

External Interventions and Consequences in the Horn of Africa*

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Abstract

This paper examines external interventions, subsequent configurations of alliances and consequences in the Horn of Africa (HOA). The HOA, major part of its political history is shaped and reshaped by external interventions and constant shifts of alliances and political configurations. Colonialism, Cold War, war on terror, piracy and scramble for resources have all shaped the politics of the region. Superpower rivalry during Cold War left its interminable print in the region. The GCC crisis and the Yemen war induced greater involvement of those states in the region. Its crucial strategic location makes the region highly coveted by external actors making it an easy prey for external power struggle. This renders the region the most conflicted in the African continent. Recently, the region has witnessed convergence of military forces of major global powers. This in turn sparks reactions of radicalism, fundamentalism and extremism. The paper argues the conflated interventions and constant shifts of alliances generate convolute pathologies that plague the HOA.

Keywords: Horn of Africa, external interventions, alliances, consequences

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Introduction

The Horn of Africa (HOA) is oftentimes described as a region whose political history has determinedly been shaped and reshaped by external interventions, constant shifts of regional and international alliances and political configurations. In terms of external interventions, in modern history, the first historical determination came in the form of colonialism that was followed by neo-colonialism and Cold War. During the Cold War, the two superpowers converted the region into war theatre for their ideological and geo-strategic rivalry (Yordanov 2016, Brosig 2015, Schmidt 2013, Woodward 2006). Following the demise of the Cold War too, new constellations of actors, alliances, geo-strategic interests and interventions continued to define the political history of the HOA (Mengisteab 2013, Woodward 2013). The global war on terror, fight against piracy off the shores of Somalia, scramble for resources represent the post-Cold War era interventions. These have sparked reactions of radicalism, fundamentalism and extremism; further inviting constellations of regional and international interventions and actors (Hansen 2007, Harper 2012, Samatar 2013). The strategic location of the HOA explain its attractiveness to external interventions. The Red Sea connects the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean, a water lane critical to world trade that make it extremely coveted.

Unbreakable vicious circle of conflicts seems to pervade the region. Currently, various military forces are located onshore and offshore of Djibouti, the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Several countries have established military bases in tiny Djibouti. The main are USA, France, Japan, China, NATO, and AFRICOM (Sun and Zoubir 2016). Many other Western countries have also military presence in the region. Lately, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have added their name to the list of competitors. The Yemeni crisis, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) crisis has

heightened the Gulf State's involvement in HOA. These developments have brought the states of the two sides of the Red Sea closer where some talk about a common security architecture. Showcasing this a Council of Arab and African States bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden have been formed in early January 2020. Since 2007, a peace mission, AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) consisting of several African countries is operating in Somalia. The current external military presence in the HOA is even greater than the one during the height of the Cold War, while in the Cold War only the two superpowers were involved, today, dozens of states are involved.

Undoubtedly, the consequences of all this to the region are of multiple nature. The aspects affected are socio-economic development, political stability, nation and state building, peace and security, democratisation process, human rights, etc. rendering the region the most unstable one (Mengisteab 2013, Woodward 2013, de Waal 2015). Consequently, concerted pathologies: chronic conflicts, state crisis, environmental degradation, underdevelopment, poverty, staggering youth unemployment, migration, etc. are afflicting the region and beyond.

The paper seeks to examine the constant regional and international interventions, shifts of alliances and the concomitant consequences in the HOA. This paper more closely examines the dynamics, mechanisms and manifestations of international and regional interventions, and the shifts of alliances. External actors could be categorised into two groups: regional and international. More closely, it examines and analyses: (i) international interventions, (ii) regional interventions, (iii) shifts of alliances among the regional states, among regional state(s) and international state actors, (iv) the multiple consequences of these interventions and constant shift of alliances.

The paper comprises six sections. Section one: introduction sets the perimeters of the arguments and analyses. Section two analyses historical

trajectories and mechanism of international interventions. Section three examines the scope, rationale and nature of regional interventions. Section four examines the consistent shift of alliances of forces and actors within the region, regional-international geostrategic settings. While section five analyses the multiple consequences of the multiple interventions; section six provides concluding remarks.

1 – Regional and International Interventions

The Horn of Africa (HOA) is located in a strategic part of the world. It is an important pass way for international trade, particularly oil from the Middle East to Europe and the Americas. Products on their way to Far East, Middle East and Africa also pass through this water lane. It is shorter from Europe to Asia that makes it immensely vital. It is estimated that USD 700 billion worth of trade pass annually through the Bab El Mandeb Strait (Tavolato 2016). The significance of Bal El Mandeb Strait (Gate of Tears) that connect the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, as a trade lane dramatically increased with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (De Waal 2015). Under the colonial scramble for Africa project Britain, France and Italy competed to divide the region among themselves (de Waal 2015: 39, Walls 2014: 85, Keller 2014: 74). France succeeded in curving out the territory of Djibouti, which it held until 1977 (Abdallah 2012, Marks 1974), while Britain secured the possession of Sudan and northern Somalia (British Somaliland) (Walls 2014). Italy grabbed southern Somalia and Eritrea (Yordanov 2016: 2, Bereketeab 2007). Italy also briefly occupied Ethiopia (1936-1941) (Jalata and Mathews 2017: 74, Mengisteab 2014: 50). This could be perceived as the first international intervention in the region. Ethiopia also partook in the scramble and increased its territory several fold (Markakis 2011, Schmidt 2013: 144). In this manner, the destiny of the region was sealed by colonialism and colonial era politics. That destiny still reverberates in shaping the history and defining the complex reality of the region. Yet, it is not only the colonial history that continues to shape the region, but also

what followed had equal imprint. The tumultuous politics of today could only be fathomed against this historical backdrop.

Many of these territories achieved independence as a result of the decolonisation process, while some were compelled to go through protracted bloody and excruciating liberation wars (Bereketeab 2015). The decolonisation of the territories however ushered in the second international intervention, which is to be known as the Cold War spawning the overlap of the two (neo-colonialism and Cold War) (Schmidt 2013, 2018). During the Cold War, the two superpowers (Soviet Union and USA) converted the region into a war playground.

Without the vast quantities of weapons provided by the United States and the Soviet Union, local conflicts would not have escalated into regional ones that took an enormous toll in human life. The militarization and destabilization of the Horn during the Cold War are at the root of the conflicts that continue to devastate the region in the twenty-first century (Schmidt 2013: 144)

Under the heat of the Cold War, the USA established its first military base in Ethiopia in 1953 (Habte Selassie 1989). The military base in Asmara, Eritrea, was the outcome of a trade-off agreement between the US Administration and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. The trade-off rewarded Ethiopia with Eritrea, while the USA got a military base in Asmara, capital of Eritrea (Mengisteab 2014: 120-1). The military base harboured one of the highly sophisticated intelligence communications installation of its time used to monitor activities of the Soviet Union (Yordanov 2016: 78, 88). ‘During the Cold War, the communications station would play a critical role in American intelligence gathering in Africa and Middle East’ (Schmidt 2013: 145). This trade-off generated the thirty years liberation war in Eritrea. It also provoked several ethnonationalist movements challenging the legitimacy of the Ethiopian state (Reid 2011, Markakis 2011). The political turmoil that gripped Ethiopia for decades assumed temporary containment in 1991, when the military junta that ruled the country since 1974 was deposed by coalition of liberation movements.

The Soviet Union got foothold in Somalia upon the independence of the country in 1960. The foothold was formalised when Gen Siad Barre came to power in military coup in 1969 (Yordanov 2016, Lewis 2002, de Waal 2015). Initially, the Soviets were very cautious in building their relation with the Somali state. They traded very carefully not to completely abandon Ethiopia. The Soviets also briefly allied themselves with the military regime in Sudan that came to power in 1969 through military coup. Indeed, en-Nimeiri, the coup leader was supported by the Sudanese Communist Party (Berridge 2015). It was a common occurrence where a superpower comes to a country the other superpower will covet a neighbouring one. Both superpowers poured sophisticated weapons into the region that was primarily used to suppress internal rebellion but also induced inter-state wars. The Ethio-Somali inter-state war of 1977/8 is commonly perceived as triggered by the abundance of weapons supplied by the superpowers (Woodward 2006, Schmidt 2013, Yordanov 2016).

By mid-1970, the Horn of Africa witnessed a profound realignment of superpower intervention (Yordanov 2016: 208-14). Following the outbreak of war between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977, the Soviet Union abandoned Somalia and began to build its military presence in Ethiopia. In addition to pouring billions of dollars' worth of armaments, they also provided the military regime with military advisors, trainers and experts. According to some estimates the weapons provided to the military junta within the first years was in the amount of US\$ 2 billion (Englebert and Dunn 2013: 355). This amount was to be multiplied in the following decade. They established naval bases in the Red Sea islands of Eritrea. They also encouraged their Eastern Bloc allies to support Ethiopia in its war with Somalia. Accordingly, about twenty thousand Cuban soldiers participated in the Ogaden war on the side of Ethiopia against Somalia (Yordanov 2016: 193). This Cuban intervention decisively changed the course of the war and tilted the outcome for the benefit of Ethiopia. The Americans did not waste time to fill the void left by the soviet departure from Somalia. They began to supply weapons to

the Barre regime. In no time did the Pentagon occupied the Soviet-built port of Berbera (Yordanov 2016: 211).

While Washington built its military bases in the ports of Berbera (Somalia) and Mombasa (Kenya), Moscow boosted its military base in the Island of Dahlak (Ethiopia), present Eritrea not far from the American base in Somalia. The superpowers continued, until the end, their arms supply to both client governments, although the supply of arms was greater to Ethiopia by the Soviets than the USA supply to Somalia (Ismail 2010: 162-3). The flamboyant supply of arms could not however save the regimes from the assault by highly motivated and dedicated liberation movements as a result of which Barre and Haile Mariam were deposed in 1991, with that the intervention of superpowers ended for the moment. The waning of the Cold War facilitated cooperation of the superpowers that contributed to the changes in Ethiopia and Somalia. Arguably, the change of wind that began to blow in the region in the shift of 1980s to 1990s is attributed to the waning of the Cold War (Englebert and Dunn 2013: 356).

The demise of the Cold War brought highly needed respite to the region (Lewis and Harbeson 2016). The Horn of Africa, temporarily, lost its strategic significance for big powers. The Soviet Union was dissolved. The Americans, with the demise of their archenemy, saw no rationale in having strong presence in the Horn. Consequently, they retreated thus the region was left on its own. This respite however did not last long. Soon the Cold War was replaced by the global war on terror that constitute the third international intervention. Following terrorist attacks at its Embassy in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998 in which the perpetrators were presumed to be hiding in Somalia, the US began to carry out military operations in the country (Möller 2013: 183-4). The military engagement in the region increased momentum in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attack in the USA (Ruiz-Gemenez 2017: 133-4). The hunt of suspected terrorists in Somalia that began in earnest in 1998 spurred the USA to ally itself with local warlords and militia leaders (Samatar 2013: 170). As usual is the case, the hunt for terrorists

produced unholy alliances. The USA trained, armed, aided and abetted warlords and militia groups that were wreaking havoc to the Somali society because they were willing to offer their services to the imagined war on terror. The warlords created an organisation called the Somali Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT) funded by the CIA (Samatar 2013: 170, Möller 2013: 183, Brosig 2015: 181).

At the same time, a process of resuscitating the Somali state, in name, under the auspices of IGAD, in practice however driven by Ethiopia produced the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004. The (TFG) was devoid of any domestic legitimacy but was recognised by the so-called international community (Ruiz-Gemenez 2017: 136). Moreover, it could not exercise control even on the capital, Mogadishu. In June 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) attacked and defeated the TFG forces. Within six months, the ICU succeeded in bringing security to Mogadishu, opened the airport and seaport, cleared checkpoints and reduced piracy. The ICU, unlike the TFG, earned widespread support from major section of Somali society across clan boundaries. It created a semblance of state, for the first time in fifteen years (Ruiz-Gemenez 2017: 135, Mathews 2017: 151). There was a real chance of reviving the Somali state. This domestic process was however aborted by the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December 2006 that vanquished the ICU (Möller 2013: 184, Samatar 2013: 171-2, Ruiz-Gemenez 2017: 135). The demise of ICU gave rise to the emergence of militant radical Islamic group called Al-Shebab (youth). The more the USA demonised and tried to eradicate Al-Shebab the further the latter was determined to be part of international terror. Finally, following the US labelling of terrorist Al-Shebab declared its allegiance to Al-Qaeda. The emergence of Al-Shebab, further, heightened the US war on terror in Somalia.

In 2003, the phenomenon of piracy exploded off shore of Somalia adding additional element to turmoil of the region. Somali pirates endangered international trade passing through Bab el Mendab. The pirates carried out spectacular hijacking of merchant ships demanding ransoms (Ruiz-

Gemenez 2017: 129). Shipping premium passing through Bab el Mendab skyrocketed.

Somalia piracy is said to have caused significant risks to seafarers and increases in the cost of shipping, although the amount of the costs is difficult to estimate. The One Earth Future Foundation (OEF), a non-profit organization studying piracy, put the costs at roughly between \$7 and \$12 billion in 2010 and between \$6.6 billion and \$6.9 billion in 2011 (Mengisteab 2014: 142).

This presumed threat induced international naval forces to converge in the region. Tiny Djibouti is now a hub of international military base: France, USA, Japan, and China have bases with many others vying a spot. Although the threat of piracy has been removed, and Al-Shebab remains a rag tag militia comprising few thousands there is still unproportioned international military forces in the region raising suspicion of the real objective of the presence of these military forces.

Terrorism and piracy driven intervention in the HOA is also reinforced by the scramble for resources. The rise of non-Western economic powers like China, India and Malaysia; hungry of natural resources triggered what some have designated the scramble for resources. The availability of natural resources such as oil, mineral, land highly coveted by the rising economies spurred those countries to aggressively penetrate the region (Jalata and Mathews 2017). The outcome of the scramble for resources is mixed for the countries of the region (Cheru and Obi 2010). Countries like Ethiopia and Sudan until the secession of South Sudan have benefited a great deal (Wenping 2010: 160). For the last fifteen years or so, Ethiopia has experienced unprecedented economic growth, which many attribute to Chinese investment. China has invested heavily in infrastructure, manufacturing, telecommunications, housing, road and railway transportation, etc. (Roy 2014). Further Roy notes,

Chinese companies have become engaged in manufacturing a range of productsteel, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, machinery, blankets, and bicycles. The breakdown is as follows: construction (20 per cent),

manufacturing (66 per cent, and involving some 60 companies in 2007), real estate (6 per cent), and others (8 per cent). The two largest Chinese investments in Ethiopia were each valued at US\$30 million, one in rolled steel and the other in engineering and construction (Roy 2014: 19).

A negative aspect of the scramble is the expropriation of land from farmers and pastoralists for agro-industrial purposes without any compensation. Transnational corporate companies and foreign states, particularly from Asia, are given big chunks of fertile land. This often happens by dislocating communities from their sources of livelihood. They are not adequately compensated, no job opportunity created, even the crops grown on expropriated land are for consumption back home of the transnational corporate companies. The net gain for the communities is loss of livelihood the result of which can be seen in the recurrent drought and famine. On the other hand, the political and economic elite benefit immensely from the dealings. The scramble for oil, particularly in Somalia, has magnified the unfortunate situation of the country. International investors in cohort with local beneficiaries are exacerbating cleavages in the society.

The West who belatedly realised that they have been outmanoeuvred by the new economies from East, from what they thought was their privileged domain, began to react impulsively, contributing to further instability in the region. The USA has responded by dispatching military contingents and establishing military bases throughout the Continent. AFRICOM is rapidly expanding its presence in Africa (Haywood 2017). This rivalry, in many ways, resembles that of the Cold War. Beyond, unjustly expropriating natural resources of the region, the rivalry also adversely affects integration of the region. The intervening powers aspire to reconfigure the region in their own image spawning division and disintegration (Mengisteab and Bereketeab 2012). Recently, Djibouti has turned into hotspot for the USA-China rivalry (Sun and Zoubir 2016).

2 - The Gulf and Horn of Africa

Long history of interaction, common culture, religion, language and geography ties the Gulf and Horn of Africa regions. In addition several states are members of the Arab League. The connection has grown immensely in recent years. Some of the factors that intensified the connection include, (i) Yemen war, (ii) Saudi-Iran rivalry, (iii) the GCC crisis. Underpinning all this is the Gulf States ambition to translate economic power to diplomatic, political and military power, therefore the projection of their influence to the HOA. The Yemen war and the GCC split has reconfigured a coalition, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt on one side and Qatar and Turkey on the other. The Saudi-Iran strife for hegemony in the region compelled HOA states to take side and many of them sided with the Saudis.

The emergence of the coalitions and their active involvement in the HOA have added additional element to the complexity of pathologies plaguing the region. The war in Yemen has aggravated the military involvement of the Gulf State in the region. The UAE have established military bases in Somaliland and Eritrea. Sudan sent several thousands of soldiers to Yemen as contribution to the Saudi led military campaign, while Eritrea allowed its port to be used by the UAE war planes for their operation in Yemen. The Turks have military base in Mogadishu and are training the Somali national army. They also signed trade and military agreement with Khartoum that unnerved Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The visit by Erdogan, then prime minister of Turkey, in 2011 and the beginning of regular flight of the Turkish Airline to Mogadishu constituted strong symbolic and practical importance. The Somalis receive Turkey's involvement in Somalia positively. Many Somalis perceive Turkey's role as a balancing act to the Western Christian interference. The rivalry between Qatar and UAE is, however, destabilising Somalia, because while Qatar has good relations with the federal government, UAE is supporting regional state component units of the federal arrangement. This led severance of relation and withdrawal of the UAE from Somalia while putting her eyes on Somaliland.

The role of the Saudi's and UAE in the Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement was positive. Economic incentives that include investment and aid in Ethiopia and Eritrea bolstered the mediation facilitation. Particularly in Ethiopia, in addition to big investment the UAE have also provided Ethiopia with 3 billion UDS. The Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement provide both opportunities and challenges to the Gulf-Horn of Africa relation, which require careful trading.

3 – Regional Interventions

Regional intervention alludes to physical and particularly proxy intrusion that is driven by geostrategic and security calculation of the intervening regional power. Clearly, intervention does not only come from distant places. The states of the region are also actively involved in the intervention of the affairs of their neighbours (Ruiz-Gemenez 2017, Menkhaus 2012, Woodward 2013, de Waal 2015, Mengisteab 2013). There have been clear tendencies that the states in the region quite frequently imitate behaviours of international big powers. They boldly invoke national security and interest as a legitimate and pre-emptive rationale for intervening in a neighbouring country perceived to constitute a threat. The threat to national security and interest is mostly defined subjectively and arbitrarily, which makes it highly controversial. This security interest drove Ethiopia (2006) and Kenya (2011) to invade Somalia (Mengisteab 2014: 140, Ylönen 2017: 99).

The states of the region have been involved in proxy wars for too long. Already in the 1950s, for instance, Sudan and Ethiopia embarked in some sort of proxy. Sudan supported the Eritrean struggle for independence, while Ethiopia supported rebellion in Sudan (Cliffe 1999, Woodward 2013). The proxy war between Ethiopia and Sudan continued until the 21st century overshadowing their diplomatic relation, at times in the fringes of interstate war. Another mutual act of interference is that between Ethiopia and Somalia. The two countries went to war twice, 1964 and 1977/8 (Mathews 2017, Yordanov 2016). The primary source of their conflict is the ethnic

Somali region of Ethiopia that was incorporated in the Ethiopian empire in the 19th century (Walls 2014). Somalis, since receiving independence in 1960, dreamed to unite all ethnic Somalis dispersed in neighbouring countries under the roof of one state. The Somali region of Ethiopia was therefore seen as a natural part of the emergent Somali state. This pan-Somali project has put Somalia at odds with all its neighbours (Mathews 2017: 148, de Waal 2015, Walls 2014).

The neighbours also perceived pan-Somalism as a threat to their national security and integration. Particularly, Ethiopia and Kenya have utilised every opportunity to counter pan-Somalism. Countering pan-Somalism, specially, for Ethiopia, means taking deterrent and preemptive measures (Walls 2014). According to Somalis these measures include making sure that the Somali state remains weak and Somalis remain divided (Ruiz-Gemenez 2017, Samatar 2013). The Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December 2006 is therefore seen in line with the concerted deterrent and pre-emptive measures. Further indication of these measures is the recent introduction of clan-based federal structure, which many Somalis perceive, as primarily pushed by Ethiopia as part of its scheme of containment and ensuring weak Somalia (Ingiriis forthcoming 2021).

Recently, Kenya, in a change of long held policy of non-interference in Somalia's affairs, has begun to, actively, engage in Somalia. The official position is containing terrorist acts, coming from the Al-Shebab. Kenya invaded Somalia in 2011 and still its forces are in the country. Many observers are however convinced that Kenya's change of policy has to do with the USA's drive of war on terror. It was reported that already in 2006, the George Bush administration admonished the Kenyan government of not doing enough in the fight against terrorism. Regardless of the reasons for its involvement in Somali affairs, the consequences have been devastating for Kenya. Al-Shebab have fulfilled their threat of revenge. It has not been able to contain terrorism. If anything has come out of the intervention is the increase of terrorist acts in Kenya. The Garrisa University attack in

April 2015, West Gate Mal in 2013 are clear indications of this. Moreover, the military personnel loss in Somalia has also been huge. For instance, in February 2016, about 200 soldiers lost their life in an Al-Shebab attack at their military base in lower Shebelle. The daring attack, on 5 January 2020, on a military base, in Lamu, Americans are using, is the latest example. Its tourism industry is also highly affected (Menkhaus 2012: 3).

Eritrea and South Sudan joined the club of state in the HOA, following their ascendancy to sovereignty in 1991 and 2011 respectively. Both are involved in the infamous proxy wars. Eritrea and Ethiopia fought a bloody two-year war, 1998-2000 (Reid 2011, Bereketeab 2010). Following signing cessation of hostility, their hot war was converted into cold war until 2018. The two governments were actively involved in abetting oppositions of the other in the hope of either deposing or weakening the enemy. Indeed, their motto seemed to be my enemy's enemy is my friend that produce unholy alliances (Abbink 2003, Woodward 2013, Mengisteab 2014)). South Sudan and Sudan following the secession of the former were engrossed in inter-state conflict. Rebel groups determined to depose the Khartoum government were given sanctuary by Juba, while rebels opposing the Salva Kiir government in South Sudan were abetted by Khartoum (de Waal 2015: 106).

These intricate webs of proxies and interventions by regional states is adversely affecting the structures and functionalities of the regional organisation, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (Mengisteab 2014, Bereketeab 2017). Since the outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998, IGAD faced dilemma. The dilemma concerned with the issue of whether IGAD should stick to its principles and statutes and remain a neutral peace broker or succumb to Ethiopia's pressure and isolate Eritrea. It was exactly the latter choice that IGAD opted for. Ethiopia utilised IGAD for placing Eritrea under UNSC sanctions in 2009 (Mengisteab 2014). This angered Eritrea and still holds grudges against IGAD as a result of which Eritrea has not yet reactivated its membership despite the Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement.

The implication of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict to internal cohesion of IGAD could be exemplified by Uganda's attitude toward IGAD,

The stance of Uganda towards IGAD can be explained by President Museveni's view that the organization is saddled with Ethiopia-Eritrea quarrels which Uganda should not be part of, and that Uganda should concentrate on building the East Africa Community (EAC) (Apuuli 2016: 1).

Other member states have similar views, but no one dared to challenge Ethiopia openly. When Eritrea suspended its membership in IGAD on 27 April 2007 (Andemariam 2015:10), it gave Ethiopia the chance to pass numerous decisions against Eritrea through IGAD (Mengisteab 2014). In 2019, a number of positive changes have taken place in IGAD. After a decade of Ethiopian incumbency, the leadership has been transferred to Sudan that gives new hopes to the revitalisation of the regional organisation. Nonetheless, unless Eritrea is fully re-engaged, revitalisation of IGAD will remain incomplete.

4 – Shifts of Alliances

The superpowers behaved notoriously in discarding their erstwhile clients and initiating flirtation and marriage of convenience with yesterday's enemy. This notoriety is not only a behavioural display of superpowers, but also of the regional states as well. This section examines the constant shifts of alliance by the superpowers and the regional states. I will first examine the behaviours of the superpowers, which will be followed by explication of behaviours of regional states.

As was indicated earlier the USA established military base in Ethiopia in 1953 that lasted until 1974, while the Soviet Union began its presence in Somalia in late 1960s. The hunt for clients, during the Cold War period, was made on the criteria of ideological colour. When Siad Barre declared scientific socialism (Walls 2014: 143), the Soviets began to pump sophisticated weapons to Somalia in which by mid-1970s, Somalia was

considered to be one of the powerful states in Sub-Saharan Africa (Schmidt 2013: 149). The USA have been providing Ethiopia with weapons since 1953 for its Western orientation and the Emperor's willingness to join the bandwagon of anticommunism (Schmidt 2013: 145). The year 1974, in many respects, is a memorable year. First, the aging Emperor was deposed by a military junta following widespread popular uprisings (Markakis 2011). Second, the military proclaimed socialism and approached the Soviet Union for ideological mentorship and weapons (Woodward 2013: 31). The Soviets, initially attempted to bring together Somalia and Ethiopia to create anti-imperialist bloc in the region. The idea of the creation of socialist, anti-imperialist bloc was however foiled by Somalia who was determined to annex the Somali region of Ethiopia (Yordanov 2016: 165-6). When the Soviets realised that they could not convince Siad Barre to abandon the idea of getting back Ogaden and embrace the anti-imperialist socialist coalition, they deserted him and moved to Ethiopia. The move was expedited by the outbreak of war between Somalia and Ethiopia. Two factors convinced the Soviets to switch side. The first was the Somali attempt to annex Ogaden had no support of international law. The second was the increasing realisation and conviction of the Ethiopian military leader's genuine socialist orientation (Yordanov 2016: 144-5, 153).

Once the Soviets moved in Ethiopia, it was logical for the Americans to exit from Ethiopia (Keller 2014: 75-6). The exit from Ethiopia however did not mean exiting from the region. It simply meant moving to the next door. By then Siad Barre made it clear that he has abandoned his commitment to scientific socialism and turned his face to the West (Yordanov 2016: 188-9, Woodward 2013: 37). Nevertheless, the USA was not in hurry to pour weapons into Barre's hands. The USA's hesitation to provide Somalia with military supply had to do with their reservation of Barre's determination to annex Ogaden. The American reservation might have caused Barre to lose the war. The Americans were also convinced that annexation of the Ogaden contradicts international law. Nevertheless, perhaps of more importance is

that the US still saw its relationship with Ethiopia of long-term and strategic nature. The military junta's flirtation with the Soviet Union was seen as hiccup that in due time will pass away. Therefore, they were navigating cautiously not to inflict permanent damage to the Ethiopia-USA strategic relationship (Ismail 2010: 163). Nonetheless, the reshuffling of alliances wrought war, carnage, poverty and instability for one and half decades that included the Somali-Ethiopia war, escalation of the Eritrean independence war, the rise of various rebels in both Ethiopia and Somalia, the famine of 1984/5 in Ethiopia. The superpowers also encouraged their allied to provide weapons to their respective clients. While the Soviets encouraged members of the Eastern bloc to supply arms to Ethiopia, the American's encourage their Arab allies to supply weapons to Somalia (Yordanov 2016).

In term of reshuffles of regional alliances, also the Cold War and post-Cold War periods witnessed dramatic challenges. Regional states are not, in a meaningful sense, different from global powers when it comes to interventions and shifting alliances. After all, all states have their own interests and world outlook that drives them to intervene in the affairs of other states as well as create alliances against others. The most dramatic shift of alliance making during the Cold War was seen when President Barre of Somalia and President Mengistu Haile Maria of Ethiopia signed a sudden peaceful coexistence agreement in 1988 (Elmi 2010). Some of the provisions of the agreement concerned supporting rebel groups of respective country. Accordingly, the Ethiopian government ordered the Somali National Movement (SNM) to leave Ethiopia (Elmi 2010: 20). Left with no alternative options, the SNM returned to Somalia and launched spectacular attacks against government forces. Countering, Siad Barre unleashed heinous bombardments in northern Somalia, destroying the main towns, notably Hargeisa and Berbera (Walls 2014: 158). The SNM military move was decisive in the final collapse of the Barre regime and the Somali state. Perhaps, if the agreement between Barre and Haile Maria was not signed the collapse of the Barre regime might have been deferred.

Another dramatic shift of alliance took place between Sudan and Ethiopia in the wake of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war (1998-2000). Not only Sudan established firm alliance with Ethiopia against Eritrea, but also, abandoning its historical ties with Egypt consolidated its alliance with Ethiopia in the Ethio-Egyptian rivalry on the Nile waters. The Somalia federal government and the selfdeclared independent Somaliland, although both have no options, abandoned their historical enmity and formed strong alliance with Ethiopia.

The flux in alliance formation may not provide the region strategic long-term peace, stability and development. Predictable and sustainable relation building would guarantee regional integration, a presupposition for regional peace and development.

5 – Multiple Consequences

As a result of the concerted regional and international interventions, the HOA has paid immensely high price. The region is often described as the most unstable, conflict prone and crisis ridden. The first, most devastating consequence is the festering intra-state and inter-state conflicts afflicting the region (Bereketeab 2013, Woodward 2013, Cliffe 1999). Just when the decolonisation process was beginning to unfold, in the 1950s, the region was marred by festering conflicts. The region was overwhelmed by intra-state conflicts. From the very outset, ushering in the post-colonial era, centrifugal forces began to seriously challenge the central state. The central state was perceived by marginal and periphery groups as dominated by an ethnic group, one party, the military, or a strong leader. The post-colonial state, due to its colonial origin and colonially inherited structures, failed to represent all citizens. Therefore, it was born defective. The central state finds itself in need of external big power support that deprive it domestic legitimacy (Schmidt 2013, 2018; Yordanov 2016; Woodward 2006). The intra-state conflicts have also the tendency of easily spilling over across international boundaries and assuming interstate dimension. Therefore, the region has seen a number of inter-state wars. The reverse is also very

true where inter-state conflicts have the tendency of stirring intra-state conflicts. This is so true when you have ethnic groups that astride across the international border. Over the last sixty years, in this overlapping inter- and intra-state conflicts, both regional and international actors played active role. The scope and pace though varies contingent on periods and situations. Overall, however, the number of intra-state wars are much higher than inter-state wars (Woodward 2013).

The involvement of regional and international actors renders the conflicts intricate, intractable and interwoven, which means their settlement necessarily requires holistic regional approaches and mechanisms. Nevertheless, international peace mediators and peace builders focus is usually on piecemeal isolated and disaggregated cases and countries. Moreover, certain cases or countries are given more attention while others are neglected (Young 2012). Yet, it has proven again and again that the attempts to deal with specific, local and isolate conflicts is fruitless. The reason for this is that what often seem to be isolated conflicts are in fact embedded in a much more complicated web of local, national, regional and international tensions and rivalries. A good example is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation MovementArmy (SPLM-A) in south Sudan. In spite of the designation, comprehensive, it proved to be narrow and bilateral, excluding many other stakeholders and actors. The exclusivity of the settlement was demonstrated by the explosion of conflicts in Darfur (2003), South Kordofan, Blue Nile (2011) and Kassala region (Young 2012, Sorbo and Ahmed 2013, Grawert 2010).

These regions felt left out of the peace agreement and the concomitant dividend, and in order for their grievances to get attention resorted to armed rebellion. The very fact that raising arms can be rewarding spurred these groups to fight, proving the intractability of the conflicts gripping Sudan. The Eritrea-Ethiopia, Eritrea-Djibouti, Sudan-South Sudan, and Somalia

conflicts clearly demonstrate the inter-link and regional dynamics of the conflicts.

The effects of war are not only limited to the immediate loss of life and destruction of property, but also to the long-term structural and functional effects on the economy. Basic economic infrastructures are destroyed. The able labour force is either recruited as fighting force or compelled to leave the country to a refugee life. The emission of toxic gases from weapons used in the pervasive and protracted wars also generate serious permanent health problems. The outcome of all this is deplorable poverty, underdevelopment, inequality, unemployment, diseases, etc. Another consequence of the festering intractable wars is environmental degradation. The protracted wars have the effect of destroying biodiversity, causing deforestation, desertification and droughts. Recurrent droughts have become common occurrence at times leading to famine. The 1973-4 and 1984-5 famine in Ethiopia that took the life of hundreds of thousands; and recently, in 2013, 2016, 2017 are examples of droughts and famine cases plaguing the region caused by wars and environmental degradations (Bereketeab 2013, Woodward 2013, Abbink 2017).

Moreover, the crisis related to conflicts and environmental degradation also have direct bearing on the state and nation building process and project. The post-colonial state and nation building project from the very onset faced formidable obstacles. One of the obstacles has to do with models of state and nation building post-colonial nationalist leader chose to pursue (Mengisteab 2014: 70). The Western models of state and nation building proved incompatible with the reality in Africa, yet were rigorously pursued. State building, basically, concerns institution building (Poggi 1978), while nation building concerns cognitive aspects such as sentiments, feeling of common overarching supra-ethnic identities (Gellner 1983, Smith 1991, Bereketeab 2011a). State building as institution building needs to address institutional bifurcations that characterise post-colonial societies. This institutional bifurcation is expressed in the form of modern-traditional,

urban-rural, peasant sedentary-pastoral nomadic (Ekeh 1975, Mamdani 1996, Englebort 2005, Sklar 2005). This was compounded by demographic complexity such as religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity. The overall upshot has therefore become state deformity. The concerted effort of Western powers and their regional allies to resuscitate the Somalia state through neo-liberal peace building and state building agenda has proved so far to be a failure. The unceremonious designation of failed state for the last quarter of a century is a strong reminder of the incompatibility of neo-liberal peace and state building. Moreover, the continuous external interventions also have a disruptive and corruptive effect to the domestic process of state and nation building.

A viable and functional state and nation building presupposes reconciling the institutional bifurcations and corresponding power centres. The failure to reconcile the institutional bifurcations could not only be attributed to the unwillingness or inability of the post-colonial nationalist leaders. It has very much to do with interventions of the neo-colonial, Cold War, global war on terror and scramble for resources. One of the schemes of Cold War interventions has been, following the Roman maxim of divide and conquer, create division between urban-rural, state-society, elite-masses (Bereketeab 2013). This division denies the state domestic legitimacy, though it earns external legitimacy, which is at the centre of the crisis of the state in the HOA. The divide and conquer is also applied to the regional organisation, IGAD (InterGovernmental Authority on Development) where member states are frequently categorised as friendly or non-friendly based on their relations and services to geo-strategic interests and programmes (Al-Affendi 2001).

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine the constant international and regional interventions, shifts of alliances and consequences in the Horn of Africa (HOA). The HOA suffers of convoluted pathologies. The pathologies could, succinctly be identified as conflicts, state crisis, environmental degradation, poverty and underdevelopment, mass youth migration and external interventions. In terms of causality of the pathologies, while the last point constitutes an externality dimension, the rest constitute internality dimension. Nevertheless, there is an intimate correlation between the internality and externality causality dimensions. The intimacy of the internality and externality of causality finds expression primarily in the collusion between the national political elite and external big powers. This has given rise to a political establishment that seeks accountability and legitimacy in the outer world. Rarely do national leaders and institutions base their legitimacy on their citizens, or they are accountable to citizens. This means a social contract between state and society that is supposed to ensure mutual coexistence fails to materialise. Without this social contract, there will never be peaceful coexistence between state and society. Further, a functioning social contract that brings peace and stability could only be produced by the negotiated arrangement between state and society without interference, intervention and imposition of external actors. Imposed institutions, structures and solutions will only serve short-term purposes, if any at all. History tells us nation and state building is an arduous, protracted and generational work, no short-cut or quick fix. We also learn that nation and state building, by its very nature, is domestic. As such, it has to be built bottom-up as well as top-down; the nation seeks for its corresponding state, while the state seeks for cohesion of the nation.

The paper argued that the international and regional interventions, and continued shifts of alliances generate convoluted pathologies that have been and still are plaguing the region. The post-colonial configuration of political players in the HOA has been in continuous flux. The end of the Cold War

phased out a configuration of players paving way for new ones. This time the number of players multiplied. The interests and ideologies also multiplied. The classical interests and ideologies were either reformulated or replaced by new ones. Radicalism and religious extremism is increasingly taking hold terrain in the HOA. The post-Cold War period may have brought new actors and players to the region. The fundamental behaviours however remain the same. The old pathologies still persist in defining life of the people of the HOA. Amid all this, however, we see light in the tunnel.

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