

Two Track diplomacy and early warning: an overview of Governance styles in West Africa

Salawu, Mashud Layiwola Adelabu, Ph.D,

Crescent University,
Dept. of Pol. Sc. & International Relations, Abeokuta – Nigeria
adesal2@yahoo.com

And

Akinboye, Solomon Oladele, Ph.D

Dept. of Political Science,
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The recognition accorded Track Two diplomacy, otherwise known as Non-governmental Organizations, is due to the waning impact of Track One diplomacy in satisfying the inevitable needs of salient diplomatic interaction. The resultant weakness of Track One diplomacy, which is restricted to the interaction between governments and predicated on rigid foreign policies of each nation-state, has created major problems concerning issuance of Early Warning to prevent conflict emergence. This is in spite of an avalanche of privileged information channels available to any government, such as the state or military intelligence services, diplomatic missions, the mass media and many others. This is a far-cry from the operations of Track Two, which are non-partisan and apolitical, an attribute that encourages freedom and non-adversarial interaction between feuding nations and communities. Besides, NGOs are a reservoir of privileged information concerning issues that often serve as catalyst to violence. The endemic catastrophe in the West Africa sub-region generally is due to the disdain and to ambivalence in decision taking which point to the need for embracing early warning signals by various non-governmental organizations in order to reduce the overall costs of intra-state conflicts. As it is cheaper and cost-effective to tackle any conflict before graduating into an armed conflict which is lacking in West Africa, this paper will examine the governance styles of some conflict prone West African States, taking into account the role of non-governmental organizations in areas of early warnings, with a view to recommending strategies for sustainable peace-building in West Africa.

Key words: Track Two Diplomacy, Early Warning, Governance, State Actors, West Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The manifest dysfunctions of contemporary West African States and their inability to effectively respond to the peace and security needs of the sub-region led to the rising popularity of Track II Diplomacy in the process of peace building in West Africa (Olarinde 2010:218). Besides, recent catastrophes, not only in the West African sub-region but elsewhere in the global community, as well as the realization that it may be easier to deal with conflicts at the earliest stage, led to the growing consensus of the importance of conflict prevention in the United Nations and among many (trans)governmental and non-governmental organizations. (Miall, Rainsbothan and Woodhouse, 1999).

Paradoxically, despite indices of impending conflict such as occasional bouts of violence, political and religious fundamentalism as well as many other peace threatening signals, governments are still lackadaisical in giving timely warnings to both Local and International Communities, to avoid the label of either alarmists or the backlash of repelling would-be- investors. Where governments lack the courage of prompt alertness for political reasons, Track 2 Diplomacy, a collection of various Non-governmental Organizations which have no political affiliation and are pursuing peace-building agenda, often come up with tangible early warnings, to the discomfiture of governments. This is found cost-effective because, as advanced by Tongeren (1996:18), the overall costs of intra-state conflicts are much higher than the eye-catching material damage and human casualties. These are evidenced in issues having to do with the demolition of the democratic system, disintegration of states, social disequilibrium occasioned by separation of families and communities, while spiritual costs, in terms of the undermining of values and meaning of life, do occur. Above all, the inevitable impact of psychological effect of conflicts have been serving overtime as catalyst to yet, the eruption of new violence.

It is the strong belief of this paper that most of the conflicts in the West African sub-region, which have been generating refugee-flow or showing traits of intractability, are due to the government's insensitivity to giving early warnings and where such have been alerted by the practitioners of Track 2 Diplomacy, they are regarded as crying wolf where there is none, or at best, treated with disdain. Without any gainsay, the West African and International Communities will be the beneficiary of early conflict prevention because a stitch in time saves nine.

Conceptual And Theoretical Framework

In order to situate this paper pertinently, its theoretical takeoff point advocates that conflict prevention or mitigation through the application of early warning and early response by the Government is desirable as the current power politics approach by various states have not helped matters. The conceptual clarification of early warning as well as Track Two Diplomacy which are central to this paper must be attempted. In the opinion of Schmid, (1998), early warning is "the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of anticipating the escalation of violent conflict, the development of strategic responses to these crises, and the presentation of options to key decision makers". Buttressing the significance of formulating strategic responses and policy options are other scholars like McCarthy (1997), Archarya and Dewill, (1997), among many others. McCarthy (1997:15) opines that Early Warning is a process of communicating judgments about threats early enough for decision makers to take action to deter whatever outcome is threatened; or failing that, to manage events in such a way that the worst consequences are mitigated". In the collective views of Archarya and Dewill, (1997:131-132), early warning involves monitoring of developments in political, military, ecological, refugee flows, threats of famine, and the spread of disease that may, unless, mitigated, lead to outbreak of violence or major humanitarian disasters". If we contextualize the submissions of Archarya and Dewill (1997), it will be discovered that close monitoring of developments such as political, military, ecological and other areas requires certain relevant institutions to enable Track Two Diplomacy formulate pertinent

strategic responses. It is on this ground that the view of Jentleson (1996), becomes helpful. Accordingly, he asserts that early warning is the provision of relevant institutions, groups and organizations with essential information about escalatory developments, far enough in advances, in order for them to react timely and effectively with preventive measures.

In his view, the institutions required for peace building may be groups and organizations such as:

- The prospective victims and groups at risk;
- The perpetrators (in order to deter them);
- Trans-governmental organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and NATO, as well as United Nations Agencies;
- Governments of nearby or neighboring countries willing and able to provide their good offices;
- The Secretary-General and Security Council of the United Nations;
- Non-Governmental Organizations Concerned with relief;
- The Mass Media and public;

And lastly – Eminent persons who can lend credence to the early warning. (Jentleson, 1996).

Mimicking African proverbs which specify that thunder is the usual concomitant of a storm, and that there is no smoke without fire, the submissions of the aforementioned scholars are pointers to the level of preparedness which must be envisaged against any anticipated conflict. However, due to political mediocrity, engineered by a complacent posture among those communities or states where, despite an abundance of signals about an impending humanitarian disaster, the leaders there still sit petrified, with fears about taking decisive action to stem the tide. In the West African Sub-region, the indices of backwardness are quite prevalent several years after independence, as the sub-region keeps graduating from one conflict to another, in the mist of unheeded early warnings. Conflict generation has reduced the region to the celebrants of mediocrity where, in the 21st century, construction of a kilometer road or repairing a damaged bridge is celebrated with funfair, attracting the presence of recruited political hangers-on, in the name of stakeholders, traditional rulers, and diplomat etc to signal the arrival of the new political savior. Such could be tolerated in the days of 16th C Renaissance in Rome, Germany or Geneva. What an irony! The presence of such teeming thousands of mere clappers in a mundane ceremony and during planting or harvesting seasons, by itself, is a potent signal of an impending malcontent and conflict explosion.

At this juncture, an attempt will be made to explain the concept of Track 2 Diplomacy which is a bridge builder between those parties in conflict. Track Two is unofficial, informal, and introspective in its examination of a conflict or other issues. On the basis of this, it generates freedom of interaction not possible in Track One Diplomacy, otherwise known as traditional diplomacy. It is through Track Two that activities such as “citizenship building, microfinance of small business in developing nations, disease prevention, education and a host of other beneficial support activities are realized. www.imtd.org/publications - retrieved (26th April, 2013). What makes Track Two as a concept quite amenable to conflict solving is the deep suspicion with which governments, both local and foreign, view each other on account of histories of oppressive behaviors and corruption, whereas, Track 2 hasn't got such stigma. Track Two lends credence to skilled professionalism, versed in societal cohesiveness and win-win negotiation in any situation. In the words of Diamond and McDonald, (1996:37).

Track Two is transformational, positing a world view in which power politics is superseded by mutual empowerment; identity groups at least join, if not replace, nation-states as the loci of power; basic human needs and not strategic interests set the agenda; collaboration and exclusivity replace competition and exclusivity; international relations are seen as ongoing relationships between all the people, not as crisis or situational relationships between governments; and the international community is called to address human environmental issues, not just the political side of world affairs.

Essentially, the theoretical thrust of this paper is predicated on conflict prevention or mitigation from the perspective of the multi-track diplomacy and that the Non-governmental organizations otherwise called Track Two Diplomacy, can contribute towards societal homogeneity like any other collaborative tracks such as Government, (Track One), Business Organizations (Track 3), Private Citizens (Track Four), Research, Training and Education (Track 5), Activism, (Track 6), Religious Diplomacy (Track 7), Funding Agencies Diplomacy otherwise known as (Track 8), and the Track 9 diplomacy otherwise called Communications and the Media. From this stand point and echoing a renowned Peace and Conflicts Scholar, (Albert, I.O 2011), Multi Track Diplomacy refers to a synergetic approach to development, particularly peace intervention across levels, actors and interests. Multi –Track Diplomacy approaches the task of Peace-building as systemic and a process, contained and elaborated within conceptual compass of nine (Albert, I.O, 2011), as above enumerated. We will now establish how Non-Governmental Organizations have featured in the West African Sub-region, and Governments’ response to their views, as well as difficulties faced by Track Two Diplomacy.

Early Warning & Track Two Diplomacy in the West Africa

There are many precursor events on signs of unrest that could be used in forecasting situations that have the potential to escalate into acrimonious situations. As advanced by Carnegie Commission (1997), important indicators of imminent violence include widespread human rights abuses, increasingly brutal political oppression, and inflammatory use of the media, the accumulation of arms, and an increase in organized killings.

The manifestations of early warnings, which were largely unheeded in West Africa are not wanting generally, but attempts will only be made to feature those states with great spill-over conflict manifestation. In Nigeria, the feebleness of the political structure on which Nigeria anchored her democratization project was pointed out in 1952, from the platform of Multi-Track Diplomacy when Adelabu (2005), painfully asked thus: Have we any genuine political party in Nigeria? Adelabu, (2005:120). His answer was emphatically no. His warning then was drawn from what he perceived as the lack of ideological base of the political parties then, coupled with carpet crossing of the political actors, which was a novelty at that time, not on account of principle or ideological incompatibility, but for what the gladiators stood to gain from where they were crossing to, in Adelabu’s view. When again he saw that Nigeria was on the descent because of an ardent appeal to sectionalism and religion for political ascendancy, he warned thus:

Any sentimental appeal to my Oduduwa ancestry or subtle attempts to exploit my religious susceptibilities is doomed to failure. Christians, heathens and atheists will always have my political confidence, respect and support. No sectional loyalty or group interest will ever deter me for a moment, from my sacred duty to my mother land. I will live, work, strive, think, write, fight and die for Nigeria... my ideal is a West African States Union, stretching from the banks of the Gambia to the shores of the Congo in panoramic beauty and unparallel grandeur. (Adelabu, 2005:120-121).

The problems of unheeded warnings are manifesting in the organization and management of political parties in Nigeria today. The rewards of neglected warnings are being seen in the unrest and terrorism ravaging the land and being controlled at a high cost. Similarly in the series of publications of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; a focused Track-Two Diplomacy advocates, timely warnings have been advanced to avert violence, be it political, economic, or social, while making necessary suggestions through a collection of professionals, intellectuals, as well as eminent persons who, in the words of Jentleson (1996), could lend credence to the early warnings. One of those publications, edited by Olurode and Akinboye (2005), is titled Democracy, Good Governance and Corruption in Nigeria.

Getting worried about the negative effect of corruption on Nigerian economy and image, and having collected workable data on the enigma, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation sponsored a workshop organized by the Faculty of Social sciences of the University of Lagos. In one of the workshop papers, it was rhetorically submitted thus:

To most of our compatriots, corruption has taken on the complexion of an industry such that whoever thinks that he could erase the scourge must be engaged in a quixotic adventure and needed to have his head examined... but must we embrace this seeming reality that no nation is free of corruption as an alibi to refrain from taking action against a scourge that daily assaults our collective psyche as a nation? (Ribadu, 2005:viii preface, cited in Olurode and Akinboye, 2005).

If “total war” against the scourge has been unleashed as warned, could there not have been a marked difference? Every sector of Nigerian economy as well as political sphere is corruption ridden. It is discovered that corruption has percolated deep into the fabrics of our society like a permanent feature, and the political or social platform cannot be an exception. It is therefore out of this abiding concern that African Scholars and civil society organizations devote considerable amount of time and resources to addressing the question of good governance which no doubt has been identified as a factor responsible for the proliferation of conflict in the continent (Yaqub and Abubakar, 2005:15). Having sounded the warnings of the coming storm, how receptive have the Governments been? Are the by-products of prevarication by the ruling elites in Africa, particularly in the West African sub-region not responsible for many protracted conflicts, manifesting in poverty, unemployment, under-employment and other vices?

Relief activities often take precedence over pro-active peace-building, measures. One begins to wonder then when various governments beat their chest for having provided enabling environments for gainful employment, educational advancement, agriculture etc when the impoverished citizenry, on account of unending conflicts which could have been averted, could not muster enough economic means to satisfy their felt needs. It is the effect of bad governance, occasioned by lack of respect for pre-conflict warnings that resulted in poverty and crime commission. What is the use of having facilities that could transform one’s living standard when the means to acquire such is unavailable? This type of situation influenced Mclelland to declare that “it is no use having the right of access to the Grill Room of the Ritz if you cannot afford the bill. (Mchelland, 1983:145). This is the type of issues accentuating psychological violence, serving as catalyst to yet, another violence.

The ceaseless demand for good governance by the World Bank and many other local and international organizations since the early seventies till date is anchored on the profligacy of political leaders in the developing economies and the leaders in the West African sub-region have a large share of the dose. Among the indices of bad governance contained in the warnings of many financial institutions and other concerned organizations of the Track Two Diplomacy are corruptions, electoral fraud, etc which throw up political leaders whose mission in government is predatory accumulation and looting of the state’s treasury which encourage gross maladministration. As aptly captured by Odukoya (2011:323),

State weakness, maladministration, ill-digested and externally-imposed policies, irresponsible leadership, corruption and unproductive capitalism are some of the major factors behind the Africa’s crisis. Regrettably, the crisis which started in the late 1980s is far from receding.

With these unaddressed ills staring us in the face, the inevitable repercussions are poverty, unrest, destitution, unemployment, diseases, illiteracy, crime and violence. Yet, in spite of the persistent warnings against blocking the path of institutionalizing square pegs in square wholes, to redress this unwholesome perpetuation of didactics, the adversarial exercise of political power, in the face of

conspicuous distress calls, holds sway. The issue is not which party or person is in power but which party or person is able to supply the citizen the basic needs of life. The perpetuation of the state of mediocrity attracts the attention of Abrokwa (1999:663), who submits that:

The African State has increasingly become irrelevant to the people due to its inability to supply them their needs, hence, thousands are joining in the silent revolution of dropping out of the formal economy for their own survival.

A point that is generally agreed to by all analysts is that heaping the blame of lack of development, or perpetuation of conflict in Africa and particularly the West African Sub-region on erstwhile colonial masters' amounts to a defeatist and dastardly policy. Poor governance is self inflicted as due timely warnings were not lacking by parishioners of Track Two Diplomacy, be it on economic, social, or political sphere. For instance, on agricultural terrain, policy making is that of Track One Diplomacy but the significance of Track Two Diplomacy is sensitization through collaboration with other Eight Tracks, and the in-depth fraternization of the practitioners with the grass root, which assists the Track to assess the feelings and raise timely warnings for the overall good of the community, in practical and empirical terms. The policy maker in the West African sub-region had signs of economic diversification through series of sensitization seminars by Academics Institutions, particularly humanitarian bodies, faith inspired groups etc. but they often assumed that they were crying wolf when there was none. The alert on the danger posed by abandonment of agriculture in Nigeria, which kept, and is still able to keep over 80% of the citizens gainfully employed was loud enough but not heeded. In the West was Cocoa, in the East, Palm Oil and Kernel and in the North, Groundnut, exhibiting pyramids and seeking spaces at Apapa port, awaiting evacuation to Liverpool. Their growth was jettisoned after independence without any provision of alternative avenues for gainful employment for the teeming million who are farmers. In Ghana and Ivory Coast, Cocoa and agricultural products were no longer regarded relevant but transient mining. The Wheat Farmers of Niger and Chad Republics as well as Malian authorities saw the advent of political independence as life more abundant. The effect of these neglects that keep people busy and which Track Two Diplomacy had warned against, is conflict and violence. Whatever the apparent cause of any riot, the real one is always (about) want of happiness" (Paine, cited by Abiodun Afolabi 2012:391). Afolabi is recalling the frightful farmers' conflict and violence in the old Western Region of Nigeria in the late 1960s after several unheeded warnings, and submits that personal ambition, fears, rivalry etc are usually not the motives impelling peasants to any severe anti-authority struggles, but that such wars are always fought for economic interests when the authorities ignore their pleas. Signals of chronic deprivation, rioting, brain drain or refugee-flow are some indices which Non-Governmental Organizations use in sounding timely warnings to Governments but such are often thrown into the dustbin. From the above,

What appears fundamental is that popular agitation for the amelioration of the human condition had been an enduring phenomenon throughout the history of human kind... The material base and the economy portend instances of distortions or disarticulation that adversely affect the human condition. The instances of distortion include the increasing deterioration of the public health sector, rising unemployment, and the attendant rising social problems of insecurity and crime, increasing aberrations and dilapidation across the spectrum of publicly-owned formal education sector, capacity under-utilization in the manufacturing sector, and associated rising costs of living... Inter alia. (Ninalowo, cited in Olurode and Akinboye 2005:27).

Without much stress, Ninalowo is alluding to the danger inherent in complacency with which pre-conflict warnings are being handled by various governments which often lead to horrendous conflicts with dire consequences. One may then ask; if catastrophes in many political communities and the realization that it is best to deal with conflicts at the earliest stage compelled (the practitioners of Track Two Diplomacy to embark on early warnings, why are they often ignored? We may need to

peruse the strains and stresses confronting the practitioners of Track Two Diplomacy to unravel this pertinent question.

Strains And Stresses Of Track Two Diplomacy

Isaac Newton, (<http://chemistry.about.com/od/mathsciencefundamentals/a/newtons-laws-of-motion.htm> retrieved 26th April, 2013), while pontificating about the laws of motion, alluding to the vicissitudes of life, submitted that “for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction”. Though a Scientist, whose experiments are empirical, yet his views could be gleaned through those constraints inherent in human activities. This is because however strenuous an individual or a group of individuals could strive to assuage an impending catastrophe, characters benefiting from the impasse will serve as impediments to order to render innocuous the efforts of the peace builders for their own ascendancy. It is within this purview that we are discussing the strains and stresses of Track Two Diplomacy. Among the earliest constraints Track Two Diplomacy encounters relate to their sources of information. Irrespective of whatever expertise or experience at the disposal of the practitioners, authenticating their source, as well as the required level of signals to blow the lid for acceptability by the State Actors, is always a problem. Another issue constituting an impediment revolves around how whatever early warning eared will not be misconstrued. Besides that, despite the apolitical stance of the practitioners of Track Two Diplomacy, and irrespective of their intention for societal good, the fear of blowing the lid over an issue of vital public interest must be such that does not result in conflict escalation in view of those perceived vested interests.

For instance, in Nigeria, before and after independence, there were series of events that served as early warnings such as ethnic based riots, Cow Fulani/Hausa uprising in the Old Benue/Plateau State, religious based fundamentalism, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria and many other clashes in Southern Nigeria. The creation of a segregated settlement in Kano and Ibadan by the Colonial masters were early strong warning about the need for a clear policy on either homogeneity or heterogeneity. Before the Nigerian Civil War, Nigerians were warned by well placed individuals as well as organizations to avert electoral violence which could occur if subsequent elections were manipulated. Among these was Sir Francis Ibiyam, who called a World Press Conference (Daily Times, (Nigeria), 1965, 21st Dec. p1, 8, 9) warning of the calamity awaiting Nigerians if his early warnings were ignored. He was called names and derisively named a false soothsayer. The result was the endless stress and strain manifesting in Nigeria’s political, social, economic and cultural scenario.

Hear him: “*we are a divided people and therefore, may fall, and fall woefully, if we do not quickly see that we are drifting and put our house in order*”. What else do we, as a nation, require as a timely warning? He and several others sounded the warnings of the coming storm, but they were disdainfully derided. Events in Ghana, during the days of Kwame Nkrumah could not escape mention as they rattled the entire West African Sub-region because of the unique position the country occupies. Carnegie Communication (1997) alerts us that indicators of imminent violence include wide-spread human rights abuses, increasing brutal political oppression, inflammatory use of the media, amongst other indicators. These were firmly rooted in Nkrumah’s Ghana but because of the constitutional cog – non-interference in the internal affairs of member states – inserted into the constitution of all member states, none could muster the courage to appeal to Nkrumah to soft pedal. He amended the constitution of Ghana through his proxies in Parliament to suit his whims and caprices. He abandoned the 2/3 majority for a simple majority when he began his repression. He abolished the Regional Assemblies and the Judicial Service Commission. He usurped the powers of the House of Chiefs as well as that of the Attorney General. He eliminated the guarantees for fundamental human rights, initially entrenched in Ghana’s 1957 Constitution.

His regime introduced Preventive Detention Act which empowered him to detain suspects without trial. Opposition members were climbed into jail on trumped up charges. He turned Ghana into one-

party state and was made President for life. The Press could not utter a word. *“The flow of news to the public was curbed, the press was censored, and some overseas press representatives were expelled. The Accra Anglican Bishop, Reseveare, was declared a prohibited immigrant in August 1962, although, he was allowed to return after three months”*. (Adekunle Ojelabi; 1970:293), Nkrumah went ahead to dismiss the Chief Justice of Ghana, (having been granted such powers at his prompting in 1964) for failing to condemn to death as charged by him some members of the opposition. University lecturers for raising voices of dissent were out rightly dismissed. The end result of these dastardly acts, which left many of his political opponents dead in detention, was the overthrow of his regime in 1966. Ghana, since then has been struggling to find its feet. The political climate of Guinea in the era of Sekou Toure had semblance with Ghana. Oppositions to his regime were brutally met with stern repression. For criticizing his government “the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Conakry, Gerard de Mille Vile was expelled in 1961 by Sekou Toure” (Adekunle Ojelabi 1970:302). The trials and condemnation of his political opponents especially, the erstwhile Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, Diallo Telli, remains evergreen. The press could not speak, neither any warning sigh heeded by him, hence, his eventual overthrow, leaving behind him political and economic casualties.

In Cote de Ivoire, there were very conflicting accelerating indicators such as tribalism, political concept of Ivoirite as an instrument of persecution, and religious cleavage which were largely not taken into account until the emergence of Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Quattara acrimonious political contests. What ought to have been nipped in the bud during the long stay in office of Felix Houphouet-Boigny was allowed to germinate, leading to loss of human and material resources, besides its impact on the democratic institution. There is hardly any West African state that did not have symptoms of what are confronting them these days but the fear of various governments dealing with them either tactically or strategically, drove them to silence. It is the fear of the unknown, whereby a liberator becomes a villain that compels scholars to submit that

one has to overcome the analytical problem of avoiding misperception or other faulty analysis of: the likelihood of diffusion and/or escalation of the conflict; the impact on interests; and the potential risk and the social, economic, military and political costs of both action and inaction. (Jentleson, 1996;219). We are admonished to always give a second thought to any pre-conflict information received with a view to separating the grains from the chaff.

Be that as it may, another constraint that elicits strain and stress is in a situation where adequate data is made available but owing to either the absence of political will among governments, or a raging situation which overshadows the issue over which early warning is raised, action could not be taken to forestall the envisaged repercussions. Further, another issue is located in the vested interest that government may have, especially political considerate before acting. In Nigeria, enough pre-conflict religious uprisings were given which government could have used to stem the tide until it resulted into terrorism, such as napping any suspected individual but the absence of political will had the upper hand. Yet, elsewhere in Africa, particularly in Rwanda, often described as the worst humanitarian tragedy, the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as Somalia, early warnings were never lacked but yet, the countries were ravaged with violence, indicating the effect of procrastination. The international bodies cried out early enough but yet, the incapacity for quick response by those governments to early warnings was another disservice to the activities of Track Two experts.

Without any pinch of salt, Track Two practitioners are typically humanitarian as they are renowned for bringing humanistic instincts to diplomacy in their activities, besides daring exploits in the nooks and crannies of any State or Community. However, we need to examine those areas where they are quite successful in the performance of their duties and where they are vulnerable as there are always two sides to a coin.

Success And Challenges Of Track Two

Conflict situations are quite dynamic as changes happen, often quite rapidly. Many Non-Governmental Organizations, in view of their deep knowledge of issues in a state or community, provide quick and essential alert on situations considered inimical to any society as well as pushing out any signal that a situation, hitherto considered a non-issue, seems to be getting out of hand. They interact with ease among contending parties without raising suspicion, through which they attract confidence to themselves. Track Two practitioners have been providing humanitarian assistance and protection in conflict or war zones, despite the high risk involved. They have served as main sources of information from which the international communities receive their view in many conflict zones where the international institutions are either procrastinating or are having no link at all. During the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, the International Red Cross and the Caritas Organization were very active Track Two Practitioners, providing relief in form of food, medicine, and succor for war victims, especially, on the Biafran side. In Liberia and Sierra – Leone, the horrendous situation within the war zones were made known to the international community by the irrepressible Track Two Practitioners.

The Liberian War Lord, Charles Taylor, whose propensity for generating and enhancing conflict knew no bound, was shaken to his marrow when he realized that the Track Two practitioners in his country were in possession of vital information with which he intended perpetuating his holocaust. Realizing that the cat was out of the bag, not only did Charles Taylor disorganize the Non Government Organizations in his country, he simply condemned to death by firing squad two Nigerian Journalists on that account. Indeed the disruption of normal NGO operations is itself an early warning signal that conditions are deteriorating dangerously, a signal that governments often miss. (Carnegie, 1997). The level of information made available to the international community during the intra-state political turmoil in the then Belgian Congo in the early sixties was what the UN troops, which come in rather late (on account of Cold War Squabbles), made use of to begin their peace keeping operations, the first on the soil of Africa.

However, if it is true that certain deficiencies captured in Track One Diplomacy made Track Two and other Tracks inevitable, it does not follow that Track One Diplomacy, which embodies political decision makers, should be rendered innocuous. Indeed, the activities of all other Tracks are subject to the policies put in place by Track One Diplomacy. That is why it is argued from the perspective of multi-track diplomacy that they combine for the overall good and happiness of the state and her indigenes. From this preamble, the NGOs' task would be seen done once necessary measures are made available to governments, while they revert to their humanitarian services. The reasons for this measure are that Governments and Trans-Governmental Organizations have unfettered access to political and diplomatic instruments for conflict prevention. Besides, the already set out systems of information gathering to keep the governments abreast of any development within seconds, are in place. These tools include state security service, military intelligence and other issues of expediency available to governments. It is not a novelty for government to set up print and electronic media for information gathering. A major problem confronting various governments in acting in time on early warnings received is the fear of misperception which the international community may entertain about such country. The concern of ban travels or relocation order by foreign governments to their nationals are part of the fears. Every where things are going wrong, foreign countries will continue to protect their nationals as they have imbibed the culture of listening to strong NGO warnings about certain developments in any state, which they often take as the gospel truth as the USA did on terrorism and religious fundamentalism in Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc recently.

When in 1998, General Sanni Abacha ordered the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and Ogoni Nine due to their longstanding insistence for government attention on environmental degradation in Ogoni land, the Nigeria Foreign Affair Minister, Tom. Ikimi, pretended such a horrendous act ever took

place. It was not until the facts of the execution were shown to him and was ordered out of the conference before he knew the implication of taking lightly, early warnings. There had been early warnings about environmental problem in Ogoni land by local and international organizations for decades but unheeded. Being a diplomat under whose control the Foreign Ministry was, he could not have said anything less. This boils down to the fact that “for foreign service officers, the bureaucratic disincentives are arguably even greater. Because of uncertainty, they often adopt the stance that it is far better to wait and see. (Krumm, 2000). This is why Governments always find issuing timely warnings ahead beyond a few days difficult despite the fact that early warnings require the ability to foresee trouble early enough and steps taken to forestall it.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the significance of Track Two Diplomacy and early warning in conflict prevention and amelioration, particularly in the West African sub-region. The recalcitrance of various state governments notwithstanding, the ceaseless activities of the non-governmental organizations in achieving early warning of growing tensions, with violent escalation potentialities, remain commendable. We have equally made it known that while exposing areas of latent and smoldering conflicts are humanely pursued by the Track Two practitioners, creating an enabling environment for nipping in the bud any conflict therein remains that of the political decision makers. Inability to act on information received for various reasons, ranging from an absence of political will, undue prevarication, national interest and ego, among others, were equally highlighted. Consequent upon these views, the following recommendations are proffered.

Recommendations

1. Various governments in the West African sub-region should pay greater attention to early warnings as it is cheaper to douse tension than spending a fortune on relief materials.
2. There must be co-ordination and co-operation between the Non-Government Organizations and Trans-Governmental Organizations for a holistic and timely review of any early warning on ground. This will aid government’s acceptability and quick response.
3. State Actors could also collaborate with Non-Governmental Organizations as part of confidence building between the two. Accusation of doubt or wolf-crying, to the detriment of the governed, will be removed.
4. Unheeded early warnings by various governments in West Africa have encouraged cow-boy style of governance whereby respect is no longer accorded democratic institutions. Those in government should eschew corruption; ensure accountability, and transparency which will aid sustainable development.

References

- Abrokwa, C.K. (1999). “What is Develop Strategy?”, *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 29, No 5, Special Issue: Political Strategies of Democracy and Health Issues and Concerns in Global Africa, p646-668.
- Adelabu A (2005), “Parties and Ideologies” in Adegoke Adelabu (2005), *Africa in Ebullition*, Ibadan: Board Publications Ltd.
- Afolabi, Abiodun, “The 1968 – 1969 Peasant Farmers Struggle for Social Equity In South Western Nigeria”, in Isaac Olawale Albert, (2012:391), *A History of Social Conflict and Conflict Management in Nigeria*, Ibadan: John Archers Ltd.
- Albert, I.O. *Track 5 Diplomacy: Rethinking African Studies beyond the Culture and Civilization Thesis*. A Conference paper delivered by Professor Isaac Olawale Albert at the University of Ibadan, 3rd February, 2011.
- Archarya, A. and Dewill, D.B (1997) “Fiscal Burden Sharing” in Hathaway, J.C (ed) *Reconceiving Internatinal Refuge Law*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publisher.

- Carneigie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (1997), *Preventing Deadly Conflict*, New York.
- Diamond, L. and MacDonald, J.W. (1996), *Multi Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*. New York: Kumarian Press.
- Ibiam, Francis, Daily Times (Nigeria), 21st Dec., 1965, pp. 1, 8, 9.
- Isaac Newton <http://chemistry.about.com/od/mathsciencefundamentals/a/newtons-laws-of-motion.htm> retrieved 30th June, 2013
- Jentleson, B. (1996), “Preventive Diplomacy and Ethnic Conflict: Possible difficult, necessary”, University of California Institute on *Global Conflict and Co-operation Policy Papers*, No. 27, La Jolla.
- Jentleson, B. (1999), “Preventive Diplomacy and Ethnic Conflict: Possible, Difficult, Necessary”, in D.A Lake and D. Rothchild (eds), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict . Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. p293 – 316.
- Krunim, D. (2000) “Early Warning: An Action Agenda”, in J. Davies and T. Gurr. *Preventive Measures. Building risk assessment and Crisis early warning systems*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Lanham, p248-254.
- McCarthy, M.O (1997) “Potential Humanitarian Crises: The Warning Process and Roles for Intelligence” in S. Schmeidl & H. A delman (eds) *Synergy in Early Warning*. Conference Proceedings, March 15-18, 1997. York: FEWER 1997 p.15-16
- Miall, H. Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. (1999), *Contemporary Conflict Resolution. The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ninalowo, A.M, (2005), “Antinomies of Corruption and Democratic Governance”, in Lai Olurode and S. O. Akinboye (eds), *Democracy, Good Governance and Corruption in Nigeria*, Lagos, FES
- Odukoya, Adelaja Odutola “Crisis of Development in Africa: Reflections on the Political Economy of the Culture of Accumulation” in Akin Alao (2011:323), *Politics, Culture and Development in Nigeria*, Lagos: Concept Publications Ltd.
- Ojelabi, A (1970), *A Text Book of West African History*, Ibadan: Educational Research Institute.
- Olarinde, O.N. (2010:218) “West African Network for Peace-building & Early Warning Systems in West Africa “ in I.O. Albert & O.N Olarinle (2010). *Trends & Tensions in Managing Conflicts, Abuja: (SPSP)*
- Olurode; L and Akinboye, S.O (2005), *Democracy Good Governance and Corruption in Nigeria*, Lagos, Fredrick Ebert Stiftung (FES).
- Ribadu, N (2005) on Corruption – Enough is Enough – Speech delivered at the Chartered Institute of Administration, and cited at Prefare VIII in Lai Olurode and S.O. Akinboye (2005) *Democracy Good Governance and Corruption in Nigeria*, Lagos, FES.
- Schmid, A.P. (1998), *Thesaurus and Glossary of Early Warning and Conflict prevention terms*. London: Forum on Early Warning and Early Response.
- Tongeren, P. Van (1996:18-24), “The role of NGOS in conflict prevention in ACCESS and diom (EDS), *Prevention and Management of Conflict*; Ut recht: NCDO.
- www.imtd.org/publications retrieved 6th April, 2013
- Yaqub, N.O and Abubakar, S.O (2005), “Conceptualizing Good Governance, Corruption and Democracy” in Lai Olurode and S.O. Akinboye (2005), *Democracy Good Governance and Corruption in Nigeria*, Lagos, FES