



International Boundary Study

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Libya – Sudan Boundary

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I. BACKGROUND

The Libya - Sudan boundary is delimited by three straight-line geometrical segments which from north to south are based on parts of the following 1) the meridian of 25° East, 2) the parallel of 20° North, and 3) the meridian of 24° East. The boundary as presently constituted was established in 1934 and, therefore, was inherited by the newly independent states of the Kingdom of Libya and the Republic of The Sudan, which obtained their independence on December 24, 1951 and on January 1, 1956, respectively.

Preceding the establishment of the present boundary, the northwest corner of the then Condominium of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan formed a triangular area of land with its apex pointing westward (see International Boundary Study No. 3, Chad - Libya Boundary). This area of land was commonly referred to as the Sarra Triangle, so-called because of the location of the Sarra water wells in the western part of the area. An east - west line forming the northern side of the triangle was a conventional extension of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan - Egypt boundary of 1899. This boundary was the parallel of 22° North and was established by an agreement signed at Cairo on January 19, 1899 between the Government of Great Britain and the Government of the Khedive of Egypt, but no western terminus was fixed. However, the Egyptian - Italian Accord of 1925 established the southern terminus of the Egypt - Libya boundary at the point of latitude 22° North and longitude 25° East and in effect fixed the western terminus of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan - Egypt boundary on the 22nd parallel at the same point.

The second side of the triangle, which forms part of the present Chad - Libya boundary, was established by the Anglo-French Declaration of March 21, 1899 and the Anglo - French Convention of September 8, 1919. In accordance with the declaration of 1899, the French sphere of influence was to be limited by a line which started from the point of intersection of the Tropic of Cancer with the meridian of 16° East and then extended southeastward to the meridian of 24° East. However, it was not until the convention of 1919 that the exact point of intersection of the southeastward trending line and the 24th meridian was determined to be at 19°30' North.

The present boundary was established by the Italo-British-Egyptian Agreement of 1934. This agreement was completed at Rome on July 20, 1934, by means of an exchange of notes by the states concerned. The boundary as established by the agreement of 1934 removed the Sarra Triangle from the administration of the Government of the Anglo - Egyptian Sudan and added more than 30,000 square miles to the territory of Libya. In addition the notes of the agreement stated that the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Egypt renounced all claim on the part of the Sudan to territory to the west and north of the newly established boundary; in turn the Government of Italy renounced all claim to territory south and east of the newly established boundary.

II. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY

In accordance with the terms of the Italo - British - Egyptian Agreement of 1934, the Libya - Sudan boundary is comprised as follows. In the north the United Arab Republic (Egypt) tripoint is located at the intersection of the parallel of 22° North and the meridian of 25° East of Greenwich. The boundary then is formed by the 25th meridian southward to its intersection with the parallel of 20° North. From this point the 20th parallel forms the boundary westward to its intersection with the meridian of 24° East. Finally the 24th meridian forms the boundary southward to the Chad tripoint at 19°30' North. The text of the notes of agreement did not specify the location of the present Chad tripoint, formerly the French equatorial Africa tripoint; instead, it stated the boundary would follow the 24th meridian in a southerly direction as far as its junction with the frontier of French possessions. However, the northern limit of the then French territory had previously been established at the point of 19°30' North and 24° East by the Anglo - French Convention of September 8, 1919.

The boundary is approximately 238 miles in length and traverses arid wastelands for the entire distance. The northern segment is 138 miles in length, and from the United Arab Republic (Egypt) tripoint located in the Jabal 'Uweinat, it passes southward for about 15 miles through rugged mountains. South of the mountains a desert track crosses the Libya - Sudan boundary, which in turn connects with trade routes originating in Chad and the United Arab Republic (Egypt). There are several important water wells close to the boundary in the nearby mountains and in the vicinity of the desert track. For a distance of about 8.5 miles south of the mountains, the boundary appears to be demarcated by 12 boundary beacons.* However, information is not available on the type or condition of the beacons. The lengths of the central and southern segments of the boundary are 65 miles and 35 miles respectively, and the segments pass through sandy areas of relatively low local relief and extreme desolation. A small boundary beacon is reported to mark the location of the Chad tripoint at latitude 19°30' North and 24° East.

A Franco-Italian Agreement on January 7, 1935 was to establish a new French Equatorial Africa - Libya boundary southward of the recognized boundary of that date. The 1935 boundary in its entirety would have extended from south of Tummo on the then French West Africa - Libya boundary southeastward to the French Equatorial Africa Tripoint and thence in the same general direction across the Tibesti to a new Sudan tripoint of 18°45' North and 24° East. The agreement was never ratified; therefore, the 1935 boundary shown on some maps lacked validity. The ratification of the agreement would have extended the terminus of the Libya - Sudan boundary southward for a distance of about 52 miles.

The British World Aeronautical Chart map sheets Mount Uweinat (2568, published September 1954) and Jebel Abyad Plateau (2665, published September 1954) and the French Carte Aéronautique Du Monde (World Aeronautical chart) map sheet Borku Ennedi

* Reference United States Army Map Service East Africa map sheet 'Uweinat (34-I, published August 1951), compiled by the Survey Office, Khartoum in December 1943, 2nd edition, Y501 (Geography Section, General Staff - 8003).

(2664, published March 1959) indicate the correct alignment of the Libya - Sudan boundary.

III. CONCLUSION

There are no known negotiations in progress or joint commissions active on this boundary at the present time. Since the Franco-Italian Agreement of 1935 was never ratified the Libya - Sudan boundary terminates at latitude 19°30' North and longitude 24° East instead of 18°45' North and 24° East as shown on some maps.

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared in the Office of the Geographer, Department of State, in accordance with provisions of Bureau of the Budget Circular No. A-16, Exhibit D.

Government agencies may obtain additional information and copies of the study by calling the Office of the Geographer, Room 8744, State Department Building, Department of State, Washington 25, D.C. (telephone: Code 182, extension 4507).