

**GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND THEIR IMPACT ON
ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY**

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Declarations

I **Tesfay Hailu**, Registration Number/I.D. Number CLG/PE/001/2010, do hereby declare that this Thesis work is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially; or in full, by any other person in any other university/institution.

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This Thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as College supervisor.

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Approval

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to the Mekelle University to accept the thesis submitted by **Tesfay Hailu** entitled “**Geopolitical Rivalries in the Horn of Africa and Their Impact on Ethiopia's National Security**”, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Masters Degree in Foreign Policy and Diplomacy.

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Abstract

The study's general objective is to examine the geopolitical rivalries of major powers and emerging regional powers in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. It is well known that new political and security dynamism is emerging in the Horn of Africa every season. New events are emerging in the region due to the rapid political changes that are still taking place. This is the result of the geopolitical rivalries of major powers and emerging regional powers in the region to ensure their interest. Even though, studying the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa is very important to know their impact on Ethiopia's national security. It is known that; the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa are based on the interests of the countries. This also it has its own impact on Ethiopia's national security. Thus, the objective of this thesis was to analyze the geopolitical interests of major powers and to examine the influence of emerging regional powers in the Horn of Africa. The study also assesses how these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia.

The researcher used an exploratory research design and qualitative approach obtained from secondary sources such as books, documents, internet sources, journal articles, periodicals and newspaper stories were used to acquire the approach and data. The information gathered from secondary sources is therefore discussed analytically. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The study's findings indicate that the HOA is experiencing new and tough geopolitical rivalry driven by geo-strategic, geo-economic, geo-security, vigilant containment, and resource competition. The geopolitical rivalry brings both risks and opportunities to Ethiopia. The rivalry posed a peace and security risk, exacerbating internal instability and adversarial powers may exploit the internal situation as an advantage to destabilize Ethiopia. If Ethiopia manages the regional dynamics properly, the rivalry has many opportunities such as economic, regional security stability. Recommendations for the betterment of the region and Ethiopia's national security are also clearly stated in the study. The paper stated that the issue is ongoing and needs further research and theoretical assessment. The country mentioned in this research, the ideas and things included in this study, directly or indirectly have a negative impact or an opportunity for Ethiopia's national security.

Keywords: Conflicts, Geopolitics, Horn of Africa, Influences, Interests, Powers, Rivalries and Security.

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Abbreviations

AU	African Union
ADR	Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway
AGOA	The African Growth and Opportunity Act
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ATMIS	African Transitional Mission in Somalia
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CITG	The Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	East African Community
EAP	Environment Action Programme
EU	European Union
FMB	Foreign Military Base
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
HOA	Horn of Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	National Security Strategy
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
STC	Southern Transitional Council
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations

UNSC -----The United Nations Security Council
US-----United States
USD -----United States Dollar
USA ----- United States of America
USSR ----- The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WTO ----- World Trade Organization
WW ----- World War

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Chapter One □ Introduction

Geopolitics should be weighed against the benefits and harm it brings about to the people and the countries of the world. It concerns power struggles over territories for the purpose of political control over space. In other words, geopolitics is the practice and ability of a state to control and compete for a territory. Thus the geopolitics of Horn of Africa entails power, politics, policy, space, place, and interests that states embrace as they interact in the Horn of Africa. Horn of Africa provides a perfect instance of conflict ridden area. The geopolitics of the Horn of Africa can well be understood by analyzing each state's potential power in terms of its size, economy, population, power, prestige, potential wealth, global positioning, strategic importance and international influence (Edward W., Patrick M., 2016).

The region is marked by both historical complexity and contemporary strategic importance. Comprising Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti, the Horn sits at the crossroads of critical global trade routes, linking the Middle East to Sub-Saharan Africa. It is home to some of the world's most volatile and long-standing conflicts, including the civil war in Somalia, the border disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the internal strife in Sudan and South Sudan. These conflicts have not only contributed to the region's instability but have also drawn in global powers, each with its own strategic interests, further complicating efforts to establish lasting peace and security.

On the other hand; the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa is shaped by both regional dynamics and external interventions. For example, the rivalry among the emerging regional powers, notably Turkey, Qatar, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, has significantly influenced political alliances, particularly through military bases and economic investments in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Meanwhile, the geopolitical rivalries of major powers (the United States, China and Russia) have increasingly sought to secure economic and strategic footholds in the region. China's Belt and Road Initiative further embedding it as a key player in the region's infrastructure development. The role of international organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, has also been crucial in peacekeeping and conflict resolution, though their effectiveness has often been limited by geopolitical rivalries and inadequate resources (Aschale A., 2024).

Therefore; this paper analyzes to examine the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. This chapter (the introduction part) covers background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the research paper.

1.1 Background of the study

The Horn of Africa States, the easternmost region of Africa, is marked by its distinct geostrategic location. And, hence, its geopolitical importance to non -regional powers is immense. Moreover, it has got a significant importance for regional power in the vicinity of the Horn of Africa. The region is of great interest to many extra-regional forces simply because of its location, which could be of geopolitical and geo-economics value. One must, in this respect, note that it links Europe to Asia through the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Sea (the northern Indian Ocean). The current activity of superpower interactions in the area demonstrates how the Red Sea has quickly developed into a scene of fresh geopolitical intrigue as engagement between Gulf and African governments defies preconceived notions and dissolves borders.

Moreover; the Middle Eastern nations of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and Turkey are competing for supremacy, power, and influence in the Horn of Africa on the basis of state actors. Additionally, there are international players like the United States, China, Russia competing in the Horn of Africa (Michaele H., 2019, Vertin Z., 2020).

The fact that the Horn of Africa is central to the politics of the USA, Europe and the Arab world has gained worldwide attention. The frequent war due to multifaceted political and economic interest of global powers has its own role in the drawing worldwide attention. Recent changes in the political order of the world may have also changed the influence of the East on the Horn countries. This has been demonstrated in the direction Western countries, are taking on matters concerning the Horn countries especially after the end of the Cold War. This, however, does not mean that the old ties between the Horn countries and the East have been broken. The tie between them has only been loosened and it can be tightened in times of emergency. This factor can intensify conflicts between neighboring countries of the Horn (Shemelis G., 2003).

The region has recently seen dynamic changes and it is in constant transition. Somalia, one of the region's most troubled states, established a transitional government through surprisingly fair elections, and yet it is far from being stable. The breakup of Sudan into two states and the ensuing tensions have also compounded the region's problems. Sudan is also in turmoil in Darfur and in the South Kordofanian and Blue Nile areas. The past decade further witnessed border clashes between Eritrea and Djibouti and a continued stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The newly emerged state, South Sudan, is also engulfed in a crisis. Thus, the Horn of Africa is still grappling with intensive violent conflicts.

So; Ethiopia's geostrategic position at the heart of the Horn of Africa, and the fact that it shares porous borders, as well as ethnic and historical links with all of the states in the region, makes it more vulnerable to conflicts in the region. Ethiopia has been increasingly willing to take on responsibility for peace and security endeavors in the Horn of Africa. The geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa have its own impact on Ethiopia's national security. On the other hand; it has its own opportunity.

Accordingly, this paper has attempted to identify and critically analyze the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China, Russia) and to examine the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar, Egypt) in the horn of Africa related with the interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia. By collecting secondary data from different reliable and verifiable sources, the data was analyzed using the qualitative method of research and exploratory research design. Hence, the output of the research depicted that the HOA is challenged by diversified intra-state and inter-state conflicts among the neighboring countries owing to economic, social, political and historical grounds. There are also resource centered disputes especially on the Red Sea; Indian Ocean and River Nile Ethiopia's initiative to construct The Great Renaissance Dam brings about tension and anxiety among the three competing countries i.e. Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The political dynamics in the Horn of Africa change very quickly. New things are happening in the region and regional alignments are being seen as threats to Ethiopia's national security. For example, in February 2024, Turkey and Somalia signed defence and economic cooperation agreement that allegedly enables Ankara to protect Somalia's territorial waters and to construct,

equip, and train the Somali navy. This accord, which once again draws attention to the troubled Horn of Africa, follows a similar agreement made in January 2024 between Ethiopia and the contentious area of Somaliland, which Somalia has considered as a direct attack on its sovereignty.

Somalia occupies a special position in international politics due to its proximity to key strategic locations such as the Babb al-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea. The oil of Middle Eastern nations also passes through Somalia, making it a crucial geographic intersection for international trade. The country is regarded as a gateway to Africa, bordering Ethiopia and Kenya to the west and Djibouti to the northwest, and has the longest coastline on the African continent. Given the area's geopolitical significance, global and regional actors have been actively involved in the politics of the Horn of Africa.

There are also geopolitical tensions in the Horn of Africa. These Geopolitical tensions are shaping themselves into two primary axes of influence: the Ethiopia–the UAE (United Arab Emirates) –Somaliland axis and the Somali–Turkey–Qatar–Egypt axis. Turkey, Qatar, and Egypt stand behind Somalia as it works to bolster its independence and thwart Ethiopia's regional aspirations.

On the other hand, Egypt reacted strongly to the Somaliland-Ethiopia agreement with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi viewing the pact as a violation of Somalia's territorial integrity. Accordingly, in his call to Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohammed, El-Sisi expressed his strong support for Somalia's sovereignty and stability. This was not only a gesture of solidarity but also a strategic move in the complex geopolitical environment of the Horn of Africa. Indeed, Egypt, which has an ongoing dispute with Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), is seeking to maintain the regional balance of power.

While Ethiopia sees GERD as a crucial development project for its own interests, for Egypt it is a major threat to its water security. Since 2011, negotiations on the dam have often stalled and little progress has been made, exacerbating the existing regional tensions. Egypt's strong position against the Somaliland–Ethiopia deal underscores Cairo's strategic intention to maintain its influence in the Horn of Africa. This approach is part of a broader strategy to secure Egypt's interests in the face of contentious GERD negotiations and shifting alliances in the region.

Turkey and Qatar provide significant military and financial support for Somalia, but Egypt's support is motivated by its disagreement with Ethiopia regarding the GERD and the desire to maintain a balanced power in the region to preserve its own interest.

The UAE, on the other hand, supports the Ethiopia–Somaliland agreement. In addition to its investments in Somaliland through the Dubai-based company DP World initiatives in the port of Berbera, the UAE is also considering establishing a military base in the region. By doing so, the UAE is trying to maintain the balance of power to counteract the close relationship between Turkey and Qatar in Somalia. The UAE also hopes to gain crucial maritime access through Somaliland. In general, new events, and alignments appearing in the region may directly or indirectly be dangerous for Ethiopia. It can also turn into an opportunity.

From this perspective, the researcher has initiated to conduct a research regarding to the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The findings suggest that long-term stability will require more effective regional cooperation, stronger governance, and a balanced approach to external engagement that prioritizes peace over geopolitical rivalry. Through this study, an effort is made to analyze the interests of major powers and the influence of emerging regional powers in the Horn of Africa region to Ethiopia's national security. The study analyzed the opportunities and challenges of intensified major power rivalry in the region for Ethiopian's national security. Methodologically, qualitative research methodology was used. Accordingly secondary source of data is employed. Secondary data is derived from books, journals, media reports, and documents.

The research found out opportunities and threats to Ethiopia's national security. In terms of opportunities, increased competitive engagement of major and emerging powers in the Horn has positive contribution in economic and diplomatic terms as great power rivalry provides with alternative sources of economic and diplomatic opportunities. However, there are major challenges to Ethiopia's national security, political stability and territorial integrity, when rival superpowers meddle in domestic political processes. In the context of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, the study offered evidence indicating the negative impacts of major power competitive engagement in weakening the Ethiopian state's capability to provide economic prosperity, peace and security to its people.

Therefore, this study focuses on critical analysis of geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The paper analyzes the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China, Russia) in the Horn of Africa and examines the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt). The study also assesses these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia's national security.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to analyze the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China, Russia) and the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar, Egypt) in the Horn of Africa. It also aims the interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia. Therefore; this study incorporates the general and specific objectives□

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the research is to examine the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are;

1. To analyze the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China, Russia) in the Horn of Africa.
2. To examine the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt).
3. To assess how these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia.

1.4 Research Questions

This research addresses the following basic questions;

1. What are the interests of the major powers (US, China, Russia) in the Horn of Africa?
2. How can influence the emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar, and Egypt) to the Horn of Africa?
3. How these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The research is important from the following perspectives. It can provide valuable information on the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The findings of the study will be used by concerned bodies and readers to consider and preserve knowledge and values. The results of the study will contribute to the literature on geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The findings of this study will be contributed as initiations to provide some information to the existing knowledge related to the geopolitical interests of major powers and the influence of emerging regional powers in the Horn of Africa and how these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia. Moreover, it will be used as reference document for related studies in the future.

Besides, the finding of this study will help for researchers, policymakers, and to different stakeholders' to know the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. It also used as an input to future research on related issues.

Therefore; this study focuses on assessing the interests of major powers and the influence of emerging regional powers in the Horn related with the opportunities and security challenges for Ethiopia. Because Ethiopia is one of the countries located in the Horn and can influence with the new geopolitical rivalries in the region. The findings of this research also help to regional and federal leaders as situational analysis when they prepare a strategic foreign policy and diplomacy planning. The study initiates to the political leaders and citizens of Ethiopia to know the new geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and identify how Ethiopia can change in its opportunity.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study was delimited conceptually and geographically on the assessment of examine the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. Specifically the scope of the research was conceptually confined to the objectives of the research. The general scope of the study is aimed at analyzing the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The variables in the analysis focused on the rivalry among the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China, Russia) and

the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt) in the Horn of Africa from 2018 – 2025. The study further assesses the overall outlines of the interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia. Due to prevailing logistical and time limitations; the study was undertaken between 2018 and 2025.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security in different countries. Hence, generalization of some facts and findings of the study could limit to the specific geopolitical interests of major powers and the influence of emerging regional powers in the Horn of Africa related with the interactions create security risks and opportunities.

In the several stages of this research, the researcher has faced different kinds of problems. This kind of issues is highly dependent on different documents. Therefore, the researcher can make perfect knowledge how to collect the data from different documents, internet sources, books and other related materials. In this study, the researcher had to depend on several books, journals and web contents to know about the place and the socio-political aspects of the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The research paper has five chapters. The first chapter deals with research introduction including background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and limitation of the study. In the second chapter review of related literature is presented in a detailed manner. In the third chapter research methods and procedures is described in detail. In the fourth chapter findings and discussions is presented. In the fifth chapter summary, conclusion, and recommendation will be described in detail. The research also contains references and appendices at the end of the research.

Chapter Two □ Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Frame Work

The geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa is complex, shaped by a mix of historical legacies, regional dynamics, geopolitical rivalries and global interests. A significant body of literature has explored the interaction of these factors, examining the region's internal conflicts, external interventions, and strategic importance in the international system. In this section, studies and articles related to this study and previously written are included as follows.

In the literature review; The Superpower Geostrategic Competitions in the Horn of Africa, the new superpower geo-strategic competition in the Horn of Africa, The Competition for Access to Ports and Military Bases and Heightening Geopolitical Rivalries in the Horn of Africa, Geopolitics of Military Bases in the Horn of Africa, Geopolitical Rivalries and External Influences will be provided. In addition to; Historical Context (Back ground of the Horn of Africa Region; the Colonial Legacy, Regional Issues), the Horn of Africa's Strategic Importance and Superpower Interference, Challenges and Opportunities of Regional Geopolitical Dynamics for Ethiopia will also be defined.

2.1.1 The Superpower Geostrategic Competitions in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa region is of great geostrategic and geo-economics importance. The region is home to some of the world's busiest shipping lanes, which connect Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. It is strategically located at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, making it a critical gateway for trade between Asia, Europe, and Africa (Vertin Z., 2019).

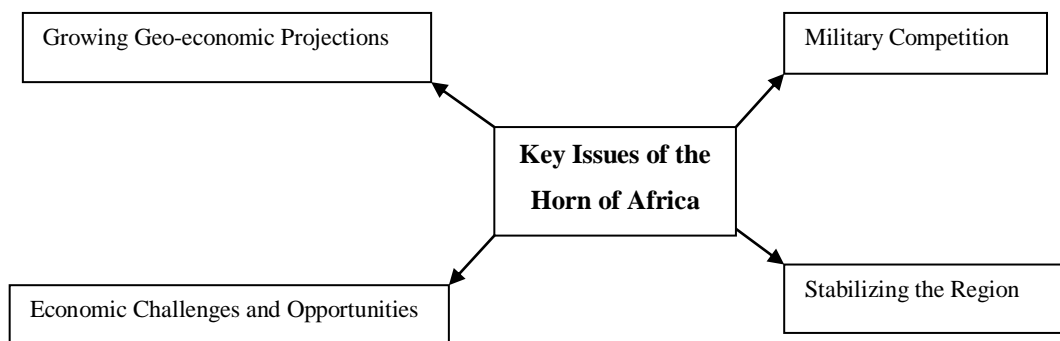
The region has been a site of intense geopolitical competition for centuries. In recent years, the region has become a battleground for regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Egypt (Mesfin, 2016). The Red Sea and Horn of Africa regions are also home to several fragile states that are vulnerable to conflict and instability. The region is a vital area for global trade and security. It has been facing several geostrategic and geo-economics issues that have far-reaching implications. The following are some of the key issues in the region:

- **Growing Geo-economic Projections:** The region is becoming increasingly important in global geopolitics due to its strategic location. Several countries in the broader Gulf

region and external powers are extending their influence to the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. This has led to growing geo-economic projections, military rivalries, and the risk of confrontation between key regional players and international actors (Vertin Z., 2019).

- **Military Competition:** The region has become a site of military competition between regional and international powers. Several countries have established military bases in the region, including China, France, Italy, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United States. This has led to concerns about the militarization of the region (Aidi, 2020).
- **Economic Challenges and Opportunities:** The Horn of Africa is one of the poorest regions in the world. However, it has significant economic potential due to its strategic location. The region is home to several ports that are critical for global trade. However, several factors, such as political instability, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure, have hindered economic growth in the region (Narbone and Widdershoven, 2021).
- **Stabilizing the Region:** The Horn of Africa region is facing several challenges that require regional cooperation to address. These challenges include terrorism, piracy, human trafficking, and illegal fishing. Several initiatives have been launched to promote regional cooperation in the region. (Surafel G., 2024).

Figure 2. Some of the Key Issues of the Horn of Africa



2.1.2 The New Superpower geo-strategic competition in the Horn of Africa

The new superpower rivalry in the Horn of Africa is a complex issue that involves several global and regional powers. This competition is driven by the strategic importance of the region, which serves as a critical passage for global trade and military operations. The new superpower competition for ports and military bases in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa is a manifestation of

the changing geopolitical landscape. The Horn of Africa has become a stage for global power rivalry. Superpowers like the United States, China, and Russia, along with emerging regional powers such as Turkey, the UAE, Qatar and Egypt have shown increased interest in this region. They are establishing military bases, investing in infrastructure projects, and forging alliances with local governments (Surafel G., 2024).

For instance, China has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti. The United States also has a military base in Djibouti, which is used for counter-terrorism operations in Yemen and Somalia. Russia has been negotiating with Sudan to establish a naval base on the Red Sea coast. These activities are not just about military presence. They are also about gaining economic influence. China's Belt and Road Initiative includes several infrastructure projects in this region (Ibid).

2.1.3 The Competition for Access to Ports and Military Bases and Heightening Geopolitical Rivalries in the Horn of Africa

The new superpower competition for ports and military bases in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa is a manifestation of the changing geopolitical landscape. This competition is driven by the strategic importance of the region, which serves as a critical passage for global trade and military operations. Countries such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey are seeking to expand their influence in the Horn of Africa. They are doing so through commercial ports and military outposts on Africa's Red Sea coast.

Moreover, great powers like China, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States have established their presence at the junction of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. India and Saudi Arabia have also signaling interest in establishing bases in Djibouti, while Russia has shown interest in having its own strategic presence in the Horn (Michael H., 2022).

This surge in political, economic, and strategic engagement across the Red Sea is challenging old assumptions and erasing old boundaries. However, it's important to note that this new engagement from outside powers presents both challenges and opportunities for the fragile African states on the western shores of the Red Sea. This new superpower competition is reshaping the geopolitical dynamics in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa regions. It's a complex

issue with potential implications for regional stability, economic development, and international relations.

2.1.4 Geopolitics of Military Bases in the Horn of Africa

A foreign military base (FMB) is a location that houses a specific number of armed forces and is beyond the territorial control of a sovereign state. It has military operations, organized institutions, and infrastructure. In terms of strategy, it's crucial for the projection of military might in international relations, a launch pad for military operations and interventions, the protection of foreign interests, the demonstration of soft power, and the expansion of political influence abroad. The Horn of Africa's regional security complex is increasingly being influenced by foreign powers, according to a primary observation of the region's security environment since the turn of the twenty-first century. This involvement involves a variety of means, mechanisms, and methods, including but not limited to establishing military bases, installations, programs, and money (Surafel G., 2023).

Ten foreign military bases, many of which are in Djibouti, have already been created in the Horn of Africa by various powers according to their hierarchical levels. As a result, the powers are organized as follows based on the classification from Buzan and Waever (2003; also see Surafel G.2023). They are military bases operated by regional powers, superpowers, and great powers, respectively. Each of them is covered in detail below. The Red Sea and the Horn of Africa have seen a significant increase in foreign military installations, reflecting the strategic importance of these regions. Here's a breakdown by regional, global, and superpowers.

- **Military Bases by Regional Powers:** Regional powers are look like great with high competence in their regions, but do not register much in a wide-ranging way at the world stage (Buzan & Waever, 2003). In line with this, the security engagement of Middle Eastern and Gulf States in the Horn of Africa has undergone a steady evolution over the past decade (Buzan & Waever, 2003). The Horn Africa and the Middle East are two regions but highly interconnected. The central part of these two regions, the Red Sea, is the main connector of the sub-regions. The Gulf States increased presence in the Horn of Africa Initially; the main driver of the expansion was the security contest between Iran and the GCC states.

In the Horn of Africa not only the Gulf States, Egypt, Turkey and Qatar also compete in building military bases. As in the eastern Mediterranean, the export of Middle Eastern rivalries into the Horn of Africa with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Egypt contesting Turkey and Qatar for dominance. The UAE staged operations in Yemen out of a base in Eritrea and reportedly pursued building another in Somaliland. Saudi Arabia has reportedly sought a base in Djibouti and has been active diplomatically, going so far as to convene the Red Sea Forum in 2018 in an effort to position itself as the center of gravity in a region that includes the volatile Horn of Africa. Meanwhile, the diplomatic split within the Gulf Cooperation Council was exported to the Horn, as Turkey and Qatar bolstered their presence in Somalia, which hosts Turkey's largest overseas military facility (Michael H., 2022). Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UAE and Qatar have increased their engagement in the Horn of Africa significantly in recent years for a host of economic, political and geostrategic reasons. The Middle Eastern and Gulf states have pursued economic statecraft using strategic economic investments to achieve their political, military and economic aims in the region.

The UAE has established a naval base in Assab, Eritrea. It also operates the ports of Berbera and Bosaso in the autonomous region of Punt land and the unrecognized Republic of Somaliland. Saudi Arabia has an agreement with Djibouti to build its first overseas base in the country. Qatar is working to establish itself in southern Somalia. Turkey hosts its largest overseas military base in Somalia, and Turkish companies run Mogadishu's port and airport (Vertin Z., 2020).

- **Military Bases by Great Powers:** Great powers are in between super and regional powers mostly which are in the order of global power and with some degree of military capability task. During the Cold War, it was held by China, Germany, and Japan, with Britain and France coming increasingly into doubt. After the Cold War it was held by Britain, France, Germany-EU, Japan, China, and India is knocking loudly on the door.
- **Military Bases by Super Powers:** Those countries which are categorized as super powers, according to Buzan and Waever possess, first class military political proficiencies as well as economic strengthens to back such capabilities. In the post-WWII, two countries, the US and Soviet Russia remained superpowers whereas the U.S.

becomes the only superpower following the end of the Cold War (Buzan & Waeber, 2003).

On the other hand, the United States has maintained a significant military footprint in the Red Sea region for several decades. In the Horn of Africa, its military presence has grown markedly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, largely out of a concern for violent extremist groups based in Somalia. Its footprint in the Arab Red Sea littoral states of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen as well as in the adjacent Persian Gulf has fluctuated in this period based on the intensity of US engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan. These foreign military installations reflect a myriad of power structures, political opportunism, and financial deals—the outcome of the complex regional dynamics of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. The presence of these bases provides these countries with strategic advantages and allows them to exert influence over vital trade routes (Surafel G., 2024).

2.1.5 Geopolitical Rivalries and External Influences

External actors have been increasingly involved in the Horn of Africa, driven by both economic and strategic interests. The United States, China, and the Gulf States have all established a presence in the region, with varying degrees of involvement in the region's political and security affairs.

The U.S has historically seen the Horn of Africa primarily through the lens of counterterrorism, particularly with regard to the Somali-based terrorist group al-Shabaab. In addition to security concerns, the U.S has also been involved in supporting peace building initiatives and humanitarian aid, with mixed results. However, U.S. policy has often been criticized for its failure to address the region's deeper political and economic issues, and its reliance on military interventions has at times contributed to the perpetuation of conflict rather than its resolution.

On the other hand; China's growing influence in the Horn of Africa, particularly through investments linked to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has been the subject of several studies. China has strategically positioned itself as a key economic partner for countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. Through infrastructure projects, loans, and military installations, China has become a major geopolitical player in the region. This economic diplomacy has allowed China to

exert significant influence, as seen in its establishment of a military base in Djibouti, a move that has raised concerns among Western powers about China's expanding military footprint on the African continent (Aschale A., 2024).

The Gulf States particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have also intensified their involvement in the Horn of Africa in recent years, primarily through military engagements, humanitarian aid, and economic investments. The Gulf States have played a dual role in the region: they are engaged in proxy wars, such as their involvement in the Yemen conflict, which directly affects Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti, while also attempting to secure critical ports along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden for strategic reasons. These states have sought to influence local politics, with the UAE, for example, developing close ties with the Somali federal government and providing financial support to Ethiopia's military operations in Somalia.

2.2 Historical Context (Back ground of the Horn of Africa Region)

2.2.1 The Colonial Legacy

The seeds of the current conflicts in the Horn of Africa to a large extent go back to the European colonial experience in that region, even though most of the conflicts' root causes pre-date this experience. Indeed, at the end of the 19th century and after the construction of the Suez Canal, the European colonial powers partitioned the previously free constituent parts of the Horn of Africa, joining unrelated areas and peoples into territorial units (Berouk M., 2013).

The states of the Horn of Africa took advantage of every local tension or conflict to support rebel movements in neighboring states. Sponsoring subversive activities had simply become a customary tool poised to destabilize and endanger the security of another state, in what some observers called the time-honored principle of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' extending throughout the Horn of Africa. This enhanced inter-state rivalries, mutual suspicion and the development of an eye-for-an-eye mentality. One example is the long and bloody game of tit-for-tat that bedeviled relations between Ethiopia and Sudan for over four decades. In any case, Sudan's support for Ethiopian rebel movements was the reason why the Sudan People's Liberation Army enjoyed strong and sustained support from the post-1974 Ethiopian regime (Ibid).

As Berouk (2013) explained other examples abound in the Horn of Africa in which pursuing regional foreign policy through proxy forces in neighboring countries has been the normal pattern of relations for decades. This activity has proved persistent over time and has survived radical political reconfigurations, including changes of regime. The Christian fundamentalist Lord's Resistance Army received support from Islamist Sudan in retaliation for Uganda's support for the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Sudan's support for the Eritrean Islamic Jihad invited Eritrean support for the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the National Democratic Alliance, which was even allowed to occupy the Sudanese embassy premises in Asmara. It has to be pointed out that Eritrea has become a recklessly belligerent bully especially adept at pursuing a low-cost strategy of supporting rebel movements against Sudan and Ethiopia as well as in Somalia. Many analysts describe Eritrea's support for the Somali Islamist movements – despite facing its own Islamist movement – as a proxy war that is largely opportunistic, as it cuts across ideological lines (Berouk M., 2013).

2.2.2 Regional Issues

The Horn of Africa States region continued to suffer from lack of peace and security for many years and hence lack of development, although it appears to have recovered from the old false socialist socio-economic and political infrastructures of the past. Private entrepreneurship seems to be winning and taking shape in the region and should hopefully come to fruition in the long run, if peace and stability is assured (Dr. Suleiman W., 2023).

The region, although it was getting closer together in the recent past, appears to have drifted apart in the first half of 2023 and, in the main because the Somali Federal Government, would seem to have chosen a different path than was previously agreed upon. It appears to be seeking solace and support from Egypt and Kenya, which are both exploiters of Somalia and its people and the region. It has pursued strongly to join the EAC, a region with which Somalis, in general, share little except for, perhaps, a few traders, who appear to have offices and businesses in some of the east African countries and mostly in Kenya. They should not be allowed to lead the foreign relations of the country. Old rivalries which should have been extinguished appear to have been rekindled and this does not pose well for the region (Ibid).

2.3 The Horn of Africa's Strategic Importance and Superpower Interference

The Horn of Africa has never acquired a strategic importance for its raw materials or for any other continental advantage. However, the region has always been allotted a relatively important strategic value owing to its proximity to the Red Sea, which is an important and expeditious route of international trade and communications between Europe, the Middle East and the Far East, as well as the navigation route through which oil is transported from the Persian Gulf (in which the largest oil deposits of the world are located) to consumers in North America and Europe. Hence, the states of the Horn of Africa were forced into economic, political and military dependence on either one of the two superpowers of the Cold War – the US and the Soviet Union. Competing to establish positions of influence and military advantage in the strategically significant regions of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the two superpowers supported client states in the adjacent Horn of Africa primarily by injecting military aid, and undermined inimical states by supporting rebel movements and weaving unfriendly alliances and counter-alliances (Berouk M., 2013).

The United States of America is one of the most powerful countries in the world and its influence throughout the world cannot be denied. In fact, the United States has known different political environments when it comes to its foreign affairs since World War II and during the Cold War to the present day. Previously, the United States of America did not pay attention to Africa and used to associate Africa with negativity. Afterwards, very briefly at the beginning of the Cold War, the U.S. started to get interested in Africa, especially the Horn of Africa. The United States has established naval and air facilities in Africa in order to ensure free and secure flow of Persian Gulf and Southern African fuel and non-fuel minerals to the industrial West. Additionally, the end of colonialism left many African States politically unstable, which made the region fit for great-power rivalry. The region drew the attention of American for several reasons (Rachid, 2018).

The Horn of Africa is located in a strategic place, so the U.S. was interested in intervening in this area during the Cold War. The Horn of Africa, as defined by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), stretches over an area of 5.2 million square kilometers that comprises the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The

America involvement in those countries is to enhance their economic and security. Basically, the United States' policy in the Horn of African States provides more emphasis on its national rather than for international laws and mutual benefit (Ibid).

Furthermore, the U.S. involvement in the Horn of Africa is proof of the importance of the region not only for its potential resources but also for all the superpowers such as the EU and China which have military bases in order to protect their national objectives. The United States of America's foreign policymakers have implemented strategies to establish strong and lasting relations with each state in the region so that in return, the U.S. will have the opportunity to keep its interest in the region. The United States gives priority to protecting the trade that crosses the sea of Bab el Mandab to secure these goods composed of gas, oil and petrol but also to fight against piracy that becomes an obstacle to the international trade which crosses the Red Sea (Rachid, 2018).

Given the significance of this region on a global scale, it should come as no surprise that China has also identified the Horn of Africa as a focal point for significant economic, political, and military growth opportunities, with the obvious objective being to secure a foothold in East Africa, resulting in increased control and the strategic advantages therein. As a result, China has purchased or supported several high-profile construction projects in Ethiopia, such as a light rail and the new headquarters of the African Union. The Ethiopian government joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2018 and sees itself as crucial to Chinese interests in East Africa. Similarly, Beijing sees Ethiopia as a nucleus for the Belt and Road Initiative and thus has heavily invested in it to earn its goodwill (Maj R., 2021).

Beijing has sought to ensure its military foothold in Djibouti. On August 2017, China officially opened its support base just a few miles from Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. The base's stated primary mission is to protect Chinese commerce in the Gulf of Aden—along with intelligence collection, logistical support, and counter terrorism operations. Its existence also represents a significant augmentation in China's power projection capabilities. Perhaps more importantly to the Chinese is the influence that accompanies such a base. As a component of improving Sino-Djiboutian relations, China has provided 40 percent of the funding for infrastructure and loaned Djibouti \$1 billion for investment projects. Such engagement is likely an indication of things to

come, with Djibouti serving as only one piece of China's much larger Belt and Road Initiative, much of which is extensively focused on the nations of East Africa (Ibid).

To maintain security and stability in the strategically vital region of the Horn of Africa, the United States must increase its engagement with the nations therein. The same is true for any goals of providing a counterbalance to Chinese influence. While it can be tempting to set the main objective of any Africa strategy as a direct counter to China, it should instead be dedicated to building and strengthening mutually advantageous alliances and partnerships within the continent. Again, from the National Defense Strategy Summary: "By working together with allies and partners we amass the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of our interests, maintaining favorable balances of power that deter aggression and support the stability that generates economic growth." By focusing on increasing its diplomatic, economic, and military engagement with the countries of the Horn of Africa and ensuring those relationships remain mutually beneficial, the United States can continue to be both a bulwark of stability and, by extension, counter Chinese influence in the Horn of Africa.

Russia wishes to regulate its involvement in the resolution of the Horn of Africa's numerous security challenges, Moscow is likely to remain in the "engaged opportunist" role, which has defined its post-2008 presence in the region. Despite the unlikelihood of a radical overhaul in Russian policy towards the Horn of Africa, Moscow's strategy towards the region could be impacted by an intensification of tensions between Russia and Western powers (principally France and the United States), as well as reverberations from the expansion of Russia's influence in the Middle East.

In addition to potential frictions between Russia, France, and the United States, the trajectory of Russian influence in the Horn of Africa could be impacted by Moscow's actions in the Middle East. Since March 2019, Russia has established close ties with the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a United Arab Emirates-aligned south Yemeni separatist group, and the STC's recent declaration of self-rule in southern Yemen could give Moscow a geopolitical foothold in Aden. Closer ties between Russia and an autonomous southern Yemen would allow Moscow to project influence on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and reciprocally strengthen its links with the Horn of Africa (Samuel, 2020).

On a contrasting note, Russia's engagement with Ethiopia could become more circumspect if tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Grand Renaissance Dam persist, as Cairo is an increasingly important partner for Russia in Libya and Syria and a significant purchaser of Russian weaponry. The Horn of Africa continues to be a secondary priority for Russia's relationships with Egypt, Turkey, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and Moscow will likely reduce its involvement in the Horn of Africa if its actions infringe on the objectives of any of these partners (Ibid).

Although Russia's influence in the Horn of Africa has grown considerably since 2008, Moscow's role in the region remains that of an "engaged opportunist," as it eschews binding alliances or security commitments in the region. Russia's chief short-term priorities are to expand its array of arms exports in the region and deepen its military cooperation with Ethiopia. In the long term, Russia views Eritrea's Red Sea coast as a potential location for a military base or logistics center. With respect to foreign powers, Russia largely views China as a constructive force, sees France as a competitor, and wishes to act as a spoiler to U.S. ambitions in the region, but modalities exist in Moscow's perspectives on these three great powers. Ultimately, the trajectory of Russian influence in the Horn of Africa will be significantly impacted by its ability to devote resources towards establishing a foothold on the Red Sea and to navigate constraints laid out by its Middle Eastern partners.

2.4 Challenges and Opportunities of Regional Geopolitical Dynamics for Ethiopia

Ethiopia is the pivot of the Horn of Africa region. Geopolitical developments in the region affect the strategic aspirations of the country in different ways. In this regard, the contemporary geopolitical dynamics in the Horn region has both opportunities as well as risks for Ethiopia. On the good side, the new dynamics provides Ethiopia the opportunity of alternative port access, supporting naval force development, investments in infrastructures, access to foreign hard currency, and prospects of enhanced regional integration. Besides, the geopolitical dynamics in the Horn has challenges to Ethiopia which includes alienating neighbors, threatening sovereignty, escalating tensions, jeopardizing religious coexistence, and maintenance of security and sustainability.

Being a landlocked country, the need to have outlets to sea has been the major strategic interests of Ethiopia since 1991. After the end of Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998-2000, Ethiopia's import and export trade has been exclusively dependent on Djibouti. 95% of Ethiopia's external trade is conducted through the port of Djibouti and Ethiopia pays around \$1.5 and \$2 billion annually for port services (Ethiopia Observer, 2018). The new regional bloc of HOAC and UAE engagement in the Horn provides alternative port access in Eritrea and Somalia. As indicated before, Ethiopia owns 19% of the Berbera port in Somaliland together with UAE's DP World. Therefore, there is a good opportunity in terms of alternative port access to Ethiopia.

Markowitz and Fariss (2018) argued that "states are likely to ramp up the development of their naval capabilities to counter an increasingly threatening geopolitical environment". For this end, the Ethiopian military sent 1,000 naval officers to Russia in December 2019 for training with the goal of strengthening its naval capabilities off the coast of Djibouti. This shows that the geopolitical dynamics in the Horn region with Superpower rivalry is a good opportunity which has to be utilized in order to develop Ethiopian navy.

The other benefit of contemporary geopolitical dynamics for Ethiopia has been economic opportunities in terms of infrastructure investments, access to hard currency, aid and debt relieves from competing international and regional powers. Chinese investments in infrastructure such as new airport, African Union Headquarter, ring roads and Ethio-Djibouti railway are a good welcome for Ethiopia. Finally, the construction of Ethio-Djibouti railway with the support of China and the new regional alignments of HOAC proved to be a key ingredient for regional integration in the Horn of Africa.

The geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa also presents challenges to Ethiopia. The new regional bloc of HOAC risks losing and alienating of neighbors which are strategically important to Ethiopia. The HOAC alienates regional neighbors especially Djibouti and Kenya who need to face the loss of strategic influence in the region. The other challenge is that the port development game complicates the question of sovereignty between de-facto state of Somaliland and the state of Somalia. Somalia's federal government in Mogadishu angry protests Berbera Port deals by UAE and Somaliland as it is presumed as violations of sovereignty of Somalia (Vertin Z. 2019).

Additionally, further increases polarization and volatility in the Horn region which affects the peace and security of Ethiopia. Particularly, the Nile Rivalry and military alignment of Egypt and Sudan led to escalation of the tensions with Ethiopia and, considering internal conflict dynamics and border disputes, this has potentials for proxy wars as well as border war between Ethiopia and Sudan. The engagement of Gulf States may jeopardize the prevailing religious coexistence in Ethiopia. This is due to the fact that Some Middle Eastern countries besides having economic interests also have religious motivations (Yirga A., 2021).

The other challenge has to do with maintenance of security and sustainability. The engagement of foreign powers with massive investments in Ethiopia requires stable and safe environment. Moreover, the investments have to be taken in to consideration of economic needs and potentials of future generations. In this regard, ensuring peace and stability in the context of wide range of conflicts on the one hand and maintaining sustainable development which takes note of the future on the other hand have been the challenge for Ethiopia which resulted from geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa (Ibid).

Chapter Three □ Research Methods and Procedures

3.1. Introduction

This part of research is like a road map how researcher goes through to conduct the study by focusing on research methodology, research method, research design, and area of study. The data sources and data collection method are explained and justification provided. The data analysis procedure and ethical considerations are explained.

3.2 Research Methodology

Schwardt (2007) defines research methodology as a theory of how an inquiry should proceed. It involves analysis of the assumptions, principles and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry. According to Schwardt (2007), Creswell and Tashakkori (2007), methodologies explicate and define the kinds of problems that are worth investigating; what constitutes a researchable problem; testable hypotheses; how to frame a problem in such a way that it can be investigated using particular designs and procedures; and how to select and develop appropriate means of collecting data.

Accordingly, this research has been organized in order to discuss the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. Here the researcher has collected information from different documents. Final findings are based on the collected information and their analysis. This chapter will help to develop effective methods and techniques in order to analyze the geopolitical interests of major powers and to examine the influence of emerging regional powers in the Horn of Africa. This can be related with the assessment of how these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia's national security.

The methodology used in this study is qualitative method. Analytically, the information gathered from secondary sources is discussed. Books, documents and internet sources have helped to collect huge and enough amounts of data. Based on this; the researcher doesn't use the primary source of data. The researcher collected enough and sufficient information from the different documents such as internet sources, publications like books, journal articles and newspaper articles. As part of this study, various pertinent materials related to the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa have been included. Therefore, primary sources of data are not included in this study.

3.3 Research Method

There are a number of different research methods available and one should be selected which is most likely to meet the objective of the research and gather the correct type of information. Research methods should be seen as complementing and supporting each other. Methods used to conduct a research is basically includes the procedures of data collection and the result of analyzing the collected data. Here the topic is based on the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. In this research secondary data will be obtained from the published and unpublished books, magazines, and journals on regional geopolitics. Other relevant materials from the library as well as internet will also be taken as part of the secondary data.

Therefore, this research has attempted to identify and critically analyze the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. By collecting secondary data from different reliable and verifiable sources, the data was analyzed using the qualitative method of research.

3.4 Research Design

Leedy (1997) defines research design as a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data. MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) define it as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s). They further indicate that the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible. Research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research strategy. It is a comprehensive plan for data collection.

In this research qualitative data is frequently highly desirable to answer specific research questions testing specific hypothesis, thought that, the research converse qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of research problem of the study. It is useful to capture the best of qualitative data. Based on the nature of the study the researcher has used qualitative method in order to collect considerable amount of data. Different data and historical facts are analyzed qualitatively. The researcher has used the exploratory form of research design and analytical approach in that it describes, interprets and analyzes the research problems.

The study entailed a case study employing an exploratory to analyze the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. Explorative research design gave the researcher an opportunity for flexibility in instances where there are new insights and new data steering in different directions, guiding the emerging themes.

3.5 Area of Study

The research has focused on the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa. This is analyzed related with the impact of Ethiopia's national security. Therefore; the research has attempted to analyze the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China and Russia) in the Horn of Africa and to examine the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt). It also assess these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia.

3.6 Data Sources and Data Collection Method

The data is collected from secondary sources. The researcher has collected accurate and sufficient data using the secondary sources such as books, journal articles, internet sources and official documents. Also, the study used scholarly literature, both published and unpublished from sources such as articles, books, journals, internet, and government speeches on the official website.

Here the researcher has applied the secondary method to collect data for the research. At the initial stage, various secondary sources such as books, journals and websites regarding this current topic have helped the researcher to understand the proper method, design and approach should be chosen to conduct the research. Finally, the researcher has chosen the secondary data collection procedure to conduct this research.

After getting basic knowledge about the procedure about the research methodology, the researcher has taken help from several books and journals about the problems of the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact for Ethiopia's national security.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is the most important part of a research because it determines the final findings from the collected data. Qualitative and Quantitative both are equally popular and important data analysis research method (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). The quantitative method is mainly

based on practical numeric data that finally provides statistical results. This above topic is much more concerned with the social and political atmosphere and dilemma regarding the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact for Ethiopia's national security. Therefore, numeric data do not have a big function here.

So, this research requires a lot of information about the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact for Ethiopia's national security. After that Qualitative method has helped to deal with this huge amount of data. Therefore, the qualitative method has been chosen for this current research. At the very initial stage of qualitative data analysis, the researcher must need to get a proper concept of the data and their key points. In the qualitative method, the researcher gets the opportunity to analyze a large amount of data in the easier way.

As explained above, the researcher has collected documents such as books, journal articles, internet sources and official documents. In addition to this the researcher has collected data related to geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa related with their impact for Ethiopia's national security. Based on this the researcher has collected new and current information related the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact for the national security of Ethiopia. The researcher mostly has used documents to analyze the study. It is clear that there are many documents written about the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia. So; the researcher has used former and later information especially the geopolitical rivalries it the Horn of Africa related with the opportunities and security challenges for Ethiopia.

In this part qualitative type of research has been implemented. The process of data analysis involves making sense related the research objective. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting analysis, moving deeper and deeper in to understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed all ethical and moral issues while conducting this research, even though this thesis contains no personal interviews or any other form of human subject and data collection that may have implications on officials or other employees. This paper sheds light on ethical considerations that must be taken into account when conducting qualitative research. Ethics revolve around the responsibilities of the researcher towards his audience, society and

academic communities. In this study the ethical considerations that generally need to promote in qualitative research when the researcher is collecting and analyzing data. These include ethics of respect and conflict of interest, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, trustworthiness of research.

Additionally, the researcher applies the following ethical considerations. These are honesty, objectivity, and integrity in data collection, analyses, reporting, and all other aspects of research. Critically and carefully examining work, keeping good records, and transparently sharing data, results, and resources.

Chapter Four □ Findings and Discussions

Introduction

The researcher has collected data from different secondary sources and the data has been analyzed through qualitative method. Moreover, the researcher has tried to collect information about the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. At the initial stage of the research, particular goals and questions were manifested in chapter one and the entire research work has been done in order to achieve those goals and arrive at cogent and relevant answers. This chapter will provide the results the researcher has gleaned from the research and the knowledge extracted from the collected data.

This chapter discusses the results of the study under the following headings: the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China, Russia) in the Horn of Africa, the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt), the interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia's national security. This part was analyzed and organized in relation to the objectives of the study.

4.1 The Geopolitical Interests of Major Powers (US, China, Russia) in the HOA

The researcher put the strategy, goal and focus areas of the geopolitical interests of the major powers (US, China and Russia) before looking each other in the following table.

Table 4.1 Strategy, goal and focus areas of UN, China and Russia in the HOA

Country	Strategy	Goal	Focus area
United States	Emphasizes infrastructure investment, economic development, and debt-driven partnerships under the Belt and Road Initiative	Maintain regional security, counter extremism, and limit Chinese and Russian influence	Ethiopia and Somalia, often navigating complex local conflicts
China	Emphasizes infrastructure investment, economic development, and debt-driven partnerships under the Belt and Road Initiative	Secure strategic logistics, trade routes, and resources	Operates a naval base in Djibouti and provides logistical backing for peacekeeping operations, with increasing focus on security cooperation and technology
Russia	Focuses on security assistance, military cooperation, and arms sales to secure influence	Re-establish a foothold in the Red Sea and counteract Western influence	Exploring naval presence, particularly in Sudan, and engaging with Eritrea

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As it can be seen in table 4.1; the major powers geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa revolve around securing strategic maritime routes, countering rival influence, and accessing economic opportunities like critical minerals, energy, and infrastructure development. The region has become a key arena for global power competition due to its location along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden shipping lanes. The Horn of Africa has become an intensely contested strategic region with 15 foreign military bases, where the US, China, and Russia vie for influence. The U.S. focuses on counter-terrorism from Djibouti, while China pursues economic and infrastructural influence, and Russia seeks strategic, security-based partnerships, with 67% of foreign bases within 500 km of Ethiopia.

4.1.1 The Basic Interests of United States in the HOA

There has been a lot of talk about where the situation in the HOA is heading. A significant shift in the alignment of political power appears to be taking place. The region is witnessing significant change. This is also part of the geopolitical conflict. The region, Which is the focus of world's highest political and economic activity and the key promoter of the interests of powerful countries, is the center of intractable poverty and incessant civil conflict, a transit point for

human migration, and a subcontinent that continues to be a victim of drought. Where ever the world power America goes, it advances its own interests ahead of its rivals and domestic interests. This is the basis of the activities and policy designing in the Horn of Africa.

Table 4. 2Key aspects of US engagement in the Horn of Africa

1	Security and Counterterrorism	A primary focus is combating extremist groups like Al-Shabaab, using military assets and partnerships, particularly with Ethiopia
2	Strategic Location	The Horn of Africa is crucial for Red Sea security, with Camp Lemonier in Djibouti serving as a major base
3	Economic Strategy	The US seeks investment opportunities in energy and minerals, aiming for trade growth and reduced reliance on foreign aid, shifting towards partnerships with market-opening nations
4	Diplomacy	The US engages diplomatically to prevent conflicts, notably in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan, supporting regional peace efforts
5	Policy Shift	A new US strategy prioritizes investment and trade over past aid-heavy approaches, focusing on strategic partnerships
6	Ethiopia's Role	Ethiopia is seen as a key partner due to its regional influence, but maintains a non-aligned stance between the US and China
7	Geopolitical Competition	The US competes with China, Gulf States, and Turkey for influence in the region, raising concerns about losing strategic ground if engagement falters
8	Balancing Act	The US must balance security interests with addressing deep-seated issues of poverty and underdevelopment, which fuel instability, notes this UCLA analysis

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

The above table depicted that; the U.S approach is primarily centered on security, counter-terrorism, and a recent shift toward trade and investment over traditional aid. The U.S maintains a significant military presence, notably its base in Djibouti, to counter threats from groups like al-Shabab in Somalia and ensure stability in vital transportation routes. Current policy emphasizes working with regional partners to carry the primary security burden. A key objective is to counter the growing influence of China and Russia in the region, which includes exploring new strategic positions, such as the port of Berbera in Somaliland. The current U.S. strategy

signals a shift from an aid-centric model to one focused on mutually beneficial trade and investment, especially in energy and critical minerals, and building resilient supply chains.

The study also analyzes the 2025 US strategy signals shift in engagement with Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is considered a country of strategic importance in USA national security and foreign policy. Beyond Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region are seen through the American strategic lens. The 2025 US National Security Strategy outlines a shift in Washington's approach to Africa, emphasizing targeted partnerships including Ethiopia and conflict prevention initiatives in the wider Horn of Africa. The document, issued by the White House and signed by President Donald Trump, proposes leveraging new diplomatic, economic, and security tools to advance U.S interests on the continent. It underscores the need to move beyond decades of aid centered relations toward trade and investment-driven engagement.

The strategy identifies opportunities to help address active conflicts, such as those between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as well as Sudan. It also cites the need to prevent emerging disputes in the Horn of Africa, naming Ethiopia's strained relationships with Somalia and Eritrea. Tensions have escalated in recent months as landlocked Ethiopia seeks access to the Red Sea, a move strongly opposed by neighboring governments and Egypt. The strategy also warns of persistent threats from Islamist militant groups but insists the United States must avoid "long-term American presence or commitments" on the continent. "To ensure that America remains the world's strongest, richest, most powerful, and most successful country for decades to come, our country needs a coherent, focused strategy for how we interact with the world," it reads (Ashenafi E., 2025).

Blen M., (2025) suggested that, the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy marks a decisive shift in how Washington approaches Africa, and by extension the Horn of Africa. After decades of weaving development assistance, democratization programs, regional diplomacy, and soft-power influence into an integrated framework, the United States has moved toward a narrower, interest-driven posture. Africa is no longer presented as a space for broad partnership or institution-building, but as a region where the U.S. will engage selectively, commercially, and with limited appetite for large-scale commitments. For a continent where structural fragility and external competition are rising, this reorientation carries deep implications.

Ethiopia sits at the center of this strategic recalibration. As the demographic, geographic, and diplomatic anchor of the Horn, Ethiopia remains too large and too central to be ignored. Its waterways feed a dozen countries; its conflicts spill over borders; its alliances shape regional balances. Yet Ethiopia today is also internally fragile, fiscally strained, and still navigating the political and social aftershocks of conflict. The paradox is that Ethiopia's strategic weight has never been more important, while its internal resilience has rarely been more uncertain. At the same time, Ethiopia is undergoing its own foreign policy transformation: a clear and deliberate shift toward transactional diplomacy. Ethiopia now negotiates not as a values-aligned partner of the West but as a state seeking leverage, liquidity, and diplomatic flexibility in a competitive geopolitical marketplace.

This is where the interaction between Ethiopia's transactional turn and the U.S 2025 NSS becomes both consequential and delicate. On the surface, the two postures appear compatible. A U.S foreign policy that rewards strategic utility and clear deliverables can work with an Ethiopia seeking pragmatic arrangements rather than ideological alignment. But beneath this apparent symmetry lies a critical asymmetry. Ethiopia's transactional diplomacy is born from vulnerability; America's is born from selectivity. Ethiopia seeks partners because it must. The U.S. chooses partners because it can. This difference matters, because transactional relationships are inherently brittle. They reward strength, predictability, and clear returns. Ethiopia, despite the challenges it faces, is striving to offer such consistency (Blen M., 2025).

On the other hand; (Getahun T., 2025) examined the 2025 US national security strategy implications for US – Ethiopia strategic cooperation as follows. The newly released National Security Strategy signals a marked reorientation in U.S. engagement in Africa — moving away from an “aid-first, liberal-democracy promotion” model toward a more selective, partnership-based approach built around trade, investment, and conflict prevention. Under this framework, Ethiopia — with its strategic location in the Horn of Africa, its history as a U.S. partner in counterterrorism, and its current legitimate calls for sea-access— emerges as a natural candidate for deeper U.S. cooperation.

Firstly, Ethiopia has long contributed to regional efforts to counter militant Islamist movements such as Al-Shabaab. Secondly, Ethiopia sits at the crossroads of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea / Bab el-Mandeb corridor, and the complex web of states and conflicts that stretch from the Horn

to the Sahel and central Africa. The November 2025 Strategy names the Horn as a priority region for preventive diplomacy, given persistent tensions involving Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. The new U.S. strategy of shifting from an aid-centric relationship with African states to one oriented toward trade, investment, and mutual economic benefit is the third pillar where Ethiopia could position itself to benefit from it.

That said; the alignment between U.S. strategic interests and Ethiopia’s ambitions is not without tension or risk. The main challenges involve resolving internal instability, which the government is working on; addressing neighboring states’ misconceptions (particularly Eritrea’s) regarding Ethiopia’s sea access move, which requires careful navigation; and, following its success with the Food Independency Initiative, ensuring the government sticks to the new investment and growth paradigm by avoiding reversion to an aid-dependent mindset.

Overall, the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy for the HOA marks a turning point. By prioritizing conflict prevention, counterterrorism, investment, and trade — and by signaling selectivity rather than blanket engagement — Washington is opening a window for deeper, more strategic cooperation with states that can deliver. Ethiopia, because of its history, geography, ambitions, and potential, is among the strongest candidates to be such a partner.

The recent visit of General Dagvin Anderson underscores Washington’s serious intent: Ethiopia is no longer just part of a regional portfolio, but a focal point. By coupling diplomatic initiatives (such as sea access), internal stabilization, and economic reforms with its long-standing historical engagement, Addis Ababa could anchor a new model—one where the U.S.-Ethiopia relationship shifts from aid dependency toward shared security, mutual economic growth, and strategic cooperation.

Despite its rhetorical shift from aid to investment, the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy reveals a narrow and instrumental reading of Africa’s strategic importance—one that risks reproducing extractive and quasi-colonial patterns of engagement. The Strategy explicitly prioritizes Africa’s “abundant natural resources and latent economic potential” and identifies “the energy sector and critical mineral development” as areas offering “a good return on investment” for the United States, including nuclear energy, liquefied natural gas, and mineral extraction (U.S. National Security Strategy, 2025). While framed as mutually beneficial, this

emphasis sidelines Africa's structural governance, industrial, and institutional needs in favor of resource access and market opening for U.S. goods and services. By favoring "capable, reliable states committed to opening their markets," the Strategy risks reducing African partnerships to transactional arrangements that privilege external demand over endogenous development priorities, thereby reinforcing asymmetries long associated with colonial and post-colonial economic relations (Getahun T., 2025).

4.1.2 China's Interest in the Horn of Africa

China's interests are predominantly economic, driven by trade, investment, and infrastructure development as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while also expanding its political influence in the Global South. China is Africa's largest single country trading partner. Its investments are heavily concentrated in infrastructure (ports, railways, and power grids), mining, and energy sectors, aiming to secure access to natural resources and open new markets. Chinese companies built most of the region's 3G and 4G networks, and its focus remains on long-term economic development and connectivity, with strong bilateral relations with nations like Ethiopia and Eritrea. China has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti, primarily to secure its commercial shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean, although the region is not a primary military arena compared to its economic importance.

Based on this, the interest of China in the Horn of Africa is not easy for the United States. Powerful countries who see the countries of the Horn of Africa as their executors, who do not understand that they have absolute existence and are sovereign countries that can stand on par with western countries, are obsessed with the spirit the ruler ship and have lost a lot of things for them. The Chinese military camp opened by Chinese president Xi Jinping in 2017 has significant implications for the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa. The largest military base China has built outside its territory is located in Djibouti. Djibouti will receive 100 million dollar in rent payments from China. China has covered the cost of Djibouti's port with 590 million dollars. It is estimated that there are 10,000 Chinese soldiers at the base, although it has not been officially disclosed.

It is many times larger than the US military base in Djibouti Lumonier. The U.S opened the Lumonier military base in Djibouti in 2001, where about 2000 soldiers are stationed. The

Chinese military base is also home to two 124 – meter warships, the largest in the region, including fighter jet carriers and four nuclear submarines. It can be said that China currently has 80% of the share of joint trade with African countries. This also shows that the competition from America is getting stronger. Based on this competition, the westerners have opened a two – faced struggle against China. One is to fight China directly and the other is to fight China indirectly by twisting China's allies.

The United States is well aware that China has begun to transition from an economic power to a multi - faceted world power. The west has never slept to stop this progress. However, they could not stop this. China has made large – scale investments in the region, and the Belt and Road project, which connects Africa to the Middle East, is the biggest target. China has strategic ties to the Horn of Africa, including its military bases in Djibouti, where it oversees a key international shipping route. In terms of trade, Ethiopia has also lent a large amount of money to the landlocked country that depends on the port of Djibouti.

It is to be remembered that China and the countries of the Horn of Africa will hold a summit on peace, good governance and development issues for the first time on June 22, 2020 in Addis Ababa. The countries of the Horn of Africa, which are plagued by civil war and conflict, border and tribal disputes, have agreed to resolve their problems through dialogue and understanding. In their discussion, they said that the region should be peaceful and stable, to have comprehensive cooperation, to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries, and to prevent one country from interfering with the other, and to prevent terrorism, illegal trafficking of people and weapons.

The global geo - strategic interests of the superpowers America and China are increasing now. The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, including Ethiopia, are areas that have entered into significant geo – strategic focus by the US and China. In this sense, a close examination of US and Chinese foreign policy in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region from the perspective of long – term strategic perspective and current situation will help to explore national threats and opportunities.

On the other hand, Ethiopia values it's economic and diplomatic relations with China. In 2021, the bilateral trade volume will reach 2.66 billion dollars, of which China will import about 370

million dollars of goods from China. America and China's geo –strategic interests are one thing and the issue becomes a geo – political solution of “two elephants”, so that Ethiopia as a country is not threatened, it is necessary to build the ability to withstand geo –political pressure. It is required to make strategic investments in man power, infrastructure and technology to address threats arising from geo –political pressures.

China's interest in the Horn of Africa (HOA) centers on expanding its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through massive infrastructure investments (ports, railways, industrial parks), securing resources, enhancing its geopolitical influence, and gaining access to strategic maritime routes, viewing the region as a key economic and strategic hub to challenge Western dominance and foster a new global order with the "Beijing Consensus". This involves economic partnerships in Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea, alongside increasing security presence and diplomatic engagement to ensure stability for its growing economic footprint.

Table 4. 3the Key Interests and Motivations of China in the HOA

1	Economic Growth and Resources	Fueling China's domestic economy with natural resources and expanding markets for its goods and services
2	Infrastructure Development	Building crucial infrastructure, like the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, ports, and power projects, linking Africa to global trade routes
3	Strategic Location	Utilizing Djibouti's strategic port on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road for trade and military logistics
4	Geopolitical Influence	Positioning itself as a major global player, offering an alternative development model to challenge Western hegemony
5	Peace and Security	Increasing involvement in regional stability, partly to protect its vast investments and present it as a diplomatic actor

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

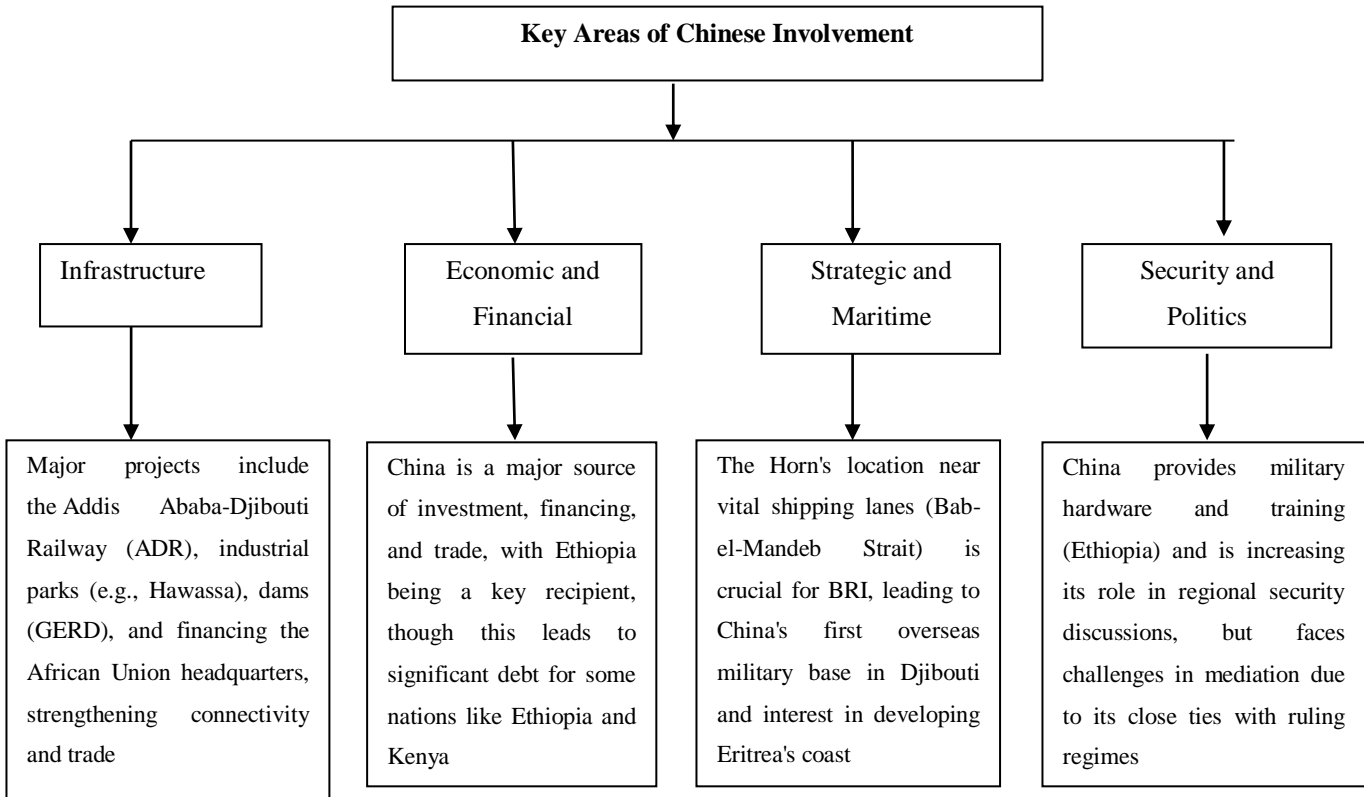
Table 4.3 shows that; fueling China's domestic economy with natural resources and expanding markets for its goods and services. Building crucial infrastructure, like the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, ports, and power projects, linking Africa to global trade routes. Utilizing Djibouti's strategic port on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road for trade and military logistics. Positioning itself as a major global player, offering an alternative development model to challenge Western hegemony. Increasing involvement in regional stability, partly to protect its vast investments and present it as a diplomatic actor.

The other is China - Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa relations. Ethiopia - Chinese relationship is unique in many ways. Chinese-Ethiopian cooperation is manifested at several levels. First, Ethiopia sees China as a source of economic assistance and investments as well as inexpensive technologies capable of lifting millions of small entrepreneurs out of poverty through access to farm machinery and transport.

China has also identified the Horn of Africa as a focal point for significant economic, political, and military growth opportunities, with the obvious objective being to secure a foothold in East Africa, resulting in increased control and the strategic advantages therein. Of all the countries in China's crosshairs, Ethiopia stands out as a country with immense political and economic potential. As a result, China has purchased or supported several high-profile construction projects in Ethiopia, such as a light rail and the new headquarters of the African Union. The Ethiopian government joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2018 and sees itself as crucial to Chinese interests in East Africa. Similarly, Beijing sees Ethiopia as a nucleus for the Belt and Road Initiative and thus has heavily invested in it to earn its goodwill (Maj R. 2021).

China's engagement in the Horn of Africa centers on strategic economic interests, significant infrastructure investment (like the Addis-Djibouti railway), resource acquisition, and securing maritime trade routes through its Djibouti military base, driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). While China offers substantial financial support and technology, particularly in Ethiopia, its role also involves growing security cooperation, though its ability to resolve regional conflicts remains debated (Ibid).

Figure 4.1 Key Areas of Chinese Involvement



Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As figure 4.1 shown that, the major projects include the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway (ADR), industrial parks (e.g., Hawassa), dams (GERD), and financing the African Union headquarters, strengthening connectivity and trade. China is a major source of investment, financing, and trade, with Ethiopia being a key recipient, though this leads to significant debt for some nations like Ethiopia and Kenya. The Horn's location near vital shipping lanes (Bab-el-Mandeb Strait) is crucial for BRI, leading to China's first overseas military base in Djibouti and interest in developing Eritrea's coast. China provides military hardware and training (Ethiopia) and is increasing its role in regional security discussions, but faces challenges in mediation due to its close ties with ruling regimes.

Table 4. 4 Motivations and Impact

1	Resource Security	Fueling China's own economic growth, though focus shifts from raw resources to high-tech industries
2	Geopolitical Influence	Expanding its global footprint and enhancing its strategic position in Africa
3	Market Access	Accessing African markets for Chinese goods and investments
4	Accelerated Development	Chinese capital and expertise speed up infrastructure and industrial growth
5	Debt Concerns	Large Chinese loans raise sustainability issues for some countries
6	Evolving Role	China is transitioning from purely economic engagement to a more active, though complex, role in regional stability and security

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As indicated in the above table 4.4; fueling is China's own economic growth, though focus shifts from raw resources to high-tech industries. Expanding its global footprint and enhancing its strategic position in Africa. Accessing African markets for Chinese goods and investments. Chinese capital and expertise speed up infrastructure and industrial growth. Large Chinese loans raise sustainability issues for some countries. China is transitioning from purely economic engagement to a more active, though complex, role in regional stability and security.

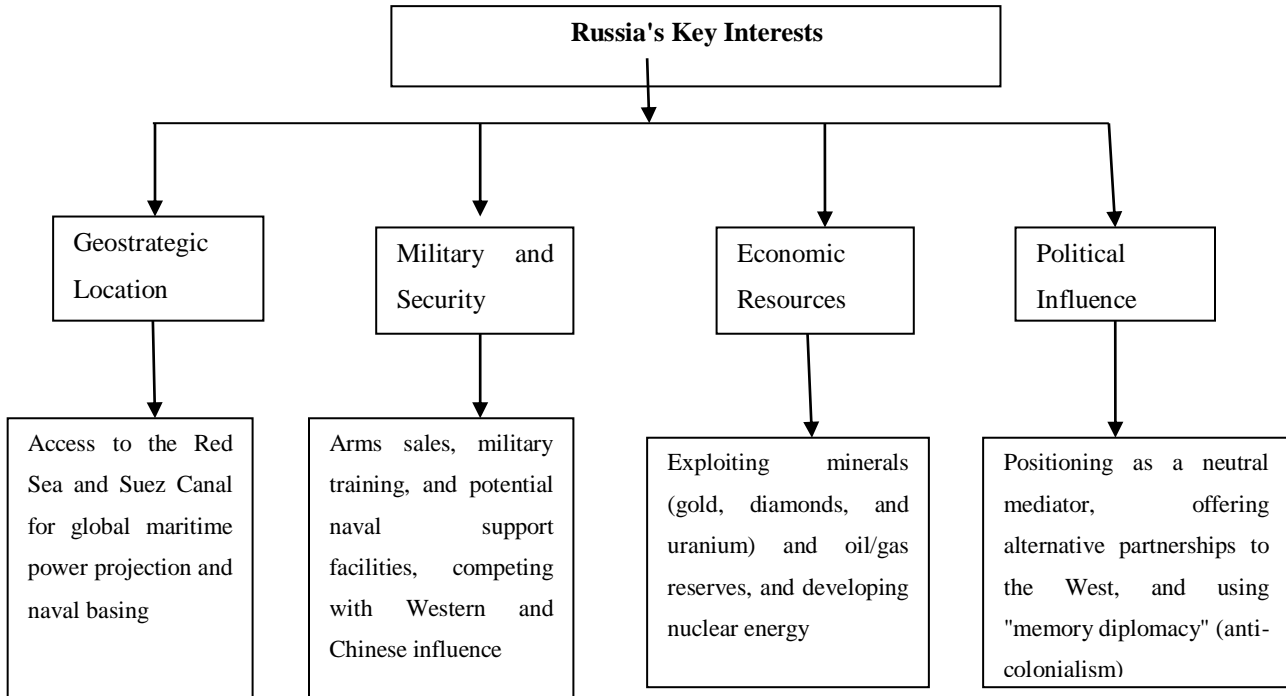
4.1.3 Russia's Interest in the Horn of Africa

Recently, Russia's influence in the internal affairs of African countries has been increasing. It is recalled that Russia, due to its desire to participate in the politics of the Red Sea, has started activities to establish military bases in Sudan and Somaliland. It is known that Sudan and Russia signed a 25 – year contract for a Russian naval station to have a military base in a Sudanese port. It is mentioned that the agreement will not only allow Russia to dock its warships in the port, but will also carry out ship repair work. When the landing of nuclear – carrying ships is given to Russia, Sudan will open the possibility to receive free weapons from Russia in return.

Russia's position on the Sudan coast was thought to be the gateway to Africa. On the other hand, it is said that it is Russia's approach intended to stop the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the South. Russia's access to Sudan's ports was primarily a concern of the United States. America has been given the opportunity to improve its relations with Sudan, to remove Sudan from the terrorist list and to cover the current problems of the World Bank. The

United States sees Russia's strengthening of its base in Syria as a major threat, and it is said that it is the United States that has caused the treaty to be canceled by interfering in Sudan's internal affairs and persuading its progress in to Sudan.

Figure 4. 2the Key Interests of Russia in the HOA



Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As clearly indicated in figure 4.2, the geostrategic location is access to the Red Sea and Suez Canal for global maritime power projection and naval basing. In addition to, the military and security is arms sales, military training, and potential naval support facilities, competing with Western and Chinese influence. Exploiting minerals (gold, diamonds, and uranium) and oil/gas reserves, and developing nuclear energy. The political influence is positioning as a neutral mediator, offering alternative partnerships to the West, and using "memory diplomacy" (anti-colonialism). Russia's interest in the Horn of Africa stems from strategic goals to counter Western influence, secure access to the Red Sea for naval power projection, and gain economic advantages through arms sales, natural resources (minerals, oil/gas), and energy projects (like nuclear), leveraging historical ties and offering "peaceful coexistence" diplomacy, often through military and security cooperation (including private military companies) and potentially establishing naval bases.

Table 4. 5 Russia's Role in the Horn of Africa

1	Strategic Interests	Russia is utilizing the Horn of Africa to build non-Western alliances and secure, or attempt to secure, access to strategic, Red Sea-adjacent ports
2	Regional Stability	While backing Ethiopia, Russia also engages with other regional players, maintaining a complex, and sometimes balancing, role in the security dynamics of the Horn
3	Historical Ties	Current relations are rooted in long-standing diplomatic and cultural, including religious, connections dating back to the Cold War era

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

Table 4.5 shows that; Russia is utilizing the Horn of Africa to build non-Western alliances and secure, or attempt to secure, access to strategic, Red Sea-adjacent ports. While backing Ethiopia, Russia also engages with other regional players, maintaining a complex, and sometimes balancing, role in the security dynamics of the Horn. Current relations are rooted in long-standing diplomatic and cultural, including religious, connections dating back to the Cold War era.

On the other hand, the target countries and potential sites Sudan, Djibouti and Ethiopia. In Sudan mining, energy (Zarubezhneft), but complicated by civil war; previously eyed for naval base. In Djibouti and Somaliland: Potential alternative locations for naval facilities and broader strategic presence. In Ethiopia: Nuclear energy cooperation (Rosa tom). Other Nations: Engagement with Somalia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya.

In this study the relationship between Russia and Ethiopia is included. The relationship between the two countries has its own advantage for the national security of Ethiopia. So, the following are some of the key areas of Russia – Ethiopia relations.

- **Military Cooperation:** Following high-level talks in Moscow in May 2025, the two countries strengthened their military alliance, with Russia providing support for Ethiopia's navy and general defense capacity building.
- **Economic and Energy Ties:** Russia's Rosa tom has signed agreements for peaceful nuclear energy cooperation in Ethiopia. Russia is also supporting Ethiopia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

- **Diplomatic Support:** Russia aligns with Ethiopia's position on regional, non-interference, and internal security matters, providing a counterweight to Western pressure.
- **Financial Integration:** Ethiopia has been included in Russia's list of approved nations for currency trading, facilitating closer financial ties.

Moscow has seen the most progress toward building its presence in the region is naval cooperation with Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's BRICS accession. A few years later, in 2022, Russia looked to undermine France as Ethiopia's leading partner to develop a national navy, principally through training missions and staff education in Russia. Russian analysts, for their part, see expanded military training as a promising area of cooperation with Ethiopia. Ethiopia's 2024 BRICS accession has led to Addis Ababa and Moscow opening dialogues on several issues.

Russia's presence in the Horn of Africa depends largely on maintaining momentum gained from regular initiatives and high-profile events, as well as taking advantage of opportunities presented by shifts in major power engagement there and local dynamics. In the HOA, these factors are especially pronounced, particularly since 2022, with Russia unable to rely on as many levers of influence as it has in other parts of the continent, such as active arms markets, enduring ties, and military deployments. Despite these limitations, Russia has devoted attention to the region, leveraging the relative isolation of Ethiopia and South Sudan, as well as the pariah status of Eritrea, to enhance its position. The Russian military deployments in Sudan no longer translate into additional reach due to the civil war in that country, which jeopardizes Russia's broader presence there.

This brief has presented three explanations for why Russia has chosen to maintain and increase its engagement in the HOA despite its limited resources and bigger priorities of Ukraine and Europe. A shifting power balance, combined with enduring concerns over trade routes, might be shaping Russia's perception of the region as open to engagement. Authoritarian consolidation among the governments of the HOA and their marginalization from institutions led by democratic states might also be a factor, owing to the Kremlin's preference for authoritarian partners. Finally, Russia's identity as a major power with a special path in the world might create an affinity for non-Western states that also make conspicuous claims about their "ancient"

cultures, such as Ethiopia. These explanations are not mutually exclusive and might reinforce each other. The upshot is that Russia represents an engaged yet limited actor in the HOA.

A factor that might change the trajectory of Russia's engagement with the HOA is China's shifting position on the continent. In particular, China's economic deceleration might lead Beijing to lean more on fora such as BRICS to sustain its continental ambitions, including in the HOA. In turn, its relationship with Russia in Africa might shift, too, moving from a loose division of labor to either competition—especially where opportunities are scarce—or synergy, with Beijing potentially leaning on Moscow's presence to compensate for its loss of capacity. Ethiopia's BRICS membership might end up facilitating the latter as the forum increases the opportunities for contact and dialogue on regional affairs among Chinese, Ethiopian, and Russian officials (Ivan U., 2024).

4.2 The Influence of Emerging Regional Powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt)

Turkey, the UAE, Qatar and Egypt have emerged as significant regional powers by leveraging a combination of economic strength, diplomatic activism, and selective use of military force. Their influence has been shaped by a post-Arab spring regional power vacuum, a desire for strategic autonomy, and a shifting global order. These emerging regional powers have their own interests in the Horn of Africa. There is also its own influence in the Horn of Africa and on Ethiopia's national security. Based on this, the study put each of them as follows.

4.2.1 The Influence of Turkey in the Horn Africa and Ethiopia

Turkey's foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa, encompassing Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, has been intricately linked to the geopolitical tensions and divisions experienced by the countries in this region. Moreover, it has been shaped by broader developments across Africa, especially the intensifying competition among international and regional powers to strengthen their presence in the Red Sea amid a range of emerging changes. In its efforts to bolster influence and position itself as a key player in the Horn of Africa, Turkey has employed various strategies. These include signing defense cooperation agreements, acting as a mediator in regional disputes, and investing in the energy and oil sectors. However, this multifaceted approach raises important questions about the extent and limitations of Turkey's role, the

underlying motives driving its engagement, and Ankara's capacity to fulfill these commitments in the face of numerous regional and international challenges (Iman A., 2024).

Turkey and Somalia have signed a major defense and economic cooperation agreement. Under the agreement, Turkey will help protect Somalia's long coastline and help rebuild the weak HOA navy. The agreement has a message for the attacks and internal challenges Somalia faces from al-Shabaab and other terrorists such an agreement would reduce and weaken and destroy al-Shabaab, as well as limit its activities along the border. The Somalia government said it hoped the deal would help it strengthen its capacity to fight threats such as piracy and terrorism, and more importantly, counter “foreign interference.”

The Turkey – Somalia agreement was made at a time when tensions between the two countries increased due to Ethiopia's maritime agreement with Somaliland. According to the agreement, Ethiopia is going to recognize Somaliland, which has not been recognized as a country. Somalia strongly opposes Ethiopia's agreement with Somaliland. “It is illegal,” it said, adding that it would protect Somalia's maritime rights. But Somalia president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud emphasized that the agreement with Turkey is about Somalia's maritime security. “We are talking to the people of Somalia only about the agreement that we have presented to the parliament on maritime defense and economic cooperation between Somalia and Turkey. It is not intended to create hatred or conflict with another country or government in any way,” he said.

In terms of the internal conflict in Ethiopia, it is estimated that Turkey's presence in that area may have an impact on Ethiopia's national security. Somalia's agreement with Turkey may complicate the dynamic of power in Ethiopia and further influence conflicts. As Somalia is a neighboring country of Ethiopia, the instability in the country is creating its own problems in Ethiopia. It is preventing stable geopolitics in the region. It is recalled that Ethiopia issued a statement regarding the activities being carried out in Somalia. It is recalled that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued the following statement on the current regional issue of the Horn of Africa □

“Ethiopia is concerned that the new peace mission structure of the African Union Transitional Mission (ATMIS) in Somalia will bring a new threat to the Horn of Africa region. As the African Union and the United Nations prepare for this new transition, the region is facing a predicable

challenges. The repeated calls and comments of countries that previously contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia, including Ethiopia, were not paid attention to. It can be seen that there is a desire on the part of some parties for Ethiopia to remain silent when a series of statements are issued that undermine the reputation and sacrifice of our defense forces. Ethiopia will not watch silently while other actors take steps to destabilize the Horn of Africa region. Because of this, it is actively monitoring all situations that may threaten its national security in the region.

Ethiopia has been making tireless efforts to establish peace and security for Somalia and the region, for common development and to strengthen the close ties between the peoples of the region. Ethiopia has also actively participated in dialogue forums designed to resolve the current dispute with the Somali government. Concrete results were also seen in these talks. Instead of strengthening these peace efforts, the Somali government is working with foreign forces that seek to destabilize the region.

All those responsible for preparing and authorizing the proposed new peacekeeping mission in Somalia should take in to account the relevant concerns of the regions already militarized countries. Forces trying to inflame tension in the region for their short – term interests and futile purposes will have to bear the consequences of their evil actions. Ethiopia will not tolerate actions that jeopardize and reverse the encouraging results achieved in the past against continental and international terrorist groups. Ethiopia remains committed to resolving differences peacefully and working with the Somali people and the international community to prevent threats to peace and stability in the region.” (BBC News, Amharic □ 2024)

This indicates that Ethiopia is paying close attention to the events happening in the region related to Somalia. The concerns about the future security of Somalia have arisen against the background of the planned withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The United Nations Security Council (UN SC) approved the replacement of AMISOM by ATMIS (African Transitional Mission in Somalia) in April 2023 with a reinforced mandate to combat the Al-Shabaab Islamists until the end of December 2024, keeping peacekeeping efforts going.

On the other hand; Selcan K., (2024) explained, in February 2024, Turkey and Somalia signed a defense and economic cooperation agreement that allegedly enables Ankara to protect Somalia's territorial waters and to construct, equip, and train the Somali navy. This accord, which once again draws attention to the troubled Horn of Africa, follows a similar agreement made in January 2024 between Ethiopia and the contentious area of Somaliland, which Somalia has considered as a direct attack on its sovereignty. Somalia perceives its recent agreement with Turkey as a step to strengthen its defenses, while Turkey's priorities are twofold, governed by both a desire to be a greater world power in the region and its current struggles with an energy crisis and its need for more energy sources. Nevertheless, the Turkey–Somalia Pact also has several regional ramifications that will affect the unstable Horn of Africa. Considering the reactions from other countries, these agreements carry the risk of escalating regional tensions and potentially reshaping diplomatic relations in the Horn of Africa.

By coming to a deal with Turkey, Somalia is attempting to demonstrate that it has maintained its sovereignty and independence. Its maritime agreement with Turkey in February 2024 has, however, exacerbated regional problems in the Horn of Africa. Tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia have been rising already due to the former's earlier maritime accord with Somaliland, Somalia's breakaway region. Ethiopia has been attempting to gain access to the sea ever since losing its Red Sea ports upon Eritrea's independence declaration in 1993. According to the Ethiopia–Somaliland pact, Ethiopia gains access to the Red Sea and in exchange pledges to recognize Somaliland's independence, even though Somalia refuses to recognize the breakaway state. While Turkey has maintained cordial ties with Ethiopia to this point, the animosity between Somalia and Ethiopia raises special concerns. Increased diplomatic and military difficulties could result from Turkey's backing Somalia, which would give Mogadishu more confidence to oppose the Ethiopia–Somaliland agreement. The stability of the regional economy could potentially be impacted by disagreements or wars over marine and economic zones, particularly between Ethiopia and Somalia (Ibid).

Table 4. 6Key areas of influence and strategic drivers

1	Economic Investment	Turkish companies are major investors in Ethiopia and Somalia, focusing on infrastructure like ports, energy, and telecoms, supported by efficient, less politically burdened projects
2	Military and Security	Turkey has built its largest overseas military base in Somalia, provides military training, and is a growing supplier of defense equipment, particularly drones, to African nations
3	Diplomatic and Soft Power	Turkey uses its lack of colonial history and focus on "African solutions for African problems," building goodwill through development, humanitarian aid, and supporting African representation in global bodies
4	Strategic Partnerships	Turkey acts as a mediator, notably in the Ethiopia-Somalia relationship, securing long-term economic benefits and cementing its role as a regional power broker
5	Geostrategic Location	The Horn's importance for Red Sea maritime security and access to Africa
6	Economic Opportunities	Seeking new markets, resources (like uranium for energy), and infrastructure projects
7	Global Ambitions	Projecting influence beyond the Middle East and challenging traditional great powers

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As it can be seen in table 4.6 above, Turkey's influence in the Horn of Africa stems from a multi-faceted strategy of significant economic investment (infrastructure, trade), deepening military and security cooperation (bases, drone sales), providing humanitarian aid, and assertive diplomacy, positioning itself as a key partner in development, counter-piracy, and regional mediation, especially in Somalia and Ethiopia, driven by strategic goals in the Red Sea and broader African engagement.

The Ethiopia-Somalia agreement represents a critical step toward reducing tensions in the Horn of Africa, offering both nations a chance to focus on pressing domestic challenges. Turkey's role as mediator highlights its growing influence in the region, while the agreement's ambiguities and unresolved issues underscore the fragility of this peace. With regard to Ethiopia-Somalia relations, the path forward hinges on successful technical negotiations and sustained commitment to dialogue. For Turkey, the agreement cements its reputation as a capable mediator and

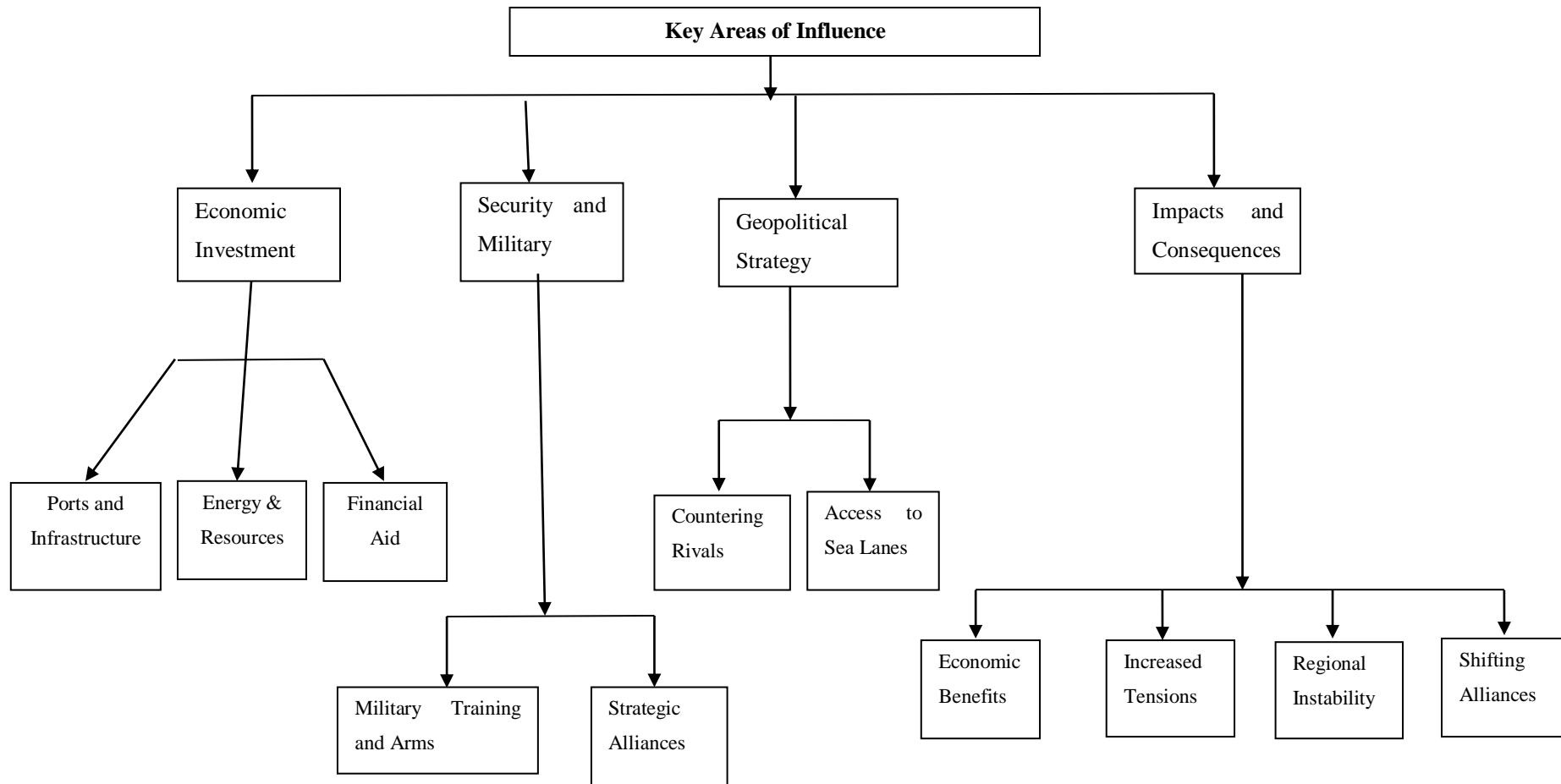
positions Ankara as a dominant player in the Horn of Africa. Yet, the geopolitical chessboard remains fluid, with competing interests from Egypt, Somaliland, and other regional actors poised to shape the next chapter of this evolving story (Paulo A., 2024).

On the other hand, Iman A., (2024) suggested, Turkey's influence extends beyond military cooperation into the energy sector. In March 2024, Turkey and Somalia signed a cooperation agreement for oil and gas exploration, assessment, development, and production in both onshore and offshore Somali areas. This was followed by another agreement in July between Ankara and Mogadishu for hydrocarbon exploration and production. As part of this agreement, Turkey plans to deploy its research vessel "Oruç Reis" to conduct seismic studies off the Somali coast. Furthermore, Turkey has announced its intention to send a drilling ship to explore offshore oil blocks belonging to Somalia in September of this year.

Turkey has assumed a crucial diplomatic role as mediator between Somalia and Ethiopia, addressing disputes that arose after Ethiopia signed an agreement with Somaliland, granting it access to the Red Sea. Despite the first two rounds of Turkish-mediated talks ending without resolution, Ankara remains optimistic about achieving a breakthrough during the third round of negotiations scheduled to commence in Ankara on September 17 2024 (Ibid).

4.2.2 The Influence of United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Figure 4.3 Key Areas of Influence



Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As shown in figure 4.3; the UAE is investing heavily in ports (e.g., Berbera in Somalia, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania), roads, and commercial projects to control trade routes. The country fund renewable energy projects (hydroelectric, wind) in Ethiopia and investing in agriculture, mining, and telecom. Similarly the UAE is providing crucial financial support, particularly to Egypt and Ethiopia, to stabilize economies. The UAE uses its substantial financial resources and strategic location as a global hub for trade and logistics to project influence. The UAE has the most diversified economy in the GCC, focusing on tourism, finance, technology, and AI, making it less reliant on oil and gas and a global business hub. Abu Dhabi has recently shifted from an assertive, competitive stance to a more economy-driven approach focused on de-escalation and diplomacy with rivals like Iran and Turkey. The UAE is a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and uses its extensive diplomatic network and investments in other countries to build global partnerships. It was a key broker of the Abraham Accords, normalizing relations with Israel.

Table 4. 7Economic Investment, Security and Military, Geopolitical Strategy, Impacts and Consequences

1	Ports and Infrastructure	Investing heavily in ports (e.g., Berbera in Somalia, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania), roads, and commercial projects to control trade routes
2	Energy and Resources	Funding renewable energy projects (hydroelectric, wind) in Ethiopia and investing in agriculture, mining, and telecom
3	Financial Aid	Providing crucial financial support, particularly to Egypt and Ethiopia, to stabilize economies
4	Military Training and Arms	Supplying weapons and training to governments and paramilitary groups, including training Ethiopian forces and allegedly supporting Sudan's RSF
5	Strategic Alliances	Forming strong security ties with Ethiopia and Eritrea, partly to counter Iranian influence and secure interests
6	Countering Rivals	Countering influence from Iran, Qatar, and Turkey in the region
7	Access to Sea Lanes	Securing access to Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade routes for its own maritime dominance and to support Ethiopia's port needs
8	Economic Benefits	Brings much-needed capital, infrastructure development, and economic opportunities to the region
9	Increased Tensions	Heightens geopolitical rivalries, particularly between Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt, and Sudan, as regional powers compete for influence, according to
10	Regional Instability	Controversial military involvement, especially in Sudan, prolongs conflicts and exacerbates humanitarian crises, notes Martin Plaut and The Century Foundation
11	Shifting Alliances	Strengthens ties with countries like Ethiopia and Eritrea but strains relations with others, affecting regional dynamics

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As it is clearly indicated in table 4.7 above; the UAE exerts significant influence in the Horn of Africa through massive investments in ports, infrastructure, energy, and agriculture, alongside security partnerships, using economic leverage to gain political allies and secure strategic maritime access, particularly in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea, though this engagement fuels regional rivalries, especially with Qatar, Turkey, and Egypt, and involves controversial military support in conflicts like Sudan's civil war, impacting regional stability.

Similarly; the UAE's military training and Arms is supplying weapons and training to governments and paramilitary groups, including training Ethiopian forces and allegedly supporting Sudan's RSF. The strategic alliance is forming strong security ties with Ethiopia and Eritrea, partly to counter Iranian influence and secure interests. The geopolitical strategy is countering influence from Iran, Qatar, and Turkey in the region. In addition to; the UAE is securing access to Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade routes for its own maritime dominance and to support Ethiopia's port needs.

On the other hand; the Economic benefits are brings much-needed capital, infrastructure development, and economic opportunities to the region. The increased tensions are heightens geopolitical rivalries, particularly between Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt, and Sudan, as regional powers compete for influence, according to. The regional instability is controversial military involvement, especially in Sudan, prolongs conflicts and exacerbates humanitarian crises, notes Martin Plaut and The Century Foundation. Strengthens ties with countries like Ethiopia and Eritrea but strains relations with others, affecting regional dynamics.

4.2.3 Qatar's Influence in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia

Qatar is expanding its influence in the Horn of Africa through economic investments and diplomatic mediation, aiming to counter the influence of rival Gulf States like the UAE and Saudi Arabia. While historically strained due to Qatar's alleged support for regional armed groups and ties to Eritrea, Ethiopia is now navigating a complex relationship with Doha, balancing economic opportunities with regional security interests.

Table 4. 8Key aspects of relationship

1	Geopolitical Competition	The Horn of Africa is a key battleground for Gulf rivalry, with Qatar competing against the UAE and Saudi Arabia for influence, impacting countries like Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea
2	Economic Interests	Qatar is looking to invest in Ethiopia's infrastructure and agricultural sectors, aligning with a broader \$103 billion investment drive across Africa
3	Historical Tension & Reconciliation	In 2008, Ethiopia severed ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting anti-Ethiopia armed groups and Somali insurgents, but relations improved after 2012
4	Mediation Role	Qatar has positioned itself as a mediator in regional conflicts, such as in Sudan, although its influence is often viewed with caution by Ethiopia
5	Strategic Focus	Ethiopia's current engagement with Qatar is part of a non-aligned, "principled multilateralism" approach designed to maximize economic gains while safeguarding its sovereignty and national interests

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As it can be seen in table 4.8, The Horn of Africa is a key battleground for Gulf rivalry, with Qatar competing against the UAE and Saudi Arabia for influence, impacting countries like Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea. Qatar is looking to invest in Ethiopia's infrastructure and agricultural sectors, aligning with a broader \$103 billion investment drive across Africa. Qatar has positioned itself as a mediator in regional conflicts, such as in Sudan, although its influence is often viewed with caution by Ethiopia. Ethiopia's current engagement with Qatar is part of a non-aligned, "principled multilateralism" approach designed to maximize economic gains while safeguarding its sovereignty and national interests.

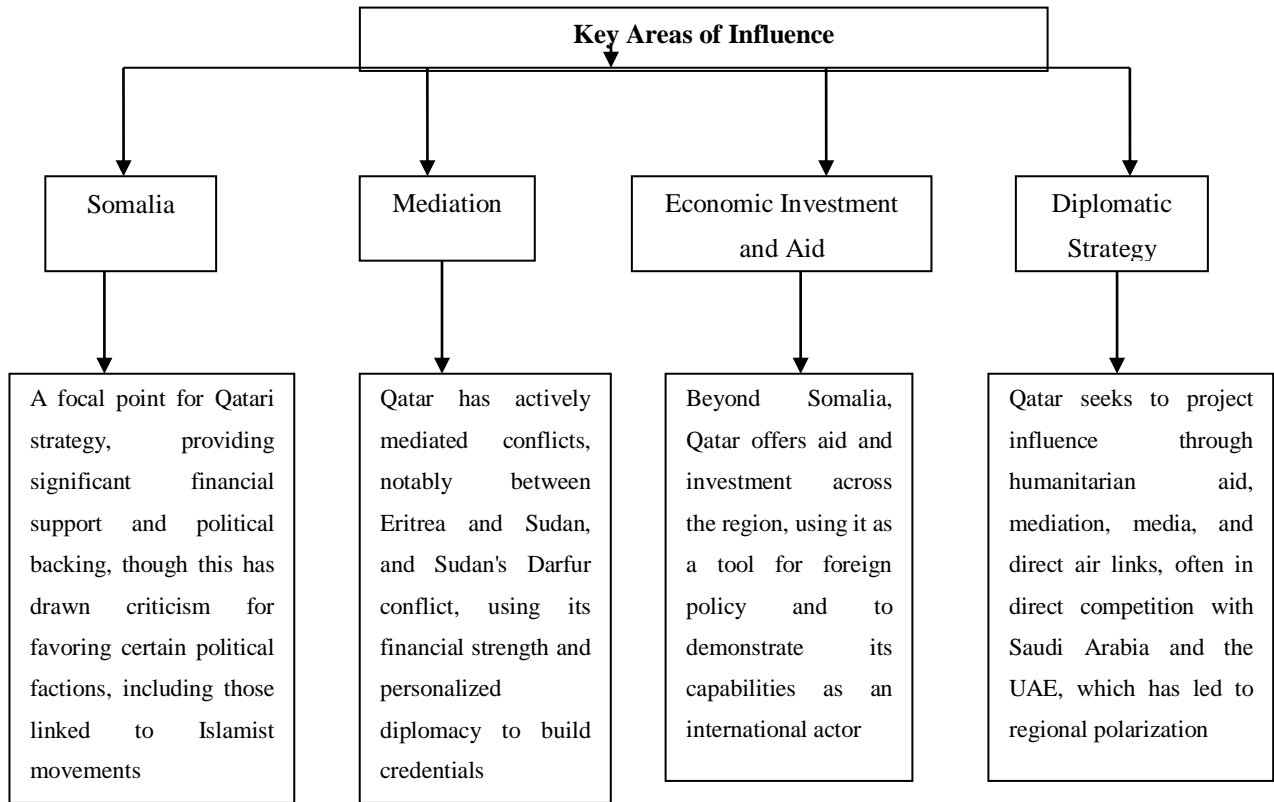
Qatar's foreign policy in the Horn of Africa has generated significant debate and scrutiny, especially regarding its influence and relationships in the region. One of Qatar's primary foreign policy objectives has been to strengthen bilateral ties with Somalia, particularly with the administration based in Villa Somalia, the country's presidential palace. Since the onset of Somalia's long-standing crises, Qatar has emerged as one of Mogadishu's most supportive allies, supplying substantial financial aid and political backing. However, this involvement has drawn criticism, as many observers allege that Qatar's support disproportionately favors certain Somali politicians affiliated with Islamist movements, raising concerns about its potential destabilizing effects on the region (Abdi A., 2025).

In this geo-political landscape, Qatar finds itself in direct competition with other Gulf states, notably the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia. While the UAE has secured significant investments in Somaliland, including strategic initiatives like the Berbera Port and Barbera free zone programs, Qatar often positions itself as a counterforce to UAE interests in the region. This rivalry complicates the political dynamics and further entrenches the conflicting allegiances that characterize the Horn of Africa (Ibid)

Miftah M. 2025) suggested that; the turning point of aid interventions implemented by the Gulf States and Qatar in particular in the HOA is represented by the blockade in 2017. Regarding the impact of the Gulf crisis on Qatar's humanitarian sector, the volume of Qatari aid has not declined, but there was a shift in the resource allocation from bilateral to multilateral channels, to improve accountability and transparency. Analyzing the period 2016–2020, the Annual Reports provide data on the total funds (grants and loans) of the Qatari foreign aid in humanitarian and development intervention. The flow maintains a constant trend except for 2017 when there was an increase in the funds allocated to aid. In 2020, Qatar provided US\$533 million representing 0.30% of the gross national income (GNI).

When compare this approach with that of the other Gulf States, the involvement of the UAE in Somalia, especially in Punt land, had the main aim of mitigating the Somali piracy issue, which undermined the security of transportation in the Gulf of Aden and the wider West Indian Ocean. Therefore, since 2011, the UAE has become the main supporter of the Punt land Maritime Police Force,⁶ in charge of combating piracy both on the land and off the shores of Somalia, and in 2014 Abu Dhabi increased its cooperation with the Somali government in the field of security and military issues. (Miftah M., 2025).

Figure 4.4 Key Areas of Influence



Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

Figure 4.4 shows that, Somalia is a focal point for Qatari strategy, providing significant financial support and political backing, though this has drawn criticism for favoring certain political factions, including those linked to Islamist movements. Qatar has actively mediated conflicts, notably between Eritrea and Sudan, and Sudan's Darfur conflict, using its financial strength and personalized diplomacy to build credentials. Beyond Somalia, Qatar offers aid and investment across the region, using it as a tool for foreign policy and to demonstrate its capabilities as an international actor. Qatar seeks to project influence through humanitarian aid, mediation, media, and direct air links, often in direct competition with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which has led to regional polarization.

4.1.4 Egypt's Influence in the Horn of Africa

As we know; Egypt's activities in the Horn of Africa is related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Based on this; Egypt's influence in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia, is expanding through increased military, diplomatic, and economic engagement,

primarily driven by concerns over the Nile River's water security due to Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and a broader strategic goal to reassert its regional primacy. This involves security cooperation, military support (including advisors and weapons for Somalia), port upgrades in Eritrea and Djibouti, and economic projects, all aimed at counterbalancing Ethiopia's growing influence and ensuring its own access to the Red Sea corridor.

In August 2024 Egypt has established the second tripartite agreement with Somalia and Eritrea, without the military agreement with Somalia. Although this approach is right, the motive behind it is likely to be different. In particular, Egypt's support whether it is military cooperation or the illegal transfer of weapons, is a form of aid to civilians. It is inevitable that this approach is a threat to the Horn of Africa. The agreement that Egypt is making with Somalia does not meet the needs of the Somali government but it is probably aimed at achieving the regional destabilization of Egypt. Egypt's intention is to arm al-Shabaab and similar terrorists and use them for its own benefit rather than a body that believes in diplomacy and has a form of government.

In addition to; Egypt's move poses a serious threat to air lines and maritime businesses, and poses an additional threat to Somalia, which is a hub for illegal trafficking of people, trade, money and equipment. Egypt's other objective is to weaken the power of the Ethiopian government in the proxy war and reduce its focus on the Renaissance Dam.

Table 4. 9Key Drivers of Egyptian Influence and Manifestations of Influence

1	Water Security	The central driver is Egypt's fear that the GERD will reduce the Nile's water flow, threatening its water security, making control over the river's sources paramount
2	Strategic Competition with Ethiopia	Egypt views Ethiopia's ambition for a maritime lifeline as a direct challenge, prompting Cairo to constrain Addis Ababa's rise by increasing its own footprint in the region
3	Red Sea Corridor	Egypt seeks to maintain its historical dominance along the vital Red Sea corridor, viewing the Horn as crucial to regional stability and its own strategic interests
4	Military and Security	Deploying troops and advisors to Somalia for counter-terrorism against al-Shabaab. Upgrading ports in Djibouti (Doraleh) and Eritrea (Assab) to accommodate warships. Providing weapons and support to Somalia
5	Diplomatic and Political	Strongly supporting Somalia's unity and condemning unilateral actions that challenge its sovereignty. Positioning it as a key power broker to counter other foreign influences (like Israel, Turkey) in the region
6	Economic	Signing economic and security agreements with regional states. Investing in infrastructure projects in Somalia, particularly in electricity and renewable energy

Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As it is clearly indicated in table 4.9 above, the following are the key drivers of Egyptian influence and manifestations of influence. The central driver is Egypt's fear that the GERD will reduce the Nile's water flow, threatening its water security, making control over the river's sources paramount. Egypt views Ethiopia's ambition for a maritime lifeline as a direct challenge, prompting Cairo to constrain Addis Ababa's rise by increasing its own footprint in the region. Egypt seeks to maintain its historical dominance along the vital Red Sea corridor, viewing the Horn as crucial to regional stability and its own strategic interests.

On the other hand; Egypt is deploying troops and advisors to Somalia for counter-terrorism against al-Shabaab. The country Upgrading ports in Djibouti (Doraleh) and Eritrea (Assab) to accommodate warships. Providing weapons and support to Somalia. Strongly supporting Somalia's unity and condemning unilateral actions that challenge its sovereignty. In addition to, its position is as a key power broker to counter other foreign influences (like Israel, Turkey) in

the region. Similarly, Signing economic and security agreements with regional states. Egypt is investing in infrastructure projects in Somalia, particularly in electricity and renewable energy. By increasing its presence in Somalia and other Horn nations, Egypt aims to limit Ethiopia's strategic gains, especially as Ethiopia seeks reliable port access. In essence, Egypt's expanding role is a multifaceted strategy to secure its Nile water future, counter Ethiopia's regional ambitions, and maintain its strategic position in the Red Sea, using both cooperation and strategic maneuvering in fragmented environments.

Moreover; Egypt is expanding its military, diplomatic, and economic presence in the Horn of Africa amid its ongoing water dispute with Ethiopia. At the same time, Ethiopia's push for sea access has strained ties with its neighbors, some of whom are aligning with Cairo to counterbalance Addis Ababa. These dynamics, if not managed carefully, threaten regional stability and call for greater international attention to ease tensions between Cairo and Addis Ababa. Egypt is stepping up its military, diplomatic and economic presence in the Horn of Africa. In recent months, Cairo has signed a series of economic and security agreements with countries in the region and is preparing to deploy troops to Somalia. These developments come at a time when Egypt is locked in a long-standing water dispute with Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which was inaugurated in early September 2025. At the same time, Ethiopia's quest for a direct sea access has strained its relations with its neighbors, some of whom appear to be aligning with Cairo to counterbalance Addis Ababa (Amanuel D., 2025).

The Horn of Africa, already beset by multiple conflicts and crowded with external actors vying for influence, can ill afford a further escalation of geopolitical rivalries. Instability in the region would also have consequences far beyond its borders. The African Union, together with the European Union, China and the United States, should therefore use their influence, individually or in concert, to encourage Ethiopia and Egypt to return to negotiations on Nile dispute, help defuse regional tensions linked to Ethiopia's quest for sea access, and prevent Somalia and Sudan from becoming arenas of proxy conflict (Ibid).

4.3 The Risks and Opportunities of Geopolitical Rivalries in the Horn of Africa for Ethiopia's national security

In this study presents the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa related with the geopolitical interests of major powers (US, China and Russia) and the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Egypt and Qatar) in detail. The research was presented by linking the geopolitical rivalries of these countries in the HOA to the national security of Ethiopia. So; the risks and the opportunities of the geopolitical rivalries for Ethiopia's national security are presented as follows. Geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa significantly impact on Ethiopia's national security by exacerbating internal conflicts, intensifying tensions with neighbors over sea access and water resources, and making the country a theater for external power competition. This study also explores the impact of the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa for Ethiopia's national security and its opportunities.

4.3.1 The Impact of Geopolitical Rivalries on the HOA for Ethiopia's National Security

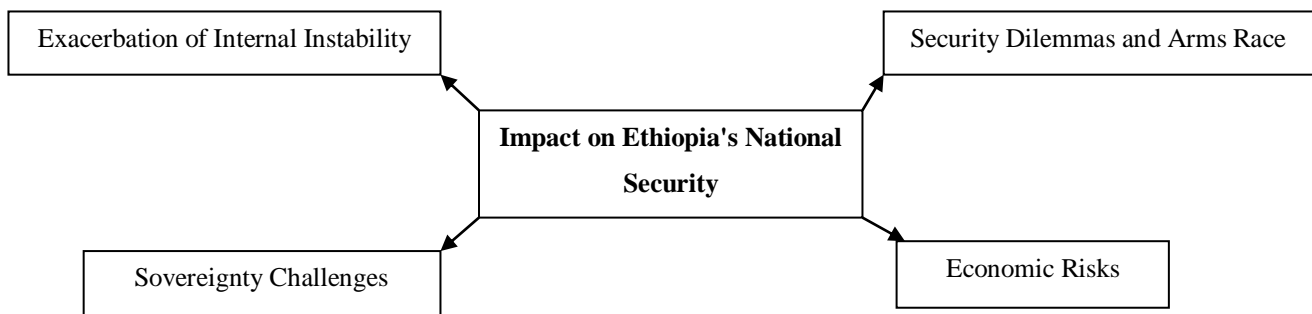
The following are some of the key rivalries and dynamics;

- **Ethiopia-Somalia/Eritrea Tensions:** Ethiopia's quest to secure access to the Red Sea, a strategic "existential matter" due to its landlocked status, has led to a controversial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Somaliland (a self-declared state yet to be internationally recognized). This move infuriated Somalia, which considers the MOU an infringement on its territorial integrity and has threatened conflict. Eritrea, a long-standing rival, has aligned with Somalia and is seen by Addis Ababa as actively working to destabilize Ethiopia.
- **Nile Basin Disputes:** The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a major point of contention with Egypt and Sudan. Egypt views the dam as an existential threat to its water supply and has used its diplomatic power to rally other Arab League and Gulf states against Ethiopia's interests in both the Nile and Red Sea contexts.
- **External Power Competition:** The region has become a hotspot for global and Middle Eastern powers, each with competing interests in military bases, ports, and resources.
- **Middle Eastern Powers (UAE, Turkey, Egypt and Qatar):** These nations view the Red Sea as a strategic backyard and have financed port development and established

military/commercial presences to project influence, often aligning with different local factions and exacerbating regional divisions.

- **Global Powers (USA, China, and Russia):** China focuses on economic investments and infrastructure (Belt and Road Initiative), while Western powers focus on counter-terrorism and maritime security. This competition offers Ethiopia potential economic opportunities and diplomatic leverage but also increases intelligence vulnerabilities and the risk of conflict spillover.

Figure 4. 5Impact on Ethiopia's National Security



Sources □ Researcher's own survey 2025 (from different internet sources)

As indicated in the above figure; external powers or rival regional states may exploit Ethiopia's existing internal conflicts (such as those in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and other regions of the country) by supporting non-state actors to destabilize the central government. The militarization of the Red Sea littoral states and an ensuing regional arms race pose a significant threat to the safe utilization of ports and the overall security environment for Ethiopia. Navigating between competing external interests challenges Ethiopia's strategic autonomy and traditional non-aligned foreign policy stance.

Moreover; Potential conflicts over access to ports like Assab or Berbera could disrupt vital maritime trade lanes, impacting not only Ethiopia but the wider global economy. In sum, the complex web of geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa significantly complicates Ethiopia's national security.

On the other hand; the international geopolitical rivalry in the countries of the Horn of Africa is widely seen. The competition is becoming a cause of regional instability by immersing proxy conflicts. So; Ethiopia, which has a superior geopolitical advantage in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, is bound to fall directly or indirectly under the influence of this competition. There is a

fear that local and regional conflicts, exacerbated by geopolitical rivalry, will lead to regional instability.

As we know currently, Ethiopia is at war within self. There is no stable peace in the country. Political cooperation has disappeared. Death and displacement have become a daily occurrence. Hence due to this reason there is no peace and security in the different corners of the nation. Hence currently there are different foreign states controlling the sovereign territory of Ethiopia like Eritrea controlling northern part of Tigray regional state in eastern Tigray place like Erob, Zalambessa, in central zone Egella, in north western Badme, some parts Tahtay Adyabo etc.

Therefore, there are security issues mean peoples of these places are voicing their rights Eritrean troops. As explained above; there is a serious war in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and other regions. So, these are a series risks for Ethiopia's national security.

In addition to; different militant groups are fighting each other for regime change in the nation. The country accused of genocidal war in Tigray. UN security countries conducted over 13 times closed secession with regard to pass are solution on gross human right violations. The war caused to genocidal event to the Tigray people, living create and the ecosystem in the region. The Ethiopian soldiers and its allays attacked and killed over 1000 civilians in Aksum who were in Aksum Mariam tsion and over 700 in Mariam Dengelat and 500 in DebreAbay (The Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG 2025)). The commission suggested; religious institutions were targeted and different religious books, bibles, manuscripts were stolen. Over one million civilian were displaced from their homeland especially from west Tigray.

So; the damage this war has done to the people and resources of Tigray is severe. Besides this; the political and economic crisis in the country is not easy. There is no stable political situation at present. The people could not find peace and work calmly. This is not the only problem caused by this war. From now on, it has its own role in creating a political crisis in the Horn of Africa and preventing a stable situation. This has been seen every season and is still being seen in reality. Therefore, resolving the war peacefully is not only beneficial for Tigray, but also for the national security of Ethiopia and political stability of the region. Generally, these are some of the internal security challenges of Ethiopia.

On the other hand; Egypt's security pact with Somalia and its regional implications in the Horn of Africa also has its own impact on Ethiopia's national security. In August 2024, Egypt and Somalia signed a security pact, introducing significant changes to the Horn of Africa's geopolitical landscape. This agreement, which involves Cairo supplying military aid to Mogadishu, emerges amid escalating regional rivalries and historical disputes, particularly between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Nile River. While Egypt relies heavily on the Nile for its water needs, Ethiopia's ambitions with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) have fueled ongoing tensions. Somalia's shift towards Egypt, moving away from its traditional alignment with Ethiopia, is driven by its own security concerns, particularly the threat from Al-Shabaab and threats from external regional actors such as Ethiopia. This strategic realignment not only reflects broader regional changes but also risks deepening Somalia's involvement in the regional power struggle, potentially heightening tensions and attracting external actors with interests in the Horn of Africa's complex geopolitical environment (Dr. John M., 2024).

The implications of this military aid, alongside Ethiopia's internal and external security challenges, highlight the necessity for this detailed examination of how these dynamics might influence the region's future stability. The impact of Egypt's military aid to Somalia extends beyond the interests of Ethiopia and Somalia. The Horn of Africa is a region of great strategic significance, not only to the countries which are in it but also to world powers with interests in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. It is a critical region of passage for international trade, with a large percentage of the world's oil shipments passing through it, and it is increasingly a focal point for global security concerns, including terrorism and piracy (Ibid).

4.3.2 The Opportunities of Geopolitical Rivalries in the HOA for Ethiopia's National Security

The Study presents the impact of the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa for Ethiopia's national security. Now the opportunity of the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa for Ethiopia's national security presented as follows.

The current proliferation of military bases in the sub-region may bring opportunities for the host states that can help them fulfill their national interests but also be a source of concern for the countries involved. The countries that have leased military bases, as well as harbors and airfields, are situated between these opposing poles. There are also the prospects of booming consumer

markets, natural resources, and its strategic location along one of the world's busiest maritime routes. Ethiopia is expected to take full advantage of the threats and opportunities of the age competition in the international geopolitical arena and use it for its national interest. Geopolitical competition and global influence on national peace and security, as well as on development and diplomacy, need to be transformed into benefits and opportunities.

It is a great opportunity to explore the opportunities in the geo-political ups and downs for greater national benefit. An effective foreign policy should be formulated and implemented. But before this can be implemented, internal issues need to be dealt with properly. This also requires insuring peace and stability internally. They say that there is good luck for Ethiopia in the efforts being made to ensure peace after coming out of the war declared in Tigray in the last years. Not only the war in Tigray, but the war in the entire country is resolved peacefully, it will be a great opportunity for the national security of the country.

Moreover; Ethiopia must work to improve its security situation with its neighbors. It has its own opportunity for the national security of the country. For example, it is expected to solve the problem with Eritrea. Easing the border problem will reduce military spending and allow resources to be used for development. This in turn boosts investor confidence. Somalia needs more security support from Ethiopia. Ethiopia should continue this. There is a need to ease the border tension by establishing a crude oil pipeline found in Ogaden on the border of Somalia and making it a common benefit for the two countries. Similarly, solving the conflicts in South Sudan and Sudan is crucial for Ethiopia. It is important for Ethiopia's national security and stability.

The other is to be able to proactively navigate a threat that needs to be turned in to an opportunity. This is very important. As it means the difference between prosperity and being a victim in times of crisis, it is necessary to analyze the current facts that influence the political economy and geopolitical activities in depth and work to transform them into opportunities.

As it is remembered, Ethiopia played a major role in peace, security and stability in East Africa countries and has been successful in fighting the anarchy and extremism in Somalia. Of course, it is not boastful that neighbors whose peace is guaranteed, whose economies are prosperous and whose democracy is flourishing are the basis of common interests. It is known that Ethiopia has

left its mark on the Sudan – Darfur region with the peacekeeping force it has deployed along with other countries to prevent civil conflict. In Abyei state, where Sudan and South Sudan are disputing their claims, it deployed the world's only peacekeeping force under the auspices of the United Nations, which has increased its acceptance at the international level.

Following this, not only conflicts and controversies should be resolved through peaceful efforts, so that there can be a stable political process in the country itself as well as in the surrounding countries. Ethiopia played a leading role in expanding the horizons of peace and cooperation accompanied by diplomacy. Ethiopia expected to play its own role in order to stabilize the controversy and political crisis that is currently occurring in the region. It must turn it into an opportunity for itself.

As a country in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is under pressure. Because of the geopolitical motives /competitions between great powers may negatively or positively affect Ethiopia. If Ethiopia is clearly identified its national interests and geopolitical prospect of the regime. The country can ensure diplomatic leverage of the region. Such as ensuring internal peace, creating foreign direct investment opportunities, good governance etc. Ethiopia may utilize the advantage of creating alliance against terrorist groups in the Horn. Generally, Ethiopia should turn the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa in to an opportunity.

Chapter Five □ Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Introduction

The thesis examines geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. The study analyzes the geopolitical interests of major powers (USA, China and Russia) and examines the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, UAE, Qatar and Egypt) in the Horn of Africa. Based on this; the thesis assess how these interactions create security risks and opportunities for Ethiopia. The study involved an exploratory design that aimed to discover the possibilities of the geopolitical rivalries. On the basis of this brief introduction, the chapter presents summary, conclusions and recommendations on the findings as per the study objectives.

5.1 Summary

It is known that, the Horn is one of the most politically dynamic regions in the world. Almost nowhere else has geopolitical forces and regional ambitions combined to produce such volatile results. Ethiopia has been dealing with immediate threats to both its national security and stability in the region.

New changes are being seen in the region's geopolitics and there is no stable peace. This is directly related to Ethiopia's national security. Because if the region is not stable, Ethiopia's national security can't be stable. Rather it can be disturbed. This is why Ethiopia paying attention the activities and new alignments in the region. In addition to this; the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa change very quickly. For example; the tendency towards radicalization in Somalia and Sudan will all have serious implications for regional stability and Ethiopia's national security. Therefore, for stability to prevail in these countries, Ethiopia should contribute its own share.

On the other hand, the region continues to hold the attention of many strategic thinkers and commentators, leaders, scholars, policy makers and citizens of the countries in the region. As explained in this study, the region is one of Africa's most conflicted and unstable regions, others draw attention to the emergence of some unique experiments in managing diversity, state formation and governance, and forms of engagement with outside cultures and influences. The

fact that Ethiopia is part of the HOA, the geopolitical rivalries in the region may have negative impact and opportunity for the national security of the country.

As systematic geopolitical rivalries among major powers and emerging regional powers for influence, control of natural resources and national security is a fundamental process that has shaped the international system for thousands of years. On the one hand, this geopolitical rivalry has led to the development of human technology and the awakening of creativity but on the other hand, it has led to the most destructive wars and large – scale human suffering in history.

The geopolitical rivalries of major powers and emerging regional powers have an opportunity or a risk depending on the country's management and local political situation. This is a strengthening of the global supremacy for the powerful countries, but for strategic and vulnerable areas such as the HOA, it increases internal instability and foreign intervention. It is the main political work of the era to find a way for the countries of the Horn to protect their national interests by using this geopolitical rivalry as a tool.

Currently, the regional geopolitical rivalries have become a multi – pole world in which Russia, Turkey, Qatar, UAE and Egypt actively participate, beyond the direct tension between the United States and China. China is allocating billions of dollars in infrastructure railways and port construction through the Belt and Road initiative, while the US is striving to strengthen trade and security ties through prosper counter – terrorism cooperation. Although this situation has brought new infrastructure opportunities, foreign investment and anti – terrorist military support to the countries of the region and for Ethiopia's national security. Therefore, Ethiopia should turn this geopolitical rivalry in to an opportunity.

On the other hand, there has been a risk of permanent dept dependence, erosion of national sovereignty and new proxy wars for the interests of other countries. The fact that Ethiopia is part of the Horn of Africa, the geopolitical rivalries have its own negative impact on the country's national security. If the region and the countries in the region are not stable, the security of Ethiopia will be disturbed. Ethiopia's status as a country in the HOA should be turned in to an opportunity for the geopolitical rivalry in the country. There is a growing fear that Ethiopia's role in the region may not be sustained. However, Ethiopia's policies are unlikely to change in face of the persistence of threats to its national security and regional stability.

Moreover, the Horn of Africa is a region that still needs a lot of work. After a bloody war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, it is difficult to say whether it is peace or war. They are still in controversy. Sudan is at war with itself. The day after South Sudan declared its independence, it plunged in to a horrific civil war. It has become a country that is dealing with an increasingly serious conflict that has led to a terrible massacre and a worst humanitarian crisis for its citizens.

In general, the rivalry in the HOA has been a source of destruction in the course of history, but in the future there is a great opportunity to change this balance wisely in to opportunity. Therefore, it is necessary to do the task of bringing out the crisis of the HOA, which has such fragile internal and regional unity. Especially Ethiopia, being a country in the region, deserves to work with focus and turn new events in to opportunities.

5.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, the Horn of Africa is a subcontinent with a jagged appearance and a security situation that is always on edge. The region is a complex and dynamic geopolitical landscape that is of great importance to global trade and security. These are some of the reasons why major powers and emerging regional powers compete in this region. While there are significant challenges facing the region, there are also opportunities for cooperation and development that could help to promote stability and prosperity.

The region has been a battlefield of conflict for centuries and is a subcontinent of strategic importance. Even today it is seen attracting the attention of geopolitical rivalries. The different movements that are being drawn in the region issue, which is usually a fragile geopolitical part of the continent, can, have a serious impact. For example, the interests of the major powers (US, China and Russia), the influence of emerging regional powers (Turkey, Qatar, UAE and Egypt) create stronger ties with the region has led to a new look in the region. Therefore, they have separated themselves from each other and started to pursue their own interests in the HOA. They are trying to create a zone of influence in the subcontinent.

Moreover; the Horn of Africa has been the major geo-strategic regions in the world despite its reputation as being volatile and conflict-prone area. It has become a center for unprecedented geopolitical rivalry by international and regional powers that aim to exert their influence and

control in the region. The geopolitical Rivalry in the region has seen the existence of power projection and scramble for military base by extra-regional states, competition for commercial ports, the Nile Rivalry, and regional configuration of states amid political transitions. Although this geopolitical rivalry poses a serious threat to the security stability of the region, it also has an opportunity. Especially Ethiopia should make good use of this geopolitical rivalry and turn in to an opportunity to secure the national security of the country.

As explained above, this geopolitical rivalry has brought both opportunities and challenges for Ethiopia's national security. In terms of opportunity, the new dynamics provides Ethiopia alternative port access, investments in infrastructures, access to foreign hard currency, prospects of enhanced regional integration, and support in building up naval force.

On the other hand, the geopolitical rivalry in the Horn of Africa has presented challenges to Ethiopia in terms of alienating neighbors, threatening sovereignty, escalating tensions, jeopardizing religious coexistence, and maintenance of security and sustainability. Therefore, sustaining the gains and addressing the challenges of geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa is vital and should prevail for maintaining strategic interests of Ethiopia.

In addition to; the new geopolitical rivalries are reshaping the geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa. It's a complex issue with potential implications for regional stability, economic development, and international relations. According to this research, if the Horn is unable to control the regional interests and expanding presence of foreign military actors, it runs the risk of becoming even more fragmented and joining a larger international security competition over which it is likely to have little influence.

It is known that; Ethiopia is seen as the center of the region. It needs to work hard in the fields of economy, politics, and good governance and democracy in order to make the peace of the region permanent, to have stable national security and political stability. These all have their own a multifaceted implications for the country's national security.

However, Ethiopia's national security can't be seen separately from the situation in neighboring countries. This is why the issue of Somalia is seen as a challenging for Ethiopia, the HOA and the world. As long as it is not possible to stop a government system that has a permanent foundation and created national consensus in each of the countries of the region, it is inevitable

that countries will be plunged in to internal conflicts and eventually their problems will spread to neighboring countries. This is what the recent history of the Horn of Africa shows us.

In another way, The Tigray and other regions of the country conflict have had far-reaching and profound effects on the national security of Ethiopia. The conflict has not only caused a severe humanitarian crisis but has also fundamentally reshaped the national security and political landscape of the country. The conflict has exposed existing vulnerabilities and weaknesses within Ethiopia's governance structures, raising questions about their ability to address grievances and manage power dynamics. It has highlighted the need for reforms that promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making processes, as well as the strengthening of democratic institutions to ensure the protection of human rights and the rule of law. So, these problems must be resolved to stable the national security of the country.

Additionally, Ethiopia's foreign policy is characterized by a commitment to sovereignty, stability, and pragmatic diplomacy. Rather than being drawn into geopolitical rivalries between the U.S. and China, Ethiopia focuses on working with whichever global powers share its strategic interests. Its relationships with both the U.S. and China are driven by mutual benefits, not by political or ideological alignment. Ethiopia's approach is one of balance and flexibility—seeking partnerships that advance its national development goals while avoiding diplomatic tensions that could undermine its long-term stability. This pragmatic and independent approach has allowed Ethiopia to become a respected regional leader, cultivating partnerships based on shared interests and avoiding the geopolitical traps that often entangle other nations. By prioritizing its sovereignty and maintaining its autonomy in foreign policy, Ethiopia continues to shape its future on its own terms, securing its place in the evolving global order.

To conclude, the findings highlight that the Horn of Africa's geopolitical challenges are deeply intertwined with internal conflicts, external interventions, and regional rivalries. While external actors have brought investment and support for peacekeeping, their involvement often complicates efforts to resolve conflicts. Regional organizations like the African Union and IGAD play a critical role but face significant hurdles in maintaining unity and effectiveness. Ultimately, the path to stability in the Horn of Africa will require greater regional cooperation, the strengthening of local governance, and a more balanced approach to external engagement, where

foreign powers prioritize the long-term peace and development of the region rather than their own strategic interests.

Therefore, Ethiopia and its neighbors must prioritize diplomacy and multilateral dialogue to prevent escalation. In particular, Ethiopia as a part of the HOA must look carefully at the geopolitical rivalry in the region and turn in to an opportunity.

5.3 Recommendations

From the above research findings the researcher has recommended as follows;

The Horn of Africa region is characterized by intricate geopolitical rivalries, where major powers and emerging regional powers compete to pursue their strategic interests. This geopolitical rivalry in the region has both negative impact and an opportunity for Ethiopia's national security. So; Ethiopia must turn this geopolitical rivalry in to an opportunity especially for the stability of the country's national security.

The researcher also recommend; the countries of the region must work together to achieve peace, political stability and accelerated development in the Horn of Africa. Unity, clear vision, strong structure and development strategy are needed to coordinate the effort. Therefore, it is necessary work carefully to keep the region's security. When a regional power plays a positive or cooperative role in the region, the chances for regional stability are often high. If the region is stable, it has its own important role to maintain a stable security situation in Ethiopia.

It is known that, the absence of peace in the Horn has its roots in a long and complex history, political economy, state formation processes and struggles, international intervention and identity conflicts. Untangling the complex web of conflicts, understanding the connections at the local, sub-national, national, regional and global levels, engaging in deeper reflections and proffering viable options for promoting participatory, sustainable people-centered peace and development in the Horn remain compelling challenges.

Additionally, the Horn of Africa is a region of great diversity and deep poverty. Therefore; the policy of the Horn of Africa countries should be designed cooperatively to address the political and economical problems of the countries. Ethiopia should also work well in these areas. If there

is a stable politics and a good change in the economy, it has a great role for the national security of the country.

Strengthen the diplomacy of the Horn rather than European diplomacy. Therefore; by strengthening the diplomacy of the region, then make it to stable the region and keep its security. Especially Ethiopia as one of the Horn of Africa's country to play its own role in order to have peace, political stability, keeps the national security of the country.

In addition to, the Horn of Africa's countries should solve their difference by discussing in chair, not by war, not by interfering European leaders. The reason is that if there is external interference, stability may not be achieved. Ethiopia must solve its internal problems within its own capacity. If it solves its internal problems with its internal capabilities, it has an important role for the country's national security.

The Ethiopian government takes special measures to ensure that security forces stop committing human rights violations. The government immediately orders the security forces to stop carrying out extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests and detention, forced evictions and destruction of property belonging to people suspected of supporting opposition political parties or armed groups. Because solving these problems it has a big part in the stability of Ethiopia's national security.

The researcher recommended to the Ethiopian government to strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms and democracy in order to stable the national security of the country. The Ethiopian government should improve its conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent conflicts. This should include establishing effective mediation and negotiation processes, as well as empowering local communities to resolve disputes peacefully. Additionally, democratic institutions and practices should be strengthened to promote political pluralism, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. If these are properly implemented, they have a significant in the security stability of the country.

The other that the researcher recommended is, conflict transformation. For example; promotion of dialogue and understanding between the different parties involved in conflicts. Encouraging open and respectful communication can help facilitate empathy and ultimately lead to finding common ground. Creating safe spaces for dialogue, such as community forums or mediation

sessions, can be a constructive approach. Additionally, promoting initiatives that foster reconciliation and trust-building can contribute to long-term peace and stability. This could involve organizing joint projects or activities between communities, promoting cultural exchanges, or supporting grass root peace-building organizations. These all have their own positive side to change the geopolitical rivalries in the HOA in to opportunities. Ethiopia being part of the Horn of Africa, should work with great attention in these areas. If it pays attention to these areas, it is crucial to improve the country's national security. The geopolitical rivalries of major powers and emerging regional powers in this region have a great role to turn in to an opportunity.

In addition to this, IGAD must lead in establishing a region-wide security forum bringing all countries of the Horn of Africa and key external partners together in all-inclusive discussions. The Forum should focus on counterterrorism, conflict prevention, and crisis management and support the development of regional mechanisms through increased cooperation and confidence-building measures. This would help mitigate risks of proxy wars and further reinforce common regional interests.

The Horn of Africa countries should exercise caution when signing bilateral agreements to allow foreign military bases on their soil. They pose a great threat to their citizens in case of a conflict escalation that can lead to war. They also, jeopardize economic growth by extracting key resources in the host countries. Most foreign powers are a target of non-state actors mainly terrorists, this increases chances of host countries to suffer many terrorist attacks.

Generally; the study focused on the geopolitical rivalries in the Horn of Africa and their impact on Ethiopia's national security. Yet there are other global powers whose influence cannot be wished away. Hence, another study should consider such relationships as how they fit into modern global politics and the scramble for the Horn of Africa by other contemporary global powers.

Lastly, this study was centered on qualitative research method, thus triangulating qualitative methods to collect and analyze data can also be an interesting research approach. Therefore, the researcher recommends next researchers to apply such kind of research approach.

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Appendix A, (Time Schedule)

no	Activities	Mar. 2024	Apr. 2024	May 2024	Jun. 2024	Jul. 2024	Aug. 2024	Sep. 2024	Oct. 2024	Dec. 2024
1	Visiting the study and identifying sampling sites	*								
2	Develop literature review		*	*	*	*	*	*		
3	Define problem		*							
4	Develop methodology			*						
5	Over all proposal writing		*							
6	Submission of first draft proposal to principal and co-advisors		*							
7	Submission of final proposal to principal and co-advisors			*						
8	Hiring and training of enumerators					*				
9	data entry and analysis						*			
10	Thesis write up						*	*	*	
11	Submission of first report								*	
12	Final thesis submission								*	
13	Thesis presentation								*	*

Appendix B, (Budget Schedule)

No	Material Required	Amount	Unit price	Total costs
1	Stationeries (pen, pencil, paper, photo copy, printing, typing, binding).	-----	-----	8500
2	Internet access	-----	-----	2500
4	Taxi charges and other transportation costs	-----	-----	7000
5	Other (miscellaneous) expenses	-----	-----	6500
6	Total cost/expenditure			24,500