



Security and Conflict Transformation in the Niger Delta

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National Security- is it:

- Security of the nation and its key assets (e.g. oil facilities), protection of leaders and the elites

or

- Security of nationals- the other 139m Nigerians

Okey Ibeanu

Conflict:

- Resolution- cover up the changes that are really needed
- Management – handle problems
- Transformation- - peace as embedded in justice, the building of right relationships and social structure through a radical respect for human rights and nonviolence as a way of life.

John Paul Lederach

- Conflicts happen for a reason.









Conflict drivers- March 2006

- Poor governance or lack of participation in the governance structures
- Lack of social and economic development
- Lack of participation in the oil and gas industry, which greatly impacts the region
- Overmilitarization of the Niger Delta

Accelerating violence in the Niger Delta

- Low level political agitation for control of oil resources for 35 years
- Occasional attacks on oil facilities and kidnapping of oil workers
- Since January 2006- huge increase in attacks and kidnappings
- Shut in of oil- often 1.4 million bpd out of maximum capacity of 3.2 million bpd

But in 2009:

- The stakes have risen dramatically with increasing ransoms, payments by state governments to be part of peace accords, consequent creation of new groups to benefit from these payments
- Creation of new groups, redefinition of existing groups, and dramatic increase in arms for the 2007 elections by all parties

2009 continued

- Political groups never disarmed and demobilized.
- Armed groups used to fight political battles between godfathers and incumbents
- Elections are not related to mandate.
- Absence of good governance and accountability - at all levels

2009 continued

- Armed groups being protected by politicians, especially at state level, who need them for continuity
- Protection of militants and insider information from military who benefit from the crisis
- Journalists and other militants paid by the military to expose militants out of favor

Past efforts to resolve the problems of the Niger Delta have not worked:

- Reports- Willinks 1958, Don Etiebet 1994, UN 1997, Popoola 1998, Ogomudia 2001, Pres Panel on Natl Security 2003, NDDC 1st Conference 2003, NDDC Masterplan 2004, National Political Reform Conf 2005, UNDP 2006, Yenagoa Accord 2006, Pres Council on Coastal States 2006, Technical Committee on the Niger Delta 2008

Other resolution efforts:

- Development bodies: River Basin, OMPADEC, NDDC
- Reconciliation committees: Oputa Panel 1999, R/S Truth and Reconciliation 2008
- Other peace efforts: Rivers State Oct 2004, Community Committees- R/S 2005, D/S Waterways Security Com 2007, Goodluck Jonathan peace com 2007, Bayelsa Peace & Conflict Resolution Com

Why haven't these initiatives worked?

- Too many vested interests in perpetuating the crisis
- Too little political will
- Too much concern with national security and too little with security of nationals
- Too much "resolution" and too little "transformation" of the conflicts- getting to root causes with the relevant people

Something that did work: the Kaduna Peace Declaration

- Signed August 22, 2002 by Muslim and Christian leaders, and Gov Makarfi
- Members communicated during Miss World riots of November 21, 2002 to calm their people and coordinate security movements
- Joint religious committee buried the unidentified dead in mass grave after interreligious service

Issues of the riot in which 200+ people died:

- More political than religious:
- Attempts to destabilize Makarfi, whom some viewed as next potential VP
- Attempts to destroy Makarfi's political and economic base
- Attempts to redress underrepresentation of Southern Kaduna people in govt.



The conflict spread outside Kaduna State

- Attempts by Southern Kaduna people to disrupt the Jumaat prayers at National Mosque Nov 28, 2002
- Movement westward through Nasarawa State toward Abuja
- Peace Committees in Karu Local Govt. picked up early warning signs- Muslim northerners told Muslim Yoruba, who told Christian Igbos, who told AAPW

Early detection, early prevention

- Called President and Governor, who called in police to forestall violence
- Chiefs and chairmen of Peace Committees mobilized members
- Police prevented demonstrators from entering Abuja
- NIREC and religious leaders prevented their members from violence

Why was this successful?

- Ownership by many people- federal, state and local governments; chiefs; religious leaders; ordinary citizens
- Police acted responsibly
- Dialogue across religious, ethnic, class boundaries- no "us vs. them"
- A shared vision of desired "peace"

The ABC Triangle of Conflict

CONTEXT



ATTITUDE --- BEHAVIOR

Mindset change and modified behavior must be accompanied by improved context.

Building ownership of the peace process

- Warri mediators and interethnic peace committee 1999-2002
- Eleme/Okrika peace committee 2001-2002
- Nonviolent Election Committees and Early Warning Systems 2007
- Delta State- chiefs and beachmasters held responsible for hostages in their areas

Building cooperation among the actors

- Government has stated responsibility to protect its citizens- must be involved
- Civil society has the most incentive to have a peaceful environment- must be involved
- Companies/private sector need a peaceful operating environment and healthy, safe workforce- must be involved

Building conducive environment for peace and security

- Potentials for criminality MUST be closed
 - Oil bunkering- by civilians and military, local and international
 - Arms importation
 - Secure borders
 - Money laundering
 - Political thuggery
 - Disarmament and demobilization- supervised by a neutral body

Conducive Environment cont'd.

- In exchange- SERIOUS job creation- real jobs, not menial trades
- Real reintegration program that is not hijacked by vested interests.
- SERIOUS social and economic development of the region
- SERIOUS participation/partial ownership of the oil and gas industry

Conducive Environment cont'd.

- SERIOUS efforts at Good Governance, esp transparency and accountability
- SERIOUS Security Sector Reform
- REAL political will to implement the 7 Point Agenda, support the Niger Delta Ministry, restructure NNPC, arrest and prosecute corrupt politicians, including those sponsoring armed groups

International Assistance in Achieving this

- International assistance in stopping illegal oil bunkering and arms importation
- Naming and shaming sponsors of violence
- Sanctions applied to such sponsors
- International assistance in DDR
- Security for ex-members of armed groups and others must be guaranteed.

International Assistance cont'd

- REAL development assistance- not in money, but expertise on genuine, not token activities
- Assistance in developing strong mechanisms for detecting and responding to early warning signs of conflict
- Advocacy for addressing fundamental issues of the Niger Delta
- Coordinated international efforts

Preconditions:

- Political will
- Closure of criminal activities
- Readiness of communities
- Provision of alternatives
- Militants have no other choice

e.g. Okrika Ateke February 2009

And if...

- If the avenues for criminality are blocked and genuine alternatives provided for peace and development of the Niger Delta, the people of the region will work with other actors in achieving the basic social justice and conducive environment beneficial for all.