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Essay: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

July 28, 2019 by Essay Sauce

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Nigeria, officially, The Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a federal constitutional republic consisting of 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The nation is located on the coast of West Africa, bordered by the Bight of Benin and the Gulf of Guinea in south and it is bordered by Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, it shares maritime borders with Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

It is practically comparable in size to Venezuela and is about twice the size of California. With Niger State, one thousand four hundred and ninety-seven (1497) kilometers is shared between them, eighty-seven (87) kilometers with, seven hundred and seventy-three (773) kilometers with Benin, one thousand six hundred and ninety (1690) kilometers with Cameroon and a seaside of no less than eight hundred and fifty three kilometers. The existing numerous number of States, of which there were only three at independence, reflect the country's tumultuous history and the difficulties of managing such a heterogeneous national entity at all

levels of government. The states are aggregated into six geopolitical zones: North West, North East, North Central, South-East, South-South, and South West.

The population in Nigeria grew from 1990 to 2008 by 57 million, a 60% growth rate. From reports statistically, it is the most populated African country in the world. The projection set by the United Nations gave an estimation of about one hundred and fifty five million in 2009. The National census results in the past few decades have been uncertain. On December 2006, the census' outcomes were announced with a total of 140,003,542 population. The main analysis accessible was by sexual orientation: the male gender numbered 71,709,859, and female gender numbered 68,293,08.

From the report documented by the United Nations, Nigeria has witnessed a rise in population rate which reflects a very high rate of growth and fertility in the world. By their projections, Nigeria is one of the eight countries expected to account communally for half of the world's total population increase from 2005–2050. The United Nations has projected that by 2100, the Nigerian population would be between five hundred and five (505) million and one point zero three (1.03) billion people, middle estimate: seven hundred and thirty (730) million. Whereas, in 1950, the country had only thirty-three (33) million people.

One out of each four African is a Nigerian Citizen. At present, Nigeria is the seventh most populous country in the world. 2006 estimations show that forty-two point three (42.3) percent of the population is between zero to fourteen (0- 14) years of age, while fifty-four point six (54.6) percent is between fifteen to sixty-five (15–65) years old, the birth rate is meaningfully higher than the death rate, at forty point four (40.4) and sixteen point nine (16.9) per one thousand (1000) people respectively.

Nigeria is a mixed country with different religious groups which are categorized into three major groups namely Christianity which are more present in the Southern region; Islam, more densely populated in the Northern region of the Country; and Traditional worshipers are sparingly dispersed all around the country. There are over 500 ethnic groups in Nigeria; the three largest are the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba in which the six geopolitical separates them into the cardinals.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria got independent from the British Colonial Masters on the 1st of October, 1960. The federal government became a sovereign State with no external influence on areas that has to do with its territorial defense, international relations, commercial and economic policy. Due to the parliamentary system operated, the Queen of England was the Head of Government while the president of Nigeria assumed the position of head of state. Its legislative arm was a bicameral system with two chambers namely the House of Senate and Chamber of Representatives. The executive arm of government had a Prime Minister and its cabinet which are selected from the party with majority members at the floor of the house by convention. The Federal Supreme Court which was the high court of law was the main Judicial authority. The political parties united the country with more of national interest.

The contemporary history of Nigeria-as a sovereign state incorporating ethnic groups ranging from 250 to 400 in number with diverse societies, ways and means of political connections. This can be dated back to the end of the British invasion in 1903 and the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria into the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914.

The British Colonial representatives inoculated a structure of government at the time of independence in 1960. In 1963, a federal system of government was introduced to create tiers of power constitutionally and structure a two-level of government that are independent and dichotomous in their own areas of influence. Federalism that undermines the sovereignty of its component will cause conflict, a peril to national peace and unity, and critical breakup. In addition, it is important to note here that Nigerian nation is fragmented in the sense that it reflects the high impact of the three predominant ethnic groups, Igbo (East), Yoruba (West), and Hausa (North).

The most intense experience, was the crude oil discovery and its exploitation which has a long haul impact on the economic growth of the country, The expedition for crude oil, started in 1908 and bring forth a significant discovery a couple of years later. It was brought back by Shell and British Petroleum in 1937. The crude oil extraction got to an optimal point in 1946; however, the first business disclosure was unknown until 1956, at a place known as Olobiri which is located in the Niger Delta region. Export started fully in 1958 which was refined in the factory at Port Harcourt. Funds acquired from proceed on Oil was still insignificant. However, the projections for continuous monetary development seemed optimistic and additional complemented the political competitions on the day before independence.

Palm products, cocoa, cassava, peanuts and some other cash crops were known to be the major export of Nigeria before the discovery of oil which later relegated and took the attention of the government. In the 1970s, Nigerian was ranked the 7th oil producing Nation among the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The oil boom in 1971 completely changed the revenue channel of the nation. Agriculture suffered neglect from this bringing about unemployment and inflation. Unfortunately, the world consumption of oil went down in 1975, and affected the production of oil, it took the intervention of OPEC so as to keep oil back to its remarkable price which had a ripple effect on the Nigerian economy as well and completely strengthened the policies of OPEC.

The oil-rich Nigerian economy, for a long time, has been characterized by bribery and corruption, inflation, and unfortunate management of macroeconomy, is experiencing considerable economic change during the democratic era. The agricultural sector, precisely the small scale and large scale farming did not meet up with the rise in population rate of the country which later turned Nigeria to a country that imports food.

During the economy distress that Nigeria suffered, IMF came into rescue by granting Nigeria a debt relieve and 1 billion dollars fund to support institutions of the country and some structural polices to keep the country back to a buoyant financial state.

Militant insurgencies in the oil region, terrorisms in the Northern region and ethnic and religious conflicts in some States have weakened and affected the economy of the country. The state of internal security are greatly unpredictable which can be traced to the failure of government agencies to curb violences and criminal activities that have led to loss of lives and properties. So many people, for example, the Northern part of Nigeria, have been displaced or killed, religious places, schools, and hospital facilities have been destroyed.

Before the colonial masters gave independence to Nigeria, it is believed that all the region were forcibly joined together to form one nation. Nevertheless, it has been the cry and agitations of some groups that the system of government is not true federalism. Some group of Igbos triggered the Biafran war that occurred between the period of 1967 to 1970. This war has to do with the call for secession of the Igbo tribe from Nigeria. Thousands of lives were lost, billion of Naira was spent, and even nearly dwindled the unity of the country. The younger generation that witnessed this war have not erased the wailing of there older generations who died in this war. Of recent, crisis have began on this Biafran issue again. In addition, Kaduna, a Northern State has witnessed violence with the main purpose of usurping the incumbent Emir which has resulted into a total death toll of more than a hundred (100) civilians. So many issues are cropping up everyday that is distracting the government of the day. In the shortest form, it can be said that violence has eaten deep to the existence of Nigeria before and since the inception of democracy as a system of government.

In the same way, soldiers from the Nigerian army moved into Odi, a community of perhaps 15,000 people, engaged in a brief exchange of fire with the young men alleged to be responsible for the deaths of the policemen, and proceeded to raze the town. This was majorly due to the killing of twelve Nigerian police officers on duty in the community. February–May 2000 marked the death of more than one thousand (1000) people in a crisis that erupted from the enactment of Sharia law in Kaduna. In a retaliation attack waged against the Hausa people residing in Southeastern Nigeria, scores of innocent civilians were killed. September

was another blood spilling month in the year 2001. Over two thousand (2000) people were brutally murdered in a religious-related crisis in the middle-belt of the country, Jos. Also, In October 2001, hundreds were killed, and thousands displaced in communal violence that spread across Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa States. On October 1, 2001 President Obasanjo announced the formation of a National Security Commission to address the issue of communal violence.

For local processing and income reasons, residents in the Niger-Delta region have been engaging in the draining of oil from pipelines. This has drawn the attention of the oil companies with cry for government intervention in curbing this acts that has resulted to fire outbreaks and eventual loss of life. Incidence ranging from the death of more than a thousand lives on October 1998, to another incidence that occurred on July 2000 which claimed about two hundred and fifty (250) lives. Coupled with this data is the report of death toll of sixty people somewhere close to Lagos State. May 2006 was not exempted from the records of death experienced in this oil rich region. Record has it that around one hundred and fifty to two hundred (150-200) people feared death. Presently, the people of Niger Delta have been agitating for remedy to the environmental pollution caused by the massive exploitation of oil and poverty inflicting them as a result of this.

As being indicated by World Bank, Nigeria is categorized as a diversified economy, developing marketplace and with its plenteous abundance in natural endowments, well-advanced economic, telecommunications, transportation and legal sectors, and forex trade coupled with its ranking as the second biggest in Africa, officially, has come to decline drastically in income status. As at 2012, on the GDP world ranking, Nigeria sits at the 30th. In the Sub-saharan part of Africa, remarkably, it has been known that Nigeria is placed first as the United States Trading Partner and exports about eleven percent of its oil to United States. It is rated as the 50th-largest fare market for US goods and the 14th-largest exporter of products to the US and also having United States as its biggest financial investor. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated 9%, 8.3% and 8% economic growth for 2008, 2009 and 2011 respectively.

Nigeria has been masked with crisis and violence right before it got its independence because of its vast number of competing ethnolinguistic groups. Tussle for control and political power over the oil-rich region of the country has caused aggrieved individuals and the State to engage in continuous campaigning for better condition and more national concern over this area suffering neglect of the government. For example, one of the areas which have attracted the attention of the international community is the Ogoni tribe which has been suffering from serious environmental impact rooting from crude oil exploration going on daily. Right from 2002, the nation has seen sectarian violence by Boko Haram, an Islamist movement that seeks to put an end to the secular system of government and establish Sharia law in the country. In 2010, over five hundred (500) people were killed by religious violence in Jos

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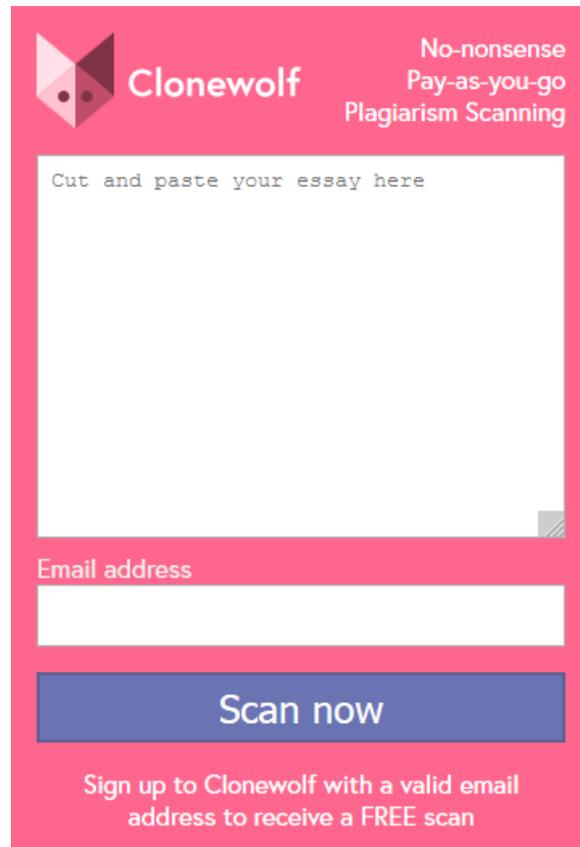
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