



# AN HISTORICAL RE-EVALUATION OF INTERNATIONAL BORDER DISPUTES BETWEEN NIGERIA AND CAMEROON, NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA, 1960-2002.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper interrogates the idea that international border disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon had been settled at The Hague, but circumstantial evidences purport a relevant fact of Nigeria's negligence of her porous borders in the wake of her good neighbourliness practices. The border problems went beyond the celebrated Bakassi Peninsula and further included the north eastern region, a geographical environment that is rich in varieties of valuable natural resources, important to Nigeria, especially in the wake of dwindling world natural gas, and with the urgent need for alternative economic source of national wealth. At The Hague, the major contention was who the true owner of the Bakassi Peninsula was. The peoples and natural resources were not considered in their proper perspective. The boundary created by the colonial masters has been and still is a problem to those nations who inherited them. Further the two agreements on the Nigeria-Cameroon crisis; that is the Green Tree Agreement and the International Court of Justice Ruling specifically talk on the Bakassi Peninsular, and the Lake Chad regions, problematic delineations created by geographical factors were not put in their proper perspective. It is important to say that, in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, there are other natural resources more expensive than the oil in the south, which could bring huge revenue to the nation. It is thus the contention of this paper that, Nigeria had lost valuable wealth in people and natural endowment due to administrative negligence and Nigeria should pay more attention to the border territories. Proper governmental attention and management with a good consideration for its rich natural endowment would prevent future problems. The paper further examines the idea that diplomatic negotiations were the better alternative to resolving post-colonial border disputes as boundary created by the colonial masters has been and still is a problem to those nations who inherited them.

**Keywords:** Historical Re-evaluation, Border Disputes, Nigeria, Cameroon, Northeast.

## Introduction

Colonially determined boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon has been contextual since 1960, when the two countries gained their independence from Britain and France respectively. It is a given argument that, although boundaries everywhere are artificial and largely arbitrary and forcefully imposed, the magnitude, duration as well as the process of boundary making in Africa makes its case more dramatic and problematic, especially when there is a presence of natural resources. Conflict is in the nature of man. Crises is derived from the Greek word “Krisis” meaning any event that is expected to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, community or whole society<sup>1</sup>. Crises are deemed to be negative when they have implications for security, economic, political, societal or environmental matters; especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no warning. However, crises is the situation of a complex system (family, economy, society) when the system functions poorly, and an immediate corrective decision is necessary, but the causes of the dysfunction are not particularly identified<sup>2</sup>.

Crises have several defining characteristics. Seeger and others opine that, crises have four defining features that are specific, unexpected, and non-routine events or series of events that create high level of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to an organization’s high priority goal. They argued that, these features could be seen as surprise; create uncertainty as well as a threat to important goals and the need for change<sup>3</sup>. Venette S.J spell out that, “crises is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained”<sup>4</sup>

Crisis is one of the causes of backwardness both domestically and in the international system. The area of dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon is enriched with natural resources like oil, columbite, gypsum, coal, kaolin, bentonite and some deposit of uranium and the geographical proximity of the southern section of the disputed area to the ocean is of economic

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<sup>1</sup>. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scot, A Greek-English Lexicon on Perseas (Oxford Clarendon Press 1940)Pg. 11

<sup>2</sup> Seeger M.W. et al *Communication, Organization, and Crisis. Communication Year Book Vol.2, 1988, Pg 231.*

<sup>3</sup>. Venette S.J. (2003) *Risk Communication in a High Reliability Organization*; APHIS PRQ’S Inclusion of Risk in Decision Making.

<sup>4</sup>. Mitroff I, *Why Some Companies Emerge Stronger and Better From a Crisis.* 2005, Pg. 36.

and security relevance.<sup>1</sup> The border between Nigeria and Cameroon has been the most problematic of the five Nigerian frontiers. The quizzical thing here is that the two countries share virtually the same historical, cultural and primordial experience but certain impediment is keeping them apart from mutual cooperative co-existence. However, the causes of dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon could be attributed to several factors among which are the failures of both Britain and Germany to bequeath a “conflict free and properly demarcated boundary”<sup>2</sup> to their emerging postcolonial states.

The boundary crisis in Northern Nigeria correlates very much to the mistakes created by the colonial government. The boundary problems in Northern Nigeria are as contending as the border issues that ensued between Nigeria and Cameroon in the South of Nigeria. Although the oil politics embedded in the Bakassi Peninsula dispute may have elevated the crisis in the south above that of the North<sup>3</sup>. This paper interrogates the idea that international border clashes between Nigeria and Cameroon went beyond the celebrated Bakassi Peninsula and further included the north eastern borders, a geographical environment that is rich in varieties of valuable natural resources, important to Nigeria, especially in the wake of dwindling world natural gas, and the urgent need for alternative economic source of national wealth. The paper further examines the idea that border clashes were not only restricted to the south but also that the Northern delineation was significant to the diplomatic maneuvers (but was treated with levity). It is further contended here that, boundary negligence is not conducive for the economic wellbeing of the country and the need for proper border administration would provide future economic security and some alternative source of wealth for the country. This paper is divided into statement of the problem, Aim and Objectives, Methodology, Review of Literatures, An Overview of Nigeria Cameroon Boundary, Geographical Features of Nigeria and Cameroon, Geo-Political Evolution and 1959/1961 Plebiscite, Nature of the Border Crises, Examining the Colonial Boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon , Nigeria / Cameroon Border Conflicts from 1961 – 2002, Effects of Boundary disputes on Nigeria/Cameroon Integration, Negotiations and Resolutions Made by Various Court Injunctions, The Green Tree Agreement between Cameroon and Nigeria. Comparison of the Two Court Agreements and Ruling as it Applies to the North of Nigeria and conclusion.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The celebrated border clashes between Nigeria and Cameroon was popular in discuss and ruling as being based on the southern geographical enclaves between the two countries. This however is

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<sup>1</sup> . Duyile A. W *Nigeria-Cameroon Bakassi Peninsula Crisis: A Retrospect of Nigerian Technocrats Views Prior To The Court Case At The Hague*, International Journal Of Humanities And Social Science Invention, Vol. 4, 2015, Pg. 66.

<sup>2</sup> . Duyile A.W. *Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Relations In The North of Nigeria 1914-1994, A Journal Of International Affairs and Global Strategy*. Vol. 27, 2014, 35.

<sup>3</sup> . Anene J.C. *The International Boundaries Of Nigeria, The Framework Of An Emergence Of African Nations*. (London; Longman Publisher 1970) Pg. 243.

more expansive, as contentions extended to territories in the northern section of the border zones, highly rich in natural resources. This paper examined the contentions while highlighting the need for Nigeria to pay more attention to this geographic advantage before the same faith befalls the zone. Further the aim is to assist in historical meandering to provide information for Nigeria to lay claim to her territories and further protect her citizens dwelling in this area.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research is to examine northern Nigerian Cameroon border contingency.

The specific objectives of this research are to:

- a. examine the disputations and opinions of the technocrats on the subject;
- b. interrogate the idea that the North of Nigeria's boundary with Cameroon was of economic importance to the interplay of diplomatic rows between both nations;
- c. highlight the historical events that had occurred as it concerns the boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon.

### **Methodology**

Primary and secondary data were used in this research.

This research made a contextual and textual use of panel documents. The researchers painstakingly examined manuscripts, journals, books related to the topic. That is, cross examination of information between the various secondary sources.

This research focused majorly on historical events from the period of independence. It also discussed issues that concern the various boundary controversies in Northern Nigeria. The beginning of the relevant period marked the 1959-1961 plebiscites and the end of this period marked the genuine effort of the United Nation to put an end to the boundary conflicts between Nigeria and Cameroon.

### **Review of Literatures**

A lot of scholarly works has been published as regards colonialism, boundary disputes and conflicts among African states. Anene J.C in "the International Boundary of Nigeria" gave a detailed and interesting account of the international boundaries between Nigeria and its neighbours. The work was not only concerned with the foreign acts of partition, but with the impact of colonial boundaries on the peoples in whose history the acts of partition were a major intervention. This necessitated a multi-disciplinary inquiry into the ethnic situation at the time the boundaries were made, the history of the different peoples, particularly the question of the history of political and economic inter-group relationships, the knowledge of such available information to the treaty makers and the consequences of their decisions. The author recognized that the boundary zones of Nigeria and her neighbours were potential sources of boundary disputes; it did not put forward the criteria which may afford the best guide to a settlement of an unhappy legacy of colonialism<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> . Ibid 251

Though Anene (ibid) suggested that the boundary demarcation was the source of disputes between these people, but he noted that colonial legacy contributed to the problem between these two states, the author does not proffer possible solutions to correct that issue which this research examined. Anene J.C traced the activities of the German and British traders in the areas during the colonial era. He observes that the German administrators in the Cameroons attached great importance to the Benue River and its tributaries as the best, quickest and most profitable way of gaining access to the hinterland of their colony. He further observed that the attempt at penetrating this hinterland from the Cameroon coast failed disastrously. Hence the Germans through their agent Flegel, pretended to regard the entire region, north of the latitude of the Cross River “rapid” as no man’s land<sup>1</sup>. European legacy was still in place, but African nations, after gaining hegemony over their affairs did not come to a consensus on how they would handle every dispute that could arise as a result of such disputations. Anene J.C further assessed the length of legacy of colonialism in Africa. He points out that the industrialization of the south in the late 1800s and 1900s had showed that Africa was largely controlled by its indigenous peoples in 1878 but had by 1914 become almost totally subjugated and divided into colonies by European powers<sup>2</sup>.

Asiwaju A.I recorded that, Nigeria-Cameroon border problems can be derived directly from the burden imposed by the history of the nation’s entire boundary system. This is evident in the arbitrary demarcation of African borders by the colonial powers without reference to the ethno-cultural affinities of the border areas<sup>3</sup>(for example the Yorubas are separated between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin.). The demarcation was done without considering the relationship of these peoples; such ethno religious considerations provide the bases for conflictual relations and geographical adjustments which created the interest in this research.

Brownlie J, in *African Boundaries* posits that, national boundaries are analytically colonial borders both in origin and orientation<sup>4</sup>. He further suggested that, the delimitation agreements were negotiated before a detailed knowledge of the terrains and people in the interior of the continent. The borders are characteristically prone more to conflict than cooperative interaction with their neighbours, as African boundaries in many parts of the continent are not finally settled by the countries sharing the common boundaries. These points underscored the artificiality and the arbitrariness of African borders which is a source of reflections of rivalries in African states. Thus, the long Nigeria-Cameroon border, inherited from the British and German and subsequently, the British and French (when France came into the picture in colonial Cameroon) was not clearly and completely demarcated, most especially from cross River to the northern region<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, the demarcations of boundary were done by the Europeans, but it is

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<sup>1</sup> . Ibid 257

<sup>2</sup> . Ibid 290

<sup>3</sup> Asiwaju A.I, *Partitioned African, Ethnic Relations across African International Boundaries*. 1884-1984, (Lagos University Of Lagos Press And London, Hurst And Co.1984) Pg. 367

<sup>4</sup> Brownlie I., *African Boundaries*, (London Hurst And Company 1985) Pg. 553-555.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid P.555

high time that the Africans themselves should correct the mistakes made by colonial masters, through re-strategizing.

Ate expressed his concern that arbitrary nativity around the border zones does not account for border problems between Nigeria and Cameroon, but factors such as Nigeria's unequal size in terms of population and the role of France in Cameroon. Also, he is of the opinion that, the availability of vital resources in the Maritime and land boundary, promotes smuggling along the Nigeria-Cameroon borders. It is regarded as cross border trade activity and is a well-organized business. It is of a complex structure, in which the indigenous peoples of the border communities collaborate with influential state functionaries and citizens within the two countries. Thus, this has a dire consequence on Nigeria's economy and the porosity of the border regions has made incursions to be frequent in the area<sup>1</sup>.

It is clearly obvious that not much work has been done on colonialism as a source of boundary dispute. Hence this paper tends to be more specific and give a detailed analysis of how boundary disputes were created by imperial rule particularly in the Nigerian instance. The paper discusses issues that concern the Northern border region. The paper elaborated on the pervasive implications of the crises which has constantly beclouded the focus of development of these two countries. It also gives recommendations that would enhance the overhaul of such problems having considered the historical antecedents.

### **An Overview of Nigeria Cameroon Boundary**

Adekunle Ajala describes boundary as an imaginary line, which divides two pieces of land from one another<sup>2</sup>. According to him, this can assume the form of mental categorization such as "we" and "them" or the physical demarcation between two administrative units. He warns that boundaries are not "dead immobile lines in the dirt" that separates administrative areas, but fulcrums around which the political, social and economic activities of people revolves.<sup>3</sup> According to the Collins English Dictionary, boundaries are that which divides one territory or political unit from another<sup>4</sup>. It is generally believed from an historical point of view that the state boundaries of Africa have no concrete validity. This is well justified because the borders are byproducts of colonial notion, drawn by Europeans at continental congresses<sup>5</sup>. All of these are general expressions of boundaries of Africa especially that of Nigeria-Cameroon which is also artificial and is of flaccid lines that cross rather than follow the real contours of the continent. Thus, the artificial lines metamorphose into uncontrollable conflicts that troubled Nigeria and Cameroon since independence. As a result, the relationship of this sister states

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<sup>1</sup> Ate, Bassey E., *Nigeria And Cameroon In Nigeria And Its Immediate Neighbor* (2000) Nigeria's Relation With Its Immediate Neighbours: A Security- Political Analysis In Akindele Aa And Ate, Bassey E. *Selected Readings On Nigeria Foreign Policy And International Relations* The Nigeria Institute Of International Affairs (1992). Pg10

<sup>2</sup> Adekunle Ajala, *Boundaries and Governance in Nigeria*, Edited By Anthony Asiwaju, (University Press Ibadan, 2000). Pg. 240.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Collins English Dictionary Complete and Unabridged 117<sup>th</sup> Edition 2014(C) Harper Collins Publisher 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Adekunle Ajala *Boundaries And Governance In Nigeria* P.300

became characteristically that of caution, intrigues, claims and small scale upheaval and reconciliatory diplomacy.

The nature of arising conflicts between these two countries will not be worthwhile without looking at the geographical complexities that surround the countries in question. This will give us a more coherent picture of the Nigeria and Cameroon border crises.

### **Geographical Features of Nigeria and Cameroon**

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. Nigeria share land borders with the Republic of Benin in the West, Chad and Cameroon in the East and Niger in the North, its coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the South and it borders Lake Chad to the North East. Noted geographical features in Nigeria include; the Adamawa highlands, Mambila Plateau, Jos Plateau, Obudu Plateau, the Niger River, River Benue and Niger Delta. Nigeria is found in the tropics where the climate is seasonally damp and humid. Nigeria has an area of 923, 768.00sq kilometers and lies between the latitude 40 and 140 north of the equator and longitude 30 and 140 east of the Greenwich Meriden<sup>1</sup>. The country Nigeria was colonized by the British Empire and it gained independent in 1960. The 2005 population census gave the country's estimated count to about 170, 000,000 populace.

The boundary point between the Northern communities of Nigeria and their counterpart groups in Cameroon can only be found in Bornu, Benue, Taraba, and Adamawa states on the side of Nigeria<sup>2</sup>. However, in some of the problematic local government areas in northern Nigeria, such as Ngala, Madagali, Michika, Mubi, Maiha, Futore, Ganiye, Bama, and Jada local governments; Nigeria and Cameroon had continued to have unresolved border demarcation challenges which is still a problem today.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, Cameroon is one of the 54<sup>th</sup> largest countries. It is slightly larger than the nation of Sweden and the state of California<sup>4</sup>. Cameroon land mass is 472,710km<sup>2</sup> (182,510sqmi) with 2,730km<sup>2</sup> (1,050sqm) of water<sup>5</sup>. The country is located in central Africa, bordering the Bight of Biafra between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. Cameroon is sometimes described as "Africa in miniature" because it exhibits all the major climates and vegetation of the continent; Mountains,

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<sup>1</sup> The Nigeria Geographical Features And Land Mass. Wikipedia.Com

<sup>2</sup> . National Commission, Report Of The Visit Of The Sub-Committee To The Nigeria Cameroon Land Border

(Lagos Research And Documentation Center 1991) Pg.5

<sup>3</sup> Duyile A.W. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Relations In The North Nigeria 1914-1994, *A Journal Of International Affairs and Global Strategy*. Vol. 27, 2014, Pg. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Highest Average Annual Precipitation Extremes, Global Measured Extremes Of Temperature and Precipitation National Climatic Data Centre, Aug. 9, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid



desert, rain forest, savanna, grassland and ocean coastland<sup>1</sup>. Nonetheless, Cameroon was originally German territory from 1884-1916, but was handed over to France and Britain as mandate territory after the defeat of Germany in the First World War<sup>2</sup>. The Northern part is characterized by semi-desert and scanty rainfall, while in the west vegetation is nourished by the River Benue which flows into Bokora in Nigeria.

The Nigeria Cameroon border has four major landmarks; the first is the Lake Chad tripoints to the Horere Gesumi uplands. The second is the sector of the river Gamana (boundary pillar 64) east ward to the Korobom Mountains. From pillar 64, the third sector of the boundary runs eastwards to pillar 114 at the Cross River. The fourth sector runs from Cross River towns to the seas<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless, the relevant portion of the border is described in the Anglo-German treaty of March 11, 1913<sup>4</sup>.

Based on the findings of the survey and demarcation commission, a change was made on the former international boundary. The only change was that, local European administrations were authorized to make an allowance of up to one kilometer on either side of the boundary in order not to split farm lands belonging to towns and villages. This adjustment had not given an answer to crucial questions: the question of separating a people who had a long history of togetherness and secondly, the economic activities of these people was cattle rearing and by their tradition, they rear their cattle to far off zones when there is green pastures, this brings these people into contact and some form of harmony or conflict.

In effect therefore, using the words of Anene, the Anglo-German boundary of 1885-1913 was merely a geographical expression, and lacks the merit for political control. The resultant effect of this, especially in Adamawa region, was that there is a constant and considerable friction in the border zones and with this the Fulani rulers, whose fiefs had been sundered by Anglo-German boundary arrangements continued to extract tributes from the local “people” who were on the wrong side of the boundary.

Another source of friction was the undiluted manner in which plain-dwelling folks decided to rejoin their kith and kin on the plateau and mountains<sup>5</sup>. In doing so they crossed the boundary which meant nothing to them. They would then be either British or German subjects in one year and in another year German or British. In the South, the picture was not clear. Further evidence of the demarcation of the Cameroon-Nigerian border are contained in the Franco-British Declaration (named after Viscount Miller, Secretary of the colonies of the British Empire), and Harry M. Simon, Minister for the colonies of the French Republic<sup>6</sup>. This

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Frank, *Afference, Effervesce and Legitimacy in Africa* Pg 3&4.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvester Kalu; *A West Africa Geography*, (1987 University Press, Ibadan) Pg. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Weladiyi C, *Cameroon Nigeria In Border Conflict*. (1975 Abbia), Pg. 165.

<sup>5</sup>.Lawrence O. Mgbengso, *Nigeria-Cameroon Border; Conflicts and Their International Implication*. *Nigeria Forum, The Nigeria Institute Of International Affairs*, Vol 13, 1993. Pg 15-43.

<sup>6</sup> Weladiyi C, Pg.167

declaration of 1919 relegated Germany to the background because of the loss of hegemony over her colonies in Africa, which includes Cameroon.

Nigerians and Cameroonians had not given serious regard to the colonial boundaries and the agreement that created them, or else they would have resolved the issue of their borders earlier. Instead, the nationalist interest was to achieve independence.

The Anglo-German agreement treaty of 1913, the Simon Milner declaration of 1919, the British and the French mandate established in 1922 which established their control over Northern and Western Cameroon are pointers to the issues causing border irregularities. The trusteeship agreement approved by the general assembly of the United Nations on December 13, 1946 and most especially 1959 and 1961 Assembly plebiscites held in the territories of Northern and Southern Cameroon created a rational basis for the two countries to live in harmony after their independence in 1960<sup>1</sup>. But the opposite was the case as borders were subjected to the dictates of geographic change and the ethno political whims of the people and rulers around these regions.

### **Geo-Political Evolution and 1959/1961 Plebiscite**

The plebiscite, a referendum enacted by the United Nations General Assembly for the adjudication of the border problems gave liberty of choice to both inhabitants of Northern Cameroon and Southern Cameroon to join either the newly independent republic of Nigeria or Cameroon. The Northern Cameroon joined the Federal Republic of Cameroon due to fear of marginalization<sup>2</sup>.

In a bid to establish political hegemony over the newly independent states and to demonstrate palpable economic and social control by annexing lands or territories, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon laid controversial claims over their border lands, especially the Lake Chad Basin, Horore Karoa, Kite Wulgo and Dorokista etc in the North Eastern flank. On the southern flank, the Mbo Obudu around Ikom, Onesi, Inna around present day Akwa Ibom and the controversial Bakassi Peninsular around Calabar<sup>3</sup>.

The relationship between Nigeria and Cameroon became inherently difficult after independence. However, by January 1960 and October same year, Cameroon and Nigeria gained independence respectively. In 1964, four neighboring countries; Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad signed a conventional established treaty over Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) which the sole aim was to promote settlement of disputes<sup>4</sup>.

On the North Eastern flank of the border, what existed were a few problems which were largely caused by Nigerian farmers and herdsmen who traverse the border towns in search of fertile land and grazing areas<sup>5</sup>. In addition, some Nigerians, especially of Fulani origin, go to the

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<sup>1</sup> Idris Haruna, *A History Of International Border Crises*, Geographical Survey.(Samaru Zaria 2006) , Pg17.

<sup>2</sup> Idris Haruna, *A History Of International Border Crises* Pg.18

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

extent of paying nominal taxes to the Cameroon authorities, this translated into crises<sup>1</sup>. And on the Southern flank, the area around the Bakassi and Enong Peninsular situated on both West and East around Rio-De-Rey and Calabar, also witnessed similar situation with that of the North. The fishermen from Nigeria who fished along Border Rivers were seriously confronted by their Cameroonians counterpart who laid claims to fishing in that literal territory. Also compounding the crises was the discovery of oil in the area<sup>2</sup>.

Notably, the result of the plebiscite re-established the Anglo-German boundary as an international boundary of Nigeria and Cameroon in the southern section and also, the Milner-Simon line became Nigeria-Cameroon international boundary in the Adamawa regions<sup>3</sup>.

After the plebiscite the utterances of the leaders of both countries portrayed the same nationalistic feelings. For example the former Southern Cameroon premier John Ngu Foncha issued a statement which among other things noted that, “the assumption of power by Kameun National Democratic Party (KNDP) in Southern Cameroons means the beginning of a new era of political and social changes long desired by Cameroonians”<sup>4</sup>. The era of autocracy characterized by rebukes, intimidation and victimization is being replaced by that of instruction, encouragement and demand for devoted service for the love of one’s country<sup>5</sup>.

However, in Nigeria, the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, while greeting the result of plebiscite conducted in the Adamawa region, said

I most sincerely welcome you to Nigeria and assure you at all times of the friendship of my government. The journey was long but thank God we have reached the end. Our brothers and sisters of the Trust Territory will now rejoin us in peace and amity<sup>6</sup>.

### **Nature of the Border Crises**

It is argued that, the boundaries have length but are without breadth, the area around the boundary which is called a border land, could be prone to crises.<sup>7</sup> This is because there could be some difficulty in recognizing where the lines passes on a range of mountain or body of water that may have been selected due to the fact that boundary division is artificial. In the real sense, it

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence O. Mgbengso, Nigeria-Cameroon Border; Conflicts and Their International Implication. *Nigeria Forum, The Nigeria Institute Of International Affairs*, Vol 13, 1993. Pg 15-43.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence O. Mgbengso, Nigeria-Cameroon Border; Conflicts and Their International Implication. *Nigeria Forum, The Nigeria Institute Of International Affairs*, Vol 13, 1993. Pg 15-43

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ajala, *Boundaries And Governance In Nigeria*

was due to the product of power politics. There is the likelihood that a boundary may divide a coherent culture or ecosystem.

From the evaluation of the boundary problem between Nigeria and Cameroon in Adamawa, Taraba, Benue and Bornu states respectively, the only applicable legal instrument which is recognized and respected by the people who live along these borderland areas on both sides is the Anglo-French Declaration of 1931<sup>1</sup>. Since the Anglo-French Declaration of 1931, several new villages have sprung up along the borderland while some other villages mentioned in the treaty have also been deserted<sup>2</sup>. Some certain villages had also expanded beyond Nigeria into the Cameroon and vice-versa. This implies that some features used in the 1931 had disappeared. The cairn of stones in some areas had either been removed by the Cameroonians or pushed extremely into Nigeria territory to change the position of the boundary<sup>3</sup>. In some instances, according to the Nigeria Boundary Commission, “pillars have had to be removed and where possible destroyed by the visiting Cameroonians in their attempt to distort the boundary<sup>4</sup>. Whilst in some border points, it was the river changing course, that being the source of disagreement among the border communities.

There are many scholars who conventionally agreed that the boundary problems are fictitious, because they are of the opinion that all boundary disputes are caused by the state interest and all argument put forward are nothing but mere pretense<sup>5</sup>.

### **Examining the Colonial Boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon**

A boundary dispute is not always identical with a dispute over territory even though conversely, most territorial conflicts also involve boundary problems. The territorial conquest of an entire state for example cannot reasonably be counted as a boundary dispute. It is of course possible to define the concept of boundary dispute even more precisely. Prescott gives the following three main types; territorial dispute; which result from some quality of the border land which makes it attractive to the state initiating, and usually involves controversies of the boundary; functional dispute, this concerns state functions applied to the boundary while last is the dispute over resource development<sup>6</sup>.

However, the Nigeria/Cameroon border dispute encompasses the above mentioned typologies; this is prior to the nature and inherent manifestation of the dispute area in the study enclaves. The big question that pops a great deal of wonder is why the British and the Germans

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<sup>1</sup> .Ibid

<sup>2</sup> National Commission, Report Of The Visit Of The Sub-Committee To The Nigeria Cameroon Land Border (Lagos Research And Documentation Center 1991) P10.

<sup>3</sup> .Ibid

<sup>4</sup> .Ibid

<sup>5</sup> . Ajala, *Boundaries And Governance In Nigeria* Pg.303

<sup>6</sup> Prescott J.R.V Evolution of Nigeria Political Boundaries, (London Ph.D Thesis 2002) pg 266

failed to create a proper boundary in the length of about 1,100 kilometer boundary stretching from Lake Chad in the north to the Atlantic Oceans in the south. It must be observed that, they had a hidden agenda which includes among other factors; to entrench and consolidate colonialism, which will enable them supply their country with raw-materials and secure market for manufactured goods, therefore the interest of the merchants of these goods were entrenched, hence the denial of the interest of those inhabitants, whose culture, identity, communalism and lineage hood was trifled upon.

More importantly was the arbitrary manner in which the Europeans partitioned Africa, which left it with inherent problems of imprecise boundary description and definition, which by implication had juxtaposed multifarious conflicts in these areas.

This of course was admitted by Lord Sahbury as a sham, when he noted,

in those days we just took blue pencil and ruler and we put it down at old Calabar and drew that line to Yola. I recollect thinking when I was sitting and having an audience with Emir of Emirs, surrounded by his tribes, and the Emir said-that it was a very good thing and he did not know that it was with a pencil we had drawn a line through his territory.<sup>1</sup>

This was the caricature the Europeans made out of the expanses of our future, culture, solidarity and our cooperate existence as a people.

### **Nigeria-Cameroon Relations in the North of Nigeria**

The period from 1960-2002 presented history with perhaps its most significant crossroads, as conflictual activities almost resulted into wars between the two states. At the height of an era of radical socio-political change in the structure of African relationships, especially between Nigeria and Cameroon, which resulted into conflictual tendencies, and sometimes integration and mediation between Nigeria and Cameroon, one would say that the major predominant affirmed root of this crisis could be traced to colonialism in which the imperialist powers perpetrated partitioning in the helpless sharing of African states among themselves obviously buttressed by the Berlin-conference of 1884/1885.

Artificial lines were drawn as boundaries among colonial powers which divided the land and the people, culture and norms, relationships and commercial solidarity of the Nigeria/Cameroon peoples. This design resulted into the disintegration of harmonious entities which in subsequent years exacerbated crises especially on territorial claims between the two sister states, which makes it more of an inherited time bomb that blow up cohesive relationship of peace, bilateralism and prospective associated development.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid

However, the inherent anticipation of wide-spread conflicts, after the attainment of independence was shared by African rulers, as well as outside observers in the African political terrain. It is most remarkable to remember the caution of Kwame Nkrumah who warned in 1958 against the danger inherently akin to “colonial legacies of irredentism”<sup>1</sup> The disputes have been numerous especially as it pertains to the Northern part of the country, though the bloodshed had been minimal. Some territorial claims reflected deeply rooted bad relationships between neighbours. In some other instances the border or territorial claim was abandoned. Some of these disputes were inherently resolved with boundary agreements and others continued to be active, while others were suddenly suspended without solution. In some areas, the struggle was merely verbal and the parties involved pursued their goals by making acrimonious speeches.

### **Nigeria / Cameroon Border Conflicts from 1961 – 2002**

The relationship between Nigeria and Cameroon communities who live along the border areas has been relatively cordial. The inhabitants on both sides intermarry, perform some social functions together and generally regard themselves as brothers and sisters. As a matter of fact, some of these communities have cultural link with one another and speak the same language<sup>2</sup>. Even though skirmishes do occur from time to time, the traditional rulers have a way of resolving such disputes without any recourse to government machinery. However, each country does recognize the fact that they belong to different countries and they jealously protect the boundary lines between them.

On few occasions, the border communities have had to protect the territorial integrity of their countries, which more often than not always lead to disputes that sometimes sour their relationships. Though some Nigeria government officials have accused Cameroon of inordinate attempt to remove or destroy pillars, cairn of stones and sometimes also take over any space created by the change in the water course from its original boundary position into Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> These problems vary in the different borders between Northern Nigerian communities and Cameroon. It is important to note that, the inevitable factor which range from rational evaluation that demean Nigeria’s wholesome participation in the border issues between Nigeria/Cameroon is basically the dereliction of her government towards perpetual or virile policy making which did more damage than good<sup>4</sup>.

The study of border problems begins from Kumshe in Bama Local Government in Borno State. Alhaji Zanna Arji Nome Sale, the district head of Woloji (1992) explained that, “the dispute between the people of Kumshe and the neighbouring Cameroon authority started

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<sup>1</sup> Adekunle Ajala, *Boundaries and Governance In Nigeria*, Edited By Anthony Asiwaju, (University Press Ibadan, 2000) Pg.124.

<sup>2</sup> Duyile A.W. *Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Relations in The North Nigeria 1914-1994, A Journal Of International Affairs And Global Strategy*. Vol. 27, 2014 pg. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

when there was a dispute between the people of Kumshe Dam<sup>1</sup>. The Cameroonians claimed this dam whilst the Nigerian villages disagreed with their claims causing a minor fracas between the two border communities. This problem was however resolved by their leaders.<sup>2</sup>

In the Gwoza area, the problem is different from that of Kumshe. The problem had to do with a river called Kirawa. There are two points where the river changed course and these were at Kirawa and Belvraza<sup>3</sup>. In Kirawa, due to the flood, the water could not be controlled, forcing the water to chart a different course leaving the old course to dry. The old course is the original boundary, as both the communities in Nigeria and Cameroon recognize this fact but followed the new course of the river. At Belvraza, the river covered the land from the Nigeria side, thereby changing its original course. It later joined the old course in a cyclic form at a point in the South of Belvraza systematically creating an artificial island on the Nigeria side<sup>4</sup>. Here likewise, the old course has dried up and Cameroonians are moving with the new course. The Cameroonian authorities because of this change of the course of Kirawa, now claim the area created by the change in the river course as their territory<sup>5</sup>.

Nigeria authorities disagree and maintain that the boundary lines cannot change with the course of the river, stressing that the area created beyond the new course naturally belongs to them. On the other hand, Cameroonian, nonetheless, disagree with this assertion and this was the core of the problem between the two nation's boundary communities in that Local Government. However, in Adamawa State, at Ganye Local government to be precise, Toungo and Sugu Districts, the problem faced here is that the border communities disagreed over where the precise border line is truly situated. Even though, an attempt was made in 1959 by the district officers on both sides to resolve the conflict, nothing has been done to award ownership of the area to either the Nigeria state or the Cameroonian state<sup>6</sup>.

Further, on the problems of the border between the two sister states was the circumstance of Ganye Local Government which was similar to that of Gwoza of which in this instance; the River Tiel changed its course to about one kilometer into the Nigerian boundary<sup>7</sup>. In this case, the Nigerian state stuck to the old course of the River Tiel rather than the new course<sup>8</sup>. Whilst, the Cameroonians preferred the new course which had favoured them. Similarly, in Mubi Local Government in Nigeria, in a place called Madagura, Cameroonians farmers were accused of coming into the Nigeria territory for farming<sup>9</sup>. This offence also extends to customs officials at

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<sup>1</sup>.Idris Haruna, *A History of International Border Crises*, Geographical Survey. (Samaru Zaria ,2006) Pg35

<sup>2</sup>.Duyile A.W. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Relations In The North Nigeria 1914-1994

<sup>3</sup>.National Commission, Minutes of The Nigeria Team to the Nigeria Cameroon Land and Maritime Border Committee (Lagos Research and Documentation Centre (1991) P6.

<sup>4</sup> .Ibid

<sup>5</sup> National Boundary Commission, Committee On Land Boundary Pg3

<sup>6</sup> .Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

Burha (Cameroon), who were also accused of coming into Nigeria to perform their duty to the Cameroonian state<sup>1</sup>. However, at a joint meeting between the representatives from Nigeria and Cameroon in February 12, 1980, it was resolved that farmers farming on the disputed territory should continue to do so pending the authorities in Lagos (former Capital of Nigeria) and Yaoundé are also able to determine the actual boundary.

In Bagira area of Nigeria, the dispute arose because Cameroonians who settled on the Nigeria farmland but refused to pay taxes to the Nigerian authorities<sup>2</sup>. This dispute was resolved by the official of the Mubi Local Government Area (in Nigeria) and Burha Local Government Area (in Cameroon) who met to settle the matter. In Madagali Local Government Area (in Nigeria) there is a village called Wula Hauko. This village was in Nigeria, but between 1951 and 1957, part of it was exerted to Cameroon<sup>3</sup>. This people were close to the border lines and had built houses across the borderline and they moved freely between Nigeria and Cameroon. The peculiar case of Hudu(Nigeria) or Bwande as it is called in Cameroon, should be mentioned, here, the river separating the two countries disappeared underground for about two kilometers stretch and re-surfaced again. These two kilometers were claimed by the Cameroonians<sup>4</sup>.

The length of border between Taraba state and Cameroon is 107km. However, disputes occur from time to time in Taraba state. The disputes as a result of the movement of cairn stones from where they were originally piled into Nigeria territory by persons believed to be Cameroonians. This made Nigerians to fall into the land of the Cameroonians. Consequently, contrary to the people's belief in Taraba, the boundary is not situated at River Abong because a recognized beacon still exists up the hill at Ndumlagi in the Cameroons. The people of Abongshe pay tax to Cameroon due to the erroneous belief that River Abong is the boundary and therefore they live in Cameroon territory<sup>5</sup>. Abongshe is kilometers after River Abong. Coupled with these facts, Taraba, has about thirty villages and hamlets which are not reflected on the state map<sup>6</sup>.

Nevertheless, the first major attempt to resolve the crises between the two sister states was in 1971, when a joint Cameroon and Nigeria permanent Consultative Commission was set up in Lagos by both countries. Before this commission was reconstituted however, the authorities in Cameroon had formally requested the Secretary General of the United Nations, the famous Diplomat Mr. U. Thant, to express his personal views on it and hence by a note dated

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<sup>1</sup>.Minutes Of The Preparation Team Of The Nigeria Team To The Cameroon Land Maritime Border Committee, Held In The Conference Room Of The Director (Prs) National Boundary Commission 3, Force Road, Onikan, On Monday , 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>National Boundary Commission Joint Meeting of Nigeria-Cameroon Land Border Committee Of Expert P2.

<sup>5</sup> Duyile A.W. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Relations in the North Nigeria 1914-1994, *A Journal Of International Affairs And Global Strategy*. Vol 27, 2014, 35.

<sup>6</sup> .ibid



18<sup>th</sup> January, 1971<sup>1</sup>, the clarification was conveyed to Yaoundé. Basically, this clarification relied on the provision of the 1913 agreement, particularly paragraph 20, which states among other things that, if the Akpayafes' lower course changes its mouth and then transfers its waters into the territory, it shall remain German territory<sup>2</sup>. The British Admiralty chart No. 3433 was also cited to back up this analysis<sup>3</sup>. Nigeria however, totally rejected this clarification, since the 1913 agreement itself basically assumed that the Rio-del-Rey was a river 80 miles (128kilometres) long structurally<sup>4</sup>.

Inevitably, tension mounted over the border conflicts, this led to a mini-summit meeting in September, 1974 between Gen Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and President Ahidjo of Cameroon in Kano in an effort to quell the conflicts. This was popularly known as the Kano declaration, in which among other considerations, a communiqué which made an 8 kilometer (5miles) buffer zone on either side of the oil prospective area forbidden temporarily<sup>5</sup>.

Another meeting was held in Marua in the Cameroon in 1975, unfortunately, Cameroon had violated the terms of the Kano agreement by creating an oil rig somewhere around Calabar channel. Nonetheless, though the boundary in the northern regions of Nigeria seems relatively peaceful, disputes do occur from time to time, especially in Baro, Antere, Inkori and Tamiya, resulting from the removal of cairns of stones into Nigerian territory by people believed to be Cameroonian<sup>6</sup>. The Cameroon authorities had attempted to establish security posts at Durf, something strongly rejected by Nigerians.

There is very little Nigerian government presence in these border areas before the year 1994. This has made it possible for some inhabitants to cross over to the Cameroonian side, where government presence was better, in fact before 1994; some Nigerian border towns were still inaccessible by roads<sup>7</sup>. Poor infrastructure provided in the border areas in Nigeria, makes it difficult for the communities to remain within their boundary areas. The effect of this was however to become pronounced after the attainment of democratic rule in 1999<sup>8</sup>.

### **Effects of Boundary Disputes on Nigeria/Cameroon Integration.**

The concept of national and international integration has been defined in many ways. Clifford Geertz defines it as “the aggression of independently defined, specially outlined traditional

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<sup>1</sup>.Adekunle Ajala, *Boundaries and Governance in Nigeria*, Edited by Anthony Asiwaju, (University Press Ibadan 2000). Pg 270.

<sup>2</sup>.Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup>.Adekunle Ajala, *Boundaries And Governance In Nigeria*, Edited By Anthony Asiwaju, (University Press Ibadan 2000). Pg.331.

<sup>6</sup>Greenhill B.J, Correspondence Of Ref No. 503/314 Of May, 1961

<sup>7</sup>. An Interview Conducted By Haruna Idris In Keroa, On Saturday On May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

<sup>8</sup>. Carl Gosta E, African Boundary Problems, *The Scandinavian Institute Of African Studies* (Sweden 1986), Vol. 41.

primordial groups into large more diffuse units, whose implicit frame of reference is not the local scene but the nation, another author similarly explained national integration as the process of bringing together culturally and socially discreet groups into a single territorial unit and the context of some cohort of plural society”<sup>1</sup>. The contextual explanations above shows that, the concept of establishment of common independent authorities in respect to unity of political, social and economic values on the platform of symbiotic relationships, covers the anticipated understanding of national and international integration.

However, the pervasiveness of adjustments in Nigeria and Cameroon had over time resulted into the manifestation of boundary disputes that have raised and further complicated the task of nation building and jeopardized international integration.

More so, the irrelevant killing of people by raids, forceful confiscation of lands, rivers, and the imposition of tax payments on people in the border areas, only sour bilateral relationships. For example, the incident in 1981, where six (6) Nigerian soldiers were killed by Cameroon gendarmes and the guerrilla attacks Nigerian launched on the Cameroon side of the border create nothing but anger, distrust and caution among both countries<sup>2</sup>.

Further to stress, is the inherent neglect of communities around the border areas by virtue of economic marginalization. The inhabitants of these areas suffer neglect and economic isolation in terms of infrastructural development denied them by the Nigerian state. It will be preposterous to think that such people will concede to the gospel of patriotism and maintenance of peace<sup>3</sup>. This has been the serious problems which, naturally devoid of solutions in decades past still melt itself into present times in both countries.

More important is the fact that border area communities are the gate keepers of various countries, even though they are not officially assigned, they believe in defending what is theirs. Therefore most offensive issues that emanate from the border regions affect these inhabitants first. But the question is why they have been subjected to impoverishment by the government of both Nigeria and Cameroon.

Furthermore, a more sharp effect of boundary disputes is the fact that it destroys relationships, linkages and interactions, which have been nurtured over the years or ages. It is naturally detestable to wake up to the realization that one’s ruler or king has been cut off on the wrong side of the international boundary, and can no longer provide you with the social, cultural and traditional cover. Even the thought of it is disorientating and traumatic. No wonder many scholars of this discipline or orientation assert more negative perception on colonial boundaries. As Benjamin Disraeli put it “a nation is gradually created by a variety of influences, the influence of original organization of climate, soils, religion, laws, customs, manner, extraordinary accidents and incidents in their history and their individual character; of their illustrious citizens, these influences create the nation’s; these form national mind.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. Ibid

<sup>2</sup>. West Africa Magazine of 21<sup>st</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2002 London 12-13

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid

<sup>4</sup>. Benjamin Blatter E-Tal, European Perspective Of Border Land Vol.15, (Diego State,

Unfortunately, boundary disputes have impeded the growth and cordial relationship between these two prominent countries. The Nigeria/Cameroon border was closed during the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon and between Nigeria and Chad. N'Djamena, the Chadian Capital was short of fuel (petroleum) and the electricity generating station which supplies the town was disrupted for almost six months<sup>1</sup>. This scarcity of oil did not only affect Chad, but also seriously affected northern Nigerian soldiers of the frontiers (according to source in Lagos, up to 50,000 barrels of Nigeria oil per day had, prior to the border closure, was being 'illegally' imported to Chad)<sup>2</sup>.

Even though Nigeria and Cameroon are members of the Chad Basin Commission (CBS) comprising of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, and also River Niger Commission (RNC), the two countries still found themselves in two different economic communities, which though not antagonistic to each other, are not very friendly. Nigeria is a member of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) while Cameroon is a member of the Unions Dovanieres et Economiques en Afrique Centrale (Custom and Economic Union of Central African States (UDEAC). The constant conflicts along Nigeria-Cameroon borders could be one of the reasons why Nigeria, looking for a better market for its goods, spearhead the formation and smooth running of ECOWAS<sup>3</sup>.

Cameroon, for fear of been isolated by Nigeria and her West African Francophone counter-parts, and though through France's special initiative found membership in the UDEAC<sup>4</sup>, saw Nigeria's action of 1983, where foreigners expelled were mostly from ECOWAS member states<sup>5</sup> a continuation of hostile relations. The member states started questioning Nigeria's role as leader in the community. Cameroon on the other hand stepped up its commitment in UDEAC, especially as it was assured a dominant position in the organization. Moreover, it tries to improve its relationship with other smaller countries in the region (Gabon, Equatorial Guinea), so as to checkmate any potential threat (economic or political) directed against it from Nigeria<sup>6</sup>. It was through Cameroon's diplomatic efforts that Equatorial Guinea joined the France zone, becoming a member of the Banque Des Etats De L'Afrique Centrale<sup>7</sup>. On December 19, 1983, at the nineteenth summit of UDEAC, it was agreed to have Equatorial Guinea join the Organization as a full member<sup>8</sup>.

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U.N. Press 2000) Pg5

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Blatter E-Tal, European Perspective of Border Land Vol.15, (Diego State, U.N. Press 2000) Pg5

<sup>2</sup> National Boundary Commission Joint Meeting of Nigeria-Cameroon Land Border Committee of Expert P9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence O. Mgbengso, Nigeria-Cameroon Border; Conflicts and Their International Implication. Nigeria Forum, the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, 1993 Vol. 13. Pg. 15-43.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

Nigeria on its part, decided to work for improving diplomatic and economic relations with Britain and France. who by their historical connection with the area, had influences on the Nigerian-Cameroon border conflicts<sup>1</sup>. Interestingly, one aspect of reality in the present day Nigeria/Cameroon border areas is the unavailable communication facilities as one moves from riverine to desert confluence of the border regions in all directions<sup>2</sup> this weakness of national and international social communication at the margins, means dethroning the pillar of social fabric leaning and hybridization and a feeble appreciation of the significance of national and international materials signals, symbols, device and institution – features for integration.

Finally, even with diplomatic advantage and compromise between the leadership of both countries, like Maroa, Kano and Lagos agreement, no substantial formidable path had been threaded upon by Biya Paul of Cameroon and the then Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to over haul these re-occurring problems<sup>3</sup>. This is because of their poor foreign policy towards border reconciliation. Instead they look upon the international community's for inspiration, instead of understanding their problems internally and resolving them; this is particular to Cameroon, who is always drawing in French assistance which further compound problems.

### **Negotiations and Resolutions Made by Various Court Injunctions**

The Green tree Agreement was the formal treaty which resolved the Cameroon - Nigeria border dispute over the oil and natural gas rich Bakassi Penninsula<sup>4</sup>. The dispute had roots as far back as 1913, 1981, 1994 and 1996 armed clashes between Nigeria and Cameroon which took place in Bakassi<sup>5</sup>. The dispute was referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and on 10<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2002, The ICJ ruled in favour of Cameroon<sup>6</sup>.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June, 2006, the then Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Cameroonian President Paul Biya signed the Green Tree Agreement concerning the withdrawal of troops and transfer of authority in the Peninsula. The withdrawal of Nigerian troops was set for 60 days but allowed for a possible 30days extension, while Nigeria was allowed to keep its civil administration and police in Bakassi for another two years<sup>7</sup>. A follow up committee

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<sup>1</sup> .Ibid

<sup>2</sup> . Lawrence O. Mgbengso, Nigeria-Cameroon Border; Conflicts and Their International Implication. Nigeria Forum, the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, 1993 Vol. 13. Pg. 15-43.

<sup>3</sup>.National Boundary Commission Joint Meeting Of Nigeria-Cameroon Land Border Committee of Expert Pg. 2.

<sup>4</sup>. Eboh Cornelius, Nigeria-Cameroon Fail to Set New Bakassi Pullout; Washington Post Online, October 15, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> . Ibid

<sup>6</sup> . Ibid

<sup>7</sup>.Bekker Pieter Land And Maritime Boundary Between Cameroon And Nigeria, *The America Journal Of International Law* Vol. 97, No. 2 April, 2003.Pg.24.

composed of representatives from Cameroon, Nigeria, the UN, Germany, USA, France and the UK, was created to monitor the implementation of the agreements<sup>1</sup>.

### **The International Court of Justice Ruling and Negotiation Processes.**

As the tensions continued to mount along the Cameroon and Nigeria border and particularly in the Peninsula, the Cameroon government got tired of trying to handle the situation by themselves and decided to forward the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1994. When Cameroon made this choice, the ICJ, under the supervision of UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, invited representatives from both countries for the negotiation processes. It is interesting to say that, what seemed easy, took 8 years of intensive negotiations to settle. Representatives from both countries worked hand in hand to support their assertions and the ICJ listened carefully and also received the historical documents in a bid to arrive at a just settlement. Among the points that Cameroon made to justify their claim was the famous Anglo-German agreement of 1913, in which the boundary was defined and signed<sup>2</sup>. Nigeria on its own part among other things claimed that the most democratic way to decide Bakassi sovereignty was to hold a referendum, since the 300,000 people living on the Peninsula did not want to be Cameroonian<sup>3</sup>. Nigeria also argued that, the sovereignty of Bakassi was not a matter of oil or natural resources on land or in coastal waters but a matter of the welfare and well-being of the settlers who were Nigerians<sup>4</sup>.

On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2002, the ICJ, located at Hague Netherlands, delivered judgment on the disputed oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula in favour of Cameroon<sup>5</sup>. The Court's decision was based on old colonial documents. The boundaries in the Lake Chad region were determined by the Thomson-Marchad Declaration of 1929-1930 and the boundary in Bakassi determined by the Anglo-German agreement of 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 1913<sup>6</sup>. With the settlement, Nigeria was supposed to quickly and unconditionally withdraw its administration; police and military from the Lake Chad, under Cameroonian sovereignty and from the Bakassi Peninsula<sup>7</sup>. Cameroon on its part was supposed to remove its citizens from anywhere on the new border

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<sup>1</sup>.Nicholas K. Tarlesbea And Sam Baroni “The Cameroon And Nigeria Negotiation Process Over The Contested Oil Rich Bakassi Penninsula”, Southeastern University Florida, *Journal Of Alternative Perspective In The Serial Sinen* (2010) Vol 2.Pg 14.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid

<sup>3</sup>.Ibid

<sup>4</sup>.Ibid

<sup>5</sup>. Eboh Cornelius, Nigeria-Cameroon Fail To Set New Bakassi Pullout; Washington Post Online, October October 15, 2005

<sup>6</sup>. Ibid

<sup>7</sup>. Ibid

between the two countries and the land boundaries from Lake Chad in the North to Bakassi in the South was demarcated and signed by both countries<sup>1</sup>.

Weeks before the ICJ ruling, Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the UN, President Paul Biya of Cameroon and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria were to meet on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2002 in Paris. During the meeting, the ICJ verdict was released to the two Presidents and they agreed to respect the decision and also to establish an implementation mechanism. After the ICJ judgment, the Secretary General facilitated the formation of Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission which was to enable a smooth handing over ceremony<sup>2</sup>. The Mixed Commission did their homework on the handing over logistics and a few years later on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, the two parties concluded the Green Tree Agreement and the handing over was done in front of the UN Officials and diplomats from numerous countries<sup>3</sup>.

### **The GreenTree Agreement between Cameroon and Nigeria**

The United Nations court injunction, the Green Tree Agreement in New York on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2006, documented as follows:

Commending the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his efforts made in this respect, in organizing the tripartite summits and establishing the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission considered that, the question of the withdrawal from and transfer of authority over the Bakassi Peninsula should be treated in a forward-looking spirit of goodwill, in order to open new prospects for cooperation between the two countries after decades of difficult bilateral relations. Determined to encourage the consolidation of confidence and peace between their two countries for the well-being of their peoples and for stability in the sub-region, Article 1 suggested that, Nigeria recognize the sovereignty of Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula in accordance with the judgment of International Court of Justice of October 2002, in the matter of land and Maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria; Cameroon and Nigeria recognized the land and maritime boundary between the two countries as delineated by the Court and commit themselves to continuing the process of implementation already begun<sup>4</sup> Article 2 talks on how Nigeria agreed to withdraw all its armed forces from Bakassi peninsula within sixty days of the

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<sup>1</sup>. Nicholas K. Tarlesbea And Sam Baroni "The Cameroon And Nigeria Negotiation Process Over The Contested Oil Rich Bakassi Peninsula", Southeastern University Florida, *Journal Of Alternative Perspective In The Serial Sinen* (2010) Vol 2.Pg 14

<sup>2</sup>. Done At Greentree, New York, On 12 June, 2006 For The Republic Of Cameroon Paul Biya, President, For The Federal Republic Of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, President, Witness- For The UN- Kofi Ata Annan, Gunter Plenger-Germany, Fakie Sanders-USA, Michel Duclos-France, Koren Piece- Britain And Ireland

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid

<sup>4</sup>. Done At Greentree, New York, On 12 June, 2006 For The Republic Of Cameroon Paul Biya, President, For The Federal Republic Of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, President, Witness- For The UN- Kofi Ata Annan, Gunter Plenger-Germany, Fakie Sanders-USA, Michel Duclos-France, Koren Piece- Britain And Ireland

date of the signing of this agreement. If exceptional circumstances so require, the Secretary-General of the United Nation may extend the period, as necessary for a further period, not exceeding a total of thirty days. This withdrawal shall be conducted in accordance with the modalities envisaged in annex 1 to this agreement<sup>1</sup>. However, the Article 3 suggested that, Cameroon after the transfer of authority to it by Nigeria, guarantee to Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi peninsula, the exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms, enshrined in International human rights laws and in other relevant provisions of International law. Also, that Cameroon in particular shall not force Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi Peninsula to leave the zone or to change their nationality; respect their culture, language and belief; respect their right to continue their agricultural and fishing activities; protect their property and their customary land rights; not levy, in any discriminatory manner any taxes and other dues on Nigerian nationals living in the zone; and take every necessary measure to protect Nigerian nationals living in the zone from any harassment or harm<sup>2</sup>.

Article 4 talks on the annex 1 and the map contained in Annex to this agreement, shall constitute an integral part thereof and no part of this agreement shall be interpreted as a renunciation by Cameroon of its sovereignty over any part of its territory. Article 5 further suggested that, this agreement shall be implemented in good faith by the parties, with the good offices of the secretary-general of the UN, if necessary, and shall be witnessed by the United Nations, the Federal Republic of Germany, the French republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America<sup>3</sup>.

Article 6 says a follow-up committee to monitor the implementation of this agreement is hereby established. It shall be composed of representatives of Cameroon, Nigeria, the United Nation and the witness states. The committee shall monitor the implementation of the agreement by the parties with the assistance of the United Nations observers of the mixed commission. The follow-up committee shall settle any dispute regarding the interpretation and implementation of this agreement. The activities of the follow-up committee shall cease at the end of the period of the special transitional regime provided for in paragraph 4 of annex 1 of this agreement.

Finally, article 7 of this agreement stated that, this agreement shall in no way be construed as an interpretation or modification of the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2002 for which the agreement only sets out modalities of implementation. And Article 8 concluded in English and French both texts being equally authentic<sup>4</sup>.

### **Comparison of the Two Court Agreements and Ruling as it Applies to the North of Nigeria.**

It was a fact that Nigeria and Cameroon dispute was settled through negotiation. But it is important to note that, the court injunction, centres on Bakassi Peninsula; this was due to the oil

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<sup>1</sup>.Ibid

<sup>2</sup>.Ibid

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid

<sup>4</sup>. Ibid

wealth of the area. The northern part of the country was neglected and the international order did not make any pronouncement as regards the Northeastern part of Nigeria and North Western part of Cameroon, in which these two countries also faced different clashes as enumerated earlier. However, taking a look at Adamawa in the Northeastern part of Nigeria, which is richly blessed with natural resources like Benitonite, Gypsum, Kaolin and Magnesite, there is a necessity for border determination. For instance, gypsum can be helpful to humans, animals, plant life and the environment. The majority of this gypsum is also produced in North America which is used for building, as a soil additive or land plaster, turbid water, to create surgical orthopedic cast etc. More so, Magnesite is mostly an evaporate mineral found in sedimentary rocks, it also occurs as veins in ultra-mafic rocks, such as serpentinite and other magnesium rich rock types found in mountain forming belts. It is used for a lining in blast furnaces, kilns and incinerators. Also present is Kaolin, the price of which is about 8,550 compared to the petrol, which is about 145 per litre at present. All attention rested on the crude, neglecting all other natural resource. Furthermore, Bornu State is also endowed with Diatomite clay, limestone, hydro-carbon coal, Gypsum, Kaolin, Benitonite. Most important among this, Kaolin is used to make medicine, that is used for mild to moderate diarrhea, severe cholera etc. Also Taraba State of Nigeria is also blessed with Kaolin and lead Zinc. It is interesting to note that, Benue State is also enriched with Lead, Zinc, Limestone, Iron-Ore, Coal, Clay, Marble, Sakt, Berytes, Stones and Gypsum<sup>1</sup>.

From the foregoing, one would deduce that Nigeria most importantly forgot about what this part of the country add to the value of the economy of Nigeria, resting all her hope on the Bakassi Peninsula due to the discovery of oil there. It is of no doubt that, the result of loophole left out in the northeastern part of Nigeria did not only bring damage to the economic prowess of that region but also have brought about destruction of lives and properties of the people living in that region, due to the insurgency outbreak (Boko Haram) and the workings of Niger Delta Militants. Nigeria did not take to cognizance the borders in the North of Nigeria and this had brought about the influx of terror perpetrators both internally and externally because of the inflow of the people from outside the state. A place like Mubi Local Government of Adamawa is seen as a commercial town in which both the indigenes and Cameroonians come for trading activities, but ever since the Boko Haram attacks, the place had experienced a tremendous drastic deterioration in commercial activities.

The neglect in the Northern border also paved ways for the recent herdsmen attack overhauling the nation of recent. This is due to the fact that there is no proper monitoring of those areas, and the government's negligence of those regions which could have brought revenue to the country is of grave concern.

### **Conclusion**

Nigerian/Cameroon border clashes were resultant of misunderstandings made more complex by such elements as colonialism and the discovery of petroleum.

At The Hague, the major contention was who the true owner of the Bakassi Peninsula was. The peoples and natural resources were not considered in their proper perspective. Some of the

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<sup>1</sup>. Natural Resources In The Northeastern Nigeria-google.search.com/wikipedia



factors that inform the developing world's security include boundary disputes which stem from the arbitrary demarcations of their borders by their former colonial masters; the boundary created by the colonial masters has been and still is a problem to those nations who inherited them. Further the two agreements on the Nigeria-Cameroon crisis, that is the Green Tree Agreement and the International Court of Justice Ruling specifically talk on the Bakassi Peninsular, leaving the Northern borders out of the agreements. It is important to say that, in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, there are other natural resources more expensive than the oil in the south which could bring huge revenue to the nation. Economic starvation had always been the major problem of border inhabitants; here there is a vehement need for greater attention to the development of border regions by government of both countries. The border areas have long suffered untold neglect.

The paper interrogates the idea that international border clashes between Nigeria and Cameroon went beyond the celebrated Bakassi Peninsula and further included a geographical environment that is rich in varieties of valuable natural resources, important to Nigeria, especially in the wake of dwindling world natural gas, and the urgent need for alternative economic source of national wealth. The paper further examines the idea that border clashes were not only restricted to the south but also that the Northern delineation was significant to the diplomatic maneuvers (but was treated with levity).

The paper therefore recommends that there should be a proper revision of the Topographical maps along the borders in order to carry out a proper boundary demarcation. This will destroy the colonial border legacy which had caused a great deal of instability between the two countries. More so, special border committee should be established; whose terms of reference should include proper development planning, monitoring and execution of the border policies. Also, national consciousness is to be constantly hammered into the ears and mind of the border settlers.

The people of Nigeria and Cameroon have the ability to live together in peace, since both countries virtually share the same primordial cultural ties, religion, creed, believes and more. Therefore an inward approach to crisis resolution should be initiated drawing in the African Union (AU) as a presiding judge. The involvement of the European Agencies like European Union (E.U) and United Nations (UN) should be avoided since they have failed in their responsibility of solving the border crisis in Africa and this can be largely understood by the operation of neo-colonialism which has more to do with their selfish interest.