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

**GREAT POWER RIVALRY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ITS**  
**IMPLICATIONS ON ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL SECURITY FROM 2018 -**  
**2022**

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**Advisor: Asnak Kefale (PhD.)**

**December, 2023**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL SECURITY FROM 2018 -2022**

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of Political Science and International Relations,  
College of Social Science, Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement for Master of Art Degree in Political Science and International Relations**

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**Advisor: Asenake Kefale (Ph.D.)**

**December, 2023**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	The African Union
ADP	Amhara Democratic Party
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CFA	Cooperative Framework Agreement
CIC	Council of Interstate Cooperation
CARI	China Africa Research Initiative
CJTFFHOA	The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
DP World	Dubai Ports World
EPRDF:	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	The European Union
FBC	Fana Broadcasting Corporation
FANSPS	Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
ICU	The Islamic Court's Union
IDFC	International Development Finance Corporation
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISS:	Institute for Strategic Studies
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
ODP	Oromo Democratic Party
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PSC	Peace and Security Council
TPLF:	Tigray People Liberation Front
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union Of Socialist Republics
WB	World Bank
WWII:	World War the Second

## **ABSTRACT**

*Through this study, an effort is made to analyze the national security implications of great power rivalry in Africa and the Horn of Africa region to Ethiopia. The study aimed to find out the implications of great powers competitive engagement in Africa and the Horn Ethiopia. The study analyzed, theoretically and practically, the opportunities and challenges of intensified great power rivalry in the sub-region for Ethiopian's security. Methodologically, qualitative research methodology was used. Accordingly, both primary and secondary sources of data are employed. Secondary data is derived from books, journals, media reports, various research works, and policy documents. Primary data were collected through key informant interviews from various governmental and non-governmental foreign policy and security sector institutions. The research found out opportunities and threats to Ethiopia's security. In terms of opportunities, increased competitive engagement of great powers in the Horn has positive contribution in economic and diplomatic terms as great power rivalry provides with alternative sources of economic and diplomatic opportunities. However, there are major challenges to Ethiopia's political stability and territorial integrity, when rival superpowers meddle in domestic political processes. In the context of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, the study offered evidence indicating the negative impacts of great power competitive engagement in weakening the Ethiopian state's capability to provide economic prosperity, peace and security to its people.*

**Keywords:** Great Power, Rivalry, Competition, Geopolitics, Security, Intervention, Hegemony, Political Change

## **DECLARATION**

I, hereby declare that this research paper is my original work and has never been presented in any other institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, I also declare that any information used has been duly acknowledged.

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JAFAR BEDRU

December, 2023

This thesis is submitted for examination with my approval as an advisor of the candidate.

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Asnake Kefale (Ph.D.)

December, 2023.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Area studies' ever-increasing multidisciplinary and diversified character is a fascinating challenge with complicated patterns worth examining. The theoretical and practical value of providing region and country specific analyses is enormous. The Horn of Africa is no exception in this regard. For most of the region's history, foreign powers' interests, intents, and activities have influenced and determined the historical trajectories of the region's countries. From the colonial era through Cold War geopolitical contestation, the Horn has been a global geopolitical theater with a variety of actors vying for influence in the region.

Scholars debate the definition of the phrase "the Horn of Africa," the geographical delimitation of the Horn of Africa, and the nations that comprise the Horn of Africa. Scholars disagree on what exactly comprises the Horn of Africa area. Some researchers included Uganda, while others excluded Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya. Professor Mesfin Wolde-Mariam devised the criterion for classifying nations as belonging to the Horn of Africa (Gashaw & Zelalem, 2016). Mesfin (2004) defines the Horn of Africa as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, and South Sudan. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the Horn of Africa includes Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somaliland.

The Horn of Africa maintains a strategically important place on the global stage, geographically, politically, and economically. It is the source of the Nile and the primary entrance to both the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Because of its important ports, resource potential, and proximity to some of the world's busiest maritime routes, the area receives worldwide interest (Hess, 2021). Nevertheless, for far too long, countries in the sub-region have been victims of geo-strategic power politics, which has caused devastation on countries in the region. Almost all of the Horn nations that make up the regional security complex have suffered intra- and inter-state conflicts of varied degree and intensity over time (Clapham, 2017).

The Horn of Africa appears to be gearing towards a new order set off by a global rivalry of strategic interest as the international order becomes more multipolar. Melvin (2019) states that a varied spectrum of foreign entities from the West and East, as well as Middle Eastern regional

forces, are currently active in the region. Global rivalry in the area, driven by geostrategic interests, is forging a new regional order, with new alignments and political arrangements forming in the intraregional and interregional ties of the region's countries. In recent years, the United States, China, and Russia have all increased their influence in this region. As a result, new regional security dynamics have evolved as regional state and non-state players obtained new diplomatic and financial resources by aligning with great power actors, increasing their power and influence within the current status quo political structures (ibid).

Aside from internal political instability, great power rivalry in Africa and the Horn has been driven by the U.S. and China's struggle for regional domination. The U.S. has been a vocal opponent of China's advancements in the Horn of Africa, notably in Djibouti, which has long been regarded as a sphere of influence for the U.S. and the West. During a meeting at the American Heritage Foundation, former National Security Advisor John Bolton accused the Chinese government of using 'debt trap' to force the Djibouti government to hand over the Doraleh Container Terminal to Dubai-based DP World. He also stated that assisting Africa in countering the influence of China and Russia is central to America's desire to form partnerships with African countries. He went on to say that China and Russia are purposefully and actively targeting their investments in the area to acquire a competitive advantage over the U.S.. He affirmed that China's efforts to enhance its political, economic, and military dominance in Africa have been alarming (Heritage Foundation, 2018).

In line with Bolton's thoughts, Anthony Blinken, new U.S. Secretary of State, stated that the U.S. attempts to create "open societies" were designed in part to "counter harmful activities" by China, and "other foreign actors." Russia. Similarly, during her trip to Africa in 2022, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen made China's lending policies the centerpiece of her speech. In an address in Dakar, Senegal, she issued an implied criticism on Chinese 'debt trap' diplomacy. In Zambia, Yellen took another aim at China, pushing private sector and bilateral lenders "to meaningfully participate in debt relief for Zambia, particularly China" (U.S. Treasury, 2023).

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy provided a clearer picture of the rivalry between the U.S. and China in Africa in his testimony before a Congressional Committee. "China is exerting itself economically, militarily, and politically on

the continent,' he said. We must continue to be a good option and demonstrate that working with the U.S. would result in greater riches and security for Africa."

China's first significant security stride toward African countries occurred in 2008, when it began an anti-piracy campaign in the Gulf of Aden. In 2017, China created a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) facility in Djibouti, which serves as a logistical support base for China's anti-piracy, peacekeeping, and other activities in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. Chinese politicians and scholars have referred to it as a "strategic strong point," referring to a forward presence aimed to bolster the Chinese military's capacity to project long-range power. China's relations with Djibouti show that political and security issues have grown increasingly relevant in China's interactions with African countries. The construction of a military overseas military facility was viewed as a significant strategic pivot for China, which had hitherto concentrated on establishing economic links with the continent. (Malvin, 2019).

The Belt and Road Initiative, a multibillion-dollar global infrastructure initiative launched in 2013, connects China with the rest of the globe and builds greater economic, security, cultural, political, and geostrategic ties between China and the Horn of Africa. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway and the Ethiopia-Djibouti Water Pipeline are the region's major projects. China also maintains an oil monopoly in Sudan and South Sudan, and other Chinese economic and military activities in the continent are essential to China's influence and expansion on the continent, particularly in the Horn of Africa (ibid).

According to security specialists who specialize in the Horn of Africa, the region has entered a new cold war. Dr. Mehari (2019), a regional security expert, believes that with greater foreign military participation and escalating diplomatic tensions, Africa has become a new battlefield for a burgeoning cold war between superpowers vying for strategic dominance. He claims that global superpower rivalry in Horn Africa exacerbates the region's already precarious security environment, because it occurs in the backdrop of the region's weak stability, which is caused by internal political instability and external interference.

Russians have also entered the great power rivalry in Africa since 2014. After Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the U.S. and its Nato allies slapped severe economic sanctions on the country, with the declared purpose of punishing and isolating Moscow from the global diplomatic arena. Realizing the impact of Western sanctions on Moscow's diplomatic and

economic activity, Russia implemented counter-measures to minimize the effects of Western sanctions. It has been increasing its political, economic, and military ties with Africa as part of its counter-strategic strategy in order to improve its isolation and increase its power standing. Russia, which had almost abandoned Africa after the demise of the Soviet Union, is concentrating its attention on the continent. Former President Trump's 'America first' disengagement strategy presented possibilities for the Russians in Africa. African countries, who were anxious about China's growing influence, have been open to Russian overtures and eager to obtain Russia's support to balance the Chinese (Paczynska, 2019).

In his research, Mehari (2019) argues that the continent of Africa is evolving as a new frontier, with increased foreign military involvement and rising diplomatic tensions. The continent is already seeing many signs of the big power rivalry. The Horn of Africa, and particularly Ethiopia, as Africa's most strategically crucial sub-region, has become a battleground for rising geopolitical contestation. The trend has serious ramifications for Ethiopia's stability and territorial integrity.

Ethiopia, which is located in the Horn of Africa, is one of Africa's oldest independent countries and served as a symbol of African freedom during the colonial period. Ethiopia was instrumental in laying the framework for Africa's anti-colonial movements as a founding member of the United Nations and the Organization of African Union. Ethiopia has been through a difficult political transition since 2018. After three years of protests against the governing coalition of ethnic parties known as the Ethiopian People Democratic Front, which was controlled by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the current Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, assumed office in 2018. For more than three decades, the EPRDF dominated Ethiopia, imposing an authoritarian regime that many believed promoted economic development.

However, the TPLF iron fist rule undermined many of the citizens human rights and democratic rights, causing widespread discontent and finally leading to a nationwide protest movement. The demonstrations were sparked by public anger with the planned execution of a city development master plan in the capital's surrounding suburbs. Protests began in the Oromia region in 2014 and extended to other areas as people came together in solidarity, bringing out region-specific issues. Protests against the government enveloped the country in 2015. Protests for greater economic and political reforms swiftly expanded to Amhara and sections of the Southern Nations,

Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State. Big political changes were on the horizon as a result of continuous countrywide protests. The EPRDF and its principal core, the TPLF, were facing the most severe threat to their decade-long reign. Emboldened by the demonstrations and the widespread sense of insecurity, the constituent sections of the EPRDF, notably the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) and the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), outmaneuvered the TPLF in the selection process that resulted in Abiy Ahmed's election. Ethiopia's politically ailing Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, resigned on February 15, 2018, aiming to put an end to the country's "unrest and political crisis." On April 2, 2018, Abiy Ahmed was sworn in as Prime Minister in Parliament.

Though anti-government protests have mostly subsided after Abiy's installation as Prime Minister, community violence has escalated and intensified, and violence based on ethnic profiling has spread to nearly every region of the country (ICG, 2019). Communal violence has broken out in numerous regions of the nation, most notably in Amhara between the Amhara and Kimant groups, and in the Benishangul Gumuz region between the Gumuz community and ethnic Oromo and Amhara people. Many factors contribute to intra- and inter-ethnic conflict, including historical and personal grievances, land access, the desire for self-determination, and political exploitation of such concerns. The number of individuals displaced by conflict is estimated to be in the millions (ibid).

The super-power rivalry could be an opportunity for Ethiopia as it could alternate great power partners as they vie for influence in Ethiopia. However, the emerging complex security environment might also be a challenge. The danger of great power rivalry in the region couldn't have come at a worse time for Ethiopia. Ethiopia often referred to as the anchor of stability in the Horn of Africa, has embarked on far-reaching political reforms at home. The political reform process, which began with the election of the new Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, embarked on extensive political, economic and security sector reforms within a short period of time. The reform process, which saw the end of Tigray People Liberation Front's (TPLF) prominence in the governing coalition of parties under the umbrella of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), has provoked a counter reform movement from actors associated with the TPLF that has resulted in an extensive political and security crisis. Liberalization of the political space resulted in the polarization of politics in the country, which was not helped by the

multiethnic nature of the polity. The mix of fast-paced democratization and the politics of a multinational federal system has exacerbated an already severe fragility of the state. Externally, the increased involvement of great powers in the Horn of Africa has significantly impacted the existing security dynamics in the region. The competitive aspect of great power politics provides the impetus for powerful state actors to interfere in the internal political conflicts of states in the region. As great powers in the region support their respective allies with new resources to challenge status quo and stable power structures, a new security dynamics has evolved in which existing and stable political and security structures unravel, exacerbating the region's instability. The prolonged instability in Ethiopia following the political reform process since 2018 is a case in point. Ethiopia embarked on a political reform process in which the reigning TPLF lost its dominant role in the ruling coalition of ethnic parties under EPRDF. The election of the reformist Prime Minister Abiy was considered as a 'historic' peaceful transfer of power in the nation's violent political history. After subsequent years of public protests and state of emergency declarations, many hoped the election of a reformist leader would bring stability and democratic transition. However, in the immediate aftermath of the election of the new Prime Minister, violence and lawlessness across the country continued unabated. Ethnic based attacks displaced millions, vigilante groups undermined legitimate state authorities to take justice on their hand. The spreading instability in the country culminated in a prolonged civil war in the Northern region of Tigray.

Researchers, who studied security of Africa and the Horn, point out the significance of weak state institutions, internal political vulnerabilities and internal political upheavals as the sources of prolonged instability in Ethiopia and the Horn region. Although internal factors were addressed in multiple studies, less studies were conducted to find out the impact of the increased involvement of global superpowers in Africa and the Horn of Africa, especially Ethiopia (Carbone, 2020).

In an increasingly multipolar world defined by great power, strategic rivalry and external actors' involvement brings in new sources of support. Opposing actors in a given regional security complex, align themselves in new ways to collect the support of great powers. Competing great powers provide new financial and diplomatic resources to their proxy state and non-state actors. Proxy actors then deploy the newly found resources to challenge status quo security

arrangements. As a result, a new and unstable regional security dynamics emerges as regional state and non-state players align and re-align themselves to obtain the support of competing great power actors. Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of great powers U.S., China and Russia competitive dynamic in the Horn of Africa. The study focuses on the political and security instability in Ethiopia since 2018, and asks to what extent the intervention and involvement of competing superpowers affected security and political stability in Ethiopia since the election of the new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed?

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Horn of Africa is abound with actual and potential insecurities at national and sub- regional levels, which emanate from the nexus between violent conflict dynamics and state fragility (Adaye, 2007). The Horn of Africa's strategic location has been central to its security and political development for a century. The geopolitical understanding of the Horn of Africa is part of the politics and strategic significance of the region that still shapes its external relations. The Horn of Africa region's wider geography has also been significant in that the Nile, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean have all exposed the region to outside influences (Woodward, 1996).

In the currently emerging multipolar world, the Horn of Africa is undergoing far-reaching changes in its external security landscape (Melvin, 2019). External involvement in the Horn of Africa dates back hundreds of years, as major powers and regionally influential state and non-state actors have found the sub-region strategically important. As a result, they have entered into periodic power rivalries while seeking to influence the political, economic and social development of the local states and societies. However, although great power engagement over recent decades has encouraged economic development, the emerging great power rivalry for influence and local actors' exploitation of such rivalries tend to contribute to the persistence of political instability in the Horn of Africa.

The emergence of new global rivalries at the regional level, created a new security dynamic in the region which has challenged existing assumptions about the policy of great powers and the resulting security dynamics in the region. The emerging geo-political dynamics represent a significant new development in the post- colonial history of the Horn. That is why it is important

to study great power rivalry and its impact on the countries of the Horn of African region. The increased sharp contradiction following the 2021 Russian invasion of Ukraine, which pitted the U.S. and its allies against Russia exacerbated an already tense relationship, leading to a situation whereby the dynamics of global strategic rivalry among the three superpowers of USA, China and Russia have increasingly affected relations with, and regional dynamics in various Horn States. Ethiopia is located in the world's most geostrategic area, which is unstable due to intra-state and inter-state disputes inside and among the region's countries, and the rising presence of foreign powers in the region has ramifications. The rare coincidence of changes globally, regionally and within Ethiopia offers a unique opportunity to examine dynamics of political transition in the context of external and internal change processes. Given the centrality of Ethiopia to the region's geopolitical dynamics, there is a clear need to examine the geopolitical developments from the broader perspectives of national security and international relations.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine and analyze the political and security consequences of great power involvement in the Horn of Africa to Ethiopia, as well as how it should navigate the positive and negative consequences as it seeks to maximize its gains while avoiding the negative effects of great power rivalry. Furthermore, with the exception of a few published articles dealing with the rivalry of big powers and regional countries in the Horn of Africa region and its effects on Horn of Africa countries, there is scant literature focusing on the peculiar effects of superpower rivalry on Ethiopia's internal and external security.

Thus, this research investigates and analyzes the interacting dynamics and consequences of changes in the region's geopolitics as well as changes in Ethiopia's domestic politics. By analyzing the effects of the rivalry between the United States, Russia, and China on the stability and territorial integrity of Ethiopia, the study fills a gap in the literature on the effects of great power rivalry on Ethiopian national security. There has not been a detailed analysis of the consequences of the great power relationship and the accompanying repercussions on the stability of subject nations such as Ethiopia. Furthermore, the research will give policy recommendations on how to investigate and manage internal changes in the context of global superpower rivalry. As a result, this study adds to the body of information on the impact of rivalry in the Horn of Africa by the United States, Russia, and China on regional stability and

Ethiopian national security. It will be essential for policymakers, practitioners, diplomats, and security personnel and other research institutes.

### **1.3 Core Argument**

The rivalry of great powers (United States of America, Russia and China) in the Horn of Africa region with in the context of new political developments domestically since 2018, has resulted in an adverse situation in which the stability and territorial integrity of Ethiopia has been highly impacted.

### **1.4 Objectives**

#### **1.4.1 General Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the great power rivalry among the United States of America, Russia and China in the Horn of Africa and its impact on the stability and security of Ethiopia. In order to achieve this general objective, the study took the following specific objectives: -

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- To understand the characteristics and drivers of great power rivalry.
- To explore the strategic rivalry between global superpowers in Africa and the Horn of Africa.
- To investigate the effects of great power rivalry on the national security of Ethiopia.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- What are the characteristic features of great power rivalry?
- What are the natures of great power rivalry in Africa and the Horn region?
- How has the national security of Ethiopia been impacted by great power rivalry in the Horn of Africa?

### **1.6 Methodology**

In order to explore the impact of the great power rivalry of USA, China and Russia on the national security of Ethiopia, the study applied qualitative research methods. Qualitative research approaches are useful to provide detailed explanations of complicated phenomena which involve a diverse range of actors and unpredictable events. By illuminating the unique viewpoints and

interpretations of actors, qualitative research methods help us create a theory and/or produce an explanation for a complex phenomenon (Sofaer, 1999).

### **1.7 Methods of Data Collection**

This study relies on primary and secondary data. The major source of data for this study is in-depth interviews. In light of this, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to elicit the perspectives of the key informants. Key informants are those who have a higher societal position in the study context, which allows them to have specialized information about other people, processes, and events (Payne and Payne, 2004).

The key informants for this study were chosen purposively based on their specialist knowledge and positions in the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, National Intelligence and Security Services, Information Network Security Administration, and Ministry of Peace, Addis Ababa University Institute of Peace and Security, Institute of Security Studies and IGAD. Furthermore, two senior Ambassadors and three career diplomats from relevant departments of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were interviewed, as well as two senior officials from the Ethiopian Ministry of Defense, one senior official from the Ethiopian Information Network Security Agency, and two senior advisors from the Ethiopian Ministry of Peace. Moreover, interviews were conducted with one expert from Addis Ababa University Institute of Peace and Security and one analyst Institute of Security Studies (a regional human security policy think-tank in Africa, which aims to enhance human security in the continent) and one officer from IGAD security sector program. Purposive sampling was utilized to pick the informants, and respondents were chosen based on predetermined goals of direct access of the respondents' employment or area of engagement with the topic of inquiry.

Also, efforts were made to interview appropriate representative personnel from the embassies of USA, China and Russia in Addis Ababa. However, the attempt to interview representative personnel from the relevant Embassies as the personnel approached were unwilling to be interviewed on this matter.

Secondary data was also acquired from relevant literature, such as books, published and unpublished materials, journal articles, periodicals, newsletters, and internet sources. The study drew on a number of documentary sources to supplement the analytical components of the study. Government announcements, speeches by higher-ranking officials, reports by think tank groups,

and other key online and offline materials are included. Secondary data was utilized to develop the conceptual and theoretical framework, which is then used to obtain primary data by supplying the basic framework and documents to be evaluated. Meanwhile, a descriptive data analysis approach is used to analyze the data gathered from the aforementioned primary and secondary sources.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This research was constrained by the scarcity of scholarly literature on the Horn of Africa as a region. Rather than analyzing the general and comprehensive features of geopolitical events in the Horn of Africa as a regional security complex, country-specific analysis is frequently offered. The most significant limits noted by the researcher and implicated in restricting the breadth and study of the issue area are those related to time. Because the main informants chosen for the study are active and practicing authorities and experts, the amount of time and attention given to the in-depth interview questions had been limited. Key informant interviews frequently arrive late or cancel a previously arranged interview. Time restrictions connected with key informant interviews have been especially restricting to data gathering approaches. The researcher was not provided sufficient time because key informants' busy schedules and constraints on interview time duration limited the interviews.

Apart from time constraints, the unwillingness of U.S., Chinese, and Russian embassies to allow interviews has severely hampered the collecting of primary data. All of the data needed for the study was not available easily, and new policy developments were difficult to find. However, the study attempted to mitigate the impact by using announcements from government agencies, partially published and accessible policy papers, credible reports and statistics, scholarly publications, and other sources.

### **1.9 Scope**

The scope of the study is limited to the analysis of the engagement of great powers of USA, China and Russia in the Horn of Africa and its security implication to the stability of Ethiopia in the context of the political change the country has been going through.

Spatially, the study has been conducted in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia in particular. The primary focus of this study has been the analysis of the USA, Russia, and China's rivalry in the horn of Africa and its impact on the security of Ethiopia. Thematically, the study is limited to

assessing and examining the above mentioned great power rivalry and its impact on the stability of Ethiopia. Therefore, the primary focus of this study is the USA, Russia, and China's rivalry in the horn of Africa and its impact on the national security of Ethiopia

### **1.10 Significance**

The problem of a state's national security is viewed as critical since national security concerns are closely linked with the need for state survival. Ethiopia, in particular, is becoming increasingly vulnerable to national security challenges as a result of shifts in geopolitical alignment caused by global and regional geopolitical contests. As a result, the study's outcomes and insights are critical in offering an understanding of the impact of U.S., Russian, and Chinese rivalry in the sub-region, and particularly in Ethiopia. The research hopes to be used as a decision-making guide in the field of Ethiopian national security and foreign relations, and it will inform Ethiopia's national security policy-making process in order to protect the country from current threats emanating from the Horn of Africa's ascending great power politics. It will also help identify major power interests in the Horn of Africa, as well as their influence and impact on Ethiopia's national security. It also informs national security policymakers as well as Ethiopia's Ministries of Peace and Foreign Affairs.

### **1.11 Ethical Considerations**

The study made an attempt to collect data in compliance with ethically acceptable standards. As a result, the researcher followed the appropriate research ethics and respected the codes, values, and principles when doing the research, such as correctly recognizing sources and information and other critical concerns. Furthermore, given the sensitivity of the study area and the participants' official positions, all interview participants were fully informed about the study's goals, and guarantees were provided to protect and safeguard interview participants' privacy and identities.

### **1.12 Organization of the Study**

The research is divided into five chapters and finishes with a conclusion. The first chapter discusses the study's background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope and limitations, importance of the study, methodology and data gathering methods, and ethical issues.

The second chapter discusses the study's conceptual and theoretical foundations. As a result, the chapter attempts to identify and illustrate the conceptual and theoretical debates surrounding 'Great Power rivalry' and 'Security'. The chapter investigates the conceptual and theoretical debates surrounding Great Power rivalry by evaluating the ideas of authors from both the realist and idealist schools of international relations. This section also discusses the conceptual development of the concept of 'Security' briefly. Based on the literature reviewed, the chapter concludes with an operational definition of the two key concepts of the research i.e Great Power rivalry and Security. In order to identify the nexus between great power contest and global security and stability of states in the international system, the section drives out criteria to differentiate between inter-state competitive relations that threaten global stability, and those that doesn't destabilize international peace.

Based on the literature, the third chapter tries to explore why, how, and when great powers engage in competitive relations. The section reviews current and historical competitive relations among the great powers of the U.S., China, and Russia to gauge whether the contests are harmful or benign to the security and stability of international peace. The section emphasizes the destabilizing character of current competitive relations among the three great powers and their attendant impact on the national security of other states in the international system.

The fourth chapter presents and discusses the historical and current political and economic engagements of the three great powers with the continents of Africa and the Horn. The section discusses the different ways the three powers engaged the continent through the post-colonial and post-Cold War eras. The section concludes with the increasingly destabilizing impacts of the recent competitive engagement of the three powers with the continent and the Horn in particular.

The final chapter presents a thorough discussion and analysis of the security implications of the competitive engagement of the three great powers with Ethiopia. The section provides evidence for the why and how of great power intervention in Ethiopia's internal political processes. Particular emphasis was given to the great power interventions that were detrimental to the stability of the country since it embarked on a political change process in 2018. The chapter relied on primary data gathered from key informants and some relevant secondary sources as deemed appropriate.

Finally, conclusions are derived from the overall study to draw lessons and show future directions to suggest patterns of engagement that would enable Ethiopia to minimize negative impacts and maximize opportunities for great power politics in the Horn of Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Great Power Rivalry and National Security: Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives**

#### **2.1 Conceptualization of Great Power Rivalry**

In recent years, the notion of Great Power rivalry (GPC) has grown in prominence as a major topic of debate among international relations scholars and practitioners. The development of the issue among researchers has been related to the concern of increased confrontation between the Great Powers of the United States, China, and Russia, as rising China and resurgent Russia lay claim to critical areas of global geopolitics and compete for global supremacy (Wright, 2020). Furthermore, recent U.S. national security documents focused and elevated Great Power rivalry over terrorism, insurgencies, and global challenges to human survival. National security papers released by the Trump and Biden administrations identified GPC as the greatest threat to the U.S.'s global dominance and called for changes to U.S. national security and defense strategies (White House, 2017;2021).

The widespread views about Great Power rivalry (GPC) may have originated with the positions expressed in previous Trump administration papers such as the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS). The NSS underlined "the fight for power" and expressed concern about "revisionist powers" China and Russia "reasserting their influence locally and internationally," threatening the U.S. and the global order established by the U.S.. The documents discuss the need for the United States to plan for competitive advantage now that great power politics has emerged after being dismissed as a bygone period concern (White House, 2017).

Scholars who have critiqued the notion of GPC as a novel idea argue that it fails to explain strategic shifts in the global power politics because rivalry among superpowers has always been with us. They question the assertion that rivalry among superpowers has 'returned to 21st-century' global politics, and argue that rivalry among great powers cannot return since it never disappeared (Nexon, 2021).

Great-power politics have always been an essential component of modern international relations, according to IR realists. It has been the topic of a recognized tradition of theorization and analysis that dates back to Thucydides and continues through scholars such as Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, and Kenneth Waltz. The concept of power struggle, according to these forefathers of international relations studies, is inherent in human nature. Morgenthau, a well-known IR realist, claimed that "international politics is essentially power politics" (Morgenthau, 1973). GPC is part of a larger international relations paradigm that posits the struggle and survival of the state in the face of anarchical global politics as key element of international relations.

Despite the fact that the term "great power rivalry" appears only infrequently in IR literature, the general concept of power struggle among states is central to the work of numerous IR scholars, including Gilpin (1981), Mearsheimer (2001), and Rasler and Thompson (1994), whose works trace the rise and fall of great powers as well as patterns of contention among them. The blending of concepts from this author's writings with traditional realism perspectives leads in a distinct and long-lasting concept of GPC in contemporary international politics. However, we must distinguish between rivalry among regular states and rivalry among superpowers seeking global dominion.

## **2.2 Defining Great Power rivalry**

Rivalry may be described as a battle or a contest in which two or more entities or groups compete to obtain and control a prize. Standard dictionaries describe rivalry as "antagonism" and "opposition." The terms "rivalry" and "rivalry" are commonly used interchangeably in dictionaries online dictionaries. Although definitions of 'rivalry' in IR studies consider rivalry to be a subset of rivalry.

Beyond broad conceptions of competition and rivalry, the most general concepts of IR studies that aimed at understanding the mechanisms of global politics identified three understandings of Great power rivalry. The first refers to contests and rivalry that exist among states of comparable

powers aiming to maximize their national interests, while the second is a contest involving two states seeking to dominance control the international system. The third type of rivalry involves aggressive powers prepared to use military force to win geopolitical contestations.

### **2.2.1 Inter-state Politics: An Arena of General Rivalry**

A significant portion of the literature on international relations assumes that international relations involve state rivalry and influence-seeking (Mazarr and Rhoades, 2018). A constant degree of rivalry is expected in relations among states, but the struggle is taken for granted and not identified and dealt with as a distinct issue. Realist scholars of international politics have long argued that rivalry is an inherent fact of international politics' anarchical nature (Morgenthau, 1973). Realists attribute the competitive nature of international politics to two elements. The first factor is human nature. They emphasize the human 'desire for power' as an important component. Second, they describe the role of the international system in the absence of a central governing authority, which forces nations to over-prepare for their own defense while remaining suspicious of the intentions of others, sparking spirals of hostility, misunderstanding, and eventually conflict (Mearsheimer, 2001).

A state's aim to be superior should not be seen as essentially negative in its goals. The literature distinguishes between contests that seek absolute and relative gains in this regard. Several states compete in non-zero-sum rivalry. In its widest sense, rivalry might be described as rivalry for absolute gains. Trade relationships, for example, allow governments to strengthen their geopolitical positions while avoiding conflictual competitiveness at the state level. States can become wealthy through participating in international trade. Richer states, for example, make considerable contributions to international assistance and charity in order to maintain a benevolent image. Foreign aid benefits developing nations by providing resources to tackle poverty and hunger. The major premise of liberal institutionalism thoughts has been relative benefits leading to a world free of inter-state conflicts. This view served as the foundation of the liberal economic order in the post-World War II and post-Cold War eras, when the development of free trade resulted in absolute benefits, resulting in a positive-sum system that stopped inter-state rivalry from ballooning into violence (Glaser, 2010).

However, as contemporary confrontations between competing super powers have demonstrated, the positive-sum approach to economic needs has shortcomings. In an anarchic international system, states pursue relative gains. In geopolitically sensitive domains, states directly assist indigenous producers to increase their market share and compete with rivals in adversary countries. They could also develop trade rules to provide local firms an advantage over competitors in other countries. They can also make targeted investments in local sectors to obtain a competitive advantage and build their economies (Mazarr and Rhoades, 2018).

### **2.2.2 Great Power Rivalry and Competition**

Conceptualizations of rivalry have a deeper root than rivalry. Unlike generalized rivalry between ordinary countries, rivalry is a generally two-sided struggle between competing great powers that usually possess relatively equal levels of power and often the rivalry focuses on preponderance in a single region or globally. They fight to hold the position to set international rules governing strategic geopolitical and geo-economic domains. (Rasler and Thompson, 2013).

Rivalries as long-standing historical adversarial relations that are likely led to collision. He added that a high- degree of incommensurability in relative national goals preceded the emergence of rival states. rivalry takes place in zero-sum rivalry for incompatible goals, where one party seeks to win at the expense of its opponent (Heath and Thompson, 2018).

rivalry, as defined in international relations studies, arises when one competing state considers that the other constitutes a serious danger to its objectives, aspirations, and norms. Diehle and Geortz (2000) underline the relevance of mutual anticipation of future conflict; a rivalry may be reduced if mutual expectation of war is not there. rivalry among great powers has a significant influence in the stability of global order. One study found that only a few bilateral rivalries cause most wars (Maoz and Ben D. Mo, 2001). According to some authors, rivalries continually threaten conflict and cause a considerable number of armed conflicts. For example, Diehl and Goertz (2000) argued that a threat or the deployment of military forces are required to characterize a relationship as rivalry. For them, the deployment of military instruments of power indicates the gravity of the rivalry. They stress the necessity of long-lasting, unsettled contentions that are essential to a rivalry.

rivalry is a higher degree of competitiveness that is frequently characterized by the winner taking all kinds of disagreements. According to Heath and Thompson (2018), geopolitical rivalries come in "grim packages" that contain tense and hostile interactions, several crises, and, in some cases, all out conflicts. The "grim package" proposed by Heath and Thompson has historically resulted in significant international instability, including proxy wars and aggressions. Rivalries between great powers are prone to escalation and may result in a devastating conflict, the consequences of which might destroy countries and destabilize entire regions and the global system as a whole. The devastating protracted proxy war in Ukraine, with its global economic and security impacts can be considered as an example of such "grim" reality of great power rivalry.

Other literature within the framework of great power rivalry suggests rivalry among big states arise out of the changing balance of power between a rising state and status quo power. These theories clustered around the ideas of 'power transition' claim rivalries occur when a status quo hegemony loses its economic and political superiority to an emerging new power (Gilpin, 1983). As the status quo seeks to protect its dominant position, it pursues policies that undermine the emergence of a challenger state that creates a resentment and growing nationalism within the political system of the rising state (Ibid).

The literature indicated many instances of such rivalry as being particularly volatile that increased the risk of direct war. The seminal work of Graham Allison (2015) traces the emergence of great power conflict during periods of power transitions. He argues that the rising tension between the great powers of USA, China and Russia can be attributed to the conflict that emerges when a hegemonic power tries to defend its position from being overtaken by a new rising power. Allison has traced the conflictual power dynamics as far back as the relationship between Sparta and Athens, which caused the Peloponnesian War. Analyzing the historical conflict, he concluded that "It was the rise of Athens, and the fear that this inspired in Sparta, that made war inevitable". The basic idea of power transition suggests that the rise of a new dominant power inspires hostile reaction from an established power and the subsequent rivalry produces confrontations and wars. By directly applying the historical dynamics to the temporary U.S.-China relation, Graham Allison (2015), attempts to draw attention to the high risk of war. He referred the danger as the "Thucydides Trap".

Although the ideas espoused under the rubric “power transition theories” have garnered a fair level of scholarly acceptance, the concepts have been criticized for over-generalization. Lebow and Valentino (2009) produced the strongest critics so far. Their assessments of great power wars were not caused by hegemonic transitions. The most important example was the peaceful relationship between the U.S.-Great Britain. During the period from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to mid-20<sup>th</sup> the U.S. took over the United Kingdom as the leading power on the global stage, however the two states avoided rivalry by cooperating to manage the power transition in the international system (ibid).

### **2.2.3 Militarized Great Power Rivalry: Revisionist Powers**

Though most bilateral and trilateral rivalry involve a certain level of tensions and clashes on some strategic issues, not all of the rivalries devolve into a direct military conflicts. However, a third variety of militarized and conflictual world politics arises when a particularly aggressive states emerges that deploy military might as a tool of foreign policy to change the status quo and dominate a sub-region or global systems. The international relations literature identifies those states as ‘revisionist’ which are combative states wielding military force as a means to pursue a foreign policy agenda of global preponderance. A great historical example can be the aggressiveness witnessed in the two world wars by the likes of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan (Woosang and James, 1992).

Realist literature suggests that most consequential conflicts don’t simply happen because of the ordinary competitive relationship of states. According to the realists, unstable global order emerges when an aggressive state which is unsatisfied with the positions it holds within the present status quo power configuration, becomes willing to take up large scale military action to change the status quo. These so-called ‘Revisionist’ powers have the will and the capability to deploy the armed forces to position themselves in a superior posture or at least disruptive position regionally and the globe at large (Ibid).

In recent years with the invasion and the subsequent war in Ukraine and the tension in South China sea, some argue Russia and China can be seen as revivalist states which are willing to deploy military force to rebalance the international system away from the dominant United

States and desire to create a sphere of influence in the geographic region adjacent to China and Russia (Sun, 2021; Lina, 2021). Russia and China also have been active beyond their immediate neighborhood using the military, economic and diplomatic might to re-establish and defend strategic areas in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe. The two countries also invested heavily to strengthen alternative global financial and diplomatic institutions such as BRICS to displace the dominant position of the U.S. in the international system (Ibid).

The United States can also be seen as a revisionist state albeit defending its dominant position in the international system. The U.S. employs its wide reaching alliance system, economic and military powers to safeguard the preponderance position it holds in world politics. It instigated ‘color revolutions’ and took ‘democratic promotion’ foreign policies to forcibly unseat regimes it considered hostile to U.S. strategic interests. The US kept the international system in its favor when it imposed punitive sanctions against states that challenged its own vision of the World.

There are some criticisms of viewing the Great powers (the U.S., China and Russia) as aggressive revivalist states. Historically speaking, a limited number of states have shown the level of militarized invasions that are provided in the conceptualization of revisionism in the international relations literature. Critics argue the threat of nuclear annihilation and the economic devastation of world scale wars prevent the possibility of large scale war of conquest. Russia fails to show the level of extensive aggressive state that threatens global scale war of invasions, apart from its most immediate neighborhood. China fears the risk of escalation from localized conflicts to large conventional wars that risk nuclear exchanges. Its newly found economic prosperity could be lost by the impact of the war and historically preferred soft power approaches as strategy. In this connection China has been a constrained revisionist power, although forceful, it didn’t go as far as dispatching ground and marine force across its shore lines to settle conflicts (Nexon, 2021).

### **2.3 Conceptualizing National and International Security**

Security in the simplest and broadest definition refers to the absence of and protection from dangers. Contextualizing security in the national and international space the term becomes complicated and problematic with no universally accepted definitions. As a result, several experts in the area have given the concept "security" numerous interpretations based on their emphasis, perspectives, and culture. This is especially true following the conclusion of the Second World War, concepts such as national security, collective security, common security, hemispheric security, and in the contemporary era human security, food security, environmental security and others have been invented to grapple with the complicated post-war international security complex (Lasarte, 2011)..

However, most attempts at defining the security agenda are concerned with describing a state's security goals and how to achieve them than with the concept of security itself (Baldwin, 1997). This is typically observed in the demand to protect oneself from external threats to the country such as geopolitical rivalry, territorial integrity, transnational terrorism, and internal security issues such as political stability, organized crime, and epidemics, among others. Such concepts of security are frequently provided with normative arguments about which values should be protected and empirical arguments about the nature and severity of threats to those values. Questions about what security entails receive little consideration (Ibid).

The concept of national security evolved from a simpler understanding of security that emphasized a state's protection from military invasion and political coercion to a later expanded version of the idea that captures the various types of security needs that go beyond military threats to include protection from man and natural threats to human security (Romm, 1993). Despite the need for clarity, attaining a shared conception of security, and national security more broadly, remains a challenge. Through the analysis of relevant literature, this section of the research attempts to construct an operational definition of national security.

### **2.1.1. Evolution of National Security**

The contemporary notion of "national security" as a principle to preserve a stable state may be traced back to the Treaty of Westphalia, when the concept of a sovereign state controlled by a sovereign formed the foundation of a new international order of independent states. Since Westphalia's peace, the state has been defined in terms of its territoriality (connected to a specified and recognized land area) and the sovereign authority (self-rule) that it was acknowledged to have. The state has been the basic unit of the international system. The major responsibility of the state has been identified as security. The state, as the provider of law and order, asserts a right to exist and self-defense distinct from the individual citizens who occupy it. The idea that the state was the referent object and the primary supplier of security resulted in a territorial and state-centric perspective of security (MacFarlane & Neil, 2006).

Historically, the state has served as a basis of security. The state takes on the duty of protecting its citizens and expects their allegiance. The security of a country's population is assured when the security of the state is likewise secured. The traditional model of national security, that underpins the realist international relations perspective, was reflected in the remarks of a former American strategist who defined state security as the country's continued ability to pursue its development without the malign interference of foreign states. Under the anarchical nature of international politics, the realist approach thinks that global policies may be found in the battle of nations to guarantee their sustainability. States primarily rely on military force to prevent threats from adversary states and protect their interests. In this setting, governments seek to defend their internal stability and foreign interests by using national power. In such a scenario, national sovereignty and the balance of power become paramount (Kennan, 1948).

National security was defined as a state's ability to defend itself and prevent potential threats to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. This was the prevalent perspective of national security, in which threats were viewed as existential, and emphasis was placed on military force to respond to the dangers. As a result, military capability was historically the first acknowledged kind of national security tool. Traditional definitions of national security focused on the preservation of a

state's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as its essential political and cultural values, against military threats from outside and disruptive elements from inside. Because these dangers are perceived to come from the use, or threat of use, of force, national security is viewed as relying primarily on the state's coercive ability and the dependability and strength of its friends and allies. As a result, national security is seen to be mainly dependent on the state's military capabilities, the effectiveness of its internal security system, intelligence and the strength of its foreign policy to build effective alliances (Chandra and Bhonsle, 2015).

The traditionalist defined national security as a state's ability to pursue its legitimate national objectives without being compelled to sacrifice them in order to avoid conflict. According to them, the distinctiveness of national security derives from the state's ability to be free of external influence and dictation (Lippmann, 1943; Lasswell, 1950). When distinguishing between subjective and objective conceptions of security, Arnold Wolfers (1952) underlines the relevance of threat perception. He describes national security as an objective issue entailing the lack of threats to acquired values as well as the absence of fear that such values would be threatened.

In the post-World War II's era through the collapse of the Soviet Union, the traditionalist notion of national security appeared to fully explain and solve security challenges. However, with the demise of the Soviet Union various new security risks emerged, revealing the limits of previous conceptions and the necessity to rethink and re-conceptualize security (Buzan, 1997). Traditional concepts of national security began to be challenged after the Cold War and as a result of global changes. Several critics have emerged who argue that there are diverse perspectives on security, different actors, and therefore, different solutions to different types of insecurities. Terrorism, organized crime, climate change, and disputes over natural resources were rising new security challenges which became as critical as the traditional military defense (Ibid).

Eventually, new definitions of national security evolved, offering alternatives to the conventionally limited view. Many advocated for a new security paradigm that was wide enough to accommodate diverse security challenges and approaches. The discursive arguments concentrated on the need to extend the security agenda and shift it away from its statist orientation to a concept of security that comprised the broad spectrums of insecurities (Katzenstein, 1996).

### **2.1.2. Towards a New Understanding Of National Security**

Some of the changes brought about by the Cold War's end were reflected in the prominent concepts and theories that emerged in the post-cold war period. As theorists grappled with new security concerns in the international political arena and attempted to define the parameters of security in the new era, views that see national security primarily through the lens of military defense began to fade. As a result, much of what was formerly taken as timeless insight has been thoroughly scrutinized and questioned.

The breakdown of the bipolar world environment increased and justified the need for a new approach. The Cold War's bipolar setup confined studies of security to the two great power competitors' tit for tat exchange. Several new problems arose as a result of the fall of the Soviet bloc, such as the resulting poverty in several former socialist countries, ethnic conflicts within them, and the subject of security studies took on a whole new meaning, necessitating the need for broader conceptualizations and approaches to security research (Buzan, 1991).

Traditional national security studies in the postwar period concentrated primarily on military issues and their interactions with economic, technological, and political factors within the framework of the state. The primary analytical focus was the nature and distribution of military power and the use of force at the international level. Conceptions of security, with its exclusive concentration on the ideas of threats and power; realism and liberalism; conflict; and a singular perspective on state security, has become a barrier in and of itself since it does not allow for the examination of a larger range of security-related topics (Trager and Kronenberg, 1973).

The traditionalist security perspective, which places the state in the center, allowed states to determine what constituted national security and to act in accordance with what the political elites regarded to be in the national interest, leaving aside not only other security issues, but also other important actors, such as institutions and individuals, who were also part of the state. Culture and identity, according to realists, are at best reflections of the distribution of capacities

and have no independent explanatory capacity. In this concept, agents strategically deploy culture and identity, just like any other resource, to achieve their own self-interest (Katzenstein, 2002).

Neoliberalism, in contrast to realists, proposed a theory of cultural-institutional background for national security. Improving on traditionalists' classical works, neoliberals' ideas added principles, norms, regulations, and processes in their concept of regime. However, detractors said that the neoliberal additions to institutions were out of date since they couldn't assist researchers and policymakers understand the fundamental changes occurring in the international political arena following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Ibid).

The traditional definition of national security focuses on the state and its military capacity to confront other states, leaving out the possibility of including economic, social, political, and even environmental threats and security that affect individuals and groups of non-state actors within the state. It was obvious to its critics that a new and different analysis of national security was required. A new generation of researchers has expanded on these ideas to revitalize the subject of security studies. Interests in expanded notions of national security, such as global prosperity, human rights, or human welfare, as they influence not just states but also non-state actors, have risen (Buzan, 2007).

In general, what researchers and policymakers believe to be national security challenges changes with time. In the nineteenth century, the idea comprised economic and social aspects of political life that were no longer regarded vital when national security received a stricter military interpretation in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly during the Cold War. As a result, the realm of national security problems is dynamic (Ibid).

### **2.1.3. Modern Conceptions of Security**

Contemporary perspective on national security arose as a result of the traditional state centric paradigm's limitation (Deguat, 2015). Nasu (2011) argues that national security issues have broadened, reflecting more modern, vital public concerns that represent larger hazards to

individuals and groups of people than the old-fashioned physical defense of a state's territory from military attacks by another state. According to Afolabi (2015), the post- Cold War conception of international security has expanded national security beyond military considerations to include non-military concerns such as hunger, unemployment, poverty, environmental humiliation, and others. National security encompasses a country's efforts to safeguard the state, its institutions, people, and property, as well as the well-being of its whole population.

Scholars after the Cold War identified five interrelated dimensions of security, dubbed the multi-sectoral security concept that included political, economic, military, social, and environmental securities (Buzan, 1991). Later authors defined political security as the organizational stability of governments, government systems, and ideologies that give legitimacy to the state. Moreover political security included the ability of the state to build a political system in a country or set of countries while maintaining state stability (Serowaniec and Bien-Kacala , 2016). Furthermore, political security was understood as the link between the state, society and the state's relation with other states.

Economic security was linked to the protection of economic progress from internal and external elements. Economic security entailed the absence of threats to economic activities and free exchange of goods. Interdependence and diversification as well as integration are viewed as increasing economic security (Moller, 2000).

Furthermore, military security is defined as the absence of military anxieties from the outside and the ability to respond to military threats from the outside (Serowaniec and Bien-Kacala, 2016). Military security is concerned with the two-level interaction of states' armed offensive and defensive capabilities, as well as states' perceptions of each other's intentions.

The ability of civilizations to reproduce their traditions and customs within acceptable evolutionary parameters is referred to as societal security. Social security, according to Moller (2000), is defined as a society's ability to maintain its core character in the face of changing situations and potential or actual dangers.

Furthermore, environmental security refers to the preservation of the local and global biosphere, which serves as the foundation for all other human endeavors. It is tied to the preservation of a

certain people's cultural values in a specific location, with the potential to withstand external forces. Environmental security, often known as ecological security, strives to keep natural development under check for present and future generations. The problem in the Horn of Africa is examined using a multi-sectorial security framework (Serowaniec and Bien-Kacala, 2016).

Sulovic (2010) observed that a non-state centric view of security allows for multi-sectoral analysis of security research while also discussing the strengths and limitations of the multi-sector security paradigm. The contemporary perspective on security covers larger societal and institutional concerns that are outside of the state and military threats.

The multi-sectoral perspective of security has been criticized for hyping the inclusion of non-state centered security risks. Critics argue the topic of security in the broad sense has been covered in full or in part by traditional security perspectives (Grizold, 1994).

## **2.4 The Nexus between Global Order and Security**

In this part of the thesis, international relations theories, particularly the different facets of the theory of realism in international relations; including, polarity and subaltern realism will be discussed as theoretical background to establish and explain the linkage between world order, international security and national security of states which are the object and the subject of the global order. Specifically, an attempt will be made to explain the sources of conflict among the leading global powers of the U.S., China and Russia, and how the global rivalry among the powers are projected into Africa, the Horn and Ethiopia. Furthermore, by instrumentally deploying the theory of subaltern realism, explanations will be put forth for the systemic vulnerability and sensitivity of fragile third world states to changes in world order. The section employs the theory of subaltern realism as a conceptual framework to understand the security impacts of the competitive interaction of global superpowers with the Horn and Ethiopia.

## **2.5 The theory of Multipolarity and the engagement of Great Powers and the Horn of Africa**

Structural Realists believe a state's economy, population, level of development and the will to deploy these national capabilities to project power determines the behaviour of a state in the international system (Waltz, 1979). These capabilities and the will to use them determine their actions by presenting the structure that constrains and incentivizes a particular set of behaviors. For neorealists, the presence of relatively equal states with more or less equivalent levels of economic and political powers creates the prerequisite for multipolar world order (Walt, 1990). Neorealists believed the rise of the multipolar world made inter-state and intra-state conflicts more likely. Realists argue the increased number of competing states for global or regional dominance in a world with no single dominant power (i.e. multipolar world) increased the number of potential enemies and allies that influenced the risk assessment of states in such a way that makes war more likely. Multipolarity was the dominant form of international politics until the Second World War, seeing more conflicts than the relatively peaceful bi-polar cold war era and the unipolar years of U.S. hegemony that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Multipolarity as a theoretical framework of system realism predicts an increased level of instability in geopolitically significant regions of the World (Jervis, 1978). Such instability could be much pronounced in key countries within a key sub-region of global geopolitical interest to the competing great powers. The civil wars that have emerged following the so-called the 'Arab Spring' can be attributed to the rise of multipolarity in world politics. The duration and intensity of civil wars have been known to have a correlation with the involvement of external actors. The civil wars in Libya, Yemen and Syria, for instance, were highly influenced by external actors, notably the U.S., Russia, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar. Many of the civil conflicts that followed the Arab spring in the middle eastern countries, were very much influenced by the involvement of great powers and the actions of these external participants to the civil war in many of post-Arab spring have been very much shaped by the involvement of external actors, and the involvement of these actors has been influenced by the emerging multipolar international system (Morsy, 2019). The competitive engagement of powers that defines multipolarity incentivized and constrained these powers.

Similarly, the competitive interaction and involvement of great powers in the Horn of Africa and in Ethiopia specifically, can be viewed in the same fashion. The behaviour and engagement of great powers of the U.S., Russia and China with Ethiopia that followed Ethiopia's political change process since 2018 has been greatly dictated by the competitive interactions of the rising multipolar international politics (Kasu, 2022). In fact, the behaviour of these three great powers in relation to the post-2018 Ethiopian political change was framed by the structural realities that Systemic Realists predict to be observed in the rivalries of a multipolar world system. Several features of multi-polarity forwarded by Realists are relevant in explaining the significant impact of great power competitive engagement with the political change process in Ethiopia.

Structural realists identify several ways that multi-polarity shapes the behaviour of players in multi-pole order, this thesis identifies three characteristics features that have explanatory relevance in the Horn of Africa and the Ethiopian context. The first is related to the fluid security situation the multi-pole world creates. Mearsheimer (1990), asserted that in a multipolar order the potential for conflict among states is high as the system is much more fluid and has a multiple possibility for dyadic confrontation. However, a bipolar system has only one dyadic relation across which confrontational relations might emerge. The involvement of multiple external actors in the security crisis in Ethiopia, that are not aligned in to one bloc or two opposing blocs, affected the behaviour of these states which significantly impacted the level and duration of the security crisis in post-2018 period in Ethiopia (Woldemariam and Cheeseman, 2021).

The other feature of multi-polar system is the inter-connectedness that comes with the competitive involvement of external states in a particular sub-region. A conflict in another region of the world can be easily exported to several other geopolitical regions in which a particular set of competing great power states might have contradicting interests. Barry Posen (2017) explaining the logic behind such behaviour suggests that the possibility of multiple shifting alliances allows for the opening of many fronts to attack and distract enemies. If state A concludes that State B is otherwise occupied with State C that presents opportunities to attack B. This has been observed in the conflict in northern Ethiopia, whereby the geopolitical confrontation among the three super-powers manifested itself as the West supported the TPLF

while Russia and China backed the government side including vetoing UNSC resolutions against the government.

An illustrative example of interconnectedness of conflict issues can be observed in multilateral organizations. Dervis (2018) commented that the decline in uni-polarity creates a crisis in multilateralism. He argues that in a multi-pole system great powers prioritize agenda that undermine or otherwise disadvantage the position of their peer competitors so much so that it will be very much difficult to reach an agreement on issues of common interest such as environmental security. Moreover, multilateral forums such as the UN Human Rights Commission become stages of great power duels. Issues of universal human rights decline in significance as these forums and the ideals they espouse become weapons to tarnish the reputation of competing great powers. Global rivalry and divergence of great powers has been witnessed in several UNSC meetings on the conflicts around the world, where the rival great powers use their vote powers to protect their respective allies. Similar behaviour of great powers can be observed in the conflict in northern Ethiopia, whereby the geopolitical confrontation among the three super-powers manifested itself as the West supported the TPLF while Russia and China backed the government side including vetoing UNSC resolutions against the government (Harter, 2022).

Furthermore, great powers also prioritize building regional security and economic alliances to counter and contain adversaries undermining the potential role of multilateral organizations such as the UN in bringing global peace and prosperity. Additionally, multi-polar systems tend to form around regional hegemonies that weakens global interdependencies fomenting the formation of bounded orders rather than global ones (Dervis, 2018).

The final characteristic feature of multi-polar global politics is that the possibility of counter escalation forces caution and incremental approach on the part of intervening external actors (Posen, 2017). This has been observed in multiple crises around the world where the great powers restrained themselves from deploying the full extent of their capabilities for fear that the other side might also escalate. Caution due to fear of counter-escalation on the part of competing great powers has been witnessed in conflicts around the world, including the War in Ukraine where Western support has been limited to proxy support for Ukraine and the Russians themselves restricted the military operation to what they called 'special operation'. The Syrian

war can also be an example where the West limited its support for the rebels fearing escalation on the part of allies of the Assad regime. Similar cautious approach has been observed on both sides of the great powers in the Ethiopian civil war between TPLF and the central government (Brook, 2022). At the height of the conflict in Ethiopia, avoiding any material support the West chose to limit its engagement in the conflict to the areas of diplomacy and information (intelligence and media coverage). While the bulk of the armament on the Ethiopian government side came from Russia and China, they avoided a direct engagement in the ongoing battles.

## **2.6 Subaltern Realism and the Interaction of Great powers with Ethiopia**

Kenneth Waltz and his supporters believed that structural realist theory didn't always explain all aspects of international relations. They suggested the neorealist structural view to be helpful in providing an understanding towards a small number of big and important matters in international relations (Waltz, 1979). In line with this argument, Mohammed Ayoob developed the theory of subaltern realism. Subaltern realism responds to the macroscopic focus of the neorealist school and provides tools to analyze the behaviour of poorer countries in the Third World. Ayoob's conception turns its attention to the international relation of the economically poor and politically weak states of the global south. These states have a marginal significance in shaping the fundamentals of international politics, but they have been impacted by new developments in the world system (Ayoob, 1997).

Although agreeing with the realist basic premise of the international system as being anarchical and states as central actors, Ayoob's theory of subaltern realism assumes that inequality among states lies at the core of international relations theorizing, policy making and diplomatic practice. Ayoob points out that most states in the present-day international system are "at the same stage of historical development as Florence in the 15th century and England in the 17th century" (Ayoob, 1998, p. 41-43). Unlike Neo-realism, subaltern realism views states as having historical differences in terms of the state's development and ability. Subaltern realist view acknowledges

the importance of state building, rather than acquisition of power in relation to other rivals, for developing Third World countries with state building exercises having international aspects. In this sense the state making efforts of a weak state benefits from a favourable regional and global balance of power (Ibid).

Underlining the fundamentally different interest and priority of states in the Global South, subaltern realists identify several ways in which great power politics in the international arena impacts the political stability and wellbeing of developing countries such as Ethiopia. Subaltern realism identifies three areas where international politics links with the domestic politics of underdeveloped states.

The first link is the inextricable connection that exists between domestic order and international order, particularly when it comes to the arena of conflict and conflict resolution. Ayoob noted; “issues of domestic order and international order are inextricably intertwined, especially in the arena of conflict and conflict resolution” (Ayoob, 1998, pp. 44). The nascent level of state building exposes developing countries to the policies and institutions of great powers, which can often lead to a loss of sovereignty and control over their own affairs. This can have significant implications for their long-term development and autonomy of these states. Furthermore, it can perpetuate a cycle of dependence and hinder their ability to address their own unique challenges and priorities. Contests over identities and boundaries, and external support for proxy civil wars demonstrate the challenges of legacy colonialism for the state-building efforts of many developing countries (Ibid). Moreover, the structural adjustment policies of the Bretton Woods Institutions have also contributed to the loss of sovereignty and control for developing countries. These policies often require countries to implement political and economic reforms that prioritize the interests of global political and financial institutions over their own domestic needs and priorities. This further exacerbates the challenges faced by developing countries in building strong institutions domestically (Ayoob, 1997; Themner & Wallenstein, 2011).

Second, Ayoob contends that, while domestic level factors must be given analytical precedence for understanding the bulk of conflicts in the international system, external variables must also be examined because of the destabilizing impact they have on domestic order. For Ayoob, failing to include external variables might lead to an insufficient understanding of conflict dynamics. Interference from regional and global rivalries, for example, might increase existing local

tensions and intensify clashes (Ayoob, 1998). The 2011 Libyan revolution is an illustrative example of how internal disorder is a significant source of interstate war. As the Arab Spring's revolutionary wave swept across the Arab world, in Libya Gaddafi threatened to bomb protesters, in an attempt to remove Gaddafi and replace him with a pro-Western government the United Kingdom, the United States and France joined hands and intervened militarily. However, the power vacuum created after Gaddafi's removal led to the collapse of the Libyan state. The subsequent civil war further destabilized the region, causing the growth of various armed groups, and turned Libya into a breeding ground for terrorism and exacerbation of regional instability in the broader Sahel (Yonamine, 2011).

Finally, Ayoob contends that the dynamic link between domestic and external variables might explain interstate and intrastate conflicts. Interactions between domestic and external factors can lead to the expansion of an internal conflict into an interstate war. By analyzing these variables, subaltern realism can provide insights into how domestic and external factors interact to shape conflicts and potentially identify opportunities for conflict prevention and resolution. For subaltern realism, in order to understand, predict, and prevent conflicts, certain domestic and international variables must be investigated. Some of the domestic factors include the extent of state-building in the states concerned, with the less developed state-building making internal instability more likely. The more ethnically varied a state is, the less cohesive and distinctive the public notion of the country is, and the more likely conflicts are. External variables include territorial and identity disputes; where the existence of disputes over boundaries and identities makes internal and external conflicts more likely. Irredentist wars are a good example; an irredentist state may aid rebel elements in a neighboring state's civil conflict, with whom it is separated by colonially constructed borders, forcing the fight to become interstate. For instance, in the Russo-Ukraine conflict, Russia's support for Russian-speaking rebels and Ukraine's actions in Eastern Ukraine exacerbated existing tensions and ultimately led to a full-scale interstate conflict (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Great power intervention is another key variable; the involvement of great powers can further escalate tensions and potentially lead to military interventions or proxy wars. Additionally, the recognition of secessionist movements by international norms can inspire other marginalized groups to seek independence, potentially fueling further conflicts (Ayoob, 1998).

Thus, as discussed above, in the context of Subaltern Realism, contested borders and identities in the Horn of Africa broadly and Ethiopia in particular; and the condition of historically weak state building process coupled with the contest among great powers in the Horn region with in the context of the emerging multipolar world, has resulted in the proliferation of instabilities in the Horn and Ethiopia. The fragility of statehood in the Horn and Ethiopia, in particular, as a result of domestic factors of contested identities and borders, as well as the export of great power strategic rivalry into the region, has contributed to the region's increasing instability of states and societies. The structure of relations between countries in the Horn and contending major powers pursuing subaltern realism has had an influence on the security of the Horn of Africa in general, and has security implications for Ethiopia as well.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Aspects of Instability in Great Power Rivalry**

#### **3.1 Characterizing Contemporary Great Power rivalry**

The previous chapter established the historical and conceptual underpinnings for characterizing the contemporary relationship of the three superpowers, the United States, China, and Russia. In this chapter, we look more in to current competitive engagements of U.S.-China and U.S.-Russia relations to find out and characterize different aspects of their engagements, and find out the different ways in which the instability in great power relations impacts international security and by extension impacts the national security of states that are peripheral to the rivalry.

rivalry among big powers has long been an aspect of state relations (Mazarr and Rhoades, 2018). Given that the study's investigative focus is on the nexus of international and national security, i.e. the impact of international rivalry among big states on Ethiopia's internal security, it is only necessary to concentrate our attention on the factors that contribute to tensions and confrontations in the international system. The insecurity of competitive great power interactions has a considerable influence on international political stability and, by extension, the national security of governments on the periphery of the rivalry. To that end, this section seeks to identify the major factors for instability and evaluate current relationships in light of the major factors that contribute to insecurity in contemporary great power politics between U.S.-China and U.S.-Russia. Specifically, under this section, major sources of tension and instability will be discussed by dividing the issues along four categories; the political and systems, weapons and security, management of allies and proxies and economic relations.

##### **3.1.1 Political and Ideological**

The legitimate acceptance of the other state's political system is a major factor to the establishment and future stability of any relationship among states (Kolodziej, 1991). The idea of reciprocal understanding and acceptance of the political system of each other become more vital when the relationship involves great powers. The underlying idea behind frequent diplomatic

engagements and formal diplomatic recognitions is an open recognition of the other side's vital interests, and neither side intends to destroy the other in any existential sense nor to jeopardize its vital interests (ibid). Another political factor for stability has been avoidance of rivalry for sphere of influence in similar geographic zones. Historically, competitors have avoided open conflict with rivals by avoiding rivalry in similar spheres of influence, where the rival's interests are judged critical. Instead, opponents strive for advantage in periphery regions remote from the competitor's key areas (Goldgeier and McFaul, 1992).

### **U.S.-Russia Unstable Political rivalry and Its Impacts**

Examining the present day rivalry between the USA and the Russian Federation in light of the political factors for instability presented above, it appears that the relationship has been increasingly unstable and shows severe volatility that can adversely affect national security of state's such as Ethiopia that are not directly involved in the rivalry.

When it comes to mutual acceptance of legal recognition, the U.S. and Russia offered clear indicators that they acknowledged each other's legitimacy during much of the post-Cold War era. However, as time has passed, both sides have given obvious indications to the contrary, notably about the validity of each adversary's place in the world and each side's understanding of the other's core security interests. At the most basic level, both the United States and Russia acknowledge the legitimacy of the other as sovereign state actors. They recognize each other's "stateness," which differentiates them from, say, unrecognized political entities, as well as their right to participate in the international system. Furthermore, despite their shared unhappiness at breaching particular promises, both place trust in one another's ability to maintain bilateral agreements. Russia and the United States have mostly acknowledged each other's territories as valid during the majority of the post-Soviet period. An early outlier arose from a disagreement between Russia and Japan over the status of the islands known as the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan, with the U.S. siding with Japan (Japan Times, 2014).

rivalry over spheres of influence is another stabilization issue. The decision of a state to operate in an area that is peripheral to itself but vital to its adversary is known to threaten rival superpower and create instability in great power relations (Kolodziej, 1991). Since the post-Cold War era, the United States and NATO have been at odds with Russia. The United States and its allies sought influence over former Soviet states and satellites on Russia's western border.

Russia's weakness following the collapse of the Soviet Union forced it to withdraw from the conflict in a far-flung area crucial for U.S. interests. Initially, the United States avoided active involvement in regional wars centering Central and Eastern Europe. At one point, President Bill Clinton even advocated for Russia to have a leading role in the region (Charap and Colton, 2017).

During the Bush administration, the U.S. took an assertive stance, backing domestic political change as well as parties participating in Georgia's Rose and Ukraine's Orange revolutions. This heightened tensions with Russia, which suspected the West of orchestrating illegal regime change conspiracies and undermining its security interests. The United States and its allies regarded the color revolutions as a chance to push for these nations' admission into Western liberal democracies, emphasizing the West's interest to undermine Russia's security (Ibid).

The westward expansion of NATO and the EU has recently been the most significant source of volatility in U.S.-Russia ties. In this regard, the Ukrainian crisis has become a serious concern, escalating tensions between the two great nations. Following the toppling of Viktor Yanukovich's pro-Kremlin administration through a 'color revolution' supported by the U.S., Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and then attacked Ukraine in 2022. The United States criticized the invasion and initiated a multipronged counter-measures against Russia, including massive sanctions and military assistance for Ukraine (U.S. State Department, 2017). Russia saw these actions as a threat to its territorial integrity and national security. As a result, Russia has extended its military presence in eastern Ukraine and bolstered its defense capabilities along its western borders and next to numerous NATO member nations.

Russia has been conducting military drills along its NATO borders, as well as deploying nuclear-capable long-range advanced weapons in its western area. Russian efforts in Eastern Ukraine also included significant participation in media campaigns to mold the narrative and seek worldwide support for its actions. Furthermore, it has aggressively sought assistance from other nations, particularly several in Asia and Africa, in order to resist diplomatic pressures and garner support for its policies, as well as challenge the legitimacy and effectiveness of Western sanctions (CFR, 2022).

The war has heightened tensions between Russia and the West, resulting to an increase in NATO military buildup and instability in Eastern Europe. Russia's invasion of Ukraine generated an

aggressive reaction from the United States and its NATO partners. Some critics even go so far as to say that the invasion and following confrontation marked the end of thirty years of worldwide cooperation among countries, as well as globalization (Maddox, 2022). The conflict has sparked a surge in geopolitical tensions, with countries taking sides and alliances being reshaped. Economic sanctions placed on Russia by the United States and its allies have strained global trade relations and impacted food and energy prices throughout the world. The war has jeopardized not just European stability, but also the rest of the world with serious implications for food and energy security globally including for countries in Africa such as Ethiopia.

The struggle between the United States and Russia has heated up in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis. The Ukraine War ushered in an era of competitiveness and hostility reminiscent of the nineteenth-century rivalry between Russia and the British Empire. The rivalry's most visible political consequences have been on the bilateral and multilateral diplomatic fronts.

### **Bilateral and Multilateral Impacts of the rivalry**

Following the conflict in Ukraine and the consequent increasing enmity between the United States and Russia, world politics has seen tremendous realignment and changing of alliances. The Ukraine war has resulted in a political constellation of three distinct groups of nations. The first category consisted of countries that supported Ukraine. The majority of the countries in this category are Western nations and their Asian allies. The European Union (EU) states, led by the United States, were the first to impose sanctions on Russia and send military aid to Ukraine. Despite slight disagreements in the nature and pace of assistance provided, the Western alliance remained united in its support for Ukraine. Other Western nations such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also stood in solidarity with Ukraine. In addition to these countries, several Eastern European nations, including Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, actively supported Ukraine both politically and economically. Traditional U.S. allies in Asia supported Ukraine, including Japan, Singapore, and South Korea (Kiel Institute, 2022). Although small in number, the second group of several countries stood strongly in their support for Russia. Those who sided with Russia included Iran, Cuba, Eritrea, North Korea, Syria.

The third category consists of nations that have refused to join either of the blocs. African and Asian countries in the third category reject the Western narrative of the conflict as a fight of might with right. The majority of Sub-Saharan African nations are in the third category, as

evidenced by the large number of African delegates that abstained from the UN General Assembly meeting scheduled to denounce Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These countries took a pragmatic approach, keeping economic and military relations with Russia (Haddad, 2022).

The Ukrainian crisis has heightened great power rivalry, with third-world nations bearing the brunt of the increasing unpredictability and fluidity of the international political climate. This has led to a complex geopolitical landscape in which countries are forced to carefully navigate their alliances and partnerships. The shifting alliances have also raised concerns about the potential for escalation and conflict, as countries may feel compelled to take sides in order to protect their own interests. Additionally, the instability and unpredictability have made it difficult for diplomatic negotiations and peaceful resolutions to be achieved, further exacerbating conflict resolution efforts in many geopolitical flashpoints around the globe.

These third world countries often find themselves caught in the crossfire of conflicting interests and power struggles between major global players. As a result, they face challenges in maintaining stability and pursuing their own development agendas amidst the shifting dynamics of international politics.

Countries that choose to stay neutral faced pressure, straining diplomatic ties as well as cooperation (Foreign Policy, 2022). This has resulted in a complicated geopolitical landscape in which neutral countries must carefully maneuver between opposing major powers' interests while preserving their own sovereignty and national agency. These countries' problems underscore the careful balance they must find in order to retain diplomatic relations and cooperation without jeopardizing their own strategic objectives. The pressures and threats placed on neutral nations to choose between opposing great powers have produced policy dilemmas and undermined their sovereign right and national agency to choose friends and conduct diplomacy in accordance with their national interests.

In today's complex geopolitical landscape, neutral nations face immense challenges in navigating the delicate balance between maintaining their sovereignty and national agency. The increasing pressures and threats from opposing great powers have not only created policy dilemmas for these countries but also posed a significant risk to their ability to freely choose allies and pursue diplomatic strategies aligned with their own national interests. As such, it is crucial for these nations to employ astute diplomacy and strategic decision-making to safeguard their

independence while fostering constructive relationships with multiple global actors (Vines, 2022).

Ethiopia, like many other third-world nations, has taken a non-interventionist posture in the Ukraine issue. It has refused to attend UN Security Council meetings aimed at chastising Russia and has resisted Western attempts to take sides and oppose Russia. Ethiopia, like many other countries, has been subjected to intense Western diplomatic and financial pressure as a result of its failure to take a partisan stand and maintain a neutral posture on the Ukraine crisis. According to data gathered from interviews conducted for this study, Ethiopia's choice to remain neutral in the Ukraine crisis has put it under severe diplomatic and financial pressure from Western nations. This pressure has had an influence not just on Ethiopia's foreign relations, but also on its national security, and economic prospects.

According to a senior foreign ministry advisor interviewed for this study, Western diplomats urged Ethiopian solidarity against Russia and threatened to withdraw financial assistance offered to Ethiopian social development programs. According to another highly placed senior official, U.S. diplomats consistently characterized Ethiopia's help against Russia as a requirement for the resumption of Ethiopia's access to AGOA and the restoration of U.S. development aid supports during bilateral meetings. Western diplomats' efforts to seek Ethiopian backing against Russia emphasize Ethiopia's strategic importance in the area. However, it also highlights the possible implications of not aligning with Western goals, which have a substantial impact on Ethiopia's national security and U.S. development funds.

### **Economic Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis**

Aside from the political and economic consequences, the Ukraine crisis has economic ramifications for the whole African continent, particularly Ethiopia. Given the complexities of great power rivalry and relationship of geopolitics, commodities pricing, and financial markets, the Russian-Ukraine war has sent shockwaves across the global economy, including Ethiopia. To be sure, the ramifications have varied both within and across emerging countries. However, there have been certain shared challenges, such as sharp increases in commodity prices.

The Ukraine crisis has significantly impacted developing countries, particularly Africa, with trade disruptions, food and fuel price increases, macroeconomic instability, and security challenges. Global oil prices have risen beyond \$100, and food grain prices have risen due to

supply disruptions from Russia and Ukraine, affecting over one-third of most African nations' consumer price indexes (UNDP, 2022).

The Ukrainian conflict has produced severe debt distress in African nations such as Ethiopia, limiting their capacity to meet their debt obligations. Inflation induced by the conflict raised global commodity prices and spurred central banks to raise interest rates. International investors withdrew capital from developing nations in search of greater rates, causing currencies to depreciate against the U.S. dollar. The influx raised import costs and increased the cost of servicing foreign debt.

In a similar way the economic consequences of Ukraine's conflict were felt in the Ethiopian consumer sector. Ethiopia, a net importer of food and energy, is particularly vulnerable to global commodity price fluctuations. The Ukraine crisis has resulted in a huge increase in essential commodity prices across the world, most notably in Ethiopia. Petroleum prices increased by 64% in June 2022, while wheat prices increased by 48%. Edible oil prices climbed by 49%. Sanctions on Russia, the world's largest exporter of nitrogen-based fertilizer, have hampered supply, leading fertilizer prices to climb globally. As of 2021, petroleum items account for about \$3 billion in imports, accounting for one-fifth of total merchandise imports in Ethiopia. This surge in essential commodity prices has had a significant impact on the economy of Ethiopia, causing inflation rates to skyrocket and putting a strain on the purchasing power of its citizens (Senshaw and Tewodros, 2022).

The protracted crisis in Ukraine has resulted in continuous global price increases, causing the Ethiopian economy's balance of payment deficits to expand and critical commodity imports to fall (MoF, 2022). The economic impact of the Ukraine conflict has added to the Ethiopia's already precarious economic, political, and security position. The timing of this shock jeopardizes the nation's economic and political stability, since Ethiopia has been recuperating from the economic effects of COVID19 and the civil conflict in the country's northern and western regions since 2018.

### **U.S.-China Unstable Political rivalry and Its Impacts**

The geopolitical rivalry between the U.S. and China, extending beyond the Asia-Pacific region to the Horn of Africa, is characterized by a growing rivalry in areas such as security, political

influence, commerce, and investment, highlighting the fragility of the U.S.-China relationship (Modebadze, 2020).

Mutual acknowledgement of each other's political existence shows the possibility of stable and trusting ties between big states. The growing mutual revisionism between the United States and China as big powers has severe implications for international security. China has been increasingly willing to challenge perceived U.S. leadership of the international order and value promotion initiatives, whilst the U.S. is more focused on combating what it sees as a systemic challenge. A significant deterioration in the level of reciprocal acknowledgment of legitimacy in both nations' relationships risks increasing the instability of the international order, in which both play a critical role (Lawrence, 2013).

The decision to compete on peripheral problems and in peripheral areas rather than core interests is a critical political element influencing great power relations. Rival governments are less likely to escalate hostilities if their conflicts are kept distinct from vital national interests. On the contentious issue of Taiwan, the U.S. has consistently opposed independence; however, Beijing views U.S. actions such as arms sales to Taiwan and support for Taiwan's ostensibly democratic system of governance as efforts to thwart reunification and, by extension, Beijing's sovereignty over all of its claimed lands (ibid). The U.S.'s opposition to China's claims in the South China Sea—areas Beijing deems undeniably Chinese territory—is also regarded as compromising the Chinese state's territorial integrity (Ferdinand, 2013).

China is actively challenging the United States' supremacy in Asia by establishing China-centric international institutions such as the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the BRICS Bank. In January 2017, China's Foreign Ministry issued a white paper on Asia-Pacific security cooperation, highlighting the country's position as an Asian leader. The document sets forth a three-pronged strategy for building alternative infrastructure, normalizing U.S. acceptance, and ensuring regional compliance with Chinese leadership preferences via incentives and punishments. These declarations directly contradict the U.S.'s vision of its role in the area (Ministry of foreign affair of PRC, 2017).

The U.S. has traditionally seen itself as a dominant power in the Asia-Pacific region, and China's efforts to assert its leadership through initiatives like the Bank, Belt and Road Initiative, and BRICS Bank challenge this perception. China's white paper reflects its intention to reshape the

regional order by promoting its own infrastructure projects, gaining international acceptance for its leadership, and exerting influence through a system of rewards and punishments. This shift in dynamics has led to increased rivalry and tensions between China and the U.S. in the region (Heath, 2017).

On the ideological front, China's governance model is a source of contention, with the 2017 U.S. national security strategy condemning it while affirming a commitment to liberal democracy. Meanwhile, China promotes itself as a model for emerging economies, offering its own system of economic growth that does not require political change. President Xi sees China as forging a new route to modernization for other poor nations, providing a new option for their growth (Xi, 2017). This disagreement has been a major source of tension between the U.S. and China, with both countries engaging in diplomatic, economic and military maneuvers to assert their positions in many regions of the world including in the Horn of Africa.

### **3.1.2 Arms Race and Global Security**

Historically, the ambition to obtain sophisticated military technology has driven an arms race among major powers in the context of their competitive relationship. The relative balance of military capability has been a key cause of instability in the relationship between the present-day great powers of the United States, Russia, and China. Arms race could lead to a continuous cycle of military buildup and modernization as each country strives to maintain or gain an edge over its rivals. This arms race can exacerbate tensions and increase the likelihood of conflicts and miscalculations between competing states. A The pursuit of advanced military technology not only serves as a deterrent but also enhances a country's geopolitical influence, further exacerbating the instability in their relationships (Rasler, 2014).

Russian conventional capabilities have increased in recent years in the U.S.-Russia conflict, allowing Moscow to conduct offensive operations in Ukraine since 2014. Even though these capabilities are unlikely to be used directly against the U.S., U.S. partners on Russia's borders may be vulnerable. Russia's ongoing reform measures, as well as lessons gained from Ukraine and Syria, have resulted in substantial changes in Russia's armed forces' organization and operations. Ground forces have received new units and technologies, enabling for rapid

mechanized invasions along Russia's western border, particularly near the Ukraine border. These changes in Russia's armed forces have raised concerns among U.S. and NATO allies about the potential for further aggression in the region. The increased capabilities and proximity to Ukraine have heightened tensions and prompted increased military presence and exercises by NATO forces in Eastern Europe (Adomeit, 2017).

In the U.S.-China strategic rivalry issues of weapons and security plays a crucial role defining escalation in the rivalry. Both the U.S. and China regard conventional deterrence as a necessary complement to nuclear deterrence. In China military planners see conventional and nuclear deterrent as coexisting under the umbrella of integrated strategic deterrence (PLA, 2013). . Traditional deterrence, according to the PLA's Science of Military Strategy, provides more flexibility than nuclear weapons, particularly with rapidly expanding precision-strike capabilities in conventional missiles, and thus constitutes a powerful strategic deterrent for achieving strategic goals (ibid). Similarly, the idea of strategic deterrence in the United States has grown beyond nuclear forces to encompass non-nuclear assets (Gerson, 2009). In a crisis, China has made enormous investments in anti-access and area denial capabilities to prevent U.S. military intervention. This increased military investment on weapons and systems implies that both countries see each other as a possible conventional threat, reflecting a rising perception of each other as a threat (Neuman, 2018). This growing perception of threat has led to a significant increase in military spending in both China and the U.S.. As a result, both countries have been engaging in strategic rivalry and developing advanced technologies to maintain their military advantage over the other.

### **3.1.3 Management of Allies and Proxies**

The management of allies and proxies is a crucial aspect of great power relations that determine the stability of relations. The importance of proxies in initiating conflict between major nations has been widely established throughout history. The use of proxies and third parties to start wars may be traced back to Thucydides and the role that minor Greek city-states played in bringing Athens and Sparta to war. Throughout history, the manipulation of allies and proxies has proven to be a double-edged sword for great powers. While proxies can be instrumental in expanding influence and achieving strategic objectives, their actions can also inadvertently escalate tensions and even cause wars between great powers. This delicate balance requires great powers to

carefully navigate their relationships with proxies, ensuring that their actions align with broader geopolitical goals and do not undermine stability on the international stage. Great powers must also be prepared to bear the consequences of their proxies' actions, as they can face backlash and damage to their reputation if their proxies engage in controversial or destabilizing behavior. Additionally, the reliance on proxies can sometimes lead to a loss of control over the situation, as these actors may pursue their own agendas or act in ways that are not in line with the great power's interests (Borghard, 2014).

In the case of modern rivalry between the United States and China, both have practiced restraint, but rising tensions have split the Asia-Pacific region and exacerbated conflicts between China and its neighbors. The U.S. has actively pressed its partners in the South China Sea to undertake FONOPS (Freedom of Navigation Operations) in waters claimed by the PRC as its own, upsetting Beijing. Britain and France have conducted FONOPS in Chinese-claimed waters. This action, like military supplies to Taiwan and a pledge to support Japan in protecting the Senkakus, has heightened tensions between China and the United States, while deterring Chinese attack (Heydarian, 2018).

The Sino-American relationship between Taiwan and the U.S. is delicate, with the U.S. opposing Taiwan's independence proclamation and selling arms to Taiwan, which has angered Beijing. Chinese officials claim these sales motivate Taiwanese independence proponents to pursue a permanent separation from Beijing. U.S. policy towards Taiwan shows a rising willingness to strengthen ties, even if it means antagonizing Beijing. This growing willingness is evident in the recent high-level visits and increased military cooperation between the U.S. and Taiwan. However, the U.S. also maintains a "One China" policy, recognizing Beijing as the legitimate government of China, which adds complexity to their relationship with Taiwan (CSIS, 2022).

Furthermore, China's ties to North Korea have produced tension with the U.S., since China's support to the survival of the Pyongyang administration led to conventional conflict in the 1950s. There is danger that any large-scale crisis in North Korea would spark violent confrontations, especially if the U.S. and South Korea rush to accomplish reunification. The United States and South Korea's pursuit of reunification has been a longstanding concern for China, as it would potentially eliminate the buffer zone between its border and U.S. military presence. This fear further intensifies the tension between China and the U.S., as any large-scale conflict or crisis in

North Korea could escalate quickly and potentially lead to an armed clash between these powerful nations. (Bush, 2014).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Historical and Contemporary Aspects of Great Power Rivalry in Africa and the Horn**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Africa makes up around one-fifth of the earth's landmass and is the second-largest continent after Asia. Its boundaries, which include the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the south, the confluence of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, have made it an important center of global trade throughout history. In addition to its strategic location, the continent has always been rich in significant natural resources, including large global shares of salt, iron ore, diamonds, gold, and silver. These resources have played a significant role in shaping the continent's history and attracting foreign powers seeking to exploit its wealth (Tarihi, 2019).

In the 16th century, the Portuguese and Ottomans encountered the first great power conflict in Africa, when the former's efforts threatened the latter's dominance in Ethiopia (Abir, 1980). Following that was what was known as the "scramble for Africa," a contest in the second half of the nineteenth century between European powers for the brutal partition of Africa (Mamdani, 1996). The continent became an extension of the global East-West confrontation between the United States (U.S.) and the Soviet Union (USSR) during the Cold War. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia's focus on its own economic recovery and domestic concerns reduced its influence in Africa. However, with Russia's annexation of Crimea and the imposition of sanctions, Africa has emerged as a key component in Russia's global search for alternative source of economic partnership. Moscow has established political and economic relations with African countries, focusing on energy, infrastructure, and military matters. This is driven by Russia's goals to counter the influence of Western powers in Africa and secure access to critical resources, as well as escape Western sanctions (Duursma & Masuhr, 2022).

While the abrupt fall of the USSR in the 1990s left the U.S. with no opponent on the continent, China's geopolitical resurgence quickly threatened its dominant position. Since the early 2000s, China has increasingly engaged with Africa in parallel with its need for natural resources to fuel its booming economy (Tarihi, 2020). China's engagement with Africa has been characterized by

extensive investments in infrastructure projects, such as roads, railways, and ports, aimed at facilitating the extraction and transportation of resources. Additionally, China has also pursued diplomatic efforts to strengthen its ties with African nations through trade agreements and development aid programs. This growing presence has not only strengthened China's economic ties with the continent but also raised fears among Western powers about its expanding influence in Africa (ibid).

The historical involvements and present dynamics of great power competitive engagement must be investigated in order to assess the political and security implications of great power involvement in Africa and the Horn. Additionally, it assists us in understanding and explaining wider patterns of great power behavior in Africa and the Horn, which allows us to comprehend great power behavior in the specific context of Ethiopian national security.. To that end, this section analyzes the historical aims and patterns of great power competitive dynamics in Africa and the Horn of Africa. The chapter opens by addressing major power involvement in the post-World War II era, focusing on the political and economic angles of the engagements. It then examines East-West rivalry in Africa during the Cold War. The chapter then addresses the so-called 'unipolar' period that followed the fall of the Soviet Union and the ascension of the United States as the sole global superpower in the 1990s. Finally, the chapter finishes with the United States', Russia's, and China's recent competing involvement on the continent, notably in the Horn of Africa. The examination of these three eras of great power rivalry in Africa demonstrates the effects of major powers rivalry on the political and economic stability of Africa's nations and societies.

## **4.2 Politico-Security Dynamics of Great Powers in Cold War Africa**

The Cold War (1945–1991) may be characterized as a period of fierce ideological warfare between proponents of free market capitalism headed by the United States and several communist countries led by the former Soviet Union (Kalu , 2020). These big players' foreign policy toward Africa had a significant influence on the continent's political culture. The main Cold War actors, in particular, contributed to generate and prolong crises that would eventually

become a permanent feature of African politics by providing financial and military assistance to domestic actors in African countries. This interference in African politics by the United States and the Soviet Union not only fueled existing conflicts but also created new ones, as local actors were often manipulated and supported based on their alignment with either capitalist or communist ideologies. The consequences of this intervention continue to shape the political landscape of Africa, with deep-rooted divisions and power struggles that persist to this day (ibid).

Prior to the end of World War II, the multipolar international system, which was characterized by the presence of multiple powerful states with balanced powers so that none of them was powerful enough to dominate the others, had been transformed into bipolarity. This transformation occurred as a result of the rise of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, who emerged as the dominant players on the global stage. The bipolar international system was marked by intense rivalry and rivalry between these two superpowers, leading to the Cold War era. Bernard Baruch, a former American businessman and presidential advisor, coined the term "cold war" on March 12, 1947, during a Senate discussion over the Truman doctrine (Lafeber, 1994). Lafeber (1994) divides the cold war into two periods, the first period began after World War I and continued until the conclusion of World War II, while the second part began in 1945 and lasted until 1990.

During much of the cold war era, the continental Africa and the Horn region developed as an extension of the United States' (U.S.) and Soviet Union's (USSR) East-West conflict. The Soviet Union and the United States methodically employed military and economic aid programs as instruments of influence to further their objectives. U.S. help was only available to nations who supported the West. This, however, violated general U.S. foreign policy since strategic objectives were prioritized over liberal principles like democracy and human rights (Thomson, 1996). As a result, the U.S. gave South Africa and Zaire's authoritarian regimes financial and military support without hesitation. In contrast, the USSR's aid program was primarily offered to countries that opted for a Marxist non-capitalist system.-Leninism (ibid).

During this era, the impact of major power competitive engagement with the African continent has been exemplified by the continent's lengthy wars in the south and east regions of the continent. Multiple global powers' participation complicated the conclusion of these conflicts,

caused immense suffering for people, and destabilized the political and economic well-being of the affected states and societies long after the bloodshed ended.

The proxy wars in Zaire and Angola characterize the Cold War's great power involvement in the continent. In Angola, the civil war turned into a flash point in the Cold War as the superpowers and their allies provided military support to their chosen proxies. While the U.S. supported liberal 'democracy movements' while frequently supporting extreme right-wing forces equally as violent as those supported by the Soviet Union during the Angolan civil war, the USSR supported violent left-wing communist organizations opposed to the liberal West's objectives. In addition to escalating ideological tensions between the superpowers, the proxy war in Angola and Zaire also made the misery of the local inhabitants worse. The involvement of these superpowers exacerbated tensions and prolonged the fight for control in these areas, further complicating the already complex dynamics of the civil war. The severe effects of this Cold War rivalry further widened these nations' divides and had a long-lasting effect on their political and social circumstances (Henry, 1991).

During the Angolan civil war, the U.S. provided supplies and training to both the FNLA and UNITA. China has also provided military training to the FNLA. The Soviet Union supplied the MPLA with military training and supplies. Despite the Soviet-backed MPLA's success to seize control of Luanda and drive the FNLA out of the city in the summer of 1975, the FNLA continued to launch attacks. The surviving Portuguese soldiers were helpless to stop the slaughter. The FNLA's continued attacks encouraged the U.S. to strengthen its backing for UNITA, viewing it as a potential counterbalance to the MPLA. This fueled the conflict and heightened the bloodshed in Angola. As many factions competed for power and control over the country, it war increasingly became complicated, leading to a prolonged and devastating civil conflict (Henry, 1991). Lisbon decided to withdraw its soldiers from Angola on November 11, 1975, the day MPLA leader Neto declared Angolan independence. This decision effectively ended Portugal's colonial control in Angola, leaving the country in political chaos and setting the way for a lengthy and bloody civil war between the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA. The withdrawal of Portuguese soldiers also left a power vacuum, allowing other countries like Cuba and South Africa to intervene and exacerbate the bloodshed. The MPLA, led by Agostinho Neto, eventually emerged as the ruling party in Angola, with support from the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Meanwhile, the FNLA and UNITA received backing from South Africa and the United States, respectively, turning Angola into a battleground for Cold War proxy conflicts. The civil war lasted for nearly three decades, resulting in immense suffering and devastation for the Angolan people (Ibid). Furthermore, the Angola crisis reversed a nascent warming in relations between the United States and its cold war adversaries. The civil war not only heightened tensions between the superpowers in the Third World but also undermined any progress made towards great powers détente and cooperation at the time (Henry, 1991).

The significance of great power rivalry in African regional wars had been shown in the Horn of Africa by the 1977-78 Ethio-Somali war and the ensuing swift change in great power alliance formation. The Soviets were late to arrive in the Horn of Africa. They began contacting Mogadishu at least ten years after the United States established itself as Addis Ababa's main friend and arms supplier in the early 1950s. Furthermore, it wasn't until Somalia's military takeover in 1969 that relations between the two countries began to strengthen, making Somalia the USSR's staunchest African friend until it switched sides and partnered with the U.S. to cut all ties with Moscow (Ayoob, 1978).

Prior to the outbreak of the Ogaden war between Ethiopians and Somalis in the early 1970s, the United States was a key supporter of Ethiopia, offering everything from direct military aid to development assistance. This U.S. backing for Ethiopia throughout the 1970s was motivated by geopolitical objectives, as Ethiopia functioned as a vital ally housing the Kagnev Communications Center in Asmara, a critical node in America's global network of military communications. Prior to the beginning of the conflict, Ethiopia was the primary receiver of U.S. military and economic aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. Somalia, on the other hand, was a USSR satellite state that received major military assistance before its invasion of Ethiopia.

Given the large number of ethnic Somalis living in the disputed territory between the two nations, one could claim that the Somali state's irredentist ambitions were a primary source of conflict between Ethiopia and Somali Republic. The irredentist attempts of the Somali state were motivated by a desire to unite all Somali-speaking areas, including those within Ethiopia. If the war had been fought with the minimal resources available to the two countries, casualties and damage may have been reduced. However, the involvement of foreign major powers greatly

increased the scope and breadth of the conflict, as well as the resultant violence on both sides (Ayoob, 1978).

Although the Horn of Africa has long had intense regional rivalries, there have been few wars between neighbors on the scale of the devastation seen in the Ethiopia and Somalia war. The involvement of the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as their satellites and allies, raised this conflict above the level of a neighborly conflict with minimal means to deploy state of the art weaponry with large destructive capabilities. Furthermore, it is a fight characterized by quick switches in allegiance and dramatic changes, such as the breaking of strong military relations between Ethiopia and the U.S., the expulsion of the Soviets from Somalia, and the USSR and Cuba providing major military aid to Ethiopians (Ayoob, 1978).

#### **4.3 Africa in the ‘New World Order’**

When the Soviet Union fell apart, the global ideological conflict that defined the Cold conflict came to an end, with the United States emerging as the lone remaining superpower and winner (Krauthammer, 1991). In the early aftermath of the Soviet collapse, Western politicians and pundits began to speculate about the rise of the U.S. as a unipolar power and referred to the new international politics as ‘New World Order’. Unipolarity refers to an international system in which the might of one state dwarfs that of the rest (Nye, 1992). The United States dominated the military, economic, and cultural sectors throughout this unipolar period. One can argue that the United States' position in the 1990s was a one-of-a-kind example of a unipolar system (Posen, 2017).

Unlike bipolar and multipolar systems, the unipolar system has minimal limitations on the state wielding it. With minimal resistance, the United States preferred liberal policies, supporting democracy and market economies while preserving its power position, resulting in the development of democracy and market economies. This system enabled the United States to wield global power, establishing international institutions and alliances that reflected its beliefs and interests. Furthermore, the unipolar structure allowed the U.S. to undertake unilateral actions, such as military interventions, without considerable opposition from other major powers. In the African geopolitical space, with the retreating power of the USSR and the yet developing China, the U.S. singularly dominated Africa's political and economic relations. Lacking a clear

competitor and enemy to target in the African space the U.S. with its Western ally's prioritized democratization and economic liberalization as the be all and end all of engagement with Africa (Krauthammer, 1991).

### **Africa's Post-Cold War Politico-Security Dynamics**

The United States maintained active engagement policies during the 1990s post-Cold War transition period, with democratization and economic liberalization taking center stage. The United States promoted economic and political liberalization programs by prioritizing democratic reforms in any foreign aid provided to African countries (Brown, 2005). The U.S. followed through on its commitments by reducing funding to cold war allies that are seen to be regressing on democratization, while shifting resources to states perceived to be actively democratizing, such as South Africa, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. By tying foreign aid to democratization, the U.S. hoped to stimulate democratization and build democratic institutions in formerly 'undemocratic' African countries. The approach was based on the belief that supporting democratic reforms would not only promote stability and good governance but also foster economic growth and improve the overall well-being of the citizens in African countries (Brown, 2005; Lawson, 1999).

However, because of the prevalence of internal crises and coups in many African nations, the exuberant democracy drive faded shortly after, as the U.S. and its Western allies began emphasizing stability above democratization. In the mid-1990s, major conflicts erupted in Burundi, when a successful coup in 1996 overthrew the democratic government, restoring previous President Pierre Buyoya to power. Despite East African nations' efforts to apply sanctions, the U.S. and its Western allies backed the coup government in the hope that Buyoya would enhance security. However, Buyoya's return to power did not result in Burundi's stability. Instead, it exacerbated the country's internal problems and tensions (Nkurunziza, 2018). The

coup government's harsh actions and violations of human rights only fuelled discontent among various ethnic groups, ultimately worsening the security situation rather than improving it (ibid).

The United States' strong presence and engagement on the continent in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War's end included its participation in the Horn of Africa. Following the collapse of the Somali state and the severe humanitarian consequences of the civil war, the United Nations Security Council, concluding that the situation in Somalia had become "intolerable," authorized the deployment of military forces to ensure the distribution of humanitarian aid in a land beset by widespread starvation and suffering, preventing a total breakdown of law and order (Lefebvre, 1993). This was an unexpected option for the United Nations, especially for the United States, which had taken the lead in supporting the intervention. Following UN Security Council approval, the U.S. assumed the lead and launched a military campaign in Somalia as part of a multinational humanitarian and peacekeeping operation from 1992 to 1993, culminating in the so-called Battle of Mogadishu on October 3-4, 1993. After a skirmish in which 18 U.S. Marines were killed and their corps dragged on the streets of Mogadishu, the U.S. withdrew its soldiers the following weeks (Lewy, 1993). The Battle of Mogadishu, also known as the Black Hawk Down incident, had a significant impact on the United States' decision to withdraw its forces from Somalia. The tragic loss of American lives sparked public outcry and raised questions about the effectiveness and feasibility of interventions.

The shock and humiliation of the disastrous mission in Somalia drove the United States to withdraw from Africa. Following the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia in early 1994, a period of U.S. disengagement fueled by the "Somalia Syndrome" ensued. After the failure in Somalia, and with the Rwandan genocide well underway, the Clinton administration released the Presidential Decision Directive, which attempted to severely curtail future United Nations operations, particularly U.S. participation in them. It outlined seven reasons that American authorities would evaluate before sanctioning United Nations operations to be carried out by non-Americans, as well as six additional factors that would be reviewed if U.S. soldiers participated (Michaels, 1993). The shift away from the idealism vision of the early post-Cold War period, which Bush referred to as the "New World Order" and Clinton referred to as "Assertive Multilateralism," could not have been more drastic. The first two factors in authorizing even UN operations in which the U.S. was not involved were whether the action would benefit U.S. interests and if

there was a clear threat to world peace and security. The disinterested humanitarian era was passed (ibid).

The Rwandan genocide put the newly stated value-based engagement of U.S. policy in Africa to the test. Inspired by the U.S. setback in Somalia during the 1993 intervention, the U.S. hesitated to intervene to stop the killings in Rwanda. Later, released U.S. documents revealed that the Clinton administration was aware of the ongoing genocide but denied it in order to justify U.S. inaction. The U.S. administration battled over the definition of genocide, refusing to refer to the Rwandan genocide as such until it had taken its course and killed a million people. The United States' reluctance to intervene in Rwanda had long-lasting consequences, raising questions about its commitment to human rights and its role as a global leader in preventing mass atrocities. The U.S. government was heavily criticized both domestically and internationally, with many accusing the United States of turning a blind eye to the atrocities taking place in Rwanda. U.S. inaction had a significant impact on its relationship with Africa and its perception as a global leader in human rights, raising questions about U.S. pronouncements about the commitment to defend human rights, prevent mass atrocities, and protect vulnerable populations (Linda, 2000).

In other parts of Africa, a need to democratize compelled several rulers to find ways to meet U.S. demands. Following a restricted conception of democratic governance, these regimes held periodical elections in order to accommodate U.S. demands without jeopardizing their control. As a result, in the mid-1990s, the modal regime in Africa was what some referred to as 'electoral authoritarian' sorts (Diamond, 2002). The U.S. was especially close with a set of Presidents it referred to as a "new generation of African leaders," despite its overall rejection of the applicability of multiparty democracy to their conditions. Presidents Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, and Paul Kagame of Rwanda were among the new generation. This approach of favoring stability over liberalization and democratization could have performed better had the new generation of African leaders not gone to battle with one another soon after (Diamond, 2002).

### **Post 9/11 Africa**

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, marked a significant change in how Africa and the world interacted after the Cold War. The U.S. changed its value-based policies to securitization as the driving premise for policy in response to the September 11 attacks (Pham, 2006). In the

post 9/11 era, U.S.-Africa relations embraced the more realist logic of fear and self-interest. Africa's so-called weak and failing states and its historic links to the Middle East were seen as potential breeding grounds for transnational terrorism. As one author pointed out, combinations of relatively weak states, ethnic and religious diversity and sometimes discrimination, poverty and in many places 'ungoverned space'" make the continent susceptible to the growth of radical and sometimes internationally connected movements that employ terrorism (Lyman, 2009). The U.S. also feared that Africa's natural resources, such as diamonds, together with drug money, might be used to finance transnational terrorist activities. Alleged terrorists and their groups, including Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, made millions of dollars from the illicit trade in West African diamonds, or they concealed their money in diamonds from West Africa, or both (Pham, 2006).

The 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) asserts that the U.S. was threatened less by conquering states than by falling ones. With respect to the threat of international terrorism, the NSS pledges to work with European allies to help strengthen Africa's fragile states, help build indigenous capability to secure porous borders, and help build up the law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny safe havens for terrorists. In 2002, the U.S. policy to combat terrorism in Africa was organized around two sub-regions; the East African component included the Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and West African component included the Pan-Sahel Initiative/Trans-Sahel Counter Terrorism Initiative (Whitehouse, 2002).

The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was established in 2003 at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti by the East African component of the African anti-terror alliances system. Under this organization, approximately 18 thousand military personnel were sent to the Horn of Africa from 2002 to 2009 (Ploch, 2012). In addition to assisting in the acquisition of military equipment and the provision of humanitarian assistance in the region, the CJTF-HOA attempted to establish military-to-military relations, conduct joint training and exercises with military units in the Horn of Africa, and establish military-to-military relations. Military support was provided by CJTF-HOA personnel, and they participated in joint military exercises with a few Horn military installations. Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya were among the beneficiaries, along with Burundi, Tanzania, and Rwanda in lesser amounts (ibid).

According to Mills (2007), CJTF-HOA forces frequently patrolled the Red Sea coast, looking for terrorist infiltration and gathering information on potential terrorist groups in the Greater Horn. Additionally, they contributed to the African Union's efforts to maintain peace. The U.S. military transported Ethiopian peacekeeping powers to Burundi in 2003 and gave specialized and knowledge help to Ugandan peacekeepers in Somalia. In addition, the CJTF-HOA has supported Ethiopian and Djiboutian security forces in their military operations in the Horn of Africa by providing information and other resources. For instance, they provided the Ethiopian forces that invaded Somalia in 2006 to overthrow the Islamic Court Union with intelligence and technical support (Ploch, 2012).

The primary beneficiaries of the United States' policy to enhance the capacity of government agencies in selected African states to combat international terrorism were the governments of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (Shady, 2007). In 2003, these nations received grants totaling over \$100 million and technical assistance from the United States' East Africa Counter-terrorism Initiative to improve their military capabilities, maritime security, border security, law enforcement capacity, and prosecutorial capacity (ibid).

In West Africa, the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) was established to assist the governments of Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in enhancing the capabilities of their security institutions to combat terrorism in the West African sub-region and in better protecting their borders. In 2005, the program was renamed the Pan-Sahel Initiative and expanded to include the Sahel sub-region. According to Lyman (2009), Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, and Senegal were added to the list of states that received assistance in their efforts to combat terrorism in the Sahel sub-region of Africa.

Overall, the attacks of September 11 and the subsequent "war on terror" agenda consumed U.S. relations with Africa. The United States of America prioritized security-related anti-terrorism issues over value-based policies in response to the September 11 attacks. The logic of fear and self-interest began to dominate American-African relations. The shift in U.S. policy toward Africa resulted in an increase in the continent's military presence and efforts to combat terrorism. Furthermore, it brought about a prioritization of strength and security over different parts of the

U.S.- Africa relationship, for example, improvement help and a majority rules government advancement.

#### **4.4 Socio-Economic Engagement with Africa**

The U.S. 's shift away from value based policy was also driven by economic self-interest. The dependence on oil from the Middle East was increasingly viewed as a threat to national security of the U.S., the untapped potential of Africa's oil was looked at as an alternative option to reduce the United States' oil dependence on Middle Eastern oil (Rice, 2006). The term "transformational diplomacy" was coined by Secretary of State Rice at the time to capitalize on this idea. According to Rice (2006), the strategy aims to move Africa from being on the periphery of "the U.S. spectrum of vital interests" to a more central position in U.S. policy making. As a component of the 'transformational diplomacy', U.S. Africa relations came to be characterized by the three D's: diplomacy, development, and defense.

The defense part mainly focused on technical support to African armies in the fight against terrorism. The development cluster sought to support African efforts to improve "health, education, democracy, and economic growth and to "prevent problems from turning into crises and crisis from turning into conflicts in Africa (Lyman and Wittels, 2010). An outstanding contribution by the Bush administration was the injection of massive resources into the health sector of Africa's economies. The U.S. pledged U.S.\$200 million towards the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and followed it up a year later with a U.S.\$500 million International Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative, which sought to prevent the maternal transmission of HIV. In 2003, the U.S. introduced the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to help people infected with HIV access life-saving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. PEPFAR was expected to disburse about \$15 billion over its first five years, but by the end of 2008 it was estimated that the figure had already reached around \$25 billion. The health initiative of the Bush administration is widely believed to have had a major impact in Africa's health sector, including helping to halve the incidence of malaria in 15 African countries and saving the lives of thousands of people infected with HIV (Cook, 2006).

In the economic sector, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), which President Bush established in 2003, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) have emerged as the central pillars of U.S. economic engagement in Africa following the Cold War. MCA provides economic assistance to impoverished democracies worldwide, and AGOA grants democratic nations in Africa preferential access to the U.S. market. Countries that have established market-based economies, the rule of law, political pluralism, the elimination of trade and investment barriers, the protection of intellectual property, efforts to combat corruption, policies to reduce poverty, increasing availability of health care and educational opportunities, the protection of human rights and worker rights, and the elimination of certain child labor practices are considered AGOA eligible by the President (office of U.S. trade representative, 2006).

The MCA makes a more serious effort to target resources to democratic regimes by determining eligibility based on 16 quantitative indicators, which measure the same qualities that are listed in the AGOA eligibility list. This is done in recognition of the political pressures that are involved in presidential certification of eligibility. The majority of African nations, including some of those that violate the principles listed on the eligibility list, were designated as AGOA eligible by both Bush and Clinton. For instance, Guinea is eligible for AGOA in 2006 despite Freedom House's rating of it as "not free" and Transparency International's global corruption indices ranking it as the most corrupt country in Africa (Nicholas, 2010).

AGOA is the institutional embodiment of the "trade not aid" rhetoric of the mid- to late-1990s, in which American and African leaders agreed that increased access to the American market would facilitate economic growth and development in Africa more effectively than had decades of foreign assistance. However, the provisions of AGOA included multiple protections for American producers who might be harmed, even marginally, by rivalry from Africa (CFR, 2006).

#### **4.5 The re-emergence of Great Power Rivalry in Africa**

Long after the conclusion of the cold war, brief international disengagement and disinterest, and the gradual trend away from the global "war on terror," geopolitical, strategic, and economic

factors are progressively heading to a new global superpower contest in Africa. Following the United States' short lived "Unipolar moment" and Western unilateralism, the twenty-first century has unleashed a strategic rivalry among superpowers on multiple levels in the international arena. The increasingly active global and regional power struggles are most pronounced in the resource rich African continent and the strategically important Horn of Africa region, involving the three great powers of the United States, China and Russia. Thus, this section of the study examines the political and economic interactions of major powers with Africa in the competitive context of international politics. The purpose of this section is to investigate the long-term goals and driving interests of major powers as well as the effects that the three great powers' competitive and dynamic engagements have on the African continent and the Horn of Africa in particular.

#### **4.5.1 USA Competing in Africa**

The geopolitical reality of rivalry for influence on the African continent seems unavoidable. The rise of China's economy has been linked, according to senior U.S. officials, strategists, and academics to resource rivalry and a significant rise in Chinese political influence internationally (Economist, 2019). The former administration of Donald Trump was the first to emphasize the upcoming rivalry in Africa with China and Russia. Some even go as far as to call the current politics between African great powers a "new scramble for Africa," referring to the "scramble for Africa" during the colonial era, which took place between 1881 and 1914 and saw European powers occupy, divide, and colonize the continent (ibid).

The ongoing confrontation in Africa between the U.S. and China is tied to the principles set by each major power to preserve its primary interests. The multiple efforts and institutional frameworks established in Africa by the major countries emphasizes this rivalry. Since 2000, the U.S. has established and implemented key institutions and programs to counter growing Chinese influence in Africa, including the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the African Command (AFRICOM), the Young African

Leaders Initiative (YALI), and, most recently, the widely reported Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative (EU, 2021).

#### **4.5.1.1 U.S. New Africa Strategy: A break from status quo**

In a departure from the past, the United States developed its first Sub-saharan strategy, which is believed to be innovative in both thinking and approach. Similarly to China and Russia, the United States hosted two U.S.-Africa High level summits conferences to enhance and improve diplomatic ties with African countries. The shift in U.S. policy reflects not only the need to respond to the growing influence of its great power rivals but also a recognition of Africa's growing importance in the global rivalry among the major powers.

As part of his tour to South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda in August 2022, Secretary of State Antony Blinken introduced the new U.S. Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy in Pretoria. The new plan, envisioned as a strategy with the potential to alter U.S.-Africa relations, is an important document in the long history of U.S.-Africa connections. The new U.S.-Africa strategy is a departure from previous Africa policy documents, as well as a novel approach to U.S. engagement in Africa, which has made little headway since the colonial era and the Cold War.

Critics contend that the fall of the Berlin Wall provided the United States with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to successfully alter African geopolitics and adapt to the realities of Africa following the Cold War (Nzuki and Dizolele, 2022). Instead, policies that foster partnerships with African nations that benefit both parties, such as those between South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand, were hampered by a lack of imagination and creativity as well as an excessive reliance on European former colonial powers (ibid.).

The U.S. twenty-first century Africa strategy seeks to forge a relationship between the United States and Africa, with an emphasis on Africa's rising great power dynamics. The strategy highlights Africa's potential relevance in the coming era of great power contestation, emphasizing its rapidly increasing population, considerable natural resource endowments, and sizable voting bloc in the United Nations. The strategy also outlines the ways the U.S. will confront China's 'destructive' activities as well as Russia's use of disinformation to undercut African resistance to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The strategy seeks to promote the United States in the emerging great power dynamics while also countering China and Russia's moves.

The strategy includes strengthening diplomatic ties with African nations, offering economic incentives, and providing military support to those countries that align with the U.S. and its allies (Whitehouse, 2022).

Furthermore, the strategy includes four strategic objectives, including measures to adapt to climate change and post-COVID19 recovery issues, as well as long-standing goals of good governance, democracy and securing issues. To accomplish these goals, the strategy envisions resetting the partnership that will focus on increasing U.S. efforts and deploying new perspectives to existing policies. Some of the new strategies included engaging and strengthening civil society, using the public diplomacy of America's African diaspora, as well as leveraging the corporate sector and a renewed focus to urban centres (Ibid).

Along with other programs, the United States hosts the U.S. Africa Summit to engage African leaders. In 2014, former President Barack Obama hosted the inaugural summit. The second U.S.-Africa leaders' Summit (ALS) was held in Washington in 2023. However, much has changed since the inaugural U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit (ALS), when the geopolitical context for deepening partnerships was less volatile: global economic integration was accelerating, and Africa was "rising" from slow development and chronic poverty. The first summit was characterized as a critical first step in engaging with a new, wealthier Africa. But the 2nd summit was organized on the backdrop of a worrying economic and political developments: Global inflation, an oncoming debt crisis for numerous African nations, escalating geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China, and a heated conflict in Ukraine are all possible outcomes. In an uncertain international environment, big and medium countries have a fundamental national interest in reviving connections with a continent that may be the last frontier of future economic development and a sizable voting group in multilateral forums.

#### **4.5.2 China Competing in Africa**

The phenomenal rise of China has been one of the most significant developments of the twenty-first century. The Chinese economy is expected to surpass that of the United States during the next decade (EUISS, 2015). As a result, the global order is undergoing transformation, with the status and changing relationship of great powers being one of the most crucial issues in

international affairs. In recent decades, China's relationship with Africa has developed enormously, overtaking the United States and its Western allies as the dominant powers in Africa. In this section, the study addresses China's political, diplomatic, security, and economic engagements with Africa, with a focus on engagements meant to expand China's influence in order to out compete other great powers.

China has experienced extraordinary economic growth over the past two decades, moving from an economy with low incomes to one with upper middle incomes and maintaining its position as the largest contributor to global growth (Jayaram 2017). China's economic engagement with African countries is central to its ambitions to increase its influence in the continent. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is at the center of China's economic growth plan. The BRI is one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects ever built, with an estimated cost of a trillion dollars. The effort, which began in 2013, was intended to connect East Asia and Europe. However, in the decades since its inception, the initiative has grown to encompass Africa. Currently, Africa is the project's largest component; 46 African nations have signed on to the BRI, representing over a billion people and 20 percent of the world's land mass. China's economic dominance in Africa would be further solidified with the completion of the BRI, as it would open up new trade routes and increase connectivity between African nations and the rest of the world. This expansion would also provide China with access to Africa's vast natural resources, strengthening its position as a global economic powerhouse (Ursu & Berg, 2018).

According to reports that track private investment in Africa, China is increasing the volume of financial investment in the continent. As the number of Chinese-funded projects surged by 106% in 2016, China emerged as the continent's biggest employment generator and third largest investor (Jayaram 2017). China's overseas financial flows into Africa have primarily taken the shape of development aid in the form of grants and loans. Statistical data on Afro-China commerce show that China outnumbers the United States in trade with the 55 African countries. While commerce was USD 58.65 billion in 2017, comprising USD 24 billion in imports from the U.S. to Africa and USD 34.6 billion in exports from Africa to the U.S., trade with China totaled USD 206 157.3 billion, including USD 97 billion in Chinese imports compared to USD 60.3 billion in African exports. As a result, it can be claimed that China is three times more present on

the African continent than its American strategic opponent. Of course, China's trade figures nearly quadrupled between 2017 and 2021, while the U.S. continued to decline (Ega, 2021).

In the diplomatic sphere, China has established the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) which meets every three years. The FOCAC summit has been conducted on a regular basis since the turn of the century. The FOCAC summits produce outcome documents in the form of an action plan for both sides of the participants to work on until the next meeting (Sun, 2021). The establishment of a naval base in Equatorial Guinea may signal that a new phase in this agenda has begun. The 2021 FOCAC Ministerial Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, was the most important FOCAC meeting in determining the future of Sino-China partnership. The Dakar Ministerial Meeting of FOCAC endorsed four documents: the 2035 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation, the Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024), the Sino-African Declaration on Climate Change, and the Declaration of the Eight Ministerial Conference of FOCAC. The four documents have a lot of overlap in terms of scope and focus. They all give extensive lists of concerns and areas of collaboration between China and Africa. The 2035 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation is notable for being the first to set a long-term cooperation plan established jointly by China and Africa. The Vision establishes the basis for China-Africa collaboration for the next 15 years. The most notable aspect of Vision 2035 is that its timing corresponds to China's own Vision 2035 plan (ibid).

China's engagement in the security and military sectors is one of its many relations with Africa. China has significantly increased its involvement in the African security sector since 2015 (Isaev, 2019). China vowed to strengthen African security institutions through the FOCAC action plans, investing hundreds of millions of dollars in the building of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises. The 2018 FOCAC summit called for the establishment of 50 various initiatives to help China and its African partners coordinate security throughout the continent, including the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum and the China-Africa Law Enforcement and Security Forum (Tanchum, 2021). Furthermore, the most important development in China's military engagement with Africa occurred when the country established its first overseas military base in the Horn of Africa—Djibouti. Djibouti is strategically located at the entrance to the vital Red Sea corridor of Bab el Mendeb. Djibouti also hosts military bases for the United States and its allies. China has been a

member of the multinational alliance against piracy and defending global trade moving through the Red Sea. Although China claims that the naval base's purpose is 'logistics facility' to support anti-piracy operations and protect global trade passing through the street, the base's extensive docking capabilities, which include aircraft carriers and submarines, suggest a desire for a continent-wide security presence (ibid.).

In the socio-cultural arena, China has been extensively engaged in promoting internationalization of its culture through its Confucian institute. The institutes promote Chinese language and culture education, as well as granting scholarships for good students to attend university on the mainland. China is focusing its efforts on winning the hearts and minds of African governments. By 2008, it is expected that 120,000 students from other countries would have flown to China to attend college, up from 8,000 a decade earlier (Kurlantzick , 2006). In order to widen African people' exposure to China, China is also attempting to develop its diplomatic core and media outlets, such as the Xinhua news agency (ibid).

Finally, The rivalry between the U.S. and China in Africa responds to the imperatives that each great power has established to safeguard its vital interests. The various initiatives or frameworks launched in Africa by the two great powers demonstrate this rivalry.

### **4.5.3 Russia Competing in Africa**

Since Russian President Vladimir Putin's first trip to Africa in 2006, relations between the two countries have significantly improved. There has been a deliberate push toward political and economic re-engagement following a prolonged period of decreasing Russian interaction with Africa, following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. This drive was particularly strong in the 2010s. Russia has actively worked to enhance its connections with African states over the last decade through increasing diplomatic visits, commercial deals, and military cooperation (Kachur, , 2020).

These efforts have resulted in the formation of new alliances and the resuscitation of old ones, establishing Russia as a crucial participant in Africa's development and geopolitical environment. These efforts have typically been restricted to a few African countries and a few vital industries such as military, energy, and minerals. To be sure, Russia's political and economic imprint on the continent has remained small in contrast to the other big nations (ibid).

In the late 2010s the Kremlin rekindle its interest in playing a greater geopolitical role: Sub-Saharan Africa revived in Russian political discourse, and commercial and diplomatic activity grew. At the same time, Moscow reactivated alumni organizations of Africans who studied in the Soviet Union and initiated attempts to attract additional students to Russia. The Wagner Group, a military firm linked to the Russian state, also extended its operational area south of the Sahara.

Russia's military, economic, and political engagement with Africa, however, has expanded considerably in recent years, in keeping with its developing revivalist goal in global geopolitics. For example, Russia has signed over 20 bilateral military treaties with African countries, increased its trade volume with the continent, and increased its media presence (Hirsbrunner, 2022). Russia sought new commercial and geopolitical opportunities, particularly after being sanctioned by a number of Western countries following its annexation of Crimea in 2014. Furthermore, Russia used the anti-colonialism card deftly on the African continent, seizing on discontent with Western policies.

Despite growing sanctions and escalating international tensions during the Ukraine conflict, Russia-Africa ties improved significantly in the second part of the 2010s. 'Since the implementation of Western sanctions, Africa has been the only area in the world to continuously boost imports from Russia. Despite falling well behind most of the superpowers in the continent, Russia was able to garner significant political support throughout this period. This revived relationship was built on the back of at least 16 official visits by African heads of state to Moscow in the 2015 to 2019 period, a doubling in trade in the 2014 to 2019 period, and culminating in the 2019 the First Russia–Africa Summit hosted in Sochi and attended by 43 African heads of state (ISS, 2022). The 2019 summit signaled Moscow's intent to bolster trade and non-conditional financial assistance to African states over the coming years while underscoring the value of the Russia–Africa partnership within the areas of energy, arms and military cooperation.

At the inaugural Russia-Africa Summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his desire to expand the amount of commerce between Russia and Africa to \$40 billion by 2024. Given that trade volume fell to \$14.5 billion in 2020, and given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, it seems very doubtful that this objective will be met in the following two years. However, when it comes to military cooperation, Russia is the greatest provider of armaments to Africa, accounting for

44% of the region's purchases between 2017 and 2021. The Russia-Africa meeting strengthened these military cooperation even further. Several military agreements were signed at the meeting, including ones between Russia and Algeria and Nigeria. Furthermore, at the event, Rosatom, Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation, inked two new agreements with Ethiopia and Rwanda.

In the cultural domain, Russia has been increasing the regional offices of its media. Russia sees the media as a critical component that must be completely utilized in order to create favorable conditions for Russia's revival. As a result, much as the Soviet news agency TASS developed its regional offices during the Cold War, Russian TV (RT) and Sputnik has been in the process of increasing its collaboration arrangements with local state media outlets in order to directly broadcast what it calls "untold stories" of Africans (Ambrosetti,2022).

In general, Russia's goal with achieving great power status prompted it to regard Sub-Saharan Africa as just another battleground where established and rising powers compete for resources, market share, and political influence. Furthermore, since 2010, Russia's great power status has been founded on its capacity to project power globally, rather than simple claims of pre-eminence in its immediate region. The deterioration of ties between the United States and Russia deepens this need for status recognition. Moscow appears to be expanding its non-Western cooperation, as its relations with the U.S. worsen and the costs of sanctions mount in the aftermath of Ukraine's war. Moscow's so called 'flanking strategy' attempts to demonstrate that it cannot be diplomatically isolated and has viable economic options.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **The Impact of Great Power Rivalry on Ethiopian National Security**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The conceptual framework and empirical status of the current state of world politics have been presented in earlier chapters of the thesis. The chapters concluded that the rising revisionist rivalry of the great powers USA, China, and Russia has significantly contributed to the instability of international relations. The rise of China and Russia, whose national powers have significantly improved in the decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall and who want to change the existing international order to better reflect shifts in the distribution of global power, has shaken up the international order. The USA and its allies, who are the major powers in the existing system, are bolstering their defenses in an effort to maintain the status quo. Therefore, the intensive revisionist and counter-revisionist activities of the current major powers are amplifying a shift in international dynamics from collaboration to rivalry, leading to the destabilization of the international order. Moreover, subaltern realism has been used to highlight the structural vulnerability of third-world nations, such as Ethiopia, to changes in the global order. The general patterns and impacts of global power competitive engagements at the international and regional levels were addressed in the subsequent sections.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, security must be viewed as a notion to safeguard against a broad spectrum of threats to society (Buzan, 1991). This section of the study presents and analyzes the impact of GPC on the political, diplomatic, military, and socioeconomic dimensions of Ethiopia's national security. In doing so, the research uses primary data gathered from key informants and some secondary data as necessary. To set the context, the section begins with a brief review of the post-EPRDF political process, describing Ethiopia's security condition since the start of the new political process. Next, the section thematically presents the security complexities and implications of great power involvement in Ethiopia's domestic political and security processes.

## **5.2 Political and Diplomatic Impacts**

### **5.2.1 The Conflict in the Northern Part of Ethiopia**

To set the stage for a broad discussion of the implications of the emerging great power rivalry and attendant multipolarity in the Horn of Africa on Ethiopia's national security, it is necessary to first explain the country's ongoing insecurity and instability since embarking on a reform process in 2018. To understand Ethiopia's difficult political and security context, it is necessary to begin the conversation with a brief outline of the country's ongoing political transition process.

Ethiopia has been navigating a difficult political transition. The current Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to office in 2018, following three years of protests against the government of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which had governed Ethiopia for nearly three decades, constructing an authoritarian regime that delivered development benefits but engendered discontent. Though anti-government protests have generally receded after Abiy's election as Prime Minister, communal violence has increased, and communal violence has extended to most areas of the country (ICG, 2019). Communal violence has erupted in several parts of the country, notably in Amhara between Amhara and Kimant, in Tigray between Tigrayans and ethnic Amharas, and in Benishangul Gumuz region between the Gumuz community and ethnic Oromo and Amhara people, in Oromia region between ethnic Oromo and Amhara peoples, in the Southern regional state between Sidama and Wolaita, Gedeo people and Guji, in Afar region between Afar people and ethnic Somalis etc. Many causes contribute to intra- and inter-ethnic violence, including historical and personal grievances, access to land, the desire for self-determination, and the political exploitation of those concerns. The number of people displaced as a result of violence is believed to be in the millions (ibid).

The nation's worst period of insecurity since the reform process began when a political standoff between the Federal government and Tigray's regional authority, led by the TPLF, devolved into all-out war. According to ICG (2021), the underlying conflict between the Federal government and the TPLF is a fight for power between Abiy and his allies, as well as Tigrayan elites under the TPLF. The TPLF claims Abiy's administration has sidelined them by excluding them from a reconciliation with their once comrade and subsequently archenemy, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, and by prosecuting Tigrayans for corruption and human rights crimes. According to Abiy's supporters, the TPLF never accepted losing power, obstructed reforms, and worked to destabilize the new government (ICG, 2021). As the power struggle escalated, TPLF leaders went

forward with regional elections in Tigray in 2020, defying federal officials who had postponed the 6<sup>th</sup> national elections due to COVID-19. When the federal and Tigray administrations declared one other to be illegitimate, a constitutional crisis erupted. (ibid).

When TPLF forces attacked the provincial national army headquarters on 3 November 2020, citing an impending federal military attack incursion, the situation swiftly escalated into full-fledged war. Addis Ababa immediately launched an all out military offensive against TPLF in Tigray. The federal government implemented siege strategy by blocking roads, and electricity, telecommunications and banking services to prevent their use by TPLF fighters. In the early days of the war TPLF tried an incursion into the Western Amhara region, however, TPLF failed to advance into the Amhara region. The Amhara regional forces quickly advanced into bordering regions of Western Tigray. Defeated, TPLF forces committed one of the most horrific massacres of the conflict by killing scores of ethnic Amhara civilians in a place called Maikadra. In the early days of the conflict, the neighboring Amhara region seized control of Western Tigray, sealing shut the border areas connecting Tigray with Sudan (ICG, 2022).

With the TPLF's rocket attack of Asmara's airport, the war threatened regional conflagration. According to the TPLF sources, the areas that were hit had been military outposts that served as operational hubs for airstrikes against TPLF targets. TPLF rebels also launched rockets toward airports in the Amhara regional state's Gonder and Bahr Dar cities. Drones flying from United Arab Emirates bases in Assab, Eritrea, struck TPLF artillery and weapons storage facilities, escalating the conflict. The TPLF's airstrikes and retaliatory attacks have heightened tensions between the Tigray region and the Ethiopian government. The deployment of Chinese-made drones of United Arab Emirates from military facilities in Eritrean added new dimension to the ongoing war raising the fear of regionalization of the conflict (EEPA, 2021).

Quickly, the ENDF (Ethiopian National Defense Forces), with the support of Eritrea and drone earned from external support were able to capture the regional capital Mekelle, and forced remaining TPLF fighters and top leadership in to the mountainous rural areas of Tigray (ibid).

In June 2021, an Ethiopian military cargo plane was downed over an area called Samre (Walsh, 2021). The incident marked a significant shift in the dynamics of the nine-month-long civil war as it signified the turn of the war in the TPLF's favor. It provided a boost to the TPLF forces and dealt a blow to the Ethiopian military. Shortly thereafter, the TPLF forces retook Mekelle. The

occupying Ethiopian army, police, and the interim Tigray administration officials left the city ahead of the TPLF's takeover. Following the military setbacks, the Ethiopian government declared an immediate unilateral ceasefire throughout the Tigray Region. However, the Ethiopian government's decision to declare a ceasefire may have been driven by the realization that their military campaign was no longer sustainable, given the TPLF's resurgence and the mounting international pressure for a ceasefire (ibid).

Invoking the continued siege on the Tigray region TPLF forces extended the civil war into the neighboring regions of Afar and Amhara. They marched south to Addis Ababa, conquering towns and committing crimes along the way. After a government counteroffensive gained pace, they withdrew to Tigray in December 2021, the popular mobilization declared following the invasion of Afar and Amhara regions by the Federal government and drones supplied from Turkey playing significant roles in the Federal government's victory (ibid).

Because of the war's extension into Afar and Amhara, over 300,000 people have been uprooted, and another 7.2 million became food insecure. The fighting ceased as the federal government declared a unilateral humanitarian truce, allowing food and medication to be delivered to Tigray more quickly (Dahir, & Marks, 2022). The TPLF also stopped the fight. However, efforts to begin official peace negotiations failed, in part because TPLF presented preconditions stating that Addis Ababa must first lift its embargo by restoring services to the region and permitting transportation between Tigray and other regions (ibid).

The 2 year civil war in Tigray, a region of northern Ethiopia home to six million people, has attracted the involvement of regional and global powers keen to influence the outcome of the conflict in their favor. The civil war in Ethiopia's north was not the only crisis that the country has faced since embarking on a democratic reform process; rebel groups in the Oromia, Amhara, Benishangul, and Gambella regions have also waged a persistent insurgency. According to reports, over 800,000 people were estimated to be displaced by the violence in the first half of 2021. In June, a State Department official informed Congress that increased inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes across the country are threatening Ethiopia's unity and territorial integrity (Godec, 2021).

During the early stages of the conflict, the United States and its European allies maintained a neutral attitude. After Abiy came to power in 2018, the U.S. supported his administration's reforms.

Observers of the region's political dynamics argue, the United States and its Western allies have refrained from outrightly opposing the Abiy administration's handling of the war in the Tigray region (Kjetil, 2021). Ethiopia is critical to anti-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa; it is at the heart of the regional security architecture; its vast population combined with a rapidly developing economy has made it the region's anchor (ibid).

The election of the Biden in the United States resulted in a significant deterioration of relations between Ethiopia and the West. The Biden administration threatened Ethiopia's government with punitive sanctions for alleged human rights violations, including war crimes in the Tigray War (Felbab, 2021). Initially, the Biden administration demanded unrestricted access for foreign humanitarian organizations in the Tigray region, as well as the withdrawal of Eritrean forces. The Federal government suggested that it responded positively to the Biden administration's calls by declaring a unilateral cease-fire and withdrew its forces from Mekelle. However, after seizing control of the regional capital, Mekelle, TPLF turned to popular mobilization in preparation for a far larger fight with the Federal government. Subsequently, the TPLF began an attack into nearby Amhara and Afar areas. With the momentum of the war on their side, TPLF fighters were able to control swaths of territory from Amhara and Afar, threatening to reach the Ethiopian capital. During their occupation of Amhara and Afar, TPLF fighters left a trail of death and destruction as they ransacked towns and rural villages, looted extensively, and massacred civilians (Ethiopian News Agency, 2022). The US and its European allies remained silent about the atrocities, instead focusing on repeating similar announcements blaming the Federal government for blocking humanitarian access to Tigray; they remained silent about the horrors visited on Amhara and Afar civilians by TPLF fighters (Aberra, 2021).

This silence from the US and its European allies raised concerns about their impartiality and commitment to human rights. Many questioned why they failed to condemn the TPLF's actions and address the suffering of Amhara and Afar civilians, leading to further doubts about their intentions in the conflict. This lack of international condemnation for the atrocities committed by TPLF fighters in Amhara and Afar has raised concerns about the selective attention given to the conflict in Tigray. The silence from the US and its European allies on these heinous acts has left many questioning their real intentions and commitment to human rights and justice in Ethiopia (ibid).

Despite escalation of the conflict with the TPLF invasion of Amhara and Afar regions, the Biden administration officials repeatedly blamed the Federal government for human rights violations in

Tigray. Nonetheless, the Biden administration imposed economic and military sanctions on Ethiopia. The administration has escalated the pressure on the Ethiopian government by asking an investigation into whether or not atrocities in Tigray amounted to a 'genocide' have been perpetrated (Saine, 2021). It revoked Ethiopia's duty-free access privileges under the Africa Growth Opportunity program and asked that the IMF and World Bank hold Ethiopian loans (U.S. Treasury, 2022). The EU, in its part, has postponed \$100 million in financial assistance to Ethiopia demanding the Ethiopian government to increase humanitarian access to Tigray (Marks, 2020).

During the second phase of the civil war, when TPLF forces expanded the war into Amhara and Afar regions, the United States and its allies concentrated their efforts on organizing United Nations Security Council meetings to condemn the Ethiopian government for restricting the flow of humanitarian aid into Tigray. Maj. Gen. William Zana, commander of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa in Djibouti, has even urged that American forces be sent to provide a humanitarian corridor for Tigray (BBC, 2021).

The United States' efforts to draft UN Security Council resolutions condemning the Ethiopian side repeatedly failed because the Chinese and Russians used their veto power to block U.S. efforts. The proxy support and diplomatic rivalry among the region's great powers demonstrate the level and extent of the internationalization of the conflicts in Ethiopia's. Tronvoll claimed that throughout the war, the Ethiopian government has gotten weaponry from Iran, Turkey, and China, loans from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and political support from Russia and China, as the latter two had several times vetoed the UN Security Council from agreeing on a resolution on the civil war in Ethiopia (Chothia, 2021).

Interview data acquired from key informants in Ethiopia's foreign ministry<sup>1</sup> has also confirmed the idea that foreign entities were actively engaged in Ethiopia's internal instability. According to a key informant interviewed for this research, who is currently working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country's prevalent conflicts may have internal political roots; however, the proliferation and prolongation of the conflicts can be attributed to the involvement of foreign actors. According to the key informant<sup>2</sup>, foreign participation has internationalized the country's

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with MoFA expert in 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<sup>2</sup> Interview with MoFA senior expert in 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

disputes. Government insider<sup>3</sup>, who declined to identify the countries involved, indicated that global and regional powers wishing to exert diplomatic pressure on the Ethiopian government collaborated to back the various rebel groups conducting insurgency in various parts of the country.

Furthermore, the key informant indicated that foreign players' interventions played devastating roles that hindered all efforts to bring stability to the country's stability in the post-political reform era. According to the informant, foreign players harbored, trained, and logistically supported Ethiopian-based armed rebel organizations in neighboring countries, allowing them to undertake cross-border strikes in Ethiopia. The source went on to say that during the height of the conflict, when TPLF forces appeared to be moving on the Ethiopian capital, outside players, mostly Western countries, assisted the TPLF with media and diplomatic cover. Another major insider in the ministry of defense<sup>4</sup> determined that the post-political reform era's dire security condition may be attributable to a near and far foreign enemy state's scheme. In general, the military backing that various insurgent groups get from outside players has undermined and continues to challenge Ethiopian governments' capacity to stabilize the country.

### **5.2.2 Great Power Rivalry Aggravating Local Conflicts**

One of the study's significant findings was the important role those external players played in Ethiopia's instability after the political transition. Multiple interviewees in the foreign policy and security sectors approached for this research reiterated the enormous challenge the developing global power rivalry posed to Ethiopia's national security. When asked to comment on the problems they encountered in defending Ethiopia's national security, security professionals cited rivalry among great powers and Horn regional states as the most serious threat to the region and Ethiopia. Many interview participants from the military and security agencies<sup>5</sup> highlighted funding opposition organizations (both armed and unarmed opposition) by antagonistic governments as the single most significant obstacle to regional stability. Key informant participants emphasized on how hostile powers offer varying levels of assistance to armed ethnic rebels in Ethiopia in order to drive the government into accepting agreements on GERD<sup>6</sup>. The Ethiopian government's security and foreign policy experts determined that the fundamental challenge of violence and instability in

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with security advisor at the PMO in 2022 at the Office of the Prime Minister

<sup>4</sup> Interview with a General from Ministry of Defense in 2022 in Bishoftu city

<sup>5</sup> Interview with two officials from the Information Network Security Agency in Addis Ababa

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Foreign Affairs Expert at the Prime Minister Office, Addis Ababa, in May 2022

post-political transition stems from long-standing political grievances; however, the longevity, intensity, and intractability of most security issues can be attributed to the malign involvement of international powers<sup>7</sup>. The involvement of major power actors in Ethiopian civil conflicts reduced the Federal government's ability to the point that the war in the north Tigray region has been stalemated.

The key informants of the study provided ideas and issues that are supported by the literature on prolonged civil wars. Conflict has become more intractable as a result of the significant increase in internationalized civil wars (i.e. internal conflicts in which foreign governments intervene on one or both sides.). Researches show there has been increasing trends since the end of the cold war, where foreign states have often intervened in internal disputes within the state. In 1991, 4% of conflicts were internationalized, according to statistics from the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), but by 2015, that number had multiplied tenfold to reach 40%. Conflict internationalization not only makes violence more severe and widespread but also makes it last longer (PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, 2020).

Conflict researchers suggest when external interventions in domestic conflicts do not result in a quick military victory, they are likely to make internal conflicts deadlier and last longer (Cunningham, 2010). The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a case in point, where neighboring countries like Rwanda and Uganda's mining and military interests have contributed to the Congolese conflict extending over many years, with both countries shifting their support to different parties over time in accordance with their own objectives. Intervening countries behave virtually as independent parties to the dispute which poses extra challenges to peace negotiations. Another case in point is Syria, where the military presence of many external parties hampers prospects for a negotiated settlement. The engagement of major power governments with strong military, such as the United States, Russia, and China, in internal conflicts is especially likely to prolong and increase casualties (ibid).

The views expressed in literature of internationalized conflicts match the scenario in northern Ethiopia. Multiple interviews with key informant sources in Ethiopia's foreign ministry<sup>8</sup> and

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with General from the Defense Ministry, in Addis Ababa, May 2022

<sup>8</sup> Interview with two officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa 2021

ministry of defense<sup>9</sup> reveal that the region's geostrategic importance in global geopolitics draws the attention of major powers. For the great powers, Ethiopia, as the most powerful country in the Horn of Africa, cannot be left alone to work out its internal problems on its own. Indeed, key interviewees questioned for the study, felt that internal instability have paved the way for foreign intervention in to domestic affairs. The civil conflicts serve as a useful instrument to force the government to accept policy positions that foreign entities want. Promoting crises around the country was viewed as an opportunity to undermine the government's legitimacy and governing capabilities. Ideas gathered from the Key informant discussion appear to suggest that, rather than placing collective pressure on opposing sides in Ethiopia's civil war, big powers were busy calculating relative advantages depending on their prediction of who will win the civil war. Great powers pick sides that they believe will benefit their interests. Interview data entails competing great powers intervening in the civil war as foreign players with a distinct purpose from the local actors fighting directly in the civil war.

The involvement of foreign forces in Ethiopia's extended civil upheavals provided a case study of how foreign forces intervene to pursue an autonomous agenda that is diametrically opposed to the goals of local combatants. When great powers intervene with their own agenda, civil wars become more difficult to conclude. This is due to their desire to veto any dispute settlement that does not please their interests. Furthermore, because they are geographically far from the combat zone, they incur a reduced cost of the fighting and the destruction caused by the war.

### **5.2.3 Human Rights Instrumentalized**

Since the beginning of the Tigray War in November 2020, all parties to the conflict have been consistently accused of committing war crimes by local and international human rights organizations (Aljazeera, 2022). Numerous claims of both war crimes and crimes against humanity have focused in particular on the Ethiopian federal government, the State of Eritrea, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and Amhara regional troops. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission accused the TPLF of perpetrating crimes against humanity in Mai Kadra, an Amhara residence in old western Tigray (Dejene, 2021). Amnesty International also accused the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments of war crimes in the Tigray region of Axum (Amnesty, 2022). Furthermore, according to a U.S. State Department assessment, the Amhara region's armed forces

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with official from the Ministry of Defense in Addis Ababa 2022

carried out ethnic cleansing of Tigrayans from what was Western Tigray in an attempt to construct ethnically homogenous Amhara districts (US State Department, 2022).

After numerous allegations of human rights violations during Ethiopia's northern conflict, the United Nations Human Rights Council established the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) in December 2021. ICHREE's mission is to investigate claims of abuses of human rights that have allegedly occurred in Ethiopia since the conflict first broke out in the north in November 2020 (HRW, 2022). In December 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council formed the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) in response to various claims of human rights violations amid Ethiopia's northern conflict. ICHREE was mandated to examine allegations of human rights violations in Ethiopia since the conflict began in the north in November 2020. The Ethiopian government quickly opposed the establishment of ICHREE and refused to cooperate with the investigation. The Ethiopian embassy in Geneva condemned the proposal to form a foreign entity, saying it was a direct threat to Ethiopia's sovereignty and interfered with its internal affairs. The Ethiopian ambassador suggested the international community give a chance to an independent investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. He emphasized the importance of respecting Ethiopia's sovereignty and allowing the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to conduct an independent investigation. The ambassador also highlighted that Ethiopia is committed to addressing any human rights concerns within its borders and is actively working towards improving its human rights record. He urged the international community to support Ethiopia's efforts in this regard and engage in constructive dialogue rather than imposing external measures that could undermine the country's sovereignty. He urged Human Rights Council members to oppose the creation of an outside body because it would be "hijacked" and used as a political pressure tool against Ethiopia (Aljazeera, 2021).

The Ethiopian government's rejection of the human rights investigating team was reinforced when the Prime Minister's Office's spokeswoman, Billene Siyoume, accused the US and its Western allies of using double standards when it comes to alleged human rights crimes. She added that political and diplomatic pressures were directed at and specifically targeted the Ethiopian government, while remaining mute when it comes to TPLF atrocities on civilians in Amhara and Afar. In a news conference, she stated that the United States and its allies had been placing enormous pressure on Ethiopia over unsubstantiated gross human rights abuses, including genocide. However, she stated that let alone passionate condemnation, unequivocal condemnation,

of the TPLF force's atrocities has been lacking from Western leaders and rights groups. She explained:

*Failure of some western countries & International Organizations to look into the massive human rights violations & atrocities committed by TPLF in Afar & Amhara regions reveals the politically motivated & double standard position towards current human rights issues in Ethiopia,” Billene Seyoum (20, August, 2021), “On key highlights of the week and recent developments in Tigray and Northern Ethiopia”*

Despite documented violations of TPLF fighters atrocities in Amhara and Afar regions, State Department spokesman Ned Price down played documented reports of human rights abuses and property damages committed by TPLF forces in Amhara and Afar regions, suggesting US ‘concerns’ about “unconfirmed” human rights abuses and property damage committed by Tigrayan forces. The outrage was palpable when the Head of Press Secretariat with the Office of the Prime Minister, Bilene Seyoum, chastised the United States for claiming that human rights violations committed by Tigray forces in the Amhara and Afar regions were “unconfirmed”. Moreover, in a message shared on social media Billene said:

*It becomes “unconfirmed reports ” and ” claims “when a favorite terrorist group commits crimes on innocent civilians in regions it violently occupied. It is taken as fact when the same terrorist group cries foul in an orchestrated manner. Ethiopia says #NoMore to double standards. (Billene Seyoume, December 14, 2021)*

Double standards and the selective targeting of nations for violations of human rights, as raised in the aforementioned statements by Ethiopian officials, become new norms in the international context of great power rivalry (Bob, 2019). The literature on international human rights provides several conceptual frameworks for understanding the deployment of international human rights as tools of foreign policy to advance geopolitical interests. Bob Clifford's views provide explanations on the instrumental use of human rights discourses in international and national political rivalry. For him, when rival sides dispute on a wide variety of substantive demands, they expect that utilizing rights-oriented discourses can help them advance their desired political outcomes. 'Rights'

are rhetorical weapons used by geopolitical actors to advance themselves whilst challenging the opponent.

According to Clifford (2019), the strategic deployment of human rights discourse allows geopolitical actors to not only promote their own interests but also undermine their opponents' credibility. By framing their actions within a human rights framework, these actors can garner international support and portray their adversaries as violators of fundamental values. This instrumental use of human rights not only shapes foreign policy decisions but also influences public opinion and the overall narrative surrounding geopolitical conflicts. According to Bob's perspective on rights, rights are fundamentally aggressive weapons in political contestation, in which rights as discourses are not an end but tools contesting adversaries deploy to demand substantive advantages (ibid).

The idea of Western double standards and instrumentalisation of Human rights issues to put pressure on countries that the U.S. doesn't approve of, has been a common theme of understanding among interview subjects of the study. One interview with senior diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>10</sup> suggested that, "the conflict with TPLF has offered opportunities for Western countries to pressure Ethiopia indirectly". The diplomat claims that this pressure is being applied in order to force Ethiopia to comply with Western demands and is motivated by geopolitical interests. Additionally, the expert noted that this pattern of double standards and instrumentalisation of human rights issues is not unique to Ethiopia, but rather a recurring phenomenon in international politics. Moreover, an Expert working at the Prime Minister Office (PMO)<sup>11</sup> added:

*We have disagreements on many geopolitical issues from the GERD filling to relationships with great powers such as China and Russia. The U.S. and its European allies want Ethiopia to be a Western allied country. They want Ethiopia to reduce its political, economic and military relationships with big powers like China and Russia. We refused to align our interests with one block or the other. Russia and China are equally important for our national development. Even though the war in Ukraine impacts us very much. We refused to take sides in the conflict. That was reflected in the UNGA vote. It's a kind of*

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with senior diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa, June, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with expert at the Office of the Prime Minister, Addis Ababa, May, 2022

*payback on us. They enthusiastically condemn Ethiopia and become silent when it comes to the TPLF violations.*

Furthermore, the key informants from the Ministry of Defense (MoD)<sup>12</sup> also reflected similar opinions. Informants from MoD suggested U.S. instrumentalisation of human rights issues has been witnessed in many instances historically. The U.S. demonizes countries based on human rights, which threaten its strategic interests. But, it gives a free pass when the violations come from countries considered allies, partners, and friendly countries. Its similar instrumentalisation can be seen in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's ties with the West have reached an all-time low since the country's democratic transition, notwithstanding early friendly relations. This is due to Ethiopia's neutral stance toward the Russia-Ukraine war as well as its close ties with China. Also, the US has taken a pro-Egyptian stance in numerous GERD negotiations. They want Ethiopia to accept Egyptian conditions in the GERD talks. Overall, the United States wishes to impose its policies on Ethiopia. Ethiopia flatly refuses to be dictated to. I don't have to remind everyone, "Ethiopia is the only country that has defeated colonialism; we do not bargain over our sovereignty and national interests."

The Key Informants from the PMO, MoD and MoFA agree that the allegations and subsequent publicization of human rights violation has significant contributions in damaging Ethiopia's reputation and image internationally. Study informants concur the widespread accusation of human rights violation has direct effects on Foreign Direct Investment earnings. Moreover, the U.S. and its Western allies deploy human rights investigations and reports to provide the narrative pretext to impose punitive economic sanctions on countries.

Furthermore, key informant from the Ministry of Peace<sup>13</sup> (MoP) expressed the effects Western pressures on Ethiopia on investment and tourism sectors. The key informant claimed that U.S. and Western governments deliberately issued exaggerated travel warnings without sufficient information to scare away foreign investors and tourists from Ethiopia. The informant claimed that there have been many instances, where travel advisories have been manipulated by Western governments in order put pressures by hurting tourism and investment flows into many countries. Since the start of the war in the Northern part of Ethiopia, Western governments had been issuing

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with General for Ministry of Defense, Addis Ababa, July, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with expert at the Minister of Peace, Addis Ababa, July, 2022

travel warnings, warning their citizens away from Ethiopia. The informant suggested that because of manipulated travel advisories of Western countries, Ethiopia has lost nearly USD 2 billion.

#### **5.2.4 Deadlocked GERD negotiations and Great Power Involvement**

In recent years, negotiations between Egypt and Ethiopia over Nile waters have stalled, capturing the intervention of global powers. Ethiopia declared the launch of construction of the Millennium Dam (now known as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam [GERD]) on the Blue Nile in 2011. Ethiopia sees the dam, which was planned in the 1950s, as an exemplary example of its development efforts and a source of national pride. Egypt, which has enjoyed a strong position on the Nile's waters since the 1959 treaty, which allotted it 75% of the Nile's average annual flow and for Sudan 25%. Egypt pursued diplomatic efforts in all riparian nations - as well as globally - to gain the largest share of the water. Egypt has hinted at military action in response to what it views as an existential danger. Ethiopia, on the other hand, has stressed on the necessity of electricity production in meeting its power demands and claims to reserve the right to participate in additional Blue Nile water-related projects (ICG, 2019).

The GERD is Ethiopia's largest ever development hydro-project: politically flagship, economically massive, and geopolitically game changer for the country and the Nile basin. Domestically, it has come to symbolize national unity and consensus in a society that is deeply divided and politicized. Few foreign policy, diplomacy, and international problems generate as much domestic attention as the hydro-politics surrounding the project. The Grand hydro-electric dam has become the elephant in the room amid the emerging geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa and larger Nile basin, continuing to be a source of disputes, tensions, and controversies, with the potential to spark significant hostilities in the region. More than any other aspect, the direct engagement of global powers in the contest over the usage of the Nile River has resulted in critical geopolitical and geoeconomic developments that have worsened the region's already high levels of tension (Taddele, 2020).

The contemporary hydropolitics on a grand scale in the Nile basin have gone through several stages. Following the announcement of the commencement of GERD construction, there was a period of fierce disagreement, denial, threats, and counter-threats. Egypt and Sudan both originally opposed the idea, but both were mired in civil strife (ICG, 2019). Egypt has been opposed to the project since it was announced as part of its so-called "historic rights" to retain its age-old

dominance over the Nile. Egyptian politicians were accidentally heard on live television recommending military action during a meeting called by President Mohammed Morsi, where their suggestions centered on military intervention as a decisive response to what one of them called a "declaration of war," which elicited a standing ovation (Ahmed, 2013).

The second stage has been a time of trilateral talks between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. Technical studies and The Declaration of Principles are examples of some of the modest advances made during the tripartite negotiations, which included ministerial level discussions on water, irrigation, energy, and foreign affairs. The signing of the Declarations of Principles, which had ten articles and contained a clause that none of the signatories would hurt the interests of the others, was a major diplomatic breakthrough and confidence-building measure (Saeed, 2018).

The appointment of a new Prime Minister following the resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn has launched a third chapter in Ethiopia's disagreement with lower riparian countries. When Abiy inspected the dam's construction site just weeks after assuming office, he signaled the dam's continued importance. The government stated that the Military Conglomerate, Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC), was implicated in a large corruption scandal concerning the construction of the dam, causing the project to be further delayed.

However, the conflict between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the project has taken a dramatic turn and has grown more complicated, difficult, and hazardous, with the advent of external great power actors complicating the tripartite discussions even further. Egypt's goal of internationalizing the Nile dam problem by inviting the World Bank and the United States to the negotiating table has given the conflict a new global dimension, drawing the interest of worldwide media and the supposedly international community. The then Trump administration, which oversaw the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) negotiations for nearly four months, advised Ethiopia that "final testing and filling [of the dam] should not take place without an agreement" with Egypt and Sudan (Helal,2020).

The past Trump administration aggressively interfered in the tripartite discussions, selecting the U.S. Treasury Secretary and World Bank to join in what appears to be an act of financial intimidation. According to Davison, an International Crisis Group Senior Expert for Ethiopia, the U.S. transformed its agreed-upon role of neutral observer to active mediator by crafting an

agreement. During the final talks, Ethiopia withdrew from the Washington DC summit, claiming that it had not completed consultations with stakeholders (Getachew, 2020).

The U.S. Treasury Department stated in a statement issued shortly after Ethiopia withdrew from the negotiations that the U.S.-sponsored negotiations "resulted in an agreement that addresses all issues in a balanced and equitable manner," and warned Ethiopia not to begin testing and filling the GERD without an agreement. Ethiopia voiced its dissatisfaction with the announcement and indicated that the initial filling of the GERD will take place with or without an agreement. Ethiopia stated that the wording of the draft deal apparently initiated by Egypt was not the result of negotiations with Egypt and Sudan, but it pledged to continue working with them to resolve the issue. Egypt and Sudan, on the other hand, signed the treaty mediated by the U.S. and pledged to preserve their interests in the Nile by any means necessary (Africa News, 2020).

While the previous Trump administration was highly engaged in the Egypt-Ethiopia disagreement, including hosting meetings and former U.S. President Donald Trump's infamous comment that Egypt may "bomb up" the dam because they couldn't survive without the Nile, the Biden administration has avoided overtly condemning Ethiopia on the subject. Nonetheless, the Biden administration continued diplomatic pressure on Ethiopia about the GERD's development and filling. During his visit to Cairo, U.S. Central Command Commander General Kenneth McKenzie voiced concern over the developments in the Renaissance Dam dispute, saying that Ethiopia's behavior "worries us" and that "Egypt is exhibiting extraordinary prudence." Furthermore, during the pre-second filling phase, the Biden administration dispatched Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, the former U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa, to the area twice, while CIA Director William Burns visited Egypt to discuss the GERD filling with President Sisi (Maher, 2021).

Russia hopes to establish a presence in north east Africa to reinforce its position in the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean, and it has maintained positive ties with Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Aside from its developing commercial relationships, Russia consults with Egypt on the Libyan war on a regular basis and has sought to obtain long-term access to Egypt's Mediterranean naval facilities since 2017. Russia is also attempting to reach an agreement with Sudan for a naval facility, which would give it a presence in the Red Sea and strengthen its capacity to undertake anti-piracy missions in the Indian Ocean. Russia has also maintained good relations with Ethiopia, and as a major supplier of weapons, it has boosted security cooperation with Addis Ababa.

During the Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, Russia's President Vladimir Putin offered mediation on the dispute over the Nile. Russia has increased its diplomatic engagement in the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. While Russia has contributed technical help to the GERD's disputing parties, it has avoided acting as a mediator in the Nile dam issue, instead balancing the viewpoints of Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia in multilateral fora. This stance is consistent with China's approach to the GERD problem, which favors an AU-led procedure to settle the conflict. Russia's balancing stance has been welcomed in Sudan and Ethiopia, but it has caused lingering tensions with Egypt.

Russia's cautious stance to the GERD problem was also apparent during GERD Security Council sessions. Russia's U.N. ambassador Nebenzia presented Russia's viewpoint, acknowledging the GERD's significance in reducing Ethiopia's energy shortages while also noting Egypt and Sudan's "valid fears" that the GERD might aggravate droughts. Nebenzia (2020) advocated for progressive filling of the GERD and collaboration on water supply management among all Nile basin countries to avoid a regional security issue. Consideration of the discussion as a zero-sum game in a context of mistrust, suspicion, and threats has resulted in diplomatic paralysis, technical impasse, and a difficult political situation in the region between Egypt and Ethiopia, with significant implications for regional peace and security. As discussions fail to resolve the disagreement between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan, the involvement of contending big powers adds fuel to the fire of escalating regional tensions.

### **5.3 Socio-Economic Impacts**

In the midst of the conflict in northern Ethiopia, the United States slapped sanctions on the Ethiopian Federal Government, allowing the US to reject visas and freeze the assets of Ethiopian people and businesses. Within a month, the U.S., citing a lack of progress on humanitarian access and ceasefire, announced additional sanctions by suspending Ethiopia from the AGOA program, which stands for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Bader, 2021). The suspension has serious economic ramifications for Ethiopia. Despite US demands for all warring sides to stop fighting and get down to negotiating, the sanctions primarily targeted the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments.

### **5.3.1 Ethiopia's Suspension from AGOA**

The AGOA, signed by President Clinton in 2000, promotes African governments to implement market-based economic policies, uphold the rule of law, and remove trade and investment obstacles between the United States and African countries. Ethiopia effectively attracted international investors into its manufacturing sector with tariff-free access to the US market by constructing a network of industrial parks in over a dozen locations. This resulted in a surge of foreign direct investment in Ethiopia's light manufacturing industry, luring global brands in the textile manufacturing sector (Ingram et al, 2015).

Ethiopia spent over 1.5 billion dollars to construct 13 industrial parks with the potential to export items worth more than 700 million dollars. Approximately 30 of the 33 enterprises operating in these parks use AGOA authorization to ship clothing to the United States. They employ over 83,000 individuals, four-fifths of whom are young women, and over 200,000 people, 80 percent of whom are young women. These industrial parks have significantly contributed to Ethiopia's economic growth and job creation. The utilization of AGOA authorization has opened up lucrative opportunities for the country's textile and clothing industry, empowering a large number of young women in the workforce (Mamo, 2021).

Ethiopia's removal from the AGOA has both immediate and long-term consequences for the Ethiopian economy. In the immediate term, the delisting of AGOA will have huge economic and social consequences. 200,000 Ethiopian laborers' employment, 80% of whom are women, and an additional 700,000 to 800,000 ancillary jobs in transportation, catering, and distribution have been under threat (Endale, 2021). These job losses have resulted in higher unemployment rates and lower household incomes, increasing the country's poverty levels. Furthermore, the delisting has had an impact on foreign direct investment (FDI), since potential investors may be unwilling to invest in a country that no longer enjoys privileged trading treatment with the US (ibid).

In the long run, the sanctions have harmed Ethiopia's growing, vibrant, industrialized development progress. The sanctions also created uncertainty in the Ethiopian business climate, damaging Ethiopia's reputation as Africa's top FDI destination. Furthermore, the sanctions have drained Ethiopia's funds for the payment of external debt. In general, the AGOA sanctions have posed a significant setback to Ethiopia's economic progress. The country's efforts to alleviate poverty,

establish a robust manufacturing sector, generate employment opportunities for its young population, and reduce dependency on foreign aid through trade are now at risk (Mamo, 2021).

The United States intended to impose AGOA sanctions in order to put pressure on the Ethiopian government to make adjustments in its fight with the TPLF. However, according to a key informant interviewee, the most significant negative impacts of the AGOA sanctions have been on the poorest laborers who work in industrial parks. These laborers heavily rely on the income generated from their jobs in industrial parks to support their families and livelihoods. The AGOA sanctions have resulted in job losses and reduced wages, exacerbating the already dire economic conditions for these vulnerable workers. An interview with economic expert from the Prime Minister Office<sup>14</sup> indicated that “Restricting Ethiopia from AGOA won't affect the government in Ethiopia. Rather, it will disproportionately negatively affect the poorest Ethiopians, particularly poor women. It has a social effect, not a political. 85,000 workers, most of whom are women, are estimated to lose their jobs. The families they help will endure the worst economic impact, leading to increased poverty and financial instability.”

Other interview subjects also highlight the positive impact of great power rivalry in reducing the impact of U.S. AGOA sanctions to pressure on Ethiopia. In the new World with competing great powers, unilateral sanctions like AGOA can't impose significant pain in the long term since it has increasingly become easy for governments to find support from alternative sources. The informant working on Asia and Pacific issues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>15</sup>, suggested that one of the positive impacts of the new great power rivalry has been the widening of alternative sources of development support for developing countries such as Ethiopia. The informant noted the example of China's offer of zero tariff treatment for goods from Africa. The program under the Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) aims to import \$300 billion worth of African goods over the next three years (Nyabiage, 2022). This initiative by China not only provides a boost to Ethiopia's export industry but also fosters economic growth and development in the country. Additionally, it creates opportunities for Ethiopia to diversify its trade partners and reduce its dependence on traditional sources of development support.

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with economic expert in the Office of the Prime Minister, Addis Ababa, 2022

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Asia expert at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa, 2022

Moreover, other informants also doubted the reality of the rationality of U.S. sanctions. Key informants<sup>16</sup> approached for the study believed that the U.S. more specifically the Biden administration has ulterior motives in imposing AGOA sanctions that are designed to pressure Ethiopia into caving for the demands of TPLF. Attributing the close link between the former regime of TPLF with prominent figures in the new Biden administration, a key informant from the Office of the Prime Minister, working on economic and investment matters, commented that despite the fact that the U.S. overtly expresses its concerns for the human right of all people, in spite of gross violations of well documented atrocities committed by TPLF fighters, the West stayed mute on TPLF violations. The U.S. and its EU allies never mentioned the human rights violations in Amhara and Afar regions and never directly criticized TPLF's for the human rights violations of its soldiers. And yet they singularly target the Ethiopian government for punitive economic sanctions which mainly hurt the poorest sector of society. This view was further amplified when foreign ministry of Ethiopian spokesperson, Dina Mufti told journalists at a news conference "The issue of AGOA is being presented to intimidate us" (Reuters, 2021).

The issue of double standards of the U.S. and its allies were further emphasized in an opinion piece published in the Foreign Policy magazine by senior economic policy advisor to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Ethiopia's chief trade negotiator Mamo Esmelalem. He stated:

*AGOA eligibility is subject to domestic policy choices in beneficiary countries, encouraging African governments to adopt market-based economic policies, adhere to the rule of law and political pluralism, and eliminate barriers to U.S. trade and investment. Although Ethiopia before 2018 would hardly pass the test of human rights or political pluralism, the U.S. government never seriously questioned the country's AGOA eligibility under the repressive leadership of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Indeed, when the AGOA was launched in May 2000, Ethiopia was deep in a state of war against Eritrea. Yet Ethiopia was on the original list of 34 countries declared AGOA-eligible later that year and remained eligible despite years of authoritarian rule. Ethiopia's eligibility under AGOA continued even though its authoritarian rule persisted. (Mamo E. Mihretu, October 13, 2021)*

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with expert at the Prime Minister Office, Addis Ababa, in May 2022

## **5.4 Military Impacts**

### **5.4.1 Geopolitics of Military Base Expansion and Ethiopian National Security**

Foreign military bases are sites built to assist military operations and supplies in nations other than the home country's sovereign territory. Bilateral agreements are often used to establish them. These bases serve as vital locations for military operations and power projection across the world. These bases are, by definition, geographical and functional expansions of domestic military bases in other territories (Lutz 2009).

The establishment of military bases also serves to further national security objectives. These goals might include gathering intelligence, acting as a logistical hub for military operations, and serving as a military communication hub. Foreign military outposts can be used for both defensive and offensive military aims, depending on a country's strategic interests. Foreign military outposts can give a country a strategic advantage by increasing a country's capacity to project force and influence in crucial areas. Furthermore, they can act as a deterrent to possible threats and aid in the maintenance of stability in volatile regions (Adam, 2017).

As presented in previous sections, the Horn of Africa has evolved into the world's first and largest overseas military outpost in recent years (Sun and Zoubir, 2016). One may argue that the area has been turned into a military garrison as a consequence of the installation of military bases in Djibouti by the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia, which Russia may soon join after Djibouti declined Iran's request (ibid).

Following the demise of the former Soviet Union and the communist bloc, the United States assumed a leadership position in the Horn of Africa (Dahir, H., 2019). Furthermore, in 2002, the United States created a military post in Djibouti at Camp Lemonnier, a former French military station, as well as Djibouti's international airport, Ambouli. The installation was originally known as the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa until being renamed Africa Command in 2008. (Styan, 2013). The declared aims of the U.S. permanent military base in Djibouti are to acquire information, strengthen local security systems and community projects, and disrupt and remove international terrorist groups that represent a danger to the U.S., its allies, and their regional interests (Nicoll, 2007). By keeping access to oil and gas reserves, the U.S. has a strategic interest in assuring U.S. energy security. Furthermore, the U.S. military presence in the Horn is part of the so-called global War on Terror strategy. Terrorist organizations may dominate oil resources and

jeopardize marine security, putting the United States and its regional partners at risk from the expansion of Islamic extremism.

In 2017, China established its first overseas military facility in Djibouti. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) base is established in Djibouti as part of China's military presence in the Horn of Africa, particularly to support the One Belt, One Road plan. Furthermore, ships from the PLAN's South Sea Fleet were dispatched to the Djibouti base, which is effectively a fortified enlargement of the Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port (Dahir, 2019). The facility spans 90 acres and is located near the Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port, which is financed and administered by Chinese government firms with a \$590 million investment over a 25-year period (Vertin, 2019).

China's aim to create a military installation in Djibouti is motivated by geostrategic and geo-economics security concerns. Melvin (2019) states that the base is open for a variety of purposes, including assisting the Chinese military with long-range power projection and providing logistical support during various anti-peace operations such as piracy and terrorism as part of China's obligations to maintain international security. Furthermore, the Chinese Government sees the station as a tool to serve China's economic security aims in the Horn of Africa, notably to safeguard the trade line and support the international anti-piracy operation. African nations, especially the Horn states, signed Memoranda of Understanding with China during the 2018 Beijing Summit on China Africa Cooperation on the Developments of the Belt and Road Initiative (Africa Times, 2018).

When asked about the security and military implications of the proliferation of foreign military bases in Djibouti, a key strategic transit hub in Ethiopia's economy and military logistics, key informants from the Addis Ababa University Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)<sup>17</sup> point out some opportunities for regional security. The key informant from IPSS provided the idea that the presence of superpowers with bases in Djibouti plays a positive role in regional stability. The key informant emphasized that these superpowers contribute to regional stability by fighting against piracy and terrorism in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Red Sea is a critical chokepoint for global trade; the presence of great powers in the region ensures the safe passage of ships carrying goods from Asia to Europe. Additionally, the presence of great powers in the region helps in the fight against the Al Shebab group in Somalia. As these countries possess advanced

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with expert in May 2022 at Addis Ababa University from IPSS

intelligence and military capabilities, their close presence and support enable the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia to be effective in the fight against the Al Shebab group. Furthermore, the presence of superpowers in the region could have a deterrent effect on the region as they would be able to prevent the escalation of violence and conflicts among state or non-state actors.

Another impact identified<sup>18</sup> was that the presence of diverse superpowers in the regions presents an opportunity for Ethiopia to have more options and alternatives to establish cooperative relations with the Great Power that align with its policies. This means the negative impacts of the presence of one great power can be counter-balanced by establishing good relations with a rival great power. The diversity of the Great Power creates opportunities that neutralize each other's impact; the impact of the U.S. can be countered by China and Russia, and vice versa.

On the other hand, data gathered from key informant interviews<sup>19</sup> suggests that the presence of great powers in such close proximity to each other and at the most important transit hub for Ethiopia's export and import of goods poses a significant threat to Ethiopia. The key informant fears the global escalation of the Great Power relationship might have a spillover effect in the region and in Ethiopia. The potential outbreak of conflict among these powers could disrupt the flow of trade and jeopardize Ethiopia's economic stability. The instability in global power's relationships could be exported to the region, specifically Ethiopia, in the form of proxy wars and interference in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. This interference could further exacerbate existing conflicts and fuel political instability in Ethiopia. Moreover, proxy wars and interference may hinder internal political processes to resolve ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia, prolonging the suffering of its people and hindering progress towards peace and stability.

Additionally, a key informant from the defense<sup>20</sup> also identified strategic threats to Ethiopian national security. The militarization of the Red Sea and the proliferation of foreign military bases in Djibouti and the Horn sow the seeds of Great power confrontation and war that might eventually threaten the region's peace and security, including Ethiopia's long term access to the sea. Key informant from defense is of the opinion that the Ethiopian security and military establishment has been alarmed with the proliferation of foreign military bases and hostile alliances forming in the most strategic area of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with expert in May 2022 at Addis Ababa University from IPSS

<sup>19</sup> Interview with a General from Ministry of Defense, in Addis Ababa, March 2022

<sup>20</sup> Interview with a General from Ministry of Defense, in Addis Ababa, March 2022

Key informant from the defense sector commented, the recent developments in the Red Sea region has been the driving force behind Ethiopia's desire to re-establish the navy force. This suggestion has been highlighted in the media reports regarding Ethiopia's effort to develop its naval force. According to reports, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed voiced alarm over the scramble to install military outposts of rival superpowers in the Horn, when he was addressing top military officers meeting (Irish, 2019). He emphasized the significance of developing a naval force to protect Ethiopia's national security interests in the Red Sea. Since then, Ethiopia has sought international allies to assist it in rebuilding its naval force. The first assistance came when the French President Emmanuel Macron paid a visit to the region in 2019 (ibid).

The President met with Ethiopian and Djiboutian leaders. During the French president's visit in 2019, France and Ethiopia inked their first military cooperation agreement, which involves assisting landlocked Ethiopia construct a navy as well as giving options for air support and coordination, joint operations, and training and equipment acquisitions. Ethiopia's efforts to construct a new fleet in the Horn of Africa area are part of the country's larger military reforms. The revisions take into account the security challenges that may arise as a result of escalating tensions and conflicts generated by the 'new scramble' for Africa by contesting superpowers, which has peaked in intensity in the Horn of Africa region.

The stated aim of the French President Emmanuel Macron was to 'reaffirm' France's position in the face of expanding 'Chinese regional expansion' (VOA, 2019). Experts agree that the increasing militarization of the Horn of Africa will have huge implications in the Horn of Africa in terms of further destabilizing the region (Taddele, 2019). According to Mehari Taddele (2019) while a direct clash between US and Chinese soldiers in Africa is improbable, their rising military presence is becoming an increasingly disruptive element. This growing military presence not only raises concerns about potential conflicts but also adds complexity to the already delicate geopolitical landscape in Africa. It has the potential to exacerbate existing tensions and rivalries among regional powers, further complicating efforts for stability and cooperation in the region.

#### **5.4.2 Great Power Rivalry Undermining State Capacity**

Drones played a vital role in the Ethiopian government's war with TPLF forces. The drones provided the Ethiopian army with crucial intelligence and surveillance capabilities, allowing them to effectively target and neutralize TPLF forces. This significantly increased the government's

chances of achieving their goal of restoring stability and control in the Tigray region. According to a key informant from the Ministry of Defense<sup>21</sup>, the drones' ability to gather real-time data and monitor enemy movements gave the Ethiopian army a tactical advantage, enabling them to anticipate TPLF strategies and respond swiftly. With the help of drones, the government was able to minimize civilian casualties and collateral damage, further solidifying their position as a responsible military force. Furthermore, the drones' ability to conduct airstrikes on TPLF positions further weakened their resistance and disrupted their command structure. The use of drones also minimized the risk of casualties among Ethiopian soldiers, as they could gather real-time information from a safe distance and plan their operations accordingly.

However, the US attempted to curb the sale of drones to Ethiopia, citing concerns about human rights abuses and the potential misuse of the technology. During the conflict, the US raised concerns about the Ethiopian armed forces deployment of drones against civilians, including allegations of indiscriminate targeting and civilian casualties. At the height of the conflict with the TPLF, U.S. Horn of Africa envoy Jeffrey Feltman visited Turkey to pressure Turkey to stop selling drones to Ethiopia, citing reports of armed drone use in Ethiopia against civilians. Feltman emphasized the need for responsible use of drone technology and urged Turkey to consider the potential consequences of selling drones to Ethiopia. He emphasized that the Turkish sale of drones exacerbated the conflict in Ethiopia.

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Key informant from the Ministry of Defense in 2022 in Addis Ababa

## **Chapter Six: Concluding Remarks**

As there is growing concern that the United States and China will have a more competitive relationship, and that Russia actively seeks to revive its global power, international relations scholars and professionals are becoming increasingly interested in questions about the impact of great rivalry across various regions of the world. As the primary strategic focus of global politics shifts from the so-called "war on terror" to "great power rivalry," many continental and regional power arrangements are being restructured. There is a growing interest in area and security studies about the extent and manner in which these global contestations have affected the national security of states and society. As the growing global battle unravels old state institutions and regional security architectures, 'great power rivalry' has risen to the highest interests of scholarly inquiry and engagement.

As Africa becomes an essential battlefield for great power rivalry, studying the areas that make up Africa in general, and the Horn of Africa in particular, has become an increasingly attractive subject of study in the study of International Relations and Security. The study of the Horn of Africa involves a complex set of issues such as state formations, peace and security, national and human security dynamics, external security intervention, and national security dynamics within a changing global geopolitics and other broader international relations framework. Many new global

political trends interact with existing dire situations of conflict, state fragility and decay, natural and man-made disasters, and traditional and human security threats in the Horn of Africa to create the most volatile and unpredictable political and security conditions in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia. The Horn of Africa, Africa's most crucial sub-region, is trapped in a highly structurally embedded vicious cycle of political fragmentation and deterioration, armed wars, unstable political transitions with a long history of democratic deficit, and instability. Ethiopia, being the largest and most populated country in the Horn of Africa area, hosts the majority of the sub-region's instability and vulnerabilities.

Ethiopia's lengthy history of state fragility and instability was exacerbated by the beginning of internal political transition and increased involvement of great powers, attempting to manipulate the political transition to their advantage. As a result, the existing state of fragility, combined with the vulnerabilities of the political transitional process and the rising antagonistic engagement of competing super powers in the sub-region and within countries, has generated a slew of threats to Ethiopia's state security and human security, with long-term implications for regional peace and security, democracy, and development. As a result, scholars and practitioners alike are increasingly fascinated by the emergent great power geopolitics in the Horn and its influence on Ethiopia. With its great relevance and ramifications for the region, the continent, and the wider globe, it is rapidly gaining the attention of scholars, policymakers, and observers in the region.

This study created a new landscape of data and analysis on the dynamics of the growing multipolar globe in relation to the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia. The study encompassed three levels: national, regional, and global political contests, with a focus on the consequences for Ethiopia's national security. The study's aims were highlighted from the start: understanding the theoretical and empirical importance of unstable global power rivalry in connection to international and national peace and security. Most importantly, the new challenges confronting Ethiopia's political change processes in the face of growing geo-strategic cooperation and rivalry in the Horn of Africa. Qualitative research methods and analysis were used to adequately explore the evolving multipolar geopolitics internationally and its relationship to Ethiopia's national security situation. Primary and secondary data were gathered from a variety of sources, including interviews, books, published and unpublished documents, organizational reports, news stories, and other online sites.

The study looked through the existing literature for theoretical and empirical frameworks to analyze the impact of great power rivalry on global peace and security as well as national security

of nations. In assessing the beneficial or detrimental effect of great power rivalry on Ethiopia's national security, the literature investigated the many ways and characteristics through which great power rivalry may result in more peaceful and cooperative (positive) order or conflictual and antagonistic (negative) order. The literature on global order stability (positive) or instability (negative) identifies indicators to analyze the current situation of great power competitive engagements. The rivalry between the United States, China, and Russia has become intense. Geopolitical conflicts, economic competitions, and ideological disagreements all contribute to this instability. Furthermore, the advancement of military technologies and the desire of regional primacy add to the possibility of increased clashes between these global powers. The pursuit of regional dominance by these powers often involves supporting proxy conflicts and engaging in aggressive actions, further fueling tensions and the potential for conflict. Moreover, the involvement of regional states in proxy conflicts can have devastating humanitarian consequences and exacerbate existing political and social instability in the affected regions.

The study examined the consequences of intense power struggle among the three great powers in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia specifically. Looking at Ethiopian national security in the context of unpredictable and volatile great power rivalry, the research discovered several issues affecting Ethiopian national security. In terms of the state and society's security in various parts of the country, great power rivalry has been implicated in initiating or extending civil strife in the country. According to primary and secondary data gathered from key informant sources, the direct or indirect engagement of external players in Ethiopia's political process has detrimental effects on the country's security. Many civil conflicts were externalized by the involvement of major powers, restricting states' capacity to create a monopoly of violence in various conflicts involving armed non-state belligerents. External actors, on the other hand, encourage insurgent groups with a false sense of invincibility, discouraging them from negotiating with the government.

The thesis also discussed the impact of great power contestation on the peaceful resolution of the Nile Basin's hydro-politics, particularly the GERD negotiations, and how great power interference helped and hindered a negotiated settlement of the dispute over the river's equitable and reasonable utilization. The contentious diplomatic and geopolitical interaction surrounding the construction and filling of the Dam, as well as the heightened attention and involvement of external

superpowers, signified a major geopolitical change in the lengthy dispute over the fair and reasonable use of the water.

Overall, the research attempted to analyze, theoretically and practically, the opportunities and challenges of intensified great power rivalry for Ethiopian and Horn of African security. In terms of opportunities, increased participation of international powers in the Horn, notably in Ethiopia, may result in considerably increased economic investment in infrastructure development that contribute to regional integration and economic prosperity. The military presence of major powers can boost the capability of antipiracy operations, hence improving the security of maritime commerce routes. Military cooperation and defense may also contribute to the maintenance of regional power balance and political stability. However, there are challenges to governments' political stability and territorial integrity when superpowers meddle in domestic political processes. In the context of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, the study offered evidence indicating the role of external malign interventions in weakening the state's capability to provide peace and security to its people. Finally, the study examined how much the interference of contending superpowers affected Ethiopia's sovereignty and policy independence.

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### List of Key Informants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>
General Gutema Debele	Head of Department in EFDRE Ministry of Defense	July 14, 2022	At a Hotel in Addis Ababa
General Mohammed Hassen	Head of a Geographic Command in EFDRE Ministry of Defense	February 20 and 22, 2022	At a resort in Bishoftu, Oromia Regional State
Ambassador Bekele Alemayehu	EFDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs Advisor	May 10, 2022	MFA Premises
Ambassador Agegn Miheretab	EFDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head of Department	March 21, 2022	MFA Premises
Ambassador Mustefa	EFDRE Ministry of	July 19, 2022	MFA Premises

Mohammed	Foreign Affairs Head of Department		
Dr. Melaku Geteye	EFDRE Ministry of Senior Official	June 17, 2022	MoP Premises
Cherugeta Bekele	EFDRE Prime Minister Office Current Affairs Senior Expert	March 20, 2022	PMO Premises
Melekete Sahilu	EFDRE Prime Minister Office Economic Affairs Expert	April 27, 2022	PMO Premises
Wubshet Tadele	EFDRE Prime Minister Office Political Affairs Senior Expert	May 13, 2022	PMO Premises
Dr. Kena Tolessa	IPSS Graduate	August 2 ,2022	Cafeteria in Addis Ababa
Mr. Semeneh Muluneh	IGAD Security Sector Program officer	September 2, 2022	Cafeteria in Addis Ababa
Mr. Ayalew Zenaw	Institute of Security Studies, Horn of Africa Researcher	August 7, 2022	ISS Premises
Mr. Desta Bahru	Senior official of Information Network Security Service	July 27, 2022	INSS Premises
Mr. Ahmed Mifta	Senior official of Information Network Security Service	August 5, 2022	INSS Premises
Mr. Million Endeshaw	Senior official of National Intelligence and Security Service	June 11, 2022	NISS Premises
Mr. Abdelfeta Jebril	Senior official of National Intelligence and Security Service	June 13, 2022	NISS Premises

## **Annex One**

### **Interview Guiding Questions**

#### **I. Interview guiding questions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

1. How do you see the great powers increased rivalry in the Horn of Africa?
2. What is Ethiopia\_s current foreign policy towards USA, China and Russia?
3. What are the national security implications of GPC in the Horn to the region and to Ethiopia?
4. How would you describe domestic political reform with regional security in this context?
5. What possible foreign policy orientations would best serve the interest of Ethiopia in dealing with the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa?
6. Can IGAD and AU play a role in dealing with the impact of great powers in the horn? How?

7. What recommendations you may forward to reduce the impact of GPC in Ethiopia?

## **II. Guiding Questions to the Office of the Prime Minister**

1. What is the nature of great power rivalry in the Horn of Africa?
2. What is Ethiopia\_s policy towards the Horn of Africa, IGAD and its role in the region?
3. What should be the role of Ethiopia within IGAD to deal with GPC in the region?
4. Currently is there any active case you are engaged with IGAD in dealing with the situation?
5. What is your recommendation or way forward you would suggest on this issue?

## **III. Interview guiding question to Ministry of Defense**

1. Would you describe (USA, China and Russia) engagement in the Horn of Africa?
2. How do you describe the interplay of GPC and Ethiopia relation with Horn countries?
3. What is the security implication of GPC in the Horn to the region and Ethiopia in particular?
4. Can AU and IGAD play a role in dealing the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa and how?
5. What foreign policy orientations would best serve the national interest of Ethiopia in dealing with the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa?

## **IV. Interview guiding questions to the Ministry of Peace and Security Agencies**

1. How do you see the features of great power rivalry in the Horn of Africa and its implication to national security of Ethiopia?
2. How do you explain Ethiopia's political reform in maintaining national security?
3. What is the negative effect of great power rivalry on the national security of Ethiopia?
4. What are the potential opportunities of great power rivalry in the horn of Africa to the national security of Ethiopia?

## **V. Interview Guiding Questions to IPSS and ISS**

1. How do you see the great powers increased rivalry in the Horn of Africa?
2. What is Ethiopia\_s current foreign policy towards USA, China and Russia?
3. What are the national security implications of GPC in the Horn to the region and to Ethiopia?
4. How would you describe domestic political reform with regional security in this context?

5. What possible foreign policy orientations would best serve the interest of Ethiopia in dealing with the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa?
6. Can IGAD and AU play a role in dealing with the impact of great powers in the horn? How?

#### **VI. Interview Guiding Questions to IGAD**

1. Would you describe (USA, China and Russia) engagement in the Horn of Africa?
2. How do you describe the interplay of GPC and Ethiopia relation with Horn countries?
3. What is the security implication of GPC in the Horn to the region and Ethiopia in particular?
4. Can AU and IGAD play a role in dealing the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa and how?
5. What foreign policy orientations would best serve the national interest of Ethiopia in dealing with the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa?

#### **VII. Interview Guiding Questions to AU**

1. Would you describe (USA, China and Russia) engagement in the Horn of Africa?
2. How do you describe the interplay of GPC and Ethiopia relation with Horn countries?
3. What is the security implication of GPC in the Horn to the region and Ethiopia in particular?
4. Can AU and IGAD play a role in dealing the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa and how?
5. What foreign policy orientations would best serve the national interest of Ethiopia in dealing with the impact of GPC in the Horn of Africa?



