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## The Role of Ethiopia in Peace Process and Conflict Resolution at the Horn of Africa and Impacts of Military Intervention in Somalia Post 1991

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**Abstract:** The study result showed that Ethiopia plays a key role in conflict resolution in the horn of Africa and in Somalia in particular. Currently political condition of Somalia is not capable to build organized government; the Transitional government needs support of other countries like Ethiopia. As the study presented, even if the relation between Somalia and Ethiopia before 1991 is not good after 1991 they work together for the establishment of peace in the area. The involvement of Ethiopia also have value in the way that struggling AlShabaab, Islamic Court Union and other terrorist groups. From the result of this study the researcher recommended that peace is not only a need for individual but rather it is worldwide and not only Ethiopia but also all nations should give a due consideration for the establishment of stability in all countries. As the result showed, the troops challenged in language and each country including Ethiopia should train soldiers to be able to speak the language of the country to communicate with the peoples of the given country.

**Keywords:** Al-shabaab; Conflict; Ethiopia; Horn of Africa; Governance; International relation; Intervention; Terrorism.

### 1. Introduction

Ethiopia has a long history in playing a great role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the region, in Africa and out of the continent; for instance its role in Korea. The Ethiopian army fought in a number of engagements as member of UN including the battle of Pork Chop Hill during the Korean war in 1951 (<http://www.ethiopiarmilitary.com>, 2012:1-2).

Ethiopian foreign and national security policy and strategy drafted to protect its national interests and to ensure Ethiopia's survival as a country, and its basic thrust is designed to bring about a fundamental change of attitude regarding the essence of foreign relations and national security. In order to bring this, the policy and strategy bases its on the internal challenges and vulnerability to threats that have an influence on its survival, and its focus is on tasks that should be carried out within the country. The direction is to move from the internal to what is external, addressing internal problems first, thereby enabling its shortcomings. Our foreign relations and national security policy and strategy are designed to address the gaps that need to be filled. The external environment is viewed from the prism of our national situation and this ensures that the policy and strategy have relevance to our national security and survival (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2002).

In a fundamental sense, security policy is a matter of ensuring national survival. In order to formulate a foreign affairs and security policy that addresses these issues, it is important to identify and examine the sources and basis from which the policy springs (ibid: 9). The overall volatility of the Horn in terms of political stability, poverty, political and economic marginalization, largely unsecured territories, and states' internal conflicts and weaknesses provide a platform and create potential breeding grounds for current and future terrorism in the region (West, 2005). Ethiopia, along with the USA, therefore, decided to engage in the Horn of Africa militarily by establishing the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in 2002 in order to confront states control their ungoverned spaces, especially borders and coastlines. CJTF-HOA was initially established with roughly 1400 military personnel who oversee a region that encompasses Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Yemen, and Ethiopia (Ibid). CJTF-HOA is based in strategically important Djibouti. The United States also designed other counter terrorism measures and projects like East African Counter Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) and then East African Regional Security Initiative (EARSII) where the latter replaced the former. The US was also involved in other less visible and less popular counter terrorism measures especially in Somalia that affected the whole Horn of Africa as it is a 'region of security complex' (Gedion, 2011).

### 2. Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions.

- I- What are the possible consequences of the Ethiopian military engagement in Somalia?
- II. What explains the Ethio-Somalia relation post 1991?

### **3. Research Methods and Methodologies**

The study adopted qualitative research Method approach to explain the role of Ethiopia in conflict resolution in Somalia to describes social phenomenon by using words.

#### **3.1. Positive Impacts of Ethiopian Military Intervention in Somalia**

##### **3.1.1. The Possibility of Weakening the Insurgency**

These observers state that it is too early to be certain about the capacity of the Islamists to persistently launch urban guerrilla warfare or to carry out terrorist attacks. Accordingly, “the UIC militias suffered heavy losses after engaging Ethiopian army in pitched battles. The UICs lost money in the fighting and some of their devoted supporters gave up and went in exile” (Duhul, 2007). Moreover, only few hundred foreign fighters went to Somalia in response to the UIC’s call for a global jihad against Ethiopia. Thus, with the lack of military strength and major foreign support, the insurgents might not consistently launch attacks. Furthermore, the exposed desert scrub of Somalia is not suited to launch a long guerrilla campaign (Economist, 2006). The revival of the UIC could be seen by some other clans as a clan setback of the Hawiye, thus, hindering the insurgents from easily recruiting new militias (ICG, 2004). Accordingly, the insurgents could not resist Ethiopia’s offensive and pursue with the urban guerrilla tactic (Gettleman, 2007b).

##### **3.1.2. Sows Ethiopia’s Military Strength and International Support**

Ethiopian forces have fought two major conventional wars, eventually resisting Somali invasion in 1977 and fighting Eritrea to a stalemate in 1998-2000. Ethiopian forces have also long waged counter-insurgency campaigns against various guerilla groups at home. They have experienced both in conventional and guerrilla tactics during the civil war that toppled military dictator Mengistu in May1991. Ethiopia that has now military forces ranging from 150,000-180,000 could effectively counter the insurgences.

The international community fears that the withdrawal of Ethiopia could leave a power vacuum and even lead to a return to the anarchy and warlord rule of the past (Duhul, 2007). Hence, the international community could grant assistance to the TFG’s institutions in order to strengthen its capacity. Italy, for instance, provided 40 million US dollars in March 2008. Ethiopia’s meddling is the most important and persistent factor in the perpetuation of the Somali conflict. This meddling has given shelter and arms to all spoilers (groups and individuals). It has undermined the two most important peace accords (Arta, 2000) and has manipulated the Somali peace process in Kenya and the transitional government that was formed to improve the welfare of the Somali population and broker an equitable political resolution (ibid).

The humanitarian crisis in Somalia is ongoing. While the Ethiopian military intervention both directly contributed to and exacerbated the humanitarian situation in terms of civilian casualties, displacement, emigration and access to humanitarian aid, there is still a possibility that Ethiopia’s actions will yield long-term benefits for the Somali population (Duhul, 2007). The formation of a unity government that enjoys a measure of support in both Ethiopia and Somalia was perhaps a turning point in addressing the humanitarian crisis. The success of the new government hinges on its ability to assert control over central and southern Somalia, a formidable challenge considering the continued violence in those regions caused by inter-clan fighting and militant Islamists. If the unity government proves capable of stabilizing Somalia and reintroducing the rule of law, Ethiopia’s intervention, it can be argued, will have played at least some role in paving the way for long-term improvement in humanitarian conditions in Somalia (Braden, 2009).

Ethiopian troops suddenly withdrew from around the town of Hudur in March 2013, which was subsequently reoccupied by Al Shabaab. Numerous possible reasons were advanced to justify the unexpected withdrawal from the town. Given that information is very tightly controlled, it is impossible to verify the validity of these reasons, which must include the demoralization of Ethiopian troops, among whom tension is running high, and Ethiopia’s emerging disillusionment with Somalia’s president since February-March 2013. One possible cause is that Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is trying to become more independent of the regional states, which seem set on continuing old practices of interference. The withdrawal was possibly to demonstrate the strength and usefulness of Ethiopia’s presence and how much it would be missed. There may also be some fiscal considerations. It is becoming more and more difficult for the Ethiopian government to foot the bill but the government does not want its contingent to become part of AMISOM, which would mean that it would become accountable for all its operations and intelligence sources (Eriksson, 2013).

Maintenance of a Unilateral Military Presence Ethiopia’s intervention in early 2012 made a difference by pushing Al Shabaab out of its major strongholds in south and central Somalia. According to Eriksson (2013) logically, a hasty withdrawal by Ethiopia could create an unexpected security vacuum and opportunities for Al Shabaab to regain control, as it did when Ethiopia withdrew its troops in 2009. Ethiopia’s unilateral presence in Somalia enables it to closely follow political and security developments there and gives it greater freedom of action. Ethiopia has been unilaterally militarily engaged in Somalia for a long time. Troops from other states in the region have since joined the battle and demonstrated strong commitment to stay the course despite severe casualties.

### **3.1.3. Creates Strong Political Relations with Somalia, 2012– to Date**

In November 2012, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud travelled to Ethiopia for what was his first presidential state visit. He was received at Addis Ababa airport with pomp and ceremony by Prime Minister Hailemariam. The red carpet rolled out for Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was very much appreciated by The Somalis. Ethiopia promised to support the re-establishment of Somalia's institutions and the training of its security forces. More than 2000 Somali recruits were given six months military training by the Somalia Task Force in three locations: Hudur, Dollo and Baidoa. The graduation ceremony took place in Baidoa in November 2012, and was attended by the commander of the task force, Major General Yohannes Wolde Giorgis. In January 2013, Ethiopia and Somalia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the formation of a Joint Ministerial Commission (Eriksson, 2013).

The Effects of Intervention Statistical data offers useful lessons in understanding the humanitarian effects of Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia. During ENDF operations in Somalia from 2006-2009, at least "15,000 civilians [were] killed, an estimated 1.1 million people displaced, and 476,000 Somalis fled to neighboring countries." For reasons provided above, there is reason to believe that the civilian casualty rates cited are a modest estimate. This analysis does not attempt to lay the blame for the exacerbation in Somalia's humanitarian crises squarely at the feet of any one party. Regarding the effects of ENDF security operations on humanitarian conditions in Somalia, beyond the documented instances of injuries and deaths caused as a result of the ENDF's intentional abuse of the civilian population and use of indiscriminate shelling and gunfire, it is problematic to make any hard assertions regarding the ENDF's causal role in the death and displacement that plagued Somalis for two years (Braden, 2009).

However, statistical data and firsthand accounts offer a starkly contrasting picture of the humanitarian situation in Somalia before December 2006 and during the ENDF's two-year conflict with the insurgency. The ENDF's involvement in Somalia had the immediate effect of creating a power vacuum in which Islamist militants assumed control and the more moderate elements of the ICU became "marginalized, splintered, and weakened." As discussed earlier, evidence suggests that the ICU was cultivating an environment of stability and security unprecedented in Somalia since 1991 (Braden, 2009).

As the Ethiopian government and the TFG eventually entered into productive diplomatic dialogue with the more moderate ICU elements, it seems plausible that Ethiopia would not have intervened had its government, the TFG and the ICU found a way to neutralize the influence of the more radical ICU elements in 2006. This approach was never attempted, as Ethiopia, the TFG and the US labeled the ICU an extremist organization and made few diplomatic overtures to the new regime in Mogadishu. Admittedly, the US and Ethiopia were largely justified in viewing the ICU as a potential threat to security interests in the region (Braden, 2009). The events that transpired between late 2006 and early 2009 offer poignant lessons regarding: (1) the effects of military intervention in nations already plagued by humanitarian crises; (2) the role of the international community in either mitigating or exacerbating those conditions; and (3) the type of leadership and diplomacy necessary to most effectively improve humanitarian conditions (Braden, 2009).

According to the conclusion of Somali Embassy Immigration Officer, as a result of longstanding civil war Somalia has become stateless and lost central authority in the last two decades. But countries and organization that have involved in Somalia have restored peace and security in the country. Without such interference Somalia will continue to be the state of absolute anarchy and such crises can hinder the economic, political and economic wellbeing of neighboring countries, the region and even the entire world 24 April, 2015.

When we come back to explain Ethiopian role and contribution; it is better to look back at historical role that Ethiopia played in conflict resolution and peace keeping process in different countries. For instance anyone remembers back the contribution of Ethiopia in Korea in 1950s, Congo, Liberia, Uganda, Burundi and currently south Sudan and Somalia active participation and positive response to wards maintaining collective security is the admired manner of Ethiopia. When we look at its involvement in Somalia, formally it was two rounds. The first round was from 2006-2009 in which TFG was under heavy attacks from AlShabaab, ICU insurgents and other small national resistances. Accordingly the TFG asked Ethiopian for help and got positive response in which Ethiopian troops intervened and made freed the country attacks and threats of insurgents in which 50,000 peace keepers including UNISOM and other regional troops took part in. The 2<sup>nd</sup> round was from 2012 to date by AMISOM decisions in which more than 4,500 military is force is currently in Somalia engaging on peace keeping mission in Somalia. Before the two rounds, however, Ethiopia had intervened in Somalia, though the involvement was informal and circuitous and that it was not for the interest of Somalia rather it intervened to confront insurgent groups like ONLF, OLF and other small guerilla forces without recognition of Somali state.

As mentioned above as a result of its military strength it is advantageous for Somalian people and government in general with great sacrifice for Somalis as they think more than any other countries in the world. Owing Ethiopian intervention AlShabaab is totally driven out of Baidoa (Ibid). Even if situation in Somalia is not good in compared to other neighboring countries, it is better than before in all aspects. i.e. politically, Socially, Economically.

**A. Politically:** for example, it is resulted in the establishment of a recognized federal government in which three regional states declared their own autonomy and become the constituent state with the interest of self determination. These are Juba regional state with Kisimayu as its capital city; South West Somalia with its capital city Bidoa; Punt land with its capital city Garowe. The other fourth region, though not recognized as regional state and neutral is Somali land with capital city, Argesa.

The capital city of the country is Mogadishu where parliament is found. There are 275 parliamentary seats as Hussen Shek Mommmed is the president from the central part of Somali, while Umer Abdurashad is the prime minister from Puntland who is the son of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Somali president after independence between 1967 to 1969, Shermarke who was assassinated by Barre in 1969. But even if the involvement of external party is strong there is no smooth relation between structure of members of the parliament even between the president and the prime minister themselves because of clan contradiction and nepotism. In areal aspects the activity of Alshabaab and other anti peace movements are restricted and never seen as before due to the presence of Ethiopian peace troops.

**B. Socially:** The current population data of Somalia is estimated to 15,000,000 million, while it was 10,000,000 million in 1991 due to destruction of Barre. Most people were migrated to different neighboring countries and become homeless as a result of instability in the country. But currently most Somali people are return back to their country and home and engaging on normal activities. The relationship between government and people is also smooth though not strong as other countries. Rights and liberty of the society is respected than ever before that every person has the right to move to work to live elsewhere in peace in any parts of the country. Huge number of Somalis that migrated to Ethiopia were well warmly hosted and provided with services like health, education, infrastructure, environment and other basic needs now and there.

**C. Economically:** From 1991 onwards Somalia was struck poverty, famine, disease and starvation since the prolonged civil war and instability as halted freedom of work and led to massive, which consequently resulted in production decline, leading citizens to economic crises. But now due to Ethiopia and other parties involvement Somalia is developing like other African countries. Generally, Ethiopian role and contribution for Somali revival from the destruction of two decades politically, socially, economically is greatly admired and got heart full reception for ever from Somali government and people (Somalia Embassy, 24/4/2015).

### 3.2. Negative Impact of Ethiopian Intervention in Somalia

Somalia has been in the state of complete anarchy for over twenty years, especially, after the downfall of the Barre's regime, Somalia has become typical example of failed state to these days, which led to the on going chaos where by war loads, radical Islamic groups and tribe and other transitional actors exacerbated or worsened the situation (Dareskedar, 2008).

The issue of security is one of the threats for Ethiopia that emanates from Somalia. Ethiopia had the reasons to involve in Somalia because of security threat. In the first place, the Gulf Islamic stated posed strategic challenge because of water issues or spread of radical Islam in the region. Secondly, these counter supported the armed opposition groups to attack Ethiopia indirectly. Thirdly, domestic security threat was the factor for the lack of development and democracy that leads to the anarchy (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2002). The Union of Islamic Court (UIC) publically pronounced creating Islamic state of Somalia (Medhane, 2004). This Islamic militancy threatened the national security of the Horn countries.

The Ethiopian government decided go to war against the UIC in order to thwart the imminent security threat with the support of the majority of the national parliament on November 30, 2006. The immediate reasons that forced Ethiopia of the war was the UIC declared proxy war the war of Jihad against Ethiopia. Also the UIC hosted the Ethiopian armed opposition groups, and used them to invade Ethiopia (Addis Zemen, 1999). But the Ethiopian government thought the war as the defensive because of the irredentist agenda of UIC (Addis Zemen, 1999). In the other way, Eritrea challenged the Ethiopian government to revenge the Ethiopian victory of the 1988 and 2000 war and it decided to challenge Ethiopia through supporting armed oppositions groups against Ethiopian government (Weber, 2008).

The rise of UIC in Somalia was a threat to Ethiopia since there are ethnic Somali people in Ethiopia and thus there was the probability for some Somali secessionists to ceded from Ethiopia. Moreover the rise of the Islamic state in Somalia would have serious religious and political impact in the Horn of Africa. (Dareskedar, 2008).

The TFG has been supported by the Ethiopian government to weaken the UIC and at the same time UIC's supported by different external powers to control Mogadishu. Ethiopian involvement in Somalia was strengthened in collaboration with Kenya "urged the continuation of a strained Arab league mediated dialogue between the Somali transitional government and the Islamists, set to resume in Sudan". There was also peace talks between TFG and UIC and Ethiopia actively intervened on it but no negotiation between them. This shows that Ethiopia highly intervened in the politics of Somalia. (ICJ, 2007).

According to an Ethiopia official since 1991 Ethiopia hosted more than 100,000 refugees. This created some social, political, economical and environmental problems in the country. Socially, the huge influence of Somali refugees created water, food, shelter, healthy, education and other infrastructure related problems. Environmental degradation is another related problem when there is over population accelerated by internal and external factors in country, it creates dynamic change on ecosystem as such like desertification, water pollution, destruction of forest and so forth.

Politically: a person can sleep normally if his/her neighbors are stable and free from conflict. Where there is illegal migration in the eastern part of Ethiopia and they are Ethiopia Somalis and by the failuer of information exchange they might some rise against government policy and facilitate conditions for attacking the strategic areas of the country. For instance, the consequent attack from 1991 upto 1996 in the Somale regional state of Ethiopia, bombing on Ghion Hotel in Addis Ababa, an attempt of assassination on the Ministry of Economic cooperation of Ethiopia on Abdulmajid Hussen and the 2009 assassination on sixty eight chance and Ethiopians at mining site in

Ogaden and the attacks of insurgents are problems faced as a result of this. But Ethiopia is strong doing on it to and work to wards bring in sustainable peace and security in both countries and the region.

On the the other hand some weakness of Ethiopian peace keeping troops that greatly obvious in Somalia are **\*language or communication problems** since citizens of both countries are poor in common language of the world English and in which somalian people cannot speak Ethiopian language(s) viza- a- vis there is difficulty of communication between Ethiopian troops and Somalian in social interaction;

**\*Beliefs and religious related problems** most Ethiopian troops in Somalia are Christians while all somalias are Muslims and this created intolerance and they face some problems from society in times of praying, eating, working , meeting and others;

**\*Peacekeeping Allowances** in many cases, the absence of clear and fair payment of allowances for UN peacekeeping participants could cause disciplinary problems in the army. Individual governments pay troops serving in UN peacekeeping operations according to their own national rank and salary scale. Since Somalia is in weak economic condition it is difficult for the Ethiopian troops to fullfill or have adequate, and even basic need to survive the life condition in the country (Somalia Embassy, 24 April 2015).

#### 4. Summery and Conclusion

The Horn of Africa is one of the conflict ridden areas in the world. Of all conflicts in this sub-region, the Somali inter- and intra state conflicts are brutal and unique. The history of Somalia changed from having strong and organized central government to unorganized and failed state with continuous civil war, which have caused security threats on the region. This condition totally destroyed the social, political and economic conscience of the country. The impact stretched to mass migration of peoples to neighbouring countries like Ethiopia which also affects host countries economy, death, spread of disease, and violations of human and democratic rights.

In Somalia, there is no central government for over the last twenty years that resulted in the civil war. It has profound consequences on Somalia and its neighbours like the problems of refugees, the rise of terrorist groups, the outbreak of epidemic diseases, environmental degradations and so on.

During the past two decades of Somalia's statelessness, the building block approach of federal state and unitary forms of state structures have been explored at length: Ethiopia is an advocator of the former, whereas Kenya and Djibouti support the later, since a strong Somalia would provide a counterbalance to Ethiopia's hegemonic aspirations (Stevenson, 2010). The building block approach is bottom-up and focuses on addressing clan rivalry through peace and reconciliation conferences. This approach has been successful in Somaliland and Puntland but the rest of Somalia has not ushered this model positively Kasaija (2010).

The study examined the role of Ethiopia in conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia. Since the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991 and the coming power of the EPRDF government domestic and international expectations have been heightened regarding Ethiopia's role as an important member of the international community.

These expectations indicate that Ethiopia has a leading role to play in the continent's peace missions. The first Ethiopian peace mission, Ethiopia's participation in Korean War to defend the principle of collective Security of the UN, has significant meaning for current and future member of the Ethiopian Armed Forces to recognize its legacy in peacekeeping missions. This tradition, Ethiopia's commitment to contribute its part to the effort to ensure peace and stability in the region and beyond, has increased over time in the belief that peacekeeping is now becoming a new and effective way to mitigate conflict. However, this commitment demands greater efforts to foster peace and plays a key role both at regional and continental levels.

Currently, Ethiopia has committed itself to contribute troops to AMISOM, AU, and UN and it may be asked to respond immediately should a conflict in the sub-region or in the region arise. Therefore all efforts must be exerted to organize peacekeeping contingents and be ready for any emergency requests made by AMISOM, the AU. From the study Ethiopia plays a key role in peace building and conflict resolution process in the horn of Africa and Somalia in particular. In Somalia Ethiopia sent troops in two rounds First, from 2006-2009 by the conscience of the TFG of Somalia, and the second mission is from 2012 to these days in which more than 4500 troops with other supporting countries like Kenya and Uganda and others by AMISOM have participated (Somalia Embassy, 24 April 2015). When we see the effectiveness of the Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia it was effective in such a way that fighting against Alshabab and other internal and external forces quite concluded with victory. Though the military victory over the UIC and Alshabab was a sources to Ethiopia, it was not enough to bring an end to Somalia's numerous political, socio-economic and security problems. Basically, language problem and difference in religious view were the challenges of troops in communication with the Somali peoples to facilitate the mission.

The study also investigated the relation between Ethiopia and Somalia before and after 1991. Accordingly, the study found that the pre-1991 Ethio-Somali relation was not good and there was no common position on peace and security issues in the region. Somalia used to support Ethiopian armed opposition groups and vise versa. On the other hand, after 1991 the relation between two countries has become positive and is aimed at peace building in the region and on other common shared issues like social, political, economical and environmental problems basically in Somalia.

In general, Ethiopia plays a great role in Africa particularly in Somalia by participating in different peace missions under the auspices UN, AU, AMISOM and other organizations. Not only participation the effectiveness also received great honor from different countries.

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**Appendix:** The map of the region of the horn of Africa

**Figure-1.** The countries of the horn of Africa and their boundary connections (Cliffe, 2009)

