

# **Globalisation and New Resource Wars: Armed Conflicts over the Bakassi Peninsula between Cameroon and Nigeria.**

**Jean Mbagá ; Zachée Njo**

Association Freedom Life,  
B.P. 17519 Douala Cameroun.

[jembaga@yahoo.fr](mailto:jembaga@yahoo.fr)  
[njoza2000@yahoo.fr](mailto:njoza2000@yahoo.fr)

**Abstract:**

The oil rich Bakassi peninsula has been a theatre of constant, violent military clashes between the armed forces of Cameroon and those of Nigeria well over two decades now. Up till today, serious tensions persist over its ownership despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling in favour of Cameroon in 2002.

The peninsula's geographical location suggests, and numerous prospections made by geologists and other scientists confirm Bakassi as being most likely the richest peninsula in Africa, comprising extensive reserves of oil, gas, other important minerals.

The colossal foreign exchange earnings from oil, as a result of very high demand of the commodity in the global economy in recent periods, midwifed belligerence and legal acrimony between the two countries regarding ownership of the land. The ugly corollaries of the imbroglio thus raised are of great interest: mistrust, tensions between governments of Cameroon and Nigeria and the neighbours involved in the Hague process as witnesses.

This paper discusses the inherent dynamics of globalisation in the Bakassi conflict, highlighting decisive steps and mechanisms underlying accommodations into the context of an irreversible single world economy. This will however follow analysis of a previous attempt at, or circumstances of relative globalisation.

**Résumé:**

La Péninsule de Bakassi riche en pétrole a été le théâtre de constants et violents affrontements militaires depuis plus de deux décennies entre les forces armées du Nigeria et celles du Cameroun. Jusqu'à ce jour, de sérieuses tensions persistent malgré la décision de la Court Internationale de Justice (CIJ) en 2002 reconnaissant l'appartenance de Bakassi au Cameroun.

La situation géographique de la péninsule et de nombreuses prospections faites par les géologues et autres scientifiques confirment que Bakassi est probablement la plus riche des Péninsules en Afrique regorgeant d'immenses réserves de pétrole, gaz et autres minerais importants. D'énormes gains de devises étrangères issus de la vente de pétrole, émanant de la demande tant élevée de cette denrée dans l'économie globalisée ces récentes périodes, ont généré belligerence et acrimonie légales entre les deux pays revendiquant chacun la propriété de la péninsule. Les conséquences néfastes ainsi suscitées par ce malentendu sont d'un grand intérêt : méfiance, tensions entre les Gouvernements du Cameroun et du Nigeria et voisins intervenant comme témoin au Procès de la Hayes.

Cet article discute des dynamiques inhérentes à la globalisation dans le conflit de Bakassi mettant ainsi en relief les étapes et mécanismes relevant de l'adaptation dans un contexte irréversible de l'économie globalisée. Ceci sera suivi par une analyse des précédents essais ou circonstances de relative globalisation.

**Introduction:**

No matter how the term 'globalisation' is defined, or the views of the discipline of learning concerned with the studies of globalisation, it is imperative to grasp a decisive implication of this phenomenon: a switch to a single world economy. Mankind in its entirety, more than ever before, is channelled towards the confines of an apparently irreversible common 'destiny'.

Although globalisation was first formally predicted by the Stoics long before the Christians era, only the momentum associated with the 18<sup>th</sup> century Industrial Revolution was capable of fostering a real attempt at it (1870-1914). However, the technical feasibility of full fledged globalisation had to await the type of technological progress and planetary political, socio-economic atmosphere that pervades the quasi totality of the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At the heart of economic processes and physical transformations so far achieved by globalisation, stand natural resources: they are indispensable 'oilers' of the capitalist machinery; they woo States with developed productive capacities in such a manner that their control most of often sparks off rivalries between these industrial giants. That is on the one hand. On the other, strife and dissension engulf States and communities with insignificant productive capacities, the incentive being the mere geographical location of needed resources in these naturally export oriented economies.

This perfectly captures armed conflicts over the Bakassi peninsula between Cameroon and Nigeria with adverse effects on neighbouring lands. Security concerns and the pervasive state of despair in the conflict zone among local populations will be a kernel of this brief analysis.

For the purpose of comprehensiveness as far as the generic nature of globalisation is concerned, it will be rewarding to first of all have a glimpse at States' attitude to resource sharing during the first attempt at globalisation and compare it to the present day single world economy in which the irrefutable globalising dynamics firmly grip mankind.

## **II- Relationship between Security and Natural Resources in the ‘first’ and second globalisations.**

### **a- The ‘first’ Globalisation.**

The consolidation of Industrial Revolution strongly amplified trade between 1870 and 1914. The structural transformation of the economy that ensued fostered the growth of trusts, cartels and interest groups which became the dominant system of production. They paved the way for an economic battle throughout the world.

To overcome competition, the new industries needed to secure the cheapest sources of raw materials; to avert the danger of deflation as a result of overproduction, they needed to acquire new outlets in remote areas from the Western hemisphere as in Jules Ferry’s remark: ‘colonial expansion is an offshoot of industrial policy.’

Typical of the ‘first’ globalisation was the scramble for overseas territories. Africa, the Mediterranean Islands, Central and Western Asia, the Far East, virtually became battle grounds for France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Portugal and to some degree the United States. The normless process of territorial conquest by these powers created unprecedented state of distrust among imperial powers as well as pandemonium in conquered lands.

Imperialism and land conquest were strictly undissociable. Land was to be acquired as a necessary preliminary for industrial expansion: all land was to be seized even with no knowledge of its resource content. Thus violence was inevitable: apart from grave armed rivalries between Western powers, massacres of indigenous peoples and liquidations of resistance to foreign domination were obvious in a world ill-equipped with international democratic governing mechanisms in the face of growing internationalism. Tensions between States over resources heightened, instability became pervasive and eventually overt war broke out. A brief glimpse at events in the parts of the world under imperialism would enhance our understanding of the point about security and natural resources during the ‘first’ globalisation.

Western nations were at war of all against all during the period 1870 and 1914 over territories in undeveloped parts of the world.

From Mediterranean Africa, control of the Suez isthmus was the paramount concern. Britain quickly started becoming hostile to the Franco-British condominium. She thus unilaterally began repressing mounting antagonisms Egyptians to its rule in 1882 and made France Egypt finally in 1904 through an agreement. At that same time, Germany’s ambitions to curb British territorial expansion into Tunisia boosted Italy’s courage to openly confronting France whose grip on Tunisia was becoming firmer and firmer. France’s reaction was prompt: Jules Ferry, the imperial propagandist, sent troops to secure French rule over Tunisia in 1881. Uprisings by tribesmen in southern Tunisia followed French military presence, and the use of more force in the process of pacification was inevitable. In June 1883, France had full control over Tunisia after a hard won convention.

The theatre in Morocco is far more interesting. After Mulay Hassan’s reign in 1894, France, Italy and England developed a keen interest in the kingdom. Mainly interested in Morocco was France who signed an agreement with Italy in 1902, with England and Spain in 1904. All these agreements were at once nullified by Germany’s pushfull entry into territorial conquest in 1905. The world was stunned at Germany’s military intervention in an already occupied Morocco. Diplomacy and

promises of handsome compensations in Equatorial Africa in 1911 alone could ease the tensions.

In West Africa, France and England were major players. The French occupation of West African territories was unhindered until the intervention of the powerful British Association, the Royal Niger Company decided to represent British interests there. In 1898, a final agreement between both powers settled both powers and gave a colonial shape known to West Africa today.

In West Africa clashes between imperialists did not turn violent, but resistance to imperial penetration was remarkably turbulent. France had it tough with the well established kingdoms and potentates she encountered. From 1872, Ahmadou, son of El Hadj. Omar the conqueror prophet and Samory, both on the right and left sides of the river Niger respectively, fought the French with great determination but succumbed to western technological superiority. Again fierce resistance to the French and uprisings in Fouta Djallon in 1893, heroic but unsuccessful attempts at checkmating the French by Behanzin's Dahomey in 1894 all took place with severe adverse effects on the African societies concerned.

The 1884-1885 Berlin conference organised by King Leopold II was the most significant hallmark in the partition of Equatorial Africa. Through this conference. Through it, Germany, France, Belgium and Portugal relatively smoothly shared Equatorial Africa in the light of principles they arrived at. Apart from quelling a resistance put up by Rabah on a religious background, the use of force was not necessitated.

In East Africa, matters were different. Tension and frenzy were inspired by the Suez isthmus. England strengthened its positions in Zanzibar and kept a watchful eye on religious turmoil in Sudan. Between 1883 and 1887 France occupied Obok, Tadjourah Bay, Djibouti, the sultanate of Gobad and Ambada. Italy settled in Assah Bay and headed towards Abyssinia. Germany forcefully entered into Zanzibar and the German government made a protectorate out of the Deutsche OstAfrika Gesellschaft. Conflict was thus inescapable. First that between Germany and England was settled on 15 June 1890 with the demarcation of British possessions (Uganda, Vitou, Kenya and Zanzibar) and Germany's. Next came the Italian disaster in Ethiopia. Crushed by Menelik's army, Italy was forced to recognise Ethiopian independence in 1896 at Addis Ababa. Finally, England's ambition to link its territorial possession from Cape Town to Cairo with France's own plan to form a vast empire stretching from Senegal to the eastern African coast through river Nile collided at Fachoda: the two countries narrowly escaped major acrimony as emotions ran too high back at home. The French government backed out.

In southern Africa, mineral wealth was the determining factor behind Britain's army grappling with the Boers who had made a homeland out of that place since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Before leaving Europe, the Boers had a clear vision of their destiny and once in Southern Africa they developed significantly. Stripping them of their resources would require a major war.

So in 1877, England, using the pretext of security, hastily invaded Transvaal, and occupied Zululand barring the Boers access to the sea. In 1880, Transvaal's representative government is abolished. Angered at this, the Boers led by Kruger, Joubert and Prétorius organised an insurgency that inflicted a heavy defeat to British troops.

Meanwhile Germany was settling westward at Damaraland and around Angra Pequena Bay developing an alliance with the Boers. To stop this dreadful activity, England quickly occupied Bechuanaland thereby putting an end to the Portuguese project meant to link Angola to Mozambique. But the unification of Southern Africa was carried out by Cecil Rhodes, a shrewd businessman at the head of the British South African Company. Strengthened by this achievement, the British government ordered the renewal of war in 1899 which lasted two years, with the defeat of the Boers; South Africa thus became a British possession.

In western and central Asia, Russian and British troops clashed again in Turkey in 1877 during the Balkan war. For the Tsar, a victory would console Russia by healing the wounds of the Crimean war. Victorious, Russia retained Batoum and Kars following the 1878 Berlin Congress and Britain, for having spared Turkey a heavier defeat, got the Island of Cyprus in return.

Anglo-Russian wars were made open in Central Asia: the objective was supremacy in the Persian Empire. Turkmenistan under Russia in 1884 and Afghanistan was subjected to a border demarcation after serious tensions. Violent incidents still broke out over the Palmir Plateau in 1895 territorial demarcation favourable to Russia was taking place. In 1906, England taking advantage of the war between Japan and Russia and quickly occupied Tibet.

In the Far East the French possession of Indochina forms a federation of colonies and autonomous protectorates: Cochin China, Tonkin, Annam Laos, and Cambodia in 1896. England had already conquered Burma while Russia was preparing to occupy new territories among Chinese dependencies but was overtaken by Japan. Heavy military deployments with no declaration of war were typical of Japan's imperialism. In 1895, the Island signed the Simonsen Treaty ousting China from Korea securing Liao Tung with Port Arthur and Formosa. This single act provoked Europe's indignation and insisted on Japan's evacuation of Liao Tung. European powers also took advantage of this and got new concessions on the Chinese coast. This is what brought about the Boxers revolt and a punitive expedition.

In 1902, Japan militarily confronted Russia and routed her on sea and land, signing in 1905 the Portsmouth Treaty which gave her the Korea protectorate, that of Port Arthur a sizeable part of Sakhaline island and a temporary occupation of Manchuria.

In the Caribbeans, the forceful entry of the United States into the club of warriors for land was dramatic but hardly unsurprising. The need to secure steady supplies of tropical resources such as sugar and spices was towards the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was imperative, coupled to this was the strategic importance the Caribbeans represented for the US economic expansion to Latin America. After bulldozing Spain from Cuba, which became their vassal State, they captured Puerto Rico while imposing economic ties on St. Domingue and progressively on the rest of Latin America.

Although American imperialism was mainly economic and financial, at various points it became intrinsically traditional during the 'first' globalisation: American presence was felt ubiquitously in the Pacific, in Central America (Panama) and in the Caribbeans.

In a nutshell, all territories in economically backward parts of the world with the exception of Liberia and Abyssinia in Africa, China and Siam in Asia, had been occupied as vital resources by nations that pioneered the 'first' globalisation.

The hobbesian character in States' interaction typical of the first globalisation was the source of instability and insecurity nationally and internationally. The rush for natural resources through territorial acquisition, a dictate of unprecedented industrial growth and development, had two major consequences: the destruction of basic traditional productive systems of conquered lands and the subsequent mobilisation of local indigenous economies into a far more developed modern capitalism and the omnipresence of; and sophistry attained in the art of warfare significantly compromised security both for conqueror-States and conquered-States or communities.

### **b- Contemporary Globalisation.**

The interaction between security and the sharing of natural resources in the contemporary globalisation must be understood in the light of the argument universally held by scholars and some part of the civil society, that the pressures and burden of globalisation strictly overwhelm the particularities of diverse national and communal situations, while producing the same distributional outcomes in rich and poor corners of the world alike. But the precarity of Third World's institutional arrangements arguably a result of their economic backwardness, drastically constraints scopes of home-grown political and economic initiatives and public choice thereby exposing them to a vicious cycle of economic doom. So between Western nations and Third World countries, just as with the pre-1914 globalisation system, contemporary globalisation sustainably distributes prosperity extremely unevenly: in actual fact, it enriches industrialised nations and exposes Third World to monumental vulnerability. Securitywise, this contrast proves counter-productive.

The intensification of social interaction fostered by communication and mobility networks equally deliver (eventually to the West) disgruntled feelings of unfairness emanating from resource-rich poor communities of the Third World. Recently, those feelings have worn the garb of religious sentiments and ideologies in a mix of growing dependence on oil by the West and grinding poverty where oil is tapped from. Plausibly, these are ingredients for international insecurity in contemporary globalisation.

The Bakassi Peninsula dispute offers us a peculiar unfolding of globalisation dynamics: lingering fratricidal hostilities propped up and managed by the global economic system.

## **III- The Bakassi Peninsula Dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria.**

### **a- Milestones to the crisis**

Bakassi lies roughly between latitudes 4°25 and 5°10 N and longitudes 8°20 and 9°08 E. It consists of low lying mangroves covered islands in an area of about 665km<sup>2</sup>. It is situated at the extreme eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea. Here the warm east flowing Guinea current meets the cold north Benguela current. These two great ocean currents come into contact leaving foamy breakers which head towards the shore thereby building submarine shoals rich in fish, shrimps and other marine life. This explains why the Bakassi area is such a very fertile fishing ground in the likes of Scandinavia and Newfoundland.

Geologists suggest that the area is oil rich going from its particular location in the Gulf of Guinea.

The Bakassi population is put at between 150.000 to 300.000 in 2005, making its living through fishing.

In 1884, the Germans entered 'Cameroon' and occupied a vast expanse of land including Calibre in present day Nigeria. They sailed along the river Akwayife and met the Oroko people in Bakassi, whose relatives are in mainland Ndian Division of present day Cameroon. On March 11, 1913 Germany in 'Kamerun' and Britain in Nigeria had an agreement on the delimitation of their neighbouring colonial possessions involving the Bakassi Peninsula. At the outbreak of World War I, in 1914 France, moving from her eastern, southern and northern colonial outposts and her British ally from Nigeria squeezed Germany out of 'Kamerun' in 1916, marking a new dawn on 'Kamerun's' colonial history: the country was shared as a booty between France and Britain, the former occupying the eastern part while the latter took control of the western part which she administered directly from Lagos along with her traditional Nigerian possession. That marks the birth of Francophone/Anglophone duality in Cameroon and the creation of the future Bakassi dispute. In February 1961, four months after Nigerian independence, western Cameroon, through a plebiscite opted to join and form a federated Republic to eastern Cameroon with a serious consequence that the Bakassi Peninsula falls within the geographical confines of western Cameroon.

In actual fact, the three colonial powers involved in the area namely Germany, Britain and France left no precise and definite land or maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria at that particular point of the Gulf of Guinea and responsibility rested upon the new independent States of Cameroon and Nigeria to do so in the light of their shared colonial history and experience.

The first post colonial administration of Cameroon led by Ahmadou Ahidjo chose to embark on infrastructural development using dividends from Cameroon's own natural resources rather than foreign 'aid' from the Bretton Woods institutions and loans as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire. Thus identifying and assessing major natural available to Cameroon became critical for budget exercises. That was Ahidjo's 'développement autocentré'. Aware of the successful oil exploration in the Niger Delta and in other parts of the Gulf of Guinea in 1954, Ahmadou Ahidjo in a pre-emptive move promptly suggested to his Nigeria counterpart, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa a practical step to acknowledging ownership of the Bakassi Peninsula by Cameroon.

The turmoil in the Nigerian police arena typified in the controversial 1963 legislative election, the January 16, 1966 bloody coup d'Etat, the gruesome ethnic cleansings in Northern Nigeria that fostered the Biafran secession attempt and subsequently civil war temporarily suspended the Bakassi negotiations. In the 1970s after the civil war, several bilateral agreements were reached between both countries in order to allow Cameroon's Ahmadou Ahidjo's celebrated 'développement autocentré' policy take advantage of world oil boom, namely the 1972 Kano Accord; the 1975 Maroua Accord between Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon.

In the most concrete agreement in 1975, the two leaders agreed to prolong Cameroon's maritime border from point I to point G. They also agreed to create a two kilometre long maritime corridor (a No man's land ) in the high sea, surrounding the Bakassi Peninsula area allowing the sea route to Nigeria's vital oil fields in the area to be permanently open.



Overthrown in a bloodless coup in July 1975, General Yakubu Gowon's agreement with Ahidjo was soon challenged by his successor General Murtala Mohammed and later by General Olusegun Obasanjo who succeeded Murtala Mohammed following his assassination

in February 1976. In Obasanjo's own words, the Maroua Declaration was: 'illegal and illegitimate' for not having been ratified by the 'Federal Parliament'. Of course constitutionality was suspended when the army overthrew the government in 1966. In other words, Cameroon had to await a representative government on the Nigerian side to legally and legitimately tackle the Bakassi land crisis.

In October 1979 when power was handed over to an elected government, hopes of coming to an end with the Bakassi problem were very high on the Cameroonian side. Unfortunately the new civilian regime led by Shehu Shagari maintained the same course of things, at the time when oil revenues hit historical records of 41 US dollars a barrel, frustration on the Cameroonian side heightened tension and the two countries came to the brink of war on May 16, 1981 after sporadic bloody military confrontations. The return to military rule in Nigeria in December 1983 dashed all hopes of a legitimate mutual arrangement between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsula dispute. President Paul Biya of Cameroon and General Badamosi Babangida of Nigeria tempered existing tensions through diplomacy although no concrete step forward was undertaken until his exit in 1993.

November 17, 1993 a dramatic political occurrence in Nigeria with immediate adverse effects on the Bakassi crisis knew the day: General Sani Abacha took over power from an interim Head of State, Ernest Shonekan, just three months after violent protests against the annulment of the June 12, 1993 long awaited presidential elections. Another civil war was averted. While millions thought General Abacha's intervention was to restore civil rule and normalcy, he instead became autocratic and brutal. Some African political analysts even suggest that his invasion of the Bakassi Peninsula weeks after his palace coup, was a pretence to patriotism and a diversion from the unpopularity of continued military rule.

President Paul Biya of Cameroon himself overwhelmed by grinding economic crisis with a currency pending a 50% devaluation, legendary unpopularity and threats of Anglophone secession, swiftly took the matter international Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague on March 29, 1994. Cameroon's application did not impact on the course of hostilities the loomed: more than two serious incidents provoked shootings and deaths of soldiers. From January to May 1996, violence sporadically occurred between military personnel and diplomats in Lagos reported more than 50 Nigerian fatalities and scores of soldiers taken prisoners. No exact figure was given for Cameroonian losses. A major military showdown was miraculously averted by both parties.

On October 10, 2002 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague decided after eight years that sovereignty over the disputed Bakassi Peninsula lies with the Republic of Cameroon based mainly on the Anglo- German Agreement of March 11, 1913. The Agreement stipulates that the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria in the Bakassi area is delimited by Articles XVIII to XX. Nigeria's claim that the title to sovereignty over Bakassi never passed on to Great Britain from the Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar (a group of local chiefs of the Niger Delta ) was judged unfounded. In its remarks the court noted that the treaty of protection signed on September 1884 between Great Britain and the Chiefs and Kings of Old Calabar was not specific on the territory to which the British crown was to extend 'gracious favour and

protection' nor did it indicate the territories over which each of the Kings and Chiefs signatory to the treaty 'exercised his powers'. The ICJ further stated that Great Britain had a 'clear understanding' of both territory ruled by the Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar as well as of their standing in a region under indirect rule.

After World War I, Germany renounced its colonial possessions including the ones she got by the virtue of the 1913 Agreement with Britain and that these territories were divided between Britain and France under the League of Nations. Bakassi remained within British Cameroon until after World War II, when the mandate became a trusteeship under the United Nations. After gaining independence, the court noted, Nigeria clearly and publicly recognised Cameroon's title too Bakassi as well as Cameroon's activities intended to develop the area. To sum it up, the Court's judgement obliged Nigeria to quit the peninsula 'expeditiously and without condition'.

Nigeria's promise to hand over the Peninsula to Cameroon by September 15, 2004 has so far not materialised, while firmer military deployments to its 2/3 of the land position happen regularly. On a monthly basis since the ICJ verdict was pronounced, rocket propelled grenades, bullets, ambushes, reactions and counter reactions remain the only resort in an atmosphere of mistrust created by both country's common desire to benefit from the wealth accruing from natural resources in the area.

#### **b- The blood life of tension.**

Cameroon and Nigeria remain uncompromising on their stands over the Bakassi Peninsula dispute. Africa's oil production is expected to double in the next seven years with the USA importing 25% of its oil from the Gulf of Guinea alone. The oil sector in the continent is estimated to attract over 50 billion US dollars by the end of this decade, making oil the largest single source of investment in Africa's history.

The awareness of these facts simply gives more impetus to the already existing tensions expressed in widespread willingness to split at all cost from the main political structures in the area (Nigeria and Cameroon ) and become an oil-rich autonomous State with full control over the fertile fishing grounds and immense oil reserves of the Bakassi Peninsula. That pictures the pattern of most African civil disturbances, citing the case of the bloodiest civil wars in Africa, the Nigerian -1967 to 1970; the Angolan since 1975.

At present, the drama over the Bakassi is more interesting than ink and saliva have previously depicted. On the Cameroon side, an Anglophone secessionist movement, namely Ambazonia is, in the words of its Secretary General, Emmanuel Visha : 'going to fight tooth and nail' Nigeria and Cameroon, 'two thieves fighting over a neighbour's goat'. Added to this, are the recent inflammatory statements made by a Nigerian delegation to the Bakassi conflict resolution that they would only hand over the Peninsula to its rightful owners: Anglophone Cameroon. These allegations complicate Cameroon's stability at which attempts have repeatedly been made since the advent of multipartism in the 1990s.

Suffice it to say that a state of emergency was imposed on the North West Province ( the Anglophone opposition stronghold ) of Cameroon following controversial presidential election results of October 1992, results which the Social Democratic Front ( SDF) of Ni John Fru Ndi claimed to have won. The brutal physical abuse of civilian populations by soldiers stationed in the area exacerbated the commitment to

splitting from Francophone Cameroon and forming a prosperous oil rich State in the image of an aborted Biafra.

Already the SDF official political programme was federalism with a very strong regional autonomy. In other words, each regions natural endowment and human resources would help foster its physical development, rather than the competitionless unitary system which the SDF accused of promoting stagnation and ambivalences in Cameroon's efforts to development since independence. While that could simply have been a legitimate idea for nation building, many saw it as a broadway to disintegration. Indeed, the SDF proposal was predominantly informed by the geographical location of many oil reserves in their sphere of influence.

The Bakassi inhabitants themselves, in majority Efik and Ijaw from Nigeria are unbendingly opposed to any hand over of 'their' land to Cameroon for obvious reasons. That is on the one hand. The Ogoniland's nightmarish relations with the Nigerian Federal State is on the other hand too traumatic an experience for them to cope with.

Ogoniland is located in Rivers State of Nigeria, with an extremely oil-rich sub-oil from which western oil firms pump huge amounts of crude to the world market daily and earn enormous enormous benefits. But Ogoniland itself is very poor and environmentally tattered. As a minority ethnic group in such a populous, ethnically polarised socio-political setting, the Ogoni organised themselves in a pressure group namely the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP ). MOSOP's main activities emphasised rehabilitation of its people, environmental protection and maintenance of their homeland badly scared by oil exploration. On November 10, 1995 Ken Beeson Saro-Wiwa and eight of his lieutenants were barbarically killed by hanging in their home town amidst unsuccessful national and international calls for clemency to General Sani Abacha whose initial warning to Nigerians on November 17, 1993 goes thus: 'any attempt to our will, will be decisively dealt with.'

This takes us to a brief examination of the character of the Third World States in general, and that of the ones in the region of our concern in particular, which to some extent informs truculence against its own institution. For our own purpose let us view the 'State' as the highest step reached by a community in the process of commodity relations, usually within the context of pervasive 'commodification', leading to social atomisation. That means a community where nearly all individuals become commodity bearers, even though that commodity is just their labour power, will certainly witness the triumph of individualism and as a consequence, enjoy the virtues inherent to this state of things. In this type of community individuals relate to the State and to each other in strict conformity to law, in civil society. Law defines the rights and obligations of all in view of preserving production which is fundamental to social cohesion and stability. At the time of electing leaders in a free and open competition for instance, members of a society which by virtue of pervasive 'commodification', has graduated to individualism, will do so with an ultimate intension of preserving their interest in the network of production, rather than those of ethnic groups or particularities. That is just by the way. In a single word, it is production that informs the State first; then the State acts as an umbrella to protect and revitalise social production.

In the Third World States are personalised, formed from abroad and alien to local production on which they feed fat in a conscious absence of accountability, checks and balances. Force and coercion are the language of the administration and access to

power is normless. The development of civil society is embryonic and a lot more could be discussed in relation to Third world States.

The foregoing somewhat captures the Gulf of Guinea. The zeal for secession is fuelled by a number of factors both inhibitive of social atomisation and demonstrative of the precarity of the State. The Bakassi Chiefs's contemplation of secession is informed by the harsh cohabitation between States and their resource-rich zones in the Gulf of Guinea. Also generalised social insecurity nurtures extreme feelings favourable to excesses that are further expressed in armed antagonisms.

### **c- Potentials for a lingering conflict.**

It is erroneous to think of the Bakassi crisis as ephemeral. Nigeria and Cameroon have initiated mixed commissions intended to evaluate the feasibility of a possible physical hand over of the Peninsula to the Cameroon authorities. Even the United Nations' representative overseeing resolution of the conflict has alleged practical difficulties to comply with the ICJ verdict soon.

The first difficulty relates to the sizeable Nigerian population that now nearly permanently inhabit Bakassi. It is very hard to imagine mobilising these populations into Nigeria without making a proper financial and logistic arrangement to accommodate them. In actual fact, such would certainly require handsome compensations from the Cameroon Government had they suggested such a step. That is most unlikely given the financial constraints in the country.

Nigeria's recent stand on the dispute, according to her, is all about the welfare and well-being of its populations, not oil. The point she raises here is that not matter the objective of seeking to own the Peninsula, or the ICJ verdict, justice rendered must imply equity and fairness towards the hordes of people who find themselves in Bakassi. The Government certainly touches a sensitive point omitted by the ICJ.

The next point concerns the maritime boundary of the coast of Equatorial Guinea which was not raised. This masks another set of rivalries which will soon be brought to limelight given the on-going oil exploration in the region.

The most conspicuous factor that might revive the conflict is the increasing international involvement in the dispute for economic interests as a working out of globalising dynamics. It is clear that one of the peculiarities of multinational firms and other giants of the oil industry is the incentive to invest in remote areas with relatively lower taxes, a lighter environmental control policy and of course lower wages. That is intended to maximise their benefits as they sell their products back in their home countries with much higher standards of living.

Rebel governments or potential secessionists usually offer much more attractive deals to oil 'mongers' who sometimes target nothing more than their profits. Such investors even provide military hardware to potential secessionists against the latter's sub soil. Secessionist outbreaks over the Bakassi are capable of attracting such nightly investors owing to the nature of commitment and partners the key players in the conflict have with the outside world.

Nigeria is particularly invulnerable in the Gulf of Guinea. Its extensive oil reserves and its relatively abundant market are a source of its negotiating power at all levels of world affairs. That is significant in the Bakassi dispute and Nigeria comfortably takes advantage of that asset. In other words, executing a punishment against Nigeria needs

a prior thorough examination of the implications in the world economy. If the sanctions are counter-productive for global economic stability then they are not worth being contemplated, no matter the gravity of the infraction it is accused of. That is normal given the kind of economic preoccupations associated with globalisation. Bakassi may therefore be unresolved for a very long time owing to the diplomacy of globalisation. That is not to say that Nigeria enjoys any preferential treatment whatsoever, rather the logic behind globalising dynamics is such that the pillars of world economy are distinctly attributed some roles owing to their credibility and the particular positions they occupy in the global economy.

#### **IV- conclusion**

Globalisation between 1870 and 1914 was unique in various ways. Emphasis was placed on territorial conquests and expansion because land symbolised resources of all sorts. The world once came under the grip of imperialists and tensions arose nearly everywhere. The contemporary globalisation witnessed the growth of powerful multinational firms and powerful financial institutions that overshadowed the power of individual States and started moving the world towards the path of economic and political 'unseparatedness' with such a strong drive that no civilisation ever witnessed before.

The sharing of natural resources in this setting becomes subject to a unique logic defined by the forces that identify the global economy namely, interest and profit, capital's unimpeded movement, excessive mass consumption and monopoly. These are rules of the global game and their application certainly results to confrontations and civil unrest in many parts of the world. The stage at which we are in this line marks attempts at accommodating to the newly created motion whose magnitude is yet to be appraised appropriately.

The Bakassi conflict is just an illustration of the relationship between security and natural resource wars typical of the present day global system. Nigeria and Cameroon have been quarrelling over an oil rich boundary area and are now facing the hard realities of accommodation into the network of interrelatedness. The outcome of their dispute is absolutely subject not only to their mutual agreements and accords, but also to the external forces that determine the prevailing transnationalism.

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