

**SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN
THE NIGER-DELTA: THE MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE.**

BY

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1. Protocol

2. Introduction

It is my pleasure to be here to discuss a very important issue that is presently shaking the foundation and tearing the fabric of our great country, Nigeria.

The title of today's discussion has been slightly adjusted to read, "Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Development Issues in the Niger- Delta, The Managers' Perspective"; this mild change will enable us to interact more robustly, look at the issue more holistically and proffer generic recommendations that will not only be applicable to the Niger-Delta region but to the entire country.

You will all agree with me that one of the crucial security omens in Nigeria is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Despite the loss of lives and properties from this menace, it has remained unabated and is even flourishing. Many of us have resigned to fate and expect God Himself to descend to cure the disease. One of our top Military gurus recently called on Nigerians to pray to God to quench the security crisis in the North East, ostensibly linked to arms proliferation and misuse. Seriously, I can't fault a spiritual solution to a lingering and seemingly intractable security menace, the more perspectives we bring to bear on our challenges the better.

Fellow Professional managers, small and light arms proliferation can be looked at and solved from different perspectives: military, religious, political, economic, social, technological, environmental, family, traditional, international, local, etc. Since this is a gathering of professional managers, we are going to X-ray the topic with the eyes and brain of a manager. I believe by the time all of us imbibe and apply the recommendations of this lecture, the Niger-Delta in particular and Nigeria in general will be safer, better and more secure. Ladies and Gentlemen, you are most welcome to this Management Clinic.

3. Definition of Terms

According to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Small Arms include: revolvers and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine guns;

assault rifles; light machine-guns, heavy machine-guns; portable anti-tank guns; recoilless rifles; portable launchers of anti-tank guns, and rocket systems, anti-aircraft missiles systems; and mortars of calibres less than 100mm.

For the purpose of this lecture, small arms also include knives, clubs, stones, small calibre guns, fire, bottles, and other objects that can be used to inflict injury, kill or damage properties, environment, etc.

Light Weapons are weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of antitank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 mm (John, M. M. and Julius L. N.2017).

Small arms and light weapons proliferation simply means, small arms and light weapons trade and/or market. As a professional manager, and for the purpose of this lecture, I will like to define small arms and light weapons proliferation as an illegal/illicit possession of small arms and light weapons (in the **wrong hands, at the wrong time, in the wrong place, for the wrong purpose, in the wrong quantity**) that constitutes a danger to people and other aspects of the environment. Any situation with any of these '**5 wrongs**' constitutes small arms and light weapons proliferation.

To understand arms and small weapons proliferation, we should consider the following pertinent questions begging for answers: who are those involved in this proliferation? (Who are the sellers and buyers?), how do they get them? (Which routes are those weapons passing through to get into the country and/or the end users?) Are they produced locally? Even if locally, how are they transported from one end of the country to the other?), and why are people involved in such trade? (For what purpose/or reason?).

4. SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION - DEEP THOUGHTS

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons is always a common phenomenon that a country has to deal with after war; it is usually a post-conflict security issue. The case of Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 is still fresh in our minds. It was reported during the First International Global Information Infrastructure Symposium, held at Marrakech, Morocco, from 2-6 July, 2007, that the military lost 7-8 million (almost all) firearms that are now used by criminals in promoting crimes like abduction, murder and violence.

Also, the case of the civil war in Nepal is pertinent. Though, one may not be able to actually say for certain the extent of the proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons in that small South East Asian country, however, considering the fact that more than nine dozens domestic arms manufacturing units operated in the Indo-Nepalese border during the time of armed conflict and with more than 1800 km of open border between India and Nepal, one can only imagine how many small arms and light weapons entered the wrong hands from that war. To worsen the issue, only very few of the arms were collected from the Maoists and their Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN). (Soetan, 2017).

There is the case of Libya. After the fall of their almost everlasting former leader, Colonel Muammar Mohammed Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi on 20th October, 2011 there was a proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country and in the surrounding countries.

Let us now consider the example of Nigeria. Why do we have so much small arms and light weapons almost everywhere? Why is the arms trade one of the most lucrative businesses to venture into? There is no gainsaying the fact that there are so many ungoverned and ungovernable areas in Nigeria with their warlords. When the political class begins to negotiate with bandits and kidnappers, banditry and kidnapping will be transformed into a quasi - positive, neo political, strong and lucrative business enterprise with the wherewithal, effrontery and capacity to confront state power and security architecture.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Niger-Delta and Nigeria have had their own share of war and politico-ethno- religious crises. The list is almost endless:

- the Biafran war fought almost fifty year ago still has its ghosts with us and the agitations are yet to leave public discourse or the hearts of some in the South East;
- the Maitatsine religious riots in Kano and Bauchi;
- religious and election riots in Kaduna, Ibadan;
- ethnic conflicts in Jos,
- Yoruba- Hausa/Fulani clashes,
- Ife-Modakeke crisis,
- the crises between Aguleri-Umuleri, Tiv- Junkun, Ijaw-Ilaje, Ijaw-Itsekiri, Urhobo-Itsekiri and Ijaw-Urhobo;
- the Boko Haram insurgency that has refused to die,
- the attack by some alleged Fulani bandits in certain parts of the country, etc.

In the Niger-Delta region, most of the crisis emanated from the agitation for resource control and has led to palpable fear in the hearts of many. Kidnapping is the latest thriving business; bandits even kidnap High Court and Appeal Court Judges, some kidnap for yam, red oil and other victuals. Traveling from one place to another is a nightmare, night life has almost ceased. No matter how you want to look at the environment, you will find that people are actually frustrated and are asking in different ways, why do we have so much crime, small arms and light weapons in the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large? Are we currently at war? The answers, my esteemed managers, are blowing in the wind but consider the following pseudo- war phenomena in the Nigeria of 2019:

1. There is hunger in the land. A thin line exists between a hungry man and an angry or mad man; when the thin line is crossed, the hungry man can become angry or mad and source for and use a weapon.
2. Politics in Nigeria is not a game but a form of war; political opponents turn to political gladiators and equip their electoral supporters with small arms and light weapons not manifestoes. This has contributed to the proliferation of

small arms, criminalisation of politics, politicisation of crimes and the militarisation of youths.

3. Unemployment is a sort of war in the country. An indication of the seriousness of our unemployment war was a 2017 Immigration employment exercise: 1.2 million applicants jostled for 1,112 positions. The devil finds work (and a weapon?) for the idle hand!
4. The constitution of Nigeria is a form of war as it was not based on the consensus of the people defining how they intend to live together; it was imposed as a child of necessity to provide a policy document for civilian governments to operate. We the people of Nigeria never sat or agreed to the current constitution in use. Did we?
5. Corruption is a form of war ravaging the country. Corruption breeds violence. Reference Gen 6:11: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence". Corruption and violence are Siamese twins, anywhere you see corruption, check around, and you must see violence.
6. Bureaucracy is a form of war in Nigeria as you rarely get something done without passing through the tortuous route called 'red tape' with its inefficiency, waste and mediocrity.
7. The porous border is fueling 'war' in Nigeria. Anything and everything can always find their way into the country despite government efforts at tightening the routes/borders to the country. We hope that the current 'closure' of most of our land borders will have a positive security impact on us all.
8. Poverty is another 'war' in Nigeria. Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world; it has displaced India as the country with the poorest persons. Nearly 47% of the population; about 93.8 million, were on less than \$1.90 a day as at June this year. The number must have since increased. Our gross poverty has made nonsense of the UNDP Sustainable Development Goal of ending poverty by 2030, and fuelled security issues.

9. Proliferation of small arms has escalated in the country because there exists perceived injustice and delayed justice and “when judgment is not fully executed, the hearts of men are set to do evil” (Eccl 8:11).
10. The country is experiencing a high influx of small arms and light weapons because, we live in a country where, to a large extent, ‘might is right’. The arms are required to strengthen the ‘might’ of some people and convert it to ‘right’.

5. REASONS FOR SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION.

The under listed types of small arms and light weapons **proliferators** give direct and clear **reasons** for small arms and light weapons proliferation:

1. **The Alienated-** Those that have lost hope in the country and believe the only way to live is to take up or sell arms against the state.
2. **The Sponsored** - Those that are sponsored into crime for reasons best known to the sponsors; may be to achieve political or religious advantage.
3. **The Bewitched** - Those that are doing what they are doing because they have been indoctrinated, hypnotized or bewitched to destroy our country.
4. **The Disappointed** - Those that are battered by the economic situation in the country and are retaliating by gun running or the use of small arms to cause maximum destruction. Some of them actually went to school and have certificates and skills to unleash on any job but alas there is no work and no tradermoni.
5. **The Spoofed-** Those that are led, hoaxed and deceived by peer influence to take to crime.
6. **The Agitators-** Those fighting legitimate causes illegally. Some of them feel the resources of the country are not evenly distributed and the only way to get the government attention to remedy the situation is to take to violence and small arms. Does this sound familiar?
7. **The Negative Risk Takers** - Those that feel life is all about taking risks to excel. They see the arms trade as a risky but sure route to success.

8. **The Flappers** - These want to live large, achieve quick success fixes and hate the 'slow and steady' route to fame, fortune and their share of the national cake. They therefore resort to crime for fast success.
9. **The Used and Dumped** - These persons are hurt because they believe they have been used and dumped. They got into crime to help a godfather or area father have a political or business win but after the victory, they were dumped and forgotten. They therefore take to crime out of vengeance and a desire to recoup 'lost wages'
10. **The Copycats** - These persons saw how other criminals were rewarded and celebrated, they were then motivated to go into crime, enjoy the lime light and make a neat, untaxed income.
11. **The Professionals Criminals** - These persons have deliberately chosen arms and weapons proliferation as a profession and a way of life. We are professional managers and they are professional criminals.

6. THE WAY OUT

Ladies and Gentlemen, the effects of this menace are already on us in more ways than one; we can no longer pretend that all is well. The whole environment is tense. The security forces are trying their best, especially with their fancifully coded military operations like "Operation Crocodile Smile" and "Operation Python Dance". Even if the two reptiles did what the code names suggested, how much blood would have been shed? How many women would have been husband-less and son -less? Still, because the situation has not abated even with all the different types and forms of dance and smile, we would suggest additional solutions from a different angle, the professional management prism.

Fellow Professional Managers, a Manager gets things done through others.

1. As professional managers we need to harvest the views/opinions of stakeholders leveraging on the root cause analysis technique as well as employing the '5 whys' philosophy. We should understand the root causes and

foundation of the proliferation of weapons and arms in the first place. It is practically impossible to successfully solve a problem you have not properly diagnosed and understood.

2. Understanding the **what, why** and **how** of the problem will help us to then proffer workable solutions that are congruent with Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Legal and Economic realities. This is pertinent because we cannot for example solve a Niger-Delta challenge with American Theoretical Postulations (ATP). We need home grown solutions that originated from concerned and affected stakeholders.

Fellow Professional Managers, I am convinced that we are all tired of this problem. Are we? Do we want a safer environment? Do we want to be able to move more freely by road, air and water? Do we want to sleep with our two eyes closed? Do we want small arms and light weapons proliferation to end? Do we want kidnapping, killings, piracy and violence to stop? Are we truly tired of the current situation? If truly we answered yes to all the above questions and are truly tired of our security situation, the solutions I am proffering are summarised in the acronym “**TIRED**”, explained as follows:

- ‘**T**’ we owe it a duty to **teach and train** others to depart from the small arms and weapons mindset. We need to begin to invest in the minds of the people through seminars, workshops, conferences, visits etc. Right from Primary schools to higher institutions, we need to design programmes and events that will educate the people on the dangers of taking to the arms and weapons lifestyle. Proper teaching and training will send the right message and open the eyes of the people to the right knowledge that will enable them have different perspectives to solving their problems and different perspectives in understanding and ventilating their own views, feelings, motivations and beliefs.
- ‘**I**’; we should strive to **influence** government policies and our environments. We must go out to bring to our ethical fold those that are at the helm of affairs, to make them imbibe and practice the NIM code of conduct. We must

begin to influence government policies especially on education. We need to let the government know that they cannot continue to pay lip service to the development of education. One of the factors fueling the insecurity in the region and the country is the lack of relevant quality education or lack of environmentally compliant education. As professional managers, we must begin to advise the government on why they need to fund technical and vocational education. We cannot keep quiet when specialised, entrepreneurship friendly institutions in the country are being degraded into conventional institutions. Technical institutions are now running administrative courses; this is not helping the country. We need to be able to come up with position papers on the types of curriculum that should be run in our institutions not the ones that will make our graduates eternal job seekers instead of job creators. Several multinational oil and gas companies are currently operating in the Niger-Delta region; they need more technical than administrative staff. China recently converted 600 universities to polytechnics to increase their technical, job creation capacity. Nigeria is converting Polytechnics to Universities to graduate job seekers with half baked theoretical administrative capacities. What will they administer when the jobs are nowhere to be found? Therefore, as professional managers, we need to influence government policies on education, budgeting, accountability, infrastructural development etc. Also, we owe it a duty to influence the Multinational oil companies to be socially responsible. We owe it a duty to influence the security agencies by working in collaboration with them to device creative strategies for the retrieval of small arms and light weapons. Professional Managers can influence traditional institutions by collaboratively working with them to better teach and train their subjects to know the value of 'work' over 'fast' money. And learn to pray through their work and not work through their prayers.

- 'R'; Professional Managers must be **responsible** to themselves, their families, their environments and the nation at large.
- 'E', we must lead by **example**. We have to begin to walk the talk and not only talk the talk. We must demonstrate management professionalism in the way we

act, think, relate, and do things. We must be courageous enough to ensure that our deeds reflect our creeds and make sure that our video is in sync with our audio.

- ‘D’, and above all, as professional managers, we must exhibit **deliberate leadership**.

Deliberate Leadership is about being self-aware enough that you can be purposefully wise, diplomatic, and intentional with competence. It is about embracing the values (and behaviours) of accountability, reliability, and responsibility. Deliberate Leaders lead by personally modeling the behaviours or ways of thinking that they desire while encouraging others to courageously take the initiative to be independent in their reasoning and in doing so, transfer ownership and responsibility to others.

Deliberate Leaders are teachers, mentors, and role models - and they accomplish the majority of their results through the power of influence, not authority. All of these aspects of influence are essential for us as professional managers to ensure that the government, our colleagues, young boys and girls in our environment respect us and the decisions we make. This will enable us to have the capacity to **deliberately** persuade those within our own areas of influence (through our actions) to believe that we are “Credible.” **Credibility** is at the heart of influence!

Fellow Professional Managers, before we can build trust and influence as deliberate leaders, we must understand who we are, what we need to change, and how to go about it. When we are not self-aware about our own preference, gifts, talents, and tendencies, it is impossible for us to act trustworthily, and influence deliberately.

Becoming a deliberate leader starts with developing all of you. Several factors make up what you bring as a leader to the playing field. To be a successful leader means deliberately developing the whole person. But how do you go about doing that? Well, it starts with learning the art and science of digging deeper into understanding yourself and at the same time, you learn about the others you are leading. Deliberate leaders communicate with clarity, promote disciplined analysis and provide sense of stability. Deliberate leaders tend to be systematic, cautious and analytical. They are

comfortable working independently and collaboratively at a disciplined and moderate pace, ensuring accuracy in their craft or profession, deep in analysis and planning and solving complex problems.

7. OUR CREED

Ladies and Gentlemen, as managers, we can't continue to complain, yes we are tired of small arms and light weapons proliferation, but complaining is never a winning strategy. We need to create a new order, new orientation and new direction which are encapsulated in "TIRED" as explained above.

We do not want this lecture to just be one of the futile lectures we have listened to in the past, that is why the following creed is necessary;

That as professional managers, because we are tired;

- We are going to henceforth teach and train others to be better
- We will influence our environment to do what is right, influence the government, and preach the NIM code of conduct.
- We will be responsible to our environment; in the office, in our homes (we will ensure that none of our children will stray away to take to crime as a profession, we will not lay **eggs** we can't cater for.)
- We will live by example; we will not only talk the talk, we will work the talk.
- As professional managers, we will demonstrate deliberate leadership.

8. CONCLUSION

OUR TAKE AWAY SONG THAT CAPTURES OUR RESOLVE AGAINST SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION.

I AM TIRED, I AM GOING TO TAKE ACTION, I AM GOING TO TEACH AND TRAIN, AND BE RESPONSIBLE, I AM TIRED, I AM GOING TO TAKE ACTION, INFLUENCE MY ENVIRONMENT, DELIBERATE LEADERSHIP.

AM TIRED, I AM GOING TO TAKE ACTION, I AM GOING TO TEACH AND TRAIN AND BE AN
EXAMPLE, I AM TIRED, I AM GOING TO TAKE ACTION, INFLUENCE MY ENVIRONMENT,
DELIBERATE LEADERSHIP.

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