

Ethiopia's Foreign Policy in the New World Order System: Foreign Policy Direction and its Determinants

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Similar to other countries in the world, there is a linkage between domestic and international actor forces involved in the formulation of Ethiopian foreign policy, since 1991. Obviously, this is due to the fact that foreign policy and domestic politics are interdependent and could spill over into each other. As the goal of every country's foreign policy is promoting national interest, Ethiopian foreign policy among other things achieving economic development through economic diplomacy. This study aimed to explore determinants of Ethiopian foreign policy in the post 1991. Methodologically, it employed secondary source of data collection and data analysis. The result of this study would shade light on the set of factors that determine Ethiopian foreign policy with the change of global world order from bipolar to multi polar system. It highlighted the challenges and opportunities faced in realizing policy goals by taking into account certain bilateral relations Ethiopia has as case study. The change of global political order witnessed within the end of Cold war has also implications on the Ethiopian foreign policy. As a result of New World Order system, Ethiopian foreign policy orientation is changed from purely stubborn Marxist ideology, to flexible developmental state with numerous alliances, paying great emphasis for economic development, at the expense of security issue.

Keywords: foreign policy, economic diplomacy, globalization, bilateral relation

Introduction

This paper is designed to provide the domestic and international determinants factors that affect of Ethiopian foreign policy in the post 1991. An attempt has been made by redefining foreign policy to address longstanding internal political instability endured in the Ethiopia that has its own implication on external relations. The 17 years of military rule faced armed conflict opposing the regime, finally left the country with serous internal problems. During this period, foreign policy direction was highly securitized and ideologically oriented toward Eastern Bloc. However, the post 1991 world politics witnessed major changes in terms of dominant actors, patterns, and policy directions. Since global politics underwent tremendous changes in the post-Cold War era, this study has attempted to assess the direction of Ethiopian foreign policy, in line with identifying major foreign policy actors in decision-making by selecting certain countries in the Horn of Africa, and the rest of the world. Within change of global political economy, Ethiopian foreign policy also witnessed changes in many directions. The new government started to redefine its foreign policy with new a global political paradigm which is more of pragmatic foreign policy approach. Subtle, but arguably controversial "Democratic Developmental State" of political ideology, Ethiopian government started to expand new fresh

foreign policy engagement with various countries around the world. Unlike previous time, new forms of engagement have been expanded to both Eastern and Western World, regardless of their internal political outlook. In economic perspective too, the command economic system that had been in place in previous regime changed into free market economy as one part of structural change aimed to speed up the integration of Ethiopian economy to world economy.

So, this paper is provided not to evaluate the success of Ethiopian foreign policy since 1991, rather, to indicate underlying actors in the foreign policy formulation and implementation. It identifies domestic and international factors that shape Ethiopia's foreign relations. It adds insights for scholars in this area in particular and foreign policy-makers in general. Methodologically, this study employs qualitative research method. For this purpose, data collected from different sources, like foreign policy documents, books, articles, magazines, and newspapers are thoroughly reviewed and analyzed.

The paper has organized into three sections. The first section highlights scenario of global political setting in the post-cold war era. The second section discusses Ethiopian foreign policy objectives. And the last section analyses Ethiopia's bilateral relations with certain countries.

An Overview of Post-Cold War International Political Setting

The Cold World ended with emergence of the New World Order¹ system, as the forces of contending ideologies that had taken center stage for half a century gave way to a new, nascent international system. The definitive end to Cold War came in 1991, when Soviet Union fragmented into 15 separate states. The collapse of communism led to the emergence of liberal dominance, among other values democracy has become a legitimate political ideology (Köchler, 1992). The end of the Cold War inspired social movements for changes questions related for equality, freedom, democracy, and development in the former socialist states and developing countries. At the top of global power, United States begun to impose liberal values, such as free market and democracy spread around the globe, and slogans about democracy, collective security, and the promotion of free trade become order of the day in which all state believed to support (Köchler, 1992). As a result, in many parts of the world, authoritarian regimes were replaced by democratically elected government. Many believed that the spread of democracy would help to reduce domestic and international conflict. Although some new democracies have made transition successfully, many other governments, such as in China and Burma, have successfully resisted calls for democracy (D'Anieri, 2012). Similarly, the hope that adopting free market economic principles would quickly increase prosperity has worked out splendidly in some countries and poorly in others.

Moreover, during 1990s, Europe achieved extraordinary successes in its economic and political integration under European Union (EU) by introducing single market and a single currency which became the largest trading bloc in the world. At the same time, Europe witnessed ethnic conflicts at its doorstep, resulting from the fragmentation of the Balkans and the circumstance that Africa had long existed on the sidelines of global political concern. The Balkans—the historic powder keg of Europe—once again erupted into political violence (Köchler, 1992). In the wider context of the decline of the Yugoslav Federation, war was visited upon Bosnia (1992-1995), Croatia (1991-1995), and later Kosovo (1999). In the Balkan countries, Yugoslavia fell apart in a

¹ Author refers new world order system, the body of rules, norms, and institutions that govern relations among the key players in the international environment global political system since 1991, following collapse of USSR. It is shift of global political system from bi-polar system to multi polar system which characterized the current global politics. Taking into account the emergence of China, Western Europe, Russia in addition to United States global political order would be defined. The old political order according to the author is the structure of international relations in the period before 1991.

series of wars which saw ethnic cleansing and genocide return to Europe. The driving force was not age-old ethnic tensions (as the Serb side liked to proclaim), but distinctly modern nationalism, fanned by the media and driven by politicians. In Africa, tribal rivalries witnessed a bloody comeback, for example, in the genocidal war fought between the Hutu and Tutsi factions in Rwanda and Burundi in the early and mid-1990s. In response, multinational peacekeeping forces were deployed to intervene in the conflict ridden regions under United Nations Charter (Schulenburg, 2014).

The situation in Ethiopia is different from other parts of the world. Major changes around the world and in Ethiopia forced the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to adjust its approach and to proclaim "Revolutionary Democracy" in place of Marxist socialism as the party's ideology. Marxist Leninist affiliate regime replaced by another Marxist oriented type of government, called EPRDF—a coalition party successfully overthrew military government and installs ethnic federalism as a solution to nationality questions believed to inadequately unaddressed in the past regimes. The reason that the Front assumed power in a period when the centralized administrative states of the socialist bloc were collapsing, undoubtedly for the fact that it arrange ethnic based administrations in the regions (Young, 1996). In terms of institutional set up, EPRDF borrowed some elements of Lenin which aimed to establish vanguard party from the center reaching peripheral area (Young, 1996). Unlike its predecessors, the new EPRDF government emphasize on liberating Ethiopian nationalities by taking ethnicity as its components (Young, 1996). Surprisingly, the new constitution has granted regions the right to leave the federation (Art. 39). Another unique political development in Ethiopia was peaceful separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, in which EPRDF itself facilitated the way against the policies of the past regimes (Byrne, 2002).

To sum up, the post 1990s witnessed the sharp increase of intrastate conflicts in contrary to interstate conflicts. While the patterns of global conflict were changing from ideological competition to ethnic and religious fault lines, the process of globalization gave a new impetus to the neoliberal economic order that placed considerable power in the hands of multinational corporations and consequently further undermined the nation-state as unchallenged incumbent key actor in international relations. Globalization has reduced the ability of individual states or even coalitions or groups of states to shape outcomes. Many actors emerged as important unit of analysis in foreign policy. Among the others, state must take into account the environment, population, terrorism, transnational crime, drugs, and sustainable development in their decision-making. Overall, the post 1991 has brought many changes to the international political and economic orders, among others, the transition from the Cold War world into the globalized world.

Foreign Policy Objectives: Proclivity Toward Economic Diplomacy

Since its emergence, EPRDF has undergone several changes. These include: changing from an organization for the liberation of nations and nationalities from Derg oppression to an organization taking power and ruling over Ethiopia; from anti-imperialist organization to pro-Western organization becoming their darling; and also persuading the Chinese and making them the major investors in the country; from market economy to revolutionary democracy, and then to developmental state; from a federal structure based on ethnic territories to centralized power control through centralized vanguard party system, and then adopting the concept of developmental state.

Particularly the change that occurred in the post 2002 Ethiopia was important for EPRDF, because it was the turning point for consolidation of power, which coincided with new ideology called "developmental

state”—state led development. Basically developmental state is a state that derives political legitimacy from its record in economic development, so that developmental foreign policy's credibility will be measured and determined by the extent to which it helps to foster development and industrialization (Landsberg & Georghiou, 2015). Although it is not well conceptualized notion, it is possible to argue in the common sense that developmental state foreign policy is not designed out of existing global political and economic system. Like liberal democratic state, a developmental state foreign policy has also place for democracy, human rights, and international law. In light of this, the current Ethiopian foreign policy platform is framed based international political system of the day, “New World Order System” in which governments could not satisfy domestic economic demands without engaging itself in international negotiation. Maintaining large coalitions with similar actors is not a matter of option, but an obligation for every state. In this international political environment, economic diplomacy has become more important comparing to political relations. The Ethiopian government places economic diplomacy at the center of its foreign policy document. In such a way, economic diplomacy is prioritized to attain two areas of national interest: economic development and consolidation of democracy. Relatively, an external security threat to the country has been obtained little attention (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002). In order to achieve these objectives, Ethiopia has implemented “domestic first, external second” approach, strategy aimed at prioritizing effective utilization of all domestic resources (ibid).

As stated in FDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2002) policy document, the justification provided behind promoting development is that if living standard of people is raised, it is a guarantee for over all national state survival, given that the major contributing factors for Ethiopia's internal and external vulnerabilities have been understood to be underdevelopment and poverty. Being taken as a factor of Ethiopian State survival; development considered as an element to benefit people which in turn able to avoid turmoil and tendency of disintegration which could be potential, if lacked led to disintegration of the country. So, an enabling environment for development in this context is to identify market, attract investment, trade promotion, solicit grants and loans and technical support, and make maximum utilization of all possibilities.

By pursuing “developmental state” model, government is seeking to transform the economy, based on major investments in economic infrastructure, economic management reforms, and strategic public sector engagement in the economy. For instance, industry parks are starting to spring up across Ethiopia, and different infrastructure programs are underway to integrate the country's internal economy. Ethiopia's connections to global markets are being significantly upgraded with new, high-speed rail and road corridors under construction. Ethiopia's emergence from land-locked isolation and integration into the global economy is deepening and accelerating, giving support to the label that has sometimes been accorded to it, namely that of Africa's newest “Lion Economy” (Mekonnen, 2016, p. 31).

In 2002, Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategies of Ethiopia formulated. The Foreign Policy has opened a new avenue and chapter for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Diplomatic Missions of Ethiopia in terms of clearly defining the role and policy direction that the Ministry and the Missions should pursue in the field of economic diplomacy. The policy stresses on the importance of competitive economic diplomacy as the right basis of Ethiopia's international relations. The detail tenets of globalization where Ethiopia should never adopt an on-looker position due to inactivity and inequality also stipulated in the policy. It has once again brought the capitalist international market as the major framework of Ethiopia's International economic relations. Accordingly, attracting direct foreign investment, lobbying for facilitating the expansion of

the export market, luring foreign tourists and soliciting development assistance consisting of financial and technical support through bilateral and multilateral cooperation are the major targets of economic diplomacy (FDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002).

The second policy objective is consolidation of democratic system. These lines of action are not directly related to development promotion, but help to create a positive environment for the other lines of action to succeed. Rather, the argument behind this policy is that democracy is imperative instrument in an effort to realize common goals in nation building strategies. As Ethiopia is the home of different ethnic groups, democracy is helpful for these members of ethnic groups living in the country to promote culture of tolerance in each other and in endeavor to succeed peaceful coexistence. In contrary, the absence of democratic order would result in political turmoil as a lesson taken from Derg regime, abuse of human rights and finally, pose threat for state existence and international peace and security. In justifying this argument, President Bush of United States declared that, in the end of Cold War, the United States is now threatened by “the turmoil and dangers in the developing world”, and must be prepared “to deal with a world that, for all our hope, remains a dangerous place—a world of ethnic antagonisms, national rivalries, religious tensions, spreading weaponry, personal ambitions and lingering authoritarianism” (Volman, 1993, p. 1). So, realization of democracy has twofold significance for Ethiopia: development and safeguarding national security.

Ethiopia's Security Threats in the Globalized Era

Ethiopia is situated in the Horn of Africa region—prone to conflicts, which affect its economic and political activities. The region's security challenges flow from the failure by respective governments to embrace good governance and democratic practices, and from their inability to effectively manage ethnic diversity. The geo-strategic importance of this region is driven by external security and economic interests. Since the political fate of each state in the region has always been inextricably intertwined with that of neighboring states, understanding the direction of Ethiopia's international relations is essential. The potential nature of security challenges defining Ethiopian foreign relation in the globalization era, have national, regional, and international system dimension. Intrastate security issue is inherent feature of the Horn of Africa region, which systemically interconnected to each other. This complex insecurity underpins Ethiopia's state security policy, too. One of Ethiopia's security challenges is related to the old dream of creating a greater Somalia. One of these groups was Islamist movements called Union of Islamic Court, the group rapidly gained support in the 2006 by taking over control of the most of the country (Barnes & Hassan, 2007). The rise of this group is associated with the absence of a central government in Somalia. Internally, this group created some level of domestic order that Somalis had not enjoyed for decades. The problem was that such a movement could only maintain large mass of support from a deeply fractured Somali society, by combining its Islamist appeal (necessarily the source of deep suspicions, globally as well as regionally) with the revival of Somali nationalist claims on south-east Ethiopia. Ethiopia's fear was that resurgence of Al-Itihaad would rekindle alliances with ethnic insurgent groups, such as the (Somali) Ogaden National Liberation Front, and encourage the radicalization of Ethiopia's sizeable Muslim populations (Barnes & Hassan, 2007). Ethiopian security elites have viewed the threat from Somalia as being against Ethiopia's territorial integrity and, in its more paranoid moments, against their hold on power itself, by looking the group expansionist policy of creating greater Somalia. In December 2006, Ethiopia launched assault at the Islamic courts by tacit support of US, on behalf of the Transitional National Government (Bjorn, 2009).

Ethiopian security has been affected by proliferation of internal and external terrorist groups based in Somalia. One of the groups, Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (AIAI), and its indigenous terrorist group affiliate, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), attacked Ethiopia several times between 1995 and 1997 (Goitom, 2013). More recently, terrorists and extremists groups operating in Somalia, like Islamic fundamentalism and Al-Shabab, posed security threats. This regional insecurity forces has attracted global players into the region, such as the EU and the US. Following the 9/11 attacks against the United States, the Horn of Africa region has come under increased study as a strategic focal point of the war against terrorism and other violence. Ethiopia also allied with USA in a campaign to anti-terrorist activities in the region.

Border disagreement with Eritrea also determines security policy Ethiopia. As a result of this, until recent restoration of diplomatic relation in 2018, Ethiopia and Eritrea had been involved in proxy war. For instance, Eritrean government has sided with military force opposing Ethiopian government by providing assistance, such as training in Eritrea and Somalia and various types of weapons (Lyons, 2009). The Eritrean government also continues a propaganda campaign against Ethiopia and the international community efforts to stabilize Somalia. Despite efforts made by the AU, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the international community Eritrea to stop Eritrea sponsoring the Somali terrorist organizations, the Eritrean government continues to provide this support despite multiple regional and international attempts to persuade it to refrain from its destructive role towards the peace and security of the region.

Likewise, Horn of Africa is the single most geo-strategically important region of the world. The region is significant for international trade (import and export), maritime security, anti-piracy operation and anti-terrorism campaign, access to the world's largest oil in the Middle Eastern Arab Gulf (Gashaw & Zelalem, 2016). In the recent time, the region has become world's first ever-largest military base of foreign powers. It can be argued that the region has become a military garrison: US, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia have already established their military base at Djibouti (ibid). So, the militarization of Horn of Africa due to foreign powers involvement has security implication for Ethiopia, encircled State by self-interested foreign power (ibid).

Ethio-Djibouti Relations

Ethiopia's relation with Djibouti starts with the formation of modern port. More than previous Ethiopian regimes the current Ethiopian government has created strong relations with Djibouti so as to benefit from port services. They have signed many memorandums of understanding, protocols, and agreements of friendship and cooperation at various times, which enable them to achieve common objectives and further deepen the existing relations. Since 1991, there have been several official visits at Head of States and Ministerial levels between the two countries where political, economic, and social issues have been examined and significant results have been achieved to further strengthen the relations between the two countries (Urgessa, 2014). More importantly, Haramaya University has conferred an Honorary Doctoral Degree upon Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of Djibouti in recognition of his efforts to strengthen the Ethio-Djibouti all-round relations, on July 04, 2015 (All Africa.com, 2015).

The contributing factor for friendly relations between Ethiopia and Djibouti is "diplomatic deadlock" emerged between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998. The outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea shifted the former, demand for new ports, given that Ethiopia used Asseb and Massawa as entry to the sea though Eritrea gets seceded from Ethiopia leaving it a land-locked country in 1993. Following the war, the Port of Djibouti

became primary outlet to the sea for landlocked Ethiopia as the later channeled almost all of its imports and exports through Djibouti and relocated its merchant fleets to the city's port. Since the volume of Ethiopia's development project has been increasing from time to time, this forced her to search for another (Styan, 2013). Currently, the port of Djibouti handles about 95% of Ethiopia's import-export businesses (Styan, 2013).

However, there are factors that affect Ethio-Djibouti relations in the post 1991. One of this factor is emanated from the fact that Ethiopia's greater size in geographical area and power which created highly unequal mutual dependency marked by frequent tensions and frictions aroused from costs and taxation from port services (Urgessa, 2014).

Ethio-USA Relations

Ethiopia and United States have long age diplomatic relations. During Derg regime, Ethio-USA relation was deteriorated due to increasing human rights violation in the country. However, in the post 1991, the relation revived with coming of the new Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government. The current Ethio-USA relation is focusing on four major areas. These areas are: (1) protecting American citizens; (2) strengthening democratic institutions and expanding human rights; (3) spurring broad-based economic growth and promoting development; and (4) advancing regional peace and security (USA Department of States, 2017).

Within the framework of the New World Order, the Americans want to keep a balance of power in every geographic domain spanning the planet. This includes the Horn of Africa where for the same reason; European colonial powers have tried to desperately weaken Ethiopia since it towers over its smaller neighbours. The Americans themselves have for a long time been apprehensive whenever Ethiopia's relations with the littoral states of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean were rocked and the status quo ante was disturbed (Paulos, 2004). Thus, it is not surprising that they were happy to see Ethiopia's wings clipped with the independence of Eritrea because it was too powerful to be responsive to their regional concern.

The United States is the largest source of bilateral aid to Ethiopia accounting roughly for almost a third of total aid (Yonas, 2016). Ethiopia has received about \$1 billion annually from the US between 2008 and 2010 (The Oakland Institute, 2013). The amount of US aid was \$608.3 million in 2011 alone, nearly three times the amount allocated by UK aid (The Oakland Institute, 2013). Again, total amount of USA aid to Ethiopia in 2013 was estimated \$687.6, while this amount increased to \$742.2 in 2014 (Yonas, 2016). Even the amount of aids distributed to Ethiopia for development assistance continued despite criticism for human rights violation. The overall increasing level of aid is a definite indicator of the growing value of the relationship between the two countries. The plausible explanation for such high level of aid is strategic position in the Horn of Africa, and Ethiopia within it, accentuated by the threat of international terrorism. The advent of the "global war on terror" dramatically raised the stakes. Al-Qaeda attacks on the United States in the region, notably the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam embassy bombings and the attack on the USS Cole at Aden, preceded the events of 11 September 2001, and—together with the absence of government in Somalia, which thus appeared as an ungoverned space analogous to Afghanistan—turned the Horn into an arena secondary only to west/central Asia as a potential source of Islamist militancy (Clapham, 2009). Initially, this could only be beneficial to the Ethiopian regime, which could present itself as a force for stability in the region. So, in general, Western geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa have been a major factor in consolidating and scaling up international development assistance to Ethiopia. Ethiopia is strategic partner of United States in the global fight against terrorism. To this effect,

United States gained a drone base in Ethiopia at Arba Minch (Tegegne, 2016) used to launch attacks on the al-Qaeda-linked Somali militants al-Shabab. However, the military base was closed in 2016 with overtly unknown reason, but “mutual decision made between two countries” (Reuters, 2016).

Ethiopia is strong and successful country in combating terrorism in the Horn of Africa. In July 2015, during his state visit, Obama called Ethiopia as an “outstanding partner” in the fight against terrorism in the Horn and a “key partner” in resolving the crises in South Sudan. He praised Ethiopia for being “a major contributor to U.N. peacekeeping efforts”, and for its unique role in “contributing more peacekeeping troops than any other country in Africa” (Alemayehu, 2017). It is recalled that Al-Shabaab has lost most of its key strongholds following a major offensive by African Union Mission in Somalia, or AMISOM troops—with Ethiopian Defence Forces reputedly credited with doing much of the fighting (Mekonnen, 2015). President Obama said,

That's an area where the cooperation and leadership on the part of Ethiopia is making a difference as we speak. So our counterterrorism cooperation and the partnerships that we have formed with countries like Ethiopia are going to be critical to our overall efforts to defeat terrorism. (Mehari, 2014)

Ethio-China Relations

Diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and China began on 24 November 1971, when Haile Selassie visited China. In the post-cold war era, state to state interaction started more closely when Prime Minister Meles Zenawi visited china and Chinese counter parts did the same thing in 1995. More importantly, diplomatic breakthrough between two countries obtained big momentum when Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was launched in 2000 to smooth collective dialogue between Africa and China in which Ethiopia hosted the two ministerial meetings and co-hosting the Beijing Summit (Thakur, 2009). It was the turning point for the relation between Addis Ababa and Beijing. In the post 1991, relationship between two countries reached new chapter for two main reasons. One reason for their growth relationship is new international political development—power shift from dual polarity to multi polarity. The development of circumstances in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular is changing toward new emerging partners from the global South taking on a more important role as providers of finance and know-how. Besides, Chinese long stance on non-interference foreign policy principles also paves the way for their mutual relationship. The second reason is resemblance in domestic political ideology—an effort to consolidate dominant party systems called by some scholars “authoritarian model of development strategy” (Cabestan, 2012, p. 62).

Like other states Ethio-China relation is facilitated by conducive environment emanated from diplomatic, strategic, and ideological relevance. Gedion (2009), one of prominent scholar in this area, identified four driving factors for establishment of Ethio-China relations in the post 1991. These are: economic assistance, alternative partner to the West, role model, and diplomatically. The first factor is that Ethiopia needs China as alternative economic partner to the West countries—usually imposes conditionality in providing assistance to developing countries. The second factor is the Chinese need of Ethiopia for strategic importance—Ethiopia being head quarter of African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa which would help to influence Africa and Middle East. As President Hu Jintao put it: “Ethiopia could play a pivotal role in enabling China to consolidate its cooperation with other African countries” (Ethiopian Herald, 2004a, as cited in Seifudein, 2012, p. 148). In addition, being the second most populous countries in Africa, Ethiopia could also potential for this purpose. And the third factor is Chinese need of Ethiopia to protect Taiwan under her administration (Gedion, 2009).

Given these factors, diplomatic interaction between China and Ethiopia is more visible in economic area than security and military sector. China-Ethiopia military cooperation is of a not negligible size, even if it is not comparable to that between the United States and Ethiopia, especially since 11 September 2001. Political elite in Ethiopia are almost certain that China can, and even will, ignite Ethiopia's economic modernization. Ethiopia is currently undertaking different development projects. Rail ways, roads, hydroelectric power, irrigation, and telecommunication are among the others. For the purpose of building these projects, Ethiopian government looks China for financing through loans and grants. The strong argument in this case is that Chinese considered herself as developing world so that equal relation between two countries would led into mutual benefits through trade flows, foreign domestic flows, technology transfer, and integration in global value chains, in addition to aid flows, which otherwise the partners would not have access to before entering into these relations (Desta, 2009).

However, relations between two countries are not without limitations. One of potential challenge of bilateral relation is trade imbalance. To address the problem, Chinese provided preferential treatment for certain Ethiopian products, so that suspension of tariffs on mainly agricultural products has been beneficial in boosting Ethiopian exports (ibid). It appears that China is sincerely interested in forging a mutually beneficial relationship based on co-operation and support. Since Ethiopia is mainly an agrarian-based economy, it needs to focus on diversifying the composition of its exports and increasing the number of value-added products that it is producing.

Moreover, infrastructure projects in Ethiopia are carried out with major Chinese labour input. Although Ethiopia has excessive labour force, it is normal to see numerous Chinese workers operating in different Ethiopian projects. This experience not only common in Ethiopia, but also, in other African states. No doubt this would affect job opportunity for Ethiopians thereby, creating the potential factor to negatively affect Sino-Ethiopian relations (Cabestan, 2012; Thakur, 2009). Partnership with China conforms as much to its domestic as to its international priorities. It contributes to consolidating the EPRDF's hold on the political system and the army, directly favours economic development, diversifies its funding sources, and increases its elbow room in often difficult negotiations with its traditional donors.

Ethio-Egyptian Relation

Ethiopia and Egypt have no common borders but they enjoy one of the oldest bilateral relations both by African and global standards. Formal diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Egypt dates back to 1927 with the establishment of legations in both countries. Both countries are the founding members of the AU (former Organization of African Unity [OAU]). Even though modern diplomatic relation between two countries is mostly constrained by use of Nile water, they have also a deep-rooted religious, cultural, and historical interconnection. As in the past, the post 1991, the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Egypt mostly determined by use of Nile water. Particularly with initiation of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (EGRD), issue of the Nile waters is getting an Egyptian-Ethiopian bone of contention. In 2011, Ethiopia allocated \$4.2 billion to build Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project with the goal of creating one of the world's largest hydroelectric power plants. Ethiopia has partially funded the Dam Project to the tune of \$1.8 billion and the Dam Project is approximately 62 percent complete as of 2018 (Xinhua, 2017). In their tradition, Egyptian learned that no country has the right to develop any project on the Nile River including Ethiopia which contributes more than 85 percent of the Nile waters. This opinion is now seems unworkable. Obviously, an

Egypt fear is emanated from reduction in the Nile's overall water volume once it reaches Egypt. The serious concern of Egypt is that, the Dam Project might result in diverting waters from the Blue Nile that would ordinary flow into the Nile and that the reservoir associated with the Dam Project would lead to evaporation of some of the Blue Nile's water volume. In 2013, Egypt's president, Mohammed Morsi, made declared that "all options [were] open" to protect the country's "water security" in the face of Ethiopian plans to divert an upstream Nile tributary as part of a \$4.7bn dam construction project (Fisher, 2014, p. 20). This statement clearly indicates Egypt willingness to go to war over the issue.

On the other side, the 1990s witnessed the establishment and institutionalization of a dialogue between the parties. On 1 July 1993, the heads of the two states, Hosni Mubarak and Meles Zenawi, signed a framework of cooperation and committed themselves to reaching an agreement. Again, in February 1999, the Nile Basin Initiative, a new all-riparian body, was launched in Dar es Salaam. The ministers of water affairs of nine countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Congo, Kenya, and Uganda, with Eritrea as an observer) stated jointly that "for the first time in history, all Nile basin countries have expressed a serious concern about the need for serious discourse", and they declared that their "shared vision" was to "achieve sustainable socioeconomic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile basin water resources" (Enlich, 2002).

Beyond achieving a better atmosphere and carrying on a continuous dialogue within such new frameworks, Ethiopian-Egyptian relations do not yet contain an element of complete trust. The challenges are emanated from building a common understanding on the use of equitable water. "Though the Blue Nile starts in the Ethiopian Highlands in Lake Tana, Ethiopia has not been able to exploit the Blue Nile's water resources for the myriad economic, political, and geostrategic reasons" (Daniel, 2014, p. 31). Ethiopia on the other side wants to use Nile water to generate electric power, and propagating as if Egypt has been attempting to jeopardize efforts to develop any project on the Nile River. These two extreme sides have been challenges for Ethio-Egyptian relations.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to identify Ethiopian foreign policy actors in the post-cold war era. Ideologically, the relationship with foreign state was established based on idealistic and friendly relations (Berouk, 2012). Under an umbrella of "democratic developmental state", EPRDF has been tried to pursue economic development as foreign policy objectives. Ethiopian approach to economy is designed on the model borrowed from China, South Korea, and Singapore which mixes statist, planning, and quasi-liberal features that are welded together in a long-term, state-led effort to stimulate economic growth and development out of poverty. However, the government does not insist itself to the ideology and the numbers of network countries are increased so as to maximize enabling environment for realization of economic diplomacy as policy objectives. So, Ethiopian foreign policy under EPRDF government is characterized by diversification of partners in corners of the world. Unlike military regime which heavily relied on the Soviet Union in the area of engagement like foreign direct investment and addressing economic constraints through strategic trade negotiations and aid, the Ethiopian EPRDF government foreign policy under EPRDF government is emphasized on realizing economic objectives in all directions (Negera, 2016). Exception to bloody war broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea between 1998 and 2000, these objectives intended to realize by using soft power instead of hard power. Although the emergence of terrorism as the threat to global peace and security following the 9/11 attack on

United States, security threats are less emphasized as policy focus, and priority of foreign policy objectives are given to eradicating poverty and backwardness.

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