

## DISSECTING THE LABYRINTH OF GLOCALIZATION AND GOVERNMENT PREPAREDNESS: A GLANCE AT THE PROPOSED CAR ASSEMBLY PLANT AT ITU, AKWA IBOM STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The research plunged into dissecting the labyrinth of glocalization and government preparedness; a glance at the proposed automobile assembly plant at Itu LGA, Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria as the study area is viewed as an investment destination hopeful. The study reviewed a collection of library and other academic works as its main sources of resources. It was gleaned from the study that there were few infrastructural gaps that require immediate attention of government, such as weak communication systems and insufficiency in transportation systems that support heavy international partnership with the state. The study also revealed that without these infrastructural and other economic and policy issues being addressed, it would further exacerbate the existing number of moribund industries available. However, it was recommend that the national and states house of assembly should be keen to making decisions that would encourage sustainability of investments. Similarly, it was recommended that multiple taxation system in Nigeria should be generally discouraged, while government should rather invest more in the areas of security and electricity generation to ensure a commensurate return on investment (ROI) and sustainability of investments.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, glocalization, government preparedness, and investment.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the government of the federal republic of Nigeria took a rational stand under Buhari's administration in ensuring that its economy becomes internally driven by its private sector organizations, a plethora of organized individuals, corporate individuals, and states are seeing this as a rare window to take advantage of (Jiddere & Manu, 2016). However, it is in the light of the foregoing that these organized individuals, corporate individuals as well as the states within Nigeria become revamped, and reorient their resources towards aligning their goals with the vision and the stance of the federal government. The government of Akwa Ibom state has decided to undertake a partnership deal with an Israeli company, MIMSHAC Merkavim Transportation Technologies to practically economically take the lead in broadening the scope of its investments to catch up with the envisaged opportunities brought about by the central government policy, and to create employment opportunities for the vast economically unengaged citizens of the state by proposing for the establishment of multiple publicly and jointly owned configurations, of which the proposed automobile assembly plant at Itu local government area of the state is one

(Mahmood, 2014; Ibom Reporters, 2017). It is in the wake of this economic dimension assumed by Akwa Ibom state government that has promulgated the traversal assessment of the environment (the state) to see how prepared and competent the government of the state can initiate, construct, manage and sustain this seeming would be developmental stride. Since it is not just going to be an organization that would service only local market but, the international market as well, there is need to assess the environment of the proposed venture from the stand point of the global village. Ayandele (2005), in his attempt to defining globalization narrowed it to the world being configured into a miniature village where an individual could access a product or service from any part of the world from the comfort of his house with just the click of an internet enhanced button.

Globalization which is relatively a novel concept in the academia is as well a subject that has gained a wide scholarly publicity in recent times. Although, it is still surprising to note that many cannot still sustain a meaningful discussion on the subject before the emergence of a more recent academic postulation, glocalization (Robertson, 1992, 2013). Simplistically, this high level of ignorance bestows great responsibility on anyone discussing the concept of glocalization. This emerging concept, glocalization is the amalgamation of globalization and localization to make a blend. It is used to describe a process whereby global corporations adapt their products and services to accommodate the variations in consumer demands in a local market. Vizureanu (2013:70) explains glocalization as “the mixing of cultures as a result of globalization and the production, out of the integration of the global and the local (...), of new and unique hybrid cultures that are not reducible to either the local or the global culture”. By definition, glocalization is the adaptation of international products and services around the particularities of a local culture in which they are sold (Wikipedia, 2017). Capturing this in brief, Robertson (2014) explains that glocalization entails simultaneity and homogeneity of cultures for the purposes fair and equitable exchange and distribution of ideas, goods and services. This philosophy gives rise to total conformity by the corporate giants with the locales, laws, customs, traditions and consumer preferences while also encouraging business organizations to work harmoniously with the society in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. However, glocalization is a global strategy devised by multinational corporations to extend their products and services to developing economies but, with seeming total respects for their cultures for ease of penetration and maximization of wealth as its ultimate goal.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK**

Any economy, state and organization aspiring for international economic partnership with glocalisation in view reasons through numerous areas of

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concerns before doing so. In any case, glocalization breeds a whole lot in its nut as the parties involved target immediate or long term benefits which are the key drivers of this economic marriage. Akwa Ibom state, however, is an environment blessed with multiple resources, ranging from human resources to natural resources with sparsely deposits of capital amenities. Nonetheless, such economic proposals thrives when the host environment is sophisticatedly organized devoid of political rancor, unpredictable government policies, nepotism, fraud, sabotage, embezzlement, security upheavals, kidnapping/cultism, power/electricity irregularities, low GDP, road networks & transportation system, weak public communication systems and high cost of living among other challenging socioeconomic vices like multiple taxation.

Looking at the contemporary Akwa Ibom state, how has it been able to guarantee the success of its potential investments when considering the above indices raised? Going by the local contents policies of the federal republic of Nigeria, shall the state be able to present best-fit employees to fill strategic positions as the policy provides for? The sustainability of the proposed automobile assembly plant hinges on how well Akwa Ibom state has been able to address these issues by using any existing state owned organization as a prototype to measure its chances of success and competitive advantage over any automobile assembly/manufacturing plant in Nigeria. Every business organization is established to achieve a set of objectives. This is done through effective management of organizational affairs both internally and externally. Conversely, almost all business organizations find it difficult to achieve these objectives from a fixed stand (Jiddere & Manu, 2016). As a result, businesses choose to go global, spreading their tentacles to places as far as they can. Again, it is worthy to note that prevailing glocal realities in one part of the world are likely to be quite different from such realities in other parts (Ritzer, 2008) and the quest to identify and manage these cultural, lingual, political, religious and ethnic realities brings about the idea of glocalization; the co-presence of universalizing and particularizing tendencies (Robertson, 2004).

The Akwa Ibom State government under the leadership of Mr. Udom Emmanuel in a bid to actualizing the industrialization dream of the state as enshrined in his five point's agenda (wealth creation, economic and political inclusion, poverty alleviation, infrastructural consolidation, and industrialization) has completed plans for the establishment of a car assembly plant in the state. The plant site at Itu Local Government Area of the state when completed and fully operational will boost the economy of the state, create employment for the unemployed, raise the standard of living of indigenes as well as project a positive image of the state nationally if not globally. However, despite the outlined benefits of the plant, it is also of paramount importance to assess the capacity of

the state to welcome this development having in mind the practice and adaptation of local and foreign cultures to have a hybridized common culture suitable for both locales and the foreigners. The success or otherwise of the application of any concept depends largely on how strictly its principles are followed. Glocalization as a business concept has its principles and adherence to them ensures a smooth implementation. Among these principles are the importance of local actors, governance and globalization of knowledge as well as commonness in culture. Based on the points stated earlier, an assessment of these variables among others in relation to the prevailing status quo in the area of study (Akwa Ibom State) will be carried out. This will give insight to the practice of glocalization as this paper sets out to examine the Akwa Ibom State government's preparedness to support glocalization using as a case study, the proposed car assembly plant in Itu Local Government Area of the state.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the objectives this work:

1. To examine the concept of glocalization in various aspects.
2. To identify the principles of and prerequisites for glocalization.
3. To ascertain the Akwa Ibom State government's level of preparedness to host an automobile assembly plant.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will be of immense benefit to the Akwa Ibom State government as it will help in spotting out the available and lacking requirements for the practice of glocalization in the state. This will enable the government work towards providing the lacking facilities or conditions in the state. The study which will add to the already existing knowledge on glocalization while also serving as reference material to scholars and researchers carrying out research on similar or related topics. It will assist policy makers in the formulation of business policies and strategies. Also, the Merkavim Transportation Technologies Limited will benefit from this work as it will create an awareness of the people's culture, norms, product/service tastes and preferences. This will in turn create a harmonious business environment between the company and the host state

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terms are defined as used in this work:

- i. Dissect: to dichotomize a phenomenon with a view to understanding all its units in details.
- ii. Glocalization is a global strategy devised by multinational corporations to extend their products and services to developing economies but, with seeming total respects for their cultures for ease of penetration and maximization of wealth as its ultimate goal.

- iii. Government: the body with the power to make and/or enforce laws to control a country, land area, people or organization.
- iv. Preparedness: the state of alertness and wholesome awareness of a situation

## EVOLUTION OF GLOCALIZATION

According to the dictionary meaning, the term glocalization is formed by telescoping *globalization* and *localization* to make a blend (The Oxford Dictionary of New Words, 1991). Richard (2003) defines glocalization as the way in which ideas and structures that circulate globally are adapted and changed by local realities. The word as well as the idea is of the Japanese origin. The term was modeled on the Japanese word *dochakuka* which originally meant adapting farming techniques to one's local conditions (Robertson, 1995). The introduction of the term glocalization to the English lexicon is attributed mainly to the British sociologist, Roland Robertson in the early 1990's. This was later reinforced by Canadian sociologists Keith Hampton and Barry Wellman along with Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman, 2000). Prior to the idea of glocalization and when globalization was in its infancy, leading Harvard Business professor, Theodore Levitt in 1983 published an essay entitled 'The Globalization of Markets'. Also, Naomi Klein in her book 'No Logo' argued that any corporation that was willing to bow to some local habit or taste was an unmitigated failure. Again, this quote from Levitt and Klein (2005) 'The world's needs and desires have been irrevocably homogenized' demonstrates the traditional and even the American view of how globalized businesses should undergo their activities. However, since the introduction and mass adaption of the idea of glocalization, this idea of ignoring local cultures has almost entirely been eradicated from contemporary marketing philosophy. This is not to say that despite widespread acceptance of glocalization that homogenization is not taking place. Homogenization in simple terms is the process of making things uniform or similar (Roundometof, 2013).

Before going further, the term globalization ought to be defined. This is because glocalization thus far in this report has relied upon the commonly sold economic understanding of globalization. Globalization is the noun form of the verb, globalize – the emergence of an international network of economic systems. Over the years, different scholars have expressed diverse views as to what globalization actually means. In 1992, Roland Robertson, a professor of sociology at the University of Aberdeen defined globalization as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole. Again, Albrow and King (1990) define globalization as 'all those processes by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society. However, a useful way to understand globalization is demonstrated by Steger

(2003) in his book 'Globalization: A Very Short Introduction'. In his book, the phenomenon is explained in relation to ancient Buddhist parable of the blind scholars and their encounter with an elephant. The scholars felt different parts of the elephant and gave different descriptions of the animal. They were all correct in their descriptions but all of them failed to understand the holistic picture. Globalization then is a complex beast. It is not just related to economics as we are mostly told but it affects the political, cultural and technological spheres.

Robertson (2005), one of the pioneers in the study of globalization did not view globalization as a recent phenomenon nor did he see it as a consequence of modernization; he sees it, besides divergence as convergence. It is in this context that Robertson conceptualized globalization in the twentieth century as 'the interpenetration of the universalization of particularization of universalism'. Khondker (1994) building on Robert's framework argues that globalization or glocalization should be seen as an interdependent process. While in this view, local is the provider of the response to the forces that are global, we argue that local itself is constituted globally.

## **GLOCALIZATION EXPLAINED**

There are several different components to the theory of glocalization. First of all, since the world is so diverse, glocalization is sensitive to the many variations that can be found between different parts of the world. Secondly, glocalization places value on the local – whether it is entities, people, or cultures (Robertson, 2001). Glocalization often battles ideas of standardization because of the importance the theory places on the local. According to Ritzer (2008), the glocal realities in one part of the world are likely to be quite different from such realities in other parts. In other words, the effect of glocalization on some areas can be different from other areas. When Wal-Mart decides to enter a new territory, whether it is a different neighborhood in the United States or a different country, the corporation faces strong support and opposition. In this perspective, in a general way, glocalization can be defined as the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas (Ritzer, 2011). Pictorially, glocalization could be described as a strong individual/group, an autonomous, emancipated, independent entity, having rational options and being culturally inspired from the Western tradition; this entity being capable of significant resistance in the 'struggle against globalization' using its own 'weapons' without any suspicion that the development of these tools could generate the proliferation of the globalization itself, by perverting the 'local' and creating another local element for the global consumption type.

## PRINCIPLES OF GLOCALIZATION

The identification of glocalization principles is another outcome of CERFE's study on the glocal approach. In particular, these principles emerge from the analysis of the glocal vision in relation to other alternative visions. In this regard, some prominent differences among these positions can be identified pertaining, for example, to the tendency shared by most international aid policies to keep development programmes and peace-oriented initiatives separate. In this glocal approach, this separation is an anomaly to be rectified. Different is also the role accorded by glocalization to the city. This is understood as a social and political bridge to bring together local initiatives and glocal dynamics. There are many diverging opinions on this issue since some experts continue to perceive the urban condition in a very negative way. However, the real strength of the glocal proposal and perhaps its very appeal lies in its intrinsic and content related features. This is shown in its first set of principles developed through the research (Robertson, 2004; 2006; 2013).

- i. **The Importance of Local Actors:** The first element making up the glocalization vision is the full recognition that the actors and social relations at the local level have acquired crucial importance for development and peace. Often it is the agency of the local actors, their assessment of local problems and needs, their knowledge, their attitude to exercise governance over issues that affect them directly that makes the difference in terms of success or failure in development programs. It is the attitude of local actors that makes the glocalization approach realistic and able to provide unprecedented concreteness to peace and development strategies (Kraidy, 2005; Krucken & Drori, 2010; Roudometof, 2013).
- ii. **Internal war/Poverty Nexus:**At the core of the glocal approach, there is the assumption that the most destabilizing factor of the world is the vicious circle of poverty/endemic war such as kidnapping and secret cultism, promulgation of conflicts and spread of violence. Situations of war and conflict and the culture which drive and foster them tend to go beyond their place of origin and to attain global dimensions while threatening the overall stability of the international public (Ikejiaku, 2009). In this perspective, the akwa ibom state government at present cannot boast of a security free environment capable of adapting the prosal of automobile assembling plant, this to a good extent still stands as a huge barricade against success and development(Uko, 2013; Udoh & Uyanga, 2013)
- iii. **Government policies:**Government anywhere in the world assumes the status of an influence of political, social and economic activities within its polity of which Nigeria and Akwa Ibom state as a paragon are no

different. Therefore, knowing the present political immaturity in Nigeria where government is practically seemingly not a continuum as theoretically popularized by government top brass, and this in many strategic dimensions impacts the economic decisions of huge investors. Kelvin and Michael (2015) in their study of perceptions of the role of government policies in promoting the growth of business in Nigeria, demonstrated very strong reservations in declaration the environment a very safe place for a serious investment owing to series of political rancor (Oparama, 2010).

- iv. **Fraud, sabotage and embezzlement:** prevalent among most cooperate outfits in Nigeria are the issues of fraud, sabotage and embezzlement which however, is vast degenerating among young dynamic employees who possibly had inherited this practices from their predecessors who are highly placed in the society as a result of fraud. Although, Johnson (2014) conversely put it that opportunity, pressure and rationalization give rise to this otherwise termed white collar crime practices. When issues like this crop up in an organization, the organizations themselves are faced with recovering from the forfeiture of trust, as well as the significant loss of financial resources. Executives and fellow co-workers in the victim organizations predictably question themselves and ask how they missed reading the clues of dishonesty and deception with a trusted employee who once held their trust and confidence. Unfortunately, as matter of realities of threats to organizations in which fraud and embezzlement have occurred, the Nigerian Police and Akwa Ibom state lack detailed documented reports and investigations as to why the insider indulge in such illegal activities. Besides, the internal controls systems in existing state under study are apparently weak too (Duke II & Kankpang, 2012; Johnson, 2014; Odo, 2015).
- v. **Basic capital amenities:** basic capital amenities include all the facilities that are the sole responsibility of the government of any nation state, and this include good road networks, health care facilities, education, security, water, and electricity. In developed economies, all these facilities make the economy thrive smoothly (Berst & Michael, 2008). The Nigerian case is not the same, most especially in the area of electricity. Electricity is a major bane in the Nigerian economy as any part of Nigeria hardly sustains the supply of electricity for up to six hours a day, while some areas don't even witness the supply of electricity for weeks and some months( Biodun,2011; Oyesola, 2012).

Whereas, the implication of erratic electricity supply on any manufacturer exposes such organization to heavy costs increment since the manufacturers are required to invest huge capital funds to provide



alternative infrastructural facilities for their operations, domestic industries carry high cost/price structure, which results in loss of competitiveness for their products in both the domestic and foreign markets. However, this situation is not strange in Akwa Ibom State where there is an intention to site an automobile assembling plant (Ilori, 2004; Mesagan & Ezeji, 2016).

- vi. **Weak communications system:** the current communications system is very appalling because GSM and CCTV gadgets are still very strange to most Nigerians. In fact, some meters away from where the proposed plant is going to be sited, people around such areas don't have access to this service, and this is a serious impediment to the proposed plant because it would just be existing in almost total isolation. Going by the score of increase in joblessness, such facility is prone to incessant criminal attacks if commutation services/issue is not addressed to cover the entirety of the state before the commencement of commercial operations (Mesagan & Ezeji, 2016; Ogunsanya, Fanu, Mayowa & Oladipo, 2016).
- vii. **Multiple taxation:** this really not an established term in the field of taxation per say, but, is mostly peculiar with the Nigerian business environment. The emerged as a pedestrian slang that best describes a taxation system where a facility is taxed, levied, billed or financially charged by more than one state or local government authority.

This practically has sentenced a lot of organizations to their untimely economic graves thereby making them moribund. "With due respect, this definition is too narrow to the extent that it implies that multiplicity of taxes occurs only with regards to state and local taxes. From the general usages of multiplicity of taxes by stakeholders, it can be said to manifest in at least four ways. First, it refers to the various unlawful compulsory payments being collected by the local and state governments without appropriate legal backing through intimidation and harassment of the payers. Collection of it is characterized by the use of stickers, mounting of road blocks, use of revenue Agents/Consultants including Motor Park tout. Second, it refers to situations where a taxpayer is faced with demands from two or more different levels of government either for the same or similar taxes. A good example here is the administration of the Value Added Tax (VAT) and Sales Tax simultaneously. Third, the term refers to where the same level of government imposes two or more taxes on the same tax base. A good example is payment of Companies Income Tax, Education Tax and Technology Levy by the same company. Fourth, it refers to cases whereby various government agencies "impose taxes" in the form of fees or charges" (Sanni, 2012:239).

Given the above case scenarios by Sanni(2012), the proposal has to be looked into far beyond mere excitement by the Akwa Ibom state government with view to having a successful investment that will stand the taste of time (Pitigala & Hoppe, 2011; Ocheni & Gemade, 2015)

- viii. **Transportation systems:** Akwa Ibom state is one of the fast growing states in Nigeria currently, its capital city uyo is congested with human and vehicular traffics as attracted by the natural deposits and good climatic conditions which act as strong support for business growth. However, the state under the leadership of Chief Godswill Akpabio triggered a lot of developments in the areas of roads constructions and an international airport to open up the state to economic development as an attempt to combat the endemic challenges of unemployment and associated vices in the state then. Although, this has gone a long way in bringing about a positive change in most economic endeavor within the state, but, roads leading to the interiors are still expected to be constructed and the international airport is yet to have a runway that can adapt a cargo flight, there is no improvement in the waterways as was intended to have a seaport for the state. Regrettably, situating a car assembling plant would require a lot of periodic importations of materials and equipment as the progress of the firm would demand. There is no gain say that the proposed firm would operating steeply transportation cost structure because of the numerous route their imported consignments would have to pass through (Umoren & Etim, 2011; Umoren & Elijah, 2012;
- ix. **The Use of Global Knowledge:** The movement towards glocalization is strengthened by the characteristics of the knowledge society. These include increased circulation of knowledge, communication and peer learning, and the possibility to insert local actors and organizations into global communication circuits. This can enhance the practice of a real multiculturalism in which local players and their cultures, far from being depressed and nullified, can access the global arena and find ways of cross fertilizing each other (Ritzer, 2004).

### **Glocal Strategy Approach and Glocalization of Business Activities**

The introduction of the terms glocal strategy and glocalization may be a compromise to improve the present usage of term global strategy. The global strategy approach reflects the aspirations of a global strategy approach while the necessity for local adaptations and tailoring of business activities is simultaneously acknowledged. The glocal strategy concept comprises local, international, multinational, and global strategy approaches. It differs from the

global strategy approach since it explicitly recognizes the importance of local adaptations and tailoring in the market place of business activities.

Accordingly, a local strategy approach recognizes the necessity to consider locally related issues in the performance of business activities in the market place. An international strategy approach refers to the local strategy approach of business activities that is applicable beyond the home market's boundaries. A multinational strategy approach on the other hand is applied when a wide selection of foreign markets is targeted through the business activities. The international and multinational strategy approaches acknowledge also the necessity for local adaptation of business activities in the different markets targeted. The global strategy approach has an emphasis on the standardization and homogenization of business activities across existing markets all over the world. However, the global strategy approach to manage worldwide business activities appears to be a managerial utopia. As an effect, the concept of glocal strategy is introduced to provide an improved accuracy of the present usage of the global strategy approach among scholars and practitioners. The glocal strategy approach also recognizes that there has to be a balance and harmony between the *standardization versus the adaptation* and the *homogenization versus the tailoring* of business activities. The harmony is achieved since the concept explicitly comprises the spectrum from local strategy issues to global strategy issues through the glocalization of business activities. Glocalization therefore means that the standardization versus the adaptation and the homogenization versus the tailoring of companies' activities are optimized. Accordingly, the focus on balance and harmony are crucial in a company's glocal strategy approach and its glocalization of business activities.

## **GLOCAL STRATEGY OF GLOBAL BRANDS**

Nowadays, global corporations face difficult decisions regarding what marketing strategy to adopt. Global marketing strategies aim to maximize standardization, homogenization and integration of marketing activities across markets throughout the world (Kotler, 2009). However, global marketers must address a number of issues in their marketing strategy to ensure a global success of their brand.

## **SUMMARY**

Nigerian government under the leadership of President Mohammed Buhari's tends to positively stimulate the rebirth of private sector potential to drive the economy of the nation. The change mantra of the administration is an endowment in disguise to the people of Akwa Ibom state because the state government has come up with many emerging manufacturing industries like the metering industry, and tooth-pick and pencil industry which are already

undergoing production test running at various degrees. The chances of the success of these two facilities are centered on the scope of production and proximity to materials which to a very reasonable degree are locally sourced. On the other hand, the metering industry requires importation of some materials but, such components are light weighted when compared to the quantity of component parts an automobile assembly plant would be importing to couple sufficient quantity of automobile vehicles that would be enough to serve all its potential consumers in and outside Nigeria. The study took into account the real components of glocalization and its principles as the star area of consideration in sitting such a facility in Akwa Ibom state. However, the state and quantity of the capital goods available in the state presently may not support the investors decision of coming over to Nigeria since return on investment (ROI) may be a mirage given the history moribund companies in the area. Although, it is a green investment, the state has to work on the quality and quantity of the amenities currently on ground before it can boast of its preparedness to play host to such an investment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Akwa Ibom state government should combat ignorance from its people by way of creating public awareness to its populace concerning international partnership businesses so that the locales will be able to adapt the foreign expatriates who would be working and leaving with them.
2. The national and the states house of assembly should be keen to making policies that would stand the taste of time without calling for incessant adjustments in policies which are capable of altering the smooth flow of economic activities in the nation.
3. Organizations owned by the government should be exemplary enough in remunerating and reinforcing the positive contributions of their workforce to give them that sense of organizational membership. With this, the degree of sabotage will steeply reduce.
4. The government should also invest more in the areas of organizational control systems to stall the proliferation of embezzlement which is harrowing to organizational growth and development.
5. In the areas of security of lives and property, government of Akwa Ibom state should boost its present security arsenals by ensuring a wider coverage of the mobile phone network systems and strategic installation of spywares like cctv with view to having timely information on every activity relative to the sited facilities in the state.
6. The multiple taxation system in Nigeria is encouraged by the government. So, for the economy to receive a smooth sail, most especially the private sector, the policy makers should put a stop to it to encourage investors.

7. Finally, it was also recommended that Akwa Ibom state government should strive harder to open up the state by ensuring the completion of Ibom sea port alongside the cargo flight carriage runway being completed to alleviate the untold costs structure awaiting to plague the proposed investment and many others to come.

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