China-Horn of Africa Regions Relations since mid-1990s: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects for Democratizations

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Abstract

The Horn of Africa region has been one of the centers of confrontation among super powers during the cold war era. The region was politically unstable during the cold-war due to conflicts at intra-state and inter-state levels. Moreover, the two super powers, USA and USSR, have been affecting the political stability, peace and relations within and among states in the Horn by backing regimes with aids and weapons of various kinds. The political instability of the region has been mainly due to lack of democracy by the government of the respective states and regime's choice of mere brute force than any political means to rectify problems. Currently, the political stability of the region is even harsher. Nowadays, it has been a matter of discussions and debates among scholars and politicians on the potential impacts of Chinese re-emergence on the international system as a whole and the African continent in particular.

In this regard, this article seeks to understand the implication of China's ascendancy to the status of hegemony on intra and inter states relations in the horn of Africa in general by identifying major features of intra and inter states relations in the HOA region since the mid-1990s. To this effect, it will assess major aspects of Chinese undertakings in these states in economy and political matters. Methodologically, the study is basically qualitative. It follows the post-modernists pragmatic knowledge claim that underlies the possibilities of multiple realities. The primary types and sources of data are collected from policy documents of the concerned states, China, and INGOs. On the other hand, secondary data resources including books, journal articles, magazines and newspapers, and electronic dispatches dealing with states of the Horn of Africa relationship with China are amply consulted.

Keywords —*China, Horn-Africa, Democratization, Qualitative study*

I. INTRODUCTION

The region's proximity to the Middle East oil rich region has been attracting various great powers as actors since the mid-20 century. The Horn of Africa region has been one of the centers of confrontation among super powers during the cold war era. The region was politically unstable during the cold-war due to conflicts at intra-state and inter-state levels (Lefebvre, 1998; 618). Moreover, USA and USSR have been affecting the political stability, peace and relations within and among states in the Horn by backing regimes with aids and weapons of various kinds (Woodward, 2000:149-150).

In this respect, foreign aid and weapons have served the continued rules of most regimes in the region that lack legitimacy. While states were poor, they were proxies of their master patrons (Clapham, 1993:423-429). On the other hand, the political instability of the region has been mainly due to lack of democracy by the government of the respective states and regime's choice of mere brute force than any political means to rectify problems (Mesfin, 1985:5-7). Currently, the political stability of the region is even harsher and the worst. There is no political stability in the region. Political developments in Sudan, to these very days, are not resolved completely. Even if the Southern question seemed to be calm, no one is sure enough, as to what will happen following the southern referendum. Moreover, the Darfur crisis is also a new political scenario with unknown ends to Sudanese politics.

Added to these, the region's political situation is disturbed by the Ethio-Somalia problem in current times. After the end of the cold war super powers competition, if not confrontation, seemed too declined unlike the periods as it had been before. Currently, China as an "emergent power" has appeared as a global economic powerhouse and has commenced an involvement with African state through bilateral and multilateral relationships unlike the earlier periods (Kinfe, 2005: 19-27). It has been a matter of discussions and debates among scholars and politicians on the potential impacts of Chinese re-emergence on the international system as a whole and the African continent in particular (Wath, K. van der and Dirk Kotze, 2006: 43-59; Humphrey, J and Dirk Messner, 2008:107-113).

In this regard, this article seeks to understand the implication of China's ascendancy to the status of hegemony on intra and inter states relations in the horn of Africa in general by identifying major features of intra and inter states relations in the HOA region since the mid-1990s. To this effect, it will assess major aspects of Chinese undertakings in these

states in economy and political matters. Methodologically, the study is basically qualitative. It follows the post-modernists pragmatic knowledge claim that underlies the possibilities of multiple realities. The primary types and sources of data is collected from policy documents of the concerned states, China, and INGOs. On the other hand, secondary data resources including books, journal articles, magazines and newspapers, and electronic dispatches dealing with states of the Horn of Africa relationship with China are amply consulted.

The paper comprises of three sections. The first section discusses the over view of the Horn of Africa briefly. Cold war and the super powers involvement, major intra and inter conflicts in the Horn, forces of alliance-internal and external -and role of super powers are dealt in the second section. Section three focuses on the emergence of China in the post 1991 period and the implication of its rise in the international system. China's international relations and its foreign policy to Africa and the Horn of Africa states with particular emphasis on Ethiopia and Sudan are dealt with. It also examines the impact of the Chinese engagement to the political instability in the respective countries.

II. THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ITS GLOBAL IMAGES: AN OVERVIEW

The region we called "Horn of Africa" is a term referring to a geographic region that emanates from the glance at the North-eastern part of African. Geographically, the Horn region is located east of the Red sea, west of the Nile valley, and South east of the Indian Ocean. The strait of Babel el Mandeb separates it from the Arabian Peninsula. The region comprises the states of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea (Mesfin, 1985; 1-2: Beruk, 2004:22).

The countries in the Horn region predominantly other than Ethiopia are emerged after the end of colonialism in the mid-20th century. Of course, Italy had tried twice to colonize Ethiopia but had not been able to stay long like others had done in the region. Britain, France and Italy were the major colonial powers. Put simply, most of the states had been under colonial powers rule for a long period of time. Eritrea was part of Ethiopia until it was colonized following the battle of Adwa until the defeat of Italy in 1942 through the allied Anglo-Ethiopia force.

Yet, the British were not willing so that it had remained for about a decade under their rule. Later, it was federated with Ethiopia in 1952 through the UN decision. However, the federation was short lived and it was incorporated into Ethiopia in 1962. In sum, legacies of the colonial period continued to pose challenges for today's independent states and their economic growth (Rifkind, 2006:19; Clapham, 2008: 137-138). In fact, Colonialism had its effects on the political structuring, the nature of state- society relationship, pattern and trend of interaction among

states and within states, too. Problems that are prevalent to these very days in the Horn of Africa are in attributable to the legacies of colonialism. To clearly explain these scenarios, the following points are worth relevant.

Ethiopia is linguistically, culturally and ethnically very heterogeneous and the most populous. It is one of the Horn states that is land locked and has no other neighboring state out of the region. It's usually referred as a country that has escaped colonialism by many writers. In fact, Ethiopia was the first black African country that had defeated the early 19th century colonialism attempted by Italy. Even if the battle of Adwa in 1896 had made Ethiopia's sovereignty maintained, it has been causing another problem as a far as her territorial in the north of its part, as had been known before, is concerned. In this aspect, Eritrea after the battle of Adwa had fallen under the Italian colonial rule.

Moreover, after the withdrawal of Italy following her defeat in World War II by Ethiopia and UK's coalition force, Britain had tried to extend her protectorate rule over Ethiopia for a brief period of time. Until the first Anglo-Ethiopian agreement signed in 1942, Britain had established a military rule in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's sovereignty seemed to be guaranteed because of the two successive Anglo-Ethiopian agreements signed in 1942 and 1944 respectively.

However, Britain had been unwilling to transfer both Eritrea and the Ogaden region to Ethiopia rather Britain sought to incorporate the Ogaden region to its British Somaliland and had also devised a separate strategy to Eritrea. By this time, most states in the Horn region-Sudan, British Somaliland along with the Ogaden and the Italian Somaliland and Kenya were under British rule(Bahru,2002;180-81). For its own strategy of maintaining hegemony in the region, unlike the Ethiopians quest for the Ogaden and Eritrea, it had been indoctrinating the people in these respective areas with Anti-Ethiopia propaganda. Be that as it may, Britain had transformed these areas due to challenges from the US and the UN system (Lefebvre, 1998; 616).

Yet, the British in their short time stay in these areas had created, to a considerable extent, an anti-Ethiopian propaganda. As a result, these problems added with the earlier Italian rule had created movements against the emperor during the time of the federation by various groups and after 1962 in a great scale and remained unresolved by military regime.

The Sudan, determinedly Arab and naturally African, is the largest country among Arab and African countries. It shares borders with about nine countries. It is the Horn state with the largest geographical size. Britain had again been the colonizer of Sudan. For its own sake, it had instituted and practiced the "divide-and-rule" political strategy in which Sudan was divided between the northern

Arabs who are predominately Muslims and the Southern black Africans ascribed as Christians by religion (Prunier, 2005; 135-137).

Likewise, "Colonialism and nationalism have consolidated ethnic, tribal, and religious diversities. It has always been argued that the colonialists' policies are the prime mover of ethnic and religious diversities," in Sudan politics which after independence have gone unabated and thereby have been despoiling Sudanese political history (EL Turabi M, 2006: 27-31).

The Somali people were divided into five parts by the colonial partition of Africa at the end of the 19th c. The smallest section of the nation, based in Djibouti became French colony, the neighboring region became the British Somaliland protectorate, and Italy established her colony of Somali, while the Somali nomads to the south were incorporated in British Kenya (Lewis, 1985:1-2).

Even if an independent Somali Republic had been created in the 1960 after de-colonization through the union of British and Italian Somali land which had been together during the 1940s under British rule, it had left the Somali population in Northern Kenya, French Somaliland (the then Djibouti) and the Ethiopian Ogaden under the rule of Kenya, Djibouti, and Ethiopia respectively (Ibid: 2).

It is the only African state to be described as typical nation-state, as the people of Somali are ethnically and religiously identical. The post-independence years have been not peaceful so that both internal and external clashes have remained to be the order until then. The impact of colonialism in Somali has resulted in not only civil wars but also conflicts with its neighbors mainly Ethiopia-because of their claim over Ogaden (Abdulaziz, M, 1985:3). Likewise, colonialism has not only created the fragmentation of the nation state of Somalia among the aforementioned states but also lack of unity among the elites that works in the state apparatus due to the unevenly distribution of education in the British and Italian Somaliland areas .The Southern part was denied of education beyond primary school education which itself had been limited to some urban areas.

However, the British Somaliland had got themselves in a far better situation than their southern counterpart in this regard. Thus, this linguistic division between the English-speaking Northern intelligentsia and their Italian counterparts in the south was a matter of significant conflicts when the two regions were integrated at independence (ibid: 6).

A. The problem of Conflict in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is also an area where the conflict between and among states and internal civil wars with all its internal and international dimensions is common. It is an area where "clan, tribal, secessionist, and liberation struggles are sustained internally and altering waves of hot wars and cold peace are witnessed externally among the countries of the Horn" (Negussey, 1985:2). The Horn of Africa is characterized by many writers as unstable and conflict prone region. It has been a common phenomenon to observe intra and inter-state conflicts in the Horn since the 1960s.

Accordingly, below are stated the factors that have been affecting the peaceful co-existence of states and the domestic political dynamics in the Horn region which are dependent on the various interrelated and interacting, internal, regional, international, factors. For the sake of simple understanding, we will briefly highlight as following.

a) Domestic factors

The question of legitimacy of regimes has been an important factor. Indeed, there is no state in the region that has not experienced civil wars (Amare, 1989:15-16). Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia, except Djibouti, have experienced military leadership whose agonies have been high and deep for the respective peoples to carry. Accordingly, the undemocratic behaviors of the regimes have been the cause of political turmoil in Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia in the recent past. The tyrannical character of governments in the respective states has been a vital supplement to the perpetuation of situations of political instability which in effect resulted in both domestic and regional conflicts. It is no wonder, to see civil wars in many of the states more than any other things and there of obstacles to any efforts of economic development to states in the region are enormous.

Ethno cultural complexities and regional differences have their own roles to the kind of civil wars in most of the Horn regions. In this regard, it has not been the mere existence of ethnic heterogeneity by itself which have not been serving as a basis for conflict but the inability of states to accommodate various interests of their citizens. Likewise, governments in the region have been unable, nor willing to provide an all-inclusive political solution rather take for granted politics as a means of combat and tool of political repression (Mesfin, 1985: 7).

Added to this, a just and democratic solution for nationality or regional problems with in each state has not been adopted. State on the Horn has been experiencing some kind of nationality or regional problems in various forms or different degree of intensity. In all cases, these nationality or regional problems spread out outside the state boundaries and complicate interstate relations (Negussey, 1985: 9-10).

b) Regional Factors and Conditions

Disputes over boundaries (borders) between states have been a cause for various conflicts in the region (ibid; 11). To this effect, the conflict between Ethiopia and Somali and between Ethiopia and

Eritrea are good examples. Thus, boundary problems in the Horn of Africa have affected the political stability of the region until the current periods. In this case intra-state conflicts have been important factors in aggravating conflicts due to the fact that civil wars have the spillover effect of attracting both regional and international powers as major forces in the course of the conflict. It has been a customary practice among member states of the Horn region to sponsor and back one another's domestic opposition groups.

Regional institutions such as IGAD has not been as strong as it was supposed to be in minimizing, if not curbing, both internal and inter-states conflicts. It has been testified both in the case of Somali and Sudan in the one hand and in the Ethio-Eritrea and Ethio-Somalia problem on the other hand. The Horn of Africa is surrounded by rather ambitious, well-to-do active neighbors. These include Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt and Libya principally. These states have been exerting some kinds of influence on the Horn. In this regard, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia had showed favor and supported differently Somali in its war against Ethiopia in the 1978/79. Likewise, Israel had also watched on the Horn and the Red sea with renewed interest and medium power ambition for control of influence (Ibid: 14).

c) International Factors and Conditions

It is a common knowledge that politics in the Horn of Africa has been affected in various ways by the involvement of external actors. Political development in the Horn of Africa cannot be understood in a separate way from the global politics. To do so otherwise becomes "neither possible nor desirable" (Negussey, 1985: 13).

These are because of the involvement of external actors relative autonomy of governments has been subjected to the super powers interest so that it affects political stability of the entire region. This was/is due to the fact that usually governments in the Horn have been subordinating the needs and problems of their societies to global needs and strategies or downgrading most often their interests to big powers. *Ipso facto*, the largest volumes of foreign funds and aids have been for military rather than for development purposes during the cold war.

B. Cold war and the Super powers involvement in the Horn

In this section the political dynamics in the Horn of Africa during the cold war period along with the impact of external powers involvement is briefly explained. Likewise, we have tried to assess the scenarios of political instability at both domestic and regional level and the impact of foreign powers involvement. Here, my intention is that political instability are the result of the domestic, regional and international factors that are interwoven to each other across time. Finally, the chapter touches upon the

political developments which have prevailed in Horn of Africa following the end of the cold war.

a) The Horn of Africa during the Cold War

During the cold war period states in the horn of Africa were serving as proxies. They were seen based on their strategic significance to serve each super powers interest in the global conflict. The foreign policy of each super power considered the geo-politics of the state or region in which they aspire to set a satellite states to each of them while trying to limit it opponent ability to so (Wiseman, 1993:441). The horn of Africa, as it is in the Red sea region, because of its proximity to the Middle East, the oil rich Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, has been attractive enough to the two super powers during the cold war and to limited extent to countries like – China (Amare, 1989: 484).

Irrespective of all forms of ideological justifications used to rationalize the process, the main factor that shaped super powers policies were their perceived strategic interest. Due to this fact both super powers provided aid to oppressive regimes to meet their interest which in turn governments in the region have been using to consolidate their power internally and to protect any perceived or actual attack from neighboring states (Wiseman, 1993:441).

C. Major conflicts in the Horn and super powers role

As it has been discussed above, intra and inter states conflicts have been the peculiar features of the Horn of Africa region. Accordingly, a brief explanation is vital with a glance at as to how and to what extent external super powers have affected the conflict scenarios in the region.

a) INTRA STATE CONFLICTS

Almost all states in the horn of Africa have experienced civil wars and will likely to remain so for various reasons. During the cold war period, no state in the region was free of political strife and open civil war. In Ethiopia starting from the1960s a civil war in both the Northern and southern parts of the country had started against the imperial regime of Haile Sellassie by political groups who claimed to be independent and autonomous from Ethiopian administration and government. In this regard, the involvements of external powers was a factor that had affected the coming into terms of the groups in war against each other in such a way that while the emperor was trying to calm the situation predominantly by applying force over any other tool being reliant on external powers such as USA, the secessionists were also provided military and other aid from other forces (Lefebvre, 1998; 634-636).

The replacement of old regime and the adoption of 'scientific socialism' by the military government had invited USSR as Ethiopia's major ally by the time it was challenged by the conflicts in Eritrea and Somali

which had affected to a large extent the political stability of Ethiopia and the region. On the other hand, USA provided support to both EPLF and TPLF against the regime. The post -1974 eras in Ethiopia has become politically unstable due to the fact that various political groups from various directions waged war against the military government. In this regard, USSR had been bolstering the regime's military strength with its massive inflows of armaments (Amare, 1985: 480; Woodward, 2000; 142-43).

The case was not different in Sudan either. It is because since 1947 and before, relations between north and south have been unfriendly. Following independence relations had become harsh when all aspects of Sudan's political, economic, social and cultural life have become limited to and controlled by the government in North. After a decade of relative peace another civil war had erupted in1982 when the Khartoum government "abrogates the peace treaty and practiced the politics of injustice, inequality, and policies of Arabization and Islamization against the southerners" (Nyama, 2005:14).

The Sudan government backed by USSR until it starred relations with USA in 1971.Untill its relation was despoiled in the 1980s, Sudan had been the major recipient of military aids which have a total value of $1.2 billion in the years from 1977-1985(Woodward, 2000;144). Both USSR and USA had also been significant actors in the Somalia political dynamics. In this regard, the former had been a close partner and a major supplier of arms to leaders in Somalia until it was replaced by USA in the late 1970s (ibid; 142-146; Lefebvre, 1998; 641-643).

b) INTER STATES CONFLICTS

Relationships among countries of the Horn have largely been characterized by mutual suspicion and often with fierce hostility (Amare, 1985: 482). Thus, relations among states of the Horn ha   ve been characterized by overt and covert confrontation. For instance, Ethio- Sudan relations have been known as one of confrontational in such a way that when relations become unfriendly, each engaged in making subversive activities and provide each other's rival domestic political groups (Ibid;483).

The Ethio-Somali war was classical example that had witnessed a massive influx of foreign military assistance and various aid to the government of the respective states since the 1960s. Until the ousting from power of the emperor, USA has been the major supplier of military assistance and various kinds of aids to Ethiopia. On the other hand, USSR had provided Somalia in its war and confrontation with Ethiopia. The cause of the conflict was due to the Somalia's claim over Ogaden which was inspired by the Greater Somalia ideology following independence. When the emperor was dethroned from power and the military junta has hold power,

conflict was aggravated between them overtly when WSLF had prompted to intensity its struggle for freedom from Ethiopia following the disposition of the emperor and Djibouti's independence in 1977 which, according to them, will make Ethiopia unable to resist (Lewis, 1985: 2-3).

During the course of the war Russia, who had been a friend and had provided Somalia with military equipment, changed sides to support Ethiopia taking advantage of the American withdrawal from Ethiopia. To this effect, the Russia government and Cuban forces had assisted Ethiopia to regain Ogaden which the Somalis had occupied in the earlier course of the war. This being the case, the war had generated political problems in the Somali in that along with the domestic insecurity sphere, traditional internal clan divisions became extremely pronounced.

Leaders of Somalia and Ethiopia were reluctant to make compromise because each have an interest in the continuing antagonism between them in that it would facilitate their requests for military aid from their respective super-power patrons. Yet, the Russian interest in Ethiopia was higher than USA interest in Somali was (Ibid: 5).

The region's rival groups, during the cold war era, recurrently seek rival external patrons whose antagonism aggravates local conflict and problems. This was seen in the supply of arms from opposing and competing external sources. Thus, USA and USSR in their own ideological rivalry and commitment to fulfill their program, they have served, at best, the egoistical interests of the rulers and of guerrilla group's leaders in the horn of Africa.

That is, after the end of the cold war, regimes in both Ethiopia and Somalia were defeated by rival domestic groups. While the former has maintained statehood, even if a new political entity-Eritrea was born out of it, along with new political restructuring of the polity, the latter has gone to the worst political scenario of state collapse (Merera, 1992: 228-231). Likewise, the immediate spillover effects of the end of the cold war in the horn region was one of a change in the political map of the region with the emergence of the state of Eritrea; and the former British Somaliland has established its own government and the issue of new statehood in southern Sudan is still in the air pending the will be held referendum by 2011(Woodward; 2000; 7).

Generally, the post-cold war era had affected the then territorial structure of the region in such a way that the earlier political boundaries designed by colonial power had changed and new political entities have emerged. In these regards, in 1991 Eritrea has become a *defacto* sovereign and a *dejure* sovereign state in 1993 and Somalia has disintegrated into fragments controlled by antagonistic war lords. This had again intensified the regions political climate by adding new "cultural and political divisions" (Clapham, 2008:138; Woodward, 2000:7).

III. THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA'S PRESENCE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The emergence of China as a major actor in the international system in the 21st century and its impact on the political economy climate of Africa in general have been on public discourse since the last nearly two decades among pundits, policy makers, experts and public officials. Likewise, the chapter touches upon the evolution of China's relation with Africa and particularly the Horn region. The nature of China's foreign policy and the shift in emphasis from ideological to economical drives is discussed. The current political situations in Ethiopia and Sudan, the implication of the foreign policy of China and the effects of its actual relations with these states thereof are parts of the section.

A. Images of China in the International system

Even if the Chinese were unable to establish a stable government under their own leadership as it became an arena of imperialists outside powers competition since the early 20th c so that it was constrained to exercise influence as an independent international actor, their final success of establishing an independent China PRC in 1949 out of the tentacles foreigners domination and civil war was a great achievement that china showed to the world (Tanaka, 2006:15).

During the early two decades of the cold war china was not an active actor in the world politics. Its involvement on international affairs, especially in the third world was determined by the kind of attitude states have towards USA and USSR in the 1950s and later in 1960s respectively (Wenping, 2005; 51-52).

However, by the late 1960 China had gained enough strength and showed enough independence so that it appeared as ''a rising power in its own right.'' By many standards, China is already a major power. It has the world's largest population. It has an enormous territory. Likewise, it has the largest standing military force in the world even if it is not technologically advanced as the western counties. China also has a veto power as a permanent member of the UN Security Council (Rourke 1994:111).

Against this backdrop, there is still no common consensus among scholars and politicians since the end of the cold war regarding the future position of China and the world order in the 21st Century. In this regard, it was predicted that china either will become "a regional super power" in Asia or it will be ''a global super power, perhaps the leading super power."

Accordingly, it was predicted that by the 21st century China will in fact become a region super power in Asia and potentially a global super power. Its emergence as a global super power will affect the status quo of International political system. In this regard, China's resistance to the westerners' attempt of halting nuclear proliferation and its engagement in the practice of the sales of nuclear arms components and chemical weapons delivery systems will complicate international security matters in the future beyond the current trends.

It was argued that in its desire to curb the spheres of influence and of westerners' hegemony, it will likely supply destabilizing technologies to regimes that are found and prepared to be real or potential enemies of westerners and "increase security risks wherever they appear" (Xiaowi, 1999; 112-118). However, there was also a view that China is unlikely be a regional super power, let alone be a world super power, even if there are possibilities by dint of its demographic features, large military force and evolving economy, china's ambition to be an Asiatic regional super power will likely be groom as its "strategic value can never be taken for granted by any external power, for it is both unwilling and unable to play a decisive role in reshaping the structure of global high politics" (Kim, 1992: 119-124).

Yet, authors like Tanaka refutes the above held views that discussion on china either as an "emergence" or "emerging" power implied that its emergence is new as if it has been a country that can be neglected. Accordingly, it is incorrect to talk about china's "emergence", what would rather amount as valid is to emphasis the implications of China's "re-emergence" throughout the world. Hence, if it peacefully rises, it can achieve a significant position in the global distribution of power and more likely to become one of the five or so great powers" (Tanaka, 2006:15). For most of the periods since Deng Xiaoping days, China has believed that accepting American hegemony was the path to economic success. But Beijing is now engaged in its own internal debate over whether a confrontation between it and the United States is inevitable.

There are those who argue that it is – that America is actively seeking to contain China and that China must build up its position in Asia and the world to respond from a position of strength. China has made several moves that seem consistent with this approach." Likewise, the foreign policy of China is still mostly motivated by "parochial concerns" that officials in China are prohibitive to the Independence of Taiwan and their foreign policy is "narrow" that one doubts whether China will likely be "willing to pay the price that comes with great globe power" or not. In this regard, a clear response and action of China on matter of "strategic issues" will avoid the dilemmas hold hitherto (Zakaria, 2006:17).

Moreover, the rise of China as a great power will transform the contemporary unipolar world order into a multipolar power configuration. Hence, it changes the way how international problems are going to be dealt and what roles developing countries can play in global politics and international economy. Thus, the 21st century will be a competition among these great powers for power and policy options (Humphrey, J and Dirk M., 2008:108).

B. China and the Horn of Africa relation

China-Africa relations is not a recent scenario. In the 1960s and 1970s, China's interest centered on building ideological solidarity with other underdeveloped nations so as to advance Chinese-style communism which in turn aimed at deterring, and energy (Brooke, P and Ji Hye Shin, 2006; 1). China's relationship with Africa in general and the Horn of Africa particular trace back to the Bandung conference. It was a historical landmark in that has served the commencement of official contact between the two continents. Particularly, states Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan relations with China entered a new stage in 1963-1964 following the formal state–to state China's visit to Africa in the 1960s (Wenping, 2005;42-43).

In the later 1960s the relationship gained momentum following independence and China engaged in spreading its "rural – based brand of revolution" to Africa from 1960-1970s.Yet, its ideological stance came to a halt in the later 1970s following Mao's death and the coming of Deng Xiaoping . The new leadership avoided the" expensive ideological" commitment of the earlier periods and rather focused on economic matters.

In the 1980s China focused on more lucrative partners as Africa's economy was collapsed (Wath, Vander Kobus and Dirk Kotze, 2006:43-44). However, after the late 1980s its foreign policy again focused on both political and economic considerations along with developing bilateral relations in an all-round way. In doing so, China sought to meet its economic benefits and protect its political interest amidst the political and economic sanctions imposed by western countries following the 1989 gross violation of human rights upon its citizens (Wenping, 2005; 55-56). Yet, China's foreign policy following the mid – 1990s changed from a mere "ideological idealism to pragmatic realism" in that national economic interests has become the most prioritized foreign policy goal in the 1990s (ibid; 51-52).

The contemporary relationship is the result of Chinese plan so as to meet its appetite for raw materials to its growing economy. Although the official drivers of china's African approach had been dramatically redefined by the turn of the 21st Century, the political relationships, on the surface at least, retained some similarities to what was seen in the 1960s and 1970s, at present, the dynamics is still heavily founded on "by an anti-western bias that causes Africa to see China and China to present itself to Africa – as an alternative to the prescriptive or neo – colonialist forces in the west" (Wath, Vander Kobus and Dirk Kotze, 2006: 44:45).

Jiang Zemin, the then president, during his tour to Africa in May 1996 has presented the "Five principles" that established the terms of a new relationship with Africa oriented towards the 21st century, centering on a reliable friendship; sovereign equality, mutual respect and non-intervention; mutually beneficial development; and international cooperation for creating a new world order (Kinfe, 2005; 182).

Accordingly, the Forum on China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC) that was held in Beijing in 2000 has adopted two documents with the objective of further consolidating China-Africa cooperation in economic, social, and political spheres. In effect, the Beijing Declaration, one of the documents, adopted that sovereign equality, mutual respect and non-intervention; respect for states choice of models in promoting human rights, among other things.

Likewise, in the second document-programme for China-Africa cooperation in the economic and social development- it was stated that cooperation between them will be strengthened to set up a new international order. African minister has also agreed that the processing of applications for work permits and visas will be facilitated by their governments, and it also avowed that every three years a common meeting will be held (Vander, Wrath Kobus and Dirk Kotze, 2006: 45; The African Economist, 2003; 61).

Following the FOCAC 2000, Ethiopia and Sudan have set up their own institutions to follow up actions thereupon the two documents adopted in 2000 in Beijing. Ethiopia and Sudan have had frequent exchanges of high-level visits and have deepened their political relations with the Chinese officials independently (The African Economist, 2003; 7).

Ethiopia has hosted the second ministerial conference of the China-Africa cooperation Forum in 2003 in Addis Ababa. The Addis Ababa China – African forum, held in December 2003, was concluded in adopting the Addis Ababa Action Plan which envisioned to further cooperation for the coming three years in economic and social development sectors.

Likewise, it has remarked that cooperation in social, political and economic aspects between the two parts will continue as relevant as it was. Along with it, emphasis was also given to cooperate in maintaining peace and security and fighting terrorism (Penling, Cao, 2005; 81-82). In the second China – Africa forum, China has made debt forgiveness to 31 African countries which amounting to $1.27 billion (10.5 billion RMB Yuan) and it has make known its decision to exempt duties on 190 export items from Africa's poorest countries (Alden, C and Elizabeth S,2006; 3).

The Third Forum on Sino-African Cooperation was held in Beijing in 2006 and such forums are made every three year as a manifestation of their smooth relations. China claims herself as an "all weather friend" to Africa (Kinfe, A, 2005:189).

C. China's Foreign policy & Relations in the Horn of Africa

As has been explained, the foreign policy principle of China has elements of negative and positive dimensions that have its own spillover effect to the political crisis existing in the Horn region. The effects can be felt in the political and economic spheres. To this effect, the impact of China's emergence and its impact thereof to Ethiopia and Sudan are worth discussing. This is due to the fact that these states have higher relations with China and they are major actors in the politics of the region.

The Horn is involved in a regional system of insecurity in which conflicts and political crises feed into and fuel one another. The crises in the border region between Eritrea and Ethiopia and in Somalia, together with the conflicts in Sudan and the north of Uganda, create instability and insecurity in the region. State collapse has become the order in Somalia. In fact, Somalia can be sited as the "African Iraq" (Marchal, R, 2005).

The major conflicts exhibit the interconnections characterizing the region. These are related to the fact that most of the borders are unstable and many are contested. In addition, this factor undermines relations between countries sharing a common border, with some States providing support to armed groups fighting in neighboring States.

There are various intertwined explanatory issues that make problems in the horn of Africa more or less similar. There is a link between insecurity, poverty and governance. There is regional and ethnic marginalization in most part of the region. In addition, authoritarianism, militarism and the interference of external powers contribute to instability and conflict.

After the cold war, religious fundamentalism has emerged as a new force taking advantage of failed state such as Somalia and regimes like Sudan that have institutionalized it over their diverse citizens on one way and aimed at spreading it across the region on the other hand. It is also strengthened by the grievances created by poverty and conflicts and the influence of extremist fundamentalist ideology. With this, weapon's proliferation and movements of small arms have also gone unabated. Border insecurity between states has still remained unresolved (http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s0505032.htm).

Political instability has been the common denominator of most states in the Horn of Africa for so long time. Civil wars and regional conflicts have remained as if they were in the "Hobbes states of nature" tradition (Cliffe, L, 1999; 89). The contemporary political scenario neither in Ethiopia nor in Sudan is democratically stable, save for the failed Somalia. No matter how the EPRDF echoed its democratic standing, the overall result is not as it was supposed to be.

A classic example for this, without going further, and the most recent is the May 15, 2005 election. Following the after math of the election, most oppositional party leaders and members', civil society leaders, journalists, scholars and human rights activists were sent to jail. While most western governments, whatever their intended interest may be, have intervened to reconcile and in most circumstances to put pressures on the incumbent, China's commitment to support peaceful solutions to conflicts as it has been promising in the various China-Africa forums was not observed.

While most western governments are supporting the institutionalization of democratization by offering aids of various forms to political parties and civil societies, Chinese relations only with ruling groups in the respective states in the Horn may mean its foreign policy aimed at maintaining the status qua of these regimes most of whom are not legitimate, in the strict sense of the term, even if they have established political stability, but not democratic stability, through brute force.

Ethiopia and China have increased their relations in political and military matters. Local resistance to China's engagement has been observed in the Ogaden which was manifested by killing some 77 Chinese workers in area in which the ONLF was suspected (Smith, 2008). Party level relations have started between them. This was seen in the 7th EPRDF'S annual conference that was held in Awasa in 2008. Likewise, EPRDF has been striving to hold a monopoly over the economic and political resource of the state. Needless to mention, the regime has not been able to provide solutions to political groups such as OLF and ONLF.

Ethiopia needs to adopt the Chinese development model (Addis, 2005; 242). This development model gives, less or not at all, weight to democratization and Human rights protection. The Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's "Democracy, Developmental State and Development" argued that Democracy is not the mechanism through which development can be attained rather the reverse. It argued that;

There has to be continuity of policy if there is to be sustained and accelerated economic growth. In a democratic polity uncertainty about the continuity of policy is unavoidable. More damagingly for development, politicians will be unable to think beyond the next elections etc. It is argued therefore that the developmental state will have to be undemocratic in order to stay in power long enough to carry out successful development" (Meles, 2006; 18).

Yet in a state such as Ethiopia in which economic and political power is unevenly distributed, where there is "ethnocentric exclusivism" and politicians are unaccountable to their people, any development effort would not be effective as far as conflicts remain (Kasshun, 2001; 104-105).

Development and economic growth that do not avoid inequality and exclusion cannot reduce conflicts. Hence, China's foreign aid falls short of dealing with such aspects. It does not support the

interest of other political forces in such a way that their foreign aid is merely limited to the incumbent.

In Sudan, there is even more alarming development such as genocide in the Darfur area where culturally 'Arabized Africans' attack other Africans with the support of the militias by the Khartoum Government (Moussa, 2006; 13; Zorgbibe, 2005; 147). 40% of Sudan's oil infrastructure owned by China's oil companies. In order to protect its interest, it has used its veto to block on pressure on Omar Hassen al-Bashir to halt the violence in Darfur (Liu, 2006; 20). Likewise, it has enabled the Khartoum government to refrain from making reliable peace deals with the various rebels as it has got such an emergent global power that attaches no any kind of political strings to its foreign aid.

In fact, Sudanese government have benefited that its troops and government-aligned militias have used Chinese-made helicopter gunship and varieties of weapons in the conflict-ridden Darfur region. Currently, China and Sudan have quite sound relationships. Along with their economic and trading partnership, a political and militaristic contact between them that has a direct impact on the political instability is growing. The Chinese government is offering weapons to the Sudanese government which in turn uses it against the conflict in southern and the Darfur regions (El-Batthani, 2001; 171; Liu, 2006; 20-23).

In effect, China is China is Sudan's biggest arms supplier. "On balance, China's engagement in efforts to end the Darfur conflict appears modest and is outweighed by its much deeper, unconditioned economic, military and diplomatic support for Sudan's government" (Reuters, October 18,2007 available at the Sudan tribune web site).

Generally, as far as China is unable and unwilling to approach the prevalent political conflicts in both of these states by playing a positive role to the disputing parties without being fixed to the interests the incumbent, sooner or later its involvement will result in worst case scenarios.

Because of its interest to extract resources, keeping the status qua of these volatile and fragile regimes, it will produce animosity from rival political forces.

In this regard, its ongoing foreign aid provision and military relations along with the growing popular discontent due to marginalization will likely complicate political instability. Today it is no exaggeration to state that the Horn of Africa is one of the most volatile regions in the world. The region suffers from numerous political, socio-economic and cultural challenges. Issues such as political instability, economic degradation and cultural tensions contribute to this state of underdevelopment. On the other hand, Chinese growing relations with Sudan and Ethiopia will affect the likelihood of institutionalization of democracy in such a way that these regimes have not been able to bring democratic stability.

IV.CONCLUSION

The Horn of Africa region, due to its geo political advantage, has been attracting various great powers as actors since the mid-20 century. It is also an area where the conflict between and among states and internal civil wars with all its internal and international dimensions is common. In general, it is characterized as unstable and conflict prone region.

The main factors that have been affecting the peaceful co-existence of states and the domestic political dynamics in the Horn region which are dependent on the various interrelated and interacting, internal, regional, international, factors. The main domestic factors were civil war and the tyrannical character of governments. Indeed, there is no state in the region that has not experienced civil wars. The tyrannical character of governments in the respective states has been a vital supplement to the perpetuation of situations of political instability which in effect resulted in both domestic and regional conflicts. Ethno cultural complexities and regional differences also have their own roles to the kind of civil wars in most of the Horn regions. In fact, governments in the region have been unable, nor willing to provide an all-inclusive political solution rather take for granted politics as a means of combat and tool of political repression. Added to this, a just and democratic solution for nationality or regional problems with in each state has not been adopted.

There were also regional factors and conditions like disputes over boundaries (borders) contributed to the political instability of the region. Moreover, regional institutions such as IGAD has not been as strong as it was supposed to be in minimizing, if not curbing, both internal and inter-states conflicts. Besides, the Horn of Africa is surrounded by rather ambitious, well-to-do active neighbours. These include Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt and Libya principally. Additionally, it is a common knowledge that politics in the Horn of Africa has been affected in various ways by the involvement of external actors. These are because of the involvement of external actors relative autonomy of governments has been subjected to the super powers interest so that it affects political stability of the entire region.

During the cold war period states in the horn of Africa were serving as proxies. They were seen based on their strategic significance to serve each super powers interest in the global conflict. The horn of Africa, as it is in the Red sea region, because of its proximity to the Middle East, the oil rich Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, has been attractive enough to the two super powers during the cold war and to limited extent to countries like – China.

The emergence of China as a major actor in the international system in the 21st century and its impact on the political economy climate of Africa in general have been on public discourse since the last nearly two decades among pundits, policy makers, experts and public officials.

During the early two decades of the cold war china was not an active actor in the world politics. Its involvement on international affairs, especially in the third world was determined by the kind of attitude states have towards USA and USSR in the 1950s and later in 1960s respectively. However, by the late 1960 China had gained enough strength and showed enough independence so that it appeared as ''a rising power in its own right.''

Today, by many standards, China is already a super power. It has the world's largest population. It has an enormous territory. Likewise, it has the largest standing military force in the world even if it is not technologically advanced as the western counties. China also has a veto power as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Its emergence as a global super power will affect the status quo of International political system. In this regard, China's resistance to the westerners' attempt of halting nuclear proliferation and its engagement in the practice of the sales of nuclear arms components and chemical weapons delivery systems will complicate international security matters in the future beyond the current trends. Moreover, the rise of China as a great power will transform the contemporary unipolar world order into a multipolar power configuration. Hence, it changes the way how international problems are going to be dealt and what roles developing countries can play in global politics and international economy. Thus, the 21st century will be a competition among these great powers for power and policy options.

China-Africa relations are not a recent scenario. Formerly, China's interest centered on building ideological solidarity with other underdeveloped nations so as to advance Chinese-style communism which in turn aimed at deterring, and energy. But, its ideological stance came to halt and rather focused on economic matters in the later 1970s following Mao's death and the coming of Deng Xiaoping and. Starting from the mid – 1990s changed from a mere "ideological idealism to pragmatic realism" in that national economic interests has become the most prioritized foreign policy goal in the 1990s as China's   foreign   policy.   The   contemporary relationship is the result of Chinese plan so as to meet its appetite for raw materials to its growing economy. Although the official drivers of china's African approach had been dramatically redefined by the turn of the 21st Century, the political relationships, on the surface at least, retained some similarities to what was seen in the 1960s and 1970s, at present, the dynamics is still heavily founded on "by an anti-western bias that causes Africa to see China and China to present itself to Africa – as an alternative to the prescriptive or neo – colonialist forces in the west". Jiang Zemin, the then president, during his tour to Africa in May 1996 has presented the "Five principles" that established the terms of a new

relationship with Africa oriented towards the 21st century, centering on a reliable friendship; sovereign equality,   mutual   respect   and   non-intervention; mutually beneficial development; and international cooperation for creating a new world order.

Generally, as has been explained, the foreign policy principle of China has elements of negative and positive dimensions that have its own spillover effect to the political crisis existing in the Horn region. The effects can be felt in the political and economic spheres.

While most western governments are supporting the institutionalization of democratization by offering aids of various forms to political parties and civil societies, Chinese relations only with ruling groups in the respective states in the Horn may mean its foreign policy aimed at maintaining the status qua of these regimes most of whom are not legitimate, in the strict sense of the term, even if they have established political stability, but not democratic stability, through brute force.

Generally, as far as China is unable and unwilling to approach the prevalent political conflicts in the horn region, as it can be seen in Sudan and Ethiopia, by playing a positive role to the disputing parties without being fixed to the interests the incumbent, sooner or later its involvement will result in worst case scenarios. Because of its interest to extract resources, keeping the status qua of these volatile and fragile regimes, it will produce animosity from rival political forces.

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