring. When oil was discovered however, everyone focused on it making it one single factor that can disintegrate the nation. To make matters worse, this oil is located in a place where there is minority groups that may be motivated to secede from the commonwealth. Collier and Hoeffler<sup>17</sup> pointed out that the wealth of oil in a minority area can actually encourage a secession movement thereby leading to a civil war. Nigeria has already had a civil war fought for a different reason. The next civil war in Nigeria, if we allow it to happen, will be a war fought over who control what oil resources and how. We have already started seeing this war in the making. Many wars we have seen in recent years fought over resources are hard to end. Scholars are of the opinion that if we allow a war to start in an area with a single resource that is disputed, it will be even harder to stop such war. According to Doyle and Sambanis<sup>18</sup>, 'civil wars are harder to end when they occur in countries that depend on primary commodity exports'. Also, Buhaug and Gates<sup>19</sup> show that the presence of mineral resources in a conflict zone tends to increase a conflict's geographical scope. This means that any Nigeria's resource oriented civil war will damage the entire West African sub-region and create a human catastrophe in terms of the refugee crisis that will ensue. If indeed full scale war does break, everyone in Nigeria and the world will be worse off and Nigeria itself will be taken many miles backwards and hers poor will be very worse off more than they are now. Mansoob Murshed<sup>20</sup> has already noted that 'conflict in low-income countries makes the objective of poverty reduction all the more difficult, since not only is growth retarded, public money is taken for military spending from basic social services, and the poor are themselves disproportionately the victims of conflict'.

In the face of all these threats, the only option left in the Niger delta situation is political reconciliation first and

foremost and later reassessment of resource distribution through political restructuring of the country. This will require a number of things that seem to be missing in Nigeria right now. Participative political structure, Pluralistic power structure, understanding of conflict history of the area through plural participation of all parties, and Structural integration are some of those things to bear in mind in trying to reorganize the political landscape of Nigeria with the view to solving the Niger delta conflict. Political reconciliation is not an easy matter in Nigeria since years of corruption and cronyism has destroyed any trust in government's intensions and activities. Nigerians are more likely to view government actions towards reconciliation as a means yet again to favor their cronies. This is clearly understandable. The only option remaining for the government is to actually be seen to solve the problem by bringing the militants to the table of discourse instead of leaving them in the jungle while deciding their fate in the palatial palaces of Abuja. Political reconciliation begins when parties involved in the conflict and indeed all Nigerians are brought to decide permanently how to share the resources of the country. A true federal system of government would have been the best for an ethnically and religiously diverse country as Nigeria. This will require therefore a serious soul searching for all the entities in Nigeria. They will have to decide whether to continue mauling forward in the tracks of debilitating unitary system or engage in a more mutual federal system where the whole entities contribute meaningfully to the general will. We are left to see how it plays out in this stiffly competitive world. Leaving the militants of the Niger delta to fight on in the creeks will eventually lead to the death of the country and therefore must be prevented, not only for Nigeria's sake, but for the sake of the world.

#### *Oil Security in Nigeria: Issues and Options*

Protecting oil in Nigeria with the situation in the Niger delta is indeed a monumental task. We need to get clean oil to the world to contribute our quota to the engine of the world's economy. Clean oil here means oil not tainted by blood of the citizens of the Niger delta. If we are to do this, then we have a lot of issues to deal with. Issues bordering on environmental protection, stoppage of gas flaring, responsible construction of pipelines and float stations since some of them are unbearably near residential areas in the creeks among other things. Also, corporate social responsibility on the part of the participating oil firms should be enforced through government agencies and edit. These are some of the issues that must be critically considered in the present Niger delta situation.

Environmental pollution being one of the most debated single factors in the conflicts needs some consideration. How can people whose livelihood depends on the creeks be deprived of their means of living simple because we want to drill and sell oil? Oil spill comes with added baggage. Some of the waters or lands that have been spilled with crude are damaged forever to the extent that those who depend on such piece of land or water must have to depart from there and move to another place where possible. The

same thing with continues flaring of gas. This is going on in many places in the Niger delta creating a serious health hazard to residents of even Port Harcourt, a city far from the oil fields. Continues flaring will no doubt create a siege mentality in the people near the flares. If this continues to happen, how can we settle nerves in the Niger delta? Also pipeline construction has posed a great threat to people of the delta. Many accidents have occurred, many of them unreported in the media about consuming conflagrations that usually befall people of the Niger delta. Pipelines passing through someone's backyard are simply not acceptable. Considering these issues will make it possible for the Nigerian government to start the process of responsible reconciliation in the Niger delta thereby safeguarding the crude in the region.

Oil security therefore starts with responsibility in terms of redesigning the oil industry in the above mentioned counts. Then we move in the area of peace efforts. We cannot allow the militants to be the ones to show signs of wanting peace like they recently showed by declaring a unilateral cease fire. Rather we should stop all military activities in the area and focus on bringing the militants in the direction of peace and also making effort to develop the area. Development will indeed ensure that 'our' oil will move out from that region smoothly without fear or favor. This means that we have to make the citizens see reason in the activities of the oil firms operating there. Development efforts should start earnestly to show that Niger delta citizens are the owners of the resources in their lands and that the rest of Nigerians are simple enjoying the magnanimity the citizens of the delta.

In other words, oil security comes with plenty of responsibility on the part of everyone in Nigeria beginning with oil firms and the Nigerian governments. The whole world should also participate in the process of achieving oil security in Nigeria especially those whose citizens man the oil firms operating in Nigeria. The only military responsibility that will remain for the army will be the one of preventing external terrorist groups from sabotaging the oil installations of Nigeria and not fighting their own citizens. Oil security therefore comes with good political atmosphere and equitable resource distribution that will better reflect where the oil is coming from.

## II. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper had been to highlight the problems of the Nigeria's Niger delta and the possible solutions therein. The Niger delta in Nigeria is a smoldering conflict area which the rest of the world barely understands since the Nigerian government and the oil firms operating there are making effort to avoid letting anyone in the world know what is going on. The world is simply waiting for a full-scale war before the import of the crisis dawns on everyone. We simply here on CNN and other news organization that Nigeria's oil production is down because of militant activities. No one mentions the human toll of the conflict especially the fact that Nigeria has deployed her army against her own people. This is

a clear and present danger that we all must discuss and seek ways of stopping it. If we fail in the Niger delta, oil security which the whole world needs will become a mirage by the time we allow this crisis to fester. It is recommended by this paper that oil security is guaranteed in Nigeria only if the government withdraws from the delta and institute a framework for political reconciliation, engineer real development projects in the area and reestablish confidence in the hearts and minds of the citizens of the area, assuring them that it possible for the government to work on their behalf using their own recourses. It is only them that we will achieve oil security in the Niger delta.

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