SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

OCCASIONAL PAPER 261

JUNE 2017

A REGIONAL POWER IN THE MAKING: ETHIOPIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

MEHARI TADDELE MARU



African perspectives. Global insights.

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) has a long and proud record as South Africa's premier research institute on international issues. It is an independent, non-government think tank whose key strategic objectives are to make effective input into public policy, and to encourage wider and more informed debate on international affairs, with particular emphasis on African issues and concerns. It is both a centre for research excellence and a home for stimulating public engagement. SAIIA's occasional papers present topical, incisive analyses, offering a variety of perspectives on key policy issues in Africa and beyond. Core public policy research themes covered by SAIIA include good governance and democracy; economic policymaking; international security and peace; and new global challenges such as food security, global governance reform and the environment. Please consult our website www.saiia.org.za for further information about SAIIA's work.

FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAMME

SAIIA's Foreign Policy research covers three pillars: South African Foreign Policy; the foreign policy engagement of key African driver countries in their region, with a specific focus on supporting regional peace and security; and the engagement of key global (including emerging) players in Africa, with the view to supporting African development, peace and stability at a national, regional and continental level.

The programme seeks to produce a body of work that assists policymakers, the business community and civil society working on South African and African foreign policy concerns. SAIIA gratefully acknowledges the support of the Swedish International Development Agency and the IDRC (Canadian International Development Research Centre) which generously support the Foreign Policy Programme.

PROGRAMME MANAGER Aditi Lalbahadur, aditi.lalbahadur@wits.ac.za

© SAIIA JUNE 2017

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilised in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information or storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Opinions expressed are the responsibility of the individual authors and not of SAIIA.

Please note that all currencies are in US$ unless otherwise indicated.

Cover photo: Map of Ethiopia
© https://www.flickr.com/photos/cmuffins/5477515532/

ABSTRACT

Ethiopia's regional engagement and foreign policy is based on its Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy (FANSPS), launched in 2002. The country is a key player in the Horn of Africa and, despite recent internal conflict, crucial for maintaining stability in the region. Its government engages robustly at the regional and continental level, mainly through multilateral agencies such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the AU; and it is seen as a trustworthy mediator in East Africa and the Horn. This role is aided by the relative strength of its military and its active participation in regional peace and security operations; its capacity and willingness to combat terrorism; a pan-Africanist legacy; and its effective utilisation of multilateral platforms. Domestic problems include a grave democratic deficit; sectarian politics; corruption; the absence of constitutional accountability, judicial review and parliamentary oversight; the violation of human rights; and extreme poverty, all of which pose a threat to internal peace and security. Its response to these domestic threats remains the main determinant of Ethiopia's foreign policy. Externally, terrorism and neighbouring states' expansionist policies, continued enmity with Eritrea and rivalry with Egypt over the Nile River threaten Ethiopia's pursuit of peace and social development, both domestic and regional. Although the fundamentals of the FANSPS remain pertinent after two decades, it is time that Ethiopia turns from an exceedingly inward-looking foreign policy focused exclusively on domestic vulnerabilities towards a more balanced approach, to forestall external threats and seize legitimate opportunities. Proportionality demands adequate attention to external threats and opportunities; hence it is time to take stock of its current approach and, in doing so, consider economic and trade opportunities, in particular access to the sea and port services. Emerging geopolitical and geo-economic issues may impair Ethiopia's diplomatic achievements if the FANSPS is not urgently reappraised.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR MEHARI TADDELE MARU is a member of the AU High Level Advisory Group on Humanitarian Affairs, Chief Strategy Consultant for IGAD and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Law and Governance at Addis Ababa University. He is a visiting lecturer at the NATO Defense College, the UN Institute for Economic Development and Planning, and armed forces and peacekeeping colleges in various countries, including Nigeria and Ethiopia. He was Programme Coordinator and Legal Expert at the AU Commission, Programme Head for Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis at the Institute for Security Studies, and Director for University Reform at Addis Ababa University.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia
AU HIP	AU High-Level Implementation Panel
CFA	Cooperative Framework Agreement
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EASF	East African Standby Force
EEBC	Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Development Front
FANSPS	Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy
GDP	gross domestic product
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NSC	National Security Council
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UNISFA	UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade Ethiopia has moved toward a more focused and robust stance in its regional foreign policy, in the process bolstering its status as a pivotal regional power and a major player in African affairs. Ethiopia's foreign policy (and regional diplomacy in particular) revolves around its approach towards its immediate neighbours – Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda – and its mutually reinforcing roles within the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)[1] and institutions such as the East African Standby Force (EASF) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

With a long history of independence, Ethiopia has considerable experience in foreign relations and diplomacy.[2] Although the governments of Emperor Haile Selassie (1916–1974) and Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam (1974–1991) faced many of the same external threats as are currently being experienced, their domestic problems were very different from those facing the two subsequent administrations, both led by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which took power after overthrowing Mengistu in 1991. It is primarily those domestic questions and the response to them that have informed the thinking of the EPRDF governments under prime ministers Meles Zenawi (1991–2012) and Haile Mariam Desalegn (since 2012). These administrations have been more inward looking and focused on domestic political dynamics than their predecessors.

As part of its efforts to address domestic political instability, in 2002 the EPRDF government developed the Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy (FANSPS), based on Article 86 of the federal constitution.[3] The FANSPS prioritises domestic security over external threats and vulnerabilities; and domestic considerations over foreign policy. As a result, domestic and external issues are inextricably bound together in shaping Ethiopia's diplomacy.

The FANSPS prioritises domestic security over external threats and vulnerabilities; and domestic considerations over foreign policy

UNDERPINNINGS OF FOREIGN POLICY

It is the government's response to domestic threats, mainly those arising from poverty and protracted conflicts and instability, that underpins current Ethiopian foreign policy,

1 Established in 1996 and headquartered in Djibouti, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) comprises states in the Horn of Africa, the Nile Valley and the Great Lakes region. Its members are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

2 Smidt W & K Abraham (eds.), *Discussing Conflict in Ethiopia: Conflict Management and Resolution*. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2007.

3 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Information, 'The Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy' (FANSPS), November 2002, p. 107, http://www.mfa.gov.et/web/guest/policy-issue, accessed 2 October 2016; Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1st Year, No. 1, Addis Ababa, 21 August 1995.

although threats from neighbouring countries are also in the frame.[4] The government regards regional diplomacy essentially as a vehicle for helping solve problems relating to Ethiopia's internal governance, with economic development, stability and democratic institutions seen as the major national priorities.[5]

The FANSPS shows which elements the government identifies as being central to Ethiopia's national interests; elaborates on what the end state of foreign policy should be and how it may best be achieved; and articulates the contribution that foreign policy must make to the attainment of domestic priority goals.[6] The overall aim of that policy is the furtherance of Ethiopia's efforts to achieve the developmental status of a middle-income country by 2025.

The FANSPS merges foreign and national security into one policy document. As the name implies, it also includes strategies for implementation. The FANSPS has three aims: developing and building a democratic system, national pride and prestige, and globalisation:[7]

> The goal of our foreign and security policy is to ensure international conditions that are conducive to achieving our development and democratic objectives. The basis and goal of our foreign and security policy is defined as realizing development and democracy. Our diplomatic work must aim at eliminating or at least reducing external security threats. Our policy should strive to widen the number of foreign friends that can help create a regional and global atmosphere conducive for our peace and security. Our diplomatic activity also aims at forecasting potential threats and addressing them through dialogue and negotiations. The policy should also help secure allies that can help us withstand intractable challenges and threats.

It lists seven strategies: devoting the prime focus to activities at home; focusing on the economy; effectively utilising foreign assistance and aid; minimising threats; reducing vulnerability to threats; building a reliable defence capability; and building a strong implementation capacity.[8]

The FANSPS then assesses the importance of countries with significant influence on Ethiopia's internal political and economic development, its foreign relations and its security, and elaborates the policy direction to be taken regarding each country or group of countries. Beginning with each of the neighbouring countries (Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya), it offers measures that will strengthen IGAD.[9] It deals in

4 FANSPS, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
5 *Ibid.*, pp. 28–30.
6 *Ibid.*
7 *Ibid.*, pp. 5–24.
8 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–55.
9 Revealing the emphasis Ethiopia places on diplomacy, development, peace and security issues, the FANSPS devotes close to 50 pages on the immediate neighbourhood and IGAD. See FANSPS, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–105.

a similar manner with other African countries, the countries of the Middle East,[10] the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Israel, Turkey and Iran. Since they have significant influence on Ethiopia's diplomacy, the US, Europe, Russia, Japan, China and India are the main focus of the FANSPS. It also gives an overview of the relationship Ethiopia wants to have with international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Previous Ethiopian regimes, particularly that of Mengistu, externalised almost all the country's problems by expanding its military defence capabilities in the face of 'historical external enemies'.[11] Intractable domestic problems were blamed mainly on these external forces, with the result being a focus on militarisation and diplomacy to contain real and assumed external threats.[12] This externalisation neither solved the country's internal problems nor prevented external direct and indirect attacks. Domestic problems festered into civil war and were exploited by various forces, while extreme militarisation did not help Ethiopia or its diplomacy, and eventually led to the fall of the Mengistu regime.

In a complete break with the past, the EPRDF government not only internalised the challenges that hampered the country's overall development but also identified protracted conflict, extreme and rampant poverty, and general backwardness as the main threats to national survival. It has framed Ethiopia's developmental, governance and democratic challenges as the causes and consequences of domestic political and economic problems. The government confronted the ultra-nationalist culture of the Ethiopian elite, with its disingenuous discourse of externalising severe internal problems and blaming them on outside forces. The EPRDF believes this 'externalisation' mindset poses the gravest of all existential threats to the nation, as old assimilationist policies fail to govern ethnic or religious diversity effectively. In the EPRDF narrative, external threats have been reduced to those that exacerbate and exploit internal challenges of poverty and conflict.

By internalising most of these problems, however, the policy makes the assumption that their solutions remain within the grasp of Ethiopia and its people. The government has replaced an old, rigid and reactive strategy with a more flexible and, to a limited degree, proactive foreign policy. If not in itself revolutionary, this does constitute a radical departure from the fundamentals of the foreign policies of previous regimes. The clean break has led to major changes in the approach to regional diplomacy and economic cooperation.

The government has replaced an old, rigid and reactive strategy with a more flexible and, to a limited degree, proactive foreign policy

Nevertheless, while the government has achieved significant progress on the economic front, in terms of democratic governance Ethiopia still faces serious domestic challenges. This is despite some major achievements in solving old national conflicts through federal arrangements. Ethiopia now needs to focus on its domestic peace and security challenges so that it can build strong and sustainable relations with other countries.

10 In an indication of the position Egypt occupies in Ethiopian foreign and security matters, the FANSPS dedicates almost 11 pages to the country.

11 Tekle A, 'The determinants of the foreign policy of revolutionary Ethiopia', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 27, 3, pp. 479–502; FANSPS, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–38.

12 *Ibid.*

Institutional and individual foreign policy drivers

Institutionally, the major drivers of foreign policy are the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Ministry of Defence, the Ethiopian National Defence Force, and the National Intelligence and Security Services; all acting with other key sector entities.[13] Chaired by the prime minister, the National Security Council (NSC) provides overall direction with respect to the coordination and supervision of the 'proper implementation of domestic, foreign and defence policies relating to … national security'.[14] As a joint inter-ministerial collaborative platform, the work of the NSC is coordinated by a national security advisor with the rank of minister within the OPM.

Politically, the EPRDF and its chairperson, who usually assumes the prime ministership, formulate the country's foreign policy. Organised on the Leninist principle of democratic centralism,[15] the EPRDF exercises strict control through its party structures over the formulation and implementation of policy at federal and local government levels. During the first two decades of its rule, Zenawi and the party's inner circle defined and articulated Ethiopia's national interests and foreign policy: the party leadership formulated the FANSPS and still keeps a close watch on its implementation. Given the particular urgency accorded to foreign policy by the border war with Eritrea in 1998 and a 2001 schism within the EPRDF, major regional and global diplomatic initiatives were dominated – and in some aspects monopolised – by Zenawi himself. Policy initiatives on continental issues such as Ethiopia's role in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), climate change negotiations, the appointment of the chair of the UN-supported AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AU HIP), and the deployment in 2011 of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) depended on the personal leadership of the prime minister.[16] In highly political cases demanding foreign policy decisions, such as the UN General Assembly resolution on Russia's annexation of the Crimea[17] and the recent UN

13 Such as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Inland Revenue and Customs Authority, etc.

14 Federal Government of Ethiopia, Ethiopian National Security Council Establishment Proclamation No. 257/2001, 8th Year, No. 3, Addis Ababa, 12 October 2001, Article 4, http://www.fsc.gov.et/content/Negarit%20Gazeta/Gazeta-1994/Proc%20No.%20257-2001%20Ethiopian%20National%20Security%20Council%20Estab.pdf, accessed 10 September 2016.

15 Mehari M, 'Devolution of Power in Ethiopia: The Legal and Political Aspects', Paper presented at the Public Discussion Forum for Political Parties, African Initiatives for a Democratic World Order, Addis Ababa, March 2008, pp. 38–39, http://meharitaddele.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Devolution-of-Power-Mehari-Taddele-Maru.pdf, accessed 12 October 2016.

16 Mehari M, 'Ethiopia and AU', in Gelot L & M Eriksson (eds), *The African Union In Light of the Arab Revolts: An Appraisal of the Foreign Policy and Security Objectives of South Africa, Ethiopia and Algeria*, Nordic Africa Institute & Swedish Defence Research Agency Discussion Paper, 76, May 2013, http://nai.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:622198, accessed 4 September 2016.

17 UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262, 27 March 2014, A/RES/68/262.

Security Council vote on a draft resolution on Syria,[18] Ethiopia's actions are ideologically determined by the party leadership rather than by MoFA officials. Neither national interest nor value-based foreign policy considerations explain its recent positions in the UN.

With its primary mandate of executing the FANSPS and formulating regional diplomacy, the MoFA follows an organisational structure under which core political issues are separated from support functions. Hence, while the minister of foreign affairs is in charge of both core and support functions, he has three ministers of state to assist him – with one of them responsible for core political diplomacy and the other two respectively for business diplomacy and diaspora affairs, and finance and administration.

Operating through 52 diplomatic missions (42 embassies and 10 consulates) and with 820 staff members and diplomats, in 2013/14 the MoFA had a budget of $62.8 million with an average annual increase of approximately 10%. A total of 33% of these diplomatic missions are in Africa (15 embassies and two consulates), of which six embassies and two consulates (47% of the total missions in Africa) are in the IGAD region. Ethiopia has embassies and consulates in all its neighbouring countries except Eritrea.[19]

Given its limited human and financial resources, at least when compared with major diplomatic players in Africa such as Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa,[20] the MoFA faces substantial limitations on its strategic capability for prediction, response, promotion and diplomatic functioning. Nevertheless, given these financial and human resource constraints, it is generally seen as efficient when compared with other countries' foreign affairs departments. A long historical institutional tradition, extensive diplomatic experience and the clarity of policy direction given by the FANSPS, as well as the introduction of modern results-based management systems, may have contributed to this efficiency.

Regional framework

Within the general context of the FANSPS, seven main factors inform Ethiopia's regional diplomacy:

- a pan-Africanist legacy;
- the pursuit of regional peace and security;
- emerging issues and longstanding threats from the Horn of Africa and beyond;

18 UN, 'Security Council fails to adopt resolution condemning chemical weapons use in Syria, following veto by Russian Federation, the UN Security Council draft Resolution SC/12791, 12 April 2017', https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12791.doc.htm, accessed 17 April 2017.

19 Female staff members in Addis Ababa, including those providing support services, constitute 35% of the payroll; for each female diplomat in a mission there are 3.5 men. See Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'FDRE missions', www.mfa.gov.et/web/guest/fdre-mission-abroad, accessed 4 September 2016.

20 For example, Nigeria has more than 150 missions and a budget of over $400 million; South Africa has more than 5 000 staff members and a budget of close to $500 million; and Kenya has a budget of more than $300 million.

- economic diplomacy;
- measures to combat terrorism and evolve strong counter-terrorism capabilities;
- the effective use of multilateral platforms, regional diplomacy and leadership in mediation by IGAD and the AU; and
- military strength and substantial participation in peace support operations.

PAN-AFRICANIST LEGACY

As the first independent sub-Saharan African nation to join the League of Nations – on 28 September 1923 – and as a founding member of the UN, Ethiopia has continually promoted and defended the interests of Africa in various global forums. South Africa's late president Nelson Mandela referred to Ethiopia as having been a seedbed for the pan-African solidarity movement, which saw the creation of the ANC in 1912 and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) – precursor of the AU – in 1963. According to Mandela,[21]

> [f]undamental tenets of the Ethiopian Movement were self-worth, self-reliance and freedom. These tenets drew the advocates of Ethiopianism, like a magnet, to the growing political movement [that] was to culminate in the formation of the ANC in 1912. It is in this sense that [the ANC] trace[s] the seeds of the formation of our organisation to the Ethiopian Movement of the 1890s.

From the early 1960s Ethiopia extended substantial political support to various anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activists in Africa. This included offering military training and materiel as well as diplomatic support to insurgent movements from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, a policy that continued under Mengistu. In 1960 Ethiopia joined Liberia in indicting South Africa's apartheid government at the International Court of Justice for its continued occupation of Namibia (then South West Africa).

Although it lacks a fully-fledged stand-alone policy on the AU/OAU, over the past five decades Ethiopia's commitment, overall direction and contributions have been about continuity and consistency. Its current contributions to pan-Africanism focus on peace and security, leadership in IGAD and AU organs, representation of Africa in global platforms (including non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council), diplomacy on transboundary natural resource utilisation such as in the Nile River, and leadership in integrative economic infrastructures. Ethiopia, as discussed below, is active in mediation, peace-support operations, counter insurgency and anti-terrorism in the IGAD region and beyond. For the past decade it has provided leadership within IGAD and various AU organs. It has chaired IGAD, NEPAD and the AU Committee on Climate Change, and was a member of the AU's Peace and Security Council.

21 Mandela N, 'Speech to the Free Ethiopian Church of South Africa', South African History, 14 December 1992, http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/nelson-mandelas-speech-free-ethiopian-church-southern-africa-potchefstroom-14-december-1992, accessed 1 October 2016.

In terms of defending and promoting African interests in global forums, Ethiopia served as co-chair of UN and US summits on migration and refugee issues and was elected to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member representing Africa in 2017. Previously, Ethiopia represented Africa in meetings of the G20 and G8, as well as in climate change negotiations, the Forum for China–Africa Cooperation, and African partnership forums with India and South Korea. It has also spearheaded forums on the equitable use of transboundary natural resources, such as the Nile Basin Initiative and the negotiations for the development of a Comprehensive Framework Agreement on the Nile River. Through its investment in transportation corridors Ethiopia is highly connected to all the neighbouring countries. Moreover, as discussed below, its electric power pool connections to neighbouring countries also serve as an integrative opportunity for the region.

Currently, Ethiopia regularly pays its AU assessed contribution of $6.8 million per year (4% of the total assessed contributions to the AU) based on its capacity to pay and gross domestic product (GDP). It is one of 11 AU member states that regularly pay their full assessed contributions, and one of seven that usually make advance payments.[22] In addition, Ethiopia not only provided the land and buildings for the AU's headquarters but also offered all the human and physical facilities that the OAU had required in its early years.[23]

Furthermore, Addis Ababa, as the host of the AU headquarters and the seat of various multilaterally and bilaterally accredited missions, delegations and institutions, functions as the diplomatic hub of Africa. In the words of the country's current foreign policy, the opportunity to host the AU comes with 'a special responsibility'.[24] Traditionally, Ethiopia, and not necessarily for the sake of the OAU/AU only, has provided the organisation with security and conference facilities. However, challenges still remain in providing basic services, particularly those delivered by the state, such as electricity, water, banking, visas and immigration. More critically, the legislative and regulatory environment in Ethiopia precludes pan-African civil society organisations and think tanks from operating and engaging freely with the AU and its various organs. This is manifested in the country's cumbersome visa processing, registration and operational requirements, which have shrunk the space even for pan-African activities. Moreover, Ethiopia's commitment to the AU's ideals and values, as expressed in the various normative instruments of the organisation, falters when it comes to the ratification and implementation of these instruments. They include the Protocol on the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, the African Youth Charter, the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance

22 AU, 'Report of the Sub-Committee on Contributions, Executive Council, Twenty-Eighth Ordinary Session, 23 – 28 January 2016, Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA EX.CL/928(XXVII) vii'. In 2013, 35 member states of the AU – including Egypt (with more than $16 million), Libya ($33 million), Sudan ($9 million), Tanzania ($2 million), Uganda ($1.2 million) and Senegal ($1.1 million) – did not pay their contributions on time.

23 *Ibid*., p. 154.

24 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Information, *The Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy*, November 2002, Addis Ababa, p. 107.

of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention),[25] the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, and others.[26]

REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Inward-looking foreign and national security policy[27]

The FANSPS must be seen in the context of Ethiopia's history. For many years its main diplomatic focus was on collaborating with regional and global actors in the quest for collective security. The governments of Haile Selassie and Mengistu tended to excessively externalise Ethiopia's internal problems. The revolution of 1974 supplanted Selassie's monarchy with a highly centralised military dictatorship under Mengistu, who had installed himself as head of state. Ethiopia then endured a protracted civil war (particularly in its northern, south-western and eastern provinces). It saw several insurgencies until the overthrow of Mengistu, and in 1977 had to deal with incursions from Somalia, which was trying to annex parts of south-eastern Ethiopia. At the same time, separatist guerrilla movements in Eritrea threatened the unity of the country. Owing in part to the Cold War and, under Mengistu, an imposed socialist ideology and the lengthy (1974–1991) civil war, Ethiopia enjoyed much lower levels of trust and influence within and outside Africa than it does now. In fact, the opposite applied: under Mengistu, Ethiopia was considered part of the problem in the Horn of Africa.

An offshoot of the Student Movement of the 1970s, which played a key role in the 1974 revolution toppling Selassie, the EPRDF considers itself the heir of this movement.

25 Mehari M, *The Kampala Convention and Its Contributions to International Law: Legal Analyses and Interpretations of the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons*. The Hague: Eleven International Publishing, 2014, http://www.elevenpub.com/law/catalogus/the-kampala-convention-and-its-contributions-to-inter national-law-1, accessed 4 October 2014.

26 See AU, 'Treaties: Status', 2010, http://www.au.int/en/treaties/status, accessed 1 October 2016.

27 In this paper, the author uses the term 'inward-looking foreign policy' to refer to a policy founded on a critical analysis of the causes of the threats to and vulnerabilities of a nation, with internal political and socio-economic challenges as the foremost sources of vulnerability, as opposed to externalising the sources of the threats. An inward-looking foreign policy circumscribes the focus on and around domestic considerations and threats, and seeks internal solutions first before looking to external assistance, diplomacy and military posturing. The term also applies to trade and economic integration, where state-led public investment is restricted to the internal development of the economy by getting its 'house in order' before seeking external opportunities. As a result, external forces could underestimate an inward-looking country until it asserts its place in a regional or global setting.

Political platforms of the Student Movement were mobilised around the following fundamental questions, which remain relevant today:

- the 'question of nationalities' (a popular term for the 1960s struggle against ethno-linguistic domination in Ethiopia, referred to as 'Ye Biher Bihereseb Tiyaque' in Amharic);
- the 'land question' ('Ye Meriyet Tiyaque'; or 'Land to the Tiller', 'Meret La Rashu');
- the 'Eritrean question' ('Ye Eritrea Tiyaque'); and
- the question of religious equality ('Ye Haimanot Ekulinet Tiyaque').

Since each ethnic group traditionally inhabits the same geographic area and consists of agrarian communities dependent on land, the first two major questions often overlap. Given the economic value of land in such agrarian societies, land tenure claims immediately have an impact on cultural and political equality.

After Mengistu's fall, and when the EPRDF seized power in Ethiopia in 1991, Eritrea seceded and Ethiopia lost its direct access to the Red Sea via the ports of Assab and Massawa (discussed below in more detail). Immediately after toppling Mengistu's regime and in an attempt to address the above key national questions, the EPRDF promulgated the federal constitution, which established a federation of regional states based on the linguistic and cultural arrangements of ethnic groups. It stipulated federalism as an institutional form for the protection, expression and promotion of the equality of nationalities, as well as state ownership of the land.[28] Convinced that the federal constitution had helped to address the long-standing political questions raised by the 1970s Student Movement, the EPRDF chose to re-direct its focus onto poverty eradication and looked to the East for inspiration in terms of developmental economic growth and service delivery. In general, developmental states prioritise the delivery of economic growth and public services over democratic governance; a state ideology that has been generally successful on the economic front but that is intrinsically limited in its ability to resolve political tensions in such an ethnically and religiously diverse country.

Convinced that the federal constitution had helped to address the long-standing political questions raised by the 1970s Student Movement, the EPRDF chose to re-direct its focus onto poverty eradication and looked to the East for inspiration in terms of developmental economic growth and service delivery

The outlook of the EPRDF, in essence an alliance of counter-Derg revolutionary forces, is rooted in ideological convictions on the fundamental causes of Ethiopia's internal troubles (democratic deficit, poverty, an unstable region and animosity from neighbouring countries) and their solutions. It sees regional diplomacy as one of the platforms available for arriving at solutions to the regional challenges that it believes directly affect Ethiopia's domestic development. The FANSPS was meant to address this by adopting an inward-looking foreign policy that internalised all problems, and thus left a small footprint in the region unless the country's domestic situation demanded some involvement.

There are several examples that showcase the disadvantages of an excessively inward-looking foreign policy that exclusively focuses on vulnerabilities. Ethiopia's state-led public

28 See Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 9 (the sovereignty of ethno-cultural communities), Article 39 (the right to self-determination and secession) and Article 40 (collective ownership of land).

investment, for example, has centred on the development of a domestic infrastructure that promotes economically sustainable integration with its IGAD neighbours. Due to the FANSPS's almost exclusive focus on vulnerabilities rather than opportunities, Ethiopia makes significant contributions to peace and security but with limited trade and economic cooperation. This has brought with it undue stress and a consequent failure to seize economic and trade opportunities in the region, such as those in South Sudan.

Since the Derg regime, Ethiopia has provided comprehensive political, financial and military assistance to South Sudan's struggle for self-determination.[29] Despite this, it was late in developing scenarios for South Sudan and determining how its own national interests could best be protected. It was also late to open a consulate in Juba to facilitate economic cooperation and trade, and support Ethiopian businesses. Meanwhile, trade and business investment in South Sudan has been dominated by Eritrean, Kenyan and Ugandan companies that were diplomatically supported and aggressively promoted by their governments. This is not unique to the South Sudanese case. Regionally, the Ethiopian government could have been more proactive in encouraging and diplomatically supporting Ethiopian businesses, but its inaction has resulted in little activity by the Ethiopian private sector in 'frontline' countries.

A more robust opportunity-based diplomatic approach to regional economic and trade ties could have had far-reaching consequences for the market share of Ethiopian businesses, putting them on par with those of neighbours such as Kenya and Uganda

A more robust opportunity-based diplomatic approach to regional economic and trade ties could have had far-reaching consequences for the market share of Ethiopian businesses, putting them on par with those of neighbours such as Kenya and Uganda. But the intensity with which Ethiopia conducts economic diplomacy with developed and emerging countries such as members of the EU and China, centred on attracting foreign direct investment, is largely absent in its dealings with neighbouring states. This is unfortunate: more robust engagement with neighbouring economies could help Ethiopia's public and private sectors attract foreign currency and employment opportunities.

South Sudan is also an example of the EPRDF's fixation on internal threats, and its deficiency in envisioning external threats. As a result of the reactive attitude taken by Ethiopia, South Sudan is attempting to harbour Ethiopia's enemies within its borders, particularly Egyptian and Eritrean forces that support rebel groups hostile to Ethiopia. This is clearly attributable to a lack of foresight and alacrity in considering and seizing opportunities in the region.

In the 1990s this fixation on internal threats diminished Ethiopia's military readiness against external threats such as the military invasion by Eritrea and the expansion of 'Wahhabism' by Saudi Arabia-based Islamic extremists, and it has had devastating consequences for regional peace and security for the past two decades. At the end of the 1990s this excessive inward-looking foreign policy orientation hobbled the Ethiopian armed forces by denying them the resources needed to maintain their military capabilities to predict, prevent and respond to external attacks. This helped create the preconditions

29 Yihun B, 'Ethiopia's role in South Sudan's march to independence, 1955–1991', *African Studies Quarterly*, 14, 1, p. 42.

for the 1998 Eritrean invasion. Prior to this invasion, which caused the border war,[30] Ethiopia did not have a single army brigade positioned along its 912km frontier with Eritrea,[31] when such a military presence would most probably have deterred Eritrea.

INTERNAL THREATS

The most significant internal threats stem from Ethiopia's extreme poverty. It is one of the world's poorest countries,[32] with a per capita income in 2015 of $619 ($1,629 at purchasing power parity),[33] which was significantly lower than the sub-Saharan African average of $1,624 per capita. About 17% of that income came from development assistance, making the country one of the world's biggest recipients of international aid. There has, however, been substantial economic progress in the past decade. Ethiopia is now one of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world[34] and among the five fastest growing economies in Africa.[35] It is expected to retain that status for the next 40 years, if political stability improves.

Despite this success in reducing poverty and addressing old sources of civil conflict through federative arrangements, Ethiopia's political space is still characterised by a fear of politics and the politics of fear, resentment and hate. In an indication of the many challenges still to be met, in 2015 the Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index of African Governance Report[36] ranked Ethiopia as 31st among 54 countries, with a score of 48.6 out of 100.[37]

One domestic factor that undermines Ethiopia's diplomatic standing in the region is its political crisis, the result of the 2015/2016 protests, violence, and state measures in Amhara and Oromia regional states (located in north-western and central Ethiopia). Several hundred people have been killed and wounded and property – including private,

30 Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Permanent Court of Arbitration, 'Decision by Ethiopia–Eritrea Claims Committee', 13 April 2002, http://www.haguejusticeportal.net/Docs/PCA/Ethiopia-Eritrea%20Boundary%20Commission/Decision_13-4-2002.pdf, accessed 14 September 2016.

31 Interview with Key Informant No. 1, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Debre Zeit/Bishoftu, Ethiopia, 21 March 2014.

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

34 World Bank, 'Country overview: Ethiopia', 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD, accessed 12 February 2017.

35 *Ibid.* Also see Zerihun A *et al.*, *Ethiopia: Africa Economic Outlook*. Addis Ababa: AfDB (African Development Bank), OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) & UNDP (UN Development Programme), 2016; *BBC*, 'Ethiopia: One of the world's fastest growing economies', http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15739706, accessed 1 October 2016.

36 The Ibrahim Index measures the delivery of public goods and services to citizens by African governments and private entities. Its indicators fall into four main categories: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development.

37 Scores ranged from 79.93 for Mauritius to 32 for Chad.

public and industrial infrastructure – has been damaged.[38] These internal political crises revolve around 10 key national questions: democratic constitutionalism, including the space for democratic dispensation and elections; economic development and inclusivity; federalism, self-rule and ethnic identity; land governance, identity issues and livelihood; rampant corruption crippling the reform movement; youth unemployment and landlessness; religious questions; education policy; language policy; and the constitutional accountability of the security sector.

The insurrection in the Amhara region is partly a continuation of the de-legitimisation of the EPRDF's hold on power since 1991, while the widespread nature of the Oromo protests focused on equity has juddered the bedrock of the ruling party. The Oromo protests shook the EPRDF, as demands revolved around questions of federalism, identity, land and self-rule – issues that the EPRDF claims as its political pillars, which it has fought and stood for and believes it has resolved through the current federal governance arrangement. Thus, while the federal system has been facing some stiff challenges, mainly from the Amhara region, the Oromo demand that it be fully implemented.

The recent protests in Oromia and Amhara regional states have serious implications for foreign policy. If left unchecked, and in the absence of broad-based consultations and national dialogue, the political paralysis and unrest could take a more threatening course with far-reaching consequences beyond diplomacy, involving more bloodshed and war. In addition, the violence that followed the crisis could not only continue the transmission of intra- and inter-generational politics of hate but also undercut the economic delivery capabilities of the EPRDF by scaring off investment and destabilising its very foundation – that is, performance legitimacy through service delivery. Given that the public expenditure-propelled economic growth was expected to slow down with the eventual decrease in overall economic returns on infrastructure spending, the current upheavals raise concerns about the sustainability of growth through the developmental state, unless the agrarian economy is industrialised. Such a transformation requires long-term stability and predictability of risks associated with doing business and investing.

Thus, despite significant progress on the economic and diplomatic fronts, it is clear that the issues that Ethiopia's foreign policy was meant to address – mainly extreme poverty, lack of democracy, and instability – remain serious challenges to the country's internal stability and external role in the region and beyond.

EXTERNAL THREATS

Beyond its borders, Ethiopia faces equally serious challenges. No other region in Africa is more plagued by protracted violent conflicts than IGAD. The presence of four

38 BBC, 'Ethiopia mourns 55 killed during protest at Oromia festival', 3 October 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37539975, accessed 6 October 2016; Davison W, 'Dutch, Israeli farms in Ethiopia attacked by protestors', *Bloomberg News*, 1 September 2016, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-01/ethiopian-protesters-burn-dutch-owned-flower-farm-in-north, accessed 1 October 2016.

peacekeeping missions with more than 60 000 UN and AU peacekeepers in total (in Darfur, Sudan; the Abyei Sudan–South Sudan border; Somalia; and South Sudan)[39] and thousands of Western troops in Djibouti[40] indicates the gravity of the peace and security challenges.

Somalia: State failure and al-Shabaab

Ethiopia's diplomatic and military role is especially important in Somalia, which has been riven with conflict since its independence in 1961, becoming weak and fragmented, to the detriment of its own central government and the overall peace and stability of the IGAD region.

An archetype of a failed state, Somalia, until recent years, experienced over 25 years of statelessness, terrorism and violent extremism, displacement, famine, piracy and kidnapping. The implications of its failed statehood extend far beyond Somalia's borders; indeed, the situation threatens the peace and security of the entire IGAD region and the international community in general. Somalia has been a source of grave threats to Ethiopian peace and development since 1969, when then president Siad Barre assumed power by overthrowing the country's first democratically elected government. In 1977 Somalia, under Barre, invaded the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, precipitating the 1978 Ethiopia–Somalia war that ended with the latter's defeat. The central government collapsed with Barre's overthrow in 1991, and Somalia remains without an effective government. Currently, the Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahedeen (al-Shabaab) and other expansionist and irredentist groups present a security threat to Ethiopia. Its security lies in the hands of the 22 000-strong peacekeeping force of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in cooperation with national security forces.[41] AMISOM works closely with the Federal Government of Somalia, the new states, regional and global governance institutions such as IGAD and the UN, and allied anti-terrorist forces, including those of other African states, the EU and US.[42] Given the overlapping nature of their various interests, major nations in both the East and the West see Ethiopia as a strong regional partner in the fight against terrorism and instability in Somalia.

Border and proxy war with Eritrea

Since its 1993 secession from Ethiopia, Eritrea's hostility towards its neighbour has been a constant threat. For Ethiopia, the 30-year conflict over Eritrean independence was meant

39 Mehari M, 'African Union summit: Too little, too late', *Al Jazeera*, 26 January 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/au-summit-too-little-too-late-20141216 4643828344.html, accessed 1 October 2016.

40 *Ibid.*

41 Kfir I, 'Islamic radicalism in East Africa: Is there a cause for concern?', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31 9, pp. 829–855.

42 Shinn D, 'Fighting terrorism in East Africa and the Horn', *Journal of Foreign Service*, 81, pp. 26–27.

to ensure its territorial integrity and unity; for Eritrea, it was a war for autonomy that later morphed into a war for independence. First the imperial government and then the Mengistu regime faced military confrontation and a political crisis in Eritrea. Based on historical, resource-related and religious animosities, several Arab countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Syria, provided financial, diplomatic and political support for the Eritrean struggle for secession.[43]

During its armed struggle against the Derg government from 1975–1991, the EPRDF allied itself with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front – the liberation movement that achieved independence for Eritrea and is ruling Eritrea now. The EPRDF initially supported the secession. Arguably, the EPRDF as a political force and government went much further than was warranted owing to its vision of peaceful coexistence with Eritrea. Once in government, however, the EPRDF paid dearly for its staunch support for Eritrean independence, and effectively created a landlocked country by ceding all access to the sea. By supporting Eritrea's independence, the EPRDF was hoping to address the war's causes and stop the country's encirclement by enemy forces from the region and the Middle East. In return for this bold and naïve ideological position, the EPRDF expected to find an independent Eritrea under the leadership of President Isaias Afewerki that was at peace with itself and its neighbours, particularly Ethiopia. However, after less than seven years of Eritrean independence, the EPRDF's expectations were frustrated: Eritrea was again at war, with Ethiopia and with itself.

Prior to the May 1998 Eritrean invasion of Bademe[44] the EPRDF had ruled out the possibility of war with Eritrea, while it should have been prepared for all eventualities.[45] Contrary to its expectations, the EPRDF found an Eritrean leadership intent on dominating the region – if possible through manipulation, and if necessary through war. Eritrea began to use the 'port card', first threatening to and later confiscating Ethiopian property in the port of Assab and closing its port services to Ethiopia.

Ethiopian–Eritrean relations arrived at an impasse after the 1998–2000 border war, which had a high death toll among civilians and combatants on both sides – the International Crisis Group estimates the total deaths at 70 000–100 000.[46]

---

43 Tareke G, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest, Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century*. Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 1996, pp. 207–211.

44 AU, Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Permanent Court of Arbitration, 'Decision of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Committee regarding the delimitation of the border between the state of Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia', http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/decision-of-the-eritrea-ethiopia-boundary-commission-eebc-regarding-the-delimitation-of-the-border-between-the-state-of-eritrea-and-the-federal-democratic-of-ethiopia, accessed 14 October 2016.

45 Interview with Key Informant No. 1, *op. cit.*

46 Barnes C, 'A wake-up call for Eritrea and Ethiopia', ICG (International Crisis Group), 15 June 2016, http://blog.crisisgroup.org/worldwide/2016/06/15/a-wake-up-call-for-eritrea-and-ethiopia/, accessed 8 August 2016.

After Ethiopia regained the territory it had lost through Eritrea's invasion, the UN Security Council established a 25km buffer zone along the border inside Eritrea and deployed the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.[47] Under the 2000 peace agreement between the two countries (the Algiers Agreement), the Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) was established to adjudicate the border dispute. It rendered its verdict two years later;[48] among its decisions was that Bademe, a small frontier town central to the conflict, would be awarded to Eritrea. The implications of that decision were significant: the legitimacy of the governments in Addis Ababa and Asmara depended on retaining sovereignty over the town as the symbol of victory or defeat in the war. Eritrea wants the dispute resolved in line with the EEBC decision, while Ethiopia, although accepting the decision in principle, wants the border demarcation to follow only after a comprehensive dialogue on all the issues affecting the two countries and has refused to surrender control of Bademe.

Having suffered a military defeat and with its pleas for assistance ignored by the international community, Eritrea withdrew from the AU in 2003 and from IGAD in 2007.[49] At the same time it developed a strategy to attack Ethiopia indirectly, inter alia by training and equipping insurgents and terrorists such as al-Shabaab in Somalia, within Ethiopia and elsewhere. As indicated in the 2011 report to the UN Security Council of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, the Eritrean government has also involved itself in the domestic political and economic affairs of several neighbouring states, including Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.[50] Until recently the Defence Training Centre in the village of Sawa in the Gash-Barka region of Eritrea was a military training hub for rebel and insurgency groups from across the Horn of Africa.[51] Moreover, since carrying out border incursions into Yemen (December 1995) and Djibouti (April 1996 and June 2008), Eritrea has been at war with both countries.[52]

Ethiopia adopted a diplomatic strategy that proved a major contributor to Eritrea's eventual diplomatic isolation and military degeneration

An inward-looking Ethiopia thus faced a triple threat: encirclement by historical enemies, war with Eritrea, and loss of its strategic access to the sea. Its setback went beyond the geo-economic opportunities forfeited to its economy due to the loss of free port services. The landlocked country had lost its naval presence in the Red Sea, as well as independent and unhindered access to the sea to import military and other supplies. This undermined its geopolitical significance in the Red Sea region and allowed its long-term port-related

47 UN Security Council, Resolution 1640, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1640, accessed 12 September 2016.

48 AU, 'Decision by Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Committee', *op. cit*.

49 *IRIN News*, 'Envoy recalled from AU over border dispute', 20 November 2003, http://www.irinnews.org/report/47359/eritrea-envoy-recalled-au-over-border-dispute, 1 October 2016.

50 UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, 'Letter from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea', UNSC S/2011/433 (2011).

51 *Ibid*.

52 Shinn D, 'Eritrea, arms embargo and regional relations', *International Policy Digest*, 17 August 2012, http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2012/08/17/eritreas-regional-relations/, accessed 4 October 2016. The Arab League, France, the US, IGAD, the AU and the UNSC condemned Eritrea for its support to terrorist groups and provocation of border wars with its neighbours.

security vulnerabilities to be exploited by its adversaries, chiefly Eritrea, Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries.

In response, Ethiopia adopted a diplomatic strategy that proved a major contributor to Eritrea's eventual diplomatic isolation and military degeneration. Its attempts to isolate Eritrea resulted in the loss of the latter's sources of aid from, and its cordial relationships with, Western countries and a few Middle Eastern countries such as Qatar.[53] As a consequence of this (and of its parlous economic situation), Eritrea – economically struggling, politically unstable and diplomatically marginalised – has been reduced to what has variously been described as an African 'garrison state' and the 'pariah North Korea of Africa'.[54] Its policy of nation building based on hostility towards its neighbouring countries has proved to be something of an 'own goal'.

Since 2010 Eritrea has been striving to mend fences with regional and international powers. In 2011 it rejoined the AU[55] and applied to resume its membership of IGAD, which has been under consideration since then.[56] It has also begun proactive diplomatic engagement with Uganda and Sudan.[57] The outbreak of the Yemeni crisis in 2011 following the Arab uprisings (with clashes between President Abdrabbuh Hadi's forces and the Houthi rebel groups) allowed Eritrea to join the coalition led by Saudi Arabia in exchange for financial support.[58] Similarly, with Eritrea being the country of origin of the biggest number of African migrants to Europe, the migration crisis has forced the EU into a knee-jerk diplomatic rapprochement with the country, and it has also extended financial support to Eritrea.[59] Thus, the Yemeni civil war and the migration crisis in the EU have given Eritrea a chance to gain increased military from the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and 'migration containment aid' from the EU.

---

53 *Ibid*.

54 Tronvoll K & D Mekonnen, *The African Garrison State: Human Rights and Political Development in Eritrea*. Oxford: James Currey, 2014.

55 AU, 'The Chairperson of the African Union Commission Receives the Credentials of the Permanent Representatives of Eritrea', 17 January 2011, http://www.voanews.com/a/eritrea-reopens-african-union-mission-114212594/157253.html, accessed 4 October 2016.

56 State of Eritrea, Letter from Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Saleh to IGAD Executive Secretary Mahboub Maalim, 25 July 2011.

57 *Reuters*, 'Eritrea: Ethiopia makes "frenzied" sanctions drive', 17 August 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/17/eritrea-un-sanctions-idUSN1E77G15T20110817, accessed 4 September 2016.

58 Abdulla AA, 'Eritreans make their presence felt in UAE', *Khaleej Times*, 13 September 2003, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/general/eritreans-make-their-presence-felt-in-uae, accessed 12 July 2016; Madote, 'Djibouti-UAE diplomatic crisis brings Gulf states closer to Eritrea', May 2015, http://www.madote.com/2015/05/djibouti-uae-diplomatic-crisis-brings.html, accessed 12 August 2016; South Front, Saudi-UAE Military Coalition Expands into the Horn of Africa: Foreign Policy Diary, Global Research, 6 November 2015, http://www.globalresearch.ca/saudi-uae-military-coalition-expands-into-the-horn-of-africa/5487059, accessed 12 July 2016.

59 Frontex, 'Migration routes map', http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/, accessed 20 July 2016.

Nile rivalry

In the Ethiopian peace and security discourse, the phrase 'historical enemies of Ethiopia' is frequently applied to Egypt and its supporters, mainly from the Arab world.[60] Ethiopia's long-standing rivalry with Egypt over the waters of the River Nile has been one of the most enduring impediments to peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. Its domestic and foreign policy has been shaped largely by its need to defend and utilise this invaluable natural resource. As a result, Ethiopia's relations with Egypt have received more detailed attention with more clearly articulated policies and strategies in the FANSPS than any other external question.[61] Successive Egyptian governments have employed their diplomatic clout to block financial assistance for Ethiopian projects on the Nile[62] and, according to the US-based global intelligence company Strategic Forecasting Inc., Egypt has extended military, political and financial support to forces hostile to Ethiopia.[63]

For a long time Egypt has claimed a historical right to an annual quota of 55.5 billion m^3 of Nile waters, thereby threatening Ethiopian water resources. Under colonial rule, the 1929 agreement on the usage of the Nile was signed between Egypt and the UK. It excluded Ethiopia, the only independent country among the relevant riparian states. The subsequent 1959 agreement was signed between Egypt and Sudan and also excluded all the other riparian countries, including Ethiopia. Based on the 1959 treaty, Egypt claims that it has a 'historical' and 'acquired' right to the 55.5 billion m^3 of water, while 18.5 billion m^3 were allocated to Sudan. Ethiopia, which is the source of 86% of Nile waters, was allocated no water for its own use under these treaties. If this fixed allocation of the total volume of water were to be apportioned, Egypt would have monopoly usage of the Nile, as the river's available volume of water at times falls to below 80 billion m^3.

For decades, Ethiopia planned to use the Nile for its own development efforts, which included the construction of dams. However, Egypt has applied various mechanisms to thwart any attempt by upstream countries, particularly Ethiopia, to use the Nile waters. Its three main strategies have been to:

- threaten military action through shows of force, and by building a substantial army;
- thwart any external funding requests made by Ethiopia to develop its water resources, using its diplomatic advantage to successfully block external funding; and

60 Tekle A, 'The determinants of the foreign policy of revolutionary Ethiopia', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 27, 3, pp. 479–502.

61 The FANSPS devotes 12 pages to Egypt and Ethiopian relations around the River Nile. See FANSPS, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–129.

62 Femia F & C Werrel, 'The Nile Basin: Preventing Water Conflict'. Washington DC: Center for Climate and Security, 20 July 2011.

63 Stratfor, 'Egypt's Limited Military Options to Stop an Ethiopian Dam Project', 10 June 2013, https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/egypts-limited-military-options-stop-ethiopian-dam-project, accessed 1 October 2016.

- destabilise Ethiopia by encouraging neighbouring countries to do so and by supporting domestic rebel groups.[64]

As a prominent Sudanese scholar on water resources, Dr MA Salman, pointed out recently, British colonial administrations and previous Egyptian governments followed a successful strategy of discouraging the provision of external financial assistance to Ethiopia and the other riparian states. Egypt has also fostered animosity towards Ethiopia in Sudan, and assisted Eritrea and successive Somali governments and armed groups in their wars against Ethiopia.[65]

Embroiled in protracted conflicts, the other riparian countries (apart from Egypt) were unable to make use of their natural resources, including the Nile River, for development. Facing grave food insecurity due to drought and famine, and critical shortages of electric power, all riparian countries would like to accelerate their various developmental projects, including irrigation and hydropower, to the extent that their financial capacities permit. For this reason no one riparian country has been willing to grant another greater right of access to the Nile waters than it would grant to any other shared resource. Past colonial agreements are not only legally unacceptable but also irrelevant to the current economic, social and political contexts of the affected riparian countries.

The end of the Cold War brought with it a change in the geopolitical equation in the Horn of Africa, with some upstream states holding increasing significance for regional stability, particularly Ethiopia.[66] For this reason, in May 1999 nine countries with an interest in the Nile waters, including Egypt, were party to the establishment of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI).[67] The NBI has produced two significant results.[68] The first of these is the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), which in due course will replace the NBI; the second is the Nile River Basin Commission, a standing institutional authority to be established when the CFA enters into effect after all the concerned parties have agreed to the framework and signed the agreement.[69] For Egypt, any such agreement must endorse the previous agreements, while the other riparian states do not agree to this. Amid considerable political pressure from nationalist constituents, the often-incompatible

64 Bitsue KK, 'The Nile: From Mistrust and Sabre Rattling to Rapprochement', ISS (Institute for Security Studies) Paper, 238, 2012.

65 Salman SMA, 'The Renaissance Dam & fallouts of the Nile Water Agreement', *Sudan Now*, 20 June 2013, http://sudanow.info.sd/the-renaissance-dam-v-fallouts-of-the-nile-water-agreement-1959/, accessed 24 June 2016.

66 *Sudan Tribune*, 'Sudan's Bashir leaves door open for re-election, backs Ethiopia's dam', 21 June 2013, http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article47035, accessed 24 November 2016; *AllAfrica*, 'President of Uganda support to the dam', 13 June 2013, http://allafrica.com/stories/201306140096.html, accessed 24 June 2016; Salman SMA, *op. cit*.

67 Nile Basin Initiative, Memorandum of Understanding, Dar es Salaam, 22 February 1999.

68 Salman SMA, 'The Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement: A peacefully unfolding African spring?' *Water International*, 38, 1, 2013, pp. 17–29, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2013.744273, accessed 22 June 2016.

69 Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat, Nile Basin Initiative Draft Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework, Entebbe, 14 May 2010.

national priorities of the riparian countries have hindered proper deliberations and still constrain cooperation in the Basin. Some riparian countries, particularly Egypt and Sudan, have also been unilaterally developing projects in the Nile Basin.

Ethiopia played an important role in the NBI and CFA through its approach of multilateralism, rule-bound diplomacy and empathy with all riparian populations, as well as its support for the principle of fair and equitable water sharing. It rallied the upper riparian countries of the Nile to stand together against the unfair share allotted to Egypt, which also led to the signing of the CFA by many riparian countries.

Egypt's policy to protect its own usage of the Nile waters weakened Ethiopia's internal capacity, particularly in terms of financial resources, to construct dams such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).[70] Ethiopia decided to build the GERD by mobilising domestic resources. The GERD, Africa's biggest hydroelectric project and the 10th largest in the world, is a $5 billion project that was expected to increase the country's hydroelectric power capacity fivefold by 2015. Commenced in April 2011, the construction of the dam was a source of contention with Egypt. With a reservoir area of 1 874km^2, the dam has a total storage volume of 74 billion m^3 of water, of which 59.2 billion m^3 will be discharged to the turbines. The dam wall is 145m high and 1 708m wide, with turbines capable of generating 6 000MW of electricity and 15 692GW hours a year.[71] According to the International Panel of Experts, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia will benefit most from the dam.[72]

Ethiopia's assertive diplomatic approach and aggressive dam development have forced Egypt to reconsider its long-standing position of ignoring upstream states and begin negotiating with them.

Some observers believe that the GERD could lead to a war between Ethiopia and Egypt.[73] Others downplay the potential for violent conflict over the GERD and argue that the dam could facilitate enhanced cooperation.[74] However, most agree that, despite the possibility of either conflict or cooperation, the changes in the exploitation of the Nile River resources

70 Salman SMA, 'The Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Opportunities and challenges', *Daily Ethiopia*, 20 September 2013, http://www.dailyethiopia.com/index.php?aid=1476, accessed 24 June 2014.

71 International Panel of Experts, 'Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERDP): Final Report', 31 May 2013; Chekene B, *Benefit of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERDP) for Sudan and Egypt*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2013.

72 International Panel of Experts, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

73 Abdelhady D *et al.*, 'The Nile and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Is there a meeting point between nationalism and hydrosolidarity?', *Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education*, 155, 2015, pp. 73–82.

74 Ana CE & N Alan, 'GERD: New norms of cooperation in the Nile Basin?', *Water International*, 41, 4, 2016, pp. 550–573.

are due to changing relations. They also assert the need to address historically unfair and hegemonic approaches to transboundary resource sharing.[75]

Until 2015, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan had been in agreement on the technicalities of the GERD and certain other aspects.[76] For instance, in March 2015 they signed an agreement on the construction of the dam and the need for a study on its environmental impact.[77] Nonetheless, the relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt hit rock bottom when Ethiopia accused Egypt of financially and diplomatically supporting armed groups and the unrest in 2015–2016.[78] Egypt rejected the accusation, claiming that it had never provided any assistance to opposition groups in Ethiopia. However, Ethiopia's claims have been given credence by the Egyptian media and certain politicians, who stated that all necessary measures should be taken to stop the construction of the GERD, including supporting opposition groups in Ethiopia. They attributed the recent unrest in Ethiopia to Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.[79]

Testifying to its increasing diplomatic assertiveness among countries within the Nile basin, Ethiopia played a major role in the legislative, institutional and political process that led to the CFA.[80] Addressing the perennial problem of allocating the waters of the Nile, the agreement has brought about major shifts in relations between Egypt and the other riparian countries. This shift is embodied in the construction of the 6 000MW GERD. Both the CFA and the GERD signify a paradigmatic shift in relations among these countries. Beyond changes in the normative framework, Ethiopia has brought about a practical transformation in the Nile Basin.

---

75 Maru TM, 'From a barrier to a bridge: The Ethiopian Renaissance Dam can be a trigger for transformed and cooperative relations', *Aljazeera*, 6 November 2013, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/11/from-barrier-bridge-20131161194806363.html, accessed 12 January 2017.

76 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, 'The Grand Ethiopian Millennium Dam Project International Panel of Experts discussion, process and report', Addis Ababa, 2013 (unpublished Amharic text); Teshome M, 'Science, technology, innovation and development', *Science Africa*, 16, June/July 2011, p. 1; Hassan H & A Rasheed, 'The Nile River and Egyptian foreign policy interests', *African Sociological Review*, 2007, pp. 25–37.

77 Karyabwite D, *Water Sharing in the Nile River Valley*. Geneva: UNEP (UN Environment Programme), Division of Early Warning and Assessment/Global Resource Information Database , 2000.

78 *Reuters*, 'Ethiopia blames foreigners for unrest, UN experts seek probe', 10 October 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-unrest-idUSKCN1290EC?il=0, accessed 10 October 2016.

79 *The Economist*, 'Sharing the Nile: The largest hydroelectric project in Africa has so far produced only discord', 16 January 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21688360-largest-hydroelectric-project-africa-has-so-far-produced-only-discord-egypt accessed 17 April 2017.

80 World Bank, 'Partners to NBI', http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTWAT/Resources/4602122-1213366294492/5106220-1234469721549/33.1_River_Basin_Management.pdf, accessed 21 November 2016.

EMERGING ISSUES AND LONGSTANDING THREATS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND BEYOND

Recent domestic, regional and international developments have presented serious challenges to Ethiopia's dominant position in the Horn of Africa. The main problems are war and political crises in the Middle East (particularly Yemen), the migration crises in Europe, and large-scale violence following ethnicity-based protests in Ethiopia's Oromia and Amhara states. Ethiopia's views on Syria and the Crimea, which differ from those of the West, may also have implications on diplomatic alliances in the region and beyond.

Recent domestic, regional and international developments have presented serious challenges to Ethiopia's dominant position in the Horn of Africa

Ethiopia, the other nations in the Horn of Africa and the countries of the Middle East share the same religious, migration, trade and security spheres of influence. Political and religious upheavals in the Middle East over the past decade have changed the political and diplomatic landscape in the Horn of Africa and will probably continue to do so.

In the Saudi-Iranian proxy conflict, the Horn of Africa has become a battlefield for dominance, in addition to the ones in Yemen, Syria and Libya. In a bid to gain diplomatic and military support from the Horn of Africa, the Saudi-led military coalition fighting the Iranian-supported Houthi rebels in Yemen has sought – and gained – varying levels of support from Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Egypt and, more recently, Djibouti and Somaliland. In return for financial assistance, Eritrea has provided the coalition with ground, marine and air facilities and personnel while the Sudanese armed forces have also taken part in combat operations. Initially, Eritrea and Sudan, under the embrace of Iran, had actively supported the Houthis.[81] Afewerki's visit to Iran in May 2008 illustrated Eritrea's leanings in this proxy war.

However, in 2015 both Eritrea and Sudan changed their position by abruptly quitting the Iranian camp and joining the Saudi-led coalition. The main reason for Eritrea's change of heart was its financial distress and its diplomatic isolation for more than a decade by its neighbours and the international community owing to its spoiler role in Somalia and border wars with Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. By joining the Saudi coalition Eritrea not only enhanced its diplomatic standing with the Gulf Cooperation Council but also, more importantly, gained some rewards and in-kind support.[82] The United Arab Emirates has a 30-year lease guaranteeing its usage of the port of Asseb. Eritrea enabled the Saudi-led coalition to gain a militarily and economically important geopolitical and geo-economic position in the Red Sea.

81 South Front, *Saudi-UAE Military Coalition Expands into the Horn of Africa: Foreign Policy Diary*, Global Research, 6 November 2015, http://www.globalresearch.ca/saudi-uae-military-coalition-expands-into-the-horn-of-africa/5487059, accessed 22 June 2016. See also Fitzgerald D, 'UN Report: UAE, Saudi leasing Eritrean port, using Eritrean land, sea, airspace and, possibly, troops in Yemen battle', *UN Tribune*, 2 November 2015, http://untribune.com/un-report-uae-saudi-leasing-eritean-port-using-eritrean-land-sea-airspace-and-possibly-troops-in-yemen-battle/, accessed 12 September 2016.

82 Fitzgerald D, *op. cit*.

In April 2016 Djibouti signed an agreement in Riyadh to increase cooperation with Saudi Arabia in security matters. Similarly, Somalia and Sudan have recently signed agreements with Saudi Arabia and frozen their diplomatic ties with Iran.[83] Only Ethiopia has maintained its stance of neutrality in its diplomatic relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia. Historically, both Iran and Saudi Arabia have maintained an almost similar policy of hostility towards Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, in a hasty attempt to stem the flow of Eritrean refugees into its territories, the EU has embarked on an entente with Eritrea that includes financial assistance. This action may boost the Eritrean government's morale; more importantly, from Addis Ababa's point of view, it could also assist Eritrea's cash-strapped economy, and in particular the army, to the extent that it could intensify Eritrea's long-standing hostility towards Ethiopia. Unhappy at the lack of consultation, Ethiopia has expressed to the Saudi-led coalition and EU its disapproval of the agreements and of this financial support to Eritrea.[84]

In the 'no war, no peace' stalemate that followed the end of the border war with Eritrea in 2000, and against the background of Ethiopia's successful policy of military containment and diplomatic isolation, the Eritrean army had been weakened to the point where it was barely able to defend the country. The congruence of recent developments in the Middle East, EU and Horn of Africa has, however, substantially eroded the effectiveness of Ethiopia's policy, requiring significant revision.

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Economic performance

In line with the EPRDF's inward-looking orientation, the primacy of economic diplomacy is clearly set out in the FANSPS, and the economy has benefited from this orientation. The economic management of the EPRDF government is widely regarded as exemplary and has helped Ethiopia's war-torn economy recover from decades of civil conflict.[85] GDP increased from $8.2 billion in 2000 to $61.5 billion in 2015 (between 2008 and 2013 the average annual increase was around 10.4%).[86] Ethiopia is now the ninth largest economy

83 Toumi H, 'Saudi Arabia "to open military base in Djibouti"', *Gulf News*, 8 March 2016, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-to-open-military-base-in-djibouti-1.1686291, accessed 10 March 2016.

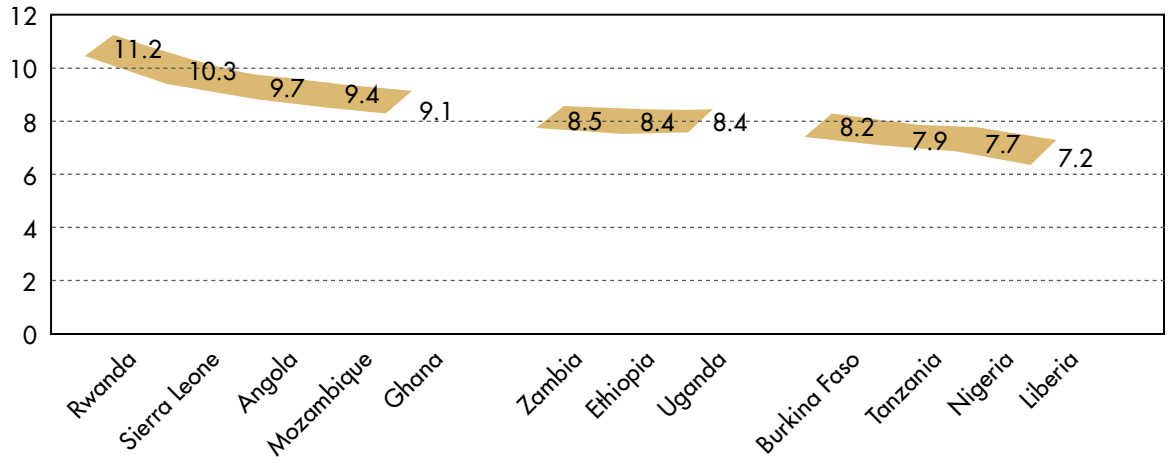
84 *Geeska Afrika*, 'Ethiopia: President warns Saudi Arabia and UAE of consequences if Eritrea attacks', 2 January 2016, http://geeskaafrika.com/2016/01/02/ethiopia-president-warns-saudi-arabia-and-uae-of-consequences-if-eritrea-attacks/13991/, accessed 8 March 2016.

85 White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Desalegn of Ethiopia before Bilateral Meeting', 25 September 2014, http://m.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/25/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-desalegn-ethiopia-bilateral-m, accessed 2 October 2014.

86 World Bank, 'Country overview: Ethiopia', 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/country/ethiopia, accessed 2 October 2016.

in Africa and one of the world's fastest-growing economies.[87] This contrasts sharply with the performance of neighbours such as South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea[88] indeed, former US president Barack Obama identified Ethiopia as one of the 'bright spots of progress' in Africa.[89] Until the recent political crisis, its economic growth and relative political stability also boosted its diplomatic clout. Against the background of an anticipated increase in Ethiopia's middle class and growth in the consumer market, there has been a surge in trade (from $11 billion in 2011 to $69.2 billion in 2016)[90] and investment opportunities. In 2017 the Ethiopian economy has already overtaken Kenya's as the largest in the Horn of Africa.[91] The country has also begun to attract more trade and investment than aid. However, this trend may witness a serious slowdown after the recent attacks by protesters.

FIGURE 1 PREDICTED AVERAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS (%)



Source: Cilliers J, Hughes B & J Moyer, 'Africa Futures 2050', ISS (Institute for Security Studies), 2011

Attracting foreign direct investment constitutes a pillar of the FANSPS, and Ethiopian diplomatic missions abroad view this as their core function and a priority issue. Nonetheless, Ethiopian missions in Africa do not pursue this with the same zeal as those in Western countries or in China.

87 *Business Insider*, 'The 13 fastest-growing economies in the world,' 12 June 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/world-bank-fast-growing-global-economies-2015-6, accessed 8 August 2016.

88 World Bank, 2016, *op. cit.*

89 White House, *op. cit.*

90 World Bank, 2016, *op. cit.*

91 *Daily Nation*, 'Ethiopia to overtake Kenya as Eastern Africa's top economy', 7 October 2016, http://www.nation.co.ke/business/Ethiopia-to-overtake-Kenya-as-Eastern-Africas-top-economy/996-3408274-x8dsv4z/, accessed 10 October 2016.

Ethiopia has placed renewed emphasis on regional integration within IGAD through infrastructure development schemes such as the projected $22 billion Lamu Port and the Lamu–Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor, as well as the export of hydroelectric power and water concessions to neighbouring countries.[92] The most important component of Ethiopia's economic diplomacy remains its extensive public investment in domestic infrastructural development projects. More than 13 transport corridors cross the IGAD region, and all of them pass through Ethiopia – to Kenya, Somaliland, Sudan, South Sudan and Djibouti. This includes 4 000km of road construction, of which 1 500km has been completed on the Ethiopian side. With the aim of connecting the country domestically as well as regionally, eight railway corridors totalling 4 744km of track will be constructed in two phases. For example, a 4 744km railway between Djibouti and Ethiopia was launched in 2016, and a 750km railway linking Addis Ababa and the Port of Djibouti became operational in the same year at a cost of $3.4 billion. Given that 90% of Ethiopia's imports come through the Port of Djibouti, this railway connectivity will cut the cost of imports by 600%.[93] As Ethiopian imports constitute about 80% of Djibouti's port traffic, Ethiopia pays the Port of Djibouti more than $1.2 billion in fees.[94] When completed, the GERD will be the largest hydroelectric plant in Africa, enhancing Ethiopia's capacity to sell hydroelectric power to countries in the region, in addition to those already connected to its electric grid (Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya).

Airline connectivity in Ethiopia and in the region is among the most advanced on the African continent. Ethiopian Airlines has a fleet of 85 aircraft (with 48 more on order), the largest in Africa, and Bole International Airport is the third busiest airport hub in Africa.[95]

These major infrastructural developments are instrumental in promoting economic efficiency, as they link several economic centres through various modes of transport and have reinforced Ethiopia's image as a force for regional integration from which broader lessons on leadership in the developmental state might be learned. Infrastructural development places the integrationist agenda of IGAD on sound economic fundamentals. Once completed, these infrastructural projects are a more sustainable means of integration, as they do not depend heavily on top–down state initiatives. They could have a positive multiplier impact on the social development of local communities along their routes and enable public services, including law and order, to effectively reach borderlands. People, skills and capital follow investment, transportation and communication infrastructure, while the mobility of people, goods and services helps foster integrative opportunities.

92 Woldegebriel E, 'Ethiopia plans to power East Africa with hydro', Thomson Reuters Foundation, 29 January 2013, http://www.trust.org/item/?map=ethiopia-seeks-to-power-east-africa-with-hydro, accessed 4 September 2016.

93 *BBC*, 'Ethio-Djibouti electric railway line opens', 5 October 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37562177, accessed 4 February 2017.

94 Tesfaye E, 'Why getting Assab Port back matters to Ethiopia', *Addis Fortune*, 11 January 2015, http://addisfortune.net/columns/why-getting-assab-port-back-matters-to-ethiopia, accessed 4 February 2017.

95 *Ibid*.

These projects meet both internal and regional demands, and may represent a major move towards correcting the shortcomings of Ethiopia's regional diplomatic practices over the longer term, regardless of its current foreign policy orientation.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Ethiopia has been subjected to a series of domestic and external terrorist attacks, the most recent being in April 2016 when armed militants on its border with South Sudan left 140 Ethiopian civilians dead and abducted many children.[96]

With a domestic political history marked by violent conflict and insurrection, Ethiopia has also faced serious terrorist aggression from Somalia and Eritrea, including terrorist attacks by extremist groups such as the – now defunct – Al Ittihad Al Islamyia and the Union of Islamic Courts, as well as al-Shabaab.[97] In addition, state failure in Somalia has seen several armed insurrectionist groups from Ethiopia, such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front, the Oromo Liberation Front and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, using it as a base from which to launch attacks on Ethiopia.[98] De jure, Ethiopia is still at war with Eritrea, which has been supporting and deploying these (effectively stateless) armed groups as proxies to weaken the country's focus on the border war.[99] Ethiopia is therefore a natural and strong ally in the fight against terrorism in the IGAD region.[100]

MULTILATERAL PLATFORMS, REGIONAL DIPLOMACY AND MEDIATION

In seeking solutions to the threats to its sovereignty, Ethiopia has for many years strongly supported collective security, multilateral platforms and institutions such as those under the auspices of first the League of Nations and then its successor, the UN.[101]

Most of Ethiopia's regional interests are pursued through multilateral agencies and with the support of IGAD. Leadership in international bodies, in particular IGAD and the AU, is a central pillar of the FANSPS. The country is a founding member of IGAD, COMESA, the AU, the UN and the EASF. In addition, Addis Ababa is the seat of the AU's headquarters and the EASF's logistical base. Ethiopia chaired NEPAD for almost eight years, until 2012, and has chaired IGAD since 2008. It has represented Africa at meetings of the G8 in 2012

96 *The Hindu* (Chennai), '140 killed in Ethiopia attack', 16 April 2016, http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/140-killed-in-ethiopia-attack/article8483789.ece, accessed 4 February 2017.

97 Tareke G, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest, Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century*. Trenton: Red Sea Press, 1996.

98 Smidt W & K Abraham (eds), *Discussing Conflict in Ethiopia: Conflict Management and Resolution*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007.

99 *Ibid.*

100 White House, *op. cit.*

101 Abhay K, *The 1961 Attempted Coup d'état*. Addis Ababa: Berhan Na Selam Printing Agency, 2004, pp. 60–61.

and the G20 from 2009–2012, and at the UN and US summits on climate change, and migrants and refugees.[102]

Although active in all these multilateral platforms, in practice Ethiopia is more heavily involved in IGAD than the others, and it is the challenges and opportunities peculiar to the IGAD region that have an immediate impact on the internal and regional challenges it faces. Thus IGAD increasingly dominates government thinking. Ethiopia's political leaders, diplomats, experts and armed forces have played a critical part in all major IGAD activities. This is particularly true of measures leading to the imposition and maintenance of UN sanctions on al-Shabaab and Eritrea. Ethiopia has played a key part in mobilising IGAD member states, lobbying the AU and putting forward resolutions to the UN Security Council.

The six Ethiopian missions and two consulates in IGAD member states constitute 11.5% (36) of all Ethiopian diplomats serving in foreign countries. There are 10 diplomats in Kenya, eight in Sudan, six in Djibouti, five in South Sudan and four in Somalia, but only three in Uganda (the mission in Asmara was closed after the 1998 border war with Eritrea). With an average of six diplomats per mission, Ethiopian missions in IGAD countries have slightly fewer envoys than the average elsewhere (6.24).

Whereas Ethiopia's prominence and interest in regional and international diplomacy depend heavily on successful integrative economic projects, as well as on peace and security efforts in the IGAD region, it deploys fewer than the average number of diplomats per mission in its immediate neighbourhood

This shows that whereas Ethiopia's prominence and interest in regional and international diplomacy depend heavily on successful integrative economic projects, as well as on peace and security efforts in the IGAD region, it deploys fewer than the average number of diplomats per mission in its immediate neighbourhood. This allocation of human and financial capital is not commensurate with the emphasis the FANSPS places on diplomacy in the IGAD region. This indicates the inconsistent application of the economic diktats of Ethiopia's foreign policy. Moreover, given that trade with Sudan is five times bigger than with Kenya, and taking into account the strategic economic importance of Sudan (more than 80% of Ethiopia's oil imports) and Djibouti (more than 94% of maritime traffic and $980 million for port services to Ethiopia),[103] the disparity between the number of diplomats stationed in Nairobi and those in Djibouti and Khartoum indicates that it is not necessarily economic imperatives that drive Ethiopia's foreign relations, as dictated in the FANSPS.

In order for Ethiopia to seize economic and trade opportunities in its immediate neighbourhood, the rationale behind the allocation of resources (diplomats, financial resources and incentives for diplomats) to missions in neighbouring countries needs to be reconsidered. Ethiopia's policymakers should accentuate the primacy of economic diplomacy, as outlined in the FANSPS. The MoFA needs to address this mismatch through

102 Maru M, *op. cit*. See also AU, 'Chairperson of the AUC, Speech UNGA', 24 September 2013, www.au.int/en/speeches/welcome-remarks-he-dr-nkosazana-dlamini-zuma-chairperson-african-union-commission-meeting, accessed 4 February 2017; *Daily Nation*, 'ECA press release no. 90/2010', 25 August 2009, www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/-/1066/645006/-/view/printversion/-/84vk4sz/-/index.html, accessed 4 February 2017.

103 Tekle TA, 'Sudan feeds 80 percent of Ethiopia's oil demand', *Sudan Tribune*, 29 November 2009, http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article33279, accessed 4 February 2017.

the commensurate allocation of resources corresponding to the prominence the FANSPS confers on the region and to economic diplomacy.

Trusted mediator

Ethiopia has a history of involvement in regional mediation and peace processes dating back to the early 1950s. It was instrumental in helping resolve the 1967–1970 Biafran war in Nigeria[104] and, closer to home, brokering the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement between the government of Sudan and rebel groups in the then southern Sudan.[105] In 1993, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (the forerunner of IGAD), Ethiopia helped to end the long-running civil war in Sudan through the establishment of a peace committee comprising the heads of state of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda. This resulted in the 1994 IGAD Declaration of Principles that aimed to identify the elements necessary for a just and comprehensive settlement to the war. In 2005, the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed a comprehensive peace agreement under the auspices of IGAD and the AU. It was IGAD, on the initiative of Ethiopia, that sowed the seeds of the agreement and later worked closely with partners such as the EU, US and UN in its implementation.

Ethiopia was also instrumental in the establishment of the AU HIP and the appointment of former South African president Thabo Mbeki as chief mediator on Darfur and the Sudan–South Sudan settlement. Moreover, indicative of the trust Ethiopia enjoyed from both parties, the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, signatories to the July 2008 Arbitration Agreement on Delimiting the Abyei (which outlined the timelines for security arrangements and the repatriation of internally displaced persons within the disputed territory) were each prepared to accept Addis Ababa's good offices.

In December 2013, in response to the crisis in South Sudan, IGAD dispatched a ministerial delegation to Juba four days after armed conflict between government and opposition forces had erupted.[106] On the same day the AU, through its Peace and Security Council, reiterated its support for IGAD and commended the timely initiative by the Ethiopian government, as the chair of IGAD. With former Ethiopian foreign minister Seyoum Mesfin as the chief mediator, the IGAD mediation team also comprised members from Kenya and Sudan. This led to the establishment of IGAD Plus (IGAD member states and five

104 *Reuters TV*, 'Ethiopia: Peace talks between Nigeria and Biafra begin at Addis Ababa', 1957, http://www.itnsource.com/shotlist//RTV/1968/08/06/BGY507030096/?s=*, accessed 22 September 2014.

105 El Gaili A, 'Federalism and the tyranny of religious majorities: Challenges to Islamic federalism in Sudan', *Harvard International Law Journal*, 45, 2, 2004, pp. 503–546.

106 IGAD, 'Communiqué of the 26th Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Situation in South Sudan', Addis Ababa, 10 June 2014; IGAD, 'IGAD Agreement to Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan', 9 May 2014; IGAD, 'Communiqué, 23rd Extraordinary Session of IGAD', 27 December 2013; IGAD, 'Communiqué, 24th Extraordinary Session of IGAD', 31 January 2014; IGAD, 'Communiqué, 25th Extraordinary Session of IGAD', 13 March 2014.

additional countries [Algeria, Chad, Rwanda, South Africa and Nigeria] representing the five different regions of AU) and the eventual signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in August 2015. The mediation enjoyed support from a broad range of international actors, including the AU, EU, US and UN. In a further expression of confidence, a former UNISFA force commander from Ethiopia was appointed to head the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) after the UN Security Council extended its mandate and increased force levels.

MILITARY STRENGTH AND PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Ethiopia's relative military power and its role in regional peace and security, including an excellent track record in peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and mediation, provide the impetus for actions through multilateral platforms, long-term partnerships and alliances in the region and beyond. Attesting to this in 2014, Obama said that Ethiopia's military[107]

> may be one of the best in the world – one of the largest contributors [to] peacekeeping; one of the most effective fighting forces when it comes to being placed in some very difficult situations and helping to resolve conflicts.

Since the 1998 border war with Eritrea, Ethiopia has been increasing its military capabilities, although its spending has been relatively low compared with other 'big' African states and there has been only moderate increases in military expenditure. In 2013/14 its military budget accounted for only about 0.8% of GDP, which puts it in the lower half of countries worldwide and is proportionately very low compared with countries in the region such as Eritrea (6.3%), Djibouti (3.8%), Egypt (3.4%), Sudan (3%) and Kenya (2.8%).[108] In terms of troop strength and equipment, Ethiopia's armed forces are ranked first in sub-Saharan Africa, third (after Egypt and Algeria) in Africa and 40th in the world.[109]

Since the establishment of the UN in 1945, Ethiopia has participated in more than 10 peacekeeping missions and is currently the biggest contributor of troops to peace support operations – 12 721 troops in 2016, of whom 4 395 were committed to AMISOM alone.[110] UNISFA is almost unique in that all its personnel are from one country; in this case 4 250 Ethiopian troops. Ethiopian generals have held posts as force commanders of

107 White House, *op. cit*.

108 Global Security, 'Ethiopia: Military spending', 23 November 2015, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ethiopia/budget.htm, accessed 8 August 2016.

109 Global Fire Power, 'Ethiopia: Military strength', 27 March 2014, http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing-africa.asp accessed 1 October 2014.

110 UN Peacekeeping, 'Contributors to UN peacekeeping operations: Monthly summary of contributions', June 2016, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml, accessed 8 August 2016.

both UNISFA and UNMISS.[111] Ethiopia is also the third biggest troop contributor to the UN–AU hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur.[112]

CONCLUSION

Given the necessary balance between the various internal and external dynamics that have led to Ethiopia's becoming a pivotal state in the Horn of Africa, it is clear that most of the important initiatives on regional peace and security have been those advanced and implemented through IGAD. Coordinating its efforts with those of regional and global players and following a strictly multilateral approach, Ethiopia's analysis of the internal threats and challenges the region is facing and the necessary interventions has increasingly prevailed. In some cases, Ethiopia's interpretation of the regional dynamics has come to dominate regional discourse and diplomacy. The AU and the international community (including the UN, the EU and emerging powers such as China) generally support Ethiopia's efforts in regional diplomacy, while the EU, the US and China consult with Ethiopia on issues related to Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. The IGAD-led peace process on South Sudan, mediation between South Sudan and Sudan under the AU HIP, and peace facilitation in Somalia, along with diplomatic initiatives leading to Eritrea's diplomatic isolation after the 1998 border war, attest to the success of Ethiopia's regional diplomacy. Although clearly pursued in Ethiopia's own national interest, its multilateral approach remains gradualist and restrained, and its domestic development-based governance is widely accepted by IGAD, appreciated by the AU and supported by the international community.

Ethiopia's rooting of its foreign policy in domestic considerations is fundamentally correct, as it shifts the focus to solving internal challenges. By rectifying long-standing policy misdirection, the FANSPS transformed the country's pillars of national security and foreign policy. Nonetheless, it was this inward-looking posture that led to its underestimating the dangers posed by Eritrea's animosity-based nation-building and Egypt's long-standing support to armed rebel groups within Ethiopia, as well as to its failure to appreciate the enormous and vital geopolitical, geo-economic and strategic security importance of access to the sea and port services. A less assertive national defence posture could also be seen to have stimulated Eritrean aggression insofar as it encouraged Eritrea to underrate Ethiopia's military capacity. The same policy orientation also limits proactive assessments of newly emerging threats in the region and dynamic and reflective adjustments, as required. The Yemeni crisis and Eritrea's emergence from diplomatic isolation indicate the shortcomings of the FANSPS.

Ethiopia's rooting of its foreign policy in domestic considerations is fundamentally correct, as it shifts the focus to solving internal challenges

A sudden surge in diplomatic activity came with the 1998 Eritrean invasion and the border and diplomatic war that ensued. Until then, at policy level Ethiopia had been consumed by domestic developmental and political considerations. The 1998 war exposed the country's

111 *Sudan Tribune*, 'Ethiopian general appointed commander of the UN forces in South Sudan', 17 June 2014, http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51370, accessed 18 June 2016.

112 UN Peacekeeping, *op. cit.*; AMISOM, 'Troop contributing countries', 1 October 2016, http://amisom-au.org/ethiopia-endf/, accessed 1 October 2016.

vulnerability to military threats, even from a much smaller nation such as Eritrea. More importantly, it uncovered diplomatic failings arising from an inward-looking foreign policy posture. For example, until that point the EPRDF was dismissive of concerns expressed in relation to Eritrea and the security of Ethiopia's access to port services, and the possible encirclement of Ethiopia as a landlocked country. Since the war with Eritrea, for the past 15 years, the government has given pride of place – with varying degrees of success – to building relations with neighbouring countries capable of providing port services and peaceful partnerships, mainly Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia (Somaliland) and Kenya.

Given its central geographic location, population size, and recent promising economic performance, Ethiopia could become a hub for integration in the IGAD region; but seizing economic and trade opportunities for regional integration will demand a proactive foreign policy focus on regional trade and commerce. If Ethiopia is to make the most of economic and trade opportunities in its immediate neighbourhood, the rationale behind the allocation of diplomatic and financial resources to missions in neighbouring countries must be reconsidered. The MoFA needs to address the mismatch between its policy focus on the IGAD region and the inadequate apportionment of human and material resources in a manner that is commensurate with its stress on regional and economic diplomacy.

The usual response by the government to similar constructive criticisms has been that the major challenge to the FANSPS arises not from flaws in policy directions but rather from ineffective implementation. In rebuttal, it might be said that a policy that fails to take into account implementation issues as part and parcel of its overall performance is fundamentally defective.

In sum, an excessively inward-looking policy orientation has led to grave miscalculations and an underestimation of external threats. Crucially, it has assumed that countries and regimes hostile to Ethiopia will always be rational in their calculations. Of course, rational human action should serve as a basis for policy formulation, but an appropriately far-sighted policy needs to take into account misjudgements – such as Eritrea's 1998 invasion – as a real possibility.

Foresight and a balance between an inward- and an outward-looking orientation are essential considerations in the allocation of resources, in order to predict, prevent or respond to identified threats

In all cases, foresight and a balance between an inward- and an outward-looking orientation are essential considerations in the allocation of resources, in order to predict, prevent or respond to identified threats; and proportionality provide adequate attention to external threats and opportunities. Furthermore, the policy needs to take into account all feasible and foreseeable scenarios – not only for the best case but also for the worst. In this regard, it is important to address both internal instability and external developments, particularly in Yemen, the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa; the potential for military confrontation with Eritrea; and the large presence and deep interference by unfriendly forces in Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan. Megatrends in economic development, taken with the surge in the volume of goods Ethiopia imports, indicate that port services will become vital for Ethiopia and demand a switch in focus. Otherwise, the intense instability in the region may affect Ethiopia's access to port services. Similarly, changes in the Somali and Sudanese governments may also have serious implications for Ethiopia.

As it did in initiatives such as NEPAD, AMISOM, UNISFA and the South Sudan talks, Ethiopia could lead the way in many regional and global forums. For example, as it is one of the largest host, origin, and transit countries to refugees and one of the main countries of origin for irregular migration (as well as a transit for significant onward migration), a leadership role in governing migration would be greatly welcomed by regional and global actors.

The FANSPS is a threat- and vulnerability-based foreign and security policy. To a significant degree, the persistence of the Eritrean border war and the dismal record of economic participation by Ethiopians in the region may be ascribed to the EPRDF government's disproportionately inward-looking foreign policy. Ethiopia's internal crises and conflicts might also be used by Eritrea and Egypt to further destabilise the former and jeopardise its plans to use the waters of the River Nile for economic development. It is also possible that the effects and implications of these crises are compounded by a 'competence vacuum' arising after the death of Zenawi and the political leadership paralysis that ensued in the EPRDF.[113] Had there been a balance between threats and opportunities and a focus on both internal and external vulnerabilities, Ethiopia might have been better able to meet the recent and current geopolitical, military and economic shifts that call for a faster adjustment, if not a significant change, to its policy stance.

Needless to say, the fundamentals of the FANSPS remain pertinent when addressing threats to Ethiopia's national interests. Nevertheless, the FANSPS requires urgent reappraisal. Against this background, it is time to take stock of the present inward-looking approach of the policy. Posing serious challenges to Ethiopia's dominant position in the Horn of Africa and its internal stability, democracy and economy, some emerging and longstanding domestic, regional and international developments necessitate balancing the inward-looking policy on addressing the root causes of domestic instability with the need to proactively defend the country and seize legitimate opportunities presented internationally. Otherwise, internal political crises, the conflicts in Yemen and the Middle East, migration into the EU, rivalry in Nile River hydro-politics and transnational threats such as terrorism and violent extremism may well serve to impair the impressive economic and diplomatic progress Ethiopia has made thus far.

113 Manson K & W Wallis, 'Meles absence fuels regional anxieties', *Financial Times*, 9 August 2012, https://www.ft.com/content/c45e4b88-e216-11e1-8e9d-00144feab49a, accessed 8 October 2016.

SAIIA'S FUNDING PROFILE

SAIIA raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. Our work is currently being funded by, among others, the Bradlow Foundation, the UK's Department for International Development, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the World Bank, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Open Society Foundations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Oxfam South Africa and the Centre for International Governance and Innovation. SAIIA's corporate membership is drawn from the South African private sector and international businesses with an interest in Africa. In addition, SAIIA has a substantial number of international diplomatic and mainly South African institutional members.



African perspectives.
Global insights.

Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)11 339–2021 • Fax +27 (0)11 339–2154
www.saiia.org.za • info@saiia.org.za