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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
CENTER FOR AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES
(MA PROGRAM IN AFRICAN STUDIES)

**THE GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY OF FOREIGN POWERS IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA: EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS, RISKS, AND
OPPORTUNITIES WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON ETHIOPIA**

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**The Geopolitical Rivalry of Foreign Powers in the Horn of Africa:
Exploring the Dynamics, Risks, And Opportunities with a Special Focus on
Ethiopia**

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Ababa University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts in African Studies (Specialization in African Human and
Economic Development)**

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DECLARATION!

Hereby, I declare that this thesis: “The Geopolitical Rivalry of foreign Powers in the Horn of Africa: Exploring the Dynamics, Risks, And Opportunities with a Special Focus on Ethiopia” is my original work and that it has not been submitted or presented partially; or in full, by any other person, institution, or university. I also declare that any information used in the study has been properly acknowledged and stated in the completed references.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAU.....	Addis Ababa University
AFRICOM.....	US Africa Command
AGOA.....	Africa Growth Opportunity Act
AMISOM.....	Africa Mission in Somalia
AU.....	African Union
CAPSCF.....	China-Africa Peace and Security Cooperation Fund
ECSU.....	Ethiopian Civil Service University
EPLF.....	Eritrean People’s Liberation Front
EPRDF.....	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Movement
FDI.....	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC.....	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GCC.....	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
GERD.....	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
HOA.....	Horn of Africa
IADB.....	Inter-African Development Bank
IDPs.....	Internal Displacement
IGAD.....	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund
KI.....	Key Informant
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OLF.....	Oromo Liberation Front
PLA.....	People’s Liberation Army
RSCT.....	Regional Security Complex Theory
TPLF.....	Tigryan Peoples Liberation Front
UAE.....	United Arab Emiratis
UAV.....	Unmanned Air Vehicle
UNAMID.....	United Nations Africa Mission in Darfur
UNMISS.....	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
USIP.....	United States Institute of Peace
USSR.....	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WTO.....	World Trade Organization

ABSTRACT

The Horn of Africa has been a geopolitical contestation, battleground, and chessboard for antagonistic foreign powers since historic times. The rivalry has now reached its peak, making the region the most militarized and security zone in the world. The study's general objective is to explore this geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers in the HOA, with a particular focus on Ethiopia. The research used an exploratory research design and qualitative approach. In order to gather primary data, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with purposively selected key informants. Secondary data were thoroughly reviewed and used to complement and substantiate the primary data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. Aside from empirical literature, three theories were used to frame the entire research: classical geopolitical theory, realism or neorealism, and regional security complex theory. The study's findings indicate that the HOA is experiencing new and tough geopolitical rivalry driven by geo-strategic, geo-economic, geo-security, vigilant containment, and resource competition. The region is experiencing new geopolitical rivalry between three groups: the West, the East, and the Middle East (Middle brokers) framed by realism and classical geopolitical theories. There is complex geopolitical rivalry formation of military bases, and training posts, as well as geo-economic rivalry in the commercial ports, investment, trade, and loan. China is influential in economic rivalry, and the West has tried various strategies to counter its influence. Since the 2011 Arab Spring, the Middle Eastern powers also played a significant role in the HOA geopolitical rivalry. Internal discontent among Middle Eastern groups is exported to the HOA, exacerbating the regional situation. The geopolitical rivalry brings both risks and opportunities to Ethiopia and RSCT has clearly applied and risks and opportunities are easily spilled to the region. The rivalry posed a peace and security risk, exacerbating internal instability and adversarial powers may exploit the internal situation as an advantage to destabilize Ethiopia. The militarization of the littoral states and the regional arms race posed a threat to the safe utilization of ports and could block the importation of arms. It also heightened the GERD tension and could obstruct the construction process. If Ethiopia manages the regional dynamics properly, the rivalry has many opportunities such as economic, regional stability, and Ethiopia could be a diplomatic champion of the non-aligned groups. Recommendations for the betterment of the region and Ethiopia are also clearly stated in the study. The paper stated that the issue is ongoing and needs further research and theoretical assessment.

Key Words: Containment, Geopolitics, GERD, HOA, Middle East, Non-Aligned

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the paper attempts to provide a clear and concrete introduction to the entire study. The geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the Horn of Africa has become very tense, bringing both risks and opportunities to Ethiopia, and the research focused on the region's current geopolitical dynamics. This chapter includes the general background of the topic, the stated problems, the central argument, the general and specific objectives of the study, basic research questions, the scope and significance of the study, and other points that the researcher intends to emphasize. Prior pieces of literature, reports from various institutions, and news magazines will be used as input to create a clear understanding of the problem in the study area.

1.1. Background of the Study

In broad terms, geopolitics is not a new phenomenon; however, it is a highly contentious and debatable term that is frequently used interchangeably with regional conflict, foreign policy, trade or security, or international relations (Black, 2015). It is a broad and widely used concept among political scientists, geographers, military experts, diplomats, journalists, and other experts to explain geographically classified political competition among multipolar actors in order to maneuver their competitors. It is a competition or struggle between global superpowers for control of strategically important geographical chokepoints or territories in order to secure political, economic, and security advantages. Flint, (2006) and Efferink (2019: 12) cited Cohen's (2003) definition of geopolitics as "the study of the interaction between geographical settings and perspectives on the one hand, and political processes on the other." Geographical settings and political processes are both dynamic, influencing and being influenced by one another."

The interaction of geography and politics, or power and space, can be used as the two pillars that states struggle to control large space or geographic areas and power to become a hegemon state in the study of geopolitics. According to Legucka (2013), globalization has reduced the importance of geographic territory by reducing the world into a village. According to Varisco (2013), since the 2000s, the international power balance has shifted from a one-state-dominated (i.e., USA) unipolar world order to a multipolar world order in which no one or two hegemon powers are dominant, but the world system has evolved to a multipolar system in which multiple hegemon states dominate the world political-economic system.

The cold war rivalry was replaced by great power competition and global hegemonic rivalry that countries are igniting more and more to achieve their best interests, increasing the likelihood of confrontation and rivalry and creating a tense global geopolitical competition (Schulze, 2019). The powerful states compete in a military technology arms race, nuclear proliferation, proxy war, cyber war, artificial intelligence, media campaign, and others are the new weapons of geopolitical rivalry. According to Flint and Xiaotong (2019), the new global geopolitical hotspot areas that hosted fierce rivalry are China and the United States rivalry in South East Asia and Africa, the United States and Russia rivalry in Eastern Europe and Africa, the Korean peninsula, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and the HOA and Red Sea region are some of the manifestations of global rivalry.

Since the period of slavery to colonialism, and from neocolonialism to neo-geopolitics, the African continent has been one of the core geopolitical rivalry areas or centers to exploit untouched natural resources. Africa is currently the battleground for both traditional and emerging superpowers in the new phase of "the new scramble for Africa" programs (Gavin, 2021). The major powers with a strong rivalry in the African continent are by far China (currently the juggernaut on the continent) and the United States; other actors such as Russia, Turkey, Gulf States, Iran, Japan, and India play an important role in the African continent. They are competing for economic, political, and security dominance in Africa, and they have hosted various economic forums. Since the 2000s, China has been planning to make a Sino-Africa summit; currently, Russia hosted the first Russia-Africa summit in Sochi in November 2019, and Turkey, as part of Erdogan's ambitious plan, has marched to Africa as an alternative great power in Africa, reviving "Neo-Ottomanism¹" through religious solidarity and investment opportunities" (Yachyshen, 2020).

The Horn of Africa is a prominent region of Africa located in the northeastern part of the continent, facing the Red Sea in the east, the Indian Ocean in the southeast, and the Nile Basin in the west (Berouk, 2011). It is controversial, and there is no agreement among scholars on the exact members of the Horn of Africa region. Some claim it is the "core horn" of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti, while others claim it is the "greater horn" or "extending horn" of all eight IGAD member states. Based on the foregoing assumptions, the researcher chose the Horn of Africa region, which includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia, because those countries are intertwined and have a spillover effect.

¹ Neo-Ottomanism, is the ideology that the current Turkey regime tried to revive the past global hegemonic role through political, economic and religious influence. (IGI Global Publisher)

The HOA region is a hotbed of geopolitical conflict between antagonistic actors such as the US-led Western Block (traditional actors), China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the Gulf States. External actors, particularly Middle Eastern countries and other actors, exported their internal discontent and differences to the HOA region, exacerbating the region's instability, economic downturn, and weak regional integration processes (Vertin, 2019). They heightened tensions in the region by expanding military bases and commercial seaports, supporting public protests, forcing a hard political transition, and intervening directly and indirectly in the internal affairs of sovereign states, the majority of which are stationed in Djibouti. This geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional actors is referred to by Mahari (2019) as the "emergence of a new cold war in Africa."

According to Guzansky and Rakov (2020), the HoA region is a militarized zone with military bases established by nearly a dozen great powers and emerging powers. The region's geostrategic importance since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the discovery of oil in the Middle East, have made it a magnet for external powers. According to Mahari (2019), the main driving force for great power rivalry in the region is economic, commercial, maritime security, and strategic importance. The region's geo-economic importance is vital for international trade because it connects Africa to the Middle East and serves as a route for the waterways of the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Indian Ocean (Rondos, 2016). Approximately 10-20% of global trade activities take place on this sea route. According to the USIP (2020), "the horn of Africa and the Red Sea region is the lifeline for international trade activities; nearly 10% of world trade passes through this line, annually 19,000-25,000 ships use this line, and around \$700 billion worth of goods pass through this line" (PP:15). Almost 4.8 billion barrels of oil are transported through the Bab el-Mandeb, the strategic chokepoint area having only 18 miles in width.

Internally, the region has been significantly challenged by a wave of problems such as the home for failed and fragile states, terrorism, illegal migration, smuggling, intra and interstate conflict, recurrent coups, transnational organized crime, refugee exodus, environmental related problems, famine, locust invasion, pandemics, and others that have attracted the great powers to intervene and manipulate to achieve their objectives (Kabandula, & Shaw2018). According to Berouk (2012), despite its landlocked status, Ethiopia has played a leading and hegemonic role in the region in economic, diplomatic, and security issues since 1991. According to the African Business report (2016), Ethiopia has now become the horn of the African region's locomotive in economic and security situations. The geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa poses numerous risks and opportunities for Ethiopia, the region's anchor

state. The growing concentration of external powers in the Horn of Africa poses a significant threat to Ethiopia's security and national interests, as discussed in this paper. The cold war rivalry between Moscow and Washington manifested through proxy war, conventional war, insurgency movement, mobilizing secessionist groups, and ideological war, rendered Ethiopia a victim state with long-term consequences. The region's new geopolitical rivalry following the end of the cold war also makes Ethiopia a victim state that hosted many regional actors (Jackson, 2020: 113).

The growing involvement and rivalry of global superpowers and emerging powers have had an impact on Ethiopia's national interests, both directly and indirectly. Any new developments in the Horn of Africa are a matter of life and death for Ethiopia. Following Ethiopia's and the region's political reforms in 2018, there are new geopolitical dynamics, power lineups, and competition in the Horn of Africa, which is concerning for Ethiopian national interests. The dynamics, risks, and opportunities of the superpower's geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa are so unpredictable that academics and researchers are eager to find a solution. Based on the foregoing assumptions, the current regional dynamics necessitate new insights and in-depth investigations into the national and economic security of Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The geo-strategic Horn of Africa region is hosting fierce geopolitical rivalry and competition of extra-regional powerful states in an unprecedented manner, which has harmed the region's economic, political, security, and stability. Alex De Waal, (2017:4) stated that "the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea constitute one of the world's most strategically important, complex, volatile, and understudied regions". In terms of international trade and security, the region's geostrategic importance cannot be underestimated. The massive container ship Ever Green's six-day blockade of the Suez Canal (March 23-29, 2021) demonstrates the strategic importance and risk of the Red Sea region and its adjacent area for global trade. The incident resulted in the blockade of over 100 large vessels on both sides, as well as a \$9.6 billion disruption in daily trade flows. Added to the internal socio-economic and political problems dozens of extra-regional powers intervene in the region (Vertin, 2019).

According to Mahari (2019), we are in the midst of a "new scramble for Africa" and a new cold war era, which has enslaved many regional countries to neocolonialism. External powers heavily intervened and twisted sovereign states to their zone of interest, acting as kingmakers if any regional government refused to accept the powerful states' interests. The region is the world's most militarized zone, with dozens of foreign powers stationed, most notably in

Djibouti (a military garrison), Eritrea, and Somalia, posing a security risk to the region's countries, particularly Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a landlocked state since 1991 making the import and export activity entirely dependent on neighboring countries' port supplies, allowing a 120 million second populous African country to exist at the will and control of others. According to the ministry of trade and industry (2021), Djibouti is Ethiopia's primary maritime port for import and export activity. Almost 95% of Ethiopian trading activity has taken place along this vital route. Djibouti's existence and safety are inextricably linked to Ethiopia's. Ethiopia is been forced to closely monitor regional changes and dynamics in order to survive. This regional situation necessitates a separate and new investigation based on the country's interests.

Following the Biden election, the US adopted a policy of "great power competition" to deter China and Russia's growing involvement in the Horn of Africa. According to the USIP (2019), Washington should be dedicated to making Ethiopian and Sudanese political reforms pro-US interests in order to deter their adversaries China (the horn of Africa juggernaut) and Russia. Other major actors and destabilizers in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region include the Middle East states, which use cash diplomacy, religious fundamentalism, and investment activities. By exporting their internal political problems and religious differences, the region is used as a battleground and a proxy center. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt are fighting a proxy war against Qatar, Iran, and Turkey, and have launched anti-government insurgency movements in the region and the Red Sea littoral states.

Medhane Tadese (2018), Vertin (2019), Verhoeven (2018), Pamba (2021), and others investigated the Horn of Africa geopolitical rivalry and its subsequent implications in the region as a whole in previous articles, journals, and academic papers or literature. However, it is poorly compiled, superficial, too general, and lacks detailed analyses of each member state. "The Advent of Competing Foreign Powers in the Geostrategic Horn of Africa: Analysis of Opportunity and Security Risk for Ethiopia," Gashaw and Zelalem (2016) wrote. This article was written prior to Ethiopia's 2018 political reform and lacks a detailed analysis of the current dynamics. Furthermore, Esraael (2018) investigated the three military bases in Djibouti, Somaliland, and Eritrea in order to assess the challenges and opportunities that expanding military bases in the Horn of Africa presents for Ethiopian foreign policy.

Dawit (2020) investigated "Saudi Arabian and UAE Military Bases in the Horn of Africa and Implications for Ethiopian Foreign Policy." He focused on Ethiopian foreign policy in relation to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Rebuma (2020) conducted a

comparable contextual analysis on "the New Geopolitics in the Horn of Africa and its Implications for Ethiopia's Foreign Policy." Tesfay (2021) wrote a thesis titled "Foreign Military Bases in the Horn of Africa and Their Implications for Ethiopian National Security (2002-2019)." To some extent, a trend analysis of Ethiopia's national security was conducted. The thesis "The Current Qatar-Saudi Dispute and its Implication on the Horn of Africa; the Case of Ethiopia" by Kidane (Col.) (2018) provides some insights into the Gulf crisis and its implications for Ethiopia. The preceding studies mentioned above made significant contributions to Ethiopia's foreign policy and security structure. However, the majority of them didn't explore in detail about the current new regional geopolitical dynamics, which are having unanticipated consequences for Ethiopia since the 2018 reform.

The current geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa post-2018 are vastly different from the previous one in scope, power structure, and implications, necessitating new research and potentially unpredictable outcomes. The main geopolitical dynamics are Ethiopia's 2018 political reform, the normalization and end of two decades of deadlock between the two adversaries Ethiopia and Eritrea, leadership changes in Somalia and Kenya, the unresolved GERD trilateral negotiation and its tension, Sudan's 2019 political change and the recurrent coup and counter-coups, Ethiopia's civil war and its persistent effect, diplomatic pressure and sanctions on Ethiopia, Sudanese invasion of Ethiopia "Al fashga" area. Prior researchers have not effectively assessed these new regional dynamics, which is the main thematic focus of this paper.

Aside from these, the region has been well researched primarily by Eurocentric studies or the West; however, there is a larger knowledge gap in Afrocentric studies and Africans have not paid much attention to this very critical hot spot area. As a result, this paper attempts to fill the gap by studying our regional situation from an African perspective. Furthermore, Ethiopia is a hegemon state in the region, with a population of more than 120 million people; however, the import-export door key is kept by another country. The paper attempts to point to a solution to maximize opportunities while minimizing risk by conducting a detailed analysis of current geopolitical dynamics. The aforementioned new dynamics exacerbate the region's rivalry with external powers and give birth to new interests that have a direct and immediate impact on Ethiopian national interests. The region's volatile and unpredictable nature necessitates new insight and investigation to alert Ethiopia's government and policymakers.

1.3. Central Argument

The Horn of Africa and Red Sea region is the site of tense geopolitical rivalry between powerful external states from the west, east, and the Middle East. There are new and

unexplored regional dynamics affecting Ethiopia's national interest and existence. Things changed at breakneck speed after 2018, and Ethiopia's safety and security are now intertwined with these new dynamics. Thus, the tense geopolitical rivalry of powerful states in the Horn of Africa has created its own set of risks and opportunities for Ethiopia, which this paper has investigated.

1.4. The objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate the geopolitical rivalry of the powerful states in the horn of Africa and its dynamics, risk, and opportunities for Ethiopia.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

To effectively respond to the proposed general objective the study has the following specific objectives.

- ✓ To identify the rationales or driving factors behind the fierce geopolitical contention of external powers in the Horn of Africa.
- ✓ To describe the current or emerging geopolitical dynamics and the rivalry between the foreign powers in the Horn of Africa region.
- ✓ To investigate the overall risks or challenges of external power rivalry in the Horn of Africa, with a particular focus on Ethiopia.
- ✓ To highlight the current and anticipated opportunities that Ethiopia could get due to the geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the Horn of African region.

1.5. Research Questions

The study has investigated the following basic research questions:

- What are the rationales or precipitating factors for rivalry or contention of external powers' in the Horn of Africa region?
- What are the current geopolitical dynamics of external powers in the horn of the African region?
- What are the overall risks or challenges of the external powers' geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa, with a particular focus on Ethiopia?
- What are the actual and anticipated opportunities for Ethiopian interest in the geopolitical rivalry of great powers in the Horn of Africa?

1.6. Scope of the Study

The conceptual (thematic) scope of the study is the geopolitical rivalry of the foreign powers in the Horn of Africa and its nature, risk, and opportunities with a special focus on Ethiopia.

Because of the region's interconnected nature, the geographical delimitations of the study area have been the horn of Africa region in general, primarily the IGAD member states and the Red Sea area. The term 'Horn of Africa' is used in the study to refer to the 'Greater Horn,' which includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. The actual geographical scope of the study is Ethiopia. The study's time scope is the new geopolitical rivalry of powerful states and the untouched new regional dynamics, particularly after 2018, but for better understanding, the study floated back and forth in time frames. The study's methodological scope was based on collecting primary and secondary data from a limited number of target respondents via semi-structured key informant interviews, and analysis was done using the thematic analysis technique.

1.7. Significance of the Study

The study is crucial for anyone interested in the geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the Horn of Africa, as well as its nature, risks, and opportunities for Ethiopia. Based on these considerations, the study attempted to produce updated, new, and rigorous results, as well as to add new understanding in the area for the benefit of Ethiopia. As a result, this research added to the body of knowledge on the subject. Furthermore, the study has policy implications for regional and national actors, allowing them to critically analyze the intentions and plans of the great powers and emerging powers in the Horn of Africa region, revisit the situation, and take adaptable measures. The study is free of biased academic papers, so it is very useful for the concerned bodies in Ethiopia to maximize the positive impact and minimize the negative impacts of the superpowers' geopolitical rivalry. The study's other significance is for stakeholders as input for further study and investigation in the area; in a broader and wider scope. The study also serves as an academic and scientific contribution to the field without bias. Finally, it is hoped that this study will invite and motivate other interested scholars in the area and on the topic for further evaluation and use as an additional reference in the area.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

During the research process, the researcher encountered some pre-existing and new limitations, such as the fast, unexpected, unpredictable, and volatile regional dynamism in the Horn of Africa challenged to reach a conclusion. During the data collection period, the researcher encountered unsupportive respondents and difficulties in obtaining key informants on time. Because of a security issue or the Covid 19 case, some informants were hesitant to give a face-to-face interview. To solve or overcome these expected and unexpected constraints, the researcher expended an unending effort to produce genuine and original

research findings. Such as zealously implementing the Covid 19 protocol, communicating with respondents via various platforms, and presenting supportive letters to institutions in order to obtain relevant data. The researcher also knocked on the doors of the targeted informants several times to get them to agree to the interview.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This research paper is divided into five sections. The first chapter contains an introductory section that includes the following sections: background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study, limitations of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter is a review of the literature, comprised of conceptual, empirical, and theoretical frameworks for the study. The third chapter describes the research methodology used to conduct the study. The fourth chapter is devoted to the research's detailed data presentation, analysis, and findings. The study's conclusion and recommendations are presented in the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises a thorough analysis of related literature that provides special insight, focus, and clarity on the research topic and explores previous accomplishments in this area of investigation. As a result, this chapter is segmented into two sections: the first section is about the empirical review and conceptual appraisal, and the second section of this chapter is about the theoretical review to assess or see the title in the pre-existed theories.

2.1. CONCEPTUAL APPRAISAL

2.1.1. Conceptual Understanding of Geopolitics

Geopolitics is a very ambiguous, uncultivated subject with no specific and agreeable definition, and different scholars define it differently. Geopolitics is a difficult concept to define in a single word, and it is also a term that is overused in the international political system. Country leaders, academics, journalists, and pundits all adore the term, which is used in every spiking that has resulted in highly complex situations (Sempa, 2007). Rudolf Kjellén, a Swedish political scientist, coined the term in an article published in the Swedish geographical journal *Ymer* in the early twentieth century. Geopolitics was a subset of political geography prior to Kjellén's definition. Geopolitics is the analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines “geopolitics as the study of the effect of a country ‘s position, population, etc. on its politics.” (Gökmen,2010). It is the concept that examines how topography, climate, land, access to the sea and other geographical variables affect or influence politics (Jacobs, 2015).

As the key determinants of state status, geopolitics revolved around the protagonists of places and peoples or land and resources. Cohen (2003) expanded on the notion of geopolitics as "the study of the relationship between geographical settings and perspectives on the one hand, and political processes on the other." Political processes and geographical settings are both dynamic, influencing and being influenced by one another. Geopolitics deals with the consequences of this interplay. This formulation emphasized the dynamic interaction of power and space. Flint (2006) provided additional perspectives on geopolitics, stating that geopolitics is the struggle for control of regions and locations centered on power.

Geopolitics, in another sense, is the study of the impact of geography on international politics and international relations. It is a type of foreign policy analysis in which geographical

characteristics are used to understand, explain, and predict international political behavior. Physical location, size, climate, topography, population, natural resources, and technological achievements are all typical geographical characteristics of the state under consideration. Power is combined with a geographical aspect in terms of space, location, and distance in this rivalry. The geographical size of a country does not guarantee geopolitical dominance; for example, Brazil, Argentina, and Australia are large nations but have played minor roles in comparison to the small states of England and Japan (Sempa, 2017).

For geopolitical supremacy, geographic position, or where a state stands in relation to other states, is more important than size. Population, economics, technology, military force, and the personality of a country's leadership all influence a country's ability to compete in global geopolitics. Based on these understandings, the current geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers in the HOA region has been triangulated. Dozens of extra-regional powers are vying for control of the HOA geography in order to carry out their foreign policy agenda in this geostrategic region.

The modern geopolitical perspective recognizes that it extends beyond physical geographic locations, but the ambition for global, economic, environmental, diplomatic, and security rivalry between global actors, international government organizations, and nongovernmental organizations is still present (Chapman, 2011). In geopolitics, as in international relations, the state is the dominant actor. However, in today's geopolitics, non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations play an important role in shifting geopolitical thinking. The current understanding and practices of geopolitics have been clearly explained in the following way;

The international system is a competitive arena in which great powers play a disproportionate role, struggling for security, resources, position, and influence. Military force is a critical indicator and fundament of that influence. Given their essential autonomy, states fear their own encirclement by other powers and try to break out of it through strategies of counter-encirclement. The realities of geography and material capability set very definite constraints on foreign policy decision-makers which they ignore at their peril (Dueck, 2013, P. 1).

In the early twenty-first century, geopolitics become complicated and multidimensional; the historical US-Soviet rivalry in the HOA region and currently the reborn of the "sleeping giant" China and Gulf states shifted the rivalry to a multi-polar contestation. There is a strong desire among Russia and China to form a united front against the US-led block. Currently, geopolitics is shifting away from traditional land-based rivalry and toward "Astro-politics" to dominate outer space and mixed with water-based rivalry. As a result, the current geopolitical contestation in the HOA region between extra-regional powers is a race to achieve their

foreign policy objectives and security priorities. It is the competition of powerful states in the interaction of power, space, or geography to become more influential than rivals in the horn region.

2.2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.2.1. Historical Overview of Geopolitical Rivalry in the Horn of Africa and its Implications on Ethiopia

The Horn of Africa region is the world's most sensitive, volatile, geostrategic region, as well as a geopolitical hotspot. According to Ahmed (2021), the name "horn of Africa" comes from the horn-shaped land structure at Africa's easternmost tip. Geographically, it is situated in North Eastern Africa, opposite the southern Arabian Peninsula. It was made up of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. However, the extended region, which includes Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya, are inextricably linked and influenced by the region's geopolitical and economic factors. It is the most important geostrategic area, serving as a lifeline for international trade (Lanfranchi, 2021).

In the study of Horn of Africa geopolitical rivalry, Ethiopia is the focal point of all international attention. Ethiopia is the hegemon state of the Horn of Africa region; any change has immediate consequences (Dehéz, 2008). The researcher attempted to explore the historical edge of geopolitical rivalry in the region using Ethiopia as a base line in this section of the empirical review. Ethiopia is a country with an ancient civilization that played a key role in the region. The current tense geopolitical rivalry between great powers in the Horn of Africa is an extension of the rivalry between the Portuguese and the Ottoman Turks. The study attempted to invigorate or assess clear pictures of geopolitical rivalry in a historical landscape in three periods, namely, before the cold war period, during the cold war period, and post-cold war geopolitical rivalry in the Ethiopian context, in this section of the literature. This could provide readers with a more complete picture of the region's current and future geopolitical rivalry for Ethiopian interests.

2.2.1.1. The Pre-Second World War Geopolitical Rivalry

The Horn of Africa region was and continues to be a vital and strategic geographic area that has piqued the interest of traditional and modern great powers alike. Historically, the region served as a battleground for the two rival superpowers, Portugal and the Ottoman Turks, in the 16th century. In the horn of Africa, these great powers fought a proxy and direct war, with the Portuguese supporting the Christen Highland Kingdom of Ethiopia and the Ottoman Turks supporting the Adal Muslim Sultanate. They fought a conventional and proxy war in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Indian Ocean region from 1538 to 1559 (Shillington, 2013).

The rivalry between these two superpowers was extended to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf region in order to control the main trade routes to the Far East.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in Africa, Europeans began to colonize the continent in order to exploit its raw materials, obtain cheap labor, and provide a market for their manufactured goods. Except for two countries, Ethiopia and Liberia, all African countries were colonized between the 1880s and 1914. This period was known as "the scramble for Africa," in which Europeans partitioned African countries according to a predetermined process (Vandervort, 2009). Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and Ottoman Turkey were the old colonial rivals in the Horn of Africa. The colonial masters saw sizing more colonies as an asset for a "balance of power," exploitation of raw materials, and deep routed marketplace (Ocheni, & Nwankwo, 2012). These deeply rooted factors can be viewed as the underlying cause of colonial rivalry in the Horn of Africa.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 that linked the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea made the region a vital communication line and the short route from Europe to Asia and vice versa was a fueling factor for the tense geopolitical rivalry of colonizers in the Horn of Africa. The Europeans believed that controlling the Red Sea region would give them control over the entire African continent and the Indian Ocean. The Anglo-French involvement had increased, and they now directly controlled Egypt's external and internal affairs. The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 climaxed this great power rivalry (Valeska, 2012).

The Berlin Conference was the second factor in European rivalry in the region. From November 15, 1884, to February 26, 1885, the newly formed German chancellor Otto von Bismarck convened "the Berlin Conference" to discuss peacefully partitioning Africa. The conference participants divided the African land by first sketching it on a map with a ruler and then dividing it on the ground. The conference declared or officially began the "scramble of Africa." The meeting's goal was to avoid unnecessary war and conflict between them as they race to control more and more territory. Even if they signed a peaceful division of Africa, the Europeans entered a bitter rivalry, particularly in East Africa (Gathara, 2019).

Through competition and cooperation with each other, the rival states took a two-faced approach. For example, Britain occasionally works with Italy against her rival France. In other words, Britain, France, and Italy formed a common front against the Germans and Ottomans. "The Hewet or Adwa treaty was signed on 3 June 1884 by the British government and Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes IV (r. from 1872 to 1889) for the safe evacuation of the encircled Egyptian soldiers and for Ethiopia to reclaim the Massawa region. However, Britain broke the agreement by inviting Italy to occupy the Massawa region in 1885. The British

committed this illegal act in order to thwart the expansion of France, which was regarded as the region's main rival (Degu, 2002). The following are some of the manifestations of the geopolitical rivalry of the great powers in this period to control the horn of the African region.

Pre-WWII geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa was primarily a period of colonial rivalry during which Europeans entered a period of overseas exploitation. The horn of Africa region displayed very tense competition and inter-great power conflict during the colonial rivalry. According to Degu (2002), the British occupied Sudan and part of Somalia; Italy occupied part of Ethiopia and established Eritrea as a colonial entity in 1890, and it also occupied part of Somalia, and France occupied Djibouti. As a result, the Horn of Africa region was divided into five colonial territories (Anglo-Egyptian, Sudan, Eritrea, and French, Italian, and British Somaliland), with Ethiopia remaining independent (except for five years of Italian occupation). This colonial rivalry altered the region's political map, divided the same people or the same ethnic group into different administrative zones, and caused a cultural and identity crisis and division (Lonsdale, 2008).

The state of Somalia is divided into three European powers, namely the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, as well as neighboring Ethiopia. Following a tense rivalry in 1884, the British colonized the southern shore of the Gulf of Aden and the northern Somalia region, naming it British Somaliland. In 1889, Italy took control of the southern Somalia region, naming it Italian Somaliland. In 1884, the French took some land and named it French Somaliland, which is now known as Djibouti. After defeating the imperialists at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, the Ethiopians moved to complete the unfinished project of consolidating peripheral territories to the central government. In 1897 Emperor Menilik II also competed with the British and Italy and united the Ogden region as part of Ethiopia (Zapata, 2012).

The Europeans' other geopolitical competition and rivalry have occurred in the current Sudan area. The colonizers' rivalry in the Sudan region reached a head and resulted in a direct confrontation. The British tactic to control Egypt defeated the French government and heightened the competition over Sudan. On September 18, 1898, the two dominant colonizers reached a climax of direct confrontation in Sudan, which they dubbed "the Fashoda Incident." The rivalry grew over time and extended to the Sudan region in order to control the Nile basin area. The incident ended with a British victory, as the Sudan Mahdist army was defeated by the Anglo-Egyptian army at the battle of Omdurman on September 2, 1898. In addition, the French and Germans were strongly opposed to the British plan to establish an empire stretching from "Cape Town to Cairo" (Gilkes & Plaut, 2018).

The other geopolitical rivalry and manifestation in the Horn of Africa was the tripartite treaty signed on December 13, 1906, by Britain, France, and Italy without the participation of Ethiopia. The agreement's main goal was to divide Ethiopia in its sphere of influence following the death of the powerful emperor Menelik II. This clearly demonstrates how much the great powers interfered in the internal affairs of sovereign and independent states. The agreement provided for Britain to dominate western Ethiopia and the Nile basin region, while France agreed to control the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway line, with the goal of building or connecting her colony through a railway line stretching from Senegal in West Africa to French Somaliland. Whereas, Italy agreed to control the Northern part of Ethiopia to merge with Eritrea and the south eastern part of Ethiopia with Italian Somaliland (Keefer, 1981).

During World War I (1914-1918), Europeans fought a very destructive war on their homeland, led by the German-led Central Powers and the British-led Allies. The war was also exported to other parts of the world, particularly their African colonies, resulting in another phase of geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa region. The Axis forces during the reign of *Lij Iyasu*, Germany, and Ottoman Turkey attempted to bring independent Ethiopia into the axis of power. They believed that if Ethiopia became an Axis power, it would provide a significant opportunity to defeat Britain and France in the Horn of Africa and the Suez Canal region. The allied powers were terrified of losing their colonial position and dominance in the region as a result of this attempt. The German general staff intended to destabilize British rule in the region by attacking French-ruled Djibouti and Italian-ruled Eritrea. The "double threat" of internal insurgency in Sudan and an Ethiopian offensive, according to Berlin, would pave the way for a successful attack on the Suez Canal by Turkish forces "supported by a German expeditionary force." (BBC News, 2016).

The above literature shows that during WWI the geopolitical rivalry in the horn of Africa was fierce and had been supported by direct military confrontations. The process of German strong rivalry and the overt geopolitical operation had been shown below.

The German government dispatched an expedition to the Horn of Africa, led by Forbenius. On 15 February, the Frobenius expedition arrived in the Italian colony of Eritrea, but the Italians, who were British allies, arrested them. Forbenius was deported back to Berlin, but the German high command was determined that the story would not end there. In June 1915, a new expedition was dispatched, this time led by Salomon Hall, who came from a Jewish Polish family with long ties to Ethiopia. Frederick Wilhelm von Syburg, the German envoy in Addis Ababa, was directed to do everything possible to persuade the Ethiopian government to join the war. Von Syburg was tasked with explaining to the Ethiopians that Germany had achieved "great victories" in the war and made lavish promises about what would happen next. "Now is the time for Ethiopia to reclaim the Red Sea coast, driving the Italians back, and restoring the Empire to its former size..." (BBC News, 2016, Para. 3).

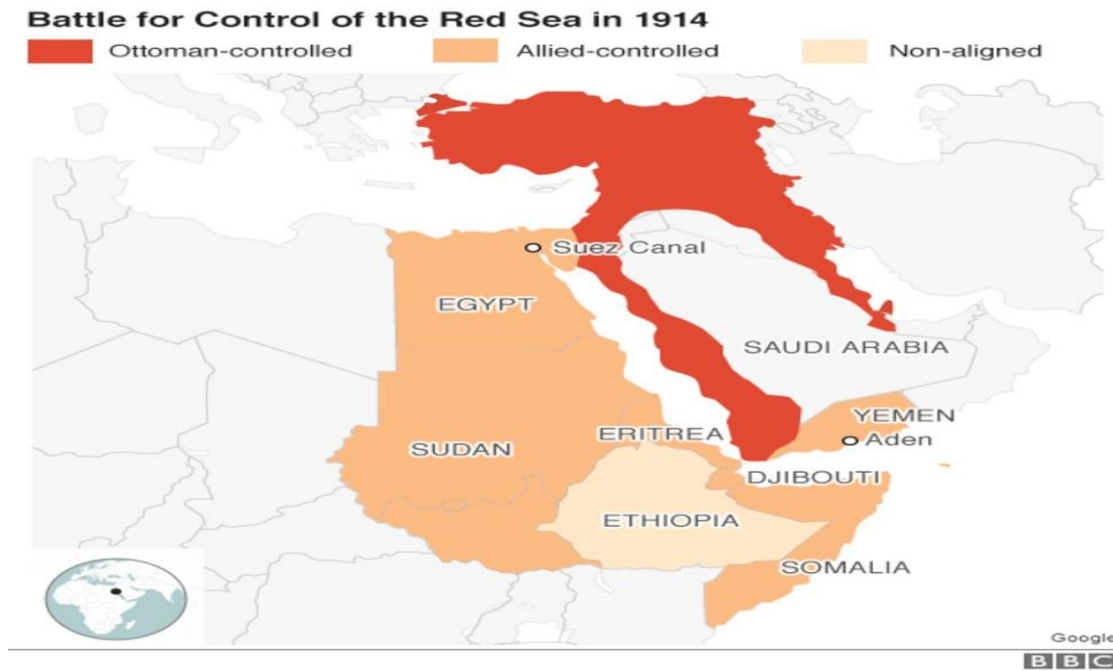


Figure 2.1. The European colonial rivalry in the horn of Africa during WWI. Source: BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-37428682>

The Ethiopian, *Lij Iyasu*, was a close friend of the long-time British foe, Sayyid, Muhammad Abd Allah al-Hassan (also known as the "*Mad Mullah*") of Somaliland. He was also encouraged by the Ottomans, who supplied Sayyid with weapons. This situation led to a disagreement with the British, France, and Italy in order to deter German and Turkish influence and protect their colonial interests in the region. The allied forces vowed to depose Iyasu in collaboration with Christian nobility who feared the king had converted to Islam. On September 27, 1916, Prince Iyasu was deposed by a *coup* and replaced by Empress Zewditu, to which the three powers (Britain, France, and Italy) sent a message of support and partnership. This situation provided relief and geopolitical dominance for the allied forces in the region until the end of World War II. As a result, the UK ambassador to Ethiopia, Wilfred Thesiger, wrote to the Foreign Office in London, saying, "the government is now in the hands of those who are friendly to our cause." The threat of Ethiopia joining the war had passed. They prevented the Germans and Turks from landing in the Horn of Africa (BBC News, 2016).

In general, the pre-WWII geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa was primarily a period of colonialism, which had negative consequences for the region's current political, economic, social, and security problems, particularly in Ethiopia. Except for Ethiopia, the majority of the region's countries were founded by colonial rivalry. The region's current geopolitical rivalry is a continuation of the previous assignment, in which the Europeans used a divide-and-rule policy, which has been a ticking time bomb for the current mess and regional

instability. Even though Ethiopia was an independent state during colonialism, all neighboring states were subject to European rule. Due to the colonizers' encirclement, Ethiopia faced a significant challenge in preserving its territorial integrity. After the Adwa victory and the defeat of Italy in 1898 by Emperor Menilik II, the Italians occupied Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941 which brings a spillover effect on political and security problems.

2.2.1.2. The Cold War Period Geopolitical Rivalry in the HOA Region

The aftermath of the Second World War gave birth to another memorable historical period in the world that lasted from 1945 to the 1990s. It was a bipolar ideological world war led by two rival superpowers by lining their supporters on their side, namely, the United States and the Soviet Union, for supremacy; the former led the capitalist bloc and the latter led the communist bloc. Instead of going to war, the two geopolitical powers engaged in an arms race, expanding their global dominance, and economic, cultural, and ideological supremacy throughout the world. The cold war divided the world into two blocks that competed in geopolitical and economic terms. Soviet leaders expanded their influence and controlled neighboring countries as a buffer zone against the capitalist United States and its allies' expansion (Sari, 2020).

The cold war's shadow and influence in the horn of Africa region were very high, accompanied by proxy wars and insurgency movements. This geopolitical rivalry altered the map of the Horn of Africa region, laying the groundwork for the current regional chaos and instability (Thomson, 2004). According to Sari (2020), the main reasons for the tense geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa were ideological, strategic, economic, and political factors. The Soviet Union was interested in the mineral resources of the Horn of Africa, which had previously been controlled by the United States and Europe. As a result of improving relations with regional countries, the USSR was able to secure the strategic resources needed to keep its military projects and space program on track. The strategic importance of the Horn of Africa was another driving force behind the rivalry between the USSR and the US. The Horn of Africa is close to the oil-rich Middle East, with supply routes passing through the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, Ethiopia has served as a trump card for easily controlling Africa. In this section, the researcher demonstrated some of the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as some of its manifestations.

In fact, the US and Ethiopia established full diplomatic relations in 1903 but in 1944 the two countries signed various economic and strategic treaties. The relationship was founded on mutual interest, with the US government using Ethiopia as an entry point and a buffer against

the growing influence of Soviet communism. Ethiopia, an old independent state, was seen as a key for the United States to easily enter Africa. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia and the United States maintained close political, diplomatic, security, and economic ties. Ethiopia appeared to the United States to be an important African buffer against the perceived global threat of Soviet communism (Patman, 2009). The highest level of cooperation between the two countries was demonstrated by the deployment of an army battalion on the side of the capitalist world in the Korean War. The US-Ethiopia relationship transformed the Horn of Africa's political and ideological rivalry.

On her side, the Soviet government opposes the US in the region by supporting neighboring states such as Somalia and Sudan (Marchal, 1991). The Soviet government established close ties with the newly independent state of Somalia in order to gain a foothold in the region and counter Western influence. They provided a financial loan as well as army equipment to modernize the Somali army, which posed a threat to regional security. According to Bereketeab (2013), the Somali government's military has become one of the best-equipped in Africa as a result of Soviet modern army supplies. Both great powers made indirect rivalry by supporting the respective regional countries.

In addition to the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, Arab countries attempted to exert geopolitical influence in the region by supporting the Somalia government. They provided arms, training bases, and diplomatic support to anti-Ethiopian insurgency movements. As a result, the Somalia government invaded the Ethiopian territory of Ogden twice in 1964 and in 1977. From 1977 to 1978, Somalia and Ethiopia fought the most destructive war, which was orchestrated by superpowers siding with them. According to US Foreign Secretary, US President Jimmy Carter, Somalia was the main checkpoint to challenge Soviet aggression and expansion in Africa during this war. The West was concerned about the USSR's increasing presence in the region, which threatened free access to international trade and oil supplies (Yordanov, 2016). In this tense geopolitical rivalry, Israel was also worried about the Arabisation of the Red Sea. To alleviate this fear and ensure the free movement of Israel's trading activities, they began to oppose the war and supported Marxist Ethiopia. During the war, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan admitted that Israel provided Ethiopia with military and technical assistance. In exchange, the Arab states backed the Somali government in its anti-Israel campaign. Because of this, the Ethio-Somalia war became a proxy war for Arab-Israel.

Adelman (1980) explained that after the 1974 Ethiopian revolution, the USSR became a strong ally and partner to Ethiopia by severing ties with Somalia. In exchange, the United

States switched its alliance from Ethiopia to Somalia, and the Soviet Union became Ethiopia's primary economic, political, diplomatic, and military partner.

In 1977, when Somalia attempted to invade Ethiopia, which had a socialist government, the Soviet Union evacuated the Berbera base. The Soviets received a military base in the Red Sea port of Massawa in exchange for assisting the Ethiopian government. After the USSR acquired another coastal base in Aden, Yemen, the significance of this base grew. The two bases are on opposite sides of the Gulf of Aden, where the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean meet. As a result, the Soviets gained a priceless strategic asset for harassing the West's Middle Eastern oil supply route. (Kitchen, 1983, p. 17).

The United States' response to the Soviet Union's activities was demonstrated by its support for ex-USSR partner Somalia against Soviet-backed Ethiopia. To facilitate this, the United States established military bases in Somalia (Berbera) and Kenya (Mombasa). In addition, they established strong diplomatic and military ties with Sudan and Egypt. Contrary to its policy, the US government began to provide military and economic support to autocratic leaders such as Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, and Zaire in order to deter the spread of communism. According to Mesfn (2011, p.19), "the US interests can be explained in terms of securing some strategic points such as the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf, as well as deterring Soviet expansion in the Middle East, Indian Ocean, and Horn of Africa." The US government began to provide massive support for the Somalia government against the newly socialist Ethiopian regime through proxy and insurgency, based on the principles of "my enemy's enemy is my friend" and "there are no permanent friends but permanent interests."

The bloodiest Ethiopia-Somalia war in the Ogden area in 1977-1978 also invited other actors such as Cuba and Southern Yemen to support Ethiopia. The war ended in March 1978 with Ethiopia's victory, and Somalia's complete withdrawal from Ogden, but the war left both countries devastated. Following the overthrow of Siad Barre, Somalia became a failed state; in Ethiopia, the war caused an economic recession, making it a weak state for rebel groups in the north and opening the way for an independence movement. The victory of Ethiopia over the US-backed Somalia invaders implied that capitalism had been defeated in Africa by communist ideology, another defeat for the US after the Vietnam War. However, the geopolitical rivalry has not ended, and a new phase of rivalry has begun (Atomic Heritage Foundation, 2018).

The US Reagan administration followed the most aggressive strategy to deter USSR's influence in the region. This shows how much the horn of African geopolitical rivalry was multidimensional. It was very easy to understand that the impact of the Reagan administration on the horn of Africa was very serious.

Sudan's rivalry with the great powers intensified immediately after the country gained independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule. According to the 1968 agreement, Moscow provided modern military equipment to modernize Sudan's army, as well as substantial financial aid and loans for development projects. "By 1970, Sudan ranked first among the USSR's trading partners in black Africa," writes Birhanu (1997). Furthermore, Soviet arms transfers to Khartoum increased, and plans were made to increase the Sudanese Army from 30,000 to 50,000 soldiers." The relationship between the two states upsets the antagonistic blocks of the west. Following this strong relationship, the western capitalist block began to support secessionist groups in southern Sudan. The problem of militant struggle has persisted for at least 30 years, severely affecting the Sudanese economy and the region's peace and security situation. The long hands of the superpowers were stretched to the making and unmaking of kings in the regional states.

The other geopolitical rivalry of superpowers in the Horn of Africa manifested itself through support for insurgency movements and the orchestration of anti-government coups. Following the conclusion of the Ogden war, the *Derg*² regime in Ethiopia shifted its focus to northern Ethiopia in order to combat the militant groups of the EPLF and TPLF, which were supported by the United States and Arab countries (Woodward, 2006). The two great powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as other Arab countries, rallied behind the secessionists. The militant groups in Africa were created and supported directly by geopolitical actors. Those actors were the primary suppliers and sellers of weapons to Africans; in the early 1960s, the United States was the primary arms seller in Africa. The USSR took the lead and was the main supplier of the army for the African governments and militant groups. Thomas & Mazrui (1992), explained the above idea in the following way.

Between 1966 and 1970, the USSR accounted for 44% of the value of the Sub-Saharan African arms trade, while the US accounted for 20%. During the latter half of the 1970s, the Soviet advantage grew dramatically, reaching 59 percent of African arms sales compared to only 8 percent for the US. Nonetheless, despite the fact those overall arms sales to Africa increased by 700 percent between 1966 and 1970 and 1976 to 1980, the United States managed to increase its arms exports by 200 percent during this period, despite its declining share. During this decade, the Soviet Union increased its arms exports by 950 percent. (Thomas & Mazrui 1992, P.9)

The growing number of arms trades can be seen as one of the factors incubating the rise of insurgent groups in the Horn of Africa. Following Mengestu's ideological shift in 1975, Western countries vowed to overthrow his regime by supporting anti-government factions

² *Derg* was a Provisional Military Administrative Council or group of a coordinating committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army that led Ethiopia from 1974-1991. <https://www.britannica.com/>

such as the OLF, TPLF, EPLF, and others. To depose him, the United States and its allies developed close ties with Ethiopia's neighbors, including Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, and other Arab states. The Soviet government actively supported the Ethiopian government in the Eritrean liberation struggle. They believed that Eritrea, the Port of Massawa, and the Red Sea region were crucial strategic areas for easily dominating global politics. To deter Soviet ambition, the West began to provide financial and military assistance to anti-Ethiopian government factions (Young, 1996).

The cold war geopolitical rivalry had the following impact on the Horn of Africa region, particularly on Ethiopia, according to Issa-Salwe (2016). The rivalry resulted in the birth of new states such as Eritrea (1992) and South Sudan (2011). The rivalry rendered the region the world's weakest region, and various interest groups easily interfered in the internal affairs of sovereign states. With the withdrawal of rival superpowers from the Horn of Africa in the early 1990s, the countries entered a new phase of exploitation, economic downturn, and intrastate civil war. The country of the region supported different dissident groups on their side, which is explained in the following way.

Somalia had supported the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), and the Somali Abbo Liberation Front (SALF) (SALF, an Oromo liberation movement). Members of the Arab League, such as Saudi Arabia, also provided financial support to Eritrean groups. Ethiopia, in turn, assisted in the establishment of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), formerly the Somali Salvation Front (SSF), and the Somali National Movement between late 1978 and early 1980. (Ibid, P.166).

In addition to the lingering effect mentioned above, the geopolitical rivalry raised unresolved border disputes between neighboring states. Somalia between Ethiopia, Somalia between Djibouti, Somalia between Kenya, Ethiopia with Sudan, and others have unresolved border claims.

Generally, the geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa was very tense during the cold war period, affecting the overall situation of the region and Ethiopia. The region was used as a battleground and a testing ground for new military equipment by the superpowers. The following argument supported the above explanation;

The involvement of superpowers in the Horn of Africa conflict has added a new dimension to the conflict by heavily arming one state against the other, creating uncertainty, and allowing one state to strike deep into another without warning. The level of superpower involvement is so deep that one writer recently stated, 'The situation in the Horn is uncertain.' Neither war nor peace is permitted unless it benefits the superpowers. (Makinda, 1982, P.8)

The US and its allies are primarily concerned with preserving the ideological status quo and containing Communism, securing pro-American states in the region, ensuring the security of

the oil sea-lanes, and deterring and countering Soviet military penetration of the region. The Soviet Union and its allies, on the other hand, are concerned with acquiring military facilities in the region, spreading Marxism, defending their regional allies, and neutralizing western powers' dominance in the Indian Ocean region in general. Thus, superpower involvement in the Horn is motivated by strategic and military considerations as well as ideological considerations.

The two superpowers' Cold War geopolitical rivalry and heavyweight contestation lasted until the end of the Soviet empire in the world. Since 1986, the Soviet government has pursued a policy of perestroika, or restructuring, in order to rethink the Soviet Union's relations with other countries. This policy had a significant impact on the Horn of Africa's geopolitical situation, leading to the triumph of capitalism, the end of the *Derge* regime in Ethiopia, and the beginning of a new era in the region. The rivalry resulted in the birth of Eritrea, leaving Ethiopia as a landlocked state, with long-term consequences for Ethiopia (Ibid).

The situation was similar in the Horn of Africa, where the fall of the military government of the *Derge* regime and the rise of new pro-US parties paved the way for the United States' sole dominance until the arrival of another rival superpower, China, in the 2000s. Wilkins (2021) concluded that the legacy of the Cold War's conclusion in the Horn was death rather than victory. This violence has a high human cost. Over 250,000 civilians have been killed in the Ogaden War, the Ethiopian-Tigrayan-Eritrean war, and the Somali Civil War. When the 1 million Ethiopians who died during the famine of 1983-1985 are added to this figure, the magnitude of the tragedy is clear.

2.2.1.3. Post-Cold War Geopolitical Rivalry in the HOA

After the Cold War ended and the USSR fell apart, the world's geopolitical structure shifted from bipolar to unipolar. The unipolar order makes the United States the sole global actor in politics, economics, security or military, technology, and development paths. During the 2003 US invasion of Iraq without UN Security Council approval, the US demonstrated its ability to be the world's kingmaker. From the 1990s to the early 2000s, or until the emergence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the United States was unrivaled for many years (Varisco, 2013). Until the arrival of the new global issue known as the "Global War on Terror," the global situation and power structure were unclear. A decade long after the end of the Cold War temporarily reduced the focus of attention on the Horn of Africa region. "By December 1991, there was no longer a Soviet Union in the HOA," said Chester Crocker, former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. The Soviet Union's

reduction to Russia and the beginning of a state's isolation from international competition eased the region's ideological rivalry. The United States began to participate in the HOA in a variety of ways, including conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance, and democracy building (Gasbarri, 2020).

Melvin (2019) stated that the end of the cold war and the dissolution of regional rivalry between the USSR and the US helped to reduce conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Particularly, proxy wars and insurgency movements have decreased, while international attention has shifted to humanitarian interventions. The main factor for the decreasing insurgency movement in the region was the downward rate of the arms trade in the region because the main dealer USSR had disintegrated. The geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa was changed into a new phase that ended autocratic leaders in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan and brought new leaders and new alignments. He also explained that the post-cold war regional geopolitical situation as a period of peacekeeping, peace building, conflict prevention, and mediation efforts between different antagonistic groups.

External political and financial assistance for multilateral security approaches to Horn of Africa conflicts has emerged as a critical pillar of regional security. A significant amount of political and financial resources has been devoted to peace operations in Somalia (the AU Mission in Somalia, AMISOM), Sudan (the UN Mission in Sudan, UNMIS, and the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur, UNAMID), and South Sudan (the UN Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS), with the goal of ending wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Eritrea and Djibouti, and managing regional tensions over unresolved borders. (Ibid, P. 6).

The European Union was the other geopolitical actor in the Horn of Africa after the Cold War ended. The EU, in collaboration with the US, took the lead in security sectors such as migration prevention (refugee exodus), conflict resolution, illegal arms control, development, conflict mediation, and others. The Ethiopian-Eritrean war, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, was the pivotal historical event in the post-Cold War horn of Africa politics. The main geopolitical event in the post-Ethio-Eritrean war was the European and American mediation and negotiation role.

The main geopolitical dynamics that occurred in the Horn of Africa after the 2000s were the "Global War on Terror" and the war against piracy in Somalia and the Indian Ocean region, which determined the region's future and the participation of global actors. According to Berketeab (2013), the United States' increased involvement and interest in the region were precipitated by the 1998 bombings of its embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam by suspected al-Qaeda groups. Due to civil war, terrorist action, and international intervention following the end of Said Barre's regime, Somalia became a failed state. Furthermore, from 1990 to 1996, the al-Qaeda leader, Bin Ladin, was granted refuge in Sudan. Sudan was also

accused of bombing American embassies, prompting the Clinton administration to destroy a pharmaceutical plant suspected of producing chemical weapons. As a result, Sudan and Somalia were designated as al-Qaeda hotspots in the global war on terror, which invited the United States and its regional allies to participate (Fluehr-Lobban, 2012).

Various global states participated in the anti-piracy operation to conduct large-scale international operations. By establishing a military operation base in the region, the United States and the European Union were the main actors in the operation. Beyond security, this military base can serve a dual purpose in protecting their country's interests. Almost 80% of the military base is stationed in Djibouti, posing a significant security risk to the region, particularly Ethiopia. Other navies from outside the Horn of Africa, such as China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Iran, and Australia, have deployed naval forces to the Gulf of Aden on anti-piracy operations on a regular basis. This nagging activity becomes the primary geopolitical focus in the Red Sea and littoral states (Melvin, 2019).

Internally, Ethiopia and Kenya supported the United States plan to combat the Islamic terrorist group Al-Shaabab; Ethiopia entered Somalia in December 2006, and Kenya in October 2011. The situation has yet to be resolved or brought about the desired outcome; rather, the region has become the birthplace of political, socioeconomic, and security issues. Bereketab (2013; pp. 11) concluded that "the collusion of international powers and regional states for the benefit of global, regional, and national geostrategic interests has proven detrimental to the region's peace, security, and stability." The Doctrine's misguided perception also attests to the presence of the continuation by other means, albeit of a more complex nature."

After the 2000s, the Horn of Africa region experienced a new geopolitical dynamic in addition to security and counter-terrorism programs: economic rivalry. The aggressive arrival of China in the post-2000s horn of Africa in particular, and Africa in general, was a game changer. In the 2000s, a new global superpower, China, emerged as a rival across the entire African continent, with particular vigor in the Horn of Africa. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established at the Ministerial Conference in Beijing in 2000, symbolized China's growing interest in Africa. FOCAC has solidified China's relations with African countries by implementing a robust economic agenda that combines three major components: aid, investment, and trade (Jayaram, et al., 2017). The geopolitical and geo-economic rivalry in the horn of Africa became very fierce, especially with the Chinese rising influence becoming a challenge and threat to US interests in the region.

The first half of the twenty-first century was regarded as the end of the United States unipolar order and the beginning of a multipolar world order. The end of the US as the sole actor heralds the arrival of China and other emerging countries as competitors. According to Vertin (2020), the US-African relationship during the post-Cold War era was a patron-client relationship that ignored Africa's economic share. The US government established a relationship in aid, humanitarian situations, democracy building, and trading partnerships. There was little investment practice, and the Chinese advent took advantage of this gap, and China-Africa relations have been primarily economic in nature. The US-China rivalry has been serious and adversarial throughout Africa, but the Horn of Africa rivalry between the two juggernauts is strategic, security, and military in theory and practice.

The Chinese One Belt One Road initiative, which interconnected the world in 2013, served as a wake-up call for rival western powers, shifting the power balance and rivalry road toward Chinese dominance. The fact that the Horn of Africa region is one of the main hub and destination places in the project has created a huge fear in the USA's interest in the future, forcing it to come in an aggressive and adversarial manner (Nantulya, 2019). This factor, along with other incoming actors such as Russia, Turkey, India, and the Gulf States, created a tense geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa. The project's adversaries are well aware that the project will shift the flow of international trade and allow Beijing to control the global supply chain. The establishment of a Chinese military base in Djibouti in 2017 was another shocking alarm that heightened the horn of African geopolitical rivalry. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Support Base in Djibouti is the world's first overseas permanent military base, with a capacity of 10,000 soldiers. The base's mission is to protect Chinese import-export trade and to conduct anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean region. The unspoken goal of the base is to bolster China's dominance in the Horn of Africa and openly challenge US power in the region (Cabestan, 2020).

Another geopolitical dynamic that heightened regional rivalry in the Horn of Africa was the growing involvement of the Gulf States and Turkey. Following the 2011 Arab Spring, the Gulf States began a policy shift from an inward-looking to an outward-looking approach in order to quell the internal public protest. External ambition and overseas competition were intended to foster nationalism by increasing military capability and international role. In the USIP Commentary, Mahmood (2020) explained that the Gulf and Turkey have increased their assertiveness in the Horn of Africa, which has been invaded by external powers for military proliferation, port development, investment, and economic aid, all of which are detrimental to Ethiopia's interests.

The growing involvement of the Gulf States and Turkey in regional rivalry in the Horn of Africa was another geopolitical dynamic that heightened regional rivalry. Following the Arab Spring in 2011, the Gulf States began a policy shift from inward-looking to outward-looking in order to quell the internal public protest. External ambition and international competition were intended to foster nationalism by increasing military capability and global role. Mahmood (2020) explained in the USIP Commentary that the Gulf and Turkey have increased their assertiveness in the Horn of Africa, which has been invaded by external powers for military proliferation, port development, investment, and economic aid, all of which are harmful to Ethiopia's interests.

In general, following the end of the Cold War era, particularly after the 2000s, the multipolar global order can be viewed as a 'Blessing in Disguise' for the Horn of Africa region, particularly for Ethiopia, a landlocked country dependent on neighboring ports. New geopolitical dynamics, new actors, new techniques, and new regional problems have emerged in the region, necessitating the development of new and appropriate techniques and tactics to address the issues. We can't plow with an old ox and with new plowing tools. The researcher's goal in this study was to assess the power constellation, the nature and current geopolitical dynamics of the great powers in the Horn of Africa, as well as the risks and opportunities for Ethiopia. In this part, the researcher tried to skim some introducing points about the post-cold war rivalry in the region, however, a detailed analysis has been taken place in chapter 4 of this thesis.

2.3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.3.1. Classical and Critical Geopolitical Theory

It is critical to see the classical and critical geopolitical theories in the study of HOA geopolitical rivalry in order to craft a full map of the study. Numerous well-known scholars have contributed significantly to the theoretical development of the concept of geopolitics. The theory and explanations of those scholars are still fully acceptable and applicable as a governing principle by various powerful states. Those classical and critical theorists have assessed the current HOA geopolitical rivalry.

2.3.1.1. Classical Geopolitical Theory

Physical geography received a lot of attention in classical geopolitics, and it is a state-centric concept. Open access to the sea and neighborhoods is a critical component in building the power of the state territory. First-generation theorists such as Halford Mackinder, Rudolf Kjellén, Friedrich Ratzel, and Alfred Thayer Mahan exemplified classical geopolitics. It was popular until the 1980s and is still relevant today. According to classical geopolitics,

geography and space are the primary driving forces in global politics. It argued that due to ongoing rivalry from other states, the states were obligated to expand their territories. Based on the above assumptions the current tough geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional power in the HOA region is fully governed by the proponent of classical theorists of government consultants. The actors are keen to control or have a presence in this geographically and geo-strategically central area.

Classical geopolitics has been explained in the following phrase by assessing current Turkey's revivalism in the regional and global hegemonic attempt.

National states, according to classical geopolitical thinking, behave similarly to living organisms attempting to thrive in a harsh Darwinian arena. They are born, grow, mature, expand, evolve, compete with their counterparts, decline, whither, perish, reproduce, and in some cases, go through a complete revitalization that restores their strength. When the Ottoman Turks (a people of Central Asian origin) overran what remained of the decaying Eastern Roman Empire, they set about creating their own state. Following WWI, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated, awaiting another period of hegemony. Turkey currently holds a global hegemonic position in the military, economy, and diplomacy. (Alonso-Trabanco, 2022, Para. 2)

Classical geopolitics is most concerned with conservative aspects of national economic strategy, political and military strategies such as economic strength, the importance of sea freedom, the importance of possessing a national military force with operational remarkable power, collaborating with allied nations to preserve national interests, and preventing international groups or powers from gaining a competitive strategic advantage that could jeopardize national interests. According to Scholvin (2016), states are growing organisms that derive their national power from the land or strategic sea route they occupy. Based on this, the current Horn of Africa's geopolitical rivalry is a mirror image in which superpowers compete for control of the most important horn of Africa's strategic sea route.

Some of the proponents of classical geopolitics are the following and their assumptions are fully applied in the current HOA geopolitical rivalry. This implied that there is a revival of classical geopolitical rivalry in a new form.

1. Sir Halford Mackinder (1861–1947)

Sir Halford Mackinder (1861–1947), a notable English scholar, was the one who set the foundation for today's geopolitical discourse. In his "Heartland Theory," published in 1904, he divided the world into two parts: the "World Island" includes Eurasia and Africa and the "Periphery" includes the Americas, Australia, Japan, the British Isles, and Oceania. The World Island (rich in natural resources) included the entire continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as the Heartland, which included Ukraine, and Western Russia. This theory

should be very reminded in the current Russia-Ukraine war. The west strongly supports Ukraine not for its freedom from Russia but for resource competition and not to lose this strategic region. He summarized the theory in his well-known formula:

“Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
Who rules the World-Island commands the World.” (Flint, 2006).

However, given the role of technological advancement, military capability, economic statecraft, alliance, and other important calculations, it is nearly impossible to consider geographical factors as a single determining force in international relations and the global political economy in the twenty-first century. Mackinder's theoretical underpinnings served as a foundation for the formation of collective security alliances against potential aggression, such as NATO (Flint, 2006). His doctrine is also a blueprint and a guiding principle in the geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers in the HOA, a very strategic chokepoint of the world.

2. Nicholas Spykman (1893 – 1943)

Dutch ancestry Nicholas Spykman made significant contributions to geopolitical thinking by modifying Mackinder's theory and writing two excellent books, *America's Strategy in World Politics* and *The Geography of Peace*, which greatly influenced previous and current US geopolitical roadmaps. In 1942, he proposed the "Rimland theory." According to the rimland theory, whoever controls the rimland (Inner marginal crescent), which includes Europe, North Africa, West Asia, India, South East Asia, and a portion of China, will control the world islands. According to him, international relations between states are primarily a function of power dynamics. The primary goal of a state's foreign policy should be to maintain and improve its power position, as power is an essential tool for a nation's survival and a better world (Rosenboim, 2019). He altered Mackinder's formula that;

*"Whoever controls the rimland controls Eurasia.
Whoever rules Eurasia controls the fate of the world."*

This theory has served as a guiding principle for US foreign policy in order to limit the Soviet Union's expansion. Control of naval bases and sea routes, such as the Straits of Gibraltar, the Bosphorus, the Straits of Molucca, the Suez Canal, and the Panama Canal, is critical for one country's supremacy. Because of easy access to the sea, he claims that sea power with larger coastal areas is more powerful in terms of resources and military movement. Control of the Rimland meant control of the world, as it contained the majority of the world's wealth and population. If the United States did not maintain effective control over the airspace and sea lanes of the two oceans on either side, someone else would. Throughout history, these

strategic chokepoints have been hotbeds of imperial ambition and intrigue (Dueck, 2013). This rough reality indicated that the current US rivalry for control of the Horn of Africa chokepoint, as well as the East Asian competition with China, were laid by those scholars.

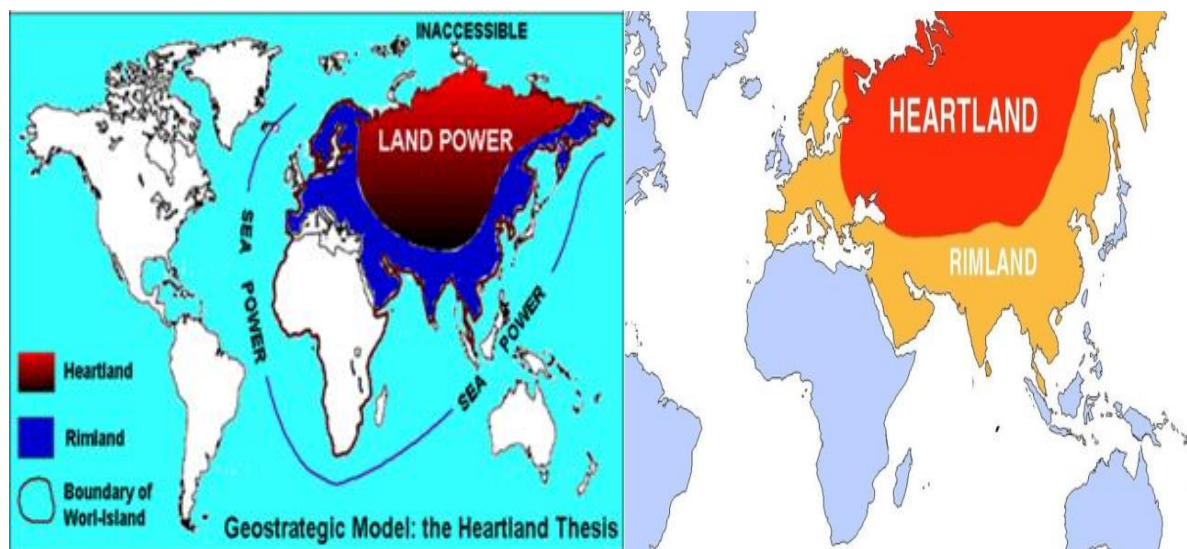


Figure 1.2. The geographical landscape of Mackinder's Heartland and Spykman's Rimland Theory. Source; Geography UPSC

3. Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922)

Rudolf Kjellén was a Swede political scientist who adopted Ratzel's concept and focused on analyzing the state in all of its manifestations and dimensions. He proposed doing so in five distinct areas and approaches. He intended to look into the geographical factors and influences in this area (Mills, 2017). Kjellen contended that "in order to be powerful, states needed to implement five complementary types of policies." These policies were Econopolitik (state economic resources), Demopolitik (state population), Sociopolitik (state social structure), Kratopolitik (governmental organization), and finally Geopolitik (state geography)." Ferrari (2010), p.1. He declared that geopolitics, rather than being idealistic or legalistic, had its feet on the ground, i.e., realistic foundations. According to the assumptions made above, the current geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region is a mix of econopolitik, demopolitik, and a realist race to outmaneuver the adversaries through military force. Despite being confined to a time when political science was in its infancy, Kjellén's geopolitical analysis includes the current debate on ethnicity and territoriality, power and identity, metaphors, and discursive analysis (Scholvin, 2016).

4. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1846–1914)

Admiral Alfred Mahan was a well-known US geopolitical theorist and naval strategist. He believed that sea or maritime supremacy and control of strategic commercial routes and chokepoints ensured the state's greatness and dominance. In 1890, he argued in his influential

book, "The Influence of Sea Power on History, 1660-1783," that sea power is critical to the rise and fall of great nations. Mahan defines sea power as a national orientation toward the ocean in terms of geographical position, commercial shipping, maritime production, and intelligent policies, in addition to a strong navy. For Mahan, the military essence of sea power is the concentrated possession of a large number of capital ships with well-trained and aggressive crews capable of defeating enemy navies.

According to his proposal, there are six very important conditions for the greatness of a state in sea power; "first, advantageous geographical position, second serviceable coastlines, abundant natural resources, and favorable climate; third extent of territory; fourth population large enough to defend its territory; the fifth society with an aptitude for the sea and commercial enterprise; and finally, government with the influence and inclination to dominate the sea."

He also argued that the US should seek new market access from abroad because the domestic market is unable to absorb the massive amount of industrial and commercial goods produced in the country. Three things must be done to secure this international market access: first, a merchant navy to transport massive American products to the new market across the great highway of the "high seas." Second, an American battleship navy to deter rival fleets, as well as the establishment of a network to supply fuel to the merchant navy, and third, an open line of communication between the United States and its new markets (Russel, 2006). Mahan, like most realist strategists, saw international politics as primarily a struggle over who gets what, when, and how. He attempted to reconcile the realist orientations of international relations theory with a less formidable but still significant component of Mahan's idealism. The above Mahan's theoretical plan was immediately implemented by the US government, and it is now being used critically and effectively in the current US geopolitical and geo-economic activities all over the world, including the HOA region.

2.3.1.2. Critical Geopolitical Theory

Critical geopolitics is a continuation of classical geopolitics, which emerged after the end of the 1980s by notable scholars such as John Agnew, Gerard Toal, Simon Dalby, Tuathail, and Klaus Dodds who were concerned with the multiple perspectives on geopolitics. As a result, critical geopolitics seeks to investigate traditional geopolitical interpretations. It criticizes traditional interpretations of international affairs based on the balance of power and influence, as well as what it sees as a state-centric approach to international relations.

Kuus (2017:P.1) defined it as a combination of political geography and international relations that investigates debates about power and place. It provides a method for deconstructing

claims about why certain places should be made secure or why other places or procedures are deemed to be a threat. Thus, critical geopolitical theorists attempt to investigate the politicization of geopolitical study as a field of study, as well as the practical consequences of geopolitical adventurism. During the war on terror, the United States had two major geopolitical objectives: first, to protect territorial sovereignty, and second, to restore global order, particularly in the HOA region.

In conclusion, comparisons between classical and critical geopolitics are made with the suggestion that, while they differ in many ways, both versions are equally legitimate for study and, after examination of their comparative approaches, may be brought closer together, at least in ways that complement each other (Kelly, 2006). It is also worth noting that both classical and critical geopolitics is concerned with how geography influences international relations and state foreign policy decisions.

2.3.2. Realism and Neo-Realism Theory

Before assessing the basic assumptions of neorealism or structural realism in the context of the horn of Africa's geopolitical rivalry, it is critical to highlight the basic concepts of realism or neorealism depicted in academic literature. The modern and academically accepted theory of realism emerged after WWII as a response to the preexisting theory of idealism by the German-Jewish émigré to the United States, Hans Morgenthau, in his notable contribution "*Politics among Nations*" in 1948. The concept of realism theory is based on human nature, in which struggle for power is an unavoidable feature, so states began to build more power to ensure law and order.

The theory of neo-realism or structural realism is not far from realism thinking, and it is the moderate form of realism developed by Kenneth Waltz in his 1979 book "Theory of International Politics" to develop systemic and scientific realism. In terms of state relations, power politics, and anarchic world order, neorealism retains many features of realism. Waltz's neorealism, according to Gang (2000), improves realist thinking through "the application of systems theory in the field of international relations and thus the revision of some of the basic concepts in traditional Realism." A system, according to him, is made up of a structure and interacting units."

According to neorealism, structural factors such as states' motivation and strategy to achieve their desired goal against weak states have shaped international relations. Every state has comparable demands; the difference is their ability to meet those demands, whether through physical or intellectual power. According to neorealism, power is very influential in international politics, and balancing internal power means accelerating economic growth and

increasing military spending. External balancing necessitates the formation of alliances with other countries to balance the power of other powerful states or alliances of nations (Baldwin, 1993).

In terms of power balance, neorealism believed that power must be balanced between two great powers. The great powers engaged in rivalry in order to balance their powers, which had a domino effect on international peace and stability. However, they are less likely to go to war with each other because they supported different groups. The primary concern of neorealists is domestic security, while governments focus on anything that affects their interests abroad. The Horn of Africa region is an international trade lifeline and a connecting chokepoint from Asia to Europe. To secure this blood vessel, every great power began to congregate in the region, erecting military bases and security stations.

Due to the anarchic nature of the international system, the neorealist strongly believed that states are the key actors in the issue of security. States will seek offensive military capabilities in order to defend or expand their borders (Mearsheimer, 2010). They supported the concept of "the stronger your military, the better your security," but this thinking has been criticized as potentially leading to war. The current situation in the Horn of Africa is not far from this reality; great powers are active in the region, erecting strong military bases to defend their national interests. The militarization of the region poses a significant security and existential threat to the region's countries. The growing involvement of one great power, for example, China, poses a threat to US interests; in response, the US began to secure its interests by increasing army capacity and diplomatic pressure. Currently, the US government has deployed an additional 700 soldiers to the Horn of Africa to secure its interests in the region (USIP, 2022).

Geopolitics and neorealism theory has a direct and vertical relationship in which both concepts are state-centric (states are the fundamental actors) and compete for global hegemony to control more power, place, and space. Other commonalities in both fields include the belief that states are unitary and rational actors, and that societies are represented by their states (Gökmen, 2010). Geopolitics was primarily concerned with state security and economic hegemony in a defined strategic location. We cannot distinguish between geopolitics and neorealism; they are two sides of the same coin (Viotti, & Kauppi, 2019). For national economic, political, and security interests, great powers sought overseas expansion, dominance, and hegemony (Bell, 2021). Among others, prominent geopolitical theorist Mahan stated that the use of force was always primary and the rule of law was always secondary. Both fields believe that the rule of power, rather than the rule of law, governs

global politics. Furthermore, both perspectives see peace as a bad situation marked by the absence of fighting.

According to the neo-realism viewpoint, states regard other states as potential enemies and threats to their national security. The majority of the world's superpowers competed for control of Africa under the neocolonial sentiment. The current assemblage of great powers is the primary manifestation of the region's strategic significance and vulnerability to terrorism and international crime. To achieve their security concerns, states must increase their power and engage in power-balancing in order to deter potential aggressors and rivals. The primary goal of American policy in the Horn of Africa is to deter Chinese aggression and Russian intentions (Hess, 2021).

The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region is the most important geopolitical hotspot area, attracting both great powers and emerging powers seeking to expand their sphere of influence in the region. It is a principle in which stronger geopolitical actors impose hegemony on weaker states. The realist and neorealist theories have been used as a driving force in the geopolitical rivalry of the superpowers in the Horn of Africa. Based on this, we can conclude that geopolitical rivals and Horn of Africa participants, such as DP World, prioritized government missions over economic interests. It is a type of defensive realism in which the multipolar world order orientation exacerbates global instability.

The Horn of Africa region is a vital lifeline for economic and security dynamics, allowing great powers to create regional security for the free flow of goods and services to Europe and America via the Mediterranean Sea. Terrorism, piracy, and illegal human and gun trafficking are the other main reasons for great powers to come together to defend their national interests. Glaser (2003) agreed that classical realism is not the best theory to analyze non-state threats such as terrorism; therefore, neorealism has a better understanding of those actors. The horn of African neorealist states is not the only actor, and they interact with non-state global, continental, and regional actors such as the United Nations, the African Union, and the Inter-African Development Bank. For example, the US and EU have had a close linkage with UN peacekeeping missions in the region like AMISOM and UNAMID.

One of the main indicators that the theory of neorealism is appropriate in the horn of African dynamics is the concept of intervention. When we can see the region, after the end of the Cold War, there was destructive intrastate and interstate civil wars has been taken place which needed the unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral intervention of state and non-state actors. Military intervention, political intervention and negotiations, economic sanctions, humanitarian aid, and international tribunals such as the International Criminal Court have all

been used (Molier & Nieuwenhuys, 2009). According to Berk (2009), different superpowers intervened unilaterally in the Horn of Africa security situation, demonstrating how neorealism has been practical.

The Horn of Africa region leads the world in peacekeeping operations supported by UN and AU missions. Great powers have played a leading role in non-state actor interventions in terms of army contribution and financial support. The competitive nature of those great powers has had a serious impact on the region's peace and stability; one rival state's support means it is an enemy to the other rival state. Starting in 2017, Turkey began to support and trains the Somali federal government, while opponents began to support anti-Somalia regional states such as Somaliland and Puntland (Joseph, 2020).

The concept of the "Security Dilemma"³ has been clearly applied in the Horn of Africa rivalry, where when one state's power or security increased; it could cause fear and insecurity in the other states. Other states can respond by increasing security measures to defend themselves against incoming threats. Based on these assumptions, the security situation in the Horn of Africa region has deteriorated from time to time as a result of the security dilemma concept. The great powers increased their physical and diplomatic weapons in the region to overwhelm their adversaries and gain control of the strategically important region. The great powers, the United States and China have built military bases and increased the number of armies in the region to dominate the region (Tang, 2010).

According to K. Waltz, "States, when planning or implementing their foreign policy, strive to maximize relative benefits, i.e., seek to acquire more opportunities than their partners." Based on this assumption, the Ethiopian government can maximize its benefit or opportunity by coexisting peacefully with neighboring states. The competition among powerful states in the region has provided Ethiopia with an opportunity to form strategic, security, and military alliances with its adversaries (Ibid).

In general, the theory of neorealism or structural realism is the appropriate framework for the HOA regional matrixes. The strategic importance of the region, internal regional challenges, terrorism, and piracy can all be cited as reasons for external powers to arrive in the region. The rivalry has evolved into a new cold war contestation between antagonized superpowers, which has a negative impact on the region's peace, security, economic, and political situation.

³ Security Dilemma; the concept is first developed by Herbert Butterfield, John Herz, and Robert Jervis, it is an instrument to see the concept of "defensive realism", that makes possible genuine cooperation between states. It is a concept that how the actions that one state takes to make itself more secure—building armaments, putting military forces on alert, forming new alliances—tend to make other states less secure and lead them to respond in kind (Tang, 2010).

Ethiopia is a hegemon state in the region with the oldest civilization; her large population, combined with her landlocked structure, may pose a greater risk than other regional states. Neo-realism theory revived the post-cold war era that depicts the exact situation of the region and the intentions of powerful states.

2.3.3. Regional Security Complex Theory

The theory of neorealism attempted to cover the power rivalry and military competition of foreign powers in the Horn of Africa for the benefit of participating countries' national interests. However, this theory has a limitation in assessing the regional security complex and the regional countries' commonalities. The regional security complex theory could assess the interconnection, similarities, common characteristics, and fate of regional states. Walsh (2020) agreed that "the explicit interest in nation-states and Great Power politics in Classical Realism and Neo-Realism has largely failed to explain the complex fluidity of the African context" (PP; 301).

Barry Buzan and Ole Waever developed the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) in their 2003 book "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security." "The theory has been defined as a group of states whose primary security concerns are so intertwined that their national security cannot realistically be considered separately." It was defined in a 1998 book (Buzan and Waever 1998: 201) as "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interconnected that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another." Buzan defined a region as "a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations that exists among a set of states whose fate has been locked into geographical proximity with each other." Furthermore, when states are close together, military and political threats become more significant, potentially imminent, and intensely felt.

The geographical proximity of each state is the main center of gravity of RSCT. According to Buzan and Waever (2003), "simple physical adjacency tends to generate more security interaction among neighbors than between states located in different areas; adjacency is potent for security because many threats travel more easily over short distances than over long distances." They further clarify the central ideas of RSCT of physical adjacency as follows:

The central concept in RSCT is that, because most threats travel more easily over short distances than long distances, security interdependence is typically organized into regionally based clusters: security complexes." The process of securitization, and thus the degree of security interdependence, is more intense between actors within such complexes than between actors inside and outside of the complex" (Buzan and Waever, 2003; P. 4).

Geographic proximity has the greatest and most visible impact on military, political, sociological, and environmental security interactions. Thus, regional security refers to a "group of states or other entities" security interdependence that distinguishes them from other surrounding groups. Berouk (2014) reinforced the above assumptions that the key concept of RSCT is that security interdependence is typically defined as clusters: security complexes because most threats spread more quickly over short distances than over long distances.

The RSCT argued that geographically coherent groups of countries share a grounded security interdependence that is influenced by external powers. The HOA region and the respected countries are intertwined in a web of security interdependence (Tapan, 2021). Because of the region's approximate, cultural, linguistic, economic, and religious similarities, the horn of Africa Security Complex is more than other parts of the world. The current regional security challenges and difficulties stem from the colonial era and are the result of the current great power rivalry. The region's neo-cold war rivalry adds to regional instability and state fragility, as one great power supporting a given state becomes an enemy to other external powers.

The domestic level (meaning nation-state, in this case, Ethiopia); Regional level (the immediate regional environment, namely the Horn of Africa or IGAD); Inter-regional level (relationships between regions, thus Africa); and Global level are all important in RSCT (great power actors such as US, China, Russia, the Middle East and structural role of the international system). All of these play a role in specific security issues and regional security dynamics. However, Buzan and Waever emphasize that, to varying degrees, the regional level is always important. 304 (Walsh, 2020)

Regional Security Complex Theory accepts neorealist assumptions such as polarity, power balance, and the importance of material conditions, as well as the role of "patterns of amity and enmity" in forming an "overall constellation of fears, threat, and friendships." Based on the preceding assumption, the other relevant theory to assess the security complex of the HOA region is RSCT.

Terrorism, cross-border crime, illegal migration, piracy, arms trafficking, insurgency movement, and other issues are among the region's top security challenges, particularly in Ethiopia. The instability in Somalia is a headache for the entire region and the world, so as Buzan stated; the problem requires a united front because the problem is complex, causing a spillover effect on neighboring states, particularly Ethiopia. The Ethiopian and Kenyan governments send their armies to Somalia in 2006 to combat the al-Shabaab terrorist group accompanied by the "global war on terror" and "counter terrorism operation led by the US government. So, the regional peace, security, and development issues cannot be solved in a separate way without cooperative actions (Farole, 2018).



Figure 2.2. How Regional security complex Theory applies in the Greater Horn of Africa
Source; academia.edu

The diagram above depicts how the region's security situation is interlocked and interconnected. According to Buzan's conceptual framework, the figure approved how various types of conflict suddenly erupt and quickly spread in space and time throughout the regional countries in the Horn of Africa. The militarization of the Red Sea region, particularly Djibouti, has a negative impact on Ethiopia's national security interests. The geopolitical rivalry has placed Djibouti in a "sovereign debt"⁴ state, undermining the country's territorial integrity. Any commercial or security activities could be directly controlled by other external powers. Ethiopia is a landlocked country that is completely reliant on the port of Djibouti, which harms Ethiopia's import and export processes.

To wrap up this chapter of the thesis, the researcher attempted to delve deeply into the conceptual understanding of geopolitics from both ancient and modern perspectives. The empirical review assisted readers in understanding the historical context of geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region from pre-WWII to the present. History teaches us that the HOA region has been a site of conflict at various times, and there is no time or space in which the region is free of the influence of external powers. Three theories were used to construct the theoretical review: classical and critical geopolitical theory, realism or neorealism theory, and regional security complex theory. These theories are currently serving as a guiding principle in the HOA region's new geopolitical rivalry. The following chapter attempted to investigate the current geopolitical dynamics based on those three theories, specifically what factors drive extra-regional actors to come to the region, what risks individual countries and the region as a whole face, and what opportunities exist.

⁴ Sovereignty debt is a debt borrowed by the government from creditors and that debt is greater than the national asset of the borrowers and the sovereignty of the country sovereignty is put under question.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3. Introduction

The research method is a set of explicit rules and procedures that guide research and serve as the foundation for evaluating knowledge claims (Ojo, 2003). It is a critical phase in addressing the objectives of the study and answering the research questions. It is also a blueprint for the entire research activity because it shows the overall research type, how to collect data, and how to interpret the data in relation to the research objectives. The research design, study area, sample selection or strategy, data collection methods, data analysis, and procedure are all included in this section.

3.1. Research Design

An exploratory research design is appropriate for this research, to delve deeper into the current geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers in the HOA region, gain new insights, and assess phenomena that have not been adequately addressed by prior studies (Creswell, 2014). To effectively address the study's intended objective, the researcher used a qualitative research approach. This is due to the topic's suitability for qualitative data; the topic is not appropriate for using quantitative or numeric data, but qualitative data is very useful for bringing detailed new knowledge in the area and making detailed explanations or insights. "The qualitative method is a common research approach that allows us to generate data that cannot be easily shaped by statistical procedures or any other means of quantification, but the data are usually described in the form of words," Creswell writes (2014). Khotari (2004) agreed that using qualitative methods when investigating complex and dynamic political phenomena is critical. The qualitative data were collected cross-sectionally from the intended informants.

3.2. Sources of Data

In the study of the research, to gather appropriate data and achieve the intended objectives, both primary and secondary sources of data are used.

3.2.1. Primary Source of Data

The researcher planned to gather primary data from research participants via semi-structured key informant in-depth interviews. A key informant interview, according to Descombe (2007), is an appropriate instrument to collect qualitative data and to get detailed insight into people's opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences. Academic conference speeches and

exclusive expert interviews were also used as primary source data in the study of this research.

3.2.2. Secondary Source of Data

Secondary data is very important, and many short articles and opinions have been produced in the field; it has been used as an equal and complementary source for primary data. The secondary sources of data are published journal articles, published and unpublished theses and dissertations, governmental and non-governmental organization reports, and international and regional organization insights from EU, USIP, UNSC, AU, IGAD, media reports, magazines, and other internet sources.

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

In the research process, primary and secondary qualitative data have been collected through in-depth- key informant interviews and document analysis respectively.

3.3.1. Key Informant Interview

The researcher used semi-structured key informant interviews in the study to present interview guiding questions during the data collection process. Purposive or judgmental sampling was used to select study participants based on their position, knowledge of the issues, occupations, and experience in the research area, as well as the research objective. Additional and detailed data and information are required, which can only be obtained from knowledgeable experts and concerned bodies. Langkos (2014) also stated that qualitative informants can be chosen based on their knowledge, relationship, and involvement with the issue under investigation. The researcher chose 10 key informants for this study from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2), IGAD Addis Ababa office area experts (1), Addis Ababa University PSIR department (2), and 1 informant from the geography department, Ethiopian Civil Service University (1), geopolitical analysts from Frederic Herbert Institute (1), Addis Ababa University Ph.D. candidate (1) and Journalists specialized in the area (1).

3.3.2. Document Review

The researcher reviewed and analyzed various document sources for this study in order to obtain complete meanings and understandings of the study. This document was used to triangulate the primary data as well as to strengthen and rigorously test the findings. As a result, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of government and private documents throughout the research process. In this regard, information obtained from both published and unpublished sources, such as books, public documents, agreements, newspapers, journals, articles, and books, is considered. As an additional data source, audiovisual materials such as

television interview scripts, YouTube interviews, conference papers, and organizational publications of the UNSC, AU, and IGAD were used, and a detailed analysis was carried out. All of these helped to triangulate the primary data gathered from informants and other sources.

3.4. Data Analysis Technique

The primary goal of the study is to investigate the new geopolitical dynamics, risks, and opportunities of external powers in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia. The researcher gathered detailed primary and secondary data, organized it, and then analyzed and inferred to reach a conclusion. The primary interview data gathered from the informant is triangulated with the data gathered from the other informants. Secondary data is collected as well and cross-checked or triangulated with primary data. The entire primary and secondary data set was transcribed, themes were organized into similar topics, and thematically organized data was codified based on the research questions, major themes, and similarities. The researcher ensures the validity and trustworthiness of the data by triangulating (cross-checking, comparing, and contrasting) data obtained from multiple sources. The researcher analyzed the paper using historical empirical data and three theories as a framework for the study, namely classical geopolitical theory, realism or neorealism theory, and RSCT. The entire data set was then analyzed and interpreted using the thematic analysis technique. The study's findings are presented to the audience in narrative form.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

According to Creswell (2014), one of the most important aspects of establishing the trustworthiness and credibility of a study is research ethics. The ethical principles and considerations of social science research govern this study completely. During the data collection period, every effort is made to protect each respondent, fostering trust among research participants. Before beginning the interview, permission from individuals and informed consent from respondents are obtained. To protect the participants' anonymity, no informants' names are mentioned in the research report unless the position and willingness of the respondent are required. All information sources are acknowledged and used with care, with no distortion or unwarranted manipulation. Only the term informant and words like most, some, and informants were used by the researcher. The researcher respected the informants' points of view and appreciated their willingness to participate in the study. Furthermore, the researcher adheres to the ethics of pure academic work that is free of research bias or misconduct. All data gathered from primary and secondary sources is properly cited and free of plagiarism.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ETHIOPIA

4. INTRODUCTION

This chapter remains to use primary and secondary data to answer all research questions or specific objectives. During the research process, extensive, sufficient, and necessary data was gathered from relevant data sources. The researcher had reached the data saturation point, or limit, where no new data was emerging from other informants, indicating that sufficient research data had been gathered from the intended key informants. The analysis was presented by combining the study's history, concepts, empirical data, and three relevant theories. The first section of this chapter responds to the two objectives, namely, the rationale for the arrival of external powers in the Horn of Africa region and the dynamics of the new geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa region. The second part of this chapter focused on Ethiopia in the HOA region's geopolitical rivalry to explore the risks or challenges that Ethiopia faces as a result of the tough geopolitical rivalry of foreign players in the Horn of Africa, as well as the opportunities of geopolitical contestation among great powers in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia.

4.1. The Geo-Political Rivalry of Foreign Powers in the Horn of Africa

The HOA and Red Sea region is the most visible part of Africa; geographically, it is located in the northeastern part of Africa, facing the Red Sea in the east, the Indian Ocean in the southeast, and the Nile Basin in the west (Broek, 2011). It serves as a melting pot and intercepting point for three major continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe. The region has greater geostrategic importance than any other region in the world because it connects Europe via the Mediterranean Sea to Asia via the Indian Ocean. It is a place where the most strategically important narrow chokepoints of Bab- al- Mandeb have been located; even more so than the Balkan region for global trade passage. The region serves as a gateway to the African continent for the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These facts make the HOA and the Red Sea region a very high geopolitical value and hot spot area, attracting foreign powers to participate in the region.

The internal nature of the Horn of Africa region is one of the most sensitive, magnetic, volatile, dynamic, fragile, and turbulent in Africa, as well as the most militarized, and it serves as a center of contestation for realist powers around the world seeking to maximize their national interests (KI, 2&3). Conflict, insecurity, ethnic violence, terrorism, interstate and intrastate war, poverty, environmental problems, and other issues plague the region's

countries. There have been and continue to be distracting intrastate and interstate wars in the⁵Horn of Africa, altering the map and affecting the region's economic, peace, and security situation. The security situation in this sub-region is highly complex due to a number of socioeconomic, political, and geopolitical factors ranging from extreme poverty to maritime insecurity. For some time, the HOA has served as a safe haven for weak and even failed states. In the HOA, we have a failed state like Somalia, as well as two major states in political transition, Ethiopia and Sudan, which has created very unpredictable and unreliable regional geopolitical dynamics (KI 1⁶).

The exact nature of the HOA region is debatable and difficult to define, and it is divided into two teachings: "the core horn states" and "the general horn states." Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and Eritrea are known collectively as the Core Horn of Africa states. The general horn states included the core horn states, as well as Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The researcher used the classification of general horn countries, excluding Uganda, for the purpose of studying this paper due to the nature or interconnectedness of those member states in political, security, and development trajectories. Besides the HOA region, the scope of the study includes Ethiopia, an anchor state in the region that shares borders with all of the horn of African countries except Uganda. It is critical to address the intended research objectives by involving all IGAD member states. It is also difficult to conduct a separate analysis of the four core horn states because all states in the region are naturally, historically, economically, and sociologically interconnected (KI 4, 7, and 9).

The current state of affairs in the region is not hidden from everybody; the political cultures of such countries as Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti, and Ethiopia have manifested with a one-man rule or autocratic leadership. Election-related issues are the regional states' other unresolved issues. Pre-, during-, and post-election violence claimed the lives of thousands of civilians,

⁶ KI 1 (Key Informant 1, interview date July 1/2022) from Fredric Herbert Institute
- KI 2 (Key informant 2, interview date July 27/2022) from Addis Ababa University PSIR
- KI 3 (Key informant 3, interview date July 27/2022) from Addis Ababa University PSIR
- KI 4 (Key informant 4, interview date July 11/2022) from Ethiopian Civil Service University PSIR
- KI 5 (Key informant 5, interview date August 9, 2022) from Ministry of Foreign Affairs IGAD affairs
Former Ethiopian Ambassador in Somalia
- KI 6 (Key informant 6, interview date August 9/2022) from Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General
of IGAD and neighboring Countries
- KI 7 (Key informant 7, interview date June 29/2022) from Addis Ababa University Geography Dep.
- KI 8 (Key informant 8, interview date July 5/2022) Journalist and Expert in Nile Politics
- KI 9 (Key informant 9, interview date July 15/2022) from IGAD Addis Ababa Office Area Expert
- KI 10 (Key informant 10, interview date August 10/2022) PhD. Candidate from AAU

trapping the countries in a vicious cycle of poverty. Ethiopia and Sudan, two prominent countries in the HOA, are undergoing a political transformation of sorts, though the process will take years to complete.

They are still in a very transitional mood with no end in sight. Djibouti is no longer an independent sovereign state because it is now a battleground for hegemony and the manufacturing of military bases and commercial seaports by major global powers and some regional emerging powers. Kenya is currently one of the most economically and politically stable countries in the region (KI 5). However, Kenyans continue to face electoral challenges, and the current Kenyan election demonstrates some democratic pros and cons. South Sudan, a newly-born state full of hope, is on the verge of disintegration due to internal conflict and ethnic clashes that have resulted in massive internal displacement.

Aside from their horrific internal problems, the region serves as a place or battleground for geopolitical actors seeking to advance their national interests. The HOA's internal geopolitical situations are extremely sensitive, conflictual, and disharmonized and they are unable to withstand external powers' pressure and interventions. Foreign powers have arrived in this region since the beginning of human civilization. According to KI 3 from AAU, geopolitical rivalry and great power contention is not new phenomenon in the HOA region; it has existed, is existing, and will continue to exist. "For example, in ancient times, the Romans, Greeks, and Persians had a great power rivalry; in the middle period, the Portuguese, Ottoman Turks, Chinese, and, after WWII, the United States and the Soviet Union had a great power rivalry."

During the colonial period, Europeans, particularly Britain and France, were very active in the area, seeking to control vast territories. According to one key informant (KI5), "the current HOA geographic and political formation is the result of colonialism and its legacies." Colonialism divided one ethnic group into several states, such as Somalia, which was divided into Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya. *Tigre* people are split between Ethiopia and Eritrea, *Afar* people also live in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

The cold war was a period of ideological confrontation between the capitalist block led by the United States and the Communist block led by the Soviet Union. The ideological conflict in the HOA region was severe, resulting in proxy war and intrastate civil war under the direct sponsorship of those geopolitical actors. There was a such serious geopolitical rivalry that the U.S. pursued a containment policy against communist expansion in the region. For less than two decades, the end of the Cold War reduced geopolitical tensions. The emergence of a

multipolar global order after the year 2000 ushered in a new era of multidimensional geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region.

All key informants (KI1, 2, 3, 4, and 10) agreed that the HOA region is a place of contention, with antagonistic external powers engaging in new cold war rivalry. It is undeniable that the post-2000 era is a period of global disorder and rivalry, with new and complex geopolitical contestation of extra-regional powers in the region. The geopolitical value of the region and the parties involved in it has increased over time, making it a geopolitical hotspot area and battleground. All of my study participants and secondary sources agreed that great powers and emerging powers engage in fierce geopolitical rivalry in the HOA and Red Sea region.

A multi-polar global disorder has exacerbated rivalry, which has a negative impact on the region's peace, security, and development trajectories. As a result, in order to achieve the specific goal of this paper, it is critical to assess the driving factor or rationale for the geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers in the HOA (Varisco, 2013). Understanding the factors that contribute to geopolitical rivalry or the arrival of external powers in the HOA allows regional countries, particularly Ethiopia, the focus of this study, to take adaptable measures to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. So, there is continuing history from the previous rivalry to a new and multipolar rivalry of states. The theory is practically applied to why the foreign powers are here in the region.

4.1.1. The Rationale for the Geopolitical Rivalry of Foreign Powers' in the HOA

Today, the thorny horn is hosting a fierce geopolitical rivalry between external powers on a scale never seen before. Therefore, it is more of geo-security complex space, where neorealist assumption defines the Horn as it was in the cold war even before the cold war period. It is the pivotal space, the hinterland of the red sea that theory, history, and concept together have been used. The number of participants and the area of competition grew as well. The actors believed that controlling the Horn of Africa region and the Red Sea lines is a matter of life and death for economic, strategic, military, and political advantage. The aggressive involvement of emerging state's middle brokers, (KI 5), primarily Middle Eastern powers, has exponentially exacerbated regional geopolitical rivalry. They have played a very influential role not less than the USA and China have done. They have the same historical, religious, and sociological makeup as the HOA countries (KI 5,) which enabled them to play an active role in the region.

Large numbers of external players are currently active in the Horn of Africa for their interests. The presence of those external powers worsened the peace, security, and development of the region even if the external actors vowed to bring peace, stability, and

development (KI 2&3). Clare Daly (Oct 6, 2022) member of the European Parliament speech assured that the presence of external powers is a disadvantage for the regional countries and she said that “GOD Saves Africa from Europeans”. For most geopolitical theorists and realists, the HOA region, the Bab al Mandeb, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Mediterranean Sea are among the most important water bodies and landmasses that attract great powers at various times. If you control those geographical areas, you will be able to control global trade, business, strategy, and security.

Based on the foregoing facts, the HOA region has been the first and foremost strategic area to attract global powers (KI 1, 3, and 8 and secondary source USIP, 2020). The realism and neorealism theory discussed in the literature section has been applied here. The concept of strong arms is applicable here because superpower rivalry sought to control the most economically and strategically important area for the benefit of their people at the expense of others. The foreign players who participated in the area arrived at different times, but they all shared the same driving factors and specific or individual factors that (KI 1, KI7, and KI8,) agreed on. Some groups come for economic reasons, while others come for geostrategic reasons, but the region's geostrategic importance is critical for all actors. In the following paragraph, a HOA geopolitical expert (KI 1) classified the individual interests of geopolitical actors in the region.

The East, particularly the Chinese, did not place a high value on issues of peace, security, democracy, and human rights. They wish to advance their immediate interests through economic means, as well as engagements and infrastructures. On the other hand, the west is keen to; protect its interests through human rights, democracy, and liberalism. This is how they promote their interest in the region. Middle Eastern countries are primarily transactional in nature, and various approaches have been used. They came to the HOA primarily for hegemonic rivalry, food security, and religious interest. (KI 1 and 4)

This implies that the disparity in individual countries' interests toward the HOA makes regional countries more vulnerable to geopolitical contention and a proxy role. External powers established individual ties with regional countries in order to achieve their respective interests, priority areas and based on the government's ideology. For example, during the EPRDF regime, when the Ethiopian government is interested in economic development, it approaches China and other Far Eastern countries under the flag of a developmental state. In terms of human rights and democracy, Ethiopia leans toward the West. Governments, political entities, and leaders have largely determined interstate relations.

The HOA region suffers as a result of the Middle East's hegemonic rivalry, internal problems, and religious differences. According to KI 2, 3, and KI 9), the Middle Eastern states attempted to play a leading role in spreading their religion and aspired to be the leader of the

Islamic World. Other than economic reasons, Turkey Saudi Arabia and the UAE are aggressively approaching the HOA. We must never forget that the religious issue, particularly the arrival of Middle Eastern countries in the region, is unrelated. The current Saudi and Iran rivalry has been precipitated by religious factors or an ideology of political Islam. The Ayatollah's country Iran patronage of Shia Islamism and Saudi wanted to propagate Sunni (Wahabism) Islamic sect. The Middle East rivalry is very dangerous for the HOA region and eminence problems have been exported from outside (Rab, et.al. 2022).

Regardless of the individual concerns or driving factors mentioned above, there are common and acceptable driving factors for the arrival of foreign powers in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. It is critical to investigate the underlying factors or rationale for the geopolitical rivalry of external actors in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. According to the KI's response and the literature, the researcher classified the factors into four categories that can be attributed to the increasing involvement of extra-regional powers in the HOA and the Red Sea region.

4.1.1.1. Geostrategic Importance of the Region

The HOA and the Red Sea region serve as a bridge between the Far East and the Indian Ocean, as well as the Mediterranean Sea and Europe. "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean, the Bab-al-Mandeb, and the Red Sea region can control global politics" (KI1). Lanfranchi (2021) agreed that the Horn of Africa is in a critical geostrategic position, even more so than other global geopolitical hotspots. The region's waters have provided a quick link between the Euro-Mediterranean region, the Middle East, eastern Africa, and the Indian Ocean since the Suez Canal opened in 1869. No one can relinquish or abandon this geostrategic region, which is why great powers and emerging powers try to posture themselves for hegemonic control by establishing military bases and commercial sea ports. This is not a new phenomenon; it has occurred in the past and will continue in the future. Recently, during the cold war period, the two global superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union engaged in strenuous geopolitical and ideological competition in the HOA for hegemonic control over this strategically important area.

The classical geopolitical thought and practice have been resurrected in the Horn of Africa region, where external actors believed that the water bodies of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean attracted great powers, as Rimland theory applied previously. They also have a strong desire to establish a presence in the HOA region's hinterland or heartland in order to exploit natural resources, particularly in Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan, as proposed by the Heartland theory (Yonas, Interview with Ubuntu TV Sep. 22. 2021). As a result, the Chinese

massive project known as the Belt and Road Initiative has characteristics similar to traditional geopolitical practice. The project uses Djibouti and Kenya Ports as Rimland Posts or ports and Ethiopia and Sudan are used as Heartland to connect with the water bodies. The geostrategic importance of the region invited dozens of extra-regional actors to have a presence in this area to maximize their national interest (KI3).

Another critical factor that makes the HOA and the Red Sea region strategic is their proximity to the oil-rich countries of the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. The above reality was supported by (KI9), which stated that oils from the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula were transported to Europe and America via the strategic areas of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. That is why the Europeans and Americans attempted to maintain their historical hegemonic role in the safe transportation of energy supplies. Because the industrialized western world cannot function without the supply of Arabian or Gulf oil. Gashaw and Zelalem (2016) supported the above idea that the HOA region is only 22 miles from the Arabian Peninsula, making the area the shortest way. The current Russian-Ukraine war and the subsequent multimillion-dollar sanctions, as well as Russia's restrictions on supplying oil to Europe, forced them to look for other options, increasing the significance of this geostrategic route.

According to Dazi-Héni and Gouriellec (2021, p. 3), this supported key informants' responses that the HOA and Red Sea region is a very important geostrategic location. Because of four regional developments, the Horn of Africa is a strategic crossroads of contemporary international new political dynamics. The region witnessed the start of the US-led "Global War on Terrorism" in 2001, the global "fight against maritime piracy," the passage of "China's New Silk Roads Initiative," and the "War in Yemen." These global political dynamics used the HOA and Red Sea region as a juncture and focal point, increasing the region's geostrategic importance.

From the historical period to the present, a participant in the HOA region has served as an entrance door to the hinterland African continent. During the colonial period, Europeans used the HOA region as a battleground to expand into Africa's heartland. This implies that the current adversary is the neocolonial approach, which seeks to establish a presence in the region. Another critical point for the region's geostrategic importance is the presence of the narrowest chokepoint, Bab El-Mandeb, which is about 17 kilometers from Djibouti. The presence of the world's longest river, the Blue Nile (which contributes 85% of the Nile River's flow), in this region of Ethiopia has enticed Middle Eastern actors to secure their water scarcity and irrigation activities. It is obvious that Egypt, the Arabian world's leader, is

completely reliant on Nile Water, forcing it to seek alternative water supplies. Furthermore, the region is a hub for international criminal activities such as maritime piracy, arms and human trafficking, and a transit point for people and goods, making it a critical geostrategic location (KI7).

The geostrategic importance of the Horn of Africa region is fully supported Telci (2018: 4);

The three basic reasons that make the HOA region strategically important are; first, the region has been located in the coastlines of the Gulf of Aden, Bab el-Mandeb, and the Red Sea, a route that is one of the most important passages for world naval trade. Second, the region is also considered the most important entry point to the African market by the leading countries of Asia and the Middle East. Third, the substantial population of the region which consists of over 200 million people contributes to a potential power base in securing their interests in global politics.

This implies that geostrategic importance is the driving force behind the increasing involvement of foreign powers. Controlling or having a presence in this geostrategic region entails partaking in the above-mentioned benefits as explained by key informants and secondary sources. The area is extremely sensitive for international criminal organizations and terrorist organizations to disrupt the navigation route and use it as a hostage location. The region is vulnerable to blockage due to man-made and natural factors that destabilize the global trading system, not just the regional countries. In economic terms the region is an entry point to the largest African market to the massive central African market, have increased the region's strategic relevance.

The Arab-Israel war is another critical factor that makes the region geo-strategically significant. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Arab-Israeli war altered not only regional but also global geopolitical situations. The war increased the HOA and Red Sea region's geo-military and geostrategic importance. A KI 9 confirmed the above analysis, stating that Israel desired to project its power in the Red Sea and Mediterranean Seas in order to deter Arab expansion into the region. To do so, Israel had an option to strengthen its relationship with non-Arab countries such as Ethiopia, despite Ethiopia's apprehension about a conflict with Arab countries. As a result, the Arab-Israel dispute increased the region's importance and drew in new players.

To summarize, the geostrategic importance of the HOA and the Red Sea region is the single most important factor driving foreign powers' rivalry. In order to maximize their national interests, these powers must maintain a presence in geostrategic locations. Controlling or having a presence in this region means controlling the world, particularly the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula, as well as ensuring the safe transportation of maritime trades and attempting to project hard and soft power.

4.1.1.2. Geo-Economic Importance of the Region

Another important factor driving the fierce rivalry between great powers and emerging powers in the HOA and the Red Sea region is the region's geo-economic relevance. The economy, politics, and military are not two sides of the same coin, but rather one side of the same coin, and it is difficult to determine who comes first. The HOA region is a critical transit route for international trade in goods, services, and oil from the Arabian Peninsula to various destinations. The economic importance of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has been increased after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and becomes a vital artery for international maritime trade overnight. Strategic commodities such as coal, oil, and other manufactured goods are transported to Europe, Africa, America, or Asia through this geo-economic region, making it a critical maritime space for merchant ships (KI3). The region's economic importance is well known; it has been used for centuries by various geopolitical players attempting to dominate the region. As a result, economic interest is a defining factor in the HOA's geopolitical rivalry.

According to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) report, the region plays an unrepeatable role in global economic transformations. Without this region, global trade is unthinkable, and the world economy could be frozen for an extended period of time. The following appraisals solidified the geo-economic importance of the region the same as what the key informants from AAU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

“The Horn of Africa and Red Sea region plays a very crucial role in global economic situations. First, the region is a passage line for approximately \$700 billion worth of goods each year. The second factor that makes the Horn of Africa strategically important is its proximity to the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf and the vital commercial lanes that transit the Bab al-Mandeb which is a crucial global maritime chokepoint and port. It is argued that more than 40 percent of the world’s oil vessels are sailed through the Bab el Mandeb major global maritime checkpoint” (USIP, 2020, p. 11).

The data presented above demonstrated how important the region is for international trade and maritime transportation services. Foreign powers have created an "athletic race" to control the economically sensitive area, which is the main target of those actors for the safety of international transportation of goods and services, resulting in a geopolitical war between rival powers. This strategic region sees a significant flow of goods, trade, and ideas. The rivalry has military and security manifestations, but it is ultimately an economic struggle to outperform their adversaries in this strategic zone.

The US Energy Information Administration provides statistical data on how much the region is a very critical geo-economic area for the global transportation of energy by comparing it with other geo-economic chokepoints of the world in the following map.

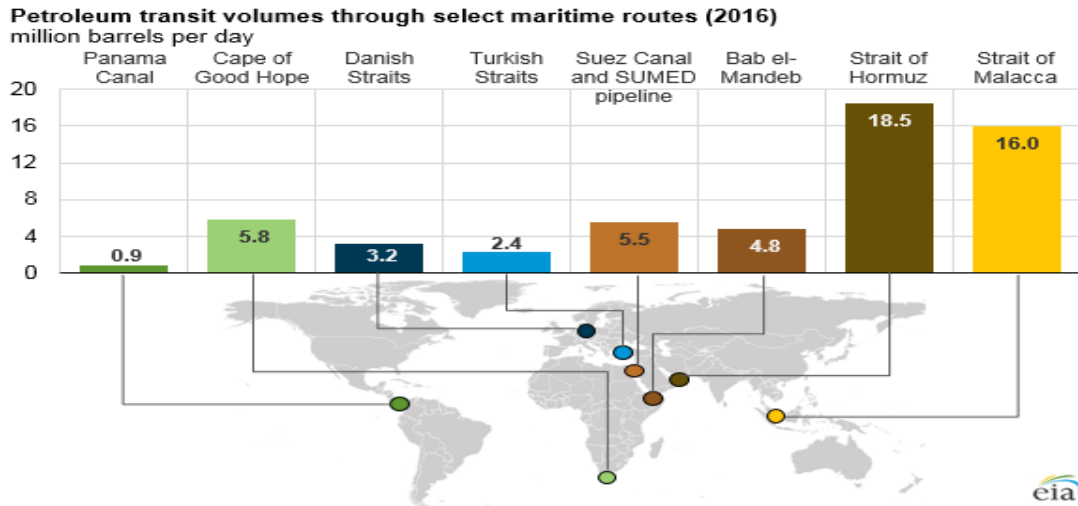


Figure 4.1. Petroleum transit volume through the selected maritime routes. Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2020) <https://www.brinknews.com/>

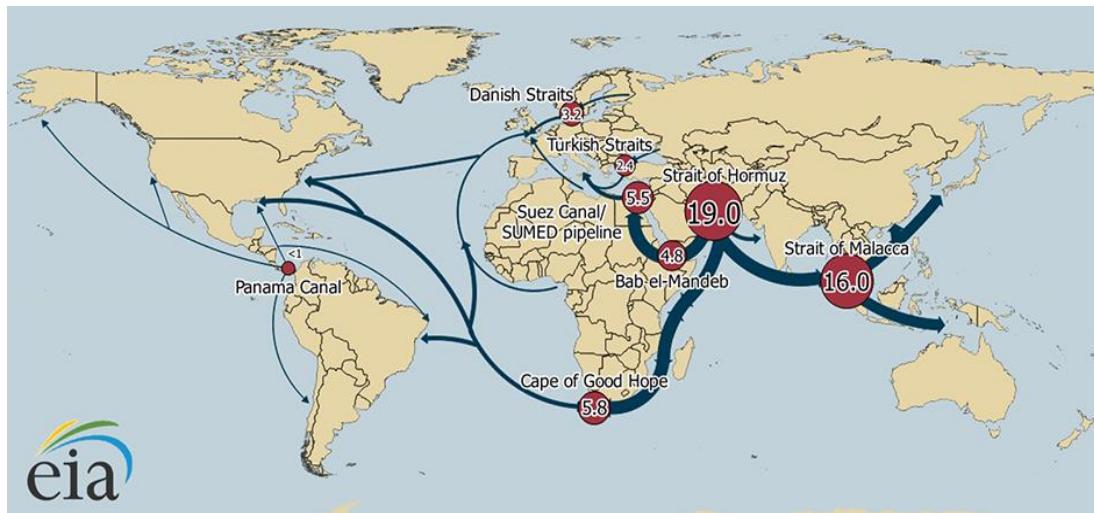


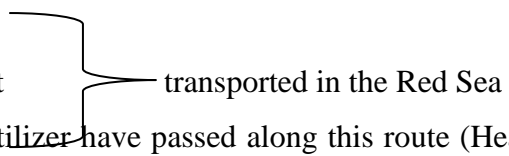
Figure 3.2. The trade volume through the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Region. Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2020) <https://www.brinknews.com/>

The figure above shows that the Suez Canal and the Bab al-Mandeb region are two of the world's most important maritime routes, essential for global transportation. Almost 5.5 and 4.8 million barrels of oil have been transported per day through the Suez Canal strip and the Bab al-Mandeb straight, respectively. As a result, the two strategic locations in the Red Sea and HOA region served as a transportation line for a total of 10.3 million barrels of oil per day. Consider how important the region is geo-economically, even if only for global energy supply. It is not debatable why external powers ought to have a presence in this highly sensitive region. This route has carried 23% of all global oil transportation. The 23-29 March 2021) six-day blockade of the Suez Canal by the giant container ship Evergreen demonstrates the strategic importance and risk of the Red Sea region and adjacent areas for global trade. The incident resulted in the blockade of more than 100 large vessels on each side, as well as

the disruption of an estimated \$9.6 billion in daily trade flow. It is the world's lifeline, and if it is shut down for a day, it is a huge blow to global trade.

Currently, 10 to 20% of global trade is said to pass through the Horn's shores in terms of goods and services. As a result, the region has emerged as a critical geo-economic and geostrategic hub for countries around the world in the fast-paced process of international trade and global security. The Bab-el-Mandab Strait ("Gate of Tears" in Arabic) in Djibouti is one of the world's narrowest chokepoints and an economic hub, with a width of 18 miles and 10% of total world trade passing through it. The strait was used by nearly 19,000 ships per year in 2020 (USIP, 2020).

The Red Sea's global significance stems primarily from its importance as a vital trade route. Red Sea GDP is expected to more than triple by 2050, from \$1.8 trillion to \$6.1 trillion, and trade to more than fivefold, from \$881 billion to \$4.7 trillion. Trade agreements will help to fuel this massive wealth by encouraging countries with significant Red Sea interests to increase exports, especially in key sectors like energy, infrastructure, and technology. The region is also strategic in which 2/3 of China-Europe trade has been passed. The Red Sea region is more important than the Persian Gulf for the transportation of international goods and services by supporting the fact in the following way.

- 20% of the world's maritime trade and rice
 - 20% of the world maritime trade and wheat
 - 30% of the world's maritime trade and fertilizer
- have passed along this route (Heath, 2021).
- 

Furthermore, the construction of new ports and military bases to protect trade and investment interests will result in increased trade levels across the Red Sea. The geographical location of the Red Sea, close to numerous major energy producers, explains the region's current wealth and forecasts future economic growth. The rivalry of regional or neo-regional actors who controls the area will be a serious power struggle that affected the peace and stability of the region as Dewaal, (2018) agreed in the above analysis.

Former US President Donald Trump, "the entire HOA and Red Sea region is a key shipping center for goods to the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and America via the Strait of Hormuz." The region's potential for international trade and security has never been underestimated." To summarize, all of my research participants and secondary sources written in this region agreed that the HOA and Red Sea region serves as a pharynx for global economic transportation and energy supply to Europe, Africa, and America. It is difficult to overestimate the region's geostrategic importance (VOA News 2019).

The geopolitical actors are acutely aware of how this region can benefit their day-to-day economic processes. To protect their interests, great and emerging powers are constantly competing to establish a foothold in the region. All the participant countries identified the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea as geostrategic competition hotspots and are actively pursuing interests in the region. The geopolitical actors are very conscious that how this region could be beneficial for their day-to-day economic process. To secure their interest great and emerging powers are always rivalry to plant their foot in the area. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, Turkey, Russia, Europe, and the US have all identified the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea as a hub of geostrategic competition and are actively pursuing interests in the region.

4.1.1.3. Resource Competition and Containment Factors

After the 2000s, the unipolar world order was replaced by multipolar actors such as China and Russia, who became global competitors to the US. China, Türkiye, and the Gulf Courtiers are among the newly emerging actors in the HOA region. According to a study participant from the Ethiopian Civil Service University department of IR (KI4), "in the middle periods i.e., the end of the cold war to 2000s, western countries ignored the African continent in general and HOA in particular in bilateral economic relations." Their relation was confined to humanitarian affairs, democracy, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, gender equality, sustainable development, climate action, and regional cooperation were among them." However, the West has recently become too extremely worried about their downfalls to reengage in the region in economic ties, mutual benefits, and diplomatic relations. The region's untouched abundance of resources also attracts them.

The traditional actors or the West, (Mehari, 2019) explained, try to project themselves in order to maintain the previous statuesque through a "Neo-Colonialism⁷" instrument such as a boss-servitude approach. "Neo-colonial" policy has been maintained through knowledge production, pro-western policy, and technological advancement. When the West looks deeply into the region, adversarial countries such as China and Russia establish strong economic, diplomatic, and political ties, which exacerbated the rivalry. The region had become an economic battleground, putting regional countries in a diplomatic and ideological quandary. The contenders attempted to outmaneuver their rivals in order to exploit the region's resources unilaterally, resulting in power rivalry and unfair competition (KI 2&3).

⁷ Neo-colonialism is the economic and political policy by which previous colonial masters tried to indirectly maintain or extend their previous influence over the colonized states through new form of relation. (Merriam Webster)

The region's growing population, the untapped raw materials (source of industrial inputs), a marketplace for manufactured goods, and a source of cheap labor forces made the region the center of gravity. The region also has many major ports stretching from Egypt to the coasts of Somalia and Kenya, attracting new players such as China, the UAE, Turkey, and Qatar. All of these extra-regional powers wanted a commercial port as well as a destination for import-export products. The emerging Gulf countries' primary goal in diversifying their oil-dependent economies is the blue economy. The region is undeniably suitable and a potential area for a blue economy. That is why the UAE has invested aggressively in port developments in Djibouti, Somaliland, and Eritrea (KI 7).

According to (KI2,3 &4), and a literature written by Mesfin (2019, pp. 3-4), the region is a maritime-agrarian economic zone endowed with abundant natural resources such as crude oil and other raw materials such as potash, lithium, and diamonds, which are primarily exploited by Chinese mining companies. Furthermore, the region is rich in uranium, gold, and Rare Earth Elements (REE), which are essential components of batteries for electric vehicles, cell phones, high-tech weapons, and wind turbines. Geographically the region has a tropical savannah climate, arid and semi-arid regions, highland areas, and a large maritime surface. According to an African Development Bank Group report from 2018, the region has significant opportunities in food production, fishing, clothing industries, extractive industries, tourism, and the infrastructure required to facilitate and grease the economic system.

Demographically, the region is favorable for investment and has a large market potential for manufactured goods. Countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, and Kenya serve as a market for industrialized nations. The Horn region has a large market potential due to its more than 300 million population and large geographical area, according to Dahir (2019, p. 6). The foreign powers engaged in fierce rivalry in order to prevent other enemy groups from dominating this resource-rich region (KI5) a literature by Rondos, (2016) the same as the above analysis. Hermela TV is available on YouTube Eugene (July 29/2022) agreed that the region is a battleground due to resource competition. The region is a source for Trans Boundary Rivers such as the Blue Nile, Sobat, Shabelle, and Juba Rivers, which serve as a pillar for drinking water, irrigation, and electricity. The hydropower potential in Ethiopia, like GERD, is the main centripetal force that determines the global power lineup in the past, present, and future. This rivalry is directly linked to Egypt, and the situation has spread to Arab politics, with the goal of making the Nile water the agenda of Arabization.

This implies that due to demographic, geographic, and resource importance, Ethiopia is the HOA geopolitical rivalry epicenter, according to the data presented above. This underscores

the significance of this research in developing a scientific analysis for policy formulation and diplomatic, economic, and security lineups. Any regional or global power cannot control the hinterland or the rimeland separately. Controlling only Eritrea or Djibouti, for example, will not be successful; they will not be able to achieve their goal unless they control Ethiopia. External powers attempted to exert control over Ethiopia's hinterland, accompanied by rimeland countries such as Eritrea and Djibouti (KI, 2).

Another interesting point to bring up here is that the HOA geopolitical rivalry has been linked to the current Russian-Ukraine conflict. Two study participants (KI1 and KI3) point out that the current Russian-Ukraine war has intensified and can be viewed as one of the driving factors for the geopolitical rivalry of powerful states in the HOA region. Horton (April 2022) added to this premise by stating that the Russian-Ukraine war could exacerbate the global economic crisis, forcing developed countries to seek alternative sources of energy and raw materials. The HOA and the Red Sea region are important energy supply centers for international markets such as Sudan and South Sudan. As a result, many European countries and the United States have begun to reach agreements with many African countries for energy supplies to replace Russia's fuel blockade.

The **Containment⁸ Factor** is another critical factor in the geopolitical contestation of extra-regional powers in the HOA, particularly between the United States and China in order to contain one another. George F. Kennan, a US Foreign Service Officer, developed the containment policy to deter Soviet Union expansion. The current US containment policy has shifted to China and, to a lesser extent, Russia and Iran, who are implementing long-term, persistent, firm, and vigilant containments in the HOA in particular and Africa in general (KI 1,2,3, &7). Every state does not want to be left out of this geostrategic and geo-economic region, and each state is attempting to push out other rival actors in the region in order to establish itself as the region's and the world's hegemon power. For example, the US attempted to position itself as a dominant player in the region and to contain China. China has a genuine economic, security, and strategic interest in the region in order to secure the globally significant "Belt and Road Initiative." China resisted that the USA can't be a unipolar actor in the region like the previous.

Admiral James Stavritis of the United States speaks about China's growing influence in the region and what the United States should do to contain it. America's African strategy is

⁸ Containment; it is a policy that the US government had been applied to contain or deter the expansion of communism in the world from 1947 until the end of cold war. Today the emergence of new cold war and new great power rivalry revived between the US and China and Russia. So, it seems the revival of some version of the containment is applied between one to the other (Foreign Policy news, 2021).

inconsistent on a regular basis, putting it at a competitive disadvantage with other great powers. The United States efforts in Africa are modest and poorly coordinated across military, economic, and diplomatic domains." Perhaps more importantly, as the United States relinquishes power, these countries gain the ability to exploit the power vacuum. The two countries are unlikely to engage in a direct, conventional conflict in the region in which one party seeks to obstruct the other's influence. Professor Sean McFate (2018) explains that the West must modernize its strategy to contain the influence of China and Russia in the region to defend democracy and Human rights. The western media transmit anti-China propaganda portraying China as an enemy of human rights, an enemy of freedom, and a supporter of autocratic leaders. China, on the other hand, used a disinformation campaign to portray itself as a trustworthy economic, diplomatic, and political ally (Glaser, & Flaherty, 2020).

The figure below depicts the areas of Chinese investment and economic zones within Africa and the HOA region, which could be very worrisome for the West. The West blamed China for exploiting Africa's natural resources.

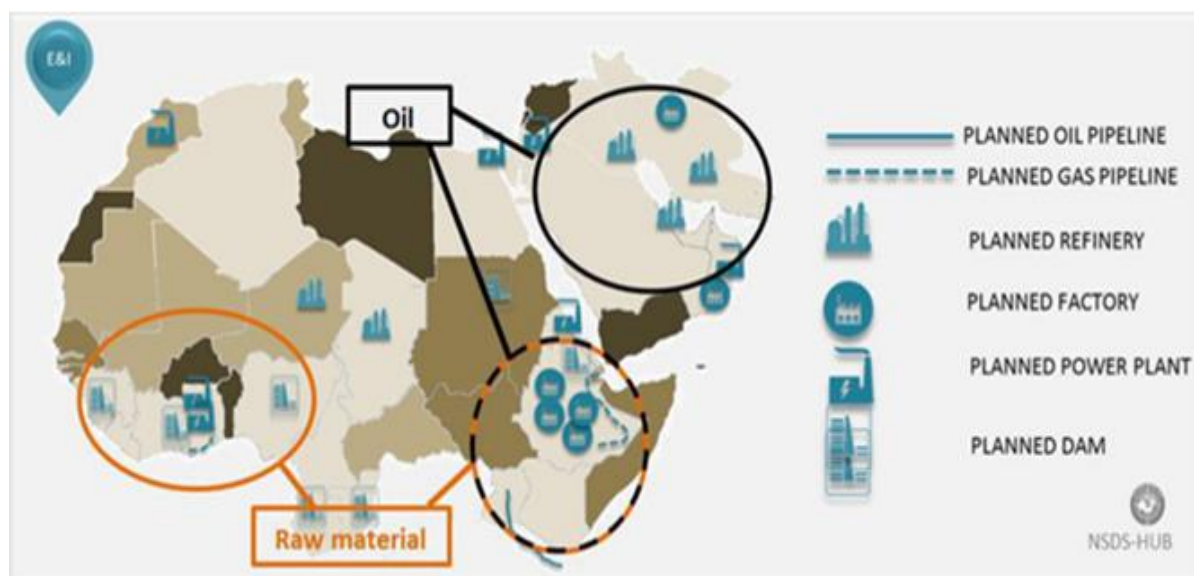


Figure 4.3. The actual, planned, and potential China's involvement in Africa. Source: NSD-S HUB Paper

The containment factor and geopolitical rivalry in the region and global politics have been shaped by realism or neorealism theory. Participants in the above study from Addis Ababa University's Department of PSIR agreed that neo-realism or realism is the ideological model for the great powers' geopolitical rivalry. There is intense global geopolitical competition, states are lonely and seek to expand their power, nationalism is resurrected, militarization is ascendant, multilateral institutions such as IGAD, AU, EU, and UN are weakened, and

populist leaders preaching loneliness arises; all of these global changes can be articulated or analyzed through the theory of realism or neorealism.

4.1.1.4. Security Factor and Internal Dynamics of the Region

The peace and security situation in the HOA and Red Sea region is a top priority for both regional countries and the international community. The region's stability is a dividend not only for the region's countries but also for the world's retained earnings. Various actors (state and non-state) have made significant efforts to bring peace, stability, and tranquility to the region. Despite these efforts, tangible and long-term results have yet to be achieved. The region's security situation deteriorated from time to time, and intrastate and interstate conflict has been daily news. The dwarfed economy is being spent on army logistics and a weapon to suppress public protests and civil wars. Human insecurity is extremely high (KI 3, 4, and 10). As previously stated, the region is the primary artery for international trade in goods, services, and energy.

The external powers' top priority for the safe transportation of those commodities is regional security and stability. Anyone who needs to export or import a product through this strategic line should be mindful of the region's stability and security. All participants in the study agreed that foreign powers required the stability and security of this strategic area. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, great powers and emerging powers paid close attention to regional security. To do so, different cooperative and individual attempts have been made by state and non-state actors such as the UN, EU, AU, IGAD, USA, China, Russia, and the GCC for the security of the strategic zone.

Previously and now, the region has security issues, such as being a safe haven for religious fundamentalist and terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda factions. Insurgency, proxy war, maritime piracy (between 2010 and 2020, over 600 attacks were carried out by sea pirates, however, it is decreasing), trans-continental and regional terrorism, migration, arms and human trafficking, civil war (South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Yemen), and state collapse (Somalia) are examples. South Sudan, a recently created state (since 2011), is interacting with ethnic conflict and internal displacement, which created a spillover effect on the entire region. Eritrea emerged as a small state that acted as a rebellious actor against Western interests and was labeled as a particularly totalitarian regime. The protracted civil war in Yemen and Syria also created a ramification effect for regional instability (Shay, 2021).

All of the aforementioned regional security issues are justifiable reasons for the advent of foreign powers, which could be concerning and have an impact on their national interests. External countries have made various attempts to bring regional security, such as military

deployment, the formation of military bases, and operations such as "Operation Atlanta" and counter-terrorism programs. Despite the efforts of dozens of external powers over the last two decades, a practical solution has not been found in the region, and the security situation has worsened. The maritime area is still unsafe, terrorism has not been defeated, and illegal trafficking is at its peak. According to the KI and secondary sources, the researcher concluded that geopolitical rivalry played a significant role in the region's instability. Instead of cooperating, they are competing; the enemy of one group is the friend of another; one party provides food aid and financial loans, while the other group solely provides military equipment.

The current internal dynamic of the region invites foreign powers to bring the dynamics to their advantage. According to USIP (2020), the US government should take advantage of the political transitions in Ethiopia and Sudan to make the transition pro-American and to deter Chinese influence in the region. An absurd effect has emerged in the region, and the region's political transition has failed. Ethiopia has been in a calamitous civil war since November 2020, and Sudan is in recurrent coups and public protests pushing the countries to the brink of disintegration and state collapse. The regional unrest paved the way for refugee exodus, a threat that worries European and Middle Eastern countries concerned about social unrest and refugee influx. The region is also plagued by recurring environmental issues, which bring poverty and youth migration. To address these issues, external powers intervened in the region, escalating the geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region.

Other immediate factors (pretexts) for tough geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the region, such as Winn & Lewis, (2017) supported that counter-terrorism in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, US terrorist attacks to combat Al-Shabaab, anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean targeted for maritime security and safe transportation of trading ships, China's aggressive involvement and the Belt and Road Initiative. The Arab Spring, which began in 2011, drew the Middle East or emerging states to the region's growing influence in the Red Sea and HOA. Yemen's civil war and subsequent regional problems served as a pretext for foreign powers to intervene in the HOA region.

To wrap up the global order has shifted to a multipolar stage following the end of the cold war and the end of two decades of US hegemony. After the 2000s, the HOA region became a point of contention for adversarial powers such as the United States, the European Union, China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the Gulf Cooperation Council in order to maximize their national interests at the expense of regional countries. Since the 2018 Ethiopian and Sudan political reforms, the geopolitical rivalry has reached its highest stage. The main driving

factors or rationale for the geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers in the Horn of Africa region, according to study participants and secondary sources, are geostrategic, geo-economic importance of the region, resource competition, containment factor, security factor, and regional dynamics of the region. The above-mentioned common factors, as well as other individual factors, are the primary causes of tense geopolitical rivalry. These extra-regional powers are at their most potent in terms of maximizing their national interests through realist or neorealist ideology.

4.1.2. The New Geopolitical Dynamics in the Thorny Horn

As alluded to in the literature, geopolitics is a very old discipline and classic term that studies how a specific space or geographic region has relative strategic significance or position to the world. It all comes down to space, and which space is crucial in the global political process. If you control strategic places, you will control the world; this kind of assumption has stayed for a long period of time in the study of geopolitics. The geopolitical actors (state and non-state) are curious about "which place is very strategic?" If any actor controls that strategic location, it will have a distinct advantage over other actors who do not control that location (KI, 2).

The theoretical formulation of classical geopolitical theorists i.e., "Heartland Theory" and "Rimland Theory" of Makinder and Spikman, respectively, have been applied in the current HOA region geopolitical rivalries, as key informants explained. The previous theoretical dispensation of geopolitics is clearly relevant to assessing the current geopolitical rivalry in the HOA. According to the informants, Ethiopia and Sudan, like Russia, are heartland states, whereas the peripheral or coastal areas of Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia are rimland states. Landmasses ranging from Egypt in the north to Somalia and Kenya in the south are important contestation zones in the HOA region, according to the heartland theory. That is why the state society competition and relations are very tough. Everybody wants to project their power in the region and tried to be here for their domination. The current geopolitical rivalry is very different in its field of competition, the actors involved in the area, and the intensity and focus of rival powers in the area.

Participants in the study (KI 1, 2, 3, and 5) explained that the current HOA state of affairs is the result of a series of historical events such as colonial legacy, cold war rivalry, and new geopolitical dynamics. After a decade of relative stagnation, geopolitical competition and rivalry among external powers have resurfaced since the year 2000. It was the end of the unipolar order and the rise of multipolar and multi-hegemonic powers that challenged the United States for the title of world superpower. According to KI 2, multipolar order is a

period of disorder with no single hegemon power that amplifies the internal problems of the HOA region. According to Mehari (2019), the Horn of Africa region is currently experiencing a tough geopolitical and geostrategic rivalry in an unprecedented manner, making the region a chessboard. This new geopolitical rivalry has been described as a "new scramble for Africa" and "great game theory," with significant implications for the region's⁹ peace, security, and development trajectories. As a result, this period was dubbed the "new cold war" era, with the emergence of numerous external powers.

The ideological dispensation of realists or neorealists (as KI 2 and 3 explained) has a firsthand model for the rivalry of extra-regional powers in the HOA and the Red Sea region. As previously stated, the beginning of the twenty-first century is a historic period that brings divergent and antagonistic multipolar global orders that affect global and regional peace and security situations. They have irreconcilable interests in the area, and they work day and night to avoid their adversary in this region. The external powers aimed to become global economic and military hegemonies, and they exported their internal problems to the region. The main finding here is that the irreconcilable or divergent interests of the external powers are the primary cause of the HOA region's instability, insecurity, and turbulence.

The HOA and Red Sea region is hosting tough geopolitical rivalry in an unprecedented manner. Almost dozens of foreign powers have participated in a geopolitical rivalry that made the region a battleground. A study participant (KI1, 2, 3, 8) and secondary sources such as Neil Melvin (2019, pp. 28-29) stated that there are three geopolitical groups or parties involved in the HOA rivalry; i.e., the Western groups¹⁰ (the traditionalist groups) includes the US, Br, EU member state (mainly France, Germany, Italy, and Spain). Japan is also part of the western block due to its animosity to the eastern group and its ideological resemblance to the western group. They are influenced by the USA and members of the group have similar interests in what they want to achieve.

The Eastern groups¹¹ or the Asian group comprised the global economic juggernaut China and a military superior Russia. The third main group involved in the HOA rivalry is the Middle East¹² or emerging powers groups. KI5 from the ministry of foreign affairs call them middle brokers due to their brokerage role or an agent between the west and the HOA. This bloc includes Turkey, Iran, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (KSA, UAE, and Qatar) having historical, sociological, and religious ties with the HOA region.

¹⁰ The western group includes (USA, British, EU members mainly France, Germany, Italy and Spain), and Japan

¹¹ The Eastern group includes (China, Russia and India)

¹²The Middle East Group Includes (Turkey, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran)

The primary defining instruments or areas of the geopolitical rivalry of those external powers in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Region differ and are determined by the interests of the competent powers. The KIs listed above, as well as prior research such as Yirga (2021), Melvin (2019), Bereketeab (2013), Esrael (2018), and other unlisted literatures, all agreed that the current geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers has been expressed or manifested in various ways. These tense geopolitical rivalries and superpower schisms have a risk and opportunity for the landlocked state of Ethiopia and exacerbated the crippled horn of the Africa region's peace, security, and development activities.

The main rivalry instruments are geo-economic rivalry, geo-military rivalry or formation of military bases (military ports, airstrips, training camps, semi-permanent facilities, logistics hubs, and naval forces for permanent or regular deployment of soldiers), strategic and security rivalry, or power projection, involvement in sovereign countries' internal affairs, proxy wars, and insurgency activities.

4.1.2.1. Geo-Economic Rivalry

In the HOA region, the main field of foreign power rivalry is geo-economic rivalry. External powers used various geo-economic tactics to become the region's leader, which brings blessings or curses to the region's country. Today's geo-economic rivalry is fierce, in terms of FDI, low-cost loans and aid, trade, and soft power projections (KI1, 2, 3, 8). The geo-economic rivalry is a blessing for the regional countries because it provides different economic grapevines for the region's development. It is also a curse because the unhealthy rivalry turns regional countries into a battlefield and places them under the arms of neo-economic colonialism, which exploits the region's natural resources. Participants in the study agreed that external power attempted to achieve their economic interests by exploiting their natural resources.

Participants in the study KI1, 4, and 8 also agreed that over the past two decades, the Western group has been less active in FDI, and mutual economic development; while the eastern or Middle Eastern groups have been more active. The West primarily focused on humanitarian aid and loans through Bretton Woods institutions such as the IMF, WB, and WTO, while also supporting democratic practice in the region and regional peace and security issues. Since the early 2000s, China has become a reliable economic partner for the HOA countries, as well as a leading investment (FDI) ally, providing finance (loan and aid), trade, technology, and entrepreneurship that have played a significant role for the HOA countries. The geo-economic rivalry has received renewed attention as a result of China's growing influence in

the HOA. The Middle East group is active in areas of FDI (production of agricultural products, textiles), aid (cash diplomacy) and loan or port establishment, and trade relations.

China is very influential and aggressive in economic relations in order to exploit the region's untapped natural resources to meet the increasing demand of its booming economy. Despite the Western old and obsolete model of non-cordial relationships, China adheres to a win-win approach and refrains from interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states. As KI 2 has explained, the current Chinese policy is shifted to common prosperity in order to win the hearts of Africans rather than the USA's traditional model of liberalism. Western aid and loan policies are bounded by strict conditionality, whereas China provides any financial benefits without conditions. These attractive Chinese policies are appealing to many HOA countries that prefer to have close ties with China rather than the West. The European Policy Brief (2018) by Ursu and Berg explained that the Beijing policy is very dangerous that sizes new areas of influence in the HOA which should be stopped. There is no other foreign power like China has a depth and breadth of economic engagement in the region.

China leads in the investment sector, particularly in infrastructure developments such as railways, highways, and power plants. According to Gabriel Negatu's (2022) analysis, the Chinese government has signed agreements with thirty-nine African countries in infrastructure, which has alarmed the US government. According to Chun (2020), Chinese FDI stock in the HOA region reached \$33.4 billion, indicating a significant imbalance with the West. China has a trade exchange advantage, and all rival groups want to have a stronger presence in emerging HOA markets. China-Africa trade increased dramatically from US\$1 billion in 1980 to US\$128 billion in 2016, surpassing the West's \$55 billion in the same year (Jones, Ndofor, & Li, 2022). The USA and China arranged special trade preferences for the African countries to import cheap raw materials. In 2000 the Clinton administration adopted the AGOA for Sub-Saharan Africa, in the same line China arranged FOCAC platform.

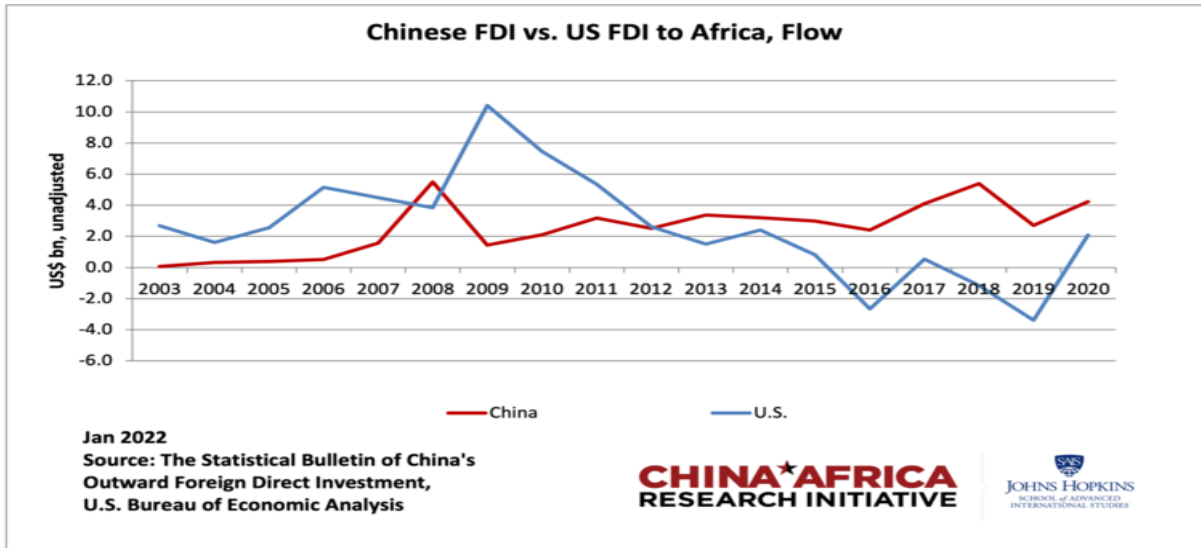


Figure 4.4. The comparison of China and USA FDI in Africa. Source: China Africa Research Initiative

The Chinese massive Belt and Road Initiative, launched by Xi Jing Ping (dubbed the "project of the century") in 2013, is a nightmare for the West, who believes that this project is more than just infrastructure. They also believed that the project is a Chinese long-term goal to dominate global geopolitics and economics. It is undeniable that the completion of the project means the end of Western dominance and the beginning of Chinese global hegemony. The project will make China a hegemonic state in the HOA, which will have a significant impact on Western interests. Through land and sea destinations, the project directly connects the HOA region KI1 and 8.



Figure 4.5. The Inland and Water Body Routes of the Chinese One-Belt-One Road Initiative Source: <http://www2.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ355/choi/obor.htm>

The West realized that the Chinese aggressive involvement (new economic scramble for Africa) should be deterred at all costs unless it is part of a plan to wipe out the West. As previously stated, the Western investment trend has decreased exponentially in comparison to

China's dominant role. The US assistant secretary of state for African Affairs Tibor Nagy said that: “For too long when investors have knocked on the door and the Africans opened the door, the only person standing there was the Chinese” (BBC, 2019). This indicates that the US is incompetent in economic rivalry against the Chinese and Middle East countries. Study participant (KI 4), the current US suspension of Ethiopia from AGOA is one means of economic rivalry that the US government had been offended by the Ethiopian government to its interest in China than the USA. The US has been applying a “carrot and stick” approach to deter Chinese increasing involvement. This wide superpower rivalry in the region posed a risk to third-world countries like Ethiopia used as a battleground.

Since the Arab Spring of 2011, the Middle East has shifted its policy focus from inward-looking crown protection to an outward-looking approach for regional influence and hegemonic competition. This group, like the eastern or western groups, is a very influential actor that has a direct and indirect impact on the geopolitical situation in the HOA region. The Middle East actors in the region are fiercely competitive. Internal conflict and competition caused by religious differences, as well as hegemonic interest within, exacerbated HOA fragmentation. To manipulate the HOA region, this bloc is divided into two antagonistic groups, with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt on one side and Turkey, Qatar, and Iran on the other.










The growing influence and impact of Middle Eastern powers on the HOA were not recognized at the time; people were focused on the battle between the two great powers, China and the United States. However, due to geographical proximity, and religious, cultural, and linguistic similarities, the Middle East's role and influence in the region are very high, even exceeding that of China and the United States. According to KI 8 and 9, the economic incentive for Middle Eastern countries to participate in the HOA is very strong.

Previously, Middle Eastern countries supplied food and agricultural products from Latin America; however, since the 2010s, they have shifted their policy to access imported materials from nearby areas such as the East African region. The GCC countries, as well as Turkey, are extremely ambitious and have invested billions of dollars in the HOA region. They aimed and implemented various strategies to diversify the oil-dependent economy to the Blue Economic Plan, such as port development and FDI, primarily from the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Turkey also attempted to be the other hegemonic state in the region by increasing its investment in HOA economic sectors. (KI 8, and 9).

Donelli and Cannon (2021) agreed that the Middle East powers are at odds with one another. Saudi-led groups such as the UAE and Egypt are hostile to Turkey, Iran, and Qatar's participation in the HOA. Using the petrodollar and cashbook diplomacy, each group attempts to deter the other. The HOA states of affairs, such as the political transition in

Ethiopia and Sudan, Eritrea's isolation, Somalia's internal problem, and election, Yemen and Syria's civil war, and the 2017 gulf crisis, as well as Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, are the main driving forces behind the growing involvement of Middle East powers in the HOA. The Gulf States invested approximately \$13 billion in 434 projects across the Horn of Africa between 2000 and 2017. Since 2003, total Gulf State aid and direct investment in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Djibouti have totaled around \$18 billion (Sudan received \$8,238 million, Ethiopia received \$5,683 million, and Djibouti received \$4,026.8 million), according to the United States Institute of Peace (2020, pp. 22-23).

Table 4.1. The Gulf Countries Investment Shares in the Horn of Africa, 2000–2019.

		National alignment of investor			
		 Saudi Arabia	 United Arab Emirates	 Qatar	 Kuwait
Recipient	 Ethiopia	233	104	12	16
	 Sudan	16	19	4	13
	 South Sudan	1	2	2	1
	 Somalia	1	5	-	-
	 Djibouti	1	3	-	1

Source: <https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2018/riyal-politik/>

According to table 4.1, study participants (KI3, 7&8) and Yousif from Asheraq Al-Awset news (April 2022), Gulf States' investment in the HOA region has increased in an unprecedented manner, particularly in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Djibouti. It shows the sharp increments in participation and the UAE and Saudi Arabia take the lead in investing in the region. The UAE and Saudi Arabia account for 88% of total Gulf investment in the region. Agriculture is the most important sector, with manufacturing coming in second. Saudi Arabia has 233 investments in Ethiopia only and followed by the UAE with 104 investments. Middle Eastern countries have invested heavily in the Horn. However, the data show that political instability in the region, particularly in Ethiopia and Sudan, reduces potential investment activities in the region. The two Gulf Countries UAE and Saudi Arabia is taking a lead in the economic flow to the HOA region as the figure below indicates.

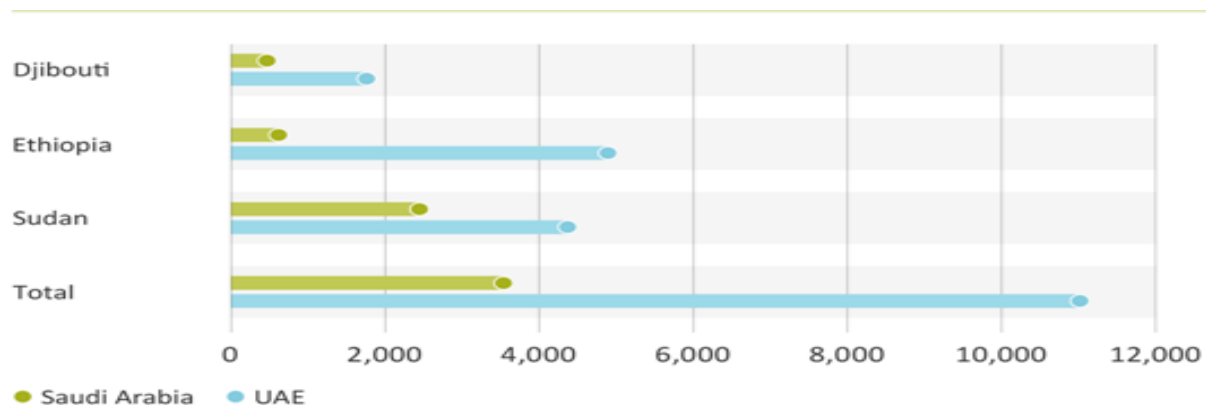


Figure 4.6. Saudi Arabia and UAE Economic flows (USD in million) from 2003–June 2020. Source: Karen Young, ‘Gulf Financial Aid and Intervention Tracker by Source Country (2003 to June 2020)’, Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, August 2020. Figure 4.6 illustrates that the UAE government is a leading investor more than any other Middle East country even more than Saudi and Turkey. The UAE has invested more in Ethiopia especially in the past decade the increment is exponential.

The following table also shows how the UAE investment activities in three HOA countries are classified by government and private investment areas. In government-led investment, Djibouti is the first next to Ethiopia and the last is Sudan. In private investment 1,574 are in Ethiopia followed by Sudan and Djibouti respectively.

Table 4.2. A snapshot of UAE economic statecraft (in USD million) from 2003–June 2020).

Name of HOA Countries	Government Related FDI	Private FDI	Aid/Intervention (ODA)	Total
Djibouti	1,694.7	47.7	19.6	1,762
Ethiopia	214.2	1,574.5	3,109.9	4,898.6
Sudan	68	725.1	3,582.1	4,375.2
Total	1,976.9	2,347.3	6,711.6	Total 11,035.8

Source; Own Survey (September 2022)

Türkiye is another powerful state that is deeply involved in the HOA region and the African continent in an unprecedented manner. Türkiye's aggressive presence worries rivals such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. Türkiye's involvement encompasses diplomacy, investment, trade, education, health, security, and military cooperation, as well as soft power tools such as culture and history. President Erdogan has the plan to become the region's hegemon by resurrecting the ancient model of Neo-Ottomainsm. Turkey competed with Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the region through various plans, such as the Turks-Africa economic and business forum (the second forum was held in 2018 under the theme "Investing in a Sustainable Future Together." (KI 4, 5, 6, and 10). Al Jazeera Center for studies Orakçi

(2022) explained that Türkiye's investments have reached \$3 billion and in trade exchange, a direct increase has shown up to \$6 billion. State leaders from the HOA countries pay frequent visits to Ankara for bilateral and multilateral meetings.

The establishment of commercial seaports is another manifestation of geo-economic rivalry in the HOA littoral states. For the last two decades, many additional regional powers, particularly the UAE and China are leaders who established ports in the HOA in this most strategic area, through which nearly 20% of global trade and maritime shipping pass. The UAE-based company DP World established numerous ports for rental purposes and diversifying the oil-dependent UAE economy to transition to a blue economy. China is also a pioneer in the development and use of a commercial port in the HOA, which is linked to the massive belt and road initiative project and reaches the African continent's hinterland. The UAE shipping industry saw China's growing influence as an opportunity to integrate itself into the Belt and Road Initiative. Western groups are unmotivated in the establishment of commercial seaports. Djibouti, which is located on the Bab al-Mandab strait, has become a logistical hub for agricultural trade movement between Saudi Arabia and East Africa, similar to military bases. The table below summarizes the above data on port holdings and foreign powers in the HOA (KI 1, and 8 and Cafiero & Cok, 2020).

Table 4.3. The Extra regional powers Port Holding in the HOA region

No .	Extra Regional Powers	Name of Ports	Date of Lease	Term	Investment In Million	Ownership
1.	UAE	Berbera Port-Somaliland	2016	30 years	\$442	UAE DP World 51%, Somaliland 30%, Ethiopia 19%
		Bosasso Port-Somalia (Puntland)	2017	30 years	\$336	DP World and Puntland regional government
		Doraleh Container Terminal (Agreement is Cancelled) in Djibouti	From 2000-2018	--	--	Djibouti's Port Authority (67 %) and DP World (33%)
2.	Qatar	Suakin Port-Sudan (Planned)	2018	--	\$500 I phase	Sudan 51% Qatar 49 %
		Hobyo Port-Somalia (Planned)	2018	--	--	--
3.	Turkey	Suakin Port-Sudan (Planned)	2017	99 years	\$650	Sudan 51% Qatar 49 %
		Mogadishu Port-Somalia	2014	20 years		55% Somalia Gov. 45 % Turkey
4.	China	Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port-Djibouti	2018	--	%590	China Merchants Holding and Djibouti Ports Authority
		Djibouti Port Authority	2013	--	--	Djibouti 76.5%, China Merchants Holdings Company 23.5%
		Doraleh Container Terminal	2018	--	--	China Merchants Holding and Djibouti Ports Authority

Source, Own Compilation (September 2022)

Participants in the study and secondary sources such as USIP agreed that the post-2018 political reforms in Ethiopia and Sudan were the turning point for the new geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers to reach its apex. The United States is paying close attention to the political transitions in Ethiopia and Sudan to keep China out of the region and to make the reforms pro-American. Former US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and US National Security Advisor John Bolton both publicly criticized China's presence, warning African countries against collaborating with powers that exploit the continent's resources. The geo-economic rivalry with China reached a climax during the Trump and Biden administrations. The US higher officials announced a “new US-Africa strategy¹³” but it is not about Africa it is about geopolitical rivalry against China.

The Ethiopian government's bid to liberalize the telecom sector in 2021 shows a battle between Washington and Beijing-based companies to buy. Despite the long-standing partnership between Huawei and ZTE companies with Ethio Telecom, Ethiopia pressured a grant for Safaricom rather than Huawei or MTN. The recent Sep. 6/2022 Ethiopian decision to liberalize the financial sector is debatable in terms of its short and long-term benefits and drawbacks for Ethiopia; however, it is one of the implications for the geo-economic rivalry between the west and the east that will be seen in the future. According to the African Report journal (2021), "the fighting has turned into a surprising ideological and geopolitical battle between China and the United States," this is open to various interpretations. He also stated that Addis Ababa will become a new front in geo-economic rivalry. Both blocs are eager to enter Ethiopia's untapped financial market.

Russia's reemergence in economic rivalry has exacerbated the geopolitical competition that the West is attempting to deter Russia and China from engaging in. Russia recently signed economic treaties with Eritrea, Sudan, and Ethiopia in order to compensate for the isolation and sanctions imposed by the West as a result of the Russian-Ukraine war. To deter China's and Russia's growing involvement in the region, the West employed aggressive strategies, termed "a new containment policy" by KI3. The Horn of Africa region's geopolitical rivalry

¹³ The new US-African strategy: - is a 17 page document that the US believed that It has one of the world's fastest growing populations, largest free trade areas, most diverse ecosystems, and one of the largest regional voting groups in the United Nations (UN). It is impossible to meet this era's defining challenges without African contributions and leadership. The region will factor prominently in efforts to: end the COVID-19 pandemic; tackle the climate crisis; reverse the global tide of democratic backsliding; address global food insecurity; strengthen an open and stable international system; shape the rules of the world on vital issues like trade, cyber, and emerging technologies; and confront the threat of terrorism, conflict, and transnational crime. The document boldly reaffirmed that **“This strategy reframes the region’s importance to U.S. national security interests.”** For detail explanation refer the official link, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/U.S.-Strategy-Toward-Sub-Saharan-Africa-FINAL.pdf>

has become a site of "new cold war contestation," affecting the region's overall situation. The elephant external powers' rivalries make the HOA region a battleground. When elephants (i.e., the US and China) fight, the horn countries suffer in terms of peace, security, and development.

The Bandung¹⁴ Declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement should be the primary ideology of the regional countries and the entire continent to maximize the opportunities offered by both blocks. Instead of being pulled to the east, pushed to the west, or allied with Middle Eastern groups, regional countries should band together (integrate) to rekindle the Bandung type of non-alignment movement, which could be evaluated by the AU's IGAD. However, each country is preoccupied with its internal issues, making it difficult to form a continental or regional alliance or unity (KI 1 &2). The advantage of Bandung-like foreign policy is that it is not antagonistic and is very friendly to compete for powers. That is why, in a recent meeting with US President Biden in Washington in September 2022, Ramaphosa challenged US influence and insisted that Africans should not be punished for their historic nonaligned position. As a result, the nonaligned bloc provides an escape route for Africans to avoid diplomatic stalemates from all sides while maximizing interest in the multipolar global order.

4.1.2.2. Geo-Military, Strategic, and Security Rivalry

The other major geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA region is geo-military and security rivalry. The main instruments of geo-military and security rivalry are the establishment of military bases, common alliance formation, peacekeeping operations, and security lineups. It is the process of installing external powers' military equipment in sovereign land (such as the HOA and Red Sea region) for them to succeed. States that established a foreign military base somewhere else in the world took one step closer to superpower rivalry. A study participant from Addis Ababa University (KI2&3) and the Frederic Herbert Institute (KI1), as well as Vine (2015), agreed that militarism is a manifestation of the realism and neo-realism ideologies in which countries seek to achieve their national interests through force. It is a neo-military colonialism sentiment that new colonial masters have arrived in this geo-strategic region.

According to informants (KI 1, 2, and KI 4) and secondary sources such as (Vertin, 2019) and (Machrouh, 2020), the HOA geo-military and security rivalry is a type of neo-cold war

¹⁴ Bandung Conference (Asian-African Conference), In April, 1955, representatives from twenty-nine governments of Asian and African nations gathered in Bandung, Indonesia to discuss peace and the role of the Third World in the Cold War, economic development, and decolonization. **For detail; visit** <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/bandung-conf>

rivalry in which multi-polar actors compete in an arms race, establishing conventional military bases and small logistical facilities, opening training camps, securitizing the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, creating security alliances, supporting insurgency groups, sponsoring proxy wars, deploying soldiers, small military drills, and peacekeeping operations. Based on the data, the region was transformed into a battleground and a security zone, with everyone attempting to project their powers. The greater number of military bases and security rivalry in the Horn of Africa means more geopolitical rivalry and regional instability.

The terrorist attack on September 9, 2001, was a watershed moment for the establishment of military bases in the HOA region. Following that, the militarization and securitization process accelerated, bringing a dozen of external powers into the region. The HOA littoral states, including Djibouti (a military garrison), Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, and Somaliland, provide a safe haven for external powers. The majority of military bases are stationed in Djibouti because of its strategic location adjacent to the vital chokepoint (narrowest point) strait of Bab-al-Mandab, the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula, and the strategic shipping lane of the Gulf of Aden.

Despite the presence of dozens of external powers, the region has become more unstable, with instability, conflict, terrorism, and civil war on the rise. Why has the regional peace and security situation deteriorated at times? The extra-regional actors, (KII, & 3), do not want to bring tangible and sustainable peace to the region, but rather focus on their own interests. They have no concern for the regional countries; they are not here to bring peace and stability but to secure their interests under the realism ideology at the expense of others. Over the last several decades, the Western "security-first" strategy has proven ineffective.

Clare, a member of the European Parliament who spoke on the podium on October 6, 2022, strongly opposed the EU meddling in the HOA region. She explained that the HOA region is a place of a new great game for the formation of foreign military bases and that more weapons are being transitioned that are not for the region's human beings but for the ambitions of the superpower. She also explained the current HOA geopolitical rivalry in the following way;

Greater and lesser powers are pockmarking the place with military bases France, the US, China, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Saudi Arabia all have a presence in the tiny area of Djibouti alone. Mercenaries are swarming in from all quarters the entire region is being militarized. War is in the air. And what about the people, facing climate and food insecurity? None of this benefits them. We talk about instability, but we make it only worse. We flood the place with weapons, hand over the profits to European arms companies and charge the bill to our citizens. And then with the carnage, we go back in and we do it all again. It's a racket. Is it a Strategic relationship? It is one thing after another, isn't it? Really

it is the same as it ever was. And all I can say is GOD save Africa from Europeans offering help. (Carle speech at EU Parliament Oct.6.2022, cited at Addis Informer¹⁵).

External powers accumulated billions of dollars in the region by selling military equipment (war economy), according to study participants (KI 7 and 8), making the region a center of proxy and insurgency movement. That is why external powers are unwilling to commit to bringing tangible peace and stability to the region. If long-term peace is assured, they will be unable to exploit the region's natural resources without fear of losing the geostrategic region. The presence of external powers also assisted regional countries' efforts to bring peace and stability in the face of terrorism, piracy, and humanitarian crises. A study participant (KI 4) and KI 10 agreed that extra-regional powers played a positive role in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean, and regional peacekeeping activities, as well as fighting Al Shabaab despite materializing to stop the expansion of those terrorist groups.

Despite their lower economic participation, the western blocs are more influential and experienced in geo-military and security rivalry than the eastern or Middle Eastern groups. The United States played a critical role in regional peace and security activities by using direct military intervention, supporting regional peacekeeping missions (UN and AU), combating terrorism and piracy, mediating conflicting parties, and providing financial assistance to various regional and continental organizations such as IGAD and the AU. Following the counter-terrorism operations in Somalia in 2001, the United States began direct military and security intervention and established its first African military base in Djibouti in 2003, with other pro-US countries.

In 2008, an international anti-piracy operation known as "Operation Atlanta" was launched to protect the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean from sea pirates. The US government was critical in assisting the UN and AU in financial and technical areas in Darfur (UNMID), South Sudan (UNMISS), and Somalia (AMISOM) operations. In negotiations, the US is taking the lead in bringing South Sudan fighters to a round table in collaboration with IGAD. The EU and its members are more concerned with securing the Red Sea and the Suez Canal for safe goods and services transportation. They also carried out coordinated missions to prevent HOA migrants from entering Europe via the Gulf States.

The HOA geo-military and security rivalry have intensified since China established its first military base in Djibouti near the US military base in 2017. The Chinese security participation dates back to the global anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden and Indian

¹⁵ Addis Informer You Tube link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WfTDcrxT-Q>

Ocean Maritime region since 2008, to secure its import and export routes. According to Melvin (2019), China increased the number of military and security personnel from 2008 to 2018, to 26,000 posing a threat to the rival US and EU. Since the end of the Cold War in 2018, Russia has increased its involvement in the region. President Vladimir Putin's 2019 Russia-Africa summit in Sochi ensured Russia's return to the great power rivalry. To deter the increasing influence of China and Russia and to become victorious in Africa the US government adopted a "New Africa Strategy" in December 2018 (KI1, 4, 6, and 7).

External power geostrategic rivalry is evident in the current Ethiopian civil war, which is supported by diplomatic fronts in Ethiopia between pro-federal government and pro-Tplf groups. On various diplomatic fronts, China, Russia, India, and some Middle Eastern countries support the federal government in its opposition to Western sanctions and pressures. In the case of Ethiopia, the US and EU called the UN Security Council more than 14 times and overwhelmingly supported the TPLF terrorist group. The western media campaign and false flag operation blackmailed the Ethiopian government, accusing it of human rights violations, using famine as a weapon of war, and cutting off supply lines to the needy. This negatively affected the United States' credibility as well as its ability to inspire popular policymaking and civic-minded diplomacy among local populations. The Middle East group also had a significant impact on the civil war by supplying or selling army equipment such as drones and military convoys. Participants in the study and other international new media outlets such as Al Jazeera, CGTN, and TRT announced that drones purchased from Turkey and the UAE were used in the war.

The Chinese government has recently demonstrated a policy shift from non-interference and an economic-driven strategy to wise intervention and participation in regional peace and security activities in Africa. In September 2018, China established the first China-Africa Peace and Security Cooperation Fund (CAPSCF), as proposed by Xi at the FOCAC Beijing Summit, to assist Africans in peacekeeping, security, and peacekeeping efforts in the Gulf of Aden. In February 2022, China appoints the first HOA special envoy, Xue Bing, to look for rivalry with the United States. In June 2022, China hosted the first China-HOA collective meeting of regional diplomats in Addis Ababa on the topic of "a conference on Peace, Good Governance, and Development."¹⁶ This indicates that the Chinese government has brought a policy shift from an economic-driven strategy to more attention in areas of peace, security, and shared regional developments.

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Peoples Republic of China, 2022-06-09 20:17 Official website; https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/.

China has realized that peace and security are required to secure the vast investments in the region and that focusing solely on the economic sector is not profitable. China's growing involvement in regional peace and security could endanger US interests and lead to China becoming a dominant power (KI 4). VOA correspondent Bartlett (2022) agreed with the above analysis that China is returning to areas of peace and security to compete with the US and secure its massive investments in the region. However, the US continues to play a significant role in regional peace and security issues, while China is eager to play a major role. China has an advantage over the West in regional negotiation and peace-building efforts because it never takes sides or interferes in the domestic affairs of regional countries, unlike the West.

The current Russian-Ukraine war has heightened the neo-cold war rivalry between the United States and Russia and China in the HOA region. Russia is eager to establish close ties with Africans in order to ease Western sanctions and gain an alternative diplomatic and economic partner. Both the US and Russia have made bilateral visits to Africa which has implications for the growing rivalries, as it did during the cold war. Since 2018, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made two official visits to the Horn of Africa to strengthen relations in the face of Western diplomatic and economic sanctions. The US is in a diplomatic panic to persuade Africans which made repeated visits. It is evidenced in the following phrase;

Washington has significantly stepped up its charm offensive in Africa. Last month, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield visited Uganda, Ghana, and Cape Verde. At the same time, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken toured South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda. And in December, Washington will host an Africa Leaders' Summit. (Gbadamosi, 2022; Para. 6).

Since 2011, the Middle East bloc, also known as the emerging Middle brokers, has played a prominent role in the HOA geo-military and security rivalry, which has an undeniable role in the region's current peace, security, and stability situations. The two antagonistic blocs, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, face off against the Qatar, Türkiye, and Iran groups. They compete in military base formation, security sector training, publicly sponsored public protests and terrorist groups, insurgency movements, lobbying or checkbook diplomacy, arms and human trafficking, and others.

One group or state sought to establish hegemony over another. The presence of one group poses a threat to the other. The alliance and military presence of Türkiye, Qatar, and Iran pose a threat to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. The Yemen Civil War, the 2016 Gulf Crisis, and religious differences are the reasons for those powers' rivalry,

which has made the HOA and the Red Sea a de-securitized region because they exported their internal discontent to the HOA.

In 2015, the UAE and Saudi Arabia established a military base in Eritrea's old port of Assab as a sea and air assault against the Houthi rebels in Yemen's civil war. They support Somaliland and Puntland against the federal government of Somalia, which is backed by Turkey and Qatar. Türkiye maintains a strong security and military presence in Somalia, with a military and training base in Mogadishu. Türkiye's training facility is the country's largest overseas investment, and its operation of Mogadishu's air and seaports stems from increased humanitarian, political, and aid investments in Somalia since 2011. The Turkish government intended to be a hegemonic power in the region, as a patron of the Islamic world. On the other hand, Iran and Saudi Arabia are embroiled in a serious religious and ideological dispute, using Yemen as a proxy center in which Iran supports the Houthi rebel groups while Saudi Arabia and the UAE support the incumbent group, exacerbating the civil war.

The main security participation of Saudi Arabia was shown in the establishment of a new regional Security Council in Riyadh in January 2020, dubbed the "Council of Arab and Horn of African Littoral States." Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Egypt, Eritrea, Yemen, and Jordan are members of the council, but Ethiopia, a regional anchor state, is not. According to Abdeta (2020), Ethiopia and Kenya's exclusion from the forum created a threat of encirclement and Egypt's plan to de-securitize Ethiopia. Despite this, the international community recognized Ethiopia's centrality to the region's security and stability. A study participant KI 5&6 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also agreed that Egypt's intention is to alienate Ethiopia in Red Sea politics, so Ethiopia must strengthen regional multilateralism. Vertin (2019) agreed with the preceding analysis that Ethiopia's exclusion from a Red Sea forum could complicate the country's growing relations with the Gulf, as well as the development of ports, infrastructure, and energy resources throughout the Horn.



Figure 4.7. The establishment of the council of Arab and African Littoral states of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Source Brookings Institute

The HOA region is embroiled in the involvement of those middle brokers such as in Somalia, and Sudan. Sudan's current political insecurity is exacerbated by Middle Eastern countries that have exported their political, religious, or ideological differences here in the HOA. The presence of those external military bases in the region turns the countries into a "nest of spies," creating antagonistic fronts that could lead to a direct confrontation, transforming the area into an actual battlefield (USIP, 2020).

Egypt is the other major extra-regional power and regional destabilizer, and it played a critical role in the HOA security situations. Egypt's role should not be ignored and any alternative could be applied to maintain its historic dominance, hydro-political benefit, and geostrategic presence. Melvin (2019), Egypt has no actual military base or presence in the HOA, but its influence is very high due to two major concerns: Nile hydro politics and Suez Canal issues. The Egyptian government works day and night to secure sustainable use of the Nile and to secure the Suez Canal route. The rivalry between Ethiopia and Egypt over the GERD project invited other extra-regional powers to the podium, primarily the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, who sided with Egypt, exacerbating the region's hydro-

political insecurity. Egypt recently increased its military spending and manipulated the Sudanese transitional military council to invade Ethiopia, both directly and indirectly (KI 1, 4, and 8).

Religion should not be ignored in the geopolitical rivalry and involvement of Middle Eastern powers in the HOA region. The Middle East powers' other main project is to spread the Islamic religion throughout the HOA and the entire continent. The HOA region has a large Muslim population that uses its influence to propagate various Islamic sects and support extremist groups. Millions of dollars have been allocated to religious activities in the HOA religious groups (KI 3). Walhad (2022) agreed that religious differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the former advocating Shiism and the latter Sunni Islamic sects exacerbated the religious rivalry in the region. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is funding extremist Islamic movements such as Al-Ahbash, Wahhabiyya, and Salafism to replace indigenous Islamic practices. Türkiye and Saudi Arabia are also competing to become the Islamic world's leaders, which has an impact on HOA religious practices.

Almost 16 external powers have joined the HOA rivalry through the establishment of military bases, small operation facilities, progressive talks for future development (actual and potential), and security participation. The researcher attempted to illustrate the geo-military and security rivalry of extra-regional powers contestation in the HOA and Red Sea region in the following table using study participants and secondary sources.

Table 4.4. The Establishment and operation of Military Bases and Commercial Sea Ports in the HOA and Red Sea Region

No .	Extra Regional Powers	Years of Establishment	Where the Military Bases are Located	Features and Purpose of the Military bases and Commercial Sea Ports
1.	France	1 May 2001	Djibouti near to close to Ambouli International Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A naval base holds 1405 Personnel and heavy Military equipment. Aimed to protect French interest in the area, combating terrorism and anti-piracy in collaboration with EU and USA
2.	USA	Since 2001	Camp Lemonnier Djibouti 202 hectares and deployed 4000 personnel, administered by US Africa Command (AFRICOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counter-terrorism operations on ISIL and Al Shabaab, Somalia, and Yemen, and aimed to secure regional peace and security. ● Providing military training for regional countries and supporting IGAD, AMISOM, and East Africa standby forces operations capacity in training and leadership roles. ● Securing US interest in the area through the gathering of surveillance and launching UAV attacks
3.	British	Since 2008	A personnel staff in Somaliland and Djibouti hosted by USA bases, a small military presence in Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in Anti-Piracy operations and supporting US missions against counter-terrorism in Somalia, securing UK interest in the area. ● Training of Kenyan forces in Nanyuki,
4.	Japan	In 2011	In Djibouti adjacent to Camp Lemonnier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting for safe of Japan's international trade exchange and countering Chinese increasing influence, counter-piracy activity, supporting Japanese participation in UNMISS in 2012–17. Also aimed to train East African nations and to increase military cooperation with the USA in the region
5.	Italy	In 2013	Inter-service military installation at Djibouti next to Ambouli International Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support Italian naval activity, participating in Operation Atlanta, safe transportation of goods and services, and controlling the refugee influx to Italy
6.	Germany	In 2013	Djibouti hosted by France MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A logistical staff participated in counter-terrorism and anti-piracy operation (Operation Atlanta), Providing training for Africans
7.	Spain	Since 2013	Djibouti hosted by France MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Involved in EU mission to counter maritime piracy or participating in operation Atlanta. In the maritime area conducting a patrol and reconnaissance in the geo-strategic area to secure Spain's interest.

8.	China	August 2017	In Djibouti next to Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port just six miles from the US holdings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A military and logistics support base operated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) to conduct naval operations and anti-piracy tasks in the Indian Ocean, peacekeeping in the HOA, and securing the Chinese trade interest in this geostrategic area, non-combat evacuation operations, and counterterrorism. ● Collecting intelligence service or surveillance and safe evaluation of Chinese citizens in times of war
9.	India	2018 (After China opened)	In the western Indian Ocean and Djibouti use the Japanese base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● an anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden ● To counter China's rising military presence in the region ● Cross-servicing Agreement on military logistics in the Indo-Pacific region
10.	Türkiye	Since 2009	In Somalia Mogadishu (2017) and A deal on progress to develop Swakin Island for tourism (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The anti-piracy operation is the place of the Turkish largest overseas military presence for the training of Somalia security forces to fight Al-Shabaab,
11.	Russia	---	Progressive deal with Sudan and Eritrea to open a logistics center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2008 made an anti-piracy operation, planned and applied to compete with the USA in the region
12.	UAE	Since 2016	Assab (Eritrea)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Used as a base in the Yemen war and to deter the influence of Iran,
13.	Saudi Arabia	Since 2016	Deal with Djibouti and used Asseb Port (Eritrea)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Used as a base in the Yemen war against the Houthi rebels backed by Iran, and aimed to increase Red Sea domination
14.	Qatar	Since 2016	Mogadishu Somalia (Port Hoby) allied with Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prominent in security participation in the HOA before the 2016 gulf crisis. Aimed to resist the influence of the UAE and Saudi
15.	Iran		An attempt in the Red Sea (Eritrea) and Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2011 a small flotilla of surface ships deployed in the Suez Canal, Operation in the Yemen Civil War and Rivalry against Saudi and UAE in the region, Securing the Gulf of Aden and Hormuz Strait and appearing as a hegemon state in the region.
16.	Israel	2012	A small naval team in Eritrea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To gather intelligence in the region against Iran, Palestine Movement, and Yemen Civil war

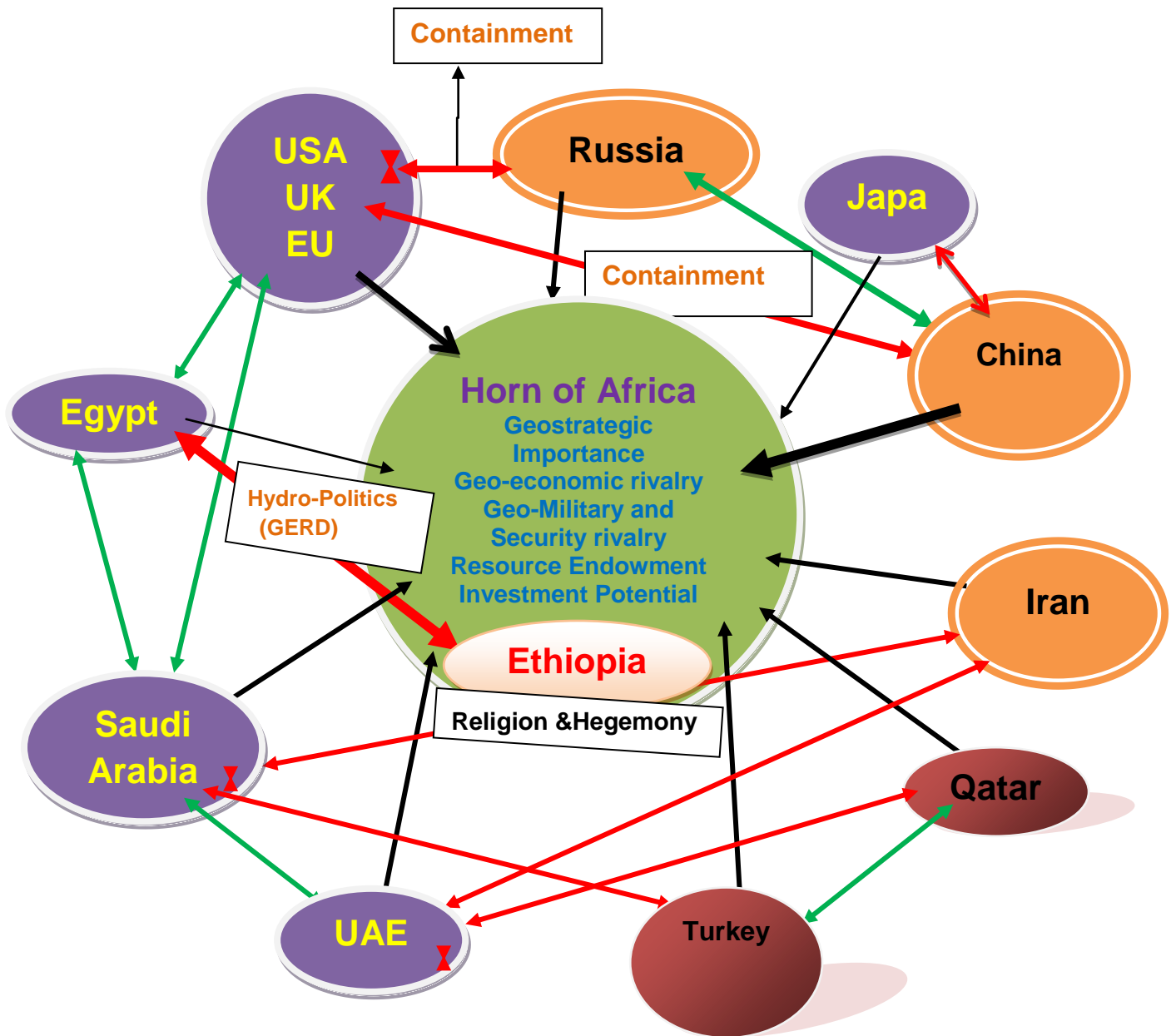
Source: Own Survey (September 2022)

The above table indicates that the region becomes more militarized, antagonistic powers tried to project their power in the region and the extra-regional powers' influence has increased in an unprecedented manner. The formation of military bases in the HOA posed a security threat for the regional countries, which the AU Peace and Security Council has expressed concern about “the existence of foreign military bases and the establishment of new ones in some African countries, as well as the inability of the Member States concerned to effectively monitor the movement of weapons to and from these foreign military bases.” (African Union, 2016, p. 2).

Recently, geo-military and security rivalry between the great powers of China, Russia, and the United States, as well as Middle Eastern powers, reached a peak in the HOA region. Participants (KI 1 and KI 8) in the study also agreed that the presence of antagonistic states and the militarization of the region heightened geopolitical rivalry and had a significant impact on the region's economic, political, security, and development trajectories. However, the AU or IGAD remains silent on increasing militarization of the region and its impacts on regional peace.



Figure 4.8. The Foreign Military Base and Commercial Sea Port Facilities of external powers in the HOA region. Source: -Retrieved from, Danish Institute for International Studies (2019).



- ↔ Line of Confrontation
- ↔ Line of Cooperation
- Line of discrete Relation with the HOA region

Figure: 4.9. the complexity and the new geopolitical dynamic of Foreign powers in the HOA.
 Source: own survey (September 2022)

Figure 4.9, illustrates that the HOA region is a battleground for extra-regional powers in an unprecedented manner, with higher security complexes. Every external power has a vested interest in this geostrategic region in order to project their power as hegemon states, exploit untapped natural resources, and secure their interests. External powers' main geopolitical rivalry has manifested as geo-economic rivalry, geo-military rivalry, and security rivalry. As

previously stated, the three geopolitical parties project themselves in the region. The figure also attempts to depict the HOA geopolitical and security complex that exists between each participant state. The West, primarily the United States, the EU, and Japan, is both harmonious and antagonistic toward China, Russia, and Iran. The US and Japan alliance is also visible in the South China Sea against China which makes dual and multiple military exercises. Middle Eastern groups are also fiercely competitive with one another. For hegemonic, economic, and religious reasons, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt compete with Turkey, Qatar, and Iran. Separately, Egypt is embroiled in a bitter rivalry with Ethiopia over the Nile Politics and the GERD project. To deter its adversary in the region, each country has a containment policy. Every state tries to project itself in the region and does not want to see its rival.

In order to conclude since historic times during the Portuguese and Ottoman Turks time till know the HOA and Red Sea region has been the site of fierce geopolitical rivalry between antagonistic extra-regional powers, and this would continue in the future. Three groups are active in the region western group, the eastern group, and the Middle Eastern group. The main instruments of rivalry are broadly classified as geo-economic rivalry and geo-military and security rivalry. China is more persuasive than other groups in geo-economic rivalry, significantly transforming the region's economy (KI 1). Whereas the US and EU are more active in geo-military, security, and strategic concerns through military bases, security alliances, and liberal decentralizations. The geo-military and security rivalry of those powers has caused collateral damage for regional countries, making the HOA the world's most militarized and contested battleground.

Regional insecurity, intrastate and interstate civil war, disintegration, terrorism, state-sponsored insurgency movement, human, arms, and drug trafficking, environmental problems, poverty, and other innumerable problems occurred not only as a result of regional problems, but also as a result of problems imported, sponsored, and supported by extra-regional powers. The HOA countries may need to be vigilant, integrated, and nonaligned in order to overcome the challenges and maximize the opportunities of geopolitical rivalry. Because inclining to someone means resenting others, the middle path is a fruitful line to collect the grapevine from all parties or geopolitical actors. In general, a lack of influence management has jeopardized regional security and exacerbated the HOA and Red Sea region's instability.

4.2. Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa Geopolitical Space

4.2.1. The Risks of Geopolitical Rivalry of Foreign Powers in Ethiopia

Things in the Horn of Africa region are constantly changing, and geopolitical interests shift. The HOA states are easily dominated by external powers due to their geostrategic importance. The Horn of Africa has emerged as a major geopolitical battleground, with regional heavyweights and international actors vying for dominance in an unprecedented manner. Due to its landlocked geographic location, Ethiopia is the first victim state in the region as a result of these fierce geopolitical rivalries, putting Ethiopia's fate in the hands of other states. That is why, according to KI 1, the current state of affairs and geopolitical dynamics in the HOA could be very problematic for Ethiopia. In the previous two objectives, the researcher examined the rationale for the arrival of foreign powers in the region as well as the new geopolitical dynamics in the HOA in geo-economic and geo-military terms.

The researcher attempted to see the risks or challenges of the geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA with a special focus on Ethiopia in this section of the paper. Ethiopia is a regional dominant state that influences the HOA state of affairs from political, diplomatic, military, economic, and demographic perspectives. Assessing the broad spectrum of geopolitical risks with a particular focus on Ethiopia is a critical starting point for generalizing the risks of the entire sub-region. From Ethiopia's perspective, it is simple to deduce the HOA geopolitical dynamics. External power rivalry in the region has brought multiple and complex risks and challenges to regional countries, particularly Ethiopia, from historical times to the present.

The concentration of various powers and rival groups in the region could undermine the power balance, affecting the status quo and leading to an increase in tension and regional instability. Ethiopia, the region's dominant power, would be the primary victim in this regard KI 1 explains. The combined effect of a rival power in the region could be detrimental to the region's stability.

The risks could stem from Ethiopia's inability to effectively manage the regional geopolitical process or dynamics, as well as its internal discontent. A study participant (KI2) agreed that the risks of geopolitical rivalry may arise simply from choosing sides we cannot afford: Americans over Chinese or Chinese over Americans. We cannot go with the Emiratis by animosities with the Turkish. If Ethiopia automatically chooses one over the other, it puts itself at grave risk. It will provide an opportunity for our adversary to exploit Ethiopian insecurity by utilizing the resented parties. In the past, and even in the recent past, we tend to

take sides with various geopolitical actors. That only increased Ethiopia's risk and challenge, with no benefit to its development trajectory.

During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia supported the capitalist bloc or western countries, whereas during the *Derg* regime, Socialism was the state ideology and it sided with the USSR against the USA. During the EPRDF regime, Ethiopia leaned to the east but did not ignore the west through a wise diplomatic championship. In the last four years, Ethiopia is in a difficult political transition, and the leading Prosperity Party has been challenged by a clear ideological map, which alternates between being pro-east, pro-west, and shifting from one Middle Eastern group to another and being neutral. Due to these ideological shifts starting from the previous time, Ethiopia became a proxy center and a new cold war battleground between external powers, resulting in a devastating period of violation of sovereignty, loss of thousands of human lives, and economic downturn.

Every geopolitical actor has its own agenda; we cannot expect or learn democracy from the Chinese, and thus allying with the West will harm China's economic and infrastructure interests. Middle Eastern countries cannot provide us with education or cultural tolerance. The countries of the Middle East are not in a good position to practice cultural tolerance. The neorealist interest is the main motive for the coming of those actors in the region to maximize their own national interest. Despite the foregoing, data revealed that Ethiopia's current peace and security risk is the result of the role of extra-regional powers and Ethiopia's inability to manage changes in the best interests of the state. It is very important to seriously address the main gap, "what we get from whom." So, the risk is there, and it is up to Ethiopia and the Horn states to manage it. Understand how to play one against the other.

The international community was encouraged by the post-2018 HOA wind of hope, democratic beginnings, and regional rapprochement, particularly between Ethiopia and Eritrea. After a brief period of anticipation, the HOA region returned to its previous state of democratic backsliding, fragmentation, interstate and intrastate conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crisis. The peaceful political transition in Ethiopia that began in 2018 was quickly replaced by intrastate conflict, civil war, IDPs, and a humanitarian crisis. The situation worsens after a civil war breaks out in northern Ethiopia between the incumbent federal government and the TPLF group.

Externally, Ethiopia faces challenges from the Nile Water Dispute (GERD crisis with lower riparian states), a border dispute with Sudan over the Alfashega area, the growing threat of Al Shabaab, pressure from Western powers, and increasing competition from external powers

and tough geopolitical rivalry. The country's economy is being hampered by severe price inflation. What had been a positive dynamic in the Horn of Africa has rapidly deteriorated since the outbreak of the civil war in November 2020. The civil war in Ethiopia's Tigray region spread quickly, and a humanitarian crisis and famine now threaten the lives of millions of people and have pushed the country to the brink of state collapse. So, the regional security complex theory has been really applicable in this part, that those listed problems have a ramification effect on the rest of the region and the problems can't be resolved unilaterally.

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) has been used to investigate the spillover effect and interconnectedness of security and insecurity in the HOA region, with a particular focus on Ethiopia. Buzan and Weaver (2003), proponents of RSCT, explained the literature part of the security interlinks and how these security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed or resolved separately. Most threats travel more easily over short distances than long distances, and there is a security or de-security interdependence in this short distance. Ethiopia's immediate neighbors have raised security concerns and problems, which have a high level of spillover effect on Ethiopia due to the increasing militarization of the region. This security problem was created by a lack of coordinated action, porous borders, and state-sponsored insecurity and it can only be solved through coordinated action, not individual efforts. The HOA region is the most complex and interconnected region in the world; the more interconnected the region, the greater the entanglement of security threats and the severity of the spillover effect. Nobody can escape the insecurity that occurred in a neighboring state and impacted the next country.

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight the risks that Ethiopia faces and to show the way forward for Ethiopia's long-term interests. If Ethiopia fails to manage the geopolitical dynamics for its own best interest in the region, the following are the main classified geopolitical risks. As previously stated, Ethiopia faces greater risk than other horn region states due to its geographical location, which is surrounded by small states, and Ethiopia is a landlocked country that is completely reliant on neighboring countries for external trade. Whether you like it or not, Ethiopia is back and reliant on neighboring Djibouti for external trade and defense activities. However, Djibouti has been sold and placed under the control of external actors, which is a significant blow to Ethiopian national security and existence. Some of the risks or challenges Ethiopia may face include peace and security risks, economic risks, unstable port use, and the escalation of GERD disputes.

4.2.1.1. Peace and Security Risks in Ethiopia

It has a direct ramification in that if the region is unstable, Ethiopia cannot be safe due to the region's security complexity and interconnectedness. According to Ethiopia's foreign policy document from 2012, regional stability and security preserve Ethiopia's internal security. The internal peace and security situation is also a major determinant of the level of risks that external powers may pose to Ethiopia. Our current internal crisis is the main impediment to Ethiopia playing an influential role in the region and around the world. At the moment, Ethiopia's prospects are gloomy. The government has been in transition for four years, and the process has not been completed. Ethiopia's peace, security, the political, and economic situation is precarious.

Participants Key Informants 1, 2, 5, and 7 agreed that without a stable and peaceful internal situation, there will be no stable external relations, and even small neighboring countries may turn against us. In the last four years, even small states like South Sudan and Sudan have invaded Ethiopian territory. Eritrea also takes part in the Northern civil war, which violates¹⁷ the territorial sovereignty and integrity of the country. In geostrategic terms, recent events have not been favorable to Ethiopia. Kenyans are quickly becoming the HOA's powerhouse and tried to maneuver Ethiopia.

Ethiopia, more than any other HOA country, is vulnerable to geopolitical rivalry from foreign powers, particularly in peace and security situations. External power rivalry has a significant repercussion effect, causing regional instability, mobilizing proxy war (TPLF and OLF Shene), sponsoring insurgency movements, and militarization of the region. A key informant (KI 2, 3, 5, 6, 10) agreed with the above analysis that the HOA region's peace and security situation has been disrupted due to external powers' increasing involvement and geopolitical rivalry, which has resulted in regional chaos, instability, and recurring conflict. A discussion at the Atlanta council (2021), also agreed that the internal instability and recurrent conflict are orchestrated by rival external powers.

Ethiopia is an anchor state in the region that plays an important role in security and military issues, so every external power works to bring Ethiopia to their side against their adversaries to manipulate the region. The West needs and works Ethiopia should not be an ally of China

¹⁷ The involvement of Eritrea is undisputable evidence and assured by Ethiopian government and UN officials. The research participates (KI 2, 5, 6, and 9) also agreed that Eritrea is participated in the northern civil war. It is an act of external interference and violation of sovereignty despite the claim that Eritrea was involved due to the aggression of TPLF group and invitation of Ethiopia.

or Russia and vice versa. The current western pressure is a policy that “Ethiopia should be under our control to deter the influence of China and Russia” as USIP (2019) assured that the political reform should be in the interest of the West, not the East. The conflicting interests of Middle Eastern powers have turned the HOA region into a battleground, affecting Ethiopia's peace and security situation.

The western world believed that Ethiopian-Chinese relations should be stopped at all costs. The same is true in Middle Eastern countries where Saudi Arabia and the UAE are attempting to cease Ethiopia's ties with Qatar or Iran. This means that one extra-regional actor is fighting with the other in HOA territory, implying a resurgence of the neo-cold war. This crisscrossed geopolitical situation has resulted in an alignment, realignment, and de-alignment that began in the sub-region and has created a security problem for Ethiopia. The former Ethiopian ambassador in Egypt stated that “the US-China rivalry has national security implications for Ethiopia that we should be aware of.” He also stated that the presence of foreign military bases has a negative impact on Ethiopia and the region, potentially posing an instability threat. The current insecurity in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa is the result of external powers undermining regional power balances and negatively impacting the status quo.

One of the main exacerbating factors for tensions and disputes arising in Ethiopia is the expansion of military bases and involvement in the internal affairs of sovereign states in the HOA. The above analysis was also supported by Rashid Abdi, Crisis Group's Horn of Africa Project Director; it has significant peace and security implications, causing new regional divisions, exploiting fragile political settlements, reigniting old hostilities, and exposing Ethiopia to further geopolitical risk. Ikondere (2021) also stated that the influx of foreign military bases in the Horn of Africa has exacerbated existing inter-state mistrust, tension, fear, and a state's fragility and fluidity. The militarization of the HOA region increases Ethiopia's vulnerability to attack by other enemy countries standing along the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean coasts. The current insecurity, civil war, and instability are inextricably linked to external powers' planning and implementation (KI 2, 3 & 4).

As a result, the major security risks for Ethiopia are the rivalry of foreign powers and the rise of regional tensions and instability, the encirclement of Ethiopia by Gulf Powers and its impact on Ethiopia's foreign policy orientation towards the Horn of Africa, alienating from neighbors, threatening the sovereignty of Ethiopia, escalating tensions, jeopardizing religious coexistence, and finally a threat of fundamentalism expansions. Mehari Taddele (2019) says that "the escalating tensions between the United States and China could also end up

threatening the continent. While a direct confrontation between US and Chinese forces in Africa is unlikely, their growing [military] presence is becoming an increasingly destabilizing factor.” USIP (2021) assured that Biden's arrival, opened a new phase of great power rivalry after Trump's “American first” policy put China and Russia as a national security problem. To deter the Chinese influence the Abiy administration has been selected as a litmus test for the US intervention.

The above idea that the Ethiopian peace and security situation is threatened by the geopolitical rivalry of external powers has been explained in the following sentences.

The Nile Rivalry and military alignment of Egypt and Sudan, in particular, led to an escalation of tensions with Ethiopia, which, given internal conflict dynamics and border disputes, has the potential for proxy wars as well as border wars between Ethiopia and Sudan. Fourth, the involvement of the Gulf States may jeopardize Ethiopia's current religious coexistence. This is because "some Middle Eastern countries, in addition to economic interests, have religious motivations. (Vertin, 2019, P. 4)

Currently, multiple problems plague Ethiopia's peace and security situation, making the country the primary focus of the UN Security Council and the international community. When Ethiopia's internal problems worsen, its regional role suffers; when you are weak, it is difficult to find friends. Ethiopia does not appear to have a neighboring friend at this time (KI 1 and 2). When you are strong, you will gain more friends and a stronger voice in regional and global politics. Ethiopia is currently more vulnerable. External countries are working carefully together in some cases to de-securitize Ethiopia and implement various strategies to counter internal destabilization. Since the election of a new government four years ago, Ethiopia has gone from crisis to crisis in all directions.

The geopolitical rivalry resulted in the formation of various antagonistic security alliances, resulting in a filling of encirclement for Ethiopia (developing siege mentality). A good example is the establishment of the Red Sea Cooperation Council in 2020 under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which posed direct security and national risk to Ethiopia's land. Excluding non-littoral Ethiopia, which has significant economic, security, and geostrategic interests in the Red Sea and HOA region will have far-reaching ramifications. The establishment of the council was designed by Egypt to permanently alienate Ethiopia from the Red Sea region. And Egypt attempted to make Ethiopia the champion of the Red Sea region, which it aimed to subdue indirectly.

KI7 explained that the western countries regard the Horn of Africa region as their sphere of influence and protectorate against the growing involvement of China, Russia, Turkey, Iran,

and the Gulf countries. History teaches us those Western countries will go to any length to protect their national interests, including regime change and the installation of a puppet leader. It is no secret that Westerners continue to be kingmakers in the horn of African countries after the end of direct colonialism; no one can become a leader without the blessing of the Westerners. The current multifaceted pressure, sanction, and media campaign launched by the West against the incumbent Ethiopian government is an attempt to install their own puppet regime.

The northern Ethiopia civil war has been indirectly exacerbated by the geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers, especially China and the United States geopolitical rivalry has a great impact. The civil war has been protracted by the strong US government's open support to the TPLF group that aimed to install a puppet government in Ethiopia to secure its interest against rival China and Russia's increasing involvement in the region. China and Russia on their side stand to the federal government in diplomatic support and opposing the US interference in Ethiopia. These made the conflicting parties not come to the negotiation table and expect the support of those external actors. KI 4, 7, and 9 supported the above analysis that the Federal government is reluctant to accept the order of the US government and seems too inclined to the east block and approach to China. That is why the US accused remained silent about the TPLF's human rights violations, despite mounting diplomatic pressure on the federal government. On their side, China and Russia support the Abiy administration, which is a precedence factor in the escalation of the civil war (KI 4, 5, and 6). As a result, the West and East chose Ethiopia as a geopolitical battleground, which had a significant impact on Ethiopia's peace and stability. It seems a battle of the heavyweights on the other land to preserve their national interests.

Ethiopia's instability could set off a chain reaction of instability, refugee exodus, arms and human trafficking, and terrorism across the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, and Western Europe. Youths make up more than half of the region's population, creating a fertile environment for criminal activity, terrorist agendas, and a wave of unemployment and chaos. This implies that the current Ethiopian insecurity has been exacerbated by the geopolitical theatrical competition between the traditional actors of the West and China, Russia, Turkey, and the GCC group (KI 4).

The growing presence of foreign military bases has put regional countries like Djibouti and Somalia in "sovereign debt." Participants in the study agreed that Ethiopia is completely reliant on neighboring ports to import not only economic goods but also military equipment.

This implies that Ethiopia's security is in the hands of others, primarily external powers. What if external powers are reluctant for Ethiopian ships not to import military supplies, as they were during the Italo-Ethiopian war in 1935? As a result, external geopolitical actors determine Ethiopia's national security and access to the sea. Ethiopia should create a comprehensive policy and strategy that addresses foreign policy, national security, domestic demands, and long-term development concerns. One study participant, on the other hand, stated that the militarization of the region may empower Djibouti as a strong contender for Ethiopia. According to Fakude (2017), Djibouti's strategic nature enabled it to be the most important state, undermining Ethiopia's regional dominance.

External powers' geopolitical rivalry and antagonism in the region provide fertile ground for fundamentalist and extremist terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and ISIL, posing a national security threat to Ethiopia. According to CBS News (February 18/2022), the deadliest group Al-Shabaab has ties to international terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIL, posing a significant threat to global security and the existence of Ethiopia. Al-Shabaab is now one of the world's most well-resourced extremist organizations, and Somalia could be a safe haven and harboring the next Osama bin Laden, if not worse.

Ethiopia's historic adversaries could provide military support to any militant groups or terrorist organizations seeking to destabilize Ethiopia. Who supports Al Shabab? There is no idea (KI 2, 3 5). The growing capacity of Al-Shabaab is a huge security threat, and he has announced his retaliation plan, as well as various attempts against Ethiopia. The current failed attempt by Al Shabaab to ambush the Ethio-Somali region is the main implication for Ethiopia's geopolitical risk. According to Reuters (July 21, 2022), Al Shabaab launched a rare attack on the Ethio-Somali region, but the attack was foiled by Ethiopian joint security forces. This indicates that Al-Shabaab is a major security threat aimed at destabilizing Ethiopia while it is engaged in the northern civil war against the TPLF group.

External powers bring security risks including proxy wars and support for insurgency movements against Ethiopia. According to KI (5&6), antagonistic powers or Ethiopian adversaries have supported proxy wars against Ethiopia. Why would Egypt sign a military treaty with Somalia, Sudan, or South Sudan? It is not about a bilateral relationship, nor is it about Somalia, South Sudan, or Sudan having a strong army, but rather about targeting Ethiopia. The signing of a military agreement by a neighboring state poses a threat to the immediate neighbors. The remaining countries sought to reach another military or security agreement with other non-regional actors, resulting in mutual destabilization. When you add

one actor, you are actually adding multiple actors or multiple interconnected issues in the region. Why does Ethiopia want peace in Somalia? Is that an attempt at hegemony? It is not the case. If your neighbor is at war, you will be the next victim as per the assumptions of regional security complex theory.

Regardless of the other superpower rivals, the Middle East's increasing competition is extremely dangerous for Ethiopia and the region and needs careful relationships. The countries of the Middle East are bitterly opposed or antagonistic to one another, and they have exported their domestic problems to the Horn of Africa, worsening the countries' peace, security, and regional integration processes. One country is standing against the other and they exported their internal discontent to the region making the region a chessboard which made Ethiopia very busy handling the interest of the Middle East powers. As a result, one key informant (KI 6) stated that the Middle East poses a significant security risk to Ethiopia and has weakened IGAD's integration process. Prior to the 2018 reform, Ethiopia played a neutral role in Middle Eastern and Gulf politics and was simply viewed as an investment destination. However, after 2018, the UAE and Saudi bloc forced Ethiopia to align with them, which angered Qatar and Iran. In exchange, the latter states may be eager to back anti-Ethiopian groups. In religious and political Islamism ideology Middle East powers such as Saudi Arabia supports extremist Islamic sects such as Salafism and Wahhabism to have a presence in Ethiopia, which has created a conflict with home-based Islamic practices.

Aside from the foregoing, KI3 explained that Muslim countries in the Middle East regard Ethiopia as "the Christian Highland," despite the fact that it has a higher Muslim population than neighboring states. Somalia, Djibouti, and Sudan are members of the Arab League and are run by Arabs, but Ethiopia is not. Despite the fact that Ethiopia was the first to accept Islamic refugees from the Prophet Mohammed's family, this situation could pose a security risk to the country. Since historical times, the region's leading Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, and others, have pursued a policy of obstructing Ethiopia's influence within and beyond the region by supporting anti-Ethiopian insurgent groups.

Furthermore, the recent Russian-Ukraine war has opened a new phase of geopolitical rivalry in the HOA, which could put Ethiopia at risk if we choose sides. Gbadamosi (May 24/2022), a foreign policy African Brief, supported that current after the Russian-Ukraine war, "Africans Caught in the Geopolitical Crossfire." If Ethiopia warmly welcomes Russians over Americans during the recent multiple visits of the US and Russian ministries of foreign affairs, it is an attempt to choose sides. Due to Ethiopia's diplomatic influence in Africa, both

powers attempted to sway it to their side. Most Africans on the outskirts did not want to become embroiled in a new cold war between the United States and Russia.

4.2.1.2. Economic Risk and a Challenge to Stable Port Accesses

The other risk that Ethiopia may face is economic risk; first, the absence of peace and security has a direct impact on the country's economy. As previously stated, Djibouti is a battleground for external powers, and at least a dozen countries have military bases or small facility units there. Ethiopia's foreign policy in 2002 places a greater emphasis on the long-term use of port access without external intervention. However, the arrival of external powers and fierce geopolitical rivalry may have an impact on the long-term use of ports; particularly the rivalry put Djibouti as a sovereign debt state.

The reverse is evident here: Ethiopian import-export activities (95%) are completely dependent on Djibouti ports (Selam, 2021). However, Djibouti is a military garrison that has leased most of its shores to external powers for extended periods, which could pose a problem for Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a merchant ship that is transported to various world corridors for trading activities; if these ships are blocked by an enemy naval fleet, Ethiopia will face significant economic and security challenges. For example, China has a military base in Djibouti and is considered a friend of Ethiopia, and the United States has a naval base in Djibouti as well, which may impede Ethiopian shipping activities due to the rivalry of two massively opposing states. The RSCT has gone traction that, if Djibouti is affected the impact is directly spilling to Ethiopia posing a risk to the import-export activity.

Geopolitical rivalry causes security issues, and investment, technology transfer, loans, and other economic benefits may be jeopardized. Business cannot exist in an unstable and peaceful environment. In this regard, the challenge for Ethiopia as a result of geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa has been ensuring peace and stability in the context of a diverse range of conflicts on the one hand and sustaining long-term development that considers the future on the other. In terms of economics, the presence of external powers in the region jeopardizes Ethiopia's economic interest in investing in ports; for example, the UAE was not interested in Ethiopia's participation in the port of Berbera Somaliland as part of the Arab-Ethiopia historical animosity.

According to a study participant (KI7, 8, 9, and 10), access to the sea or ownership of ports is critical for any country, not only for economic reasons but also for security concerns. Ethiopia has lost its historic access to the sea in the ports of Massawa and Asseb since 1991, following Eritrea's secession. Ethiopia, with a population of 120 million, is the world's first

landlocked country, relying on the blessings of other countries. After the Ethiopian-Eritrean war in 1998-2000, Djibouti's importance in Ethiopian external trade grew exponentially. This implies that Ethiopia's external trade activity may be under siege or surveillance by external powers, either directly or indirectly. It is obvious that Ethiopia didn't have a naval fleet to protect its import-export activities. If antagonistic powers launch conventional war through their naval fleets, Ethiopia's maritime trade could be hampered, and import and export activity could be halted unless other alternative ports are prepared. KI, 8 explained in the following way,

Ethiopia primarily uses the port of Djibouti for external trade, and the country is pursuing an economic integration strategy that includes diversifying Ethiopia's port options in the region, including the port of Berbera in Somaliland, which has a 19% share. However, as Djibouti's military bases expand, the port's dependability is being called into question. The military presence of the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Eritrea, as well as the potential arrival of Egypt, would jeopardize Ethiopia's economic and security survival in the region. (KI 8)

The current HOA geopolitical rivalry is a maritime and land-based rivalry and it directly affects Ethiopia's national interests. The emerging geostrategic competition over ports and bases in the Horn will have geostrategic and geo-economic implications for Ethiopia. The government is pursuing a diversification strategy for its port service in order to reduce strategic vulnerability caused by over-reliance on Djibouti. In order to avoid being policy-bound, it has begun projects in Berbera, Sudan, Eritrea, and Kenya.

The geopolitical rivalry in the HOA littoral states means the rivalry on the Ethiopian existence and national interest. The impact or the risk of geopolitical rivalry in the HOA littoral states and how directly affects landlocked Ethiopia. It is clearly explained in the following way;

Ethiopia is feeling hemmed in from the other side of the Red Sea. In its war with Eritrea, the landlocked hegemon lost access to the port of Assab by default. Ethiopia is concerned about its increasing reliance on port access to investment (in the Gulf) as a source of currency, as well as the militarization of its surroundings. (Weber, 2017; P:4)

The current geopolitical rivalry in the region has been exacerbated by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which has created a diplomatic quandary for Ethiopia and the region. Food insecurity is the most serious threat facing Ethiopia and the region. Most African countries rely on wheat imported from Ukraine and Russia, and the international fuel crisis has had a significant impact on Ethiopia's economy. Ethiopia's suspension from AGOA privileges in November 2021 has a spillover factor due to the geopolitical rivalry between the US and

China in the region. In fact, the US government announced that the suspension decision is due to the accusation of the Ethiopian government of human rights violations in the northern Ethiopia civil war. One of the consequences of geopolitical rivalry posing an economic risk to Ethiopia. As KI 4 explained that the suspension is directly related to the US plan to see her resentment of the Ethiopian government's stance approaching China and Russia and its refusal to accept the order of the US government. However, the suspension has an impact on the Ethiopian economy, and experts say it will affect millions of lives in Ethiopia's direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Another economic risk is the risk of receiving aid and loans from donor countries such as the United States and the European Union, as well as other development support organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank. Access to loans and aid is critical for economic growth, job creation, and improving people's lives (KI 1, 6, and 10). However, if the aid and the loan-dependent economy are poorly managed, it can have far-reaching consequences for recipient countries such as Ethiopia. For the last three decades, Ethiopia has been one of the top five African countries in terms of external debt. External powers contribute billions of dollars in order to position themselves as reliable partner. If the debt and loan rates are raised, the Ethiopian economy may become paralyzed and completely dependent on creditor countries. At the end of the day, the country's aid and loan-dependent economy trapped it in a debt trap and a cycle of sovereign debt, inviting predatory trade practices in Ethiopia.

4.2.1.3. Escalated the Hydro-political Rivalry and GERD Dispute

The Nile River has had a significant impact on regional politics and intra-state relations in the past, present, and future, influencing economic development and poverty reduction, geopolitical dynamics, power balance, alliance formation, external intervention, and geo-strategic power contestations. Historically, the downstream countries, namely Egypt and Sudan, have long dominated the Nile Basin region's power balance due to their military power, geostrategic location, diplomatic powers, and treaty politics, while Ethiopia, a source of Blue Nile (contributes 85% of Nile's water share), has been passive.

According to Ambassador Ibrahim Indris (July 2022)¹⁸, the HOA geopolitics, peace, and security situation are the result of Nile politics and the Red Sea rivalry. He also stated that Egypt believed that "Ethiopia is a sharp bone that sticks on the Egyptian neck," and that it should be avoided. Egypt has used Nile water unilaterally, accompanied by various colonial

¹⁸ Ambassador Ibrahim a senior diplomat and ambassador of Ethiopia in Egypt, explains in a conference held in MOFA about the GERD case in July, 2022.

and apartheid treaties, with Cairo eager to keep Ethiopia weak by exacerbating internal problems. According to the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, every Ethiopian peace and security problem has an Egyptian component.

The Nile River and its uncooperative ambition of water utilization is a source of contention in the HOA region, with Egypt attempting to ensure its long-term use of the water by weakening Ethiopia. Egypt believed that if Ethiopia remained stable, it would pose a significant threat to Egypt's sustainable use of Nile water. Study participants (KI 4 and 9) agreed that Egypt had set two goals against Ethiopia. One option is to avoid Ethiopia in the Red Sea region, which appears successful and has aided Eritrea's independence. The second is to make Ethiopia unstable to obstruct the use of the Nile River. Egypt has tried various approaches, including invasion, signing of baseless and fake treaties, binding agreements, military and logistical support for defiant groups to weaken Ethiopia, mobilizing proxy wars, and supporting insurgencies.

Ethiopia's flagship project, the GERD, launched on March 30, 2011, intensified Nile hydro-politics between Ethiopia and the lower riparian states. It was and is a regional hegemonic rivalry not a question of water sharing or dam construction. Egypt feared that the project would turn Ethiopia into a regional hegemon and used every means possible to destabilize Ethiopia in order to maintain its previous hegemonic status. Several rounds of multilateral and bilateral negotiations were attempted between Ethiopia and the lower riparian states after the project began. However, it was not and still is not a win-win situation. As a result, the data demonstrated that the HOA's tense geopolitical rivalry challenged Ethiopia, escalating the GERD disputes. The antagonistic external powers used the GERD issue to advance their national interests; for example, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates supported lower riparian countries (Zaidan, 2020), whereas China, Russia, and Türkiye supported Ethiopia (Klaassen, 2021).

Egypt employs all available options and resources (political, economic, and security-related) to isolate and pressure Ethiopia over the GERD, as well as to contain extra-regional powers' actions in this geopolitical space (both partners' and competitors'). Dentice and Corda (2020) also supported Egypt in taking the GERD issue to the UN Security Council and the Arab League in order to put diplomatic pressure on Ethiopia. One of the geopolitical implications is the United States and World Bank's pressure and support for Egypt, as well as the Arab League's announcement of full support for Egypt's stance. Egypt has used the Arab League as a foreign vehicle to consolidate its hydropower hegemony in the Horn of Africa. The Arab

League Council issued a resolution at the conclusion of its 153rd session condemning any "violation of Egypt's historical rights to the waters of the Nile." All GERD-related disputes are the result of antagonistic rivalry between external powers attempting to use the GERD issue as a card in their favor.

In order to sum up, the main risks or challenges that Ethiopia may face as a result of tough extra-regional power rivalry in the HOA region arose if Ethiopia chose one side over the other. Ethiopia's neutral stance reduces risk while increasing opportunities from both sides. The main risks are peace and security risks, economic risks, a challenge to the stable and sustainable use of ports, and an increase in GERD tensions. The rivalry of extra-regional powers may worsen Ethiopia's internal peace and security situation; they are a source of insecurity for Ethiopia, and adversarial states might support proxy wars and insurgency groups to embroil the internal situation of Ethiopia. The other major risk is a threat to Ethiopia's use of ports or secure port access in the littoral states. The fall or control of neighboring states such as Djibouti and Somalia by foreign powers has a direct impact on Ethiopia's stable port utilization. Another critical point is that the rivalry heightened Nile hydro-politics. The HOA geopolitical rivalry has been directly related to the GERD construction and the tripartite negotiation. Extra regional actors with divergent interests in each other could use the GERD project to leverage their interests.

4.2.2. The Opportunities of Geopolitical Rivalry of Foreign powers in the HOA for Ethiopia

The researcher illustrates the opportunities that Ethiopia benefits from the geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA in this section of the paper. This geopolitical rivalry created new opportunities for regional countries to gain the most benefit from all parties. The multipolar world order benefits developing or third-world states like Ethiopia. Because there are many rivals and alternate actors in a multipolar world, developing states attempted to form friendships (KI2). Despite the outdated forms of the boss and servant relationship of the west, all parties are eager to establish a cordial and win-win relationship. If developing states make a calculated and cautious move, they may benefit more from the multipolar order or gain more friends. Even competitors and rivals can be allies of weak states. For example, if Russia, China, or the United States all become friends with Ethiopia, this provides an opportunity to exploit the best interests or benefit of those actors.

Study participant (KI1) agreed that Ethiopia's opportunity from the rivalry is dependent on the approach and capacity to manage geopolitical changes. If Ethiopia chooses sides, it will

face more risks than opportunities. Instead, Ethiopia could benefit from taking the middle road and following the non-aligned movement. External powers have established their own presence close to Ethiopia. As a result, Ethiopia can benefit from its presence by minimizing its drawbacks. Ethiopia should stop being a servant of the United States and instead become an adversary of China. Ethiopia should adopt and implement a wise foreign policy; Ethiopia should pursue or discontinue our foreign policy in order to support or please one group while focusing solely on Ethiopia's national interests. They have an opportunity for Ethiopia to receive developmental aid and experience, and to work with them in peace, security, and regional integration on a reciprocal basis. But we must exercise caution.

In the following sentence, KI 4 describes how Ethiopia should be vigilant in its external relations. "If the United States offered \$1 billion to end relations with China, and China offered \$100 million, the Ethiopian government would not accept the United States offer." The Ethiopian government must say, "No, you can only give \$100 million and maintain your relationship with both global actors." The regional security complex theory has investigated the opportunities of geopolitical rivalry for the HOA and Ethiopia in particular. Not only have problems or negative issues been spilled, but positive effects can also be spilled to the immediate neighbor. As a result of the spilled nature and entanglement of regional countries, rivalries provide Ethiopia with numerous opportunities. It is difficult to separate the positive and negative effects from the regional countries.

According to an ECSU study participant (KI 4), Ethiopia should be diplomatically wise, and handling or following the middle line is a very important rule for Ethiopia to follow. To maximize opportunities, Ethiopia can use its advantages such as food, energy, military capacity, power, and population as leverage to become a regional powerhouse. If "we fail, Ethiopia's interests are automatically harmed." When dealing with different interest groups, Ethiopia must be very careful and think three or more times. According to information gathered from informants and secondary sources, Ethiopia's geopolitical rivalry in the HOA could present numerous opportunities. The main opportunities are supporting the peace and security efforts, bringing economic growth for Ethiopia, and making Ethiopia a diplomatic hub of Africa detailed analysis has been shown as follows.

4.2.2.1. Supports Ethiopia's Peace and Security Efforts

As a global superpower emerges, the region as a whole is becoming a geopolitical playground for global powers. Despite the fact that the region's current peace and security situation has deteriorated, external powers have spent billions of dollars to make the region

more stable. Study participant (KI 4), agreed that most of the powers stationed in the Horn of Africa want regional stability as much as Ethiopia does. Ethiopia's main foreign policy goal in the HOA region has been to eliminate the threat of terrorism and potential insecurity. One of the agenda items to deter potential threats was Ethiopia's military involvement in Somalia to fight Al Shabaab in 2006.

Traditional actors like the USA and EU played an active role in peace and stability efforts, after the new phase of geopolitical rivalry other actors like China, Russia, and Türkiye have been playing a leading role. The US has spent heavily on the global "war on terror" in Somalia and piracy off the Somali coasts, as well as training security forces in IGAD and other bilateral countries. The United States increased its security and development assistance to Ethiopia from \$1.1 billion in 2001 to \$3.6 billion in 2014, according to the Inter-Agency Regional Analysis Network (2017, p. 9). It should be considered the US support in the fight against terrorism and piracy in the region.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attack, the primary goal of the military base stationed in the region has been to combat terrorism and maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden region. They realized that without the peaceful Horn of Africa, the resource-rich HOA countries would become a safe haven for extremists and terrorist groups, the strategic maritime route would be jeopardized, the Arabian Peninsula the world's oil bank would be troubled, and Western Europe could be hit by a refugee tsunami. Based on the factors mentioned above, external powers conducted bilateral and multilateral military and security operations in the region, which could be very beneficial to the region's relative peace and stability and a supportive measure to Ethiopia's peace and stability efforts.

The first two years of Trump's presidency saw an even greater increase in dynamic engagement across the continent, particularly in Somalia, where US security forces conducted 47 airstrikes against Al-Shabaab in 2018 (a 200% increase from 2016) (USIP, 2020). The presence of foreign military bases on the other side provides Ethiopia with insurance in its fight against terrorism. The primary goal of the United States military bases in Djibouti and Somalia is to combat global terrorism against Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab. Other actors, such as China, played a critical role in ensuring the maritime security of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden regions, which are vital to Ethiopia's external trade.

China has shifted its previous economic or investment-based policy to strategic and security partnerships with HOA countries in order to play a global role and maintain its massive investments. The first China-Horn of African Peace, Good Governance, and Development

Conference was held in Addis Ababa from June 20-22, 2022. The current peace and development conference is the most visible manifestation of China's policy shift. It was a sign of how China is increasing its presence in the Horn of Africa in terms of peace and security sectors. It is an attempt to reaffirm China's commitment to bringing peace and stability to the region. During the conference, China's special envoy to the HOA, Xue Bing, told the audience,

I am ready to provide mediation efforts for the peaceful resolution of disputes based on the will of countries in this region." The conference could be interpreted as a green light for regional countries to receive additional assistance for the acute humanitarian crisis and drought issues. According to official sources, around 20 million Ethiopians are in need of food; the conference could help to solve this problem. To end the destructive war, the special envoy offered to mediate disputes in the region, particularly between the Ethiopian Federal Government and rebel TPLF leaders. It could be another alternative mediation effort by China in addition to the roles of the AU, the US, and Kenya. (Foreign Policy's Africa Brief, 2022; P.2)

The first Chinese HOA envoy calls for the parties to reach a win-win solution. The Chinese realized that an economic isolation policy is unprofitable because investment is impossible without a peaceful region. The key finding here is whether the Horn states have welcomed China's role in peace and security. It answers yes based on data showing that governments welcomed China's role in leveraging the United States' traditional model of intervention. What China has done in the economic sector has made it an alternative and reliable ally for the horn courtiers. Ethiopia could use China as an alternative negotiator in the GERD dispute, the Tigray region civil war, and the Ethio-Sudan border conflict because China strives to play a balanced role in achieving a win-win solution.

China saw the US's harsh sanctions against Ethiopia as an opportunity to position itself as a regional viable ally for Ethiopia. It is in both Beijing's and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's interests to put the country on a path toward peace without the involvement of Washington. China did not want Ethiopia to be destabilized because it has billions of dollars invested there. In general, external actors support Ethiopia's efforts to pursue a shared policy of combating terrorism and religious fundamentalism in the region. Aside from the attempt to combat terrorism, Ethiopia has been and continues to be committed to international peacekeeping missions, beginning with the Korean Peace Keeping mission in the 1950s and continuing with the current Darfur and Abiye missions. As a result, the presence of those external powers is a global effort as well as a benefit to regional peace and stability.

The internal peace and security situation is the baseline for Ethiopia's role abroad, so, the geopolitical rivalry and the advent of multi-polar actors have been an opportunity to support Ethiopia's effort to bring peace and stability inside. Without internal stability it is difficult to talk about external relations, currently, our home problem needs the integrated activity of Ethiopia and its allies. In this case, all the external powers tried to support Ethiopia's effort to solve its problem in its own capacity.

4.2.2.2. Brings Economic Dividends and Diversify Port Utilization for Ethiopia

The geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA enabled regional countries to reap economic dividends in various forms; Ethiopia, in particular, has benefited from profitable opportunities. When it comes to economic dividends, Ethiopia is a poor country that requires massive development aid, FDI, technology transfer, capital inflow, loan, franchise, training, and knowledge transfer from developed nations, particularly from those stationed in the HOA region. Ethiopia has received many dividends from external powers over the last two decades, resulting in astonishing economic growth recognized by international and continental organizations. This economic growth was the result of Ethiopia's prudent and cautious foreign policy, as well as its middle-of-the-road role. External rivalries not only carry weapons, but also finance, technology, and market access for Ethiopian export goods. If Ethiopia is in good standing with all parties, it is easy to access the market from all parties, and investment and aid will flow in from all directions.

All external powers involved in the new geopolitical rivalry are keen to establish peaceful and beneficial economic, diplomatic, and security ties with Ethiopia. Because of its strategic advantage, diplomatic role, cheap labor with a large youth population, untapped natural resources, fertile land, and pleasant climatic conditions Ethiopia is the focus of all external powers. As a result, all of my study participants from AAU, ECSU, and other independent respondents agreed that external geopolitical rivalry is very important for Ethiopia if managed carefully. Vertin (2019) also agreed that;

The geopolitical rivalry in the HOA has to bring more dividends for the regional country if it is properly managed. With proper management of all the geopolitical participants i.e., the west, the east, and the Middle East the regional countries in specific, and the African continent, in general, can get many economic advantages. The Horn of African states, particularly Ethiopia, can use the rivalry as an opportunity for attracting investments and assistance to develop infrastructure, create jobs, and access global markets as they attempt to modernize their economies. (P.11).

The geopolitical actors are also forming various regional alliances, which would work to secure the region's waterways, regulate migrations, achieve food security, combat extremism,

and manage conflict and displacement. If the region is as safe as expected, it will play a significant role in boosting the region's economy and increasing Ethiopia's export-import activities. Peace and economic growth are not two sides of the same coin but the same side; without peace, no investment, infrastructure construction, or trade is possible.

The rivalry provided Ethiopia with an opportunity to attract new investment and development partners. China has become Ethiopia's most important economic partner, investing billions of dollars in infrastructure development, FDI, loans, aid, and technology transfer. China constructed various infrastructure flagship projects, such as the Addis Abeba-Djibouti rail way (Standard Gauge Railway), which fundamentally altered the region's economic landscapes and connectivity. This line has handled the majority of Ethiopia's landlocked trade. Previously, Ethiopia and Djibouti were connected by poor road networks, with trucks taking up to two or three days to travel between the two capital cities. The newly built Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway has cut the travel time between the two cities to ten hours. Furthermore, Chinese infrastructure investments in Ethiopia, such as the new airport, African Union headquarters, and ring roads, are welcomed.

Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa have benefited from China's massive One Belt, One Road Initiative, which connects the HOA region via rail and ports such as Doraleh and Lammu. These ports will serve as alternative ports of entry for Ethiopian import and export activities. The presence of China is also important because it connects the region to the global market and serves as a vehicle for Ethiopia's policy of regional integration. Ethiopia and China have mutual interests in the Horn of Africa, according to Gashaw and Zelalem (2016). Ethiopia wants to be a regional integration champion in the HOA, making various attempts to integrate infrastructures; on the other hand, China needs to connect its African investments through its "One Road, One Belt" project. Thus, geopolitical rivalry and the presence of external powers provide a boost for Ethiopia's ability to maintain regional hegemony and integrate the region through economic activities.

The geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers opened the way for Ethiopia to play a leading economic and military superpower in the region. In this case, the analysis supported that 120 million Ethiopia needs a reliable port service and by any means, Ethiopia should get additional port access and diversify the outlets. In this case, Ethiopia needs to practically apply the plan to build a naval base in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden unless the import and export activity of Ethiopia falls under the goodwill of extra-regional powers. As per the government verification Ethiopia is in the progress to rebuild its own naval base in the region,

so, this process should be practical. It is not the time to sit silent and observe the elephant's race but being part of the tournament enabled us to get our share. Indeed, at this time Ethiopia has no actual ports, it may be in the future owned a port, but currently, the situation forced Ethiopia to take its own measures to protect its national interest.

Infrastructure development is a critical component for regional economic and political integration, allowing Ethiopia to gain significant market access and investment opportunities. This regional integration is required in order to realize continental and regional flagship projects such as intra-Africa free trade, free movement of people, and free market schemes. Nicholas (2019) agreed with the preceding analysis, stating that the geo-economic rivalry of external powers is critical for regional countries' infrastructure growth, regional interconnection, and common alliance against insecurity and instability.

Foreign Policy African Brief (2022), explained the short-term and long-term economic importance of the Belt and Road Initiatives for Ethiopia that how a prominent geopolitical actor China has been vital in the region. "Ethiopia could be considered a flagship for China's Belt and Road Initiative, with around \$16 billion in investments between 2000 and 2020 and currently around 400 Chinese construction and manufacturing projects." (P.2)

The new geopolitical dynamics bring other geopolitical actors to establish economic ties with HOA countries mainly with Ethiopia. Such as, Russian trade activity increased by 185% between 2005 and 2015. Ethiopia and Russia are also discussing the establishment of a nuclear technology center, and Russia has announced its intention to build an African Center of Excellence and nuclear power in Ethiopia. In addition, Russia canceled \$163.6 million in Ethiopian debt in advance of the Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi. Turkey, the Gulf States, and India have also increased their economic participation in the region.

UAE and Saudi invested billions of dollars in Ethiopia that could enable them to get hard currency. According to Dahir (2019, p. 13), Ethiopia receives \$3 billion in investments and aid from the United Arab Emirates following the 2018 reform, including a \$1 billion deposit in the country's central bank, which helps to alleviate the acute shortage of foreign hard currency. Furthermore, "the United States and its partners have already begun to provide a \$2.9 billion dollar IMF package and planned US investments of up to \$5 billion in Ethiopia," according to USIP (2020, p. 55). The geopolitical rivalry brings an economic dividend to Ethiopia, as external powers' interest in investing more has increased.

On the Western side according to Financial Times (March, 5/2020) reported that;

The US is ready to invest \$ 5 billion in Ethiopia through its newly created International Development Finance Corporation in an effort to support private-sector reform and counter China's influence in one of Africa's fastest-growing economies... to help Washington's foreign policy aims, including countering the influence of China and Russia- in Africa. (Para.5).

Because of China's presence in Ethiopia, may pave the way for the United States and Europe to arrive as another investment ally to compete with China's dominance. This rivalry paved the way for Ethiopia to emerge as an economic powerhouse for those states. The competition between those multipolar actors created a large and diverse market destination for Ethiopia's exported commodities. Even if the alliance is short-sighted or for strategic reasons, there is organic interdependence between Ethiopia and Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, and others. This strategic interest has been disabled, affecting the organic integration of the region.

Other very important economic opportunities resulting from the geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA benefited Ethiopia by providing alternative port access from other nearby well-equipped ports. Since 1991, Ethiopia, as a landlocked country, has had a strong strategic interest in having seaports. Ethiopia pays between \$1.5 and \$2 billion per year for port services, which is a significant financial loss, and it is unreliable that a population of 100 million or more is solely dependent on ports (Ethiopia Observer, 2018). Participants in the study (KI 4, KI 5, KI 6, and KI 8) also agreed that many external powers, such as the UAE and China, are actively involved in developing ports in the HOA. As a result, Ethiopia will have the opportunity to diversify its port access beyond the port of Djibouti, which is very expensive, costing millions of dollars per year. Ethiopia is attempting to diversify its port access in Somaliland (Port Berbera, in which Ethiopia holds a 19% stake), the Port of Assab (in progress), and the Kenya Lapset or Lammu project, which is now open for import and export to southern Ethiopia (Ahmed, 2020, and Dargie, 2021). In accordance with the principle of reciprocity, Ethiopia is in supplying electric power to Djibouti and is in advanced talks with Kenya, which gives Ethiopia confidence in gaining easy access to the sea. As it was signed by the two officials during the agreement, the 2018 normalization between Ethiopia and Eritrea also opened up a new opportunity for port diversification to Assab and Massawa but it is delayed. The relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea, on the other hand, resented Djibouti's loss of benefit from Ethiopia.

Aside from the economic significance of the arrival of external powers, a large number of Ethiopian migrant labor workers found employment in Middle Eastern countries. The Middle East actors, particularly the Arabs, benefit from Ethiopia's indentured labor or migrant

workers, demonstrating that Ethiopia contributes to the economies of each Arab state. The Gulf States is the primary destination for Ethiopian refugee workers, who are a major source of remittances for the Ethiopian economy. Millions of Ethiopian households were also supported by migrant workers. On the other hand, thousands of labor workers are being forced to expatriate, primarily in Saudi Arabia, due to the GERD issue and Egypt's indirect pressure.

4.2.2.3. It Is an Opportunity for Ethiopia to Become a Diplomatic Champion of Africa

In interstate relations, most countries pursue a pragmatic foreign policy in order to achieve their objectives; "there is no permanent friend, but permanent national interest." Ethiopian foreign policy has been challenged in the last four years by internal insecurity and intense diplomatic pressure from the international community, particularly the West. Ethiopia is attempting to take the middle road and avoid siding with one group, the eastern group, primarily China, and Russia has supported Ethiopia's stance at various UNSC meetings. According to my AAU study participants (KI 2 and 3), third-world countries are currently in a diplomatic bind because the West has forced them to oppose Russia. However, the way forward for this diplomatic quandary is to recall the non-aligned movement's Bandung conference. As a result, Ethiopia has the capacity and opportunity to become a diplomatic champion of Africa, as Emperor Haile Selassie did. Currently, the "no more" movement is another phase that Ethiopia is fighting an African war and struggling against white supremacy. It is the second round of the Adwa movement that Ethiopians all over the world struggle to resist neo-colonialism through the flagship project of GERD construction and the "no more" movement (MOFA, Report 2021).¹⁹

Futurology, Sep 28/2022, explained that Ethiopia benefited from geopolitical rivalry on one side by gaining political and diplomatic allies from China and Russia when the west imposed heavy pressure due to the conflict with the TPLF. Ethiopia could use the rivalry to bring regional countries together in order to resist geopolitical pressures. Ethiopia's desire to create effective regional integration is also credible at a time when the federal government has established a special integration ministry. The role of Ethiopia in combating terrorism was undeniable, particularly in Somalia, where thousands of soldiers were deployed to peacekeeping missions under the auspices of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council. The west pursues an absolute victory policy and is not a viable ally,

¹⁹ MOFA; Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website, <http://www.mfa.gov.et>.

whereas the east pursues a foreign policy that benefits Ethiopia and other third-world countries. The Ethiopian government should not pursue a rigid foreign policy; rather, it should be flexible in order to maximize its own national interests. It is critical to establish relationships with all actors based on foreign policy frameworks. By scanning the global context and developing flexible and focused national interests, Ethiopia benefits not only the region but also the continent. We should not be "*Zeleneskians*" who are only concerned with preserving his power, rather than thinking about the people and the country's survival.

There is global disorder, such as the Ukraine-Russia war, China-US rivalry, and its effect on Taiwan, which has put African states in a diplomatic bind, and those actors have tried to align on their side. To maximize their national interests in this dangerous time, Africans should develop a neutral foreign policy based on global patterns. Instead of being pushed or pulled by China, it is preferable for the AU or other sub-regional organizations and states to band together in order to rekindle the Bandung type of non-alignment movement. However, each country is preoccupied with its own internal issues, making it difficult to form a continental alliance or unity. The advantage of Bandung's foreign policy is that it is not antagonistic and is very friendly to compete for powers. As a result, this will have a positive impact and may help small states maximize their interest in the multipolar global order.

The presence of external powers, particularly China and Russia, can be used to achieve a power balance, which could benefit Ethiopia as an African diplomatic hub. Despite Ethiopia's contentious relationship with the West, countries in the East and the Middle East saw Ethiopia as a symbol of unity and freedom. As a result, they realized that it is simple to enter Africa's hinterland via Ethiopia. The "No More" movement is currently a sign that Ethiopia is fighting an African war through a new form of diplomacy. Despite Ethiopia's staunch opposition, the West is attempting to bend it through a series of media campaigns, sanctions, and diplomatic pressure. In the subsequent GERD trilateral negotiations, the West openly supported the lower riparian countries but refused to accept their interest rather than withdrawing from the table by announcing a solution through the AU. According to RSCT, the GERD fruit could be spilled to neighboring states and used as a unifying instrument for regional countries in order to build a single and unified economic zone. These and other circumstances regarded Ethiopia as the new leader of the Non-aligned Movement.

To wrap up this part, there are many opportunities that geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region, could give Ethiopia. The current multipolar world order by itself brings alternative economic and security allies for third-world countries like Ethiopia. The geopolitical

contestation in the region should be properly managed which could enable to maximization of the opportunities. The good news is that all geopolitical actors from the west, east, and the Middle East need to establish peaceful relations with Ethiopia. To that end, the Bandung-style non-aligned movement is the way forward in order to escape the dynamic geopolitical complexity. In general, the rivalry yields various benefits for Ethiopia, including developmental aid, experience, and reciprocal cooperation in peace, security, and regional integration. But we must proceed with caution.

The HOA region is a volatile and hotbed region affected by recurring civil war, terrorism, maritime piracy, and other issues. Ethiopia, a landlocked country, is directly affected by the region's insecurity. Ethiopia has been enthusiastic about and involved in various regional peace and security efforts in collaboration with international partners. External powers spent billions of dollars and made numerous bilateral and multilateral efforts to restore regional peace and stability, secure the most strategic maritime zone, and combat terrorism. This positive effort by external powers has the potential to improve regional peace and security. Economically, the geopolitical rivalry has ushered in a new era of investment and globalized market inflows to the region, potentially opening the door to positive competition among external actors, which is a good opportunity for economic development. Because of its untapped natural resources, demographic advantage, and diplomatic role on international stages, Ethiopia has become an economic and diplomatic hub of Africa.

In general, this chapter examined in depth all specific objectives or research questions based on primary and secondary data. Based on the theoretical perspectives of realism or neorealism and regional security complex theory, it assessed the rationale for the advent of external powers in this time from near and far, what appears to be the new geopolitical dynamics in the region, and the new power alignments in the HOA region. Other topics covered in this section include the challenges or risks and opportunities that Ethiopia faces or gains as a result of geopolitical competition in the region.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Introduction

The study's goal was to present in detail the new geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers in the HOA region, with a special focus on Ethiopia, in order to explore the risks and opportunities discussed in previous chapters. Based on the research questions, the study conducted a thorough analysis and produced concrete findings that will benefit HOA countries in general and Ethiopia in particular. The study attempts to highlight the key concluding remarks derived from this chapter's findings. The conclusion is presented in accordance with the themes and specific objectives of the paper for a clear and better understanding of the overall research findings. Finally, possible recommendations are made for each concerned body based on the findings, ensuring the study's success and effectiveness.

5.1. Summary

The paper discussed the new geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA region (comprised of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan), and its risks and opportunities for Ethiopia, the region's anchor state, which is provided. The study was analyzed using an exploratory qualitative research approach, in which primary data was gathered from identified key informants, and secondary data was also used as a complementary to the study. The researcher thoroughly researched the topic and used three theoretical frameworks to illustrate the study: classical and critical geopolitical theories, realism or neorealism, and regional security complex theory. The study's scope is the HOA region in general, and Ethiopia in particular because the region is home to diverse nations with different historical and cultural backgrounds.

The main driving factor or rationale for the advent of foreign powers into the HOA region is, first and foremost, its geostrategic importance as a valuable area for economic, strategic, military, and political advantages, and it is a critical geostrategic position, even more so than other global geopolitical hotspots. The current HOA geopolitical rivalry revives the classical geopolitical theories of Makinder's "heartland" and Spikman's Rimand theory. Whoever controls the Horn of Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Bab-al-Mandeb, and the Red Sea region has the ability to influence global politics. The second rationale is the region's geo-economic importance and critical transit route for international trade in goods and services. The third driving factor for the emergence of foreign powers is resource competition and containment.

The region is rich in untapped natural resources; it has a geographically favorable climate for investment, a market for manufactured goods, and a source of cheap labor for investment activities. The new containment factor is another rationale for the geopolitical contestation of extra-regional powers; particularly, the US government implementing firm and vigilant containments against China and Russia in the region, while others, such as Middle Eastern powers, are in containment to one another.

The study investigates the new geopolitical dynamics or rivalry that currently exists in the HOA region, which hosts fierce geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers in an unprecedented manner. The current geopolitical rivalry differs greatly in terms of the field of competition, the actors involved, and the intensity and focus of rival powers in the area. The rivalry is a "new scramble for Africa" and "great game theory," it recalls the cold war geopolitical contestation. The instruments of geopolitical rivalry are geo-economic rivalry, geo-military rivalry and formation of military bases (military ports, airstrips, training camps, semi-permanent facilities, logistics hubs, and naval forces for permanent or regular deployment of soldiers), strategic and security rivalry, or power projection, involvement in sovereign countries' internal affairs, proxy wars, and insurgency activities. The geo-economic rivalry is manifested by FDI, low-cost loans and aid, trade, and soft power projections.

The HOA region is a battleground or militarized zone for dozens of realist external powers through the establishment of military bases, arms races, opening training camps, alliance formation, peacekeeping operations, and security lineups in geo-military and security rivalry. Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, and Somaliland are safe havens for geo-military rivalry. The West is influential in that it builds military facilities and spends billions of dollars to combat terrorism, piracy, conflict mediation, and regional stability; however, the region's peace and security situation deteriorates from time to time due to a lack of coordination and competing interests. The geo-military rivalry has risen since China established its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017, and China has now shifted its non-interference and economic-driven policy to wise intervention and regional peace and stability efforts. The Middle East power's geo-military rivalry is very highly sponsored by different public protests and insurgency movements. Turkey is reviving the region to its previous hegemonic status through a "neo-ottomanism" policy that created a hegemonic rivalry against Saudi and UAE making it a geopolitical security complex region affirming Buzan or geopolitical theories.

The geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers, as well as the militarization of the region, poses numerous challenges and risks to Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in general. As the regional

security complex theory explains, if our neighbor is unstable, we are also in trouble. The new geopolitical rivalry has brought Ethiopian security and economic risks, which may arise due to Ethiopia's inability to manage the dynamics and if Ethiopia chooses one side over the other. Because of its geographical location, which is surrounded by small states, and Ethiopia is a landlocked country that is completely reliant on neighboring countries for external trade, the risk could be higher than in other horn regional states. Ethiopia develops a fear of encirclement or "siege mentality," particularly by Middle Eastern powers, endangering religious coexistence and increasing the actual and potential threat of religious and political fundamentalism.

Ethiopia is completely reliant on neighboring ports, making military and security equipment importation difficult in this geostrategic region. What if foreign powers are hesitant to allow Ethiopian ships to import military supplies, as they were during the Italo-Ethiopian war in 1935? The rivalry turned the HOA region into a new cold war battlefield, threatening Ethiopia's peace and security (a regional center of gravity) by sponsoring and mobilizing anti-Ethiopian groups, supporting insurgency movements, causing new regional divisions (exacerbating existing inter-state mistrust), exploiting fragile political settlements, reigniting old hostilities, and threatening Ethiopia's territorial sovereignty, and eventually leading to state collapse.

The rivalry could pose economic risks to landlocked Ethiopia, affecting the sustainable and safe use of ports; in particular, the rivalry could make Djibouti, a sovereign debt state, a door for Ethiopian external trade. On the other hand, if one group is offended by Ethiopia's stance, the rivalry could have an impact on investment, aid, and loans. It is evident in the current cancellation of western countries' and UN agencies' aid and loan programs. Make Ethiopian external trade activity may be under siege or surveillance by hostile external powers. If adversarial powers launch conventional war through their naval fleets, Ethiopia's maritime trade may be hampered, and import and export activity may be halted unless alternative ports are prepared. The new geopolitical rivalry exacerbated the GERD dispute and heightened a hydro-political conflict between Ethiopia and the lower riparian states. The rivalry brings pro-Egyptian and pro-Ethiopian groups to the podium, creating an impediment to reaching a win-win solution. Egypt has two plans: one is to avoid Ethiopia from the Red Sea region, and the other is to make Ethiopia unstable in order to obstruct Nile River use.

The final point discussed in this paper is the opportunities that Ethiopia may have if it pursues wise foreign policy and does not choose sides by adhering to the non-aligned movement. It

will be advantageous to exploit the best interests of all participating actors. The arrival of foreign powers presents an opportunity to assist Ethiopia's peace and security efforts such as fighting terrorism, maritime piracy, and peacekeeping operations. The external powers bring not only weapons, but also finance, FDI, technology, trade potential, capital inflow, loan, franchise, training, and market access, among other things, which have aided Ethiopia's economy in its transformation. If Ethiopia is in good standing with all parties, it will be easy to access the above benefits, which could come from any direction. Ethiopia can use the rivalry to attract investments and assistance to develop infrastructure, create jobs, and gain access to global markets as they seek to modernize its economies.

Aside from the foregoing, the rivalry provides an opportunity for Ethiopia to reinvigorate its role as a third-world diplomatic champion. Third-world countries are currently in a diplomatic bind as a result of the West forcing them to oppose Russia due to the war in Ukraine. However, the solution to this diplomatic quandary is to recall the Bandung conference of the non-aligned movement. As a result, Ethiopia has the potential and opportunity to become an African diplomatic champion, as Emperor Haile Selassie did.

5.2. Conclusion

This paper attempted to shed light on those concepts from an Afro-centric perspective because the majority of the written sources are Euro-centric and ignore the reality of internal situations. The current new geopolitical dynamics or the "new scramble for Africa" and the "new cold war" rivalry in the HOA region, with a special focus on Ethiopia, have been left unexplored by previous researchers. The geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA region is a geostrategic, geo-economic, and geo-military rivalry between contending powers that has exacerbated the region's instability, conflict, and poverty. It appears that the multipolar global order, which challenged the unipolar dominance of the United States and ushered in a new era of global multi-hegemon states, precipitated the geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region. The HOA region is now a chessboard and a battleground for dozens of extra-regional powers from the west, east, and Middle East (middle brokers).

The HOA region is so important in terms of geostrategic and geo-economic importance that one great power is working hard to keep its rival out of the area. The study's empirical framework appears to be applicable to the current geopolitical rivalry. The only difference is the increased number of participants in today's rivalry; previously, the region's hegemon powers were the bipolar powers of the United States and the Soviet Union. Geo-military rivalry is the region's main source of geopolitical conflict (establishment of military bases,

small training facilities, security alliances, and supporting proxy war and insurgency movements). There is significant geo-economics rivalry in terms of investment, trade, infrastructure development, aid, and loans, all of which provide positive energy to the regional countries.

Ethiopia is a dominant state in the region, influencing and being influenced by regional dynamics defined by the regional security complex theory. The geographically landlocked nature of Ethiopia is a source of risk when contending powers increase in military, sizing Djibouti as the outlet for Ethiopia's external trade. It appears that the region is a security region with interconnected problems that cannot be resolved independently. Instead, external powers must be contained in a unified, integrated, and vigilant manner. Regional countries should proceed with caution to capitalize on opportunities while minimizing risks in this multipolar world.

This paper proves to be highly important, contributing significantly to philosophical and theoretical understandings. Spikeman's rimland theory revived (appears to be) the framework for the current HOA geopolitical rivalry that external powers attempted to present themselves in the littoral states of Djibouti, Somalia, and Eritrea. Ethiopia and Sudan, on the other hand, are heartland states, as Makinder described. The liberal idealism theory was replaced by realism or neorealism, which provided first-hand theoretical justification for the increasing involvement of extra-regional powers in the region to deter rival powers and secure their national interests at the expense of others. The regional security complex theory developed by Buzan is the best lens for triangulating the internal regional security situation and its spillover effect.

The region becomes the world's most militaristic region, with adversarial powers competing for geo-security and geo-economic interests. This rivalry created a risk for Ethiopia if it chose to side with one group rather than the other, such as a security risk that enemy countries could sponsor anti-Ethiopian groups and a risk of safe port utilization due to Djibouti's total dominance by external military bases. So, the paper contributes significantly to theory dispensation, and philosophical analysis of what homework the regional countries should do, and it also serves as a stepping stone for further study in the area. The horn becomes a classically geostrategic, geo-economic, and geo-security region, with the horn's heartland or rimland similar to Eurasian space. The theory of realism, or neorealism, is the ideological model used by extra-regional powers to demonstrate their power and maximize their national

interests. The geopolitical rivalry has an impact on Ethiopia, and Buzn's RSCT clearly assessed that the immediate neighbor state could be affected both positively and negatively.

5.3. Recommendations

The researcher investigated in depth and presented concrete findings concerning the new geopolitical rivalry of external powers in the HOA region, as well as the risks and opportunities it may bring to Ethiopia. The following are the main possible recommendations; solutions and the way forward for Ethiopia in particular and the Horn of Africa region in general to the relevant bodies.

- The HOA countries need to be in an alert mood to the new cold war geopolitical rivalry of extra-regional powers in the region by reinvigorating Pan-Africanism ideology and committing to strengthening regional and continental integration platforms such as IGAD and AU. Building stronger regional ties through trade, security cooperation, a united front against terrorism, and the construction of physical and legal infrastructures to integrate the region. These are the next steps in resisting pressures and forging common fronts against the growing influence of extra-regional powers. The establishment of a unified region has resulted in no losses but has benefited all regional countries in order to protect sovereignty and state existence.
- Regional countries keep a close eye on national interests; it is important to reduce reliance on foreign powers for assistance because reliance erodes freedom and decision-making powers. It also makes countries more likely to accommodate the interests and politics of foreign powers, which may be detrimental to the host country. Inviting foreign powers to build military bases may jeopardize the host country's sovereignty and independence. Foreign power intervention is not just the concern of one country, such as Djibouti, Somalia, or others; it is a collective problem that requires collective solutions.
- Domestic circumstances determine a state's existence, let alone economic development, stable external relations, or diplomatic championship. The current Ethiopian internal situation is precarious, unstable, and characterized by intrastate civil war, which has a domino effect on the external relationship. So, first and foremost, the government needs to resolve internal issues as soon as possible in order for Ethiopia to advance its foreign policy in the Horn of Africa and around the world. Once the internal problems are resolved, it is up to you whether you engage with the west or the east. Whatever decision is made, it will be simple to influence. However, because of the internal crisis, you cannot play any external role or choose your preference because you are fighting for survival and the survival mood is

present. If Ethiopia is in order, failed states like Somalia, South Sudan, and even Eritrea can be handled effectively. Does it make sense to change your master without changing your slave status? No. So, shifting alliances is not a foreign policy goal for Ethiopia, but changing your dependency situation by addressing fundamental domestic issues can allow you to minimize risk and maximize opportunities in the regional geopolitical rivalry.

- Ethiopia is surrounded by independent sovereign states, and our external relations rely entirely on the goodwill of our neighboring port services. Ethiopia needs to form a vigilant and well-versed think tank group to work on proactive foreign policy strategy while taking into account our domestic context, conducting effective soft power diplomacy, and forecasting global changes for the benefit of the state. Ethiopia must abandon its "excessively inward-looking foreign policy" in favor of an outward orientation and friendly and cooperative relations with its neighbors. That is the urgent homework Ethiopia must complete in order to reduce the risk posed by external geopolitical actors and regional instability.

- A new order is emerging, and the economy and military are also changing; the stakeholders must read this very carefully. Things haven't settled down yet, so it needs careful tread through the transition. Whether like it or not, it is critical to work wisely and peacefully with all actors such as the West, the East, and emerging states, and must consider Ethiopia's security interests. To maximize our interests in this dynamic global politics, realists believe that "we must" define ourselves on the international stage or posture ourselves. Are "we" posing like cockroaches or lions on the international stage? That is the only way for Ethiopia to avoid the risk of geopolitical rivalry while capitalizing on regional opportunities.

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Annexes

Annex-I



Dear all my research participants, the purpose of this key informant interview guiding questions is to gather relevant information from the concerned bodies to conduct research for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in African Studies at Addis Ababa University. Thus, these questions are designed for the purpose of gathering data regarding the master's thesis research, entitled *“the geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers in the HOA region; Exploring the dynamics, the risk and opportunities with a special focus on Ethiopia”*. The data that you provide here is used to identify and analyze facts relating to the geopolitical rivalry in the HOA region and its implication for Ethiopia. I would like to express that; this research will be conducted for academic purposes and I confirm that all data given by you will be treated confidentially.

Therefore, you are kindly requested to spend some minutes of your time and provide as accurate information as possible. I greatly appreciate your kind cooperation which has of great importance to the success of this research, so please give genuine responses to every question.

Thank you for your time and cooperation in advance.

Personal Information of the interviewee

Position _____

Semi-structured In-depth interview guiding questions

1. How do you see the concept of geopolitics from the current perspective?
2. Please explain the Horn of Africa region facts and geographical orientations on the base of global politics?
3. How do you see the current horn of African geopolitical dynamics and the power lineups?
4. How do you see the great powers' rivalry in the horn of Africa and their interest?
5. What are the driving factors or the rationale for the advent and increasing involvement of external powers in the HOA region?

6. What are the natures of the great power rivalry in the horn of Africa?
7. Explain the great power's lineup, their amity, and enmity, or their competition and cooperation.
8. What are the risks of the geopolitical rivalry of foreign powers on the horn of Africa with a special focus on Ethiopia in the case of;
 - Peace and security Risk
 - Political risk
 - Geo-Economic risk
 - The GERD case
9. How do you assess the current Ethiopian situation and the role of external powers positively and negatively?
10. Explain the participation of the West, the East, and the Middle East power rivalry in the Horn of Africa region on the base of individual interests?
11. What are the main opportunities of the geopolitical rivalry of the foreign powers to a special focus on Ethiopia in the long run and short run?
 - Peace and Security cases
 - Economic cases
 - Diplomatic cases
12. What measures are to be done by the Ethiopia or country of the region and regional and continental organizations for this growing involvement of foreign powers in the region?

Annex-II**Lists and Information of Key informants**

No.	Pseudonym Name of the Key Informants	Sex	Organization	Position	Interview Date and Time	Remark
1.	KI 1	M	Fredric Herbert Institute	Geopolitical Expert and Researcher	July/1/2022 2:00-9:00 pm	personal interview
2.	KI 2	M	Addis Ababa University Department of PSIR	Lecturer and researcher in the area	July 27/2022 4:00-5:00 pm	// //
3.	KI 3	M	Addis Ababa University Department of PSIR	Lecturer and researcher in the area	July 27/2022 2:00-3:30 pm	// //
4.	KI 4	M	Ethiopian Civil Service University Department of PSIR	Lecturer and researcher in the area	July 11/2022 9:30-10:30 am	// //
5.	KI 5	M	Ministry of Foreign Affairs IGAD and Neighboring Countries affairs (Former Ethiopian Ambassador in Somalia)	Vice Director	August 9, 2022, 2:00-3:20 pm	// //
6.	KI 6	M	Ministry of Foreign Affairs IGAD and Neighboring Countries affairs	Director	August 9, 2022, 4:00-4:30 pm	// //
7.	KI 7	M	Addis Ababa University Geography Dep.	Geopolitical Expert	June 29/2022 10:00-11:20 pm	// //
8.	KI 8	M	MOFA Worker	Journalist and Expert in Nile Politics	July 5/2022 4:00-5:00 pm	Virtual
9.	KI 9	M	IGAD Addis Ababa Office	IGAD Addis Ababa Office Area Expert	July 15/2022 9:30-10:40 am	Personal
10.	KI 10	M	Ph.D. Candidate AAU	Geopolitical Expert	August 10/2022 11:00-12:10 am	Personal