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Politics of International Boundaries: A Historical Study of Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 1965-2008

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Abstract:

The study focuses on Nigeria-Cameroon boundary disputes with the view to highlight the nature of politic involved and the framework of cooperation applied by both countries to ensure peaceful cooperation among them for the socio-economic development of their citizens inhabiting their borderlands. The overall objective of the study is to contribute to existing works on African boundary conflicts and suggest ways that could guide or engender developments within the border crises areas and inspire cross-border cooperation between Nigeria and her Cameroon neighbours under study. The Study adopts a historical approach by reviewing existing scholarly works on the theme and descriptive analysis had been used on historical data to ensure efficiency and reliability.

Keywords: Boundary, disputes, peaceful, cooperation, development, conflicts

1. Introduction

African boundaries had its foundation from the 1884/85 Berlin Conference sponsored and organized by the bigger nations of Europe namely, Britain, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and France. They had drawn lines of demarcation authenticated from treaties and agreements based on the interest of the colonial authorities in Africa. Because these boundaries were superimposed on the African people, its consequence has been the split of related ethnic and religious groups, common ecological zones, culturally coherent areas, common sea beds in to two or more units and placing them in opposing political system.¹ Boundary politics are inherent issues in border disputes and territorial claims among modern African states the emerged after independence.

These boundaries are usually 'marked' by lines indicating the limit a state can exercise its sovereignty right. One can see therefore how boundary politics play a role in the territorial integrity of any nation. The need by the various African states to maintain and protect their boundaries has resulted in several conflicts between nations over time, accompanied by serious consequences. The overall effect is that regions serving as conflict zones had been distant from the development attention of the states, therefore largely underdeveloped.

2. Conceptual Frameworks

Scholars are not unanimous in the definition of the term boundary. In most case, the term issued interchangeably to mean 'frontier' or 'border'. In the perspective of Akinyele, R. T, boundaries mark the limit to political jurisdictions.² Situated in the African concept of boundaries, one would say boundaries are mere administrative lines drawn to separate contiguous states by demarcating their areas of jurisdictions and territorial sovereignty. From a geographical perspective, Adelamo sees boundaries as the limit beyond which a phenomenon is no longer dominant. It contains in it a notion of contact, which may be punt form, linear or areal.³ A boundary to Onovughe may be real or imposed. In a partial contact, a boundary represents areas of various shapes, whose scores and peripheries can be distinguished for other contiguous or adjacent geographical area.⁴

¹Onovughe, I, Peaceful Co-existence and Sustainable Border Development between Nigeria and her Neighbours, (Ed) Leo, E History Unlimited, Essay in Honour of Professor AbendnegoEkoko, (Nigeria, Minders Publishers CO. Ltd,2012), .434-454.

²Akinyele, R. T. Cross Border Cooperation Initiatives and the Potential Strategies for Border Community', A Paper Presented at the National Conference on Implementation Strategies for Border Community Development in Nigeria, Abuja, 2nd -3rd December 2008. Cited in Onovoghe, Ikelegbe, Peaceful Co-existence and Sustainable Border Development between Nigeria and her Neighbours, (Ed) Leo, E History Unlimited, Essay in Honour of Professor AbendnegoEkoko, (Nigeria, Minders Publishers CO. Ltd, 2012), 436.2

³Adelamo, I. A. "The Concept of Boundaries in Geography", (Ed) Akinyele, R.T., Academic Discipline and Border Studies, (Lagos, 2007), 15-28. 3

⁴Onovoghe, I. Peaceful Co-existence and Sustainable Border Development, 436.

Meanwhile, international boundaries refer to boundaries as were created in Africa by the colonial powers without due consideration of the socio-cultural, historical and political implication of the demarcation exercise. The whole experience arose from the power rivalry among European powers during the Berlin conference in 1884/85. The reason for the balkanization and partition of Africa was based on the quest for power and ensuring equilibrium. Reacting to the above, Asiwaju argued that, the 1884/85 Berlin West African

Conference which led to the balkanization of Africa was essentially European affairs, there was no African representative and African concern were, if they matter, at all, completely marginal to the basic economic strategy and political interest of the negotiating European powers.⁵ Because the Europeans were in a hurry to achieving their economic interest in the partition, without due consideration to study the geography of Africa, there is no type of boundary be it, astronomical line or mathematic lines or boundary based on relief features, that do not suffer for the defect of cutting across and thereby, dividing the territory of many African peoples.⁶ Boundaries in modern time had facilitated group contact and formed bridges of cooperation as well as promote socio-political and economic exchange such as those of the European Union. In Africa, the situation is quite different; rather, boundaries have continued to serve as a culture of conflicts among African states. Ajiji, D. N is right when he observed that, apart from the divisions which arise routinely from the partition and creation of boundaries in Africa, partitioned groups were further pulled apart in consequent of the opposing integration process set in motion by the different states.⁷

Such a process, Asuwaju argued, have blended to make the divided groups look at different political, economic, and social direction.⁸ This no doubt had effects on the partition culture areas. This manifested in the different policies individual African state pursue in matters of currency, politics, trade, transport, etc. The efforts to further encourage separation among Africans is the systematic application of names for the same people to distinguish between those on different sides of particular inter-state boundaries, as evidence in Nigeria nation and her immediate neighbours. This phenomenon dated back to the period when boundaries were created by the colonial powers in Africa.⁹ However, in spite of the divisive influence put in by the colonial boundaries, partitioned African societies nevertheless, tend in their normal activities to ignore the boundaries as diving lines and carry on social relations across them, more or less as in the days before the partition.¹⁰ R. Strassoldo, cited by Ajiji contends that spatial boundaries have ambiguous features. They divided and unite, bind the interior and link it with the exterior, are barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defence and attack, and so on. Frontier (border-lands) can be managed to maximize any of these functions. They can be militarized, as bulwarks against neighbours or be made into areas of the peaceful interchange.¹¹

The expression by Strasoldo's description of the nature of boundaries as were created by the European colonial powers are appreciated by this researcher. It indeed prepared his mind to undertake a study Nigeria-Cameroon border disputes having insight the politics involved in the disputes.

3. The Impact of European Border Demarcation on Africa

Many Writers of modern history and their counter-part in other fields of study have all agreed that the consequences of European imperialism enshrined in their colonization of Africa no doubt is responsible for the disunity inherent among the various African states since independence. This has disrupted Africa's long-age mode of development and her journey to modern life. Reflecting on the above issue, various stages of African development before 19th century, on pre-colonial Africa had been discussed in the studies of E. T. J. Babatola. Both historic and ethnographical sides have been highlighted here. Without participation of Africans, European powers divide Africa into colonial territories at Berlin Conference. Only it was done in presence of people of South Africa. European defeated Africa and started ruling over there. Even they established agreements with the kings.¹² Proper picture of pre-colonial African states had been highlighted by the writings of Isola Olomola cited in Babatola. Discussions had been made about boundaries and relationships with other countries. As per him only few interstate boundaries were present there. After the ruling of Europeans in Africa boundaries had been affected a lot. Even Culture, welfare, trade had been changed in many ways. Based on spiritual ceremonies, access to land and other resources like trees, rivers, streams, hills, mountains, forest etc agreements had been signed among City-states and communities. Relations between inter-state borders were being affected by power relations of surrounding states but it had never been prevented by natural ways of separating boundaries.¹³

⁵Asuwaju, A. I. *Partition Africans: Ethnic Relations Across African International Boundaries, 1884/84*, (UK, C. Hurst, Co. Publishers, Ltd, 1985), vii.

⁶Udoh, R. O. *The Human Geography of Tropical Africa*, (Nigeria, Educational Books, Ltd, 1992), 209-121.4

⁷Ajiji, D. N. *Colonialism and Inter-Group Relations in Central Nigeria Highlands: The Afezere Story*, (Nigeria, Aboki Publishers, 2011), 33.

⁸Asuwaju, A. I. *Partition Africans: Ethnic Relations Across African International Boundaries, 1884/84*, vii-viii.

⁹Ajiji, D. N. *Colonialism and Inter-Group Relations*---p.33.

¹⁰Asuwaju, A. I. *Partition Africans*, 3.5

¹¹Strassoldo, R. *Border Studies: The State of the Art in Europe*, (Ed) A. I. Asuwaju and P. O. Adeniyi *Border Lines in Africa: a multi-disciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria, and West Africa*, (Lagos, University of Nigeria Press, 1989), 393.

¹²Babatola, J. E. T. 'Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Dispute: The Quest for Bakassi Peninsula', in *International Affairs and Global Strategy* www.iiste.org, ISSN 2224-574X (paper) ISSN 2224-8951 (Online), Vol 4, 2012, pp.6-7. Accessed on 11/05/2017.

¹³Babatola, J. E. T. 'Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Dispute, 7-8 7

From all indications, traditional African boundaries were clearer compared to those created by mark lines survey and drawn on maps by the European colonizers, in the 20th century. While the natural boundaries associated with the African traditional boundaries largely unites communities, European boundaries in Africa divided the African people without taking in to account their cultural backgrounds as well as the existing traditional boundary pattern. About the relationship and crisis generated between Ghanaian sedentary farmers and Burkina Faso pastoralist, M. S. Tonah explained that Ghanaian sedentary farmers were close to Burkina-Faso pastoral groups in terms of border. Both of them cooperated with each other for mutual benefit. Like cow milks were provided by the Burkina-Faso nomadic to Ghanaian farmers for getting benefits in terms of pasture and water. But when disputes occurred both of them got separated. Dismissal of nomad had been considered as seasonal migrants.¹⁴

During this crisis period also cultural accord and inter-marriage were present among borders. Dismissal of Fulbe nomads from the area not only affect the peaceful relationship but cattle development also being affected. The scenario above represents one among the several cases of the effect of border conflicts in Africa. The case of Nigeria-Cameroon is no exception.

The 20th-century boundaries as observed by Griffiths, are an aspect of inherited political geography. He is categorical when he further postulates that, the inherited political geography of Africa is a great impediment to independent development as her colonially based economies and political structures.¹⁵ Other writers on political geography have also argued that the distinguishing characteristic features of the colonial boundaries do not in any way reflect territorial culminations of locally generated political processes.¹⁶ One can now understand why externally superimposed boundaries created by the Europeans in Africa continued to serve as the centre point for inter-border disputes in Africa over time.

The case of Nigeria-Cameroon border disputes is one among others. One no doubt accept the strong views of Whittlesey that, the political map of Africa today is 'child of necessity' rising from the diplomatic chess game amongst the colonial powers, a game played on European Council tables since the 1880s by men who never saw Africa.¹⁷ In the preceding analysis, it is therefore evidence that the resultant effect of the ambiguous, ill-defined, and uncoordinated European border demarcation in Africa is responsible for the perennial border disputes on the continent, with the case of Nigeria-Cameroon border disputes under investigation. The Contending Factor in the Nigerian- Cameroon Border Disputes

The contending factor in the border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon Nigerian-Cameroon has been the question of who owned the oil-rich Bakassi peninsular. We can only understand the claims by the two countries by critically analysing the geography and the political features of the peninsular. Our proper understanding of the status of the peninsular is based on available colonial records and views from scholarly works on the study area. Citing Anene, J. C, Aghemola and Ibhasebhor see the Bakassi peninsular as an area covering some 1,000 kilometres of mangrove swamp and half submerged Island protruding into the Birth of Bonny which had effectively been inhabited by fishermen settlers (many of whom were Efik language-speakers in the Nigerian area) since the 18th century.¹⁸ A. J Omode locates Bakassi Peninsular, as an area occupying the South-eastern tip of Nigeria, where the peninsular pushed south-wards into the Gulf of Guinea. It is a low-lying border region on the West by the estuary of the Cross River, on the North by the Akpa Yafe (also called Akpa-Ikang), on the East by the Rio del estuary, and on the South by the Gulf of Guinea.

The peninsular consisted of a series of Islands covering about 50 square kilometres and equally occupied for the most part, by long established communities of Nigerians, in several villages.¹⁹

As per history, Old Calabar kingdom including Bakassi peninsula had signed an agreement with Imperial Britain in 1884. This had become the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900. Nigeria's all nation were being specified in 1999 constitution of Nigeria with Bakassi described as a local government in part 1 of the first schedule of the constitution.²⁰ Going by the above submission, Post-colonial Nigeria in her path, therefore, had over the years lay claim over undisturbed manifestation of the sovereign act over Bakassi through tax collection, provision of social amenities in the area. Bakassi generally had remained recognized as Nigerian territory under international law, until it was lost to Cameroon in 2002.

¹⁴Tonah, M.S. State Policies, Local Prejudices and Cattle Rustling Along the Ghanaian –Burkina-Faso Border Expelling the Fulbe, in Africa, Vol 4, Edinburg, (Online), 2001, Accessed 13/05/2017.

¹⁵Griffiths, L. 'The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Boundaries in the Geographical Journal, Vol152, NO 2, 1989, .204- 692, as cited in J. E. T. Babatola, 'Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Dispute.8. : The Quest for Bakassi Peninsular', in International Affairs and Global Strategy www.iiste.org,ISSN 2224-574X (paper) ISSN 2224-8951 (Online), Vol 4, 2012, 6-7. Accessed on 11/05/2017.

¹⁶Nwokedi, E. 'The Politics of Inter-African Boundary Conflicts: A Study of Nigeria and Her Francophone Neighbours', Quarterly Journal of Administration, No 9, Vol. 2&mp;5, 1984, 85. 8

¹⁷Whittlesey, S. The Earth and the State, (USA, New Heaven, 1934), 3-5.

¹⁸Aghemola A.T. and S. Ibhasebhor, Colonialism as a Source of Boundary Disputes and Conflict among African States: The World Court Judgement on the Bakassi Peninsular and its Implications for Nigeria, Journal of Social Sciences, Kama-Raj, Vol 13, No 3, 2016, 177-181p. 9

¹⁹Omode, A. J. Nigeria Relations with her Neighbours, in-----

²⁰Babatola, J.E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 12-13.10

It is fundamental to note here that, the age-long boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon is of colonial origin. Consequently, the boundary disputes between Nigeria and her Cameroon neighbour arose from their long, but ill-defined border by the colonial authority in Africa. The Nigeria-Cameroon boundary seems to be the longest of all Nigeria's international boundaries and has remained the most controversial boundary in Africa, resulting to the intervention of the International Court of Justices (ICJ) and its ruling in favour of Cameroon in the year 2002.

Based on the agreement (1913), Cameroon claimed over Bakassi peninsular.²¹ On 11th March 1913, the British government and her German counter part signed a settlement in London to fix Nigeria-Cameroon borders including Bakassi as part of Cameroon in article 21 of that Anglo-German Agreement. The subsequent agreement followed on 12th of April, 1913 with the signing of the protocol at Obakin and exchange of letters on the 16th July, 1914. This restored and showed that the British colonial Government had isolated part of the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria to German- Cameroon through the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty and Agreement.²²

Our understanding here is that, right from the foundation of European diplomacy witnessed at the Berlin Conference in 1884/85, the European powers recognized the need for peaceful engagement and relations over conquest, occupation, and control of territories. Even after the partition, the European powers continued to see the need for peaceful negotiation, exchange, and concession with one another without recourse to hostility or conflict. But their treaties and agreement went beyond such signed with African kings, rulers, and their peoples. What we saw was that the colonizers without consultation with Africans shared African territories based on falsehood treaties that served their interest. From the picture above, the Cameroonians argument is based on the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty. P. M. Ujong (a

Cameroonian Writer) is Categorical in this claim, that, although there was a cross-border relation

Bakassi zone comprising Isangele, Idabato, Kombo Abedimo and Komboltindi Sub-Division and Nigerian Communities particularly the Old Calabar Kingdom, nevertheless, the Bakassi dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon are central to the inactive and cowardice on the part of Cameroonians in the face of 'the overwhelming population of the Creek area' by Nigeria 'settlers'.²³ He further recalled that J. C. Drummond Hay led the British Boundary Commission (BBC) has specified Bakassi to fall on Cameroon's territories, therefore, denied Nigerian claim over Bakassi. On the contrary, a series of recovered archival documents on this study as presented by Babalola. It highlighted the facts of controversy between both the parties, Nigeria and Cameroon. Agreements are basically a series of documents raised issues regarding use of land and other resources.

As presented by Babalola: In a document classified as CSO 2603062, Vol. IV and Memorandum No. 1547/472/1921 of 2nd September by the Resident, Cameroon Province with Headquarter at Buca to the Hon. Secretary, Province of Nigeria at Lagos titled: Anglo-French Frontier, Kumba Division, the observations noted in the study were summarized thus:

- The Moisel's frontier map is misleading as stated in the Cameroon of 1919.
- Between the Resident and the French counterpart, disagreement had been raised, for a new line for the frontiers, had been suggested.
- Since the French sides were important to the Bakassi for navigation and agricultural purpose, the land of Bakassi which should fall ordinary in the British side was being held by the French sides.
- The uncertainty left by the Milner-Simon Declaration can be replaced by review of the map in light of 1913/1914 boundary adjustment (that is Anglo/ German Treaty of 1913).²⁴
- Delimitation of the Anglo-French Frontier between the Kumba Divisions (Cameroon Province) and the Circumscription of Discharge found in the Archival records, Babalola discussed the following matters.

Moisel mentioned that it was difficult to carry the frontier along the lines of watershed even if they were accurate 'without seriously prejudicing the interest of the natives living on either side of the frontier. As all the villages are on the upper slopes of the hills with their farms in the valleys, this led the lines of the watershed would leave their villages and their farms on two opposite sides.

Based on logic and believe, if possible, frontiers need to follow village boundaries. This conforms to Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Convention of 1919.

Leaving the plantation of ESSOSONG in English territory, from the south to the north, was made by the agreement of entire residents to establish the frontiers. It had been mentioned in the 1919 Convention. Boundary lined had been marked by the decision of leaders such that all lakes are under the British territories²⁵ Babalola

²¹Omode, A. J. Nigeria Relations with her Neighbours, .20.

²²Babatola, J.E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 13. 11

²³Ujong, P. M. Nigeria has never Exercised Rule over Bakassi even in Traditional Society, Limbe, South-west Province of Cameroon, November, 2002. Cited in J.E. T. Babatola, Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 36.

²⁴Classified File No-CSO 2628296/ S.i Notes including Memo No. 01210/75 of 11th November, 1938 Title Question in Parliament Regarding Land in the Cameroon and Memorandum SLA 953/35 OF 11 TH January, 1946 Titled Right in 12 Land Subject to Cap 85, Jurisdiction of Native Courts over Land. Cited in J.E. T. Babatola, 15- Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 16.

²⁵Babatola, J.E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 16.13

highlighted the disputes between Cameroon and Nigeria through a wide array of documents. He pointed to the following Archival colonial records generally grouped as classified as documents- File No. CSO 26/06711, Vol. 4 covering pages 359-399, File No. CSO 26/29682 covering pages 27-61, File No. CSO 2628296/S. covering 91 pages notes, and File No. SCO 262896/S.I of 91 pages notes. A highlighted discovery in these documents are put two forms:

- The Nigerian Gazette of 20th January, 1927- A Proclamation of the boundary post on the Old (which to me substitute for outdated, unusable, former, eroded or impracticable) Anglo-German frontier marking the Franco-British frontier.
- The statement of the cost of the mandated territory to Nigeria which indicated on page 28 No. 3 of the memo thus: Nigeria has obtained no benefit from the mandated territory which has been a burden on the finance of the colony and protectorate from the moment that the administration of Cameroon under The British mandate was undertaking....²⁶

From the substances of objectivity and historical findings persuaded by the various archival (though, classified) documents, as provided above, there is no doubt that, the claim to Bakassibi Nigeria is not only a pursuit of gains towards the economic potential of the peninsula, but as a struggle for affirmation that Bakassi was part of Nigeria in traditional society therefore a great extent, a Nigerian settlement. Nigeria on her part understood this on the instance of the law which the British pronounced for the acquisition, occupation and protection of native lands in the colony and protectorate of Nigeria, which could be misconstrued as a matter of necessity to mean that, Bakassi zone still exists within the Old Calabar Kingdom.

Very important too is that Bakassi formed part of the Nigeria-Cameroon frontiers or at least, a part of mandated areas that Nigeria had contested or laid claim to at the verge of colonial rule, though it was ceded to Germany in 1913. The validity of the ownership and occupation of Bakassi peninsula in the pre-colonial time up to 1913 was in greater favour of the historical claims of Nigeria, however, when Germany lost out in the 1914 World War under the League of Nation Mandates and subsequently the United Nation Trustee, the administration of Bakassi was transferred to the colonial government of Nigeria. It had been mentioned as mandate territory not Nigeria territory, to which it originally belongs. It had not been mentioned that any polling station bearing the name Bakassi village or any people from Bakassi participated in this process. Although residents of Bakassi had excised their rights to self-determination, by remaining part of Nigeria..²⁷

Cameroon acknowledged justification by her claim of ownership of Bakassi peninsular from Nigeria in 1961.²⁸ Under the acclaimed international laws to the treaty and agreement between Britain and Germany legally transferring Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon in 1913. This recognition was officially communicated as shown in the records of the Federal Directorate of Survey, Lagos, 29 indicating that Bakassi peninsular was regarded as Southern Cameroon which ceased to be part of Nigeria by the year 1961.²⁹ However, perhaps for lack of clear cut understanding of the colonial boundary lines drawn up in the Anglo-German treaty of 1913, Cameroon in 1963, came up with territorial claim over two areas, Danare and Boudan in the borderlands. The attempt to retrace the boundary lines drawn up by the aforesaid Anglo-German treaty of 1913 between Sandy point and Tom Shotpoint by the both parties took in 1971. During the regimes of General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and president Ahidjo of Cameroon, a commission of boundary experts of both countries was constituted to offer solutions to their border problem.²⁹ The Official hand-over of the Bakassi Peninsular to Cameroon by Nigeria was actualized in 1961, however, the Minister of Foreign Affairs forwarded as evidence, a Diplomatic Note No. 570 of 27, 1962, to the Embassy of the Cameroon in Lagos with an Attach Map prepared by the federal directorate of Surveys (Nigeria) which recognized the Bakassi Peninsular as part of Southern Cameroon.

This to a large extent, supposed to delimit the maritime boundary between both countries, from the point where the relevant colonial treaty ended, which extended down to the Calabar and Cross River estuaries and out to a point south of Bakassi.³⁰ Realizing the consequences that accompanied the Maroua treaty of 1975, which worked against other things-fear of losing her larger population in the area, loss of her strategic military and economic status in the Bakassi peninsula, the Nigerian government un-regrettably opted out. But Armed with the 1913 and 1975 treaties, Cameroon attempts its enforcement on Nigeria with threats and enforcement of hostilities with all forms of invasions against Nigerian communities on the disputed border areas.

Cameroon in May 1981, attacked Nigerian communities in Adamawa and the Oil rich Bakassi peninsula leading to several cases of loss of lives and properties and displacement of large populations in the areas. It is noted that, the military aggression that is often directed against Nigeria by Cameroon was backed up by her military alliance with France, her former colonial 'master'. Nigeria in her part did not sign the Anglo-Nigeria Defence Pact in

²⁶Babatola, J.E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 1-17.

²⁷Babatola, J.E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 20

²⁸28 Babatola, J.E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 21.

²⁹ The Official hand-over of the Bakassi Peninsular to Cameroon by Nigeria was actualized in 1961, however, the Minister of Foreign Affairs forwarded as evidence, a Diplomatic Note No. 570 of 27, 1962, to the Embassy of the Cameroon in Lagos with an Attach Map prepared by the Federal Directorate of Surveys (Nigeria) which recognized The Bakassi Peninsular as part of Southern Cameroon. See J.E. T. Babatola, Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 21

³⁰Babatola, J. E. T. Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Disputes, 22. 16

the 1960s after independence from Britain. Consequent upon this, in the event of any territorial or border disputes between the two nations, France as a developed European state and one of the military powers in the world, with a permanent seat at the Security Council of the United Nations Organization (UNO) allied with Cameroon to confront Nigeria.

The military face-up between the two countries over the Bakassi peninsula, coupled with the frequent harassment of Nigerian soldiers and her civil citizens at their various Bakassi settlements by the Cameroon gendarmes came to its climax when on 24th December 1993, a security report came to the Nigerian government on a plan by the Cameroon authority to bomb Abana, a Nigerian town in the peninsula.³¹ The attempt to protect her citizens, territorial and national integrity the Nigerian government could not resist the attempt to deploy troops to the Bakassi peninsula. Disputes between Nigeria are still there until Cameroon took initiative to approach the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in 2002. Before this many international steps had seen failure. As a result, Bakassi surrendered to Cameroon in 2002.

4. Developments after IJC Ruling

The frosty relations arose from the ill-defined European boundaries between Nigeria and Cameroon and the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is not an end to the negotiation for peaceful resolutions over dispute boundary areas as may have been thought by many people. Indeed, both countries after IJC³² ruling (though in favour of Cameroon) have come to see the need for more collaboration in achieving lasting peace and stability in the areas of conflicts. It was on this note that the Cameroon-Nigerian Mixed Commission (CNMC) was established following a meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 15th November 2002, between former president Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) president Paul Biya (Cameroon) chaired by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for West Africa, Mr Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah.³³

The withdrawal of the military and para-military forces as well as the transfer of authority in the Lake Chad area amongst others began earnestly in December 2003, and by 2008, large progress has been achieved in these areas. For detail purpose:

The CNMC no doubt by its mandate was able to transfer thirty-three (33) villages affected by the ICJ judgment in the Lake Chad area to Cameroon in December 2003. Meanwhile, Nigeria the village of Dambore was given to Nigeria. In 2004, it exchanged some selected villages on the land boundary to either Cameroon or Nigeria. It is still ongoing exercise as work goes on the demarcation of the land boundary. Withdrawal of the Nigerian army was carried out in 2006 while that of the police and general administration were done in 2008. Other confidence-building efforts are still ongoing.³⁴

5. Conclusion

From the study, there is no doubt that, the hostile relations between Nigeria and her Cameroon Francophone neighbours situate within the historically ill-defined and improper delimitation of the boundaries in the West African sub-region by the erstwhile colonial authorities in Africa. Because these boundaries were highly porous and easily permeable in nature and couple with the non-compromising attitude of the Nigerian government and her neighbouring Cameroon government, negative relations between Nigeria and Cameroon is unavoidable. The validity of the ownership and occupation of Bakassi peninsula in the pre-colonial time up to 1913 was in greater favour of the historical claims of Nigeria than those of Cameroon. Cameroon from every indication had only laid claims solely under the acclaimed international laws to the treaty and agreement between Britain and Germany legally transferring Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon in 1913. The Anglo-German treaty and agreement as a matter of concern were done without any consultation with the colonized people of Nigeria who was original owners of the land transferred. Moreover, the aftermath of their actions was not taken in to account. A review of the position of the IJC in resolving disputes over territories and in determining the cause of action in the case of Bakassi peninsula between Cameroon and Nigeria, the finding of this study is that, the crux of the western style of resolving boundary dispute is defective when compared to the pre-colonial African judicial process of resolving boundary disputes. Hence, the study submits to Babatola's position that, Acceptable settlement of boundary disputes can only be seen to be arrived at for both parties if the process considers the area as and causes of the disagreement along with the structure of claims in determining the disputation and addressing the disagreement. What then follows is to be the variables inherent in the claims and counter claims by the two countries, taking the case of Nigeria and Cameroon over Bakassi peninsula.

Before disturbance between two countries, there were issues with right of authority, profession and traditional ties in Bakassi peninsula. Other issues covered under colonial settlement and subsequent colonial rule and role of two states for showing control to solve disputes. Prior to the ICJ ruling, citizenship, relationship and

³¹Omode, A. J. Nigeria Relations with her Neighbours, Kaml-Raj, Stud. Tribes Tribals, Vol 4 (1): 7-17, (Online), 2006. 17

³²Omode, A. J. Nigeria Relations with her Neighbours, Kaml-Raj, Stud. Tribes Tribals, Vol 4 (1): 7-17, (Online), 2006.

³³Georget, P. and A. Makombo, UN Department of Political Affairs, <http://www.un.org/events/tenstories/06/story.asp?storyID=900>, Accessed, 23/06/2017.

³⁴Mohammad, B. A. 405-406.18

aspirations of the inhabitants were some of the common issues of Bakassi peninsula. The effect of change reflected on land, water as well as political scenarios. Issues also arise in the area of police and the military operations and control of airspace, cross-border activities and territorial space and the cost of either side over the dispute area, where a disputant incur irreversible human and psychological ties, economic and political loss.

Where this area was ignored by the IJC attempt in defining the true owner of the disputed Bakassi peninsula between Nigeria and Cameroon, it is now a case to be looked in to by the African Union and the UNO in the settlement of boundary disputes among African states. The establishment of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission on 15th November 2002 in Geneva, Switzerland in a meeting between the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo and his Cameroon counter-part, president Paul Biya chaired by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallahand, served a better alternative to resolving border disputes in the African continent, beginning from the Disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon. It is very crucial fact that with the ruling of the IJC, the future of Bakassi peninsula or nor the recommendation and actions of the CNMC will not destroy. If the promised self-governance of the United Nations (UN) and autonomy of people are not improved I will suffer a lot. To enhance security of world as well as tranquility and to enforce inviolable rights preservation of world power is needed with compassion. That right is the crux for aspiration by Kurds in Iraq, Syria, as well as Turkey, just as Israel and Palestinians contend for the Middle East among others.

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