THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE NIGERIA-CAMEROON BORDER DISPUTE

BY

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PG/M.SC/10/57038

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.SC) DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS).
Ugwuowo Kenneth O, a postgraduate student in the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka with registration Number PG/MS.C/10/57038 has satisfactorily completed his dissertation work requirements for the award of Master of Science in Political Science (International Relations). The work embodied in this thesis is original and has not been submitted in part or in full for another degree of this or any other university, to the best of our knowledge.

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Dean
DEDICATION

To God Almighty
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Having completed a work of this nature, the truism in the saying that no man is an island unto himself easily come to bear as I remain indebted to so many who contributed to make the dream a reality.

First, I must commend the inestimable assistance and guide of my indefatigable supervisor and head of department of political science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Prof. Obasi Igwe. I so remain indebted.

I am also grateful to all my lecturers in the department, especially, Prof. Jonah Onuoha, Prof. E. O. Ezeani, Dr. A. M. Okolie, Dr. Ken Ifesinachi, and the Late Prof. Mrs. Ikejiani clerk (may her soul rest in peace) for their good work on me.

Finally, mention must also be made here of the great assistance from the staff of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria and those of the National Library of Nigeria, Enugu Branch as well. So grateful.
ABSTRACT

Although the dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon border conflicts in its entirety has attracted considerable attention in recent times, no serious study has been conducted to find out the impact of the ethnic interests of the people living in the Bakassi and the link between the ICJ ruling and the secessionist bid of the people as well, on the Nigeria-Cameroon border problems. The central aim of this study therefore, is to analyze the implications the ethnic interests of the people residing in the peninsular and the ICJ verdict pose on the entire Nigeria-Cameroon border problems.

The study is guided by two main questions; first, “Have the ethnic interest of the people living in the Bakassi, had any impacts on the entire dynamics of Nigeria-Cameroon border problems?” Second, “Has the international court of justice ruling, inspired the secessionist bid of Nigerians residing in the peninsular?

To this, it is an analysis of two human factors thrown up by a conflict situation as implicated in the conflict. Therefore, two general points emerge from the study. First, pressure from the real victims of the conflicts - that is those whose livelihood chances are directly threatened by the conflict is often critical in explaining the conflict. In other words, the contradiction brought about by the abstruse, artificial delineation of the two states’ boundary by the colonialists in alter neglect of the Africa traditional style of separation is in the first place, discovered as the root of the conflict. Second it is clear that there is a link between the ethnic considerations of the Bakassians and their continuous bid for secession. Therefore, the ethnicity of the people is often critical in bringing about the resolution of the Nigeria-Cameroon conflicts.

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one covers the introductory phase of the enquiry. It embraces the general introduction, statement of problem, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical framework, hypotheses, research design-methods of data collection and analysis and the operationalization of terms.

In chapter two, we looked at the ethnic map of the Bakassi and European imperialism. Here, we treated the geography of the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary, the ethnic groups and inter-ethnic relations, ethnic groups and evolution of colonial boundaries, British/German administration and obfuscation of the Nigeria-Cameroon colonial international boundary and Bakassi ethnic groups and rise of other problems.

In chapter three, we examined the other complex dimensions of the Bakassi disputes which embraced the political dimension, the cultural dimension, the legal dimension and the strategic dimension as well.

The chapter four treats the effects of the Bakassi disputes on ethnic relations. Here, issues like, the rise of the initial trends in the Bakassi disputes, the Nigeria-Biafran war and the Bakassi question, Gowon/Nigeria and the Maroua declaration, Neighbor relations/foreign involvement, the good offices of AU, UN and Kaffi Annan, and the Bakassi dispute, Obasanjo and Abacha, two Nigerian leaders and the Bakassi, Court proceedings and the
Green Tree Agreement (GTA), the ICJ ruling and the Nigeria Territorial Integrity and Bakassi ethnic groups and the resettlement programmes.

Finally, we summarized, conclude and proffered solutions in chapter five.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“Boundaries remain critical sources of discord among many nations in the international system today. The possibility of border disagreement escalating into war also continues to be real. Confronted by this reality in the world, scholars and experts have developed many methods for the resolution of conflicting border claims in the international community. Many of these depend on a host of factors (including, the historical background of the states involved, their general level of economic attainment, the nature of the borders themselves, the specific socio-economic cum political issues along disputed borders, as well as their domestic political and economic structures), for their success in deflecting border crisis. Most of these elements underlie the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary dispute” (Fombo, 2006: 191).

Nevertheless, most border conflicts between and among African states, no doubt are products of evolution and change. Nigeria – Cameroon boundary dispute, not an exception, could be traceable to among other crucial factors, the aftermath of the European imperialism on the continent Africa, as the root. In other words, the emergence of many African states from colonial rule in the 1950s and 60s, consequently brought grim prospects of widespread border conflict. These fears were actually borne out of the fact of, European diplomats who had only limited knowledge of our local realities, artificially forging most of the boundaries of African territories. In other words, most conflicts on the African continent especially those along ethnical lines like that of Nigeria-Cameroon, have been attributed to the fact that colonial powers arbitrarily partitioned the continent among themselves without any meaningful consideration of parameters like history, demographic realities on ground, ethnicity, language and socio-cultural affinities. In many cases, people from the same ethnic groups found themselves on different sides of the colonial border lines and governed by different European powers. The case of the Bakassi Peninsula is clear proof of this. For instance according to Aye, (1994: 13) “the region now known as Akpabuyo that lies east of the Kwa River was, prior to the sixteenth century, one vast trackless Equatorial forest region that lay stretched to its southern shores in what is now Bakassi Peninsula. For centuries before the Efik occupation of the area the forest region lay primeval, virgin, wild, untouched and untamed by man, and separated from the
Cameroon country that lay to its east by innumerable serpentine creeks and rivulets. Thus as the Efik spread into Akpabuyo to the east beyond the Kwa River so they spread south beyond the Akpayafe River to Bakassi Peninsula.

Akpabuyo and Bakassi Peninsula are a contiguous landscape only cut into two by Akpa Ikang (or Akpayafe). Both regions were buried in the Equatorial Forest region that swept westwards from the Congo and abutting on the Niger Delta to the west. Again this was made manifest as majority of the disputes actually erupted in the immediate post-independence period and a few had continued to crop-up every now and then. However some of these disagreements continued for long to bedevil relations between neighbouring African states”.

To this, it becomes basic that any meaningful attempt to understand the crisis of state formation in Africa, in relations to the problem of identity, however, has to be as a matter of necessity, historically contextualized, in terms of the system of rule and domination instituted by the colonial powers. “The colonial state was clearly marked out by the critical role it played in the process of economic galvanization, domination and subjugation by the colonial powers, as well as the political environment to which such economic target was put. This was strongly suggested by the rich literature on the role of colonialism in the promotion and even “invention of ethnicity” (Nnoli, 1978). “But this was a role that it had to play for a number of historically conditioned reasons. First, is the alien nature of the state as a geographical extensions of the metropolitan state that found exclusive reliance on force as central as it was in the construction of law and order. Second is the necessity of differentiating people properly and making them legible to the colonial state, in terms of classic state functions of taxation, conscription and prevention of rebellion. The well-known political stratagem of divide and rule associated with colonial rule in Africa, therefore, had the important legacy of transforming what was essentially fluid and flexible identity to one based on rigidity”. (EEST, 2006: 417 – 48).

Invariably, for over four decades of independence, Nigeria and Cameroon have been lurked in a dispute over border and territorial claims – Bakassi peninsula, in which relations between the two have been characterized more by war or threat of war rather than diplomacy of mutual co-operation for development. An in-depth examination of the background, nature, issues of the dispute, reveals as having constituted the issue at stake, so many factors, including the contradictions brought about by colonization process of the world powers, the issue of
ethnicity to the problem, role of third parties and their attempts to mediate and resolve the
dispute, but has failed to address the problems.

By the way, “Bakassi peninsula is an area of some 1000km$^2$ of mangrove swamps, creeks
and half-submerged islands located at the extreme eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea (Aghemelo
and Ibhasebhor 2006, 177). It is located precisely between the Cross River and the Rio del Rey
estuaries (Ogbogbo, 2002: 321) where the warm east flowing Guinea current meets the cold
northflowing Benguela current”. On contact, these two great ocean currents from huge foamy
breakers thundering endlessly ashore, creating submarine shoals rich in shrimp, fish and other
marine resources. “As a fertile fishing ground, the Bakassi Peninsula has often been compared to
Newfoundland in North America and Scandinavia in Europe” (Mgaga and Njo 2007: 7). “In terms
of its extensive reserves of oil and gas, the Bakassi Peninsula is potentially the richest Peninsula
in Africa” (Mbuh 2004; Mbaga and Njo 2007: 1 – 8). The coast of the Bakassi Peninsula is
estimated to hold oil deposits of billions of barrels (Nwachukwu 2008). Beside oil, “the Peninsula
itself is believed to contain several trillion cubic feet of natural gas beds, potentially more
profitable than the reserves of crude oil” (De Konings 2008, 4 n7).

Meanwhile, contrary to the claims put forward in the Nigerian media that the
population of the Peninsula, mainly its Efik inhabitants, numbers approximately 300,000 (Mbaga
and Njo 2007, 8; De Konings 2008, 2; Cornwell 2006, 49). It is noteworthy that “United Nations
officials who are closely involved in the UN brokered mediation between Cameroon and Nigeria
say there are no more than 15,000 inhabitants living in the peninsula” (Ogen 2008 and Isaac
2005). The Ministry of External Relations in Yaounde suggests a population figure of 8, 562
based on a poll conducted in 1987. It is, however, doubtful if the Nigerian inhabitants of the
peninsula especially those in the relatively populous Abana and Achibong were counted during
this poll. A projected estimate based on the 1991 population census in Nigeria gives the Bakassi
peninsula a population figure of 37, 500 (ICJ 1999, 33). The location of the Peninsula is also very
strategic. Its positioning in the extreme eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea makes it a potentially
effective base for defensive and offensive military operations. The region is also a pathway and
indeed, harbours two important seaports- Douala in Cameroon and Calabar in Nigeria.
“Described as ‘a strategic underbelly of Nigeria’, the struggle for the control of the peninsula
should therefore be viewed as one for the control and appropriation of its natural resources and
To that effect, it only makes more sense for a critical appraisal of the ethnic factor in the Nigeria-Cameroon border problem having traced other angles through which scholars had attempted to approach the malfeasance albeit, failed to adequately explain the root of the lingering border problem. This is even as Nigeria matures into 51 years of statehood and celebrates her “Golden Jubilee”. It in other words, becomes germane that during this period, this study ventures into examining the impact of the ethnic factor in the border skirmishes with special interest on the role of ethnic interest in discarding the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling in fueling the secessionist bid of the Nigerians residing in the peninsular.

As Molem and Debora, (2009: 104), note that “a renewed interest in the study of colonially negotiated boundaries and the remarkable increase in boundary disputes between and within African states have been the focus of several recent studies”, our study would be specifically, first, examining how the imperialist adventure of the European powers on Africa caused confusion and clash of naturally evolved boundaries, between Nigeria and Cameroon as two modern states, artificially carved out of several ethnic nationalities, independent of one another hitherto the emergence of colonialism. During colonialism, Nigeria and some part of Cameroon were merged together and run as one entity obviously for administrative convenience on the part of the colonialists. At independence in 1960 through 1961, Southern Cameroon that was formally part of Southern Nigeria was asked to join the rest of Cameroon and hence, the genesis of Nigeria-Cameroon border conflict as there was need, the countries were separated from one another.

Also, Asobie, (2003: 75), points out that “following the judgment by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague, concerning the boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, there was calls on Nigerian government by some Nigerians to go to war over the matter. However, the response and reactions of some Nigerians including some of those who represented us on the case, did not reflect a thorough understanding of the issues prime in the case”. In particular, even now, the ethnic context of the dispute is yet to be fully appreciated by many Nigerians.

To this, it could be recalled that before the scramble for Africa by the European powers, Bakassi was part of the ancient kingdom of Calabar. But via a Treaty of protection signed by Queen Victoria with the king and chiefs of Akwa Akpa, known to Europeans as “Old Calabar” on 10 September 1884. The Obong of Calabar placed not only Calabar, but also the Efik and Ibibio
(in the peninsular) under the status of a British protection. Interestingly, even after southern Cameroon voted in 1961 to leave Nigeria and become a part of Cameroon, Bakassi remained under Calabar administration in Nigeria even constituting a local government of its own, until International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment of October 10, 2002.

Regrettably therefore, “in the name of African unity, Nigeria has sacrificed a lot and continues to make excruciating sacrifice for Africa. This is praiseworthy, but most African countries do not appreciate the sacrifices made by Nigeria to bring them out of their woes. In the case of Bakassi Peninsula and Cameroon, some analysts argue that the peace-loving disposition of Nigeria has blinded her to the ardent need to stoutly defend her sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Government of Nigeria has a responsibility for defending, protecting and providing for Nigerians who live and derive their means of livelihood in Bakassi. In a statement read out to the press, the President of the Court, Mr. Guillermo, a Frenchman, relayed the judgment with a tinge of finality when he said “sovereignty over the Peninsula lies with Cameroon”. In the judgment, the court requested Nigeria to “expeditiously and without condition, withdraw its administration and military or police forces from the area of lake Chad falling within Cameroonian sovereignty and from the Bakassi Peninsula”. (Vanguard, 31 October 2002). Against the expectation of most Nigerians, the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, awarded the oil rich Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon. In line with the charter of the court, the judgment was final, without appeal, and binding on both parties. Nigeria abandoned her territory and people in Bakassi, all in the name of being a good, law-abiding and responsible international citizen”. (Ebeghulem, 2008:72)

At this point, it become worrisome that Bakassi, a territory that bears Nigerian name and is inhabited by Nigerians has been ceded to Cameroon. As the nation now smarts from the shame of this unfortunate incident, it is important to point out that the feeling of foreign policy experts and analysts is that Nigerian leaders in thier characteristic myopia bungled the handling of the Bakassi imbroglio. There is no doubt that the embarrassment of Nigeria’s defeat should have been avoided.

Finally and perhaps of the fundamental consideration of this study is the imminent danger of extermination facing the unity state of Nigeria through the rejection of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment over Bakassi by the indigenes of Bakassi threatening secession. It was obvious Nigeria lost at the huge because of vested western interests. The naïve
handling and transfer of Bakassi peninsular to Cameroon seem to have provoked the secessionist bid of the Nigerians residing in the peninsular. This is in line with the ethnic consideration of this study as the fuel for the continuing Nigeria-Cameroon border problem in this recent time. As Oyeshola, (2005: 28 – 29), puts it, “... in reality, human rights are universal and fundamental. They are more or less claims that limit state power though they are absolute but limited to the extent that they interfere with the rights of others, maintenance of law and orders as well as in the state of emergency of a nation. Summarily, all of us are human and exhibit characteristics of being human. We have our genes and common biological ancestry; we can feel, laugh, kill, hate and love. Similarly, we have our background. Every grown-up person carries with him/her his background, that is, all that have shaped his present status. He was born one day, socialized in a family, grew-up in a neighbourhood and attended school in a place. All these experiences influenced them in their actions and orientation today? The past can not be successfully denied even if we wish it away. Our identity is also reflected on the type of nationality we are coming from”. To summarize it all, ethnic nationality(s) and associations we join impinge on our visions. This is exactly what our study wish to unveil of the ethnic factor in the Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite so many measures adopted to manage and contain, if not extinguish totally the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary dispute, both by the leaders of the two countries and the third parties to the problem, the issue of boundary and territorial claims between Nigeria and the Cameroon remains unresolved. In other words, from bilateral negotiations, through diplomatic means involving international mediators (good offices of United Nations and Africa Union), to the arbitration proceedings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the border problem between the two countries is still faced with multi-dimensional problems. Put differently, a cursory look at the efforts and strategies employed to tackle the Bakassi problem, indicated that some of the measures taken so far, did not reflect a thorough understanding of the issues involved in the case. To this, it shows that the dispute over the Bakassi includes a number of other contradictions aside the political and economic issues that were determined in the past to manage the conflict. One that requires a closer examination, attention and perhaps the most crucial, is the “Ethnic” context of the dispute. The “right to self determination” agitated by the
Bakassians, borne out of their ancestral and cultural affiliation and attachments to the disputed area, has not been fully appreciated. Therefore, pressure from the real victims of conflict, that is, those whose livelihood chances are directly threatened by the conflict, is often critical in bringing about a resolution of the conflict.

Nevertheless, according to Ngang (2008:5) “there is historical antecedents to the original habitation of people in the Bakassi area. Ethnically, it is absolutely clear and understandable that the Bakassians would prefer to remain under the jurisdiction of Nigeria. Ninety per cent of Bakassians are of Nigerian decent and as opposed to the Cameroonian accusation against Nigeria of taking advantage of its large population to populate the area in an attempt to support its bid for sovereignty, this is rather the result of the fact that long before the British set foot on Africa, Bakassi belonged to old Calabar”. Again, Asobie, (2003: 77) notes that “in pre-colonial times, Bakassi was under the ancient kingdom of Calabar which in 1914, became part of Nigeria, under British rule. The people of the main settlements in the Bakassi peninsula owed allegiance to the Obong of Calabar which covered the people of Efik, Efiat and Idombi (in the peninsula) under British protectorate via a treaty of September 10, 1884. The chiefs of Efiat and Idombi were co-signatories to the treaty. However, subsequently, through a series of bilateral treaties and other legal instruments, the British ceded the territory, first to Germany, and then placed it under the mandate of the league of Nations and the trusteeship of the United Nations”. Therefore, the Efik people had inhabited the area for many centuries.

Besides, it could also be recalled that under this mandate of the league of the nations and trusteeship of United Nations, a plebiscite ordered by United Nations General Assembly, took place on November 14, 1959 to determine where these people in this area called Bakassi would be. The result showed that, by 70,546 to 42,788 votes, a majority of 27,758 votes, the people of Northern Cameroon resolved to postpone the decision on their future political association. In the plebiscite, they had been asked whether they wished to remain part of Northern Nigeria, or whether they wished to postpone the decision on their future political association to a later date (Reports to the United Nations, 1959, P. 24; and Yearbook of the United Nations, 1959, p. 364). Given this development, the United Nations General Assembly ordered a second plebiscite to be held in Northern Cameroon; this took place on February 11 and 12, 1961. On February 11, 1961, too, a UN-ordered plebiscite was held in Southern Cameroon. The people of Northern Cameroon were, in the second plebiscite, asked pointedly,
whether they wished to join the Federation of Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon. The same question was posed to the people of Southern Cameroon. In Northern Cameroon, 146,296 votes were cast for union with Nigeria, while 97,659 votes were cast for union with the Republic of Cameroon. [Akinyemi, 1974: 139]. In one area, Chamba, however, the people voted 3:1 to joint the Republic of Cameroon. In Southern Cameroon, the result of the plebiscite was the reverse: 233,571 votes 571 votes for union with Nigeria. However, in the Bakassi Peninsula, majority of the people voted for union with Nigeria [The News, 21/3/94, p. 18]. The results of the plebiscites in the two territories were accepted and confirmed by the UN General Assembly on April 21, 1961, by 61 votes to 23 and 10 abstentions, the General Assembly passed a resolution fixing June 1, 1961 as the date for the transfer of Northern Cameroon to Nigeria, and October 1, 1961, as the date for the transfer of Southern Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon.

To this end, it shows that the territory under contention-(Bakassi peninsula) between Nigeria and Cameroon, belonged to Nigeria prior to European imperialism. This in other words, accounts for why immediately after the verdict by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), many Nigerians appalled by the judgment began questioning how a people with a different culture, language and background could be ceded to another nation whose background is completely different from that of Bakassi. This is also why Nigeria’s argument turned on practice as opposed to theory during the arbitration proceedings, a perspective that privileged the Nigerian indigenes; the Bakassians claim to the Bakassi kingdom as an act of habitual consideration, was a continuation of the historical consolidation of arguments. Although, Ngang (2008: 16), stresses that “this line of argument cannot be considered valid because the same claims could be made the other way round. There is no doubt to the fact that there are millennial cultural and historical ties between the peoples of Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River states in Nigeria and the North west and south west provinces of Cameroon. In the English-speaking areas of Cameroon again, there are special ethnic and tribal ties between inhabitatants of the Ndian Division in the South west province and the peoples of Akwa Ibom and Cross River state in Nigeria. In addition, Tiv, the language spoken by most of the indigenes in Akwaya sub-division in the south west province of Cameroon is the same language spoken by the majority of the groups in Benue State of Nigeria. And lastly, Gross border language and other cultural affiliations, like traditional dances and local rites and rituals are noticed between the peoples of south eastern Tabara State of Nigeria and the peoples of the far North West province of Cameroon”. Continuening, he points that, this brings us back to the argument that one of the
root causes of conflict in Africa is the result of arbitrary demarcation of borders by European powers. Fombo (2006: 71) also captures these root causes of conflict in Africa when he notes that “ethnic composition of border regions is an important factor in cross-border relations between African countries as it is the case elsewhere. The presence of the same groups straddled across boundaries of African states is known to be a major influence on the socio-cultural activities across the border and relations between the areas sharing such populations. These activities have on one occasion, posed serious threats to state security and on others, posed even greater challenges to the economy”. As Asiwaju points out, it is in recognition of this threat to state security that significant interest has been generated on Africa divided peoples referred to as population overhang” with regard to their contribution to conflicts.

Insofar as the sharing of ethnically similar populations is known to affect border relations, evidence on the degree and direction of this influence is mixed. Asiwaju thinks that this influence is positive and should be encouraged as a step towards the illusive dream of African unity. To him the fact that such inhabitants ignore the artificially contrived boundaries of the colonial masters by maintaining across the border kinship ties, other socio-cultural relations and economic activities, is an achievement that eludes westernized elites who pay narrow and parochial obedience to specific states. Notwithstanding this positive side of uncontrolled borders, such activities as smuggling and uncontrolled grazing across international boundaries by pastoralists often lead to disagreements among states. These disagreements spring up from the inherent contradictions in the desires of the people and their traditions on one hand and the exigencies of the modern state. Two main reasons have been advanced for this situation. According to Asiwaju, borderlands in (pre-colonial) African societies were regions of overlapping cultures, manifest not early in the similarities or even identical nature and character of people on both sides of the border, but also similarity in the kind of economic activities they undertake. This invariably creates a livelihood regime that would be injured by any attempt at maintaining an absolute boundary desirous of the modern nation-state, or in the trenchant words of Anene “boundaries (that) have acquired a sanctity alien to African traditional frontiers”.

However, close to 95% of the inhabitants of Bakassi are of Nigerian decent. Nigeria was very quick to point to cultural issues to legitimize her legal claim of sovereignty over Bakassi against her better judgment.
Secondly, boiling down from the ethnic and cultural threat of the Bakassians, is the Right to self determination. And in other words, this could be the major source of the continuous uprising and bid for independence by the Bakassians. According to Ebeghulem, (2008: 70), “Nigerians in these areas need not move nor do they need to change their nationality, but those who chose to stay in the affected territories should realize that they now live in foreign land”. This brings us to the issue of human rights violations located in the activities of both parties in the conflict. According to Akinterinwe, was, the human rights norms highlighted by the Bakassi Peninsula case are those embodied in Article 3, 5, 9 and 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 3 states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of persons”, while Article 9 states that “None shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”. Article 17.2, on its part states that, “None shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property”. It is on record today that these rights have been violated in Bakassi with impunity by soldiers of both Cameroon and Nigeria, who were stationed there. Equally violated are article 5 and 12. While article 5 declares that “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’, Article 12 states that “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family home or correspondence, nor attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks”.

Even though the authorities of the countries concerned were aware of the frequent violations of these rights, they gave little or no attention to the gross violation of the dignity of man in Bakassi.

It is also recognized that the right to self determination is a critical democratic principle. This principle which is generally recognized in International Law is a legal right. The integral elements of the right of people to self determination are: “the right of all peoples to determine democratically their own socio-economic and political system; the right of all peoples, nations, nationalities, national groups (including minorities) to freely pursue, develop and preserve their culture, traditions and language; and the right of the oppressed nations to self determination”.

The actors in the Bakassi conflict refused to acknowledge the existence of these rights. Millions of Nigerians and Cameroonians were denied the right to determine their own socio-economic system, including their own political system. Even within the imposed political systems, they were also denied a related fundamental human right, which the 1948 Universal
Declaration of Human Rights describes as the “right to take part in the government of his country directly” and the right to “equal access to public service in his country”.

Looking at this gross violation of the people’s rights in Bakassi, it can therefore be concluded that economic interests of both countries overrides the concern for human lives and consideration for human welfare in Bakassi. It was the discovery of crude oil in the disputed territory in 1967 that heightened the interests of the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon. The livelihood opportunities of the people in the area, specifically, their fishing rights and their general welfare have been of little concern to successive governments in Nigeria and Cameroon. Even the question of whether the people in the area wish to be Nigerians or Cameroonians did not bother the governments of the two countries much. Several young people interviewed by the Guardian newspaper argued this position.

We are in support of the declaration of the republic of Bakassi. The United Nations should realize that we have the right to decide where we want to be and the right to self-determination is one of the inalienable rights of the people, even enshrined in the United Nations human right charter. We are Nigerians and here in our ancestral home. You can see some of the graves of our forefathers, here dating back to the 19th century. How can you force a strange culture and government on us? We appreciate what the Nigerian government is doing but, let it be on record that they have betrayed us and we will fight for our survival and self-determination. (The Guardian, 18 August 2006: 8)

In the same vein, the Cross River State Youths Assembly, after a comprehensive consultation, rejected the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling in its entirety. They issued a statement clearly defining their stand as follows:

We the Cross River State Youths reject completely the handover of Bakassi peninsula to the Republic of Cameroon because it lacks the consent and approval of the indigenous Bakassi people who are Nigerians. The handing over of the ancestral land of Bakassi people to a foreign country did not follow due process
because it lacked the ratification of the Bakassi indigenes by way of an internationally accredited plebiscite, monitored by United Nations seeking the position of the people. (Cross River State Youths Assembly, the Guardian, 2006: 9).

Yes, the ceding of Bakassi peninsular was done without the consent of the Bakassi people. Nigerians cannot have their ancestral home transferred to a foreign land in obedience to a politicized word court judgment. Bakassi remains and will always remain part and parcel of Cross River State of Nigeria and not to be transferred to the Republic of Cameroon because the inhabitants have no ancestral, historical, archeological and political links or ties with Cameroon. They are Nigerians and will always remain Nigerians. We refuse to be victims of neocolonialistic manipulations and machinations of the western world, all in obedience to the world court judgment.

Adding to the voices of the youth, Chief Etim Okon Etim also cried out;

I was born here and have lived all my life here. I am over 90 years now. Now that they said we should go out from here, how are we going to do? Feeding is now a problem for us because this crisis has brought a lot of problems for us. I have more than two houses, so what will I do (Guardian Newspaper, 2006:11).

Considerably, the agitation of the Bakassi indigenes, anchoring on the basis of ethnicity as well as self determination, may not be as clearly understood as people think. This is because it may not be as to which cultural forms of ethnic group-based symbols do they now belong if finally made Cameroonians, but what becomes of their faith in terms of the sentiments and discriminative tendencies that may arise in future. Prof. Otite captures this fear on ethnicity when he puts thus; “Ethnicity has both objective and subjective dimensions. The later is dangerous. The subjective aspect of ethnicity deals with those attitudes, opinions, stereotypes and prejudices, which members of different ethnic groups have about themselves, and on the basis of which they identify and classify people. Hence, there is a point of articulation as well as of separation as different people interact in a plural society. Therefore, in my usage, ethnicity does not consist in mere ethnic or cultural heterogeneity – the mere identification of ethnic or
cultural group entities. Put differently, I distinguish between ethnic pluralism and ethnicity. Mere socio-cultural diversity poses no real problem. What is crucial comprises the interactions and the interrelationship as the various identifiable socio-cultural groups struggle and maneuver themselves over control of access to the nation scarce resources. In the process, there is always the tendency for people not to place their ethnic values and interests over those of others but also over those of the nation. Hence ethnicity becomes not only a cultural phenomenon but also a structural category, an instrument of social organization in fields of competition” (Otite, 1983: 8 – 9).

Obviously therefore, the people of Bakassi continues to agitate their right to self determination; also their ethnic dignity, notwithstanding the International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict and the subsequent handover of the Bakassi territory to the Republic of Cameroon, and hence, the continued uprising and bid for independence.

Finally, the actual and the fundamental cause of Nigeria Cameroon clash over Bakassi, is still not clear to many. The traditional system of border delineation is clashing with the European colonial modern system. In other words, the pre-colonial history of the ancient kingdom of Calabar is hunting the post-colonial reality of contemporary Nigeria and Cameroon. To this, Fombo, (2006: 4) observes that “in international law, the territory of every modern state is said to be separated from those of others by boundary. Several studies have indeed been conducted that point to a correlation between borders and wars among states, though their findings are either controversial or inconclusive”. In the same vein, Starr and most in their “the spread of war,” observe too, that borders may lead to a high level of international interaction, may in and of itself lead to more wars. Large numbers of border create more close targets which aggressive nations may choose to attack…. Finally, borders create uncertainty and nations may attempt to reduce that uncertainty by going to war (Starr and most, 1989:42). These studies suggest that even if borders do not cause wars, they at least create structures of risks and opportunities in which conflictual behaviour, mainly emanating from the tendency of states thinking expansionism, is apparently more likely to occur.

Basically, Asobie, (2005: 77) opines that “the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon under reference is a boundary and territorial disputes, one of the territories in dispute is the Bakassi peninsula the most contested”. Like Asobie, many scholars and experts as well have been pointing at border and territories as the problem between Nigeria and Cameroon. But the
question is “is border and territory” the problem between Nigeria and Cameroon that need understood and resolved or that “border and territory” in between Nigeria and Cameroon.

In this light, borders and territories of Nigeria and Cameroon constitute not problems themselves, rather the delineating pattern at which borders are arrived constitutes the hub around which border problems, by the states revolve. In other words, Nigeria-Cameroon border conflict is a product of a clash between tradition and modernity. Perhaps the pre-colonial style of boundary delineation by our ancient societies (kingdoms), is invariance with the post-colonial style used for contemporary Nigeria and Cameroon. Nevertheless, this also has antecedents historically.

“Africa was largely controlled by indigenous people in the 1870’s, but 1914, it became almost exclusively subjected and divided into protectorates/colonies by the European powers” (Rourke 1977; quoted in Bayer 2010: 1). Again, “the colonial boundaries in these configurations were not established according to the various indigenous ethnic groupings. Grouping nations together in some cases and dividing them in other cases was a common feature as long as it was consistent with the security and economic interests of the colonial powers. After independence, most of Africa became and are still troubled by the legacy of trying to get originally different indigenous groupings to live peacefully in a single country or to get the same ethnic group to live peacefully in different neighbouring countries. As in most of Africa, therefore the origin of the conflict situation between Nigeria and Cameroon over border issues can be traced to the colonial era and some post-independence political activities” (Bayer, 2010: 1).

Asiwaju (1984), quoted in Sama and Rose (2006: 105) points out that “a study of European archives, supports an accidental rather than an intentional making of African boundaries. This means that the European interests were of primary concern. The population of the frontier areas was envisaged, if at all, only as dim and inarticulate presences in the background”. Therefore in determining boundaries, the Europeans did not take African interests into consideration. An Anglo-French commission of diplomatic and colonial experts was formed for the purpose of demarcating the boundaries, but the limits of its experts soon became evident. Lord Salisbury Commented:

We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps were no white man’s feet have ever trod; we have been giving away
mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were (Lord Salisbury, speaking in 1890, cited in Asiwaju 1984, as quoted in Sama and Rose, 2006: 106).

Obviously, the notion and function of the term “boundary” differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. Fanso, (1986) notes;

In traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular state or polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it in this sense, the boundary was the zone where two states were united or joined together (Fanso, 1986: 72).

In other words, pre-colonial African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. European states, however, conceived of boundaries as lines or points of separation. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the former German colony in 1916 provided that inhabitants living in or near the border region, had six months from the time that the border was delimited to express their intention to settle in a region placed under the jurisdiction of the other colonial power. A problem was thereby created. A clash between tradition and modernity. The Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kin divided by the boundary were now foreign. They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the traditional ones with which they were familiar. They thought the former were only important to the white men who made them and were not immediately concerned about their existence until they were checked at crossing-points. It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers.

By and large, ethnic identity, question of self-determination to the Bakassians, and the confusion between the traditional supposed-style of boundary delineation in Africa and
European purported style, could be the major sources of agitation still of the Bakassi people not withstanding the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and order to transfer the territory to Cameroon. To guide and direct our study, the following questions may be found relevant.

1. Have the ethnic interests of the people living in the Bakassi, had any impacts on the entire dynamics of Nigeria-Cameroon border problems?
2. Has the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling, inspired the secessionist bid of Nigerians residing in the peninsula?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Granted that every academic endeavour has stated objectives it seeks to achieve, the objectives of this study are in two folds; the general objective and the specific objectives. In general, this study aims at examining critically the dynamics of the ethnic factor in Nigeria-Cameroon boundary dispute. This objective is realized by showing the result of a group called “the Bakassi self determination movement” (BSDM), declaring its independence from both Nigeria and Cameroon in November 2006, following the decision as well as the reactions of the general indigenes of the Bakassi area against the verdict of the international court of justice over the border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, as what constitutes the major issue in the case. Hence, central to this study is an attempt to place the border problem in its historically ethnic perspective. Then, the specific objectives also aim at the following.

1. To ascertain if the ethnic interests of the people living in the Bakassi, have had any impacts on the entire dynamics of Nigeria-Cameroon border problems.
2. To ascertain whether the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling inspired the secessionist bid of Nigerians residing in the peninsula.

In other words, the study would be stemming to find out the situation of the problem even with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgement and the subsequent handover of the peninsular to the Cameroon.
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

For the fact that no research work is an end to itself, this study at completion shall be of great significant in the following ways:

First and foremost, this study has both social and academic importance. Yes, because there is considerable disquiet about conflicts, especially in Africa where they have greatly negated development and have equally remained topical. Recent interventions in such conflicts have had limited results, be them inter or intra state. The frequent failure in intervention has led to a mood of “Afro-pessimism” and “conflict fatigue”, on the part of outsiders. Emphasis has thus shifted to containing the conflict rather than eradicating it. Taking into consideration Bozeman’s observation that “African political processes cannot be adequately accounted for by simply applying findings from elsewhere (because of her empirical complexities)”. (Bozeman, 1976: 36), This work offers a good case study of the raging influence of a conflict situation which carries the potentials of plunging the central and west African sub-regions into a catastrophe and ruin. The study offers insight into the, apart from the central organizing influence or factor in the Bakassi problem, between Nigeria and Cameroon, the international diplomats interested in resolving, containing or preventing conflicts, for the Nigerian-Cameroon border situation is unique and offers a good case study in that, it reveals a distinct experience dictated by the chequered colonial history of both countries.

The Nigeria-Cameroon border differences have persisted for almost their forty-five years of independence. Facts have been observed and beclouded by accusations and counteraccusations on the part of the belligerents as well as by journalistic writings and sheer propaganda by both sides. Even after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling, passions have hardly given way to reasoning especially as reflected in the press statements. This study is significant in streamlining the issues at stake, the ethnic influence in the case and tracing the historic roots and stages of the dispute; and by so doing, the way is illuminated for consideration of new gestures and policies that can further create an enabling environment to arrive at a modus operandi for the two peoples, so that this melee will pass onto history. The import of this has also been highlighted by Asiwaju, (1984: 8) who stressed in relation to this dispute that “it is of capital importance and significance getting to the roots of the disagreement by way of research to facilitate its resolution”.
Again, by making a critique of Cameroon response to the Nigerian probes and vice-versa, in the Bakassi and other place on this border and with its recommendation. This study hopes to stimulate at the end, more research into the foreign policy making process in Nigeria and Cameroon. Perhaps better options can be proffered for the defence of the territorial integrity of the states than had been put in place before, since new developments in decision-making and foreign policy are of cardinal importance in realizing the goals of the national interest. Also, this study of international boundary disputes provides an inter disciplinary interlace of materials from history, geography, law and political science in general. It is hoped, this interdisciplinary dimension contributes to the generation of more data to support or discard existing theoretical knowledge on the phenomenon of border conflicts that have remained potent till date. Finally, given that border conflicts pervade the world, it is hoped that this study may contribute to the burgeoning literature on conflict resolution. As North-edge, (1971: 1) have argued, “the notion that disputes can somehow be eliminated from the international system.... is utopia”, rather efforts should be concentrated on the management of the “inheritable” clashes of interest that must exist among states. The trust thus, should be on management of conflict situations.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A good research needs to be delimited to a manageable scope. Delimitation of research refers to the definition of the scope (extent or boundary) covered by the research. The scope of a research can be operationally defined in terms of:

(a) the issues covered;

(b) the period (time frame);

(c) subjects studied such as people,

(d) geographical area covered; and

(e) sector of an economy such as public and private sectors, or health, educational....etc (Obasi, 1999: 99).
In this light, our study is at large, limited to the conflicting claims between the Nigeria-Cameroon people along the lacustrine boundary in the Chad area; and the maritime border around the Bakassi and adjacent islands (known as the fish towns in colonial days that are the undisputable epicenter of the border dispute). And in particular, the ethnic factor in the dispute. In other words, it examines the ethnic question as a factor precipitating the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over their maritime border differences for decades now.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

No researcher or author per say, is an Island unto himself. His ideas are generated and formulated from reflections of what he reads, observes, examines and discusses with others. Therefore, in this literature review section, we review many works of different writers. And from these, we have found, scholars and experts actually dwelt primarily on the general dynamics of Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute – the economic, political legal, socio-cultural as well as the imperialistic aspect of the problem), but have failed to touch on the ethnic factor in the problem. So, we have exposed them with a view to locating this gap (ethnic factor) in literature, taking our research questions as basis around which our review revolves.

Notable scholars who have written profusely on this include: (Asobie, 2003; Baye, 2010; Aene, 1970; Nwokedi, 1985; Esiemokhal, 1982; Nwaekke, 1982; Shagari, 2001; Sholanke, 1993; Ngang, 2010; Fombo, 2006; Rose and Sama, 2006; Eke, 2009; Ebeghuleum, 2008; Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, 2006; Ronke, 1997; Akanmode, 2003; Kolapo, 2002; Sanusi, 2002; Rudin, 1938; Uffot, 2008; Ogen, 2011;......... etc.). According to Asobie, 2003, who did study of the international conflict between two neighbouring, under-developed African States, Nigeria and Cameroon, anchored on the analysis of the principles and norms thrown up by a conflict situation, and of the domestic political and economic contexts of international conflicts, placed in a historical perspective. He noted that the general points of theoretical and practical policy interest emerge from the study.

First, it is clear that there is a link between authoritative repressive regimes in conflict and high proclivity to resolve international disputes by the use of violence. It was under the highly repressive regimes of Babangida and Abacha in Nigeria and Paul Biya in Cameroon that the conflict between the two countries arising from the dispute over boundaries and territories
almost degenerated to violence confrontations. Second, economic interests, especially stakes in some valuable natural resources, rather than concern for human lives and consideration for human welfare, underlie most international conflicts. He opined that in the case under reference therefore, it was the discovery of crude oil in the disputed territory in 1967 that heightened the interests of the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon in the disputed territories, especially the Bakasi peninsula. Third, strong contending parties with weak cases avoid arbitration, judicial settlements, and collective security and go far bilateral negotiations, conciliation and self-enforcement. Fourth, pressure from the real victims of conflicts, that is, those whose livelihood chances are directly threatened by the conflict is often critical in bringing about a resolution of the conflict. Conversely, those who indirectly benefit materially from such conflicts, for example, oil – prospecting companies operating on both sides of divide and potential suppliers, of arms and ammunitions, local and international, constitute obstacles to peaceful conflict resolution.

Baye (2010) in his study, examines, the geopolitics of the Bakassi dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, and outlines socio-economic implications of its peaceful settlement. Nothing that neglect and subsequent discovery of oil deposits subjected the Bakassi peninsula to claims and counter-claims for sovereignty, military occupation and recourse to the international court of justice (ICJ), he maintained that the ICJ ruling in 2002 in favour of Cameroon, although based on sound historical evidence, faced implementation difficulties. However he said that following mediation by the United Nations (UN) secretary – General good faith by protagonists, the Green-tree Agreement and subsequent instruments, Nigeria completed the withdrawal of its military, policy and administration from the Bakassi peninsula by 14 August 2008. Putting aside disruptive activities by social movements, the entire process could be viewed as a model in peaceful resolution of border conflicts.

He goes further to state that, “implications of the settlement anchor on expenditure-reducing and expenditure-switching effects, wealth-generating effects, and enhanced Cross-border activities”. Infrastructural developments and effective presence are considered essential elements in border management policies.

Anene (1970), close to our point, takes a more thorough and holistic approach to the establishment of Nigeria’s boundaries. With much vigour given by his perfect mastery of not just the historical facts, but also the ethnographic realities of Nigeria’s border regions. Anene
debunks the theory of Africa’s and especially Nigeria’s boundary arrangements being “mortally injurious” to the pre-colonial political order. Treating with remarkable details the ethnic composition of contiguous areas on Nigeria’s borders, and the diplomatic negotiations that took place to establish them, Anene describes as being “unhistorical” and “dangerous” emotive phrases denouncing the existing international boundaries in Africa. His elaborate treatment of the various tradeoffs among European states and the ethnic considerations they took, gives us an inkling of the enormous difficulties inherent in embarking on revisionism of the present borders of Nigeria to satisfy ethnic sentiments or claims, and by extension, the rest of Africa, an endeavour which he describes as “utterly unrealistic”. For sure his argument is not that the unity of some groups was not outraged by the borders but that there is no way this could have been completed avoided, especially in relation to the eastern boundary of Nigeria with Cameroon.

While Anene treats with sympathy the cumbrous process of establishing Nigeria’s borders, Nwokedi (1985) deplores the ill-defined nature of these borders and emphasis that like most others in Africa are the products of arbitrariness. He attributes intermittent border dispute between Nigeria and her neighbours to imprecision of boundaries, the presence of vital mineral resources within the frontier zones and what he calls “trans-border activities of nationals and government agents”. Of import to this study is his discussion of efforts to resolve problems between Nigeria and her neighbours. Probably because of the focus on all the borders of Nigeria, his analysis is rather weak and tries conclusions simplistic. For instance, tries recommendations for stable boundary policies call for “intensified co-operation in economic, industrial, socio-cultural and political points of contact between these states” offers nothing new, given that he does not indicate how these issues over which they disagree can then be turned into issue of co-operation. Nor is it evident that he is borrowing a leaf from functionalists and neo-functionalists that do indicate explicitly how this can be achieved.

Esiemokhal (1982), picks up this cue from a higher level. Armed with the analytical techniques of international law, the author rather lopsidedly recounts the origins of the conflicts between Nigeria and Cameroon. After reviewing the strategic importance of the disputed Bakassi and surrounding islands, he posits that the Anglo-German control of this area should be jettisoned for it was based on misinformed opinions on the part of the negotiators. He challenged the wisdom of the 1964 OAU resolution on boundaries and calls for a revision so, as to “correct mistakes of the colonial past”. This work is relevant to our study in two major
directions. First, by invoking international law and customs, he exposed international litigation and arbitration as a possible visit to be explored for a solution to the Nigeria-Cameroon crisis. Second if shares the concern of other analysts that erratic leadership could plunge Nigeria and Cameroon into fall-scale war if these problems are not resolved.

Furthermore, in a more critical analysis of the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon, Aforka Nweke (1982) focuses on the May 1981 crisis. He analyses the response of the federal government of Nigeria to the incident that led to the deaths of five Nigerian soldiers around the Bakassi peninsula, from the decision-making perspective. He finds the decision of the federal government not to go to war with Cameroon to have been at variance with public opinion and the general consensus of politicians and the military in the country as well as inimical to Nigeria’s national interest. However, his well structured analysis of the conflict still ends up reiterating analysis strategic and economic importance of the Bakassi and the adjoining islands-the holy grail of the Nigeria-Cameroon conflict – as being the “Actcilles heel of Nigeria’s potential to have her way militarily and not the legal issues or documents establishing the boundary.

Similarly, Shagari (2001) pays some attention to the Nigeria Cameroon dispute focusing on especially the 1981 crisis between Nigeria and Cameroon. Beginning with a refreshing but familiar summary of the evolution of Cameroon under German, then French and British colonial tutelages which affected Nigeria boundary, he argues that the diverse parts to independence taken by the British, Northern and southern Cameroons left Nigeria and Cameroon dissatisfied with the outcome of the decolonization process. However authoritative this source night be, (the author was the president of Nigeria (1979 – 1983) during the May 1981 crisis) it does little to quell the controversies surrounding this border, particularly, in regard to postcolonial boundary instruments. He unwittingly joins those who argue that without ratification, the Marona Accord was null and void, and also states emptiatically that “it was clearly understood that the agreement signed by the two leaders would become law only after it was ratified by the legislatures of each of the two countries”, meanwhile, this seems not to have been stated in the course of the negotiations. Also, the shortcoming of the Accord as being overgenerous to Cameroon for gratification of support given to the federal side in the Nigerian civil war which he points, is also off the mark.
Moreso, Sholanke (1993) approached the issue by exposing the unofficial stance of both countries in their dispute (Bakassi dispute). He began with refreshing renditions of the historical background in which the border between Nigeria and Cameroon was created. Sholankes study tries to expose the weaknesses in previous treaties and protocols on which Cameroon case against Nigeria is based. Noting the frequent pledges by leaders of both states to resolve the conflict peacefully, he concludes though erroneously, that in recognition of the weaknesses in previous agreements “both states have recently shown their readiness to redefined their boundary alignments”. This study manifest the error in most works on the Nigeria-Cameroon dispute, especially in relation to the Bakassi peninsula. Few have articulated the fact that the crux of the matter is a challenge of title rather than doubts as to where the boundary is located. It is only when a diachronic review is made of the widening claims by the parties that we can see that marked change of policy by Nigeria from 1992 when a new map of the federation is drawn and a corresponding intensification of the hostiles, in the disagreements. This study hopes to fill this lacuna.

From the legal dimension, Mike Chinedu Anekwe analyzing the ICJ adjudication, in an article; “ICJ RULING ON BAKASSI: MATERS ARISING, took off thus:

“Concur with Reuben Abati, that in a matter of days, something else will happen and the story of the riots that followed the hosting of the miss world pageant in Nigeria, and the consequences will disappear from the front pages, and this country will move on to something else. And that will be the end of it, until something happens again. amazing, how we find it so easy to live with the rot in our lives. We are perhaps the most curiously optimistic group in the world. We always manage to move on” (Nigerian world, 27th December 2002)

But this is not about the “miss world”. It is about Bakassi. Not about Bakassi Boys but Bakassi peninsula. How come we seen to have forgotten this one and are trudging on?

On Oct. 10, 2002, the international court of justice (ICJ) ruled on the protracted boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon. In its judgment, which is final without appeal and binding on the parties, the court determined as follows: the course of the boundary, from north to south, between Cameroon and Nigeria: “in the Chad area, the court decides that the boundary is delimited by the Thompson-Marchard declaration of 1929 – 1930, as incorporated in the Henderson – fleurian exchange of notes of 193 (between great Britain and france); it finds
that the boundary starts in the lake from the Cameroon-Nigeria-Chard tripoin{t (whose co-
ordinate of defines) and follows a straight line to the mouth of river Ebeji as it was in 1931
(whose co-odinate it also defines) and hence runs in a straight line to the point where the river
today divided into two branches, the court confirmed that the boundary is delimited by the
following instruments.

From the point where the river Ebeji bifurcates, as far as Tamnyar peak by the
Thompson Marchard declaration of 1929 – 1930 (Paras 2 – 60), as in cooperated in the
Henderson-Fleurian exchange of notes of 1931;

From Tamnyar peak to pillar 64 referred to in article xii of the Anglo-German agreement of 12
April, 1913, by the British order in council of 2nd August 1946;

From pillar 64 to the Bakassi peninsula, by the Anglo Germany agreement of 11 March and 12
April, 1913, the court examines point by point, 17 sectors of the land boundary and specifies for
each one, how the above mentioned instruments are to be interpreted (paras 91, 96, 102, 114,
119, 124, 129, 134, 139, 146, 152, 155, 160, 168, 179, 184 and 189 of the judgement.

In Bakassi, the court decides that the boundary is delimited by the Anglo-German
agreement of 11 March, 1913 (arts. Xviii – xx) and that sovereignty of the Bakassi peninsula, lies
with Cameroon. It decides that in this area, the boundary follows thalweg of the river
Akpakorum (Akwayafi), dividing the mangrove islands near Ikang in the way shown on map Tsg
2240, as far as a straight line joining Bakassi point and king point. As regards the Martine
boundary, the country having establishing that it has jurisdiction to address this aspect of the
case, which Nigeria had disputed..., fixes the course of the boundary between the two states,
Maritime area. In its judgement, the court requests Nigeria expeditiously and without condition
to withdraw its administration and military or police forces from the area of lake Chad falling
within Cameroon sovereignty and form the Bakassi peninsula. It also request Cameroon
expeditiously and without condition to withdraw any administration or military or police forces
which may be present along the land boundary from lake Chard to the Bakassi peninsula on
territories which pursuant to the judgement fall within the sovereignty of Nigeria. The later has
the same obligation in regard to territories in that area which fall within the sovereignty of
Cameroon. The court takes note of Cameroons undertaking, given at the hearings, to “continue
to afford protection to Nigerians living in the peninsula and in the lake Chad area”. Finally, the

Both Ngan (2010) and Fombo (2006) in their different studies, agree that economic interest was the major issue that brought Nigeria and Cameroon to the brink to war. As Ngang noted:

“Socially speaking, both Cameroon and Nigeria had not carried out any reasonable development in the area in terms of communication networks, health and education as to claim ownership”.

Furthering, he maintains that the security issue and national interest are closely linked to economic interests while the political aspect as we have seen was just a mere effort by politicians to divert public attention from the real, issues they were failing to address. Many analysts agree essentially, that had there not been talk of the presence of oil deposits in the area, there would not have been any Bakassi crisis and the area would have remained uninteresting for both countries except for matters pertaining to fishing rights.

Fombo on his own reiterated invariably that, analysis of relevant data revealed that, economic nationalism inspired by the mineral and other natural endowments of the disputed areas, is central to the dispute. But parted a bit which he noted that besides economic factor, domestic political forces in these countries and their colonial backgrounds synergized with the basic economic element to reinforce the conflict situation. The wholly legalistic considerations embodied in the international court of justice judgement of Oct. 10 2002, which we have critiqued proved to be, in essence, a novel vista for renewed bilateral diplomacy to resolve the dispute. However, because of mixed feelings with which the judgement was received, we are yet to see the parties take full advantage of it to resolve the melee.

Rose and Sama (2006) close to our point, examined the question of identity and power in Bakassi from the level of the community to the state and external levels. For instance they argue that ethno-cultural forces unleashed by the political liberalization process have always accentuated the struggle to control resources. Separatist and irredentist movements are based on ethno-cultural foundations but manifest most often in struggles for resource control. They remarked that an example of this phenomenon is the Bakassi peninsula – an area rich in oil reserves and other natural resources – which became a continuous bone of contention between the Cameroon and Nigerian states became involved in protracted border skirmishes over
ownership and jurisdiction over the Bakassi peninsula, raising international attention in the
UN’s. Cameroon filed a case with the international court of justice in 1998, which resulted in a
decision for Cameroon. Nigeria determined that it would not honour the final ICJ decision. This
action prompted Kofi Annan, in his role as secretary General of the United Nations with both
parties. Finally resulted in 2006 implementation of a four-year resolution process to clearly
define the limits of the borders and thereby ensure territorial sovereignty for each states. At the
level of the community, however, indigenes of the region have yet to accept the existence of
what they fed on in fact colonial boundaries and have claimed sovereignty for themselves.

Nevertheless, Eke (2009) in his own study observed that the Nigeria-Cameroon dispute
over the oil-rich Bakassi was a carryover of the unhealthy relationship between Nigeria and
France as a result of the latter influence in the sub-region. He went further to explain that,
however, Nigeria got her independence in 1960 and became a Republic in 1963 with sovereign
authority over her international relations with the world at large. Nigeria, at infancy, was
engaged in a civil war with the secessionist Biafra between 1967 and 1970. He noted also that; at
the end of the war which took tool on both sides for 30 months, border skirmishes erupted
between the Cameroon gendarmes and Nigeria villages in the Bakassi area. In 19071, a joint
Nigeria – Cameroon permanent consultative committee was set up for improved relationship
but the discovery of oil in the area of Riodel Rey soon made Bakassi a political hotbed which
stalled the committees work. By this period, Cameroon had granted drilling rights in the
disputed area to American oil companies, Nigeria adopted quiet bilateral diplomacy including
the establishment of Nigeria – Cameroon mixed Border Commission to seek solution to the
political problem.

Ebeghulem (2008) in his own study, focusing on the diplomatic impact of the Nigeria’s
foreign policy over Bakassi, and also seeking to analyse Nigeria’s handling of the Bakassi
imbroglio before, during and after the world courts judgment, pointed out that, it was a
diplomatic blunder in Nigeria’s foreign policy. He wrote thus: the population of Bakassi is
overwhelmingly Nigerian. Its local government, functions as part of Cross River State since the
inception of the State. The Efik Nigerians have always voted to choose their representatives
whenever the civilian governments hold sway since Nigerian independence in 1960. The
residents of Bakassi believe themselves as Nigerians because they have always participated in all
decision-making processes since the nation was born. They should have therefore, been given
the privilege to determine their future instead of being partitioned into Cameroon as implied by the ICJ’s ruling. Looking at this blunder from a constitutional angle, Okuwa (2006) points out that Nigeria is a federal system, and the loss or the excise of a state or part of a state to another sovereign state is “a situation not imagined or envisaged when the 1999 Nigerian constitution was hurriedly written”. Okuwa also put up a strong argument why the 1913 Anglo-German Agreement should have thrown out by the international court of Justice. According to him, “the 1913 Anglo-German document signed on Bakassi should have been thrown out by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Why? It was a treaty between two alien powers about the future of a traditionally sovereign community who had no role in drafting the imposed treaty”. We agree with Okuwa’s submission that Nigeria has all the diplomatic options and material resources to vigorously pursue a face-saving alternative to the embarrassing consequence the country finds itself now.

Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor (2006) in their article titled “colonialism as a source of Boundary Dispute and conflict among African states: The world court judgment on the Bakassi Peninsula and its implications for Nigeria”, looked at the arbitrary delimitation of Africa into sovereign entities as the cause effect problem between Nigeria and Cameroon. They opine that; the African territories which have attained independence and national sovereignty, cannot in a strict sense, be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture. They are indeed, the arbitrary creations of colonialist. The manner in which European nations descended on Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century in their scramble for territory, was bound to leave a heritage of artificially controlled borderlines, which now demarcate the emergent African states. Having examined critically, the international court of justice (ICJ) judgment on the Bakassi Peninsula, they demonstrate clearly that the international agreements of the era of the scramble for Africa are sources of conflict among African states, themselves. Equally, they noted that several boundary disputes, have broken out between African states and so far, there is no acceptable criteria which may afford the best guide to a settlement of an ‘unhappy legacy of colonialism’, and that historical research may enable African states men to borrow a leaf from their pre-colonial ancestors, whose attitude to international frontiers between one ethnic group and the other was much less emotional, much less rigid and much more pragmatic than that which many African leaders are adopting today.
Rouke (1997) though did not particularly highlight the Bakassi Peninsula, he however showed the general trend of European colonial imposed boundaries on Africa, hence, indirectly pointing at Bakassi as one of such imposed African boundaries. He assessed at length the legacy of colonialism in Africa. He points out that the industrialization of the North was one factor that caused the colonization of the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He 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 the European powers. The colonial boundaries had little relationship to the territories occupied by the various indigenous peoples, grouping nations together in some cases and dividing them in others. He further points out that within seven decades, virtually all of the colonies regained their independence, but many of the new countries (such as Rwanda) have been troubled by the legacy of trying to get two or more states to live peacefully in a single state.

Akanmode (2002) choose to start first by emphasizing on the paradox of the peninsula when he maintained that the peninsula is a community that subsists in the midst of plenty – plenty of fish and oil deposit – but is ravaged by poverty. He further traced the dispute in the oil rich area between Nigeria and Cameroon from 1993, leading to loss of lives from military aggressions that have been mostly instigated by Cameroon.

Kolapo (2002) gave a critical analysis of the far-reaching political, economic implications on the Nigerian state. He points out that the ruling would have adverse effect on the Nigerian state as a whole. His primary emphasis was on the security implications, the social structures, the pride of Nigerians and the economic jeopardy on the Nigerian state amongst others.

Sanusi (2002) studied the international court of justice ruling, part of the Nigeria Cameroon problems and indeed he was interested on the way of the judgment that ceded the peninsula to Cameroon he pointed that the judgment made no sense. His question was “How do you cede a people with different culture, different language and background to another nation whose background differs completely?” He insisted that Bakassi people are Nigerians who cannot become Cameroonians overnight. He pointed out the need for the Nigerian government to appeal to the World Court for a review of the judgment.

Rudin (1938) traced the activities of the Germans and British traders in the areas during her colonial days. He observes that the German administrators in the Cameroons attached great
importance to the Benue and its tributaries as the best, quickest and most profitable way of gaining access to the hinterland of their colony. He further observes that the attempts at penetrating this hinterland from the Cameroon coast failed disastrously. Hence the Germans through their agent Flegel pretended to regard all the region north of the latitude of the Cross River ‘rapids’ as no man’s land. Though the book is highly critical on the activities of the Germans and the British during the period, it failed to highlight the consequences of their actions on the boundary areas and inter state relations between the two African States.

Uffot (2008) of the news watch, took up the narrative aspect of the hand over of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon. In fact, he comprehensively narrated thus: that, “the final handover ceremony which took place in Calabar, the Cross River state capital last Thursday, August 14 was, however, not devoid of tension and anxiety. That even on the eve of the historic event, the mood of residents of the peninsula was that of fear, anger and uncertainty. The uncertainty was informed by the order from a federal high court that without prejudice to the judgment of the world court in Hague, the status quo should be maintained on the Bakassi Peninsula. But, while some Nigerians in Bakassi were urging the federal government to obey the order by the high court and shelve the handover, the administration of President Umar Musa Yar’Adua insisted on obeying the judgment of the international court which ceded the disputed Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon and the Green Tree Agreement which fixed August 14 as handover date”.

When the appointed day finally came, it turned out to be an anti-climax. This was because against all expectations, the handover venue was hastily changed from Abana in Bakassi to Calabar. The event took place inside the Perequino Hall of the Governors lodge, Calabar.

The sudden change of venue was said to be informed by the growing security concern posed by the threat of militants to dispute the ceremony in Abana the original venue for the handover ceremony.

Newswatch gathered that government’s thinking was that inspite of the heavy presence of soldiers in and around Ikang in Akpabuyo and Bakassi, it did not want to take chances by going ahead to hold the event in Bakassi, and risk confrontation with the militants. Source said there were intelligence reports the militants were bent on disrupting the event.
At the brief handing over ceremony, Francis Adah, the acting governor of Cross River State pointed to Article 3 of the Green Tree Agreement, which spelt out the modalities for the transfer of Bakassi to Cameroon. The section states that Cameroon shall not force Nigerians living in the Bakassi Peninsula to leave the zone or change their nationality.

Other sections of the agreement provides that Cameroon shall, respect the culture, language, beliefs and rights of the Bakassi people to continue their agricultural and fishing activities as well as protect their properties and that there shall be no imposition of discriminatory decisions on them.

He said the task of resettling the displaced people of Bakassi who have chosen to move to Nigeria was enormous. According to him, in as much as the Cross River State government and the federal government were committed to ensuring that the people were catered for, the international community should assist with the provision of funds to complement the efforts of government.

Michael Aondoakaa, the attorney-general of the federation and minister of justice who led the Nigerian delegation to the ceremony said the task of completing the implementation of the International Court of Justice judgment by handing over Bakassi to Cameroon was painful. He, however explained that the fact that the event eventually took place was a vivid demonstration of President Yar’Adua’s commitment to the rule of law. He said government was very much interested in the welfare of the Bakassi returnees and enjoined the Cameroonian authorities to abide by their guarantee that they will fully integrate all those who elect to remain in their ancestral home in Bakassi.

The climax of the ceremony was signing of the hand over instrument and exchange of flags. While Aondoakaa, attorney-general of the federation and minister of justice signed for Nigeria, Ahmadou Ali, Cameroonian justice minister signed on behalf of his country. Ali held President Paul Biya of Cameroon as a man of peace who would abide by the commitment he made under the Green Tree Agreement, GTA. Kieran Prendergast, chairman of the follow-up committee who represented Ban Kimoon, UN secretary-general described the event as the triumph of the rule of law. Said Djinnit, Algerian diplomat and chairman of the Nigeria-Cameroon Mixed Commission commended the Nigerian government for respecting the rule of law.
The fate of Bakassi has been a subject of controversy. While the militants and the students under the aegis of the National Association of Nigeria Students, NANS, had warned government on the consequences of the handover, a few other Nigerians threatened to sue President Yar’Adua for contempt if government went ahead to disobey the order of the Federal High Court.

Bassey Ewa Henshaw, senator representing the Bakassi area took the battle to stop the handover to the National Assembly. He claimed that the National Assembly was not in support of the handover because it had not ratified the ICJ judgment and the Green Tree Agreement. Etim Okon Edet, the paramount ruler of Bakassi fought at the home front assisted by Emmanuel Etene and Ani Esin, both former chairman of Bakassi Local Government Area, to stop the ceding of Bakassi. They faulted the handover saying it will render most of their people homeless.

Although the handover of Bakassi has been done, many indigenes still feel that the problem associated with the ceding of the area might still linger. Florence Ita-Giwa who is heading the resettlement committee said Bakassi people were ready to live in the peninsula provided the Cameroonians respect their rights. But some indigenes said this may not be feasible if the antecedents said this may not be feasible if the antecedents of the gendarmes are anything to go by.

Ogen (2011) took up the cue from a revisititation of the meager Nigerian historiography on the Bakassi peninsula. He argues contrarily to the positions of other scholars who have taken the historic side of the peninsular, when he submitted that “Nigeria’s claim of ownership of the peninsula is logically indefensible and historically unsustainable”. Contending further, he noted that Effik irredentism which found its expression in Nigeria’s attempt to forcefully annex the Bakassi peninsula is based on historical claims that are in reality largely not historical. In his study, he is of the opinion that Nigerian’s occupation of and attempts to exercise sovereignty over the peninsula emanated from the predictable desire of the Nigerian ruling elite to appropriate Bakassis’s abundant natural resources and the strategic advantage that the peninsula holds for Nigeria’s oil interests in the Gulf of Guinea. He further analyses the border – cum-migration problems that prevail in the peninsula. He argues that patterns of migrant life rooted in historic and still functioning socio-cultural and economic networks persist in defiance equally of national and international agreement and political claims to ethnic solidarity. He concludes that peace can only be guaranteed in the Bakassi, and indeed in virtually all conflict.
prone African borderlines, if African governments respect the old ‘Glass house rule’ (ie. the 1964 Cairo Declaration by the OAU) and acknowledge that colonial treaties and national borders, irrespective of their arbitraries and artificiality, constitute the foundation of all modern African state structures.

While Uffot, treats with mild the harsh reality of handing over the Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon, Umahi of the Daily Sun newspaper, Thursday, Oct. 13, 2011, deplores the ill-defined nature of and the crimes associated with the fall of Bakassi. In his write-up, he noted that, “to most people, Bakass peninsula is dead and buried. But the spirit of the oil rich peninsula is not resting in peace as efforts have been made to make the corpse walk again”. He argues that until August 14, 2008, Bakassi was one of the 774 Local Government Areas recognized by the 1999 constitution of Nigeria. That however, following the ceding of the peninsula to Cameroon on that day, after years of legal battles at the international court of justice (ICJ), it became constitutionally dead. But investigations have revealed that three years after the council became defunct, statutory monthly allocation of about N50 million is still being made to it from the federation account even as the constitution has neither been amended to that effect nor much done about the right of the affected people.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Studies of political phenomena have been carried out under various approaches or rather schools of thought. But for the purpose of our study, we adopt theory of “Nationalism” to the study of political consciousness and organization. And to render nationalism more relevant to our research problem, we invariably also adopt the ethnic interpretation of Nationalism (Ethnic Nationalism). Nationalism as Obasigwe would note in his politics and globe dictionary, is the practices of ethnic ideology or simply tribalism, each of which at some point necessitates the exploitation of differences in nationality for any purposes. One consequences of ethnocentrism, itself an inward-looking and chauvinistic attitude towards ones nationality or cultural group, with a correspondingly suspicious and hostile attitude towards others, especially those held to be in competitive relations with ones own. (Obasigwe, 2007: 283)
To this, it is a strategy to survive and prevent domination. Nationalism, the outcome of political and economic need becomes a force and a source of conflict when it is “refracted” into a society. The intelligentsias are agents of this refractions and are the main purveyors of nationalism. In other words, it connotes the active consciousness of being a different nation, especially in relations with other nations or groups - the struggle by colonized nations or nationalities for collective or separate independent statehood or any other form of self-determination. Imperatively, nationalism generally was introduced in this part of the world “Africa” by the westernized educated Africans in the 19th centuries, during the era of European colonialism. Several factors were responsible for the rise of nationalist movements in Africa chief among them include; socio-political and economic, as well as cultural exploitation and subjugation by the European powers. In this light, nationalism, writers Chukwu, (2000: 106), “is a patriotic feeling which brings oppressed but related people together to demand for their independence”. It is often found rooted and promoted by the presence of another superior power. This was quite obvious in colonial Nigeria where Britain remained the superior power, militarily and technologically while Nigeria remained weak. On the other hand, ethnic nationalism is a form of nationalism wherein, the nation is defined in terms of ethnicity. Whatever specific ethnic group is involved, ethnic nationalism always includes some element of decent from previous generations and the implied claim of ethnic essentialism i.e. the understanding of ethnicity as an essence that remains unchanged over time. The central theme of ethnic nationalism is that “nations are defined by a shared heritage which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry. It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of the group and with their ancestors, and usually a shared language, however it is different from purely cultural definitions of the nation” (which allow people to become members of a nation by cultural assimilation and a purely linguistic definitions (which see the nation as a one speakers of a specific language).

Herodotus is the first who stated the main characteristics of the ethnicity, with his famous account of what defines Greek identity, where he lists kinship (Greek: homainon, “of the same blood”), language (Greek: homoglossom- “speaking the same language”), cults and customs (Greek: homotropon, “of the same habits or life”). In other words, the ideological implication here is that the central political tenet of ethnic nationalism is that ethnic groups can be identified unambiguously and that each of such groups is entitled to self-determination. The outcome of this right to self-determination may vary, from calls for self-regulated administrative
bodies within an already-established society, to an autonomous entity separated from that society to a sovereign state remarked from that society. In international relations, it also leads to policies and movements for irredentism to claim a common nation based upon ethnicity. Again the theorist Anthony Smith uses the term ethnic nationalism for non-western concept of nationalism as opposed to western views of a nation defined by its geographical territory. (Ethnic nationalism-wikipedia, the free encyclopedia http://en.m.wikikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic).

To our study, nationalism (ethnic nationalism) provides critical explanations to the frequent war stirrings emanating from Nigeria-Cameroon borders, that go beyond defuse of territorial integrity of the two states. Territorial differences alone need not lead to war, given that there are hardly any terra incognitas or terra nullius today. Other factors inherent in the passions of nationalism (economic and psychic gains) tend to blur the vision of state leaders to opposing claims over territory. Because there is a “basic self-doubt involved in any serious concern about identity, nationalism involves hostility towards other nations and a tendency to adopt a double standard of morality with respect to them, put into perspective, the varying oppositions of the Bakassi populations to the world count verdict and order on the disputed Bakassi area, can be interpreted in relation to expected self determinations. Ethnic nationalism also accounts for not just the present antagonism between Nigeria and Cameroon but portrays this conflict to be partly related to the frantic efforts of the centres of both countries to control the border lands (that is British Camerons) in the run up to the plebiscite of 1961. In this respect thus, the conflict can be constructed as residual irredentism by one or both sides to an unfinished business of political independence and national unity which begun in 1960. The fact that the disputed areas were at one time or the other in no distant past under the same administration to which Nigeria and Cameroon are successors in a sense, inspires the irredentist appeal.

In the foregoing theoretical consideration, history and geography are the basic categories around which the analysis of the protected and recurrent nature of the ethnic consideration in the Nigeria-Cameroon dispute is structured. Hence Nigeria’s argument at the world court tuned on practice as opposed to theory, a perspective that privileged the Nigerian indigenes. The contemporary indigenes claim to the Bakassi kingdom as an act of self determination was a continuation of the historical consideration. Several young people interviewed by the guardian newspaper argued this position.
We are in support of the declaration of the Republic of Bakassi. The United Nations should realize that we have the right to decide where we want to be and the right to self-determination as a people. We are Nigerians and here in our ancestral home. You can see some of the graves here dating back to the 19th centuries. How can you force a strange culture and government on us? We appreciate what the Nigerian government is doing but let it be on record that they have betrayed us and we will fight for our survival and self-determination. (The Guardian, 18 August, 2006: 30).

So, using this framework, we are allowed to capture the driving force of the melee and difficulty in making concession by either side.

1.8 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses anchor our empirical verifications.

1. The ethnic interest of the people living in the Bakassi, have had impacts on the entire dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon border problems.

2. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling inspired the secessionist bid of Nigerians residing in the peninsula.

1.9 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This section is concerned with attempts to unveil the building blocks of the research edifice. It shows the processes and procedures employed in sifting through mountings of data and choosing a particular set of data; and presenting the data so chosen and the analytical tools utilize to reach conclusions (Agaptus, 2009: cited in Ugonna, 2010: 30).

There are two broad methods of generating data for social science research. These are observation method and self-report. While the former entails either observing actions or events
as they occur (direct observation) or observing the traces or records of actions or events as well as the reports put down or recorded through direct observation (indirect observation), the former largely borders on the use of interview and/or questionnaire to elicit information internal in the respondents. For the purpose of generating data to test our hypothesis in this study, we shall use the observation method of documentary sources - secondary method. By document, we mean any written material (whether hand-written, typed, or printed) that was already in existence, which was produced for some other purpose than the benefit of the investigation (Nwana 1981 cited in Obasi, 1999: 192). Hence, observational/documentary method is used in this study to mean a method of gleaning, extracting, examining, analyzing and interpreting information as well as reading meaning into these pieces of information so as to draw inference from the available evidence in order to reach a conclusion (Obasi, 199: 171).

What the foregoing implies is that documentary method makes the recourse to the secondary sources of data inevitable. By secondary sources of data, we mean data gathered from documents authored by another person, virtually data from the available data archives, either in form of document or survey result and books. To this end, this study will be based on documentary analysis of secondary sources of data. These sources of data include institutional and official documents from embassies and policy document by strategic institutions, etc.

Apart from institutional and official documents, this enquiry will extensively source materials in the internet and other secondary sources of data as textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers, articles and other written works dealing on the subject matter of this investigation. To be sure, secondary data sources imply information originally collected for the purpose other than the present one (Asika 2006: 140). The advantage of secondary data is that it saves time and money through purpose and random selection of recorded materials in order to investigate the problem and test the hypothesis. There is also the possibility of using the work of others to broaden the base from which scientific generalizations can be made (Ifesinachi, 1999; cited in Ugonna, 2010: 32). The use of documents will also be complimented by the technique of non-participant observation as the researcher has been a keen and active reader of the trends and dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary dispute.
1.2.1 Methods of Data Analysis

Like our design exposed, and also in corroboration with our methods of data collection, we adopt descriptive qualitative data analysis or method for our study. This otherwise known as content analysis is essentially normative and descriptive in orientation. This is essential because, according to Obassi, 1999: 61) it is always necessary to subject historical data to internal and external test of validity in order to ascertain their objectivity. This is because people can reconstruct historical events or data for selfish reasons and such biasness usually affects the method of gathering such data as well as the content of data. So in using content analysis, we hope to apply deductive and inductive logic on our analysis. In doing this, we hope to as Obasi, (1999: 60) insinuates, determine, evaluate and explain past events essentially for the purpose of gaining a better and clearer understanding of the present and making a more reliable prediction of the future.

To this, in our study, we examine a class of social artifacts typically written documents as we noted in our design and methods of data collection. Therefore, we shall examine rather historically, document evidence regarding the impact of ethnicity on the Nigeria-Cameroon border problem.

1.2.2 Research Design

In conducting research, research designs are indispensable. Eboh, (2009: 45) observes that, “research design is the deliberate strategic approach used in conducting a scientific enquiry”. It gives shape, form and identity to the research activity. Research design serves as the anchor of the scientific study. It provides the smooth sailing and enables the evolution of the scientific exercise. It is the research plan or blueprint of action. Invariably, Obasi, (1999: 54) defines it as simply a plan that specifies how data should be collected and analysed. Therefore, a research design is a plan which guides a researcher and prevents him/her from veering off course in the process of collecting, presenting, analyzing and interpreting data.
In this light, this study is basically qualitative and non-experimental, thus we are using the observation method of documentary sources; that is, going through documented evidence to discover the various information that have made this work scientific. Non-experiments are based on the same logic as experiments and can be designed to determine associations. While the study couches the hypothesis in relational terms, (dependent and independent variables), it does not use experiment or controlled groups.

The relationship amongst variables in our hypothesis is asymmetrical. As Rosenberg (1968, cited in Ugoma 2010: 33) opines, “in this type of relationship, we postulate that one variable (the independent variable) is ‘essentially for’ another (the dependent variable)”. Our variables exhibit the type of asymmetrical relationship which Rosenberg (1968) has described “essentially a necessary precondition for a given effect”. In our first hypothesis for instance, there is a relationship between the ethnic interest of the Nigerians living in the Bakassi area and their rejection of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling. The same pattern is observed in our second hypothesis. There is a relationship between the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling (which took not cognizance of the ethnic interest of the Bakassians) and the secessionist bid of Nigerians residing in the peninsular.

To meaningfully undertake the validation or otherwise of our hypothesis, this study utilizes the ex-post facto design. That is, the tests of hypothesis involve observing the independent and dependent variables at the same time because the effects of the former on the latter have already taken place before investigation. Kerlinger (1977) defines the ex-post facto design as a form of descriptive research in which an independent variable has already occurred and in which an investigator starts with the observation of a dependent variable; he then studies the independent variable in retrospect for its possible relationship to and effects on the dependent variable.

The choice of ex post facto design is necessitated by the nature of our research questions. The essential variables in our hypotheses are such that controls groups cannot be introduced to address the various effects of ethnicity and the rejection of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling as well as the secessionist bid of the Bakassi people.
1.2.3 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

**Bakassi Peninsular:** a peninsula is any long piece of land projecting into the sea. Bakassi peninsular therefore, refers to that long piece of land projecting into the Lake Chad sea, that is the exact area in context between Nigeria and Cameroon over its sovereignty/ Nigeria and Cameroon over its sovereignty. It is an area of some 1,00km of mangrove swamp and half submerged islands protruding into the Bight of Bonny (previously known as the Bight of Biafra), which since the 18th century, the peninsula has been occupied by fishermen settlers most of whose inhabitants are Efik – speaking people of Nigeria (Nnen, 1970).

**Ethnicity:** In pure political terms, ethnic Nationality (Obasigwe, 2007). This concept has been used interchangeably with national states or ethnic group. It therefore, refers to communities of people with years of identical and identifiable language, geographical homogeneity, political and common customs and outlooks, although there may exist slight differences in their dialects. For instance, the Igbo group is an ethnic nationality which had existed independent of other national states before the intrusion of the British. Within the group, there may exist some differences in the dialects of say, the Enugu and the Imo, but the Igbo language remains supreme.

**Province:** One of the areas that some countries governments and equally constituting a constituency. Used to describe one of the two areas into which Nigeria was divided during colonial rule/British rule (Northern and Southern proninces).

**Sovereignty:** Refers to the absolute power of a state to exercise supreme legal authority over its own affairs, within its territory without any form of external control. In our Bakassi context, sovereignty is used to denote the absolute power of either of the two countries (Nigeria Cameroon) to have jurisdiction – supreme legal authority over its own affairs within the territory of Bakass without any form of external control. It is also an attribute of the state, characterizing the possession by it of all the possible powers of independent statehood, including constitutional and legislative supremacy, which entitle its government to make and implement
its own decisions in domestic affairs and in the conduct of international relations, without the prior consent or permission of an outside power (Obasigwe 2007).

**Colonialism:** Colonialism is a coercive foreign rule foisted on an indigenous people, which always has a its aim, economic exploitation of the colonized people hence, we can safely argue that it is an extention of capitalism. It also has as its objective the distortion of the people’s political and cultural institutions. Colonialism in Africa is of considerable antiquity dating back to the era of the Portuguese slave dealers in the fifteenth century. However, modern colonialism in Africa is traceable to the second half of the nineteenth century. This was the period of the European scramble for, and partition of, Africa (Chukwu, 2002).

**Self-determination:** This is the right of a people, group country to decide its fate, run it’s own affairs economically, politically, culturally and other wise, without any external intervention. The Bakassi inhabitants it in the area in contention have been seeking their political self determination, leading to their declaration of the republic of Bakassi.

**Imperialism:** This is a system of international relations which enables a military and technologically much stronger state to extent its political or economic power over a weaker one with or without the consent of the inhabitants of the weak state. Imperialism in modern times has been motivated by a number of factors, including commercial ambitions, rabid nationalism and the so-called incidental humanitarianism. It is often bred by capitalism.

**Protectorate:** As compared to the colony, a protectorate was so used by the British in Nigeria to connote paternalism (fatherly care, love and protection). Thus, when so used, they had in mind “protection” against any possible aggression from external forces. In colonial Nigeria the protectorate (protected area) was largely populated by the indigenous people, and it was here that indirect rule policy applied most. In Southern Nigeria, the Niger Coast protectorate originally ruled by the Royal Nigeria company, was taken over by the British government in 1900
and declared the southern Nigeria protectorate. In the same year, protectorate of northern Nigeria was also created (Chukwu, 2002).

**Nationalism:** Seen in the light of African reaction to European rule (colonialism) it can be explained to mean a patriotic feeling of oneness which propelled the people to demand for their independence. The essence was principally to secure political independence and thus maximize the socio-economic prosperity therefore. Often it is considered to be more pronounced with the presence of superior foreign powers dominating the weak ones.

In a more generic usage, the term nationalism has its classical connotation. Here it does mean unity of language and culture of a political unit.

**Ethnic Nationalism:** is the practices of ethnic ideology or simply tribalism, each of which at some point necessitates the exploitation of differences in nationality for any purposes. One consequences of ethnocentrism, itself an inward-looking and chauvinistic attitude towards ones nationality or cultural group, with a correspondingly suspicious and hostile attitude towards others, especially those held to be in competitive relations with ones own. (Obasigwe, 2007: 283)

**Secession:** Refers to the fact of an area or group becoming independent from the country on large group that it belongs to. It is also an act of withdrawing from an alliance or federation. In the Bakassi context it connotes the Bakassians treating to separate and gain independence from either the federation of Nigeria or Cameroon.

**Irredentism:** Activities of people of similar cultural or other strong characteristics but in separate political boundaries, to re-unite, usually the smaller with the bigger, under a single polity, one important expression of nationalism, with important consequences for international relations and international and municipal laws. (Obasigwe, 2007).
**Treaty**: Means any formal agreement between states in the international system. The basic instrument in relations between states, defining them, especially the mutually derivative questions of diplomacy and conflict, trade, sports, people-to-people and other cultural contacts. Also a written agreement, essentially between states, usually signed by the accredited plenipotentiaries.
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CHAPTER TWO

THE ETHNIC MAP OF THE BAKASSI AND EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM
From the above stance, “the Bakassi peninsular is an area of some 1,000km of mangrove swamp and half submerged islands protruding into the Bight of Bonny (previously known as the Bight of Biafra). Since the 18th century, the peninsular has been occupied by fishermen settlers, most of whose inhabitants are Efik-speaking people of Nigeria (Anene, 1970: 54).

It is situated at the extreme eastern and of the Gulf of Guinea, where the warm east flowing Guinea current (called Aya Efiat in Efik) meets the cold north flowing Benguela current (called Aya Ubenekang in Efik). These two great ocean currents interact, creating huge foamy breakers which constantly advance towards the shone, and building submarine shoals rich in fish, shrimps, and an amazing variety of other marine life forms (Tary, 2003:5).

Again, Ngang, (2005:4) in his description of the Bakassi area, notes also that “The Bakassi peninsular covers a total area of approximately 1000sq.km and is located on the extreme eastern and of the Gulf of Guinea between latitudes 4°25, and 5°10’N and longitudes 8°20’ and 9°08’E. It is largely made up of a cluster of low-lying, swampy and mangrove covered islands with a population though subject of some dispute, estimated between 150,000 to 300,000 inhabitants.

The indigenous inhabitants are predominantly of the Efik tribe, which sees itself as part of the federation of Nigeria, hence they speak languages similar to the languages spoken in certain Eastern states of Nigeria, and they are culturally homogenous. Bakassi peninsula is situated between Nigeria and Cameroon at the corner of the Gulf of Guinea. He added that, “the fact that two great ocean currents, the cold Benguela current and the warm Guinea current meet here, provides suitable conditions for a very large variety of fish and other forms of marine wildlife. Hence, most of the inhabitants of the peninsular indulge in fishing.

Nevertheless, after the arrival of European colonialists during the European scramble for Africa in the second half of the 19th century, Queen Victoria signed a treaty of protection with
the king and chiefs of Akwa Akpa, known to Europeans as “Old Calabar”, on 10 September, 1884. The Bakassi area was at that time under the rule of the Old Calabar, but by signing this accord; they literally ceded their kingdom to Britain as a protectorate. Britain therefore could do whatever she wanted to do with it. Nigeria itself, according to history, became a state by amalgamation three decades later in 1914.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE NIGERIA CAMEROON BOUNDARY

Cameroon and Nigeria are States situated on the west coast of Africa. Their land boundary extends from Lake Chad in the north to the Bakassi Peninsular in the south. Their coastlines are adjacent and are washed by the waters of the Gulf of Guinea. Four States border Lake Chad:  Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The coastal region, where the southern part of the land boundary ends, is the area of the Bakassi Peninsular. This peninsular, situated in the hollow of the Gulf of Guinea, is bounded by the River Akwayafe to the west and by the Rio del Rey to the east. It is an amphibious environment, characterized by an abundance of water, fish stocks and mangrove vegetation. The Gulf of Guinea, which is concave in character at the level of the Cameroonian and Nigerian coastlines, is bounded by other States, in particular by Equatorial Guinea, whose Bioko Island lies opposite Nigerian/Cameroons coastlines (Ekoko, 2004:16).

According to Fombo, (2006:39), “the border between Nigeria and Cameroon can be differentiated into roughly four physical and ecological sectors. In its northern most part, the land boundary traverses Lake Chad and the neighbouring plains at an average altitude of about 300m above sea level. This unbroken plain during the rainy season from June to September is inundated over large areas by waters of the yedseram River and its tributaries. This area, especially as one approaches Lake Chad, becomes completely water logged during the rains. During the dry season, which is longer, the soil loses the excess water and becomes hard, providing rear water, cultivable land and pasture.

Beyond this, the second phase which can be characterized as the land boundary is a near continuous chain of mountains and valleys only broken by Benue valley near yola. The area provides the source of headwaters for many rivers that drain into either the Benue and Cross River basins that flow into Nigeria or the Sanaga and its tributaries that flow into the Atlantic on
the Cameroon Coast. The predominant human activity in this sector is grazing although there are patches of cultivated grounds. This sector continues with a gradual descend from the Savanna mountains region through more peaks and valleys and traverses very dense equatorial forest before approaching the coast. Describing this border, Anene (1970), gives a vivid account of its features: “The region stretching from the Bamenda Plateau to the Alantika Mountain peak south of Yola, is one of fantastic mountain formations, including Plateaux, parallel ranges and innumerable hill-tops. These are broken into the deep ravines which provide the river systems through which tributaries flow north-westwards of the Benue and North-broad plain, some eighty miles by forty miles, dominated by Yola. Between the Benue and Lake Chad the geographical configuration repeats the features of the region south of Yola. There are the same irregular masses and a broken sea of granite peaks. The Yadseram valley, however, provides uninterrupted access to the plains or Ornu. The irregular mountain formations, north and south of Yola, gradually disappear as one moves Eastwards into Cameroon Republic, to give way to a low Plateau covered with grass in the north and thick tropical forest in the south” (Anene 1970: 40).

The third geographical sector of this border is the coastal region that descends into the area of the Bakassi peninsular and the adjoining islands. This area is in the trough of the Gulf of Guinea with predominantly mangrove swamp vegetation. The Akpayafe assumed to be at the boundary in this area; the Rio del Rey and Ndian River to the east, as well as the Calabar and Cross River to the west, dominate the hydrology to this generally amphibious environment. This area is somewhat believed to the an “Edorado”, about with not just marine and aquatic life but substantial deposits of crude oil.

Fourthly and perhaps the final sector of this boundary is the maritime zone characterized by a broken and adjacent coast. The maritime boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon also ends in an ill-defined tripoint with Equatorial Guinea. The presence of Eloko island (Fernando po) belonging to equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and principe within this gulf further complicated delineation and demarcation efforts and the fact that the latter pair was not party to the dispute at the Hague precluded a comprehensive judicial ruling on the entire maritime boundary between these countries. Considerable oil deposits in this area and the
maritime life have impassioned commotions and compounded efforts, and at the same time, accentuated the need for a clear demarcation of the maritime zone”.

To this end, the import of understanding the geography of the Nigeria-Cameroon frontier to guide our appreciation of the border dispute cannot be overemphasized. As noted by Aghemelo and Ibhasephor, (2006: 2) “the geography of most of the zone in the boundary, has impact or even dictated the settlement patterns along the boundary. Besides, its direct impact on settlement patterns, equally critical is the fact that human activities along the border are also dependent on the geography, which indeed carriers a higher premium for developing societies that depend more heavily and directly on the immediate environs for subsistence exploitation of hydrological resources. On one side of the border, for instance, the flow pattern of rivers that take their rise and flow across to the other. (eg. persistent wrangles over water management on the river kilia). There is the significant overhang of population and human activities across the border, especially where the same people straddle the boundary. In the maritime zone, natural resources in the form of marine life and oil deposits lie across the border, providing opportunities for intense competition and bickering over their control.

2.2 ETHNIC GROUPS AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Naturally, African societies (Ethnic Nationalities) are separated from one another by boundaries just like elsewhere in the world. These boundaries we may refer to here, as African traditional boundaries or lines are nothing more than the pre-colonial African groupings or settings. These settings are consequently formed by language. Hence, language groupings as a style of separation in Africa. In other words, Africa was segmented severally hitherto the European artificial divisions in Africa (European colonial boundaries), that form the modern states of Africa today.

Aye, (1994: 20 – 28), corroborated this fact, when he did a study “Akpabuyo in transition” to unveil Efik (the major ethnic group in Bakassi peninsular) occupation of the area today known as Bakassi peninsular. Aye puts the very long history thus; ‘No Efik person lives in isolation: everyone of them belongs to a House (Ufok), and anyone among them who is unable to trace his or her own House is not an Efik. The history of its origin therefore goes back to the
remotest past; and indeed long before their earliest commercial contact with Europe from the fifteenth century.

From the beginning Efik grew in family units, and each unit had its own family council. The head chief, Etinyin or partriarch, presided over the family council with its lesser chiefs, and his position of importance was guaranteed by his genealogy. Even when they sojourned in Ibom in the vicinity of Arochuku they lived in these family units. As years wore on these units developed into clans. They carried the same social system to Uruan during their sojourn in that country. When the civil crisis in Uruan (Ekon Abasi Anwan), compelled their exodus from that area they left in family grounds and clans so that wherever they went they grouped and settled in families which became known as House or Ufok. Enwang, one of the Efik clans, left Uruan and settled in Atakpa until their conflict with Henshaw Twon compelled their exodus to the present Oron Local Government Area.

The connotation of Ufok in this respect is not restricted to the building for people to live in, but conveys a much wider meaning of family unit embracing also the extended family and much more. As new generations arrived the family units became larger and the units broke up eventually into secondary and tertiary segments. Thus, the original Etinyin or partriarch was still regarded as the spiritual and administrative head of the larger unit. Each unit recognized the eldest son as its partriarch who must represent it in the larger unit. Etinyin therefore became the embodiment in flesh of the original founder of the family and his power in the clan became very wide and unchallenged.

An Efik House was made up of groups related patrilineally to a male ancestor. There were also included the wives of the men, all the sons and the daughters yet unmarried. To all intents and purpose, a House had also absorbed foreign refugees who had field from trouble spots or from internal or fratricidal conflicts in their own countries to Old Calabar for an asylum, such as the Nyanibos of Bonny or the Nakandas of the Cameroon. Indeed, it was a socio-political extension of the patriarchal concept. The Efik have a proverb that “owo edi inyene” (to have people is to be wealthy) which means the larger the kindred the stronger.

As the family grew large enough to form an Efik town, the evolution of the patriarchy became a cherished tradition. When Efike arrived in Creek Town towards the close of the fourteenth century there was the Atiai from which sprang Ema Atai, Eke Atai and Ukpong Atai.
As the Efike fanned out of Creek Town, Efiom Ekpo House emerged and from which also sprang Nsa Efiom and Ufok Orok or Duke House. Newer Houses followed as the existing ones became larger and multiplied. Magnus Adam Duke dates the newer Houses of Eyo Nsa Eyo Ema, Ephraim Duke Ephraim as having been founded in 1690 A.D.

Thus the Efik House system developed naturally from the patriarchal nature of the Efik socio-political system. In other words, The family units that grew to be known as Efik tribe have been in existence as “family groups recognizing a common paternity ever since Efik arrived at their present habitat on the estuary of the Cross River”. It was this system that they adapted to meet the demands of the latest prevailing influences of development in a fresh environment, not only to suit domestic administration, but also to meet the needs of the existing socio-economic structure of a new society. Certainly, it was not the environment that imposed the social system on them. This is a fact which many historians fail to grasp or refuse to understand. The patriarchal social system of Efik society is of oriented origin which originated before they ever entered what is now Nigeria. Reverend Waddell writing in the middle of the nineteenth century recorded that:

The government of Calabar... was essentially patriarchal, which meant simply that the head of every family governed it, independent of every other, by his sole authority (cited in Aye 1994: 23).

Rev. Hugh Goldie in the late nineteenth century added:

As in patriarchal times, the power of the head of a house is supreme over his own people, and the heads of the house forming a town community, in council regulate the matters which are of common concernment(cited in Aye, 1994: 23).

In the early years of the twentieth century Rev. J.K. Magregor writing on Calabar remarked:
The social system is patriarchal. The oldest male of the ruling House was recognized as Head of the clan, and all matters affecting the clan were decided by him sitting in council with free members of it (cited in Aye, 1994: 23).

Before the nineteenth century these Houses in Old Calabar had grown to become autonomous settlements which became known as towns, thus we had Eyamba Town, Cobham Town, Archibong Town, Henshaw Town and Old Town. The first three were a part of Duke Town while Old Town or Obutong in the north of these settlements remained isolated and autonomous. Dike refers to them as “republics” even though the three were within Duke Town itself.

Magnus Adam Duke records that when a House was founded the founder, or what he calls “conditor”, was not always the caretaker or “rector”. Some of the founders preferred to keep both offices, probably owing to absence of reliable lieutenants. When King Eyamba V founded his new Eyamba House in 1834 he made “Captain” (Etubom) Duke Ephraim his caretaker. Terms such as lineages, towns, Houses, or “wards” are used by G.I. Jones for Efik Houses.

M.D.W. Jeffreys definitely failed or refused to acknowledge the patriarchal development of Efik House system and wrote in 1935 that it was “a direct product of, and response to, the European slave trade”. The statement which is really misleading needs some consideration and amendment, for the slave trade came to meet the House system in full operation among Efik and left it still in its dynamic historical period.

The claim by Latham that the expansion of what he terms “compound groups” into autonomous wards which he claims depended on the accumulation of slaves by members of the compound groups should not be taken seriously, and needs some reassessment. Three factors, among others, lay behind the segmentation of Efik House:

1. Population pressure engendered by the arrival of new generations,
2. Constant friction and tension in the Houses themselves over political power and a desire to share in the commercial wealth of Old Calabar and,
The death of the Great Duke Ephraim in 1834 gave the green light to those Houses he had emasculated into Duke to seek their freedom and autonomy as hitherto, and these generated “centrifugal forces” that precipitated in a movement away from the centre. This became more expressive in Duke House where political power and wealth had centered for centuries. These forces, therefore, sent the oppressed Houses like Archibong, Eyamba, Etim Efiom, Ntiero etc. breaking away from Duke, the parent body of the Okoho group.

Besides, a lineage was never confined to a compound. This is a misunderstanding of the term “compound” in a traditional African society.

One lineage often accommodates itself in several compounds or even a village, and this habit of some historians tenaciously holding on to Jeffreys’ hackneyed and misleading claims that Efik House system was the direct result of the introduction of slaves into Efik society is doing more harm than good to the history of Old Calabar, because it orientates unwary historian into accepting the issue as axiomatic. And if the advent of the slave trade had been the genesis of Efik House system certainly the number of Houses would have either stagnated or diminished or eroded with the end of the slave economy in the nineteenth century. But as these Houses are concerned their number has multiplied and they still go on increasing with the passage of time.

Occasionally poor people and those who were insolvent, for their security in the uncertainty of the age in which debtors were often sold with their families, surrendered themselves to powerful heads of Houses (otomo ubok) who in return demanded reciprocal reward in services for their protection. In this way many Houses also grew and expanded. The more powerful the head the more this retainers.

When the Great Duke Ephraim became the ruler of Duke Town in 1814 Efik Houses stood at 29. With his usual propensity for intolerance of rivals he set himself the task of emasculating other Houses into his own Duke House so that by the time he died in 1834 he had, in the words of Magnus Adam Duke in 1890, made:
All Old Calabar princes and gentlemen his household slaves and succeeded to reduce the number of the Houses or ‘captaindorns’ in Old Calabar from nearly 30 to 15 and many of these Houses integrated into his new Duke House”.

The creation of Efik Houses is a continuous historical process, because new ones are being created and added to the old with the lapse of years and as circumstances dictate. Today, the number of these Houses stand at 34, and each House is administered by an Etuborn. An Etuborn in Efik tradition is ranked higher than a Chief, and he is created by the Chiefs and members of his House to administer the House, while the Obong Efik is appointed by the college of Etuborns of which he is a member by following the traditional method of appointment; but when the traditional method proves unworkable owing “to differences between the parties, modern electoral procedure is adopted as an alternative method of selection”.

The appointment of the Etuborn is meant to be for life subject, of course, to an upright behaviour and satisfactory administration. Age and birth alone are not the only criteria for his appointment. There are other necessary adjuncts, namely, good behaviour, administrative ability, devotion to the general interest of his House and the community. If he passes through these social and political hurdles and his appointment confirmed by his House, he is not officially recognized until he is inducted in the court of the Obong of Calabar, a traditional ceremony of great significance which is rounded off by his being capped with the traditional ‘biak’ by the Obong. On march 20, 1987, Etuborn Etim Bassey Edet of Atabong was inducted in the court of the Obong of Calabar.

Each Efik House is a corporate body, with its chiefs, executives, heads of family and villages, officers and members, holding its regular council meetings in order to bring reality into the system; to “bring together men and women who share a common ancestral father or mother”, and to encourage the formation of branches in other parts of the country. Each is guided by its own constitution and rules to be observed. Some of the House derive their funds from membership and registration fees, levies, donations or proceeds from any force of entertainment, or from commercial ventures. Duke House in particular, the largest of the Okoho
group, has three Wards in Akpabuyo. Each House sets up the qualification for its membership. Furthermore, there is regular stock-taking of their satellite villages distributed either in the Calabar Municipality or outside it. The Houses hold regular elections either to replace those officers whose terms of office run out or to replace a new Etuborn at the demise of the former.

Some Houses have their Boards of Trustees. Members are encouraged to save money for their own use in times of distress, trouble or sickness. Some grant loans to members on certain conditions. Members are encouraged also to identify themselves with the funeral arrangements of a deceased member. Indeed, the House system among Efik is gradually undergoing its own evolution, from the ordinary patriarchal concept to that of the guild for mutual survival.

The existence of the different Houses should be symbiotic so that one benefits from the other’s advantage. Excessive loyalty to a House should have its limits because too much concentration on emphases and activities of one’s House for the express purpose of eclipsing another may create the danger of unhealthy rivalry, overlap of interest and misunderstanding that can in turn propagate conflict likely to endanger the well-being of Efik in general as was ugly demonstrated in nineteenth century.

Interestingly, these ethnic groups related in all spheres. Socio-economic and cultural interactions among them pervades it all. Invariably, the permeability of the Cameroon-Nigeria border by the same groups, in pursuit of their interest, notwithstanding the modern state style of boundaries, is eminent. Fanso, (1986) puts it thus:

In traditional Africa, the concepts of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with who the particular states shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region fronting the two neighbours marked by it. In this sense, the boundary was the zone were two states were united or joined together.

(Fanso, 1986:3 ).
In other words, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contacts. Therefore, contacts have been on by these ethnic groups along the Nigeria-Cameroon border. Economically, socio-cultural, etc. they have related.

According to Sama and Ross, (2006:103), “the permeability of the Nigeria-Cameroon border has been documented by scholars such as Margaret Niger-Thomas (2001), Kate Meagher (2001) and Molem (2004), who investigated cross-border economic activities. According to Meagher (2001), “the available evidence suggests that there has been an increase in the actual quantity of cross-border flows, as well as a deepening of the penetration of cross-border operations in to the heart of the national territories”. This implies that cross-border operations have undergone some structural reorganizations. It also indicates that the socio-economic interactions of the respective indigenous populations are carried on with little regard to the colonial demarcations. And because the boundary is ill-defined, unimportant to them, the natives of the area do not confine their socio-economic activities to particular areas. Indigenes in both countries are able to evade gendarmes from Cameroon and police, customs and immigration officers from Nigeria given that they are very familiar with the terrain. In fact, according to Niger-Thomas, smuggling is no longer an issue for concern, but has become an accepted strategy for both survival and capital accumulation. In his words;

... Not only smugglers but other categories of people in society too seem to be benefiting from this activity, including state officials themselves. In this part of Cameroon (the south west province), which is closely aligned to Nigeria, it is clear that national borders are just political creations (Niger-Thomas 2001: 47).

Basically, “Ethnic composition of border regions is an important factor in cross-border relations between African countries as it is the case elsewhere. The presence of the same groups straddled across boundaries of African states is known to be a major influence on the socio-cultural activities across the border and relations between the areas sharing such populations. These activities have on one occasion, posed serious treats to state security and on others,
posed even greater challenges to the economic. As Asiwaju (1984) points out, ‘it is in recognition of this threat to state security that significant interest has been generated on African divide peoples referred to as “population overhang” with regard to their contribution to conflicts (Fombo, 2006: 71).

Insofar as sharing of ethnically similar populations is known to affect border relations, evidence on the degree and direction of this influence is mixed. Asiwaju thinks that this influence is positive and should be encouraged as a step in the right direction towards the illusive dream of African unity. To him, the fact that such inhabitants ignore the artificially contrived boundaries of the colonial masters by maintaining across the border kinship ties, other socio-cultural relations and economic activities, is an achievement that eludes westernized elites who pay narrow and parochial obedience to specific states. Notwithstanding this positive side of uncontrolled borders, such activities as smuggling and uncontrolled grazing across international boundaries by pastoralist often lead to disagreements among states. These disagreements spring up from the inherent contradictions in the desires of the people and their traditions on one hand and the exigencies of the modern state. A major reason has been advanced for this situation. Asiwaju (1987, as quoted in Fombo 2006: 72) puts it thus:

... Borderlands in (pre-colonial) African societies were regions of overlapping cultures, manifest not only in the similarities or even identical nature and character of people on both sides of the border, but also similarity in the kind of economic activities they undertake (Asiwaju, 1987).

This, invariably creates a livelihood regime that would be injured by any attempt at maintaining an absolute boundary desirous of the modern nation state, or in the trenchant words of Anene, “boundaries (that) have acquired a sanctity alien to African traditional frontiers.

Despite the long-standing border disputes between both countries, groups in Cameroon and Nigeria continued to have a cordial and brotherly relationship with one another. With a
particular attention to their economic relations along the maritime region between Nigeria and Cameroon, Fombo (2006:68), pays attention to this when he observed that; “from pre-colonial days, the entire zone comprising the Calabar Rivers, Cross River and Ndian River basin formed the hinterland of lucrative trade in oil palm produce among others and imported European products. The trading “houses” of Efik city-states along the west banks of the Calabar and Cross Rivers also owned agricultural lands across the Akwayafe cultivated by slave labour. Dating back also to pre-colonial times, the maritime area especially around the creeks of the Bakassi, has been the base of an important fishing industry. Reports of colonial administrators spoke of “good business and prosperity” among the predominantly migrant and itinerant or seasonal population reliant of fishing.

The relative importance of this area to the industry has grown in recent years. Not only has there been an increase in the population in the number of people moving into this peripheral area of fund for a means of livelihood, but also the drying up of stocks from other areas invaded by large trawlers from Europe and North Africa. Perhaps more important is the damage done to the habitats of fish in the neighbouring regions, especially, the Niger Delta caused by exploration and exploitation activities of oil companies, which have exposed an arrogant disregard to preserving the environment. As such, more people who could have been living in other areas have had to go further a field to the Bakassi. The population of the Bakassi and the neighbouring islands has increased from a few hundred fishing folks in the 1920s to 150.000 in the 1950s” (Fombo, 2006: 69).

Conclusively, besides fishing, other economic activities also take place within this region. As is the case with most of the Nigeria-Cameroon border, a large volume of this pertains to informal and uncontrolled transborder trade relations. However, unlike in other areas where some measure of control exists, the difficult terrain around the maritime boundary gives no room for regulation by customs services that usually do this with undue use of force. Anxiety by the Cameroon government to regulate such activities leads it to send in paramilitary forces that usually go in with methods, detested by the population. People especially allies, involved in fishing and other economic activities-legitimate and illicit have suffered harassment and they have bombarded their home governments with complains against their maltreatment, which invariably lead to more successes. Such highhandedness may not have restricted to the treatment of Nigerian.
The cross-border activities of criminals in particular, smuggling and the over reaction of Cameroon security forces have left a legacy of bitterness and mutual recrimination between the two governments over the treatment of nationals within each others territory. Little wonder that Nigeria’s initial professed reasons for intervention in the Bakassi area was to protect its nationals from the exactions of the security forces. The population of this area within predominantly Nigeria province has increasingly felt alienated and has sought the support of their home government to ensure safety while they relate with others in the area.

2.3 ETHNIC GROUPS AND EVOLUTION OF COLONIAL BOUNDARIES

African territories which have attained independence and national sovereignty today, cannot in a strict sense, be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture, they are indeed, the arbitrary creations of the colonialists. The manner in which European nations descended on Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century in their scramble for territory, was bound to leave a heritage of artificially controlled borderlines, which now demarcates the emergent African states. Reflecting on the emergency of many new sovereign states in contemporary Africa, Davidson (1967) observed: “Their history begins anew. They reappear today in the sad evening of the world of nation-states: Yet their own tradition, one may note was seldom on of narrow nationality. Their genius was for integration-integration by conquest s the times prescribed, but also but an every partful mongling and migration. They were never patient of exclusive frontiers... Nineteenth century imperialism cut across boundaries and peoples and left; for a later Africa, the problem of redrawing frontiers on a rational plan. As independence widens across these coming years, will this plan stop short with the making of nation-states aping European example?... it remains to be seen (cited in Agbemelo and Ibhasebhor: 179). In other words, Africa was largely controlled by indigenous people in the 1870s, but by 1914, it became almost exclusively subjugated and divided into protectorates/colonies by the European powers (Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, 2006: 1; Ronrke 1997:5). A clear example of this is as obtained in the case of Nigeria state. As Chukwu (2002) writes, “No doubt, Nigerian-British relations in the early years of the twentieth century showed how weak the former was in relation to the latter, militarily and technologically. To this end, Britain was able to successfully impose her political and economic policies and practices without the consent of the people. Among the propelling forces for territorial acquisitions in
Africa was the rise of the capitalist class in Britain following the Industrial Revolution. The capitalists, in search of investments abroad, did demand that the British government should establish political control over the indigenous Nigerian peoples. Such political control was traditionally designed to be backed by military power on the part of the invading state. Let us therefore consider how the British used their military power in an attempt to conquer, how they equally used their military security for their economic and political investments.

The year 1851 has always been seen as marking a watershed in the annals of Nigerian political history. This is because it was in that year that the event that would affect the whole of the Niger area (which eventually emerged as Nigeria) took place. As at the time the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was Lord Palmerston who had as his policy thrust the extension of British legitimate trade to all parts of the world and was prepared to remove any impediment on his way to actualizing the policy. It was thus in a bid to execute his programme of trade expansion in West Africa that Palmerston appointed Mr. John Beecroft a British Consul in charge of the Bights of Benin and Biafra with a residence at Fernando Po.

At the time in question, the King of Dahomey had bluntly refused to give up his alleged involvement in slave trading activities unless the King of Lagos was first forced to stop it. It would be recalled that the international slave trade was at this time an outlaw and was being replaced by the so-called legitimate trade that would benefit the European economy. Consequent upon the controversy and stalemate over who should first be made to stop the trade Beecroft was instructed by London to deal with the Lagos King Kosoko, a man considered by some analysts as being of a strong and resolute character. According to Nwafor Orizu: “He was very sensitive about his personal right as a sovereign of the portion of Nigeria which he ruled. When the British made their first attempt to see him, he flatly refused to have any dealings with them... declined to sign a treaty and said the friendship of England was not wanted.

It was this air of boldness and assertiveness on the part of Kosoko that necessitated the use of force by Consul Beecroft to attack and deport him. Although he put up some initial resistance, when the British employed the maxim guns, Kosoko, (undermined by his local opponents) was defeated and driven into exile.
Having gone into exile, Kosoko was quickly replaced by his uncle, Akitoye, who had assisted the British in dethroning the former. A man of weak character Akitoye was pro-British for fear of being deposed as had happened to Kosoko. On January 1, 1852, a treaty was signed between him and the British representative. The following were the principal terms of the treaty:

i. The abolition of the slave trade
ii. Provision for freedom of trade for British subjects, other Europeans not excluded
iii. Expulsion of European slave traders and
iv. Protection of the European missionaries giving them the right to build churches and schools.

As can be inferred from the foregoing, the essence of the treaty was to provide freedom and security that would facilitate the so-called legitimate trade for European traders. It would be re-called that the slave trade at the time was becoming obsolete and unprofitable and had therefore, become illegitimate in the eyes of the British. On the whole, the essence of the treaty was guided by commercial ambition, though coated in a religious language.

While in exile, Kosoko made some subterranean moves to re-posses his lost throne. For instance, in 1853 he started an attack known as the “Ija Ifaseg Boja” war on Akitoye. Amidst these inspired attacks by Kosoko, Akitoye was said to have died and was consequently succeeded by his son, Dosumu.

A man of weaker character, Dosumu was supported to the throne with a view to the eventual cession of Lagos to the British. At the time when the Whig government in London was emphasizing trade expansionism everywhere in the world especially West Africa, the British only needed a pliant king in the person of Dosumu to dominate the trade in Lagos. A coastal enclave that had hitherto played a dominant role in the slave trade, Lagos was badly needed by Britain in the emerging legitimate trade. Besides London needed the Lagos port at all cost to be able to ward off the French military incursion in parts of the West Coast of Africa. According to sources, however, as at June 22, 1861 when Dosumu and his people received London’s threat of bombardment, they had refused to cede their kingdom by peaceful means. It was through the use of force that king Dosumu was eventually forced to sign away his kingdom on board the “Prometheus” in 1861. Thus the land which had hitherto belonged to the King of Lagos
henceforth was called a colony of the British government – a small strip costal land one hundred and ten miles long by four to twenty miles wide in the Southern portion of the country.

The cession of Lagos by king Dosumu in 1861 signified a number of things in the history of the Niger area. First, it marked the beginning of the conquest of Nigeria by Britain. Secondly, it would cause trade expansion not only along the coastal areas, but also in the hinterland. Thirdly, it would help Britain focus more closely on the independent political states of the Niger valley. This political gerrymandering of Lagos by the British would further encourage her territorial aggrandizement in Africa. But more importantly, this political conquest of “Nigeria” was accentuated by the Berlin Conference on West Africa of 1884 – 5 (Chukwu, 2002: 30 – 32).

To this, apart the artificial demarcation or partitioning of the Africa (African boundaries) by Europeans during the closing hours of the 19th century, to form our modern statehoods today, Africa was grouped and controlled by indigenous people along ethnical bases. Baye, (2010:10) notes that “The colonial boundaries in these configurations were not established according to the various indigenous groupings. Grouping nations together in some cases and dividing them in others was a common feature as long as it was consisted with the security and economic interests of the colonial powers.

Continuing, he points out that “after independence, most of Africa became and is still troubled by the legacy of trying to get originally different indigenous groupings to live peacefully in a single country or to get the same ethnic group to live peacefully in different neighbouring countries”. This is corroborated by Asobie when he stresses that “the eastern part of Nigeria’s international frontier was particularly problematic. It consisted of along strech on land and a shorter maritime section. Extending for a distance of about 1,500 miles (or 1,696 kilometers) between Lake Chad and the Bight of Biafra, much of the land border was undemarcated. The entire length was never properly marked on land, or even clearly delineated, throughout colonial rule. The process of demarcation was begun on the stretch from Lake Chad to the Kombon Mountains in the 1932 – 1940 period, but was not completed. On land, the few border posts that existed before the interaction of Nigeria with the former Southern Cameroon (later known as Western Cameroon), had disappeared during the long period (1922 to 1960), when the British administered the territory as part of Nigeria. with respect to the maritime side, the uncertainly regarding what was the boundary was even greater. The Anglo-German Agreement, which formed the basis of the boundary line, was based on speculation about the nature of the
territory. For instance, in one of the Agreements concerning the southern – most section of the eastern border (dealing with the Bakassi peninsula), the Rio-Del-Rey was assumed to be a river 80 miles (129 kilometers) long and flowing into the sea. But subsequent explorations revealed that it was rather a maze of creeks, a network of rivulets, linking two larger streams, namely, the Akapayafe and the Ndian. But, then, instead of now using the Ndian river, which fairly neatly separates two ethnic groups on either side, as the boundary, the Akpayafe was used, thus splitting the Efiks into two-some in Nigeria, the rest of their kith and kin in Cameroon (Ede, 1981: 294: 298).

It was not the Efiks alone that were divided by the eastern boundary. The Eko and the Boki ethnic groups were also split by the south-eastern boundary (Anene, 1970: 285). Furthermore, many Eastern Nigerians remained in Western Cameroon after its separation from Nigeria in 1961. Yet, the Western provincial government of Cameroon, fearful that if the boundary did not operate as a ‘human divide’, the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria would flood Cameroon and dominate the economic life of the country, insisted on strict application of state functions at the border.

As in most of Africa, therefore, the origins of the conflict situation between Cameroon and Nigeria over border issue can be partly, traced to the colonial era and some post-independence political activities. The European diplomats who have little or no knowledge of our local realities in terms of the ethnic groupings in Africa that had formed walls of separations, came and were merging and remerging arbitrarily the ethnic groups on board. Hence the spread of one ethnic group, in so many international independent territories today in Africa.

Nevertheless, there seems to be little logic in relation to the demarcation of the boundaries of African colonies by European states. Asiwaju (1984), quoted in Ross and Sama, (2005: 105 – 106) points out that “a study of European achieves supports accidental rather than intentional making of African boundaries. This meant that the European interest were of primary concern. The population of the frontier areas was envisaged, if at all, only as dim and inarticulate presence in the background”. Therefore in determining boundaries the Europeans did not take African interest into consideration. An Anglo-French commission of diplomatic and colonial experts was formed for the purpose of demarcating the boundaries, but the limits of its expertise soon became evident. Lord Robert Salisbury, British prime minister at that time of
partitioning, as quoted in Asiwaju, (1984), described the partitioning process quite aptly in the following words.

We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white mans feet have ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and Rivers and lakes were (Lord Salisbury, Speaking in 1890, cited in Asiwaju 1984: 64).

Although geographers were available to advise, Europeans’ knowledge of the physical, let alone the human, geography of Africa was still rudimentary. According to Asiwaju (1984), a famous epigram defines geography as being about maps rather than Chaps, but its value is always defined by “the knowledge of the chaps who draw the maps”. Just like Fanso (1986), as noted before, opined that “the notion and function of the term” boundary differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts.

In traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular state or polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it. In this sense, the boundary was the zone where two states were united or joined together (Fanso, 1986).

In other words, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. European states, however, conceived of boundaries as lines or points of separation. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the former German colony in 1916 provided that
inhabitants living in or near the border region had six months from the time that the border was delimited to express their intention to settle in a region placed under the jurisdiction of the other colonial power. A problem was thereby created, as Fanso notes again “The Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kin divided by the boundary were now “foreign”. They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the traditional ones with which they were familiar. They thought the former were only important to the white men who made them and were not immediately concerned about their existence until they were checked at crossing points. It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers (Fanso, 1986: 72)

According to Brownlie, (1979) “the actual demarcation of the Cameroon-Nigeria border took place over a long period of time from 12 July 1884, when the German colony of Cameroon was established, through the plebiscite of 11 February 1961. It was the outcome of this plebiscite that divided the British Northern and Southern Cameroons into distinct territories, which chose independence by joining Nigeria and French Cameroon, respectively. Brownlie provides a list of treaties and agreements that document the changes in the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary that took place during that time.

It is important to note that Northern and Southern Cameroons were British protectorate territories administered as part of Nigeria before 1961. There was not a separate administrative agency for the Cameroons. As a result the colonial boundaries was not considered as an impediment to social and economic activities, thus maintaining the ethnic-linguistic continuity of the region. In fact, at one time the leading political party in Nigeria was the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and Cameroons participated fully in the Nigeria parliament. This shared colonial history encouraged the Nigerian state to lay claim to the Bakassi peninsular as even after the Cameroonian left, social and economic relations between the people, did not stop.

Konings (2005) as cited in Sama and Ross, (2005:107) in their treatment of “Nigeria and Cameroon in past and colonial divide”, states that “the British method of administration led to the appearance that Nigeria rather than Britain was the colonial master of southern Cameroons. As he indicated, the post-1945 nationalist struggle in southern Cameroon was more anti-Nigeria than anti-colonial in character. Furthermore, he mentions that this situation gave rise to the
increasing peripheralization of southern Cameroons, which seem to be more of a colony within a colony. As mentioned above, being administered as an appendage of Nigeria led to a lack of socio-economic development and little advancement in the economy from the plantation economy established under German colonial rule. More significantly, the quasi-regional status and limited degree of self-government gained by southern Camerons in 1954 seemingly undermined the existing boundaries between what had been the German Cameroon protectorate and Nigeria. The southern Cameroons achieved full regional status within the federation of Nigeria in 1958.

The fact of southern Cameroons autonomy led to two problems once independence was subs-equently achieved. First, the southern Cameroons entered into a federal relationship with la-Republique du Cameroon, which proved to be unequal and antithetical to the democratic traditions that had begun to take root there. Secondly, La Republique treated the border between it and Nigeria as sacrosanct and resented the continuing ties between Nigerian groups and that of the southern Cameroonianians. Over the forth across the border Cameroon reacted strongly and a tense, sometimes conflictual relationship developed around the border.

In view of this background, it is not surprising that skirmishes between the two states intensified when Cameroon filed a series of pleadings with the ICJ beginning in 1994 through 1998 against Nigeria for “violently contesting Cameroon’s sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular and for occupying the territory with military troops (Konings, 2005). While Cameroon protested Nigeria’s impositions into the Bakassi, it did little to develop the region. In fact, Nigeria built roads, schools and medical clines in Bakassi further strengthening its assertions that the people living in the region were Nigerian and not Cameroons. To that extent, the colonial evolution of Nigeria-Cameroon boundary was one of the greatest colonial obfuscation as that sowed the ever continuing seed of discord between people of similar if not the same ethnic affinities that had related together before colonization.

2.5 BRITISH/GERMAN ADMINISTRATION AND OBFUSCATION OF THE NIGERIA-CAMEROON COLONIAL INTER-BOUNDARY
In the first place, following the industrial revolution in Europe around and during the 19th century, it became obvious that European traders (British and German Marchants), had long standing interest in this part of West Africa that later became known as Nigeria and Cameroon. The European trading Cameroon which started spreading their tentacles outside the shares of European did so to counter the contradictions created by capitalism in Europe.

This is because the industrial revolution led to the massive production of goods, the urgent need for market cheap raw materials and labour. The need therefore, to satisfy the above factors necessitated the struggle for the control of African territories among the European nations through their trading companies. The bid to maintain monopoly by these trading companies led to them, calling on their home countries for protection. The protection of the trading companies by the various European nations brought about rivalry among the countries of European.

Nevertheless, according to Fombo (2006: 41 – 42), “before the age of empire creation in Africa; trade, slavery, missionary activities as well as adventure had attracted Englishmen to this area, such that “pidgin English” for instance, was widely spoken among the coastal peoples and the business people. British Baptist missionaries had opened stations in Douala and Bimbia since 1845. However, the British Government had limited interest here and even turned down an offer in 1833 by natives to cede the maintain from Bimbia to Rio-Del-Rey. It is doubtful thought; if the kings of this area understood exactly what their offer meant. More plausibly, they were simply manipulated by (Europe) traders because they desired the protection of their home governments in area where they operated. Such alleged invitations also came from kings of Douala for annexation of Cameroon even before the Germans did”.

To this, it was not until 1884 that the British Government finally decided to annex the area. But by then it was too late for Britain to establish a complete domination as a genuine race had indeed begun among the European powers for colonies in the area. Germany deceptively dispatched Dr. Sachtigal who concluded treaties with the Douala Kings on July 2, 1884, for the annexation of the Cameroon coast for Germany a few days ahead of the British consult-Hewitt, who was charged with this duty for Britain (Fombo, 2006:42).

Continuing, Fombo noted also that “on July 12, 1884, a German protectorate was declared over Cameroon. This proclamation was preceded by a long period of manicuring by
German commercial interest in Africa to enlist the support of their home government to join the race for colonies in Africa and Asia. It had been a policy of the German imperia government with Otto Von Bismarck as chancellor to avoid any form of colonial entanglements that could lead Germany into conflict with the then established colonial powers, viz Britain, France, Portugal, Spain and Belgium. It was not until 1384-85, that Bismarck changed his mind on the issue of acquisition of colonies.

As Chukwu, (2002: 33) notes, “the Berlin west Africa conference of 13 November, 1884 through January 1885 was field at the instance of the German chancellor, Otto Von Bismark. Among the circumstances surrounding the convening of the conference was the issue of the Congo Free State where as at 1876 king Leopold of Belgium had established an international association for its exploration and a possible civilization of the interior or tropical Africa. The association was a private one with a tinge of scientific and humanitarian objective. Thus, on the eve of the conference, the association had laid claims overhang areas of tropical Africa with a series of treaties concluded by H.M Stanley.

In this light, Crowder (1968: 62) asserted that “the Berlin west Africa conference that met from 13 November 1884 to 26 February 1885, give legal and international recognition to the partitioning of west Africa among the European colonial powers. Also, the conference traced its origin to the rise of Germany as a united nation after the Franco Prussian war of 1870 through 71. At the end of the war, Germany under Bismark became a united state and a major force to reckon within the comity of European nations. As a result of this development, Bismark came under pressure from the German commercial class who wanted him to secure them safe and secure markets in Africa, hence the Berlin conference to accommodate their interests. “At around the same time or precisely on June 5, 1885, Britain declared a protectorate over the territory between the protectorate of Lagos and the west bank of the Rio-del-Rey which was later renamed is 1893 as the Niger coast protectorate. Discussions on the demarcation of the boundary between these contagious protectorates were begun in 1885 and wore increasingly made clearer as negotiations on both sides gathered more information on the claimed territories. The last settlements on the Anglo-German boundary in Nigeria and Cameroon were arrived at by the agreements of March 11 and April 12, 1913. In many respects, this agreement was a formalization or refinement of the agreements preceding it, especially that of 1909 which took some two years to negotiate between 1907 and 1909. Thus, the Nigeria-Cameroon
boundary was largely settled between Britain and Germany before the outbreak of the First World War. The entire boundary had been delineated and partly demarcated with pillars leaving little doubts as to its location” Fombo, (2006:43).

In this perspective, Ngang (2005: 7) recounts that “in a series of agreements in 1913, Britain and Germany sought to establish an exact demarcation of the borders between Nigeria and Cameroon, which of course did not exist as such. The first treaty entitled: “The settlement of the frontier between Nigeria and the Cameroons, from Yola to the sea”, put Bakassi proper under the jurisdiction of the Germans and the second: “The Regulation of Navigation on the Cross River”, ceded the “navigable portion” of the offshore border of the peninsular to Britain. Article 21 of the Anglo-German Treaty of 1913 quoted below states the exact position of the border.

From the centre of the navigable channel on a line joining Bakassi points and king of the navigable channel of the Akwayate River as far as the 3 mile limit of territorial jurisdiction. For the purpose of defining this boundary, the navigable channel of the Akwayafe River shall be considered to lie wholly to the east of the navigable channel of the Cross and Calabar Rivers (UN Department of peacekeeping operations map No. 4247, May 2005).

Moreso, “Events of the first world war completely changed the fate of cameroon. The war that started in Europe was quickly carried to the colonies. German forces in spite of their dogged resistance in Cameroon, were finally overrun in 1916 by a combination of British forces from base in west Africa, especially Nigeria, and French and Belgium forces from bases in French equatorial Africa and Belgium Congo, respectively. Germany lost all her colonies in Africa including Cameroon which was divided into two territories by the league of nations and administered as mandate under British and France. The Franco-British Declaration of July 1919 placed Bakassi and the rest of the “British Cameroon” under British mandate. This territory was then administered under the British system of “indirect rule” as part of Nigeria respecting the
borders laid down by the agreements of 1913. A further agreement between both powers in 1931 was signed to further codify the declaration of 1919. Again maps from this period clearly show Bakassi as part of Cameroonian territory.

At the end of the Second World War, the British and French League of Nations mandates over Northern/Southern Cameroons and Cameroon respectively, were succeeded by trusteeship agreements under the newly created United Nations Organization. The agreements creating these trusteeship territories re-ratified the Anglo-German and Anglo-French treaties pertaining to the borders between both countries. Once more, maps from this period place Bakassi under the sovereignty of Cameroon (Ngang, 2005: 8).

The condominium, which was envisaged in 1914 when Britain and France first agreed on a joint conquest of German colonies in Africa, with Cameroon inclusive, could not be realized in practice shortly after military operations begun in German Cameroon, mutual suspicious of future territorial calculations bedeviled relations between the two allies over a joint and equitable administration of Cameroon. The British involving military necessity successfully maintained an administration that was essentially British in the very important part city of Douala, as well as its environs, right to Buea and Victoria. The rest of the territories was either administered by the French where their forces captured or by British officials from Nigeria where British forces captured. Meanwhile, even before the official partition as Déclassé had articulated in a correspondence to Bertie (dated June 6, 1915), a good chunk of the territory in Cameroon had reverted to France before the campaign could be concluded in Cameroon.

On the further insight onto the administration of the Bakassi area after Germany left, Fombo (2006: 44 - 45) puts it straight: As soon as the Germans were dislodged from their entrenched position in Yaunde and ahead of their final collapse in Mora negotiations were opened between Britain and France for the final partition of Cameroon on an agreeable formula, abandoning the attempted condominium that had to serious misunderstandings between the two allies. At the negotiations, France demanded Douala and most of the rest of Cameroon with Cambon the French delegate initiating that the “French colonial party were excited over Cameroon”. He argued that France coveted Douala above all as the only port that could serve its equatorial African colonies. However, this claim is spurious given that the French were in control of neighbouring Gabon and a considerable coastline and Douala in itself had no good harbour.
In spite of the fact that the British had contributed more militarily to the conquest of German Kamerun and had dominated the administration of, especially, Douala and the neighbouring coastal districts in the course of the war, they conceded as French demands pretty easily, abandoning their long proposed boundary line that was to begin from the mouth of the Sanaga river. Rather a boundary (Picot Line) further west from the mouth of Mungo was agreed on. Two main reasons can be advanced for the British reluctance to have a fair share of Cameroon. Firstly, as Simon had rightly pointed out, Britain by not accepting French assistance in the capture of German East Africa had effectively shut off the French against any claims there and in any case this area was more important to the Britain than Cameroon. So Britain was more disposed to make concessions in Cameroon. Secondly, there was also a genuine desire in British colonial circles to make concession to the French so as to sustain the public morale in the war effort in Europe and elsewhere.

The negotiations that ended on March 6, 1916 adopted the picot Line as the provisional boundary between the British sphere to the west and the French to the East by this partition Britain had about one-fifth of what was left of German Kamerun and France and four-fifth. Despite some uneasiness in Britain, particular in the colonial officer, over the special consideration made to France, little was changed in the subsequent post-war negotiations that opened in March 1919. The Milner-Simon declaration of July 10, 1919 finally settled the partition of the German colony into British and French spheres. This declaration was mainly an endorsement of the 1916 Picot line. It was subsequently appended to the mandate agreement in accordance with Article 22 of the statutes of the League of Nation and officially became one of the most important instruments on the definition of the Nigeria-Cameroon border.

Logically, the picot line and the Milner-Simon Declaration are the first instruments on this boundary during the period. In consonance with the Miner-Simon Declaration of 1919 in which it was stated thus:

The boundary commissions shall be authorized to make such minor modifications of the frontier line as may appear to them necessary in order to avoid separating villages from their agricultural lands... and deviations shall be clearly
marked on special maps and submitted for the approval of
the two governments [permanent mandates commission
reports of the UN, sixteenth session, (Nov. 1930:84)].

Again, the commission report stated further that: “on 29 December 1929 and 30 January 1930
Sir Graeme Thomson, Governor of the colony and protectorate of Nigeria and Paul Marchant,
commissionaire de la Republique Francaise an Cameroon signed a further very detailed agreement
hence forth known as the (Thomson-Marchant Declaration) clarifying the alignment of this
border. The Thomson-Marchant Declaration was approved and incorporated in an Exchange of
Notes dated 9 January 1930 between A. de fleuriau, French Ambassador in London and Author
Henderson, British foreign minister (“subsequently, Heuderson-Fleuriau Exchange of Notes”).
Also, it was not a significant departure from the previous agreements between Britain and
France over their boundary Cameroon [permanent mandates commission reports of the UN,
sixteenth session (November 1930: 84)].

What turned out to be a major change (which was not evidently so at the time of its
conception) was the 1946 order in council providing for the administration of the Nigeria
protectorate and Cameroons, subsequently known as the “1946 order in council”. The edict was
enunciated in pursuant to a decision taken by Britain on August 2, 1946, to reorganize the
administration of its disjointed share of the Cameroons. The territory was divided into two-
Northern and Southern Cameroons – to be administered respectively, as integral parts of the
Northern and Eastern Regions of Nigeria. The order in council contained a detailed description
of the boundary between these administrative units which following the diverse paths chosen
by the countries in the plebiscite of 1961, turned out to be part of the international boundary
between Nigeria and Cameroon today.

“Basically, in spite of apparent British fury over the lost of Cameroon to Germany in 1884,
colonial authorities in Britain were not particularly exited with the occupation of Cameroon. As
explained above the initial German annexation of Cameroon was thanks to British
procrastinations on doing so ahead of the German. When they again had the opportunity of
establishing a strong presence in Cameroon, following the defeat of Germany and the forced
surrender of its colonies according to the dictates of the treaty of Versailles, Britain preferred
territories elsewhere like Tanganyika. As Ronald Robinson et al., have shown, the Cameroon question was considered in a wider global diplomatic context. The foreign office saved the opportunity to concede territories in West Africa to France, Britain principally in the war and rival in the colonial race, in order to secure East Africa, considered more vital to British interest. Thus the main objective for Britain was to tidy up its frontiers in Nigeria, provide access routes by road and river, and to an extent, remite divided peoples among the former Anglo-German Boundary it was with this in mind that the British sought and obtained from the French some slight adjustments of the 1916 picot line by taking back from the French wba Billa Kilba, Holma, Zummu Malabu and Gurin (Fombo, 2006: 46).

Terms of British Mandates in Cameroon

Furthermore, Britain while agreeing to a cession of all German colonies in favour of the principal allied powers in accordance with article 119 of the Treaty of peace with Germany signed on June 28, 1919, Articles 22 and 23 of the league of Nations made provision for the mandate system under whose auspices the former colonies were to be administered. Admittedly, these provisions were sufficiently vague to allow even more elbowroom for the mandatory to carry out its will. Under Article 2 Britain became responsible for the peace, order and good government of the territory, and for the promotion to the utmost of the material and moral well-being as well as the social progress of the inhabitants. With this, Britain opted to administer her disjointed share of Cameroon as adjuncts of contiguous parts of neighbouring Nigeria.

According to Anene, (1970:96 – 97) “Britains grand design in 1916 was to annex its share of German Cameroon to Nigeria. The British had acquired this elongated bi-partite boundary and had never intended to erect a new and separate administrative unit. But the terms of the mandate agreement (which was an American inclusion into the post-war settlement) forestalled this. As such, while striving in principle to maintain the juridical entity of the Cameroons as a mandated on an administrative integration of the territory into Nigeria, consistent with its initial goal for acquiring the territory in 1916. The British authorities, citing administrative convenience dismembered the territory before joining the pieces to various administrative units of Northern and Eastern Nigeria. Although this policy led to very serious
consequences in regard to future political developments in British Cameroons, the inconveniences cited by Britain were real. The narrow, elongated and bisected nature of the territory, together with the formidable geographical barrier of the manbilla escarpment, made the separate administration of the British Camerons practically difficult considering the parsimonious polices that inspired empire administrators”.

The Integrative Policy of Britain

On the integrative policy of Britain, the northern part of the territory (that became known as the British Northern Cameroons from 1946), Dikwa Emirate was reconstituted and administered as a division of Bornu Province. Meanwhile, the rest of Northern Cameroons was reorganized into Adamawa Emirate and placed under Adamawa province, dominated by Yola. The entire province came under the Emire of Yola who was later officially known as lamido of Adamawa. The Nigerian legal system also replaced German legislation from February 28, 1924 in the Cameroons.

Generally, Asobie, (2005: 80) stresses that, “this gamut of British actions, especially the more positute ones of the mandatory between 1959 and 1961, led to orientation of every aspect of life in the territory to be centred on the Northern Region of Nigeria. subsequent nationalism in this part tended to be inarticulate and, at the critical moment favoured independence through integration into Nigeria, as a result of the comprehensive administrative integration that was effected. A pan-British Cameroons nationalism never emerged in the run up to independence. Britain even advanced the fact that there was little or no contact between the Northern and Southern Cameroon to justify its argument for the results of the two territories to be considered separately at the 1961 plebiscite. This affected significantly the outcome of the February 1961, UN conducted plebiscite in the territory and led to a fundamental change of the Anglo-German colonial boundary in this area. While British policy of administrative interaction of the Cameroons under British administration with the colony and protectorate of Nigeria led to the unwholesome transformation of the northern colonial boundary, it also considerably contributed to the current dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon on the southern border, especially in the Bakassi area. Elements of the impending
dispute were evident in the incongruities in policies under British colonial administration on both sides of the border”.

In the first instance, administration of southern Cameroons as an integral part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria negated the fact of an international boundary between the two territories. Coupled with the ethnic mix of the border area, and the seasonal fishing occupation of most of the occupants of the hotly disputed Bakassi and associated islands, movement across the border was without any form of impediment. Asobie puts it thus:

The indigenous population, (the peasant farmers and workers) living on both sides of the borders, some of who belong to the same ethnic stock, wish to operate and indeed were operating as if the artificial barriers, known as boundaries, never existed” (Asobie, 2005: 82).

To that extent, Native Authority tax office officials and law enforcement agents from Oron (Eket Division, Calabar), purused defaulters and criminals right across the border to areas that were opposed to be controlled from Kumba Division for the southern Cameroons. For instance, while on tour in the fish Towns area, the Acting district officer (D.O.) for Kumba, Mr J.S. Smith reported he met Oron Native Court messengers Henshaw with two Native court warrants of imprisonment for residents (at least temporary ones) of Ine Oriong and Ine Tayu in British Cameroons. The D.O of Kumba sent a memo No W.T./8/1926 of 20 June, 1926 to the D.O. Of Eket, advising him to see that the Native Authority desist from double domicile of the residents of the border areas particularly, those of the fish Towns, that made tax collection difficult. A modus vivendi that entailed the mutual recognition of taxes paid in each other’s territory was arrived at among local administrators of the contiguous division of southern Cameroons and Eastern Region. This arrangement was formalized in 1928 and it was accepted that, where taxes varied only the excess should be paid to the neighbouring administration, but it did not clarify where the locus of power laid in this area.
2.5 BAKASSI ETHNIC GROUPS AND RISE OF OTHER PROBLEMS:

- Socio-Cultural, Political and Economic Issues

- Territorial Cum Security Issues

- Environmental and Natural Resources Issues.

The people of Bakassi are predominantly of the Efik, Afiat, Efut, Ibibio, and Anang tribes, that constitute 322 villages and 8 clans with village/clan heads as well as a paramount ruler. They themselves, claim to be the people of Cross River and Akwa Ibom States and as well see themselves as part of the federal republic of Nigeria. Hence their occupation of the defunct Bakassi local Government Area that was made up of 10 (political) wards namely; Abana, Akwa, Ambai-Ekpa, Efut-Inwang, Akpankanya, Ekpot-Abia, Atai-ema, Archibong, Amoto, and Odiong.

A projected estimate based on the 1991 population census in Nigeria gives the Bakassi peninsular a population figure of 37,500 people (ICJ 1999 report: Nos 33). But Ogen, opines that contrary to the claims put forward in the Nigerian media that the population of the peninsula mainly its Efik inhabitants, numbers approximately 300,000. It is noteworthy that United Nations Officials who are closely involved in the UN brokered mediation between Cameroon and Nigeria say there are no more than 15,000 inhabitants living in the peninsula(Ogen, 2008:3). Again the ministry of External Relations in Yaounde suggests a population figure of 8,562 based on a poll conducted in 1987. It is however, doubtful if the Nigerian inhabitants of the Peninsula especially those in the relatively populous Abana and Archibong were counted during this poll. Unfortunately, with the ceding of the territory to Cameroon in accordance with the ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on the 10th of October, 2002, these people have been dismantled in all ramifications. Socially, politically, economically, traditionally, territorially environmentally and security wise. This is vivid in the worries, lamentations of some of the indigenes after court ruling. Chief Etim Okon, one of the eldest men in Bakassi cried out:

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I was born here and have lived all my life here. I am over 90 years now that they say we should go out from here, how are we going to do? Feeding is now a problem for us because this crisis has brought a lot of problems for us. I have more than two houses so what do I do? (cited in Akpan 2006).

He continued.

Government said they will build a house but up till now we have not seen the place they have built for us. Again, the compensation the government said they would pay us, up till now, nothing has been done and I am still in shock. Right now, we still need the compensation. We in Archibong Town are ready to move if the government builds a place for us and pays compensation (cited in Akpan 2006)

Further on their traditionality and ancestral home, he began again;

...........besides, does it mean that when we leave we will carry our ancestors on the graves of our forefathers buried here in Archibong Town? Is it that we will leave and I will be able to appease them as usual? We certainly do not know what to do with our forefathers buried here years ago and we don’t even know what to do. My father and mother died here (cited in Akpan 2006).

Nevertheless, this and many more no doubt captured the challenges facing the Bakassi people. Hence, we therefore look at some these problems.
Socio-Cultural, Political and Economic Issues

The harsh reality of the handover of Bakassi to Cameroon is striking. It was not just the oil embedded underneath, several thousands of indigenes of the area were driven forcefully out of their ancestral lands. As them, there is no longer anywhere to call home. It was, indeed, a precarious situation. However, the federal government assured the displaced people that their loss would be mitigated. Speaking at the U.J. Esuene stadium in Calabar during the final pull out of the Nigeria Armed Forces from Bakassi on August 21, 2006, Obasanjo said: “The Federal Government would set in motion and elaborate stress-free process for relocation/resettlement of the Bakassi indigenes from their ancestral homelands to a suitable location of their choice”.

In 2007, the federal government released the sum of N1billion of Cross River State government for the provision of residential houses, offices and infrastructures in a new settlement for the displace people. What the federal government did not seem to have taken into consideration was the claim most of those displaced from Bakassi and were said to have returned to their parent state did not actually return to Cross River State. Akwa Ibom State, which got nothing to resettle them. That not withstanding, in 2008, another N2billion was released by the federal government to the cross state government for the completion of the projects and mass care of about 3,500 persons displaced them. Bakassi leaders insist that some of those occupying the few units of residential houses built for the displaced people are “ghost Bakassi people” (Daily Sun, Thursday, October 13, 2011, ).

In other words, the socio cultural identity of the Bakassi indigenes would be lost forever as they would be swallowed up by Akpabuyo people. Secondly, the peaceful co-existence of the landowners and the settlers cannot be guaranteed any more. According to researches, like most traditional African communities, it had several deities and shrines as well as peculiar customs and traditions that distinguish its people.

Politically, this people hitherto now, constituted a local government of their own (Bakassi local government) and which was recognized by the 999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, as one of the 774 local governments in Nigeria. This council area no doubt acted as their rolling point of all their political activities – the conduct, administration and
implementation of the government activities. Their constituent representatives and most importantly their direct share of the national cake, no longer obtains.

Umahi of the Daily Sun opined that “To most people, Bakassi peninsular is dead and buried. But the spirit of the oil rich peninsular is not resting in peace as efforts have been made to make the corpse walk again. Until August 4, 2008, Bakassi was one of the 744 local government areas recognized by the 1999 constitution of Nigeria. However, following the ceding of the peninsular to Cameroon on that day, after years of legal battles at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), it became constitutionally dead. But investigations have revealed that three years after the council became defunct, statutory monthly allocation of about N50 million is still being made to it from the federation account even as the constitution has neither been amended to that effect nor much done about the rights of the affected people” (Daily Sun, October 13, 2011).

To their economy, the people obviously had lived not as baggers but people who worked hard to meet end. Their land is said to be rich in oil and marine life. Apart from the oil deposit (natural economic resources) found in large quantity in the Bakassi, the people had survived from harvest of marine life. They fed and earned from fishing as their occupation. “As a fertile fishing ground, the Bakassi peninsular has often been compared to new found-land in North America and Scandinayia in Europel (Mbaga and Njo, 2007: 7). To this, the question is, “what would become of all those who earn their living through fishing as

From the socio-cultural, political and economic perspective, The people of Bakassi, especially Efikt-speaking people who generally see themselves as Nigerians could not imagine either to evacuate the land they had been living in for centuries or to suddenly become Cameroonians over night. What would become of all those who earn their livelihood through fishing.

It is glaringly obvious that the indigenes of Bakassi are clamoring for continuity of their lifestyle under the Nigerian administration. All these, put pressure on the Bakassi people to adopt a though stand on the issue.

According to Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, (2006: 180), the social implications are that, especially after the ICJ ruling, Nigerians who have lived in Bakassi all their lives, will have to face the sad reality of having to evacuate a region that is part and parcel of them immediately most people living in that areas have their business located there and so leaving the area will mean
detacting them from their source of income. Moreover, all infrastructural facilities, including hospitals, schools, recreational centres, that were originally put in place by the country stands the risk of being forfeited resulting in a fruitless effort and loss of income. Again, just like Hon. Efiong E. Efiong, the National Vice Chariman, Bakassi Peoples General Assembly (BPGA), the umbrella body of indigenes of the defunct Bakassi local government area stresses; “before the ceding of Bakassi, there were four built up Secondary Schools (one of which was built by NDDC with staff quarters) and all were fully equipped. There were also over 42 primary schools in the area, a comprehensive health clinic and over 10 health centres and an ambulance boat”.

Moreso, many political analysts have wondered what happens to a local government that had been used by federal government of Nigeria (Bakassi Local Government) to conduct and administer her political activities. Hence the submission of national president of the Bakassi People General Assembly (BPGA) Efiong E. Efiong, in a letter dated July 27, 2011. He addressed it thus; “Indeed, the relocation of the people of Bakassi LGA to Akpabuyo LGA could be described as trying to solve one problem by creating another. It is like recreating the Jos scenario in the area. To start with, by so doing, the cultural identity of the Bakassi indigenes would be lost forever as they would be swallowed up by Akpabuyo people. Secondly, the peaceful co-existence of the landowners and the settlers cannot be guaranteed. According to reports, two indigenous men of Bakassi were beheaded not long ago during a conflict with Akpabuyo natives and their heads were put in a tray and displayed in the streets of Ikang towns” (Daily Sun 13th October, 2011, p. 27).

Three years after Nigerian completely relinquished its authority over Bakassi to Cameroon, it is yet to initiate the processes for the amendment of the 1999 constitution to reflect the new reality. But some, for instance; entrenched interests are cashing in on the lacuna to create a new Bakassi. Take this: In a letter dated February 5, 2009, which was addressed to the Hon. Speaker of the Cross River State House of Assembly, Governor Donald Duke sought to adjust the boundaries of Akpabuyo and Bakassi LGAs.

The Executive Bill said: “In keeping with the diplomatic protocols entered into between our country and the Republic of Cameroon and in consideration of the various political solutions aimed at ensuring the preservation of our state interest, I now forward the attached Bill which seeks to adjust the boundary of Akpabuyo and Bakassi local government areas to enable Ikang North Ward, Ikang Central ward and Ikang South Ward be incorporated into the Bakassi local
government area. “The legislature may wish to consider and pass the said Bill into law expeditiously in view of ongoing preparations for the forthcoming elections”. The bill was passed into law as Cross River State Law No. 7 of 2007. Thus, the ethnic clans and villages of Bakassi were merged with the towns and villages in the three Ikang was villages in the three Ikang wards of former or original Akpabuyo LGA. With this development, the 10 wards lost their names and are identified numerically.

By and large, with the handover, many residents have declared their intention to evacuate to mainland Nigeria expressing anxiety about what the future holds under Cameroonian rule (IRIN news. Org, 25 November 2006). Ani Esin, Chairman of the Bakassi Local Government Council, which was created by the Nigerian government, explains that the Bakassi people are interested in how to feed their families, their daily fishing and they want to remain Nigerians (Akpan 2006). The various Anglophone Cameroon separatist movements have expressed support for the Bakassi peoples, claiming them as a part of Southern Cameroons. Chairman Esin states that his people may not share a common goal with the separatist movements but the general feeling, according to him, is that “if Southern Cameroons is able to get the independence it is seeking and becomes a republic encompassing the peninsular, the people of Bakassi will no longer have problems with La Republic du Cameroon and the neglect of the Nigerian government will stop”. But he would have pre-ferred a situation whereby the ICJ would have considered the Bakassi inhabitants. He states that the Bakassi people strongly believe in the Nigerian context and that the Federal Government is big enough and interested in every Nigerian no matter where the Nigerian lives (Akpan 2006). Meanwhile the Southern Cameroons secessionist movements are also contesting the Green Tree agreement that gave La Republic du Cameroon sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular. The Bakassi indigenes and the Southern Cameroons secessionists regard the ICJ judgment and the Green Tree Agreement as irrelevant. More importantly, the indigenes of Bakassi, both those who consider themselves to be Nigerian and those who consider themselves to be Cameroonian, are not willing to strain their relationships with one another and are more concerned with maintaining peace than with rivalry and conflict. A delicate balance has been achieved in terms of lifestyle less and division of labour among the indigenes. Those who claim Cameroonian citizenship are accustomed to traveling inland to sell the fish and other products provided by their Nigerian nieghbours. For this reason they have documents that verify their Cameroonian citizenship and are accustomed to dealing with Cameroonian laws. The Nigerian indigenes, on the other hand, do not
necessarily have residence permits and other legal documents permitting them to reside and engage in business in what is now legally Cameroonian territory. The Nigerians fear potential harsh treatment by agents of the Cameroonian government while Cameroonians fear the destruction of their way of life. In this way, all the indigenes of the region are unsure about their future under Cameroon.

**Territorial Cum Security Issues**

In International law, state territory is that portion of the globe that is subjected to its sovereignty and where it exercises jurisdiction to the exclusion of all other states. It consists of the land mass, the internal waters and the territorial sea, as well as the land mass below to the centre of the earth and the atmosphere above to a height that includes the troposphere. A state has the exclusive right to exploit the natural resources in these areas. Although not part of its territory, a state enjoys the exclusive right to exploit its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and its continental shelf. To this, the territory of a state is separated from those of other states by boundaries. A boundary may be natural or artificial.

Natural boundaries consists of mountains, hills, valley, rivers, lakes, seashores, forests, deserts and so on when these indicate the course of the boundary. The term ‘natural boundary’ may also be used in political sense to indicate the one that should satisfy the strategic or other needs of a territory. Natural boundaries may also be described as orographic.

Artificial boundaries are signs erected to indicate the boundary or parallels of longitude and latitude so used. They are also described as geometric boundaries and are often determined in treaties. Some states set up boundary commissions for the settlement of boundary disputes. If a non-navigable river is used as the boundary, the boundary normally runs along the median. For a navigable river, it runs along the middle of the navigable channel-the thalweg. For inland lakes, seas, bays and straits, the median line is often used unless where, for historic or other considerations, other criteria used to fix the boundary. Where the boundary is not clearly demarcated, the principles of self-determination should be a most relevant consideration (Umozurike, 2005: 67 and 74 – 75). The Bakassi conflict is the classical example of a conflict between two states contesting sovereignty over a territory. Although Bakassi is merely 1000 sq. km big and generally considered unattractive as noted by some scholars, ceding territory to another nation is always a problematic issue. In the constitutions of both countries,
there are clauses which directly address the issue of sovereignty over all of their respective territories and the responsibility to protect their territorial integrity. In a BBC interview on February 20, 2002, Cameroon’s Minister of Special Duties at the Presidency, Professor Ngole Ngole reiterated the point mentioned above saying “…we have the might and we have the will and the 16 million people of Cameroon are behind the government to defend the territorial integrity of our country. Therefore it is not a joking matter”. This is apparent proof of the fact that Cameroon was ready to go to war alone on territorial grounds. Nigeria also made equal sounding threats and even after the decision had been made public, Nigeria in its official reaction advanced its constitution’s principles of federalism as a reason of non-compliance with the court’s decision.

Also, essentially, the issue of security has always played an important role in matters relating to the Bakassi peninsular. We remember that the treaty signed between the chief of Old Calabar and Britain in 1884 ceding Old Calabar and consequently Bakassi to Britain was termed “Treaty of Protection”. Britain later on ceded Bakassi to German cameroon because she wanted secured passage to the port of Calabar and because she wanted to assure the Germans that she would not seek any further eastward expansion i.e. towards Cameroon. It should however be noted that security here is seen in its wider sense encompassing both the security of the state as well as human security. It is therefore in line with this that during the military confrontations, both countries advanced security reasons as excuses for resorting to direct military force. In 1981, Cameroon claimed Nigeria had entered her sphere of influence and thus posing a threat to her national security and territorial sovereignty (state security). Nigeria on the other hand, justified the deployment of soldiers to Bakassi saying she did so to protect the security of Nigerian fishermen and traders who were subjected to harassment and unfair treatment in the hands of Cameroonian gendarmes (human security). On the strategic level, Cameroon’s ownership of Bakassi was seen as a threat to Nigerian access to the port of Calabar. Nigeria would lose its eastern access to the Atlantic Ocean with the far-reaching security implication that her naval ships would not or may only be able to freely move from there to southern Africa with permission from Cameroon.

Okike, (2008: 26 – 28) traced far, records of security instability as it affected routes as well as the ethnic groups residing along the disputed boundary, when he noted that “During the civil war, it was alleged that Biafrans used Ikom Maunfe routes as an exit to the outside
world. It was even reported that a Biafran helicopter clash landed in Cameroon. In order to avert ugly border incidents especially the imminent threat of subversion and secession by Southern Cameroon, the two Heads of state held bilateral talks that covered economic co-operation and boundary problems in September, 1968. Following the diplomatic shuttle between them, Cameroon, declared full support for Nigeria in the on going civil war. Federal Ministry of information press Release (1968). Again, between 1970 and 1980 life and property became quite insecure as a result of frequent border skirmishes between the two countries Nigeria and Cameroon with the discovery of oil at Bakassi peninsular the two countries began to lay claims over the oil rich area.

In 1970 three Nigerian officials on water patrol were kidnapped by Cameroonian gendarmes; in 1971 fishermen on both sides clashed; in 1972 two boats belonging to Enyany Multi-purpose co-operation Society in Calabar were seized by Cameroon gendarmes Daily Times, (1972: 4).

In April 1972 eight Nigerians were killed by Cameroonian gendarmes. In July 1973 the Cameroon navy and army expelled Nigerian fishermen in the creek villages, while Cameroon renamed the creek villages along the borders, occupied twenty-five miles of Nigeria territory and displaced over two thousand fishermen from the area.


In December 1980 Cameroon Occupied Effiat Mbong district in Calabar province. The border situation between the two countries was further aggravated with the diversion of Rivers Kailia and Chari, major tributaries of the Niger. This singular action by Cameroon adversely affected the economic activities of 80,000 people in Borno State of Nigeria, in May, 1981 five Nigerian soldiers on surveillance along River Akapan Yafe near Ikang village were murdered in cold blood by Cameroonian gendarmes on patrol, led by white mercenary soldiers in combatant uniform, while three others were seriously injured. Times international (1981: 14).

The cold blooded murder of five Nigerian soldiers on border patrol further aggravated the already tense border situation between Nigeria and Cameroon. The Nigerian minister of External Affairs, Ishaya Audu sent a diplomatic note to Cameroon, demanding an unqualified
apology within one week for what seemed to the most unprovoked and unwarranted insult to Nigeria. He further demanded compensation and appropriate punishment for the murderers.

In July 1981 President Ahidjo of Cameroon would fully comply with the demands of Nigeria, stating that Cameroon would fully comply with the demands of Nigeria as stated by her External Affairs Minister, Ishaya and during that period the border problems between the two countries were discussed. But the central question of what really constituted boundary through diplomatic shuttle.

Ultimately, Nigeria claimed that sovereignty over Bakassi was not a matter of oil or natural resources on land or in coastal waters but that she was merely interested in the well-being and welfare of Nigerians in their country. But now that the Bakassi are has been ceded to Cameroon and some of the inhabitants who are Nigerians refuse to relocate the question is what now becomes their security fate.

**Environmental and Natural Resources Issues**

Finally, despite that, this point is closely linked to the economic aspect, it is still very important to mention on its own merit because it is very fundamental to the plights of the Bakassians. Just as Nigeria lost Bakassi following the ICJ ruling, the Bakassians had decried loss of their good environment and natural resources. Other border conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria in the Lake Chad area, the Bakassi conflict revolved around the environment and the resources that could be won from the environment such as oil and fish. Desertification and overfishing in the Lake Chad region has led to an environmental disaster which both countries are trying to balance or alleviate by gaining sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular and the adjoining waters. Though both countries continued to refute allegations that their interests in the area were focused on the availability of huge oil reserves, the conflict was essentially over natural resources.

As Asobie noted;
...essentially, the struggle over the Bakassi is neither for a people, nor for an empty or barren territory. It is primarily for some natural resources, for some object of labour. And the roots of the dispute lie in the nature of colonial frontiers in Africa, in general, and the Nigeria-Cameroon international frontiers, in particular (Asobie, 2005: 82).

Fambo (2006), observed that “Fishing and animal husbandry constitute the mainstay of the economy of this region and the lake offers great potentials for fishing as well as grazing in its immediate environs. Its numerous islands are characterized by many fishing shacks. Some of these islands are permanent while others are exposed only at low water tide a the dry season. Apart from the seasonal variations in water levels and the shifting opportunities, the lake is constantly retreating as a result of the encroaching Sahara desert and the diversion of waters of rivers that empty into it for irrigation. During the long and very harsh dry season of who roam in quest of these with their cattle and sheep, having no regard to international boundaries.

With growing hardship caused by the global economic system and the vagaries of the sahelian climate, more and more people tended to move into the region to irk a living and most of the new arrivals turned out to be Nigerians. What hitherto were temporary settlements became permanent with the retreat of the lake offering more avenues for such settlements. As the ICJ noted: “As Nigerian settlements, and the organization within them of village life, became supplemented from 987 onwards by Nigerian administration and the presence of Nigerian troops...” the control of some of these areas slept off from Cameroon. But it was only in 994 through a noted verbale that Nigeria made a official claim to the dispute villages in this area, that is, long after the maritime disputed had arisen. Meanwhile, Cameroon on her side, has been implementing territorial policies at home, which make economic life difficult for her nationals in its borderlands, as opposed to those of Nigeria, especially with provision of access roads. Invariably, every border part of Cameroon along its western boundary is more easily accessible from Nigeria. one of such places is Akawaya which has no road link from Cameroon but is a sub-divisional headquarters. The administrators and civil servants in this area must get
there through Nigeria if they want to avoid trekking for over twenty hours. Because of such official neglect, economic life in particular and many other aspects of life in these areas are oriented towards Nigeria.

The contribution of the economic endowments of the Lake Chad and its environs to the conflicts are more or less indirect. “Economic migrants” who literally, moved ahead of their government took initiative before government policies were designed to absorb them. It became a forward policy aimed at not just securing “living space” but also to let the flag cover nationals in outlying territories.
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CHAPTER THREE

OTHER COMPLEX DIMENSIONS OF THE BAKASSI DISPUTES

- The Political Dimension
- The Cultural Dimension
- The Legal Dimension
- The Strategic Dimension

Apart from the economic/natural resources issues most people attribute the Nigeria-Cameroon (Bakassi) conflicts to as the bone of contention along the border region, there are equally a number of other shapes the dispute has taken. For instance, like Asobie, (2005:82) aptly contended that, “the struggle over the bakassi is neither for a people nor barren territory. It is primarily for some natural resources; for some object of labour. And the roots of the dispute lie in the nature of colonial frontiers in Africa in general and the Nigeria-Cameroon international frontiers, in particular”. In other words, the Bakassi conflicts, are widely viewed as economic driven. But that notwithstanding, the dispute has obviously degenerated into so many other dimensions which equally need our attention, other than the economic driven motives alleged by many. To this, in this chapter, we will be exploring the: political, cultural, legal as well as the strategic dimension of the conflict.

3.3 THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE BAKASSI

Asobie, (2005: 76) argued that, “International conflicts are contests or clashes between or across nation-states. The struggle might be between one or more governments to monopolize the exploitation of resources in disputed territory. It might occur when one state tries to prevent another from obtaining some resources that are vital to its survival. It could arise when one or more governments intervene in the internal affairs or domestic disputes of another state. Occasionally, a conflict may ensue when the nationals of one state are attacked, dehumanized, killed or maimed by the agents of another state. Often, conflicts are presented as
occurring between governments. Thus, concretely, most international conflicts are either conducted or perceived as inter-governmental contests or struggles. And the bone of contention is usually territorial or some other economic resources. It is seldom the welfare of the citizens of one or more of the states concerned that is perceived to be at stake”. To this, which ever direction it takes, the essence is politics the struggle is political either directly or indirectly. Asogwa (1999: 18) expressed this view better. According to him, international politics, which the Bakassi problem represents, has to do with international political relations (which could be hostile or friendly) among states. It has four connotations:

1. International politics connotes that the relationship between states and non-state actors generally involves attempt by one actor to influence, manipulate or control other actors.

2. That states use their powers freely with little or no inhibition and minimal restraint. For the most parts, the action of the states are restrained neither by moral norms nor legal principle nor yet by resolutions of international organizations.

3. That the principle if not the sole motivator of actors in their external behaviour is their national interest. This interest may be re-formulated or readjusted but never be changed nor abandoned. This is what is meant by saying in international politics, that the states have no permanent friends but permanent interests; and

4. That because interests of different states diverge, international politics involves conflicts of interests that results in constant struggle for power among actors within international system.

In this light, the Nigeria-Cameroon border struggles are clear proofs of the above assertions by Asogwa. In other words, the Bakassi conflicts depicts nothing more than an international politics engaged in by two state actors—Nigeria and Cameroon over their territorial sovereignty.

Invariably, on deeper reflection however, it can be seen that in reality, international conflicts are struggles between or among social groups or more precisely, social classes, clashing across state boundaries. The real actors in international conflicts are social classes, which, in their struggles, mobilize and use the various apparatuses of the state, coercive and non-coercive-to achieve their ends. And the contests are, invariably too, for the control of some productive forces: objects of labour (land, raw materials); instruments of labour (technology,
finance capitals): or labour power (trained/untrained human resource). In brief, international conflicts occur when contending social classes, operating from distinct national societies or relatively autonomous territorial entities, struggle to establish monopolistic control over some global productive forces. Hiding behind governments, in most international conflicts are usually the monopolistic capitalists operating trans-nationally and with multinational tentacles. And the victims of such conflicts are usually, the working people – peasant farmers, fishermen, and petty traders, workers. Often, when violent conflicts erupt between two contending ruling classes of two distinct national societies or states, they are extensions of violent intra-state conflicts (Asobie, 2005:76).

As Raymond Aron has argued, one cannot imagine a non-violent diplomacy as long as one has not eliminated violence from intra-state politics” (Hoffman, 1985: 17) for instance Gowon and Ojukwu during the civil war.

To this extent, there are therefore, three critical factors that shape the dynamics of most international conflicts, and which the Bakassi conflicts is not an exception. First, there is the nature of the prize that would accrue from the conflict. This refers to the relative utility and size of the productive forces or social product that the victor might gain in the wake of the struggle. Second, there is the nature of the relationship between the social classes, which constitute the real actors in the conflict. Once monopolistic capitalists either on one side or on both sides, of the state territorial boundaries have high stakes in the outcome of the conflict, the spiral of international conflicts will be almost unending. Third, is the state domestic politics in the nation states, which form the bases for the contending parties. This includes, especially, the nature of the regime in office. Authoritarian regimes or dictatorial governments, by their modus operandi, provoke the emergence of violent intra-state politics. And so as already indicated, such violence easily becomes translated into coercive international diplomacy, resulting in violent international clashes.

Be it as it may, many political analysts share the common view that the Bakassi crisis was instrumentalized by politicians in order to divert public attention from the real issues affecting their countries like bad economic management unemployment, poor social services and bad human right records etc. As Aghemelo and Ibhasbhor put it, “some political explanation of the causes of the conflict would suggest that government of both countries had some hidden political agenda to the border crisis. They have been accused of using the crisis to
stir off people’s attention to their ailing economic and increasing rate of unemployment and poverty. They argue that, the dangerous trail of strength between President Paul Biya and Late General Sani Abacha is not just because both leaders believed Bakassi worth fighting for but because both see the dispute as a way to short-up failing domestic support” (Aghemelo and Ibhasebhoh, 2006:181). To this, both governments were thus seen as the spoilers of the conflict. Under the term of president Ahidjo, the most glaring negative factor was his human rights record. Albert Makong and Mungo Beti both believe that as many as 25,000 people were killed alone during the UPC insurrection in the 1960s, another 5,000 were tortured to death and close to 20,000 were severely maltreated while serving prison terms. Under president Paul Biya, who colonized power since 1982, the major problem has been the economy. Cameroon has suffered major economic setbacks since the mid 80s with the salaries of normal civil servants plummeting drastically by about 70% which the salaries of those in the armed forces have doubled through almost yearly salaries increments. This most probably explains why there have not been any attempts by the military to take over power in Cameroon. In 1986, the president declared that the country was undergoing an economic crisis, from which it has not recovered until today. A few years after this announcement, the currency was devalued by almost 100% following the structural readjustment scheme proposals by the IMF and the World Bank. Over the last few years, the economy has been growing averagely by 4% but the situation does not seem to be getting better for ordinary citizens (Ngang, 2005: 13).

Likewise, in Nigeria on the other hand, the main trouble till the return of civilian rule in the 1990s was the unending succession of overbearing military regimes. Nigeria is most likely the world record holder in coup and counter coup attempts, which have led to the deaths of thousands of both military personnel and civilians. Her human rights record is by no means better than that of Cameroon. All Nigerian government ever since independence had had very negative human rights record. Political killings of which the most important ones worth mentioning here include the murder of minority human rights activist, Ken Saro Wiwa in November 1995 and the brutal murder of the wife of presidential candidate, Moshood Abiola, Abiola’s own sudden and untimely death while in custody still remains unresolved (Ngang, 2005: 14).

Nevertheless, therefore, it is evident from the above glimpses that before Cameroon took the case to the United Nations for arbitration, both countries, were facing severe internal
tension. Note should be taken of the fact that multi-party politics had just been reintroduced in Cameroon and that the results of parliamentary and presidential elections which had just taken place reflected the general perception that they were not free and fair. Having a conflict with a neighbour which was likely going to end in a war, would have served government well in diverting internal interests to the external crisis. This situation was best summarized by African confidential as follows:

“The trail of strength is dangerous, not just because Biya and Abacha believe Bakassi worth fighting for, but because both see the dispute as a way to short-up falling domestic support. Their grip on power is threatened by a rise in ethnic nationalism, economic collapse and restive soldiers; while a full-fledged border war would be damaging, even catastrophic because of the instability. It could spark this prospect and may not prevent them from blundering into battle. Given the diplomatic failures that have marked the dispute, the most probable brake on further escalation appears to be the sense of failure of the Cameroonian and Nigerian governments to convince the majority of their people that the peninsular is worth fighting for (Africa confidential, cited in Ngang, 2005: 1A).

Moreso, the state of domestic politics in the nation states, which form the bases for the contending parties, also depicts the political dynamics or dimensions of the Bakassi problems. The abjuring of the policy of irredentism by the Nigerian government and its embrace of the principle of “uti possidetisjuris”, as early as 1960, was informed largely by its domestic political circumstances. Right from the 1950s and the 1960s, it was clear that Nigerian political leaders were not averse to playing partisan politics with the question of Nigerian federal government’s bid to secure any territory that was in dispute in its eastern border. From the beginning, the disunity among the Nigerian ruling (political) class in pursuit of the territorial disputes with French Cameroon was evident (African Research Bulletin, July 1970: 180).

Inevitably, Asobie, (2005: 86) noted that “In the struggle for Northern Cameroon for instance, Nigerian political parties, were not on one side. With respect to the first plebiscite in the territory, on November 14, 1959, all the Nigerian political parties campaigned to influence the results. However, significantly, only the Northern people’s congress (NPC) campaigned for the first option, which was that Northern Cameroon should vote to be integrated with Nigeria, as part and parcel of the Northern Region of Nigeria. The other parties, such as the Bornu Youth Movement/United Middle Belt Congress/Action Group alliance, and the Northern Elements
progressive union (which was in alliance with the National convention of Nigerian citizens formerly known as National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons), Campaigned for the second option. The second option was that the Cameroonian should vote to postpone a decision on their political association and status to a future date. More telling, the BYM/UMBC/AG coalition formed an alliance with the Northern Cameroon Democratic Party (NKDP), which in fact, advocated secession from Nigeria. Thus, at least, by association or implication, the three Nigerian political parties were opposed to the integration of Northern Cameroon with Nigeria. Not surprisingly, therefore, when the verdict of the plebiscite was announced, indicating that the Northern Cameroonian had voted, by majority, to postpone the decision on their political association to a future data only the Northern people’s congress and the Northern regional government, which it controlled, were shocked. The Action Group and its allies were evidently delighted. They describe the results as a vote of no confidence in the Northern Nigerian leadership. The NCNC was indifferent. Again, “when the United Nations (UN) Trusteeship committee and the General Assembly re-visited the matter and recommended that a second plebiscite be held in the territory, sometime between September 1960 and March 1961. Opposition came from some Nigerian political parties. The United Nations bodies had decided that, this time, the questions should be whether the people of Northern Cameroon wished to join the federation of (British) Nigeria or (French) Cameroon when the two countries became independent. The Action Group and its allies in Northern Cameroon proposed that the Cameroonian should be given a third choice: they should also be asked whether they wished to unite the two British-administered territories of Cameroon into a sovereign, independent state” (Akinyemi 1986: 134)

When this failed, and despite the fact that the federal government of Nigeria forged an all-party consortium, under the leadership of the NPC dominated Northern regional government, all the Nigerian political parties did not speak with one voice on the matter. The brunt of the struggle was borne by the NPC – led federal government and Northern Nigerian government. Between them, they provided a substantial sum of money, estimated by unofficial sources as amounting to $60.000 to prosecute the struggle. The Action Group and its Northern Nigeria, allies, Bornu youth movement and united middle-Belt congress, attacked the Northern people’s congress for spending too much money on the campaign to achieve a favorable result in the plebiscite, a change taken up by the political groups in Northern Cameroon that were opposed to its integration with Nigeria. And even though, by this time, the NCNC/NEPU alliance
was now in a coalition government, at the federal level with the NPC, the campaign was left largely to the Northern Nigerian Government (Asobie, 2005: 87).

Conversely, continuing also, Asobie noted that “the NPC political leaders and the Northern Nigerian Government saw the fight to secure favorable results in the plebiscite on Southern Cameroon as primarily an NCNC affair. However, the NCNC itself, together with the Eastern Nigerian Government, which it controlled, was indifferent on the matter. It is the Action Group, which controlled the Government in distant Western Nigeria, which showed the greatest interest in the retention of Southern Cameroon (including the Bakassi peninsula) as part of Nigeria. The reason for this was not the rational consideration of national interest. Rather, it was the calculus of the differential benefits of partisan politics. During the 1959 regional elections in the territory, the AG strongly supported its allies, the Cameroon National Congress/Cameroon People’s Party coalition, through press comments on newspapers owned by the Action Group (AG). Reportedly, the AG also rendered some financial assistance to its Southern Cameroonian allies during the 1961 plebiscite. It even sent delegates to the United Nations, to help its allies canvas the delegates from other countries for support. Within Eastern Nigeria, the strongest advocates of the retention of Southern Cameroon as a part of Nigeria were the leaders of the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State movement (who were allied to the AG), not the leaders of the NCNC. The reason was that, by the time the struggle for Southern Cameroon was waged openly between Nigeria and Cameroon, the NCNC and the Eastern Nigerian Government had lost hope of ever politically controlling the territory due to the history of unhappy relationship between the NCNC leaders and some of the Southern Cameroonian political leaders.

Until 1953, the trust territory of Southern Cameroon was administered as part of Eastern Nigeria. But, in that year, a political crisis occurred in the ruling NCNC, involving an unsuccessful revolt against Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe’s leadership. The Southern Cameroonians used the opportunity to declare benevolent neutrality in NCNC’s internal squabbles, in particular, and Nigerian domestic partisan politics, in general. Later, in the same year, and following an All-Cameroons Conference, the Southern Cameroonian representatives, under the leadership of E.M. Endeley, went to London to demand separation of Southern Cameroon from Eastern Nigeria. They got a conditional promise that their demand would be met if the Cameroon National Congress of Dr. Endeley won the 1954 elections on the issue of separation from
Eastern Nigeria. Following a strong anti-Eastern Nigeria campaign, the KNC won all the thirteen seats and Southern Cameroon was separated from Eastern Nigeria. It first became a separate province and then a full region in 1958.

In the same year (that is in 1958) a UN visiting mission went to the territory and found that opinion was sharply divided concerning the political future association of Southern Cameroon. While one group, led by Dr. Endeley, felt that the territory and its people should remain a self-governing region within independent Nigeria, another group, led by M. John Foncha, felt that the territory and its people should be separated from Nigeria, with a view to union with Northern Cameroon and the French Cameroon. The UN visiting mission, therefore, recommended that a plebiscite be held on the territory in 1959 to ascertain the people’s wish on their future political association. The plebiscite did not, however, take place in 1959. But, an election to the Southern Cameroon’s Regional Assembly was held early in the same year, and as fought partly on that issue. M. Foncha’s Kamerun National Democratic Party won 14 seats, and Dr. Endeley’s KNC won 12 seats. Shortly after the election, Southern Cameroon’s House of Assembly passed a resolution calling for the separation of the territory and the people from Nigeria [Yearbook of the United Nations, 1959:361].

Partly because the separation of Southern Cameroon from the Eastern Nigerian region in 1954 was preceded by an anti-Eastern Nigeria campaign, and partly because, subsequently, Dr. Endeley’s KNC chose the Action Group as its ally, instead of the NCNC, the Eastern Nigerian Government became indifferent to the future political association of Southern Cameroon. Thus, during the 1959 regional elections, one of the leaders of the NCNC, Dr. Jaja Wachuku, said that if Southern Cameroon wanted to secede, it should not be stopped. Another leading NCNC member was even more negative in his attitude. He argued that an attempt to fight to retain Southern Cameroon, as part of Nigeria, would amount to imperialism, and that there was no question of losing Southern Cameroon because, although it was administered as part of Nigeria, it never belonged to Nigeria (Akinyemi, 1974:142 – 143). When the UN plebiscite was eventually held in the territory, in 1961, the NCNC and the Eastern Nigerian Government maintained their indifference concerning its outcome. The organ of the Government, the Eastern Outlook, stated that whichever way the Cameroonians voted, Nigeria had nothing to lose or gain. After the plebiscite, the Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Dr. Michael Okpara, claimed that the loss of Southern Cameroon was “largely as a result of the campaign mounted against Eastern Nigeria by some
Cameroon leaders in 1953 and 1954”. As for the Federal Government, under Balewa, it did only the minimum to support the cause of the pro-Nigerian Southern Cameroonians. In 1959, Balewa issued a statement promising the Southern Cameroonians that they would retain their own separate region in independent Nigeria. In 1959, too, he issued another statement outlining the benefits that the Southern Cameroonians would derive by joining Nigeria, and warning them of the uncertainty and insecurity they would face if they rejected continued association with Nigeria. In addition, the Federal Government of Nigeria, dispatched Nigerian troops to the Cameroon-Nigeria border, partly to check the possible infiltration of Unions des populations de Cameroon, and partly to instill confidence in persons living in the borders areas, thereby demonstrating how secure it would be to live in Nigeria. Beyond these steps, the Federal Government did not wish to go. When the results of the plebiscite in the territory were known, and it became obvious that Nigeria had lost to French Cameroon, the Nigerian Prime Minister refused to pursue the matter any further.

In the 1970s, with Nigeria under military rule, the politics was different. The Federal Government commanded and the regions or states obeyed. And the Federal Military Government in Nigeria, under General Yakubu Gowon, was determined to maintain peaceful relations with the Government of Cameroon, under Amadou Ahidjo. Indeed, there was pressure on the Nigerian Federal Military Government from the South-Eastern and East-Central state governments to protect the lives of Nigerians living in the disputed territory and secure their livelihood chances. But the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, under Yakubu Gowon, was highly disposed to settle the matter peacefully for several reasons. The most important reason was that Nigeria had gone through a civil war; therefore the post-civil war Nigeria governments were unwilling to get Nigerians involved in fresh confrontations, this time with a neighboring state whose strong and firm support for the Federal side was crucial in helping it emerge victorious against the Biafrans. The FMG, rather resolved to settle the matter through friendly, bilateral consolations and negotiations with the government of Cameroon. Consultations between Nigeria and Cameroon had started before the civil war in Nigeria; they were continued during and after the war. By April, 1971, a joint (Nigeria-Cameroon) Permanent Consultative Committee had been set to delineate the boundary and work out the detail of other agreements for friendship and co-operation between them. By 1972, agreement had been reached on our important areas; cooperation in judicial matters, co-operation in police matters; cultural, social and technical cooperation; and protocol on the right of establishment; the fourth
aspect of the agreement was particularly important since it gave the nationals of each country the right to settle, acquire property and engage in industrial, commercial, and agricultural undertakings in each other’s territory without discrimination.

Specially, agreement was reached on the reciprocal granting of fishing privileges in the territorial waters of each other until formal agreement was concluded. But, unfortunately, only the first three agreements were ratified; so the dispute over fishing rights and the right to oil prospecting continued. Then, in 1974, to prevent further disputes arising from competitive exploitation of petroleum resources in the maritime boundary, a four-kilometer corridor was created with two kilometers on either side of a tentative boundary.

By the end of 1974, General Yakubu Gowon was facing a lot of criticisms over his domestic policies. Domestic opposition was growing. His administration was being charged with corruption, incompetence, and lack of action on a number of fronts. He was under pressure at home to show some decisiveness in governance. External relations became for his regime a convenient point of diversion. In June 1985 Gowon, Nigeria’s leader and Amadou Ahidjo, President of Cameroon, met in Maroua, and reached an agreement on the border and territorial disputes. Part of the agreement was that much of the disputed territory in the south, including the Bakassi peninsula, belonged to Cameroon; that the occupation of some fishing ports in the disputed territory by Nigerians did not amount to proof of ownership over the territory by Nigeria: but that Nigerians in the territory were, however, free to pursue their occupation without molestation from any quarters, provided they were law-abiding (SWB part 4, ME/492, 7/5: 8).

Succeeding regimes in Nigeria, including those of Murtala Mohammed (1975 – 1976); Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) and Shehu Shagari (1979 – 1983), either threatened or were put under severe domestic political pressure to go to war with Cameroon to regain the disputed territory, including the Bakassi peninsula. Each regime, however, pulled back from the brink, in the end. The main reason was that each realized that it was on rather weak legal grounds in respect of the maritime border. Let us illustrate this point with one civilian administration and one military regime-namely Shagari’s coalition government formed by the National Party of Nigeria and the Nigeria People’s Party; and the military junta of General Muhammadu Buhari. The government of Shehu Shagari was brought under server domestic political pressure, in 1981, to go to war with Cameroon over the disputed south-eastern maritime
border and territory. It was to launch a counter-offensive against Cameroon, following the killing of five Nigerian soldiers in the disputed territory by Cameroonian gendarmes on May 16, 1981. At the time, the Nigeria House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the government of Shagari to launch a retaliatory attack on Cameroon. Also, after a meeting of Senate in which the minister of Defense, The Chief of Defense staff, and the three service Chiefs were in attendance, the Minister Defense announced that, in the circumstance, the most probable option for Nigeria was military action against Cameroon. Furthermore, two of the three political parties in opposition at the Federal level, the Unity Party of Nigeria and the People’s Redemption Party also called for military action by Nigeria against Cameroon. Shagari’s government resisted all the pressure and chose to resolve the dispute through bilateral negotiations. The reason was the discovery that several regimes before this had conceded the territory in dispute to Cameroon a long time age.

Under the military regime of Muhammade Buhari, the position that the territory in dispute had been conceded to Cameroon was reiterated. Thus, in a letter of 24th May, 1984, to the military governor of Cross River State. Lt. Col. Dan P. Oduwaiye, stated categorically:

I should emphasize that the Bakassi peninsular and the Rio-del-Rey estuary are definitely in Cameroon territory. Although the border is yet to be demarcated, it would be indefensible to lay claim to any areas eastward from the thalweg of the Akwayafe Rivers. (cited in Nweke, 1990: 415)

Significantly, earlier in 1981, General Buhari had been one of those who favoured military action by Shagari’s regime as a means of setting some of the border and territorial disputes between Nigeria and her neighbours. When in power, he became less aggressive on the matter. Only one major reason can be adduced for this: he had access to superior facts on the matter.

However, working in the direction of escalating the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over the disputed frontiers and territories was domestic political instability. Exacerbated by economic crisis, domestic political instability, made certain regimes in Nigeria and Cameroon feel insecure at home and to seek external diversions abroad. This was the
situation in Cameroon, under President Paul Biya in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was the case in Nigeria, too, in the same period, under General Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. In both countries, the regimes became blatantly repressive, employing instruments of violence massively to silence political opponents. The corollary, in the sphere of external affairs, was the readiness to resort to violence as an instrument of state policy. No wonder, it was under Babangida that Nigerian officials, in 1992, brought out a new map, showing the Bakassi peninsular as part of Nigeria. And it was under Abacha that troops were massively deployed in the peninsular, ostensibly to separate the rival claimants to the territory from the states of Akwa Ibom and Cross River in Nigeria. And it was under Paul Biya, that Cameroonian gendarmes went virtually berserk, unleashing violence against Nigerian fishermen and traders in Bakassi, and at the same time killing hundreds of Nigerians in the Cameroonian mainland (The Guardian, march 14,1994).

Again, Ekoko (2004: 19), still on the side of military politics in Nigeria in one hand, noted that "the Bakassi mess was a function of domestic politics. The authoritarian regime of maximum ruler, Gen. Abacha was confronted with serious problems of legitimacy at home. He chose foreign policy of military adventurism and escapism in Bakassi as a diversionary stratagem that has now back-fired. Insecurity at home found expressed external policy diversion. The invasion and subsequent militarization of Bakassi was ill-conceived and created grave and unnecessary national security problems. On top of that, Bakassi policy formulation and execution were contradictory. As Etubom Bassey Ekpo Bassey a high Chief of the Court of the Obong of Calabar was to later observe, ‘Nigeria’s Foreign Minister, Baba Gana Kingibe, at the point when Nigeria sent troops to Bakassi, distributed maps to journalists which indicated that Bakassi was lock, stock and barrel, in Cameroon”. Kingibe in a most contradictory statement claimed on that occasion, that the troops were sent to maintain peace between Cross River and Akwa Ibom indigenes in the area!

At this juncture and with the benefit of hindsight was it so difficult for Nigerian legal experts who ought to have known the obvious outcome of the case to have advised the Federal Government that we were heading for judicial Golgotha? Instead, they remained adamant that there were chances of success, for self-serving motives.

Over the years Nigeria usually pulled back from the brink of war with Cameroon over Bakassi even in the face of extreme provocation. Gen. Obasanjo in his first coming as Head of
state, had threatened that “rather than accept the outrageous 1975 award, Nigeria would go to
war if the Republic of Cameroon refused to negotiate. Cameroon did not negotiate and Nigeria
did not go to war either. President Shehu Shagari refused to be pushed to war after the killing of
five Nigerians by Cameroon gendarmes in 1981. On that occasion France deliberately leaked
information to the effect that she would stand by Cameroon if war broke out. And in 1994
following Nigeria’s invasion of Bakassi, France and the Republic of Benin carried out joint
military exercises in Nigeria’s western boundary. The message was clear. In 1981, 1994 as well
as in 2002, the military balance between Nigeria and Cameroon did not favour Nigeria; while
Cameroon had France behind them, Nigeria stood alone, in a most un-plendid isolation. And
Nigeria cannot secure any international support in form of an alliance in any border war along
all her international boundaries, given the French factor we had earlier examined.

In this connection, in 1989 we had advocated Nigeria’s alliance policy that should
involve the consummation of bilateral defense agreements with each of our five neighbors.
Agreements with Benin and Niger should have been within the framework of ECOWAS Defense
Pact; in the case of Chad the existing internal problems of that country should have provided
Nigeria with the opportunity for the conclusion of a treaty of guarantee.

With Cameroon, Nigeria has seemingly complicated but easily identifiable unsettled
border problems that have been compounded by the presence of oil in the disputed
borderland. Cameroon is therefore Nigeria’s territorial rival and competitor for economic
resources. But can we seriously classify her as an enemy? Even them enmity in inter-state
relations is not permanent. Britain and France were rivals and enemies for most of the
nineteenth century, and curiously enough their friendship was anchored on the settlement of
various colonial differences in the famous Anglo-French Entente of 1904. It is significant to note
that the Entente was gradually transformed into a pseudo-alliance on the eve of the World War
I. From enemies, Britain and France fought against Germany as members of the Triple Entente.
This example demonstrates the positive role of rivalry and even enmity in inter-state relations.

In the Nigeria/Cameroon situation it is unfortunate that the latter, due to French
colonial classification which the OAU borrowed and failure of Nigerian diplomacy, was not
included in ECOWAS. Her membership of the community instead of her “observer status”
should have provided a forum for mutual and institutionalized relations and reduced
antagonisms. A Cameroonian accession to the ECOWAS Defense Pact would have been
territorial dispute with Cameroon from our agenda and proceed to construct a defense alliance with her. Such a breakthrough would enable and proceed to construct a defense alliance in particular and defense policy in general with self-assurance. The dream bogey of Nigerian domination would then be finally laid to rest.

Finally, according to Eke, (2009: 113), Nigeria and Cameroon had enjoyed healthy relations as the same people during the 1950s when they remained as one political party under NCNC. Later, for more political convenience, Southern Cameroon which was originally governed by the British was, in 1961, under the United Nations plebiscite, joined to the Republic of Cameroon under the French influence.

The Nigeria-Cameroon dispute over the oil-rich Bakassi was a carryover of the unhealthy relationship between Nigeria and France as a result of the latter’s influence in the sub-region. Howbeit, Nigeria got her independence in 1960 and became a Republic in 1963 with sovereign authority over her international relations with the world at large. Nigeria, at infancy, was engaged in a civil war with the secessionist Biafra between 1967 and 1970.

At the end of the war which took tools on both sides for 30 months, border skirmishes erupted between the Cameroonian gendarmes and Nigerian villages in the Bakassi area. In 1971, a joint Nigeria-Cameroon permanent consultative committee was set up for improved relations. But the discovery of oil in the area of Rio del Rey soon made Bakassi a political hotbed which stalled the Committee’s work. By this period, Cameroon had granted drilling rights in the disputed area to American oil companies, Nigeria adopted quite bilateral diplomacy including the establishment of Nigeria-Cameroon Mixed Border Commission to seek solution to the political problem.

In 1974, President Ahmadou Ahidjo met his Nigerian counterpart, General Yakubu Gowon and after their meeting, they signed the Kano Declaration, the major objective was to create a two-kilometer neutral corridor on either side to provide free and unfettered navigation access and security in the place.

The Bakassi issue remained a knotty political issue between Nigeria and Cameroon. Ambassador Leo Okogwu recounts that during the period, General Yakubu Gowon without consultations for advice from his officers, acted in the most unethical diplomatic practice. The head of state, in the presence of Ahmadou Ahidjo, signed the map submitted to him by the
Federal Surveyor-General, Mr. Coker, which had excluded the eastern boundary. According to Okogwu’s account, when Gowon observed that the development was attracting public outcry, the head of state called in Mr. Coker and remarked disappointingly: if any man has deceived me, it is you, coker'. Okongwu’s view is amply reinforced by Major-General Murtala Nyako who observed that the development was attracting public outcry, the head of state called in Mr. Coker and remarked disappointingly: if any man has deceived me, it is you, Coker”.

Okogwu’s view is amply reinforced by Major-General Murtala Nyako who observed that Gowon acted on the unfortunate situation that Nigeria’s cartographers rightly or wrongly, have always put the (disputed) peninsular under Cameroon. After the copious error had been made in favor of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo quickly ratified the agreement while the drenched Gowon could no longer muster the political euphoria to present the agreement and persuade the ruling Supreme Military council in Nigeria to ratify it because the Council also felt it was not for the best interest of Nigeria. It became one of the numerous diplomatic faux pas of Gowon’s exuberant personal largesse: If Gowon could pay the salaries of civil servants of Grenada and give away ECOWAS headquarters to his friend, President Eyadema of Togo (thanks to Murtala) despite Nigeria’s huge investment in the community, it was nothing difficult to sign away Bakassi peninsular to his friend President Ahidjo of Cameroon. It was indeed a treasonous treaty that underpinned the final session of Bakassi peninsular to Cameroon from Nigeria. Ambassador Okogwu blamed the loss of Bakassi to Cameroon on critical error of judgment by Nigeria’s military leadership in 1971. Nigeria acquiesced her claim of ownership of Bakassi peninsular by inaction and negligence because it failed to use the recommendations offered by the international jurist. In his recommendation, Okogwu had advised that:

Nigeria should hoist her flag in Bakassi as evidence of her sovereignty over the land; and Nigeria should establish effective military presence in Calabar near the territory in order to oversee and protect the peninsular (cited in Eke,2009:115).
Although Nigeria rejected military presence as recommended based on the narrow views held by the inner circle of decision-makers who argued that it “connotes aggression in some form”, it was not open to these narrow circle that military presence could be for peaceful purposes through swaggering, compellence and deterrence. It was not until 1991, when Cameroonian onslaught became intense and almost unbearable that Nigeria woke up in reactive posture to establish a naval base in Calabar to contain Cameroonian gendarmes’ insurgency. By this time, the gate of redemption had been closed; ICJ gave its verdict and Nigeria was expected, acting in good faith to the principles of the United Nations which she is a signatory in good standing, to obey or face possible sanctions. The belated and continued disagreement and the daring by the Federal High Court of Nigeria and National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to reverse the ceding of the oil-rich Bakassi peninsular and other Nigerian territories to Cameroon constitutes an affront to the decision of the international court of justice howbeit the controversial verdict in terms. On July 32, 2008, the Federal High Court of Nigeria ordered to stop the handover of the peninsular to Cameroon. After all, the Green Tree agreement for the handing over of Bakassi peninsular to Cameroon, it is argued, allows Cameroon the right of full exercise of powers over the peninsular from 2011. The length of time into year 2011, it is expected, also leaves an ample time for the school of thought that believes that there are remaining sharp edges to be explored in the diplomatic maneuver of Cameroon.

After several pressure, Nigeria swallowed her pride and avoided taking further steps that are capable of shading her image in bad light, jeopardize the nation’s chances for the permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council, including other consequences of Nigeria’s daring non-compliance to the ICJ ruling and such that may smear her image as West African and African leader with contradictory international image in the comity of civilized nations. She backed down to avoid developments that would impair her leadership role and influence in Africa and the world at large. The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in August 2008 ratified the handing over of Bakassi peninsular to the Republic of Cameroon.

The point to note is that Bakassi peninsular was in dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon but Nigeria lost in the struggle because of vested Western interest. This suggests that Cameroon’s influence in West Africa and beyond as a counterweight to Nigeria’s leadership aspiration is growing by the day. It is a matter for more proactive and dynamic foreign policy by the day. It is a matter for more proactive and dynamic foreign policy by Nigeria. The naïve
handling and transfer to Bakassi peninsular to Cameroon seem to have strengthened dubious claims by other countries sharing borders with Nigeria to take a chunk of Nigeria’s territorial land space and water under land and maritime disputes. The ceding of Bakassi peninsular to Cameroon under French-backed ICJ verdict introduces sad in Nigeria shores is more illustrative of such surprises that are yet to come. Expressing surprise over the development, the Director-General National Boundary Commission Sadiq Diggi, stated:

We never knew we had maritime boundary with Ghana until this issue came up. Since you are here and ready to negotiate with us, we are ready to negotiate with you (cited in Eke, 2009:116).

Nigeria should expedite effort in forming closer ties with her neighbors, especially, Cameroon, Ghana, Benin Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe to further promote unity, co-operation and security to guarantee Nigeria’s role in West African as a regional hegemon.

3.4 THE CULTURAL DIMENSION

The impact of western-constructed boundaries on ethno-cultural affinities in Africa, can never be over emphasized. Many border conflicts tend to emanate from the permeable and ill-defined nature of the boundaries that divide ethnic language groups with little discernible logic. Similarly to the demarcation lines imposed by the colonial powers, the international court of justice (ICJ) did not take into consideration the interest of the Bakassi indigenes vis-à-vis their cultural values that are held tenaciously as far as their existence is concerned, when rendering its 2002 judgment. Also, the signing of the Green Tree Agreement clearly demonstrates the ability and willingness of the international community to resolve border dispute in a peaceful and harmonious fashion, but again, did not appreciate the concerns of the indigenes of Bakassi.
The situation has resulted in several groups laying claim to the Bakassi kingdom, all with ethnic, cultural or historical ties to the peninsular. It is therefore, to this negligence of a peoples culture that we write this chapter to explore the cultural implications of the Bakassi dispute.

Culture of a people as Okafor and Okeke, (2002: 1) would argue, implies the way people do their thing; it is the people’s way of life. It includes all the ideals, arts, artifacts through which a group of people make meaning out of their every-day challenges. They further note that it endows a group with the “we attitude” which distinguishes it from any other group. It is the culture of the people that makes them united and integrated as a community. Abraham has succinctly synthesized this integrating perspective of culture when he said:

"Culture is an instrument for making (mutual) sufferance and co-operation natural. Its success depends upon the extent to which it is allowed to be self-authenticating. Though it allows for internal discussion, and is indeed nourished thereby, the principles of decision in such discussions are themselves provided by culture......

...... By uniting the people in common beliefs, actions and values, culture fills with order, that portion of life which lies beyond the pale of state intervention. It fills it in such a way as at same time to integrate its society, on the basis of common attitudes, common values. It creates common destiny and cooperation in pursuing it (cited in Okafor and Okeke, 2002: 2)

Nevertheless, it is in the light of these features and implications which culture embraces that the Nigeria-Cameroon border conflicts and its dynamics, has remained a problem to the Bakassi kingdom. This no doubt is what the people of Bakassi suffered emotionally when, they voiced out after the ICJ’s ruling and on the day of handing over of Bakassi to Cameroon:
Nigerians cannot have their ancestral home transferred to foreign land in obedience to a politicized world court judgment..... ... otherwise, when we leave, we will carry our ancestors. On the graves of our forefathers buried here in Archibong Town, when we leave, will not be able to appease them as usual, but we don’t know what to do with our forefathers buried here years ago and we don’t even know what to do. My father and mother died here (Akpan, 2006: 34).

The aforementioned perspectives are deeply rooted in the ethno-cultural attachment that Nigerias (Bakassi indigenes), feel towards Bakassi. Also, according to Sama and Ross, this ethno-cultural attachment has informed the Nigerian position of historical consolidation, but it is not easily captured in terms that can be adjudicated in a western court. (Sama and Ross, 2005: 112).

Basically, considering the ethnicity of the population of Bakassi, it is absolutely clear and understandable that the so-called Bakassians would prefer to remain under the jurisdiction of Nigeria. Majority of the Bakassians are of Nigerian decent and as opposed to the Cameroonian accusation against Nigeria of taking advantage of its large population to populate the area in attempt to support its bid for sovereignty, this is rather the result of the fact that long before the British set foot on Nigeria, Bakassi belonged to old Calabar. In historical terms, the Efik people have inhabited the area for many centuries. So within Nigeria, especially in the eastern states, there was mounting pressure on the president not to cede the territory to Cameroon and to resort to war in case of defeat at the International Court Justice. Immediately after the verdict, many Nigerians appalled by the judgment began questioning how a people with a different culture, language and background could be ceded to another nation whose background is completely different from that of Bakassi. Unfortunately, this line of argument cannot be considered valid because the same claims could be made the other way round. There is no doubt to the fact that there are millennial cultural and historical ties between the peoples of Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River States in Nigeria and the North West and South West Provinces of Cameroon. In the English-speaking areas of Cameroon again, there are special ethnic and tribal ties between inhabitants of the Ndian Division in the South West Province and the peoples of Akwa Ibom and Cross River States in Nigeria. In addition, Tiv, the language
spoken by most of the indigenes in Akaway sub-division in the South West Province of Cameroon is the same language spoken by the majority of the natives in Benue State of Nigeria. And lastly, cross border language and other cultural affiliations, like traditional dances and local rites and rituals are noticed between the peoples of south eastern Taraba State of Nigeria and the peoples of the far North West Province of Cameroon. Consequently, this brings us back to the argument that one of the root causes of conflict in Africa is the result of arbitrary demarcation of borders by European powers. However, because 90 to 95% of the inhabitants of Bakassi are of Nigerian descent, Nigeria was very quick to point to cultural issues to legitimize her legal claim of sovereignty over Bakassi against her better judgment.

3.5 THE LEGAL DIMENSION

In the first instance, mention must be made here, that the experience of the attempts made to resolve the Cameroon-Nigerian boundary or territorial disputes in general, and the conflict over the Bakassi peninsular in particular, shows that a wide range of strategies and assortment of mechanisms exist for the resolution of international conflicts. It also shows that there are principles implicated in the process.

According to the United Nations year book of 1963, “in the early days of the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over their land and maritime boundary, that is in the 1950’s and 1960’s, up till 1985, resort was made to the orthodox international strategies of peaceful resolution of conflict. One of these is the use of the conventional methods of enquiry, mediation and conciliation. The United Nations visiting missions referred to earlier, the plebiscites in the two disputed territories of Northern and southern Cameroons and the deliberations on the reports of the missions and the plebiscite of the United Nations General Assembly represented attempts by the international community to resolve the conflict, using orthodox diplomatic strategies and employing conventional conflict-resolution mechanism (United Nations year book of 1963:492).

When, at the stage, one party in the dispute, namely the Republic of Cameroon, was not satisfied with the outcome of these efforts, it employed yet another peaceful means, resort to the International Court of Justice. As already indicated, when the Republic of Cameroon took the matter, in respect of the plebiscite in Northern Cameroon to the ICJ in 1961, the World
Court declined to pass judgment on the case, arguing that the dispute was about the interpretation of a treaty that was no longer in force, since the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 22nd April, 1961, which approved the results of the plebiscites in the two disputed territories, had a definitive legal effect of terminating the Trusteeship Agreements under which the territories were administered (yearbook of the United Nations, 1963: 495-497).

As Asobie rightly opined, “The use of plebiscites in the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary/territorial conflict needs to be highlighted as a cross between the old and new mechanisms of conflict resolution. It is quite similar to the modern methods of verification mission, supervision of democratic/transition elections, etc. which now go by the name of ‘democratization. The question being raised today is whether or not the people of the Bakassi peninsular actually participated in those elections; and if they did, how they voted. The fact is that they indeed participated and voted overwhelmingly in favor of the integration of Southern Cameroon with Nigeria. But, so did many others in Southern Cameroon. As a matter of fact, those who voted in support of remaining as an integral part of Nigeria numbered 97,741. At the time Dr. Endeley had suggested that the Federal Government of Nigeria should support his efforts to partition Southern Cameroon between pro-Nigerians and pro-French Cameroonians. But the Nigerian Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa, rejected the proposal (Akinyemi, 1974:19).

To this extent, another orthodox strategy which featured in the resolution of the Nigeria-Cameroon conflict was bilateral negotiation. It became the major instrument for dealing with the problem in the first half of the 1970s. The instruments or mechanisms employed along with this strategy were: Heads of State bilateral summits: Joint Consultative Committees: and Joint Boundary Commissions.

Evidently, Ate and Akinterinwa recorded that “bilateral summits were held between Ahmadou Ahidjo (Cameroon) and Yakubu Gowon (Nigeria) in 1970 in Nigeria, in 1971 in Cameroon, and in 1974 and 1975 in Cameroon. The Joint Consultative Committee met in 1971, 1972, 1974 and 1975. Through such meetings, important agreements were reached by both sides. In 1971, an agreement was reached, at the level of experts between Cameroon, represented by Mr. Ngoh, and Nigeria, represented by Mr. Coker, leading to the establishment of what became known as the Ngoh/Coker lines. By this agreement, ownership and control of the Calabar River channel was placed under Cameroonian authority. The agreement reaffirmed
earlier ones, which have put the Bakassi peninsula in the territory of Cameroon. However, in a subsequent meeting between Gowon and Ahidjo, in August, 1972, the Nigeria government declared that the Agreement creating the Ngoh/Coker line was unacceptable to it. On the other hand, Ahidjo stated that the delineation was acceptable to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (Ate and Akinterinwa, 1992: 156).

Again, the Yaounde joint border commission meeting was another important agreement that was concluded between the two countries in 1974. To prevent any conflict arising from competitive exploitation of petroleum resources in the vicinity of the disputed maritime boundary, a four-kilometer corridor was created with two kilometers on either side of a tentative maritime border was created with two kilometers on either side of a tentative maritime border. This corridor was declared an oil-exploration-free zone. In 1974 also, at a meeting in Kano between Gowon and Ahidjo, the Anglo-German Treaty of 1913, and the 1958 Geneva Convention of the Law of the Sea were upheld as they pertained to the contiguous maritime zone of Nigeria and Cameroon. It was also agreed that a corridor extending to two kilometers from either side of an established line of buoys be created as a free zone for navigation. Both parties were to ensure that this was respected, through patrol (Ake and Akinterinwa, 1992: 158 – 159).

Another agreement was entered into, in 1975, when Gowon and Ahidjo signed a declaration spelling out the line, which they had agreed to earlier as the maritime boundary between their two countries. The new line of maritime frontier demarcation “proceeded from point 12 at the terminal of the line agreed to in 1971 and terminated at point G, at the extreme southerly point on Chart 3433 accepted by both countries”. This declaration was made in Maroua, Cameroon significantly on June 1, 1975 and subsequently became known as the “Maroua Declaration”. It amounted, in fact, to an endorsement of the Ngoh/Coker technical proclamation: nonetheless, the new line specific in 1975 resulted in a shift of the maritime frontier slightly east of the Ngoh/Coker line. The Maroua settlement also represented, in a way, a compensation to Cameroon over the loss of some territory in the northern part of the border, hence the date-June 1-which, as we saw earlier, had been marked annually by the Republic of Cameroon in commemoration of the loss of northern Cameroon to Nigeria in 1961. By the Maroua declarations and treaties were not entirely efficacious as international conflict resolution strategies. For in that year, Gowon’s (immediate past, but one) successor as Head of
State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, threatened that, “rather than accept the outrageous 1975 award (that is, the Maroua agreement of June 1, 1975), Nigeria would go to war if the Republic of Cameroon refused to negotiate” (Isa, 1987: 15). Subsequently, Cameroon refused to enter into further bilateral negotiations, on the matter, with Nigeria. The argument of the government of Cameroon was that Nigeria’s past behavior of not respecting agreements, accords, and declarations made further bilateral talks meaningless. However, between 1976 and 1979, Nigeria did not go to war on the matter. Cameroon’s preference has since the 1980s and 1990s been for extra-African multilateral political intervention and judicial arbitration. Thus, when troops from the two countries clashed over the control of the Bakassi peninsula, in 1993 and 1994, Cameroon had the matter placed before the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. As for Nigeria, with the exception of 1981, when the Federal Government under Shagari proposed the setting up of an international arbitration, and however, when troops from the two countries clashed over the control of the Bakassi peninsula, in 1993 and 1994, Cameroon had the matter placed before the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. As for Nigeria, with the exception of 1981, when the Federal Government, under Shagari, proposed the setting up of an international arbitration commission to resolve the perennial conflict, her preference has been to place the matter before African continental or regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States. Nigeria would rather have these two organizations, in which it commands immense influence, resolve the conflict. She has been generally reluctant to have the matter settled by extra-African, multilateral agencies with enforcement powers. When the matter was placed before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by Cameroon, however, Nigeria has had no choice but to appear before the World Court, having endorsed, without any reservations or qualification, the Optional Clause of the Statue of the ICJ barely five years after becoming a member of the United Nations. In 1965, Nigeria became the forty-first state in the world to declare her acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ And it did so without the sort of reservations made by such countries as the United States of America, that virtually negate such acceptance. The only condition which, Nigeria attached to her acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ was reciprocity. As the government of Nigeria explained at the time, Nigeria did not accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court because she believed that everything was right with the court or with the state of international law itself. Nigeria’s action was based on the conviction that unless many states gave the Court “their trust and confidence”, it would be no
more than a mere symbol of “man’s belief in a world of law and order” (Balewa’s Address to the United Nations; Reproduced in Obiozor, 1985: 190 – 197).

As for the Republic of Cameroon, it declared its acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice much later. This was no 10th May, 1992 (Odoemena, 2002: 60).

The question that now arises is whether Nigeria’s apprehension as reflected in her reluctance to use the ICJ has been become out by recent events or whether her initial and early support for, and faith in, the Court was right. When the dispute under discussion was first taken to the ICJ by Cameroon in 1961, the ruling of the world court pleased Nigeria. In the more recent resort to the ICJ, it would appear, on the first sight that, the rulings of the ICJ went against Nigeria. But did they?

The matter was placed before the ICJ again by Cameroon in 1994. In 1998, the ICJ ruled in favour of Cameroon, against Nigeria’s argument that the World Court had no jurisdiction to entertain Cameroon’s suit on the conflict over the maritime boundaries (the outer sea) between the two countries. One October 10, 2002, the International Court of Justice then gave a comprehensive ruling on the substance of the boundary and territorial disputes between the Republic of Cameroon and Nigeria, which is summarize below.

The International Court of Justices Ruling on the Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary disputes

Fombo, (2006: 151), notes that “as early as 1981, Nigeria and Cameroon had mooted the idea of submitting their land and maritime boundary disagreements, to an international tribunal. However, after diffusing the tensions caused by the May 1981 shooting incident, the idea fizzled out, until the next major crisis in 1994. On March 29, Cameroon filed at the registry of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) an application instituting proceedings against Nigeria. The dispute was described as “relating essentially to the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular”, coextensive to the rest of the maritime boundary, the delimitation of which has “remained a partial one despite many attempts to complete it...” Ahead of the court action, Cameroon signed up to the compulsory appearance clause of the ICJ to which Nigeria had signed
on September 3, 1965. In any case, the ICJ being an integral part of the United Nations system to which both Nigeria and Cameroon had acceded at independence, the latter could still have proceeded with the application as a member of the UN.

Two months after the initial application, Cameroon on June 6, 1994, filed in an additional application “for the purpose of extending the subject of the dispute” to include the lacustrine area of Lake Chad and as its basin. In the additional application, Cameroon also requested the court to examine the entire frontier between the two states from Lake Chad to the Atlantic. This additional application Cameroon explained was designed to be an amendment to the initial one, implying that Cameroon desired the two to be treated as one case file. The ICJ and Nigeria consented to this modification and the stage was set for the proceedings. It was however, to take many months of procedural delays and objections raised by Nigeria before the substantive matters of the dispute could be presented to the Court.

Thus, Cameroon’s action did not come as a surprise. Certainly, there has been no lack of precedence to resolve international boundary disputes by delegating the power of decision to a court; for almost all international conflicts, especially boundary ones, involve important legal questions. Such legal questions were no less present in the Nigeria-Cameroon case. Two African examples readily come to mind: the Libya-Chad boundary dispute and the Mali-Burkina Faso. As Holsti has argued, while the records of tribunals in resolving international disputes may not be very impressive generally, they have done better when it concerns boundary disputes (Holsti, 1996: 289).

Nevertheless, after several years of legal battle and argument at the international court of justice (ICT), the world court seating at The Hague, Switzerland, on October 10, 2002, ruled on the protracted boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon. Abati (2002), cited in the ‘Nigeriaworld’ (Friday 27, December 2002), who did a very comprehensive record of the adjudication, noted that, in its judgment which is final, without appeal and binding for the parties, it determined as follows the course of the Boundary, from north to south, between Cameroon and Nigeria:

In the Lake Chad area, the court decides that the boundary is delimited by the Thomson-Marchand Declaration of 1929-1930, as incorporated in the Headerson-Fleuriau Exchange of Notes of 1931 (between Great Britain and France); it finds that the boundary starts
in the lake from the Cameroon-Nigeria-Chad tripoint (whose co-ordinates it defines) and follows as straight line to the mouth of the River Ebeji as it was in 1931 (whose co-ordinates it also defines) and then runs in a straight line to the point where the river today divides into two branches”.

Between Lake Chad and the Bakassi peninsular, the court confirms that the boundary is delimited by the following instruments:

i. From the point where the River Ebeji bifurcates, as far as Tamnyare Peak, by the Thomson-Marchand declaration of 1929-1930 (paras. 2-60), as incorporated in the Henderson-Fleuriau exchange of notes of 1931.

ii. From Tamnyar Park to pillar 64 referred to in Article xii of the Anglo-German Agreement of 12 April 1913, by the British order in council of 2 August 1946.

iii. From pillar 64 to the Bakassi Peninsular, by the Anglo-German agreements of 11 March and 12 April 1913.

The court examines point by point sectors of the land boundary and specifies for each one how the above-mentioned instruments are to be interpreted (paras. 91, 102, 114, 129, 134, 139, 146, 152, 155, 160, 168, 179, 184 and 189 of the judgment).

In Bakassi the court decides that the boundary is delimited by the Anglo-German agreement of 11 March 1913 (Arts. Xviii-xx), and that sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular lies with Cameroon. It decides that in this area, the boundary follows the thalweg of the River Akpakorum (Akwayafe), dividing the mangrove Islands near Ikang in the way shown on map TSGS2240, as far as a straight line joining Bakassi point and King Point.

As regards the maritime boundary, the Court, having established that it has jurisdiction to address this aspect of the case-which Nigeria had disputed, fixes the course of the boundary between the two states’ maritime areas.

In its judgment the court requests Nigeria expeditiously and without condition to withdraw its administration and military or police forces from the area of Lake Chad falling within Cameroonian sovereignty and from the Bakassi peninsula. It also requests Cameroon expeditiously and without condition to withdraw any administration or military or police forces which may be present along the land boundary from Lake Chad to the Bakassi peninsular on territories which pursuant to the judgment fall within the sovereignty of Nigeria. The latter has
the same obligation in regard to territories in that area which fall within the sovereignty of Cameroon.

The court takes note of Cameroon’s undertaking, given at the hearings, to “continue to afford protection to Nigerians living in the (Bakassi) peninsular and in the Lake Chad area”. Finally, the court rejects Cameroon’s submissions regarding the state responsibility of Nigeria. It likewise rejects Nigeria’s counter-claims. (International Court of Justice official website-www.icj.org).

To that extent, as Asobie noted, the verdict has several dimensions. The first is the court’s ruling on the colonial treaties and post-colonial agreements pertaining to the disputed boundaries and territories. The second component has to do with the determination by the court of the precise land and maritime frontiers between the Nigeria and Cameroon. The third dimension relates to the issue of state responsibility and the associated matter of compensation or reparation. The fourth part deals with the request made to the court by Equatorial Guinea, urging the court to take the interest of Equatorial Guinea into account in giving its ruling on the case before it. The fifth aspect concerns the recommended manner of effectuation of the court’s verdict, and the courts proposals on how to deal with the effects of its ruling on the peoples affected by the determination of ownership of the disputed territories. The first and second dimensions of the verdict have raised considerable debate in Nigeria, and therefore attracted so many comments:

Chief Richard Akinjide’s (he was on the Nigerian legal team) view on the issue: “If in 1913 Britain signed the Anglo-German Treaty purporting to transfer Bakassi to Germany, can Britain transfer what she hasn’t got?” (“Nemo dat quo non habeter”. No one has the power to transfer the ownership of that he does not own). (The Gurdian, October 19, 2002).

This is in consonance with his position on the matter in an interview with Newswatch:

We must accept that, that ICJ judgment is 50 percent international law and 50 percent politics. And as far as the case between Nigeria and Cameroon was concerned, the dispute was really between Nigeria and France. Cameroon
was just the proxy for France. There is no doubt that in law
and in fact that Bakassi belongs to Nigeria because that is
supported by a lot of documentary evidence, which were
tendered before the court. But, which the court ignored.
You don’t ask somebody to transfer to you what belongs to
you. So as far as I’m concerned the judgment of the ICJ is a
complete fraud and unaccepted. If indeed Bakassi belongs
to Cameroon, how can Cameroonian be asking them to
transfer it to them. (Newswatch, November 4, 2002).

When asked why the French representative was allowed to preside over the case, since the
Nigerian team knew that the matter was between “Nigeria and France”, Akinjide side:

You cannot, you cannot. You have to operate within the
status of the court. And the status of the court didn’t allow
you to do what you say we should do. All we did and were
to do were all within the status of the court. Don’t forget
Nigeria did not sue Cameroon. Cameroon took us to court.
And when you are taken to court, you have to defend
yourself. (Newswatch November 4, 2002).

Elder statesman, Chief Anthony Enahoro raised this issue in an interview
with vanguard:

On Bakassi, I do not really know what was pleaded by the
Federal Government at the court, because if it is said that
the judges did not pay attention to a particular aspect of an
issue I would like to know whether we pleaded that in
court. Or whether the Federal Government’s action is an
after-thought............. And whether this means that it is up to
any other nation on earth whether to accept the judgment or not of the court, if that is the case it is going to be difficult to make a case for the very existence of that court. And then how do you settle problems, it is war. We are then back to the old days of using war to settle disputes. So I am not myself pronouncing judgment as I do not know what was pleaded” (Vanguard, October 28, 2002).

I want to raise this issue: Does the status of ICJ not allow parties in a suit to plead a case of conflict of interest whereby a judge (or some judges) are asked to step down? Be that as it may, why didn’t the country’s legal team make that prayer and let it be on record that the court overruled it. I am not a lawyer and I do not claim to be one. However, I wish to throw open the debate. International lawyers should please throw more light on this issue. Let the debate begin.

Moreso, the case was so much shrouded in secrecy as at the time it was going on. I am talking particularly about the last one year. Save for the snippet of video clips and news reports in Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) and short news reports on the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN—“Radio Nigeria”), not much was heard about the case. If the matter was handled much more transparently, I believe the case would not have ended the way it did. It was only when the judgment was delivered that we started getting details of what transpired at Hague. All the intellectual inputs as it concern this case that is now pouring in would have better utilized if people had made these inputs while the case was going on.

Again, I still cannot understand why the indigenes of Bakassi were not invited as defense witnesses. I remember during the sitting of the Human Rights Violation and Investigation Commission (HRVIC), otherwise known as the Oputa Panel, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) even invited illiterate women from the villages to come and testify on the floor of the commission and they had to speak through interpreters. On the back page of the Thursday, October 17, 2002 edition of Thisday, Olusegun Adeniyi wrote a very nice piece. He had written: “One of the community leaders (of Bakassi), Chief Okpo Eyo, said during the week that officials who provided legal defense did not seek adequate proofs of the
ownership of the peninsula from the aborigines and real owners. “Rather, what we saw was the flying abroad to testify of strangers who know nothing about the peninsular to the detriment of the country when the real owners and inhabitants of the area are there”.

A pertinent question to ask now is: was the Obong of Calabar at any point involved? Were his people, especially those living in the peninsular, given opportunities to make representation? From what one has been reading in the newspapers, they were not, yet the Obong is an internationally renowned Professor of medicine who could have helped Nigeria in the course of the case since the peninsular belongs to his people”. I agree with Adeniyi, intoto.

This administration has this uncanny manner of handling legal matters clumsily. Fred Agabje, a constitutional lawyer, in an interview with Vanguard, berated the government on this. Commenting on the Mohammed Abacha case, he said:

“I cannot blame the court or the judge. The judge decides on the fact that the lawyers placed before him. Supposing the government lawyer did not make that as one of the conditions (retrieving illegally acquired wealth by the family), will the judge go outside the fact before him? And if a judge does that he will be acting outside his jurisdiction. Because the government lawyers were shortlisted, they did not sit big hammer on him. They did not do what they (are) supposed to do. They were waiting for Obasanjo to come in through the backdoors.... I am not satisfied with the job the federal government has done on the Abachas. The substance has been left and the shadow is being pursued. There are clever ways people like us, could have come on behalf of the federal Government to get every kobo that has been stolen. It is like thoroughness, intellectualism, resourcefulness were not employed. It is sad,” (Sunday Vanguard, September 29, 2002).

However, in respect of the first part, the court’s verdict is that the colonial treaties (between Britain and Germany, 1913; and between Britain and France, 1931, pertaining to the southern and northern borders, respectively, were valid legal instruments. Similarly, the court ruled that the agreements between Nigeria and Cameroon in 1971 and 1975 are also valid legal instruments. These treaties or agreements, according to the court, established legal right of sovereignty, for each of the parties, over some of the territories in dispute and formed a sound basis for defining and demarcating the contentious international boundaries between the two countries.
The World Court could not give a ruling different from this considering the evidence before it much of which emanated from the Nigerian side, and given the nature of Nigeria’s defense which was rather weak and apologetic. Nigeria’s position was weakened from the start by the earlier position, often publicly stated, on the matter, for instance, as earlier indicated, by a policy statement issued by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa’s government, in October, 1960. The Nigerian government had explicitly and unequivocally endorsed the doctrine of uti possidetis juris, declaring that it is a cardinal principle of Nigeria foreign policy in relation to colonial boundaries. Hence, before the court, the legal team that represented Nigeria operated on the premise that this principle was sacrosanct. As Auwalu Hamisu Yadudu, a member of the team, and once legal adviser to the late Nigerian military leader, General Sani Abacha (1993 – 1998) saw it, “there is no way we can escape relying on pre-independent instruments that shaped African countries. And these instruments do not exactly show the borders as we would want it to be in Nigeria” (the Guardian, Lagos, October 27, 2002: 10). More importantly, Nigeria’s own maps about the disputed territories and borders were drawn in a manner that reflected an acceptance of the validity of these colonial treaties. This point was clearly made by Titilayo Abiodun, a Surveyor, who had worked in Nigeria’s Survey Department with the late Chief Coker in delineating and demarcating the borders, and who spent “most of 1983 – 1995, dealing with Nigeria’s international and inter-state boundary surveys”. Abiodun revealed that the Nigerian government had earlier “adopted” the Anglo-German Treaty of 11th March, 1913, treating it as valid, and as a sound basis for the delineation and demarcation on the boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon. In the words of Titilayo Abiodun, a fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Surveyors, “In 1970-1975, Bakassi was not the issue as the Anglo-German Treaty of 11th March, 1913 was adopted…. It is on record that before Nigeria accepted the 1913 (Agreement) for the demarcation legal opinion was sought and given, searches and inquires were made at the UN headquarters, through our Mission in New York. U.N records showed Bakassi as part of the Trust Territory (of Southern Cameroons) and was also included in reports sent to the UN by Britain that was (the) administering colonial power” (Vanguard, October 27,2002).

Above all, before 1994, when Cameroon went to the World Court on the matter, several officials of the Nigerian government had issued statements and or distributed maps produced by the Nigerian government itself, declaring and indicating that the Bakassi peninsular belonged to Cameroon, and not to Nigeria. This was done in 1962 (by Balewa’s government by way of a diplomatic note, accompanied by a map produced by Nigeria’s Department of Survey): in 1972
(through a letter written to Nigeria’s Ministry of External Affairs by Nigeria’s Commissioner for Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation. Dr. Taslim O. Elias): and in 1984 (via a letter written to the military governor of Cross River State, Lt. Col. Dan. Archibong. By Rear Admiral V. L. Oduwaiye declaring that “the Bakassi peninsular and the Rio-del-Rey estuary are definitely in Cameroon territory”). The latest of such self-denying acts was done in 1993, under the self-same Abacha regime that resumed the struggle for the recovery of the Bakassi peninsula. According to Etubom Bassey Ekpo Bassey, a prominent member of the court of the current Ogbong of Calabar, in 1993, “Nigeria’s Foreign Minister, Baba Gana Kingibe, at the point when Nigeria sent troops to Bakassi peninsular, distributed maps to journalists which indicated that Bakassi was lock, stock and barrel, in Cameroon”. Asked why then Nigerian troops were in Bakassi, Kingibe stated, contradictorily, “that the troops were sent to maintain peace between Cross River and Akwa Ibom indigenes” in the area (The Guardian, Sunday, October 13, 2002: 1-2).

In the light of these facts, the Nigeria legal representatives at the court placed the burden of the Nigerian case on the principle of effective occupation and historical consolidation, aka affectivities. The Nigerian position sounded like that of a robber insisting that some property rightfully and legally belonged to him because he was in effective possession of it, and had, in fact, had custody of it for more than forty years. In the circumstance, the presentation of Nigeria’s case was rather apologetic. In a bid to avoid paying compensation to Cameroon for Nigeria’s alleged illegal occupation of Cameroonian territory, the Nigerian team at the court pleaded: “even if the court should find that Cameroon has sovereignty over these areas that is, the Lake Chad area and the Bakassi regional, the Nigerian presence there was the cannot be held internationally responsible for conduct which, at the time it took place, Nigeria has every reason to believe, was lawful” (The Guardian, November 4, 2002: 8).

Not surprisingly, the World Court rejected the argument advanced by Nigeria, which was predicated principally on the claim of effective occupation. As Gilbert Guillaume, the president judge, later explained, “It (i.e the court) moreover rejected the theory of historical consolidation put forward by Nigeria and accordingly, refused to take into account the affectivities relied upon by Nigeria. It ruled that, in the absence of acquiescence by Cameroon, these affectivities could not prevail over Cameroon’s conventional titles” (The Guardian, Friday, October 11, 2002: 3).
Reactions to the Ruling

Despondency characterized the general reaction to the verdict in Nigeria. Newspaper headlines, editorials and columns for several weeks from October 11, 2002, paid much attention to it. The Guardian captioned it as a “painful end to a tortuous legal battle”. As the government dropped a clue it might not accept the judgment, the captions became more forthright in denouncing it. A Thisday headline “Bakassi: ICJ Judgment, western imperialisit gang-up” typified the general evoked spontaneous reaction of rejections in the Bakassi (the area that makes up the kernel of the litigation). The people of the Bakassi are “bona fide citizens of Nigeria and will forever, inhabiting our Bakassi, remain Nigerians”, said Florence Ita Giwa, a representative of the area in the Nigerian Senate. In the same review, the president of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) Chief Wole Olanipekun expressed surprise that Nigeria lost the Bakassi. In his words, “I never expected Nigeria to lose that case, Bakassi is the juiciest part of Nigeria heritage…. It is most unfortunate that we lost the case”. The Punch with a similar tone in an editorial described the judgment, as a “Bitter pill to swallow for the government and people of Nigeria”. It further rebuked it as “dubious” and a “product of political experience rather than of equity and; indifference to the relevant historical facts”. A columnist with Thisday justified rejection of the judgment for its being “unwholesome, demeaning, a-historical, anti-people, anti-justice and above all superficial and partial”.

However, on Wednesday, October 23, 2002, the Federal Government of Nigeria rejected the ruling. After the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, Chief Ojo Madukwe (the Minister for Transport), not Prof. Jerry Gana (Information Minister), was mandated to brief the media. Maduekwe, a sophistical rhetorician inebriated with exuberance of his own verbosity, read the federal government’s position on the matter. “There will not be any requirement for Nigerian nationals to move from where they are living at present, “he said. “The judgment will have no effect on Nigeria’s nationals to move from where they are living at present”, he said. “The judgment will have effect on Nigeria’s oil and natural gas reserve”, he added. He further stated that “on no account will Nigeria abandon her people and their interests. For Nigeria, it is
not a matter of oil or natural resources on land or in coastal waters; it is a matter of the welfare and well being of her people on their land”.

In consonance with this, Asobie also recorded the same, when noted that “After almost a fortnight of silence, the Nigeria Federal Government complemented its initial disjointed reaction, (which held that the ruling left no victor nor vanquished) with a communiqué that exposed the bitterness it orchestrated. At the end of an executive meeting convened to examine the ruling on October 23, 2002, the Minister of Transport, (Ojo Maduekwe) read out its official stance on the judgment largely rejecting the Court’s ruling. Perceivably emboldened by the general disgust with the pronouncement of the ICJ, the government cited grave and extensive errors of judgment and bias on the part of the World Court. According to the statement:

... for purely political reasons, the court, headed by a French President, upheld a legal position which is contrary to all known laws and conventions, thus legitimizing and promoting the interest of former colonial powers at our expense (cited in the ‘Nigeria world’ Friday, December 27, 2002).

The government reaction was especially fine-tuned to coincide with public opinion and the general mood in the country, but appears to be at odds with previous dispositions of African countries on ICJ rulings, concerning territorial and boundary disagreement.

However, after the ICJ ruling and the rejection of the judgment by the Nigerian government, several people across the country and beyond have been expressing their views on the issue. Even in the Nigeria world.com webset, the debate was alive. Some weeks ago, there were been tantrums on this website between H.E. Ambassador Albert G.P. Omotayo, MFR (Nigeria’s High Commissioner to Mozambique) on one side and Uchenna Odogwo, Mike Onwukwe and Kennedy Emetulu, on the other side. I not wish to join issues with them but to express my own views on this contemporary issue.
It is my view that the Federal Government and Nigeria’s legal team bungled this case. This is what brought us to the current cul-de-sac we find ourselves in. First, the president and his Cameroonian counterpart, Paul Biya, were “summoned” to France on September 5 by the French President Jacques Chirac, where both African leaders were said to have pledged to abide by the court ruling. In a very incisive editorial, The Guardian Newspaper took exception to this. It had written: “Very recently, it transpired that the French President, Monsieur Jacques Chirac, had invited President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Cameroonian counterpart, Mr. Paul Biya, to France in connection with the Bakassi palaver, which is subjudice in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague. In all probabilities, the French President’s aim in arranging the tripartite meeting was to discuss the likely outcome of the judgment of the ICJ, which, as must be well known to Monsieur Chirac, is imminent. France has copious investments, particularly in the oil sector, in the disputed area” (“France and the Bakassi Case”, The Guardian, September 18, 2002).

However, the president recently denied accepting to abide by the court ruling. President Obasanjo told the British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) Sola Odunfa that he would never given a “blank cheque” by agreeing to respect a judgment without knowing which way it would go. I think somebody is being economical with the truth. Both the presidency and the newspaper need some explanations to do.

Secondly, the Federal Government accused the ICJ of being partial since it has a Frenchman (Gilbert Guillaume) as president and also a British (Rosalyn Higgins) and a German (Carl-August Fleischhauer) among the 16-member jury. In the argument of the Federal Government, the countries of these judges have vested interest in the case. However, the same federal government forgot to mention that a Nigeria, Prince Bola Ajiboal, was also one of the judges. Likewise, a Sierra Leonean judge, Abdul G. Koroma (Sierra Leone is Nigeria’s “close door” neighbour).

In spite of this obvious tone of rejection, the statement ruled out war with Cameroon and it urged Nigerians to remain calm while the government forged ahead with the quest for a peaceful solution. But the general atmosphere in the country remained that of dejection, shock and disappointment. Notwithstanding the government’s ruling out of war as a means of reversing the unpleasant situation, military strategists in some quarters continued to discuss the possibility of war. The Senate even ordered the executive arm of government to get the armed
forces “combat-ready for any eventually” which it considered as a back-up to the continued
diplomatic endeavours. Also, the Senate asked for funds to be allocated for the evacuation of
the estimated four million Nigerians in Cameroon in the event of a total war to recover the
Bakassi lost in the legal tussle.

Moreover, according to Asobie (2005: 175), in the wake of the public frustration and
general disbelief, the temptation of apportioning blame could not be resisted. Much scorn was
poured on the government and its handling of the matter. Not only were there trenchant
comments against the composition of Nigeria’s team of jurists who handled the defence, Gilbert
Guillaume, as president of the bench, to have presided over the case. Still, others thought that
Nigeria should not have in the first place consented to ICJ adjudication of the dispute. Those
who espouse this position consider the advisers that impressed on the government to go to
court as the real villains. Again and often, blame was laid on former president Gowon the “feel-
good civil war hero” who is widely alleged to have “irretrievably pawned away” the juiciest
potion of Nigeria’s territory.

All these helped to strengthen the feeling and resolve that the World Court decision
was unfair, and, the government of Nigeria could rely on public opinion at home to be solidly
behind jettisoning the ICJ ruling. But as Agbakoba rightly pointed out, though these reactions
were “patriotic in intent no doubt, (they) often missed the point, been ill advised or proceeded
from ignorance”. Such words of caution were hard to come by but were deemed necessary to
wade off the government from heading towards another precipice in an attempt to follow the
promptings of press opinion.

Asobie also expressed similar misgivings when he stated that:

The responses and reactions of some Nigerians, including
some of those who represented our country (Nigeria) on
the case, at The Hague, do not reflect a thorough understanding of the issues involved in the case (Asobie, 2005).

Their thrust is that there are elements of the dispute which if known would inform a more moderate and conciliatory reaction from Nigerians. These include the intricacies of “abstruse international law”, which take precedence over the existential struggles of the people on the Bakassi and associated disputed territories. Also to be sieved and ignored are statements made by populist politicians for narrow and usually ephemeral political gains. The government being informed was expected by these ‘moderates’ to be more circumspect. And it did.

It was this backdrop that amidst the official reaction and the cacophony of popular opinions expressed in the press, the federal government embarked on a more constructive tripartite engagement behind the scene, involving representatives from Nigeria, Cameroon and the UN Secretariat. However, before examining the proceedings of the mixed commission, it would be important to note that its substance rests in the desire of the parties to peacefully implement the October 10, 2002 ICJ ruling. President Obasanjo dropped a due to this effect in a television interview during which he made it known that, in spite of the defiance shown in the initial reactions to the judgment, Nigeria, was disposed and actively engaged in the quest for lasting peace with Cameroon and was prepared to use its implementation (that is, the ICJ judgement) as a rodmap to that effect. In the interview, he also admitted after all, that the ICJ stance in the ruling with respect to the limitrophe of Lake Chad is what other members of the LCBC had ratified which Nigeria rejected. And it can also be added that, the very contentions part in relation to the Bakassi is what Gowon had conceded to be Cameroonian in 1975.

Nevertheless, assessing the judgment against Nigeria on Bakassi, Justice Adewale Thompson (rtd), Secretary General of Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) or Igbimo Agba Yorba, review that:

“The World Court giving judgment is just like our court here giving judgment and somebody out there says he disagrees. There must be law and order in society. We argued our case over Bakassi territory, and the Camerounians argued theirs, too. And a judgement was passed. And we’ve signed agreement that the judgment would be binding on us. Now, they ruled against us and people are complaining. It’s all rubbish. It’s absolute nonsense. We should
abide by the judgment. I feel sorry when I hear lots of suggestions. Some lunatics were even suggesting force and war against the Cameroonians in order to claim the oil-rich Bakassi peninsular. War at this stage? I often screamed. When people are starving here? Do you know how much it takes to fight wars? That shouldn’t be a solution. Let’s ask ourselves, the oil we have in the Niger Delta, have we derived meaningful benefits from it?..... I am a retired judge. And I know what it takes to pass a judgment. First, you take a lot of things into consideration. Secondly, this Bakassi issue is a very sensitive issue which attracts international interest. The judges would have been very careful over it. Apart from this, once a judgment is made, one is bound to obey it. I am surprised that people are remonstrating. This is sheer nonsense.... When a judgment is passed, the loser would always find a fault. Remember that one is bound to win and the other lose. What’s faulty in the judgment over Bakassi? Okay, before the arrival of the colonial masters, the Bakassi peninsular belonged to Efiks on both sides. On the colonial masters’ arrival, a portion was ceded to Cameroon and a part apportioned to Nigeria. Remember, pre-colonial days, there was nothing like Nigeria or Cameroon. Forget not that these colonial masters had many arrangements and plans among themselves. Look at Northern Cameroon; there was a referendum before independence, it opted out of Nigeria. Look, there were diplomatic manoeuvres. At the time, what arrangements do we know would have been made between Britain that ruled Nigeria and France that government Cameroon? Forget not that our academics such as Professor Ojomo, late (Teslim) Elias, a foremost jurist, at one time or the other, wrote and argued that the disputed Bakassi peninsular is not within Nigerian territory. I find it funny when Nigeria lays claim to it. Yes, Nigerians can settle there. It doesn’t mean that it’s our own... the only thing we can do is that the Bakassi people protest to the United Nations requesting for the formation of a nation of their own. Perhaps, name it the Bakassi sovereign state. Then, the formed state can decide on its own. That’s the only way out” (Hallmark National Newspaper, November 6, 2002).

But, in contrast, Chief Akinjide subscribes to the idea of Nigeria rejecting the judgment. He said:

If I were I recommend, I will reject the judgement, I won’t accept it. I will treat the judgment unbiased but if the judgement is so blatantly biased and unfair, how do you accept that? What we agreed to accept was a fair
judgement, unbiased judgment. Nigeria never accepted to accept biased and unfair judgment, which the present judgment is. (Newswatch, November 4, 2002).

Then, one is bound to ask: Is it for Chief Akinjide and the Federal Government of Nigeria to appropriate to themselves the wisdom of knowing which judgment is biased and unfair and which is not? But, as Justice Thompson said, “when a judgment is passed, the loser would always find a fault”. Supposing Nigeria had won the case, wouldn’t we be hailing the ICJ to high heavens?

I think the lawyers that were in Nigeria’s legal team should lie low for some time, stop granting press interviews and hold their peace. That will go a long way in calming frayed nerves and assuaging the feelings of the Bakassi people. I am talking particularly of Prof. Anwaal Yadudu, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi and Chief Richard Akinjide. However, Prof. Akinyemi applied utmost restraint in the interview he granted Vanguard. “The last thing you want is a Casimir type situation on your hand. And I am saying this not just to the Nigerian government but to which they have fought several wars. So it got to be handled carefully and maturely. And this is why several of us are not commenting on the issue. Because there is no use to inflame the situation. My training in diplomacy is not to create crisis, and when there is crisis, is not to make matters worse. So one has be guided”, he said (Vanguard, October 27, 2002).

Parties to the Case

Cameroon (plaintiff), instituted proceedings against the Federal Republic of Nigeria (defendant) in a suit that took eight years (1994 – 2002) for the International Court of Justice to adjudicate. In the course of the proceedings, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, on 16 November, 1998, requested and obtained a copy of the memorial filed by Cameroon and copies of the maps presented to the Court by the parties. This request was in earnest, a step towards an application for permission to intervene in the case pursuant to Article 62 of the Statute of the ICJ. Equatorial Guinea filed an application at the Registry of the ICJ on 30 June, 1999. The Court on 21 October authorized Equatorial Guinea to intervene base on the fact that, the latter
3.6 THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION

Although the entire Nigeria-Cameroon boundary became the issue of litigation at the international court of justice (ICJ) in 1994, a close diachronic analysis of the disagreement (Bakassi conflict), shows that after the initial protestation by Cameroon against the outcome of the 1961 plebiscite in Northern Cameroons, Nigeria and Cameroon had resumed normal diplomatic intercourse before the mid 1960s. As such, the dispute between them is related to some specific strategic areas on the border that touch on aspects of the country’s life going by their locations. Economic and security lives. This concurs with the conclusions of a meeting of experts on the boundary held in August 1991, at which the two sides “noted with satisfaction that the land border has been well defined” with the main outstanding task being that of “identification and densification to boundary pillars” (Fombo, 2006: 63).

In other words, in terms of location of the disputed areas, especially the maritime region that includes the Bakassi and associated islands and their joining territorial water, it could be described as being of very strategic importance to both countries. To this, two issues are intertwined. The economic and security issues.

According to Fombo, (2006: 65), the strategic potentials of the disputed Bakassi; peninsular have been well emphasized. Most scholars who have written on this dispute, particularly those of realist persuasion, stressed the strategic importance of the Bakassi. For instance, Basseye. Ate, noted that:

The vital considerations involved in the maritime border dispute with Cameroon for Nigeria are strategic and...
political moreso than legal. The legal questions involved such as the relevance of the Anglo-German agreement of 191, are, to be sure significant, but they have to be understood and interpreted in the light of the above vital consideration (Ate, 1992: 140).

Again, Akorka Nweke quoting a top military officer on the Nigerian side with respect to the dispute also reports that “the federal government of (Nigeria) had to review its stands on the Bakassi peninsular particularly because of its strategic position in the security of the south-eastern coast of Nigeria and access to the Calabar port” (Olusanya and Akindele, 1990: 145). Esiemokal, has also rehearsed (or even overstated) the above argument in an apparent regret of the level of official effort to recoup the territory. He posits that:

Nigerian authorities failed to understand the strategic nature of about 1350 square miles of territory. Since the Bakassi is located strategically the effective foreign occupier (Cameroon) could site a military base there and it could serve for an attack on Nigeria. Should Nigeria take possession, she could use it for defence purpose. It seems an ideal place to conceal a rapid deployment force to guard Nigerian oil exploration in the Eastern States. It is also important as an observation post (from) where she could monitor events around the Bight of Biafra (Nweke, 199….cited in Fombo 2006: 65).

Invariably, Okeki (2008: 26) recorded that Nigeria’s domestic crisis in the sixties compelled Cameroon to initiate moves for new boundary adjustments. On the eve of the Nigeria civil war both countries suspended free movements along their borders in a joint communiqué issued by their leaders in June, 1967. West Africa, (1967: 724)
Subsequently, it was alleged that Bifrans used Ikom-Maunfe routes as an exit to the outside world. It was even reported that a Biafran helicopter clash landed in Cameroon. In order to avert ugly border incidents especially the imminent threat of subversion and secession by Southern Cameroon, the two Heads of the state held bilateral talks that covered economic co-operation and boundary problems in September, 1968. Following the diplomatic shuttle between them, Cameroon declared full support for Nigeria in the ongoing civil war. Federal Ministry of Information press Release (1968). Between 1970 and 1980 life and property became quite insecure as a result of frequent border skirmishes between the two countries with the discovery of oil at Bakassi peninsular the two countries began to lay claims over the oil at Bakassi peninsular the two countries began to lay claims over the oil rich area.

This strategic approach has accentuated the conflict by portraying acquisition or control of such an amphibious environment to be a zero-sum-game involving invaluable military potentials; downplaying or even deliberately disguising the real objectives and stakes involved in the place. It has dominated and gained currency in academic and military circles especially, in Nigeria as evinced in a content analysis of the literature on this dispute and pronouncements of senior military authorities. Its origin can be traced to the manoeuvres in the area during the Nigeria Civil War (1967 – 1970) when Cameroon’s collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria facilitated the complete naval blockade of Biafra, while compromising its control of the territory. This significantly contributed to the defeat of Biafra much to the chagrin of not just the secessionists but also many in West Cameroon amongst whose exploitation, there was considerable sympathy for Biafra. Had the Ahidijo government sided with Biafra, it would have been much easier for munitions to be shipped into this area with its narrow channels and transported to the frontline even if the Federal very were patrolling Nigerian territorial waters.

Though, the Bakassi could be of considerable fascination for strategic reasons, especially in the sight of these authors and statesmen, but the geographic location of a country and her relations with centres of military power that define its problems of security”, Nigeria has no strong to be jittery with Cameroon.

To the economic value of the disputed territory (Bakassi), Ross and Sama (2005: 81) noted that, “from north to south, the Nigeria-Cameroon border region provides varying economic potentials for development. In other words, the area is strategically important for both the dispute, which is especially centred on the northern and southern termini (as
The Economic Potentials of the Dispute Regions

According to Fombo (2006: 67) “From north to south, the Nigeria-Cameroon border region provides varying economic potentials for development. In other words through the Lake Chad region, fishing and animal husbandry constitute the mainstay of the economy of this region and the lake offers great potentials for fishing as well as grazing in its immediate environs. Its numerous islands are characterized by many fishing shacks. Some of these islands are permanent while others are exposed only at low water tide in the dry season. Apart from the seasonal variations in water levels and the shifting opportunities, the lake is constantly retreating as a result of the encroaching Sahara desert and the diversion of waters of rivers that empty into it for irrigation. During the long and very harsh dry season of the region, the lake and its environs provide scarce water and pasture for pastoralists who roam in quest of these with their cattle and sheep, having no regard to international boundaries.

With growing hardship caused by the global economic system and the vagaries of the sahelian climate, more and more people tended to move into the region to irk a living and most of the new arrivals turned out to be Nigerians. What hitherto were temporary settlements became permanent with the retreat of the lake offering more avenues for such settlements. As the ICJ noted: “As Nigerian settlements, and the organization within them of village life, became supplemented from 1987 onwards by Nigerian administration and the presence of Nigerian troops...” the control of some of these areas slept off from Cameroon. But it was only in 1994 through a note verbale that Nigeria made an official claim to the dispute villages in this area, that is, long after the maritime dispute had arisen. Meanwhile, Cameroon on her side, has been implementing territorial policies at home, which make economic life difficult for her nationals in its borderlands, as opposed to those of Nigeria, especially with provision of access roads. Invariably, every border part of Cameroon along its western boundary is more easily accessible from Nigeria. One of such places is Akwaya which has no road link from Cameroon but is a sub-divisional headquarters. The administrators and civil servants in this area must get there through Nigeria if they want to avoid trekking for over twenty hours. Because of such official
neglect, economic life in particular and many other aspects of life in these areas are oriented towards Nigeria.

The contribution of the economic endowments of the Lake Chad and its environs to the conflicts are more or less indirect. “Economic migrants” who literally, moved ahead of their government took initiative before government policies were designed to absorb them. It became a forward policy aimed at not just securing “living space” but also to let the flag over nationals in outlying territories.

To the maritime region, as Asobie (2005) the economic endowments of the maritime region between Nigeria and Cameroon are even more enticing compared to the Lake Chad area. From precolonial days, the entire zone comprising the Calabar River, Cross River and Ndian River basins formed the hinterland of lucrative trade on oil palm produce among others and reported European products. The trading “houses” of Efik city-states along the west banks of the Calabar and Cross rivers also owned agricultural lands across the Akwayafe cultivated by slave labour. Dating back also to precolonial times, the maritime area especially around the creeks of the Bakassi, has been the base of an important fishing industry. Reports of colonial administrators spoke of “good business and prosperity” among the predominantly migrant and itinerant or seasonal population reliant on fishing. The most important fish stocks were herrings, catfish (mbonga), and crayfish (or shrimps).

The relative importance of this area of the industry has grown in recent years. Not only there an increase in the population of Nigeria and Cameroon with an attendant increase in the number of people moving into this peripheral area to fend for a means of livelihood, but the drying up of stocks from other areas invaded by large trawlers from Europe and North Africa. perhaps more important is the damage done to the habitants of fish in the neighbouring regions, especially, the Niger Delta caused by exploration and exploitation activities of oil companies, which have exposed an arrogant disregard to preserving the environment. As such, more people who could have been living in other areas have had to go further afield to the Bakassi. The population of the Bakassi and the neighbouring islands has increased from a few hundred fishing folks in the 1920s to 250,000 in the 1990s.

Besides fishing, other economic activities also take place within this region. As is the case with most of the Nigeria-Cameroon border, a large volume of this pertains to informal and
uncontrolled transborder trade. However, unlike in other areas where a great control exists, the difficult terrain around the maritime boundary gives a considerable room for regulation by customs services that usually do this with undue use of force. Anxiety by the Cameroon government to regulate such activities leads it to send in paramilitary forces that usually go in with methods, detested by the population. People, especially aliens, involved in fishing and other economic activities—legitimate and illicit—have suffered harassments and they have bombarded their home governments with complaints against their maltreatment, which invariably lead to more problems. Such highhandedness may not be restricted to the treatment of Nigerian or aliens. These security forces have a penchant to be hard on civilians in general. However, the faith of Nigerians is quite often spotlighted in the Nigerian press and not presented giving the impression that these forces are cruel to Nigerians only. On some occasions the security forces intervene in hot pursuit of criminals involved in piracy in the interest of the people, but do it poorly. For instance, 1972, following frequent attacks on traders returning from Nigeria, and fishermen (most of whom were Nigeria) within Cameroonian territorial waters, security forces from Cameroon invaded some border areas and were evidently overbearing, terrorizing those they went out to protect.

The cross-border activities of criminals in particular, smuggling and the overreaction of Cameroon security forces have left a legacy of bitterness and mutual discrimination between the two governments over the treatment of nationals within each other’s territory. Little wonder that Nigeria’s initial professed reasons for intervention in the Bakassi area was to protect its nationals from the exactions of the security forces. The population of this area with its predominantly Nigerian provenance has increasingly felt alienated and has sought the support of their home government to ensure safety.
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CHAPTER FOUR
EFFECTS OF THE BAKASSI DISPUTE ON ETHNIC RELATIONS

Nigeria and Cameroon had enjoyed healthy relations as the same people during the 1950s when they remained as one political party under NCNC. But later, for more political convenience, Southern Cameroon which was originally governed by the British, was in 1961, under the United Nations plebiscite, joined to the Republic of Cameroon under the French influence (Eke, 2009:113). Variably, as Okike, (2008) records, “this relationship was marred when in 1960s, Nigeria’s domestic crisis, compelled Cameroon to initiate moves for new boundary adjustment. This he said, on the eve of the Nigerian civil war, made both countries, suspend free movements along their borders in a joint communiqué issued by their leaders in June, 1967, hence the genesis of their official separation as well as their consequent border issues” (West Africa, 1967 cited in Okike, 2008: 26). To that extent, since then, the center no longer holds between the two countries.

4.7 RISE OF THE INITIAL TRENDS IN THE BAKASSI DISPUTE

Nigeria-Cameroon dispute over the oil-rich Bakassi, was a carry over of the unhealthy relations between Nigeria and France as a result of the latter’s influence in the sub-region. However, Nigeria got her independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963 with sovereign authority over her international relations with the world at large. Nigeria, at infancy, was engaged in a civil war with the secessionist Biafra between 1967 and 1970. At the end of the civil war, which took tolls on both sides, for 30 months, border skirmishes erupted between the Cameroonian gendarmes and Nigerian villages in the Bakassi area (Eke, 2009: 113).

Continuing, Eke noted that, “In 1971, a joint Nigeria-Cameroon permanent consultative committee was set up for improved relations but the discovery of oil in the area of Rio del Rey, soon made Bakassi a political hotbed which stalled the committee’s work. By this period, Cameroon had granted drilling rights in the disputed area to American oil companies, Nigeria adopted quiet bilateral diplomacy including the establishment of Nigeria-Cameroon mixed
Border Commission to seek solution to the political problem. Following this, in 1974, president Ahmadou Ahidjo met his Nigerian counterpart, General Yakubu Gowon and after their meeting, they signed the Kano Declaration, which the major objective was to create a two-kilometer neutral corridor on either side to provide free and unfettered navigation access and security in the place.

Nevertheless, According to Ngang, (2005:10) since the mid 70s, tensions had been building up on both sides till they finally culminated into armed conflicts accounting for the loss of human life.

The first major use of direct violence in the form of military conflict, took place on May 16, 1981. On that day, Cameroon’s national radio network service announced that three Nigerian military patrol boots had violated Cameroon’s territorial sovereignty by intruding into Bakassi up to the Rio del Rey River and opened fire on the Cameroonian Navy. In retaliation, Cameroonian soldiers also fought back and in the battle that ensued, five Nigerian soldiers were killed. While Cameroon accused Nigerian authorities of exploiting the incident politically and for trying to put the blame on Cameroon, Nigeria insisted that the incident took place on the Akwayafe River and thus indirectly acknowledging the border set down by the Anglo-German Treaty of 1913. In July 1981, Cameroon eventually apologized for the deaths of the soldiers, promised reparations and the matter was solved diplomatically and laid to rest. In any case, this event made the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsular to top the agenda of relations between the two countries since then.

In the wake of multi-party politics, growing militancy, increasing dissent and calls for greater autonomy by Anglophone Cameroonians in the early 90s, the Cameroonian government resorted to acts of oppression and antagonism against Nigerian citizens residing or doing business in Cameroon. Some of these acts are said to have been so violent that it led to the death of several Nigerian citizens. Through intimidating and embarrassing tax-drives, many Nigerians were forced to leave the country. However, the second serious incident in the area did not occur until February 1994. Nigeria decided to deploy 1000 troops to the peninsular, claiming this was simply in reaction to the harassment of Nigerian fishermen and traders in the hands of Cameroonians gendarmes. This led to more shooting which resulted in many casualties and deaths of soldiers on both sides. It was this episode that promoted the Cameroonian government to take the mater to the ICJ for adjudication. By this time, Cameroon alone had lost
34 soldiers. The complaint was filled on March 29, 1994. Be it due to a sense of premonition of defeat or due to the fact that many in Nigeria are aware of the Bakassi lie, Nigeria criticized the decision to refer the matter to the UN saying that Cameroon was not willing to settle the matter through bilateral negotiations at the local level. Nigeria even went as far as challenging the court’s authority to decide on the matter. (Mukong, 1990; 37).

Another account by Okike, (2008: 27) puts it straight, when he emphatically stressed that “between 1970 – 1980, life and property became quite insecure as a result of frequent border skirmishes between the two countries with the discovery of oil at Bakassi peninsular. The two countries began to lay claims over the oil rich area. In 1970 three Nigerian officials on water patrol were kidnapped by Cameroonian gendarmes; in 1971, fishermen on both sides clashed; in 1972 two boats belonging to Enyany Multi-purpose Co-operation Society in Calabar were seized by Cameroon gendarmes (Daily Times, 1972: 4).

In April 1972 eight Nigerians were killed by Cameroonian gendarmes. In July 1973 the Cameroon navy and army expelled Nigerian fishermen in the creek villages, while Cameroon renamed the creek villages along the borders, occupied twenty-five miles of Nigerian territory and displaced over two thousand fishermen from the area.

In August 1973 fighting started simultaneously in Adamawa, Calabar, Ogoja and Ikom proviences, resulting in the air bombardment of Ikorn and its environs by Cameroon (Times international, 1981; 13 – 14).

In December 1980, Cameroon Occupied Effiat Mbong district in Calabar province. The border situation between the two countries was further aggravated with the diversion of Rivers Kalia and Chari, major tributaries of the Niger. This singular action by Cameroon adversely affected the economic activities of 80,000 people in Borno State of Nigeria. In May, 1981 five Nigerian soldiers on surveillance along River Akpan Yafe near Ikang village were murdered in cool blood by Cameroonian gendarmes on patrol, led by white mercenary soldiers in combatant uniform, while three others were seriously injured (Times international (1981: 14).

The cold blooded murder of five Nigerian soldiers on border patrol further aggravated the already tensed border situation between Nigeria and Cameroon. The Nigerian minister of External Affairs, Ishaya Audu sent a diplomatic note to Cameroon, demanding an unquantified
apology within one week for what seemed to be the most unprovoked and unwarranted insult to Nigeria. He further demanded compensation and appropriate punishment for the murderers.

In July 1981 President Ahidjo of Cameroon sent an apology to President Shagari of Nigeria, stating that Cameroon would fully comply with the demands of Nigeria as stated by her External Affairs Minister, Ishaya Audu. In January, 1982 President Ahidjo paid a state visit to Nigeria and during that period the border problems between the two countries were discussed. But the central question of what really constituted boundary demarcation between the two countries could not be resolved through diplomatic shuttle.

Actually, the frequent military incursions into Nigerian territory by Cameroon can be blamed on the presence of oil in the disputed areas. In the past when oil was not in increased demand in the world oil market, nobody raised eye brow over the presence of oil in the border zones. But the increased demand for oil in the world oil market and the revenue accruing from it, made Cameroon to embark on aggressive oil policy against Nigeria. After Nigeria had announced the discovery of oil in the south-eastern border zone, Cameroon swiftly announced that she had discovered oil in her border zone just opposite the Nigerian oil and also proceeded to claim Nigeria’s oil sites as her own.

In November 1975 Cameroon signed mineral prospecting agreement with Libya and actively pursued oil prospecting with the establishment of a new oil refinery at cape limbo near Victoria. In defiance of the 1914 boundary agreement, Cameroon claimed villages in the Rio-Del-Rey estuary and proceeded to install oil prospecting equipment there.

Shortly after Nigeria and Cameroon had signed the Maroua agreement of 1975, French companies began to lift crude oil from Bakassi peninsular with an average of 1,25000 barrels of oil a day. Airing the border incident of 1994 between Nigeria and Cameroon, the necessary logistics which Cameroon needed to withstand any military attack from Nigeria, were provided by France.

Again Ngang (2005: 11 - 12) noted that, “Taking the matter to the International Court of Justice did not imply an automatic end to armed conflict. Fighting still went on the ground while the case was pending. The last major incident broke out in February 1996 when deploying an additional 1000 troops, Nigeria invaded and occupied Bakassi. This time around it seemed as if an extended and full-fledged military combat was imminent, in spite of the fact that the case
was already before the ICJ. By May 1996, more than 50 Nigerian soldiers had lost lives and several others taken prisoners according to diplomatic sources. The African magazine (Jeune Afrique), analyzed the situation in blunt terms saying that all the factors necessary for a major military conflict were present in the case of Bakassi. It went on further to stress the strategic economic importance of the peninsular to both countries as a pivotal factor for the escalation of the conflict. The bloodiness of this episode prompted Cameroon to ask the court to implement emergency measures to stop the fighting. The Hague actually called on both sides to stop the fighting in anticipation of the final ruling. Both sides however maintained a strong military presence on the peninsular in the hope that this could support their claim of ownership.

To that extent, at critical moments diplomatic initiatives were taken to resolve Nigeria-Cameroon border conflict.

Cameroon has used the opportunity of the civil war in Nigeria to open border conflicts with the latter. That had prompted the signing of a new visa agreement between the two countries in 1967 which suspended free movement of people along their border zones for security reasons.

In October, 1970 Nigeria and Cameroon set up a permanent consultative committee to review areas of co-operation between them. On border incidents between their two countries, President Ahidjo regretted that they never had the importance which the Nigerian press gave to them and that the authorities on both sides had always been quick to sort their differences.

The two Heads of state signed a bilateral co-operation agreement in April 1971. In a joint communiqué issued at Ngaoundere. They agreed on certain criteria for delimiting the maritime boundary between their two countries, adding that the 1958 maritime convention should form the basis for the delimitation. Also a permanent consultative committee on boundary would be set up, to review and up-date the convention (West Africa, 1971: 461).

In April and June, 1971 the joint Boundary commission set up to delimit the maritime border between the two countries met at Lagos. Agreement was reached on all matters under consideration. (Bulletin on Foreign Affairs, 1971: 13).

The two Heads of state met at Lagos in March, 1972 and agreed that a Joint Commission be established for the purpose of delimiting the maritime boundary between the two countries.
They agreed to meet in Yaounde to consider the report of the technical sub-committee appointed to examine technical aspect of the delimitation exercise (Bulletin on Foreign Affairs, (1972: 35).

The Kano accord of September, 1974 was based on the reports of the Joints Boundary Commission of 1971. The Kano Declaration left a piece corridor of two kilometers on either side of the line joining Fair Way Buoys to Buoys Number One, two the three, existing on the British Admiralty Chart Number 3433 as an area free from all prospecting activities (New Nigeria, (1974: 1).

In 1975 the two Heads of state signed border agreement between their two countries at Maroua. They agreed on a demarcation line between the territorial waters of their two countries in the Gulf of Guinea and the Estuary that marks the border near the shore. It also provided for freedom of navigation between the two countries and the security of the border people. The boundary demarcation relied heavily on the version of British Admiralty Chart, Number 3433 as the recording instrument of boundary demarcation (West Africa, (1975: 670).

The two heads of state issued a joint communiqué at Lagos in January, 1982 in which they expressed regret over the border incidents and added that they had resolved not to let it hinder co-operation between the two countries.

4.8 THE NIGERIAN-BIAFRAN WAR AND THE BAKASSI QUESTION

Although Nigeria was the creation of European ambitions and rivalries in this part of the world Africa, she attained modern statehood in October, 1960. Nigeria at infancy was engaged in a civil war with the secessionist Biafra between 1967 and 1970 (Ekoko, 2004: 10).

The Nigeria civil war, otherwise known as the Nigeria-Biafran war, took place between July 6, 1967 and January 15, 1970. According to Anyaele, it was a political conflict caused by the attempted secession of the south eastern province of Nigeria as the self proclaimed republic of Biafra. The Conflict also was the result of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various peoples of Nigeria (Anyaele, 1994: 189). Invariably, a very credible account of the Biafran war by Anyabolu, (2000: 118 – 122), recounts that “lieutenant colonel Odumegwu
Ojukw, military governor of the Eastern Region, went to Aburi, determined to argue for a united Nigeria in which the Ibo would be one of the federal units of equal states. Lieutenant Colonel Gowon, Nigerian Head of State, and his group had other plans. Gowon wanted a united Federal Nigeria in which the Ibo would remain its servants. The Gowon group was not at Aburi. Gowon had earlier conceded that, after the Ibo genocide, there was no longer any basis for Nigerian unity, his advisors had told him not to consider justice, but to assert the might of the federal authority.

With their backs against the wall, the Eastern Region peoples, mostly Ibo, fought with all the forces at their command against the federal coalition of the Northern and Western regions. In the thirty-month bloody Civil War that followed, the entire Ibo people, both home and abroad, fought against the brutal injustice. Being in control of the government, the Northern Region led the federal defense effort and played a leading role on the Nigerian side. The Western Region, in actions said to have been sponsored by Awolowo, managed to create a major strain in the Ibo/Yoruba relations.

First, came a declaration by Awolowo that if the Eastern Region was forced out of the country, the Western Region would follow. However, when the Eastern Region was declared the Republic of Biafra, the Ibo expected the Yoruba to follow, and they did not. Second, there was the Awo-inspired adoption by Nigeria of the inhumane policy of starvation as a legitimate weapon of war.

Third, there was the policy that in exchange for Biafra currency, twenty pounds was the top rate paid, regardless of the quantity of money rendered. And, the last burden was the implementation of the indigenization policy at a time the Ibo were not in a position to benefit from it. These policies, said to be authorized by Awolowo, not only constituted the major contributions to the defeat of Biafra, but also slowed down the post-war rehabilitation of the Ibos.

Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, an Ibo, was born at Zungeru, in Northern Nigeria, in November 1933. His parents were off and when his father, Odumegwu Ojukwu, a financier, died, he was one of the wealthiest men in the country. His mother was also a well to do business woman. Young Ojukwu attended the best schools in Lagos before traveling
to England, where he entered Epsom College at Surrey. In 1952, he attended Lincoln College at Oxford. He graduated in 1955 with a Bachelor's Degree in Modern History.

On his return to Nigeria, Ojukwu was employed by the Eastern Nigeria public service. He later joined the Nigerian Army and was sent to military institutions in Britain, and for one year he attended the Royal West African Frontier Force Training School in Teshie, Ghana. While in the Ghanaian military institution, he taught officer cadets both military tactics and military law.

In 1961, he was promoted to Major then posted to Kaduna in Northern Nigeria as Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General. He later served as a Nigerian contingent under the U.N. peace keeping operations in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Formerly Zaire). In January 1963, Ojukwu became Quartermaster General and later was the Commandant of the 5th Battalion at Kano. After the coup of January 15, 1966, Ojukwu became military governor of Eastern Nigeria. He was 32 years old at the time.

Throughout the remainder of 1966 and into 1967 the Federal Military Government sought to convene a constituent assembly for revision of the constitution that might enable an early return to civilian rule. However, the killing of Ibos increased. The Army was sharply divided along regional lines. Reports circulated that troops from the Northern Region had participated in killing. In addition, Gowon believed that the Eastern minorities would not actively support the Ibos, because they would have own states, if secession failed.

On May 30, 1967, Ojukwu answered the Federal Decree with the proclamation of the independent Republic of Biafra, named after the Bight of Biafra which provided its southern border. He cited as the principal cause for his action the Nigerian government’s enablement of the Ibos amounted to ethnic cleansing. Ojukwu stated that his move to secede was a measure taken reluctantly, after all efforts to safeguard the Ibo people in other regions had failed.

The declaration of Biafra as a country caused great joy among the people of Eastern Nigeria. “We are prepared to sacrifice the lives of the last Biafran boy and the last Biafra girl for Biafra to be a nation”, was the chant. Patriotism among Biafrans was so high that the average Biafran thought the war would be brief.

The war was fought on a massive scale with machine guns, bazookas, tanks, airplanes and rapid fire artillery. As the war continued, death tolls were kept secret by both Nigeria and
Biafra. Everyone knew the losses were heavy, but no one knew the details. Due to lack of medical supplies, support personnel, and mobility, most of the wounded fighting in Biafra bled to death.

When Eastern Nigeria was declared the Republic of Biafra, the tiny country had five thousand men in its army. The Federal Army had seven thousand. Biafra had palm oil, and much crude oil along the coast at Port Harcourt. The population of Biafra was twelve million people, nine million of whom were Ibos.

Nevertheless, following the above account by Anyabolu, it becomes obvious that ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon, is an earlier gesture by Nigerian governments, both imperia and indigenous, meant to reduce the land mass of the former Eastern Region. According to Nwaogu (2006), “that Bakassi is to be ceded to Cameroon territory, is a continuation of an ugly policy of governments in Nigeria, meant to reduce the land mass of the eastern region. He noted that “after independence, there was a plebiscite conducted by United Nations to ascertain whether southern Cameroon then part of the Eastern Region will remain in Nigeria or opt from unification with French Cameroon. The outcome was the rigging of the vote in which the people agreed to be part of French Cameroon. Britain played a key role in the outcome of the vote simply to punish the eastern region for producing politicians who were in the Vanguard for independence agitation. Part of Cameroonian territory in the Northern Region was helped to vote for integration with the Region. It later became Sardunana province. This, he said was done deliberately by the British to ingratiate the north for its limited agitation for independence movement (Nigeria-Bifran world Magazine. July 31, 1970).

Therefore, when the plebiscite was held in 1961, Bakassi was an undisputed part of Nigeria. If it was part of Cameroon that was administered by the British, why did the people of Bakassi not take part in the United Nations referendum? The Bakassi question came to light only during the Nigerian-Bifran war. Nigeria wanted to win the war at all costs even if it meant severance of more land mass from the Eastern government as attested to recently by alhaji Isuaku Ibrahim in his address to middle Belt form which was carried by the Daily trust Newspapers on line Thursday January 12, 2006. In that address, he mentioned how Nigeria enlisted the cooperation of Ahmadu Ahidjo of Cameroon and Hamman Diori of Niger during the Biafran War without which, they would have lost the war. At that time of negotiation with Cameroon, Bakassi was to Gowon and government a wasteland that could be traded in for
Ahidjo’s war effort. And that the government did (Daily Trust, Thursday January 12, 2006). To concur further with this, the daily sun 2011, had it that, “in arriving at its decision, the ICJ validated the Yaounde and Marouna Accord declaration whereby former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, willfully gave away Bakassi to Cameroon. Gowon did that as compensation to the Central African country for not recognizing or supporting the secessionist Biafra Republic during the civil war between 1967 and 1970. Indeed, Cameroon had ensured that no aid came into Biafra through its border with Nigeria while the war lasted. Ironically, the civil war was fought to retain every inch of the geographical territory known as Nigeria. So, Gowon’s action could be said to tantamount to cutting the nose of Nigeria to spite the face of Biafra (Daily Sun, 2011: 26).

Later oil was discovered and this raised the importance of Bakassi. As soon as Cameroon realized that Bakassi has become strategic as a result of the presence of oil it remembered its treaty with Gowon and demanded the fulfillment of the war time bargain. In addition, it went to its archives and dug up antiquated laws that could help it lay claim to Bakassi (Daily Trust, Thursday January 12, 2006).

More so, Nuzo of the Naira land (online publications August 14, 2008), argued that “Gowon, western and northern Nigeria, in an atrocious and wicked move to starve the eastern children to death, sold off our brothers and their oil. In other words, that, leaders of western and northern Nigerians sold Bakassi to Cameroon so that they can win Biafra war. He noted that “in war, or desperate situations, man could make a erroneous decisions that could back fire later. Bakassi issue is one of them. The land was traded off fore support from Cameroonians. So it was a decision made during desperation. No one should be blamed for that.

To further substantiate these points, is Okike, (2008) who reported that, subsequent upon the Nigeria’s domestic crisis in the sixties, it was alleged that Biafrans used Ikom-maunfe routes as an exit to the outside world. (Ikom-maunfe is a village in the boundary between Nigeria (eastern Nigeria) and Cameroon). It was even reported that a Biafran helicopter clash landed in Cameroon. In order to avert ugly border incidents especially the imminent threat of subversion and secession by southern Cameroon, the two heads of state held bilateral talks that covered economic co-operation and boundary problems in September, 1968. Following the diplomatic shuttle between them, Cameroon declared fall support for Nigeria in the on going civil war (Okike, 2008: 27).
To that extent, just like Asobie (2005, 90) noted that, “by the end of the Nigeria civil war, precisely between 1970 and 1974, General Yakubu Gowon was facing a lot of criticisms over his domestic policies, domestic opposition was growing. His administration was being charged with corruption, incompetence, and lack of action on a number of frontiers. He was under pressure at home to show some decisiveness in government. External relations became for his regime a convenient point of diversion. In June 1975, Gowon, Nigeria’s leader and Amadu Ahidjo, president of Cameroon, met in Maroua, and reached an agreement on the border and territorial disputes. Part of the agreement was that much of the disputed territory, in the south, including the Bakassi peninsular, belonged to Cameroon; that the occupation to some fishing ports in the disputed territory by Nigerians did not amount to proof of ownership over the territory by Nigeria; but that Nigerians in the territory were however, free to pursue their occupation without molestation from any quarters, provided they were law-abiding.

To this, it is understandably clear that Bakassi peninsular has been used as a reward to support rendered by the Cameroonian government to Gowon’s Nigerian government during the Bifran war through the Maroua declaration of 1975. Asobie (2005: 94), noted that by the Maroua declaration, Nigeria’s claim to the Bakassi peninsular became further weakened. By 1975, it had become clear that bilateral negotiations resulting in declarations and treaties were not entirely efficacious as international conflict resolution strategies. For, in that year, Gowon’s (immediate past, but one) successor as Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, threatened that, “rather than accept the outrageous 1975 award (that is, the Maroua agreement of June, 1, 1975), Nigeria would go to war if the Republic of Cameroon refused to negotiate”.

4.9 GOWON/NGERIA AND THE MAROUA DECLARATION

Following the rejection of the what became known as the Ngoh/Coker line after an agreement reached in 1971, at the level of experts between Cameroon, represented by Mr. Ngoh, and Nigeria, represented by Mr. Coker, which by this agreement, ownership and control of the Calabar river channel was placed under Cameroonian authority, another important agreement was concluded between the two leads of state and a declaration signed in 1975. This declaration spelt out the line, which they had agreed to earlier as the maritime boundary between their two countries. The new, line of maritime frontier demarcation proceeded from point 12 at the terminal of the line agreed to in 1971 and terminated at point G, at the extreme
southerly point an chart 3433 accepted by both countries. This declaration according to Asobie was made in manroua Cameroon, significantly, on June 1, 1975 and consequently and subsequently became known as the “maroua declaration” (Asobie, 2005: 94).

**The Maroua Declaration**

According to Fombo, (2006: 87), “In continuation of their search for an amicable solution to the border problem, General Gowon of Nigeria and president Ahidjo of Cameroon, met in maroua from May 30 to June 1, 1975. This rather short, but straightforward two page agreement was a consumption of five years of negotiations and was a continuation of the 1971 “delineation of the maritime boundary between the two countries from Point “G” on the Admiralty Chart No 2433” adopted in 1971. The declaration describes the boundary as running........... “From point 12 (Longitude 08° 24′ 38″ E and Latitude 04° 31′ 26″ N) situated at the end of the line of the maritime boundary adopted by the two Heads of State on April 4, 1971, the boundary line runs due West along a line parallel to and three miles from the straight line joining Tom Shot Point and Sandy Point up to a Point A Longitude 08° 24′ E and Latitude 04° 31′ 30″ N. Thence from Point A along a straight line to Point A1 Longitude 08° 24′ 24″ and Latitude 04° 23′ 28″ N one kilometer East of Buoy No. 2. Then from Point B the maritime boundary continues due South through Point C Longitude 08° 23′ 42″ E Latitude 04° 23″ N one kilometer East of Buoy No. 1 to a Point D Longitude 08° 22′ 41″ Latitude 04° 20′ 00″ N where it interests Latitude 04° 20′.

From Point D, the maritime boundary runs in a South-Westerly-direction to a Point E Longitude 08° 22′ 17″ E Latitude 04° 19′ 32″ N which is 550 meters from the straight line joining the Fairway Buoy and Buoy No. 1. From Point E the maritime boundary runs in a South-Easterly-direction to a Point F Longitude 08° 22′ 19″ E Latitude 04° 18′ 46″ N one kilometer East of Fairway Buoy.

Then from Point F Longitude 08° 22′ 19 E Latitude 04° 18′ 46 N the maritime boundary runs Southerly parallel to the Meridian 08° 25′ 00″ to Point G Longitude 08° 22′ 19″ E Latitude 04° 17′ 00″ N as shown on the Admiralty Chart No. 3433.
Implicatively, the Maroua Declaration was the first of the anticipated multiple treaties between Nigeria and Cameroon to delineate their common boundary ahead of its physical demarcation on the ground. Although informed by the spirit of colonial treaties on their border, the two states envisioned the agreement with sentimentalism an one emanating from a “desire born of fraternity and the spirit of cooperation on the part of the African leaders to resolve amicably outstanding problems between their two countries”, which was considered of additional value having been entered into freely and not inherited from the colonial past (Ate, 1990: 160).

Legally, the agreement became a compelling border instrument between Nigeria and Cameroon although some authors doubt its validity. Such doubts as presented by (Ate, 1990: 160), (Sholanke, 1993: 398) (Shawo, 1970: 640) and most Nigerian based newspapers seem misplaced. Indeed, the consensus among these authors is that the Maroua Declaration lacks any legal basis because it was or it has not been ratified by Nigeria.

Ratification in practical terms is a devise meant to ensure that a representative does not exceed his powers in negotiating an agreement. It also has the advantage of giving time for reconsideration of a treaty entered into by a state. Such reconsideration could be ensuring from public opinion to an agreement, common in the present mass media, democratic age. But the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties is clear on non-ratification of inter-state agreements. Article 14 of the 1969 Convention notes that ratification is required where a treaty provides for that or in the course of the negotiations a party or the parties express such a desire or if the powers of the negotiators are such that it is obvious the treaty needs ratification. In any case, the question of how a state effects ratification is an issue of domestic law alone, which implies that its procedures may not necessarily affect international law (Shaw, 1970: 640). As Malcolm Shaw has pointed out, “a state cannot plead a breach of its constitutional provision as to the making of treaties as a valid reason for condemning an agreement” (Shaw, 970: 640). This is consistent with the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which is also forthright on the issue of ratification. Article 46 enjoins that a

State may not invoke the fact that its consent to be bound by a treaty has been expressed in violation of a provision of
its internal law regarding competence to conclude treaties as invalidating its consent unless that violations was manifest and concerned a rule of its internal law of fundamental importance (Veinna Law of Treaties, quoted in Shaw, 1970: 661).

It is only when there is a fundamental change of circumstances from when a treaty was concluded could a state contemplate renouncing a treaty commitment but this is not also permissive “if the treaty establishes a boundary” (Veinna Law of Treaties, quoted in Shaw, 1970: 662).

Consequently, the Marou Declaration established following a series of meetings of high-level authorities of both countries, as well as the Yaounde II Declaration preceding it, are legally binding documents, formally signed by the president of Nigeria and Cameroon with plenipotentiary powers. Ahidjo and Gowon even had the chance to revisit the Muroua Declaration in an exchange of letters in June and July 1975) to correct some discrepancies in coordinates on the document.

Ahidjo and Gown as president of their respective countries are, especially recognized by the International Law Commission as having full powers in “representing their state(s) for the purpose of performing all acts relating to the conclusion of treaties”, requiring no further accreditation (ICJ official website-www.icj.com). The ICJ in its memorable ruling on the dispute between them also had cause to restate that:

The court considers that the Maroua Declaration constitutes an international agreement concluded between States in written form and tracing a boundary; it is thus governed by and constitutes a treaty in the sense of the Vinna Convention on the Law of Cameroon since 991, and which in any case reflects customary international law in this respect (ICJ, 2002 para 263: 124).
Although the Marou Declaration took five years to craft, in less than this time the *esprit de corps* that prevailed within the leaders of Nigeria and Cameroon for a settlement of the entire boundary was lost forever. Consequently, until litigation at The Hague no such serious efforts were made at replacing the colonial treaties with post-independence ones, not tinted with imperialist vestiges, as so sentimentally stated in 1970. What then led to a lost of zeal and momentum to settle the rest of the boundary up to Lake Chad?

The first comprehensive delineation agreement aimed at settling the maritime boundary was only accomplished after much difficulty. It entailed forth and back negotiations and some exasperation over the tactic which one Cameroon official described as a “*tabula rasa*” disposition on the part of Nigeria (referring to the tendency of abandoning previous consensuses in new positions) (Cameroon tribune, March 7, 1994). Also, the rest of the border had no compelling dispute at this time to rouse the leadership of the two countries into action. But the most important element in explaining the abandonment of this goal was the change of leadership in Nigeria that occurred barely three months after the Maroua agreement was signed. The new leadership in Nigeria under General Mutalar Mohamed and later General Olusegun Obasanjo had other more pressing problems, especially with legitimizing their coup that impacted negatively on the spirit of negotiation and compromise required for such an exercises. The important elements of trust, mutual respect and personal acquaintance between negotiations identified by John W. MacDonlad as vital ingredients to successful negotiation and resolution of conflicts were largely eroded by the populist declarations of the new leadership.

But what weakness other than the alleged procedural breach on the part of Gowon, led to the wearing away of the importance of this agreement, which were not evident at the time it was initially hailed as a breakthrough? The objections raised against the Maroua Declaration tend to be hinged only on the fact that General Gowon who committed Nigeria to it allegedly acted ultra vires. Because the president acted in that way, it was rejected by the successors. This argument lacks conviction because, apart from the supposed procedural imperfection advanced above against it, no other weakness has been pointed out in its substance. The Nigerian government’s objections to the document are succinctly articulated in paragraphs 258 and 259 of the ICJ 2002 ruling. Nothing is said about negotiation errors, for instance, on the part of
Gowon and his team of boundary commissioners. It is rather assumed. Without this it can thus be said that Gowon simply lacked the territorial ambitions of his successor.

Looking at the declaration with hindsight, Gowon secured for Nigeria a good deal as shown below. In a determined effort to arrive at a solution to the melee with Nigeria, outside UN or OAU auspices, Ahidjo compromised over the Ngoh/Coker Line that was definitely an equitable line of delineation duly arrived at based on the Geneva Convention (Geneva Convention, on the law of sea 1958). Article 15 of the 1981 Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is modeled on Article 2 of the 1958 Geneva Convention provides or adjacent coasts, the median point, every point of which is equidistance from the nearest point on the baselines from which the territorial sea is measured be used. In spite of this general principle as Shaw has shown, the question of the delimitation of the continental shelf has occasioned considerable debate and diverse state practice (Shaw, 1970: 436). Article 6 the Continental Shelf Convention, 1958 also states that in the absence of an agreement and unless another boundary line is justified by special circumstances, a boundary in such situations should be determined “by application of the principle of equidistance from the nearest points of baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of each state is measured”.

In adjudicating the dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon by delineating their common maritime boundary, the ICJ declared that the “equidistance line represent an equitable result for the delimitation of the area in respect of which it has jurisdiction to give a ruling (ICJ, para 306: 141). In accordance with this principle, (that is, equidistance) the court found out and actually declared that:

Point G which was determined by the two Parties in the Maroua Declaration of 1 June 975, does not lie on the equidistance line between Cameroon and Nigeria, but to the east of that line. Cameroon is therefore entitled to request that from point G the boundary of the Parties” respective maritime areas should return to the equidistance (ICJ, Ruling culled from ICJ official website www.icj.com.)
From the evidence adduced above, Nigeria had the better part of the Maroua Declaration. As long as Point G at the end of the Ahidjo-Gowon delineation line lies but in Cameroon territory, it is the latter that ought to complain about the agreement. It was in a bide to appease Gowon and avert a walkout by Nigeria from the border negotiations that Ahidjo made the concession which turned out to be very expensive for Cameroon contrary to popular opinion on this agreement. If Gowon were an expansionist of the Hitler type the concession would have been an extremely dangerous procedure. Gowon is somewhat right when in an interview granted to the punch, he maintained that “All the agreements I entered into on behalf of Nigeria with other nations.... Were done in a way to make Nigeria gain from such agreements” (Punch, June 11, 2001: 7). If this statement in other situations states an intention, in relation to the Maroua Accord, Nigeria actually profited at the expense of Cameroon as a result of his astute negotiating skills. In spite of the fact that the more moderate Gowon was overthrown and his successors chose to distance themselves from the agreement, it had indeed entered into law and Cameroon chose to remain steadfast to it.

On the other hand, had Cameroon understood the gravity of the compromise of Maroua, the latter could have rejected it and by mutual consent, the treaty would have fallen into abeyance? Had Cameroon done this, the ICJ ruling would not have taken into consideration its provisions. This scenario would have left it without the commitments embodied in the compromise of Maroua in which Ahidjo conceded to Gowon a part of what had been recognized in the Ngoh/Coke Line as Cameroonian territory. Cameroon would have had more from the ICJ ruling which would have been reached based on the earlier agreements defining the border from the colonial period right to the Yaounde II Declaration. Considering the fact that the latter declaration was arrived at as an equitable delineation line between the two countries based on these colonial agreements and other multilateral agreements on international law like the Geneva Convention of 1985, these governments were still enough to till the balance in the maritime and territorial boundary dispute between them in favor of Cameroon.

Again, the Maroua settlement also represented, in a way, a compensation to Cameroon over the loss of some territory in the northern part of the border, hence the date –June – 1 which, as we saw earlier, had been marked annually by the Republic of Cameroon in commemoration of the loss of northern Cameroon to Nigeria in 1961. By the Maroua declaration, Nigeria’s claim to the Bakassi peninsular became further weakened. By 1975, it had
become clear that bilateral negotiations resulting in declarations and treaties were not entirely efficacious as international conflict resolution strategies. For, in that year, Gowon’s (immediate past, but one) successor as Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, threatened that, “rather than accept the outrageous 1975 award (that is, the Maroua agreement of June 1, 1975), Nigeria would go to war if the Republic of Cameroon refused to negotiate” (Isa, 1987:15). Subsequently, Cameroon refused to enter into further bilateral negotiations, on the matter, with Nigeria. The argument of the Government of Cameroon was that Nigeria’s past behavior of not respecting agreements, accords, and declarations made further bilateral talks meaningless. However, between 1976 and 1979, Nigeria did not go to war on the matter. Cameroon’s preference has since the 1980s and 1990s been for extra-African multilateral political intervention and judicial arbitration. Thus, when troops from the two countries clashed over the control of the Bakassi peninsular, in 1993 and 1994, when the Federal Government, under Shagari, proposed the setting up of an international arbitration commission to resolve the perennial conflict, her preference has been to place the matter before African continental or regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States. Nigeria would rather have these two organizations, in which it commands immense influence, resolve the conflict. She has been generally reluctant to have the matter settled by extra-African, multilateral agencies with enforcement powers. Whenever the matter was placed before the ICJ by Cameroon, however, Nigeria has had no choice but to appear before the World Court, having endorsed, without any reservations or qualification, the Optional Clause of the Statute of the ICJ barely five years after becoming a member of the United Nations. In 1965, Nigeria became the forty-first state in the world to declare her acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ. And it did so without the sort of reservations made by such countries as the United States of America that virtually negate such acceptance. The only condition which Nigeria attached to her acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ was reciprocity. As the government of Nigeria explained at the time, Nigeria did not accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court because she believed that every thing was right with the Court or with the state of international law itself. Nigeria’s action was based on the conviction that unless many states gave the Court “their trust and confidence”, it would be no more than a mere symbol of “man’s belief in a world of law and order” (Balewa’s Address to the United Nations; reproduced in Obiozor, 1985:190-197).
Finally, to further substantiate the Gowon’s Maroua declaration implication on the Bakassi peninsular, Baye (2010:22) stresses that, “on 29 July 1975, General Gowon was overthrown in a coup detat. The new regime decided to question the 1971 and 1975 Gowon-Ahidjo maritime agreements – either without really understanding the issues or by acting mischievously. In no time the country got the impression that Gowon had given away the “Bakassi peninsular” to Cameroon to compensate for president Ahidjo’s neutrality during the Nigeria Civil War, an unfortunate and totally false notion which persists in many quarters to this day (Omoigui 2006; Olumide 2002). Many commentators still do not realize that the peninsular had been ceded by a series of actions and inactions beginning as far back as 913, reconfirmed when Nigeria became independent in 1960, finalized with the 1961 plebiscite and affirmed with the 1964 Organization of African Unity (OAU) declaration, which stipulated that independent African countries were bound to respect their colonial borders (Omoigui 2006).

4.10 NEIGHBOR RELATIONS/FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

Despite the long-standing border disputes between both countries, Cameroon and Nigeria continued to have a cordial and brotherly relationship with one another. However, Nigeria suspected that foreign powers like France, Britain and Germany and even equatorial Guinea mingled into the conflict in favor of Cameroon bearing in mind the position of her earlier relations with especially France and going also by the fact of a French citizen being at the helm of affairs (President) of the world court. First of all, Nigeria never wanted the case to be settled by the ICJ because she claimed the matter could be solved bilaterally at the local level. The truth is that she feared the president of the court, Gilbert Guillaume, a French citizen and other European juices’ like Rosalyn Higgins of Britain and Carl-August Flesichhauer of Germany would be impartial in their judgment in favor of Cameroon. In her official response to the Court’s decision Nigeria claimed:
The French President of the Court and the English and German judges should have disqualify themselves since the countries which they represent, are in essence, parties to the action or have substantial stakes. These judges, as citizens of the colonial powers whose action had come under scrutiny, have acted as judges in their own cause and thereby rendered their judgment virtually null and void. (Ngang, 2005:18).

However, this view and fear, is best captured by Eke (2009) when he stated that “the Nigeria Cameroon dispute over the oil-rich Bakassi was a carryover of the unhealthy relations between Nigeria and France as a result of the latter’s influence in the sub region. Again, Eke further maintained his stance on the unhealthy relations between Nigeria and France when he narrated it all in a very long easy thus: “Nigeria-France relations has, over time, remained one of a continuous till between good, bad, and sometimes, hard-to-believe. Jean-March Simon’s adoration for Nigeria came where France dreads Nigeria most: Nigeria’s sub-imperial perception. In the Bakassi dispute concerning land and maritime boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon, French averments contradicted its roles, covertly and overtly. French roles were controversial and contradictory and in favor of its old colony-the Cameroon. Thus far, Nigeria must begin to read lips and watch out for harder times. Trust is not just a mere generous gift in international politics; French espousal of the “policy of strict neutrality” in the ICJ verdict handed down by a Frenchman, Justice Gilbert Guillaume can serve just but part of the predatory vengeance, which could be decoded for future intelligence in Nigeria-France relations, if well understood. Proponents of cautious optimism in Nigeria-France relation like Aja Akpuru Aja, observed that the unresolved border tension between Nigeria and Cameroon in the Bakassi peninsular could have been resolved between the two countries on their acceptable bilateral peace formula if not for the implication or constraints of the French-Cameroon defense-military pact and agreement.

During the crisis, France, in a surprise maneuver, dispatched 30 paratroopers and with light machine guns and combat helicopters, installed surface-to-air missiles, surface-to-surface batteries and Radar stations to monitor sea and air movements of Nigerian troops as well as
French artillery pieces in the event of war between Nigerian Cameroon. The head of French delegation, Bruno Delaye, to Nigerian Head of State General Sani Abacha said that France acted in honoring her defense pact between France and Cameroon. Nigerian authorities blamed the French government for intervening in the crisis when there had not been failure in seeking a bilateral solution.

Conspiracy theorist point to Cameroun’s hurried complain to the United Nations Security Council immediately France assumed the presidency of the 15-member Council in 1994 on Wednesday March 9, calling for emergency meeting on the issue. The conception was to use France greater preferential military treatment in Cameroon to defend its economic interest in Bakassi. Part of the preferential treatment enjoyed by France in Cameroon is better concessionary rights in oil exploration in Bakassi from Cameroon than the less granted by Nigeria. While ELF Nigeria has 60 percent of shareholding, ELF Cameroon is a fully-owned French firm. More so, French companies are also exploiting timber from the Bakassi forest on the bank of the Rio de Rey River.

All the same, between Nigeria and France, the two states have a lot in common and should explore the merits of their economic relations in improving their overall interactions. Nigeria should appreciate France as the second largest investor in Nigeria after Britain, at least since 1985. Nigeria-France economic relations span all sectors of the Nigerian economy. These includes the banking (United Bank for Africa, UBA, Society Generate, Mutual Banking Corporation, Credit Lyonnaise Universal Trust Bank and Afribank); the automobile (Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria, PAN). The PAN located in Kaduna State is jointly owned by the French government are more than 60, including the Fougerolle, Dumez and Spie-Batignolles); distributing firms (Francaise de l’ Afrique, Occidentale, CFAO and Societe Commerciable de l’ Ouest Africaine, SCOA) and oil exploration and mining firms, which constitute Nigeria-France major economic relations. In this area, there are ELF and Total, which are two of the seven oil major markets of Nigeria’s petroleum products. The volume and imperative of economic relations is increasing into such other areas as telecommunications as the Alcatel and Globacon network has revealed. In this area, there are ELF and Total, which are two of the seven oil major marketers of Nigeria’s petroleum products. Total was the first oil firm to be established in Nigeria in 1902. With a total grant of ₦1.2billion facility from Japan and the United Nations, France and Nigeria are collaborating in Agricultural projects. The volume and imperative of
economic exchange between Nigeria and France is an important factor for future friendly and harmonious Nigeria-France relations in the future especially when properly considered along the disparity and gains inherent in Nigeria’s friendly relations with France as a member of the Group of eight world economic giants, which is also a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

Distillation of factors that characterized the ICJ legal conspiracy against Nigeria in the land and maritime dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon will surely provide essential pathways into solution to the tortuous Nigeria-France relations that are still to emerge.

More so, Sama and Ross noted, additional questions are also raised by the participation of the international community in this settlement of a potentially crisis-ridden border dispute. A cynical reading of the situation requires that one note that the process involved the diplomatic participation of countries other than the two in question. The United State participation of countries other than the two in question. The United States participated because of its interests in Nigerian and Cameroon oil reserves. In fact, the Green Tree Agreement was signed in New York: Equatorial Guinea was involved in the process because the maritime borders demarcating coastal waters between Nigeria, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. The former colonial powers, Great Britain and France were involved as well. Each of these observations supports the contention that the struggle to control resources has been exacerbated by the unleashing of ethno-cultural forces that will not easily assuaged (Sama and Ross, 2005: 117 - 118).

To this, Nigeria was convinced that Cameroon took the case to the ICJ with France’s assurance that the decision was going to be in their favor considering that Cameroon had not been well-treated by the ICJ in the past. This is evidenced, going by the failure of the court to follow the grand norms of international boundary dispute resolution by International Court of Justice ruling. It also exposes the connection between the positions of the world court officials especially the president and the outcome of the judgment. France, although not actively and directly involved in the process, took the stance that Bakassi belonged to Cameroon by citing treaties signed at and after independence was granted to both countries. This greatly anger in Nigeria, where Frances, investment by far exceeds their investment in the rest of Africa put together. Neither did this go down well with the opposition in Cameroon which sees the lack of progress in democratization process in Cameroon as a result of French meddling in Cameroonian politics in favor of the ruling government.
Again, no wonder Chief Richard Akindije, who was a member of the Nigeria legal team during the court proceedings team, summarized his view on foreign influence as follows:

We must accept that the ICJ judgment is 50 percent international law and 50 percent politics. And as far as the case between Nigeria and Cameroon was concerned, the dispute was really between Nigeria and France. Cameroon was just the proxy for France. There is no doubt that in law and in fact that Bkassi belongs to Nigeria because that is supported by a lot of documentary evidence, which were tendered before the court. But which the court ignored. You don’t ask somebody to transfer to you what belongs to you. So as far as I’m concerned the judgment of the ICJ is a complete fraud and unacceptable. If indeed, Bakassi belongs to Cameroon, how can Cameroonians be asking them to transfer it to them (Newsatch, Nov. 4, 2002).

When asked why the French representative was allowed to preside over the case, since the Nigerian team knew that the matter was between “Nigeria and France”, Akinjide said:

You cannot, you cannot. You have to operate within the status of the court. And the status of the court didn’t allow you to do what you say we should do. All we did and we were to do were all within the status of the court. Don’t forget Nigeria did not sue Cameroon. Cameroon took us to court, and when you are taken to court, you have to defend yourself. (Newswatch, November 4, 2002).

France in particular, was therefore seen at least by Nigeria as an actor in the conflict fanning the flames of the escalation for reasons best known to her.
Another foreign country which got involved in the conflict at a much later period was the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, which also filed a case at the ICJ to observe the legal process at the Hague in order to safeguard her territorial interests but not to directly get involved in the crisis. Fombo, equally noted this while writing on the “parties to the case” where he stressed that; “In the course of the proceedings, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, on 16 November, 1998, requested and obtained a copy of the memorial field by Cameroon and copies of the maps presented to the Court by the parties. This request was in earnest, a step towards an application for permission to intervene in the case pursuant to Article 62 of the statute of the ICJ. Equatorial Guinea filed an application at the Registry of the ICJ on 30 June, 1999. The court on 21 October authorized Equatorial Guinea to intervene base on the fact that, the later had sufficiently established it had interest to be protected in the case and the principal parties raised no objections against this. Although Equatorial Guinea expressly stated in its request that it did “not seek to become a party to the case”, it was given the opportunity to state its opinion, not only in writing, but also orally like the principal parties”.

Of all the points raised above, it quite clear that economic interest was the major issue that brought both countries to the brink of war. Bearing in mind that Nigeria is 923.768km$^2$ big and Cameroon covers an area of 475, 442 km$^2$, it would be quite futile for the two to go war because of a 1000km$^2$, piece of swampy land alone for territorial reasons. Socially speaking, both Cameroon and Nigeria had not carried out any reasonable development in the area in terms of communication networks, health and education as to claim ownership. Culturally, it is evident that not only the Efiks in Bkassi share the same ties with Nigeria but also larger parts of Anglophone Cameroon with eastern Nigeria as well as part of northern Cameroon with northern Nigeria. The security issue and national interest are closely linked to economic interests while the political aspect as we have seen above, was just a mere effort by politicians to divert public attention from the real issues they were failing to address. Many analysts agree essentially, that ad there not been talk of the presence of oil deposits in the area, there would not have been any Bakassi crisis and the area would have remained uninteresting for both countries except for matters pertaining to fishing rights.

So, in the finally analysis, the point to note is that Bakassi peninsular was in dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon but Nigeria lost in the struggle because of vested Western interests. This suggests that Cameroon’s influence in West Africa and beyond as a
counterweight to Nigeria’s leadership aspiration is growing by the day. It is a matter for more proactive and dynamic foreign policy by Nigeria.

4.11 THE GOOD OFFICES OF AU, UN AND KOFI ANNAN AND THE BAKASSI DISPUTE:

Inter-state border disputes are normally arbitrated or resolved through sub-regionally or regionally mechanism for arbitration. Inter-state dispute, also can be resolved by states who are involved in such disputes themselves that is through bilateral arrangements. When a solution to such inter-state border disputes cannot be affected at the sub-regional, regional or bilaterally-among the states that are party to the dispute, it is often referred to international organization for mediation. Therefore, Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute (Bakassi), an example of such inter-state border conflicts, was equally referred to such sub-regional, regional and international organizations and international organizations and agencies for solution. Nevertheless, AU, UN and the good office of the UN secretary general were checked for mediation by the parties to the case. In other words, after very first major incidents of May 16 1981, both countries resorted to diplomatic means to bring to an end the conflict.

On the part of the United Nations (UN), it should be recalled that at the earlier stage of the dispute, United Nations, sent visiting mission to both southern and northern Cameroon in 1958. In southern Cameroon, the mission found that opinion was sharply divided concerning its future political association. In northern Cameroon, its finding was that “it was the manifest opinion of the Northern Cameroon population as a whole that Northern Cameroon should become a permanent part of the Northern region of Nigeria’ (House of Representatives Debates, 7/4/60, col. 16] The UN Visiting Mission, therefore, recommended that a plebiscite be held in Southern Cameroun in 1959 to ascertain the people’s wish. For Northern Cameroun, it recommended that, if the UN General Assembly accepted such union (between Nigeria and Northern Cameroun) as a basis for the termination of the trusteeship arrangement, no further consultation need be held (yearbook of the United Nations, 1959, p. 361). But this, opinion was challenged by some petitioners from the territory, among whom were representatives of the
One Cameroon Party, the Cameroon Student’s Association of America (CSAA), and the National Union of Cameroon.

The proposed plebiscite did not take place in Southern Cameroon in 1959. But in Northern Cameroon a plebiscite ordered by the UN General Assembly, took place on November 14, 1959 to determine where these people in this area called Bakasi would be. The result showed that, by 70,546 to 42,788 votes a majority of 27,758 votes, the people of Northern Cameroon resolved to postpone the decision on their future political association to a later date (Reports to the UN 1959, p. 24: and Yearbook of the United Nations, 1959 p. 364). Given this development, the UN General Assembly ordered a second plebiscite to be held in Northern Cameroon were, in the second plebiscite, asked pointedly, whether they wished to join the posed to the people of Southern Cameroon. In Northern Cameroon 146,296 votes were cast for union with Nigeria, while 97,659 votes were cast for union with the Republic of Cameroon (Akinyemi, 1974: 139).

Again according to Fombo, (2006:143) “on March 24 and 25, 1994 the newly created central organ of the OAU responsible for the resolution of conflicts among members countries constituted only at the OAU summit in Cairo the previous June, formally gave a hearing to delegations from Nigeria and Cameroon on their spate of intra and inter state disputes on the continent and before examining the Nigeria Cameroon case, it had met only once in November 1993 to examine the conflicts that were raging then in Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi.”

At the end of the hearings on the Nigeria-Cameroon dispute, the body issued a communiqué noting with relief the commitments made by the two parties to seek a peaceful settlement to the crisis, in spite of the fact that several skirmishes had been taking place along the border. The communiqué underscored the importance of achieving a peaceful settlement based on the charters of the UN and OAU, reaffirming its commitment to the principle of uti possideits (i.e., the inviolability of frontiers inherited at independence) (Cameroon Tribune March 31, 1994 cited in Fombo, 2006:143). The commission agreed to entrust the task of resolving the dispute into the hands of presidents Mubarak of Egypt, then OAU Chairman and Eyadema of Togo both of whom were already involved in apparently parallel mediation efforts.

The reiteration of uti possideits by the OAU commission reassured Cameroon even though the actual mediation was left in the hand of Mubarak and Eyadema and not the
commission members themselves. This can be explained by the fact that all through, Cameroon firmly stated her case as a violation by Nigeria of the colonial boundary established by Britain and Germany the former imperial powers in these territories. Nigeria on her part had vacillated between claims of colonial transgressions in establishing the boundary to attempts at arresting atrocities being committed against her population settled in the Bakassi area. Thus, Nigeria in support of her claims to the territory as we shall see, rather emphasized the “Nigerianess” of the territory before the advent of colonial rule and argued that the main agreement of March 11, 1913 between Britain and Germany defining this border was fundamentally flawed because Britain went against some earlier commitments with the Chiefs of Old Calabar.

The mediation efforts of Egypt and Togo went ahead pari passu the intermittent skirmishes, the litigation at The Hague and UN involvement. However, going by what the Cameroonian authorities held, the mediation efforts of Togo had borne no fruits because of Nigeria’s diversionary tactics. Nigeria perhaps because of the popular image of Togo’s efforts as being masterminded by the French tended to prefer Egyptian mediation. It was from this background that Baba Gana Kingibe met President Mubarak in Cairo, on may 16 and announced an imminent meeting between Abacha and Biya, which Cameroon was quick to dismiss as being doomed because no consultations were made with Cameroon prior to the announcement in Cairo (Cameroon tribune, March 18, 1994:2).

The United Nations was not directly involved in mediation. However, the security council called on the parties in the course of the intermittent clashes to desist from actions that could escalate the situation, while the ICJ was examining the claims of the parties. Also, the Secretary General initiated a fact-finding mission to the area in September 1996, in the wake of the continuing clashes (Guardian, September 20, 1996:1).

On the whole, these mediation efforts accomplished little at this phase of the conflict. The reasons for this lie mainly in the faithfulness of the belligerents, especially Cameroon, relying on the OAU and the mediators for a solution. Repeated efforts to arrange a summit meeting between Abacha and Biya could not be realized with each side blaming the other for the stalemate. Even the frequent ministerial visits accomplished little because of the deep mutual distrust existing between the (Fombo. 2006: 145).
More elaborately, several other factors can be adduced for the outcome of the mediation efforts considered above. First, perceptions of the parties rendered the endeavors fruitless. Nigeria and especially, Cameroon were not serious with grabbing the crises eschewed bilateral negotiations with Nigeria on the grounds that previous agreements had not been respected. Cameroon therefore, preferred arbitration or at least negotiation within a multilateral forum offered either by the OAU or the UN. Nigeria though willing to negotiate, was at the same time unwilling to make concessions after having publicly taken stance on the border issue which could not be withdrawn without domestic criticisms of feebleness. Thus, both sides considered the crises to be involving “core values” associated with the “national self” that could not be compromised (Saadia Tovral, 1792:176) Second, there were factor emanating from the environment such as those that influence the capacities and capabilities of the parties to fight or negotiate, include domestic political structures and public opinion, as noted above, that determine government’s freedom of action in negotiation. These regimes that were under domestic pressure (from difficult democratization programmes) and were had pressed for opportunities to divert attention from the issues of the day, could not afford to go in for negotiations and other concessions that would provide a forum for further crystallization of opposition to them at home. Coupled with this is another environmental factor related to ideology. Cameroon largely saw Nigeria as a military dictatorship projecting its repressive domestic policies into the international arena, and having the disapproval of the rest of the international community. Cameroon inherently had the self-image of being pious. Nigeria as noted above in the statement of Foreign Minister, Baba Gana Kingibe, who described Cameroon as being involved in a dangerous Machievellian game to divert attention from domestic failings, had just a similar idea. These conflicting ideological perceptions also helped to render mediation efforts fruitless.

There were also personality factors at work. Some of the mediators as we have seen above, were for one reason or there other, treated with suspicion or absolute scorn, like the Gabones initiative on behalf of UDEAC, for reasons unconnected with crisis itself. When such distrust and lack of confidence exists, mediation can hardly resolve the substantive issue in a dispute. Meanwhile, deep suspicions had also poisoned relations between Yaounde and Abuja over the years, especially during the period of military rules as we have shown above in this and the preceding chapter.
Other obstacles to the effort could be considered as procedural. Perhaps the most serious impediment to a compromise agreement being reached in the conflict results from the outbreak of violence itself. As Boulding has strongly asserted:

... violence in itself prevent ... Conflicts

from being resolved and indeed perpetuates them. Violence, for instance, creates and atmosphere in which reconciliation is difficult and in which, indeed, each party is likely to move farther away from the position of the other (Quoted in Holsti 1970, cited in Fombo, 2006: 146)

Because of the violence and occupation of part of the disputed peninsula, Cameroon refused entirely any summit meeting unless Nigeria withdrew its troops to the position ante bellum. Of course, Nigeria never considered its forces in the Bakassi to be on Cameroonian territory and so, could not accept the precondition set by Cameroon. Given the difficulties of organizing a summit meeting between the leaders of the two countries, negotiations were only at lower levels, which meant that decisive actions could not be taken by those who were involved. The procedures adopted by the mediator also contributed. For instance, the French could no succeed with mediation while ostensibly rendering military support (all be it, small) to one of the parties. Equally, the Egyptian move of allowing a summit meeting to be announced by Kingibe without prior consultations with Cameroon rendered such endeavors futile as a result of the procedures adopted.

With the failure of mediation as we have seen, the stage was no set for judicial settlement which Cameroon preferred. Truly Cameroon’s contention and claims were more rooted in legal than political or social arguments as was the case with Nigeria. This ipso facto predisposed Nigeria to a bilateral resolution of the problem or at worse a regional arrangement where the political resolution of the problem or at worse a regional arrangement where the political and social arguments could be brought to bear on the case. Cameroon on the other
hand stood to gain more from a legalistic prosecution of the dispute, in spite of the ongoing fighting.

Meanwhile, the international community had in place a code of conduct which somewhat favored Cameroon. The Kellogg-Brian Pact of 1928, which was also incorporate into Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, had proscribed war as an instrument of national policy. Article 2(4) enjoins UN members to refrain from threat or use of the force against the territorial integrity of another state. Although force may be legitimate when used in self-defense, a successful use of force does not constitute a valid method of acquiring territory. Security Council Resolution 242 as well emphasized the “inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war”. In the same vein, the 1970 Declaration of Principles of International Law adopted by the UN General Assembly provided that:

The territory of a state shall not be the object of acquisition by another state resulting from the threat or use of force. Not territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal (Shaw 1970, cited in Fombo, 2006: 147)

Given the above consensus in the international community as reflected in exiting international law, Cameroon had every reason to be undaunted by the sporadic fighting that was not going well on its part. Several areas in the dispute territory had been lost to Nigeria through sheer force of arms. A successful prosecution of the case became the most reasonable cause obtaining redress and restoration of these loses.

Also Ngang, (2005: 22) noted that on march 29, 1994, after many years of low-keyed sporadic attacks on both sides, Cameroon finally decided to take to case to the UN for arbitration in order to prevent greater human and material loss and in its pursuit of peace, stating in her application that the delimitation of the maritime borders with Nigeria was incomplete and that “despite many attempts to complete it the two parties have been unable to do so. Nigeria which had hoped that bilateral or multilateral talks at the local level could help
bring an end to the conflict was not happy with the decision. She even considered the timing of
the law suit a pre-emptive moreover on the part of Cameroon claiming that the Abacha regime
being very unpopular with the international community and French backing at the ICJ,
Cameroon was sure to win the case. According to Article 36, paragraph 2, of the statute of the
court, both parties to a conflict must declare their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the Court
before it can accept an application. On June 16, 1994, Nigeria indicated it has no objections to
the Cameroonian law suit and fixed a time limit for the filling of written proceedings (Ngang,

Although the ICJ ruling initially met with discordant cheers and jeers from the principal
parties in the conflict giving the impression that their position are unchanged, it indeed altered
the balance of forces in the dispute. The authoritative nature of the court and its influence on
international opinion makes it decision difficult to resist. Besides, clear defiance of the court
could lead to referral to the Security Council that can enforce the decision of the ICJ, as noted
above.

The ruling provided an impetus for the resumption of conference diplomacy for a final
settlement of the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary conflict. This has been taking place within the
ambit of the United Nations Mixed Commission for the agreed upon at a meeting in Geneva on
November 15, 2002. The commission was agree upon at a meeting in Geneva on November 15,
2002, sequel to that of September 5, 2002 in Paris convened to prepare for the October 10
ruling. Both meetings were held at the behest of UN Secretary General, who extracted from the
two countries a commitment to peacefully resolve the dispute by implementing the ICJ
judgment. As contained in his press release after the November 15, 2002 meeting.

The two president... ask(ed) me to establish mixed commission of the two sides, to be chaired
by my special Envoy, Ahmedou Ould-Abdalla, to consider ways of following up the ICJ ruling and
More so, given the complex nature of the border conflict, it was clear that a decision from the Court alone may not be enough to bring a sustainable agreement between both parties. So while anticipating the final decision of the Court, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan invited President Biya of Cameroon and Obasanjo of Nigeria to a summit meeting in Paris on 5 September 2002. At this meeting, he was able to convince both presidents to commit themselves to respect and implement whatever decision the Court arrived at. He was able to obtain an agreement from them, “to establish a mechanism to give effect to the decision. It is important to not here that while both countries were more or less ready to accept the Court’s decision none of them had come up with any concrete proposals of their own for implementation of the ruling. Mr. Annan also showed proof of great understanding and foresight by making sure that France, the United State and Britain – all nations trusted by both countries backed this initiative. Though many will disagree, credit also goes to both Presidents for recognizing the fact that the border dispute was to be seen within the greater context of the overall relationship between both state.

According to Baye, (2010:24), when it became difficult to implement the ICJ ruling, the UN Secretary-General formed the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission on the request of both leaders. The Mixed Commission first demarcated the land boundaries. The development of projects to promote joint economic ventures and cross-border cooperation monitored by the Mixed Commission included the construction of border markets and roads linking the two countries. All appeared on track some villages further north and around Lake Chad were exchanged until the handling-over process reached the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula. Two withdrawal timetables were not respected; thousands of Nigerians in the Bakaasi Peninsula were not sure where they stood in terms of citizenship and many wanted to remain Nigeria since they had more social and economic ties with Nigeria (Borzello 2004, cited in Baya, 2010:24) Nigeria’s failure to give Cameroon full control of Bakassi on 15 September 2004 was predicated on the argument that their withdrawal would lead to the collapse of law and order.

In addition, Nigeria submitted that the most democratic manner to decide Bakassi’s sovereignty would be to hold a referendum since about 90% of the people on the Peninsula did not want to become Cameroonian (Eboh 2005). Nigeria claimed that sovereignty of Bakassi was not a matter of oil or natural resources on land or in coastal water, but rather the welfare and well-being of Nigerians on their land (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2002). There were calls on the
Nigerian government by some Nigerians to go to war over the matter. This school of thought argued that there is no morality in international relations and that it is against the national interest of Nigeria in terms of security and economic interest to accept the ICJ’s verdict in its totality (Etim-Bassey 2002). However, other Nigeria cautioned again war arguing that women and children are the most vulnerable victims of war and that youths are the greatest losers in all social conflicts, domestic or international, not the men who usually ask for war (Asobie 2003). They further maintained that ‘the principle of told faith’ in international relations demands that Nigeria should not disavow her word of honor as evidence by the Diplomatic Note of 1962 (Aghemelo and Ibhavebhor, 2006).

Consequently, there is no doubt that the ICJ has a limited capacity to facilitate enforcement because there is a very weak interplay between passing judgment and binding enforcements. Implementation of rulings of the ICJ is largely dependent on the goodwill of countries in conflict. In situations where the countries involve are outward looking and cherish international credibility, diplomatic pressure can act as a credible tool which can be used to generate incentive for compliance with international obligations.

Not surprising, as expected the verdict met with stiff opposition in Nigeria while Cameroonians rejoiced with song and dance. Nigerian officials, citizen and commentators were very fast to dismiss the verdict as being partial and predetermined long before it was even reached. The administration on its part did not reject the decision but called for an agreement that would provide peace with honor. In its official response to the Court’s decision, the Nigerian government said it would “do everything possible to maintain peace in Bakassi or any other part of the border with Cameroon and will continue to avail itself of the good office of the secretary general of the United Nations and other well meaning leaders of the international Community to achieve peace and to maintain harmony and good neighborliness. At this critical point, Kofi Annan appealed to both countries to respect and implement the court’s judgment and reaffirmed the readiness of the UN to assist both countries. In his relentless effort to achieve lasting peace between both countries, he once again invited both presidents to a seminal meeting in Geneva on November 15, 2002, where both leaders agreed to request the Secretary-General to set up a Cameroon Nigeria Mixed Commission made up of representatives of both countries and UN experts chaired by a special representative of the Secretary-General. Abatti
attested to this when he granted press interviewed to the Guardian Newspaper. He noted how the president and his Cameroonian counterpart, Paul Biya, were “summoned” to France on September 5 by the French President Jacques Chirac, where both African leaders were said to have pledged to abide by the court ruling. In a very incisive editorial, the Guardian Newspaper took exception to this. It had written; “very recently, it transpired that the French president, Mosieur Jacques Chirac, had invited President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Cameroonian counterpart, Mr. Paul Biya, to France in connection with the bakassi palaver, which is subjudice in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague. In all probabilities, the French President’s aim in arraying the tripartite meeting was to discuss the likely outcome of the judgment of the ICJ, which as must be well known to Monsieur Chirac, is imminent. France has copious investments, particularly in the oil sector, in the disputed area. (France and the Bakassi case”, The Guardian, September 18, 2002). The function of the Mixed Commission was to work out ways of implementing the ruling of the court and moving the process forward. Annan’s proposal of his special representative for West Africa, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah from Mauritania to chair the mixed Commission was considered acceptable by both sides. In that atmosphere of brotherhood, the two countries accepted to identify a number of confidence building measures. The mandate27 of the mixed commission include:

- Demarcation of the land boundary;
- Withdrawal of civil administration, military and police force and the transfer of authority.
- Eventual demilitarization of the Bakassi Peninsula
- Protection of the rights of the affected population.
- Promotion of joint economic ventures; and
- The reactivation of the Lake Chad commission.

The first meeting of the mixed commission was held in Cameroon’s capital city Yaounde on 1 December 2002. To carry out the various aspects of the various aspects of its work, two sub commission and five working groups were created. To assure a smooth functioning of the Mixed Commission, the UN established a support team of experts with its base in the Senegalese capital, Dakar. This team provides technical and logical assistance to the commission as well as substantial support to the sub-commission and working groups. The commission meets once every two moths alternating between Yaounde and Abuja. The commission already started its
work of field visits by deploying its personnel Observer group made up of members from both countries to the land boundary for a period of one year. The observe group had the task of presenting a report one month after handover.

In addition to the Mixed commission, the UN deployed a team of civilian observers to the region to monitor and assess the transfer of authority according to the Court’s ruling and to see whether the rights of the affected populations were guaranteed or not.

By mid 2004, barely two and a half year after the Court’s decision, the UN and two counties could look back on a number of great developments. President’s Obasanjo’s visit to the Yaounde in July 2004 and the appointment of new ambassador to both countries are considered important turning points in the relationship between both countries. Nigeria finally signaled its readiness to transfer the most coveted Bakassi Peninsula back to Cameroon and the previous suspicions which had characterized the eely work of the mixed commission had given way to trust. At its eleventh meeting in Yaounde (18-19 August 1994), it adopted a break through document on the withdrawal and transfer of authority along and land boundary. This meeting also registered progress in connection with work on the maritime border. Due to its many successes in the Cameroon-Nigerian border conflict, the Mixed Commission concept has gained substantial ground with observers of the African political situation and is being considered a novel approach to preventive diplomacy and a new model for the settlement of conflict between states.

Nigeria’s failure to completely withdraw from Bakassi by the fixed deadline – 15 September 2004 – due to unforeseeable “technical difficulties” dampened the hopes and expectations of both the UN and Cameroon. However, the fact that Cameroon remained calm in the face of this was clear proof of the confidence it had in the work of the mixed Commission, its newly found friendship with Nigeria and that the situation on the ground had essentially changed in military, diplomatic and political terms. Mr. Ould-Abdallah’s endless energy and enthusiasm in maintaining contact with the two parties through shuttle diplomacy between the two capitals was of enormous importance in avoiding the breakdown of the entire process.

4.12 OBASANJO & ABACHA, TWO NIGERIA LEADERS AND THE BAKASSI:
The mantel of leadership fell on the shoulder of Olusegun Obasanjo when predecessor, General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated on Friday February 13 1976 in an abortive coup led by colonel Buka Suka Dimka. Abasanjo in his acceptance speech, clearly registered this reluctance to take over from his slain compatriot (major General Murtala Mohammed). On Saturday, February 14, 1976, he was sworn in as the Nation’s fifth indigenous head of Government and the fourth military head of state. In three and half years, he concluded what he and the other two Mohammed and Danjuma - had set out to achieve. He handed over to a democratically elected civilian administration (Nigeria: A complete fact finder 1999:8 and 9). This is the first.

Second on 29th May 1999, General Olusegun Obasanjo retuned to the seat of the presidency, this time as a civilian president. This followed the declaration of his victory on March 1, 1999, by the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman, Prof. Mourice Iwu as the elected president under the umbrella of PDP. To this General Obasanjo retuned as the Nigeria’s second elected executive president, ruled for eight uninterrupted years in office.

Needless to say that all these while general Obasanjo managed Nigeria, the Bakassi conflict had raged on.

On the other hand, Brigadier Sani Abacha on November 17, 1993, announced to the Nation that he had accepted the resignation of Chief Ernest Shonekan, who was appointed interim administrator to replace Ibrahim Babagida. General Abacha served as the military head of state from 1993 to 1998 when he died.

These two leaders no doubt, met, participated and left as leaders, the Bakassi conflicts. Starting from Obasanjo, from his deputy-ship with Murtala Mohammed 1975 – 1976, through his 1976-1979 military administration, faced a very sever domestic political pressure over the Bakassi issue. Obasanjo, really threatened to go to war with Cameroon to regain the disputed territory, including the Bakassi peninsular. Though this regime according to Asobie, however pulled back from the brink in the end, after realizing that it was on rather weak legal grounds in respect of the maritime border, Obasanjo tribe hand to legitimize the claims of Nigerians to Bakassi (Asobie, 2005:91).
Again it could be recalled that it was during the “Abacha regime”, that Cameroon initiated the legal proceedings over Bakassi at the international court of justice. During that time, Abacha, like some of his predecessors, preferred that the matter should be settled by force. In fact, there was a time he wanted to go to war.

According to one-time former Attorney-General and minister for justice during the time of Abacha, Dr. Olu Onagoruwa, the circumstance of the suit on Bakassi peninsula, should be blamed on the military adventurism of the later general Sani Abacha’s regime. Onagoruwa, who was a member of the defunct provisional ruling council (PRC) during Abach regime, said while granting interview with the guardian disclose that “instead of allowing sleeping dogs to lie, there were such overlapping military interest that the military authorities would want to go places and would take any decision. He recalled how he warned the PRC that we shouldn’t delve into Bakassi issue because he felt we would waste a lot of money on a title that was totally dubious (Guardian, Monday Oct 14, 2002).

Also, During Abacha regime, a committee was set up to look into all that pertains to bakassi to enable them forge ahead. The technical committee included. The minister of foreign affairs of the time, Etubom Anthony Ani, Dr. Ajato Amos Dr. Ekpenyong, a cartographer at the miniersity of Lagos. Dr Yogt and Dr. Akinterinwa. The commander in chief General Abacha, directed that the committee be expanded to include a legal team. To this Prof. Chukwura, a renowned international lawyer, Chief Richard Akinjude, the Attoney General of the federation, were included. After this constitution and their report tendered to a paper titled “Nigeria’s Authority Over “IDMBI” (Bakassi), The head of state, General Abacha appointed his special envoy to brief some selected Heads of state on the dispute between Nig and Cameroon over Bakassi. The visited Uganda, Kenya Zimbabwe and Gabon to deliver special messages from March 13 to 17, 1994. Clearly, these were in preparation for war.

Regrettably, the committees report had it that Nigeria would be denied justice if followed up to the ICJ at the Hague, and this was consequently bought to the attention of Gen. Abacha. But the formidable General made it public that “come rain, come shine, Nigeria will never give up Bakassi. Then according to Etubom. A. Ani minister of finance then they dedicated that there must be a plan “B” and there was in fact a plan “B” we had to make Bakassi de facto and de Jure Nigeria (Calabar forum magazine, 16th Nov. 2011).
Nevertheless, one thing that is certain, is that if Gen. Abacha were alive, Nigeria would still occupy bakassi. Indeed, when Abacha was alive we had started to implement plan B.

Finally, Obasanjo did not start the Bakassi case, he had to build on the foundation layed by Abacha. So when he returned in 1999, He was to prepare to finish up the Bakassi dispute as the final ruling was scheduled to in the near. Therefore, after the ICT ruling of Oct 10, 2002, according to African.com, 14 August 2006, president Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and president Paul Biya of Cameroon resolved the dispute in talks led by UN secretary General Koffi Annana, in New York city. Obasanjo agreed to withdraw Nigerian troops within 60 days and to leave the territory completely in Cameroonian control within the next two years. Annan said “with today’s agreement on Bakassi peninsula, a comprehensive resolution of the dispute is within a comprehensive resolution of the dispute is within our grasp. The momentum achieved must be our grasp. The momentum achieved must be sustained (All Africa. Com, 14 August, 2006).

Finally, the green tree Agreement reacted by Obasanjo on Bakassi, was the final deal on Bakassi. After the implementation of that accord Hand over of bakassi to Cameroon, his role on Bakassi finish before ties term as the Nigerian head of state in 2007. Nevertheless, from all indications Obasanjo’s second time on Bakassi was made of settlement, resolution and stop to it, in an amicable manner

4.10 COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE GREEN TREE AGREEMENT:

After the filing of claims and preliminary objections by Nigeria challenging the authority of the court to arbitrate the matter, the court passed judgment on June 11, 1998 dismissing seven of the Nigeria’s preliminary objections and stated that the claims brought forward by Cameroon were admissible (Ngang 2005:21).

As Okike has it, Cameroon filed a case against Nigeria in the international court of justice at The Hague (ICJ) on March, 29, 1994 requesting the court to institute proceedings against Nigeria in a dispute concerning the sovereignty over Bakassi peninsular.
The boundary, according to Cameroon is determined by the Anglo-German Agreement of March 29, 1994 requesting the court to institute proceedings against Nigeria in a dispute conceding the sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon. That, the maritime boundary was determined by the compromise line entered on British Admiralty Chart, Number 3433 by the Heads of state of the Heads of state of the two countries in April 1971 Yaounde 11 Declaration and by the Maroua Declaration on June 1, 1975.

Cameroon stated that Nigeria had violated the frontiers inherited from colonization as well as its legal obligations in international law concerning land and maritime delimitation. She further prayed the court that Nigeria should put an end to her administrative and military presence in Cameroonian territory by evacuating unconditionally her troops from the occupied Bakassi peninsula. That Nigeria should pay reparations yet to be determined by the court on account of material and moral injury suffered by Cameroon (The Guardian Friday 18, 2002:13).

In her submission Nigeria claimed that the sovereignty of the Bakassi peninsula is vested in the Federal Republic of Nigeria based on the Anglo-German Declaration of 11 and 12 March, 1913, Thomson-Marchand and Declaration of March 9th, 1931, the Nigerian (protectorate and Cameroon’s) order in council of August 2, 1946 and Article 74 and 83 of the united Nation’s law of the sea convention and the mutual agreement to respect the existing rights to explore and exploit the mineral resources of the continental shelf either party prior to March 29, 1994. That therefore, Cameroons claims were unfounded in law and fact.

By a unanimous decision in favor of Cameroon the ICJ ruled that the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria in Bakassi is delimited by Articles XVIII to XX of the Anglo-German Agreement of March 11, 1913 and that the sovereignty over Bakassi peninsula lies with Cameroon. The Nigerian boundary with Cameroon remains as was previously agree in 1913, 1971 *Yaounde Declaration) and 1975 (Maurua, Declaration) . more so, on June 30 1999, the Republic of Equatorial guinea filled in an application to intervene in the case to “protect the legal rights of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the Gulf of Guinea by all legal means available” and to “inform the Court of the nature of the legal rights and interests of Equatorial Guinea that could be affected by the Court’s decision in the light of the maritime boundary claims advanced by the parties to the case before the curt.” 23 However, Equatorial Guinea did not seek to become party to case.
Nevertheless, public hearings took place between February 13 and 21 March 2002. The final decision on Bakassi was passed by the Court on October 10, 2002 in a verdict of 13 to 3 votes it was found that sovereignty over the peninsula did rest with Cameroon. Nigeria was requested to expeditiously and without condition withdraw its forces and civil administration and transfer possession of the peninsula to Cameroon within two years. Likewise, Cameroon was asked to withdraw its forces and administration from territories which in accordance to the decision now fell within the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Ngang, 2005: 23)

Fombo noted also that, ‘in the course of the proceedings, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on November 16, 1998, requested and obtained a copy of the memorial field by Cameroon and copies of the maps presented on the Court by the parties. This request was in earnest, a step towards an application for permission to intervene in the case pursuant to Article 62 of the Statute of the ICJ. Equatorial Guinea filed an application at Registry of the ICJ on 30 June, 1999. The Court 21 October authorized Equatorial Guinea to intervene base on the fact that, the latter had sufficiently established it had interest to be protected in the case and the principal parties raised no objections against this. Although Equatorial Guinea expressly state in its request that it did “not seek to become a party to the case”, it was given the opportunity to state its opinion, not only in writing, but also orally like the principal parties (Fombo, 2006:152)

By and Large, Baye (2010:23) comprehensively packaged the whole court proceedings thus: “Cameroon tabled its border dispute with Nigeria before the ICJ in 1994 following the occupation of the Bakassi territory by the Nigerian troops on 12 December 1993. Cameroon anchored its claim over the ownership of Bakassi on the Anglo German Treaty of 11 March 1913 when both territories now called Cameroon and Nigeria were under colonial rule. Nigeria tried unsuccessful to challenge the legal basis of the 1913 Treaty, of 11 March 1913 when both territories now called Cameroon and Nigeria were under colonial rule. Nigeria tried unsuccessfully to challenge the legal basis of the 1913 Treaty, arguing that the two colonial masters had no locus standi to cede territories and that the agreement was not ratified by any of the parliaments of the two nations. Nigeria also unsuccessfully maintained that the alleged ceding of the Peninsula by Gowon, was not endorsed by the Supreme Military Council, which was the law-making body of the country at the time (Aghemelo and Ibhassebhor 2006)
On 10 October 2002, eight years of deliberations, the ICJ at the Hague decided that Cameroon had sovereignty over Bakassi, basing its decision on old colonial documents (Lacey and Banerjee 2002). The boundaries in the Lake Chad region were determined by the Thomson-Marchand Declarations of 1929-1930 and the boundary in Bakassi was determined by the Anglo-German Treaty of 11 March 1913. The court request Nigeria to quickly and unconditionally withdraw her administration, police and military from the area of Lake Chad under Cameroonian sovereignty and from the Bakassi Peninsula. The ICJ equally requested Cameroon to expeditiously and without condition remove any administration or military or police forces which may be present along the land boundary from the Lake Chad to the Bakassi Peninsula on territories which, pursuant to the judgment, fall within the sovereignty of Nigeria.

The court fixed the land boundaries from Lake Chad in the north to Bakassi in the south. However, the court did not specify a definite location off the coast of Equatorial Guinea where the maritime boundary between the two countries would terminate (Bekker 2003). The immediate reaction was that Nigeria rejected the ruling and at one point it seemed possible that the dispute would flare into open war, but UN mediation brought the two sides to the table” (Baye, 2010: 23).

Consequently there is no doubt that the ICJ has a limited capacity to facilitate enforcement because there is a very weak interplay between passing judgment and binding enforcements. Implementation of rulings of the ICJ is largely dependent on the goodwill of countries in conflict. In situations where the countries involved are outward looking and cherish international credibility, diplomatic pressure can act as a credible tool which can be used to generate incentives for compliance with international obligations.

THE GREEN TREE AGREEMENT

Following intense diplomatic offensives and the good office of the UN Secretary General, Cameroon was able to secure the Green Tree Agreement with Nigeria on June 12, 2006 brokered by the UN Secretary – General and witnessed by Britain, France, Germany, and the United State. Under the Agreement, the Nigeria troops were to withdraw within a maximum of
ninety days and a transition period of two years was given the Nigerian administration to be replaced by the Cameroonian administration. Nigerians living in the Peninsula would be able to remain there under a special regime for four years after Cameroon take full control and could stay on after that if they so wish (Baye, 2010;25).

Therefore according to then Nigerian President Olusgun Obasanjo, the Green-tree Agreement was a great achievement in conflict prevention; which practically reflected its cost-effectiveness when compared with the alternative of conflict resolution. He urged that it should represent a model for the resolution of similar conflicts in Africa and the world at large. Moreover, President Obasanjo had played a leading role in conflict resolution among African states. His refusal to respect the ICJ verdict would have left an unfavorable sport on his record. Meanwhile, his decision to respect the ICJ verdict and withdraw Nigerian military forces from Bakassi met with strong opposition from some radicals, who felt that Nigeria’s military might should be used for expansionist ambitions. In the same spirit with President Obasanjo, President, Paul Biya underscored the importance of respecting the ICJ ruling, arguing that their personal credibility and that of the UN depended greatly on its implementation and that it will begin a new era of trust, peace and cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria. Also still on the green tree, daily sun 2011 had the account that Obasanjo, living up this insouciance nature, on June 13, 2006, went into the green Tree Agreement (GTA) with Cameroon effectively making the oil rich peninsula a Cameroonian territory from August 14 2008. The GTA was signed at the Green tree estate in Manhasset outside New York. On the occasion, Annan noted: “The signing ceremony, which has brought us together, crowns a remarkable experiment in conflict prevention by Cameroon and Nigeria. With today’s agreement on the Bakassi Peninsula, a comprehensive resolution is within our grasp. The momentum achieved must be maintained.”

On his part, Obasanjo said: “Our agreement today is a great achievement in conflict prevention, which practically reflects its cost effectiveness when compared to the alternative of conflict resolution. Its significance, therefore, goes much beyond Nigeria and Cameroon. It should represent a model for the resolution of similar conflicts in Africa and, I dare say, in the world at large.

An obviously fulfilled Biya, enthused: Reason and wisdom have been our main guides. By signing the present agreement, we have armed ourselves with an efficient instrument to implement the Court’s decision bringing a definitive conclusion to our border dispute.
Obasanjo’s action clearly breached Section 12(1) of the 1999 constitution, which says “no treaty between the federation and any other country shall have the force of law except to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly.

As Nigerians carried blue murder, Obasanjo made a half hearted attempt to rectify and GTA he naively signed on Nigeria’ behalf by sending a letter dated June 15, 2006 to Senate led by Chief Ken Nnamani. But the Senate rejected the letter because it “failed to come through the right channel. During a public hearing on the bakassi blunder, the then Chief of Defense Staff, Gen. Andrew Owoeye Azazi, told the senate that Obasanjo ran a one man show as far as the Bakassi issue was concerned. According to him, the former president did not consult the military high command before signing the agreement.

The leadership problem besetting the country was further made manifest by the Surveyor General of the Federation, Mr. Austin Njepoume, who told a Senate committee: “as for the Bakassi case, the Federal Government made a mistake by ceding that part of the country to Cameroon. Nigeria provided the map use by Cameroon to nail the country. Cameroon went to court with a map produced by Nigeria, putting Bakassi Peninsula in Cameroon.

He added: “Many Nigeria government officials made official statements that said Bakassi did not belong to the country which were all admitted at the international Court of Justice”.

The process of withdrawal of authority by Nigeria from the area began with the signing of the GTA. The first phase of the ceding of Northern Bakassi took place on August 14, 2006 while the final withdrawal was on August 14, 2008.

As per the Green Tree Agreement, the handover of Bakassi was not expected to engender serious refugee problem. Article 3 of the GTA said. “Cameroon, after the transfer of authority to it by Nigeria, guarantees to Nigerian Nationals living in the Bakassi Peninsula the exercise of the fundamental right and freedoms enshrined in international human rights law and in other relevant provisions of international law.

The article added: “In particular Cameroon shall.

(a) Not force Nigerian nationals living in Bakassi peninsula to leave the zone or to change their nationality;
(b) Respect their culture, language and beliefs.
(c) Respect their right to continue their agricultural and fishing activities
(d) Protect their property and their customary land rights
(e) Not levy in a discriminatory manner taxes and other dues on Nigerian nationals living in the zone; and
(f) Take every necessary measure to protect Nigeria nationals living in the zone from any harassment or harm.

However, following serial violations of these provisions by the Cameroonian authorities, there was mass exodus of persons resident or doing business in the area. While indigenes of other states returned to their homeland, Bakassi people are still trying to sort out themselves.

Finally Baye (2010:26) note that on 14 August 2006, the Nigeria troops, in a solemn ceremony, peacefully withdrew from the Bakassi Peninsula, making the climax of long and meandering peace process that spanned a period of 12 years. The effective withdrawal of Nigerian forces from Bakassi is an indication that it is possible for African nations who find themselves in conflict over territorial rights and other issues to resolved the matter amicably thus avoiding carnage, blood shed socio economic and political dislocations, which many post independent African countries have suffered. Other things being equal, the Green tree Agreement and various stages that led up to the handing over is a model for the peaceful settlement of disputes in Africa. The entire process was graced by the Treaty of Calabar between Cameroon and Nigeria on 14 August 2008 that marked the complete withdrawal of the Nigerian administration and police as stipulated in the Green – tree Agreement.

4.11 THE ICJ RULING AND THE NIGERIAN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

Obviously, the impact or rather the implications of the ICJ October 10, 2002 verdict on the Bakassi dispute between Niger and Cameroon can never be over emphasized. The verdict which had it that, sovereignty over Bakassi did indeed rest with Cameroon and hence, instructed Nigeria to transfer possession of the peninsula to Cameroon, no doubt left much scar on the Nigeria territorial integrity. “A state’s territory is that portion of the globe that is subject to its sovereignty and where it exercises jurisdiction to the exclusion of all other States.
It consists of the land mass, the internal waters and the territorial sea, as well as the land mass below to the centre of the earth and the atmosphere above to a height that includes the troposphere. A state has the exclusive right to exploit the natural resources in these areas” (Umozuruike, 2005:67 Emphasis mine).

Nevertheless, Ngang, (2005:17) stated that “ The Bakassi conflict is the classical example of a conflict between two states contesting sovereignty over territory. Although Bakassi is merely 1000 sq. klm big and generally considered unattractive as already mentioned before, ceding territory to another nation is always a problematic issue it amounts to loss of integrity of a states territory. In the constitutions of both countries there are clauses which directly address the issue of sovereignty over all of their respective territories and the responsibility to protect their territorial integrity. In a BBC interview on February 20, 2002, Cameroon’s Minister of Special Duties at the Presidency, Profession Ngole Ngole reiterated the point mentioned above saying “... we have the might and we have the will and the 16 million people of Cameroon are behind the government to defend the territorial integrity of our country. Therefore it is not a joking matter.” This is apparent proof of the fact that Cameroon was ready to go to war alone on territorial grounds. Nigeria also made equal sounding threats and even after the decision had been made public, Nigeria in its official reaction advanced its constitutions’ principles of federalism as a reason of non-compliance with the court’s decision.

In his memoirs, former Nigerian President Shagari noted the following:

What complicated the Cameroonian case, however, was that many Nigerians reside in Cameroonian territory where they spend part of their lives to fish or farm. While there is search of livelihood, they often crises cross the boundaries. Also fishermen and traders did not bother about the actual position of the borders, while in the territorial water of each of the two countries, until they were advised or confronted as the case may be (ICJ Press Release, October 10, 2002).
In other words, Shagair was well aware of the fact that the peninsular territory itself belonged to Cameroon and that the disputed border was a maritime issue, a fact which many Nigerians and their leaders failed to understand.

From this stance, it becomes clear the indelible violation of the Nigerian territorial integrity in respect with the 2002 ICJ verdict over Bakassi peninsula. This was explicitly captured by “Umahi” of the Daily sun”, when he opined that “the shape and/or size of Nigeria got altered when bakassi was cede to the republic of Cameroon. The development was sequel to the Thursday, October 19, 2002 verdict of the international Court of Justice, at The Hague, which declare through its president, Mr. Gilbert Guillaume, a Frenchman, that henceforth the “sovereignty over Bakassi lies with Cameroon (Daily Sun, Thursday October 13, 2011: 25).

More so, with the verdict of the ICJ, altering the physical size of Nigeria at large especially the part of cross river state that was accommodating Bakassi before the judgment, Nigeria’s territorial integrity was affected as adjustment had to be made to effect the changes. Uffot of the “newswatch” Nigeria, made a remarkable not to this regards when he wrote that three years after Nigeria completely relinquished its authority over Bakassi to Cameroon a process for the amendment of the 1999 constitution was initiated to reflect the new reality. In a letter dated Friday 5,2009, which was addressed to the Honorable speaker of the cross River state House of Assembly, Governor Donald Duke Sought to adjust the boundaries of Akpabuyo and Bakassi Local government Areas, to suit the new realities. The executive Bill said: “in keeping with the diplomatic protocols entered into between our country and the Republic of Cameroon and in consideration of the preservation of out state interests, I now forward the attached Bill which seeks to adjust the boundary of Akpabuyo and Bakassi Local Government Areas to enable Ikang North Ward, Ikang Central ward and Ikang South Ward be incorporated into the Bakassi Local Government Area. “The Legislature may wish to consider and pass the said Bill into law expeditiously in view of ongoing preparation for the forthcoming elections. To this, the bill was passed into law as Cross River State Law No. 7 of 2007. Thus, the ethnic clans and villages of Bakassi were merged with the towns and villages in the three Ikang wards of former or original Akpabuyo LGA. With this development, the 10 wards lost their names and are identified numerically. Interestingly, the law was passed on April 12, 2007, which was a public holiday and backdated to 2006. The long title of Law No. 7 of 2007 says: “A law to make provisions for the adjustment of the boundaries of Akpabuyo Local government area and
bakassi local government area and for other matters connected therewith.” The body read: “Be it enacted by the cross River State House of the Assembly as follows.

The boundaries of Akpabuyo Local Government Area are hereby adjusted as follows: Ikang North Ward in Akpabuyo Local Government Area shall be a ward in Bakassi Local Government Area: Ikang South Ward in Akpabuyo Local government area shall be a ward in bakassi Local Government Area. To this end, Nigeria’s territory is altered (Newswatch, August 15, 2008:27).

4.12 BAKASSI ETHNIC GROUPS AND THE RESTTLEMENT PROGRAMMES

The socio-economic and cultural impact of resettlement on the Bakassi people is unavoidably high. Farming systems are destroyed and social supports network are dismantled, consequently most small and medium families are adversely affected and impoverished. Domestic economics are disrupted and occupations lost. The cordial ethnic relations among the groups are equally dashed. The dignity to life is lost because of lack of privacy necessitated by inadequate accommodation for affected persons. Families are rooted out of their traditional practice and way of life. The situation at the resettlement site in Ekpiri Ikang, Cross River State commands the urgent attention of all stakeholders to avoid further humanitarian crisis.

By the way, according to Ogaboh, Akpanudoedehe and Ushie, (2010: 1) resettlement is a voluntary or involuntary movement of large number of people from one place (which is usually the original settlement), to another (which is a new settlement), and this movement is not without consequences. It could also be the spontaneous movement of people from their original settlement sites, to resettle in a new one where they have to adapt to the biophysical, socio-economic, cultural and administrative system of a new environment. During this relocation or adaptation process, affected persons may face physical and mental stress. This is because the process is normally forced.

Nonetheless, the problem of the Bakassi ethnic groups – The Efiki, Efut, Efiat, Ibibio, Anang etc., said to have constituted the 322 villages in the Bakassi peninsula, came to a climax after the controversial handover of the Bakassi territory and the consequent pull out of the
Nigeria forces from Bakassi, on August 21, 2006. In other words, the impact of disintegrating and resettling people that were formally united as one, people that related socially, economically, culturally and otherwise, can never be over emphasized. Just as Okwe of the ‘Thisdaylive.com’ writes, “six years later being August 14, 2008, the United Nations in a solemn ceremony that drew tears from the aborigines, supervised the handover of the territory to Cameroon. Consequently, Nigeria’s sovereignty over the oil-rich Island faded into history. And then after that, the people of Bakassi are still searching for a place they can call their own. With the cession, they lost everything – land, water, oil, fishing right, houses, culture and even identity (Thisdaylive.com, July 3, 2002).

Therefore, after the hand over, the problem of the Bakassians became that of a people driven out of their ancestral home and now with out a home, now at the mercy of the “Clement weather of harsh sunny dry season,” when ever it comes, and “Wetty rainy season”, when it is the turn. At the mercy of their two strong legs, for those not crippled, standing or working up and down 24 hours, no place to lay and have peace. The issue of relocation becomes their plight. According to Umahi of the “Daily Sun” newspaper, “The harsh reality of the handover of Bakassi to Cameroon is striking. It was not just the oil embedded underneath; several thousands of indigenes of the area were driven forcefully out of their ancestral lands. As it is said, North or South, east or west, home is the best. But for them, there is no longer a place to call home. It was, indeed, a precarious situation. However, the federal government assured the displaced people that their loss would be mitigated. Speaking at the U.J. Esuene stadium in Calabar during the final pull out of the Nigerian Armed Forces from Bakassi on August 2, 2006, Obasanjo said; “The Federal Government would set in motion an elaborate stress-fress process for relocation/resettlement of the Bakassi indigenes from their ancestral lands to a suitable location of their choice” (Daily Sun, Wednesday, Oct. 12, 2001).

To that extent, the people’s socio-economic and cultural identity is at stake here. To their socio-cultural first, before the coming of European missionaries, the people of Bakassi worshipped “Akwa Abasi Ibom” that is, the Almighty God in their traditional way, which some persons still hold unto till date. Today, there is a mixed religion, among the people of Bakassi because of immigrants. Some are Christians while others are traditionalists. The people of Bakassi are rich in cultural heritage, such as dressing, bead works, masquerades, traditional wrestling and so on. The masquerades in Bakassi are similar to that of the Efiks of Calabar and
ranges from Nnabo, Agaba, Tinkoriko, Edem Obon, Ekpe, Ekiri Akata and Offion Inyang. Most of these masequerades entertained people during festival periods, marriages/wedding ceremonies and burials. Besides the masquerades are cultural groups like Abang dancers and Ekombi that entertain people during occasions”. (Ogaboh, Akpanudoedehe and Ushie, 2010: 51).

Now that the people are facing transition – cultural, economic and social transition in life, the possibility of maintaining these rich cultural aspects of their life, becomes vague and unattainable. This is so, as they would be shifted to an entirely different environment from theirs, even as they would be living most of their arts, and artifacts behind.

Also, sex education for girls is provided through the fattening room institution called Ufok Nkwho where girls are taught family life, including how to take care of their husbands prepare traditional dishes, look feminine and attractive to their husbands and raise disciplined children. Traditional dishes, the girl child is taught include afia efere, anyan ekkpang, iwuk abia, edikang ikong, edesi isip, efere abak and using abia. Girls are also taught how to paint their faces and bodies with native chalk called ndom. The painting symbolizes purity and love. It also symbolizes joy and happiness especially during child birth and other ceremonies.

Moreso, being a mixed population, the people of Bakassi, speak Efik and Ibibio languages. There are also unique dressing attires for both male and female of Bakassi stock, which is similar with that of the Efiks of Calabar. Men tie wrappers with a two flowering ends at the left side, with cap, shoes designed with beads, a while long sleeves with a necktie called opum-pom cut from the same wrapper the man is tying. Women wear long gown called onoy-nyo. The neck and shoulders of the gown is traditionally design and a hair style which is fixed with gold plated crown or hair holders.

As international border town, cultural diffusion was inevitable. The music type was affected; most inhabitants of Bakassi now play makosso a popular Cameroon music. As a border local government to Cameroon, the peninsular has been a contentious place between Nigeria and Cameroon since 1913. And this graduated into hostilities and military confrontations in the early 1990s up to 2002 when the resource rich peninsular was handed over to Cameroon via the verdict of the international court of justice (ICJ). To that extent, the displaced people from Bakassi peninsular were resettled in a place now called “new Bakassi” which was carved out of Akpabuyo local government area of Cross River, Nigeria. The land was already inhabited and
cannot sustain the occupation and other socio-economic activities of the displaced people of Bakassi.

Moreso, the people whose land was taken to resettle the affected persons from Bakassi, also suffered some lost. Farmlands, pincapple grove, shrines where destroyed to construct new residence/accommodation for the displaced people. Therefore, resettlement no doubt, causes major economic losses and cultural disruption.

To their economy, the people obviously had lived not as baggers but as people who worked hard to meet ends. Their land is said to be rich in oil and marine life. Apart from the oil desposit found in large quantity in the Bakassi, the people had survived from harvest of marine life. They fed and earned from fishing as their occupation. “As a fertile fishing ground, the Bakassi peninsular had often been compared to new foundland in North American and Scandinayia in Europe (Mbaga and Njo, 2007: 7). To this, the question is, “what would become of all those who earned their living through fishing even as they have been disintegrated, in all ramifications.

Invariably, according to Cernea, (2000: 18) sociological studies have increasingly revealed the psychological and socio-cultural stress, high mortality and morbidity associated with involuntary resettlement. As a result of involuntary resettlement, their farming systems were destroyed; arable lands and social support networks are dismantled leaving many small and medium families impoverished. Environmental degradation including loss of grazing lands and sources of drinking water is also associated with involuntary resettlement. Again, he also maintains that resettlement causes social change. For instance, inter-ethnic marriages that occurred among the several ethnic groups in the peninsula are now issues of the past as the people now see themselves as people of entirely different entities, hostile to each other for that matter. This is as they were shared, some in Nigeria and the rest in Cameroon. Again, According to Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, (2006: 180), the social implications of the resettlement of the Bakassi people, are that, Nigerians who had lived in Bakassi all their lives, will have to face the sad reality of having to evacuate a region that is part and parcel of them immediately. Most people living in that area have their business located there and so, living the area will mean detaching them from their sources of income. Moreover, all the infrastructural facilities, including hospitals, schools, recreational centers, that were originally put in place by the country, stand the risk of being forfeited resulting in a fruitless effort and loss of income.
Fombo, (2006: 23) observed that “fishing and animal husbandry constitute the mainstay of the economy of this region and the lake offers great potentials for fishing as well as grazing in its immediate environs. Its numerons islands are characterized by many fishing shacks. Some of these islands are permanent while others are exposed only at low water tide at the dry season. Apart from the seasonal variations in water levels and the shifting opportunities, the lake is constantly retreating as a result of the encroaching Sahara desert and the diversion of waters of rivers that empty into it from irrigation. During the long and very harsh dry season of which they roam in quest for these with their cattle and sheep, having no regard to international boundaries.
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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 SUMMARY

Remarkably, our study is generally divided into five chapters. Like in every research work in the field of political science, chapter one borders on the methodology used in political science research. In other words, chapter one encloses the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, the literature review, the theoretical framework, hypothesis, the research design methods of data collection and methods of data analysis and finally, the operationalisation of terms.

The background of the study, which on its own provides the context of the problem being investigated, became necessary as we have to be directional, focused, thereby serving as a bridge between the past-related-issues and the present problem under study.

The statement of the problem, as the most crucial introductory issue in any research, examined the problems associated with the border disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon regarding the ethnicity of the Bakassians. The question of self determination is also as a result of the international court of justice ruling. In the statement also, two questions are posed to guide our work.

Again in the objectives of the study, we stated in concrete turns what we expect to achieve at the end of the research. In this case, we expect to:

1. Discover if the ethnic interest of the people living in the Bakassi, have had any impacts on the entire dynamics of Nigeria-Cameroon border problems.
2. Ascertain whether the international court of justice (ICJ) ruling, inspired the secessionist bid of Nigerians residing in the peninsular.

On the significance of the study, it was noted to be socially and academically important. The scope of this study is at large limited to the conflicting claims between the Nigeria and
Cameroon people along the lacustrine boundary in the Chad area. In particular, the ethnic factor in the dispute is examined.

We reviewed the existing literatures on issues of border disagreements in Africa at large and in particular, that of Nigeria-Cameroon. Notable scholars which we have engaged their works include: Asobie, 2003; Baye, 2010; Anene, 1970; Nwokedi, 1985; Esiemokhal, 1982; Nweke, 1982; Shagari, 2001; Sholanke, 1982; Ngang, 2010; Fombo, 2006; Ross & Sama, 2006; Eke, 2009; etc.

Moreover, our theoretical framework makes use of theory of Nationalism. (Ethnic nationalism). This was made possible to bring to fore, the explanations to the frequent war stirrings on the Nigeria-Cameroon border that go beyond defuse of territorial integrity of the two states. In other words, those other factors like ethnicity, inherent in the passions of nationalism, tend to blur the vision of state leaders to opposing claims over territory.

Our hypotheses, anchor on the following empirical verifications.

1. The ethnic interests of the people living in the Bakassi have had impacts on the entire dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon border problems.
2. The international court of justice ruling inspired the secessionist bid of Nigerians living in the Bakassi peninsular.

Also our research design, is basically qualitative and non-experimental, hence we are using the observational method of documentary sources. Documented evidences are used to discover the various data that had made this work scientific. Importantly, the methods of data collection which attempts to unveil the building blocks of the research edifice, is made possible here by the use of observational method. Observational method here, entails observing the traces or records of actions or events as well as the reports put down through direct observation. In other words, secondary source of data collection is used. Again, we adopt descriptive qualitative data analysis or method for our study. This otherwise known as content analysis is essentially normative and descriptive in orientation. So, we examine a class of social artifacts typically written documents as we noted in our design.
Finally, in our operationalization of concepts, we made simple to understand, some of the terms that may sound vague and abstract. It suffices here to state that operationalization of concepts is an important aspect of the study.

Nevertheless, chapter two of this work, focuses on the ethnic map of the Bakassi and European imperialism. The Bakassi peninsular covers an area of about 1000km of mangrove swamp and half submerged islands, protruding into the Bight of Bonny. It is situated at the extreme eastern and of the Gulf of Guinea. It is said to be inhabited by fishermen settlers, most of whose inhabitants are Efik-speaking people of Nigeria. Again, like Ngang (2005: 4) notes, the area lies between latitude 4°25, and 5°10’N and longitudes 8°20’ and 9°08’E. This chapter two also covers areas like: Geography of the Nigeria Cameroon boundary, ethnic groups and evolution of colonial boundaries, British/German administration and obfuscation of the Nigeria-Cameroon colonial international boundary and Bakassi ethnic groups and rise of other problems.

On the geography of the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary, the land boundary extends from Lake Chad in the North to the Bakassi peninsular in the south. Their coastlines are adjacent and are washed by the waters of the Gulf of Guinea. Four states border Lake Chad: Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The coastal region where the southern part of the land boundary ends, is the area of the Bakassi peninsular. This peninsular, situated in the hollow of the Gulf of Guinea, is bounded by the River Akwayafe to the west and by the Rio-del-Rey to the east. It is an amphibious environment; characterized by an abundance of water, fish stock and mangrove vegetation.

Also beyond this, the border between Nigeria and Cameroon is said to be differentiated into roughly four physical and ecological sectors. In its northern most part, the land boundary traverse Lake Chad and the neighbouring plains at an average altitude of about 300m above see level. The second phase which can be characterized as the land boundary is a near continuous claim of mountains and valleys only broken by Benue valley near Yola. The area provides the source of headwaters for many rivers that drain into either the Benue or Cross River basin that flow into Nigeria or the Sanaga and its tributaries that flow into the Atlantic on the Cameroon Coast. The third geographical sector of this border is the coastal region peninsular and the area of the Bakassi area is in the trough of the Gulf of Guinea with predominantly mangrove swamp vegetation.
Fourthly, the maritime zone characterized by a broken and adjacent coast. The maritime boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon also ends in an ill-defined tripoint with Equatorial Guinea. The presence of Eloko Island belonging to Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and principle within this Gulf, further complicated delineation and demarcation efforts.

Furthermore, ethnic groups and inter-ethnic relations are also considered in chapter two. Naturally, African societies are separated from one another by boundaries. Those boundaries we referred to as African traditional boundaries are the pre-colonial African settings. These settings are consequently formed by language and so, language groupings as a style of separation in Africa. In other words, Africa was segmented before European artificial boundary. Besides, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contacts and so, contacts have been on by these ethnic groups along the Nigeria-Cameroon border.

To this, ethnic composition of border regions is an important factor in cross-border relations between African countries. The presence of the same groups straddled across boundaries of African states is known to be a major influence on the socio-cultural activities across the border and relations between the areas sharing such populations. These activities have on one occasion, posed serious treats to state security and on others, posed even greater challenges to the economy. Therefore, despite the long-standing border disputes between both countries, groups in Cameroon and Nigeria continued to have cordial and brotherly relations with one another. As is the case with most of the Nigeria-Cameroon border a large volume of this pertains to informal and uncontrolled transborder trade relations. However, unlike in other areas where some measure of control exists, the difficult terrain around the maritime boundary gives no room for regulation by customs services that usually do this with undue use of force. Therefore, the cross-border activities of criminals in particular, smuggling and the over reaction of Cameroon security forces have left a legacy of bitterness and mutual recrimination between the two governments over the treatment of nationals within each others territory. Little wonder that Nigeria’s initial professed reason for intervention in the Bakassi area was to protect its nationals from the exactions of the security forces. The population of this area within predominantly Nigeria province has increasingly felt alienated and has sought the support of their home government to ensure safety while they relate with others in the area.

In terms of the ethnic groups and evolution of the colonial boundaries, African territories which have attained independence and national sovereignty today, cannot in a strict
sense, be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture. They are indeed, the arbitrary creations of the colonialists. In other words, African boundaries today, are the results of indiscriminate and artificial creation of European imperialism on Africa. Therefore, apart the artificial demarcation or partitioning of the Africa by Europeans during the closing hours of the 19th century which has metamorphosed into our todays modern statehoods, mention must be made here that Africa was grouped and controlled by indigenous people along ethnical bases. In other words, modern nation-states of Africa are results of the violation and disintegration of the various African indigenous groupings. This is mainly because, grouping nations together in some cases and dividing them in others was a common feature as long as it is consistent with the security and economic interests of the colonial powers. Notably, the actual demarcation of the Cameroon-Nigeria border took place over a long period of time from July 12, 1884, when the German colony of Cameroon was established, through the plebiscite of 11 February 1961. It was the outcome of the plebiscite that divided the British Northern and Southern Cameroons into distinct territories, which chose independence by joining Nigeria and French Cameroon, respectively.

Invariably, British/German administration and the obfuscation of the Nigeria-Cameroon colonial international boundary, follows the industrial revolution in Europe, around and during the 19th century, when it became obvious that European traders had long-standing interest in the part of west Africa that later became known as Nigeria and Cameroon. The European trading companies which started spreading their tentacles outside the shores of Europe did so to counter the contradictions created by capitalism in Europe as a result of the industrial revolution which led to the massive production of goods, and the attendant urgent need for market and cheap raw materials and labour as well. The need therefore, to satisfy the said factors, necessitated the struggle for the control of African territories among the European powers through their trading companies. The bid to maintain monopoly by these trading companies led to them calling on their home countries for protection and hence, their administration and obfuscation of the most African boundaries, Nigeria-Cameroon boundary, not an exception. To this, the Berlin West Africa Conference of November, 1884 through January 1885, was held at the instance of the German chancellor, Otto Von Bismark, for the partitioning of the entire African territories for colonization by the European powers. After this, Germany and Britian maintained influence among Nigeria and Cameroon and later, following the defeat of
Germany during the World War I, France took the place of Germany and along with Britain, did the final “Justice” to Nigeria-Cameroon boundary.

In the course of Nigeria-Cameroon conflict over their land and maritime border; other problems like those of socio-cultural, political, economic, territorial cum security, as well as environmental and natural resources problems, also arose among the Bakassi ethnic groups. The people of Bakassi which are said to be predominately of Efik, Efia, Efut, Ibibio and Anang tribes, with about a population figure of 37,500, according to 1991 population census in Nigeria, had been dismantled in all ramifications, call it social, cultural, economic, traditional and other wise.

They had problems arising from these angles since their experiences in the area, of border skirmishes. For instance, the harsh reality of the handover of Bakassi to Cameroon is striking. It was not just the oil embedded underneath, but several thousands of indigenes of the area were driven forcefully out of their ancestral lands. As for them, there is no longer a place to call their home, traditional worship centers and their ancestral shrines. In other words, the socio-cultural identity of the people is lost forever.

To their economy, the people who had earlier survived from the harvest of marine life, now battle with how to feed not to talk of earning their living generally. Again, it is glaringly obvious that the indigenes of Bakassi are clamoring for continuity of their lifestyle under the Nigerian administration, and that is their political life.

Also, the issue of security has equally reared face to threaten the Bakassi people. Records of security instability regarding the routes and the ethnic groups residing along the disputed boundary are also available. Finally, as Nigeria lost Bakassi to Cameroon, the Bakassians had decried loss of their good environment and natural resources. Other border conflicts between Nigeria and Cameroon in the lake, notwithstanding, the Bakassi conflict revolves around the environment and the resources that could be won from the environment such as oil and fish.

Desertification and overfishing in the Lake Chad region has led to an environmental disaster which both countries are trying to balance or alleviate by gaining sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular and the adjoining waters. Though both countries continued to refute allegations that their interests in the area were focused on the availability of huge oil reserves, the conflict was essentially over natural resources.
With growing hardship caused by the global economic system and the vagaries of the Sahel climate, more and more people tended to move into the region to eke a living and most of the new arrivals turned to be Nigerians. What hitherto, were temporary settlements became permanent with the retreat of the lake offering more avenues for such settlement. Moreso, the contribution of the economic endowments of the Lake Chad and its environs to the conflicts are more or less indirect. “Economic migrants” who literally, moved ahead of their government took initiative before government policies were designed to absorb them. It became a forward policy aimed at not just securing “living space”, but also to let the flag cover nationals in outlying territories.

Furthermore, on our chapter three, other complex dimensions of the Bakassi disputes are discussed. This was basic because, apart from the economic/natural resources issues most people attribute the Nigeria-Cameroon conflict to, there are basically a number of other shapes the dispute has taken. Dimensions like; the political dimensions, cultural dimension, legal and strategic dimensions, have equally drawn our attention.

Politically, the Nigeria-Cameroon border struggles depict nothing more than an international politics engaged in by two state actors-Nigeria and Cameroon over their territorial sovereignty. To this extent, there are therefore, three critical factors that shape the dynamics of the Bakassi conflicts. First is the nature of the prize that would be accrued from the conflict. This refers to the relative utility and size of the productive forces or social product that the victor might gain in the wake of the struggle. Second is the nature of the relationship between the social classes, which constitute the real actors in the conflict. Once monopolistic capitalists either on one side or on both sides, of the state territorial boundaries have high stakes in the outcome of the conflict, the spiral of international conflict will be almost unending. Third is the state domestic politics in the nation state, which form the bases for the contending parties. This includes the nature of the regime in office. Authoritative regimes or dictatorial governments, by their modus operandi, provoke the emergence of violent intra-state politics. And so as already indicated, such violence easily becomes translated into coercive international diplomacy, resulting in violent international clashes. To that extent, the Bakassi crisis was instrumentalized by politicians in order to divert public attention from the real issues affecting their countries like; bad economic management, unemployment, poor social services and bad human right records. Therefore, government of both countries had some hidden political agenda to the
border crisis. They have been accused of using the crisis to stir off people’s attention to their ailing economic and increasing rate of unemployment and poverty. Moreso, the Bakassi problem also depicts the abjuring of the policy of irredentism by the Nigerian government and its embrace of the principle of “uti possidetis juris”, as early as 1960, was informed largely by its domestic political circumstances.

However, working in the direction of escalating the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over the disputed frontiers and territories was domestic political instability. Exacerbated by economic crisis, domestic political instability, made certain regimes in Nigeria and Cameroon feel insecure at home and to seek external diversions abroad. This was the situation in Cameroon, under President Paul Biya in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was the case in Nigeria, too, in the same period, under General Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. In both countries, the regimes became blatantly repressive, employing instruments of violence massively to silence political opponents. The corollary in the sphere of external affairs was the readiness to resort to violence as an instrument of state policy. Be it as it may, Nigeria should expedite effort in forming closer ties with her neighbors, especially Cameroon, Ghana, Benin Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe to further promote unity, cooperation and security to guarantee Nigeria’s role in West Africa as a regional hegemon.

The cultural dimension of the Bakassi dispute follows the effect of western-constructed boundaries on ethno-cultural affinities in Africa. Going by non consideration of the Bakassi peoples cultural affinities by the International Court Justice before the final judgment, the cultural values and attachments of the people have been shattered. The situation has resulted in several groups laying claim to the Bakassi kingdom, all with ethnic, cultural or historical ties to the peninsular. It is therefore, to this negligence of a people’s culture that we write to explore the cultural implications of the Bakassi dispute. Basically when culture is considered, it is clear the majority of the Bakassians would prefer to remain under the jurisdiction of Nigeria. majority of the Bakassians are of Nigerian decent and as opposed to the Cameroonian accusation against Nigeria of taking advantage of its large population to populate the area in attempt to support its bid for sovereignty, this is rather the result of the fact that long before the British set foot on Nigeria, Bakassi belonged to old Calabar. This is also why immediately after the verdict; many Nigerians appalled by the judgment began questioning how a people with a different culture,
language and background could be ceded to another nation whose background is completely different from that of Bakassi.

Unfortunately, this line of argument cannot be considered valid because the same claims could be made the other way round. There is no doubt that there are millennial cultural and historical ties between the peoples of Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River States in Nigeria and the North West and South West Provinces of Cameroon. Lastly, cross border language and other cultural affiliations, like traditional dances and local rites and rituals are noticed between the peoples of south eastern Taraba State of Nigeria and the peoples of the for North west province of Cameroon.

The legal dimension follows the use of a wide range of strategies and assortment of mechanisms for the resolution of international conflicts. It also shows that there are principles implicated in the process. In the early days of the conflict, resort was made to the orthodox international strategies of peaceful resolution of conflict. One of these is the use of the conventional methods of enquiry, mediation and conciliation. The deliberations on the report of the United Nations visiting missions and plebiscites in the disputed territories were used by the international community to resolve the conflict. Again, another orthodox strategy to resolve the dispute was bilateral negotiation. It became the major instrument for dealing with the problem in the first half of the 1970s. The mechanisms employed along with this strategy were: Heads of state bilateral summits; joint consultative committees; and joint boundary commission. Furthermore, the matter was placed before the international court of justice (ICJ) by Cameroon in 1994. In 1998, the ICJ ruled in favour Cameroon against Nigeria’s argument that the world court had no jurisdiction to entertain Cameroon’s suit on the conflict over the maritime boundaries between the two countries.

Before then, two months after the initial application, Cameroon on June 6, 1994, filed in an additional application “for the purpose of extending the subject of the dispute” to include the area of Lake Chad and as well, its basin. In the additional application, Cameroon also requested the court to examine the entire frontier between the two states from Lake Chad to the Atlantic.

Nevertheless, after several years of legal battle and argument at the international court of justice (ICJ), the world court seating at The Hague, Netherlands, on October 10, 2002, ruled on the protracted boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon. It finally ruled that
sovereignty over the area belongs to Cameroon. The judgment simply follows that: In the Lake Chad area, the court decides that the boundary is delimited by the Thomson-Marchand Declaration of 1929-1930, as incorporated in the Headerson-Fleuriau Exchange of Notes of 1931 (between Great Britain and France); it finds that the boundary starts in the lake from the Cameroon-Nigeria-Chad tripoint (whose co-ordinates it defines) and follows as straight line to the mouth of the River Ebeji as it was in 1931 (whose co-ordinates it also defines) and then runs in a straight line to the point where the river today divides into two branches”.

Between Lake Chad and the Bakassi peninsular, the court confirms that the boundary is delimited by the following instruments:

i. From the point where the River Ebeji bifurcates, as far as Tamnyare Peak, by the Thomson-Marchand declaration of 1929-1930 (paras. 2-60), as incorporated in the Henderson-Fleuriau exchange of notes of 1931.

ii. From Tamnyar Park to pillar 64 referred to in Article xii of the Anglo-German Agreement of 12 April 1913, by the British order in council of 2 August 1946.

iii. From pillar 64 to the Bakassi Peninsular, by the Anglo-German agreements of 11 March and 12 April 1913.

The court examines point by point sector of the land boundary and specifies for each one how the above-mentioned instruments are to be interpreted (paras. 91, 102, 114, 129, 134, 139, 146, 152, 155, 160, 168, 179, 184 and 189 of the judgment).

In Bakassi the court decides that the boundary is delimited by the Anglo-German agreement of 11 March 1913 (Arts. Xviii-xx), and that sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular lies with Cameroon. It decides that in this area, the boundary follows the thalweg of the River Akpakorum (Akwayafe), dividing the mangrove Islands near Ikang in the way shown on map TSGS2240, as far as a straight line joining Bakassi point and King Point.

As regards the maritime boundary, the Court, having established that it has jurisdiction to address this aspect of the case—which Nigeria had disputed, fixes the course of the boundary between the two states’ maritime areas.

In its judgment the court requests Nigeria expeditiously and without condition to withdraw its administration and military or police forces from the area of Lake Chad falling within Cameroonian sovereignty and from the Bakassi peninsula. It also requests Cameroon
expeditiously and without condition to withdraw any administration or military or police forces which may be present along the land boundary from Lake Chad to the Bakassi peninsular on territories which pursuant to the judgment fall within the sovereignty of Nigeria. The latter has the same obligation in regard to territories in that area which fall within the sovereignty of Cameroon.

The court takes note of Cameroon’s undertaking, given at the hearings, to “continue to afford protection to Nigerians living in the (Bakassi) peninsular and in the Lake Chad area”. Finally, the court rejects Cameroon’s submissions regarding the state responsibility of Nigeria. It likewise rejects Nigeria’s counter-claims. (International Court of Justice official website- www.icj.com).

After the verdict, so many reactions from different quarters in Nigeria graced our front pages on Newspapers and magazines as well as on air. Many people appalled by the judgment, called on Nigeria government to reject entirely the ICJ ruling, while others, suggested Nigeria, going to war in order to reclaim the Bakassi territory. There reasons, being that the court did not follow the proper and international norms and practices for international border adjudication. They opine that the indigenes of the Bakassi would have been invited as defence witnessed. Not even the Obong of Calabar who was the king, head of Bakass, supposed to know well of the area, was disregarded. To this end, despondency characterized the general reaction to the verdict in Nigeria. Newspaper headlines, editorials and columns for several weeks from October 11, 2002, paid much attention to it. The Guardian captioned it as “a painful end to a tortuous legal battle”.

However, on Wednesday, October 23, 2002, the federal government of Nigeria rejected the ruling. The government reaction, was especially fine tuned to coincide with public opinion and the general mood in the country, but appears to be at odds with pervious dispositions of African countries on ICJ rulings, concerning territorial and boundary disagreement. In spite of this obvious tone of rejection, the statement by the government ruled out war with Cameroon and it urged Nigerians to remain calm while the government forged ahead with the quest for a peaceful solution.

Strategically, although the entire Nigeria-Cameroon boundary became the issue of litigation at the international court of justice (ICJ) in 1994, a close diachronic analysis of the
disagreement, shows that after the initial protestation by Cameroon against the outcome of the 1961 plebiscite in northern Cameroon, Nigeria and Cameroon had resumed normal diplomatic intercourse before the mid 60’s. As such, the dispute between them is related to some specific strategic areas on the border that touch on aspects of the country’s life going by their locations. Economic and security lives. In other words, in terms of the location of the disputed territory, especially the maritime region that includes the Bakassi and associated islands and their joining territorial water, it could be described as being of very strategic importance to both countries. To this, two issues also like we said before, are intertwined; the economic and security issue.

To the maritime region, the economic endowments between Nigeria and Cameroon are even more enticing compared to the Lake Chad area. From precolonial days, the entire zone comprising the Calabar River, Cross River, and Ndian River basins formed the hinterland of lucrative trade on oil palm produce among others and reported European products. Dating back also to precolonial times, the maritime area especially around the creeks of the Bakassi, has been the base of an important fishing industry. Reports of colonial administrators spoke of good business and prosperity among the predominantly migrant and itinerant or seasonal population reliant on fishing. The most important fish stocks were herrings, catfish and crayfish. Besides fishing, other economic activities also take place within this region. As is the case with most of the Nigeria-Cameroon border, a large volume of this pertains to informal and uncontrolled transborder trade. However, unlike in other areas where a great control exists, the difficult terrain around the maritime boundary gives a considerable room for regulation by customs services that usually do this with undue use of force. Anxiety by the Cameroon government to regulate such activities, leads it to sending paramilitary forces that usually go in with methods, detested by the population. This is the security situation.

Again, the cross-border activities of criminals in particular smuggling and the overreaction of Cameroon security forces have left a legacy of bitterness and mutual discrimination between the two governments over the treatment of nationals within each other’s territory. This is probably, Nigeria’s initial professed reasons for intervention in the Bakassi area, was to the security forces. The population of this area with its predominantly Nigerian provenance has increasingly felt alienated and has sought the support of their home government to ensure safety.
Finally, from our chapter four; effects of the Bakassi dispute on ethnic relations, has been found from our investigations that, just like Eke, (2009: 113) emphasized,(refer to our earlier bibliographies) “the ethnic groups that made up the Bakassi area, which also are found partly in the Cameroon side as well as they are found on the Nigerian side as well as they are found on the Nigerian side, had enjoyed healthy relations as the same people during the 950’s when they remained as on political party under NCNC before independence in 1950. But later for more political convenience, southern Cameroon which was originally governed by the British, was in 1961, under the United Nations plebiscite, joined to the Republic of Cameroon under the French influence.

Variously, this relationship was marred when in 960s, Nigeria’s domestic crisis, compelled Cameroon to initiate moves for new boundary adjustment. This, on the eke of the Nigerian civil war, made both countries suspended free movements along their borders in joint communiqué issued by their leaders in June, 1967, hence the genesis of their official separation as well as their consequent border issues. To this, since then, the center no longer holds between the two countries. Hence, the Bakassi ethnic groups that are now divided between the two countries by the colonial powers are not equally spared in terms of their relations to one another. Their relationship also followed the hostile nature of that of Nigeria and Cameroon no matter their similar identities.

This unreserved relationship between them was worsened, not withstanding, the joint Niger-Cameroon permanent consultative committee set up for improved relations, by the discovery of oil in the area of priodel-Rey which made Bakassi a political hotbed. By this period, Cameroon had granted drilling rights in the disputed area to American oil companies. Following the hostility at the area, eight Nigerians were killed by Cameroon gendarmes in April 972. Again in 1973, the Cameroon navy and army expelled Nigerian fishermen in the creek villages, while Cameroon renamed the creek villages along the borders, occupied twenty-five miles of Nigerian territory and displaced over two thousand fishermen from the area. In August 1973, fighting started simultaneously in Adamawa, Calabar, Ogoja and Ikom provinces, resulting in the air-bombardment of Ikom and its environs by Cameroon. All these had great effects on the ethnic relations of the people of Bakassi.

Moreso, the Nigerian-Biafran war is another factor that ready torched on the relation between the same people of Nigeria and the Cameroon. Subsequent upon the Nigeria’s
domestic crisis in the sixties, it was alleged that Biafrans used Ikom-manfe routes as an exit to the outside world. Ikom-manfe is a village in the boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon. It was even reported that a Biafran helicopter clash landed in Cameroon in order to avert the ugly border incidents especially the imminent threat of subversion and secession by southern Cameroon, the two leads of state held bilateral talks that covered economic co-operation and boundary problems in September 968. Following the diplomatic shuttle between them, Cameroon declared fall support for Nigeria in the on-going civil war.

Looking at foreign influence and involvement as it affected ethnic relations in the Bakassi. It was revealed that Nigeria suspected that foreign powers like France, Britain and Germany mingled into the conflict in favour of Cameroon bearing in mind the position of her earlier relations with especially France and going also by the fact of a French citizen being at the helm of affairs of the world court. At first, Nigeria never wanted the case to be settled by the ICJ because she claimed the matter could be solved bilaterally at the local level.

However, during the crisis, French in a surprises maneuver, dispatched 30 paratroopers and with light machine guns and combat helicopters, installed surface-to-air missiles, surface to surface batteries and Radar stations to monitor sea and air movements of Nigerian troops as well as French artillery pieces in the event of war between Nigeria and Cameroon. The head of French delegation, Bruna Delaye, to Nigerian Head of State General Sam Abacha said that France acted in honoring her defense pact between France and Cameroon. Nigeria authorities blamed the French government for intervening in the crisis when there had not been failure in seeking a bilateral solution. Therefore, Nigeria was convinced that Cameroon took the case to the ICJ with France’s assurance that the decision was going to be in their favour considering that Cameroon had not been well treated by the ICJ in the past. This is evidenced, going by the failure of the court to follow the grand norms of international boundary dispute resolution by international court of justice ruling. It also exposes the connection between the positions of the world court officials especially the president and the outcome of the judgment. To that extent, both Cameroon and Nigeria had not carried out any reasonable development in the area in terms of communication networks, health and education as to claim ownership. Culturally, it is evident that not only the Efiks in Bakassi share the same ties with Nigeria, but also larger parts of Anglophone Cameroon with eastern Nigeria as well as part of northern Cameroon with northern Nigeria.
Furthermore, in the cause of the case, the good offices of AU, UN and Koffi Annan also implicated in no small measure to the Bakassi dispute. On the part of the United Nations, it should be recalled that at the earlier stage of the dispute, United Nations sent visiting mission to both southern and northern Cameroon in 2958.

In southern Cameroon, the mission found that opinion was sharply divided concerning its future political association. In northern Cameroon, its finding was that “it was the manifest opinion of the northern Cameroon population as a whole that northern Cameroon should become a permanent part of the northern region of Nigeria. UN visiting mission, therefore, recommended that a plebiscite be held in southern Cameroon in 1959 to ascertain the peoples wish for northern Cameroon, it recommended that if the UN General Assembly accepted such union as a basis for the termination of the trusteeship arrangement, no further consultation need be held. But this opinion was challenged by some petitioners from the territory, among who were representative of the one Cameroon party, the Cameroon student’s association of America, and the national union of Cameroon. Again, the newly created central organ of OAU in 1994, responsible for the resolution of conflicts among member countries constituted only at the OAU summit in Cairo the previous June, formally gave a hearing to delegations from Nigeria and Cameroon on their spate of intra and inter state disputes on the continent and before examining the Nigeria Cameroon case, it had met once in November 1993 to examine the conflict raging the Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi.

On the whole, these mediation efforts accomplished little at this phase of the conflict. The reasons for this lie mainly in the faithfulness of the belligerents, especially Cameroon, relying on the OAU and the mediators for a solution. Repeated efforts to arrange a summit meeting between Abacha and Paul Biya could not be realized with each side blaming the other for the stalemate. Even the frequent ministerial visits accomplished little because of the deep mutual distrust existing between them. For the secretary general of the UN, when it became difficult to implement the ICJ ruling, the UN secretary-General, Mr. Koffi Anan formed the Cameroon-Nigeria mixed commission on the request of both leaders. The mixed commission first demarcated the land boundaries. The development of projects to promote joint economic ventures and cross-border co-operation monitored by the mixed commission included the construction of borders markets and roads linking the two countries. All appeared on track some villages further north and around Lake Chad were exchanged until the handling-over process
reached the oil-rich Bakassi peninsular. Two withdrawal timetables were not respected; thousands of Nigerians in the Bakassi peninsular were not sure where they stood in terms of citizenship and many wanted to remain Nigeria since they had more social and economic ties with Nigeria.

Another aspect embodied in this chapter also, is the court proceedings and the green tree agreement. Cameron, after the first major incidents of 1981 through 1995, filled a case against Nigeria in the international court of justice (ICJ) seating at The Hague, on March, 29, 1994, requesting the court to institute proceedings against Nigeria in a dispute concerning the sovereignty over Bakassi peninsular. Cameroon stated that Nigeria had violated the frontiers inherited from colonization as well as its legal obligations in international law concerning land and maritime delimitation. She further prayed the court that Nigeria should put an end to her administrative and military presence in Cameroonian territory by evacuating unconditionally her troops from the occupied Bakassi peninsular.

In her own submission, Nigeria claimed that the sovereignty of the Bakassi peninsular is vested in the federal republic of Nigeria base on the Anglo-German Declaration of 11 and 12 March, 1913. Nevertheless, public hearings took place between February 13 and 21 March 2002. The final decision on Bakassi was passed by the court on October 10, 2002 in a verdict of 13 to 3 votes. It was found that sovereignty over the peninsular did rest with Cameroon. Nigeria was requested to withdraw her forces and civil administration and transfer possession of the peninsular to Cameroon within two years. Likewise, Cameroon was asked to withdraw its forces and administration from territories which in accordance to the decision now fell within the federal republic of Nigeria.

Following intense diplomatic offences and the good office of the UN secretary General, Cameroon was able to secure the Green tree Agreement with Nigeria on June 12 2006, brokered by the Un secretary-general and witnessed by Britain, France, Germany, and the United State. Under the agreement, the Nigerian troops were to withdraw within a maximum of ninety days and a transition period of two years was given the Nigerian administration to be replaced by the Cameroonian administration. Nigeria living in the peninsular would be able to remain there under a special regime for four years after Cameroon take full control and could stay on after that if they so wish.
Finally, we rounded-off the chapter on the effects of the dispute on ethnic relations. Here, it became obvious that the Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute had so many effects on the relationship between the different ethnic groups that found themselves around the Bakassi area. This is made possible by the disintegration and relocation of the people from their original home land to an entirely strange land, as well as the division of a hitherto united people into two different and antagonistic groups some in Nigeria, others in Cameroon. After Nigeria relinquished the territory to Cameroon, the need arose for the Bakassi, people to determine where they would be. Upon this, the majority chose to be Nigerians while others maintained their place in Bakassi, now as Cameroonians. Consequently, the relationship of the people has been disrupted as they now see themselves as different people belonging to different political entities. In other words, relations are not again what they used to be.

Furthermore, the impact of disintegrating and resettling people that were formally united as one people that related socially, economically cultural and other wise, can not be over emphasized. For instance, after the handover of the Bakassi to Cameroon, the problem of the Bakassians became that of a people driven out of their ancestral home and now without a home. Therefore, they abandoned all they had – houses, farmlands, including their cultural and traditional identities, lost for ever. To that extent, we noted that the people’s socio-economic and cultural identity is at stake.

5.2 CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, this study on the ethnic factor in the Nigeria-Cameroon border conflicts, generally provides an insight into the impacts of the entire dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute on the ethnic consideration of the Bakassi people as well as the relationship between the international court of justice (ICJ) ruling and the secessionist bid of Nigerians also residing in the peninsular.

First, despite the fact that the international court of justice (ICJ) sitting at the Hague, Netherlands, had given it final ruling, on the Bakassi case, with the verdict ceding the oil-rich peninsular, to Cameroon, the Bakassi inhabitants are yet to be contempt with the ruling. The
judgment of the international court of justice on the Bakassi controversy was delivered on October 10, 2002. Basin its judgment principally on the Anglo-German agreement, the court averred that sovereignty over Bakassi did indeed rest with Cameroon. The court therefore, instructed Nigeria to transfer possession of the peninsular to Cameroon. In its verdict, the court maintained that the colonial treaties between Britain and Germany in 1913 and the one between Britain and France in 1939 (all in respect to the area bordering Bakassi) were valid legal instruments. Nevertheless, this anachronistic ruling of the ICJ not withstanding, the Bakassians have been making moves and agitating to have their faith to tend to emanate from the indecisive nature of the two contending parties and the international court to determine the boundaries, dividing ethnic language groups with little discernible logic. In other words, the welfare of Nigerians in the Bakassi peninsular did not command priority attention in Nigeria’s presentation at the world court; the latter reflected a concern for the people in its ruling. Though after determining the land and maritime borders between Nigeria and Cameroon, the court addressed the implications of its ruling for the change of sovereignty over each territory. The court then urged the two countries to co-operate in the interest of the people affected in order notably to enable them to continue to have access to educational and health services comparable to those the currently enjoy. In other words, the international court did not take into consideration, the ethnic context of the dispute. The right to self determination agitated by the Bakassians, borne out of their ancestral and cultural affiliation as well as their attachments to the disputed area. Therefore, pressure from the real victims of the conflict i.e those whose livelihood chances are directly affected, are often critical in bringing about a resolution of the conflict.

To that extent therefore, this clearly align and support our first proposition that, “the ethnic interests of the people living in the Bakassi, have had impacts on the entire dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon border problems”. Our findings therefore demonstrate the connection between the socio-cultural, economic and psychological identity of the Bakassi indigenes and their quest for independent state of their own. However, our investigation confirms that close to 95% of the inhabitants of Bakassi are of Nigerian decent. And so, Nigeria was very quick to point to cultural issues and effective occupation to legitimize her claims of sovereignty over Bakassi, which the court turned down. Secondly, boiling down from the ethnic and cultural threat of the Bakassians is the Right to self determination. It is recognized that the right to self determination is a critical democratic principle. This principle which is generally recognized in
international law is a legal right. The integral elements of the right of people to self determination are: “the right of all peoples to determine democratically their own socio-economic and political system; the right of all people’s nations, nationalities, national groups to freely pursue, develop and preserve their culture, traditions and language; and the right of the oppressed nations to self determination. Unfortunately, the actors in the Bakassi conflicts refused to acknowledge the existence of these rights. Millions of Nigerians and Cameroonians where denied the right to determine their own socio-economic system, including their own political system. Looking at this gross violation of people’s right to self determination, people’s right to cultural and traditional practices in Bakassi, we conclude that the lingering Bakassi issue has been as a result of the insensitivity of the court of the ethnicity of the people living in Bakassi during the final ruling.

The fact here is that the world court could have put first the interest of the people living in that contentious area, possibly would have conducted a plebiscite that would be monitored by the international community, to determine the choice of the ethnic indigenes in the zone before arriving at its final decision. To that extent, we once again reiterate the position of our proposition that the ethnic factor has impact on the entire dynamics of the Nigeria-Cameroon border conflict. It equally demonstrates that the international court judgment was a great tragedy of unimaginable magnitude and dimension for the Bakassi people. It considered the ICJ judgment to be ill-fated, godless and unjust as well as humiliating and demoralizing to the Nigerian indigenes in the peninsular. Our stance does not differ from that of the estimated 150,000 – 300,000 inhabitants of the peninsular who have condemned Nigeria’s decision to cede what they consider their ancestral land. This accounts for the eventual declaration of an independence of the Bakassi self determination movement declared its independence from both Nigeria and Cameroon in November 2006. We found that the group’s leader, Tony Ene, stated that they insist on their national right to determine their future.

Continuing, he maintained that if Nigeria does not want them, they would choose to go it alone and not with Cameroon. By and large this declaration is an indication of rejection of the ICJ verdict by the Bakassi people.

It is glaringly obvious that the indigenes of Bakassi are clamouring for continuity of their lifestyle under the Nigerian administration. Meanwhile, the southern Cameroons secessionist movement is also contesting the Green Tree Agreement that gave la Republique du Cameroon
sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsular. The Bakassi indigenes and the southern Cameroon secessionists regard the ICJ judgment and the Green Tree Agreement as irrelevant. More importantly, the indigenes of Bakassi, both those who consider themselves to be Nigerians and those who consider themselves to be Cameroonians, are not willing to strain their relationship with one another and are more concerned with maintaining peace than with rivalry and conflict. A delicate balance has been achieved in terms of lifestyles division of labour among the indigenes. Those who claim Cameroonian citizenship are accustomed to traveling inland to sell their Nigerians neighbours. For this reason, they have documents that verify their Cameroon laws. The Nigerian indigenes on the other hand, do not necessarily have residence permits and other legal documents permitting them to reside and engage in business in what is now legally Cameroonian territory.

Finally, our findings in this study also support our second proposition to the effect that the secessionist bid of the Nigerians residing in the peninsular has been inspired mostly by the insensitive ruling of the ICJ. We have exposed that it was obvious that Nigeria lost at the Hague because of vested western interests. The naïve handling and transfer of Bakassi peninsular to Cameroon have provoked the secessionist bid of the Nigerians residing in the peninsular. This also, is in line with the ethnic consideration of this study as a fuel for the continuing Nigeria-Cameroon border problem in this recent time. From the start, our investigations demonstrate that since the international court of justice ruling did not follow the grand norm of international adjudication on boundary matters, the indigenes of the Bakassi peninsular, have been provoked and hence rejected the verdict. It has been found that the ruling reflects the wishes and aspirations of the European powers who in the first place are the major root causes of the problem. We submit that the president of the ICJ, Gilbert Guiluance of France, has callously decided to play politics with the territorial integrity of supported by his negligence of the principle of self determination by the inhabitants of the area. Invariably, an enduring conflict resolution must be based on clear, generation accepted principle, which serve, promote and improve human welfare not those which merely satisfy the interest of abstract entities, such as states. In this respect, the superiority of human rights norms over the principles of “raisond’etat” is to be stressed.

By this, we should emphasize here that the people are uncontempt with the world court judgment because, democratic consultation with the real or potential victims of conflict is more
efficacious than reliance on the views continuation of the conflict or conflict situation, which we so believe really transpired in the cause of the adjudication and to that extent, our findings state clearly that the ICJ adjudication over Nigeria-Cameroon border conflict is not a reflection of the grandnorms for international boundary dispute settlement and hence, helped to fuel the secessionist bid of the Bakassians.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing investigations, analyses and conclusion allow us the opportunity to proffer some recommendations in the context of the study. In the first place, as an African adage says; the eyes and the nose are too close to go the war, one suggestion which keeps coming up again and again in my mind, is for both countries to get into some kind of agreement and jointly own the peninsular. This is based on the argument that this has proved to be effective in the case of France, the Netherlands and Sweden which jointly own the islands of St. Martin and Saint Bathelemy and therefore, will be nothing new.

This is important as, even affect the cession of the Bakassi kingdom to Cameroon; the indigenes are still not content and are therefore still agitating for a state of their own outside both Nigeria and Cameroon, hence envisaging effort to make the corps walk again. Joint ownership of Bakassi is likely to ward off any attempts by any group or groups of persons to scuttle the fragile peace now reigning in the area. Also, joint control will also encourage increased trades between both countries and with other countries in the region. It will equally set the way for efficient management of the supposed abundant natural and maritime resources in the area. It will also show and proof that, Africa and Africans have come of age. It may also help and the stereotyping of the continent that, is claimed to the fall of people who bicker on nothing and are never ready to negotiate anything independently.

Again, bearing in mind that conflicts like that of Nigeria and Cameroon have always proven intractable, owing that any conflict bordering on hand is always alive through generational histories, effort should be made to consider appropriately the plights of the affected people of the Bakassi, now resettled in another place other than their ancestral home land. This is important; otherwise, in due time the problem will resurface.
The government of Nigeria and Cameroon probably should not be left alone in this task of catering for the displaced persons, but international community should join hands too.

Above all, the joint ownership of the Bakassi would further reconsolidate the lost cultural and historic bridges between Cameroon and Nigeria. Remarkably, joint ownership, though most unlikely to occur, given that the decision over the border dispute by the ICJ, is irreversible and that Cameroon will not consider it, is therefore one possibility to avoid future confrontations.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, efforts should be made in the most urgent manner to accommodate the plights of the displaced Bakassians. Most importantly, the issue of their proper resettlement should be taken serious.
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