CHALLENGES TO NATION-BUILDING: CORRUPTION, INEQUALITY AND THE QUAGMIRE OF VIOLENCE IN THE NIGER DELTA.

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ABSTRACT

The problem of environmental degradation and despoliation, youth restiveness, hostage taking and instutionalized violence is prevalent in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Although, the state and its agencies embark on a quixotic attempt to stem the miasma and restore peace and tranquility in the area only perfunctory attention, if any, is paid to the menace of corruption and inequality and how these problems promote and reinforce the seemingly intractable quagmire of violence in the region. The thrust of this paper therefore is that, much as pipelines blow up, kidnapping of workers of oil multinationals and/or ordinary civilians for ransom by militant youths, and general threat to lives and properties in the region constitutes grave security implication with negative consequences for our precarious and tenuous mono-cultural economy, yet the current admixture of unregulated state violence on the one hand and amnesty on the other hand for repentant militants employed by the government in addressing the issue appear escapist, defeatist, tangential and tendentiously illusive. The paper argues that, Nigeria does not need to adopt coercive and brute force to solve the problems of resistance but requires transparency in governance, effective leadership, justice and equity.

Keywords: Corruption, Environment, Pollution, Minerals, Nigeria