When Insecurity Unite Political Foes: Analyzing the Impact of Diplomacy of Counter Terrorism on Nigeria and Cameroon Relations

Chilaka Francis Chigozie Ph.D. & Obianua Ugochukwu Onyebuchi

Abstract

The paper examines the impact of counter insurgency on Nigeria and Cameroon relations. The paper x-rays how the deployment of counter insurgency efforts by Nigeria and Cameroon have succeeded in bolstering the relations of the two countries who were foes for decades. The findings of the paper show that the weak cooperation between Nigeria and Cameroon have been exploited by the insurgents to strike. As a result of this, it was discovered that both Nigeria and Cameroon were seeking to mend fences to defeat Boko Haram. The findings also show that some of the diplomatic counter insurgency measures deployed to end the Boko Haram menace was the agreement for Cross Border Security Commission and the signing of an agreement for the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Cameroon to Nigeria. The paper recommends, intelligence sharing, unity and cooperation between Nigeria and Cameroon to ensure victory over the menace of insurgency.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Terrorism, Border, Counterinsurgency, Bakassi Peninsula, Diplomacy, Relations, Conflict.

Introduction

The prevalence of global terrorism represents a challenge to world peace, security and stability. The activities of transnational terrorists and other violent extremist groups operating with support from global terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Islamic State have continued to resonate across Africa. The activities of these non-state actors play major roles in fueling most of the current conflicts in Africa and beyond. Boko Haram threatens Nigeria’s population, basic human rights and the democratic system. The complex and evolving nature of Boko Haram is a threat not only to Nigeria’s population, basic human rights and the democratic system, but also to its immediate neighbors in the Lake Chad region. The realization that terrorism has no borders makes it imperative for nations to seek broader counterinsurgency efforts through alliances and cooperation. The relationship between Nigeria and Cameroon have for the past twenty years been cold and frosty. This is particularly due to the decade long border crisis between both countries and also due to the long suspicion of territorial enlargement the French speaking West African neighbors have held against the Nigerian state, as a result of these aforementioned reasons and, bilateral and multilateral relations among both countries have been at an all-time low as a result of animosity between these countries. However, attacked by a
common enemy which they are unable to defeat individually, both countries are finally learning to sulk it up by working together, a move that is bound to open up the path to further cooperation.

The Boko Haram menace in Nigeria, like a bushfire, has caught up with Cameroon, for instance, for the last two-and-a-half years, the Boko Haram insurgency has already caused 1,500 deaths, and led to 155,000 displaced persons and 73,000 refugees in Cameroon (International Crisis Group, 2016). Although the first attacks occurred in Cameroon in March 2014, the jihadist group’s presence in Cameroon’s Far North region dates back to at least 2011. It has benefited from a network of local collaborators and has exploited vulnerabilities that the region shares with north-eastern Nigeria. Despite this, the Cameroon’s government was slow to react against the Boko Haram menace, due to historic tensions with Nigeria, an aversion to intervening in what it perceived as its neighbour's internal problem, and a fear of becoming a target.

In fact, the Bakassi Peninsula, contest left a lot of bad blood between Nigeria and Cameroon which negatively affected bilateral relationship especially in trade. Despite sharing a 1,600 kilometer land boundary that extends from the Lake Chad to the Gulf of Guinea, trade between Nigeria and Cameroon is abysmally low. Cross border travel remains very difficult; on land, the routes are poorly established, on water, illegal ferrying dominates, while in air there is no direct flight to the next door neighbor. In order to boost the bilateral relationship between both countries, President Biya of Cameroon paid a state visit to Nigeria in May 3 to May 4, 2016 on the behest of the Nigerian President. The visit came after President Muhammadu Buhari visited his Cameroonian counterpart in July 2015. And indeed, the two-day stay of the Cameroonian president provided very good auspices for a reinvigoration of relations which had not quite, gone into limbo, but seemed to be losing the steam worthy of relations between countries that share very close proximity. The visit also gave a booster to the joint efforts being carried out by the two countries to fight the obscurantist Boko Haram sect. The strengthening of the military relationship between Nigeria and Cameroon could also lead to more bilateral economic cooperation as well as a stronger partnership at the Lake Chad region. It was an opportunity to turn momentary military coalition into an enduring regional relationship that crisscrosses all sectors, like security.

The aim of this paper is to examine how insecurity caused by insurgent groups, especially Boko Haram brought about rapprochement in Nigeria-Cameroon relations.

**Theoretical Framework**

One framework behind the use of multinational force to defeat a common enemy is the concept of Collective Security. Collective security is based on four basic tenets. First, all countries forswear the use of force except in self-defense. Second, all agree that the peace is indivisible. An attack on one is an attack on all. Third, all pledge to unite to halt aggression and restore the peace and fourth all agree to supply whatever material or personnel resources necessary to form a Collective Security force associated with some other International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) to defeat aggressors and restore the peace. The first tenet recognizes the fact that
Boko Haram is not acting in self-defense. Nigeria and Cameroon are aware that no meaningful developmental impact can be achieved without peace. More importantly, as a result of attacks on both countries by Boko Haram, they are aware that the best option before them is to unite and defeat Boko Haram.

Collective Security therefore seeks to confront would-be aggressors with the concerted power of states determined to keep the peace. It involves the commitment to go to war if necessary and to demonstrate to aggressor that man’s inhumanity to man is not acceptable. According to Palmer and Perkins (2004) the concept of collective security is in reality a complex and elusive one. It is a machinery for joint action in order to prevent or counter any attack against an established international order. In short, it implies collective measures for dealing with threats to peace. Collective security is a system of maintaining world peace and security by the concerned action and agreement of all involved (Barry, 1996, p.82). According to Asogwa (1999:87) Collective security aims at establishing a mutual responsibility and pooling the resources of several states in an effort to maintain international peace. Thus, the maintenance of the status quo becomes a community project instead of a unilateral or bilateral plan of action. In fact,

The practice of collective security requires all nations to join one universal alliance...When associated in this manner, each nation adjust its individual interests in favour of the group interests. When power is shared in an all-for-one and one-for-all alliance, the military and diplomatic resources of the entire group may be activated to police the misbehaving aggressor. The principle enjoins all nations to use and form a common front in fighting a perceived aggressor that threatens the security of any state or states (Asogwa, 1999, p.88).

Collective security employs an arrangement that is political, regional or global in nature in which states accept that the security of one is a responsibility for all, and commit to collective action against threat and breaches to peace though at the request of the sovereign whose peace is undermined. Collective security may be achieved through peacekeeping, peace-making, peace enforcement, and peace maintenance to restore the peace.

The import of the above is that the security of Nigeria and that of Cameroon made two hitherto unfriendly countries to come together to defeat a common threat to their sovereignty. Collective security is essentially but not exclusively the main factor that Cameroon which was reluctant to intervene in what she called for Nigeria’s internal affairs suddenly realized that threats posed by insurgent groups in the North East Nigeria would destroy her by engaging in do nothingness. In fact, the Boko Haram attacks in the Far North of Cameroon, has put a great strain on Cameroon’s development objectives. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that between 2014 and 2015, Cameroon’s security expenditure increased by some 1-2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) – that is FCFA189-378 billion ($320-640 million). But the overall economic impact was greater still. The conflict has eroded the economic structures in the Far North, pushing tens of thousands who lived from trade with Nigeria into poverty or bankruptcy. Some of the menace has led
to the destruction of schools, hospitals, administrative buildings and, sometimes, entire villages, the theft of cattle and brutal halt to tourism – paralysed the local economy, which now accounts for only 5 per cent of Cameroon’s GDP, compared with 7.3 per cent before the attacks began (International Crisis Group, 2016).

With both Nigeria and Cameroon faced with the Boko Haram threat, both states in 2015 in conjunction with other states of the Lake Chad Basin set up a multinational force of 8,700 soldiers and police drawn from all countries (International Crisis Group, 2016).

**Terrorism and Diplomacy: Conceptual Definitions**

The task of defining terrorism is complicated, but absolutely in order to develop a sufficient understanding of this phenomenon and to deal with it effectively. The complexity of defining terrorism has many aspects. It arises from the variety of parties who have used violence to instill terror. According to Oche and Dokubo (2001) terrorism originates from the Latin word “terrere”. It is characterized by the desire to attain its goals by frightening those it believes stands on its way. According to the US Federal Law, the term “terrorism” means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience. Shultz and Sloan (1980) defined it as the threat and or the use of extra normal form of political violence, in varying degrees with the objective of achieving certain political goals or objectives.

Terrorist employ various modes of attacks such as assassinations, kidnapping, skyjackings, threats and bombings to intimidate the targeted audience. Terrorism is the premeditated use of threat to use violence by individuals or sub-national groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate victims (Enders and Sandler, 2012). Violence is a symbol of terrorism, with some terrorists’ groups engaging in gruesome attacks to create widespread anxiety. To qualify as terrorism, an attack must have a political motive. Cline and Alexander (1987, P.215) defined terrorism as the deliberate employment of violence or the use of violence by sovereign states in order to attain strategic and political objectives through the violation of law. Many conceptualizations of terrorism therefore converge on the idea that it involves premeditated, politically or ideologically motivated. Lodge cited in Duruji & Oviasogie (2014) identified three broad types of terrorism. They are revolutionary terrorism aimed at political revolution, sub revolutionary terrorism which has political motives other than revolution and repressive terrorism aimed at restraining certain groups, individuals or forms of behavior deemed to be undesirable. Oche and Dokubo (2001) identified the broad types of terrorism as the non-state terrorism, state sponsored terrorism and the state directed or establishment terrorism.

Diplomacy has a significant and irreplaceable role in the fight against modern terrorism. What we think as the core skills of diplomacy probably appeared at the very beginning of human civilization during the creation of first organized human communities. Although warfare and the use of weapons have been the most important means of foreign policy for thousands of years, the
appearance of nation-states has necessarily led to diplomatic communication among them. As a result, it is possible to identify certain traditions of diplomatic practice in the ancient empires of China, India, Assyria, Egypt, Persia, etc. Diplomatic relations were regulated for the first time in ancient Greece, in which city-states persistently fought for significant inheritance from this tradition with the principle of the absolute inviolability of envoys. Even during the Roman era, diplomacy played a major role in the discourse on the peaceful management of international relations, mostly through negotiations between states, although it is important to note that diplomacy mostly preceded wars, instead of helping avoiding them. It is beyond doubt that most diplomatic activities require extensive knowledge. In this context, diplomacy may be prescribed as an intellectual activity based on the continuous gathering and processing of information, its analysis, and making decisions based on the available information.

The Nature of Cameroon-Nigeria Relations after Independence

Jonathan and Olayinka (2013, p. 184), noted that after independence, the relationship between Nigeria and Cameroon was been beneficial to the government and individual citizens of both countries. In the northern parts of the two countries, grazing lands are commonly used in some areas, for example, around Adamawa and Mandara Hills, grazers gain from this cooperation and the government of both countries equally derive revenue from tax collected in those areas. The fishermen from both sides jointly use the local rivers for fishing and other domestic purposes. The trend of Nigeria-Cameroon relationship underwent some changes the middle 1960’s. It was characterized by disharmony and inherently conflict prone. This was partly due to the influence exerted by France and the leadership role of Nigeria in the sub-region. Although, the rulers of these respective countries in the sub-region often attempted to portray the impression of cordiality in their official relationship. Nigeria relations with Cameroon from 1970-1980 has been characterized by mutual suspicion, distrust and alienation. The situation of rivalry and disharmony had perhaps been more pronounced in Nigeria-Cameroon border more than any others.

This was not unconnected with some actions and decisions taken by the Nigerian government which Cameroon regarded as out of place. Cameroon accused Nigerian government on the following grounds that Nigeria used her influence through Lake Chad Basin Commission to get Niger and Chad on her side. Secondly, that Nigerian fishermen have been fishing on their own side of the lake to the detriment of the Cameroonians, that Nigerian fishing boats plunder their water with the support of Nigerian Navy using Cameroon as a dumping ground, whereas the trading activities should be on a mutual consideration between the two countries. On the boundary issue, the Cameroonians regarded Nigeria as carving out an expansionist policy to grab more land from small and weak Cameroon. In fact, the Cameroonian authority is of the opinion that Nigerian government masterminded the result of the referendum in 1959 in the former Northern section of the British controlled Cameroon that Nigerian government sent in thousands of Nigerians to vote against the idea of uniting with Cameroon.
Furthermore, the Cameroonian authority regarded Nigerian claim to the ownership of Bakassi Peninsula as an attempt by the Nigerian government to grab more territories from Cameroon. This according to the Cameroonians was regarded as unacceptable and would not be allowed to take place. Hence they were prepared to use all diplomatic means available to block what they regarded as Nigeria’s territorial expansionist policy. Border conflicts are some of those problems that constitute a grave and permanent factor of dissension among nations. Nigeria and Cameroon conflict is one of those cases.

Nigeria and Cameroon are located on the west coast of the continent of Africa. Both of them shared common political and economic institutions as part of British West Africa. Nigeria with the population of about 150 million covers a land area of 924,630km extending from the Gulf of Guinea in the south to Niger and Chad Republics in the north. It shares common border with the republic of Benin on the west and the Republic of Cameroon on the east. Cameroon on the other hand is a smaller country both in land mass and in population. The population of Cameroon is estimated at 9.7 million occupying an area of 475,442km. Cameroon shares borders with the Chad republic on the north, with the Central African Republic on the north-west with the republic of Gabon and the People’s Republic of Congo on the south and with Nigeria on the west. The boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon Republic which was engendered by the long but not defined border (1680 kilometers or 1050 miles) could be traced to the pre-colonial period when the European imperialist sat at Berlin in the year 1884 to partition the Continent of African among themselves. However, the boundary dispute had remained a source of conflict in the bi-lateral relations of the two countries since independence (Jonathan and Olayinka, 2013).

**The Border Crisis between Nigeria and Cameroon**

The issue as to the ownership of Bakassi has for a long time become a contending issue in Nigeria-Cameroon relationship. It has led to boundary diplomatic intrigues and conflicts between the two countries. Bakassi Peninsula is a strategic territory located in the South Eastern part of Nigeria, and the Western part of Cameroon. It is adjacent to the border between Cameroon and Nigeria. The swampy peninsula cut by a series of channels, covers an area of 50sp km. In 1884, Britain signed a treaty of protection with indigenous rulers that gave Britain control over the peninsula (Jonathan and Olayinka, 2013).

Subsequently however, the area was included in German colony as a result of the 1913 agreement between Germany and Britain. From the end of the First World War to the independence of Cameroon in 1960, the Bakassi peninsula and present day South Western Cameroon were administered by Britain as part of Nigeria. Geographically, the Bakassi peninsula is bounded to the east by Rio-de-Rey, to the north-West by Akpayafe, to the west by estuary of Cross River and to the South by the Atlantic Ocean. It is an extension of old Calabar territory in terms of language, culture and ancestral affinity. It covers about 1000 square kilometers or 400 miles. Located around the forest zone of South Eastern Nigeria, the weather is wet with an annual rainfall of about 2800mm. It has about 47
villages. The population is about 600,000. The primary occupation of the people is fishing and it is inhabited by the Efiks from Cross River State, the Ibibios, Annangs, Orons and Andionis from Akwa Ibom state as well as the Ijaws and Itshekiri from Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States (Chukwura, 1981).

Apart from the presence of crude oil, there is the presence of the deep sea which was claimed to have been very rich in living creatures such as fish, lobsters, prawns and shrimps. To that end, it is important to note that the history between Cameroon and Nigeria is marked by a unique colonial history and conflict of resources, which in some ways, persists today. In October 2002, the International Court of Justice (IJC) ruled that the Bakassi Peninsula, the area along the African Atlantic Gulf of Guinea, rich with oil reserves, rightfully belonged to Cameroon (International Court of Justice, Judgment of 10 October 2002). Although Nigeria initially disputed the International Court of Justice’s decision, Nigeria formally and diplomatically ceded Bakassi to Cameroon in August 2008, following the United Nations’ brokered Greenleaf Agreement, thus putting an end to 15 years of border conflict (Agence France Presse, 2013). It was at this pivotal moment that a United Nations-backed five-year transitional period began, allowing Cameroon to develop an administrative presence in the area. When this period ended on Aug. 14, 2013, Cameroon was finally able to take full sovereignty of the area (Chimtom, 2013). The proximity of Bakassi to Nigeria made it mandatory for the Federal government of Nigeria and Cameroon to need each other to survive. This is because of the fact that both of them are members of the same international organizations and agencies and are also faced by a single enemy which is the Boko Haram terrorist group.

**Impact of Counter-insurgency on Nigeria-Cameroon Relations**

Nigeria and Cameroon have for the past 20 years been cold neighbors at best and warring nations at worst. Since after the border crisis that have dominated relations among both countries, they have been unable to fully restore their relations. Although the dispute between both countries have received a final ruling in court which they have both accepted, there has remained a high level of animosity and low level of bilateral cooperation between both nations, until the Boko Haram terrorist group began its operations. Attacked by a common enemy which they are unable to defeat individually both countries are finally learning to work together, a move that is bound to open the path to further cooperation.

It goes without saying that Nigeria and Cameroon's contentious history is one marked not only by past border conflict over resources, but also by a general mistrust of the others' political motivations. Cameroon’s initial reluctance in aiding its Nigerian neighbors from the growing Boko Haram threat was most palpable in the media months after President Goodluck Jonathan, declared Emergency Rule in some states in the North East in 2013. The multi-national force enforcing emergency rule in Nigeria's northeast at the time was made up of Nigerian troops, assisted by soldiers from Chad and Niger. However, Cameroon remained reluctant to engage further for fear of Boko Haram reprisals within its own borders (Hazelwood, 2013).
Following the Chibok school girl kidnappings in northeastern Nigeria, investigations revealed that the Cameroonian government had issued a directive to all its military commanders in charge of border areas with Nigeria, in the directive, Cameroon’s Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization gave specific orders to commanders to withhold crucial information from Nigeria about Nigerian insurgents (Cameroon Web, 2014). In fact, the International Crisis Group (2016) noted that the first signs of Boko Haram in Cameroon dates back at least to 2009. During this period, Boko Haram was probably not seeking to proselytize or recruit in the Far North border communities of Cameroon, but mainly to take refuge there. However, the Nigerian security services were already insisting that the group was using Cameroon as a rear base and alerted the Cameroonian authorities without any palpable security assistance from them.

It was only a matter of time, however, before Cameroon’s government would come around and begin slowly to building trust in its Nigerian counterpart for the sake of the border’s economy. Shortly, thereafter, it created a joint body aimed at securing their common border from Boko Haram and pirates in the Gulf of Guinea (Hazelwood, 2013). Not long after Boko Haram began imposing its atrocities across Northern Cameroon, Cameroonian forces joined Nigeria, Benin, Chad, and Niger in sharing intelligence and border surveillance. On December 2, 2014, following rumors that the terrorist group began recruiting young Cameroonians to fight for them, the Republic of Cameroon became alerted to the reality of Boko Haram danger (Kindzeka, 2014).

This was also helped by the pressure the Nigerian state mounted on Cameroon coupled with Boko Haram incursions along its frontier, Cameroon began to dismantle Boko Haram’s arms caches. This led the jihadist movement – which probably had no political agenda or territorial expansion project in Cameroon at first – to harden its position. Boko Haram then multiplied attacks on border communities, while distributing leaflets calling on the population not to cooperate with the army. A spectacular attack on the Waza construction camp of the Chinese company Sinohydro in May 2014 finally pushed Cameroon into declaring war on Boko Haram and deploying 700 soldiers from the BIR as reinforcements in the Far North. In July 2014, the abduction of the deputy prime minister's wife, members of his family and the mayor of the city of Kolofata led to the deployment of a further 3,000 troops (International Crisis Group, 2016).

The International Crisis Group (2016) noted that since the traces of Boko Haram was noticed in March 2014, in Cameroon, the conflict has left at least 125 dead and more than 200 wounded among the security forces and led to at least 1,400 civilian deaths. In the course of more than 100 attacks, Boko Haram is believed to have abducted more than 1,000 people, mainly women and girls: some have been used to stage suicide attacks, while others have been forcibly married to members of the group. The defence forces claim to have killed about 2,000 presumed members of the group and arrested at least 970.

The Jeune Afrique, magazine of 29 July 2015, reported that the shock caused by the Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon, particularly those in Maroua, led to the adoption of new administrative and
security measures such as bans on the full face veil (*burqa*), on public gatherings and on the use of motorbikes, the imposition of a 6pm closing time for bars, numerous inspections and searches, the monitoring or even closure of mosques and the arrest of supposed lyradical imams and the reinforcement of police and gendarmerie manpower for intelligence gathering.

As Boko Haram gained territorial control and expanded across north-east Nigeria and the threat the group posed spread across the borders of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, regional concerns increased, pushing governments towards military cooperation. The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) created by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in 1998 to address cross-border security issues in the Lake Chad region was reactivated by the LCBC in 2012 with an expanded mandate to encompass counter terrorism operations. It was given a clearer strategy against Boko Haram at the extraordinary summit of LCBC member states in Benin in October 2014. Unlike its previous iteration, the task force included Cameroon among its troop contributing countries and was provided with pledges of financial support from international actors including the African Union (AU). The United States, the United Kingdom, the European and France. This is one of the numerous efforts put in place by both countries in order to defeat the Boko Haram menace.

In another bid to foster bilateral relations amongst both countries, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the government of Cameroon and the United Nations High Commission for refugees have signed an agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Nigeria refugees in Cameroon. The agreement which is said to be a legal framework that sets out the modalities for the voluntary return of refugees to their home country in safety and dignity. The tripartite agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Nigeria refugees living in Cameroon was as a result of more than 35,000 Nigerian refugees who fled the Boko Haram insurgency in the north east, some of who are currently living in the North East region of Cameroon with about 62,000 living in Minawao refugee camp (*The Eagle Online*, 2017).

In another recent development on May 5, 2016, after a bilateral meeting between the presidents of both countries, the president also welcomed an agreement by experts from both countries to construct a bridge across the river to link Beleri in Nigeria and Densa in Cameroon and provide related infrastructure along the corridor. According to the minister of foreign affairs, Buhari and Biya have directed the signing of both the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and terms of reference on the execution of the project.

To fight against insecurity along Nigeria and Cameroon shared border, the two countries signed an agreement on the establishment of a Cross Border Security Committee (CST) on February28. 2012 in Abuja. In this context, a meeting between the officials in charge of surveillance and intelligence gathering was fixed (Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon, 2005). Formbui (2016, p. 26), observed that;

The fight against Boko Haram is a major concern for the two countries. Cameroon has reorganized its military structures in the northern region. The fourth inter-military region (RMIA4), a fourth police region and the 41st
motorized infantry brigade (4th Brim) were created in August 2014. Heavy military equipment and 6,000 men deployed in the far north to defend the country’s territory. The Cameroon- Nigeria Cross Border Security Committee held its first session on November 6-8 2013 in Yaoundé. The second session was on July 8-11, 2014 in Abuja. Yaoundé hosted the third meeting on February 18- 20, 2015. Recommendations to jointly fight effectively against crime, in general have been developed. On January 16-19, 2015, a workshop on cross-border cooperation was held in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom state, Nigeria. This workshop identified several zones of common interest that require collaboration between the two countries to develop the border areas.

The committee meets twice a year in ordinary sessions alternately in Cameroon and Nigeria. It may also convene an extraordinary session. Nigeria and Cameroon cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally to effectively fight against the threat posed by Boko Haram which is manifested by the terrorists’ attacks in both countries. The exemplary security cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria resulted in the release of seven (7) French hostages kidnapped in Cameroon on February 19, 2013 and released on April 19, 2013 (Formbui, 2016, p. 26). In the same vein, a French priest by the name Father George Vanderbeusch was kidnapped on November 14, 2013. Security cooperation between the two countries also led to the release of the priest on December 31, 2013. In recent times, military operations conducted jointly in the field by the coalition forces of Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad have recorded successes against Boko Haram. In recent months, Boko Haram has suffered heavy losses and lost most localities captured in north-eastern Nigeria (Martin, 2015, p.13).

Both countries having long history of mutual distrust and suspicion, been faced with a common enemy, has led to the rejuvenation of relation. Several projects that is aimed at restoring trust and relations amongst these countries is underway and they include among others: -The construction of the Bamenda-Enugu cross border road, which started on June 21, 2010. Its completion is highly anticipated. This will help strengthen relations between Cameroon and Nigeria by encouraging free flow of people, goods and services across the border. The Bamenda-Enugu road corridor now emerges as a vital instrument of the harmonization and integration of both neighboring countries. The impressive project that runs from Bamenda, the metropolitan capital of the North West region through Batiba-Widikum-Mamfe-Ekok into Nigeria’s cities of Ikom-Ogoja, Abakiliki and Enugu showcases friendliness and strength in Cameroon-Nigeria relations. It leads both countries out of infrastructural deficiencies and facilitates growth of trade. The multi-national highway and transport facility is an economic boost for the masses on the corridor. The Bamenda-Enugu corridor sets Cameroon and Nigeria on the path of economic prosperity. Both countries are expected to produce projects to valorize and maximize the profitability of the corridor, while keeping brothers and sisters on both sides together (Martin, 2015).
Another enviable milestone achieved between both countries was the electrical interconnection project for the transfer of energy from Cameroon to Nigeria whose finalization was made during the fifth session of the Cameroon-Nigeria Enlarged Mixed Commission for cooperation in 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria and signatures were accorded for the electrical interconnection agreement of February 18, 2011 in Yaoundé.

One element that has destabilized the region’s economy and security over the last five years is the Nigeria Islamic sect, book haram whose full scale insurgency of massacres, assassinations, kidnappings, enslavement, terrorism and other crimes against humanity have all but paralyzed the daily lives of Northern Nigerians and their day to day economy (Sharma, 2014). Because activities of the insurgency have spilled over northern Cameroon and parts of Chad and Niger, the need to contain this ruthless group of militants has taken on a regional dimension. In spite of this, Nigeria and Cameroon have embarked on a series of bilateral and multi-lateral agreements in the area of economy in order to reawaken its battered economy and by so doing defeat the terrorist group. The trade agreement of April 11, 2014 can be described as historic as it granted access to the Nigerian market for many of Cameroonian products including soap, vegetable oil, wood, art textiles or cocoa powder. Once ratified, the agreement will facilitate transactions in both currencies.

From February 27 to March 2, 2013, Nigeria’s National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and Cameroon National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR) began negotiations on establishing a partnership between the two institutions to further facilitate trade and the fight against circulation of counterfeit drugs between Cameroon and Nigeria. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between ANOR and the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) has been signed, while a partnership between NAFDAC and ANOR is being negotiated (Martin, 2015).

Conclusion
It is imperative to state that terrorism is no longer a problem that is peculiar to a state, rather time has shown that this hydra headed monster transcends territorial boundaries and have in recent times become a global phenomenon. Given this, Nigeria and Cameroon having been embroiled in decades of intense violence, hate and suspicion amongst themselves is finally learning to swallow its pride and thereby team up together to fight a common enemy that have almost defied every means put up individually by both nations to end the deadly surge of terrorism. In view of this, diplomacy is now effectively deployed by both states through the signing of various bilateral and multilateral agreements aimed at enhancing cooperation between both countries in a bid to defeat terrorism.

References


