

“Resource” based Violent Conflict between Pastoralists of Ethiopia: An Exploration into Afar-Issa Conflict

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Abstract: This article reviews the empirical evidences behind the Afar and Issa conflicts. It argues that Afar-Issa conflict does constitute pastoralist features but not all in all pastoralist in essence. Behind seemingly resource needs, which could have been accommodated by peaceful utilization of resources, there is much bigger threat waiting that appeared to many as product of the less and ungoverned social setting of ‘nomads’. Continuity of the conflict is explained on the Issa side in terms of the quest for water and rangeland that is simple competition over natural resources. Nonetheless, the Afar version of the story asserts by far in comparable weight of counter argument that necessitates non-resource explanation. Afar and Issa pastoralist have long history of conflict and violent clash but were not at any time beyond the capacity of time old traditional institutions and resolution mechanisms. However, attempts made to effect deterrence of Issa aggression and introduce balance of power on the contrary proved to Afar dismay that there was nothing to stop the Issa advance. Afar pastoralists have suffered the worst damage appears multi-dimensional. Afar-Issa conflict has very grave messages on the oblivious human security in the region more so, on the Ethiopian state security and indeed sovereignty.

Keywords: conflict, dynamics, Afar, Issa, Resource, competition, impact, implication

1. Introduction

Conflict between Afar and Issa has been taking place for the last six decades. The intensity of conflicts and violent clashes has been ever increasing across regime and system changes; administrative, structural and governorship reshufflings; changes over socio-economic and political landscape as well as other over arching national sub-regional and regional changes that tremendously affected many aspects of the nation seemed to affect the continuity and development of this particular conflict. The universal pastoralist context notwithstanding, polarities pertaining to extreme power imbalance, system failure to give end to the dynamics and potential of “peripheral” conflict, in the old Ethiopian state craft parlance, morrows national security threat, geo-political implications thereof, as well as, core democratic values of human right, of all the sanctity of human life to ensure being the elementary role of the state, this conflict appears as vital index of failure in nation building and thwarted state building.

Factors, as many as number human casualty of the conflict, can be mentioned. However, only very few are well explained free from bias and irrational predisposition. Also, ostensible expressions power asymmetry land and territorial annexation as reflection, basically resource as underpinning cause fueling conflicts and contributing factors related to geo-political, historical and cultural factors are taken in composite to explain the case at hand.

Explanatory purpose of this paper is advanced via the application of evaluative approach on past efforts (if any) and current moves afoot against structural, identity, and relationship contexts. By so doing, attention is made to shade light on matters covered under rubbles of pastoralist social order.

1.1. Theoretical and Methodological Approach

Static theory of social conflict

Conflict is physical, verbal, and emotional Struggle between individuals or groups that have actual or perceived incompatibility of values, needs, interests and goals to the actualization of which competition over scarce (vital) resources, power and influence¹. Conflicts could be positive in initiating impetus of social *change and transformation* if properly managed. Otherwise conflict is not only absence of harmony it may also involve destructive or degenerative cycle of violence², strengthen exclusionary group boundary and strictly inhibit entry or exit³. The intensity and level of struggle as well as effects of conflict, as *multi-dimensional social phenomenon*, is determined by nature of *structural relationship*, type of *issues*, of *interests* and *actors* involved. Mitigation of violent conflict is believed by structural theorist to enable in settling incompatibility via compromise and negotiations. However, social conflict undergoes change and transformation; so do structural relations that create and sustain conflict of interest, determine behavior and attitude of actors, and

¹ Koka, kgalushi, and Selby Gumbi. (*n. d. conflict management: Afro-centric perspective. Paper delivered to the community conflict management seminar, blue waters hotel, Durban, 4 April 1997*) quoted in King Mary. E and Ebrima Sall ed. 2005 peace research for Africa: a critical essay on methodology. P. 94

² (*Goodhand and Hulme 1999 from Wars to Complex Political Emergencies: Understanding Conflict and Peace Building in the New World Order. Third World Quarterly, 20(1)13-26*) quoted in King Mary. E and Ebrima Sall ed. 2005 peace research for Africa: a critical essay on methodology. P. 94

³ (*Coser, Lewis, 1965. The Function of social Conflict. New York and London: free press and collier Macmillan*) quoted in King Mary. E and Ebrima Sall ed. 2005 peace research for Africa: a critical essay on methodology. P. 94

their relationship. Conflict escalates, deescalates, in short, transforms to violence making structural centered intervention-settlement mechanisms atavistic⁴.

1.2. Non-Ideal Theory of Conflict

The most important determinant of social conflict in change –protracted social conflict- according to Azar is the *context* in which conflicts are formed, sustained and transformed to violence. Inter group/party attitudes are influenced by earlier *relations*; *behavioral* responses are not mere automated jerk to stimuli-are modified both by memories of the past and value expectations. Context encompasses societal values, norms, institutional arrangements, culture, government type and social role of actors set in place. Also, regional and international changes and development are part in context. The totalities of Relationships context in which conflicts take place and transcend define nature of conflict dynamics. Similarly, memories take part in social construction of our perception, attitude, and beliefs. Peculiar to own identity definition via reconstruction (involves remembering) of the past plays pivotal role in readiness, mobilization and choice of strategy-action of a group. Thus, memories are adhesive glues that create seamless alliance among elements of Galtung's triangular model of analyses: contradictions, attitudes and behaviors of groups in conflict⁵. Thus, the advanced substitution and presentation of Contradictions by *context*, attitudes by *relationship* and behaviors by *memories* alleviates drawbacks of party level analyses undertake out of *context*.⁶

1.3. Contextual Theory of Conflict

The continuity and transformation of (violent) conflict as dysfunctional relation in a given context is explained by the function of the state, the content of ruling ideas and the behavior of individual members in a group, and the pattern, magnitude, and nature of interaction amidst them in influencing the predictability of action and reflection; that is to mean, structural context, relationship context, actors context, memories context.⁷ Protracted social conflict appears as general background of violent conflict.

1.4. Conflict in Pastoralist Society

It involves peculiar contexts that includes what Azar referred as *communal content*, *communal action* and *state action*⁸ expressed in clan based narrow definition of identity, strong mobilization mechanism of ethnic and clan members for war at any time and absolute peculiar-exclusionary definition of identity, most often than not, coercive state measure and low level of integration, high degree of marginalization, extremely poor socio-economic profile, precariousness

of life in general.⁹Conflicts grow out of such general backgrounds where in groups' relationships and choice of action is defined by same factors. Competition for scarce resources, relative deprivation coupled with image of participants and perception of threat are strong predictor and important condition for the likelihood of violence but are not *sin qua non*.¹⁰ As long as same phenomenon stimulates different level of perception, threat, and insecurity by different groups, the subjective self and enemy image formation and its social context are the necessary conditions to violence. The juxtaposed existence of the particular historical and political context identity redefinition and ethnic (clan) consciousness appears, the consequent change in and past memories of power relationship, interests defined under such condition totally determines pastoralist community nature of togetherness. Moreover, the re-drawing of regional/local government boundaries and administrative structure, the emergence of new ethnic (political) elite, along with it the creation of multiple power epicenters, religious, social and economic centers strongly promotes mutual exclusive definition as well as perception of 'we ness' and the 'others'. In a federal state structure, weak national economy (pastoral sectors the worst expression) and infant democratic experiment, *past memories* are called up on to radicalize new definition of ethnic identity and to fan ethnic animosity and intolerance by political elite. The political elite to win the favor of clan or community constituency (power bases) to secure political offices fabricate arguments for territorial claims and counter claims.¹¹

Ecological Imbalance, land degradation, resource base depletion, and recurrent drought, altogether environmental challenges constitute impacts of imbalance in an ecosystem. The existence of administrative (assumed or relic) boundary shifted and rigidified into political and ethnic boundary Due to polarized relations exacerbates vulnerability to natural and artificial disaster. The absence of modern and the weakening of traditional drought and famine coping mechanisms together with vast stock of cattle left with nothing for survival develops the irresistible urge to resource base (water source and pastureland grabbing) competition by any means whatsoever. Such need driven communal competition together with exclusionary communal content-narrow and covert identity that harbors and promotes memories of unpleasant past encounter reinforces the life and death struggle. The emergence of other groups by the pull effect of environmental disaster further complicates both the degree and dimension of conflicts. New actors appear to the scene with new demands, new relations, perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and strategies of attaining basic needs and goals. Non transhumance appearance, in addition to resource needs, for reasons other than periodic migration are alertly look up on with suspension and often taken as territorial annexation. Especially minority groups with no particular territorial identification, gypsy like roamers: even among sub-clans of

⁴ Azar, E. 1990. The Management of Protracted Social Conflict, Aldershot: Dartmouth.

⁵ Lederach and Azar, E 1996. conflict Manament and trasformation

⁶ Ibid,19

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Azar, E.1990. The Management of Protracted Social Conflict, Aldershot: Dartmouth.

⁹ Journal Of African Conflict : Pastoralist Conflict And Ecological Challenges,2004

¹⁰ Cf. 12

¹¹ Ibid.

one clan, the response is fierce violence.¹² Minority groups in state of movement are also to challenge the very state structure. Unfortunately, nearby communities are the most frequented absorbers of inevitable shock. Relations between government and pastoralist communities transform into penetration vs. resistance level. Thus, it gives the conflict scenario negative impetus of exacerbation.

Groups' readiness to go into violence and resort to maintain same depends on groups' strategic mode of resistance, power of mobilization and the nature of political agendas on the table. Tactics employed and scope of externalities may determine their resort and commitment too. Moreover, state strategic control mechanisms and actions, policy choices and mode of accommodation ranging from concessions through pragmatic cooption (fractionalization) to coercion determines the process dynamics. Often states that underwent long protracted social conflict and left weary and powerless, rarely fail to choose coercion as 'expedient' and 'efficient'.¹³

The above three parameters mainly relate to the context aspect, and yet, has to be substantiated by factors like governance, culture, social roles and norms.¹⁴ The level of participation and inclusion of pastoralist agenda in major national policy and strategy dimensions is the aspect of governance that needs serious attention in analyzing pastoralist conflicts. The marginalization of pastoralists from major political, economic, and foreign affairs considerations, prejudice attributed to pastoralist way of life as reminiscent of remote past socio-economic formation, trivialization of pastoralist conflicts and the center-peripheries modality of state building that emanates from the former practice governments peruse contributes to silent progress of protracted social conflict. Governments' late appearance in the scene and desperate use of force to silence disorder by chaos (partial measures, disoriented, rush hour solutions) reigns lawlessness. Patriarchy and the value attached to and the vitality of arms to precarious pastoralist livelihood notwithstanding, the presence of unmanaged arms invites vast small arms and light weapons trafficking, contraband market and other illegal modalities of opportunity cost of state marginalization takes predominance over legality. Spillover effects easily transform domestic clan conflicts into both domestic and cross-border security threats.¹⁵

Regional and global market necessity of vast stock of export commodity production driven mega scale mechanized farms and consequent "unutilized" pastoralist land grabbing fans the problem further. As a result local governance either becomes floating structure or gets actively evolved in illegal activities, in neither case performs its duties properly that, instead takes refuge in conflicts to evade responsibility and culpability. By so doing, law appears taking sides in conflict that devastatingly destroys its reliability and impartiality.

Cultural practices like cattle ridding and rustling, harmful practices related to killing to rob arms, revenge killing, *abduction...the role of witchcraft* and beliefs associated with it, all that promotes manly bravery and violence in pastoralist society develops very poor inter-ethnic (clan) relationships. Where there are poor relationships along with above stated problems combine to resurrect memories of bad times in the past to strongly justify unhealthy attitudes and perception they harbor about others, inculcate enemy images, victim mentality and anguish that shapes their behavior and response as a group (also individual member). The role of women in this respect takes the upper hand¹⁶.

Largely, the final resultant is the continuity of violence in various ways for longer period compromising both human and state security. Transformations of violent conflicts transforming many aspects of a given conflict make attempts of conflict resolution futile. Attempts, instead of resolving, has to be geared at transforming them; this involves structural transformation of issues actors, incompatible goals, beliefs or relations, asymmetric power balance, lopsided socio-economic relations up on which conflicts are embedded. Actors' transformation is to effect change actors' goals, decisions and approaches to conflict that could include measures such as change in leadership as well as shifting social constituency of their supporters may initiate new spirit of peace full mechanism of resolving conflicts. Transformation of Issues, redefinition and reframing of positions and interests perused by actors has to be, relentlessly worked for to such end.¹⁷

Moreover, at individual level opinion change and transformation, the way individuals, leaders or group members' view their relationship in conflict is vital to open good gestures. Because such responses from symbolic personalities could alter many minds within ones and other side; and hence, changes the course of group relation¹⁸

2. Data presentation and Analysis

2.1. Historical Background: Causes and Causal Relations

Afar-Issa relations of animosity date a century back. Conflicts over resource drought caused or raid diminishing of stock volume. Revenge and trophy's killing along with cattle raiding is much valued in both cultural systems of values¹⁹. In short, the nature of conflict very pastoral and nothing else. However, since mid-20th century to date the nature of conflict has undergone quantum leap. Afar-Issa relation has come to carry territorial annexation, genocide, betrayal ... undertones. Afars are evicted from their historical domicile. Issa rapid advance in and beyond Awash basin as well

¹⁶ Janice Gross Stain, *Image, Identity and the Resolution of violent conflict* 1996 p.162

¹⁷ Azar, E. 1990. *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict*, Aldershot: Dartmouth. P.140

¹⁸ Azar, E. 1990. *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict*, Aldershot: Dartmouth. p143

¹⁹ Getachew, K. N. 2001. *Among the Pastoral Afar in Ethiopia: tradition continuity and socio economic change*. pp. 46-7.

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 20

¹⁵ COLIE,J. 2005 PASTORALST CONFLICTS :CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION.PP.23-6

as unflinching claim over barely left Afar territory and the defiance of the later have caused much tragic suffering²⁰. Despite common pastoral lively hood, ecology, Islam as religion, geographical proximity, and belonging to the same Cushitic cultural and linguistic group the persistence of violent conflict between them exhibited the deep rooted ness of the conflict requiring further explanation.

The social structures, common factor of conflict analyses, of Afar and Issa are very archaic have some contribution in ever increasing human casualty of war and natural disaster has been affecting the life of both Afars and Issa communities. The Afar side repeated victimization to heinous crimes has created deep-rooted animosity and hatred. Even in the democratic era where multiple identity and political pluralism is frame works of accommodation, their fate has never changed any. As in neighboring Oromo, communities' other factors like environmental and ecological driven conflicts are aspects in the wider conflict canvas. Afar-Issa conflict bears peculiarity both in form and essence apart from other pastoralist conflicts, however. Conflicting parties do not even share trivial meanings as they do on substantive matters on objectives of the conflict.

2.1.1. Battling for meaning

Historical scenario of the conflict is mainly manifested with the advent of Somalia nationalism and the later time greater Somalia dream as the Afar claim. On the other hand, the Issa version have it that the conflict bears no external factor associated with it, but only the common pastoralist day to day conflict in search of water and pasture²¹. Their arguments notwithstanding, objective exploration in to the problem provides proper image camouflaged under pastoralist society context but un pastoralist essence.

However, the dimension and scale of this typical protracted pastoralist conflict has caused the evacuation of 380 km long Afar settlement across a path and 150k.m. in bird fly. Almost all Afars described the conflict as flagrant invasion is expressed interims of progressive inclusion of conquered territories in to formal regional state structure that tripled the size of Issa land within 60 years. The Shinile zonal administration of SNRP's issuance of a legalizing regional map that totally embedded areas stretching from south Afambo²² to Awashsebat town important indicator of the nature of conflict. Within this range rolling planes like Yanguderassa National Park, the unbounded Halaydegi valley to date left pastoralist no man's land. Islam and pastoral lively hood

mitigating the eruption and furtherance of conflict repercussions is nonexistent. However, everything seems to crumble in the face of unfolding Afar-Issa violence. Marriages, social integration of the type prevalent in similar socio-economic settings are continuously denuded by persistently occurrence of violent clashes. The post 1991 period further added another dimension(s) the independence of Eritrea, the consequent emergence of land-locked Ethiopian state, eruption of Ethio-Eritrea war and the, worse was at store, absolute dependency of the Ethiopian state on Issa dominated republic of Djibouti even for existential survival and security needs is believed by Afars to have given unbounded superiority of arms, political tacit support and, indeed, all-time all boosted psychological gratification of the classical conqueror.

The absolute opposite state of conditions attest on the other half: the Afar part. The past appears to play dominant role in Afar-Issa conflict than the living present. Thus the need to go through what really happened in the past.

2.1.2. Italian Invasion

The Italians were the first to involve their hand in Afar-Issa conflict so as to exploit political advantages out of the commencement of mutual contradiction. The advancing Italian invader through the east from Mogadishu had managed to convince Issa through Somali speaking recruits that followed the invader. Moreover, members of Issa-Somali clans had joined ranks with their colonized Somalis from Mogadishu. Afar pastoralist adhered to their view of loyalty to national sovereignty, whatever that might have meant to them, to the end. It is also vital to note that both Afar and Issa were related as game animals to wild too tame by the then ruling view of state, ruler and subject relationship. The Afar side of the story has it that the invader facing humiliating defeat by poorly armed and determined Afar fighters was later on to heinously retaliate by merciless assassination of 82 famous men known for their bravery among the Afar people, indiscriminately maimed villages, hamlets and their settlers by tanks and cannons. Mass Graves of these martyrs, Afar elders bitterly witness, is located in between Hurso and Erer rivers known by Issa "Qebrri *Odiash*" meaning the graves of elders, annexed by that unfortunate falling of the state under the invader still it is occupied by the Issa. One major consequence that permeated the thick layer of time is the *power imbalance* introduced in favor of the Issa-Somali clan.

2.1.3. Promoters of Greater Somalia Project

The asymmetric relations that began with the invader Italian forces were further to be consolidated after the establishment of the Somali republic and the "*greater Somalia project*" promoting Somali nationalism that sumultaneously emerged and was without equivocation enshrined in the national state constitution. As the subsequent invasion of Ethiopia by the emerging state was the result of the Somali rabid nationalism, lopsided power relations ensued therein was the result of the same cause.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ QAJAB, 2004. Qafar-Issa Joint Committee Minuet vol. 16 P. 2. The QJJC is a joint committee of Qafar and Issa that had been meeting biannual at regional level, quarterly at zonal and wereda level, and monthly at kebele level. Despite three years of rigorous efforts and it was dissolved in 2004 due to the stalemate and immobility of the committee that had always been debating over every other incidence of conflict as to whether it is resource competition or annexation of territory.

²² This area is symbolical for its historical significance as the sea of the 400 years old Awsa Sultanate, and the most power full clans' domicile: Damohoyta, Hamedesirat and over all the great Ayidahiso domicile.

The incorporation of, according to promoters of the dream, *western Somali* refers to vast Ethiopian land stretching in the south west that encompasses not only Ethiopian Somali clan but also vast area of Oromo, Afar, Harari, and other nations. The new state perused the policy of instigating divisions among nations of Ethiopia to compromise their solidarity and resolve against threat or actual invasion. Providing arms and instigating war against disobedient clans and nations gave the Issa superior arms power against neighboring nations that become its victims; the Afar, against which the Issa waged intermittent war for years to come, suffered incomparable damage and lost their ancient domicile. The area stretching from Erer up to Addis Ababa main road, from Erer through the north up to the Obno valley, there from west wards through Adaytu to Awash, almost one-fifth of Afar land was taken by gun power evicting, threatening and killing every Afar that were in hamlets as well as those who were in the rail way construction works.

In the appeal logged to House of Federations by Afar National Regional State reference is made to Afars who used to govern many of these areas during the imperial and military rule²³. Earlier history has it that both Afar and Issa used to live in separate province during the imperial rule Afar in cherher, Adal and Gereguracha (*AsebTeferi*) province, Issa in Issa and Gurgura (DireDawa) province. if it was not for the aggression-instigated power asymmetry Issa could had controlled areas currently under its control long before the advent of external forces of aggression.

“Mefeyidela”

“Mefeyidela” could be reckoned, as no other consequence for it’s the unimaginable brutality it embodies. The story from the horse’s mouth goes on saying: “this tragic story happened in 1964 in a place called *Mefeyidela* a group of automatic machine Gun armed Issa Fighters invaded surrounded Afar hamlets and massacred every one 481 leaving every one dead behind and Cattle exceeding 25,000 were raided”.

This symbol of deep rooted animosity is located only 14 km away east of the currently known, Issa contraband town on the main Addis Ababa-Djibouti high way, as Gedamayto: reminds Afars their helplessness as though unsleeping malice aching their heart from father to son as they are obliged and fear fully cross the town : the daughter of Mefeyidela.

Moreover, the force that precipitated Issa superior power the Somali state had done a lot ensure the continuity of forcefully annexed Afar lands to get undisputed status as Issa’s own. Some among many tactics of deception are the printing and dissemination of forged maps and anthropological and historical publications fictitious work; by the endeavor, though temporarily, had confused many regional and international observers.

Books like "The origin and History of Somali People" written by Ali Ibrahim, a Somali national states prepared a map depicting the Issa Somali clan directly sharing common boundary with highlander Amhara of to Semen Showa north wards²⁴. Geographical observation of the area tells what venomous intensions are sneaking behind such move the totally cuts the Afar land detached from the center. With the legendary Somali resentment against the continuity of the Ogaden region- protruding end of the Ethiopian horn as the dagger embedded in the navel of Somali, the pointer to hinterland of Semen Showa defiantly tells the intention of stabbing the cutting edge of the dagger at the heart of Ethiopia. Two basic related reasons further explain the above assertion.

A history of the Issa clan (*written in French*)²⁵ explains geographical and territorial limits of the Issa clan “south ward starting from Djibouti along the rail way line upon Awash town and north wards starting from Awash town along Awash river banks including Logia town to fall under their area. In addition to this one of the political parties that took part in the transitional government convention The Ethiopia Somali Democratic Movement representing the interests of the Somali people had dared to overtly articulated in its social and economic program stating that the Awash valley is Somali people’s own entitlement and no developmental activity shall be done without the Somali willingness and recognition.²⁶ Until the formation of the coalition of various Somali political parties this party has been organizing the Somali people including the Issa clan around and rallying its supporters with this program seeing no actual or hope of reform to last.

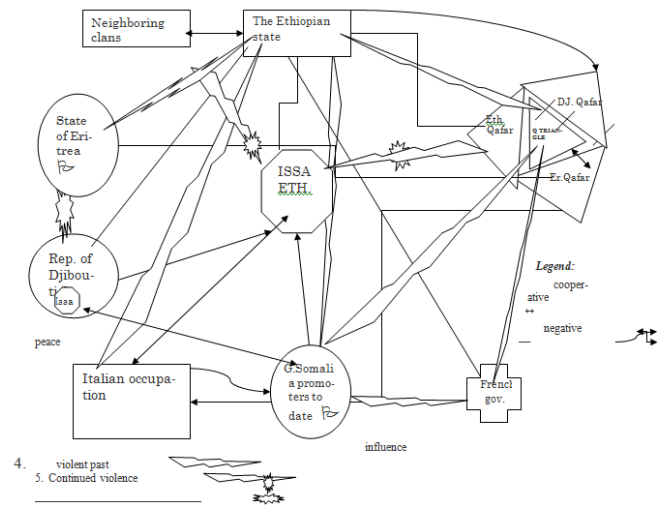


Figure 1: Conflict Dynamics: Inter Play of Cause and Actor

Legend:

- 1. Cooperative ↔
- 2. Negative Peace —
- 3. Influence →

²³ To mention those still alive, references is made to six ex-governors of these areas: Fitwarari Humed Geba Haj Ali, Qegnasmach Tahiro Humed, Ato Qumer Ali Kayri, Ato Mohamed Yesuf Aydole, Ato Abas Shami, Ato Abedu Adu.

²⁴ Ibrahim, Ali "The origin and History of Somali People" 1968. index maps

²⁵ Reference shall be made(e-mail)

²⁶ TOGE documents in Parliamrn are to be referred.

4. Violent Past
5. Continued Violence
6. Recent Violent Clash
7. Antagonism Vs. Control
8. Potential Pact(Threat)
9. Cautious Diplomacy

2.2 Interventions, Decisions and Demarcations

Various measures have been taken since the imperial era to give final solution, to demarcate administrative borders to date. But the efforts were not worth toiling for and were of no avail. However vital points for bench marching are the issuance of new range land access and control rights, proclamations are important dimensions²⁷

Towards Demarcation

As any other people in any part of the world Afar and Issa do share traditional, historical and relic boundaries. Boundaries between Afar and Issa are known by distinguishing marks, contours even names by which they are particularly known. The early encounter before the emergence of the modern state pacified boundaries of both Afar and Issa are clearly set in the evidence pack²⁸.

The first attempt was made in 1944 to delineate the boundary of Afar and Issa. Of all decisions, the quarterly presented by Adal Province governor in reporting the death of 43 and 15 wounded Afars and are totally chased away from Erer, Qadora, Asebulina, and Butiji; the report also further noted their conflict over the territory had deteriorated security in the area. Data released from AAU Institute of development studies indicated that it decided Afar to settle to the West of Erer river and Issa to the East of Erer, and yet, the later may use range land at time of distress and shortage. Police contingent force was stationed in between Afar and Issa for about eight years; following their unwarned departure for unknown reasons has resulted in causing of fresh Issa attack causing the death of 485 Afars and the robbing of 25000 cattle.²⁹

Afar elders logged a petition on December 22/1965 along with The Hararge provincial governor's complimentary note in support of same demanding the restoration of the pre-1965 Afar-Issa boundary³⁰ *status quo ante*, reinstatement of the military and police force to the pre-1965 position, the strengthening of government law enforcement capability in the area, and the protection of Afar people's right.

As a result, pursuant to the petition and the governor's report Imperial order was given for the payment of Birr 5000

blood money to victimized Afars from the sales of confiscated Ogaden clan property and for the provision of 100 arms and 5000 bullets to Afars for self defense purpose. Although authorities in the area had advised the emperor for the declaration of martial law and army direct involvement in the conflict, however, with the view to keep the balance of power between the two people the Emperor resorted to arming of Afars. Moreover, ordered the return of and payment of compensation to Afar IDPs as well as the forceful eviction of the Issa Somali from the area. However eight years later the proposed idea of declaring martial law and the stationing of armed forces was implemented in 1965: the third division infantry army was assigned to keep the peace and stability in the area (Ibid, 22). The Imperial order to effect of the evacuation of the Somali didn't materialize. The arms provision to Afars for the purpose of creating balance of power was not strong enough to undo the asymmetrical power relations that had been built up for decades that it did not enable Afars to repulse Issa aggressions that continued thereafter.

Consequently, attempts made to effect deterrence of Issa aggression and introduce balance of power on the contrary proved to Afar dismay that there was nothing to stop the Issa advance. The whole intervention process as it was done annually since 1944 up to 1970 for apparently no avail. To mention few of them the joint meeting convened by influential elders, clan leaders and senior government officials in Addis Ababa in 1967 only further reinforced the enforcement of decisions made by earlier conferences. The 1977 joint conference held in Erer as per the Issa request to get decisions to made for redefinition of Afar-Issa pasture boundary limit due to alleviate its pasture shortages and that yielded to their request is the only annual conference that was different from others. Lake Mero was identified as drought season boundary between them; Afar cattle to occupy the west side while Issa to limit itself to the east side of the lake. However, the Issa defaulted soon and eroded the Afar occupied pasture land, intransigently kept refusing the order of Issa influential persons including Qugaz Hassen Issa traditional governor that they petitioned their agreement and went to give final warning and enforce the refused order.

The elders and governor committee on December 1/1971 issued strict order Issa to pull out to the east of Lake Mero delimited to it up to December 3/1971, Issa to pay blood money after undertaking reconciliation for the killings they committed against Afars by trespassing the revised pasture limit made on June 1970 at Erer town and to return every Afar cattle take by then up to December 3/1971. Neighboring province' police chiefs were give the role of ensuring the enforcement of the order. Eleven influential elders and the Qugaz signed memorandum of understanding. And yet, in addition to non compliance to the order they kept advancing forward unhindered by no one.

In the mean time very sensational and un pragmatic order Issa to pull out from the occupied area and return to the boundary along Erer river and Afars to reclaim their former domicile was issued by *Chercher Adal* and *Gereguracha*,

²⁷ ANRS AAJB Archive. 2004 Afar National Regional State Appeal pack vol.2 p. 205.

²⁸ Hand book of Africa language (Non Bantu language of N.E Africa)-Author Salih, Mohammed 1978

²⁹ The Mefeyidela Conflict Damage Report, development Research Institute study. P.18

³⁰ Qafar elders' petition to the Emperor Hailelasié logged on December 24/1965: This refers to the boundary that passes through places like Kebera, Burteli, Alabela, Yeadora and Asboli that were under Qafar control.

Gewane, Meiso, and Afdem wereda offices. The order was issued in hurry probably due to the eminent threat posed by Said Barre lead Somalia. The absence of any further advancement thereafter attests that it was not a thoroughly thought measure to solve the problem.

2.2.1. The Military Regime

The coming to power of the Dergue regime similarly, instead of giving final solution for the last time, fall prey to the popular prejudice of trivializing Afar-Issa conflict as mere nomadic conflict over pasture and water. Thus, it is from the outset limited itself to the act of pointless adjusting crimes giving favorable life span conflict to breed and transform further. When the conflict become tangible threat to the peace and security of the Capital-Assab lifeline of the center and not the suffering of pastoralists that it was decided to divide them by pastoralist no man's land only to temporarily reduce eminence of threat until final solutions of create territorial demarcation thought to be rendered by P.D.R.E. government. This period was one of brief relief times to the pastoralists.

2.2.2. Post June-1991 Period to Date

Issa-Somali clan took the opportunity of brief period of instability and disorder that followed the fall of the Dergue regime to as often trespass the delineated boundary under took vest invasion along the high way leaving Afar domicile far behind and began settlements along the highway that are now Issa strong hold contraband towns- currently daunting state security and law enforcement challenges. During the transitional period Issa unlike any time in the history of the conflict began overtly promoting territorial claims supported by political party programs. Until this period Issa's response to as to why its aggression and occupation of Afar lands was articulated in terms of search for vital pastoralist resource needs of pasture and water. This time they hoisted flag of Somali regional state in and appointed kebele administrators, by its own merit, for Adaytu, Qundifuyo and Gedamayto towns and issued seal bearing Adaytu and Gedamayto kebele offices of Shinile zonal administration, under SNRS jurisdiction-so daring and outrageous step of no historical precedence. Explanations of former systems' measures total failure to resolve the problem can be characterized by the unfounded ness irrelevance owing to absence of well studied mechanism of decision making and the inappropriateness of measures to the nature and level of conflicts addressed to the amount and nature as well as their unbalanced damage same caused. The absence of determined and relentlessly working government body to enforce decisions was another structural constraint.

2.2.3. Change and Transformation of Causes

Afar and Issa pastoralist have long history of conflict and violent clash but were not at any time beyond the capacity of time old traditional institutions and resolution mechanisms. What is now on the ground, however, radically contradicts this undisputable tautological truth of history. What plausible explanations are behind this bitter reality takes us to exploration of causes? Thus six fundamental causes can be identified.

1. The disruptive role of external forces involvement to fetch political dividends from the death and persistent misery of poor pastoralists as exhibited by the Italian and the Somalia anti-Ethiopian forces. The military supports provided to Issa Somali against Afars had been keeping the fireworks of inter-ethnic blood feud, animosity, deep rooted hatred between them for such a length of time that devastated economic, social, and psychological settings and assets of both people.
2. Various governments that happened to presided over Afar-Issa case had not been addressing the problem properly, were responding to the reflections of the conflict and not basic causes that determine total underpinning elements of one of the longest pastoralist conflicts in Africa. The fire brigade nature of conflict resolution currently, wide spread Achilles' hill of the Ethiopian state and African continent at large, had been another setback that lengthened the lifespan and gave the vital impetus of transformation of the nature and level of violence; and hence, the rational for the protracted ness of the conflict.
3. The destruction of balance of power between the two ethnic groups has developed strong urge to settle disputes by arms power; this caused radical departure and divergence from mutual agreed traditional values and practices in maintaining the continuity of conflict.
4. Extremely poor level of socio-economic indicators, the presence of vast amount of small arms and light weapons freely and out in the hand of violence promoting culture inculcated illiterate pastoralists has contribute a lot to violence. The absence of participatory governance and the marginalizing center by far so long might have embedded the sense of obliviousness from the highlander tradition of strict enforcement of law and order to keep on the usual, even worse, violent cruelty along with above stated factors.
5. The nature of the Ethiopian state and oppressive political systems that ruled fragile country for so long had set the immediate conditions for eruption of violence while earlier incompatibilities are there unresolved adding boulders to rusty social rubbles. Consequently filling the cycle of violence feeding one other that made the resentment and grievance ridden Ethiopian society in general the most fragile and countable pat-pastoralists in particular socio-political suicide bags.
6. Refugee and illicit trade related in food and out flood of human trafficking emanating from the instable nature of neighboring countries and the unique horn experience of Somalia *destitution* has been built in effect to violent conflict dynamics.
7. The emergence of the State of Eritrea as young sovereign among old club members with self-ascribed mega scale role, and the sequels expressed in interstate war and mutual insurgency could be simultaneously evaluated with internal political/armed insurgency promoted by armed groups like OLF and WOLF. The inter ply of above listed factors have also link with what happened in neighboring states as well as in the sub-region such as Ethio-Somali war, Djibouti, the 1991 Afar invasion of Djibouti & Ethiopian intervention, during independence which is in detail dealt with in the following sections.

3. Impacts of the Conflict: an Assessment

Afar pastoralists have suffered the worst damage appears multi-dimensional. This could be, for the purpose of simplicity and expediency of presentation, treated in five major divisions.

3.1. Human and Physical Aspect

Since late 1940s to date, Issa Somali clan has caused tremendous human damage in terms of death, physical damage and the worst of all, the mental trauma intermittent aggression imprinted on individual mind, group collective feeling towards themselves and in relation to others is highly shaped by same. Although there is no accurate data to substantiate the level of fatalities for the period in focus, however, the extreme hatred developed towards Issa members and the feelings of insecurity most Afars are left with are the direct outcomes of the invaders superiority the Issa clan enjoyed by the negation of Afar honor. Moreover, the feeling of defenselessness and helplessness in front of invincible enemy that continuously defeated and evicted from domicile of their ancestors 380 Km along path and 150k.m. in bird fly has along instigated conflict among them. Vulnerability challenges group self worth and pride- high level would be in pastoralist communities like Afar-instigates intolerance. Intermittent evictions from ones' area requiring somewhere to settle (the Afar are good at harboring their kin's let alone those displaced by Issa attack) but through time with demographic and ecological pressure added often causes conflict over access, ownership and use of natural resources.

Issa aggression caused material impoverishment on so many Afars is of great value. To take a single incident out of many for the purpose of simplifying presentation in 1996 in the three days long battle between Mile Afars and Issa from the vicinity of Adaytu more than 300 Afars (hamlets) were burned with everything contained therein and more than 900 camels, 5000 cattle and 1500 goats were taken by the later for good. Tragic incidents like being burned alive on sleep are also part of Issa aggression that embedded bad memories in the mind of the youth and children to grow with animosity of childhood.

3.2. For Non-Resource Explantation: territorial expansion

Continuity of the conflict is explained on the Issa side in terms of the quest for water and rangeland that is simple competition over natural resources. Nonetheless, the Afar version of the story asserts by far in comparable weight of counter argument that necessitates non-resource explanation.

Accordingly, retroactive review of major places successively taken through violations of agreed rangeland limits by Issa shows the need for reasons other than natural resources. Mapping of initial points of Issa departure and their counterpart destinations at different times have left vast area of range land and water points choosing advance in the direction of the "life line" "feeding the center. Issa left to dry rolling plains, too far away from eastern and western Ethiopia

basin, located in between Gedamayto and Yanguderassa, Yanguderassa and Adaytu from eastern Ethiopia highlands leaving behind northern basins overlaying places from Meisso to Dire-Dawa. Why would pastoralist community leave too far away from water points, range lands and wetlands to settle in dry places and unfriendly human and natural environment for more than five decades evicting other pastoralists whose only survival is dependent on one and only major source Awash basin is the question. Prominent Afar elders forward and vehemently argue, "Issa advance is to control Addis Ababa- Djibouti high way to cut and chock us behind denying access to Awash basin and the center of Ethiopia. Defiantly, not the usual pastoralist quest for pasture and water."³¹ The Issa side polemically argue in terms of natural resources need pressure stating "Afar elders denied us access to the unlimited bless of Awash water even wild animals of wilderness freely enjoyed along humans. Should we kill ourselves of thirsty and hunger while the blessing of Allah is flowing along Awash valley?" Yet, with all level of impartiality spatial evidences of departure and destination have story to tell as provided here in tables below.

³¹ Appeal document vol. 3: evidences for years 1945-2004: 237

Table 1: Issa Legitimate Territories and Subsequently Annexed Afar Lands in the Last Four Decades: Departure Points and Destinations. Afar departure and Destination point Issa departure and Destination points to be read from left to right to be read from right to left)

Adaytu-Qundifūqo Front							
Currently pre-1964				post-1964			
Current destination and its initial departure points		Old destination and I nitial departure points		Current Issa annexed destination and its initial departure points		Current Issa annexed desti-nation and its initial departure points	
Departure	Destination	Departure	Destination	Destination	Departure	Destination	Departure
Right and left Side of Gewane Buremodaytu • Artuma • Dewea • Telalak • Mile • Awsa • Afambo • Dubti	Mainly Lo-cated Towards Amhara And Oromo high-lands	Right and left Side of Gewane Buremodaytu • Artuma • Dewea • Telalak • Mile • Awsa • Afambo • Dubti	Menda ali, Lefufili Sende,Bekere, Erolu Yengudi, Amqadu Hineli qadu, Manet Gereni, Kilelu, Adaqado Kedefuqo (then sub -wereda), Gewane Dehwe (then sub- wereda) Gewane	• Adaytu and Qundu • fuqo-located along • Eth-Djibouti • road	Menda ali, Lefufili Sende, Bekere, Erolu Yengudi, Amqadu Hineli qadu, Manet Gere-ni, Kilelu, Adaqado Kedefuqo (then sub-wreda), Gewane Dehwe (then sub-wereda), Gewane	• Geblalu • Gohad • MitoAy Aidora and Its envi-rons • Obno and • its invirones	• Aysha'a • Beyuanod • Beyuko-keb • Gogeti • Lesarat • Adigala • Milo • Harawa • sobsob
Gedamayto Front							
right and left side of Awash part of Buremo-daytu Qamibera Awash fentale weredas Andido Halaydegi	Mainly Located towards Amhara and Oromo highlands - Halaydgi	Right and left side of Awash part of Bure-modaytu • Qamibera • Awashfentale • weredas	Gobike Biyukeraba Afdem Mulu & Mulhule Mero Partly Meisso Around Asebot mountain Mefeyidela	Gedamay-to and environs Halaydegi	Gobike Biyukeraba Afdem Mulu & Mulhule Mero Partly Meisso Around Asebot mountain Mefeyidela Kaho	Erer river and its environs =	Biyu Bahi Arebi Harewa Shnile Hurso

Source: (AJAB, Afar.)

Another important point of argument is the number of water points the Issa clan had left behind annexing above listed places in the table.

Table 2 The table Provides 380k.m. distance along the path.

No.	Water points left behind	River Name	Remark
	Halaydegi and Asebot front		
1	Dobebesto		Numerous Water points(Qela)
2	yabu	River	Numerous Water points
3	Lobh aba	River	All weather streams
4	Abiaso	River	Dry Season Reserve Numerous Water Wells
5	Hmoysa		All season streams /hot spring/
6	Butiji		Seasonal water wells
7	Aware	River	Dry Season Reserve Numerous Water Wells
8	Keraba	River	All season river
9	Bike	River	All season spring water
10	Qelabela		Seasonal water wells
11	setwa / sengo alwa/		Seasonal water wells

12	Tolo	River	Dry Season Numerous Water supplier
13	Goo	River	All season supply to state farm
14	Erer	River	" "
15	Hurso	River	" "
II	Gedamayto Front		
1	Bordedeaa		Pond
2	Geagelu	River	Numerous Water wells
3	Hamoysa		All season streams /hot spring/
4	Dobebe	River	Dry Season Reserve Numerous Water Wells
5	Mero		Dry Season Reserve Water Wells around a lake
6	Adole		Afera ango /Aelwe/ water wells
7	Asbuli	River	Dry Season Reserve Numerous Water Wells
8	Gelaqlo		" " "
III	Gewane Front		
1	Dehaw/ada'ado/		All season Numerous Water wells
2	nhaya		" " "
3	Gearba'adu		" " "
4	Ado qela		" " "

5	Kimbire		Dada'a all season spring in a valley
6	Foqo	River	Dry Season Reserve Numerous Water Wells
IV	From Qunda Fuqo up to Gedamayto		
1	Mende Qela		Numerous Water wells
2	Aroli		All season spring and water wells
3	Gersele abea		" " "
4	Hinelu		Numerous Water wells
5	Sendea		" " "
6	Obno		All season river that submerges into lake Abaya
7	Horiandido		Small pond
8	Geblelu(obno)		All season

Source: (AJAB, Afar.)

3.3. Lawlessness and Challenged Enforcement of Government Decisions

Regarding the universal application of legal decisions and the existence corpus of law in general, to begin from the most recent, the major contraband ‘town’ of Gedamayto was banned illegal Issa settlement on February 2008 and huge stock of contraband commodity was confiscated after fierce battle against Federal and Regional law enforcement forces³². However, it did not last more than couple of months before things began as usual currently Gedamayto is by far hot spot of contraband trade than before. In 2004 joint court of Afar and Issa presiding judges was established in Gedamayto to introduce the presence of government and indeed to make the sense of law being felt. The contradiction is that, in principle there is no legal ground in Ethiopian legal system for such legal constellation; from operational point of view, it was inexpedient, inefficient and full of intrigues of ethno-centric interpretation of Ethiopian laws that it has rendered many citizens to rigorous punishment. More-

³² Federal Rapid Force Commander Zeynu. M in Gewane command post states that, stock of modern arms AK-45, other lather equipped medium and heavy machine guns presumably smuggled from Djibouti were found in a place near by Gedamayto south of the Ethio-Djibouti high way. Moreover, documents of political organization named “Qakkhirel Mott”- Arabic literally denoting “Death, Final and Eternal” implying mutual assured destructions, was found during Federal forces raid in to fighters hide out. Yet, officials from Somali regional state have contested it as false allegation fabricated by Afars instead the name stands for *lempun ploritariate* like day laborers, brokers and contraband transitory from whose vulnerability to extreme hazards of life their occupation involves, their extreme selfishness, cruelty and anti social behavior (multi-ethnic composition of Issa, Tegar, Amhara ...) are called “Qakkhirel’ Less people”, whose ‘the here after’ too is dead as they are presumed dead in “Qadunniya” in this life. According To Mohammed Fure, these Individuals are assumed incompetent to any responsibility whatsoever: of all, impunity from killing and being killed-unforeseen form of hooliganism in Ethiopia, could we guess a relation with the French tradition of Lé Geunirés in Djibouti..?

over, the banning of this court as per the former principle by federal government has put many citizens in both Afar and Issa penitentiaries in limbo: their right to appeal and other related entitlements, according to in mate’s description, and their cases evaporated with the *ethnic-based* court.

Territorial limits, regulations and directives regarding limits movement of arms bearer pastoralist towards the high way (progressively set only to ensure drivers’ safety from attack), government negotiated solutions on minor incidents like cattle raid or abduction, as well as other government decisions were, similarly, trespassed due to three major reasons. First, decisions were not in favor of changing lopsided power relations between them that ensued with the advent of Italian colonial invasion and it was furthered during the rise of Somali irredentist wars. Emperor Haile Selassie had attempted to change the power configuration by arming Afar, however, it was on the one hand not the right way of addressing structural power in balance; on the other hand, taking the measure at face value was not strong enough to deter Issa invincibility. Second, it was due to the slacks observed on the part of government in appointing capable officials, setting proper strategies, entrenching capable enough monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of decisions rendered without equivocation regarding boundary limits of the two people. Third, regime changes always effected in redrawing of new boundary by coercion during which loss of life, annexation of new territory and raiding is enviable. According to the Afar viewpoint, transitional periods of such type give ample opportunities to expand the limit of contested lands under Issa control. However, it goes without saying that Afars also would see to it as favorable condition to change the status quo if possible otherwise to halt Issa advance to their territorial controls. For instance, Issa conquered Qambuli and Qundufuqo during the regime crises of 1991. Similarly, Afars have attempted very recently to take back Adaytu, which was conquered during the zenith of civil war in Tigray and Eritrea, up on Eritrean advance in to Djibouti territory. According to Somali region security official, the Afar attack on Issa settlements in Adaytu was a miss calculation that the later will recoil to lend a hand to its kin’s in Djibouti – *an opportunity to simple victory*- that, unfortunately culminated in tragic fatality of Afars.

3.4. Attack on Others: Law Enforcement organs and Neighboring Clans

The Afar claim, “We were not the only ones to fall victim of Issa aggression”, posed above is further substantiated with new line of argument. According to Afar elders of Gewane wereda, since the imperial period to date law enforcement corpus and armed forces have been targets of Issa attack that put in place they believe in absence of culpability. Ettu, Bella, Webera and Nolim Oromo clans located from Erer to Bordedeia have been constant victims of same attack. Informants from Belo, Golocha, Obensa, Godechelea, Bordedeia, Bury and Xedecha-Guracha for study on Afar and Kereyu conflict assessment strongly identify themselves with Afar resentment, though they have many issues to settle yet with Awash Afars, on matters related with the Issa presence in

the neighborhood and persistent threats of insecurity same poses on them³³. Meiso wereda official and OPDO zonal executive in Meisso commented on the alleged Issa sponsored attempt on the part of Hawiya Somali clan to highjack the outcome of the 2004 referendum undertaken to decide (claim and counter claim of Oromo and Somali regions) on the administrative status of Meiso wereda. Issa through Hawiya by bringing in new Somali speaking settlers to the wereda, unfortunately, who happened to be bilingual Somali speaking Oromos, attempted to fraudulently take over Meiso due to which the Hawiya were evicted from the wereda. The informant refers to this particular incident implying that nothing deters the Issa clan even democratic dispute management mechanisms to put an invisible hand as long as it fetches back any unconquered territory home. This leaves an impartial observer what Issa members could do in state of instability and national unrest³⁴.

3.5. Land locked (from inside) and Challenged Sovereignty: Issa-Djibouti nexus

Djibouti republic lead by Issa dominated government since 1982 to date has been influencing Afar-relations in Ethiopia. Djibouti Afars willfully gave up political power for the Issa group to spare political rivalry and animosity between Afar clans, however, for the last three and half decade totally lost the means to reclaim it back³⁵. The continuity of Issa dominated politics in Djibouti has fermented ethnic hatred between them; the domino effect in Ethiopian Afar and Issa is adverse. In addition to political power rivalry, Issa antipathy towards Ethiopia and "...their sympathy for pan-Somalia nationalism and their desire to incorporate Djibouti into the "Greater Somalia" project has been intensifying contradictions in Ethiopian pastoralists.³⁶ Afars have been, as any other Ethiopian pastoralists, marginalized and ignored in the past successive regimes. On the contrary, the, Issa have been enjoying comparative advantage over Afars through use of support from their kin's in Djibouti. The new Ethiopian government, however, unlike its predecessors has followed different direction regarding the foreign policy of Afar-Issa conflict and Djibouti: though is progressively addressing pastoralist question in general.³⁷ One event in early 1990s shows extreme commitment for peaceful togetherness with neighboring states and indeed the disregard, as well as cautious regard of Ethiopian government to the Afar factor; only weeks after coming to power joint force of the three Afars in the horn waging war against Issa dominated government in Djibouti nearly conquered state power had it not been for the direct involvement of ETG armed forces clos-

ing passage to the capital city³⁸. Threat of a united Afar-TRIANGLE- could be one explanation; and yet the continuity policy of tolerance, despite its counterpart provocative temporary measures and disruptive roles in domestic conflict which is clearly identified in foreign policy document³⁹, appears only for the port service. However, the basic obvious principle of group's for self preservation and basic foreign policy principle of reducing vulnerability⁴⁰ has been compromised from within. The growing unpopularity of government among Afars on this aspect is of devastating effect both in efforts of settling conflict and governance in general. In short, Ethiopian government foreign policy ambivalence and practical miss calculation has contributed to the protracted ness of Afar-Issa conflict.

4. Way Ward: Security Implications

Afar-Issa conflict has very greave messages on the obvious human security in the region; more so, on the Ethiopian state security and indeed sovereignty. Port less Ethiopia highly depends on peaceful and amicable resolution of differences with neighboring, much weaker, states like Djibouti for better ends⁴¹. However, no better outcome could be anticipated to deal for peace tolerating behavior of actors that compromises own sovereignty. But mindful of this there could be as many common ground⁴²s as incompatibilities that are to be evaluated, weighed and judged against human and state security interests first and foremost as provided herein four parts below. First, Islets of Issa centers in Afar territory are centers of vast contraband grounds and breeding grounds of criminals⁴³ that created killing grounds of numerous Afars including prominent politicians, parliamentarians bearing the insignia of constitutional immunity.⁴⁴ If not worse, ordinary civilian safety and security is jeopardized all time all that often become trigger of conflict.

Second, in the age of international terrorism and cross border proliferation of weapons, perforated borders for human trafficking and of arms constitutes grave danger to national security human well fare⁴⁵, especially where there is communal conflict in the periphery like Afar the region easily transforms into heaven for anti peace and insurgency. The high proliferation of small arms and light weapons, unchecked power dominance of Issa in unbounded and unpatrolled land extending from Haledegy plans to Djibouti border (see map) is open corridor of national threats from war monger Eritrea, armed opponents taking refuge in unreliable

³³ ANRS AJSAB Archive.2007: Afar and Oromia Conflict Assessment document. P.39

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hashim, A. 1996. History of Afar.

³⁶ LEWIS.I.M THE REFERENDUM IN FRENCH SOMALI LAND: Aftermath and Prospect in the Somali Land. in *Le TERRITOIRE FRANÇAIS DES AFARS ET DES ISSAS: THE WORLD TODAY. French Somali land issue. Pp.308-311*

³⁷ Getachew, k.N. 2001. Among the Afar in Ethiopia: Tradition, Continuity and Socio-Economic Change. P. 46.

³⁸ Kassahun Berhanu and Tegegne Gebregziabher. January 2003. Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Ethiopia: The Role of Access to and Control Over Resources in the Ethiopian Rift Valley Area and the Surrounding Escarpment. Addis Ababa University. Addis Ababa pp.39-40

³⁹ MoFA, 2002. Ethiopian National Foreign and Security Policy and Strategy Document

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.3.

⁴¹ Ibid. P. 98

⁴² Ibid.pp. 1-3

⁴³ Cf. 32 p. 21 above.

⁴⁴ ANRS AJSB Archives 2003. A telegram message of incident report from federal forces in Gedamaytu.

⁴⁵ African Geopolitics. 2006 vol. 2 p.36

Djibouti and Somalia jihadist.⁴⁶ A container of Kalashnikov and explosives captured in welenchity and similar arms on thirty five camel's back on its way to Semen Showa were few among money exhibits of imminent threat transported by outlaws- *Qakkhirel Motts*;⁴⁷ and hence, too expensive an issue to over look as simple pastoralist war on grass and water.

Third, the presence of unused vast land while every Awsa Afars are forced to migrate more than 300 Km. to Chefa-Robit in Amhara Region Oromia zone looking for pasture and water often not well come by Oromo pastoralists, Bati agro-pastoralists and along the way with Amhara farmers are losing their sock.⁴⁸ Conflicts arising from this are also challenges of Afar- Amhara regional relations. Due to the disputed status of Issa settlements socio-economic activities are nonexistent that has caused a lot suffering to whoever dwelling in there, the question of food security as human security challenge is threatening the very existence of inhabitants of the area. Thus, ending up and transforming the conflict is to halt this scenario and domino spillover effect of conflict to other regions.

Fourth, Afar-Issa conflict has long ceased to be only between them; the push effect from faraway places are setting time bomb in the highlander agriculturalists and pastoralists, as well as among pastoralist clans exacerbating challenges of ill of life that many, from lowlands, choose illegal migration to Djibouti where they fall pray of armed insurgency recruits to fire back at the society they fled away from.⁴⁹ In nut shell efforts in security aspect has to transform to address above stated imminent national challenges.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Afar-Issa conflict does constitute pastoralist features but not all in all pastoralist in essence. Behind seemingly resource needs which could have been accommodated by peaceful utilization of resources bases listed in the tables above, there is much bigger threat lurking that appeared to many as product of the less and ungoverned social setting of 'nomads'. However, evidences out in the open attest the conflict involved even states as agents of chaos to which no state give no second thought about. The threat in past was to the ostensible extent, lawlessness but by now it is a touch of statelessness in the south east. Ethiopian government has been facilitating bilateral traditionally negotiated solutions sponsoring various peace and reconciliation constellations and stages but did not address the real problem as it desperately resorted to the use of force in February 2007 in *Gedamayto* and *Qambuli* which was one among many distress mechanisms its predecessors used adhere to. At least to higher officials, the true nature is revealed and yet the re-

solve to go for it at all levels as might so required still seems lacking, though no longer in the decades old slumber.

Ministry of Federal Affairs mandated authority over such matters initiation CEWARN System in Ethiopia and other conflict centered programs are in lieu of the challenge and mindful of national implications of such threats at national level. Nonetheless, sluggish decision making process at the House of Federations and the petitions logged by both regions in 2004 still in limbo any minor violence could simply revert everything much toiled for back to square one. That has been the case in the past in perpetuating, widening and transforming the nature of conflict into the current level that calls for far exceeding transformation in national strategy of conflict management and transformation, critical study and exploration of essence of conflicts, rapid response schemes. Although rendering the right and just solutions for problems like Afar-Issa case may involve undoing deep rooted historical mistakes, however, efforts could be initiated to control aggravating contexts like illegal settlements, contraband, hit-and-run high way crimes and other related issues to build confidence in responsiveness of government. Institutional mechanisms of monitory and controlling fully committed to Afar-Issa agenda at all level of governmental and societal organization has to be established to render in cooperation with Ministry of Federal Affairs. Working directly with the public at grass root level has to be established as major direction and approach to avoid miss informed judgments.

At Structural level, the lopsided power relationship between Issa and Afar-*basic underlying context*- unmanaged arms proliferation, contraband and illegal settlement at strategic spots have widened power gaps ensuring the continuity of violent conflict. Legal mechanisms have to be established to give final solution. Djibouti as social base and major factor in the conflict dynamics has to be considered at structural level. Enable Djibouti to contribute to transformation of Afar-Issa relations in Ethiopia, which is linked with Afar-Issa power structure in Djibouti and its undeclared policy towards the case in Ethiopia is the reflection of what is within might be as challenging as effecting transformation in its foreign policy towards Ethiopia but it is possible to stop its disruptive role. With regard to joint constellations, Afar-Issa issue can be established to reinstate the nominal Ethio-Djibouti boundary joint committee and introduce other functionally integrated mechanisms of jointly preventing cross-crime, contraband SALWs proliferation and illegal human trafficking activities. Same efforts could even be best practice for its domestic political polarization management, the successes of which is an insurer to long lasting Afar-Issa relations in Ethiopia. To reduce destructive of other forces like agents of Eritrean government and jihadists from Somalia, the best strategy has to be generated from amelioration of poverty, livelihood sustainability and confidence building efforts at all levels within the country. This would require rigorous efforts to effect attitudinal transformation at group and individual levels which may take long years to come. Yet, basic claims and fears of both groups such as on the Afar part the restoration of pre-1964 boundary and the return of those who were evicted from their old domicile and Issa claim for resources need through successive bilateral

⁴⁶ ANRS AJSAB Archives no.47. 1997. Afambo wereda patrol militia report.

⁴⁷ Afar Zone Three police report, January 2006.

⁴⁸ ANRS AJSAB .2007: Afar and Oromia Conflict Assessment document. P.39

⁴⁹ Ibid.

binding agreements and impartial legal decisions, implemented with out causing further socio-economic and humanitarian crises in the region. Besides, structurally imbedded stereo type, enmity and resentments to gradually reduce to manageable level should involve active participation of political, clan, spiritual leaders, women and the youth, traditional age old practices and norms governing access to and ownership of natural resource has to be as might be necessary adopted, contextualized to current realities and integrated with state legal promulgations that are vital to determine clear cut limits of administration. Also, disaster coping mechanisms have to be in place to deter a recoiled to resort to force in the absence of such a scheme in every ones reach.

Moreover, trajectory institutions cross cutting social services like the teaching of Issa children in same class could create a generation if possible totally uncontaminated with and if not less influenced by memory of the past.

It is neither the objective nor the limit and capacity of this paper to provide exhaustive list of envisaged actions and strategies, nonetheless the proper and timely implementation of above stated measures as might not be encouraging given the level of challenge such engagement involves, it will not be discouraging at all as long as the journey up the hill is began with clear vision of ensuring state and human security simultaneously.

Map-1: Topographic features of Issa advance and Afar retreat along the Awash basin and beyond



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