

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter described about the background of the problem, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, purpose of research, research methodology, scope of research and the last was systematic of writing.

A. Background

Egypt, officially the Arab Republic of Egypt, is a transcontinental country spanning the northeast corner of Africa and southwest corner of Asia via a land bridge formed by the Sinai Peninsula. Most of its territory of 1,001,449 square kilometres lies within North Africa and is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Gaza Strip and Israel to the northeast, the Red Sea to the east, Sudan to the south and Libya to the west. Egypt is one of the most populous countries in Africa and the Middle East, and the 15th most populated in the world. The great majority of its over 84 million people live near the banks of the Nile River, an area of about 40,000 square kilometres (15,000 sq mi), where the only arable land is found. About half of Egypt's residents live in urban areas, with most spread across the densely populated centres of greater Cairo, Alexandria and other major cities in the Nile Delta (Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1991; Jatmika, 2016).

Since Egypt lies near the banks of the Nile River, Nile is their source of life and is important for their livelihoods. Nevertheless, Nile River is an important

water resource for almost all of the Middle East and African countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan and Egypt. Since they are only relying on the same river, conflict over the water resources often happened and could not be avoided.

Water as a natural resource has increasingly become a source of conflicts in Africa and Middle East. In an ideal world, water is supposed to be uniformly distributed and easily accessed by all parties involved. In reality there is a challenge in water sharing because of the increasing demand for water which results from an increase in population especially in Africa and Middle East. Due to that reason, they need to share water equitably. According to the book of Introduction to the Middle East Region, if a state has a water resource, or takes control over water resources of other countries, then the water will be a tool of conflict (Jatmika, Pengantar Studi Kawasan Timur Tengah, 2014).

In the Nile Basin region there are eleven riparian countries with nine upstream countries; Burundi, DRC Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and two downstream countries; Sudan and Egypt. Among those nine upstream countries, the tributary in Ethiopia namely Blue Nile contributes the most water to the Nile River which is the vital sources of water for the two downstream countries. Furthermore, Nile River for Egypt as a downstream country is the most important water resource but its control is in the hands of other countries that live in the upstream countries, such as Ethiopia (Valentine, 2015).

In 2011, Ethiopia under the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi came out with a project to build Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in the Blue Nile River, near its border with Sudan. GERD construction is located in Benishangul-Gumuz Region of Ethiopia, on Blue Nile River, which is located about 40 km east of Sudan. At the end of the works, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will be the largest dam in Africa: 1,800 m long, 155m high and with a total volume of 74,000 million m³ and is supposed to generate 6,000 MW of hydroelectric power (Salini Impregilo). However, the Ethiopian government did not give a prior notification or even holding preparatory discussion to Egypt about the project commencement. Egypt found out the construction commencement from the media, not officially from the Ethiopian government (Malone, 2011). That was the starting point of the war of words between Egypt and Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian government declared that the GERD would not harm the downstream countries – Egypt and Sudan. They also claimed it would bring benefits not only for Ethiopia, but also for the downstream countries (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d). Despite of the benefit from the construction of GERD stated by Ethiopia, there are several circumstances that made Egypt to protest the GERD construction.

In response to the Egypt protest, Ethiopia conducted pre-feasibility study to assess the environmental, social and economic effectiveness of GERD. However, in fact the actual size of the GERD was larger than negotiated in the pre-feasibility plan. Even though Ethiopia made a unilateral decision without prior

notification to Egypt, they still argue that the dam would not cause harm to Egypt because that dam is constructed according to international standards. However, Egypt thinks that there are other harmless alternatives for the Nile countries, instead of the GERD (Riet, 2014).

Furthermore, during the conference on the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and its effect on Egypt's share of Nile water on June 10, 2013, Mohammed Morsi stated that if the GERD proven can harm Egypt, blood will be the alternative (El-Behairy, 2013). Even though in 2013 Morsi was being overthrown by a coup, there was no change of heart from the Egyptian. New elected President Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi tried to use different approach in more diplomatic ways to respecting the decision of the Ethiopian than Morsi. He also led Egypt to join the further negotiation regarding the GERD construction. However, Al-Sisi stated that Nile water is a matter of life and death for Egypt (El-Gundy, 2014). Moreover, Egypt Minister of Agriculture under Al Sisi administration, Adel Al Beltagy said that from the totals of 55 billion cubic meters its share of Nile water, Egypt will not give any single drop of its share of water (Shady, 2014).

B. Research Question

Why did Egypt reject the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia?

C. Theoretical Framework

For answering the research question “Why did Egypt reject the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia?” in this research Kalevi Holsti theory of conflict will be used to know the reason behind Egypt rejection toward Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam construction initiated by Ethiopia.

Kalevi Holsti assumes conflict can emerge if there are more than one party, which each side has different perspective in certain issue or problems, there is hostility, then undertake diplomatic action or military. In other words in a conflict there are parties, field of issue, tension and action (Holsti, 1994).

Firstly, the warring parties here can be a state or non-state, which each party try to achieve a certain target which is not in line with the interests of other parties. In this research both of the parties are states; Egypt and Ethiopia. Ethiopia tried to build the GERD, meanwhile Egypt had a different interest that is not in line with Ethiopia goals.

Secondly, issue or problem is an object or position that is being contested. In this case there are conditions in which the actions that need to be taken by one of the parties can harm other parties. The Source of problem in this research is the GERD, a dam located in the upstream of the Blue Nile River build by Ethiopia to secure their water resource. Meanwhile, the action that has been taken by Ethiopia was considered as a threat to their water resource by Egypt.

Thirdly, tension or hostility refers to the behaviour and perspective that are embraced by one of the parties to the other parties. Tension is not solely the cause of the conflict, but tension encourages each party to get into conflict situation. The tension started since Ethiopian government did not give a prior notification or even holding preparatory discussion to Egypt about the project commencement. Those actions encouraged the parties to get into conflict situation.

While the last is action, a step taken by one of the parties addressed to the other parties. Negotiation and assessment to the effectiveness of GERD were the actions that have been conducted between Egypt and Ethiopia.

To make it more specific and focus, Kalevi Holsti theory of conflict will be used to analyze the perspective of Egypt toward GERD construction initiated by Ethiopia and its potential that can harm Egypt which lead to the rejection of Egypt. Other than that, it is also to analyze the importance and its interest of Egypt toward Nile River.

D. Hypothesis

From the background and theoretical framework, there are two hypotheses that arise on the reasons behind Egypt rejections toward Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam construction. The reasons are because,

1. Egypt has a different perspective with Ethiopia on the impact of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that can be a threat to Egypt national stability.
2. Egypt has a different economic interest with Ethiopia over the Nile waters.

E. Scope of Research

In this undergraduate thesis, to keep this paper remain specific, limitation by regarding the scope of the time in the research about the rejection of Egypt toward Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam construction was made from 2011 when the GERD project commencement as the starting point of the conflict until the construction and negotiation process of GERD up to 2016.

F. Research Methodology

This thesis used a qualitative method of analysis and used secondary data sources obtained by conducting library research and finding journals, articles, official statements, and also other sources of information related to the issue of GERD.

G. Purpose of Research

The purposes of this undergraduate thesis were;

1. To learn about the importance of Nile River for Egypt as their main water resource.
2. To learn about the reason behind Egypt rejection toward Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam construction.
3. To apply the theory or concepts of International Relations to the International issues.
4. To fulfil the final requirement of undergraduate degree.

H. Section of Research

Chapter I, this chapter described about the background of the problem, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, purpose of research, research methodology, scope of research and systematic of writing.

Chapter II, this chapter described about the Nile River; the history of the Nile, Nile River tributaries and High Aswan Dam built by Egypt on the Nile. Egypt water resources and utilization which contained the water supply and water demand in Egypt and its water policies. Other than that was Egypt legal framework in maintaining its influence over Nile River.

Chapter III, this chapter described the Ethiopia that has a water resource namely Blue Nile which made Ethiopia referred as a water tower and made Ethiopia possess huge hydropower potential, the construction of GERD on the Blue Nile with its main technical data, and the last was Ethiopia objectives and expectations in building the GERD.

Chapter IV, this chapter provides the analysis and answer the research question on why Egypt rejected GERD construction in Ethiopia and also proved the two hypotheses that arose in this research; Egypt had a different perspective from Ethiopia on the impact of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that could be a threat to Egypt national stability and Egypt had a different economic interest from Ethiopia over the Nile waters.

Chapter V, this chapter provided the closing and the conclusion that summarised the result of the research.