CAMEROON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND NIGHTMARE EPISODE 1982 -2008: THE OPPORTUNITIES LOST AND GAINED IN SECURING A NATIONAL CONSENSUS

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Abstract

The present study is focused on the key episodes that threatened the foundation and existence of Cameroon and evaluates the astuteness of Biya’s craftsmanship in managing the events from 1982 to 2008. It examines the mechanics used by him in handling the incidences and how his approach shaped the fate of the country. Such events included the resignation of Ahidjo in 1982, the abortive coup against Biya 1983, the economic crisis1986, the re-introduction of multiparty in 1990, the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994, along with the Cameroon-Nigeria crisis, the SCNC coup plots and the transport workers strike. These events represent crucial moments of shock and bewilderment (nightmares) not only because they provided a completely new leadership matrix to the Cameroun government but also because, the mainstream political leadership was ravelled by internal wrangling and sufficient confusion in attempting to provide lasting solutions. With the use of qualitative methodology, a critique of primary, secondary and tertiary sources, the article validates that the diplomacy of compromise, abscond and revenge employed by the New Deal Regime in response to the episodes was a mere political gimmick that guaranteed no sustainability in the Cameroon political progress.

Keywords: political leadership, diplomacy, nightmares, compromise, revenge

1. Introduction

The political shape and the brand of local politicians that took up the leadership command of Cameroon at independence could hardly be imagined in the early 1950s. This was enveloped in the fact that, France’s adhesion to her policy of assimilation which grew to adopt the tone of association, kept the territories under its command in a confused state. Though Britain through its policy of Indirect Rule pointedly heralded Independence to its territory at any point in time, the time, circumstances and shape through and under which this independence was to be achieved could hardly be discernable. Irked mainly by external pressures on the part of French Cameroun and British mechanization on the part of the British, French Cameroun got its Independence on January 1st 1960 and this was completed on Octo-
ber 1st 1961 when British Southern Cameroons equally became independent.

The Cameroon political leadership with Ahidjo at its helm, encountered problems of varying shapes and contents but this stemmed mainly from French influence, Union des Populations Camerounaise (UPC) scare and internal strife between the different shades of opinions that operated in Cameroon at the time. From 1961 to 1982, Ahidjo combined mechanization replete with brute force and skilful leadership and succeeded in the main to impose his political philosophy and administrative techniques on every facets of the Cameroon economy. In every aspect, Ahidjo governing techniques created allowances for a myriad of confusion and growing speculation. It was a contextualized form of political leadership rooted in the Gaullist philosophy that found faith and blossomed in the African territories colonized by France.

In this kind of spirit, the fear of the unknown continued to gain heights among his political rivals who unfortunately had few or no opportunities to express themselves. The most obvious thing was that; political nightmares were hardly envisaged or discernable in a foreseeable future. His abrupt resignation from office on November 4th 1982 against all expectations therefore constituted a classic political nightmare not only because it ran counter to the thinking of northern political barons but also because it incidentally set the stage for other nightmares that encumbered Cameroon from 1982 to 2008. This paper re-examines the rudiments of Cameroon political leadership and the tactics it employed to deal with disturbing episodes in the Cameroon political evolution. It asserts that this leadership adopted a sort of parochial diplomacy pregnant with compromise and revenge as a response. In this frame, they colossally failed to weigh the possible future repercussions of this kind of practice on the political developments on the people and cultures of Cameroon. In all, this make-shift postures that were intended as much as possible to handle the consequences rather than the real causes of the nightmares prepared the ground for the implantation and growth of deep seated chain of evils like nepotism, corruption, tribalism and favouritism which has continued to gain space within the Cameroon political system.

1.1. Rudiments of Cameroon Political Leadership

The kind of political nightmares that gripped Cameroon from the 1982 had its origins from the brand of leaders that guided Cameroun to independence and continued to paddle the country’s affairs even after that period. These leaders emerged essentially from a parochial French mould which was more than ever, determined to defend mainly its interest in foreign soils. Through the assimilation policy which was fraught with contradictions in many areas, France succeeded to silence and nabbed from their buds leaders that were passionately nationalistic and fought hard to destroy any sentiment that failed or refused to present them (French people and their various colonial gurus) in all aspects as political messiahs bestowed with the candour of care that transcended common colonial bonds including their selfish colonial objectives in African soils. Besides, nurturing these leaders in a proto-type French philosophy and world view which glorified France in every aspect, these policies deliberately failed to train the different grades of people within their territories with the spirit of leadership that could imbue in them the latitude to birth visions and chart out an assuring future for the people placed under their leadership.

This made the task of responding to any sudden uprisings exceedingly cumbersome. In Cameroon in particular, they overwhelmingly succeeded to give those who genuinely fought for independence and a true Cameroon identity like Reuben Um Nyobe, Ernest Oundie, Abel Kingue, Felix and Moumie Etia, low keyed profiles in any witty political consultation. In the main, France

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through its various agents in Cameroon fought hard to make these true breed of nationalists to pass for both notorious and unpopular people. Indeed, they mounted people like Andre Marie Mbida, Amadou Ahidjo, Ayissi Mvondo and Charles Okalla to be known and branded in national and international circles as veritable patriots bestowed with the candour of strategic leadership thereby possessing a true national conscience. Even at this, France still struggled to impose a kind of divide and rule system among them which had the merit in their judgement of keeping these henpecked leaders poised to disagree most of the time. This malicious practice gained the merit of removing all plans of forming any front to root out any colonial malpractice. With this kind of manipulation which France gave it the surface image of care, she gained the merit not only to mould people but also prepared the background and nurtured the mental frames of a leadership in Cameroon and Africa at large that could hardly leave up to surprises or emergencies at any point in time.

The Constitution of La Republique du Cameroun which became the substance of the Law in March 1960 and the subsequent Federal constitution of 1st October 1961 provided enough legal allowance for any emergency or nightmare to be handled. In the French political mind, emergencies were envisaged only from a single angle in the Cameroun political landscape. Having eliminated the core members of the UPC and the anti-French or less cooperative figures like Bebey Eyidi from malingering in the frontline politics in Cameroun, Ahidjo with the help of the French had not more than one thing to fear or deal with. In their calculation, the main obstacle on their way was how to get a suiting therapy which could permit them to woo and gradually encompass Southern Camerooners to fit perfectly into their political mould. Within the 1960s and 80s Ahidjo through a shrewd show of a diplomacy pregnant with compromise and revenge which constantly carried the flame of brute force and skilful leadership, proved to be the right person to allay the main fear. He(Ahidjo) registered bountiful success not only to quell down any real or fictive fears and symptoms of opposition first to himself and then to the French, but scored an excellent bench mark in French colonial realms in his tact of systematically bringing Southern Camerooners into the La Republic du Cameroun political agenda without any visible qualms.

Conversely, the political leadership that emerged in the Southern Cameroon was made up of people of a special breed and political upbringing. Besides the fact that almost all of them were trained by the missionaries who imbued in them a culture of rigour in private and public undertakings, their political training was in many aspects void of vain demagogy and deep-seated rancour. Their political and leadership and belief system conformed to the Voltarian political philosophy which gave mankind the right to disagree with everything and anybody that he found wrong but to fight to death defending that person’s right to voice out his or her idea.

Beneath this, was the Southern Cameroonians firm belief on the rule of the majority and the right of the minority? To add to this was the fact that, most of them were acquainted with the British way of life which gave them not only a range of responsibilities but rights as well. Of interest too, is the fact that those who paraded the political limelight in this part of the country after independence were mostly those who fought for it. However, this seemingly fine political mould void of rancour had little or nothing to offer in the...
Federal experiment and even thereafter because, Ahidjo’s state craftsmanship had insipid spirits of over-centralisation talk less of dictatorship. This kind of leadership which was largely held within the political board to be in-human had the credit in that, it forcefully brought the fragile parts of the young and divided states of Cameroon together and at the end, created a spirit of national consciousness which was a sine qua-non condition for development.

In no particular order the people who negotiated the structures of governance in Southern Cameroon during and after independence were John Ngu Foncha, Solomon Tandeng Muna, Augustin Ngom Jua, ST Lainjo,N.N. Mbile ,Emmanuel Lifafa Endeley to provide but just a short list. As stated, these men seemingly mounted and made concrete in the spirit of the missionary and the Indirect Rule, were all overshadowed by the Ahidjo centralisation scheme which gave him exceeding rights to neutralise any spirit that went contrary to the French. To be fair, throughout the 1960s, and 70s, Ahidjo was able to stand the test of all emergency that came his way in conducting his state craftsmanship.

He had the fortune or hind sightedness of being surrounded by political mates and mentors that mastered the political landscape in Cameroon in greater details. Safe for the remnants of the UPC and some personal wrangling that constantly encumbered its leadership, Cameroon at the beginning of the 1980s stood at a very buoyant and safe plain. Besides being heralded as the bread basket of Central Africa, France’s profound involvement in Cameroon as stipulated by a series of financial agreements signed between 1958 and slightly modified in 1973, helped it to have a steadily favourable balance of payment and a lowering external financial debts. Indeed, in the 1980s Ahidjo through the mentorship of France had practically destroyed any threat to his regime and was poised to rule for ever.

For a stretch of 21 years (1960-81), Cameroonians of all walks of life had grown to know that their president from creation was a no nonsense Ahidjo and their party was the CNU. The only way out for those who cared about political developments in this era was to grapple even against their personal wishes to glorify this order. In this kind of atmosphere pregnant with a sort of “Gestopo” service, nightmares were hardly envisaged or at best almost unthinkable. Throughout all these years, Ahidjo transformed almost every facet of the country’s political chest board to take the tempo and mind-set of his vision but French politicians were beginning to see him to be gaining exceedingly more than sufficient comfortable space in the political rostrum to be easily managed. This set the stage for the search of an eminent successor thereby echoing and masterminding the first nightmare.

1.2. The Resignation of Ahmadou Ahidjo

No single or collective event produced shock waves in the Cameroon power mechanics than the resignation of Ahmadou Ahidjo on the 4th of November 1982. His resignation and tactful transfer of the reins of power to Paul Biya is fitting enough to be regarded as a nightmare because it entailed a whole range of issues that had to do with change and also because it took many people by surprise. In plain, it entailed; a change of power control and leadership from a Muslim to a Christian; from the predominantly northern Muslim barons to the emerging and mounting coalition of predominantly southern Christians from

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8 Comprehensive list of the real actors of the Southern Cameroon political story has been presented by N.N. Mbile, The Cameroon Political Story: Memories of an Authentic Eye Witness. 2002, pp. 263-7.


11 Enoh Meyomesse, Le limogeage D’Ahmadou Ahidjo, Yaounde, Les edition du Kamerun, 2007, pp. 65-9. A cursory look of his argument clearly suggest that Ahidjo did everything to conceal the fact that he was feeling like resigning to the top member of his party especially the gurus from his Muslim north who after 21 years in leadership, were prepared to keep power only within their rungs as much as possible.

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the old fashioned style of leadership definitely fraught with terror in any field to as it later came to be in the 1990s to a young, new and more tolerant kind of leadership which proved to be wanting in the face of some emergencies. This kind of sudden change was to later conform to the dynamics of the change processes where the circumstances leading to; and the agents of change rather tended to create situations and conflicts than provide an array of opportunities. This ultimately offered a matrix within which the different parts of the society were no longer easy to be kept on check.

The fact that Ahidjo was going to be replaced in office was an open secret among the French political barons. It was in consonance to the politics of renewal of state personnel’s adopted by the French government of Vallery Gisgard D’estaing from 1974 which through observing the series of mutations in French former territories came to conclude that the supposedly “famous fathers of independence” serving as presidents in the countries under their influence, were fast losing their grip over their citizens or becoming too comfortable to be easily managed. Ahidjo by force of circumstances happened to have been belonging to the later group. Going by the result of the presidential elections of 1980, he was still as much very popular in Cameroon. Unfortunately for him, the French government had chosen that their replacement experiment was going to be conducted in Cameroon alongside Senegal and Ivory Coast. Determined to execute this experiment at all cost, France set the items to be found in the curriculum of the candidate to succeed Ahidjo. To them, the person had to be (a) A truly “frenchified” Cameroonian with both a long and rich profile in administration having occupied key posts like the director of Cabinet (b) somebody who has never been anti-French especially during the independence struggle and (c) one who was younger than Ahidjo.

They equally assured that constitutional modifications were effected to allow the prime minister to succeed the president in case of any vacancy and that, the president to be replaced had to voluntarily resign from office while his mandate was still young. Going by this, France seemed to be making everything easy for Ahidjo or at best, everything seemed to be working together for Biyayas’ good. This was because besides being a legitimate heir as prescribed by the constitution, Biya’s curriculum vitae was a perfect fit to the conditions set forth by France. In addition, Ahidjo’s personal admiration for Biya coupled by what later proved to be political naivety, only gave it a home credence.

After the 1980 presidential election which Ahidjo worn by the traditional 99.99 percent, France knew for sure that the road to switch off power from him to the next person had been completed and inaugurated. The time for the programmed political drama was to be determined by circumstances which Ahidjo and France both deemed most fitted. Rumours of Ahidjo’s intentions to hand over power were circulating but that amounted to mere vain calculations and wishes because his conduct, humour and physical out-fit in all public gatherings presented a man who had no grain of health or psyche of imbalance let alone the thinking of relinquishing power. This notwithstanding, at 8:23 pm on the 4th of November, Cameroonians of all walks of life were startled by Ahidjo’s announcement of his resignation. The resignation speech read thus:

president of the United Republic of Cameroon. This decision will take effect on the 6th of November at 10 a.m. From the depth of my heart in this crucial moment, I want to thank those for close to 25 years have given me the confidence and support to execute the heavy and complicated functions

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14It is a little risky to measure the popularity of African leaders in former French territories in the 1980 using elections. This is because election were for the most part a sort of window dressing to actuate by those in power to legitimise their stay in office. There result obtained in elections most of the time hard little in common to do with the political heart beats of the people on the ground.

that office required of me. In a more particular way, I want to thank the militants of our great national party the CNU for their total and unflinching support....I invite Cameroonian of all walks of life to give their unconditional confidence and support to my constitutional heir M.Paul Biya. He merits the confidence of all within and out of Cameroon. I employ you to maintain the spirit of a united people, very patriotic, hardworking and worthy of respect. I pray God almighty to help him[Paul Biya] to continue to accomplish the dreams of a re-born Cameroon.... Long live Cameroon.16

Though the tone and content of this speech still present Ahidjo as a true patriot conscious of the weaknesses, grateful to all and sundry, ready to submit himself under the Laws of the land and prepared as he charged the other Cameroonians to, give Biya the support needed, his failure to explain the motivations behind his resignation left many Cameroonians in a state of confusion which enormously broadened the scope of speculation, fear and shock. Bewilderment gripped most Cameroonians not only because he was resigning but more so, because Paul Biya his announced constitutional heir was seen as a man with a dwarf spirit and character not fit enough to manage political affairs like Ahidjo.17

Again this kind of abrupt resignation ran contrary to the convictions of many people at the time who had branded Ahidjo and a host of other dictators in French Africa as people who were ready to die in office than to see any of their subordinates rule them. The slogan of the righteousness of the founding fathers of French African nations was gaining popular space and convictions in the political chessboard. These convictions found their material substance in the fact that; Ahidjo masked himself behind the search for a united and strong nation and dealt with his opponents mercilessly. Again, after the CNU congress that held in Douala in 1975 which Ahidjo indicated that he was running out of steam and was considering resigning,18 his countenance and humour still ignited hope and militants of the great national party admonished not weaver in the conduct of his state duties. Indeed, by 1982 many people still found in him the splendour of an architect of the Cameroon nation with no equal in the foreseeable horizon reasons for the varied reactions to the nightmare.

Ahidjo’s abrupt resignation from the office of president provided room for the offshoot of many shades of opinions in the Cameroon political landscape. There was in all about four types of groups that shared the same or common political ambitions. The first were the complacent generation who though feeling disturbed about the implication that were to come with change, were ready to work with any new people that could deliver the goods. This group saw nothing definitely wrong with change because in every facet it represented a simple switch of personalities and not systems per se. There were ready to offer their unalloyed support to the New Deal authorities as much and as frequent as need was to arise. The second group was the radicals who saw the resignation as an open door to a world of opportunities where talents could be measured and most importantly where the ideals of liberalism could be dramatized. To this group, the departure of Ahidjo from power required more than mere jubilation. Biya’s meek look and composure in all circumstances combined to give them the assurances that Ahidjo’s age of terrorism was fast gaining its place in the museum of antiquity.

Candidly, Ahidjo was sick but his ill health situation was blown out of proportion by the French.

16For a full reading of the resignation speech see the National Gazette also published by the Cameroon Daily of November 7th 1982.NB I have taken the liberty to translate the text from French into English.

17Until 1984 after the April 6th coup plot, most people took Biya training and profile in political leadership for granted. His school and political mates mistook his silence for ignorance but Ahidjo seemed to know him most.

18See minutes of deliberations during the 1975 CNU congress. Augustine Ngom Jua a political Guru from the defunct Southern/West Cameroon summoned the courage to tell Ahidjo and the rest of the party comrades that he was fit to continue after Ahidjo .His courage only amounted to vain arrogance because members in attendance from all walks of life cried and prayed him through motions of support to remain in office.
the very people who moulded and mounted him firm as a statesman. Among the political class at the time only Paul Biya in Ahidjo’s mind was a perfect fit to replace him not only because of the constitutional allowance that held him so, but more so because he had an elegant profile and temperaments of a person worth being manipulated even out of office. This found its evidence in his decision to keep the CNU party chairmanship. By so doing, he thought that he could still tele-guide his successor since it was the CNU party that defined and set up the policy of the nation.

Unlike Ahidjo who had mostly the French to please and who also depended on French support in moments of urgency, Biya upon ascension to the throne as president, had manifold political shades to give him a focus. This became visible in the various postures taken as a result of Ahidjo’s resignation. With the accession of Biya to power, a possible nightmare was out of imagination to the ordinary masses and Ahidjo who had known him to be loyal, humble and dwarf enough to be remote-controlled by Ahidjo and the CNU. Ahidjo was therefore very myopic to read under his nostrils the opposition of the northern political barons of his choice of Biya who again graduated overnight from a weakling to a lion and even modified state policies and made cabinet reshuffles without Ahidjo’s knowledge. Thus, Biya’s sudden transformation wooed Ahidjo to ally with the northern political barons’ opposition and the conclusion was to issue a death warrant of which Biya successfully outsmarted.

1.3. The Abortive Coup

The failed coup of April 6th 1984 came as a nightmare to the ordinary Cameroonians but never was it a surprise to those within the power corridors. The coup came as a result of the failure to effectively manage the following: conflict between the president and the CNU party chairperson, the Biya-Ahidjo rift, Ahidjo’s sudden resignation, numerous cabinet reshuffles, Biya’s provocative statements to northerners, the North-South division, fear of financial crash and the drastic transfers of the republican guards. All these culminated to the premature coup of 1984 but; how Biya applied his diplomacy of compromise and revenge to handle the nightmare is a subject of interest.

Since the coup was plotted by Northerners, most of whom Gendarmes of the Republican Guards, it became a Southern-Northerner affair. The results was the immediate open fire in which many republican guards were killed, some arrested, some imprisoned and the coup leaders were tried and condemned to death by the Mbalmayo Military Tribunal and instantly executed. They included Colonel Ibrahim Saleh, Captain Awal Abassi, Issa Adoum, Sadou Ahmadu and Yaya Adoum all from the North. All northerners especially the political class in Cameroon suspected of having knowledge of the coup were arrested, jailed, isolated, deposed and others forced into exile.

Besides the immediate punitive and short-lived measures, Biya in his policy of national unity and integration pardoned, reconciled and rehabilitated some of the Ahidjo’s power brokers he had dismissed from government with lucrative posts in various parastatals. For example, Samuel Eboa(former Secretary General at the Presidency) was appointed chairperson of the Board of Governors of the Cameroon Airlines, Victor Ayissi Mvodo (former Minister of Territorial Administration) made the chairperson of the Board of Governors of the National Investment Corporation and Maikono Abdulaye (former Minister of Armed Forces) appointed Director of the National Veterinary Laboratory. In addition to these, some of those sanctioned with life

\[19\] When Adhidjo’s wife Gemaine was interviewed over BBC radio in June 2006, concerning the circumstances under which Ahidjo resigned and the conditions for Biya’s choice as successor, she never minced her words in declaring that Biya among his contemporaries like Ayissi Mvondo and Samuel Ebau, Biya was considered to be calm, respectful, bilingual and a non-biased man.

\[20\] Victor Julius Ngoh, History of Cameroon Since 1800, pp.291-293.

\[21\] Ibid., 1996,p.293-95.

\[22\] Ibid., p.298.
jail benefited Biya’s clemency and many were also liberated. This diplomacy of compromise and revenge might have succeeded largely but the fate of Cameroon seem to have been mortgaged to favouritism, nepotism, tribalism and corruption.

1.4. The Economic Crisis

The economic malaise that gripped Cameroon from the mid-1980s to early 2000s was one of the nightmares that sent shocking waves to Cameroonians and its political class. Although the starting date of the crisis is a subject of dispute within the academia as many argued that Ahidjo transferred an ailing economy to Biya in 1982, some observers and critics blamed it on the stewardship of Biya’s poor economic governance. From either postures, the crisis was real and manifested itself in the form of rising prices of goods and services, trade deficits and loss of government revenue acknowledged by government in 1987. To this effect, the government instead placed the blame on the drop of the prices of export commodities most particularly petroleum announced by President Biya.23 The crisis was seen as a bad dream by Cameroonians because they were already comfortable with the fringe benefits offered by the government and the stable prices in the markets that matched their incomes but all these were swept by tides overnight.

Trapped in the economic web, the manner in which Cameroonians and the government reacted to adjust with the nightmare is worthy of analysis. In an attempt to deal with the economic nightmare, Cameroon’s trade partners notably France, Germany and the USA offered to provide the required panacea under stiff conditions of strict cost-cutting imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Although the Western idea was welcomed, Cameroon formulated its own strategy by cutting the pay package of civil servants, loss of subsidies to electricity, housing, telephone, sold parts of the country’s fleet of vehicles, forced retirement of old civil servants, modification of the official working schedule, closure of economic missions in foreign embassies, the privatisation of state and parastatal corporations, reduction of the 1987-1988 budget and spending by 18% 24

Although the above measures met international approval, they rather aggrandised the nightmare in the rise in violent crimes and the failure of the political class to prevent corruption, capital flight, embezzlement and money laundry to the effect that by October 1988, the intended implication was far less than had been envisaged. This experiment was an evidence of Cameroon’s inability to mitigate the nightmare thus craving the second opportunity for the West to impose economic based conditions in the name of solutions. For instance, the IMF offered an aid package worth 150 million US dollars and forced down the throat of Cameroon a structural adjustment programme (SAP) loan from the World Bank and further funds from the African development bank, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

It is pertinent to underscore that the proposed funds made available by the West in the name of aid were never any meaningful solutions because they were tied to strings, directives and conditioned to benefit only the West by duplicating the country’s foreign debt thus making it a permanent economic slave to Western partners. In spite the hardship crafted by the West, Cameroon’s political leadership has its own share of responsibility of the rise in the nightmare as analyst hold that:

However, the consensus among Cameroonians both at home and overseas is that the economic hardship is as a result of public funds theft by the Biya administration. Members of his regime constantly steel public funds and build mega structures in other countries such as France without any serious legal action being taken by the Biya administration. Biya himself is known to have resorts in Europe where he spends more time enjoying the proceeds of his theft than he does in his own country.25

This citation is a fact above all contestations


24 http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/cameroon, accessed, Sunday 25th March 2018 at 8:30Pm.

and justified by Cameroon’s cosmetic sham in fighting corruption evidenced by a complete government in Kondengui maximum detention centre. Even at this, analysts still qualify the anti-corruption drive to a scheme to sanction Biya’s political opponents in his government. This postulation seemingly hold true in that the country’s wealth still remains in the hands of the few purportedly imprisoned, stolen wealth not recovered, increase in government spending/foreign debt, the imprisoned live better, free, still continue to run their businesses normally behind bars, restriction of salary increment to civil servants and continuous rise in goods and services. The country’s political class might have successfully grappled with some of the nightmares, the economic hardship has been so resilient and the government is yet to fully comprehend, managed and to mitigate it.

1.5. The Re-Introduction of Multiparty Politics

The return to a multiparty system of governance to Cameroon in 1990 was far more of a nightmare to the ordinary nationals and leadership of the country rather than a simple political evolution. This is so because Ahidjo’s Machiavelli’s approach to end multiparty politics in Cameroon in 1966 was forcefully bloody. This led to the elimination of all existing political parties to the favour of Ahidjo’s lone Cameroon National Union (CNU) against the whims and caprices of democratic Cameroonians. The era 1966 to 1990 was then characterised by terror and the dream of a multiparty politics in Cameroon was far from imagination. Although multiparty politics was a welcome idea, it was more of a sad dream because Cameroonians did not believed it was real since they were made to understand that party pluralism was a challenge and war declaration on the political leadership.

However, the coming of multiparty to Cameroon in 1990 was not the craftsmanship of the political leadership of Cameroon but a dictate of the continental fever at the era. This wind of change was instigated by World War II (WWII) that led to political expression in Cameroon and the result was the establishment of political parties that represented different ideologies, carried different political opinions. This is proven by the fact that the government of Cameroon was even taken unaware and in an attempt to forcefully stop the process faced serious resistance from the political activists characterised by massive demonstrations, killings and detention of several activists by the government. One of the oppositional parties that defied government’s threats and oppression to stop the expression of party pluralism was the Social Democratic Front (SDF). The SDF further demonstrated the nightmare by challenging the government’s threats, launching its first convention, organising demonstrations, campaigns and even defeated Biya in the 1992 presidential election.

Although Biya succeeded in manipulating the SDF’s victory to his favour in 1992, it was a serious nightmare to Cameroonians but a lesson to Biya’s leadership and the Cameroon People’s Development Party (CPDM) and since then, the government developed new mechanisms to frustrate and cripple the opposition. Such frustrating strategies included: using state funds to finance the CPDM, restriction of a level playing ground in the political platform, prevention of the opposition from legally getting to power, putting of wrong structures for democratic governance, discriminative registration of voters, buying of voters, intentional displacement of voters, outright intimidation and creation of ghost or government parties. Similarly, Gilbert concludes that in Cameroon: “The CPDM has become an election winning machine after every five years even though they have nothing positive to write home


about a part from profligacy and extreme tribalism.  

Even though the CPDM government succeeded in managing the nightmare by frustrating multiparty oppositions in Cameroon to its advantage, it achieved it with remarkable consequences. For instance, corruption was one of the brainchild of this manipulation characterised by: embezzlement of state funds, ethnic divisions/regions, stereotypes, crippled political parties, a weak private sector, absence of a credible democratic structures, extortion and buying of high rate of unemployed and joblessness voters, buying of villagers with bags of rice, salt and other food items in exchange for their votes. This mechanism makes it difficult for the opposition parties because of their limited financial resources and the ruling party uses state funds to ride their political opponents. To overturn Biya’s leadership, political parties are obliged to rethink of different strategies to organise a firm and more resilient opposition so as to win further elections in Cameroon. The democratic structures in Cameroon are supposed to be independently redefined and elections should be used to change the country.

1.6. The Devaluation of the CFA Franc

This was one of the most shocking episodes concocted solely by the French treasury without the consent of the victimised central fiscal authorities of any of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) or the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) states and announced over Radio France International that kept Cameroonian and their political leadership sleepless nights. Since 1948 France had guaranteed a fixed parity of one French franc to 50 African francs but; the African franc’s value was slashed in mid-January 1994 to 100 to 1 French franc. Although the devaluation of the CFA was a serious concern to the WAEMU which comprises eight countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo), and the CEMAC, made up of six countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon), Cameroon’s case was so particular. This is so because Cameroon was still painfully battling under the weight of the economic crisis of the 1980s and had to face currency devaluation; a veritable double nightmare. By implication, the devaluation of the CFA meant that more of the CFA was required to buy very little of French franc. Since 1994, both currencies were pegged at 100 CFA to one French franc but, after France joined the Euro at a fixed rate of 6.65957 French francs to one Euro, the CFA rate to the Euro was fixed at CFA 665.957 to the Euro. More to this there were even anticipated plans by Emmanuel Malcron’s government to peg the rate at CFA 1,000 to 1 Euro; a devaluation of about 35%.

The fiscal drop in the CFA currency as lame and complex as it was though challengeable by other economic experts had its justifications by the French treasury in the finance world. The reasons advanced by the French were that devaluation was to: permit the heavily indebted poor CEMAC and WAEMU countries with little or no investment to make their exports more competitive and to attract investors. Against this claims, others argued that the devaluation rather benefited the French because:

France ran out of money and had massive public and bank debt. Part of the reason it has been able to sustain itself so far is because it has had the cushion of the cash deposited with

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the French Treasury by the African states since 1960[...]. The francophone African states have gradually been able to recognize that they may never see their accumulated assets again as these have been pledged by the French Treasury against the French contribution to the several European bailouts. Wade of Senegal has again been asking for accounting. None has been forthcoming.[...]. In short, more than 85% of the foreign reserves of these African countries are deposited in the ‘operations accounts’ controlled by the French Treasury. The two CFA banks are African in name, but have no monetary policies of their own. The countries themselves do not know, nor are they told, how much of the pool of foreign reserves held by the French Treasury belongs to them as a group or individually.33

It is therefore clear that the devaluing of the CFA in 1994 was not in the interest of Africans experimented in the massive effects suffered by Cameroonian. However, it is pertinent to underline that devaluation is only useful if a country has goods for export which are made relatively cheaper to attract buyers. Unfortunately, the goods Cameroon had for export were raw materials and petroleum of which the very French determined the prices. Resultantly, Cameroonians suffered from the nightmare of increase in the prices of food, petroleum, transport, housing, communication, poverty, stagnation, unemployment and underemployment. Worst of it all was “the cost of drugs for malaria, the continent’s biggest killer, nearly doubled in some places, putting them out of reach of many Africans”.34

Faced with the above nightmares Cameroonian’s political leadership earmarked a number of strategies to deal with the economic malaise. Amongst the solutions was the double drastic cut in public service salaries which rather resulted in rampant inflation in the prices of both domestic and imported goods and equally served as an excuse for price increase by merchants and even the cost of bribery and corruption increased for the most basic public services.

1.7. The SCNC Premature Coup Attempts

One of the greatest nightmares compared only to the UPC activist of the mid 1950s, 60s and the abortive coup plot against Biya in 1984 in Cameroon’s political evolution was the 1997 SCNC35 short-lived takeover of parts of the North-West Province. This was the attack, the overthrow of the administration, the law enforcement officers in Kumbo center, Jakiri, Mezam, Mbegwi and most particularly Oku subdivision where the SCNC formed and installed a new administration that governed Oku for twelve hours unruffled.36 Although, Cameroon’s leadership had experience serious shocking waves from the UPC and the abortive plot against Biya, the SCNC nightmare was an exception because it carved out, redefined the boundaries between former French and British Southern Cameroons on the ideology of two peoples in the Cameroon’s (Anglophones and Francophones).37 How this magma accumulated and overflows its trust to the dismay of Cameroonian leadership was an inconceivable reality.

However, the nightmare was neutralised with immediate arrest and incarceration of the SCNC activists by the government, the impact and awareness created by the SCNC was incredibly unmoved because it unexpectedly galvanise

35The SCNC was founded in April 1993 at an All Anglophone Conference (AAC) held in Buea, South West Region in order to articulate Anglophone grievances. These grievances include a return to a federation, better representation of Anglophones within the government, increased use of the English language and an end to policies allegedly aimed at the cultural destruction of Anglophones as a people.
37Ayah Pauln Abine’s video online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UynPNET_s, Thursday 15th December 2016, access 10th April 2018 at 07:20 am.
the Anglophone ideology of a return to former British Southern Cameroons independent of Yaounde. This manifested itself again with the SCNC takeover of radio Buea on the night of 30-31 December 1999 in which they unarmed the two policemen on duty and forced the radio staff to repeatedly play a tape of a proclamation of independence read by Judge Ebong Frederick Alobwede between the hours of 11:30 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. The radio message reads:

Justice Ebong Frederick Alobwede, Chairman of the High Command Council of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), here come to address you this 30th December 1999 on the Proclamation of the Restoration of the Sovereignty and Independence of the Southern Cameroons, on behalf of Prince Esoka Ndoki Mukete, National Chairman of the Southern Cameroons. The proclamation claimed to formalize the Restoration of the Sovereignty and Independence of what used to be the Southern Cameroons under United Kingdom administration henceforth [to] be known and called the Federal Republic of the Southern Cameroons.

Pending re-establishment of the institutions of the Federal Republic of the Southern Cameroons, the Chairman, and the Executive council of the SCNC shall co-ordinate the day-to-day internal administration of the state (SCNC, 30 Dec. 1999). 38

In spite the sadness of the dream to the Cameroon political leadership, it further called on the support of the English-speaking population to the effect that demonstration marches and rallies were held in the towns of Buea and Limbe to pressure a call for independence on January 8th and 9th 2000.

The double nightmares which occurred only in the two English-speaking regions of the North-West and South-West emitted serious cyclones that kept Cameroonians and most importantly the political leadership of the country unbalance. The case of the North-West Region brought mixed reactions from the media and politicians with fear of the uncertain future as many posit:

Thomas Eyoun’a Ntoh holds that: “[...] tout au moins à discréditer une opposition dont tous les observateurs disent qu’elle devrait gagner sans coup férir les législatives de mai prochain [13].” Reacting to this, John Fru Ndi alleged: “[...] It would not be surprising if the government master minds such an incident to use it as an excuse to postpone elections [14].” Similarly, Maigari Bello Bouna of the UNDP reacting to the same event said: “Enfin, je souhaite que ces incident ne soient un prétexte pour le gouvernement de différer les élections [15].” To Augustin Frederick Kodock of the UPC: “C’est pour jeter le pays dans le chaos et ainsi compromettre l’organisation des élections [16].” In like manner, Christian Obama of the UDC stated that: “[...] it faudrait c’est demander qu’elle est la véritable raison qui a amené a ceste état de choses.” 39

In spite the confusion and fear created by the incident, the government was resolute and state fast in conducting immediate rampant arrest of suspected SCNC activists. In the NW for example 32 suspected SCNC activists were arrested from Oku Sub Division alone. After detention and screening in Bamenda, 19 were released upon extortion of at least 100,000FCFA per victim. The other 11 suspects alongside those of Kumbo, Mbengui and Mezam were ferried to Yaounde where they met 30 others from the South West and later tried in the Yaounde Military court on charges of conspiracy, disruption of territorial integrity during time of peace, illegal possession of arms, setting fire on living quarters, caused premeditated death of a gendarme against the nation. Some amongst them were: Kwei Simon Ngek, Njakoy Charles Chinn, Njobara Hyacinth, Ngek Adelbert and Mng’o Job Bulewa. 40


40Ibid., pp. 676.
In the South-West region, the Radio takeover was followed by immediate arrest and detention of the radio staff and nine days after the event, Ebong and Some 25 people were reportedly arrested following rallies connected to the 30 December 1999 independence proclamation by the SCNC leaders and ferried to Yaounde. Among those arrested was the SCNC leader, Judge Ebong Fred Alobwede, who led the takeover and read the proclamation of independence. In late April 2000, Radio France Internationale reported that about a hundred people were arrested in order to sabotage an action plan conceived by the SCNC. According to the hatched plan, the secessionist movement planned to occupy all the command top posts of the English-speaking regions.41

In the course of the arrest, detention, imprisonment and trial of the SCNC activists, many of them lost their lives. Although those successfully tried were variously slammed 10, 25 years and life imprisonment, such measures applied by the Cameroon political barons were cosmetic, myopic and challenged by many analysts. According to Cameroon leadership. The above prison terms never elapsed as expected because President Biya by 2007 granted armistice to all political prisoners. For example, Kwei Simon Ngek who was given life imprisonment was trimmed to 25 years and others simply freed. However, contrary to the claim of Biya’s armistice held by Cameroons’ leadership, Njakoi Charles Chinn argued that their freedom was pressured by Amnesty International and not Biya’s clemency. In respect of Charles’ allegation, the A.G.M. from Netherlands in an official letter to the minister of defence (Lauren Esso) stated:

Allow me to draw your attention to the following: In October 1999 a group of 18 Anglophone citizens of Cameroon were sentenced to lengthy prison terms by a military tribunal. Military tribunals in Cameroon have the competence to deal with those who violate the law on acquisition and use of arms; legislation gives the possibility to try civilians under military jurisdiction. This contravenes international fair trial standards such as the International Court for Civil and Political Rights [...] I call upon the Cameroon authorities to ensure that the 18 Anglophone detainees at Nkondengui Central Prison are tried again under civilian jurisdiction, in accordance with international standards.42

This justifiable external pressure from the West vividly attest to the claims made by the SCNC activists. However, it will be dishonest of academia to brush aside Biya’s clemency, so too, Western influence could not be left out of a neo-colonial Cameroon. It is important to underscore here that the other nightmares had a general characteristic of the life of the nation and geography of Cameroon, the SCNC nightmare was particular and distinct in that it demanded the independence of the two English-speaking Regions of the North-West and South-West. The bad dream to Cameroon’s authorities for a return to an independent state of Southern Cameroons was a result of bad governance suffered by the people of former British Southern Cameroons in the Ahidjo-Biya leadership since 1961.

Under the two leaders, the people of the English-speaking regions were marginalised, ostracised and completely assimilated by their fellow Francophones under the watchful eyes of the government. It was then in the light of the tortures that Solomon Tanden Muna resigned from Biya’s government in 1990 and return to the UN to submit that the marriage between French and British Cameroons in 1961 had been a complete failure and requested for pure devoice. In the same vein, he organised the All Anglophone Conference (AAC 1) and AAC 2 in 1990 and on April 2–3, 199343 that created the SCNC which graduated from a civil pressure group to a political and


42Keming, “SCNC Rebellion in Oku”, p.878.


a military organisation with the purpose of restoring the independence of former British Southern Cameroons. Although, Cameroon leadership took the punitive path to deal with the SCNC nightmare, the approach was too myopic as it dealt only with the impact created by the nightmare and not the nightmare itself. This would be proven in the later dates as the SCNC would gather momentum and generate more, unmanageable and mightier nightmares to the Cameroon political leadership.

1.8. The Cameroon-Nigeria Crisis

The Cameroon-Nigeria crisis over the Bakassi peninsular began in 1981 and ended on the 14th of August 2008 marked by the withdrawal of the Nigerian troops from the peninsular following the famous Green Tree Tripartite Resolution between Presidents Obasenjo of Nigeria, Biya of Cameroon and Koffi Atta Annan (Secretary General of the UN). The crisis constitutes one of the major nightmares that kept the Cameroon’s leadership and its nationals sleepless nights as no one could measure the consequences on Cameroon if the dispute had evolved into a full blown war. Although Cameroon was already verse with armed conflicts: the UPC rebellion from 1955 to 1970 and the abortive coup d’état of 1984, it was the only rare African country that had not been hit by the post-independent wars or military takeovers on the continent.

Worst still, the mighty Nigeria with 32 states, with a population of over 70 million as against 10 million Cameroonians, with an active/well equipped army, frequent in coup d’états, large/resilient economy with a larger army than Cameroon population was greater than just restlessness to Cameroon. Although Cameroon was able to sustain the skirmishes that ensued, it could not face Nigeria in a full scale war and no doubt for Cameroon’s leadership to be relieved of the insomnia, it tactfully resorted to diplomacy.

The genesis of the crisis is embedded in the history of the scramble and colonisation for Africa wherein Queen Victoria signed a protectionist treaty with the King and Chiefs of Akwa Akpa (Old Calabar) on 10 September 1884. The treaty established the British authority over the entire territory around Calabar including Bakassi. However, colonial records released by Cameroonians in uniformity with those of the British and Germans placed Bakassi under Cameroonian territory as a consequence of colonial Anglo-German agreements of 1880s.

The defeat of the Germans and the partition of Cameroon between the British and the French, the League of Nations Mandate and the UN trust territory handed control of the area to Britain. In what became known as British Cameroons, the territory was ruled as an integral part of Nigeria but the border was never permanently delineated. After Southern Cameroons voted in 1961 to leave Nigeria and reunite with La Republique de Cameroun, Bakassi remained under Calabar administration in Nigeria until the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgement of 10th October 2002.

Based on the history above, the conflict came as a result of Cameroon’s negligence and ineffective occupation of its territory. Most importantly Bakassi was rich in fish, shrimps, a wide variety of other aquatic life forms made it a fertile fishing ground comparable only to Newfoundland in North America and Scandinavia in Western Europe. Besides, the long period of Nigerian rule in Bakassi, the absence of Cameroon authorities and


the discovery of rich reserves of high grade crude oil underpinned the nightmare on Cameroon.

Faced with the above complexities, the outcome was the skirmishes between the two countries in 1981, 1993, 1994 and 1996 that nearly degenerated to war. Such a military approach to address the sleeplessness in Cameroon seemingly was not the best. Although Cameroon was able to sustain the crisis as it evolved, it sought for a diplomatic solution with the ICJ on the 29th March 1994. Cameroon’s choice for diplomacy was guided by: inability to face Nigeria in a full blown war, confidence in the available colonial records, ability of its jurists, its force of diplomacy and patronage from the West as argued by Omololu and others.

The above conjectures all worked to the favour of Cameroon over Nigeria in that on the 10th of October 2002, the ICJ ruled over the sovereignty of Bakassi to Cameroon and instructed Nigeria to transfer possession of the peninsula. The verdict though backed by the UN caused consternation and Nigeria unofficially refused the judgment but instead called for an agreement that would provide peace with honour to its people. This was then proceeded by the Kofi Annan’s mediation in a tripartite summit with the two Presidents on 13th November 2002, which established a commission of peaceful implementation of the ICJ’s judgment and another summit on 31st January 2004 that significantly progressed the mediation.

The above moves met with resistance from the local population of Bakassi threatening to break away from Nigerian by militant groups: Southern Cameroons Peoples Organisation (SCAPO), Bakassi movement for Self-Defiance (BAMOSD), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) and the Biafra Nations Youth League (BNYL). In spite the resistance, Olusengun Obasanjo, Paul Biya and Kofi Annan in New York City on the 13th June 2006 resolved to withdraw Nigerian troops within 90 days. This effectively began on 1st August 2006 and ended in a ceremony of 14 August 2008 when Nigeria finally handed over the administration of Bakassi to Cameroon and to leave the territory completely within the next four years. Although the diplomatic victory relieved Cameroon of its veritable nightmare, the fate of the victory remains a subject of deep reflection as the Nigerian Senate continues to flex muscles against the accord.

In spite Cameroon’s diplomatic victory over Nigeria in Bakassi, the consequences of the nightmare left much to right home by the Cameroonian political leadership in all realms. From a positive standpoint, the peaceful resolution of the crisis led to a drastic drop in the wasteful military spending, savings in military and associated logistical expenditures could be more judiciously used to enhance the standards of living of the various populations via infrastructural development that generates income and employment opportunities. It also increased the international credibility of Presidents Olusegun Obasenjo and Paul Biya, Cameroon valorised her oil deposits, promote modern fishing in the peninsula and promote trans-border trade between Cameroon and Nigeria. Besides the positive effects of the nightmare, there were also negative consequences such as military/civilian casualties, internal displacement of the population, drop in inter-border trade and heavy spending.

1.9. The Transport Workers Strike

Since the double independence of the Cameroons on January 1st 1960 and October 1st


51Bekker, “International Court of Justice”, p.3.


53Ibid., p.13.

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1961, the country witnessed the worst crisis on February 25th 2008 compared only to the UPC’s guerrilla warfare against the French colonial rule and Ahidjo’s leadership from 1955 to 1970 when Ernest Ouandji the last UPC’s was captured and assassinated. Although there was no outright war by the civilians, the economy was paralysed and the reaction of the paramilitary forces led to the death of over 100 Cameroonians. The sad strike episode was organised by the Cameroonian workers affiliated to the Syndicate of Transportation and the Urban Transportation Union who were opposing high fuel prices and poor working conditions aimed at forcing the government to reduce the cost of gasoline. It is asserted that the nightmare was: "further political turmoil had been caused by President Paul Biya’s announcement that he wanted the constitution to be amended to remove term limits; without such an amendment, he would have to leave office at the end of his term in 2011."

On the 25th February 2008, taxi drivers, bus operators and affiliated workers took to the streets to march in protest of the increase petroleum prices that resulted to a standstill in transportation throughout the capital of Yaounde. Although the protest was initially not violent, disgruntled youths affected by the high cost of living and high unemployment who wanted better economic and employment opportunities turned violent as many fought with police on the street, looted and vandalised property, including petrol stations, loot various stores and burnt finance ministry building, cars, tyres, blocked roads, bridges and other buildings set on fire. Important to note that many of the violent members of the crowd were not affiliated with the transportation strike.

Faced with the violence, it was incumbent on the political leadership of the country to manage the nightmare. The government responded with the police massive indiscriminate arrest of demonstrators and detention in Yaounde. In the course of the arrest, the strike spread like wildfire in other major cities throughout the country beyond police control. It was in the light of the police incapability that the army was called to suppress the riots by firing into the crowds most especially in Yaounde and Douala where it was deep seated. Besides the military approach, the authorities also yielded to the nightmare by reducing the price of gasoline by six francs CFA per litter and the Syndicate of Transportation and the Urban Transportation Union called off the strike on the evening of the 26th February 2008. Generally, the government reaction resulted in: In response to the protests, President Biya reduced the cost of fuel, raised salaries of civil servants and military personnel, reduced the duties paid on cement, and suspended duties on essential goods such as cooking oil, fish, and rice. Government forces also claimed to have arrested more than 1,600 people, including government officials, and to have prosecuted 200. Human rights groups and defense attorneys, on the other hand, claimed that more than 2,000 people had been arrested in Douala alone and decried the trials as overly swift, secretive, and severe. The government has also cracked down on artists, media outlets and journalists it accuses of threatening national stability. The above solutions provided by the Biya’s leadership did not solve the problem because vio-


58Ibid.


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lence had already gotten out of hand by this point and continued spreading like wild fire. According to the government, the violence had already spread to 31 municipal areas in the Centre, littoral, Northwest, Southwest, and West. It was characterised by the exchange of gunfire between government and protesters, further looting, burning, throwing of stones on the military, mounting of road barricades, demand for Biya’s resignation, removal of boarding schools students for human shields against the military and kidnapping of a Croatian and an Italian for ransom.

It should be noted here that the government struggle to handle the nightmare left far reaching consequences on Cameroonians and on the government. For instances, government claimed to have arrested 1,600 people, 200 found guilty and sentenced from six months to three years. This was challenged by rights groups that the number was much higher than 2,000 in Douala alone and that as of 26th March 2008, 800 accused held in Douala central prison and the government had charged 1,000 to 1,500 to prison. There were cases of intimidation of the population, terror, rape, military torture and confiscation of equipment. For human casualties, government put it at 40 including both security and civilians. This figure was challenged by rights groups which placed it at 100 but the locals say over 150 were trapped on the Wouri Bridge and forced into the water with bullets by the military and government ordered morgues not to release bodies of victims for photographing and to keep the scale of the deaths caused the military secret.

In material terms, protesters vandalised and sacked bars, bakeries, government buildings, industrial sites, 33 petrol stations, pharmacies, sales kiosks, security stations and vehicles. The government estimates the damage caused by the protests at 15.2 million euros or US $ 23.4 million. According to the spokesperson of the government (Marafa Amedou Yaya), Cameroon had taken a blow to both its economy and its reputation. The nightmare is confirmed in that:

On 12 April 2008, opposition SDF leader John Fru Ndi called for a national day of mourning for 21 April 2008 to commemorate those who died during the protests and the "death of democracy" in Cameroon due to the April 2008 amendments to the constitution to allow the president to run for more than two terms. Report came in that in progressive high school bamenda about 50 students were killed. Based on all that has been presented above, the 25th February 2008 nightmare left far reaching consequences on Cameroonians. On the side of the country’s leadership, and indelible inscription made history that is yet to be document in all realms but also challengeable lessons for generation to come to inspire on how to address similar eventualities. From all the nightmare episodes presented above, most of them were not properly handled as the government focused more on resolving the consequences than the causes.

2. Conclusion

The target of this work on the key nightmare episodes that threatened the foundation and existence of Cameroon and evaluation of Biya’s craftsmanship in managing the events from 1982 to 2008 has presented a meaningful frame of the hot potatoes that Biya faced. Such selective episodes comprised of: the resignation of Ahidjo, the 1984 coup d’état, the economic crisis of the 1980s, the
re-introduction of multipartism, the 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc, the Cameroon-Nigeria crisis, the SCNC coup plots and the transport workers strike in 2008. It has to be mentioned here that these episodes were not the only bad dreams faced by the Biya administration but that we selected those that suit our context and has a national and international colouration on Cameroon’s image. Faced with continuous development of episodes, Biya’s leadership did not only deploy the wrong approach of compromise and revenge in tackling consequences than the causes but; his choice of collaborators drawn mostly from the Bulu/Beti ethnic groups which he believed in brotherliness failed him awfully. Although some of the episodes were resolved, it was more of temporal measures because the solutions were short-lived and since consequences were resolved and their causes left untouched, the events kept resurfacing even with much more greater intensity like the Anglophone question. Note has to be made here that Biya’s stratagem to rule the country only with his closest, most trusted Bulu/Beti ethnic brothers gave them primacy over the other nationals, made them feel untouchable and immune to all laws of the land. This kind of impression made them to amass state wealth with impunity, alienate themselves from the disfavoured ethnic groups, manage the country as though it was their corporation and benefited from the protection of the president. When other Cameroonians became worried and began complaining of the impunity enjoyed by the Bulu/Beti instead of investigating, Biya rather questioned Cameroonians of their evidence of his ethnic misappropriation and theft of state wealth. Such a lame reaction from Biya legalised his ethnic theft of state property and the consequences were rampant corruption, embezzlement capital flight, favouritism, nepotism, ethnicity and regionalism. The evidence of which is the presence of over 80% of special thieves, tried by special courts (for exceptional Cameroonians, of exceptional positions meant for exceptional ethnic groups (Bulu-Beti)). In this present dispensation, Cameroon is likely to face more than ever challenging nightmares. If this must be avoided, a more all-inclusive policy void of ethnic cleavages, honesty, real dialogue are indispensable. Above all, strong institutions and laws above individuals should be put in place, continues arrest, imprisonment and seizure of stolen wealth are the only prerequisites to maintain Cameroon on the super high way to emergence and development.