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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**THE CONTEMPORARY USA-CHINA GEO-STRATEGIC RIVALRY IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA: ITS IMPLICATIONS TO ETHIOPIA**

BY

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MAY, 2025

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, ADDIS ABABA

**THE CONTEMPORARY USA-CHINA GEO-STRATEGIC RIVALRY IN THE
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BY EDAO WARITU

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
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SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

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DECLARATION

By my signature below, I certify that this thesis is entirely original with no submissions for credit toward any degree at any other university, that I have adhered to all technical and ethical standards of scholarship in its preparation, data collection, analysis, and compilation, and that any scholarly material included in the thesis has been acknowledged through citation.

Edao Waritu

MAY, 2025

As the candidate's advisor, I have given my approval for this thesis to be submitted for review.

Yacob Arsano (Prof.)

MAY, 2025

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LIST OF ABBREVAITIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|---|
| AFRICOM | United States Africa Command |
| AGOA | Africa Growth for Opportunity Act |
| AIIB | Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank |
| AU | African Union |
| BRI | Belt and Road Initiative |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa |
| CACF | China-Africa Cooperation Forum |
| CFR | Council on Foreign Relations |
| CGTN | China Global TV network |
| CJTF-HOA | Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa |
| CRS | Congressional Research Service |
| CSIS | Center for Strategic International Studies |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| DOS | Department of State |
| DP World | Dubai Ports World |
| EEIZ | Ethiopian Eastern Industrial Zone |
| ENDF | Ethiopian National Defence Force |
| EPRDF | Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front |
| EU | European Union |
| EU MSS | European Union Maritime Security Strategy |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| FOCAC | Forum on China Africa Cooperation |
| FTA | Free Trade Area |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GERD | Great Ethiopian Renaissance dam |
| HoA | Horn of Africa |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |

| | |
|---------|--|
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| MA | Master of Arts |
| MOFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| OPEC | Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| PhD | Philosophical Doctorate |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| SCO | Shanghai Cooperation Organization |
| SOE | State Owned Enterprises |
| SSI | Strategic Studies Institute |
| TPLF | Tigray People's Liberation Front |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| U.S.S.R | Union for Soviet Socialist Republic |
| UIC | Union of Islamic Courts |
| UN | United Nations |
| USA | United States of America |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WB | World Bank |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

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ABSTRACT

This study's main goal was to assess the contemporary geostrategic rivalry between the United States and China in the Horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia. In line with its objectives, the study established the existence of the rivalry between the USA and China in the HoA. It identified the factors for the super powers rivalry, the importance of Ethiopia to both superpowers; and the implications of the rivalry to Ethiopia in terms of development and security parameters. The study is founded on the power transition, neo-realism and bandwagon theories. A qualitative method of inquiry is used to conduct the study. The data included both primary as well as secondary sources. Key interviews and document analysis were employed to collect the primary and secondary data respectively. Accordingly, the study consisted of 12 key resource persons, two each from the USA embassy, China embassy, AU and IGAD Missions in Ethiopia and four key informant participants from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all in Addis Ababa. The data from the interviews were transcribed, coded and themed according to the research questions for comprehensive data analysis.

Key Words: *Horn of Africa, geo-strategy, rivalry, USA, China*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory part of the thesis commences the pillars of the study which are very much essential in guiding the entire study. Accordingly, the chapter introduced the issue under the background of the study. The chapter also dealt with the identification of the research gap and highlighted the research objectives and the core assumption of the study. Moreover, significance and the scope of the study, Limitations, Ethical considerations, the methodology employed and the organization of the study were the other major issues discussed in the chapter.

1.1. Background of the study

Geographically speaking, the HoA is situated in north-eastern Africa. The region includes Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti (Crummy, 2003:15). Proximity to the Arab Gulf (the world's greatest oil supplier), maritime security, anti-terrorism and anti-piracy initiatives, and international trade all make the region important (Gashaw and Zelalem, 2016:29). Schewe (2018:16) further contends that the Bab El-Mandeb Strait, one of the most important global transportation routes, has contributed to the region's growing importance throughout time. In the past, the area served as a battle ground for Ottoman Turkey, Portugal, Britain, Italy, and France throughout the colonial era, the US and the USSR throughout the Cold War, and now Arab countries, the West, and the new powers, especially China (Sun, 2022:32).

According to Neethling (2020:29), certain African countries, particularly those who reside in Africa's Horn have adopted the concept of foreign military establishment on their soil in order to close security gaps and to support their development. Realistically speaking, states have national interests, which is why Rossiter & Cannon (2019:18) emphasize that various global powers are keeping a military presence in the HoA for reasons like safeguarding their interests in natural resources, combating terrorism and piracy, controlling immigration, and securing the best possible foundations for geopolitical influence.

The horn region, like other parts of the world, has witnessed increased competition between China and the United States since the end of the Cold War. China's economy is now the second largest in the world, having developed at an exponential rate (Yaleh & Changgang, 2020:9). By means of investment and infrastructure development initiatives, heightened diplomatic outreach, and the creation or enrollment in global institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which can serve as a substitute for financial institutions dominated by the West, the P.R.C. has quickly expanded its influence throughout the world (Sabatini, 2020:9).

China's other main economic instrument of foreign policy to increase its involvement in African nations is the Belt and Road Initiative. According to Liu (2022:8), China has contributed to the development of multifaceted connectivity in the HoA as part of BRI initiatives. The top performers in the HoA attracted the attention of Chinese investors in particular because of their abundance of natural resources, low labor costs, growing consumer markets, and potential for economic growth (Mishra, 2021:31). The Chinese government usually makes financial aid easily accessible to states in the HoA region, mostly in the form of grants and concessional loans (Robert, 2005:41). As a result, the HoA states are free from the intricate political and economic requirements of the West and its banking institutions.

Security and peace are also major concerns in the HoA region in addition to development challenges (Geburu, 2020:22). The United States has long been involved in efforts to promote peace and security in the region, but in recent years, some major powers have been involved in these efforts either through multilateral organizations or in cooperation with region's states. One example of this is China's entry into the regional scene. According to Jeong (2008:58), China's involvement in region's security issues is motivated by its geopolitical, political-economic, and big power responsibilities. For instance, according to CGTN (2017), China established its military base to fight against piracy. The base is located in the heavily trafficked shipping lanes of the HoA and the US military base is close by. It has also led US officials to reveal that the Red Sea region is a global theater for major power competitions (Xinhua, 2018). Additionally, according to the Throll report (2019:17), China announced its unflinching commitment to peace and security at its China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) in 2018.

According to Vertin (2020:28), the economic might of China is what propels the HoA nations' development initiatives. The US's interests in the region are seriously threatened by China's HoA operations, which have drawn strong criticism from the Washington administration. Furthermore, with regard to the rivalry in the region of the HoA, Aydin (2020:11), concluded that the region is turned into the military center by the Horn military diplomacy pursued by foreign countries with thousands of troops deployed to advance international peace. The most evident sign of the region's strategic importance for the struggle between superpowers is the increasing number of multinational military personnel stationed there, including a Chinese People's Liberation Army support camp in Djibouti and Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, which is arguably the most well-known base and crucial to US military operations (Cara, 2021:13).

James (2020:13) made the case that, in contrast to China, which seems to have a grand strategy of engagement with the Horn of Africa, the United States appears to be two steps behind and constantly reassessing its position in the region. Unlike the US approach to the countries in the region, China views the HoA as part of a network of investments that include the entire continent, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden. China has already selected Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti as potential investment destinations (Hess, 2021:19). In general, Chinese investments and relationship-building initiatives have steadily increased in the region. Additionally, establishing connection and helping infrastructural development without requiring recipient states to alter their political structures and governance practices has been recognized as valuable by most of governments in the horn region of Africa (Wang, 2022:12).

Given that Ethiopia is one of the most significant nations in the HoA and significantly affects regional stability, China is making an effort to promote its peace and security. However, throughout the past four years (2018–2022), the United States has started to reduce its financial and, consequently, military support for Ethiopia (Karoline & Nadine, 2022:6). Moreover, in dealing with the turmoil happened in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, USA was very much aggressive and even attempted to intervene in the internal affairs of the country and this also affected the Ethio-USA relations negatively. To fill the gap happened, Ethiopia turned its face to other rising powers particularly, China. Of all the countries China has targeted in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia stands out as having significant political and economic potential. Additionally, the Ethiopian government views itself as essential to Chinese interests in the HoA and joined the BRI in 2018 (Andrew,

2019:114). Similar to this, Beijing has made significant investments in Ethiopia in an effort to gain its favor because it views it as the BRI's core (Large, 2021:85).

Political ties are also strong: China is one of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's (PhD) most outspoken backers, supporting his government's opposition to foreign meddling in its domestic affairs (Christine & Julia, 2020:24). Decision-makers in nations like Ethiopia, where China has developed strong political ties, are therefore willing to pay serious attention to Chinese proposals rather than prescriptions given by westerners. Though it is appreciated and welcomed by many states of the HoA, this approach of China towards peace building and development which opposes the peacebuilding principles of westerners particularly USA is hampering China's relation with westerners. (Peter & Haley, 2022:73). Therefore, it appears that the United States has been decreasing its involvement in the HoA since 2018. Moreover, according to Zhao (2019:23), China is undoubtedly growing militarily and economically, and as it does so, tensions with the United States and other superpowers are certain to remain.

The HoA is a strategic location at the key geo-political and geo-economic intersection of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. It is also a flashpoint for international powers vying for control of significant national markets and maritime territories (Jalal & Sara, 2016:33). Since Ethiopia is at the center of the region, any events that affect the HoA region also affect Ethiopia. Therefore, this research is conducted to identify the nature of contemporary US-China geo-strategic rivalry in the HoA and its implications to Ethiopia's development and security parameters.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although the United States is at the top of the newly emerging global system, other countries, particularly China, is beginning to compete with it, making it the country most endangered by the new order or multi-polar system (Nacht et al., 2018: 27). For a long time, the United States has been hesitant to engage in strategic competition with the China, wanting to balance cooperation and competition and adopt a positive outlook for the future of their relationship. Besides, the USA wants to preserve its post-Cold War hegemony. China, however, became a second economic power after the Cold War and started to pose a threat to the United States by investing in a number of infrastructure projects and getting involved in the security concerns of other nations, including the HoA (Ibid).

Political, economic, and ideological rivalry between the United States and China has occasionally increased in several regions of the world, including the HoA. Mostly, both the USA and China are politically and economically competing with each other for the geo-strategic supremacy in the region of Horn. Due to that, the HoA states especially, Ethiopia have been positively and negatively affected. Furthermore, militarization and intervention of foreign powers in the region has both development opportunities as well as a security risk for Ethiopia, since it is a nucleus and landlocked country in the region.

Regarding that, some academics have studied the growing competition between the United States and China in various parts of the world, including the Horn of Africa. For instance, previous researchers such as Gashaw and Zelalem (2016), had conducted research on the advent of competing foreign powers in the geo-strategic Horn of Africa mainly by focusing on the whole HoA as a region without giving particular emphasis for Ethiopia. The other researcher Gebru (2019), wrote article on China's engagement in the promotion of peace and security in the HoA and tried to deal with the role of China in promoting peace and security in the HoA as a region. This article also focused on the HoA in general and not given special emphasis for Ethiopia. Additionally, these literatures are also missing the development aspects of the Chinese engagement in the region. Furthermore, these researchers also have not incorporated the new political trends in the HoA since 2018 and opportunities and challenges faced the region from both superpowers (USA and China) following this new political trend in the region.

In the same way, Jafar Bedru (2023) conducted MA Thesis on Great power rivalry in the horn of africa and its impication on Ethiopian national security. This Thesis mainly focused on the implications of the great powers rivalry for Ethiopia's national security and not exhaustively dealt with the implications of the rivalry for Ethiopias's Development. Moreover, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the existing literatures on the area did not exhaustively dealt with the implications of the two superpowers' geo-strategic rivalry to Ethiopia's development and security parameters particularly after the country underwent political reform in 2018. After the reform government of Ethiopia came to the power, different events happened in the country and attracted the attention of the different superpowers including USA and China. For instance, the conflict in the country's north and the Renaissance Dam controversy were two significant events that caught the

interest of other states, regional organizations, and international organizations, exposing the country to potential threats by superpowers.

The USA attempted to intervene in the internal affairs of the country several times in a manner which is against the national interest of the country. On the other hand, China is also approaching Ethiopia positively and maintaining peaceful relations with the country. Overall, it looks like both superpowers are competing with each other to maintain their power and influence in the HoA including Ethiopia. Therefore, this study is designed to objectively identify and discuss the implications of the two superpowers' contemporary geo-strategic rivalry in the region of HoA to Ethiopia's development and security parameters and to fill the knowledge gap which is identified in the existing literature.

1.3. Core Assumption of the Study

The global superpower rivalry in the Horn of Africa is intensive in its engagement, often unpredictable in its futurity and have far-reaching implications for Ethiopia's Security and Development Parametres.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was assessing the contemporary USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the Horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia's peace and Development from 2018-2022.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were ;

1. To establish the existence of the USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the HoA.
2. To identify factors for super powers rivalry during and post-cold war era in the HoA.
3. To investigate the importance of Ethiopia for both USA and China in the HoA.

4. To assess and discuss the implications of USA-China rivalry in the HoA to Ethiopia in terms of development and security parameters.

1.5. Research Questions

To attain its both general and specific objectives, this study guided by the following research questions.

1. Is there USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the HoA?
2. What are the factors for the super powers rivalry in the HoA during and post cold war era?
3. Why do both the USA and China need Ethiopia in the HoA?
4. What are the implications of US-China rivalry in the HoA to Ethiopia in terms of development and security parameters?

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it focuses on the current geostrategic rivalry between China and the United States in the Horn of Africa and how it impacts Ethiopia. It also helps government officials manage Ethiopia's foreign policy toward both superpowers in a way that protects Ethiopia's national interest.

In addition, it will also prove or disprove whether China is appearing as an option for Ethiopia to maintain its national interest which is being challenged by the USA at different times. Furthermore, this study also will inform the concerned bodies about the opportunities and challenges brought to Ethiopia because of the rivalry between USA and China in the HoA. Finally, it will also help other future researchers as a reference and literature to conduct further study on the issue.

1.7. Scope of the Study

Geographically speaking, this study was restricted to the HoA since it is a more strategic location that connects Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and attracts superpowers for competition repeatedly to protect their national interests there.

From a thematic standpoint, it was limited to discussing the current geostrategic rivalry between the United States and China in the Horn of Africa and its implications for Ethiopia 2018 to 2022. The reason for using 2018 as a starting point for the time frame work for this study was that even though USA and China have been competing in the region for the long periods of time, in 2018 there was political reform in Ethiopia and after the reform government different events happened in the country and these events attracted the attention of the different super powers including USA and China.

1.8. Limitations of Study

Obtaining sufficient and reliable data from research participants was a challenging issue for the researcher during data collecting. Among the challenges faced, one was the location of the key interview and FGD participants. The office of both key interview participants and FGD is located in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. It was very challenging for the researcher to get the exact location of these offices because the researcher has lived in the city for a short period of time.

Despite the difficulty, the researcher used Google Maps, conversation with locals, and countless hours of walking through the city to solve the challenge. The other issue in gathering data for this study was the nature of the research topic itself due to the majority of research participants' suspicions about the study and their confusion about how they can provide data. The challenge was resolved by the researcher by sharing the interview guiding questions and offering guidance on the kind of data required for the study and its objectives.

Language barrier between the researcher and respondents was the other major limitation during conducting this study. Particularly, among the two officials from the China embassy who participated in the key interview, one was not a fluent speaker of English language and this made the situation difficult to conduct the interview. Fortunately, there was a language translator around the area and the researcher solved the problem by hiring him for two hours and helping the interview process by translating the Chinese language to English language and vice versa. Finally, the study also encountered time and budget barriers.

1.9. Research Methodology

1.9.1. Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was used by the researcher to conduct this thesis. The nature of the geostrategic rivalry between the two superpowers in the Horn of Africa region and its implications to Ethiopia would be examined using this method, which would rely on the opinions and comprehensions of the participants. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005:49), the qualitative approach consists of a number of interpretive strategies that make the world visible and shift the meanings people ascribe to it. As further explained by Kothari & Garg (2014:61), the qualitative method enables the study of things in their natural environments or the interpretation of events in terms of the meanings people assign to them based on their experiences and observations. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to analyze the problems sequentially and thoroughly using the pertinent data gathered from primary and secondary sources.

In line with the qualitative research approach adopted in this study, the researcher also employed explorative research design. This research design gave the researcher an opportunity for flexibility in instances where there are new insights and new data steering in different directions, guiding the emerging themes. Moreover, assessing the nature of the topic at hand, it was prudent for the researcher to use exploratory qualitative design since it allowed for the interrogation and assessment of the participants' responses and major arguments (Swedberg, 2021:33). This research strategy also enabled the researcher to compare the arguments of the research participants from different institutions.

1.9.2. Sources of data

For this study, data were gathered both from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data obtained from officials working in Ethiopian MOFA, IGAD Missions in Ethiopia, AU, and the embassies of both super powers (USA and China) in Addis Ababa. These sources of data were chosen in order to obtain first-hand knowledge of the research problem. In addition, secondary sources were employed to support the data obtained from primary sources. These included newspapers, working papers, articles, reports, and other pertinent documents, as well as a variety of published and unpublished literatures including MA theses and PhD dissertations.

1.9.3. Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher first requested the permission letter from concerned bodies. After securing the permission letter the following task was going to the study area and adjusting time to administer and provide orientations to the participants of the study. Before the key interview, the chosen participants were contacted to provide clarification on how to participate in the key interview. Accordingly, the key interview participants were introduced and briefed before conducting the interview.

After providing orientations for key interview participants, the data gathering carried out according to its time schedule. Finally, a variety of published and unpublished document types were investigated and employed for secondary data collection, based on their applicability, adequacy, and reliability. Through the above mentioned procedures and with the help of research assistants, the data collection process is carried on by recording sounds and taking notes.

1.9.4. Data Gathering Methods

Relevant data for the study were collected through two instruments: key interview and document analysis.

1.9.4.1. Key Interviews

The major source of data for this study is key interviews. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the selection of key interview participants was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique called purposive sampling, which is defined by Padilla (2015:8) as incorporating specific criteria that the participants met at the time of selection. Purposive sampling is mostly based on the researcher's assessment of who can offer the most information to meet the study's goals, and it is highly beneficial to frame a historical reality and explain a phenomenon (Kumar, 2005:58).

Therefore, depending on their interaction with the issue and their knowledge, the researcher purposefully selected key interview participants from officials working in Ethiopian MOFA, IGAD Missions in Ethiopia, AU, and the embassies of both super powers (USA and China) in Addis Ababa.

For this study, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews. It is a more appropriate type of interview since it is carried out in a more open manner that encourages concentrated, conversational, and two-way communication. Additionally, it lies in the middle of the two spectrums of structured interviews, which are more akin to questionnaires, and unstructured interviews, which are more akin to observation.

All the interviews were conducted either in Amharic language, English or in other languages (with the help of research assistants). Interview guides were prepared and used as the guidelines throughout key interviews. All questions were prepared by focusing on the nature of the contemporary geo-strategic rivalry between the two superpowers in the HoA region and their implications to Ethiopia. In addition to taking pertinent notes during the interview, some of the interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. The fact that the interviews were held in an environment where the informants felt at ease and thought they were interacting naturally was crucial.

Regarding sample size, the majority of academics concur that qualitative research makes no effort to measure or ascertain the sample size. Therefore, the researcher must reach the so called data saturation point in qualitative research in order to examine diversity. To put it another way, saturation occurs when a researcher collects data until there are no more fresh findings to be gained. Therefore, key face to face interviews were undertaken to the level of data saturation point in the study.

1.9.4. 2. Document analysis

Document analysis is another method for gathering data that focuses on categorizing and contrasting the information included in documents and how they are communicated (Koul, 2006:79). Data for this study were gathered from a variety of published and unpublished materials, including books, working papers, scholarly articles, master's and doctoral theses, and other pertinent publications. In order to assess the sources of data, the researcher employed three fundamental criteria: data adequacy, suitability, and reliability.

1.10. Methods of Data Analysis

This study used a thematic data analysis method in accordance with the qualitative research approach that was adopted. A qualitative data analysis method called thematic data analysis entails identifying, assessing, and summarizing recurrent themes in a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006:55). It is a suitable and effective technique to apply when attempting to determine common or shared meanings among a collection of experiences, ideas, or behaviors. For analyzing data which were collected through key interview and document analysis through thematic data analysis method, the researcher began the analyzing process by transcribing the data from audio form into text and translating it into English language. Throughout the analyzing process the attempts made to keep the originality of the research. After doing so, the collected data were organized, analyzed and interpreted in an appropriate manner. During this process, the following crucial actions were taken:

Step 1: getting to know the data. Gaining familiarity with the complete data set is the initial phase in the theme analysis process, and this requires actively and repeatedly looking over the data (Braun & Clarke 2006:61).

Step 2: producing the first codes. Coding, the initial, genuinely analytical stage of the procedure, aids in the granular, targeted organization of data.

Step 3: looking for patterns. In order to find possible themes of wider significance, the coded and compiled data extracts are examined in the third stage.

Step 4: going over the themes. Step 4 was defined as a two-level analytical procedure by Braun & Clarke (2006:63). Themes must be examined at this point to see whether any supporting information is available.

Step 5: Identifying and characterizing themes. In this step, the researcher will define each theme and provide a narrative description of it as per Braun & Clarke (2006:71).

Step 6: completing the report or manuscript. In this last step, the final analysis and findings description are written up.

1.11. Data Quality Control

Qualitative researchers typically employ authenticity and trustworthiness, as opposed to quantitative research methodologies that use validity, reliability, and replication of the quality of data. Because humans are dynamic by nature, it is absurd to expect consistent results from a qualitative study. Therefore, ensuring reliability in qualitative research involves determining if a study's conclusions can be relied upon. Accordingly, Bryman's (2012:75) recommendations were used to generate high-quality results in this study. The researcher made an effort to minimize errors during data collection (participant interviews) and data transcription in order to ensure the caliber of the outcome. To put it another way, the researcher in this case triangulated the data gathered from various sources.

1.12. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics were adhered to the fullest. Prior to the actual interview, the researcher shared the research permit from Addis Ababa University, guaranteeing that the information sought was solely for academic research purpose. The confidentiality and permission forms were also distributed. Before starting the interview, a strong connection was built with the participants to encourage better responses, as advised by Jacob and Furgerson (2012:19).

In order to create a good rapport, the researcher did prior visits to the MOFA, AU, IGAD Missions in Ethiopia office, Chinese and US embassies in Addis Ababa. Also, most respondents expressed fear of not knowing what kind of information the researcher was looking for. Thus, to build trust the interview guide shared with them. After consenting to be interviewed, most respondents were comfortable in sharing their views as per the interview guide and most of them were appreciative of the subject of the study.

1.13. Organization of the Study

This research was divided into six chapters. Consequently, the study's back ground, problem statement, core assumptions, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, limitations, research methodology, data quality control, ethical considerations, and study organization were all covered in the first chapter. The review of relevant literature and the study's theoretical framework were discussed in the second chapter.

The issues related with HoA and its Historical Relations with Global Powers were covered in the third chapter. In the fourth chapter of the thesis, the great powers and super powers competition in the Horn of Africa were entertained. In the fifth chapter, the data analysis and discussion were undertaken and finally, the sixth chapter dealt with the Conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences some concepts related with the topic under investigation, and theoretical framework anchored on realism theory variants reflecting on rivalry of global powers dynamics in the HoA region and implications to Ethiopia.

2.1. Conceptual Frameworks

2.1.1. *Geo-strategy*

Like all strategies, geo-strategy focuses on aligning a nation's political goals, which may be local, regional, or international, with its resources, whether they are abundant or scarce. According to Colin and Geoffrey (1999:118), "geography is the mother of strategy." Stated differently, geography and strategy are as intertwined as geography and nationhood. The objectives of geo-strategy are to exert control over strategically significant regions of the Earth planet and exert a political influence over the international system. Its objectives are to increase the prosperity of the global system, improve one's own security and prosperity, and influence rather than be influenced.

Securing access to certain trade routes, major bottlenecks, rivers, islands, and seas is the goal of a geostrategic approach. It necessitates a large military presence, which is typically accompanied by the construction of warships with deep ocean power projection capabilities and the opening of military installations abroad. Land dominance was the primary focus in the past; today, space (land and sea) play a major role in an integrated geostrategic approach. Today, control over people, territory, resources, and information is a manifestation of power; related actions are also referred to as geopolitics or geo-strategy. Saalbach (2017:42) defines power in this context as the capacity to impose one's will on others.

2.1.2. Geopolitical Strategy

Actually, geopolitics is just the study of how human and political geography such as national borders, trade routes, and concentrations of military or economic power relates to geographical facts such as rivers, mountains, and oceans and international politics. The term "geopolitics" is often specifically associated by liberals with a reactionary, outdated, or even sinister quality.

Zbigniew (2011:34) asserts that geopolitics emphasizes how geography affects politics and represents the interplay of political and geographic elements that determine a state's or region's condition. The term conjures up images of conflict, empire, and diplomacy in one sense: geopolitics is the activity of states vying for control of territory. Furthermore, Flint (2021:71) argues that geopolitics encompasses more than merely territorial competition and the rationalization of such acts. The rise of nations and nation-states as the main political institutions is associated with geopolitics as a theory and practice. Regarding geopolitical strategy, geostrategic combines geopolitical and strategic considerations. And strategy is the thorough and planned implementation of actions to accomplish a primary objective or to critical assets of military significance.

2.1.3. Geopolitical competition

A feature of contemporary life, geopolitical competition is defined as a conflict between states vying for control at the international, regional, or even local level (Kovalev, 2017:11). As a result, international competition poses a threat to national security independently and is not just brought on by the need to protect national interests. Terms such as "the act of competing; rivalry," "a contest for some honor, prize, or advantage," and "the rivalry offered by a competitor" are used by the Cambridge Dictionary to describe competition.

As a state of antagonistic relations short of direct armed conflict between actors, competition can be understood in the context of international relations. This state reflects the three fundamental distinguishing factors mentioned: perceived contention, an effort to gain mutual advantage, and the pursuit of an outcome or good that is not generally available. According to Keohane et al. (1989:101), this suggests a shared quest for status, wealth, influence, and power at a time when supply is constrained and other people are also pursuing these goals.

Through the self-serving pursuit of contested items including power, security, prosperity, influence, and status, competition in the international arena refers to the desire to obtain an edge, frequently in comparison to others who are perceived as a threat or challenge.

2.1.4. Security

Traditional understandings of security, especially in International Relations theory during the Cold War, focused heavily on the state and its military structures, and threats were presented in primarily military terms. Consequently, a significant portion of the academic literature on security during this period concentrated on evaluating the military prowess of various nations (including nuclear arsenals and other weapons stockpiles) as a measure of the degree of "threat" that these nations constituted to other nations (Fisher, 2014:45). Since then, this state-centric perspective on security has been referred to as the "national security" school of thought, and it continues to be widely held in the majority of the current literature on strategic studies.

At least in Western thought, "security" as a political ideal today has no inherent meaning and is tied to personal or social value systems. As a result, Negasa (2021:17) contends that "security is ambiguous and elastic in its meaning" as a social science notion. According to social constructivist theories of international relations, "security" is seen as the result of social and political interaction in which cultural traditions, collective identities, and social values and norms are crucial. According to this viewpoint, "security is what actors make of it," or security is always subjective. Additionally, security is the state of not being threatened, particularly in terms of one's physical, mental, emotional, or financial well-being, as well as the attribute of being trustworthy.

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives

For many years, researchers and decision-makers have worked to create plausible theories and explanations for how countries relate to each other and the global system. These theories of international relations provide a framework for analyzing events and activities on the world stage. Scholars have tried to explain a complicated subject that is always changing, and several schools of thought have promoted conflicting theories. For instance, Neumann and Gstöhl (2006:201), show that international relations politics are centered on state power.

Thus, great power transition theory, neo-realism theory, and bandwagon theory are the most common and pertinent theories of international relations when talking about the prevailing rivalry between China and the USA in the HoA and its implications for Ethiopia.

2.2.1. Power Transition Theory

Power transition theory was originally brought forward by A. F. K. Organski (1958) and has been further developed by Jacek Kugler and a number of other scholars (Rauch, 2018:21). Its central claims are that the international system is usually hierarchically ordered with a dominant power at the top that creates and sustains the international order; that, because of uneven growth rates, new powers are regularly rising; and that the risk of war is highest in a situation when a dissatisfied rising power has reached parity or even overtaken the declining dominant power (Lemke, 2006: 15).

In the same way Ronald. et al., (2011:33) contends that the main assumptions of power transition theory are: the global system consists of hierarchical order ; the international order is created and maintained by the most dominant power at the top of the system; Probability of war increases with power equilibrium; (dis) satisfaction with the status quo with the international order by rising power determines great power war; Challengers of the international order are the emerging powers that are unhappy with the current situation and due to power parity and the dominant powers un willingness to give up their powers results in the use of force by the challengers to create a new world order.

Both realism and power transition theory are concerned with war and peace in the international system, focus on the state as the central actor and put a special emphasis on the role of power. Since power transition theory concerned with war and peace, it is often regarded as a variant or branch of realism (Feng, 2013:23). Realism's perspective on international politics and the distribution of power is rather cross-sectional (looking at a certain point in time), while power transition theory's perspective is rather longitudinal (looking at a development over time). Unlike realists, Proponents of power transition theory believe that an equilibrium of power (at least between the top two competitors) is indeed not a guarantee of peace but quite the opposite: an invitation to war (Siverson and Miller 1996:58).

A system, according to power transition theory, is more peaceful when there is no balance but a large imbalance and the most powerful state is predominant. In cases, where predominance is not established and either side can conceivably hope for victory (or at least for preventing defeat), war is a much more attractive option. Accordingly, a main difference between realism and power transition theory is, as Tammen and Kugler put it: ‘Under realism, relative power equilibrium insures the peace. Under power parity or power transition, relative power equilibrium increases the probability of war’ (Tammen and Kugler 2006:40).

And Power transition theory is an ideal theoretical framework for examining the recent global power dynamics between the USA and China. The United States of America is still the most powerful country in the world. Rauch (2018:30) asserts that allies such as Japan, Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom support Washington's dominance of the international system's hierarchical order. Similar to this, Nossel (2016:7) contended that China is now a powerful force, supported by the political power of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa). All things considered, power dynamics and the probability of war in a particular area or globally can be better understood by applying power transition theory. Thus, in order to address the nature and power dynamics of the current rivalry between the United States and China in the HoA region, this theory is pertinent.

2.2.2. Neo-Realism Theory

Neo-realist assumptions suggests that the ordering principle of international system is anarchy, which means that the system consists of sovereign states without any central authority above them to regulate their interactions (Kenneth, 2008:103). This is to say, states operate in an environment in which there is no authority to prevent them from hurting and even destroying each other. Such environment fuels suspicion and fear since states and especially great powers, possessing offensive capabilities, are potentially dangerous to each other. Therefore, states rationally incline to ensure their survival on their own rather than depending on others, called as self-help behaviour (Ibid). In doing so, states not only strive to gain more power for themselves but also endeavor to prevent others from amplifying their capabilities (Grieco,1998).

Mearsheimer (2001:35) states that the pursuit of power for great powers stops only when they achieve global hegemony. This is seen as the best way to eliminate any possibility of challenge

by other great powers. Global hegemon here is defined as a state that is far more powerful capable of dominating all others, thus is in a commanding position to build and sustain an order in international system. But in modern era, Mearsheimer argues, it is difficult (if not impossible) to achieve global hegemony due to the nuclear balance and presence of insuperable oceans. Hence, great powers can best hope to be regional hegemons, which dominate only a distinct geographical area. The US, dominating the Western Hemisphere, constitutes the only regional hegemon in today's world.

Neorealist assumptions regarding the nature of international system suggest that regional hegemons aims to prevent other great powers from dominating other areas. This is because if other great powers achieve regional hegemony, they might upset the existing distribution of power favouring the existing regional hegemon, thus diminish its security and jeopardize its interests (Ibid). Building upon this logic, Chinese involvement and gaining upper hand in Horn of Africa serve only its interest in maximizing its relative power and achieving hegemony to balance the US power in international system. The US, on the other hand, seeks to block China's further progress in the region since it present a systemic threat to US hegemony. Hence, Sino-US rivalry in Horn of Africa is thus likely to intensify in the future.

In the same way, China's extensive economic investments, intense educational, cultural and political interactions, and growing military ties in Horn of Africa constitute a systemic threat to US hegemony. According to Moore and Walker (2019:15), the competition is evident in military power, cyber security, technological power (5G), aid and alliance building. All these take place with in key government agencies, academic institutions and through military deployment. Therefore, neo-realism theory plays a pivotal role in elucidating the manifestation of superpower rivalry in the Horn region of Africa.

2.2.3. Bandwagon Theory

The main proponents of this theory are Kenneth Waltz in his well-known book the Approach of International Politics, Stephen Van Evera, and Quincy Wright (A Study of War, 1942). This theory's central claim emphasizes the necessity of politically aligning with rival great power states in order to benefit both parties. According to Mearsheimer (2001:123), keeping to Thucydides' view

that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must," claims that the bandwagon is primarily the domain of weaker states.

The theory also makes the assumption that the advantages of defying a strong state outweigh the drawbacks, which is what motivates bandwagons. As a result, the weaker state makes the most of the incentives like trade deals and security. Weak nations align themselves with foreign nations that provide their security in order to lessen external invasions. White Taker (2020:14) asserts that territorial security is these weak nations' primary goal. This theory is best fit to explain the position of Ethiopia as the nucleus state in the Horn of Africa, surrounded by great foreign powers and the application of their diplomatic relations.

CHAPTER THREE

3. HORN OF AFRICA AND ITS HISTORICAL RELATIONS WITH GLOBAL POWERS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the thesis rigorously dealt with literatures which were done by various authors and helpful in order to answer the study's research questions. Accordingly, the academic literature on the strategic significance of the Horn of Africa, political problems in the region, the HoA relations with super powers and competitions between them in the Horn region of Africa were discussed. Furthermore, the nature of the Military bases in the region was also among major issues shed light in this chapter.

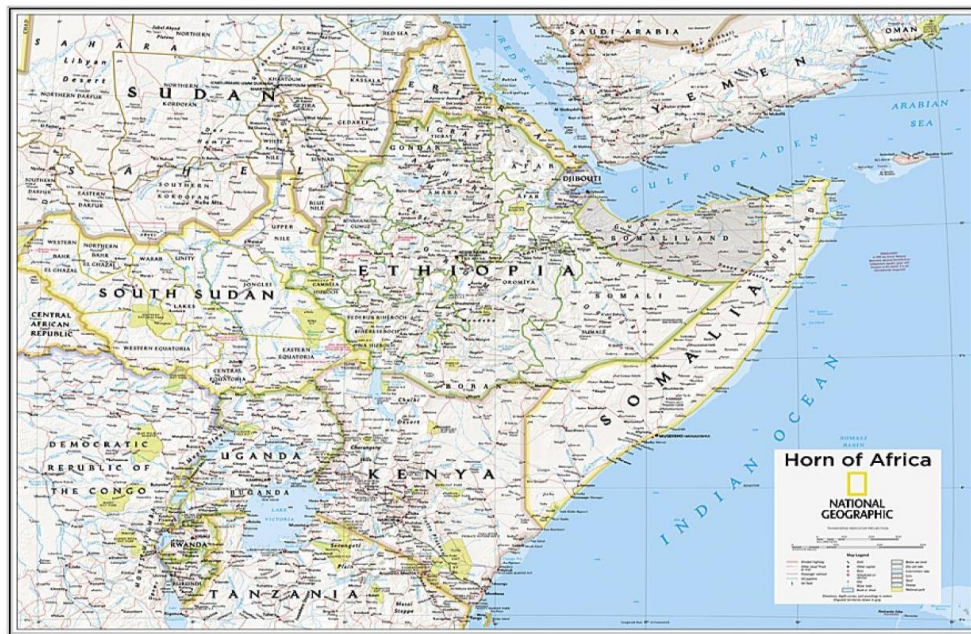
3.1. Location and the strategic Importance of the Horn of Africa

The HoA is located on the African continent's northeastern coast. The nations that inhabit this region are linked by tribal, cultural, historical, political, economic, and security factors (Kidist, 2014:13). It is therefore considered as a region. The region expresses both geography and politics. Geographically speaking, this region includes Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and Eritrea, and they resemble rhinohorns. Oğultürk (2017:11) asserts that the HoA also maintains strong relations with the Arabian petro-states, especially Egypt and Yemen. The HoA connects to the Bab el Man-deb Strait, one of the main international shipping lanes, and is home to the Gulf of Aden, which is the gateway from the Mediterranean via Suez to the Indian Ocean.

The HoA is the portion of the African continent that confronts the Red Sea to the east, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Nile Basin to the west. While it includes the neighboring states of Sudan and Kenya geopolitically, the region is traditionally made up of the major states of Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti (Roba and Berouk, 2011:35). According to Mesfin (2013:21), the region of HoA is the most strategically significant in the globe. Its importance in geostrategic terms is linked to the Red Sea, oil, and the Nile factor. The region is important for marine security, anti-terrorism and anti-piracy operations, international trade (both import and export), and access to the Middle Eastern Arab Gulf, which contains the greatest oil in the world (Gashaw and Zelalem, 2016:23). Only Ethiopia and South Sudan are landlocked among these nations; the others are Red Sea coastal states. Ethiopia is in the middle of the HoA in terms of physiography.

The Greater HoA region is one of the most conflict-ravaged areas on the African continent; since 1956, when Sudan became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to become independent, and to this day, the people of the region have had to endure countless military conflicts between and within states (Kidane, 2011:41). In terms of politics, the eight countries that currently comprise the region and are members of the IGAD are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda. The Horn of Africa is the most politically active region on the continent, as it is one of the world's most vital maritime lanes and a natural playground for actors from both inside and outside of Africa.

The region is constantly on the verge of insecurity due to a combination of external meddling, mutual destabilization, and inadequate governance. In addition, the HoA is the most conflict-ridden region in the world, with major human rights violations occurring sometimes concurrently within and across nations and wars that are made worse by foreign intervention. Indeed, the longest-running intra-state conflicts on the African continent, in South Sudan and Eritrea, have claimed an estimated two million lives.



Horn of Africa Map (Source: Google Map, 2024)

3.2. Political Problems in the Horn of Africa

On the African continent, the HoA is the area most militarized and riven by violence. For many decades, whether in the center or on the outskirts of the region, military battles have raged among different states in the region. These conflicts include the fall of Somalia, the continued animosity between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the unresolved boundary issue between Djibouti and Eritrea, and the fighting between Sudan and South Sudan as well as inside South Sudan (Kidist, 2014:15).

Throughout the post-colonial era, every country in the region has experienced at least one civil war. In such a complex system, even smaller states try to challenge the regional power by forming alliances and counter-alliances or supporting proxies. For example, Eritrea's invasion of Ethiopia and its ongoing proxy war, as well as UIC and later Al-Shabab in Somalia, demonstrate that smaller and weaker states and non-state actors separately or jointly try to counterbalance Ethiopia's power in the region.

States have in most cases fought several civil wars, with sub-state actors including ethnic, regional, religious, or other political groups on one side and the state or militia groups established by the state on the other (Kidane, 2011:31). Numerous armed battles between communities have occurred in HoA countries. Ethnic and clan groupings frequently engage in conflict over resources like land, water, and even cattle. Pastoralist groups are not the only ones affected by these conflicts, although they are typically disproportionately affected. As demonstrated by the situations of Gambella in Ethiopia and Darfur in Sudan, governments may exacerbate hostilities by interfering on one side (Mabera, 2020:22).

Instability and economic disruptions have been exacerbated by innumerable intercommunal confrontations, which have frequently gotten worse as small weapons proliferation has increased. Unquestionably, compared to civil and interstate wars, these battles are significantly less intense and occur occasionally. A collective of states whose main concerns are security and preoccupations are so interconnected that it is unreasonable to analyze or resolve their national security issues separately from one another is known as a regional security complex, and this is how the HoA can be represented.

Ethiopia is particularly susceptible to regional wars due to its geostrategic location at the center of the HoA area, porous borders, and ties to all of the states in the region on an ethnic and historical level. Additionally, Ethiopia's status as the Nile's source makes it Egypt's lifeline, and its strong position in the HoA makes it a powerful regional player, as demonstrated by the Ethiopian army's intervention in Somalia to overthrow the Islamic Courts Union and reinstate the weak transitional government (Thakur, 2009:7).

3.3. The Relations between Horn of Africa and Super Powers

Following World War II, a worldwide international system dominated by two superpowers began to take shape, and even Poor and outlying nations, such as those in the Horn of Africa, were increasingly being impacted. However, the processes of superpower involvement were irregular and uneven, sometimes motivated by shifting priorities and perceptions in Moscow and Washington, including consideration for one another's actions, and occasionally by regional circumstances or by occurrences in the Horn itself (Woodward, 2012:128).

Even though assistance increased state security under autocratic governments, superpowers did not simply invade African states by themselves during this time; instead, independent nations of Africa frequently requested them to participate in state affairs. In each case, the two superpowers used internal and external regime threats to wage proxy warfare, regardless of how their connections with HoA states started. For instance, Ethiopia was one of the main battle grounds during the Cold War, where fighters were provided with weapons and advisors. Furthermore, Ibrahimović (2020:137) asserts that the importance of ideological orientation during the Cold War was so great that the US and the USSR swapped allegiances between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Geography is without a doubt the reason why superpowers have been concerned about the HoA: the Soviet Union and the United States have competing interests in the Middle East and oil diplomacy. This is particularly relevant now that the 1973 oil embargo let the United States realize the extent of its involvement in the Middle East. The Horn is in a position to become involved in the strategic military and political plans of both the US and the USSR during the cold war era because of its proximity to the Middle East and significance to both superpowers' global security strategies.

The potential of a Soviet-American battle in the Horn of Africa increased starting in the 1960s due to developments in Ethiopia and Somalia. These events now seem to be causing a realignment of forces both within and between those African nations that border the Horn. The Horn's entire political landscape has changed as a result of the unrest in Ethiopia and the relationships between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union as well as Somalia (Schwab, 2009:79).

Moreover, foreign action by the HoA has a lengthy history. Several international operations, including Cold War, colonialism, and more recently, the campaigns against terrorism and piracy, have had a disastrous impact on the peace, security, and advancement of the area. In this regard, Rediet (2013:12) contends that the cumulative effects of these initiatives include corrupt state-building, environmental damage, protracted conflicts, political splits, and economic distortions. The growth of seaports and military installations (or the rights to such locations) the most visible illustration of the alleged "new scramble for Africa" has occurred along the Red Sea coast (Vertin, 2020:33). In light of this, well-known writers have referred to the HoA as either a crisis area or a simple battlefield between the USA and the Soviet Union whilst the Cold War and, more recently, between the USA and China.

3.4. The United States of America and the Horn of Africa

According to Woodward (2012:132), the main reason the HoA region is on the White House agenda is because of its geostrategic position. The HoA became one of the battlegrounds in a bipolar global order during the Cold War, and the post-Cold War era saw a shift in the scenario, with Russia reducing its degree of relations with HoA states due to psychological and economic considerations (Oğultürk, 2017:10). The current USA National Security Strategy is based on the idea that the United States is facing "increasing political, economic, and military competitions" in a new era of heightened global competitiveness.

The United States' desire to maintain its unchallenged post-Cold War hegemony may be argued to be the reason for its involvement in the HoA; Gashaw and Zelalem (2016) found that the United States' national interest shaped and influenced its foreign policy toward the HoA region. The United States' increased participation in Horn politics can be attributed to the war on terror following the 9/11 terrorist assault, the desire to maintain its hegemony, control the Persian Gulf oil and the Red Sea coastline, and save Israel, its Middle East ally. Furthermore, Samatar (2007:117) contends that

the United States' national interest drives and significantly determines its foreign policy toward the HoA. In order to combat violent extremists, the United States has pursued dual-track diplomacy, helping both the Republic of Somalia's reconstruction and non-state entities like warlords and the breakaway Republic of Somaliland. When it came to dangerous extremists, it also engaged in what has been dubbed drone diplomacy.

Additionally, US supports sustainable development in the Horn of Africa. Since 2009, USAID has taken the lead in sustainable development, and the US military has reverted to a supporting role. Other issues at stake include lessons learned over the last ten years and areas where different elements of US strategy stand and where they might lead (Burgess, 2015:21).

The USA became involved in the HOA through DOS and DOD as well. Halliday (2008:19) argues that the DOS and DOD have made distinct decisions about their respective roles in the HoA region. In light of this, DOD has prioritized regional engagement and partnership capacity building, particularly through the CJTF-HOA, as well as counterterrorism with drones and special operation forces. In part, the DOD has been reluctant to become overly involved in regional matters because of the October 1993 "Black Hawk down" incident, which killed 18 members of the US special force, and the subsequent withdrawal of US peacekeeping and enforcement forces.

The CJTF-HOA has assumed leadership in military strategy within the HoA with the development of the partnership capacity approach and the hearts and minds campaign. Recently, AFRICOM has attempted to take over security cooperation from US embassies in the region and subordinated the CJTF-HOA in an attempt to control US security strategy in the Horn (Halliday 2008:23). Given the geostrategic significance of the region, especially Djibouti, the military interests of a number of foreign entities in the area are not negligible. As a result, the Djiboutian government leased the former French base Camp Lemonnier to the USA Navy in 2001.

3.5. China in the Horn of Africa

The Red Sea has been emphasized as a possible Great Power conflict arena, and the combination of Chinese strategic and commercial expansion has raised concerns in US national security circles. The population of Djibouti is only one million, its land area is the size of Vermont, and its \$3 billion yearly GDP is equal to China's output every two hours (Vertin, 2020:35).

Chinese engagement in Djibouti increased starting in 2013 and has helped the country's steady economic progress ever since. This trend was continued until the start of COVID-19. Beijing shares Djiboutian elites' belief that Chinese trade volume, technology, and finance can not only make their nation the “Singapore of Africa,” but also speed up development and integration throughout a hugely underdeveloped region of horn. Djibouti and its neighbors, however, are viewed by critics as weak outlets for China's abundant domestic production capacity.

Following Kenya's independence in 1963, China also established diplomatic ties with the country. The relationships were not particularly close throughout the Cold War. Even though economic relations have significantly improved in recent years and Kenya has long supported a one-China policy, the country's enormous trade deficit with China and the recent negative effects of Chinese textile exports on its own industry are causes for concern for Kenyan officials (Shinn, 2005:9).

Similar to this, China and Sudan established diplomatic relations in 1959, but it took several decades for the relationship to gain real significance. In the early years, ties were sometimes hampered by the Sino-Soviet rivalry and a pro-Soviet Communist party in Sudan. China seized the opportunity to offer to provide military equipment and train the Sudanese government's armed forces after the Sudanese Communist party was linked to a failed coup attempt against the Nimeiri government in 1971 (Burgess, 2015:28). Ethiopia, which is at the center of the Horn and acts as a hub for Chinese BRI projects, is another nation with which China maintains close ties.

3.6. Foreign Military Bases in the Horn of Africa

The militarization of the Red Sea and the significance of the Horn of Africa region to the world are further demonstrated by the obvious military presence of international powers, which is most seen on the HoA side. In fact, Djibouti is unique in the globe in that it is home to military forces from the United States, China, France, Japan, and Italy (Vertin, 2020:37). The United States has kept a military presence in Djibouti since purchasing Camp Lemonier in 2001. Following heightened tensions with Iran, the Trump administration expressed interest in joining a coalition in July 2019 to safeguard coastal waters near Bab el-Mandab and other regions. India has also indicated interest in establishing bases in Djibouti, while Russia has experimented with its own strategic presence in the Horn.

External powers' meddling exacerbates all of this, further cementing the HoA's existing divisions. According to Berouk (2011:40), the United States' counterterrorism policies, Egypt's and Israel's desire to retain their influence in the region, and China's efforts which undoubtedly involve significant investments in the region's infrastructure and economic development to secure natural resource supplies all have an impact on politics and security in the HoA. Similarly, the European Union launched Operation Atlanta in 2008 to fight piracy in the Western Indian Ocean. In mid-2018, the EU updated its Maritime Security Strategy (EU MSS) Action Plan to include a section on the HoA and Red Sea.

In an attempt to establish a military presence in the Red Sea, Russia has reportedly investigated the beaches of Somaliland, Sudan, and Eritrea. China created its first overseas military station in Djibouti in 2017 and made significant investments in infrastructure projects throughout the Horn, including various involvements in many Djibouti ports (China Daily, 2019:10). After the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya and Tanzania, the United States identified the HoA as one of the areas where al-Qaeda needed to be destroyed. In order to interdict al-Qaeda militants, the USA Central Command and the DOD established the CJTF-HOA in Djibouti (Rediet, 2013:12).

Having shared this region since 2000, global powers such as the United States and China have competing interests in China's trade and economic connections and America's military-industrial security domain. This has unavoidably led to the idea that China is an assertive power that is determined to challenge America's preeminent position in the world and is displaying more exterior ambitions (Hartley, 2010:22).

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE GREAT POWERS AND SUPER POWERS COMPETITION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter dealt with the various scholarly works which were conducted by different authors to situate the research objectives in the existing literature. Accordingly, the Chapter shed light on the competition between the selected great powers in the HoA, the both superpowers' relation with HoA, the effects of the rivalry between the two superpowers in the HoA on their domestic economic interest and national security in the region. Moreover, the nature of relation between the two superpowers (USA and China) in the HoA is also the other issue entertained in the chapter.

4.1. The Great Powers competition in the Horn of Africa

Increased competition in the Horn of Africa is not new; it has existed there with different nations since the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. This meeting marked the beginning of what is sometimes called the "first scramble for Africa," a phrase that characterizes the way powerful countries have fought for their own self-serving strategic advantage in Africa. Ibrahimović (2020:97) confirms that a great power's ability to use power was eventually improved by its influence and access to resources. Four distinct periods have seen the evolution of engagement: the original scramble, the Cold War and independence, the post-Cold War era, and the shift to a multipolar world.

In the first quarter of the twenty-first century, Russia, China, and the United States increased their great power involvement in Africa (particularly the Horn of Africa) because of their advantageous positions of power and their view of the continent as a target. Because of the Horn of Africa's wealth in natural resources, human capital, and prospective commercial markets, it is an unavoidable place for international interaction in today's globalized world. Russia, China, and the United States have been interested in HoA since the early 2000s, much like they have in other parts of Africa. Contemporarily, other countries that have been actively interested and involving in the region include Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Qatar (Ibrahimović 2020:102).

4.1.1. Saudi Arabia involvement in the Horn of Africa

Following the Arab Spring, the Middle East saw a geopolitical tectonic upheaval in addition to a popular uprising. The ramifications of social revolutions in major Middle Eastern nations for international relations, foreign policy, and the regional balance of Power plays a significant role. According to Lefebvre (2014), there was "a psychological and epistemological rupture" in the area. Gulf monarchies and Turkey fought for control of the region as the old powers of Egypt, Libya, Iraq, and Syria weakened and the balance of power shifted. According to Crisis Group (2019:7), two opposing axes emerged: on the one hand, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates preferred stable central governments that restored security over disorderly democratic changes ideologically spearheaded by the Muslim Brotherhood or its allies. The newly established state actors began to control the political landscape of the region because of their oil-rich economy and strong diplomatic and security links to the United States. The Gulf states started vying for regional Hegemony in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

However, after the uprisings, Qatar and Turkey strengthened their connections with Islamist forces and continued to support them financially and through the media, occasionally pushing back against Iran, like in the Syrian civil war, but they did not give Tehran priority among their adversaries in the region (Ibid). The Arab Spring was especially significant in the new Middle East-Horn nexus as US global clout in Africa began to wane. It helped a new regional power center to emerge in the Middle East, which is one of the geopolitical effects.

Therefore, a number of national, regional, and international geopolitical upheavals are driving the new power dynamics. These include the Arab Spring's violence and chaos, which left the Middle East's countries weak and fragmented; the Gulf States' and Turkey's new role in extending their influence and power in the region; and the new multipolar world order, which places regional powers at the center of international relations.

The ongoing conflict in Yemen is the other element that contributed to Saudi Arabia's significant involvement in the HoA. Yemen has long played a role in the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa. Scholars even go so far as to claim Yemen is a part of the Greater Horn of Africa. Despite their historical ties, geographic closeness, and political ties, collaboration between the Gulf and the Horn of Africa significantly strengthened in the years after the Yemeni war (Soliman, 2017). Following

the Saudi-led coalition's involvement in Yemen to back Abdul Rabbuh Mansur Hadis's government against the Houthi-led coup, the Horn of Africa gained more geopolitical significance. The Horn's geographical proximity has created a strong demand for military bases, facilities, personnel, and willing partners as a result of the civil war (Ibid).

Since the region's Cold War geopolitics ended, the Horn has become a new geopolitical hotspot where proxy wars are fought. Small, weak, and vulnerable Horn states started to support the Gulf monarchs' geopolitical objectives in the fields of foreign policy, trade, resources, security, and diplomacy. Horn countries like Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia were forced to supply bases, ports, and partnerships for their patrons in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates due to the region's close proximity to the conflict. The Saudi-UAE alliance's geopolitical ramifications in the Yemen proxy war have penetrated not only the Gulf but also the Horn of Africa. Indeed, the Horn of Africa allies now have a more tangible security partnership as a result of the military action in Yemen, but this partnership has also grown beyond limited interests in security (Mahmood, 2019).

With the "Alliance Building" foreign policy and strategic collaboration targeted at the conflicts in Yemen, Eritrea, and Somalia, Djibouti emerged as the new geopolitical arena for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In 2016, Eritrea permitted the UAE to set up a military station for air and naval operations. Attempts to start military operations in the conflict has allowed the Asmara government to get Gulf investment, money, and oil in return. The strategic importance of Eritrea to Gulf nations presented the Eritrean administration with a foreign policy problem after years of diplomatic isolation (Ahmed & Mansour, 2019). Eritrea's involvement in the Coalition led by Saudi Arabia ended its diplomatic isolation in the world and enhanced its geopolitical significance.

The government intensified its foreign policy of regime survival by further extended Middle East regional power competition to the Horn. The war in Yemen was a key milestone in Gulf-Horn relations leading to more intensifications and engagement in the region afterward. Saudi Arabia and the UAE bloc attempted to fulfill their short-term security goals in Yemen, while laying the groundwork for long term interests in securing the Bab-al-Mandab and Red Sea maritime passageways and excluding rivals from the sea (Ibid).

4.1.2. The Saudi-Iran Rivalry in the Horn of Africa

The continuous conflict in the Middle East has spawned fresh competition among regional powers, the return of the Saudi-Iranian contestation being a prominent in which it is sectarian (Sunni Vs. Shiite), ethnic (Arab Vs Persian), ideological (US supported Vs US-opposed), and geopolitical (Bahi, 2018). Even if the major theatre of war between Riyadh and Tehran is in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa was not a neutral geo-political battleground between the Saudi-UAE coalition and Iran given its strategic relevance and clear geographic proximity. Iran, which had developed strong links with Sudan in the late 1980s and with Eritrea and Djibouti after 2007 attracted the attention of the Gulf powers in order to confront it.

Iranian warships began often calling at the Eritrean port of Assab in late 2008 as part of the international operation against pirates based in Somalia. Saudi authorities accused the Iranians of using these pauses to transport military supplies and weapons to be sent to the Houthis, also known as the militant Ansar Allah ("Supporters of God") movement in northern Yemen (Lawson, 2017:7). The regional contestations for power, influence and dominance has religious, ideological, diplomatic and most importantly geo-political dimension. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has found willing partners as Saudi-Iranian tensions rise in the Horn, where cash-stripped regimes frequently teeter on the edge of financial survival and alliances are established and abandoned with perplexing regularity (Ibid).

It is crucial to remember, though, that the spread of the Saudi-Iranian competition in the Horn of Africa has detrimental effects on regional stability. Any unchecked foreign security actors would be very vulnerable to the Horn's delicate security environment. States like Somalia, Eritrea, and Djibouti have already been compelled to make binary foreign policy decisions that go against their long-term interests, independence, and sovereignty (Taylor, 2016). In the post-colonial era, the Gulf countries have been forced to sever diplomatic connections with Iran due to the extremely transactional diplomacy, which creates client-patron relationships.

The United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been the most active nations since 2011, seeking political backing to offset Iran's influence and the expanding Qatari-Turkish clout in the area (Dentice & Donelli, 2020). The two monarchs in the Gulf look for Alignments with African counterparts have encouraged ongoing alliance reorganizations that have a

direct impact on the strategic decisions made by local actors (Ibid). Conflicts, tensions, diplomatic disagreements, and long-standing rivalries from the Middle East are thereby transported to the Horn of Africa, creating an uncertain regional climate.

4.1.3. The United Arab Emirates in the Horn of Africa

With a notably active foreign policy and diplomatic approach, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as one of the major regional Gulf powers in the Horn of Africa in recent years. The UAE is located in the center of the global economy and is one of the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and sit in the core of the world's largest oil-producing region (Alex de Waal, 2019:12). With in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which still has sway over the world's oil markets, the Gulf monarchy is among the top nine producers by proved reserves. Following the DP World's deal for ports with Somaliland and Puntland in the towns of Berbera and Bosaso, it has been the most animated, multifaceted actor with a well-articulated marine strategy. In addition to controlling at least six ports on the other side of the Red Sea through its military action in Yemen, the United Arab Emirates has set up a naval station at Assab in Eritrea (Financial Times, 2019).

Through forming partnerships, humanitarian diplomacy, foreign aid, and foreign direct investment, the UAE is demonstrating its expanding influence in the HoA. The well-known expenditures made to build military installations, ports, and other significant infrastructures amply demonstrate the new geopolitics' possible opportunities and difficulties. In terms of gross national income, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ranked third globally in 2016 and was one of the top five state providers of humanitarian relief in the world in terms of US dollars in 2018 (OCHA, 2019). The Addis Ababa-Berbera highway is a major logistics and transportation infrastructure project that is currently funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and the Kingdom of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In terms of the economy, it will be crucial for Ethiopia's landlocked policy to upgrade its logistics industry and diversify its port services. In terms of politics, it will be a major step forward for Somaliland's foreign policy as it pursues recognition and sovereignty. The express way, in conjunction with the US\$442 billion Port of Berbera expansion by another Emirati enterprise, Dubai's DP World, will transform Berbera into a important hub for regional trade (Fabricius, 2020).

4.1.4. Turkey in the Horn of Africa

A relatively recent development in Turkish foreign policy is the country's current active involvement in the Horn of Africa. Africa had a minor role in the Turkish foreign policy agenda during the post-Ottoman era until recently, despite the Horn's close historical ties to the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, the nation declared 2005 to be "Africa's year," and in 2008 the Participants from fifty African nations attended the first-ever Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit in Istanbul (Ozkan, 2010). A significant turning point in history was the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) ascent to power in 2002, which opened a new era in Africa-Turkey relations by reorienting foreign policy toward Africa.

It was agreed to open 15 new embassies in Africa over the course of the following few years after Turkey's then-foreign minister, Ali Babacan, once again stated in 2008 that Africa had special significance for Turkey in the framework of Turkey's new foreign policy. Since then, a shift in focus of Turkish foreign policy toward Africa has developed and became increasingly apparent to the general public. Turkey uses the historical legacies of empire and soft power projection, including business partnerships, humanitarian assistance, and the allure of its political structure, to maintain its influence in the Horn of Africa (Crisis Group, 2019). The African Union granted Turkey primarily symbolic observer status following the government's 2005 statement that the year was the "Year of Africa." One could argue that it marked a turning point in Turkey's foreign policy and diplomacy toward Africa.

The 1998 Action Plan is where Istanbul's opening policy to Africa began. It resulted in a series of foreign policy moves that further solidified and institutionalized ties with the Continent. For instance, there are currently 39 Turkish embassies in Africa, compared to just 12 in 2009 (Ibid). This new foreign policy orientation's core principles include: (a). Developing stronger political ties, (b). Providing economic assistance to Africa (c). a diplomatic approach to the peaceful resolution of conflicts on the continent (d). support in the areas of good governance and democracy (e). promoting continental and regional multilateralism (F). involvement in peacekeeping operations in Africa and, ultimately, adherence to the African Union's "African solutions for African problems" principle (Ozkan & Akgun, 2010).

Its foreign policy agenda, which prioritized greater regional influence, was largely responsible for its openness toward the African continent and the Horn of Africa in particular. Non-state players, however, such as international firms, humanitarian organizations, and other business associations are essential to the reconstruction of the Mogadishu government and the flow of foreign direct investment. Due to the new foreign policy's increased commercial ties and foreign direct investment, private companies many of which have close ties to Erdogan and his AKP operate in cities like Addis Ababa and Mogadishu and significantly contribute to Turkey's influence throughout the Horn of Africa (Cannon & Donelli, 2019).

It's also critical to remember that Turkey's increasing influence in the Horn of Africa is a component of Africa's larger goal to increase its soft power, credibility, power, and influence. Political, economic, and above all geostrategic interests in the Horn of Africa are the primary drivers of Turkey's steadily growing influence in the region. Originally driven by economic and moral principles, it may now be somewhat driven by geopolitical rivalry with Gulf foes.

In light of the changing regional geopolitical circumstances, Turkey's foreign policy orientation toward regional geopolitical rivalries is becoming more and more clear. A new strategic partnership between Qatar and Turkey against regional giants Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain has emerged since the Qatar-Gulf conflict in 2017. With Turkey's growing influence in the area and divisions within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Horn emerged as a key arena for proxy conflicts between Gulf and Middle Eastern nations (Melvin, 2019). In the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, the GCC crisis emerged as a significant political event that shaped new alliances and foreign policy approaches.

By emphasizing investment, business, humanitarian diplomacy, and foreign aid, the Turkey-Qatar axis has demonstrated a different foreign policy approach from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in terms of its goals in the Horn of Africa. With a shared affinity for Islamism that influences their regional engagement, Turkey and Qatar have fully joined forces. Driven by similar ideologies, their cooperation spans a number of industries, including defense, banking, media, and energy, and is only expected to grow as their relationship becomes more solid (Erdemir & Varsha, 2019). As ideological "champions of Islamism," they have established a strategic alliance that supports Muslim Brotherhoods in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and other regions (Ibid).

4.1.5. Qatar in the Horn of Africa

High levels of autonomy define Qatar's foreign policy and diplomacy, which demonstrates a blend of significant pragmatism and an unrelenting determination to establish an independent and sovereign path of politics and international relations in the face of ongoing pressure (Hansen, 2013:25). Beginning in the middle of the 2000s, Qatar's push into the Horn of Africa has accelerated since 2017 when diplomatic ties were severed with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain. Doha views the continent as a potential source of new partnerships and investments that could strengthen its economic and diplomatic standing during the blockade (Crisis Group, 2019).

The Gulf Kingdom's ambition to become a regional force in the Middle East and the surrounding areas includes its multifaceted, autonomous, and active foreign policy in the Horn of Africa. Although it has a small population and area, its powerful influence in the Horn is widely apparent in numerous locations. Given its diplomatic competition with Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as the benefits and limitations of mediating the numerous unresolvable disputes in the Horn of Africa, Qatar's involvement in the region demonstrates the development of its global position (Berouk, 2016). With significant ramifications, the Qatar crisis represents a new geopolitical power struggle in the larger Middle East and the Horn of Africa. Citing Qatar's purported support for terrorism, the new Quartet which is made up of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a land, sea, and air blockade, ending diplomatic ties with the country. With significant diplomatic, economic, social, and political ramifications throughout the region, the 2017 Gulf Crisis has emerged as one of Qatar's most significant foreign policy obstacles since gaining independence (Ibid).

In the Horn of Africa, where previously precarious peace agreements were at risk and the security environment was precarious, the Qatar crisis has given regional geopolitics a new dimension. The 2017 Qatar crisis was not just a Middle East and Gulf issue, given the growing Gulf influence in the area. Since then, Gulf regional rivalry has turned the Horn of Africa into a geopolitical arena (Kedir, 2016). One significant turning point in the region's foreign policy and diplomacy that solidified the geopolitical realities that were already beginning to emerge was the diplomatic crisis

in Qatar in 2017. The already precarious Horn of Africa region has been affected diplomatically, socioeconomically, and geopolitically by the crisis.

Countries in the Horn such as Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia were pressurized and forced to take sides and downgrade relations with Qatar. Border tensions rose in June 2017 when Qatar removed 400 observers monitoring a ceasefire on the Red Sea island of Doumeira, claimed by both Eritrea and Djibouti, to protest the two countries' support for its Gulf adversaries (Ibid).

Using "deep pocket politics," or the use of money to influence some of these nations to join their cause, the wealthy Gulf powers, like the Saudis and the United Arab Emirates, have employed a variety of strategies to entice support from the Horn countries to join the embargo (Aljazeera Center for Studies, 2018). With its short-termism and reliance on straightforward financial transactions to conduct international affairs on a quid pro quo basis, the Gulf's transactional foreign policy has caused alliances to shift, institutions and multilateralism to be harmed, corrupt practices and poor governance to increase regional tensions, and the already dire peace and security situation in the Horn to worsen.

The GCC split has had an especially detrimental impact on Somalia (Coates, 2018). As part of competitive proxy politics, conflicts between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and Qatar and Turkey have exacerbated already-existing local divisions, undermining the state-building initiative in Somalia. The situation got so bad in 2018 that both the EU and the AU made public calls on outsiders to stop interfering in the nation. Tensions and diplomatic conflicts between the central government of Mogadishu and Abu Dhabi have escalated since the UAE agreed to build the Berbera port and base in order to establish active foreign relations with regional autonomous governments such as Somaliland and Puntland (Ibid). In the face of regional gulf-geopolitical competition, it has raised serious concerns about Somali territorial integrity and state sovereignty.

4.2. Super powers and the Horn of Africa

4.2.1. USA and the Horn of Africa Relations

Though it is true that many Africans are eager to point out the enormous harm that the Cold War caused to Africa, this conflict ironically helped increase US interest in the continent, notably in HoA. Indeed, US-Soviet competition was frequently used by African leaders as a negotiating

weapon to get significant increases in military and economic assistance (Schraeder, 1994:83). From the beginning, it was evident that interest in the Horn of Africa by the United States followed several different paths: first, to limit Soviet influence and stop its spread worldwide; second, to maintain the region as a raw material supply; and third, to seek cooperation and a strategic gain through the establishment of military installations, particularly near the Middle East, which included the strategically significant Suez Canal.

The United States frequently rejected treaties and conventions in many areas that addressed colonialism's impacts, infrastructure development financing, and social and economic growth. The new political ideology in the Horn of Africa and other third-world regions discouraged revolutionary conflict and advocated for political compromise and dialogue to end civil wars and regional conflicts.

4.2.1.1. The Role of USA in Horn of Africa's Economic Development

The AGOA was enacted into law by the Trade and Development Act of 2000 (Pillsbury, 2015:145). Founded on the principle that "trade, not aid," is the main way to promote economic growth, this is the latest in a series of regional trade policy efforts in the United States. As an adjunct to foreign aid, the goal is to provide trade benefits to the recipient nations and motivate them to implement changes in their trade, investment, and economic policies. It offers sub-Saharan African nations quota-free exports of clothing and textiles to the US, which is the largest direct advantage.

The program also looks at potential free trade agreements (FTAs) between the US and certain nations, which would have reciprocal commitments instead of AGOA's one-way advantages. However, it does not provide the president the power to negotiate such an agreement.

For nations in the Horn of Africa, AGOA provides real incentives to keep up their efforts to open their economies and create free markets. At a time when the Horn of Africa region is ready for an economic boom and has recovered well from the 2008 global economic crisis, AGOA has been successful in creating jobs and strengthening commercial relations between the USA and the countries in the region (Pillsbury, 2015:161).

4.2.1.2. USA's Interests in the Horn of Africa

Although the geographical and political breadth of Africa varies, US officials and experts typically consider the continent, especially the Horn of Africa, in terms of the global strategic situation. Although US interests in the Horn of Africa were plainly limited in compared to US interests in other places and had not been fully defined, they were typically divided into three basic tiers (Berouk, 2011:35). As a result, the region is now at the bottom of foreign policy concerns due to the lack of distinct US interests. On a strategic level, Bereket (2010:22) argues that the Horn of Africa is close to international shipping channels, such the Red Sea, that transport crucial minerals and oil and might be targets of piracy and terrorism.

Additionally, states in the Horn of Africa have been providing helpful communications and air and naval infrastructure since the Cold War, which allowed the US to transport soldiers and undertake a range of covert and military operations. In terms of politics, the Horn of Africa is home to eight states with substantial voting power in the UN and sway in international fora. Like wise, there is persistent concern that foreign intervention could result from the political turmoil in the Horn of Africa, which would be harmful to US interests and security. For instance, with the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, the 2002 attacks in Kenya, and especially the September 2001 attacks on U.S. territory, U.S. interests centered almost exclusively on stopping terrorism in the Horn of Africa (Ploch, 2007:16).

4.3. China's Rise

China is another emerging global power that is quickly gaining sway, primarily through financial, economic, and other soft power channels. Given this, Ibrahimović (2020:113) argues that China's growing military, political, and economic power is also causing many nations, including friends of the United States to soft-pedal concerns about Chinese conduct, giving a more self-assured Chinese leadership greater license to make its presence known in international affairs.

China's increasing willingness to enforce its non-interference principle by using or threatening to use the veto power to block various sanctions resolutions in the UN Security Council will make it more difficult for the West to use the power to pressure regimes to adhere to international norms

and obligations (Bergsten, 2008:94). Additionally, Amir (2020:19) claims that China's economic expansion is currently having a significant impact on the economies of the world.

4.3.1. China's Principles towards the World

According to Sun (2022:44), the China's principles towards the world includes: China always bases its aid to other countries on the principles of equality and mutual benefit; China never imposes conditions or requests special treatment; China assists recipient countries in reducing their burdens as much as possible; China works to create aid projects that require less investment but produce faster results; China provides the highest quality equipment and materials of its own manufacture; when providing technical assistance, China will ensure that the recipient country's personnel fully master such techniques; and Chinese experts are not permitted to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities.

Mishra (2021:30) asserts that Sino-capitalist economic structure dominates China's economy. One way to conceptualize Sino-capitalism is as hybrid capitalism, which encompasses various institutional arrangements that blend market-oriented strategies with statist practices. Additionally, the advancement of marketization and capital accumulation has increased the recognition of private Chinese enterprises. Further opening to foreign direct investment, China has also developed an export-based market with liberal market-based and statist ideals in an attempt to draw in capital and integrate foreign technologies.

4.3.2. China Foreign Policy towards Horn of Africa

China has been involved in Horn of Africa events since the 1950s, just like other regions of Africa. The period signaled the start of African nations' liberation from colonialism. China's connection with the continent in modern times was therefore defined by its support of liberation movements that were then at pivotal stages that resulted in the majority of African nations' independence from their colonial masters in the 1960s.

Moreover, Berouk (2011:21) affirms that China provides extensive and unrestricted financial assistance in return for diplomatic backing, thereby rationally weakening the political clout of the United States in the Horn of Africa and the competitive advantage of American companies. It might also be endangering the United States' ability to access important ports in the Horn of Africa and

the trade and oil-receiving capability that go along with them. China's foreign policy has specifically sought to prevent the creation of anti-China blocs, particularly in its immediate neighborhood, and to promote a multipolar world that will curtail the power and influence of major countries, particularly the United States.

4.3.3. China's Horn of Africa Cooperation

Chinese scholars trace the Horn of Africa's commercial link with China back to the Han era, which lasted from 202 BC to 220 AD. Red Sea ports are said to have brought Chinese goods to Meroe in northern Sudan during this period. It's possible that the Kingdom of Axum in modern-day Ethiopia simultaneously traded unusual goods to China (Shinn, 2005:24). The contacts between China and the Horn of Africa have become a hot topic in international relations, from the simple trade of silk and porcelain in antiquity to the complex investment and economic cooperation in the present, from the astute trust to the political support that fosters ever-closer ties between China and the region.

By 1970, China had diplomatic ties with a number of African nations, including the HoA. The CACF is now the vehicle through which China coordinates its operations in Africa, especially the Horn of Africa. For China and the African nations, it serves as a venue for consultation and discussion with an emphasis on globalization and South-South cooperation.

According to Gashaw (2018:21), Premier Wen Jiabao declared that China had forgiven \$1.3 billion in debt owed by 31 African nations and outlined a plan to further China-Africa cooperation. For nations in the Horn of Africa, the advancement of China presents both opportunities and challenges.

4.3.4 China's Interest in the Horn of Africa

According to Natch et al. (2018:39), China's interactions with the Horn of Africa are aimed at addressing four major national goals. Politically aligned with other African nations, China requests the Horn of Africa's backing for its foreign policy agendas at multilateral fora like the UN and for its "One China" policy.

In terms of the economy, the region is primarily seen as a source of natural resources and business opportunities that will aid in the domestic development of China. China's government and commercial actors have three main economic interests in Africa, including the Horn region, as

discussed in the RAND (2015:65): a market for growing and comparatively underutilized exports and investment; a source of natural resource imports; and a chance for Chinese companies to expand employment and acquire international experience. Natural resources also account for the largest portion of the region's exports to industrialized countries, and they constitute China's primary economic interest in the HoA.

Security is another important national interest that China seeks to satisfy in the Horn of Africa. Due to the growing number of Chinese commercial interests in the area, China is increasingly more concerned about security. Chinese workers' and investors' safety is threatened by local criminal activity and political unrest. Lastly, China has a deeper ideological interest in the Horn of Africa because the "China model" has proven successful in non-democratic African countries, proving that Western democratic norms are not universal and subtly bolstering China's own political beliefs.

4.4. The Relationship between USA and China

The United States has long been hesitant to engage in strategic rivalry with the P.R.C., preferring to strike a balance between cooperation and competition and adopt a positive outlook for the future of the relationship (Amir, 2020:21). In order to prevent war over Taiwan and integrate China into the new post-Cold War order, the Clinton administration aimed for a positive strategic alliance.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the George W. Bush administration attempted to engage China as a responsible player in the international system, despite initially portraying it as a rising challenger. According to Natch. et al., (2018:51), the Obama administration attempted to rebalance political and economic engagement with an Asia-Pacific policy that was prominently a military posture aimed at countering increased Chinese assertiveness.

The Trump administration has made it apparent that it will work with China in areas of shared interest, such as North Korean nuclear proliferation. But strategic competition with China is a top priority for the administration, especially when it comes to economic pressure, military advancement, and China's diplomatic attempts to topple the existing regional and global order. Even if China needs to balance cooperation and competition, Beijing sees US policies as adverse to China's rise and recovery. In addition, as Shinn (2005:26) contends, China and the USA struggle for

access to natural resources, commercial tender victories, and even African support for sometimes conflicting opinions on political, economic, and social concerns in international fora.

The United States-China alliance is often seen as the most important bilateral relationship for the near future. Even though this relationship is relatively basic in reference and based on materialistic assumptions, it is undeniable that it is growing more and more prevalent given that the USA is the only superpower and the P.R.C. is the most likely opponent to the USA's worldwide dominion (Shepperd, 2013:35). Vertin (2020:28) also argues that the relationship grew more complicated as aspects of rivalry and collaboration surfaced and proliferated following the Cold War and China's economic ascent.

Because of its aggression, which compels other countries to adopt extreme defensive measures like the use of nuclear weapons, China claims that the US is the primary cause of global instability. But according to CSIS (2018:13) in 2017, the Pentagon more especially, the Strategic Studies Institute of the USA Army War College published a study based on the so called post primacy scenario, in which the US maintains its position as the world's leading military and economic force but is no longer able to influence global affairs because of the rise of rivals like China.

Vanessa (2016:29) adds that one may argue that China's political nature inherently poses a threat to democracy in the American sense. Because it has the capacity to totally upend the free international system, they argue that this threat is more powerful than any military or economic one. The United States of America is certainly sensitive to China's alleged violations of human rights and threats to democracy, and it often brings up the issue at summits and discussions with them.

Furthermore, the existing governmental structure in China is fundamentally authoritarian capitalism behind a Communist guise, which is harmful for the development of the United States. Because of these distinctive characteristics, even a state that has attempted to project an image of peace is likely to provoke distrust and anxiety in the hegemonic state.

4.4.1. The effect of China's rise on USA's Economic Interest in the Horn of Africa

The rise of China, particularly in the Horn of Africa, has affected the U.S. economy, military power, and long-standing status as a regional and global leader. The economic growth of China is clearly influencing the geopolitical supremacy of the United States, and the US is gradually losing

ground to China as the world's largest economy (John, 2018:55). The US is less competitive in international markets as a result of China's economic management, which includes state-owned enterprises (SOEs). In the Horn of Africa, it has strengthened China's ability to resist US economic pressure and influence. It has also made it possible for China to fund various initiatives and programs that are meant to offset US influence.

The U.S. economy, military might, and historically dominant position in the area and the world have all been impacted by China's ascent, especially in the Horn of Africa. China's economic expansion is obviously having an impact on the US's geopolitical dominance, and the US is progressively losing ground to China as the greatest economy in the world (Ibid). The way China manages its economy, including its state-owned companies (SOEs), has made the US less competitive in global markets. It has made it easier for China to stave off US economic pressure and influence in the Horn of Africa. In an effort to counterbalance US dominance, it has also enabled China to finance a number of projects and programs.

There are additional requirements that foreign companies must follow in order to access the Chinese market, including those related to technology transfer (CSIS, 2018:35). The rise and growth of China's economy have made it possible for it to finance the many plans and goals of the nations in the Horn. These efforts allow China to exert more influence and authority over the region than it has in the past. In addition, China's economic power has allowed it to fund several organizations and projects in the Horn of Africa that affect US influence in the region.

Originally established as a group dedicated to demilitarizing boundaries following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has been fueled by China. The organization's goals have grown over time to encompass intelligence cooperation among its members, military cooperation, and counterterrorism. According to CFR (2021:14), the SCO has also collaborated extensively with regional economic projects among member nations. Furthermore, China initiated expensive new initiatives such as the One Belt, One Road plan and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (David, 2017:122). Some have viewed the AIIB as a Chinese rival to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), providing funding for development in nations outside of the US-dominated western international system. The HoA countries are among

the major recipients of the fund. This economic prosperity has helped China to defy pressure from the United States' economic dominance.

After World War II, the United States of America adopted the Bretton Woods system, which created a new global economic order. The creation of the World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organization (WTO) at the Bretton Woods conference was essential to preserving this system's power (Klinger, 2021:17). In this new global economic structure, the United States has had a major advantage since it was the primary architect of this new international order. Because of this global financial system, the United States has a significant advantage over other nations and has been able to maintain its hegemony over the world.

Nevertheless, because of its status as an economic superpower, the United States can no longer effectively pressure China. For example, Swaine (2011:111) claims that the United States has been unable to use economic pressure to force China to change its behavior, especially when it comes to human rights and diplomacy. As a result, it is possible to draw the conclusion that China's rise is affecting the USA's economic interest in the HoA, just as it is in other parts of the world.

4.4.2. The effect of China's rise on USA's National Security in the Horn of Africa

The ascent of China has a clear effect on the geopolitical power of the United States in the domain of national security in the HoA and other parts of the world. Because of its military modernization program, China is now able to project its own strength farther than ever before and withstand US military pressure and influence, bringing it closer to military parity with the US.

For decades, China has been more interested in focusing on economic growth than pursuing any role in global security outside of its borders, but in recent years, it has shown a growing willingness to question and challenge the US presence in various parts of the world (William, 2019:124). For instance, President Xi has drastically accelerated China's military modernization goals for the PLA. These new goals call for the military to hasten its military modernization program to become a modern military by 2035. China's investments in cutting-edge military technologies have started to undermine the US's long-standing technological advantages. Through this modernization initiative, China would be able to project its might around the world, including the HoA region.

Furthermore, the PLA has developed new air, ground, and sea-based missile weapons that threaten US military installations and surface vessels. These new missiles, including the so-called carrier killer missiles, pose a major danger to the United States' capacity to undertake operations. China has also invested much in modernizing its information warfare capabilities (Stewart, 2020:39). The United States has a history of sending an aircraft carrier combat group to areas of conflict whenever tensions rise. However, China has been able to thwart US efforts to stop it from doing certain things because of its growing economic and military power.

The United States will find it more difficult to deter China from posing a threat to US power in the Horn of Africa as it develops and modernizes its military (Nye, 2017:73). China has actively sought to challenge the United States' leadership role in the region on an ideological, military, and economic level by offering a different approach and partner to the international community, including the HoA. China has also shown that it is a very successful alternative economic model from the traditional western economic model, which appeals to many countries that have not experienced the benefits promised by the economic models supported by the United States and western-backed institutions. Through institutions like the AIIB and BRI, China provides these interested nations with an alternate business partner. Among the main beneficiaries of the AIIB and BRI many of them are the HoA nations.

In terms of security, China offers a different partner for military protection and cooperation. China created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to support this objective. According to Plater et al, (2019:109), the SCO was first established to demilitarize boundaries following the fall of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, intelligence sharing and military and counterterrorism collaboration are now part of the organization's purpose. Currently, though HoA countries are not members of SCO, in the long run there are tendencies to be among the members of the organization and benefit from it. Furthermore, as many political theorists have argued, China's success calls into question the ideological notion that a democracy is the most effective and capable type of governance.

China has not hesitated to provide financial or military support for countries that would be rejected by international institutions for violating international law and norms of human rights and unfair elections (Primiano, 2020:83). Authoritarian nations that do not want to make concessions to the United States will find an ally in China who is willing to overlook their allies' violations of

international norms. China's rise as an authoritarian state opens the possibility for other authoritarian states to maintain their current government structures and reject reforms backed by the West.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This study sought to achieve four objectives, i.e., to establish the existence of USA-China rivalry in the Horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia, to identify factors for super powers rivalry during and post-cold war era in the HoA, to investigate the importance of Ethiopia for both USA and China in the horn region of Africa and to assess and discuss the implications of USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the HoA to Ethiopia in terms of development and security parameters.

The existence of USA-China rivalry in the Horn region was confirmed with most informants claiming that the region has been turned into an extension of the foreign countries' domestic governments seeking to dominate the African countries' domestic politics. Due to this fact, countries located in the Horn region, thrive in authoritarian regimes and serve as pawns to the foreign powers at the expense of neglecting governmental obligation to their citizens. Combating terrorism and piracy, natural resources endowment and the region's geo-strategic position were the main causes for the super powers rivalry in the area. On top of that, the chapter concentrates on primary and secondary data in accordance with the specific objectives and research questions outlined in the thesis's first chapter.

5.1. The Geo-strategic Rivalry between USA and China in the HoA and its implications to Ethiopia

Due to its use as a communication channel among the United States ,Western Europe, Asia, and the African continent itself, superpowers and great powers have been vying for control of Africa's physical location, particularly the HoA region, since the colonial era. In order to safeguard their national interests during the Cold War, the USSR and the USA employed their economic and political might under their ideologies of socialism and capitalism, respectively. Ultimately, since the end of the 20th century, China and the United States have been fighting for economic and political dominance across the globe, including the HoA area. Though both of them have found their own military bases in the HoA in turn, the militarization has opportunities as well as security challenges to Ethiopia for being located at a nucleus of the region.

Furthermore, the existence of the contemporary USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the HoA region also confirmed with most key interview participants claiming that the region has been turned into an extension of the foreign countries' domestic governments seeking to dominate the African countries' domestic politics. Due to this fact, countries located in the HoA region including Ethiopia, thrive in authoritarian regimes and serve as pawns to the foreign powers at the expense of neglecting governmental obligation to their citizens. In spite of this, some research participants refuted the claims of an authoritarian government in Ethiopia, instead they praised the reform government's positive impact alluding to contrary information as propaganda (MOFA KIP -4)

Additionally, according to IMIEKIP -1, most HoA countries have succumbed to the syndrome of dependency, the economy has been paralyzed by high unemployment rates leading to extremism and radicalization. This is forcing the countries of the region to involve the super powers in their internal affairs even while devising their domestic policy. Likewise, the other IGAD mission official in Ethiopia affirmed the current geostrategic rivalry between the United States and China in the HoA area and noted the extent to which both superpowers are posing a threat to the region's countries by meddling in their domestic affairs (IMIEKIP-2). According to this official, the lack of strong political unity among the region's countries is the main reason for the superpowers' involvement.

5.2. Relations between Ethiopia and USA

CRS (2021:28), claims that the USA-Ethiopia relationship has been around for more than a century. According to Negasa (2021:19), Ethiopia and the USA have worked together in various capacities since emperor Menelik's reign with economic, diplomatic, and security interests being the main areas of cooperation. Furthermore, Bereket (2010:18) contends that in order to advance its strategic and geopolitical objectives in the HoA region, the USA forged an alliance with Ethiopia, which it regarded as the most significant state in the area, during the post-World War II era and into the late 1940s.

Overall, it indicated that the United States had a long history of diplomatic relations with Ethiopia and had contributed significantly to the changes that were taking place there (Getachew, 2009:41). For example, the USA had a part in how the events transpired, even if the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union's support may have made the fall of the Mengistu dictatorship inevitable, it had

helped the U.S.S.R. pull itself out of a precarious situation long past its sell-by date; it helped move the remaining Falasha to Israel; it organized the conferences that ultimately resulted in the three main factions agreeing to the establishment of a transitional government and Eritrea's eventual self-determination; and it helped prevent significant bloodshed during the capture of Addis Ababa (Woodward, 2012:125).

Full diplomatic ties with the United States were established with Ethiopia's 1991 inauguration of a new government. A lot of people thought that this was the revival of an old partnership that had flourished under Emperor Haile Selassie's rule after World War II but had not survived the Cold War rivals. A friendly Ethiopia may still be helpful in a problematic Horn region, and it could now be reestablished in a time when there was only one superpower. In addition to advocating for peace, the US made an effort to persuade the new leader that it valued human rights and democracy and would monitor the advancement of good governance.

According to Asafa (2011:158), the United States also helped the Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to establish the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), financed Mengistu's 1991 flight, and approved the establishment of the Meles administration in cooperation. The fundamental reason why US foreign policy makers back regimes like Ethiopia is because they believe it serves their strategic and economic objectives. The degree to which the TPLF (Tigrian People's Liberation Front)-cum-EPRDF established an elite prepared to grant US businesses access to resources within the empire that the Tigray elite (EPRDF) also aimed to dominate was crucial in the USA's decision to choose a Tigrian group.

Similarly, the United States of America considers Ethiopia a key regional security ally in the fight against terrorism, particularly given Egypt's ongoing political and security instability following the Arab Spring. With Ethiopia emerging as their political and security beachhead and Djibouti as their military one, both nations appeared to be essential to the implementation of US goals in the HoA region. US officials have occasionally voiced concerns about human rights and democratic governance since Ethiopia's internal upheaval in 2016. Cooperation to combat terrorism and regional instability, as well as to reduce widespread poverty and food insecurity, has been at the heart of ties for more than ten years (CRS, 2021:26).

At the moment, upholding political order and combating terrorism are the primary justifications for US policymakers' involvement in Ethiopia. The current relationship between the United States and Ethiopia has been mostly affected by political instability in Ethiopia, which first resulted from a power struggle between the Federal government and the Tigray Regional State. The United States of America has since appeased both governments in an effort to come to an agreement and a cease-fire. But it's a controversial occasion in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

Ultimately, the USA has made the decision to take two actions against the federal government: first, to withdraw Ethiopia from AGOA, and second, to remove American citizens from Ethiopia. Additionally, the country banned some high-ranking Ethiopian government officials from traveling. Conversely, the United States is also making an effort to do its share to maintain national security and peace as well as to establish cordial diplomatic ties with Ethiopia's reform administration. For instance, the United States played a more significant role in the signing of the peace agreement between the Ethiopian federal government and Tigrayan troops in Pretoria and is still involved in ensuring that the agendas outlined in the accord are fully implemented.

5.3. The Relationship between Ethiopia and China Post-Cold War

Due to pressure from the United States, Ethiopia was unable to establish ties with China until 1970. But Emperor Haile Selassie visited Beijing the next year in 1971(Shinn, 2005:30). The connection took some time to blossom. The diplomatic relations between both countries seem better under the Durgue regime since China briefly fostered the new military government following Haile Selassie's fall in 1974 (Ibid). China faced a significant obstacle despite its continuing efforts to build positive relations with Ethiopia under the durgue regime because of its ties to Somalia and Soviet influence there. It backed down and allowed the Soviets to take over as Ethiopia's primary arms supplier because it was unable or unwilling to do so.

Thus, according to Gashaw (2018:29), the relationship between China and Ethiopia was problematic under both the military Derg regime and the imperial regime. This was because of the interplay between home and international politics, as well as domestic, regional, and international situations. In addition, Gofie (2015:27) contends that the heightened political and economic ties between China and Africa including Ethiopia are novel, especially in the post-Cold War era, which has drawn the interest of numerous academics.

Similar to this, Xiaoguang (2021:12) argues that China greatly expanded its aid, trade, and investment activities in Ethiopia when the Dergue regime toppled in 1991 and the socialist state was dismantled. China has been a significant development partner for Ethiopia because of the assistance it provides in a number of areas, including grants, soft loans, technical cooperation, urban planning, and the development of human resources. After Ethiopia's military regime was overthrown in 1991, relations started to improve and have gotten warmer ever since. Throughout Ethiopia's war with Eritrea in 1998–2000, China was a major provider of military hardware. Their respective ministries of defense occasionally visit as part of this ongoing collaboration.

Although they are becoming more and more commercial agreements, China has implemented an increasing number of aid initiatives (Xiaoguang 2021:15). They concentrate on housing, irrigation, power and water supply projects, and building roads and bridges. According to Cabestan (2012:31), Ethiopia and China have developed a considerably closer political alliance since 1995. According to the Ethiopian government, it is a "close relationship" that would undoubtedly be crucial to the nation's ambitious development and poverty alleviation initiatives that were started at the same time. Furthermore, Beijing is more than that in Addis Ababa's eyes; it is a partner which might offer both diplomatic and technical support in addition to sharing its economic expertise.

China and Ethiopia were in a close relation on political matters during EPRDF regime. For example, on a November 2004 visit to China, Meles characterized relations with China as close, amicable, and substantial (Gashaw and Zelalem, 2016:17). In several areas, especially poverty alleviation, rural development, and maybe finance, the Ethiopian government looks to China as a model. Addis Ababa serves as the African Union's headquarters, which makes it a convenient place for China and other countries to communicate with representatives from throughout the continent. Ethiopia is also essential to China due to its location in Africa. China has also been investing in East Africa, particularly Ethiopia, to support its own development (Cabestan, 2012:43). Thus, the developing and extending breadth of the connections with particular reference to trade is further revitalized by the recent intensification of engagements between the two governments.

Additionally, the Chinese industrial zone known as EEIZ, which is about 37 kilometers from Addis Ababa, is noteworthy. There, more than 20 Chinese industries have worked on a range of projects,

such as those involving the production of steel, food, clothes and textiles, leather goods and shoes, and electrical components.

Both the EPRDF and the Chinese Communist Party believed that state led development was a necessary prerequisite for long term regime stability, and this belief persisted even after Ethiopia's reform government. Unsurprisingly, the aspirations of the two nations are similar; China wants to achieve National Rejuvenation, while Ethiopia envisions the so called Ethiopian Renaissance (Gashaw, 2018:22).

5.4. USA-China geo-strategic Rivalry in the Horn of Africa

The majority of key interview informants who were asked about the United States and China's relationship in the Horn of Africa recently acknowledged that the two major powers in the region are rivals. A diplomat at MOFA in the key interview mentioned that, “USA and China could easily lead to another confrontation, a menace posed by a rising power in this case China and a global hegemon, the USA”. Moreover, due to the discontent with each other’s foreign policy dominance in areas such as global trade, cyber security issues, freedom of navigation, maritime policy, military bases and nuclear production, China and the U.S are strategic adversaries (MOFA KIP -1).

This research finding is anchored on the power transition theory indicating that in such a scenario China is a contender of the prevailing status quo. Accordingly, Lippert and Perthes (2020:15) contended that this rivalry could determine the dynamics of the military, economic and political conditions worldwide. This rivalry is shown mainly in the competition for domination as a global hegemon. It is also argued that systemic competition for technological advancement strategies has increased. The two superpowers also utilize their influence to forward their foreign policy agendas in multilateral organizations like the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

A respondent in a key interview from AU expounded that, “the United States will always get what it wants due to its position in international politics, demonstrating historical arrogance with their ideological stand-the American Dream and viewing other states like China as the underdogs (AUKIP -2). This assertion reaffirms the power transition theory’s claim that the international system is made of hierarchical order with the most dominant power being at the top. The U.S,

therefore, being the global hegemon projects power and dominance in all spheres, sometimes contravenes the international law.

Additionally another key interview participant from MOFA (MOFA KIP -2), a China desk officer indicated that, “the global powers rivalry for geo-strategic significance is a testament of the Horn of Africa becoming the next theater for global geopolitics.” As a result, Nigusu and Hailu (2021:10) assert that the region's diplomatic strength has grown dramatically as a result of the high number of international power groups in the area as well as the rivalry and fear of superpowers.

For instance, the US AFRICOM commander Waldhauser particularly warned the US government that if China had the right to manage the port, America’s activities therein would be fully paralyzed. America's fears are based on neo-realism theory, in which China, an increasing force that fights to put an end to the US-dominated international unilateral order, is seen as a Western threat. Apprehensive USA-China relations in the region of horn, according to (CHEKIP -1), the rivalry might have more negative impact as opposed to positive, because different states in international politics use different channels to achieve their foreign policies, soft or hard power can be a preferred tool. This may negatively affect the countries in the HoA.

The establishment of military stations in Djibouti, according to Vertin (2020:33), is a significant example of military diplomacy used to highlight the competition between China and the United States in the Horn of Africa. Also in 2017, China established a "naval support" military camp in Djibouti. It is located on a ninety-acre plot of land that borders Doraleh's multipurpose harbor. More than \$500 million was invested by the Beijing government to build the facility, with a \$20 million yearly lease fee paid to the Djibouti government. This was the first Chinese military base abroad, located six miles from the US military base in the region. Given that they see China as a threat to American power in the Horn of Africa, American officials are concerned about this military installation. In order to protect its strategic expansionist objectives in the Horn of Africa, Beijing is providing naval support.

In 2001, the United States set up a military facility in Djibouti following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Since then, Washington has invested trillions of dollars to expand and improve the facility. The United States has only one permanent military post in Africa, and that is this one. The United States is mainly worried about China's position in the HoA as a great power adversary, in contrast to other

foreign nations in the area. It makes natural sense for Beijing to build a military installation in Djibouti given its history of hosting foreign military forces and its motivation to use military diplomacy in contrast to its non-interference foreign policy.

These geopolitical trends demonstrate Beijing's intention to project its military foot-print to safeguard its foreign interests and further its foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, Mike (2021) argues that China's growing geopolitical position in global affairs is inevitably going to shatter America's global supremacy, confirming intense world power competition that will alter the unilateral global order.

5.5. Factors made HoA more Strategic for super powers

The larger geography of the area has also played a key role in determining the strategic importance of the HoA. Furthermore, the area has been subjected to external impacts because of the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Nile River, and the Gulf of Aden (Woodward, 2012:127). The Arabian Gulf, North Africa, and the HoA are all included in the diversified region known as the Red Sea. Even with a lengthy history of cooperation, better coordination is difficult due to the disparate political, economic, and cultural systems. Traditional definitions of Africa and the Middle East, which use the Red Sea as a border rather than a common geographic feature, have made this worse.

The HoA is also attractive to the superpowers because of the Bab el-Mandeb, a vital chokepoint between North-East Africa and the Gulf of Aden. It runs from Djibouti to Yemen and is only 29 kilometers wide at its narrowest point. According to Daniel (2012:25), 8% of all trade passes via the strait from Asia to Europe and vice versa, making the Bab el-Mandeb the busiest waterway in the world and an essential entrance point for the flow of international trade. It is also a vital route for Gulf energy exports, with 4.8 million barrels of oil and 25,000 oil ships passing through the strait daily.

The Red Sea became one of the world's most important shipping lanes after the Suez Canal was constructed in the late 19th century. This resulted in an approximate 4,000-mile reduction in travel time between Europe and Asia. The Suez route, which links markets in North America and Europe with production facilities in the Persian Gulf, carried 4.8 million barrels of oil per day in 2019. This demonstrates how beneficial the route is.

Similarly, one of the key interviewees from IGAD Missions in Ethiopia clarifies the region's strategic significance as follows:

“The Horn of Africa is an important area from a strategic and economic standpoint. There is greater access to the sea in the region. Its borders are the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf of Aden. Furthermore, since it links Africa, Europe, and Asia, the region is vital. Because of its geostrategic importance, it has also been a major site of superpower conflict at different times” (IMIEKIP-1).

Additionally, the other key interviewee from the African Union makes the following arguments for the region's strategic significance:

“The Horn of Africa is located in a very favorable area. The region acts as a link between Africa, Asia, and Europe due to its better connection to the sea. Its borders are the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf of Aden. The strait of Bab el Mandeb, which links the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, is at the other end of the Red Sea, whereas the Suez Canal is at its southernmost point. Additionally, given that they had access to the sea, countries in the Horn of Africa were able to build ports. At least five of the greatest ports for trade, security, and military uses are located in the region. Somalia is home to the ports of Mogadishu, Kismayu, and Berbera. Furthermore, the port of Djibouti is a naval station and a significant center for maritime trade” (AUKIP - 2).

Economically, the Horn of Africa is also a feasible area. In this sense, the area is economically a "mandatory" route for major marine commerce routes that transit the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Gulf of Aden (Mokoena, 2021:29). In terms of military operations, the area is perfect for air and naval security missions. Furthermore, the Horn of Africa is a crucial region since it is close to the main sea lanes that connect the oil-producing nations with Europe and America. Oil, which is primarily produced in the Middle East, travels through the Indian and Red Seas to reach countries in East Europe and other parts of the world. The Horn of Africa's strategic and geopolitical prominence was explained by all of these factors. The big powers therefore saw the area as crucial for safeguarding their military and commercial interests from the onset of colonialism.

The HoA is a complicated location with significant geopolitical and geostrategic implications that is closely related to important facets of its topography and history. In this regard, Mabera (2020:27) argues that the Horn maintains its position as a major maritime choke point and port of call in a world growing increasingly interconnected by virtue of its proximity to the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf, as well as the vital trade routes that traverse the Bab el-Mandab and the Gulf of Aden. Since the Suez Canal opened to shipping in 1869, new trade routes have been developed between Europe and America to the west and the Gulf, East Africa, India, and the Far East to the east.

Another crucial factor in determining the HoA's strategic importance is the Nile River. The world's largest transnational river system is the Nile basin. The White and Blue Niles, which emerge from Lake Victoria (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) and Lake Tana (Ethiopia), respectively, are the two main tributaries of this river system. According to Elias (2009:21), the White Nile contributes only 14% of the water inflow, whereas the Blue Nile is by far the greatest tributary, accounting for 86%. Approximately 20% of Africa's population resides in the Nile Basin, which makes up 10% of the continent's geographical area.

The majority of Africans rely on agriculture and the rearing of crops and cattle for their livelihoods. In the Nile riparian nations, where water development is prioritized for agriculture, home consumption, power, and industry, access to water is essential to human flourishing. Competition for water between people and governments fosters an environment of conflict that threatens environmental functions and human prosperity. The most notable river is the Nile, which has historically played a complex role in the geopolitics of the HoA. Geographically, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt share ownership and use of the river, and all three view it as a significant security concern (Roba and Berouk, 2011:132).

In North-East Africa, the transboundary Nile River is a shared resource that has the potential to both intensify resource-based conflict and foster greater regional cooperation. The hydropolitics surrounding dam projects, particularly the near-completion of the gigantic GERD, have been a significant source of regional tensions and have deepened rifts between Ethiopia and Egypt. As it is discussed by Mabera (2020:29), the GERD is an essential component of Ethiopia's national development ambitions, increasing the country's hydropower supplies and providing long-term advantages for regional integration. The controversial Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the

Blue Nile River has been under consideration by the Ethiopian government since the 1960s. Nonetheless, the project is the largest engineering endeavor the nation has ever undertaken and was officially launched in April 2011 (Chen et al., 2019:48).

However, Egypt is entirely dependent on the waters of the Nile River for its survival, so ensuring that these waters are not endangered should be the top priority for any Egyptian government. Concerns have been raised by certain Egyptian scholars that the GERD's current design may adversely affect Egypt's share of water flow as well as the power produced by the High Dam and Aswan Dam, especially during the filling and operation phases.

Ethiopia counters that as the water is only utilized for hydropower generation, the GERD won't stop it from flowing (Swaine, 2011:108). Ethiopian leaders in particular view Egypt's stance as a direct danger to the country's economic stability. Ethiopia views the construction of its dam, called "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," which began in 2009, as crucial to meeting the energy needs of its own people. Ethiopia also intends to boost its political and economic position by selling hydropower to other countries in the region. Other HoA nations with rising energy needs disagree with Egypt's stance as well, but they, like Addis Ababa, present theirs as one that protects "Africans" from being persecuted by northern Arabs (Fisher 2014:15).

To sum it up, depending on the data acquired from primary and secondary sources, it is possible to argue that Horn of Africa is still viable and relevant in terms of its strategic importance for the super powers rivalry.

5.6. Importance of Ethiopia for both USA and China

As a symbol of African freedom during the colonial era, Ethiopia, one of the continent's oldest sovereign nations, is situated in the HoA. Mosley (2020:26) asserts that Ethiopia was instrumental in establishing the groundwork for Africa's anti-colonial movements as a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (later renamed the African Union) and the United Nations. Ethiopia, a complex country that can navigate among the many ethnic and political groupings that comprise the African continent, is situated at the intersection of the predominantly Muslim North Africa and the Christian Southern regions of the continent.

Furthermore, during the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Ethiopia's strategic location near Bab el Mandab on the Red Sea and its closeness to the African and Arab worlds piqued the interest of colonial and modern powers (Jalal & Sara, 2016:17). Even though Ethiopia cannot economically compete with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or the United Arab Emirates, its security influence in the HoA places it on a level playing field with other strategic players.

The United Nations estimated that there were more than 100 million people living in Ethiopia as of May 2016, speaking 70 different languages and 200 dialects (WB report, 2019:41). It ranks second on the continent after Nigeria and is the biggest single market in East Africa by population. It has become a major power in the HoA in recent years due to its quick economic growth and its strategic importance in the area (CFR, 2021:25).

Ethiopia is located at the center of the HoA, an area that developed into a military base and a stage for political drama. Due to its advantageous position, Ethiopia has become a center for regional integration and is currently at the forefront of promoting integrative infrastructure initiatives, especially those related to hydroelectric power. According to Martinelli and Pirozzi (2019:97), it now exports 34-40 MW of electricity to Djibouti and 100 MW to Sudan.

5.7. The Implications of USA-China Geo-strategic Rivalry in the HoA to Ethiopia's Development and Security Parameters

The United States of America has been supporting governments in nations that it considers friendly and in which it has an interest. Foreign aid, military aid, and diplomatic help have all been provided (Daniel, 2012:54). Through the USA Department of State, USA Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, and the USA Centers for Disease Control, the United States has been working closely with Ethiopia's Ministry of Health, Ministry of Peace, Ethiopia Public Health Institute, National Disaster Risk Management Commission, and other international and local partners to provide life-saving aid and help Ethiopians withstand the effects of COVID-19 (Fact Sheet 2021:35). Furthermore, as Kidist (2014:43) argues, Ethiopia was able to obtain significant financial and technical assistance from the western nations, especially the United States, due to the convergence of Ethiopia's interests with those of its allies in the West. This gave Ethiopia legitimacy in its regional role and position within the HoA.

However, after the end of the TPLF-cum EPRDF government era in 2018, things changed dramatically and the USA stopped supporting Ethiopia and limited its aid only to humanitarian activities. Furthermore, according to Mesfin (2013:109), the militarization of the HoA by the USA and other superpowers posed a danger to Ethiopia's national security.

The United States' promotion of democracy is sometimes perceived as unwarranted meddling in other nations' internal affairs, which can lead to negative reactions (Daniel, 2012:17). For example, al Arabiya news (2020) reports that in October 2020, outgoing US President Donald Trump warned Sudanese Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok over the phone that Egypt would wind up "blowing up" the GERD. Furthermore, in May 2021, the United States government declared that it would be limiting visas for Ethiopian and Eritrean government and military leaders who were either directly or indirectly involved in the sabotage of the Tigray crisis resolution process. Restrictions may also apply to certain individuals' immediate family members. The United States of America likewise placed limitations on economic and security help to Ethiopia on the same day, but they kept up their vital humanitarian aid. According to Bloomberg (2021), the United States sanctions primarily impacted funding for Ethiopia's budget, including requests for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to withhold financial resources.

Therefore, it appears that the United States is reducing its engagement with Ethiopia, despite the fact that it has been a close friend of Ethiopia for a long time. In particular, the United States of America decreased its assistance to Ethiopia, with the exception of humanitarian matters, as the country underwent reform and a new government took office. This is happening because of the USA foreign policy directions which considers the issue of human rights, democratic governance and others which are mostly part of hard politics. As stated by one of the key interview participants from MOFA (MOFA KIP -3), the war between TPLF forces and the Federal government and the issue of GERD were one of the factors that contributed to the reduction of the USA engagements with Ethiopia.

The other key interview participant from Africa Union officials conveys the diminishing of the USA engagement in Ethiopia as follows:

“The United States and Ethiopia has a long history of diplomatic ties, just like other nations in the HoA. Ethiopia is mostly needed by the USA for security reasons,

including fighting terrorism and piracy in the HoA. The USA increased its engagement with Ethiopia, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attack on American soil. The USA provided various technical and financial support for the TPLF-cum EPRDF regime since its creation. Unexpectedly when the political reform happened in Ethiopia in 2018, the USA found the new reform government of Ethiopia very much aggressive to entertain the foreigners interest in its internal affairs. In secret or in public, the United States supported TPLF forces during the conflict between the two factions (the Federal government and TPLF forces) in northern Ethiopia and made an effort to exert diplomatic pressure on the Federal government. In the same way, when Ethiopia announced the filling of the second round turbine filling of the GERD, publically USA sided with Egypt and even the then president of USA Donald Trump promised the president Alsisi of Egypt to provide any help that they need to take any measure against Ethiopia. Also how much the USA did to take both issues (the war in Tigray and the GERD) to the UN Security council is visible. To conclude all these ups and downs can suggest the diminishing era of USA engagement in Ethiopia” (AUKIP-1).

Furthermore, the other key interview participants from MOFA argues that one of the main reasons for the USA to minimize its diplomatic engagement with Ethiopia is because of the unwillingness of the reform government of Ethiopia to allow USA to intervene in its internal affairs. Because the culture of the USA foreign policy towards the African countries including Ethiopia is to create a regime which serves their interest in each country. In this regard, it was very much successful in Ethiopia particularly during the rule of TPLF-cum EPRDF government. However, the USA did not view Ethiopia as a promising nation in the HoA to carry out its foreign policy after the reforms were implemented and the new reform administration led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) took office.

Because of this, the US began to restrict its assistance to Ethiopia and began implementing other detrimental policies aimed at undermining the government. Besides, the USA attempted to challenge the reform regime of Ethiopia through international organizations such as the UN. As an example, the United States of America was instrumental in bringing the GERD issue before the UN Security Council for recurrent discussion (MOFA KIP -4).

It is feasible to draw the conclusion that we are living in an era of decreased US involvement in Ethiopia, especially since the start of the reform leadership in 2018, as both key interviewees and focus group discussion participants have verified. And to fill the gap, it seems that Ethiopia is turning its face to the other rival powers in the region particularly China. China's long-standing presence in the HoA has many economic benefits for Ethiopia, much like those of the United States and other regional superpowers. An international airport, a water supply project, and a railway line connecting Addis Ababa to the newport of Djibouti are among the economically significant infrastructure projects that China is constructing (Jeffrey, 2018:31).

The Ethiopian government is concerned about the imbalance in trade, which is modest and largely favors China. China recently allowed Ethiopia to export a variety of goods tariff and quota free in an attempt to address this issue. The number of Ethiopians sent to China on scholarships has also surged recently. The development of the HoA and other African regions has been greatly aided by China's rise, and other nations are increasingly projecting their might in ways that challenge "USA hegemony (Rondos, 2019:13).

Ethiopia's relationship with western powers, especially the United States, has been challenged in recent years as international efforts to combat terrorism and pressure to enact democratic reforms have clashed in Ethiopia. And this is forcing Ethiopia to think of China as a best option especially in development parameters. In this regard, one of the key interview participant from China embassy explains the recent nature of China engagement in HoA and Ethiopia as follows:

“The diplomatic relation between China and HoA countries including Ethiopia is long dated and full of ups and downs because of global political, economic and ideological factors. The majority of our diplomatic interactions do not concentrate on the more difficult aspects of diplomacy, such as politics and security concerns, which opens the door for meddling in the domestic affairs of the governments. Rather, our diplomatic relations mostly focus on economic engagements and on how to develop together. In this regard, I can say that our diplomacy is successful because by their nature , states can't tolerate other states interfering in their internal affairs. That is why several HoA countries are upgrading their diplomatic engagements with China from time to time and Ethiopia is also doing the same. Especially, after the reform government took power by

replacing the previous TPLF-cum EPRDF government, Ethiopia received great pressure from the western powers, particularly the USA. But when we come to the Chinese part, the Ethio-China diplomatic relation has boomed by far and even both countries started to cooperate with each other on various global agendas” (CHEKIP -2).

In addition, as stated by Gashaw (2018:23), Ethiopia's increasing inclination toward China is because of its economic assistance, an alternative partner to the West, and a role model. Cabestan (2012:18) further argues that for Ethiopia, "partnership with China mainly serves the internal political and economic purposes of the regime." Hu Jintao announced a number of policy measures to further cooperation with African countries at the Beijing Summit, and Ethiopia was the only country to benefit from all of them, including debt cancellation, joint infrastructure projects, and a zero tariff for Ethiopian goods, which increased Ethiopian exports.

China's involvement in Ethiopia is highly visible due to significant infrastructure initiatives, just like in many other developing African nations. Roads, energy, and communications are the three main areas of Chinese activity. The Ethiopian government's national development policy prioritizes a number of sectors to be supported by Chinese (Thakur, 2009:13). The Ethiopian government greatly values China's "non-interference" approach when it comes to governance matters. Also both nations believe that mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding are the foundations of their relationship.

China considers Ethiopia as a critical friend in the HoA, and Ethiopia considers China as a key collaborator in its political and economic reform. Light armored vehicles, artillery, and troop transport vehicles are now supplied by China to the Ethiopian army. The number of Ethiopian officers it trains annually is unknown, however it may be 10 (Cabestan, 2012:29). Interest-free loans, debt relief, concessional financing, grants, and technical support are the primary forms of Chinese overseas aid. Furthermore, Ethiopia is a key hub for China's Belt and Road Initiative, a developing project that aims to expand Chinese influence by investing in and constructing infrastructure in poor countries, including HoA (Mabera, 2020:30).

According to the World Bank study (2019:17), there are already 400 Chinese building and manufacturing projects in Ethiopia with a combined value of over \$4 billion. The Chinese subsidize and construct a large portion of Ethiopia's road, rail, and aviation infrastructure. This strong

Chinese economic engagement has made Beijing Ethiopia's top trading partner. Before COVID-19, Ethiopia's economy had been growing at an impressive pace of 10 percent for over a decade, demonstrating China's stellar reputation as a development partner.

China is actively involved and contributing to Ethiopia's development, but it is also playing a role in Ethiopia's politics and security. The two nations have close political relations. For example, in 2003, Ethiopia hosted the first-ever Forum on China-Africa Cooperation gathering in Africa. The \$200 million African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa was constructed and financed by China in 2012. Chinese media outlets have increased their visibility in Ethiopia in the interim. A defense pact between China and Ethiopia has also been expanded to include cooperative training, technology sharing, and peacekeeping missions.

China has also provided training for Ethiopian officers. The Ethiopian military has lately acquired Chinese artillery and transport trucks, while the majority of its heavy weapons are manufactured in Russia or Ukraine. Furthermore, it is thought that government forces are employing drones that are supplied by China for various objectives. Additionally, Beijing has opposed serious international involvement in Ethiopia to address the problem that has arisen in the northern region of the country. For instance, its UN envoy reaffirmed "support for African solutions to solve African problems," including by regional countries and organizations, and asserted that "solutions can only be found from within." The U.N. Security Council should "give necessary time and space to the African Union to carry out such efforts," Ambassador Zhang Jun added, adding that humanitarian relief measures must respect Ethiopia's "sovereignty and leadership." The Chinese diplomat was also against Ethiopia being subjected to economic penalties by the US.

Conversely, the U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa stated that the Biden administration is "working tirelessly to keep this crisis on the international agenda," including at the United Nations. Also in response to the Abiy government's "gross violations of internationally recognized human rights" in Tigray, the United States withdrew trade benefits that Ethiopia wanted to maintain, and U.S. sanctions targeting complicit Ethiopian government officials were authorized. This is in contrast to China's positive approach in dealing with Ethiopia and aiding the country during the crisis.

In this regard, one of the key interview participant from African Union explains the situation as follows:

“Washington has been heavily involved in the crisis, even though it hasn't led any successful diplomatic efforts to put an end to it, and the United States may make a strategic mistake in Ethiopia. Prior to the recent tensions and China's growing influence in the country, the United States and Ethiopia were strong economic and security partners. Despite the fact that the country helped bring the Tigray conflict to an end by signing a peace deal in Pretoria between the federal government and Tigrayan forces, there has been no discernible effort to fully implement the agreement. The US-Ethiopian relationship is also being adversely affected by this. Therefore, as Ethio-US relations continue to deteriorate and Ethiopia may turn to China for additional support, Beijing may believe it is making progress in its geopolitical struggle with the US” (AUKIP-2).

Verhoeven (2018:17) argues that, given its military might, diplomatic clout, and enormous population, Ethiopia is increasingly being referred to as a regional force in the HoA. Ethiopia remains, thus, more strategically important to both superpowers in the HoA. Through diplomacy, development, and defense, for example, CJTF-HOA works to prevent war, advance regional stability, safeguard coalition interests, and defeat extremism in the area. Cooperation with Ethiopia, a strategically significant country in the region, is necessary for this. ENDF and Djibouti Armed Forces intelligence and communications personnel are also trained by CJTF-HOA, and they also visited the facility to collaborate with US intelligence and communication experts.

Moreover, the USA and Ethiopia also signed MoU to enhance security partnership. Also according to CR S (2021:25), the USA is Ethiopia's top humanitarian donor. Even though both superpowers are contributing for Ethiopia's security and development parameters with different degrees depending on their national interest, their contribution is not for free and it is posing challenges to Ethiopia. Burke (2017:82), for example, argues that the establishment of an excessive number of military bases and the unstable character of the region make the security issues a security dilemma, highlighting the difficulties the nation has due to the presence of adversary countries in the region.

Ethiopia has a lengthy history in this area of security quandary, sometimes influencing and sometimes affecting. Thus, the situation in which a nation must wait for military support from other nations is referred to as a security dilemma. State sovereignty may then be politically harmed by this backing. Foreign powers' arrival in the Horn poses a variety of security risks, including jeopardizing the state's territorial integrity (national security), as well as national economic, military, and political security. In addition, the Financial Times (2019:10) cautions that some African governments may attempt to circumvent the need for elections by using Chinese loans. The idea of accountability, which was created by donors, may also be at danger.

likewise Shady (2019:11) asserts that China's presence in Ethiopia and its development assistance have unquestionably strengthened the hand of the authoritarian regime; despite the rhetoric of mutual benefit invoked by Ethiopian political leaders, Ethiopia-China relations are largely asymmetrical; and from an economic perspective, Gashaw (2018:25) argues that Ethiopia-China trade relations are highly imbalanced and favor China, despite China's best efforts to rectify the imbalance by offering Ethiopia various opportunities.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION

The thesis examines the existence of rivalry between USA and China in the Horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia, the largest Eastern African nation in terms of population size and market place with being located at the nucleus of the Horn of Africa region which is geo-strategically relevant for the superpowers competition. The thesis explains the merger of the superpowers rivalry in the Horn of Africa by examining in detail why superpowers are competing with each other and how it helps Ethiopia in terms of peace and development parameters. The study involved an exploratory study.

For the superpowers' struggle to uphold and preserve their national interests, the HoA is one of the geostrategically significant regions of the world. Regarding the existence of rivalry between USA and China recently, majority of key interview participants confirmed that rivalry exists between the two big powers in the region. Even some research participants explained their worry that there is a tendency for the beginning of the conventional war between the two giant countries in the region and this will negatively affect the countries of the region in many ways.

The study also revealed that even though the USA is in a better position in maintaining hegemonic status quo, China is emerging fastly and appearing as a strong challenger. In a similar vein, China is gaining favor with many nations in the Horn of Africa and seems to be the ideal choice for them to form partnerships in both security and the economic activities. The USA's involvement in the Horn of Africa is occasionally waning, as the key interview participants attest to.

Contrary to this, as a newly emerging hegemon China's involvement in the region is increasing. Thus, recently there is rivalry between the old hegemon, USA and the newly emerging hegemon, China in the region of horn. This rivalry is shown mainly in the competition for domination as a global hegemon. In the same way by confirming the existence of rivalry in the region, Nigusu and Hailu, (2021:12), argued that the diplomatic power of the region has increased significantly due to a large number of global power groups in the region and super powers' rivalry and fear of each other.

The strategic significance of the Horn of Africa to the superpowers was also disclosed by the study. Because of the region's natural resource endowments, the Bab el-Mandeb, the Nile River, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean, the majority of key interview participants as well as the reviewed literature thus affirmed the region's geostrategic significance. Furthermore, the Horn of Africa has gained importance due to a number of variables, including its sizable population and market prospects. In terms of the military, the Horn of Africa is a perfect location for air and naval security operations, and it is also a feasible area for commercial activity.

Ethiopia is among the most significant nations for the superpowers in the Horn of Africa, much like the other nations in the area. Ethiopia is of interest to these superpowers for a number of reasons. According to this study, Ethiopia's strategic location at the center of the Horn of Africa, its sizeable population, its natural resources, its inexpensive labor force, and its extensive market potential are some of the reasons why it continues to be a significant country for both China and the United States. In most cases, the USA is interested in Ethiopia to have strong allies in the region to work on security issues. From the China side, up to more recently, its relation with Ethiopia mainly focuses on economic spheres although the country is also showing interest on peace and security issues. Moreover, China is also showing its help for Ethiopia on various international forums and helping the country to get the membership to different global south arrangements and to be benefited from it.

This study also examined the implications of the geo-strategic rivalry between the two superpowers in the region to Ethiopia. Accordingly, both superpowers have contributed for Ethiopia's peace and development in different ways. For example, the United States of America offered diplomatic, military, and foreign aid to the country. The country is also working with various Ethiopia's ministries through its different departments. According to this study, though the USA is the oldest friend of Ethiopia and has been helping the country in different ways, after the end of the TPLF-cum EPRDF government era in 2018, things changed dramatically and the USA stopped supporting Ethiopia and limited its aid only to humanitarian activities. This is mostly due to US foreign policy directives to HoA governments that encourage state engagement in domestic matters of other states under the pretext of democracy and human rights.

Moreover, this study also expounded that the USA have taken various coercive measures against Ethiopian leaders post 2018 to weaken the state economically and challenged the national interest of the country by using different regional and global organizations/arrangements. In overall, this study found that although the United States and Ethiopia have been close friends for a long time, the United States has recently been reducing its engagement with Ethiopia, especially since the new reform government took office in 2018.

On another side, China is stepping up its engagement with Ethiopia, in contrast to the United States. China has a long history in the HoA like the USA and other regional superpowers. This has various economic benefits for Ethiopia. For instance, China is actively participating in the nation by establishing trade connections and economically important infrastructure.

According to this study, the pressure to implement democratic reforms and the issues of human rights are challenging the Ethiopia's relation with western powers particularly USA and this is forcing the country to think China as a best option especially in development parameters. Even beyond the booming state level bilateral diplomatic engagements, both countries are cooperating with each other on various global agendas especially after the reform government of Ethiopia. Furthermore, this study also confirmed that there is good relation between China and Ethiopia in political and Security spheres in addition to economic sphere. In order to address the situation that occurred in Ethiopia's northern region, for example, Beijing has opposed strong foreign intervention, arguing that they must respect Ethiopia's sovereignty and leadership.

To sum it up, this study revealed that the existence of the rivalry between the two superpowers in the region of HoA is helping Ethiopia by providing the opportunity to choose from the two superpowers and engage with in diplomatic relations without compromising its national interest. Also it will make both countries compete with each other to be better friends of Ethiopia and provide more support to win the heart of the Ethiopian government. Moreover, the study also explained various challenges facing Ethiopia because of the existence of the rivalry between USA and China in the Horn of Africa region.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Key interview Guiding Questions

My name is **Edao Waritu**, currently a Masters student in International Relations and Diplomacy at Addis Ababa University, Department of Political Science and International Relations. I am conducting a research on the topic; **The contemporary USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia** which is one of the prerequisites to obtain Masters of Art Degree in international relations and diplomacy. My research guarantees full compliance to research ethics, hence ensures respondents anonymity, confidentiality and all information provided will be solely used for the research study. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

A. Key interview Guiding Questions For MOFA, AU, and IGAD Missions in Ethiopia Officials in Addis Ababa

1. Do you think that the contemporary USA-China geo-strategic competition in the horn of Africa can help Ethiopia to protect its national interest? How?
2. Why are both super powers (USA and China) competing with each other in the Horn of Africa?
3. Is Ethiopia's strategic importance for the both superpowers in the horn of Africa decreasing or increasing? Why?
4. How can Ethiopia approach both superpowers to maintain and sustain its national interest?
5. Do you think that Chinese competition in the horn of Africa has contributed for Ethiopia to continue working on GERD which is being challenged by the USA at different times?
6. Can China appear as the best option for the countries of HoA including Ethiopia to maintain their sovereignty which is very much challenged by the USA at different times? How?
7. What kinds of diplomatic relations that the countries of HoA region should follow to win the heart of the Chinese government and to establish strong diplomatic ties with it?
8. How do you explain the USA involvement in the HoA before and after China's rise?

9. How do you compare the two superpowers involvement in the HoA at different times? Is it decreasing or increasing?
10. What should Ethiopia do to maintain its national interest while both superpowers are competing in the region of HoA?
11. Is it possible to expect the occurrence of the new cold war era between the two superpowers (USA and China? How?
12. Is Ethiopia's strategic importance for both superpowers increasing or decreasing? Why?
13. What should Ethiopia do to appear as a very important country for both superpowers in the HoA?
14. Do you think that the USA's pressure on Ethiopia is decreasing from time to time because of Chinese involvement in the region of HoA?
15. USA was very much reluctant and publically sided with Egypt on the issues of GERD particularly when Ethiopia announced the filling of the second round turbine. But they did not continued/sticked to their position and even they softened their position on the issue and Ethiopia also filled the turbine for the second round successfully. How do you perceive the Chinese contribution in this regard?
16. Do you think that China can help Ethiopia in maintaining its national interest? How?
17. Why does the USA attempt to intervene in the internal affairs of the countries in the HoA including Ethiopia?
18. Is there any difference between the USA and China diplomatic relations approach towards the countries of HoA including Ethiopia? From the approaches of both superpowers Which approach is better for the countries of the region to protect their national interest? How?
19. How can Ethiopia benefit from the two superpowers competition in the region?
20. Is the contemporary competition between the two superpowers in the HoA is an opportunity or a challenge for Ethiopia? why?

21. What challenges Ethiopia may face because of the two superpowers competition in the HoA and what opportunities Ethiopia can gain from the two superpowers competition in the region?
22. What should Ethiopia do to benefit from the two superpowers competition in the region of HoA?
23. How do you compare and contrast Ethiopia's relations with both super powers (USA and China) after the reform government?

B. Key interview Guiding Questions For China embassy officials in Addis Ababa

1. How can you explain the relations between China and the USA in recent times?
2. In your understanding, Why superpowers compete in the HoA during and post cold war era?
3. Do you think that there is contemporary USA-China geo-strategic competition in the HoA?
4. Is there contemporary geo-strategic rivalry between China and the USA in Ethiopia? If your answer is yes, what are the implications of this rivalry to Ethiopia in terms of Peace and development issues? and what are its negative consequences?
5. In your understanding, How influential is China in Ethiopia's development and Security issues?
6. How do you compare and contrast the CHina involvement in the Security and dev't issues of the countries in the HoA during different times? Is it increasing/decreasing? Why?
7. Has the political reform happened in Ethiopia in 2018 affected the Ethio-Chinese relations? If so positively or negatively? How?
8. Is the Chinese involvement in the security and dev't issues of Ethiopia increased or decreased after the reform gov't of Ethiopia?
9. Is the Chinese Foreign Policy direction towards Ethiopia is the same before and after the political reform of Ethiopia (post 2018).
10. How do you explain the Chinese support for Ethiopia in Development and Security issues? Particularly after the political reform of the country? Is there any change?

11. Is Ethiopia strategically and geo-politically important for China in the HoA? Why?
12. How do you evaluate the strategic importance of Ethiopia to China from time to time? Is it increasing or decreasing? Why?
13. Do you have an idea on the implications of USA-China rivalry in the HoA for Ethiopia in terms of development and security parameters?
14. In your opinion, what challenges may face Ethiopia b/c of the contemporary USA-China rivalry in the HoA? Is there any opportunity that Ethiopia may gain from this rivalry?
15. What should Ethiopia do to maintain its national interest while both superpowers are competing in the region of HoA?
16. What should Ethiopia do to appear as a very important country for China in the HoA?
17. Is it possible to expect the occurrence of the new cold war era between the two superpowers (USA and China)? How?

C. Key interview Guiding Questions For USA embassy officials in Addis Ababa

1. How can you explain the relations between China and the USA in recent times?
2. In your understanding, Why superpowers compete in the HoA during and post cold war era?
3. Do you think that there is contemporary USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the HoA?
4. Is there contemporary geo-strategic rivalry between the USA and China in Ethiopia? If your answer is yes, what are the implications of this rivalry to Ethiopia in terms of Peace and development issues? and what are its negative consequences?
5. In your understanding, How influential is the USA in Ethiopia's development and Security issues?
6. How do you compare and contrast the USA involvement in the Security and dev't issues of the countries in the HoA during different times? Is it increasing/decreasing? Why?

7. Has the political reform happened in Ethiopia in 2018 affected the Ethio-US relations? If so, positively or negatively? How?
8. Is the USA involvement in the security and dev't issues of Ethiopia increased or decreased after the reform gov't of Ethiopia? Why?
9. Is the US Foreign Policy direction towards Ethiopia is the same before and after the political reform of Ethiopia (post 2018).
10. How do you explain the USA support for Ethiopia in Development and Security issues? Particularly after the political reform of the country? Is there any change?
11. Is Ethiopia strategically and geo-politically important for the USA in the HoA? Why?
12. How do you evaluate the strategic importance of Ethiopia to the USA from time to time? Is it increasing or decreasing? Why?
13. Do you have an idea on the implications of USA-China rivalry in the HoA for Ethiopia in terms of development and security parameters?
14. In your opinion, what challenges may face Ethiopia because of the contemporary USA-China rivalry in the HoA? Is there any opportunity that Ethiopia may gain from this rivalry?
15. What should Ethiopia do to maintain its national interest while both superpowers are competing in the region of HoA?
16. What should Ethiopia do to appear as a very important country for the USA in the HoA?
17. Is it possible to expect the occurrence of the new cold war era between the two superpowers (USA and China? How?

Your contribution is very much appreciated!

Appendix II: Informed Consent Form

This informed consent is for key interview participants working in MOFA, AU, IGAD Missions in Ethiopia, USA and China embassies in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia whom I am inviting to participate in my research titled: **The contemporary USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia.**

Name of Principal Investigator: Edao Waritu

Name of Institution: Addis Ababa University

Name of Advisor: Prof. Yacob Arsano

I am a Masters Student at Addis Ababa University and currently undertaking my final research Thesis on **The contemporary USA-China geo-strategic rivalry in the horn of Africa and its implications to Ethiopia.** Therefore, I invite you to freely participate in this research and in case there are areas or concepts you may not understand, also feel free to ask for more information. My research is based on the need to investigate the existence of superpowers rivalry in the Horn of Africa between the USA and China, and if the rivalry exists, what are its implications to Ethiopia in development and Security parameters. The principal investigator shall interview all the participants through individual interviews to give their views and opinions. Participation in this research is purely on a voluntary basis and the selected individuals may choose to participate or not. All information given shall be treated with confidentiality and the outcome of the research shall be for academic purposes only.

**Regards,
Edao Waritu**

Appendix-III

Creating codes for key interview participants

List of Key Interview participants

AEKIP- American Embassy key Interview Participant

AUKIP-African Union Key interview Participant

CHEKIP-China Embassy Key Interview Participant

IMIEKIP- IGAD Missions in Ethiopia Key Interview Participant

MOFA KIP-Ministry of Foreign Affairs Key Interview Participant

| No | Interviewee code No | Sex | Age | Education level | Position/Role | Place of interview | Date of Interview |
|----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | AEKIP-1 | M | 33 | Masters | Senior diplomat | America Embassy, Addis Ababa | 30 th March, 2024 |
| 2 | AEKIP -2 | M | 35 | PhD | official | America Embassy, Addis Ababa | 30 th March, 2024 |
| 3 | AUKIP -1 | M | 37 | Masters | Communication Affairs Head | Africa Union Head Quarter, Addis Ababa | 18 th March, 2024 |
| 4 | AUKIP -2 | M | 39 | PhD | Horn of Africa Expert | Africa Union Head Quarter, Addis Ababa | 18 th March, 2024 |
| 5 | CHEKIP -1 | M | 31 | Masters | Senior | China Embassy, | 25 th March, |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------|---|----|---------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| | | | | | Diplomat | Addis Ababa | 2024 |
| 6 | CHEKIP -2 | M | 38 | Masters | Official | China Embassy, Addis Ababa | 25 th March, 2024 |
| 7 | IMIEKIP -1 | M | 43 | PhD | Political Affairs Head | IGAD Missions in Ethiopia office, Addis Ababa | 28 th February, 2024 |
| 8 | IMIEKIP -2 | F | 34 | MA | Red Sea expert | IGAD Missions in Ethiopia office, Addis Ababa. | 28 th February, 2024 |
| 9 | MOFA KIP -1 | M | 36 | Degree | USA desk official | FDRE,Ministry of Foreign Affairs office, Addis Ababa | 14 th February, 2024 |
| 10 | MOFA KIP -2 | M | 42 | Masters | China desk official | FDRE,Ministry of Foreign Affairs office, Addis Ababa | 14 th February, 2024 |
| 11 | MOFA KIP -3 | M | 48 | Masters | PublicDiplo macy official | FDRE,Ministry of Foreign Affairs head office, Addis Ababa | 16 th February, 2024 |
| 12 | MOFA KIP -4 | M | 44 | Masters | Senior diplomat and HoA expert | FDRE,Ministry of Foreign Affairs head office, Addis Ababa | 16th February, 2024 |

Appendix IV: Addis Ababa University Thesis Permit

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Date 21/02/2024

To African Union

Student Edas Warku Amole is conducting a research for his/her MA thesis/term paper towards a partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA degree in political science & International Relations. The title of his/her thesis is The Continental Policy and Geo-strategy of China in the Horn of Africa and its implications for Ethiopia 2018-2022. Therefore, we kindly request your organization to provide relevant information to the student. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely

Advisor
[Signature]

Signature
[Signature]

RECEIVED
21 FEB 2024

P.O. Box: 1176 Addis Ababa E- Mail: psirdept@yahoo.com fax:25111.1231067/23106/239800ext.312

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
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ለተባባሶች ጥላቻ



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Date 25/02/2024

To የጋራ ጥናት ማዘጋጀት ለዘጋጅ ታሪክ ስራ
19/06/2016

Student Edae Wewel Demele is conducting a research for his/her MA thesis/term paper towards a partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA degree in political science & International Relations. The title of his/her thesis is The Development of the Role of the State in the Modern World: A Case Study of Ethiopia. Therefore, we kindly request your organization to provide relevant information to the student. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Advisor

Yared Amare

Signature

[Signature]



Date 2/10/2024

To TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Student Edae Warku Amelo is conducting a research for his/her MA thesis/term paper towards a partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA degree in political science & International Relations. The title of his/her thesis is The Contemporary USA GDP Geo-Strategic Role in the Horn of Africa and its implication for Ethiopia 2018-2022. Therefore, we kindly request your organization to provide relevant information to the student. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely

Advisor

Jacob Arano



Signature

[Handwritten Signature]