

**INTEGRATION AND PEACE THROUGH BORDER DELIMITATION
AND DEMARCATION: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

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Paper presented at the 2009 Conference of the African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE) held at University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa, 10 -12 September 2009.

Integration And Peace Through Border Delimitation And Demarcation :

The Nigerian Experience

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Introduction

Since the attainment of independence, the borders bequeathed to African States by the colonial masters have been a factor of recurrent conflicts. Reasons of these conflicts are not too far to find as it is common knowledge that the borders were arbitrary and artificial; ill-defined and largely un-demarcated. Among the major border crises which Africa has witnessed mention must be made of the Ogaden war in the horn of Africa involving Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, the Chad/Libya war over the then disputed Ouzou strip, the Burkina Faso/Mali wars, the Ethiopian/Eritrean war, and the shootouts between Cameroon and Nigeria and between Guinea and Senegal. Border tensions are known to exist between several neighboring African countries such as Guinea and Liberia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Eritrea and Sudan, Uganda and Sudan, Kenya and Uganda, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, Rwanda and DRC, Burundi and DRC, Angola and Congo etc. It is not therefore an over-statement to say that border related conflicts have taken greater part of the total conflicts which African countries encountered. At the centre of all the African border wars, the conflicts and tensions were the ill-defined and un-demarcated borders and questions over border-related pre-colonial territorial claims such as that of Somalia in relation to ethnic Somalis in neighbouring countries¹ and Morocco over her claims of the the Saharawi Arab Republic territory. There is no doubt that Africa is challenged to find solution to the recurrent border conflicts.

The priority attention given to the border question by Africa as represented by its continental organizations, the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU), stems from the realization that solution to Africa's too numerous border problems is one way of achieving continental peace. Thus the principle of the respect of borders existing at the time of the achievement of independence, also known as the principle of Intangibility of Borders, which is enshrined in both the Charter of the OAU (**Resolution AHR/R.S.16(1)**)² and the Constitutive Act (**Article 4b**) of the AU³, and subsequent political and legal actions of the two bodies are designed to reduce the conflictual characteristics of Africa's borders. But it was the commitment of the continental organization to pursue the work of delimitation and demarcation of borders and the ambitious time frame given for the completion of the exercise by 2012 as contained in the Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (**CSSDCA**), adopted by Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Durban, South Africa in July 2002, that has put the agenda of delimitation and demarcation on the tables of African States.

That the African Union Border Programme (AUBP)⁴ which emerged as a basic component of the 2004-2007 Plan of Action, derived from its Vision and Mission as well as the Strategic Framework, has given top most priority to delimitation and demarcation of African Borders in its aims and objectives, confirms AU Commission's determination to comprehensively address the problems of border definition, delimitation and demarcation in Africa. Of course, the second component of the AUBP's objective, promotion of cross-border cooperation and the building of other integration mechanisms and programmes can only be possible through effective demarcation of the borders. The centrality of delimitation and demarcation as the pivot over which all mechanisms and programmes for peace, cooperation and integration are built is therefore established.

This essay is premised on the notion that there is strong correlation between peace, security and harmonious coexistence and the borders which seek to define the limits of the jurisdictions of States. This is especially true of Africa where the Westphalian concept of borders is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The paper draws strong relationship between poorly delimited and demarcated borders with the elements that cause disharmony and even crises and therefore the stumbling blocks militating against peaceful coexistence and integration in Africa. The factors of conflicts and disharmony on the one hand and peace and integration on the other, are dependent largely on what has or is being built by and/or across the borders.

Nigeria's border management in the last two decades has in terms of its consistency and varieties of approach, recorded land mark achievements from where Lessons can be drawn for the benefit of other African countries ⁽⁵⁾. The paper therefore seeks to, on the basis of Nigeria's performance indicators in border management, make a few deductions. Depending on the policy orientation and focus of any two neighboring States or groups of States with common borders, delimitation and demarcation being crucial elements for boundary making are factors of peace as well as vehicles for the promotion of the much taunted need for African integration.

Arbitrary and Artificial Borders

The Berlin West Africa Conference of November 1884 to February 1885 had the effect of not just giving Africa its present borders; it has also the effect of at least attempting to integrate Africa into the European concept of nation states with dearly defined and demarcated borders. Such borders were conceived to be exclusive and meant to separate a sovereignty from another. The borders given to African by European imperial interests and drawn within the contexts of centuries-old rivalries, were meant to be mirror-reflections of the European nation States' borders with their characteristic dual role of peace and war as famously scribbled by Lord Curzon: "Frontiers are indeed the razors edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war and peace, life or death of nations." Borders that emerged within the context of Europeans imperial competitions for territorial acquisition in Africa and through colonial experience cannot but be arbitrary and therefore practically artificial. Arguments abound that tend to qualify or even to denounce the artificiality and arbitrariness of the borders, but what is on the ground, and statements from the actors confirm, this reality conclusively. A few examples relating to the Nigerian borders will suffice. On the occasion of signing the Anglo-French

Convention on the Nigeria-Niger boundary, Lord Salisbury, then British Prime Minister, was credited to have remarked:

*“we have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps were no white man’s foot ever trod: we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediments that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were”.*⁶

And from Nigeria’s eastern border with Cameroon, a British Colonial officer has recorded the method they used in delimitating the borders. He says:

*“In those days we just took a blue pencil and a ruler and put it down at old Calabar, and drew that blue line to Yola... I recollect thinking when I sitting having audience with the Emir (of Adamawa) surrounded by his tribe, that it was a very good thing that he did not know, that I, with a blue pencil, had drawn a line through his territory.”*⁷

Naturally the resultant effect of this exercise which was common all over Africa is bifurcated political and social systems, divided peoples and culture areas which eventually led to further dislocations and hardships amongst the border populations. Professor Asiwaju has aptly noted the effect of the dislocation brought about by the artificial boundaries. He says:

“In these specifically divided African culture areas, the boundaries have been drawn across well established lines of communication including, in every case, a dormant or active sense of community based on tradition concerning common ancestry, usually very strong kinship ties, shared socio-political institutions and economic resources, common customs and practices, and sometimes acceptance of a common political control. In many instances... the boundary has separated communities of worshippers from age-old sacred groves and shrines. In other instances, well exemplified by the Somalia, the water resources in a predominantly nomadic culture area were located in one state the pustules were in

another".⁸

Borders that emerged under the scenario given above, not to mention their forceful imposition mostly by means of military campaigns, could hardly in themselves promote peace and harmony between African States. The African borderland communities who suffered the brunt of the arbitrary borders, their institutionalisation first by the colonial authorities and subsequently by the successor States, and in most cases who suffered marginalization in terms of infrastructural and social development owing to the lopsided nature of both the colonial and successor States' policies would not *willingly* promote the borders as bridges of peace. The need for some mechanisms to be built around the borders that will make them support peace initiatives and for the borderland communities, some kind of compensatory arrangements, including reducing the weight of the borders as *divides* and taking care of their specific interests are a compelling necessity.

Nigeria's International Boundaries

Nigeria's Land international boundaries with the Republic of Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon owe their emergence directly from the Berlin Conference and subsequent bilateral treaties between the colonizing powers namely: Britain, France and Germany. The borders therefore share the same qualities with other African borders i.e. arbitrariness. We shall examine, in brief, the various treaties that give Legal effects to the boundaries and how the borders impacted on the pre-colonial partitioned States and peoples of the border areas. The Nigeria-Benin borders of 770 kilometers is largely the product of the **Anglo-French Agreement of 19th October 1906** as amended by the **Protocol of 20th July 1912**⁹ and the **Practical Description** of the boundary by the two countries in 1960¹⁰. The boundary line had the effect of dissecting major pre-colonial socio-political entities such as the old Yoruba State of Ketu (with headquarter at Ketu) and the State of Borgu with its political centre around Nikki; the Gun sub group of Aja speaking peoples, the Western Yoruba sub group and the Borgu and related groups. The boundary line was imposed over peoples that inhabit large expanse of contiguous areas in both Nigeria and Benin and who had been living as more or less homogeneous groups.

The Nigeria-Niger border of more than 1500 kilometers has been defined by **Treaty Series N°1 of 1912** between the United Kingdom and France. This boundary line has cut across territories of the Sokoto Caliphate (the Emirates of Sokoto metropolis, Gobir, Katsina, Daura, Hadeija and Gumel) and the Sultanate of Borno to the east. Like the Benin-Nigeria border, this boundary line has the effect of dissecting the Hausa-Fulani-Kanuri culture area. The Nigeria-Chad border of about 86 kilometers long which features a straight line joining the Niger/Nigeria/Chad tripoint with the Nigeria/Cameroon/Chad tripoint was determined by the **Anglo-French Protocol of 1st July 1910** as confirmed by the **Exchanges of Notes of 17th May and 1st July 1911** and the **Anglo-French Convention of 29th May 1906**, even though the more extant definition is that provided by the **Anglo-French Exchanges of Note of 9th January 1913**. This boundary line was largely on the Lake waters but with the receding of its waters, it is now partially on Land and marshy areas, divided the Lake Chad which is a common resource and focal point of intense economic and socio-political relations for the many inhabitants of its vicinity for centuries.

The Nigeria-Cameroon boundary of approximately 1800 kilometers long stretches from the Atlantic Ocean from the south to the Lake Chad in the north. An analysis of the treaties relating to the boundary reveal three major phases and is at present entering its fourth phase. The first phase is the Anglo-German Phase which represents the period before the First World War i.e. before German colonial possessions were confiscated in 1919; the second is the Anglo-French phase which is the period between end of the First World War and the independence of both Nigeria and Cameroon in 1960. The post independence phase is the period between the attainment of independence and the judgment of the International Court of Justice in October 2002 and the post ICJ judgment phase is from the judgment day to date.

Each of these phases is distinct depending on the treaty/agreement in force and, in the case of the post International Court of Justice (ICJ) phase, based on the weight of the judgment delivered by the ICJ on 10 October 2002 in the case brought before it by the Republic of Cameroon in 1994. Of course, in each of these phases the boundary kept on changing. From the ambiguity of the

Anglo-German treaty of the late 19th century which described Akwayafe as a river, when it is in fact an estuary, to the **Anglo-French treaty of 1931**, which settled the Akwayafe controversy; to the post independence boundary and the **Yaounde Declaration of 1971** and **Maroua Declaration of 1975**¹¹ on the Maritime boundary being essentially an extension of 1931 Anglo-French treaty and up to the “definitive” description of the boundary handed down by the ICJ on 10 October 2002, the boundary would appear to be moving closer to clarity. This boundary has the effect of dividing several pre-colonial States and culture areas. From the Lake Chad area moving southwards to the Atlantic Ocean, the boundary left the Kanuri Sultanate of Borno divided between Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad and Niger, the Mandara territories falling on either side of the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary and Fombina (Adamawa) Emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate divided with more than half of its territory in Cameroon, though its headquarters and metropolitan areas fall on the Nigerian side. The Chamba and numerous other related ethnic groups were also so divided. And down to the estuarial areas, the Efik, Ebibio and related peoples inhabiting the territories of old Calabar Kingdom similarly found themselves on both sides of the border¹².

It is against this background that the colonial States operated, employing as it were, high-handed methods to enforce the artificial and arbitrary borders and to regulate the partitioned peoples desire to relate with their kith across the borders. On the attainment of independence, two major trends, both of them with conflictual propensities were visible. First, was the obvious conflicts arising from the numerous partitioned peoples’ tendency to ignore the borders and continue to maintain social and economic relations as if no partition ever took place and the borders never existed. Second, the tendency by independence African states to take measures, within the theory and practice of the Westphalian ideals, to establish the limits of their respective jurisdictions. These tendencies combine with the arbitrariness and artificiality of the borders, the poor delimitation and worst still poor and often non-demarcation in some areas, such as the larger part of the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary, and the inherent African ethnic and cultural pluralism to nurture border related tensions which too often led to crises between many African States. In recent years, the discovery and/or rumours of

discovery or even the potentialities of discovery of resources, especially oil, in the borders or the borderlands tend to create border crises. Similarly the use of remote border areas as haven for criminal elements including rebel movements is changing the security situation in many parts of Africa.

The Delimitation and Demarcation of Nigeria's international boundaries

After experimenting for more than two decades after independence with an **ad hoc** and rather uncoordinated border management policy,¹³ Nigeria formally settled for a coordinated agency approach¹⁴ also referred by Professor Aswaju as the *problem solving approach*. This led to the establishment of the Nigerian National Boundary Commission in 1987. As a specialized agency of government on whose shoulders all border issues are put. For Nigeria therefore, this marks not just a point of departure from the old **ad hoc** policy, but also a paradigm shift for a scientific, policy motivated and methodical approach to border issues. And as can be demonstrated, this policy tuned out to be of immense benefits to Nigeria's neighbors also. Not surprisingly, the functions of the National Boundary Commission as provided for in its enabling law, is tuned towards finding solutions to the country's international boundaries problems. The enabling law provides, among other things that the Commission's functions include:

- *To deal with, determine and intervene in any boundary dispute that may arise between Nigeria and any other neighbours...; and*
- *To advise the Federal Government (of Nigeria) on issues affecting Nigeria's border with any neighbouring countries*¹⁵.

Successful management of any international boundary is dependent on the willingness of the parties to cooperate with one another in joint efforts towards establishing the required peaceful boundary regime. The necessity therefore, for the establishment of the requisite environment for peace and confidence building among the parties involved in the boundary management

is clear. More often, one of the parties provides the launching pad from where the confidence building structures are built. In this case it was the Nigerian government through the National Boundary Commission that brought forth the initial ideas, created and nurtured that necessary environment for trans-border cooperation and confidence building. This was achieved by means of trans-border cooperation workshops and its related follow-up activities, particularly the conducting of confidence-building missions to the neighbouring countries.

The transborder cooperation workshops, which as we shall see, were vigorously pursued by the National Boundary Commission were an open-market of ideas and opportunities. Though initially focused on searching for the enabling environment for the proper definition, and demarcation and/or re-demarcation of the international borders between Nigeria and its neighbours, and the promotion of cross-border cooperation and borderland's development, the trans-border cooperation workshops also opened up, and in some cases, strengthened other fields of cooperation between the counties. The main features of this trans-border cooperation policy promotion are: the workshops with Benin in 1988, with Niger in 1989, with Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea in 1992, and the bilateral summits of the Presidents in 1999 on the maritime boundary delineation and trans-border cooperation between Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe, leading to the establishment of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) between the two countries¹⁶.

These bilateral trans-border workshops which featured presentation of papers by scholars and technocrats from participating State parties on wide variety of themes and sub-themes such as general boundary management, strategies for demarcation/delineation of the common boundary, trade and cultural relationships, and security etc, are important in setting the stage for mutual confidence building. This, in turn, facilitated other follow-up confidence building activities and active joint-action outfits such as the Joint Technical Committees (JTCs) for the demarcation or re-demarcation, the joint reconnaissance, joint surveys, and joint pillar construction and reconstruction teams. Along with the established formal bilateral agencies such the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation's (NNJC), Local Bilateral

Committees (LBAs), these joint outfits were responsible for the peaceful border regimes being witnessed today.

As referred above, one of the benefits for the trans-border cooperation workshops staged by the Commission was the creation of appropriate atmosphere for the demarcation of the common boundaries between Nigeria and its neighbours. Thus, the major outcome of the trans-border cooperation workshops and the follow-up confidence building activities was the establishment of bilateral cooperation bodies (usually Committees and Commissions) for the demarcation and delineation of the boundaries. Those joint Committees often take different nomenclatures as dictated by their specific assignments on the boundary in question. For the Nigeria-Niger international boundary, it was the **Joint Standing Committee on Re-demarcation** of the boundary that emerged and it operated under the aegis of the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission (NNJC). Its activities included joint reconnaissance surveys and joint pillar reconstruction and pillar densification exercises as well as the recently concluded joint exercise on the reestablishment of the old thalweg of River Kumadugu-Yobe which defines the boundary at the Yobe State (Nigeria) Sector. For the Nigeria-Benin international boundary, it was the Nigeria-Benin Joint Boundary Commission (called *Parity Commission* by Benin Republic); through the Commission, all the major activities along the boundary such as reconnaissance surveys, pillar reestablishment, pillar recovery and reconstruction, and re-demarcation exercises, were undertaken, leading, as it were, to the recently signed bilateral boundary agreement between the two countries.

As regards the Nigeria-Chad international boundary and the areas proximate to Lake Chad connecting Nigeria with Niger and Cameroon in that sector, delineation and demarcation exercises were handled jointly by the four countries which share the waters and areas of the Lake Chad via a multilateral arrangement. The four-nation sub-regional outfit, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), in obvious realization of the importance of the Lake Chad region to the countries and the need to promote peace amongst their citizens, undertook the demarcation exercise between 1986 and 1991, through a contract jointly awarded to a French firm, Institute Geographique Nationale (IGN) of France. The IGN demarcation turned out to be very important at the

ICJ which used it as reference point in the determination of the sovereignty over the contested area in the Lake Chad Basin, especially the 33 Nigerian villages. More so, this multi-lateral demarcation is important in the sense that it is, perhaps, the first of its kind in Africa, thus demonstrating the relevance of sub-regional outfits in delimitation and demarcation efforts and in the promotion of peace over an area of common interest¹⁷.

Over the years the efforts of the National Boundary Commission in relation to the demarcation and (in the case of maritime boundaries) delimitation have borne useful fruits. The Nigeria-Benin boundary has now been over 90% demarcated with primary and secondary boundary markers emplaced. More important, the boundary has been relatively peaceful and is performing its role as a bridge between the people of the two countries, particularly the borderland inhabitants. Thanks to the support and the efforts of the two countries through the instrumentalities of the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission and the Joint Standing Committee on Re-demarcation, the Nigeria-Niger boundary has been re-demarcated with 148 primary pillars emplaced. At the level of composite border authorities of the two countries. Local Bilateral Authorities (LBAs) have been established and are operational throughout the length of the border. The borders of the Lake Chad area linking Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria have been as referred above, demarcated through the efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Multi-Lateral joint cooperation venture of the four countries. And with the judgment of the ICJ, Nigeria and Cameroon through the facilitation of the UN are currently in the process of demarcation their common boundary.

The delimitation of Maritime boundaries between Nigeria and its neighbours follow, in essence the same pattern as the land boundaries. The mechanism of open and transparent engagement by means of trans-border cooperation workshops and or bilateral mechanisms provided an unprecedented result, though over a long period of time.

The maritime boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon up to a point called **Point G** has been bilaterally negotiated and agreed upon and treaties accordingly signed in the context of the Yaoundé Declaration of 1971 and of the Maroua Declaration of 1975. Here, it is important to point out that the two

treaties had provided the basis for Cameroon's request for the ICJ to determine the maritime boundary between it and Nigeria. The ICJ judgement recognized these Declarations as valid and therefore determined the maritime boundary between the two countries accordingly. Subsequent actions of the Cameroon Nigeria Mixed Commission on the conclusion of the delimitation of the Nigeria-Cameroon maritime boundary are largely dependent on these declarations.

For the Nigeria-Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria-Sao Tome and Principe maritime boundaries, the respective **Joint Committees** has found a strong anchorage in the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS II) of 1982 and the support of leaders of the countries. The long-drawn boundary negotiation (over 10 years!) with Equatorial Guinea finally led to a Treaty signed in September 2006 which recognized the two countries' straddling hydrocarbon concessions along the boundary and, accordingly, unified their operations. Therefore, in addition to the boundary treaty, a separate unification agreement of the Zafiro/Ekanga oil fields was also signed.

The negotiations with Sao Tome and Principe ended with an area of overlapping claims between the two countries. This led to the establishment of the **Joint Development Zone (JDZ)** over which, in an exceptional demonstration of African brotherhood and recognition of modern industry practice, the countries suspended boundary claims for 40 years and established the **Nigeria-Sao Tome Joint Development Authority** to oversee the administration and exploitation of resources in the JDZ on behalf of the two countries in accordance with Article 74(3) of UNCLOS. The delineation of the Nigeria-Benin Maritime Boundary also reflects the joint application of technical as well as negotiated settlements approach. When it became obvious that the size of Nigeria's coastal front and Continental Shelf (CS) would prevent Benin Republic from enjoying its full 200M Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), Nigeria conceded and a Maritime Boundary Treaty was signed by leaders of the two countries in 2006. Negotiation with Ghana, initiated by Nigeria, has commenced in late 2007 and it is progressing satisfactorily.

In the light of what has been given above do we have enough grounds for

celebrations? Of course we have, cautiously though. Nigeria's border management officials have on a number of occasions celebrated their successes, in particular in the definition and demarcation of the borders and their promotion as agencies for peaceful coexistence and regional integration. Impressive have also been the success of building upon Nigerian's international boundaries bridges of continuity of socio-cultural and economic relationships, cooperation and integration mechanisms which have largely neutralized otherwise tensions that could have led to crises. And as demonstrated, the delimited and demarcated borders have provided the much needed flat form for peace and cooperation at both bilateral and multi-lateral levels that essentially promote sub-regional integration.

On the other hand, there are still pending issues that need to be digested and properly disposed. The successful conclusion of the current demarcation exercise of the Nigeria-Cameroon land boundary, which is in reality a litmus test of some sorts for both countries, would add to the credibility of Nigeria and Cameroon as one of the leading peace makers and builders of the new millennium. There is also the issue of straddling villages along the Nigeria-Benin and Nigeria-Niger borders for which concrete decisions are needed. Related to that, and indeed more from the point of view of peace and the promotion of regional integration, is the recently reported violence that led to the burning of some straddling Nigerian settlements along the Benin-Nigeria border. Indeed, this and the tensions at the contact terminus of the Benin-Nigeria border largely associated with shared cross-border resources and the demography of the area around Tongeji Island and the Kweme region near Badagry might threaten the otherwise peace along the border. For this, pundits have warned that care must be taken such as to avoid "another Bakassi".

Understandably the Nigeria-Cameroon border has given Nigerian authorities more problems in spite of the friendly relations, common populations across the border, common cultural practices and colonial experience. All the common denominators that explain the success of the delimitation and demarcation exercises of the Nigeria-Benin and Nigeria-Niger are equally applicable to the Nigeria-Cameroon border. The only exception is the Trusteeship/Mandate territories of Northern and Southern Cameroon which

were administrated as part of Nigeria¹⁸. What then are the problem and how come that they were allowed to escalate to the point of a long drawn costly litigation at the ICJ with equally a promise of a long period and costly implementation of the judgment, especially relating to the delimitation and demarcation of the land border. From October 2002 when the judgement was delivered to date, not a single boundary pillar has been emplaced. The search for the problems of the “*problematic border*” would lead us to four factors which are as follows: environmental: the receding waters of the Lake Chad; governmental: inability to establish affective governmental presence on the Bakassi Peninsula as well as in the shores of lake Chad area; political instability in neighbouring Chad: the impact of Chadian rebellion in the Lake Chad basin which affected all the neighbouring States and technical: the non-demarcation of the northern sector of the border.

Without going into details, the receding of the Lake Chad waters, especially from the Nigerian side provided the *raison d’être* for the movement of a large Nigerian population into the Cameroonian side of the Lake. And lack of effective control by the authorities in the area enabled the entry into the area in late 1970s and early 1980s of Chadian rebel elements and the Nigerian populations to settle in the 33 hotly contested villages. Similar lack of effective control by the authorities in Bakassi may have made it easy for Nigerian fishermen to move and settle in many parts of the peninsula and, here too, establish an *effectivité*. Non demarcation of about two thirds of the land boundary has the effect of leaving areas of over-lapping claims which is known to be surest source of conflict. This however could not justify some of the actions taken on both sides. On hindsight, it could be said that if both sides had acted differently, indeed more cautiously, the crises could have been avoided.

Conclusion

While the Westphalian concept of boundary making in Africa is greatly indebted to the European colonial enterprise, the construction of nations out of the colonially inherited borders remains the handiwork of Africa’s statesmen. Immediate post-independence leaders of Africa rejected the idea of redrawing the borders and found it expedient to

maintain the borders as they were at independence as a security guarantee. Whether peace was achieved all over Africa or not as a result of this mechanism, that would not in any way diminish the weight of the foresight and ingenuity of the actors. That over 30 years after the famous *Cairo Declaration* on the intangibility of African borders, the African Union finally agreed to a Border Programme whose first objective is the delimitation and demarcation of the borders demonstrate their role as critical factors for peace, security and good neighbourliness. And the results on the ground confirm the assertion: countries and regions that have had their borders defined and demarcated are at peace with themselves. On the other hand countries where the borders remain undefined and undemarcated, face numerous border-related conflicts which militate against development and peaceful relationship. The threats posed by undemarcated borders should be the concern of all, including of course border scholars, practitioners and theoreticians.

The Nigerian experience with its neighbours of Niger, Benin, Chad and Cameroon, on the basis of the score-cards, sells itself: a border management outfit and the pursuit of a scientific research-oriented border conflicts management approach would appear to be necessary. Similarly, there is a compelling necessity for the constructive engagement of neighbours in all issues relating to border matters, particularly delimitation and demarcation. The medium could be Trans-border Workshops or other bilateral and multi-lateral constructions of the parties. The resources that straddle borders especially water, hydrocarbon deposits, forests and other minerals, like the borders themselves, are very sensitive issues that need to be handled with utmost care. Options pursued by Nigeria such as Unitization of the operation of straddling oil mining concessions with the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the suspension of boundary negotiation with the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, in favour of joint exploitation of resources in the disputed areas may be considered by African countries who may find themselves in similar situations. The time and cost losses and associated with litigations, and the energies usually expended not to talk of the after effects, especially in the International Court of Justice, could better be deployed to other too numerous areas of need in the continent.

Foot Notes

*All opinions expressed and positions taken in this paper are those of the author and do not represent the official positions of either the Nigerian Government or the African Union Border Programme.

(1) For some details of the Somalia problems see Said S. Samatar, "The Somalia Dilemma: Nation without State" in A.L. Asiwaju (ed) *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries 1884- 1984*, University of Lagos Press, Lagos ,1984.

(2) Charter of the Organization of African Unity

(3) Constitutive Act of the African Union

(4) Ministers in charge of Border Issues issued a *Declaration on the African Union Border Programme and its Implementation Modalities* at the end of their Meeting on 7 June 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Declaration was endorsed by the 11th Session of the African Union Executive Council held in Accra, Ghana, 27 June 2009.

(5) See for example, M.B. Ahmad" the National Boundary Commission of Nigeria 1987-2007: The Milestone Score-cards in the International Boundaries Arena" in Yomi Akinyele (ed); *That They May Be One: Essays in Honour of Professor Anthony I. Asiwaju*,

(6) Lord Salisbury as quoted by A.I. Asiwaju; *That They May Be One: Essays in Honour of Professor Anthony I. Asiwaju*, African Regional Institute, Imeko, Ogun State, Nigeria, 201. Asiwaju, *Artificial Boundaries*, New York, 1990, p30

(7) Ibid

(8) A.I. Asiwaju "The Conceptual Framework" in A.I. Asiwaju (ed), *Partitioned Africans.... P2*

(9) The treaties referred here can be found in I. Brownlie; *African Boundaries: A*

Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopedia, London, C. Hurst, 1979

(10) A copy of this description is found in the Library of the Nigerian National Boundary Commission Abuja, Nigeria

(11) Copies of the Yaounde Declaration Marwa Declaation 1997 in the possession of the National boundary Commission Abuja, Nigeria

(12) A.I. Asiwaju, *Artificial Boundaries...* B.M. Barkindo, "The Mandara Astride the Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary" in A.I. Asiwaju (ed) *Partitioned Africans*.

(13) See M. Barkindo: *The National Boundary Commission: history, structure and operation* , Nnational Boundary Commission, Lagos, 1992

(14) A.I. Asiwaju, "The Bakassi Peninsula Crisis: An Alternative to War and Litigation" in A.I. Asiwaju (ed), *Peaceful Resolution of African Boundary Conflicts. The Bakassi Peninsula Dispute Settlement*, African Regional Institute, Imeko, Ogun State, Nigeria, P95

(15) National Boundary Commission, etc Act. Cap. 238 Laws of The Federation of Nigeria, 1990

(16) For the example of Published Proceedings see A.I. Asiwaju (ed), *Development of Border Regions: Proceeding of the National Planning Conference*; (NBC) 1993; A.I. Asiwaju and O J, Igue, (ed), *Nigeria-Benin Trans-border Cooperation* Lagos University Press, Lagos, 1994; S Amdii and D. Bobbo: *Nigeria-Niger Trans-border Cooperation and management* NBC, Abuja 2008

(17) M.B. Ahmad, "The National Boundary Commission of Nigeria 1887-2007..." in Yomi Akinyeye (ed) , *That They May Be One...*

18 In a Plebiscite conducted in 1961 by the UN, Northern Cameroon voted to join Nigeria while Southern Cameroons voted to join the Republic of Cameroon.

