REVIEW ARTICLE

The Role of Ethiopia in the Regional Security Complex of the Horn of Africa

Robert Kłosowicz[*]

Abstract

Ethiopia is a key ally of the Western world, especially the U.S., which considers it as an important regional security partner in the global war on terror. However, in the region of the Horn of Africa its role and ties are much more complex. Bordering with Ethiopia in the north, Eritrea, which after a long civil war gained its independence from Ethiopia itself, does not maintain good relations with Addis Ababa. Behind the border in the west, after the division of the Sudan, the situation is also far from stability. Another important problem is a disagreement between Addis Ababa, Khartoum and Cairo over the use of waters of the Nile. In the east, the borderland with Somalia generates not only border conflict, but also an internal one. The paper attempts to answer questions about the role played by Ethiopia in the region of the Horn of Africa, taking into account its complicated relations with its neighbours as well as its emerging new challenges in the field of internal and international security. The analysis presented in the article is based on qualitative data gathered during extensive field research conducted in Ethiopia (2011, 2012, and 2014) and Somalia (2011) as well as the already existing quantitative data provided by international organizations, governments and research institutions. The paper is developed with the use of historical method, as well as critical analysis of literature on the subject, official documents and the press[1].

Key terms: Ethiopia/Horn of Africa/Regional Security

1. Introduction

The Horn of Africa is both a geographical and political notion. In geographical and traditional, restrictive political terms, the Horn of Africa consists of the Somali Peninsula in East Africa between the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, which is home to the countries of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia[2]. However,

---

[*]Professor. Director, Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Jagiellonian University, Kraków.
≠ The article can be cited this way.

there is a growing tendency in scholarly literature dedicated to political issues to adopt a broader definition of the Horn of Africa which, in addition to the above countries, also includes Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and sometimes Uganda (Mantel-Niećko & Ząbek, 1999, p. 15). The countries represent a regional security complex interlinked by interests and dependencies typical of a politically and economically compact region. This is reflected by the existence of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which brings together the seven countries mentioned above.[3] For the purposes of this article, a broad definition of the Horn of Africa is adopted, by excluding Uganda, since it does not border Ethiopia.

The aim of the article is to assess the role of Ethiopia in the regional security complex in the Horn of Africa, taking into account the Ethiopian national interests, as well as its growing importance as a Western ally on the international arena[4]. The research hypothesizes that this role is of growing importance in the political, economic and military dimensions not only in the Horn of Africa's security complex but also in the broader international perspective.

The results considering the analyzed subject are based on three sources: empirical data gathered during field research, quantitative data provided by the governments, international organizations and the academic and non-academic research units (such as university research centres or think tanks), as well as the data resulting from critical analysis of the existing literature on the subject, official documents, and the press. During the field research in Ethiopia (2011, 2012, and 2014) and Somalia (2011), the data were collected through covert and overt observations, in-depth interviews, as well as ethnographic studies conducted in the provinces.[5] The paper is developed with the use of historical method and is structured according to the key security issues present in the relations maintained by Ethiopia with other countries of the Horn of Africa region.

2. Historical Background

Since the down fall of the Socialist Derg[6] regime in 1991, Ethiopia has been striving to regain the hegemonic position in the Horn of Africa, which it has usurped in the past. This follows from the historical tendency to establish the rule of the Amhara people, who inhabited the central plateau of Ethiopia (Abyssinia), from which they attempted to conquer the neighbouring territories, for example Ogaden, or the vast areas inhabited by the Cushitic Oromo people. The policy of dominance in the region was successfully pursued in the late 19th century by Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913), who conquered and annexed the areas neighbouring on Shewa kingdom (Merera, 2011, pp. 1-5). Menelik also held off the colonial expansion of the Italians in Ethiopia, defeating their troops at the battle of Adwa in 1896. The tradition was continued by Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930-1974), who was held in high international esteem. Thanks to his efforts, after World War II, the international community allowed for Eritrea, former Italian colony, to become part of Ethiopia. However, depriving Eritrea of its autonomy led to a war with Ethiopia, which lasted for 30 years.

After the emperor was overthrown by the Socialist Derg regime, which was being led by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, Ethiopia kept usurping the right of hegemony which, among other things, led to an armed conflict with Somalia in the years 1977-1978 and 1982, and to the continuation of the war with Eritrea. After the

fall of Mengistu, it took years for Ethiopia – afflicted by decades of wars and the disastrous communist command-and-quota economy – to recover from the damage and follow the path of economic growth. At present, Ethiopia is commonly perceived by independent observers as one of the most stable African countries. This view seems to be shared by tourists, who come to Ethiopia in large numbers every year. The capital city itself, with its modern airport and its growing modern district along Africa Avenue (Bole Road), makes a good impression on newcomers. The very fact that Addis Ababa is home to the seats of the key regional African organisations, including the African Union (AU), and diplomatic missions of nearly all the significant countries of the world, adds to the reputation of the country. These entire make Ethiopia appear to be one of the safest and most dynamically developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with its political stability likely to have a positive influence on its neighbours, which rank amongst the least stable countries in Africa.

3. Ethiopia's Growing Economic, Political and Military Importance

A number of international economic institutions predict that in the next few years Ethiopia will experience intensive growth. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ethiopia is the fastest growing African economy among the non-oil producing African countries. Currently, the country is negotiating its membership in the World Trade Organisation, and the government has been making efforts to ensure that it has the best possible image among investors (Maasho, 2013). The growing economic potential and influx of foreign capital drive the development of the country's infrastructure, in particular, the construction of roads. The economy experienced significant growth over the past decade, from 2003/4 - 2012/13, averaging 10.8% per year compared to the regional average of 5.3%, and it was the 12th fastest growing economy worldwide (The World Bank, 2015). This has been confirmed by experts, including Jeffrey D. Sachs. In his much acclaimed book, *The End of Poverty*, Sachs named Ethiopia as one of the well-governed countries which are on their way out of the poverty trap (Sachs, 2005, p. 195). Indeed, visitors who went to Ethiopia five years ago and come to the country now would see the speed and scale of development. Roads are being built across the country; the railway line which connects Addis Ababa to Djibouti is being rebuilt, and all the key cities are actually becoming huge construction sites. Ethiopia plays an important role as a key air carrier in Africa. Ethiopian Airlines is among the top three largest African airlines, with an excellent reputation for safety, which earned it the membership in Star Alliance in 2011(Star Alliance, n.d.).

In addition to the economic success, which is quite impressive for sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia may also boast a growing political position, not only in the Horn of Africa, but also across the continent. The country is also a home to major African and international organisations (the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa). Apart from playing a crucial role in international relations, it is a key ally for Western countries in fighting terrorism and extremism in the region. Washington officially considers Ethiopia as its important regional security partner in the global war on terror, viewing it as its "anchor state" in Africa. After the 9/11 attacks, in its offensive against international terrorism, the United States became involved also in Africa. American strategists chose the countries of crucial importance for the U.S. in the National Security Strategy of the United States of America that was announced by

G.W. Bush in September 2002 (Bush, 2002). A month later, the Operation Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa was launched to combat terrorism in the region. The operation comprised Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti ("African Regional Operations", 2007). Furthermore, the Pentagon started to establish the so-called Cooperative Security Locations and Forward Operating Sites ("U.S. European Command Statement", 2004) across Africa. Moreover, the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)– with its headquarters in Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, was established within the framework of the Central Command (CENTCOM). On 1 October 2008, the Force was brought under the control of the newly-established regional command, i.e. the U.S. African Command (AFRICOM), and it has been responsible for counter-terrorism operations ever since. Its objective is to fight not only Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab militants in Somalia but also any extremist group in the area, and to pursue stability actions in the region ("Partnership, Peace, Stability", 2010, p. 34).

Being the biggest and most populous country in the region, Ethiopia was a natural choice for Washington. From the start, the Ethiopian army was part of the programme for training U.S. allies' troops in the war on terror implemented by the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (Scavetta, 2009). When in 2006 the radical Islamic Courts Union in Somalia grew in strength, the U.S. was actively encouraging the Ethiopian government to strike against the Somali fundamentalists by supporting the operation financially and militarily (Slavin, 2007). Ethiopia has never announced officially how many troops were sent to Somalia, but it is estimated that the overall number was 30-40 thousand ("U.S. Special Forces", 2007; Civins, 2014, p. 127).

The events of the Arab Spring in 2011 in North Africa led to partial loss of power by Washington in Egypt, which had been a key ally for Washington in the region. As a consequence, Ethiopia has become more significant partner for the U.S. which gave it a stronger position in bilateral relations. Soon, new proposals for cooperation started to come in from America. In 2011, the U.S. American embassy in Addis Ababa was opened in a new, impressive building, which is currently the biggest U.S. diplomatic mission in Sub-Saharan Africa. Military assistance was radically stepped up by 256% compared to the previous year. In 2011, a base for American drones was opened in Arba Minch in southern Ethiopia (Whitlock, 2011; Zenko & Kreps, 2014, p. 15), the fact that suggests that the drones would be used for tracking the Al-Shabaab militants in Somalia (Smith, 2013).

The Ethiopian army has always been large, but its equipment has been far from perfect. The American support provided to Addis Ababa, such as financing, training and equipment, has been changing the Ethiopian armed forces at a faster pace (Ploch, 2010, pp. 47-49). According to the *Global Fire Power* (World Military Strength Ranking), Ethiopia is currently the strongest Sub-Saharan country in military terms and the third strongest country in Africa after Egypt and Algeria, ranking higher than South Africa (Global Fire Power, 2014). The ranking takes into account 40 factors determining the position of each country in terms of military strength. Ethiopia, with its population of 96 million, is the second – after Nigeria – most populous African country, which obviously translates into military potential. At present, Ethiopia has 180 thousand active frontline personnel, with an estimated number of persons fit for service of 24 million (Global Fire Power, n.d.). The Ethiopian army has 560 tanks and 780 armoured fighting vehicles. For the most part,

the basic weapons used by the infantry as well as the artillery and tanks are Russian and Chinese. The air force uses over 80 aircrafts, some of which are technologically outdated. There are several U.S. military training missions in Ethiopia, and the weaponry and training have been improving from year to year. An example of the progress is the construction of the first Ethiopian drone, which was announced in 2013. An increasingly important role in training and arming Ethiopia is also played by Israel, which is shown by secret U.S. diplomatic correspondence disclosed by WikiLeaks (WikiLeaks, 2011).

4. The Island of Stability within the Destabilized Neighbourhood

A crucial importance for strengthening the Ethiopian state and its regional position is attributed to Ethiopia's sense of statehood. It has been founded on age-long written historical accounts, dating seven centuries back, and on Ethiopia's awareness that it is the only African state which had not been colonised by European powers (except for the short Italian occupation in 1936-1941). The latter factor has a highly symbolic meaning for Africa as a whole, which is reflected, for example, by the fact that upon gaining independence many African countries chose the Ethiopian colours for their national flags.

However, is this a true picture of the state, or perhaps its actual condition is better illustrated by the latest Failed States Index published by the globally esteemed Fund for Peace think tank in July 2014, in which Ethiopia ranks as the 19th most dysfunctional state in the world (?). The ranking is based on 12 indicators of political, economic, and social instability. Each indicator reflects the degree of the country's fragility in the respective area. In the last 7 years, Ethiopia has consistently ranked among the top 20 most dysfunctional states: 2007 – 17; 2008 – 16; 2009 – 16; 2010 – 17; 2011 – 20, 2012 -17, 2013-19, 2014-19.

According to the Fragile States Index[7] (FSI), as well as other rankings and reports by think tanks and international organisations, Ethiopia is still a very poor country affected by droughts, poor harvest, overpopulation, political instability, and human right violations. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 184th out of the 194 countries in the Human Development Index (2014) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Human Development Report, 2014). Over 44% of the population live below the poverty line, with 77.5 % living on less than 2 dollars a day. The illiteracy level is 30%, and over 38% of children under 5 are underweight. It is estimated that there are 7 million orphans in the country, which leaves a great number of children living in the streets. Cities record high unemployment rates, reaching 80% among working-age men (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). According to the Gallup Organisation, 46% of Ethiopians, mostly educated ones, want to leave the country (Esipova, Ray, & Srinivasan, n.d.).

Ethiopia lies in a neighbourhood which is exceptionally unstable in security terms. According to the latest Fragile States Index, all the neighbouring states, except for the small Djibouti, are among the 23 most dysfunctional countries in the world[8]. During the decolonisation of Africa in the early 1960s, none of the Horn of Africa (HOA) countries were free from conflict, with the area recording the largest death tolls as the result of wars and the greatest number of refugees in the world. In the last 25 years, the region has seen 32 conflicts between states, 179 conflicts between non-

state actors and 22 acts of genocide. According to estimates, the Horn of Africa accommodates 33% of the refugees in the world. The region is regularly hit by droughts, which lead to large-scale humanitarian crises. In the years 1982-1992, approx. 2 million people starved to death, and another 25 million suffered from serious food shortages (Bereketeab, 2013, pp. 72-73; Woodward, 2013, pp. 3-15; Life and Peace Institute, 2014, p. 11; Martinelli, 2014, pp. 87-95). From 2011-2012, approximately 9.5 million were affected by starvation, and approximately 25 million died (United Nations Development Programme, 2012).

Eritrea, which borders on Ethiopia in the north and which gained independence in 1993 after a long-lasting civil war, does not maintain good relations with Addis Ababa. Since the armed border dispute between the two states broke out in 1998, their relationships have become tensed, due to Eritrea's financial and militarily support to the armed separatist groups which were active in Ethiopia, such as the Oromo Liberation Front, which fights for the liberation of the Oromia Region ("OLF Mission", n.d.) (Abraham, 2004, pp. 392-393). Asmara is also accused of supporting Islamic fundamentalists in Somalia, which is seen as a continuation of the conflict with Ethiopia following the 1998-2000 border war. By supporting Islamist organisations in Somalia, Eritrea wants to get Ethiopia involved in the internal Somali conflict, which has serious implications for Ethiopia, given the long border conflict between the latter and Somalia and the Somali minority living in eastern Ethiopia (Ogaden), where the separatist Ogaden National Liberation Front is active. The UN and the U.S. have pressed Eritrea to cease its political, financial and military support for the Islamist militants in Somalia and to stop breaking the international embargo on the supply of weapons for their troops and making training bases available in its own territory, in Asaab and Teseney. It was to Asmara that the government of the Islamic Courts Union escaped following the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia in 2006, following which, it proclaimed itself the Somali government-in-exile (Harper, 2012, p. 186).

Directly after the 1998–2000 war, many Ethiopians living in Eritrea were expelled from the country. Currently, given the highly difficult economic situation and the increasingly grave consequences of the Isaias Afwerki's Regime, Eritrea is experiencing a mass exodus of its population, leaving the country in search of a better future, with some arriving in Ethiopia. Currently, there are over 100 thousand Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2014).

With regard to Ethiopia's southern neighbour, Kenya, the only problem between the two countries is the activity of the Oromo Liberation Front, whose troops seek refuge behind the Kenyan border, from where it is easier for them to attack Ethiopian government troops. OLF is destabilising Kenya's north-western border area, which puts a strain on the relations between Addis Ababa and Nairobi. At the turn of the 2010 and 2011, the two countries launched a joint military operation against OLF (Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard) 24th November 2010, pp. 8-9).0931057195

On the western border, after a 50-year war, Sudan split into two countries, but the situation in the area is still far from stable. The continued tension between Khartoum and Juba results in armed incidents, leading to the migration of population from the disputed areas between the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan (Vondracek, 2014, pp. 251-276). As a consequence of the tense situation on the Sudan-South Sudan border and the ethnic unrest in South Sudan, nearly two hundred thousand

people were forced to leave their homes. Almost six hundred thousand of the refugees escaped to the neighbouring countries, hundred and eighty thousand of whom took refuge in Ethiopia, increasing the number of Sudanese refugees in the country above two hundred and forty thousand (UNHCR, 2014, August 19). Ethiopia was forced to reformulate its policy towards the Republic of Sudan after the country's split. The relations between Addis Ababa and Khartoum may be considered fair, even though cool and characterised by mistrust caused by Ethiopia's suspicions that Sudan has supported the separatist tendencies of the Muslim Oromo people. Such suspicions may be well-founded given the words of the leader of the Sudanese National Islamic Front, Hassan El-Turabi, who said that Ethiopia is on the road to self-destruction, which may, in the future, open way for the creation of an Islamic Oromo state – a bridge between the Islamic Sudan and areas inhabited by Muslims on the Indian Ocean (Tafesse, 2008-2009, p.16). Addis Ababa has been also blaming Khartoum for organising the assassination attempt on the former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, in Addis Ababa in 1995, when he arrived to participate in a meeting of the Organisation of African Unity. The Sudanese authorities refused to extradite the 3 suspects, in response to which the UN imposed sanctions on Sudan the following year ("United Nations Security", 1996).

Another major problem is the conflict over the Nile waters between Ethiopia and Sudan, with the latter strongly supported by Egypt. Both countries are dependent on the waters of the Nile, with 300 million of population living in its basin i.e. approximately 30% of Africa's population. Before reaching Egypt, the Nile flows across 7 countries: the White Nile across Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, the Blue Nile across Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan. Subject to an agreement Sudan signed in 1959, Egypt claims 75% of the Nile waters and Sudan 25%. In 1959, the two states did not consult the text of the treaty with the other countries which are located on the Nile. In light of the agreement, any third country wishing to deliver an investment project involving the use of the waters must first request permission from Egypt and Sudan. For years, the agreement remained on paper, and given the economic underdevelopment of the countries upstream of Egypt, any major investments on the river were unlikely (Gebeto, 2010, p. 23).

The situation changed after 2004. By that time, Ethiopia had only one water dam, which was built in 1973 and was producing 134 MW. In 2004-2012, Ethiopia implemented a dam construction programme under which 7 hydrological projects were delivered, totalling 3330 MW, including two on the Blue Nile and one on the Atbarah River, a tributary of the Nile. To reach a compromise and an agreement on the Nile waters, in 1999 Ethiopia proposed the Nile Basin Initiative, which was, however, boycotted by Egypt and Sudan (Tesfaye, 2001, pp. 108-109). The situation went from bad to worse. In May 2010, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda signed an agreement contesting the special status of Egypt and Sudan in terms of using the Nile waters. In response, Khartoum and Cairo threatened to attack the dams from the air. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian government began the construction of new hydropower plants with the total capacity of 8000 MW, including the 6000 MW Millennium Dam on the Blue Nile, which would be the largest African water dam to date. The dam will not only break Egypt's and Sudan's monopoly over the Niles waters, but will also, according to Cairo, threaten its water supply (Gebreluel, 2014, p. 25). The projects will allow Ethiopia to mitigate the impact of the fluctuations in water levels between the spells of dry and wet seasons, and irrigate 200 thousand hectares of farmland. The

depletion of water in Egypt and Sudan would amount to 5% of the water volumes flowing across the countries at present (Malone, 2011; Maasho, 2011). Such developments can change, over the years, the geopolitical balance of power in the region in favour of Ethiopia. In the next 25 years, Ethiopia plans to build another four dams on the Blue Nile River; Egypt and Sudan made it clear that the construction of the dams is against their national interests and they threatened Ethiopia with military action, including air strikes targeting the dams under construction (Ethiopian Review, 2011). Sudan agreed to host an airbase for Egyptian air forces in Kuris (western Darfur), which could be used to launch air strikes against the Ethiopian dams, if diplomatic efforts fail (African Globe, 2012).

Being a highly dysfunctional state, Somalia is a serious challenge for Ethiopia, likely to be a source of unpredictable consequences both for the region and Ethiopia's internal policy. The eastern border with Somalia is 1300 km long, and as a result of the new fighting in Somalia, approximately 300 thousand people have been forced to leave their homes and to go to the neighbouring countries. Out of this number, 100 thousand have arrived in Ethiopia, doubling the number of Somali refugees in the country (currently their number is 265 thousand) (UNHCR, 2014). According to a report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees published in August 2014, Ethiopia is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, with the total number of refugees, as at the end of July 2014, amounting to 630 thousand, accommodated in 23 camps, 6 of which are among the 20 largest camps in the world (UNHCR, 2014, August 19).

Since 1991, Somalia has been immersed in a civil war and for the last two years, it has been considered a failed state. Its northern part, the Somaliland, has seceded from the rest of the country and declared independence, with the rest of the country controlled by warring clans and fractions, which often show a fundamentalist tinge and are part of Al-Qaida's network of terrorist organisations. The chaos is conducive to organised crime, with sea piracy as its best-known manifestation. Since the very outbreak of the war in Somalia, Ethiopia has been considered the key external actor in the conflict. The Ethiopian government has conducted several military operations against the radical Islamic militants supporting separatism in the Ethiopian Ogaden province, which is inhabited by the Somali people. At the same time, Ethiopia closely cooperates with Somaliland, thus gaining access to the port in Berbera. Many prominent Somali politicians are of the opinion that, under the pretence of fighting terrorism and Islamic extremism, and with the support of the U.S., Ethiopia is pursuing its own political objectives in Somalia, thus deepening the disintegration of the latter with the aim of eliminating its traditional rival in the region. An example quoted in this context is the recognition by Ethiopia of the newly-founded quasi-state of Jubaland (Plaut, 2014; Rudincová, 2011, pp. 58-62).

It needs to be remembered that united Somalia has often claimed the territory of Ogaden, which has been an Ethiopian province since the conquest by Menelik II in the 19th century. The claims result from the still strong idea among some Somali elites to establish the Greater Somalia, which would comprise eastern Ethiopia and north-eastern Kenya. Ethiopia's political and military activity in Somalia is also aimed at weakening the influence of Eritrea, which, as mentioned above, supports Islamic fundamentalists in an effort to harm Ethiopia and fuel separatist tendencies in Ogaden (Lewis, 2009, pp. 88, 106).

5. The Regional Leader and Reliable International Partner

Ethiopia is clearly the dominant state in the Horn of Africa, as seen both in the narrower and broader perspective. Only Sudan can be compared to Ethiopia in certain respects, yet it is no match for the latter in population terms (38 million), military power, not to mention its influence and prestige both in regionally and internationally. The other countries: Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and South Sudan are much smaller and weaker, with the overall population of 109 million, i.e. slightly over 10 million more than Ethiopia. If the Horn of Africa was to be narrowed down to Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti, the predominance of Ethiopia would be huge, both in terms of the territory (40% of the region's area) and the population (85% of the total population in the region). Being the most powerful country in the region, Ethiopia should, theoretically, control the regional environment. However, in practice this would be very difficult due to the high instability of the state and the numerous intra-state (Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan) and inter-state conflicts resulting from the contested nature of nearly all the borders in the region (Mengisteab, 2014, pp. 24-25).

Ever since the independent state of Eritrea was founded in 1991-1993, Ethiopia has had no access to the sea (it is currently one of the most populous country in the world with no sea access). This determines Ethiopia's foreign policy, with the border dispute with Eritrea being one of the most pressing issues in the region (Tafesse, 2008-2009, pp. 15-16).

Ethiopia plays a crucial role in the activity of supporting the efforts towards strengthening the capacity of IGAD to ensure peace and security, as well as political and economic cooperation. IGAD is not a traditional institutional structure bringing together the region's states, as is the case for West Africa (ECOWAS) and Southern Africa (SADC). Meanwhile, the security system which was to be established after the transformation of the OAU into AU was to be founded *inter alia* on the African Standby Force (ASF). The proposed establishment of a permanent peacekeeping force was an attempt to ensure more effective response to the political crises in the region, which often escalate into armed conflicts, and consequently, result in humanitarian crises.

The mission of establishing the Eastern African Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) was entrusted to IGAD. However, the objections of some of the countries forced the ministers of defence of the states participating in the initiative to set up, in Nairobi, the Eastern African Standby Brigade Coordination Mechanism (EASBRIGCOM), which is independent of IGAD. Given the character of the activities, a decision was taken to create a regional prevention and conflict-solving mechanism – the Eastern Africa Peace and Security Mechanism (EAPSM), within the framework of which the existing EASBRIGCOM was to be transformed into a secretariat coordinating the action of EAPSM. The Eastern Africa Peace and Security Secretariat (EAPSS) is to be a platform for political and military cooperation between East African countries. The headquarters of the brigade command was established in Addis Ababa (Lizak, 2012, pp. 313-314).

As part of its commitment to peace and stability in Africa, Ethiopia deploys its peace troops under African Union and UN mission. Addis Ababa played an important role in the peace talks between Juba and Khartoum when Sudan was being divided. Ethiopian troops were the core of the joint United Nations–African Union mission in

Darfur (UNAMID). Before the proclamation of independence by South Sudan, a border dispute broke out for the oil-rich Abyei Area, and 4200 Ethiopian peacekeeping troops were deployed as part of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). That one was a rare situation when both sides of the conflict requested the same country to send its troops under a UN peacekeeping mission. Pursuant to an agreement signed on 20 June 2011 in Addis Ababa between the government of Sudan and the South Sudanese People's Liberation Army, both parties agreed to withdraw their military forces from the Abyei Area and accepted the deployment of conciliatory Ethiopian troops (UNISFA, n.d.). When, in the Spring 2012, the fighting on the border between Sudan and South Sudan broke out again, Ethiopia brokered a peace agreement between the parties, which was signed in Addis Ababa in September 2012, providing for the creation of a demilitarised buffer zone along the border (United Nations, 2013; Vondracek, 2014, pp. 262-268).

   To combat terrorism and extremism, in January 2014, 4000 Ethiopian troops were deployed in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) having a UN mandate. All in all, 22 thousand Ethiopian troops serve within African Union peacekeeping and stability missions.

   Ethiopia uses its indisputable strong position in IGAD to secure its own interests in the region. For instance, its efforts within IGAD led to the imposition of UN sanctions on Eritrea for destabilising the region by supporting armed militias (UN News Centre, 2011). Ethiopia was the initiator of IGAD's support for the Nile Basin Initiative during the 4th Nile Basin Development Forum in Nairobi last October ("Ethiopia: IGAD Supports", 2014).

6. Conclusion

   Undoubtedly, Ethiopia plays a key role in the security complex of the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, which is located strategically and is the most populous country in the region, enjoys sufficient authority among the countries in this region. Addis Ababa is also an important international actor, especially with regard to combating international terrorism and extremism. It enjoys the backing of the EU and the U.S., with the latter considering it an ally and one of the 4 states crucial for the U.S. interests in Africa. Ethiopia aspires to play a leading role in major regional initiatives and undertakings aimed at stabilising and integrating the region, and it takes an active part in peacekeeping and stabilising missions. Despite internal problems and the huge economic underdevelopment and vulnerability, Ethiopia's position is growing from year to year, just as its economic potential. In the region itself, no country, except for Eritrea, questions Ethiopia's leading role in the Horn of Africa[9].

   The foreign policy issues in the region facing Ethiopia in the near future include the problem of Somalia, the intra-state conflict in South Sudan, the border dispute over the oil-rich land between Sudan and South Sudan, the conflict over the Nile waters between Ethiopia and Sudan supported by Egypt, gaining a secured and the widest possible access to sea ports (Djibouti, Somaliland, Kenya), and solving the border dispute with Eritrea. With concern to the latter, shortly before his death, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi announced a tougher policy towards Eritrea, aimed at overthrowing Isaias Afwerki's Regime by supporting the Eritrean opposition (EthiopiaFirst.com, n.d.).   Meanwhile, the new Prime Minister of Ethiopia, HailMariam Desalegn Boshe, in an interview given to Al Jazeera on 5 December

2012, announced that he is ready to go to Asmara to speak to Isaias Afwerki (Al Jazeera, 2012). Despite these declarations, there is no change for the better in the relationships between the two countries, and the most recent internal conflict in South Sudan is becoming a new area of rivalry between Ethiopia and Eritrea (Plaut, 2013).

Undoubtedly, the death of the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2012, who had held the office for repeated terms and had enjoyed a high esteem both in the country and abroad, caused Ethiopia's political policy to be a very "big if." Zenawi maintained very good relations not only with the U.S. and the EU, but also with China, Russia, Italy, Turkey and the oil-producing countries of the Arabian Peninsula, which undoubtedly strengthened Ethiopia's international position and improved its capacity to attract capital (Záhořik, 2014, pp. 36-37). As has been seen in the last two years, Zenawi's successors are continuing his policy, and only time can show how efficient these efforts are. At a New York meeting between the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and U.S. President Barack Obama, the latter appreciated Ethiopia's economic success and its commitment to the political and military efforts towards peace and stability in Africa (The White House, 2014).

Endnotes

1. The project was financed by the National Science Center; decision number DEC-2012/07/B/HS5/03948.
2. As a state, Somalia has actually fallen apart; Somaliland, which lies in the north, has declared independence, and Jubaland, in the south of Somalia, is also heading towards independence.
3. The organisation consists of Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. Eritrea suspended its IGAD membership in 2007.
4. The present article can be treated as a voice in the current discussion regarding the regional situation in the Horn of Africa, also undertaken in specialised literature, such as for example Woodward, P. (2013). *Crisis in the Horn of Africa. Politics, Piracy And The Threat Of Terror*. New York: I. B. Tauris; Bereketeab, R. (Ed.). (2013). *The Horn Of Africa. Intra-State and Inter-State Conflicts and Security.* London: Pluto Press; Mengisteab K., (2014) *The Horn of Africa*, Cambridge: Polity Press; Markakis J., (2011), *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers,* Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey.
5. Somali Region, Amhara Region, Oromia, Tigray Region and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region.
6. Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces.
7. Until 2014 known as Failed State Index.
8. South Sudan -1, Somalia -2, Sudan -5, Kenya - 18, Eritrea – 23. (2014). In: Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index 2014. Retrieved from http://library.fundforpeace.org/library/cfsir1423-fragilestatesindex2014-06d.pdf
9. In 2003, the Eritrean government officially recalled its representative from Addis Ababa and requested officially that the seat of the African Union should be transferred from Ethiopia to another African state.

References

Abraham, K. (2004). *Ethio-Eritrean history and the Ethio-Eritrean war*. Addis Ababa: Kinfe Abraham ©

African Globe. (2012, October 23). *Ethiopia – Egypt: Is a war over the Nile still imminent.* Retrieved from http://www.africanglobe.net/africa/ethiopia-egypt-war-nile-imminent/.

African Regional Operations and Initiatives, United States European Command. (2007 January 9). Retrieved from http://www.eucom.mil/english/Operations/main.asp.

Al Jazeera station (2012, December 5). *Interview: Ethiopia PM willing to talk to Eritrea. Retrieved from* http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/12/2012 12514512965 2231.html.

Bereketeab, R. (Ed.). (2013). *The Horn of Africa. Intra-state and Inter-state conflicts and security*. London: Pluto Press.

Bush, G. W. (September 2002). *The national security strategy of the United States*. White House, Washington DC. Retrieved from http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf.

Civins, B.(2014). *Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia 2006-2009.* University of Texas. Retrieved from http://yonseijournal.com/wp-content/ uploads/2012/08/ethiopia.pdf.

Esipova, N., Ray, J., Srinivasan, R. (n. d.). *The world's potential migrants. Who they are, where they want to go, and why it matters*. Gallup. Retrieved from http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/the-worlds-potential-migrants.

Ethiopia forums (2011, February 25). *Kenya: Crackdown nets 120 Ethiopia Oromo Liberation Front rebels.* Retrieved from http://ethiopiaforums.com/kenya-crackdown-nets-120-ethiopian-oromo-liberation-front-rebels/5401/.

Ethiopia: IGAD Supports the 4th Nile Basin Development Forum. (2014, October 7). Retrieved from http://allafrica.com/stories/201410080218.html.

EthiopiaFirst.com. (n. d.). *Ethiopia's foreign policy*. Retrieved from http://www.ethiopiafirst.info/news/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=524:ethiopia s-foreign-policy-shifts-towards-eritrea&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=1.

Ethiopian Review. (2011, April 6). *Egypt prepares for military action to stop Nile dam.* Retrieved from http://www.ethiopianreview.com/content/32520.

Fund for Peace. Fragile States Index 2014. Retrieved from http://library.fundforpeace.org/library/cfsir1423-fragilestatesindex2014-06d.pdf.

Gebeto, P. J. (2010). *No more thirst. The citizens of the Nile.* Addis Abeba: Petros J. Gebeto ©.

Gebreluel G. (Summer 2014). Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's oldest geopolitical rivalry? *The Washington Quarterly*. Vol. 37, Issue 2, 25-37.

Global Fire Power. (2014). African countries ranked by military power 2014. Retrieved from http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing-africa.asp.

Global Fire Power. (n. d.). *Ethiopia military strength.* Retrieved from http: //www. globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail. asp? country_id=Ethiopia.

Harper, M. (2012). *Getting Somalia wrong? Faith, war and hope in shattered state*. London: Zed Books.

Human Development Report (2014). Retrieved from http:// hdr.undp. org /en/ 2014-report/download.

Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard) (2010,24[th] November).

Lewis, I. (2009). *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland. Culture, history, society*. London: Hurst Publishers.

Life and Peace Institute (2014). *Civil society and regional Peace building in the Horn of Africa: A review of present engagement and future opportunities*. Uppsala. Retrieved from http://www.life-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/ Civil_Society_andRegional_Peacebuilding_softcopy_20140526.pdf.

Lizak, W. (2012). *Afrykańskie instytucje bezpieczeństwa* [AfricanSecurity Institutions]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Scholar.

Maasho, A. (2011, 9 February). Ethiopia says plans to build more Nile dams. *Reuters.* Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/09/us-ethiopia-dams-idUSTRE7882GL20110909.

Maasho, A. (2013, July 10). Ethiopia expected to join to WTO in 2015. *Reuters.* Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/10/us-ethiopia-trade-idUSBRE9690BJ20130710.

Malone, B. (2011, March 30). Ethiopia to defy Egypt and build huge Nile dam. *Reuters.* Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/30/ozabs-ethiopia-dam-idAFJOE72T0SE20110330.

Mantel-Niećko, J., Ząbek, M. (Ed.). (1999). *RógAfryki. Historiaiwspółczesność* [The Horn of Africa. History and Contemporaneity]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO.

Markakis J., (2011). *Ethiopia: The last two frontiers.* Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey.

Martinelli, M. (2014). Struggling to make a difference: Challenges and prospects for international intervention in the Horn of Africa. In R. Alcaro, N. Pirozzi (Eds.). *Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa* (pp. 87-104). Roma: Edizioni Nuova Cultura.

Mengisteab Kidane. (2014). *The Horn of Africa*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Merera G.(2011). *Ethiopia: From autocracy to revolutionary democracy, 1960-2011*, Addis Abeba University.

OLF Mission, Oromo Liberation Front. (n. d.). Retrieved from http:/ /www. Oromo liberationfront.org/OLFMission.htm.

Partnership, Peace, Stability (2010). *Posture Statement United States Africa Command*. AFRICOM, Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany.

Plaut, M. (2013, September 3). *Ethiopia and Kenya help dismember Somalia*. *New Statesman* Retrieved from http:// www.newstatesman.com /africa/2013/09/ ethiopia-and-kenya-help-dismember-somalia.

Plaut, M. (2014, March 8). *South Sudan: new battleground for Ethiopia and Eritrea*? [Web blog post]. Retrieved from http:// martinplaut. wordpress. Com /2014 /03/08/south-sudan-new-battleground-for-ethiopia-and-eritrea/.

Ploch, L. (Nov. 2010). Countering terrorism in East Africa, the US response. *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, R41473*. Retrieved from https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41473.pdf.

Rudincová, K. (2011). Power and powerlessness in Somalia: Ethiopian involvement and the transitional federal government. In Horáková, P. Nugent, P. Skalník. (Ed.). *Africa Power and Powerlessness*. (pp. 55-74). Prague: LIT Verlag.

Sachs, J. D. (2005). *The end of poverty. Economic Possibilities for Our Time.* New York: Penguin Books.

Scavetta, R. (2009, July 27). *U.S. Army Africa, U.S. Africa Command, NCOs Mentor Ethiopian Soldiers. Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa, CJTF-HOA.* Retrieved from http://www.hoa.africom.mil/story/7341/us-army-africa-us-africa-command-ncos-mentor-ethiopian-soldiers.

Slavin, B. (2007, August 1). U.S. support key to Ethiopia's invasion. *USA Today.* Retrieved from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-01-07-ethiopia_x.htm.

Smith, D. (2013, October 29). US drone strike in Somalia kills top al-Shabaab explosives expert. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from http://www. theguardian. com/world/2013/oct/29/us-drone-strike-somalia-al-shabaab-expert.

Star Alliance. About member airlines. (n. d.). Retrieved from Star Alliance website http://www.staralliance.com/en/about/member_airlines/.

Tafesse, O. (2008-2009). Conflicts and resolution in the Horn of Africa: Toward the study of regional peace and security, *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities*, Vol. VI, 16, (pp. 1-24).

Tesfaye, T. (2001). *The Nile question: Hydropolitics, legal wrangling, modus vivendi and perspectives*. Münster: LIT Verlag.

The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, United Nations Building (2014, September 25). *Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Desalegn of Ethiopia Before Bilateral Meeting.* Retrieved from http:// www. White house. gov/the-press-office/2014/09/25/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-desalegn-ethiopia-bilateral-m.

The World Bank (2015, April 5). *Ethiopia overview.* Retrieved from http:// www. Worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview.

U.S. European Command Statement Following President Bush's Remarks Addressing Global Posture, United States European Command. (2004, August 16). Retrieved from http://www.eucom.mil/english/FullStory.asp?art=282.

U.S. Special Forces Engaged in Operations on the Ground in Somalia (2007, January 10). *The Global Intelligence Files.* Retrieved from WikiLeaks website https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/50/5044491_u-s-special-forces-engaged-in-operations-on-the-ground-in.html.

UHCR. (2014). *Country operations profile – Ethiopia.* Retrieved from http :// www .unhcr.org/pages/49e483986.html.

UN News Centre (2011, December 5). *Security council expands sanctions on Eritrea over support for armed groups.* [Press release]. Retrieved from http ://www .un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40628.

UNHCR. (2014, August 19). *As South Sudan crisis grows, Ethiopia becomes Africa's biggest refugee-hosting country. Briefing Notes.* Retrieved from http :// www .unhcr.org/53f32c1a9.html.

UNISFA. (n. d.). *United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei*. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unisfa/.

United Nations Development Programme. (2012, April). *Crisis brief: Horn of Africa. Crisis Prevention and Recovery.* Retrieved from http://www. undp. Org / content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/UNDP%20Crisis%20Brief%20 HoA%20April2012.pdf.

United Nations Development Programme. (2014). *Ethiopia, human development report*. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ETH.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1054 (1996, April 26). Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1054(1996).

United Nations. (2013). *Security Council, in statement, urges implementation of agreements between Sudan, South Sudan*. [Press release]. Aided by New Mechanisms, including Technical Border Team. Retrieved from http ://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc11102.doc.htm.

Vondracek, H., (October-December 2014). A single raised hand: Prospects for peace in the Sudanese Rivalry. *African Security*. Vol. 7, Issue 4, 251-276.

Whitlock, C. (2011, October 27). U.S. drone base in Ethiopia is operational, *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www. washingtonpost. Com /world /national-security/us-drone-base-in-ethiopia-is-operational /2011/10/27/ gIQAznKwMM_story.html.

Wikileaks. (2011, September 4). *US Angered by Ethiopian Army*, Curious About Israeli Role. Retrieved from http://hornaffairs.com/en/2011/09/04/wikileaks-us-angered-by-ethiopian-army-curious-about-israeli-role/.

Woodward, P. (2013), *Crisis in the Horn of Africa. Politics, piracy and the threat of terror*. New York: I. B. Tauris.

Záhořík, J. (2014). Ethiopia's hegemony in the Horn of Africa: Internal tension and external challenges before and after Meles Zenawi, *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa.* Vol. 5, Issue 1, 23-38.

Zenko, M., Kreps, S. (June 2014). *Limiting armed drone proliferation. Council Special Report.* No. 69. New York: Council of Foreign Relations.