

Title of Article: Oil Conflict, Nigeria's Unity: The Linkage and the Divide.

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Abstract: The Niger Delta, located in the Southern part of Nigeria is richly endowed with natural resources particularly crude oil. It has witnessed a long and tortuous history of resistance against state machinery as well as oil multinationals that operate in the region since the discovery of oil in 1956. This crisis, rooted in Lugardian fiat of January 1, 1914 made Nigeria a political entity with the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates. This unsolicited alliance has resulted in a rather regular pull and push for political and economic resource control by the major ethnic groups because it never put into consideration the interests and aspirations of the other numerous distinct groups (including the oil minorities). It is seen now that British assumption of a satisfactory political arrangement based on this setting was not only ill advised but equally wicked (Elaigwu, 1994). The paradox is clear: The same oil revenue that is threatening the unity of Nigeria by fueling the conflict in the Niger Delta is still used to sustain the unity of Nigeria by sharing it to the component states and local governments. How long shall this be? This paper highlights the implication of this to Nigerian polity.