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CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN ETHIOPIA'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE
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Changes and Continuities in Ethiopia's Foreign Policy Since 1991

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Declaration

I hereby, declared that this study is my original work and never been presentenced at any University or organization before, and all sources used in the study have been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

The study focuses on the changes and continuities in the country's foreign policy since 1991. In terms of data gathering, this study consulted both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data were collected through a series of interviews with key informants. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, published articles, speeches, published and unpublished documents, and internet archives. The study reveals that the post 1991 Ethiopia's foreign relations has been guided by the principle of good neighborliness and peaceful relations with both nearby and distant countries. However, the study found that due to uncertainties in the Horn of Africa region and some of its member states like Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea, Ethiopia's foreign policy under the EPRDF's regime was flawed and initially characterized by passiveness which was reactive in nature. After the 2018, the country's foreign policy underwent another significant shift. The reconciliation with Eritrea after a two-decade-long stalemate received great support both regionally and internationally. On the other hand, this study identifies continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy despite a change in regime. These include economic diplomacy, regional integration, and multilateralism. Additionally, the study thoroughly examines the challenges to the country's foreign policy. These challenges primarily stem from domestic political unrest, border disputes, terrorism, and cybersecurity. Finally, based on the empirical discussions, the researcher argues that Ethiopia's foreign policy should be guided by the principle of 'peace at home first' and assertive diplomacy.

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

AIAI	Al Ithad Al Islamiya
AGOA	African Growth Opportunity Act
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ARS	Alliance for Re-Liberation of Somalia
AU	African Union
BRICS	Group of five emerging economies namely; Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CFA	Comprehensive Framework Agreement
CoH	Cessation of Hostilities
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
EEBC	Eritrea-Ethiopian Boundary Commission
EIF	Eritrean Islamic Front
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
ELM	Eritrean Liberation Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESDL	Ethiopian Somali Democratic League
EU	European Union
FANSPS	Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
HoA	Horn of Africa
HoAC	Horn of Africa Cooperation
ICT	Information Communication Technology

ICU	Islamic Court Union
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INSA	Information Network Security Administration
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
ISS	Islamic State in Somalia
LAPSSET	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIF	National Islamic Front
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
SALF	Somali Abo Liberation Front
SPLA	Southern People Liberation Army
SPLM	Southern People Liberation Movement
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WPE	Workers Party of Ethiopia
WWII	Second World War

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The historical narratives, ideological mindset, sociopolitical construction, and the identity created by the people of Africa have greatly influenced the fragility of domestic politics, leading to foreign penetration over time. As a result, the foreign policy of African states has remained in a state of crisis. Despite Ethiopia's privileged position in African diplomacy, its relations with neighboring countries are characterized by a 'siege mentality' and mistrust. Markakis (2003:2) points out that 'the mainstream and unchallenged view of Ethiopia's foreign relations with its neighbors has relied on the simplistic narrative that the Ethiopian state occupied a center of an island in a sea of Islam'.

However, in the post-1991 period when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) assumed power, the foreign policy behavior of the country shifted from 'historical mistrust' to a 'mutual trust and good neighborliness' approach. This is indicative that relations with immediate neighbors and the world beyond have been the major thrust guiding principle of the foreign policy of the country. Although paradigm shifts surrounding Ethiopia's foreign policy objectives took place by the EPRDF regime, events like the Ethiopia-Eritrean war and threats from Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in Somalia, and domestic political instability rendered the efficacy of the policy shift focused on cooperation and development (Medhane, 2015). In the post-2018 years when a new prime minister was elected, another foreign policy shift emerged signified by a peace agreement with Eritrea. The foreign policy of the country under Ethiopian Prosperity Party was premised on the philosophy of '*Medemer*',¹ which signaled a paradigm shift from EPRDF's foreign policy. Though this remained in place with some revisions due to changes like intense geopolitical competitions and hydro politics affecting the foreign policy orientation of the country in the post-1991 period.

¹ Medemer is an Amharic term for '*synergy*' coined by Abiy Ahmed, the current Prime Minister of Ethiopia since April 2018

1.2 Problem Statement

Ethiopian foreign policy has been shaped by different phenomena. Contradictory domestic political system and ethnic polarization on the one hand and inimical relations with neighboring countries on the other hand, brought a crisis in the history of the country's foreign policy, despite regime changes and ideological orientations. Ethiopia's relations with its neighbors and the country's foreign policy and diplomacy can best be characterized as a process of change and continuity in which various determinants are involved (Solomon, 2017). Some studies (Abbink, 2003; Amare, 1989; Clapham, 1996; Keller, 1987; Markakis, 2003), found that domestic political culture, historical, ideological, regional setting, and environmental factors influenced foreign policy of the country. Ethiopia's foreign policy has been changing in some forms due to the above-mentioned factors and has been intact in other forms. For Example, Edmond Keller (1987), argues that was a continuity of the foreign relations of Imperial regime and Revolutionary Ethiopia despite the removal of the former from power in 1974. Accordingly, the main tenet of continuity in the country's foreign policy was the 'politics of state survival' (ibid: 77). In due course, to preserve its territorial integrity, the country under successive regimes adopted a foreign policy that entrench the persistence of the state that materialized through upgrading defense capability and creating strong ties with the great powers as well as pacifying relations with its neighbors.

Though according to the others this added essence to the survival-oriented foreign policy in a manner that 'resonates territorial integrity to enhance the state's domination over minorities and containment of self-determination' (Iyob: 1993: 257). In relation to this, Tewdros (2015) states that Ethiopia's main concern is the survival of the state. First and foremost, the preservation of the state's existence is of utmost importance. This statement reflects the perspective that Ethiopia's primary focus is on maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of the country. It suggests that the government's primary concern is ensuring the survival and stability of the state, and all decisions and actions are guided by this objective.

By prioritizing the survival of the state, Ethiopia may adopt policies and strategies aimed at maintaining national unity, promoting economic development, and safeguarding territorial integrity. This could involve efforts to address internal divisions, invest in infrastructure and

social programs, strengthen the military, and engage in diplomatic initiatives to secure its position in the international community.

The foreign policy document of 2002, emphasize that the enduring domestic problems surrounding political instability can be solved by ensuring economic development. At the same time, Ethiopia's foreign policy since the 1991 period, has focused on securing the survival of the multi-ethnic nation-state from the domestic threat that emanates from poverty and underdevelopment (Mehari, 2014). To this end, the foreign policy principles of good neighborliness and economic cooperation have contributed to the economic development of the country (ibid). However, the principle of good neighborliness and peaceful relations was short-lived, and gradually Ethiopia found itself in a state of rivalry and threat with Sudan, and various Somali actors in 1995 and 1996, and two years of the border war with Eritrea 1998-2000 (Goitom, 2019).

The foreign policy document of 2002 affirmed the existence of danger to the peace and security of the country and also re-affirmed irrelevance of the Somalia to the economic development of Ethiopia. The very primary objective of Ethiopia's foreign policy towards Somalia was security concerns. The EPRDF's regime believed that when peace and stability were restored in Somalia, Ethiopia would benefit from Somalia's ports (Ministry of Information, 2002). This policy direction also continued in the post-2018 period when Ethiopia on the one hand, struggled for peace and stability in Somalia and on the other seeks to diversify its port accessibility by using Somalia's ports. Meanwhile, the peaceful relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea were reversed by two years' war of 1998 to 2000. Until rapprochement through peace agreement, both countries remained in a no-war no-peace stalemate. this can be best described in a way that: 'The stalemate has been portrayed as devoid of any strategic logic and partially attributed to the political culture that the EPRDF share which has been deepened by years of guerilla struggle, as well as, Ethiopia's vastly superior diplomatic capability' (Healy and M. Plaut (2007: 8-9). Meanwhile, the foreign policy document of 2002 acknowledges strained relations with Eritrea because of the ruling elite in Asmara (Ministry of Information, 2002: 40-43). However, the deadlock between the two countries ended with a peace agreement in 2018.

Apart from relations with its neighboring countries, Ethiopia developed economic, political, and military relations with both developed countries of Europe and the USA as well as emerging

powers of the like China, India, Turkey, and Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, Ethiopia in the post-1991 period managed to establish trade and economic relations with China. In the post-2018 foreign policy of the country, we can find some insights in the Prime Minister's book *Medemer* (Solomon, 2019). *Medemer* does not agree with the idea of 'there is no permanent friend, no permanent enemy', but rather the idea of 'there is no such thing as friend and enemy' (Assefa, 2019). The statement is subjective and can vary depending on individual experiences and perspectives. While some people may believe that there is no such thing as a true friend or enemy, others may have had positive or negative experiences that shape their belief in the existence of these concepts. It is important to recognize that relationships and dynamics can be complex and multifaceted, and it is up to each individual to determine their understanding of friendship and enmity.

The newly drafted foreign policy document² emphasizes the necessity of changes in Ethiopia's foreign policy. The changes in the domestic, regional, and international arenas have influenced the country's foreign policy. Over the past 20 years, Ethiopia's population has increased from 60 million to over 100 million, and its annual GDP has risen from less than 10 billion dollars to over 100 billion. The region where Ethiopia is situated has experienced significant changes. When the previous foreign policy document was implemented, South Sudan did not exist, and Somalia was without a state. Conflict has become more prevalent in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, which were relatively peaceful in the past. Simultaneously, the global system has undergone substantial changes.

Under its newly elected leadership, Ethiopia took a bold step to end 20 years of stalemate with Eritrea. The normalization of relations with Eritrea signaled a paradigm shift from EPRDF's foreign policy of siege mentality. This rapprochement is considered a significant political development in the region. The country managed the crisis in Sudan after the downfall of Al-Bashir and played a constructive role in the Southern Sudan peace and stability settlement. On the contrary, Ethiopia's relations with Sudan flared up over the border area of Al-Fashqa as an indirect consequence of the country's Northern war (Verjee, 2021). And relations with Western countries are fragmented and lead to economic sanctions and political interventions.

² FDRE Revised Foreign Policy: Draft Document. October 2019. Addis Ababa. Until the conclusion of this study the policy document has not yet to be approved.

There were a few interesting works on the issue, but not complied with altogether. This shows that there is scanty literature in the field of study. Therefore, the study contributes to the endeavors to fill the gap in literature.

1.3 Core Argument

The core argument of this study is that the fundamental principles of Ethiopian foreign policy orientation since 1991 shows more continuities than changes.

1.4 Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to explore factors surrounding changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy orientation of the post-1991 period.

The study has the following specific objectives.

- ❖ Exploring factors that influenced Ethiopia's foreign policy dynamics in the post-1991 period.
- ❖ Scrutinizing the changes in the global and regional trends and Ethiopia's foreign policy responses.
- ❖ Examining changes in Ethiopian foreign policy orientations in pre- and post-2018 periods.
- ❖ Identifying continuities in Ethiopian foreign policy during this period.
- ❖ Bridging the gap between the pre- and post-2018 Ethiopian foreign policy orientations.

1.5 Research Questions

The core question of this study is that;

What factors have been necessitating changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy since the 1991 period?

Based on the core Research Question, the following questions are posed and answered:

1. How did historical conditions determine Ethiopia's foreign policy orientations?
2. To what extent does Ethiopian foreign policy coping with ever-changing global and regional trends?
3. What are the changes in Ethiopian foreign policy orientations in pre- and post-2018 period?
4. What are continuities in the foreign policy orientation of the country during this period?

5. How to bridge the gap between the pre- and post-2018 Ethiopian foreign policy orientations?

1.6 Research Methodology and Methods

Research approach is a general principle or framework that guides choices of methods and instruments. The procedures through which a researcher goes in defining, explaining, predicting, and analyzing phenomena are designated as a research methodology. By considering the above definition, to appropriately address the issue under investigation, this study employed a qualitative research approach. Because, it provides an insightful definition, metaphor, and deeply understanding as regards a phenomenon under study. The qualitative methodology helps to explore issues understudy from different perspectives (Klotz and Prakash, 2008).The study utilizes a methodological approach to guarantee the credibility and dependability of the findings, ultimately leading to a well-supported conclusion. Exploratory studies serve as a valuable tool for comprehending ongoing events, gaining fresh perspectives, raising inquiries, and evaluating phenomena from a different standpoint (Yin, 2002).Exploratory research in the field of social science focuses on asking relevant research questions, clarifying research problems, developing a suitable conceptual framework, and gathering necessary explanations. To address research questions, the study employed exploratory study approach to investigate and delve into the changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy.

In terms of data collection, this study also consulted both primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary data elicited from books, journal articles, official documents, published, and unpublished materials, speeches. Primary data obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants so as to grasp accurate and reliable data. Instrument of primary data gathering were conducted through semi-structured and Open-ended interviews with Key Informants. They were selected from various institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Friedrich Stiftung Institute.Key Informants in this study were selected through purposive sampling, which is the most appropriate to selecting knowledgeable key informants.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

It is a norm that the ethical consideration in conducting research is getting significance and prominence. Eventually, this study is subject to the ethical considerations of participants.

Therefore, the researcher adheres to respect values and ethics, and confidentiality. Additionally, the respondents informed about the subject, and the aim of the study and it ensured that they give their consent.

1.8 Scope

This study examines changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy in the Post 1991 period. In doing so, it has compared similarities and differences of the foreign policy of the country in the pre- and post-2018 periods.

1.9 Limitations

The researcher encountered limitations in terms of time and resources when conducting this study. Additionally, the researcher encountered difficulties in reaching out to key informants during the process of conducting in-depth interviews. Despite encountering challenges such as uncooperative individuals and officials who were unwilling to provide information, the researcher persevered and made every effort to overcome these obstacles. This was achieved through persistent follow-up and seeking out alternative sources of information, resulting in a research study that adds value to the study area.

1.10 Significance

The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the field as there are scanty research on the subject. Besides, it is expected to serve as a data source for researchers, academics, and practitioners. In addition, policymakers can use the study findings as an input in the policy formulation process.

1.11 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter consists of the background of the study, problem statement, the core argument, research objectives, research questions, methodology, ethical considerations, scope, significance, and organization of the study. Chapter two presents literature review including, conceptualizing the terms, and theoretical perspectives. Chapter three encompasses Ethiopia's foreign policy orientation in the post-1991 period. Chapter four analyzed changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy from since 1991 which followed by precise concluding remark of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

States are independent entities, and this is defined as sovereignty. However, this does not mean that they are isolated and self-sufficient from each other. On the contrary, they are adjacent and influence one another, therefore they require relations with each other. In this chapter, definitions of concepts such as foreign policy, national interest, and national security, security dilemma, as well as levels of analysis of foreign policy are discussed. Additionally, the chapter also provides theoretical perspectives including realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

2.1 Definition of Concepts

2.1.1 Foreign Policy

The far-reaching changes in the international system present challenges to leaders who formulate foreign policy and to commentators, practitioners, as well as, those who are interested in studying foreign policy. To understand why and how states do what they do in their foreign dealings, first it is important to define the term foreign policy. The most notable problem that one could face in the study of foreign policy is the problem of defining it with a clear and universally accepted meaning. Different authors defined the term in various ways. For example, Hermann (1978: 25) defines it as:

The discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decisions of an individual or group of individuals. It is the observable artifact of political-level decisions. It is not the decisions but a product of the decision.

For Hermann, foreign policy is a conglomeration of a state behavior directed beyond its national frontiers. Gerner (1995:18), on the other hand, notes that foreign policy is ‘the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor, most often, but not always a state-directed to toward the This definition demonstrates that the primary actor(s) involved in formulating and implementing foreign policy is a state. However, it does not imply that foreign policy is the sole concern of states. According to Hill (2003:3), foreign policy is defined as the ‘official external relations conducted by an independent actor, particularly a state, in the context of international relations.’ external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements, and actions’

Unlike the former definitions, Hill's definition is wider and it provides multi-players in the sphere of foreign policy. The sum of external relations unpacked the existence of multiple actors other than ministries of foreign affairs or the executive branch of a government. Hill states further that 'the idea of foreign policy implies both politics and coherence, it seeks to coordinate, and to establish priorities between domestic competing interests and an external environment' (Hill, 2003:3). Despite differences in defining foreign policy, there is consensus among researchers that foreign policy serves as a bridge between domestic and global politics³. And therefore, it serves the very fundamental interest of the countries in their businesses of foreign affairs.

2.1.2 National Interest

In studying the international relations, the issue of national interest is a guideline in the formation and execution of foreign policy. As described in the text: Burchill, (2005:1) quoting Charles, (1966) 'If citizens are to support the government which prosecutes it, soldiers are dying for it, and foreign policies are to conform to it, what could be more appropriate them to ask: what is national interest? the term 'national interest' has been used and abused term by scholars, commentators, and statesmen since the foundation of the nation-state to describe the aspirations and goals of sovereign states in the sphere of international relation.

Today foreign ministers, military strategists, diplomats, and academicians, discuss and debate the vital interests of their countries in ways suggesting that everyone understands precisely what they mean and will draw exact references from their use of the term (Nuechterlein, 1976). The study of international politics as well as the art of diplomacy suffer from widespread ambiguity about the meaning and the concept of national interest, with the result that some scholars have proposed that the concept be abandoned and replaced by some other phrase, like common interest or public interest (ibid:246). According to Frankel (1970:15), "the term [national interest] assumes a variety of meanings in the various contexts, in which it is used, and despite its fundamental importance, these meanings often cannot be reconciled; hence no agreement can be reached about its ultimate meaning". Arguably, Rosenau (1966), identifies the usage of the term 'national interest' for the purpose of political analysis and political actions thus, as an

³See, for example Hill, C. (2016). *Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*. (2nd edition), New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

analytical tool, it is employed to describe, explain or evaluate the sources or the adequacy of a nation's foreign policy, and an instrument of political action, it serves as a means of justifying, denouncing, and proposing or altering policies.

In an attempt to articulate the issue, Frankel (1970), proposes two fundamental perspectives (objective and subjective interests), to the analyses of the concept of 'national interest' to explain and analyze thoroughly understand the foreign policy of a country and those who employ it to justify or rationalize state behavior in the realm of international relations. In its objective perspective, there are permanent objective criteria against which foreign policy can be evaluated, compared, and contrasted. The subjective perspective on the other hand, is the changing priorities and preferences of decision-makers as well as the explanation of their actions (Frankel, 1970:15-17). in his part Burchill (2005:5) indicates that;

Objective interests are those related to a nation's ultimate foreign policy goals and they are permanent interests consisting of territory, history, resources, population size, and ethnicity. Subjective national interests, on the other hand, are those which depend on the preferences of a specific government, such as ideology and class identity.

National interests whether they are objective or subjective, aimed at serving a very fundamental desire of a state. The global system is changed from one in which the two superpowers, the United States and its Western allies, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union as well as its Warsaw Pact⁴ associates on the other, where they were leaders in the drama of the Cold War dominated by ideological supremacy and military tensions, to a world in which different power centers with vastly divergent interests and orientations. This means, different countries in a multipolar world, are likely to have different priorities, goals, and interests. These interests may range from economic expansion, regional dominance, security concerns, ideological influence, to cultural and social objectives.

⁴The Warsaw Pact, was a political and military alliance created on May 14, 1955. It united the Soviet Union with various Eastern European countries like, Albania (until it withdrew in 1968), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The purpose of this alliance was to balance the power of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a collective security alliance formed in 1949 by the United States, Canada, and Western European nations. For example, see United States Department of State (2017), available at: <https://history.state.gov/milestones>.

2.1.3 National Security

National security is a significant factor in a country's international relations and foreign policy choices. The term security like other terminologies in field of international relations has attracted many different definitions. The concept of national security is different for different authors and commentators. For example, Grizold (1994:39), asserts that 'there are many different eyes, which see the different scenes. Because of its seemingly lack of clear definition, national security is used to induce and whip up patronage for many political projects both at national and international levels, thus, Williams (2008:5), defines the term as 'a powerful political tool in claiming attention for priority items in the competition for government actions' (Williams, 2008: 5). On the other hand, Makinda (1998:282), defines national security as: 'The preservation of the norms, rules, institutions, and the values of society, thus all the institutions, principles and structures associated with society, including its people are to be protected from military and non-military threats'. Preservation in Makinda's definition emphasizes deliberate steps and actions of the national governments to protect a country's sovereignty and its citizens from different threats. This can be encompassing a wide range of actions, including diplomatic effort, military defense, and economic policies. Regarding this, Nobilo (1988:72), defines national security in a comprehensive insight that it is:

An intricate interplay of political, economic, military, ideological, legal, and social factors, both internal and external, is employed by individual states to safeguard their sovereignty, territorial integrity, the physical survival of their population, political independence, and opportunities for balanced and rapid social development on an equal footing.

Basically, national security could have two dimensions. First, it is about the independence and territorial integrity of a state, which is related to preserving a secured state from those who have interests to alter situations against it. And this might be related to the external military threat from neighbors or far way. Second, internal insecurities, which have domestic characteristic like the lawlessness, rise of the cost of life and food crisis, unemployment, the issues of human rights and democracy are considered as elements of security. These elements of security and farther defined by traditionalists and contemporary schools of thought. Traditionalists like Morgenthau (1985), and Waltz, (1979), discuss national security from a military viewpoint and they emphasis

on the freedom of a country from objective military threat against its survival in an anarchical world system. To the contrary, proponents of the contemporary perspective like, Williams (2008), and Caballero, (2016), views national security on the ground of liberal thinking with various agendas like economic wellbeing, political freedom, ecological hazards, individual liberty, which lies beyond a military might.

The discussion of national security cannot be complete without understanding the concept of the security dilemma. The Security Dilemma is a concept in international relations theory that describes a situation in which actions taken by one state to increase its own security are perceived as a threat by other states, leading to a spiraling cycle of arms build-up and heightened tensions. First coined by John Herz after the end of the WWII, and subsequently analyzed in detail by authors like Jervis (1978). Accordingly, Herz (1950:157), described the term [security dilemma] as:

‘Which They [states] are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulations on.’

When one state takes steps to enhance its own security, such as increasing its military capabilities or forming alliances, other states may interpret these actions as potential threats to their own security. The security dilemma has been used to analyze various historical events and conflicts, including the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The arms race and military build-up during this period are often cited as classic examples of the security dilemma in action. Both superpowers, seeking to ensure their own security, engaged in actions that were perceived as threats by the other, leading to a cycle of military expansion.

Jervis (1978: 169) asserted that: ‘in order to protect themselves, states seek to control, or at least to neutralize, areas on their borders. But these attempts can alarm others who have stakes there, who fear that undesirable precedents will be set, or who believe that their own vulnerability

might be increased'. For example, if Country A deploys more troops near its border for defensive purposes, Country B might see this as a potential offensive move.

2.2 Levels of Analysis

Foreign policies of countries are constantly subject to adjustment and modifications due to multiple factors arising from the domestic political environment or changes in the international system. Thus, to fully understand the factors behind foreign policy changes and continuities of states, three levels of analysis namely, system-level analysis, state-level analysis, and individual-level analysis are in order.

2.2.1 System-Level Analysis

The system-level analysis of foreign policy examines the distribution of power or structure in the global political system. The anarchical structure of the international system influences to behave in a certain way. The system-level analysis is a 'top-down' approach that examines the social, economic, and political and geographic characteristics of the system and how they influence the actions of a state. System-level thinking is thus, does not focused on foreign policy per se, but rather, on the context in which foreign policy is made (Hudson 2014: 173).

While the authority structure in the realm of international politics remains mainly horizontal, changes are inevitable and states are restrained by the realities of power poles or distribution. Historically, the international system is examined from the point of view of the number of powerful actors. That means the number of powerful actors described by the existing center of powers or power poles, for instance, as it was in the Cold War period where the two superpowers i.e., the U.S.A and USSR, or as it was the balance of power that greatly favors the USA after the end of the Cold War and or as today's multiple power poles. Realists argue that all states are power-seeking and making alliances and anti-alliances to become a hegemon or attempt to block the dominance of rising power by maximizing its power or cooperating with other states.

Foreign policy decision-making is typically made in a strategic way that enables countries to operate in the international system accordingly. Thus, the behavior of adversaries and allies affect foreign policy decisions in an interactive sequential setting (DeRouen jr., and A. Mintz 2010). States, consider these facts in their foreign policy choices within the context of the realities of the international system. Meanwhile, geo-politics has also significantly affected the decision-making process of states. Since the antiquity, geopolitical factors have determined the

courses of kingdoms, polities, and modern states as they forced these entities into cooperation and conflict throughout the period time.

2.2.2 State Level Analysis

Although system structure puts constraints on countries behavior in their interactions, with other parts of the world, they all respond with different actions and reactions. Thus, within a territory of states there is no single foreign policy process, instead how policy is made and implemented is different extensively. States as units of the international system are understood as independent and rational in doing what they do in their relations with others by analyzing the effect of international structure on foreign policy decision-making. State-level analysis expands to maxim of our understanding of the foreign policy choices of states. According to Hudson (2005), the state-level approach emphasizes the characteristics of states and how they make foreign policy choices and execute them.

Depending on the nature of the domestic political environment, i.e. Political forces like political parties, interest groups, and media outlets may force the government to decide foreign policy choices in one way or another (Hudson, 2014). When a government is an authoritarian with no electoral mandate from its citizens, the foreign policy is made to distract from domestic oppositions and in that retain its own power and privilege. In this case, the process of foreign policy-making remains in the hands of individual leaders whether a president or prime minister. Likewise, Clapham (1996), remarks that African leaders pursue a foreign policy that benefits their survival under the shadow state. According to Korn (1986: 106), For example, ‘decision making at the time of imperial Ethiopia ultimately reached a point of strangulation because all matters of any importance, and many of none, had to be referred to the emperor’. But either in democratic system or the authoritarian system of governance, the media, the mass, other pressure groups have little or nothing to say on the foreign policy of their country. Regarding this, Chomsky (2016:1-2), remarks on the role of the public, media, and the mass in the so called advanced democratic countries that:

Even in advanced democratic states, the population has only limited to say on policy decisions...economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on US government policy, while

average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence.

Relatively speaking, foreign policy decision-making and implementation in democratic countries are more open and, in turn, leaders are more responsible than in non-democratic countries. Besides, nature of domestic political situations affects the foreign policy orientations of countries like international system can do. However, crisis situation may occur when a state is surprised by new political reforms or economic hardships or conflicts between ethnic or religious groups and is threatened by a foreign country militarily.

2.2.3 Individual-Level Analysis

The individual level analysis of foreign policy indicates how the personal character, intelligence, perceptions and misperceptions, and understandings of world views of individual leaders contributes to the foreign policy choices of countries. A leader decides foreign policy choices by engaging in 'bounded rationality'. This means factors beyond national territory are missing, flawed, or might be less known (Hudson, 2014). 'Bounded rationality arises from a leader's instability to know everything, think everything, and understand everything' (ibid: 43). The leader's political psychology impacts the quality of decision-making and its outcomes⁵. Similarly, the emotions of leaders, are the most effective ways by which an individual can change goal emphasis. a person's motivations, including the need for power, affiliation, and achievement, play a significant role in shaping their political behavior and decision-making (Winter, 2003). According to Hermann (2001), high-level diplomacy, and leader interest increase the probability of individual-level decision making, for instance, decisions to go to war, to make peace, or to participate in an international summit are often associated with decisions of a dominant individual.

The proposition of decision-making in foreign policy and international relations at large assumes that leaders matter in the explanation of foreign policy-decisions by acting on their understanding of situation dynamics in the sphere of international politics. This more often

⁵ political psychology is a field of study that explores the psychological processes underlying political behavior and the impact of political systems on individual's behavior. It combines principles of psychology and political science to understand how individuals and groups make political decisions, form political attitudes, and interact within political systems. For example, see Huddy, L., David, S. Jack, S., (2013). The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology (2nd edn.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

characterized in the developing countries. Thus, Bojang (2018), posits from Rosenau's statement a leader's belief about the nature of the international system and the goals that ought to be pursued therein, his or her peculiar intellectual strength and weakness for analyzing information and making decisions, a leader's background, and the extent of its relevance to the requirements of the role, his or her emotional needs and most of the other personality traits these are but a few of idiosyncratic factors that can influence the planning and execution of foreign policy. It is important note however, that individual decisions are not always solely independent, but rather an aggregate of groups, coalitions, and state behavior.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretical perspectives are frameworks and paradigms used by scholars and analysts to understand, explain, and predict the behavior of states in the international system. These perspectives provide different lenses to interpret the actions and decisions of governments in international relations. In this section, I discuss the major theoretical perspectives of international relations that impact foreign policy making, namely classical realism, neorealism, liberalism, and constructivism.

2.3.1 Realism

Classical realists start with a pessimistic view of human nature, which is 'selfish' and from this, they make conclusion about the nature of states' behavior. Humans are fundamentally self-interested and exist in social conditions characterized by the persistent struggle to maintain autonomy from their counterparts. Hence, state behavior stems from human selfishness and thus they are self-interested actors in their interactions with other actors (most often state actors) in the global system, which is characterized by a continuous struggle to maintain independence from each other.

This constant human nature is eternal through time and space, there are unchanging laws that regulate individual and state behavior: states like people, are by nature self-interested and aggressive and will pursue their interests to the detriment of others and without regard to the constraints of law or morality (Diez, *et al*, 2010). According to Morgenthau (1985), a proponent of this school of thought acknowledges that states may have various motives for their actions. Power is consistently the means by which national goals are achieved, and the primary objective of states in the international system is to pursue their national interests, which are primarily

defined in terms of military power. Therefore, international relations is characterized by a struggle for power among countries that they are self-interested, and seek to maximize their physical capability and security.

Classical realism, however, asserted that state behavior is understood as having rational choices, and thus, state strategies are understood as having been decided rationally, after analyzing the costs and benefits of different possible courses of action. Classical realists contend that international politics is characterized by a struggle for power, maintaining power, enhancing and demonstrating power. Therefore, the foreign relations of states must have values to achieve physical power and maintain it. The rise of neorealism in the 20th century challenged the assumptions of classical realism by redirecting its attention from the individual level to the structure of the international system.

Neo-realists, instead of examining human nature in the behavior of states, underscore the nature of the international system. This system is characterized by anarchy, which means the absence of a central government that can guarantee safety for states. Because of the anarchic nature of the international system, states are compelled to be vigilant, watching out for impositions on their autonomy and existence (Neack, 2008), and thus the ‘anarchic system of the international system is where the survival is the fundamental objective of states’ (Mearsheimer, 2001: 29).

The neo-realists view of international relations is manifest by the absolute dominance of security interests, states strive for self-preservation and the refusal to cooperate. As there is no a world government that lays down rules and regulations mandatory for all units and that can, if necessary, ensure compliance by force, states must worry about a permanent breach of security regarding their neighbor’s intentions and thus they must ready for worst to happen namely war (Schörnig, 2014). Indeed, it is important for a state that wants to survive and that acts rationally to always compare its capabilities with those of others and determine its position within the international system (ibid). A state compensates for power shifts in another state’s favour either by upgrading its military force, or forming alliances. When a state’s sovereignty impeded or attempted by a military threat, unlikely a state will enhance its military might or enter into alliances unilaterally. Therefore, it may make a sense to a question that is international cooperation possible under the conditions of security competitions? Neo-realists see it, that states

must always work on the assumption that potential friends in cooperation will enter to agreement if they can benefit from doing so.

Regarding power maximization, However, realists disagree on the purpose for which states use their power. Do states use power to defend themselves from threats or to become a hegemon in the system? This question is answered differently by different neo-realist strands. Within the neorealist perspective, offensive realism and defensive provides different answers.

The maximization of state power is marked by aggressive, hegemonic, and domination behavior. Mearsheimer takes Morgenthau's proposition that states seek to accumulate maximum power for themselves, but not because of the human lust for power rather than the anarchical nature of the international system. Accordingly, Mearsheimer (2001: xi), asserted that: 'the ultimate aim of a state is to gain a dominant position to dominate others because having dominant power is the best means to ensure one's own survival. Strength ensures the safety and the greatest strength ensures the greatest safety.'

Defensive realism, on the other hand, contends with a systemic and state-centered theory of international politics. States as unitary actors of the international system and thus they are at a minimum, pursue policies to ensure their own survival. Defensive realism sees the states as acting defensively to maintain rather than upset the balance of power (Yasmin, 2019). In Waltz's dictum, the states are fundamentally concerned to maintain "their position in the system" (Waltz, 1979:126). Defensive realists argue that offense-defense balance favors the defense (Jervis, 1978)⁶. Henceforth, strong defensive capability and careful balancing of the system should deter threatening behavior of states. in the premises of defensive realism, great powers are concerned with sustaining capability rather than maximizing their relative power because often the cost of power expansion overshadows the benefit.

2.3.2 Liberalism

Classical liberalism begins with a different supposition unlike classical realism about human nature and traces international politics differently. In the liberals' thought, humans cherish autonomy but do not assume that their autonomy is attacked or threatened by others, instead, they exist within vast networks of relationships that allow them to achieve collectively what they

⁶And also see Van Evera, S. (1998), *Offense-Defence and the causes of War*. *International Security*, 22 (4); pp. 5-43.

cannot achieve on their own. Consequently, liberalism emphasizes the well-being of individuals as the fundamental building block of a just political system (Neack, 2008).

National security is achieved through the protection of the liberty of individuals at home, and international society, in turn, should be founded on principles that respect the right of individuals, and states and serve the collective good (Neack, 2008). Henceforth, international relations of states can be characterized by harmony and interdependence among states. economic interdependence and free trade for liberals are the means to avert conflicts between states.

Neo-liberalism on the hand, assumes that the anarchical nature of the international system creates opportunities for states to advance their interests unilaterally and makes it significant and difficult for states to cooperate with one another (Jervis, 1999). Neo-liberalism or institutionalism makes it emphasizes the role of international institutions in mitigating conflicts between states. Even though international institutions cannot avoid anarchy, they can change the character of the international environment by influencing state preferences and state behavior through established international values and norms (Keohane, 2001).

It's important to note that while liberalism provides a set of guiding principles, real-world foreign policies can be complex and multifaceted. States may incorporate elements from various theoretical perspectives, including realism and other approaches, in their decision-making processes. Additionally, the specific foreign policy priorities and strategies of liberal states may vary depending on the context, leadership, and geopolitical considerations. Weak states, are often characterized by limited resources, capacity, and influence on the international stage, face unique challenges in the realm of foreign policy.

2.3.3 Constructivism

Constructivism as a theory of international relations lies a middle ground between the conventional theories of international relations realism and liberalism. Constructivism demonstrates what is missed in the two theories' thoughts that a more determinant factor, namely, the intersubjectively shared ideas that shape behavior by constituting the identities and interests of actors. Constructivists elaborates that shared ideas are beyond material force, instead of considering anarchy as a force of states recurring security competition (Guzzini and Leander, 2005). Whether a system is conflictual or peaceful is a function of not anarchy and power, but of

the shared culture created through discursive social practices (Wendt, 1999). According to Copeland (2006), the conception of each actor's self-interests and identity is a product of the other's diplomatic gestures, they can reshape structure by the process; through new gestures, they can reconsolidate or reconcile interests and identities toward more others, regarding peaceful means and ends.

The other theme in the constructivism assumption is that agency and structure are mutually constituted, which implies that structures influence agency and that agency influences structures. Agency can be understood as the ability of some to act, whereas structure refers to an international system that consists of a material and ideational element. States' redefinitions of foreign policy and national interests are often not the result of external threats or domestic demands, but instead, they are shaped by internationally shared norms and values that structure and attract meaning to international political life (Finnemore, 1996). Constructivists demonstrate that material power does not have any meaning unless we understand within the social context, and thus, reality is always under construction, which opens the prospect for change, to this end, meanings are not fixed but can change over time depending on the ideas and beliefs that actors hold.

The aforementioned theories offer various assumptions about the behavior of states in the international system. They also emphasize what states must achieve in their relations and interactions. However, for the purpose of this study, I prefer to select one of the branches of realism, specifically defensive realism, to elucidate the nature and characteristics of Ethiopia's foreign policy since 1991. Because, defensive realism provides a nuanced understanding of state behavior in the international system, focusing on the imperatives of security and survival in an anarchic environment.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHIOPIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST 1991 PERIOD

For over a century, Ethiopia's foreign policy has been focused on ensuring the survival of the state and addressing external threats to its territorial integrity. However, a significant change occurred in the formulation of Ethiopian foreign policy when a new government was established in 1991 following the collapse of military rule. With the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coming to power, there was a shift from a mindset of 'historical mistrust' to one of 'good neighborliness' in the country's foreign policy approach. The following sections of this study discuss; de-linking from the past: new government, new foreign policy, understanding antecedents of foreign policy re-orientation; Relations with the Sudan, Ethiopia-Somalia Relations, and Relations with Eritrea, Post War Ethiopia-Eritrea relations.

3.1 De-Linking from the Past: New Government, New Foreign Policy

After the end of the Darg period, Ethiopia has entered a new era on the global stage with great optimism. According to Amare (1996), Ethiopia, along with other countries in the region such as Eritrea and Uganda, has entered a new phase in its political history. However, this optimism was short-lived as the country was engulfed by waves of conflict.

For a long time, the survival of the Ethiopian state has been a pressing issue for successive regimes, regardless of their political ideology. To address national security concerns, various regimes have implemented different mechanisms and strategies. The pre-1991 primarily focused on building military strength. However, the EPRDF has fundamentally departed from its predecessors by redesigning domestic and foreign policy. The country, which had experienced a unitary state system for a long time, was restructured as a federal state by comprehending ethnic identity as a formal and leading political element (Abbink, 2011).

Essentially ethnic based federalism was implemented to address the historical grievances of various ethnic groups in imperial Ethiopia, from 1931-1974, and during the revolutionary regime (1974-1991). This dispensation not only marks a new political milestone in post-Cold War

Ethiopia, but also signifies a significant departure from the era of political centralization that defined the Ethiopian state for a long time. However, this is not without controversy and debates. Critics emphasize that the Ethiopian constitutional approach to claims of ethnic identity has intensified mutual mistrust and conflict, and that may result in the country's disintegration (Yonatan, 2010).

Yet, any constitution that aims to build a harmonious society cannot overlook the need to pay proper recognition to people's identity regardless of the form that recognition takes. Researchers like among others Horowitz (1985) and Fleiner (2002) argue that ethnic federalism, as a means to ensure ethnic self-government, could potentially worsen ethnic problems by transforming their demands into political principles instead of offering a solution for past inequalities and grievances.

But ethnic federalism acknowledges and recognizes the diverse cultural, linguistic, and historical identities within a country. It gives ethnic groups a level of political representation and self-determination. In countries like Ethiopia with a history of ethnic discrimination or oppression, ethnic federalism can be a means of redressing historical injustices. It aims to empower marginalized groups and promote inclusivity. In countries such as Ethiopia, which have a history of ethnic discrimination or oppression, ethnic federalism can serve as a way to address past injustices. Its goal is to empower marginalized groups and foster inclusivity.

Though, when mismanaged, ethnic federalism can potentially lead to the fragmentation of a country along ethnic lines. This can create challenges for national unity and cohesion, especially if regions seek greater autonomy or independence. The focus on ethnic identity can sometimes worsen existing tensions or give rise to new rivalries among various ethnic groups. This can result in competition for resources, political power, or territory.

Perhaps the agenda of creating multi-ethnic federal state was more dominated the immediate transitional period especially during the years of 1991 and 1992 than economic schema. The efforts of the transitional government according to de Waal (1992:732) 'were devoted to regionalization to deepen ethnic self-determination, election and series of agreements with political contenders.' Regarding to the relations between neighboring countries and afar will be guided by a rhetoric of peaceful relations and cooperation. Ethiopia's foreign policy and

diplomacy under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, according to Goitom (2019), the fundamental priority of Ethiopia's foreign policy goals was redeeming territory that was considered to be Ethiopian by historical rights and pursuit of status in international affairs. By recognizing the presence of national security risks, the EPRDF regime reevaluated its foreign policy approach, known as inward-looking, with the primary goal of addressing internal weaknesses caused by inadequate economic management and ineffective governance. In order to address these concerns, the newly established EPRDF government put forth a second foreign policy document⁷ which unveils aspects of the Transitional Charter (Abel, and Mehari, 2018).

Ethiopia has identified and prioritized goals to revolutionize its diplomacy. The main focus of this shift is to nurture the prioritized policy goal of economic development, which previous governments have been unable to achieve (Goitom, 2019). The foreign policy has been newly devised to address the domestic political environment, previous relations with neighboring Muslim countries and the Arab world, and to establish friendly relations with Western countries most notably the United States.

By adopting a revolutionary approach, EPRDF altered its stance on Eritrea, which the previous government had attempted to uphold through coercion. Instead, the new administration facilitated Eritreans in determining their own destiny, leading to their independence in 1993. Nevertheless, EPRDF and its leaders faced severe criticism from various Ethiopian politicians and academics, who accused the regime of betraying Ethiopia and its citizens. (Aklilu, 2014:134 E.C; Goitom, 2019). The formulation of EPRDF's foreign policy during the transitional period can be understood in light of the party's origin in the northern part of the country as a peasant based revolutionary movement, its relations with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPRF) in the course of their struggle and the traditional Ethiopia's concerns with its security in a volatile region (Medhane, 2015). This alliance led to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea after Eritrea gained independence in 1993. During this period Ethiopia's diplomacy was characterized by its passivity and ideological rigor than by any viable

⁷ This foreign policy called Transitional Foreign Policy Document, which was the second ever written foreign policy document. The first written foreign policy (confidential document) formulated by the military regime in 1984 called Ethiopian Foreign Policy Directives and Political Affairs. For example, see Mehari Tadele Maru, and Abel Abate Demissie, (2018). *Ethiopia and the AU: Special Responsibility of a Host Nation*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Addis Ababa Office.

inventiveness or realism (Goitom, 2019; Medhane, 2015). This conflict significantly influenced the EPRDF's foreign policy, as it sought to safeguard Ethiopia's security and territorial integrity.

The principle of good neighborliness has been adopted as a guiding principle with neighboring countries, and that Ethiopia has no longer worries about security threats from its neighbors. And this has led to a reduction in the country's military capacity, which has negatively impacted its security (Medhane, 2015). For instance, during the Ethiopia-Eritrea war (1998-2000), over Badme, Ethiopia, with a population of 60 million at the time, had only about fifty-four thousand military forces. In contrast, Eritrea, with a population of 3.5 million, had approximately two-hundred thousand military forces, which was more than three times the number of Ethiopian forces (Aklilu, 2014:72 E.C).

According to Abel, and Mehari, (2018), another foreign policy document devised following the adaption of the FDRE Constitution in 1995, which painstaking as a source of the new foreign policy direction. The 1995 Constitution enumerates broad guiding principles of the country's external relations. As indicated under article 86 of the constitution (FDRE, 1995), core principles are:

Protection of national interest, promotion of national interest in international agreements, mutual respect for national sovereignty, equality of states, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and peaceful solution of international disputes.

Under the same Article 86, sub-article four, the 1995 Constitution mandates that the country's foreign relations observe international agreements that guarantee respect for Ethiopia's sovereignty and do not contradict the interests of its people. Similarly, article 86 (5) postulates economic priority rooted in the foreign relations of the country when it states that the foreign policy of Ethiopia aims to forge and promote ever growing economic union and fraternal relations of the peoples with Ethiopia's neighbors and other African countries. Based on these values of the constitution, the third written, and the first ever publicized foreign policy document of the country namely, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs document was materialized in November 1996 (Abel, and Mehari, 2018).

As far as the regional political uncertainty concerned, the new regime too focused on restructuring the state and searching for Western economic support to solidify its grip of power to establish its dominance regardless of developments in the region (Medhane, 2015). From this perspective, Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) lacks a fundamental understanding of the history, external influences on the region, and the true nature of its member states, which have a historical rivalry and hostility towards Ethiopia. According to Goitom (2019), and Medhane (2015), the passiveness of the foreign policy may be attributed to the regime's lack of interest in external developments due to its major domestic project or its lack of experience and understanding on how the external environment operates.

In the 1990s, Somalia lacked a functioning government, leading to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the country. This was concerning for Ethiopia, as stated by Belete (2022 interview)⁸. The EPRDF regime's passive foreign policy allowed for Islamic fundamentalists in Somalia and Sudan to pose a threat to national security and even the survival of the country during that time. (ibid). However, the EPRDF's government determined to prove its foreign policy to respond strongly when its interests were threatened (Aklilu, 2022 interview)⁹.

3.2 Understanding Antecedents for Foreign Policy Re-Orientation: Relations with Some Neighboring Countries

Antecedents for foreign policy re-orientation of Ethiopia in the 1990s period refers to developments in the region¹⁰, and its relations with other countries in the region that prompt the country to shift its foreign policy. The Horn of Africa is a region of paramount geopolitical and geostrategic significance. This importance is largely due to a combination of geographical location, and a complex mix of political, economic, and security interests. The region is strategically located at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It commands access to key international sea routes, including the Red Sea and the Bab *el* Mandeb strait, which is one of the world's busiest and most critical maritime passages.

⁸ Dr. Belete Belachew is a Senior Foreign Policy Advisor and Program Manager at Friedrich-Stiftung." This interview took place on 12 September 2022 in Addis Ababa.

⁹ Aklilu Kebede is Ethiopian diplomat and former African Affairs Director at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This interview took place in Addis Ababa 26 December 2022.

¹⁰ The Horn of Africa, as defined this study encompasses; Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda.

The increased involvement of external actors and their associated interests, alliances, and agendas highlight the crucial role of geopolitics in shaping the region's security and economic future. In a region besieged by relentless conflicts and external penetrations Ethiopia has to be vigilant in its dealings with countries of the region and beyond.

Despite the country's peaceful relations based on the principle of good neighborliness with the countries in the region most often, Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea have strongly been creating challenges to the Ethiopia's security. This can be seen from what have been done between 1993/4 and 1995 onward, with the Sudan and Somalia respectively, and Ethiopia- Eritrean Border War (1998-2000). Given these factors, Ethiopian leaders have recognized the importance of a realistic and adaptive foreign policy that takes into account the ever-evolving geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa, and some of its member states, including Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea. This involves balancing national interests, regional cooperation, and international partnerships to promote stability and development both in the country and in the region.

3.2.1 Sudan

Immediate after Sudan's independence in 1956 to its complete Islamization in 1983, the two states increasingly witnessed a murky relationship, revealing of the prevalent tension and uninterrupted suspicion that continued to the present. Both imperial and revolutionary Ethiopia was wary of the Sudan's political dynamic and each was determined to guarantying the coming to power of friendly leaders or groups in Khartoum. When the chance occurred successive Ethiopian governments were not to hesitate to exploit every opportunity that potentially benefits the national interest of Ethiopia (Belete, 2014).

The porous border, which Ethiopia, and Sudan share remained as a source of contentions between the two countries. Sudan has remained a challenging focus point of Ethiopia's apprehensions, a force to reckon with amidst everlasting geopolitical interplays in north east Africa. According to Belete (2016), Ethiopia and Sudan share about 2000km of non-demarcated boundary and the latter's proven exploit as a gateway to external interventions detrimental to the national interest of Ethiopia necessitated closer follow ups since the day of Sudan's march to independence in the early 1956. During the Neimeiri's regime, Sudan bolstered its backing both Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as a destabilizing mission in Ethiopia (ibid). Meanwhile, Mangistu's Ethiopia invoked the

precautionary measures retribution through overt assistance to the Southern People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military wing Southern People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (Belete, 2013). Apparently, mutual perception of imagined and tangible, that the other harbour destabilizing elements intend to overthrowing the ruling regime of its counter parts further complicated the situation (ibid, 67).

Following the regime change in Ethiopia in May 1991, new foreign policy was enacted to foster peaceful relationship with the immediate neighboring countries. Thus, EPRDF adopted an 'open door' policy to allow free movements of people and goods from neighboring countries. To this end, the country declared unilateral move to open its borders formovements of people without requirement of entry visa's (Kinfe, 1994:32). As with Sudan, in this regard the two countries have agreed to stop supporting dissidents and expelling them from their respective territories (Girma, 1999:37-38). Consequently, Ethiopia halts supporting SPLM/A militarily hoping that Sudan would not involve in supporting the OLF after it withdrew from the transitional government in 1992 (Goitom, 2019). However, the Sudanese government engaged in provocative actions by harboring Ethiopia's armed dissidents, and spreading Islamic Fundamentalism through the Sudanese non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

During the early 1990s, under the guidance of the National Islamic Front (NIF), Sudan became somewhat of a rogue state in the Horn of Africa (Amare, 1996: 501). The promised Hassan Al-Turabi's aspirations, National Islamic Front's chief ideologue began to threaten all countries of the region. Sudan became a safe-haven for extremists from around the world. For example, Osama bin Laden was guaranteed to stay in the country, and he moved much of the Al Qaeda's organizational work to Sudan¹¹.

As part of Islamization program in the region, NIF had in May 1993 begun providing massive support to Eritrean Islamic Front (EIF) and Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) (Burr and Collins, 2003). The support began in Eritrea certainly followed by arming rebel groups in Ethiopia. According to Africa Confidential (1995), quoted in Amare (1996:505) Al Turabi vowed that 'Ethiopia will self-destruct in the near future, thus paving the way for the establishment of an

¹¹Astill, James, (2001) 'Bin Laden's Sudan Years', *The Guardian*, Available at;<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/17/afghanistan.terrorism3>. Accessed 20 January 2022

Islamic Oromo state and resulting in a chain of Islamic polities extending from Sudan to the Indian Ocean.’

Accordingly, Sudan thoroughly securitized the political advancement of the Muslim communities in Ethiopia (Woodward, 1996). According to Goitom (2019), Sudan took several measures to enhance its actions. The first move was to expand the Sudanese Embassy under newly appointed ambassador Osman Al Saeed¹² and established Sudanese Consulate in western Ethiopia Gambella town. Verily the first attempt created conducive conditions for the second move, which was proliferation of NGOs, which were fundamentally spearheaded with the political Islam and they were auspices of the NIF. These two factors were highly dynamic and sophisticated measures designed to spread the ideology of fundamentalism through official representation of the government and NGOs.

The relations between the two countries deteriorated when an assassination attempt was made against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak upon his arrival for the OAU Summit in Addis Ababa. Consequently, The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs openly accused the Sudanese government of providing sanctuary to the individuals responsible for the assassination attempt and assisting them with travel arrangements to and from Addis Ababa(Molla, 2002). For some, like Goitom (2019), and Molla (2002), this was happened due to open door policy which was adopted by the Ethiopian government to allow free movement of people without entry visa. Even though he declined to be responsible for the attack, Turabi vowed that the perpetrators are ‘messengers of the Islamic faith’ (Burr and Collins, 2003: 189). Sudan during this time, was a potential threat not only for Ethiopia and Eritrea but also accused for supporting Islamic Party of Kenya, and radical groups in Tanzania (Ibid:189).

Likewise, Al-Turabi had established strong connections with Somalia's Al Ithad Al Islamiya (AIAD). Sudanese aircraft were used to transport military equipment manufactured in Iran to Somalia from Sudan, with Al Qaeda and NIF leaders providing guidance and strategic assistance

¹² Al Saeed was a Sudanese intelligence who had observed London peace process between the then Ethiopia’s military government and the TPLF. He was the only foreign observer except the mediators. See Goitom Gebereluel (2019), Strategies for Managing Regional Conflict: Ethiopia’s foreign Policy in 1991-2018. [PhD dissertation, Wolfson College]. Available at: <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/items/ca92e6ba-ad79-44ae-8c00-002ed03b59b4>.

in Somalia (Burr and Collins, 2003). Consequently, Ethiopia had to confront this intricate and multifaceted situation, along with a slight encirclement by Islamic fundamentalism.

Ethiopia's foreign policy began to shift in order to address and manage the threats posed by the Sudanese regime, which was guided by an extremist cleric. This shift was pursued in alignment with other states in the region, as well as international and regional organizations. The determinations and measures of Turabi were seen as a viable threat to states in the region, so alignment with other states was chosen as a national strategy to isolate the regime diplomatically, and exert military pressure (Goitom, 2019).

Ethiopia retaliated against Sudan's threats by resuming its political and military backing for the SPLM and its military branch, SPLA, with the intention of exerting pressure on the Sudanese government. At first, the Ethiopian government clandestinely offered limited support to the South Sudanese opposition, while simultaneously diplomatically pressuring Sudan through IGAD (Interview with Belete on 12 September 2022). However, after an unsuccessful assassination attempt, the EPRDF took direct military action, supporting proxy forces in South Sudan in coordination with 'front-line states', and making diplomatic efforts to isolate Sudan on a global scale (Doop, 2013). Through these military measures, Ethiopia unilaterally took control of Sudanese territory and provided operational assistance to the SPLA in their offensive move (Goitom, 2019).

In January 1996, the SPLA gained control over the border town of Kurmuk, which Khartoum accused Ethiopia of being involved in the conflict (Doop, 2013). Two months later, "the towns of Yabus and Pochella came under SPLA control, with the support of Ethiopian mechanized infantry" (Burr and O. Collins, 2003:208). The combined offensive resulted in the acquisition of a significant portion of Sudanese territory, with Eritrea advancing in the northeast, Ethiopia commencing its operation in the East, and Uganda invading from the south (ibid:208-209).

On the other hand, Ethiopia employed not only military action but also diplomatic efforts, which proved successful in punishing Sudan. Ethiopia collaborated with Egypt to urge the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to pressure Sudan into handing over individuals who had attempted to assassinate an Egyptian President, for trial. Despite Sudan's refusal to extradite the perpetrators, the UNSC passed Resolution No. 1044, imposing sanctions on Sudan. In April,

Resolution 1054 was passed, calling for the international isolation of the Sudanese regime. These measures included reducing the number and level of diplomatic staff at Sudanese missions abroad and consular posts, restricting or controlling their movements, and limiting the entry or transit of Sudanese government and military officials¹³.

In spite of being a key player in isolating Sudan, Ethiopia's stance was a response to the events that unfolded. These actions led to political division in Sudan, resulting in Al Bashir dismissing Al Turabi in 1999. Consequently, the relationship between the two countries has been improved. Furthermore, as Sudan and Egypt's relationship grows closer, Ethiopia aims to normalize its relations with Sudan

3.2.2 Somalia

To comprehend the relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia, it is crucial to examine the historical factors that have shaped their relations over time. The two countries have experienced complicated and striking relations since the independence of Somalia in 1960. Most often the causes of tensions and conflict have revolved around porous border the two countries share, and the aim of establishing 'Greater Somalia'¹⁴. As a matter of fact, Ethiopia was determined to counter this potentially dangerous aim that threatened its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Somalia's irredentist motive aimed to annex one-fifth of Ethiopia's territory, which is inhabited by Somali and Oromo ethnic groups (Negussay, 1982). This claim has influenced Ethiopia's policy towards Somalia. To achieve the goal of establishing 'Greater Somalia,' Somalia must weaken Ethiopia. In pursuit of this objective, Somalia, similar to Sudan, has been able to offer a safe haven for Ethiopian armed dissidents such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front and the Oromo Liberation Front (Bahru, 2002). Additionally, Somalia has publicly expressed sympathy for the causes of freedom fighters in Eritrea and Tigray (Belete, 2014). These actions have posed significant threats to the security of Ethiopia. Moreover, in 1977, Somalia's army launched

¹³ UNSC (1996) adopted Resolution S/RES 1044 on at its 3627th meeting on 31 January 1996 which imposed sanction on the Sudanese Government. The full document available at; <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/203390> accessed, on 12 September 2022

¹⁴ From independence onwards the Somalis have dreamed of incorporating Somali speaking regions to what so called 'Greater Somalia' encompassing, Djibouti, Ogaden region of Ethiopia, and Northern Frontier of Kenya. See Lewis, M. (1965), *The Modern History of Somali Land: From Nation to State*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. And Mayal, J. (1978), the Battle for the Horn: Irridentism and International Diplomacy. *The World Today*. 34 (9), 336-345.

extensive attacks on Ethiopia, leading to the Ogaden war (1977-1978). This conflict had a profound impact on the intricate relationship between the two nations for years to come.

When the EPRDF's regime assumed political power in Ethiopia in May 1991, the political landscape of the region underwent significant changes. Somalia lost its status as a sovereign state, and clan politics and extremism wreaked havoc, further destabilizing the states in the region, including Ethiopia. Moreover, there was a lack of a central authority capable of maintaining peace and security in Somalia. However, the primary focus of the EPRDF government was to support peace initiatives in Somalia. From 1991 to 1996, Ethiopia's foreign policy towards Somalia did not involve military incursions into Somali territory or providing support to specific groups or individuals to exert influence over other states. Instead, Ethiopia's engagement with Somalia was limited to participating in multilateral mediation processes (Goitom, 2019: 86).

The EPRDF government began mediating Somalia's conflict with regional and international partners immediately after assuming power. In June 1991, with the assistance of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Italy, they hosted the initial mediation process among various warring factions in Somalia. Consequently, Ali Mahdi was elected as an interim president by six participating organizations. However, this outcome was rejected by Farah Aided, another warlord, which inadvertently sparked political tensions leading to an eruption of armed conflict that devastated much of Mogadishu in late 1991. (Menkaus, 2010).

In 1993, Ethiopia hosted an UN-sponsored conference in Addis Ababa. Fifteen Somali factions, including Ali Mahdi and Aideed, participated in the conference. The aim of the conference was to reach an agreement to end hostilities and establish a transitional government¹⁵. However, the agreement failed to have any impact on the conflict in Somalia. The factions led by Ali Mahdi and Aideed continued to fight throughout the period (Goitom, 2019).

Another round of mediation was convened by Ethiopia in 1996/7, known as the Sodere conference. The objective of this conference was to decentralize and establish a federal state system in Somalia. However, a rival peace talks took place in Cairo, Egypt, opposing the Sodere

¹⁵United States Institute of Peace (1993), Addis Ababa Agreement concluded at the first session of the Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia. Available at; http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/somalia_03271993.pdf.

peace conference and aiming to promote a centralized state in Somalia. These talks also aimed to strengthen the power of factions that had rejected the Sodere peace negotiations. (Menkhaus, 2007:17). These conferences triggered antagonism and it fomented in the political divisions in conflict ravaging Somalia in the subsequent years to come (Ibid). Despite all these hardships in Somalia the ERDF's foreign policy had no clear strategic purpose with policy priorities and objectives (Goitom, 2019:87). The EPRDF's engagement with Somalia was therefore largely reactive to the dynamics of the Somali conflict and the changing interests of neighbouring countries. Ethiopia's foreign policy is characterized by an ad hoc and reactive approach, lacking clearly identified national interests (Belete Belachew, 2022, interview).

During the early 1990s, in an effort to address contentions, the EPRDF implemented a foreign policy that included opening up political space in Ethiopia. As a result, Ethiopia's Somali region was established as a regional entity to calm domestic political tensions and instability. This allowed Islamist parties like Al Ithad Al Islamiya (AIAI) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) to operate as legal political parties. However, disagreements arose between the EPRDF and these groups regarding the fate of the Somali Regional State, which ultimately led to the ONLF resuming insurgence across the region. Simultaneously, the EPRDF created a parallel party in the region which headed by the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL), to rule the regional state.

Ethiopia has a complex history of involvement in Somali affairs, supporting various factions at different times based on strategic interests or to counteract perceived hostile groups. Amidst this chaos, radical Islamist groups, including Al Shabab, emerged, posing a serious security threat to Somalia and its neighbors, including Ethiopia. In 2006, Ethiopia intervened militarily in Somalia to counter the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), in an effort to prevent Islamist groups from gaining power. However, this intervention also fueled anti-Ethiopian sentiments and strengthened Al Shabaab.

3.2.3 Eritrea

Ethiopia has a distinctive history of both conflict and cooperation with Eritrea. Federation of Eritrea implemented in 1952 (Andergachew, 1980). The formulas of the intended federation were unhappily welcomed by Eritreans. According to Bahru (2002:219), 'both unionists and advocates for independence of Eritrea were unhappy with federation formula, thus it could be

argued that neither party was ready to give the federal scheme a chance'. However, after a decade, the imperial government had taken several measures to dismantle the status of Eritrea's federation, which ultimately resulted in its union in 1962. Following the termination of the federation, Eritrea's quest for independence gained momentum.

The separatist movement in Eritrea emerged after the abolition of its autonomous status. The liberation movement first manifested itself in 1958 with the establishment of the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM). Its goal was to achieve an independent Eritrean state through political and diplomatic means, including seeking intervention from the UN (Bahru, 2002). The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), consisting of dissidents who had been exiled in the Middle East, framed their fight for independence within the framework of Pan-Arabism (ibid). This enabled it to gain substantial support from the Arab world, stretching from Egypt to Syria and Iraq (Aklilu, 2014E.C). Furthermore, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt promised his backing to the Eritrean rebels after the Eritrean federation was dissolved (ibid).

In 1993, the EPRDF took an uncommon position by endorsing Eritrea's right to secede, which pertains to the issue of self-determination. Following the partition, Ethiopia's economic and security policies frequently prioritized trust and solidarity over self-interest. The unique situation relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea were only formalized through a generic agreement called the 'Principles of Cooperation' (Tekeste and Tronvoll, 2000). The 'Principles of Cooperation' were indeed significant in the context of Ethiopian-Eritrean relations, but they were established in the early 1990s during the process leading to Eritrea's independence. These principles outlined the framework for the relations between the two countries after Eritrea's successful referendum for independence in 1993. This agreement was acknowledged that Eritrea's right to self-determination on the one hand and the Ethiopia's right to use the port of Assab for free (Tekeste and Tronvoll, 2000). After *de jure* independence of the Eritrean state in 1993, the two states signed the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement also called Asmara Pact which aimed to serve as a grass root for framework for the cooperation between them. The Pact consisted of 25 protocols that outlined an ambitious plan to integrate the two states and societies in different economic and social areas, ranging from education and tourism to defense (ibid:31).

Eritrea's relations with Ethiopia were primarily defined by personal rhetoric rather than mutual interest. Beginning in 1996, the EPRDF's leadership debated Ethiopia's reputation for peaceful

and friendly neighboring. Under the leadership of Tewolde Weldamariam, the Central Command strongly emphasized the potential for Eritrea to launch an attack on Ethiopia in the near future. They urged Ethiopia to take necessary precautions (Goitom, 2019). Additionally, Tamrat Layne, the then Deputy Prime Minister, claimed that he presented a report on Eritrea's upcoming attack to the EPRDF leadership, but Meles was denied the claim¹⁶. The nature of Ethiopia's policy towards Eritrea from 1991 to 1998 was, as argued in much of the literature¹⁷, influenced by the distinctive and close relationship between the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples, as well as the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) alliance. However, Ethiopia's foreign policy towards Eritrea was made within a broader ideational framework, as evidenced by the EPRDF's policies towards Somalia and Sudan.

Though Ethiopia won the border war, Eritrea rewarded Badme as undisputable territory by boundary Commission findings (EEBC)¹⁸. The commission reported in April 2002, and Eritrea welcomed the findings. On the other hand, instead of accepting the commission's findings Ethiopia required further boundary negotiation, and retained its military over the disputed area (Reid, 2018). Thus, Eritrea accused Ethiopia of illegally occupying its territory of the former. As a result, both states engaged in accusing one another of supporting armed groups against them. Hence, despite the war supposedly ended in December 2000 with the signing of the Algiers' peace Agreement, its repercussions and aftermath have been highly substantial phenomenon, and remained destabilization force in the region. The Algiers Agreement itself has not contributed to a strong, enduring political settlement, but rather has been used by elites on both sides of the border for a mutually convenient cessation of overt hostilities, at least for the time being (ibid).

In the post-war period, leaders in Ethiopia and Eritrea were primarily focused on domestic affairs, specifically weakening their opponents to establish unyielding political power. Their foreign policy towards each other was also characterized by covert actions aimed at regime

¹⁶ Tamrat Layne, interview by SBS Radio, June 27, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PigjiydQgAU>.

¹⁷ These literatures include, Negash and Tronvoll (2000), *Brothers at War: Making sense of the Ethiopia Eritrea War*; Paulos, (2001), Ethiopia, The TPLF and Roots of the 2001 Political Tremor. *International Conference on African Development Archives*. Available at; http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/africancenter_icad_archive/4; Leenco Lata, (2003), 'The Ethiopia-Eritrea War.' *Review of African Political Economy*. 30 (97): 369-388.

¹⁸ United Nation News, (2008), available at; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2008/10/277802>.

change in both countries. The Eritrean government is described as a criminal group involved in “rent-seeking”. Their desire to act as the regional police has resulted in the militarization of the Eritrean people (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002: 67). In this revised foreign policy document, the government emphasizes two main objectives to prevent future wars: firstly, the country must enhance and update its military to deter Eritrea’s aggression, and secondly, to overthrow the regime in Eritrea (Goitom, 2019). Accordingly, Ethiopia’s first policy option was to establish strong deterrence capacity. While the second one was instead of engaging in another round of military confrontation to overthrow the Isaias’s regime in Eritrea, it meant to employ containment policy by mobilizing international and regional, political, diplomatic, and economic pressures on Eritrea (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002:71). According to Abbink (2003: 413):

Proxy war strategies were pursued by both parties not only in the enemy country but also in neighboring states such as Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, and Sudan. In this strategy, Ethiopia has worked through two types of insurgent movements: firstly, organizations entirely established by Ethiopia, including the Eritrean Revolutionary Democratic Front and the Afar Red Sea Democratic Front. Secondly, those that were already founded and had some basis in pre-existing rebellions in Eritrea and Somalia, such as ELF, One Kunama Movement, One Afar Movement, and the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF).

On the other hand, Eritrea utilized pre-existing insurgent groups like the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), with whom they had established long-lasting contact (ibid). They also strengthened their relations with Somali groups, particularly warlord militias, who opposed the Rahanwein and the Ethiopia-backed groups in the Baidoa, Beledweyn, and Bakool areas along the border. Additionally, there are indications that Eritrea transported weapons to Somalia’s Transitional National Government in Mogadishu (Abbink, 2003: 414).

The EPRDF's proxy war strategy involved extending support to existing armed opposition groups and establishing new movements. This approach aimed to exert pressure on the regime in Asmara while avoiding a conventional war. However, the partnership between the EPRDF and Eritrean opposition groups was marked by mutual dissatisfaction (Goitom, 2019). The EPRDF,

having previously engaged in guerrilla fighting, was disappointed by the Eritrean opposition's lack of capability, ongoing internal conflicts, and fragmentation (ibid). Additionally, Meles, the Ethiopian leader, hoped to maintain a retaliatory capacity in case of an Eritrean attack. By demonstrating Ethiopia's readiness to retaliate, if necessary, Meles aimed to send a clear message to Esaias¹⁹.

In 2011 Ethiopia shifted deterrence policy to the proportional responses to provocations. Meles Zenawi the then Prime Minister of Ethiopia had announced that:

Until now, our strategy has been defending sovereignty by speeding up our development. Now, we found that we could not go any longer with passive defense. Therefore, we have to facilitate ways for Eritrean people to remove its dictatorial regime. We have no intention to jump into their country but we need to expand our influence there. If Eritrean government tries to attack us, we will also respond proportionally²⁰

Ethiopia is simultaneously building its deterrence capacity to respond proportionally to any attacks from Eritrea, while also diplomatically working to isolate Eritrea. Eritrea's already weakened relationships with countries in the Horn and the West, and its allegations of involvement in Somalia's affairs, have made it a collective security concern for these nations. The emergence of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in Somalia and Eritrea's covert support for the group have become a pivotal point in Ethiopia-Eritrean post-war relations, leading to Ethiopia's pursuit of an isolation policy towards Eritrea. Eritrea's significant support for ICU, as part of its proxy strategy against Ethiopia, was aimed at preventing an Islamist victory by the end of 2006. (Goitom, 2019: 192).

The course of events was altered by Ethiopia's intervention in December 2006 in Somalia against Islamic Courts Union. This was subsequently supported by IGAD, which expressed gratitude towards Ethiopia for its efforts in advancing the shared stance of IGAD, with regard to its

¹⁹ Yearbook of the UN (2004). UN-ilibrary available on <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210545860> pp; 266-270

²⁰ Ahram Online (2011), 'Ethiopia Vows to Support Eritrea's Regime Change' full article available at <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/2/10533/World/Ethiopia-vows-to-support-Eritrea-regime-change.aspx>, accessed, on 01 May 2023.

intervention in Somalia²¹. In a communiqué, IGAD acknowledged Ethiopia's sacrifices and made reference to any entities that hinder the Somali government and its duties, which seemed to imply Eritrea²².

As a result, Eritrea found itself in a predicament where it perceived that everyone had taken a stance in favor of Ethiopia during the Somali conflict. In response to IGAD's actions, Eritrea declared the suspension of its membership in the regional body (IGAD), due to its Somalia policy. Eritrea clarified that the suspension was only a temporary withdrawal, stating that it would be irresponsible to remain in an organization that makes decisions that are not legally or morally acceptable. Additionally, Eritrea accused external forces of manipulating the organization²³.

The EPRDF's post-war policies towards Eritrea aimed to achieve the following objectives: to avoid war and, despite what was stated in the 2002 white paper, to pursue a change in regime or policy in Eritrea. The need for regime change was largely based on Meles' and the EPRDF's perception of Isaias Afwerki as an individual with whom it was difficult to find a common ground. According to US cables, the EPRDF saw the rivalry as a competition between hegemonic aspirations rooted in Isaias Afwerki's personality: "President Isaias is seen by Meles and his government as an extremely dangerous, hostile, and malevolent individual whose sole aim is to make Eritrea the dominant power in the Horn of Africa and to establish Isaias' role as the paramount leader in the region. Ethiopia stands in the way of Isaias' desire for dominance in the region."²⁴ The EPRDF considered Isaias Afwerki as someone who either needed to be removed, contained, or influenced to adopt a different behavior pattern.

Generally, after the war of 1998-2000, the two countries found themselves in a prolonged state of "no war, no peace" for nearly two decades. This period of stalemate was marked by ongoing tensions and a lack of formal diplomatic relations. The breakthrough came in 2018 when

²¹ Hull, B. (2007). 'E. African Bloc Sides with Ethiopia over Somalia'. *Reuters 13 April 2007*. Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-conflict-idUSL1330177820070413>. Retrieved on 28 April 2023.

²² *ibid*

²³ Sudan Tribune, "Eritrea Suspends Its Membership in IGAD over Somalia." April 23, 2007. Available at <https://sudantribune.com/article21827/>. Retrieved on 29 April 2023

²⁴ The Telegraph (2008). 'ARS Ready to Talk Asmara' 5 July 2008. Available at; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/wikileaks-files/somalia-wikileaks/8302242/ARS-READY-TO-TALK-ASMARA-00000249-001.2-OF-002.html>.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced that Ethiopia would fully accept the terms of the Algiers Agreement. This led to a rapid normalization of relations between the two countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN ETHIOPIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

As the fabric of domestic, regional, and international environments undergo changes, Ethiopia's foreign policy has also experienced changes and continuities in order to adapt to these phenomena. These changes can manifest in terms of strategies, priorities, or approaches when dealing with other countries. Analyzing the changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy helps us understand the evolution of the country's international relations, the factors that influence its decision-making, and the impact of external events or internal dynamics on its engagement with the rest of the world. In this chapter, the study discusses the shift in Ethiopia's foreign policy after 2018, followed by the changes and continuities in its foreign policy since 1991.

4.1 The Post-2018 Ethiopia's Foreign Policy Re-orientation

Here, the study analyzes the factors that have contributed to Ethiopia's re-orientation of its foreign policy. Specifically, the section examines the following factors: the politics surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and its impact on the Nile politics, the emergence of a new axis of integration between Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The country's foreign policy in the face of the regional dynamics, strained diplomacy amidst domestic violence, and the external pressures that Ethiopia has encountered.

4.1.1 The Nile Politics: GERD Matters

For years, the Nile Basin has been shaped by the hydro-supremacy of colonial masters and the Egypt-Sudan alliance in sharing the river's resources (Darwisheh, 2021). Downstream countries have enjoyed uncontested control over the river's water, while Ethiopia has rejected Egypt's attempts at hydro political and geopolitical dominance (ibid). The Nile River has historically influenced regional politics, intrastate relations, economic development, poverty, geopolitical dynamics, alliance formation, external intervention, and geo-strategic power struggles.

The Nile Basin has been identified as a potential source of conflict due to unequal water usage and strained relationships between its downstream countries, namely Egypt and Sudan. The absence of an inclusive legal and institutional framework for managing the limited water resources has worsened tensions. Despite the existence of international water laws, individual claims and actions continue to prevail in the basin (Dereje, 2017). The colonial-era treaties, known as the Nile River Agreements, have become a point of contention with upstream countries denouncing them as outdated and irrelevant to their national interests. Egypt seeks to bind these countries to agreements that were made without their input and did not consider their interests (Kimenyi and Mbaku, 2010).

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was established in 1999, and the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), also known as the New Nile Treaty, is a significant achievement that continues to shape the legal landscape, geopolitical dynamics, and future water utilization agreements in the area. The NBI was launched in February 1999 by the water ministers from countries like Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, the DRC, and Eritrea (as an observer)²⁵.

Establishing a regional institutional framework is essential for ensuring sustainable development through longer-term cooperation. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) has aimed to ‘achieve this by creating the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) to replace previous bilateral treaties and formalize the transformation of the NBI into a permanent Nile River Basin Commission’ (Yakob, 2007:22). Although Egypt and Sudan have rejected the document, the attempt was a significant milestone in the history of the Nile River politics by introducing new frameworks for water cooperation (Aklilu, 2022 Interview).

Ethiopia has been actively engaging in diplomatic efforts with Egypt and Sudan to resolve issues surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Ethiopia emphasizes the importance of the dam for its development and economic growth, while also acknowledging the concerns of downstream countries. To address these differences, Ethiopia has participated in several rounds of negotiations with Egypt and Sudan, under the auspices of the African Union, in order to reach a mutually beneficial agreement on the filling and operation of the Dam. However,

²⁵ Nile Basin Water Resources Atlas (2016). ‘The Nile Basin Initiative’. Available at: <https://atlas.nilebasin.org/treatise/the-nile-basin-initiative/>. Accessed on: 20 June 2023

Ethiopia's diplomatic engagement is not as active as its counterpart, Egypt (Belete, 2022, interview).

From very beginning of the construction of the dam, the government of Ethiopia faced pressure from Egypt to prevent international financial institutions from funding the GERD. In response, the government proposed financing the projects domestically through bonds both at home and abroad (Gizachew, 2023 interview)²⁶. Egypt's diplomatic move has been not limited to persuading global financial institutions or governments, but also international and regional organizations too. Egypt has been actively seeking support from the League of Arab Nations (Arab League) to pressure Ethiopia to reach a binding agreement on the GERD. In July 2020, the Arab League passed a resolution supporting Egypt's position on the GERD and called on Ethiopia to resume negotiations with Egypt and Sudan²⁷. The country has also been using its influence within the Arab League to prevent Ethiopia from gaining support from other African countries. In June 2020, Egypt successfully lobbied the Arab League to reject a resolution by the African Union (AU) supporting Ethiopia's right to fill the dam's reservoir²⁸.

Egypt's actions within the Arab League can be seen as an attempt to gain international support and pressure Ethiopia to reach a resolution on the GERD that is favorable to Egypt. Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ambassador Hossam Zaki, has revealed that on 21 October, 2022 Egypt and Sudan have proposed a draft resolution to support their interests regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The Resolution was discussed by permanent delegates of the Arab League during their meetings in preparation for the upcoming Arab League Summit in Algeria on November 1-2. Up on a call by Egypt, the League has been accusing Ethiopia of having 'obstinate stance' on GERD, to which Egypt objects due to concerns it may significantly reduce its "traditional share" of Nile waters²⁹.

²⁶ Dr. Gizachew Asrat is a senior researcher at Institute of Foreign Affairs. This interview conducted on 26 March 2023 in Addis Ababa.

²⁷ Aljazeera, (2021), Ethiopia Rejects Arab League Resolution on the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/16/ethiopia-rejects-arab-league-resolution-on-renaissance-dam>. Accessed: 2 May 2023.

²⁸ ibid

²⁹ Addis Getachew (2020). 'Ethiopia Rips Arab League Support for Egypt on Nile Dam'. *Anadolu Agency*. Retrieved at; <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/hydro/ethiopia-rips-arab-league-support-for-egypt-on-nile-dam/28581> Accessed; 5 May 2022.

The Council of the Arab League Summit in Jeddah has recently issued a resolution that highlights the significance of water security for Egypt and Sudan as an essential component of Arab water security. The Resolution firmly opposes any activities that impede their rights to the Nile Waters. The content is referring to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dispute between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. The Resolution calls for all parties to refrain from taking unilateral actions, such as continuing to fill and operate the Dam without reaching an agreement on the rules for doing so. It also urges the UN Security Council to intervene and take necessary measures to ensure a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The decision also includes making this issue a permanent agenda item for the Arab League Council summit until a peaceful settlement is reached³⁰.

On the other hand, Ethiopia is dismayed by the ‘Resolution’ of the Executive Council of the League of Arab States on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) issued on 15 June 2021 after its meeting held in Doha, Qatar. Ethiopia firmly rejected the ‘Resolution’³¹. In fact, this is not the first time the League of Arab States has issued a statement regarding its misguided positions on the GERD. Due to its unwavering support for the unfounded claims of Egypt and Sudan regarding the GERD, the League of Arab States has already wasted its opportunity to play a constructive role. It should be abundantly clear that futile attempts like this to internationalize and politicize the GERD will not result in sustainable regional cooperation in the utilization and management of the Nile. The League of Arab States should be aware that the utilization of the Nile waters is crucial for Ethiopia’s existence³². It is essential for lifting millions of its people out of extreme poverty and meeting their needs for energy, water, and food security. Ethiopia is exercising its rightful use of its water resources while respecting international water laws and the principle of avoiding significant harm. Ethiopia strongly believes that cooperation and dialogue are the only means to achieve water security for any of the Nile Basin states. The Nile is a shared resource and not the exclusive property of Egypt and Sudan³³.

³⁰ Egypt Independent (2023). ‘Arab Summit Issued New Resolution on GERD’ available at; <https://www.egyptindependent.com/arab-summit-issues-new-resolution-on-gerd/>. Accessed; 5 May 2023.

³¹ Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia-London, UK. (2021), Statement on the Resolution of the League of Arab States on GERD. Available at: <https://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/statement-on-the-resolution-of-the-league-of-arab-states-on-the-gerd/>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Nevertheless, Egypt kept influencing Ethiopia through United Nations Security Council. Accordingly, On 19 June, 2020, Egypt officially requested the United Nations Security Council's involvement in restarting tripartite negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The goal was to ensure a fair and balanced solution to the dispute is reached. This request came shortly after the then Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Gedu Andargachew, stated that his country would proceed with filling the dam without an agreement (Elias, 2020). President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi of Egypt later explained that Egypt's appeal to the Security Council is meant to continue the political and diplomatic process. Gedu emphasized the need for a strong move towards concluding negotiations and reaching an agreement that benefits all parties involved (ibid).

Negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan have been ongoing, with multiple rounds of talks held. However, the attempts have been complicated by issues such as water rights, environmental concerns, and political tensions. Egypt has called for international mediation, while Ethiopia has insisted on continuing the talks under the African Union's mediation framework. The GERD will significantly impact the future of Nile politics, as it remains a source of tension between Egypt and Ethiopia, and is likely to continue causing tensions in the future. The GERD will have a major impact on the water supply of Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, and it remains unclear how the three countries will resolve their differences over the dam.

4.1.2 The New Axis: Cooperation Between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia

Historically, the relationship between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia has been strained due to political and territorial disputes. However, in recent years, there have been some signs of cooperation between the three countries. In 2018, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a peace agreement that ended their long-standing conflict in the region i.e. 1998-2018. This has led to increased trade and cooperation between the two countries. Somalia has also been involved in discussions with Ethiopia and Eritrea about regional security and economic cooperation. In 2020, the three countries signed a joint agreement to cooperate on issues related to trade, investment, and infrastructure development (Henneber, and F. Plank, 2020).

On January 27, 2020, the leaders of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, President Isaias Afwerki, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo respectively, convened for their third trilateral meeting since the 2018 peace agreement in Asmara, Eritrea (ibid). Their meeting resulted in the agreement of a Joint Plan of Action for 2020, which prioritizes the consolidation of peace, stability, and security, as well as the promotion of economic and social development in the region. Additionally, they proposed the formation of a new regional bloc known as the Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC)³⁴. Given the complex political context in the HoA and recent developments in early 2020, it is crucial to understand why the three states are proposing to pursue regional cooperation and what this could mean for the people in the region.

Given the conflict-prone nature of the HoA region, a dedicated regional body for peace and security matters could prove advantageous for all three states. By establishing a new regional bloc, the relationship between the countries could be further normalized, resulting in substantial gains in peace and security matters. The creation of the HoAC would pave the way for new regional norms and understandings of peace and security, in line with the preferences and understandings of the three leaders. Enhancing collaboration has the potential to boost economies and trade, but it's unclear how the HoAC would specifically strengthen economic ties among the three states. Though, the majority of trade in the area remains small-scale, local, informal, and partly illegal, with limited complementarity observed between the three states (Byeirs, 2016).

Although organizations “are easier to maintain than to construct” (Keohane, 1984:102) and the emergence of fresh establishments results in the occurrence of transaction expenses. The establishment of HoAC could add more intricacy to local politics due to the possibility of overlapping regionalism and forum shopping. This could also increase the complexity of diplomatic relations in the HoA.

This phenomenon has been studied under various names, such as regime complexity (Alter and Meunier, 2009) and inter-organizational relations (Koops and Biermann, 2017). The institutional overlap creates coordination problems and costs. It is puzzling why countries choose to join

³⁴ The Africa Report (2020). ‘Horn of Africa Cooperation: A mixed responses to new regional bloc’. Available at: <https://www.theafricareport.com/40994/horn-of-africa-cooperation-mixed-responses-to-new-regional-bloc/>. Accessed on 20 June 2022.

multiple regional blocs with similar policy mandates, given their finite financial, administrative, and political capacities (Panke and Stapel, 2018a). Furthermore, increasing overlaps between regional blocs can lead to non-compliance due to incompatible rules and norms (Panke and Stapel, 2018b), which significantly affects regional governance. Likely, it may challenge IGAD's position in the region, and give rise to more overlaps with the AU, COMESA, and conceivably the EAC.

Nevertheless, IGAD's endeavors to handle conflicts in Somalia and Sudan have proven to be successful to some extent. For instance, a power-sharing agreement was ultimately reached among the warring factions in South Sudan, who have fought a civil war since 2013, in February 2020, with the assistance of IGAD in facilitating the negotiation process (Henneberg, 2013; Henneberg & Plank, 2015; Michael, 2020). However, a lack of political will among the member states and a persistent crisis in the region are hindering IGAD's effectiveness in addressing problems in the region.

The proposed HoAC initiative may exacerbate these challenges, as member states Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia could divert resources and political influence away from IGAD. Alternatively, the proposal may serve as a means of pressuring IGAD to reform, as suggested by Urpelainen and de Graaf (2015). However, as a new and small regional organization, HoAC would face significant obstacles in its attempting to establish itself as a viable alternative to IGAD.

4.1.3 Ethiopia's Diplomacy in the Face of the Regional Dynamics

Since the late 19th century, modern Ethiopia has based its foreign policy on several strategic pillars that prioritize national sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual interest and equality among countries, non-alignment, and fostering friendly relations with other countries and peoples. These principles have been outlined in various national documents and are explicitly stated in Ethiopia's current Constitution, as well as, its foreign and national security policies and strategies.

The political situation in the region of the Horn has important consequences for Ethiopia's foreign policy. Being situated in this volatile region, which is marked by internal instability and external intervention, the country's foreign relations must navigate these challenges.

Consequently, major powers are eager to exert their influence in both Ethiopia and the broader region. Therefore, Ethiopia's foreign policy is shaped by a need to balance the interests of various powers while also pursuing the country's national interests. For example, Ethiopia has maintained close ties with China, which has invested heavily in the country's infrastructure. At the same time, Ethiopia has also strengthened its ties with the United States, which views the country as a key ally in the fight against terrorism. Despite intra-Gulf competition, Ethiopia has managed and maintain friendly relations with them. Ethiopia's foreign policy is likely to continue to be shaped by geopolitical competition in the coming years, as major powers seek to establish influence in the region.

In the face of geopolitical dynamics, the new leadership not only implemented noteworthy domestic reform measures, but also redirected the country's foreign policy towards its neighboring countries. The EPRDF regime had developed separate foreign policies for each country in the Horn of Africa, classifying neighboring nations into different groups such as economically unviable, as in the case of Somalia, or unfriendly, as in the case of Eritrea³⁵. This approach was not diplomatically sound and did not serve to safeguard Ethiopia's interests in the divided region (Abenezer, 2023 interview)³⁶. However, in the post 2018 period Ethiopia made significant change in its approach toward Eritrea. The improved relationship between the two countries brought about significant positive changes in the Horn of Africa.

The once amicable relations between Ethiopia and the West quickly deteriorated due to their support of Sudan and Egypt regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and the war in the northern part of Ethiopia. In 2020, Ethiopia declined to sign a binding agreement on the filling period, rejecting the 12-21 years proposed by Egypt and asserting its right to fill the dam at its own pace. Despite unsuccessful attempts to convene the Security Council at the request of Egypt and Sudan to halt the filling of the GERD's reservoir and establish a binding agreement between all parties, the relationship continued to strain (Ashenafi, 2023).

³⁵ The Foreign Policy Document of 2002 consisted of the country's foreign policy and strategy towards each and every neighboring countries. Meanwhile the foreign policy document described Somalia as not viable for economic need for Ethiopia, and it is instead security concern, and Eritrea is not as much as friend due to its unfriendly regime. See, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2002). 'The Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy (FANSPS)'.

³⁶ Abenezer Dawit, is a diplomat at Ministry Foreign Affairs. This interview, conducted on 7 April, 2023 in Addis Ababa.

On the other hand, Ethiopia and China have had close diplomatic ties for several decades, and China is one of Ethiopia's largest trading partners and investors. In recent years, the relationship between the two countries has deepened, with China providing significant financial and technical assistance to Ethiopia for infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, railways, and industrial parks³⁷.

Ethiopia has become a focal point for China's Belt and Road Initiative, a development program aimed at expanding Chinese influence by funding and constructing infrastructure in the developing countries. The majority of Ethiopia's air, rail, and road infrastructure has been funded and constructed by the Chinese. This deep economic involvement has made China, Ethiopia's principal trading partner (Sany and Sheehy, 2022). Nonetheless, concerns have been raised regarding the sustainability of Ethiopia's estimated \$13.7 billion debt to China, the second highest in Africa, trailing only Angola's (ibid). This debt burden may increase China's standing in Ethiopia even further.

The country has also been pursuing a diplomatic game with the Gulf countries. Despite domestic rift, Ethiopia has strong economic and political relations with these countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. These relationships are primarily based on trade, investment, and aid. For years, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pursued comparable approaches, sometimes in collaboration, when dealing with Ethiopia (Aklilu, 2022 interview). Both countries have long invested in agricultural initiatives with the aim of enhancing their domestic food security. Although they began to extend their investments into the manufacturing, tourism, and energy industries after 2000, it was not until 2018 that their efforts gained significant traction (ibid).

Following the signing of the peace agreement, between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have shown a keen interest in investing heavily in Ethiopia due to their apprehensions about Iran and Qatar's presence there. A significant player in this investment surge is the UAE, which has committed a remarkable \$3 billion in funding and aid, with a billion dollars being deposited in the National Bank of Ethiopia (Maasho, 2018). Accordingly, Ethiopia

³⁷ Xinhua (2019). Xi Meets Ethiopian Prime Minister. Available at; http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2019-04/24/c_138005317.htm. Accessed; 5 May 2023

is anticipated to reap the rewards of infrastructural projects financed by the UAE, which include the enhancement of Berbera (Somaliland) and Assab ports, and the establishment of an oil pipeline from the Red Sea to Ethiopia.

Qatar and Ethiopia have also maintained relations despite Qatar's strained relation with other Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE)³⁸. In light of the blockade, Qatar expanded its outreach to Ethiopia, particularly in the area of food imports. Following Ethiopia's steadfast commitment to maintaining impartiality in non-African conflicts, Ethiopia has avoided from aligning itself with any faction involved in the blockade of Qatar-Saudi confrontation. This led to increased investment by Qatari business people in Ethiopia's agro-food sector, as well as expressed interest in the hospitality and health industries (Cafiero, and Cok, 2020).

Finally, it is worth noting that Turkey has established a robust and enduring relationship with Ethiopia. In addition to providing aid to schools and mosques, Turkey has invested six billion in Africa, with Two and half billion dollars going to Addis Ababa, making it the first African city to receive Turkish foreign direct investment (ibid). Officials from both countries signed a military cooperation agreement in the presence of their leaders. Moreover, a skill-sharing agreement and financing resources for water management and several memorandums of understanding were signed, covering military cooperation, finance, and water resources. The military agreement which was given a green light by the Türkiye's parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee aims to enhance military relations and intelligence sharing between Ethiopia and the Turkish republic (Addis Standard, 2022).

4.1.4 Strained Diplomacy Amidst Domestic Violence

Political violence and armed struggle have been dominating Ethiopia's political phenomenon for long period of time. The domestic violence is perhaps characterized by multifaceted complexities as the political and economic issues intertwined. For decades, the EPRDF held a tight grip on

³⁸ After 2021 these countries i.e. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE are normalizing relations. For example, see Al Jazeera, (2023). Qatar's Emir Received Saudi's Foreign Minister on Official Visit. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/26/qatars-emir-receives-saudi-arabias-foreign-minister-on-an-official-visit>. Accessed on: 20 October, 2023. And Aljazeera (2023). 'Work Underway' to Restore Qatar-UAE Ties'. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/18/qatar-and-uae-moving-to-restore-diplomatic-relations-report>.

Ethiopia, overseeing stability and economic growth at the expense of basic civil and political rights. However, its authoritarian rule sparked a popular uprising that forced Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn to resign, paving the way for Abiy Ahmed's appointment in 2018. The Prime Minister on an attempt to unify ethnically divided country, announced the formation of the Prosperity Party, which replaced the EPRDF in 2019. This move caused concern in some regions that the federal system, which grants significant autonomy to ethnically-defined states such as Tigray, was under threat and put the country to edge of abyss (Awol, 2019).

Tigrayan leaders withdrew to the Tigray Regional National State, where they maintained control over their regional government. Tensions reached a boiling point in September when the Tigrayans proceeded with regional parliamentary elections that Abiy had postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Federal Government deemed the vote illegal, and lawmakers cut funding to the TPLF's leadership, sparking a series of retaliatory escalations between the regional and federal governments. Following allegations that the TPLF had attacked a federal army base in the Tigray region, and had made an attempt to seize its weapons, the Federal Government gave orders for a military operation to be carried out against the group on November 2020. This involved the deployment of troops from Ethiopia as well as fighters from the nearby region of Amhara, along with soldiers from Eritrea³⁹.

This Ethiopia's military redeployments to the Tigray, have indirectly led to a resurgence of an old border dispute with Sudan in the al-Fashaga region to the west. This has resulted in a significant deterioration of relations between Ethiopia and Sudan, reaching a low point not seen in years. There is still a possibility of a border conflict between Sudan and Ethiopia. The deteriorating relationship between the two countries has prompted Sudan to request the removal of over 3,000 Ethiopian peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)⁴⁰. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) is distinctive

³⁹ Eritrea's involvement in the Tigray war was initially denied by both Eritrea and Ethiopia. but later Ethiopia has acknowledged the involvement of Eritrean soldiers in the war in the northern part of Ethiopia. For example, see BBC (2021), Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed admits Eritrean Forces in Tigray. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56497168>.

⁴⁰ UN Security Council (2021) 'Letter Dated 1 April 2021 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2021/322, 1 April, Available at: <<https://undocs.org/en/S/2021/322>> [Accessed 10 June 2021]; Radio Dabanga (2021) 'Sudan Demands UN Replace Ethiopian Troops in UNISFA Mission', 8 April, Available

amongst UN peacekeeping missions as it solely relies on troops from a single country (Verjee, 2021). The withdrawal of Ethiopian peacekeeping troops has hindered UNISFA's ability to secure the area. Additionally, the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces has led to disputes between communities in Abyei and the neighboring area, resulting in a series of violence⁴¹

Ethiopia's support of Somalia's President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmaajo), has led to improved relations between Ethiopia and Somalia. However, the fallout from Tigray has added to the already unstable situation in Somalia, impacting Somali-Ethiopian relations (The Crisis Group, 2020). The problem may have security concerns for both countries as Ethiopia has removed some troops and disarmed others⁴². As a result, concerns have arisen regarding the impact on Ethiopia's significant troop presence in Somalia, including their involvement in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and a separate bilateral deployment. This development could potentially undermine counterterrorism efforts against the al-Shabaab terrorist organization. Apart from disarming Tigrayan soldiers in August 2019, Ethiopian forces narrowly avoided a conflict with Kenyan troops, who support a rival political leader in the Somali state of Jubaland, created a potentially volatile situation (Verjee, 2021).

This conflict was arisen when Ethiopian forces tried to arrest Ahmed Madobe of Jubaland who has been in a contentious dispute with the federal government headquartered in Mogadishu since he was reelected to office in August 2019. Kenyan forces, who were under the African Union peacekeeping Mission in Jubaland, have continued to provide protection to Ahmed Madobe, despite the Somali federal government's efforts to oust him from power⁴³. Nevertheless, military officials from both countries, along with representatives of the Somali army and Jubaland troops,

at: <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-demands-un-replace-ethiopian-troops-in-unisfa-mission>>. Accessed 10 June 2021.

⁴¹ Voice of America (2022). 'Withdrawal of Peace Keepers Forces Draws Fears of 'Security Threats' in Contested Abyei. Available at: <https://www.voafrika.com/a/withdrawal-of-peacekeepers-draws-fears-of-security-threats-in-contested-abyei/6479654.html>. Accessed on 21 October, 2023

⁴² Some Tigrayan born Ethiopians mandated for peace keeping in Somalia were disarmed due to the war in Tigray. See for example, Katherine, H. (2020). 'Exclusive: Ethiopia says Disarms Tigrayans in Somalia over Security. Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-somalia-exclusive-idUSKBN27Y1HF>.

⁴³ The Somali Guardian (2021). 'Ethiopia and Kenya agreed to end dispute over Somalia's Jubaland region. Available at: <https://somaliguardian.com/news/ethiopia-and-kenya-agree-to-end-dispute-over-somalias-jubaland-region/>. Accessed on: 18 October, 2023.

have convened to discuss strategies for collaborating on the preservation of peace and stability in the volatile southern region of Somalia⁴⁴.

Given the deficiencies and mixed record of Ethiopian foreign policy conducted by the EPRDF, the decision to reset Ethiopian foreign policy was with merit. The initial normalization of relations with Eritrea indicated a significant change from the EPRDF government's approach. However, it is worth considering why have Ethiopia's foreign relations deteriorated in the post-2018 period.

The post-2018 foreign policy of the country partly guided by philosophy of *Medemer*. *Medemer*, according to Assefa (2019), disagrees with the notion that 'there are no permanent friends, no permanent enemies,' and instead it believes that the concepts of friend and enemy do not exist. However, in reality, it is challenging to apply these principles in the world of *realpolitik*⁴⁵. In the case of Ethiopia's dispute over the GERD, for instance, Egypt strongly opposes Ethiopia's ambitions, and *Medemer* does not supersede Egypt's national interests. Despite having a regime in Sudan that aligns more closely with Egypt than with Ethiopia on the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Ethiopia's lack of a comprehensive foreign policy strategy does not benefit its regional or global standing. To effectively navigate the ever-changing dynamics of the region and the international system, Ethiopia's foreign policy must adopt an assertive approach, implemented with a thorough understanding of the realities.

4.1.5 External Pressure

Ethiopia has faced economic and diplomatic challenges due to various factors, including political instability, ethnic conflicts, and human rights violations. These challenges are particularly evident in the conflict in Tigray and other regions. The government has received criticism from the international community for its handling of the Tigray conflict and its human rights record.

A crucial resolution on Tigray was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 13 July, 2021 in which the Netherlands, being one of the 47 members, played a pivotal role. Daniëlle Drost, Second Embassy Secretary to the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ United States Institute of Peace (2020), A Changing Ethiopia: Understanding *Medemer*'. Available at: <https://www.usip.org/events/changing-ethiopia-understanding-medemer>. Accessed on 20 April 2023.

United Nations in Geneva, elucidates the resolution's implications⁴⁶. According to Drost, the resolution appealed for an instant cessation of the violence and human rights violations in Tigray. Additionally, he demanded the evacuation of Eritrean troops from the region and urged all factions to comply with the ceasefire. Likewise, on 17 September, 2021 the Biden Administration stressed that;

*Millions of people in northern Ethiopia are in dire need of humanitarian aid due to the violent conflict that has caused a widespread humanitarian crisis. The entire region is on the brink of famine. The United States will continue to exert pressure on those responsible for the crisis. The US also supports international efforts to negotiate a ceasefire and political resolution of the crisis, withdraw Eritrean forces from Ethiopia, and promote the unity, territorial integrity, and stability of Ethiopia*⁴⁷.

Furthermore, the United States and European Union have expressed concerns over the crisis in Ethiopia as the human rights violations and humanitarian crisis. Thus, they vividly called for withdrawal of external force from Tigray. Later on, the USA imposed visa restrictions on Ethiopia and Eritrean authorities accused of human rights violations. Moreover, the Biden administration decided to remove Ethiopia from African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), the measure that has resulted in unemployment and affects the already fragile economy. Belete Belachew stressed that the current diplomatic pressures and sanction are not new trends in Ethiopia's international relations. When the country engaged in conflict either domestically or with neighboring countries, pressures and economic sanctions or armed embargo are being experienced, like during Ethiopia Eritrea war (1998-2000)⁴⁸ (Belete, 2022 interview).

⁴⁶ A statement issued on July 2021 by the Netherlands Representative at UN Human Rights Council Ambassador Daniëlle Drost. Available at; <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2021/07/22/ethiopia-situation-tigray-and-un-resolution>.

⁴⁷ The White House, (2021). 'Executive Order on Imposing sanction on certain persons with respect to the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Ethiopia. Full statement available on; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/09/17/executive-order-on-imposing-sanctions-on-certain-persons-with-respect-to-the-humanitarian-and-human-rights-crisis-in-ethiopia/>.

The United States has imposed sanctions on several Ethiopian officials, who have involved in war atrocities. The US has also suspended security assistance to Ethiopia. The European Union has also imposed sanctions on Ethiopia, and has threatened to impose further sanctions if the Ethiopian government does not take steps to end the civil war and improve its human rights record. These pressures are being applied in response to the Ethiopian government's handling of the civil war in Tigray, as well as its alleged human rights abuses.

Perhaps, Ethiopia's warring sides have formally agreed to a permanent cessation of hostilities on 2 November, 2022 in Pretoria-South Africa. The agreement brought hope of an imminent end to a two-year war that resulted in the losses of hundred thousands, and displaced millions, as well as, threatened to destabilize the already fragile region. Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo, in the first briefing on the peace talks in Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital, also said Ethiopia's government and Tigray authorities had agreed on an "orderly, smooth and coordinated disarmament". The Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities was signed on November 2, 2022, with the African Union and Intergovernmental Authority on Development as sponsors, and the United Nations and United States as observers. The agreement considered as monumental in peace building after the bloody war. The Ethiopia's Prime Minister stressed that the government's commitment to peace remains steadfast and his government's commitment to collaborating for the implementation of the agreement is equally strong.⁴⁹. After the agreement was signed, Ethiopia is reviving its diplomatic engagements both with European Union (EU) and United States of America.

4.2 Changes and Continuities in Ethiopia's Foreign Policy Since 1991

Changes and continuities in foreign policy refer to the shifts and consistencies in a country's approach to international relations over time. These changes can be influenced by various factors such as shifts in global power dynamics, domestic political changes, economic considerations, and evolving security threats. Likely, Ethiopia's foreign policy has also affected by these factors. The sections that follow scrutinize the changes and continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy and looming challenges.

⁴⁹ Ethiopian Observer, (2022). Abiy Ahmed Says committed to the implementation of Peace Deal. Available at; <https://www.ethiopiaobserver.com/2022/11/03/prime-minister-abiy-says-committed-to-the-implementation-of-peace-deal/#:~:text=Prime%20Minister%20Abiy%20Ahmed%20said,and%20the%20Tigray%20rebel%20forces.>

4.2.1 Changes in Ethiopia's Foreign Policy

4.2.1.1 The Reproachment with Eritrea

The Ethiopian Prime Minister, announced on June 5, 2018, that the Ethiopian government had accepted the border ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) and was willing to implement it unconditionally. He also extended an invitation to the Eritrean government to establish peace and resolve the ongoing 'no war, no peace' situation. Surprisingly, on June 20, 2018, the Eritrean President declared that Eritrea would send a delegation. A few days later, the delegation, headed by the foreign affairs minister, arrived in Addis Ababa. The two leaders signed a peace agreement, which ended the stalemate between the two countries. The peace was greeted with surprise by the people of both countries, as they hoped it would restore their historical spirit of brotherhood. Upon the peace agreement between the countries, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, commented on the new development in the region, thus: "There is a strong sense of hope sweeping through the Horn of Africa."⁵⁰ The hope that swept through was unlike any other, with its dynamics, scope, and momentum impossible to forecast. Starting as a gentle breeze, it quickly escalated to unprecedented speeds, with numerous vectors of change emerging⁵¹.

Resolving the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia would be a crucial first step in addressing the ongoing conflicts in the region. This was evident in the immediate spread of reconciliation to Somalia, Djibouti, South Sudan, and Sudan. Despite the growing recognition of the need to address disputes between the countries as a prerequisite for easing tensions in the region, no serious effort was made to resolve it (Redie, 2019).

The main challenges of Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement include unresolved border disputes, lack of trust between the two governments, and domestic opposition to the normalization of relations (ibid). Although it was a promising hope, some have already expressed concern about the lack of i.e. institutional guidance and transparency in the agreements. Likewise, Belete (2022, interview) argues that:

⁵⁰ An statement issued by UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, available at; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1019482>. Accessed, on; 20 August 2022.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The Asmara and Dubai Agreements have been criticized for their lack of clarity and transparency. The specific details of these accords have not been made public, and even high-ranking officials from both governments are unaware of them. Only Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Isayas Afeworki possess knowledge of the agreement's specifics within the reconciliation process. These two leaders have played a dominant role in the peace deal. Additionally, they have not taken steps to institutionalize the renewed relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

For Belete, the absence of clear policy guidance may hinder the practical implementation of the peace building process on the ground that the agreements made in Asmara and Dubai were not guided by institutions, which poses a risk to the sustainability of peace between the two countries. In order for a peace process to succeed, institutions must be in place to ensure long-term stability. Therefore, the absence of such institutions poses a major challenge in the practical application of border demarcation on the ground (Belete, 2022, interview).

Leaders have crucial roles in shaping their nation's foreign policy by determining key objectives and priorities. They must assess global challenges, regional dynamics, and national interests to establish a strategic framework. The effectiveness of a leader's influence on foreign policy ultimately depends on their ability to navigate complex international relationships, communicate effectively, and make decisions that align with their country's best interests. Acknowledging the leader's role, building a strong diplomatic capability, and establishing accountable institutions are critical components of effective governance and international relations. Without a robust institution, foreign policy decisions may lack a consistent and coherent approach. Institutions often have specialized knowledge and expertise in specific regions or issues. Without institutionalism, there may be a lack of expertise and understanding of complex international dynamics, making it difficult to effectively navigate and address global challenges. Institutions provide a mechanism for accountability and oversight in foreign policy decision-making. And decision-making processes that lack transparency and accountability, potentially would lead to decisions that are influenced by personal or political interests rather than the country's long-term strategic objectives. In essence, a leader's personal decision-making can shape the state's trajectory by setting policies, priorities, and strategies that have far-reaching effects on the

country's interests and well-being over time. It's crucial for leaders to consider the long-term implications of their decisions and to balance immediate concerns with future goals.

4.2.2 Continuities in Ethiopia's Foreign Policy

4.2.2.1 Economic Diplomacy

The study of diplomacy has seen the emergence of explicit concepts of economic diplomacy in recent times, dating back to the 1980s (Barston, 1997). The globalized world is characterized by increased trade, investment and movement of people, facilitated by fast transport and communication. This presents enormous potential for economic growth and development. Nevertheless, countries must be competitive to fully benefit from globalization. Hence, governments engage in economic diplomacy to promote themselves as attractive destinations for trade, investment and tourism. Economic diplomacy has become a crucial aspect of foreign policy for many countries.

Economic diplomacy involves efforts to promote and enhance economic interests through diplomatic channels. It involves engaging in economic negotiations, trade agreements, investment promotion, and attracting foreign direct investment, attracting potential exporters, investors, and tourists, resolving trade disputes, assisting business delegations, and coordinating various stakeholders. Further, diplomats from developing countries also focus on mobilizing development finance through grants and soft loans, seeking technical cooperation, and facilitating technology transfer as part of their diplomatic efforts (Leulseged, 2023).

Since 1991, Ethiopia has undergone a significant shift in its national interests. The focus has been redirected towards addressing internal vulnerabilities and issues, both political and economic. The Foreign Policy Document of the 2002 outlined the country's major threats, which are crucial for Ethiopia's survival. These threats include economic underdevelopment and widespread poverty (Ministry of Information, 2002).

Likewise, Ethiopia's foreign policy has been focused on promoting economic diplomacy, which involves using economic tools to achieve foreign policy objectives. The country's economic diplomacy and strategy includes attracting foreign investment, promoting trade, and engaging in economic cooperation with other countries (Leulseged, 2023). Ethiopia has implemented various

policies to attract foreign investment, including offering tax incentives and establishing special economic zones. Ethiopia has also signed various trade agreements with other countries to promote trade and economic cooperation. The country has placed a strong emphasis on economic diplomacy as a way to promote economic growth and development. The country has been working to attract foreign investment, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing.

Ethiopia's foreign policy is driven by a clear philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of diplomatic efforts in achieving rapid economic development and advancing democracy. These goals are crucial for the country's overall sustainability. Thus, Ethiopia's foreign policy is focused on two main objectives: facilitating rapid economic growth to benefit all members of society, and promoting democratization to ensure active participation of the people in governing their own affairs. In recent years, the government has prioritized diplomatic activities that foster trade, encourage investment, and promote tourism (Tewdros, 2015).

As part of its economic diplomacy Ethiopia has been actively working to boost economic relations with its neighboring countries in recent years. This includes efforts to enhance trade, investment, and cooperation in various sectors. Ethiopia and Kenya have been collaborating to improve trade and economic ties. They have established the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) corridor, which aims to connect Ethiopia's South-eastern regions to the Kenyan coast. This project is expected to enhance regional trade and economic integration. Trade between Ethiopia and Kenya has been impressive as both countries have established good relations throughout the time. Trade between Ethiopia and Kenya has been increasing, with both countries benefiting from the exchange of goods and services. Kenya is one of Ethiopia's major trading partners, and the two countries have been working to enhance bilateral trade by addressing trade barriers and improving transportation infrastructure. In terms of specific sectors, trade between Ethiopia and Kenya is mainly focused on agricultural products, textiles, machinery, and manufactured goods. Kenya exports products such as petroleum, vehicles, iron, and steel to Ethiopia, while Ethiopia exports items like coffee, tea, spices, and oilseeds to Kenya. Efforts have also been made to improve cross-border trade facilitation and infrastructure development, including the construction of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor, which aims to enhance connectivity and boost trade in the region

In regarding to the aspects of economic relations with Djibouti, both countries share a significant economic relationship due to their geographical proximity and strategic partnership. Djibouti serves as Ethiopia's main access point to international trade routes through its ports and railway connections. Ethiopia heavily relies on the Port of Djibouti for its imports and exports. Primarily the Port of Djibouti and the newly constructed Doraleh Multipurpose Port. These ports serve as vital gateways for Ethiopia's imports and exports, facilitating its trade with other countries. The two countries have been working together to improve transport connectivity. Accordingly, The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, inaugurated in 2018, has enhanced transportation between the two countries⁵². This railway line significantly reduces transportation time and costs, boosting trade and economic integration. This railway has significantly enhanced trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Another emerging problem is the increasing competition between Ethiopia and Djibouti in the logistics sector. Djibouti has been investing heavily in developing its ports, free trade zones, and other logistics infrastructure, aiming to position itself as a regional trade hub. This has led to concerns in Ethiopia that Djibouti's ambitions might undermine Ethiopia's own plans for industrialization and economic growth. The other problems which have sustained for years or even decades been Ethiopia is not harnessing the importance of the Djibouti (Belete, 2022, interview).

Ethiopia has been actively engaging with Western countries, such as the United States, European Union member states, and the United Kingdom, to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and promote trade. The focus areas include agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure development, and renewable energy. The country has also participated in trade forums and investment conferences to showcase investment opportunities.

However, some problems characterized in the Ethiopia's economic diplomacy, like Ethiopia's economy heavily relies on agriculture, with limited diversification into other sectors. This narrow economic base restricts market access and trade opportunities, making it difficult to establish

⁵² African Development Bank Group (2023). 'Multinational-Ethiopia-Djibouti Transport Corridor Project Phase I. Available at; <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/multinational-ethiopia-djibouti-transport-corridor-project-phase-i-et-ipr-november-2022>. Accessed 6 June 2023.

strong economic partnerships with other countries. Non-tariff barriers, such as complex regulations, bureaucratic hurdles, and corruption, can impede trade and economic diplomacy. These barriers can discourage foreign businesses and hinder Ethiopia's ability to engage in international trade. Ethiopia's economic diplomacy can be affected by limited regional integration within Africa. Inadequate infrastructure and trade facilitation mechanisms across African countries can hinder Ethiopia's ability to engage in regional economic cooperation and benefit from regional markets. Moreover, the political turmoil that has been sustaining for years degrading economic objectives of the Ethiopia's foreign policy.

In order to harness economic diplomacy, the government needs to address domestic instability that is clearly imposing grave challenges to investment and trade. Similarly, enhancing economic diplomacy involves using diplomatic tools and strategies to promote a country's economic interests abroad. This can lead to increased trade, investment, and economic cooperation. Invest in training and development programs for diplomats to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective economic diplomacy, Foster closer ties between government officials and business leaders to align economic interests and promote international trade and investment. By implementing these strategies, a country can effectively enhance its economic diplomacy efforts, leading to expanded economic opportunities and strengthened international partnerships. This, in turn, can contribute to sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

4.2.2.2 Regional Integration

Regional integration in the Horn of Africa has been a significant focus for countries in the region, to halt economic hardships and political instability. Countries of the region have recognized the potential benefits of regional integration, including economic growth, political stability, and enhanced security cooperation. Being situated at the center of the Horn of Africa, a region which has been marked by intense insecurity and longstanding animosities between the countries of the region, the country has been playing a crucial role in mediating conflicts and fostering peace in the region. Tewdros (2015:3) the then FDRE Minister of Foreign Affairs asserted that;

'We realize that our development will be more sustainable if there is a shared vision and action for peace and development in the whole of our sub-region. Ethiopia therefore attaches utmost importance to its relations

with its neighbors and believes that creating the economic conditions of regional integration is vital. It is accordingly taking concrete action to promote regional integration by linking the sub-region with massive infrastructure developments.'

Ethiopia has been involved in various infrastructure projects that promote regional integration, such as the construction of roads, railways, and energy projects. These initiatives aim to enhance connectivity and trade among the HoA countries. Ethiopia's aims to strengthening the infrastructural connectivity arisen from a hope to build strong economic cooperation that may resulted to halt historical enmities among the member countries of the region.

Ethiopia's foreign policy focuses on maintaining regional stability, promoting economic cooperation, and pursuing regional integration in Africa. The country plays an active role in regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Ethiopia aims to strengthen ties with neighboring countries and contribute to peace and security in the region. According to the Brouk (2012) Ethiopia plays a crucial role in the Horn of Africa, a region currently plagued by multiple dangerous conflicts. These conflicts often escalate and drag on for decades, causing Ethiopia to become entangled in them. The complexity of these conflicts, with their deep-rooted grievances and uncertainties, undermines Ethiopia's ability to effectively address them alone. Consequently, Ethiopia is compelled to maintain constant vigilance, closely monitoring all changes occurring across the region. However, in the long run, Ethiopia will inevitably face the harsh truth that turmoil and conflict will likely persist in significant parts of the region.

The situation in the region and beyond has forced the country's policymakers to adopt a more assertive and proactive foreign policy, rather than relying on the assumption of good neighborliness and friendship. The country has learned from experience that these assumptions have put it in great danger. Looking back, Brouk (2012) notes that Ethiopia developed an idealistic foreign policy after the political change in 1991, which focused on establishing peaceful and positive relations with all neighboring countries. Ethiopia witnessed Sudan using it as a gateway to orchestrate an assault on Ethiopia in 1995, when the latter exploited Ethiopia's

policy in an attempt to spread extremism. Furthermore, Ethiopia was deceived by the belief that it had established strong relations with Sudan, only to be betrayed when Sudan exploited those ties to strengthen its military and launch an attack. This attack conclusively demonstrated that Ethiopia's foreign policy prior to 1998 was completely ineffective, lacking the necessary strength to support its national interests. Following the devastating war with Eritrea, the country aims to rebuild its military power and prioritize economic cooperation as the main component of its foreign policy to address future threats.

4.2.2.3 Multilateralism

Ethiopia has consistently advocated for and actively participated in multilateral organizations and initiatives to promote its national interests and contribute to global peace, security, and development. Ethiopia is a founding member of the United Nations (UN), and OAU later, AU, and to several regional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and has been an active participant in various agencies, programs, and specialized bodies. Besides its membership, the country has been a strong advocate for African interests in international climate negotiations. It emphasizes the need for developed countries to provide financial and technological support to address the adverse effects of climate change on African nations.

Considering its national interest concerns, Ethiopia, has admitted to join BRICS⁵³ in early 2023. Meles Alem the Spokesman told journalists that in light of the ever-changing global landscape and the redistribution of global power, Ethiopia is determined to actively pursue membership in various international organizations, such as BRICS, in order to protect and advance the country's national interests (Ethiopia Agency, 2023).

On its 15th annual summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa, BRICS invited Ethiopia, along with five other nations, to join the group on January 1, 2024. In his statement following Ethiopia's endorsement to join the emerging-market bloc, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed emphasized the significance of the country's membership in BRICS. According to him, this

⁵³ The term BRICS was coined by former Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 to describe the group of Brazil, Russia, India and China. The group had their first meeting in Russia in 2009, and South Africa joined in 2010.

achievement represents an extraordinary diplomatic milestone for Ethiopia, standing out as one of the most notable accomplishments in the nation's recent history⁵⁴.

Ethiopia's commitment to multilateralism is also evident in its approach to resolving regional conflicts. The has a long history of participating in peacekeeping missions across Africa, contributing troops and resources to help stabilize conflict-affected areas. Additionally, Ethiopian leaders have often taken on mediation roles in various regional conflicts. The country has played a significant role in mediating conflicts in South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, among others (Brouk, 2002). Ethiopia's involvement in peace processes demonstrates its belief in collective action and the importance of multilateral efforts in resolving conflicts and promoting stability in the region. The country recognizes the importance of engaging with the international community and working together to address global challenges, promote peace and security, and achieve sustainable development.

4.2.3 Challenges to Ethiopia's Foreign Policy

Challenges to the foreign policies of countries can arise from various factors, including geopolitical shifts, economic interdependencies, domestic politics, and global issues. In the case of Ethiopia, challenges to its foreign policy arise from various factors. The country is currently facing difficulties in managing conflicts and tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam with Egypt and Sudan. This is straining diplomatic relations with the two downstream countries and posing challenges to Ethiopia's foreign policy objectives. The country has also faced various national security problems in recent years. Some of the key challenges include ethnic tensions, border disputes, and terrorism threats. Ethnic tensions have been a recurring issue, leading to clashes and violence between different groups. Borders disputes, terrorism, and cyber security are the most challenging factors for the country's national security, and in turn affecting foreign policy.

4.2.3.1 Domestic Instability

The country has experienced periods of political instability, particularly during transitions of power. Political unrest has turned violent, posing a threat to national security. The government's

⁵⁴ Africa News, (2023). 'Ethiopian Prime Minister Hails BRICS Membership'. Available at: [https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/24/ethiopian-prime-minister-hails-brics-membership/#:~:text=%22An%20important%20moment%20for%20Ethiopia,\(ex%2DTwitter\)%20account.](https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/24/ethiopian-prime-minister-hails-brics-membership/#:~:text=%22An%20important%20moment%20for%20Ethiopia,(ex%2DTwitter)%20account.) Accessed on: 20 July, 2023.

handling of the issue has been insufficient. It mainly blames corruption and a stagnant democratic process for this problem (Biniam, *et al*, 2018). The four EPRDF parties had been given ethnic constituencies, ensuring their support by promoting ‘ethnic-interests’ and instilling fear of other groups. Additionally, Ethiopian politics is frequently defined by feeble institutions and intense personal animosities. Political figures primarily engage in personal and factional relationships, where the influence of friends and supporters is disproportionately significant. Tensions among political elites result in a dispersion of power, while interactions between politicians are shaped by patron-client connections (Yohannes, 2020). Likewise, many opposition parties are no longer founded on policy or ideological disparities, but rather on ethnic group entitlements. To move away from ethnic politics (Biniam, *et al*, 2018), it is suggested that there is a requirement for the de-ethnicization of resource competition at the federal level. This can be achieved by transforming the EPRDF into a unified and inclusive party that represents all ethnic groups (*ibid*).

In order to address the need for a revised allocation of resources and power within the ruling party, the EPRDF coalition was replaced by a new political party known as the Prosperity Party. The main objective of this transition was to promote unity by depoliticizing ethnicity (Lowings, 2022). In spite of the formation of one political party, the Prosperity Party, ethnic politics still pose a challenge to political stability and even the existence of the state as a whole. Initially, the Ethiopian people were drawn to the concept of unity, as evidenced by the slogan *medemer*. The emphasis was on promoting a unified Ethiopia rather than one fragmented by ethnic affiliation. While this attempt initially brought hopes of political reforms and reconciliation, it also created an opportunity for long-suppressed ethnic grievances to resurface, leading to violent clashes, community displacement, and a resurgence of ethno-nationalist movements. The armed fighting in Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia regions has intensified. Despite the end of the war in Tigray with the signing of a permanent cessation of hostilities on 2 November, 2022 in Pretoria-South, the resurgence of armed groups in parts of Oromia and Amhara regional states continues, resulting in a grave humanitarian crisis.

Having a strong domestic policy is a stepping stone for having a strong foreign policy that can promote and protect the interests of the country. Accordingly, a strong domestic policy, along with addressing historical grievances, fostering national cohesion, and investing in inclusive

progress, can help Ethiopia progress towards a more stable and prosperous future. International assistance and cooperation will be crucial in supporting Ethiopia's journey towards reconciliation and sustainable peace, ensuring a brighter future for all its inhabitants.

4.2.3.2 Terrorism

Terrorism is a significant concern in the Horn of Africa region, with several extremist groups operating in the area. One prominent group is Al-Shabaab, an Islamist militant organization based in Somalia. Al-Shabaab has been responsible for numerous attacks in Somalia and neighboring countries, including Kenya and Ethiopia. Another group is the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS), an affiliate of the global ISIS network (Goitom, 2013). ISS emerged in 2015 and has conducted attacks mainly in northeastern Somalia, targeting security forces and civilians. Since the collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991, the Horn of Africa has experienced ongoing instability for over two decades (ibid). This has resulted in Somalia becoming a sanctuary for various terrorist organizations including Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (AIAI), Islamic Court Union and Al Shabab. These groups have carried out attacks within Ethiopia, particularly in the Somali region and along the border with Somalia.

Al Itihad Al Islamiya, officially announced its formation with the explicit objective of establishing a new state governed by Shariah law in the region. It shifted its focus to Ethiopia as its primary adversary and initiated attacks along the Somalia-Ethiopia border. During the early 1990s, AIAI formed an alliance with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), a separatist group consisting of ethnic Somalis residing in Ethiopia's Ogaden region. The two organizations frequently collaborated to target Ethiopian entities, particularly Ethiopian soldiers, with the aim of gaining control over Ogaden (Goitom, 2013). AIAI successfully carried out attacks across Ethiopia, including in the capital city of Addis Ababa, although its limited capabilities prevented it from executing highly destructive or violent assaults. On August 9, 1996, Ethiopian forces launched a comprehensive military campaign against AIAI after the group relocated its headquarters to a Somali region bordering Ethiopia. The Ethiopian army entered Somalia, attacked AIAI's strongholds, and ultimately dismantled the organization.

The other group that was a security threat for Ethiopia was Islamic Courts Union. According to Roland (2007) the Islamic Courts originated as a direct response to the prevailing insecurity in the region. They were established in a similar manner across different areas. In urban

environments devastated by war, certain zones were predominantly controlled by a specific clan. During November and December of 2001, the US government engaged in extensive deliberations over whether to intervene in Somalia, which was believed to have the potential of becoming an al-Qaeda stronghold. It was alleged that the Transitional National Government (TNG), formed in August 2000 in Arta, Djibouti, had inclinations towards the Islamists, and there were connections between Somali businessmen and suspected Islamic groups in the Gulf-countries. The Islamist group known as al-Ittihad al-Islami was designated as a terrorist organization due to its involvement in planning multiple attacks in Ethiopia. Additionally, some of its members were found to have played a role in the preparations for the bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998 (Marchal, 2007).

In 2006, the terrorist threat originating from Somalia and targeting Ethiopia reached its highest point. This was evident when the Islamic Court Union (ICU), proclaimed a Jihad against Ethiopia (Goitom, 2013). The group's takeover was seen as a threat to Ethiopia's integrity due to their 'Greater Somalia' irredentist ideology and their claims on the Ethiopian Somali region, which was already dealing with demands for independence from the ONLF (Hagmann, 2007). There was also fear of attacks in other parts of Ethiopia, reminiscent of past bombings claimed by Al-Itihad, which was led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, a prominent ICU leader in 2006. The UN Monitoring Group on Somalia's November 2006 report also indicated the connection between the UIC and other armed movements, including Eritrea (United Nations, 2006).

The Ethiopian military intervened in Somali in December 2006 when the ICU gained control of Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Ethiopia, concerned about the ICU's growing influence and its potential to destabilize the region, launched a military operation to support the TFG. The Ethiopian forces quickly overpowered the ICU and its allies, leading to the collapse of the ICU's control over most of southern Somalia.

However, the intervention had led to attacks by Al-Shabaab against Ethiopian security forces and interests. Al-Shabaab perceives Ethiopia's presence in Somalia as a threat to its objectives and has carried out numerous attacks against Ethiopian troops, convoys, and even civilians. According to some experts, for example, Samatar (2007), it was during this period that the group transformed into a fully operational insurgency, taking hold of significant portions of land in

central and southern Somalia. Al-Shabaab has a wide-ranging objective of overthrowing the central government, removing foreign forces from Somalia, and ultimately establishing an Islamic state based on its interpretation of sharia law. In order to gain support from the Somali population, the group offers various services, including dispute resolution, which the government has historically had difficulty providing. The government in Mogadishu is unable to match the offerings of al-Shabaab in the areas where the group has a strong presence⁵⁵. In 2013, a Nairobi shopping mall was targeted by al-Shabaab fighters, resulting in the tragic loss of 67 lives. Similarly, in 2015, the group carried out a devastating attack on a university in the city of Garissa, claiming the lives of 148 individuals. This incident marked the deadliest assault in Kenya since the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, orchestrated by al-Qaeda, which claimed the lives of over two hundred people (Goitom, 2013).

Al-Shabab attempted to establish a foothold in Ethiopia previously, but they were unsuccessful. In early 2007, Aden Ayrow, a military commander, led a group into Ethiopia in response to Ethiopian troops entering Mogadishu to aid the transitional federal government of Somalia at that time. However, the incursion was swiftly pushed back (Gizachew, 2022, interview). Ahmed Abdi Godane, began training a specialized unit called Jabhat, or Ethiopian Front, with the objective of carrying out attacks in Ethiopian territory. However, due to strong Ethiopian intelligence, the unit was not successful in achieving significant results (Belete, 2022, interview).

In the recent past, al-Shabaab militants have capitalized on the ongoing civil conflict in Ethiopia and initiated an attack in the eastern part of the country in the mid-2022. They asserted responsibility for the deaths of numerous Ethiopian soldiers during the subsequent clashes. Despite the Ethiopian military successfully putting a stop to the invasion, al-Shabaab continues to pose a threat in the border area (Gizachew, 2023, interview). According to sources from both security agencies and former al-Shabab members, approximately 500 fighters from al-Shabab, a militant group, crossed into Ethiopia (ibid). Many of these fighters are originally from Ethiopia's Somali and Oromia regions. This incursion is considered the largest operation conducted by the group within Ethiopia.

⁵⁵ Jonathan, C., Masters, and Aly, M. (2007). *Al Shabab*. Available at; <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabaab>.

According to Maruf (2022) and Faruk (2022) the current offensive seems to mark the beginning of a significant strategic effort to establish a combatant presence in Ethiopia, particularly in the southeastern Bale Mountains⁵⁶. Despite experiencing some tactical setbacks, the group has successfully accomplished important goals, primarily by demonstrating al-Shabab's capability to conduct major military operations within Ethiopia. In its recent attack on Ethiopia's soil, Al-Shabab units have successfully infiltrated Ethiopia, reaching a distance of 100 kilometers, and they may still be active⁵⁷. Though the government has been working to combat the challenges by partnering with neighboring and distant countries, the terrorist threat in the Horn of Africa region remains high. In fact, combating terrorism is a intricate and diverse challenge that encompasses a range of strategies at different levels, from local communities to international cooperation. It is important to acknowledge that there is no universal solution to terrorism. Ethiopia must adapt and tailor approaches to different contexts, and often a combination of strategies is needed. Furthermore, addressing the underlying causes of terrorism necessitates sustained commitment and collaboration from stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels.

4.2.3.3 Border Disputes

Ethiopia has experienced long-standing border disputes with neighboring countries, including Somalia (1977-1978)⁵⁸, Eritrea (1998-2000)⁵⁹, and the recent border skirmishes with the Sudan⁶⁰. These disputes have occasionally escalated into armed conflicts, posing a threat to national security. The Ethiopia-Somalia border dispute is a long-standing territorial disagreement between the two countries over the ownership of certain areas along their shared border. The main points of contention are the status of Ogaden, region of Ethiopia which has a predominantly

⁵⁶ Maruf, H. (2022). Why did Al-Shabab Attack Inside Ethiopia. Available at; <https://www.voanews.com/a/why-did-al-shabab-attack-inside-ethiopia/6674783.html>.

⁵⁷ Faruk, O. (2022). In a First Somalia Based Al Shabab is Attacking Ethiopia. Available at; <https://apnews.com/article/africa-ethiopia-somalia-al-shabab-26a2426642f9eebc0b4280a4d749acd7>.

⁵⁸ See Gebru (2000), 'The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. 33 (3) (2000): 635-667

⁵⁹ Tekeste Negash, and K. Tronvoll (2000). *Brothers at War: Making sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War*. Oxford: James Curry Press.

⁶⁰ Horner, J. and A. Soliman (2023). 'Coordinating International Response to Ethiopia-Sudan tensions.' *Chatham House*. Available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/04/coordinating-international-responses-ethiopia-sudan-tensions/03-untangling-ethiopia-and>. Accessed on: October, 2023.

ethnic Somali population. In 1977, Somalia launched a military invasion of Ethiopia, aiming to annex the Ogaden region. However, the conflict ended in a decisive victory for Ethiopia.

Border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia is one of the most significant and long-lasting conflicts in the region. The dispute primarily revolves around the town of Badme. The two countries fought a war between 1998 and 2000, resulting in thousands of casualties. The conflict was officially resolved in 2018 when Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a peace agreement, ending the state of war and restoring diplomatic relations. However, it may still be a significant issue for both countries due to the porous boundary they share.

Regarding the Ethiopia-Sudanese border, the origin of the contention can be traced back to the colonial era border demarcation. The origins of the al-Fashaga dispute can be traced back to the 1902 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty. This treaty, which was created during the colonial era, aimed to establish the boundary between Ethiopia and Sudan, which was then under British control. The negotiations for the treaty took place between Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia and the British government. According to the treaty, the territory that currently forms the border region of Benishangul-Gumuz was assigned to Ethiopia. The treaty also addressed the issue of the flow of Blue Nile waters from Ethiopia's Lake Tana. Ethiopian claims to al-Fashaga extend approximately forty to fifty kilometers west of a loosely defined border line between Sudan and Ethiopia. The border was only vaguely described in the treaty and roughly marked by the British.⁶¹

The map that Ethiopian authorities are used mostly exclude the disputed area, and the Sudanese officials claim that the Ethiopian government is already acknowledges it as the Sudanese territory (Belete, 2022 interview). Additionally, he strongly stressed that the same faults were experienced in the post Badme war, when Ethiopian map ceded to include the disputed area as part of the country's territory, and this paved the way for Eritrean authority to use the fault as a witness for their claims (ibid).

⁶¹ The text of the 1902 agreement and the border as indicated on the map or as it had been demarcated on ground display significant difference. For example, see Edward Ullendorff (1967). The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. 30 (3): 641-654

After Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia visited Sudan in 1972 to mediate the north-south conflict, the two countries attempted to settle their boundary dispute through an ‘exchange of notes’ that would provide guidance for demarcation. Unfortunately, Ethiopia’s revolution in 1974 disrupted this process, causing a delay of thirty-three years before the two neighboring countries finally reached a mutually agreeable arrangement for managing tensions in the area (Crisis Group, 2021).

The 2007 cooperation agreement introduced a compromise that allowed both Ethiopian and Sudanese citizens to engage in agricultural activities, trade, and cattle herding in the area (Belete, 2022, interview). This reduced the need for immediate border demarcation. Prior to the recent tensions, thousands of Ethiopians crossed the undefined border into al-Fashaga daily to work as farm laborers. Cooperation was also supported by various agreements at the state, district, and local levels regarding land use and crop sales (ibid). The macro-economic policies of both countries played a significant role in fostering this cooperation. Ethiopia provided incentives for farmers in al-Fashaga, including both Ethiopians and Sudanese, to sell their crops to its marketing boards, making it more profitable for them to conduct business in Ethiopia. In contrast, Sudan did not offer similar incentives (Abenezer, 2023, interview).

The ongoing al-Fashaga dispute has arisen amid escalating regional tensions between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt regarding the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and the war in the northern part of Ethiopia between the federal government and the TPLF. Initially, the change in leadership in Ethiopia and Sudan resulted in a positive development in their relations. Abiy took office as Ethiopia’s Prime Minister in April 2018, leading to a significant reduction in the Tigray People’s Liberation Front’s (TPLF) federal power. In September 2019, Abdalla Hamdok was appointed as Sudan’s Prime Minister to lead the transitional government after Bashir’s overthrow in April of the same year. During this time, the relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan experienced a brief period of improvements. Sudan’s new leaders commended Abiy for his role in their country’s transition, as he intervened to ease tensions between the military and civilian protesters following Bashir’s removal. Initially, Abiy and Hamdok had a cordial relationship.

Nevertheless, at the onset of the Tigray conflict, Lt. General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the leader of Sudan's ruling Sovereign Council, deployed more than 6,000 troops to the Ethiopian border. This action was in accordance with a November 1, 2020 agreement, whereby Sudan agreed to seal its borders to prevent any armed party, specifically the TPLF, from infiltrating Sudan or crossing the border (Africa Confidential, 2021)⁶² The deployments involved Sudanese soldiers being stationed in a historically disputed area along the international border between Gedaref State in Sudan and the Amhara and Tigray regions in Ethiopia⁶³. The Sudanese army's leadership is probably using the conflict for their own political advantage, rather than being genuinely concerned about land ownership (Abenezer, 2023, interview). Sudanese army officials were exploited Ethiopia's problem to seize Al Fashega for the sake of political legitimacy. Nevertheless, currently they are in drastic problem, and it might be simple to recapture the land. However, Ethiopia has to shift the long-lasting trend of exploiting conflict in Sudan to retake the disputed Al Fashega region. The country is capitalizing on diplomacy now more than ever before to resolve the border dispute (ibid). The porous boundaries Ethiopia shares almost with all its neighboring states have been remained unsolved, and remained as the source of tensions, and war. Similarly, it also remained as a bargaining chip for these states to involve in the domestic affairs of the country, by harboring armed opposition and providing supports. Without having clearly defined borders, it would be difficult to have peaceful and stable relations with neighboring states.

4.2.3.4 Cyber Security

The increasing digitization of banking, financial systems, election systems, education, healthcare, as well as large-scale infrastructure projects, security, and intelligence systems, has made this sector vulnerable to significant global financial losses and damages. With the increasing reliance on technology and the internet, Ethiopia faces cybersecurity threats, including hacking, and cyber espionage. These threats can have significant implications for national security and the country's tech-infrastructure. Former US President Barack Obama once stated

⁶² Africa Confidential (2021). Abiy Risks More War. Available at; https://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/13206/Abiy_risks_more_war. Accessed on; 22 May 2023.

⁶³ Ahmed Younes (2020). Al Fashqa Returns to Sudanese Sovereignty After Agreement with Ethiopia. Asharq Al-Awsat. Available at; <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2230021/al-fashqa-returns-sudanese-sovereignty-after-agreement-ethiopia>.

that the ‘cyber threat’ is a significant challenge for the country, affecting both economic stability and national defense ⁶⁴. In various instances, essential information and communication technologies (ICTs) that safeguard national and economic security can be disrupted by various factors, whether they originate within the country or from outside its borders.

The Ethiopian Government takes initiative to tackle such problems. The Information Network Security Administration (INSA)⁶⁵, was first established in 1999 with the goal of safeguarding the country’s information and information infrastructures (FDRE, 1999). However, the Administration’s Council Regulation No. 250/2003 and more latest Proclamation No. 808/2003 need to be restructured to effectively combat the growing complexity of cybercrime and protect national interests. As stated in FDRE (2006), article 5 of the proclamation, INSA’s primary goal is to safeguard the country’s utilization of information and communication network technologies and telecommunications (FDRE, 2006). This is done to ensure the smooth execution of peace, democratization, and development programs without compromising national security (ibid). However, as the technological advancement is rising challenges are looming. Amid the ongoing direct negotiations between the parties involved in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) crisis, Ethiopia recently announced that it successfully prevented cyberattacks aimed at disrupting the progress of the Dam. Shumete Gizaw, the former Director-General of INSA, stated in a press release on May 2022, ‘We have successfully thwarted systematic cyberattacks targeting the GERD and some major financial institutions’⁶⁶. He explained that the failed cyberattacks were intended to disrupt the operations of the GERD by targeting 37,000 interconnected computers used by financial and administrative institutions that are linked to the dam’s activities. He claimed that an organization backed by countries aiming to obstruct

⁶⁴ The White House (2009). Remarks by the President on Securing our Nations’ Cyber Security. Available at; <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-securing-our-nations-cyber-infrastructure>. Accessed on; 20 March, 2023.

⁶⁵ The former Information Network Security Agency was renamed as Information Network Security Administration in 2021 by proclamation No. 1263/2014. See for example, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2014), Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 1263/2014.

⁶⁶ Al Monitor (2022), Ethiopia faces new cyber attacks on its Nile Dam. Available at; <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/ethiopia-faces-new-cyberattacks-its-nile-dam>. Accessed on: 2 May 2023.

Ethiopia's peace and development has been attempting to sabotage the progress of the GERD by initiating a cyberwar known as the 'Black Pyramid War.'⁶⁷

Likewise, INSA's report in February 2023 indicates that Ethiopia encountered over 2,145 attacks directed at its various sectors, organizations, and public institutions. Interestingly, the source IP (Internet Protocol) addresses of these attacks originated from countries that are recognized as superpowers⁶⁸. Determining the responsible groups or entities behind cyberattacks goes beyond simply identifying countries and geographic locations, and it requires more advanced methods of attribution that extend beyond IP addresses (Horn Review, 2023). It is important to note that delving deeper into attribution has its limitations, as it requires significant technological, financial, systems, and manpower resources. Cybersecurity is a dynamic and evolving field, so it's crucial to stay adaptable and responsive to new challenges as they emerge. In order to address cybersecurity threats, the country needs to harness a combination of policies, strategies, and collaborative efforts across various sectors and countries. Moreover, it needs to develop a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy that outlines the country's approach to securing its digital assets and infrastructure.

5. CONCLUSION

The history of Ethiopia's foreign relations is as old as the state itself and has a long and complex history of foreign policy, influenced by factors such as its geographic location, historical events, and domestic politics. After successfully resisting Italian colonization during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Ethiopia became a symbol of African independence and sovereignty. It played a significant role in the Pan-African movement and was one of the founding members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now known as the African Union (AU). During the Cold War, Ethiopia pursued a policy of non-alignment, maintaining relations with both the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Full report available at; <https://insa.gov.et/web/en>. Accessed May 2023.

United States and the Soviet Union. However, revolutionary Ethiopia leaned more towards the socialist bloc and received substantial military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union.

The country's foreign relations have sometimes been marred by disputes with neighboring states. Ethiopia has been involved in several border disputes with its neighbors, most notably with Eritrea. A two-decade-long conflict with Eritrea over their shared border ended in 2018 with a peace agreement, leading to improved relations between the two countries. Despite these disputes, Ethiopia has played a leading role in the peacebuilding process in both the Horn of Africa region and beyond. It has been involved in various conflicts and peacekeeping efforts in neighboring countries, such as Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Since 1991, Ethiopia has undergone significant changes in its foreign policy, while also maintaining certain consistencies. The most notable change is the transition from a policy of historical enmity and conflict to one of active engagement and regional integration. This change can be attributed to the rise of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the subsequent political reforms. One key change in Ethiopia's foreign policy has been its focus on regional integration and cooperation. Ethiopia has actively sought to strengthen its relationships with neighboring countries and regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). This has been evident in Ethiopia's role in mediating conflicts in the region, such as the peace agreement between Sudan and South Sudan in 2012. Another significant change has been Ethiopia's emphasis on economic diplomacy. The government has implemented policies to attract foreign investment and promote trade, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and infrastructure development. Ethiopia has also actively sought financial assistance and loans from international organizations and foreign governments to support its economic development initiatives.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has played a constructive role in regional security and peacekeeping efforts. It has contributed troops to various United Nations peacekeeping missions, including those in South Sudan, Darfur, and Liberia. This demonstrates Ethiopia's commitment to maintaining regional stability and its willingness to contribute to international peace and security. Despite these changes, there are also continuities in Ethiopia's foreign policy. One such continuity is Ethiopia's commitment to maintaining its territorial integrity and sovereignty,

despite facing impending security threats both internally and externally. Internally, these challenges include economic underdevelopment, political instability, and social dislocations. Externally, Ethiopia faces threats such as border conflicts, like the war with Eritrea from 1998-2000, and ongoing tensions with Sudan and Egypt regarding border issues and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

In the post-2018 period, Ethiopia experienced a significant shift in its foreign policy. Initially, the country took proactive measures to address internal conflicts and promote peace in the region. Ethiopia also played a crucial role in mediating peace processes in South Sudan and Sudan, contributing to the resolution of longstanding conflicts in these nations. The most notable change in foreign policy after 2018 was the reconciliation with Eritrea, which ended the two-decade-long stalemate between the two neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa. Additionally, economic diplomacy, regional integration, and multilateralism have emerged as dominant features in Ethiopia's foreign policy. However, the lack of institutionalization of foreign policy and ongoing national security challenges continue to impact Ethiopia's foreign policy. Ethiopia has maintained strategic alliances with key global powers such as the United States, China, and the European Union. These alliances have provided Ethiopia with economic and military assistance, as well as diplomatic support on various regional and international issues. Nevertheless, recent conflicts in the country have hindered Ethiopia's diplomatic engagement, particularly with the United States.

Generally, as the country is located at the center of the Horn of Africa region, its foreign policy should prioritize the principle of promoting peace both domestically and internationally. To achieve this, the country needs to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach to address domestic politics and promote reconciliation. Additionally, in order to navigate the constantly evolving global political landscape, Ethiopia's foreign policy should be characterized by assertive diplomacy, which is based on strengthening its deterrent capabilities and ensuring stability.

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Appendixes

Appendix I: Key Informant Interviewees

No.	Name	Name of Institution	position	Interview Date	Date
1	Abenezer Dawit	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Diplomat	Addis Ababa	7 April, 2023
2	Aklilu Kebede	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Former Director General for Northern, Western, Central and Southern Africa	Addis Ababa	26 December, 2022
3	Belete Belachew	Friedrich-Stiftung	Senior Policy Advisor and Program Manager	Addis Ababa	2 September, 2022
4	Gizachew Asrat	Institute of Foreign Affairs	Senior Researcher	Addis Ababa	2May 2023

Appendix ii: Interview Guide

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Correspondent One

1. How has Ethiopia's foreign policy been made and implemented in accordance with the changes in the world order?
2. How is Ethiopia harnessing benefits from the geopolitical competition in the Horn of Africa?
3. Do you think regional integration is the only means to tackle national security problems of Ethiopia?
4. How Ethiopia's foreign relations in the post-2018 differs from that the pre-2018?

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, correspondent Two

1. How did historical conditions determine Ethiopia's foreign policy orientations?
2. To what extent does Ethiopia's foreign policy coping with ever-changing global and regional trends?
3. What are the changes in Ethiopian foreign policy orientations in pre- and post-2018 periods?
4. What are continuities in the foreign policy orientation of the country during this period?

To Institute of Foreign Affairs

1. What do you think about national security problems associated with domestic vulnerability to foreign threats?
2. How has Ethiopia been responding to those security threats?
3. What do you think about foreign policy shift in 1991, 2002, and in the post 2018 and its implications for the national security?

4. How do you think that foreign interventions in the region affecting Ethiopia's port diversification motive in the HOA? What do you think a way out?

To Belete Belachew

1. What were problems in Ethiopian foreign policy formulation and implementation in the pre-2018 period?
2. What do you think about the challenges of the country's foreign policy formulation and implementation in the post 2018 period?
3. How would you explain about border dispute with Sudan and Ethiopia's policy response?
4. What measures should be taken to improve the previous problems in the foreign policy of the country?
5. What are major national security problems and foreign policy responses during these periods?