

EMERGING DIMENSIONS OF THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE HORN OF AFRICA

Edward Waithaka and Patrick Maluki

Abstract

This paper gives an overview of the emerging dimensions of the geopolitics of the Horn of African States and interests surrounding Ilemi triangle. It will focus on: power, politics, policy, space, place, territory, and embraces an innumerable multitude of interactions within and around the states that occupy the Horn of Africa. It also focuses on the varied interest that states have to the resource rich Ilemi triangle. International conflict will always exist. In such conflict bargaining, states develop capabilities that give them leverage to obtain more favorable outcomes than they could obtain without such leverage. Whether fair or unfair, the ultimate outcome of the bargaining process is a settlement of the particular conflict.¹ This paper focuses on each individual state and how they execute their foreign policies in relation to the triangle.

Introduction

Geopolitics concerns power struggles over territories for the purpose of political control over space. In other words, geopolitics is the practice and ability of a state to control and compete for a territory.² Thus the geopolitics of Horn of Africa entails power, politics, policy, space, place, and interests that states embrace as they interact in the Horn of Africa³. Horn of Africa provides a perfect instance of conflict ridden area. There is no consensus as to how many countries make the horn of Africa but for purpose of this study focus will be five countries namely; Ethiopia, Sudan, south Sudan, Somalia and Kenya. The geopolitics of the Horn of Africa can well be

¹ Goldstein S. J. (2004) *International Relations*, Fifth Edition, American University, Washington, D.C., Longman Publishers, New York. P. 183.

² Flint, C. (2011). *Introduction to geopolitics*. London :Rout ledge

³ Jones et. al.(2011). *an Introduction to Political Geography: Space, Place and Politics*.

understood by analyzing each individual state's potential power in relation to their size, economy, population, power, prestige, potential wealth, global positioning, strategic importance and international influence.

The case of the Ilemi Triangle has been complicated by history and the states that claim the triangle exhibit rational politics that make it interesting and of great concern to the security and international relations of the Horn of Africa. An analysis of the foreign policies of the states in the region that occupy the Horn will shed light on how the triangle will be the focus of the international politics in regards to the resource potential that the triangle possess. Geopolitics being the ability of the state to control a territory and given the territory in question has been contested over years, it is of great concern that overview of the history that has complicated ownership of the triangle be revisited.

The politics of Ilemi triangle

Ilemi triangle is variously claimed by Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan. This explains why until now the triangle has been unwanted hence not economically developed by any regional government.⁴ Ilemi triangle is on the fringe of South Sudan, which is rich in unexplored oil. Nevertheless no explorations have been made in the contested territory partly due to insecurity from the 30 year civil war in South Sudan and partly due to hands-off attitude by each regional government. It lacks in infrastructure or modern facilities and is so insulated that its only reminder of the outside world is a Kenyan frontier post.⁵

The geopolitical prominence of the Horn of Africa, where Ilemi lies makes it a pivotal factor in the global balance of power. The politics of Ilemi triangle dates back the period when Africa was being partitioned by colonial powers. Political developments in Ethiopia by a large extent explain the politics surrounding Ilemi triangle since it was not colonized and there was no urgency for delimitation of Kenya-Sudan – Ethiopia border, which was under British emperor. Emperor Menelik II succeeded Tewodros II of Ethiopia who died at the critical time when both British and Germany were mapping out their territories in Africa. Ethiopia's unification was hampered by imperial interest and in 1891 Emperor Menelik II sent circulars to the imperial powers outlining the extent of his empire and in 1896 he resumed expansion of Ethiopia southwards in order to check the northward expansion of British sphere of influence.⁶ Menelik with better weapons and sound policy militarily conquered and consolidated remote areas just as the British did. The territory claimed by Menelik included Lake Turkana which he called the Samburu Sea. He proposed his southern boundary with the British to run from the southern end of Lake Turkana due east to the Indian Ocean. Emperor Menelik based his territorial claim on

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid

slave raiding. He also established administrative centers and garrisons to fully consolidate the territory. Britain disagreed with Menelik's proposal and insisted on running the Ethiopia-Kenya boundary.⁷ Britain delineated its territories to halt other Europeans' territorial ambitions and more specifically to curtail Emperor Menelik's claim to land Britain considered within its sphere of influence. Mr. Archibald Butter and Captain Philip Maud surveyed Ethiopia's border with British East Africa in 1902-3 and marked the 'Maud line' which was recognized in 1907 as the de facto Kenya-Ethiopian border⁸.

Emperor Menelik continued with slave raiding which depopulated Kenya and Sudan and this necessitated the British to conduct military expeditions to contain such depopulation and secure its territory, a move that was welcome to both Kenya and Sudan. Death of Menelik II dealt a big blow to the political development of Ethiopia and his appointed grandson Lij Iyasu, age 11, to succeed him did not deliver any meaningful achievement to the Amharic nation.⁹ His death slowed down the resolution of the border conflict and Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia did not hold any meaningful discussion to rectify the border issue until the crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie.

The need to redefine the borders of British territories in Africa raised several issues that were core to future border rectification between Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan in Ilemi. This led to the formation of the Uganda-Sudan Boundary Commission which was formed in 1914. The central issues included the determination of Turkana grazing grounds while Sudan was to gain access to Lake Turkana through a lozenge of land known as the Ilemi Appendix and its eastern border was to curve outwards to Ethiopia to bring the whole Kuku ethnic community into Sudan.¹⁰

Uganda also had territorial claims and wanted to expand northwards and bring the Sudanese Acholi to Uganda. The labor patrol of 1918 was commissioned to undertake study on the issues that each country had. The objectives of the patrol included; The punishment and disarmament, in respect of fire-arms, of the Donyiro, Marille, and Turkana tribes, and of any other native tribes resident in the military area who have shown hostility to the Government and the expulsion of the Abyssinians from the East Africa and Uganda Protectorates west of Lake Rudolf.¹¹

After the Labor patrol the British were reluctant to invest in administration of troops due to logistical constraints and causality cost in the event of Ethiopia's military expeditions. In 1902 the Uganda Order in Council of 1902 transferred some parts inhabited by the Turkana's from Uganda to Kenya. Uganda's Eastern Province by then known as Rudolf Province was transferred

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ Harold, M. (1975). *The life and times of Menelik II Ethiopia 1844-1913*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

¹⁰ Mburu, N. (2003). *Delimitation of elastic ilemi triangle. Pastrol conflict and official indifference in the horn of africa.frican Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, Spring

¹¹ ibid

to British East African Protectorate in (Kenya) thereby reducing Uganda to 2/3 of its size.¹² The parts transferred to Kenya included the lands inhabited by the Turkana who had to move southwards to Kenya's hinterland so as to benefit from British protection. By so doing they lost their fertile pastures in Ilemi to the Inyangatom and the Dassanech. Britain suggested that Ilemi should be excised from Sudan and incorporated into Uganda, or, the portion of Uganda's former Rudolph Province containing the triangle be ceded to southern Sudan, Consequently the British established their administration among the Turkana's. After 1926, the Kenyan colonial authorities established an administrative boundary that did not coincide with the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1907 as a measure of accommodating Turkana's ancestral grazing area within Kenya and offering the Turkana's protection against Ethiopia's cattle rustlers and Sudanese militia. The boundaries created by the Kenyan administration raised a number of issues. First, a bigger portion of the Turkana's dry weather pastures lay to the North of the 1914 line; this was the portion of Ilemi not falling under Kenyan administration.¹³ Second, a number of pastoral communities were put under the authority of Emperor of Ethiopia who initially was under British dominion and finally most Sudanese and Ethiopian rustlers made use of the areas in Sudan far north of the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary to raid and stole livestock from their unprotected neighbors.

The British disarmed the Turkana community and the military balance between them and their Inyangatom and Dassanech neighbors was disrupted who frequently raided and stole their livestock with minimal opposition and in full view of the British authorities. The military imbalance increased the cattle rustling raids and insecurity of the region. 1929 Britain realized that its success in policing Kenya's northern frontier depended on Ethiopia's capability to do the same across the common border and for this reason it recommended to other European governments to lift the arms embargo previously imposed on Ethiopia.¹⁴

Starting from 1931 the British was determined to establish law and order in the Ilemi triangle and it mandated Sudan to contribute £10,000 annually toward the expenses of administering the territory¹⁵. The administration of the territory was not a mean feat as the region required roads and other infrastructure to aid in supplies and therefore for effective delivery of services. Kenya demanded an additional sum of £5,000 annually for the construction of roads and administrative infrastructure in Ilemi.¹⁶ Sudan rejected the proposal and instead attempted to establish the administrative center itself where it was confronted by a number of challenges that made it impossible as it required transporting supplies to the region along Nile River through Sudan's southern Mongalla province and across a hostile country that had no roads.

¹² Mburu, N. (2003). *Delimitation of elastic ilemi triangle. Pastrol conflict and official indifference in the horn of afrikca. frican Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, Spring

¹³ ibid

¹⁴ Mburu, N. (2003). *Delimitation of elastic ilemi triangle. Pastrol conflict and official indifference in the horn of afrikca. frican Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, Spring

¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ ibid

In 1931 the administrators of Mongalla (Sudan) and Turkana (Kenya) agreed that the northern limits of Turkana pastures were within the area defined by the Red Line. Sudan accepted that both the Dassanech and the Inyangatom should share grazing lands during the dry spell periods and as a result the Red line was extended northwards into what came to be known as Green line.¹⁷ This extension was to allow the Turkana to gain access to the pastures and water holes which they were to share with the Dassanech and Inyangatom. Ethiopia hastily constructed an administrative center at Namuruputh to interpret that it had formally annexed the areas given to Dassanech and the Inyangatom as grazing lands.

Italians invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 compelled the British to re-align its East Africa territory boundaries to contain Italians imperialism in the region. After occupying Ethiopia in 1936, Italians claimed Ilemi triangle on the basis that the Ethiopian Dassanech were also indigenous residents of the triangle. As a result the 1902 Maud Line (also 1907 boundary) was hurriedly confirmed as the Kenya-Ethiopia border to protect British interests from Italian territorial ambitions. British suggested to Ethiopia to cede the Baro Salient to Sudan in exchange for an area southeast of Ilemi, which Sudan had never administered. In Britain's quid pro quo proposal, Sudan would take 11,000 square miles of the Baro Salient from Ethiopia in exchange for 6,000 square miles of eastern Ilemi that would be given to Ethiopia.¹⁸ Kenya was assured that the arrangement would not infringe on Turkana's grazing rights with Sudan promising to rectify the Kenya-Sudan boundary so as to reduce the avenues for attacking the Turkana's by the rustlers from Ethiopia and Sudan.

In 1938 both Kenya and Sudan established a survey team which extended the Red line in northeast direction and established what is referred to as 'Wakefield line' or the 'Provisional Administrative Boundary'. The Red Line now stretched the Ilemi eastwards to include more watering and protective terrain shared by all pastoral communities.¹⁹ The Inyangatom and the Dassanech conducted a violent raid in 1939 in the UN administered areas of the Turkana and killed hundreds of unarmed women and children of Ilemi. Italians exonerated themselves from the blame indicating that they had no control over the Dassanech and the Inyangatom a move that necessitated revenge from the British who dropped bombs in a punitive raid conducted by the KAR (Kenya Africa Rifles) and the Royal Air Force.²⁰

The British foreign office established Blue Line West of Red Line which enlarged the Ilemi Triangle in 1944. Consequently both Ethiopia and Sudan commissioned a survey team to rectify their common boundary. The survey team failed to agree on the exact location of the line to avoid splitting of the Nuer and Anuak ethnic groups. Ethiopia had a number of suggestions that

¹⁷ 'Kenya-Abyssinia border 1932-33'

¹⁸ Farah, T (1976). *The problem of the Baro Salient*. Sudan notes and records. LVII, 21-30.

¹⁹ Mburu, N. (2003). *Delimitation of elastic ilemi triangle. Pastoral conflict and official indifference in the horn of afrikca. frican Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, Spring

²⁰ *ibid*

were to be included in the rectification of the common boundary. Ethiopia proposed that in exchange for the Baro salient the common boundary should include in Ethiopia the Inyangatom and Dassanech grazing grounds. Additionally Ethiopia proposed River Omo to remain in her territory so as to safeguard the fishing rights of the Ethiopian communities. Sudanese government established the Sudan patrol where they prohibited Kenyan and Ethiopian pastoralist from moving west of it giving up policing and development to the east of it. The Sudan patrol line was not to affect the sovereignty of both Sudan and Kenya and Kenya continued to be paid by Sudan to patrol this line.²¹

In August 1967, President Jomo Kenyatta tried to win the sympathy of Britain on the determination of the Kenya-Sudan boundary by proposing the recognition of the Red Line as the international Kenya-Sudan boundary. This arrangement was to make the 1914 line which placed the whole of Ilemi in Sudan as null and void. In the 1990s, the current Ethiopian government armed the Dassanech with new Kalashnikov automatics in recognition of their vulnerability from the Kenyan Turkana and Sudanese cattle thieves. The arming of the Dassanech resulted to the Koikai massacre that led to death of hundreds of Borans. After the death of Jomo Kenyatta in 1978 president Daniel Arap Moi assumed power and politics of Ilemi took another dimension. President Moi's government entered a covert deal with the government of Sudan, which ceded Ilemi to Kenya in exchange for halting military support for the SPLA through the Turkana ethnic community. Moi's government continued to supply arms to Turkanas an indication that led to speculation that Kenya claims the area. Many Kenyan maps have marked the Red line as the official boundary of Kenya, rather than a dotted boundary which it had previously. Most of Kenyans maps depict the 1950 patrol line as the boundary.²² Kenya continues to man the territory.

Contested Territoriality/Geopolitics and States Interest

Kenya came to occupy the Ilemi Triangle by default through a covert deal signed by the retired president Daniel T, Moi and the leader of the SPLA Dr, John Garang. Kenya was mandated to offer both military and logistical support to the south Sudanese army during the 20 year civil war in exchange for the triangle. Prior to that, Khartoum government had given Kenya permission to send military units across the border in order to protect the Turkana against the Dassanech who raided and stole their livestock.²³ In 1924 officials representing the three countries of Kenya, Uganda and Sudan met at Kitgum in Uganda to discuss the delimitation of Ilemi triangle which had become a territorial issue. The representatives of Uganda and Kenya persuaded those from the Sudan to redraw the boundary to include the northern limits of the Turkana grazing grounds

²¹ Martin, J. (2011). *The Ilemi triangle history*. Nairobi: Opinion Kenya Ltd.

²² Mburu, N. (2003). *Delimitation of elastic ilemi triangle. Pastrol conflict and official indifference in the horn of afrikca. frican Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, Spring

²³ Collins, R. (2004). *The ilemi triangle* California :University of California Santa Barbara.

across the 1914 Line ceding the territory either to Uganda or Kenya that would enable them to provide protection for the Turkana.

In 1926, the Rudolf Province of Uganda was transferred to the Kenya Colony. The Sudan agreed that it would cede 1,167 square miles of Ilemi to Kenya and an additional 90 square miles above the old Red Line. Units of the King's African Rifles (KAR) moved into the triangle and by 1947 Kenya had seven police posts in the territory, 200 police, and another 200 armed Turkana tribal police operating in Ilemi.²⁴ Units of the King's African Rifles (KAR) thereafter moved north of the 1914 Line in the dry season and successfully protected the Turkana at a cost of some £30,000 annually. Official documents in both Kenya and Sudan have depicted and delineated the Ilemi Triangle by a dotted line clearly marked "provisional/administrative boundary" making the 1914 line to disappear in both countries maps especially Kenya's maps and replaced by a solid continuous line conferring ownership to Kenya. As much as time as passed the maps and Atlases in Kenya show the administrative Red Line, not the 1914 Line, as the international boundary. Today Ilemi is solely controlled and administered by Kenya government as its territory and with the current discovery of natural resources of Oil and water Ilemi remains Kenya's territory.

Kenya is a low income economy with per capita GDP of less than \$1005 per annum. It is mainly an agricultural based economy and a net importer and petroleum based products account for 22% of total import bill.²⁵ According to the World Bank, Kenya's economy grew by 5.7 per cent in 2015 and this economic growth is set to be catalyzed by the discovery of commercially viable oil deposits in Turkana which lies squarely in Ilemi triangle. Kenya's oil discovery in 2012 has triggered a huge interest from the private sector to further explore the country's geological basins. Having recently appeared on the energy radar, Kenya and the entire East Africa region has quickly become a hot spot for commercially viable oil and gas discoveries.²⁶ UK Tullow Oil which is spearheading the exploration announced the discovery of approximately one billion barrels of oil from oil wells in Amosing-1 and Ewoi-1 exploration wells in block 10bb onshore Northern Kenya. The latest findings and the recently reported discoveries at Ekales-1 and Agete-1, puts the total estimate of discovered resources in Kenya to over 600 million barrels in Turkana County, located in the country's arid northern region bordering Uganda and South Sudan, both of which have commercial oil deposits.²⁷

Kenya belongs to a number of regional inter-governmental organizations which are instrumental in maintenance of peace and security in the region. They have been critical in conflict resolution and mediation between warring parties in the region. The Intergovernmental Authority and Development (IGAD) which is a fundamental organization in peace and stability in great lakes

²⁴ Mwaura, P. (2005). Kenya's claim over Sudan, Ethiopia border triangle precarious. Khartoum: Sudan tribute.

²⁵ Olaka, H. (2010). *Economic Implications of the Oil Discovery in Kenya*. Nairobi: The Centre for Research on Financial Markets and Policy

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ **Kinyanjui, B (2012)**. Kenya strikes oil in Turkana County but drilling could take years. Daily Nation

region has been in the forefront in stabilizing the war-torn Sudan. The Kenya-led IGAD Process successfully mediated between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). In this context the Kenya-led IGAD process was an institutional setup that was legitimately empowered to pursue peace in Sudan and ensure security of the region.²⁸ The unfolding political events in the Greater Horn of Africa region enabled the Kenya-led IGAD process to succeed in the mediation process between SPLA/M and the GOS a move that fosters confidence in the states that belong to the authority reducing conflict potentiality.

South Sudan Claim over Ilemi

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 marked the birth of a new nation in the African continent. Sudan remained as the largest state in Africa until the secession of the south and creation of republic of South Sudan in 2011. South Sudan is a poor country which is still in the initial stages of state building. Despite the fact that it is endowed with abundant natural resources, essential for economic development, the state has not tapped the potential it possess largely due to protracted conflict and political skirmishes that have engulfed it since independence. Fifty one percent (51%) of South Sudanese are poor (55% in rural areas and 24% in urban areas). The economy is entirely agricultural with 80% of the population dependent on it directly and indirectly.²⁹ South Sudan depends largely on imports of goods, services, and capital from the north and trading partners like Kenya. The government of South Sudan derives nearly 98% of its budget revenues from oil which is exported through two pipelines that run to refineries and shipping facilities at Port Sudan on the Red Sea.³⁰ South Sudan's total oil wealth is estimated at \$38 billion and includes estimated future revenues from existing oil fields. The country has an estimated GDP of \$13.80 billion and a population of 11.30 million.³¹

Regionally south Sudan has established diplomatic ties with regional powers such as Kenya to catalyze its infrastructural development as evidenced by the Lamu South Sudan Ethiopia Transport Corridor Project (LAPSSET) which aims at linking the three countries. The completion of the project will boost the volume of cross-border trade and it will provide an advance transportation network involving a standard gauge railway line to Juba, oil pipelines, oil refinery in Bargoni and the three Airports.³² Additionally south Sudan has forged mutual cooperation with the republic of Ethiopia, through signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU), to construct pipeline running from Djibouti through Ethiopia to South Sudan which will

²⁸ibid

²⁹Government of the Republic of South Sudan. (2011-2013). *South Sudan Development Plan 2011-2013*. Juba: GoSS.

³⁰World Bank Report 2013.

³¹ ibid

³²http://www.southsudaninfo.com/Lamu-Southern_Sudan-Ethiopia_Transport_Corridor_Project.

facilitate transportation of crude oil to the international markets. Territoriality has been a contagious issue and a source of inter-state conflict with numerous sporadic killings being reported the contested oil-rich regions of Abyei, South Kordofan, Heglig and the recent claims over Ilemi triangle.

South Sudan inherited the claim for Ilemi triangle from Sudan, after it gained independence in 2011. Following the Anglo-Ethiopian agreement treaty of 1907 the entire Ilemi triangle was placed in the Sudanese side which bore the Sudanese patrol line. Subsequently in 1914, the Uganda- Sudan commission mandated with demarcation of Uganda- Sudan international boundary increased Sudanese access to Lake Turkana via Sanderson Gulf, a move that bred conflict and caused deaths occasioned by raids from Dassenech and Inyangatom from Ethiopia who were angered by such demarcation.³³ Sudan refrained from administration of Ilemi Triangle since 1956. President Kenyatta of Kenya made a formal request to the British Foreign Office for the area to be seceded to Kenya and it was domesticated in the Kenyan maps which started showing the 1950 Sudan patrol line as the international boundary.³⁴ During the Sudanese civil war the leader of SPLA/M Dr John Garang entered into an agreement with the Kenyan government to cede Ilemi triangle to Kenya in exchange of both logistical and military support during the war. But upon the attainment of south Sudan independence in 2011 it revisited the claims on Ilemi pointing accusation on legality of Kenya's ownership.

South Sudan wrote to the United Nations (UN) Security Council seeking interventions to reclaim some parts of Ilemi triangle that extends into the Kenyan territory. However, South Sudan's Ambassador to Kenya later refuted this report claiming that it was a 'malicious accusation. South Sudan fears that if Oil exploration in Kenya goes on, then they will stand to lose more Oil from the wells in Turkana which are on the Lower side of the oil-table than the wells in South Sudan.³⁵ They have therefore planned to create a conflict situation as a way for (South Sudan) to buy time to explore and drill more Oil on their side before Kenya drills theirs at Ngamia 1 and the various Blocks. The conflict situation will see to it that Kenya does not start drilling since they will be engaged in resolving this conflict first. Kenya remains to have the *de facto* control of Ilemi triangle and has continued to arm the Turkanas in the region to protect themselves against external threats posed by the nomadic raiders from the neighboring Ethiopia. South Sudan and Kenya are set to engage in a diplomatic row if the former takes it head on that the triangle in question lies in its territory and embarks on castigated measures to reclaim it. Territoriality is therefore a new dimension that is cropping up in the new republic and the new state seems to avoid the ugly traditional conflict resolution by filing suit papers with the international court of justice and the African Union claiming the now resource rich region.

³³Sophie, H. & Max, H. (2013). *South Sudan*. London: Bradt Travel Guides.

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ *ibid*

Ethiopia's Position Regarding Ilemi Triangle

The 1907 Anglo-Ethiopia treaty remains the relevant reference in regard to the position that Ethiopia has on Ilemi triangle. Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia with advanced weapons than his predecessor consolidated remote areas by military conquest and established garrisons and administrative posts just like the British imperialism and expansionist policies he claimed Lake Turkana which he called the Samburu Sea.³⁶ Emperor Menelik based his territorial claim on slave raiding into peripheral lands that Ethiopia did not always police and he proposed that his territory would run from Lake Turkana southeast up to Indian Ocean. After the First World War, Ethiopia armed the Nyangatom and Dassenach peoples primarily against the Turkana who were meant to be protected by the Blue Line. This increased level of fire arms translated to traditional raids into pitched battles and concomitantly raised death tolls.³⁷

The Red Line sometimes referred to as the Glenday Line after the DC from Kenya, represented no change in the existing international boundary which had been established in 1914. It was an informal agreement defining the traditional grazing ground of the Turkana in the Ilemi Triangle. The Green Line of 1932 marking more territory further north of the Red Line was drawn to allow the Turkana access to pastures and waterholes where the Dassanetch and Nyangatom thought they had established rights.³⁸ The indulgence of Great Britain to the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in 1936 did not extend in the following year to Italian designs on Ilemi. Since the Ethiopian Dessanetch were indigenous residents of the Triangle, now subjects of the Italian empire, their rights to their ancestral home had presumably reverted to Italy which promptly established frontier posts along the Ethiopian frontier within the Sudan and Kenya.

Following a spate of attacks by the Dassanetch on the Turkana inflicting heavy casualties and loss of much livestock, the British Foreign Office drew yet another line, this one Blue that enlarged the Triangle but did not halt Ethiopian imperial ambitions supporting Dassanetch aggression in Ilemi. In 1964 officials from Kenya and Ethiopia met to discuss a readjustment of their boundary that resulted in an exchange of frontier posts, particularly the strategic Ethiopian post of Namuruputh to Kenya that restricted the free access of the Dassanetch to Lake Turkana.

Geopolitical Interests in the Triangle

Due to its permanent pasture as a result of waters from River Tarach and other smaller rivers pouring into the Lotagipi swamp and other closely linked smaller swamps, the Triangle was curved out to be a neutral zone by colonial authorities keen to minimize conflict among their

³⁶Mburu.

³⁷Borders M. (2010) The Ilemi Triangle Sovereignty scape.

³⁸Robert O. Collins O. R (2004)The Ilemi Triangle University of California Santa Barbara

African subjects. It was to be a safety net for pastoralist ethnic groups in the surrounding areas who were often engaged in violent conflicts over grazing rights and water during drought. This neutrality was granted after the Kitgum conference resolution of 1924. Thus the Toposa (Sudan), the Merile (or Dassanetch), the Nyangatom and the Tirma (Ethiopia) and Turkana (Kenya) were to graze and water their livestock under the supervision of the British authorities in Kenya.

Since the Triangle was the first to receive modern arms among African hands, it formed the cradle of rush for arms in the region, and experienced the earliest violent skirmishes. Even then they were on smaller scale not comparable to what has been occurring since the 1990s with modern globalization³⁹. The historic analysis of the regional interests of major powers was centered on the notion of “spheres of influence” or “spheres of interest.” The term sphere of influence was not possibly used before 1880s when major powers signed a series of treaties delineating the boundaries of their colonial empires. This led to the adaptation of the term sphere of interest. Naturally the Sphere of interest policy directly conflicts with the doctrine of sovereignty. Many historians argue that such a policy was traditionally pursued by major powers.

Shatterbelt is the term for a relatively old notion concerning major power disagreements, tacit or open, over their influence in particular regions.⁴⁰ Cohen coined the term *Shatterbelt* and defined it as “a large strategically located region that is occupied by a number of conflicting states and is caught between the conflicting interests of adjoining Great Powers. Regional stakes or regional salience can in turn be interpreted as a reflection of tightness of relations between a major power and other states in the region. The notion of regional salience incorporates the idea of spheres of interest, indirectly those of shatter belts and foreign policy portfolios similarities. Regional salience variables refers to the less manipulable interests or stakes that forge a major power’s willingness to carry out its threat. The assumption here is that the more salient an area is for a major power, the more likely it is to become involved in a crisis arising in the area. Such argument can be extended to claim that if an area is highly significant for more than one major power, there would be a higher probability of a more serious conflict between regional powers.

Conflicts that are resource-based can be intractable. Some of the participants in the war may actually benefit from the unsettled conditions that can facilitate access to resources.⁴¹ Perhaps the discovery of oil has seen the intensification of the Triangle conflict. On this view, an open inter-state conflict is prospective, however distant and this is an extra layer of conflict to ancient tribal rivalries and the pressure on basic natural resources. Border disputes often flare up after they become linked with important economic or social interests. Disputed territories may contain important natural resources, such as hydrocarbon, mineral reserves, or water sources; provide access to the sea or shared terrestrial resources, such as grazing areas; or be a strategic location.

³⁹ Amutabi and Were, 2000

⁴⁰ Cohens (1973, p. 85).

⁴¹ Silberfein M. (2004) *The Geopolitics of Conflict and Diamonds in Sierra Leone*, Frank Cass and Company Limited.

Such areas also may be subject to irredentist claims based on historical or cultural factors or demands for self-determination by their inhabitants.⁴²

The disputes in the Horn of Africa region are bound to be explosive owing to the recent discovery of hydrocarbons in the vicinity. In most cases there are no clear agreements defining the boundaries nor clear legal frameworks and policies that govern the exploitation of the mineral wealth in cases where mineral deposits overlap boundaries. Sovereign boundaries have added some dynamism to the current mineral and energy rush in Eastern Africa as once peaceful neighbours scramble to maximize the mineral wealth deposits under their soil. Since oil and gas reservoirs know no boundaries and interpretations of where borders pass is at the discretion of current leaders, this are bound to raise tensions and could lead to cross border tensions and even conflict in the future.⁴³

Foreign policy of Horn of African State

Foreign policy analysis focuses on interaction between one state and another be it direct multilateral or bilateral interaction. The key concept in foreign policy analysis is the national interest. Realist theories assert that international system is anarchic and the methods that states use to achieve national interest are self interesting, competitive and determined by their military power. Geographic position, material resources and demography are other important features that by a large extend dictate the pursuance of national interest.

To analyze the foreign policy of the Horn of African states, it is important to locate the geographical positioning of them and their strategic importance to world politics and economics. A politico-geographical approach has been used to analyze the foreign policy of the states that lie in the horn of Africa.⁴⁴ The region has the states that posses huge volumes of commercially exploitable petroleum, and its proximity to the Red sea which is major transit route makes the region very important to world politics. Kenya being one of the countries with claim to the Ilemi triangle has formulated in its foreign policy documents fundamental guiding principles that articulate the nation's framework of achieving its international obligations and responsibilities. Key among them is the norm of peaceful coexistence with neighbors and other nations and the Respect for the equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states.⁴⁵ These two

⁴²The Carter Center (2010) Approaches to Solving Territorial Conflicts: Sources, Situations, Scenarios, and Suggestions, One Copen hill, Atlanta, GA.

⁴³East Africa Energy (2012) Territorial disputes in Eastern Africa: The Mineral factor <http://eafrikaenergy.blogspot.com/2012/10/territorial-disputes-in-eastern-africa.html>. Accessed on 20 April 2015.

⁴⁴ Attilio,A.(2006).*Geo-political explanation of conflict in the Horn of Africa*.Addis Ababa:.OSSREA.

⁴⁵ MoF. (2009). *Foreign policy framework* .Nairobi: GoK.

principles are of great importance in analyzing the disputes that surround the Ilemi triangle and politics that have emerged among the state that lay claim to the triangle. Kenya's claim to the Ilemi triangle is precarious since it started to administer the triangle during the Anglo-Egyptian rule of Sudan in the early nineteenth century. Sudan felt the triangle was useless hence did not develop it and therefore Kenya came on board to protect the Turkana who patrolled the area with their livestock, against raids from both Dassanech and Inyangatom.⁴⁶ In 1928, Khartoum permitted Kenya to patrol the area and Kenya sent military units of Kenya Africa rifles (KAR) who established administrative posts and put the area under Kenyan control, hence Ilemi triangle became a Kenyan territory by default.

Before president Moi came to power in 1978, the Maud Line named after Captain Philip Maud who delimited the boundary was recognized as the official international boundary between Kenya and Sudan. Kenyan maps showed the Ilemi triangle in dotted lines indicated provisional/administrative boundary. After Moi came to power, he entered into a covert deal with Sudan that made the dotted lines to disappear and be replaced by a continuous line indicating Kenya's territory and its ownership.⁴⁷ Due to its current mineral possession, Kenya is bound to protect the Ilemi triangle as its territory as it is articulated in its foreign policy framework.

South Sudan is the youngest state in African continent and the 193rd member of the UN. It gained independence after the success of a secession referendum that made it autonomous from the larger Sudan.⁴⁸ South Sudan lays a claim over Ilemi given its Toposa ethnic community roams the area in search for dry season pasture and water for their livestock. Their claim is further solidified by the discovery of oil deposits in the triangle. Being the youngest state in Africa and with no capacity to erect modern infrastructure or a military expedition, South Sudan has written to UN Security Council seeking international resolution to reclaim some parts of the triangle that extends to the Kenyan territory. This claim has been refuted as malicious by the ambassador of south Sudan to Kenya.⁴⁹ The fresh dispute over boundary has the potential to ignite interstate conflict that could destabilize the region given the heavy armament of the ethnic communities that reside in the region.

Just like her neighboring counterparts' Ethiopia foreign policy is anchored on the pillar of economic development, democratization and good governance in a manner which takes into account the realities of Ethiopia, recognizing the vital principal of unity in diversity and the need for tolerance and accommodation.⁵⁰ Ethiopians claim on Ilemi triangle dates back the colonial

⁴⁶ Peter, M. (2005). *Kenya's claim over Sudan, Ethiopia border triangle precarious*. Nairobi: Daily Nation.

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ <http://www.goss.org/>

⁴⁹ Sam, K. (2012). *The Ilemi triangle –a beacon of peace turned into a cause of conflict*. Nairobi: word press.

⁵⁰ MoF. (2014). *International relations: the principals of Ethiopia's foreign policy*. Addis Ababa: Government of Ethiopia.

days when imperialists demarcated international boundaries. Although the Dassanech of Ethiopia claims to the indigenous inhabitants of Ilemi triangle, recently there have been sporadic conflicts between the Dassanech of Ethiopia and Turkana of Kenya in the Ethiopian side of Karamoja cluster. Ethiopian Dassanech elders have held peace meetings with their Kenyan local elders to arbitrate on the ongoing conflict, while at the national level; the Kenya-Ethiopia Joint Border Commission has made efforts to de-escalate conflict through peaceful conflict resolution measures. These include preventing livestock raids, requiring the return of looted livestock and promoting peace-making between the hostile pastoral groups⁵¹

Conclusion

The Ilemi Triangle is a piece of land joining Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia, roughly measuring between 10,320 and 14,000sq kilometers and named after Anuak Chief Ilemi Akwon.⁵² The Triangle is on the fringe of Southern Sudan and is home to five ethno-linguistic communities: the Turkana, Didinga, Toposa, Inyangatom and the Dassenench who are members of the larger ethno-cultural groups of these neighbouring countries but traditionally migrate to graze in the Triangle.⁵³ Precisely, the conflict surrounding the Ilemi triangle originated from the unclearity of the 1907 treaty signed between the Ethiopian government under Emperor Menelik and the British, which in fact became the Kenya-Ethiopian border, latter known as the 1914 Line.

The dispute surrounding Ilemi triangle dates back the year 1907 when Ethiopia and British signed a treaty which was adopted as the Kenyan-Ethiopian border. Political developments in the area have seen the area demarcated on different occasions with change in international boundary. The first being the Maud line which was surveyed by Captain Philip Maud, followed by the Red Line which Kenya perceived as its territorial boundary. Years on the British foreign office surveyed the Blue Line and gazette it as Turkana Grazing zone, a move that occasioned bloody massacre that resulted to deaths of Turkana's and subsequent arms race which has created a security dilemma since then. Political developments in Sudan and south Sudan have reignited the old rivalries surrounding the ownership of the triangle with the latter claiming ownership and reporting Kenya to the Un Security Council, bringing fourth an international stalemate that needs an international arbitration. Recently the government of Kenya has announced the discovery of huge deposits of commercially viable oil deposits in Ngamia 1 in Turkana County through Tullow oil Company which is spearheading the drilling. Oil remains a precious resource in the triangle and a possible source for scramble by the infamous multinational corporations and even a possible *casus belli* (cause for war) in the area. Furthermore it is established that the area

⁵¹ Siefulaziz, M. (2004). *Baseline study for the Ethiopian side of the karamoja cluster*. Addis Ababa: National Institute Research for Ethiopia

⁵² Collins, R. (2010). *The ilemi triangle*. Santa Barbara :University of California.

⁵³ *ibid*

possess huge volumes of water which could be harnessed for irrigation and sustainable food security in the region which lie underground.

Many cooperative approaches to resource and border issues have been implemented by states on an agreed basis or as a result of dispute resolution assistance. What is often needed to resolve a territorial conflict, however, is to devise a “no lose” (non-zero sum) solution. Two cross-cutting distinctions between approaches to the resolution of border disputes form the basis for a matrix of approaches.⁵⁴ The first distinction is between binding and nonbinding procedures, with the former encompassing adjudication and arbitration and the latter including “good offices” or facilitation, for example utilizing the services of international leaders or eminent persons for conciliation and mediation. Mediation is distinguished from arbitration in that the resulting award must be accepted by the parties to the dispute. Nonbinding international means of resolving disputes, especially good offices and conciliation, allow for participation of the parties throughout the process of dispute resolution.

The second distinction is between approaches based primarily on law and those that permit the dispute resolution agent or panel to explore alternative approaches based on equity and natural justice. Depending on their terms of reference, arbitrators may be granted the power to make an award on this basis. Even the International Court of Justice, under its statute, may decide cases *ex aequo et bono* (i.e., based on equity and welfare) at the request of the parties. The most flexible approaches to the resolution of border disputes would combine elements of the nonbinding methods and equitable approaches to problem solving. This involves focusing on the practical elements of a territorial dispute, including the resource and other issues at stake, as well as how to address them in a way that is acceptable to the parties while avoiding, or at least deferring, legal issues related to sovereignty.

REFERENCES

Attilio, A. (2006). *Geo-political explanation of conflict in the Horn of Africa*. Addis Ababa .OSSREA.

Borders M. (2010) *The Ilemi Triangle Sovereignty scape*.

Collins, R. (2010). *The Ilemi triangle*. Santa Barbara: University of California.

Carter Center (2010) *Approaches to Solving Territorial Conflicts: Sources, Situations, Scenarios, and Suggestions*, One Copenhill, Atlanta, GA.

⁵⁴ Ibid

East Africa Energy (2012) Territorial disputes in Eastern Africa: The Mineral factor <http://eafricaenergy.blogspot.com/2012/10/territorial-disputes-in-eastern-africa.html>. Accessed on 20 April 2016.

Farah, T (1976). *The problem of the Baro Salient*. Sudan notes and records. LVII, 21-30.

Flint, C. (2011). *Introduction to geopolitics*. London :Rout ledge

Government of the Republic of South Sudan. (2011-2013). *South Sudan Development Plan 2011-2013*. Juba: GoSS.

Goldstein S. J. (2004) *International Relations*, Fifth Edition, American University, Washington, D.C., Longman Publishers, New York.

Jones et. al.(2011). *An Introduction to Political Geography: Space, Place and Politics*.

Harold, M. (1975). *The life and times of Menelik II Ethiopia 1844-1913*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Kinyanjui, B (2012). Kenya strikes oil in Turkana County but drilling could take years. Daily Nation

Martin, J. (2011). *The Elemi triangle history*. Nairobi: Opinion Kenya Ltd.

Mburu, N. (2003). *Delimitation of elastic ilemi triangle. Pastrol conflict and official indifference in the horn of afrikca. frican Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, Spring

MoF. (2014). *International relations: the principals of Ethiopia's foreign policy*. Addis Ababa: Government of Ethiopia.

Mwaura, P. (2005). Kenya's claim over Sudan, Ethiopia border triangle precarious. Khartoum: Sudan tribute.

Olaka, H. (2010). *Economic Implications of the Oil Discovery in Kenya*. Nairobi: The Centre for Research on Financial Markets and Policy

Peter, M. (2005). *Kenya's claim over Sudan, Ethiopia border triangle precarious*. Nairobi: Daily Nation.

Sam, K. (2012). *The Ilemi triangle –a beacon of peace turned into a cause of conflict*. Nairobi: word press.

Robert O. Collins O. R (2004). The Ilemi Triangle University of California Santa Barbara

Silberfein M. (2004) *The Geopolitics of Conflict and Diamonds in Sierra Leone*, Frank Cass and Company Limited.

Siefulaziz, M. (2004). *Baseline study for the Ethiopian side of the karamoja cluster*. Addis Ababa: National Institute Research for Ethiopia

Sophie, H. & Max, H. (2013). *South Sudan*. London: Bradt Travel Guides.