

**DOCUMENT – “AFRICA HAS 52 NATIONS: MORE DIVISIONS LIKELY” READ THE PROVIDED DOCUMENT THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS..**

- 1. WHEN DID THE MAJORITY OF AFRICAN NATIONS GAIN SELF-DETERMINATION? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 2. WHEN WAS THIS DOCUMENT WRITTEN? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 3. WHAT WORLD ORGANIZATION PROVIDES PEACE KEEPERS FOR THE AFRICANS? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 4. IF EVERY ETHNIC GROUP (TRIBE) WERE A NATION OR COUNTRY HOW MANY NATIONS MIGHT THERE BE? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 5. WHAT CAUSED THE PROBLEM AFRICAN NATIONS ARE CONFRONTED WITH TODAY? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 6. DEFINE PARTITION (USE A DICTIONARY IF YOU NEED ONE) \_\_\_\_\_**
- 7. LIST 2 COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE PARTITIONING OF AFRICA. \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_**
- 8. ACCORDING TO THE DOCUMENT WHAT REGION IS MOST IN JEOPARDY OF CHANGING BOUNDARIES? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 9. 1884-85 WHAT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CARVING UP THE AFRICAN CONTINENT? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 10. WHAT COUNTRY HELD THE PARTITION MEETING? \_\_\_\_\_ WHO WAS AN IMPORTANT INDIVIDUAL IN THAT NATION? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 11. HOW MANY AFRICAN NATIONS SPEAK FRENCH? \_\_\_\_\_ HOW MANY SPEAK ENGLISH? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 12. WHAT CIVIL WAR LASTED 30 YEARS? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 13. WHAT FORCE IN AFRICA IS STRONGER TRIBALISM OR NATIONALISM? \_\_\_\_\_ DISCUSS YOUR ANSWER \_\_\_\_\_**
- 14. GO TO A MODERN ATLAS (2000) OR THE INTERNET AND SEE IF ERITREA IS INDEPENDENT TODAY. \_\_\_\_\_ WHO DID THE ERITREANS FIGHT? \_\_\_\_\_**

# Africa Has 52 Nations; More Divisions Likely

By Joy Aschenbach  
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## TRIBALISM V. NATIONALISM

Africa, which already has more independent countries than any other continent, is in danger of splitting again, with potential untold violence on the chaotic horizon.

Will Eritrea be its 53rd nation-state, or Western Sahara, southern Sudan or northern Somaliland?

Africa's 52 countries — most attained sovereignty from European control in the 1960s — make up about 30 percent of the world total. Six African countries are perennially among the 10 poorest on Earth, according to the World Bank. United Nations peacekeepers and observers are now stationed in more African countries than ever before.

"The legacy of colonial rule helped create the present instability, but who knows what it would have been otherwise?" says Richard Roberts, director of the Center for African Studies at Stanford University. "If every ethnic group were a nation-state, there would be 850 to 1,000."

The Organization of African Unity, established at a conference in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa 30 years ago, agreed not to interfere with the colonial political demarcations. "If it hadn't honored them," says an American geographer, "Africa would blow up."

"But we are now reaching a point in which a new generation of African leaders recognizes that irrational borders — if they can change in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union — can change in countries like Sudan," says geographer H.J. de Blij of the University of Miami. "The pressure on African boundaries will increase as time goes on."

"Most in danger," he says, "are Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan. The whole Horn of Africa is so rife with unreasonable borders that it is incomprehensible that in the next 10 years they will still be there."

Also threatened with fragmentation is equatorial Africa if Zaire collapses, de Blij says, and southern Africa. "I'm not sure South Africa will survive its transition to one piece," he tells National Geographic. "In Natal (a province), the Zulus might opt for secession."

"Africa is going to have more problems than the Middle East. Africa has more potential boundary conflicts than any other part of the world," says geographer George J.anko, director of the Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College.

Seven European powers — France, Britain, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Belgium — partitioned Africa, the world's second-largest continent, at the Berlin Conference 1884-85, launching its colonial era. Otto von Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor" of German Empire, who convened the conference, declared: "My map of Africa lies in Europe."

The competing powers gerrymandered the landmass with their own political boundaries, which often divided language and cultural groups. The resulting ethnic fragmentation helped touch off some 50 successful coups during the post-independence period. Today, in the post-Cold War era, loss of superpower has helped fuel the strife.

Among the many colonial legacies is language. French is the official language in 18 countries. In 15 others, it's English. In Cameroon and Seychelles, it's both.

In Africa, whose population today is more than 650 million, people shift like the sands. "It's impossible to map," says William Zartman, director of African studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. "All maps we ever have of ethnic locations are wrong. There are no clear, defined boundaries. Where do you stop the clock?"

Starving Somalia was a homogeneous (common language and Moslem religion) nation-state, but the active basis of its politics is clan families. The former British north, now dominated by the Issak clan, declared itself the independent Somaliland Republic in 1991. Its breakaway status has not yet been recognized.

Ethiopia endured Africa's longest-running civil war, 30 years. In May 1991, this resulted in future independence for the Red Sea province of Eritrea. The provisional government's mission in Washington, D.C., already is requiring and issuing visas for entry into Eritrean territory.

A referendum scheduled for April will determine whether Moslem Eritrea becomes Africa's 53rd country or remains part of Christian-dominated Ethiopia.

The Tigreans and the Oromos, who make up 40 percent of Ethiopia's population are also seeking sovereignty. "There's no way to draw a line and contain the Oromos in the south," Zartman explains. "There's no boundary to the Oromo land; other ethnic groups are in there."

Sudan, geographically the largest African country, has lived in a violent state of civil war for most of its 37 years of independence. A north-south split is likely. The black Christian and animist south feels rejected by the Arab Moslem north. "The only solution is independence," says Zartman.

Fighting is expected if embattled, long-time President Mobutu Sese Seko is toppled in Zaire. The former Belgian Congo, whose official language is French, has 250 ethnic groups.

"If ethnically homogeneous states were created, you'd have a lot more landlocked African countries, which are traditionally poor and have no access to the sea without the goodwill of neighbors," Zartman says. "One positive side effect of colonialism was the reach from the coast to the interior."

"All across the Sahara, there are boundary disputes. Boundaries were not drawn on precolonial logic," says Richard Roberts of Stanford. "The Senegal River was used as the border between Mauritania and Senegal, but there was a constant flow of people back and forth across the river. All of a sudden, they belonged to different countries."

"There's the fascinating case of the border between Nigeria and Benin. The line was drawn in the middle of the Yoruba state, in the middle of a coherent precolonial state," Roberts says. "Now you have two national Yorubas. In Nigeria, where English is the official language and in Benin, where French is."

"The only way to have Nigeria governable," Zartman says, "is to have three or four Nigerias."

Libya and Chad are competing over the mineral-rich Aozou region on their border. The United Nations is expected to try again this year to hold a referendum in Western Sahara (former Spanish Sahara) on its status with Morocco, which annexed the territory in 1976.

In Mali last summer, Roberts says, the nomadic Tuareg demanded a state of their own, which reaches into parts of Mauritania and Niger. "Originally," he says, "the nomads in search of grass moved their herd back and forth across borders that had no bearing to them."