Unveiling the Dynamics of Ethiopian Defence Diplomacy: A Focus on Peacekeeping Contributions

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Abstract

This paper mainly addresses Ethiopia's defence diplomacy through its participation in peace support operations. This qualitative research study aims to analyze and synthesize the findings from relevant literature reviews to show to what extent Ethiopia has used peacekeeping participation as a tool of defence diplomacy in contributing to peace and security, especially in the Horn of Africa region. The paper finds that Ethiopian defence diplomacy is essential for Ethiopia to achieve its global foreign policy objectives, promote regional stability and cooperation, and seek regional influence.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Defence Diplomacy, Peacekeeping, ENDF, Horn of Africa

1.   Introduction

Military power is one of the most crucial tools in international relations. The military's role is very significant in implementing any foreign policy (Chatterjee, 2010). Military forces have many tasks, 'ranging from defending national territory to invading other states, hunting down terrorists, coercing concessions, countering insurgencies, keeping the peace, enforcing economic sanctions, showing the flag, or maintaining domestic order' (Biddle, 2004). The military apparatus is vital in formulating and implementing foreign policy and the state's functioning in the international system. In the words of Alexander L. George, 'the proposition that force and threats of force are a necessary instrument of diplomacy and have a role to play in foreign policy is

part of the conventional wisdom of statecraft' (George, 1998). Thus, it is clear that military power in a hard power sense is apparent. Likewise, military power has a soft power role besides the direct use of force. The term' defence diplomacy' is widely used to describe this role.

Defence diplomacy can be considered merely 'tasks and international functions completed by the armed forces and the leadership of the ministries of national defence' (Drab, 2018). Defence diplomacy has emerged as one of the most essential tools of military statecraft amid this effort to move past the use of force, and it is generally considered the nonviolent use of a state's defence apparatus to advance the strategic aims of a government through cooperation with other countries. (Winger, 2014).

The origin of the term 'defence diplomacy' lies in the Strategic Defence Review carried out by the UK in 1998 to describe all activities carried out in favor of peace and stability by its armed forces and other Ministry of Defence organisms (Morabety, 2017). The term' defence diplomacy' is sometimes used interchangeably with military diplomacy in literature (Tan, 2016; Pajtinka, 2016). However, according to Singh (2021), 'Defence' (related to all components of the Ministry of Defence) is a broader umbrella term that subsumes the 'Military' (Army, Navy, and Air Force), and hence, Military Diplomacy is a subset of Defence Diplomacy (Singh, 2021).

Defence diplomacy is deployed through the defence ministry and the armed forces as the executing agency (Cheyre, 2013). According to Juan E. Cheyre, the defence attachés are the first defence diplomacy implementers of the practice that emerged in Europe in the middle of the 19th century, when officers were assigned to overseas missions with diplomatic status in 1857 (Cheyre, 2013). In addition, peacekeeping operations are other key areas for deploying defence diplomacy (Cheyre, 2013). Educational exchanges, international conferences, and activities related to weapons and military equipment purchases are also the main tools for implementing defence diplomacy. Winger (2014) adds that defence diplomacy can take many forms; activities like joint military exercises, gunboat diplomacy, foreign disaster relief, and military bases abroad would all be classified as defence diplomacy. Muthanna (2011) asserts that participation in United Nations or regional peacekeeping operations or coalitions and humanitarian assistance and relief in joint operations is a cornerstone of military diplomacy as it indicates a country's willingness to stand and be counted in international relations.

Nyamao (2021) also identified five means of defence diplomacy in stabilizing the African region: defence attaches, peacekeeping operations, defence multilateral and bilateral engagements, foreign training and learning opportunities, and foreign aid and donor assistance. Similarly, Drab (2018) and Bond (2013) agree that the goal of defence diplomacy is to use military and defence-related activities to build trust and cooperation between countries

and to promote peace and security in the international system. Furthermore, defence diplomacy can help prevent conflicts and promote stability by fostering understanding, collaboration, and trust between nations (Edmonds & Mills 1998). It can also help to advance national interests, such as ensuring access to critical resources and protecting national security.

Pajtinka (2016) defines defence diplomacy as a specific field of diplomacy that focuses primarily on the pursuit of foreign policy interests of the state in the field of security and defence policy. This can be sending defence attaches to foreign states, training foreign military personnel, or joint military exercises to deploy troops to peace missions and operations in a foreign state. Martin Edmonds and Greg Mills define defence diplomacy as "using armed forces in operations other than war, building on their trained experience and discipline to achieve national and foreign objectives abroad" (Winger, 2014).

Thus, defence diplomacy, or the use of military power as a foreign policy instrument in today's international relations, manifests itself mainly in peacekeeping operations (Cheyre, 2013). Cheyre (2013) further says, "Peacekeeping operation is one of the best expressions of defence diplomacy." In addition, developing the peacekeeping capabilities of foreign militaries so they can contribute to peacekeeping operations, the number of which has increased considerably since the end of the Cold War, is another way of defence diplomacy (Storey, 2012).

The use of peacekeeping in Africa as defence diplomacy as part of regional efforts to address regional security challenges since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s is steadily on the rise (Nyamao, 2021). Thus, understanding Ethiopian defence diplomacy is crucial for comprehending the country's strategies and actions in safeguarding its national security interests. Equally, understanding Ethiopia's peacekeeping contributions allows for a nuanced understanding of its defence diplomacy objectives. Analyzing its defence diplomacy efforts provides insights into how Ethiopia navigates regional and international security challenges, contributes to peacekeeping missions, and promotes stability in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, examining its defence diplomacy initiatives provides insights into the motivations and role of its peacekeeping commitments in fostering peace and stability in conflict-affected regions.

Ethiopia's use of peacekeeping as a form of defence diplomacy has increased, with the number of troops involved in such activities growing exponentially. Since the 1950s, more than 130,000 Ethiopian peacekeepers have been deployed to peacekeeping operations worldwide, mainly in the Horn of Africa region (Sigatu, 2021). For instance, from 2010 to 2019, about 12,000 uniformed personnel rotated yearly under the UN and AU flag (Sigatu, 2021).

2.   Methods

This qualitative research study aims to analyze and synthesize the findings from relevant literature reviews on peacekeeping as a defence diplomacy tool for Ethiopia. The research will employ a systematic literature review methodology, including searches of electronic databases, academic journals, books, reports, and policy documents. The inclusion criteria for the literature will focus on publications that specifically address the role of peacekeeping in defence diplomacy, with a particular emphasis on all of Ethiopia's engagement in peacekeeping missions. Data extraction will involve categorizing and summarizing each selected source's key findings, themes, and arguments. The researcher's reflexivity will be demonstrated through transparent documentation of the steps taken in the literature review process and potential biases taken into consideration. The findings of this study will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on peacekeeping as a defence diplomacy tool for Ethiopia, helping to identify gaps, strengths, and areas for further research in this field.

3.   Discussion
3.1   Historical Background of Ethiopian Defence Diplomacy

Ethiopia has a long military and diplomatic engagement dating back to ancient times. During the first half of the third century, the Aksum Empire engaged in military campaigns and established diplomatic relations with neighboring states (Munro-Hay, 1991). Ethiopia's strategic location and trade routes made it a key player in regional dynamics, necessitating diplomatic and defence engagements. In the mid-19th century, during modern Ethiopia's history, military diplomacy was used to pursue Ethiopia's foreign policy interests. Successive Ethiopian rulers practiced it. Emperor Tewodros wanted to acquire firearms and ammunition to equip his army, so he wrote many letters requesting assistance from countries like Britain (Venkataram, 1973). Emperor Yohannes IV was also active in pursuing military diplomacy, defending his country against external aggressions perpetrated by the Egyptians, the Italians, and the Mahdists (Zewde, 2002).

The Battle of Adwa in 1896, where Ethiopian forces defeated Italian colonialist troops, was a significant moment in Ethiopian defence diplomacy, demonstrating the country's resilience and ability to resist colonization. This victory elevated Ethiopia's reputation internationally and contributed to its recognition as an independent state. Scaling up the experiences of his predecessors, Emperor Menelik II was successful in using foreign skills to train his troops and import firearms from Italy and France, as well as in erecting a small gunpowder factory near his capital at Ankobar (Pankrust, 1967).

Defence diplomacy began to be employed more or less in an organized way during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Though it was to no avail, the Emperor's reliance on collective security caused Ethiopia to join and ask for support from the League of Nations during the second Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Since the Emperor was also an advocate of pan-Africanism had a role in the fight against colonialism. After the second Italian invasion and after gaining freedom, the Emperor created solid diplomatic and defence relations with the United States. The MAAG - the military advisory group trained up three Ethiopian army divisions of 6,000 men each between 1953 and 1960, and the US was the leading supplier of military equipment; moreover, the US established Kagnew Station, US's global radio communications network base in Asmera, northern Ethiopia (Halliday, 1977). The military base was named 'Kagnew' after the Ethiopian contingent fought with the US in the Korean War. During the Emperor's era, the first Ethiopian peacekeeping troops were deployed.

Under Emperor Haile Selassie I, another distinctive and fundamental feature of Ethiopian defence diplomacy of the day was its unwavering policy of supporting African liberation struggles. A prominent instance of support was military training and an Ethiopian passport with an altered name given to Nelson Mandela during his battle against the South African Apartheid system by the government of the Emperor (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2008). The former Ethiopian Air Force officer and later Chief of Staff Brigadier General Addis Tedla described another case of foreign support in his memoir as follows:

> In the 1960s, many African countries were liberated from colonial rule, and Tanzania became independent. However, its neighbor, Mozambique, was still a Portuguese colony. Tanzania began to support FRELIMO, the Liberation Front of Mozambique. As a result, when Portuguese fighter aircraft began to enter Tanzanian airspace and threatened, Julius Nyerere was confused because they did not have air power. Therefore, he appealed to Emperor Haile Selassie I to let the Ethiopian fighter jets go there and protect Tanzanian airspace. As the Emperor agreed, a squadron of the Ethiopian Air Force was sent to Tanzania as a show of force to the Portuguese (Tedla, 2022).

The 1974 Ethiopian Revolution took place, and *Derg* (The Armed Forces, the Police and Territorial Army Council), later in its official name, 'Provisional Military Administration Council' (1974-1991), took power. During this time defence, and diplomacy was mainly characterized by robust military cooperation and partnership with all countries, including Cuba, East Germany, and the Soviet Union (Unfried, 2016). The military leader, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, continued his predecessor's policy of supporting

African liberation movements and giving military supplies. For instance, the Ethiopian army provided training camps to the then Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) guerrillas led by Robert Mugabe in Ethiopia while they were fighting against the white minority government (The New York Times, 1991).

In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF) took power, which witnessed the military's excellent record of accomplishment in its role in the regional peace and security, counter-terrorism, and alliance in the region and beyond. Currently, Ethiopia's military holds a significant position in Africa, boasting one of the largest and most powerful armed forces on the continent. According to 2024 Military Strength Ranking of Global Firepower ranking Ethiopia ranked 3rd from Sub-Saharan African states after South Africa and Nigeria (GlobalFirepower.com, 2024 a). Ranking 49 out of 145 states in the wold with an estimated total number of 162,000 military personnel (GlobalFirepower.com, 2024 b).

Moreover, it long history of military prowess and a well-established defense infrastructure, the Ethiopian military is renowned for its role in regional peacekeeping operations and its active participation in international security efforts. Ethiopia's strategic location in the Horn of Africa enables its military to play a crucial role in maintaining stability and security in the region, making it a key player in African geopolitics. It also worth to mention that the National Security Strategy of the US consider Ethiopia as one of the "countries with major impact on ther neighbourhoodand anchor for regional engagement and required forcysed attention" (The White House, 2002). Defence diplomacy, therefore, has been an important avenue in pursuing Ethiopia's foreign policy during successive periods, primarily through the UN and AU peacekeeping missions. These were the main features of the EPRDF era, which is discussed below.

3.2   Ethiopian Peacekeeping Participation

Ethiopian peacekeeping engagements can be categorized into four phases. The first was the Imperial Army's peacekeeping deployment from 1950-1967. The second was the peacekeeping deployment of EPRDF's Rebel Army from 1994-95. The third was the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) engagement in 'African Solution for African Problems' from 2003-2010. The fourth and last phase is since 2011 when ENDF became 'the peacekeeper army' (Sigatu, 2021).

During Emperor Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia's first notable participation in UN peacekeeping was the Republic of the Congo in 1960. However, under Resolution 84 (1950), the United Nations Security Council recommended that all member states provide military forces under the United States's command using the United Nations flag for operations against North Korean forces (United Nations, 1950). Ethiopia provided 6,037 troops in rounds of battalions

made up of volunteers from Emperor Haile Selassie's Imperial Guard from 1951 to 1954 to the United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea.

During this time, Ethiopia wanted to get prestige and international recognition by participating in this operation as one of the two states in Africa that contributed to the Apartheid South African State (Techane, 2006). Moreover, the Emperor's decision to send his troops with the United Nations operation under the leadership of the United States was due to the regional security threats he had at the time (Halliday, 1977). He was looking for arms procurement or support from the United States, and it was an excellent opportunity to persuade the United States to dispense its negligence towards Ethiopia and value and welcome Ethiopia's arms request (Techane, 2006). William Stueck described the Ethiopian willingness and motive for deployment as follows:

> When Ethiopia expressed its desire to contribute a British-trained battalion with English-speaking officers, the State Department was more receptive. But the overture from Ethiopia, whose government in the 1930s had been a victim of the failure of collective security, hardly represented a selfless gesture. The fates of neighboring Eritrea and Somaliland were now in the hands of the United Nations. Ethiopia was an interested party, especially intent on acquiring the former and thus keen on enhancing its position in the international body. Another method of enhancing its bargaining power was to strengthen its army. Exchanges between Washington and Addis Ababa soon revealed that Ethiopia hoped to receive enough equipment from the United States to arm two or three divisions (Stueck, 1995).

With the same motivation, the Imperial government of Ethiopia deployed its peacekeeping troops to the Republic of the Congo in the United Nations Operation in the Congo, ONUC (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo) from 1960 – 1964. In addition, to the India-Pakistan border in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in 1966. Ethiopia Contributed a total of 10, 625 of which 6,911 contingents, 2,960 Junior Officers, and 754 Officers in four rotations to ONUC and seven officers to UNMOGIP (Sigatu, 2021; Yeshumnesh, 2017; WoldeTinsai, 2008). It is important to note that during this time, Ethiopia's long independent existence and statehood provided it with a unique position to be active in international affairs (Yihun, 2014).

The Ethiopian experience is one of few instances indicating the significance of peacekeeping participation as a tool of defence diplomacy, especially from 1994 onwards. After the change of government in 1991, the new government participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions after more than two decades of interruption. After the Rwandan genocide, the

United Nations deployed the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), in which Ethiopia deployed 1,694 troops from 1994 to 1995 (Sigatu, 2021).

Later, in July 2009, on the Rwandan Liberation Day, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda presented to the late Meles Zenawi, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, with "Uruti" (National Liberation Medal) and "Umurinzi" (Campaign against Genocide Medal). The first medal recognized Meles's contribution to toppling the former regime and bringing peace and socio-economic development to Ethiopia. The second medal was given in recognition of Ethiopia's contribution to deploying peacekeepers to help Rwanda (Rwanda News Agency, 2010).

The ENDF opened a new history of peace and partisanship, completing all their missions. Though the long-standing United Nations Peacekeeping principles advocate a peacekeeper should not respond in fire even if he is shot at, instead of retreating, the Ethiopian army respected this and had a saying that 'retreating while there is a clear attack against civilians is not a virtue' (EGCA, 2012). As a result, the army has won the people's affection by protecting the lives of innocent civilians and working with the Rwandan military to ensure the country's security. The Ethiopian troops' conviction of defending civilians later led to the '*Kigali Principles* on the Protection of Civilians,' a non-binding set of eighteen pledges for the effective and thorough implementation of civilians' protection in UN peacekeeping (Global Center for Responsibility to Protect, 2015).

After the African Union was officially launched in July 2002, "African Solutions to Africa's Problems" became a principle that emphasized the importance of African countries taking the lead in addressing the challenges and conflicts within the continent (Solomon, 2015). This led to a series of African Union-led peacekeeping operations on the continent and has been the driver of the majority of diplomatic defense activities (Potgieter, 2002). In 2003, the first mission was wholly initiated, planned, and executed by African Union members, the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB), and was deployed to Burundi (Murithi, 2008). In 2004, the UN Security Council established United Nations Peace Operations in Burundi (ONUB), and AMIB troops were incorporated into the ONUB (Murithi, 2008). In September 2003, the United Nations established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in Liberia. Likewise, after the Darfur crisis in Sudan, the AU set up a peacekeeping operation in 2004, the African Union Mission in Sudan. By 2007, the Security Council established the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and incorporated AMIS personnel (UNSC, 2007). Furthermore, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council in January 2007 with the approval of the

United Nations. In April 2022, it transformed into the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

Ethiopia deployed its peacekeeping troops to all peacekeeping missions stated above, including other United Nations missions in Africa, the Central African Republic, and Côte d'Ivoire. The idea of African solutions for African problems was taken sincerely by Ethiopia, especially in the Horn of Africa region. From 2003 to 2007, Ethiopia sent a total of 2,747 contingent and five military observers, including the position of Deputy Force Commander of ONUB. In Liberia, to the UNMIL mission, Ethiopia contributed 17,453 contingents and 17 military observers from 2003 to 2009, which necessitated eight brigades in nine shifts and one battalion (FDRE-PSTC, 2015).

Continuing its aggressive peacekeeping participation, Ethiopia started deploying its peacekeepers in neighboring Sudan to the UNAMID mission in February 2008 by sending 11 troops, one military observer, and an entire battalion beginning in 2009. In 2019, Ethiopia contributed six experts to the mission, 821 contingent troops, 19 police officers, and five staff officers; 18,901 personnel were deployed between 2009 and 2019 to UNAMID (Sigatu, 2021). Moreover, Ethiopia deployed 15 personnel to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) from 2009 to 2010 and 2 military observers to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in 2016 (Sigatu, 2021).

In 2011, the ENDF Peacekeeping Main Department was established under the Chief of Staff, which oversees the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - Peace Support Training Center (FDRE-PSTC), currently named the International Peace Support Training Institute (FDRE-IPSTI), which specializes in training and research on peacekeeping missions. Opening an organizational structure for peacekeeping that coordinates thousands of troop deployments transformed the ENDF into a peacekeeping army. Furthermore, in 2011, an exceptional peacekeeping deployment took place in Abyei, the border region of Sudan and South Sudan, under the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Moreover, since 2011, Ethiopia has participated in three more small deployments, in the Caribbean, to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in Sudan, to the United Nations Mission (UNMIS), in Mali, to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and in Yemen, to the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA). Moreover, one enormous deployment in South Sudan to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) is continuing, and as of July 2023, there are 834 contingents (UNMISS, 2023).

In June 2016, Ethiopia secured a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC). The position requires that countries garner at least

a two-thirds vote to win the position, and Ethiopia ran without competition, with 185 votes out of 190 votes cast, one vote being invalid while two other members abstained (Shaban, 2016). Ethiopian Foreign Minister at the time, Tedros Adhanom, said the election indicated that the country had won respect and trust of the world (Akwei & Southard, 2016). This respect and trust mostly come from Ethiopian peacekeeping involvement. Back in 2015, Tedros said the following at the Chatham House event.

> We realize that the durability of the successes we have achieved as a country depends on the prevalence of peace and security in the whole of our sub-region. Ethiopia firmly believes that its peace and security are the peace and security of its neighbors and vice versa. This explains Ethiopia's commitment to peace and security, as demonstrated by our participation in the various peacekeeping operations within our sub-region in particular and our continent in general. In our sub-region, the deployment of Ethiopian troops in Darfur, Abyei, and Somalia has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of regional peace, security, and stability. Especially if you take Abyei: it is just Ethiopian troops keeping the peace of that disputed border between Sudan and South Sudan. During the last five years, we have increased our contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations fourfold. Currently, Ethiopia is the second-largest troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping missions. If we add to this our involvement in African Union peacekeeping missions, we will find that Ethiopia is the largest contributor of peacekeeping troops in the world (Gebreyesus, 2015).

The two most prominent Ethiopian peacekeeping deployments, which have more excellent defence diplomacy, were in Abyei (2011-2022) and Somalia (2014-up to now). When UNISFA was established, it took the United Nations Security Council just five minutes to unanimously agree to send 4,200 Ethiopian troops to Abyei as a peacekeeping force (McConnell, 2011). UNISFA's establishment came in June 2011, after the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) reached an agreement in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to demilitarize Abyei. Both sides claimed the region and allowed Ethiopian troops to monitor the area under the 'Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area' (United Nations, 2016).

UNISFA is exceptional because, unlike most peacekeeping missions worldwide, it is almost entirely composed of Ethiopian peace troops. For instance, as of January 2020, 35 countries sent their military and police personnel 3,772, to the mission. Ethiopia contributed a total of 3,642 personnel, 79 experts, five police officers, 69 staff, and 3,489 contingents, which made up 96.5 % of the peacekeepers in the mission. The 35 other states

contributed only 130 military and police personnel (United Nations, 2020). Moreover, all UNISFA's force commanders were Ethiopians until 2022. Chris Johnson commented about Ethiopian in deployment as follows:

> The involvement of Ethiopian troops in UNISFA is unprecedented; a neighboring power invited by both Sudan and South Sudan to provide an interposition force to keep the peace between them. This is seen as evidence of Ethiopia's good relations with both states and its neutral position in the conflict, and Ethiopia takes pride in this regional role. UNISFA is viewed as a success story and has shown Ethiopia that it is not only possible but 'a good thing' to contribute troops to a peace operation in a neighboring country (Johnson, 2012).

The second noticeable Ethiopian peacekeeping deployment is in Somalia. ENDF's first unilateral intervention in Somalia was in 1995 to remove the Islamic insurgent Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (AIAI). In 1998, Ethiopia launched a second military intervention at the time of the Ethio-Eritrean war, following Eritrea's effort–in collaboration with a Baidoa-based Somali warlord Hussein Aideed and involving the Oromia Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) to open a second front (Beyene, 2018). Ethiopia's third intervention was in 2006, against the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) threat and supporting the Somali Transitional Federal Government. Lastly, Ethiopia joined AMISOM/ATMIS in 2014, simultaneously deploying troops outside the AMISOM/ATMIS command to support its forces under AMISOM/ATMIS. AMISOM was a multidimensional Peace Support Operation mandated to reduce the threat and conduct offensive operations against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups. ATMIS was created in April 2022 and was operational until the end of 2024, after it handed all security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (ATMIS, 2023).

Nevertheless, Ethiopian intervention in Somalia has been contentious. Napoleon A. Bamfo described it as 'Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia in late 2006 may go down in history as one of the most daring if not imprudent strategic decisions any African government has made on its neighbor' (Bamfo, 2010). Others argue, 'Ethiopia has a long and ugly history of perennially intervening in Somalia to weaken the political independence of the country and to pursue narrow political objectives' (Horn Observer, 2020). On the other hand, regarding the 2006 intervention, the former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said Ethiopia did not invade Somalia. We were invited by the duly constituted government of Somalia, the internationally recognized government of Somalia, to assist them in averting the threat of terrorism (Al Jazeera, 2007). Some also argue that Ethiopian interventions are based on 'the inherent right to self-defence, a terrorist threat, intervention by invitation, and

the protection of the right to self-determination of the Ethiopian Somalis' (Yihdego, 2007).

Generally, Ethiopia's extended involvement in Somalia in the name of intervention can be considered as 'hegemonic peacekeeping.' Shaw and Ihonvber (1996) called the Nigerian participation in the regional peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, in Liberia as 'hegemonic participation in peacekeeping' (Shaw & Ihonvber, 1996). Similarly, Adebajo (2003) asserted Nigeria's case from 1990-1998 and the United States in 1993 in their interventionists in Liberia and Somalia, respectively, as hegemonic peacekeeping. This is "a situation in which a powerful state with strong global or regional interests can deploy a preponderance of troops to manage a conflict and convince other states to accept its leadership of the mission. By shouldering a greater military and financial burden (Adebajo, 2003).

Since the beginning of AMISOM, peacekeepers from the region have relied on Ethiopian soldiers to provide the bulk of the security functions required to keep the Transitional Federal Government safe in its compounds and from any counter-attacks from Somali factions (Mays, 2009). This is because 'Ethiopian troops know the land, are used to the temperatures, are the only ones who have previous experience fighting both guerrilla and conventional warfare' (France24, 2016). In addition, Ethiopia pursued its regional interests multilaterally, mainly through a dominant role in IGAD (Maru, 2014).

Ethiopia's troop contribution to AMISOM was 4,400 (Williams, 2018); however, all ENDF forces in Somalia were not part of AMISOM, and in fact, the burden of defeating al-Shabaab in its strongholds was left primarily to the Ethiopian troops. According to the Ethiopian former ambassador to Somalia, Wendimagegn Asaminew, Ethiopia's non-AMISOM forces were deployed on bilateral understandings with the SFG (Asaminew, 2020). Ethiopia deployed an additional 10,000 – 15,000 troops outside the command of AMISOM (Vidija, 2019). Such a trend was also continued in deploying non-ATMIS troops by newly formed 'Somalia-Frontline States,' which are Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia (Garoweonline, 2023). In February 2023, Ethiopia dispatched at least 1000 soldiers not part of ATMIS, which Djibouti and Kenya will continue (Garoweonline, 2023).

The former Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister, the late Seyoum Mesfin, and his former colleague at the ministry, Abdeta Dribssa, argued the necessity of Ethiopia's presence in Somalia, especially in places near the Ethiopia border, as follows:

> In fact, the government of Somalia is unable to credibly guarantee to Ethiopia that these territories will not be used to threaten Ethiopia, so Ethiopia often is blamed for interference. This criticism highlights the paradox in which Ethiopia has to infringe on Somalia's sovereignty in

territories that Mogadishu is unable to control in order to ensure the fulfillment of basic obligations required of a sovereign state. Conventional tools of international relations, such as pressuring a national government to fulfill the obligations of its sovereignty, do not work when a state lacks a government with the capacity or political will to exercise even minimal control over its territory and armed forces (Beyene & Mesfin 2018).

Their argument is based on the TFG, later the Somalia Federal Government (SFG), which has no power to control its entire territory, so Ethiopia needs to keep its sovereignty inside Somalia. In this regard, Mesfin and Abdeta (2018) were applying the concept of a 'buffer zone.' Their argument about the need for an Ethiopian buffer zone in Somalia is as follows:

> Buffer zones play their paradoxical role while states with stronger domestic capabilities that develop their own broader dimensions of effective internal and external sovereignty, such as Ethiopia, step in to manage the effects of this extreme asymmetry of domestic control. The stronger state then violates the sovereignty of the weaker to provide the basis for the semblance of an orderly state system in the region. This hegemony can appear as domination, but to its architects, it is also the only viable alternative to manage the destabilizing regional effects of state failure and collapse. This is particularly important for states like Ethiopia, which shares a long border with Somalia, a failed state that generates violent illicit activities, cross-border insurgencies, refugee flows, and other disruptions that threaten efforts in Ethiopia to transform its domestic political economy. Disorder in the borderlands is a historical problem for state-builders, but the difference now is that stronger states no longer have the option (or are no longer inclined) to solve this problem through conquest. Instead, they have to maintain order in weak states (Beyene & Mesfin 2018).

3.3 Rationales of Ethiopia's Defence Diplomacy in Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping participation as defence diplomacy refers to the involvement of a country's armed forces in peacekeeping operations to serve diplomatic objectives. The following are the main rationales of Ethiopian defence diplomacy through peacekeeping participation, especially in the Horn of Africa region.

3.3.1 National Security

Participation in peacekeeping operations in the Ethiopian context can be considered as a vehicle for its national security strategy. Ethiopia is located in a region known for civil wars and state failures. Most of the problems are

transnational, as social and economic problems in one country would have intended and unintended spillover effects on neighboring countries (Berhe, 2016). Out of six states with which Ethiopia shares borders, except for Kenya and Djibouti, Ethiopia was in conflict with (Eritrea and Somalia), or there were intrastate armed conflicts. In Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, the UN deployed troops because of intrastate conflicts and interstate conflicts in the case of Abyei. This left Ethiopia without any other option than sending its troops to UN or AU peacekeeping operations to the troubled neighboring states for its own security.

The post-1991 collapse of the government in Somalia, which resulted in the civil war and the rise of radical Islamists in the country, has been a significant security threat in the region. The Sudanese civil war, which resulted in the breakaway of South Sudan, still has not brought peace since the division between South Sudan's leadership led to a new civil war in the country. In addition to this, Sudan and South Sudan still have not finished the demarcation of their borders because of the oil-rich Abyei region claimed by both states.

Thus, Ethiopia responded to all four calamities mentioned above through AU and UN peacekeeping missions. Security threats, thanks to spillover effects, come from communities living on both sides of the borders, namely pastoral communities, human traffickers, and in the form of illegal movement of migrants, illicit trade, and organized crime, such as drug trafficking. They represent major security threats throughout the Ethiopian border region (Berhe, 2016). The 2002 Ethiopian Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy document also clearly indicates the significance of neighboring countries toward the national interests and security, democratization and development goals (Ministry of Information Press & Audiovisual Department, 2002).

In addition, scholars found evidence that rebellions are contagious; in other words, a rebellion significantly increases the risk of internal upheaval in a neighboring country (Berhe, 2016). An ongoing conflict in neighboring states may decrease the price of arms and increase their availability, making it relatively accessible to rebel groups to mobilize insurgencies. This is most likely along the 'poorly defined borders of Ethiopia' (Berhe, 2016). Since 2017, there has been an attempt by armed groups to attack the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam – set to become the biggest hydropower dam in Africa – located only 15 km from the Sudanese border. The Sudanese government handed over some of the rebels who fled after the Ethiopian security forces killed 13 of them (Gaffey, 2017).

In the case of South Sudan's conflict, Ethiopia was mainly concerned about the dynamics around its western Gambella regional state. The sudden influx of Nuer refugees into Gambella changes the demographic balance

between the Anuak and the Nuer, creating tension between the two ethnic groups. Moreover, when more than 1,000 gunmen from South Sudan killed 28 people and kidnapped 43 children in the Gambella region of Ethiopia, bordering South Sudan at the beginning of March 2017, the South Sudanese government, which has been in civil war since 2013, was not in a position to do anything. For the second time, the occurrence of such incidents, where more than 200 people died and about 160 children were kidnapped (Aljazeera, 2016), demonstrates that violence in South Sudan could spill over into neighbors (Aljazeera, 2017).

With the availability of small arms, cattle raiding and child abductions have become more frequent and fatal. Over the years, insurgent groups among the Murle have killed more civilians, rustled more cattle, and abducted more children, primarily from communities that are not well protected, such as the Anyuaa and Jikany-Nuer of Ethiopia. These make sending peacekeeping troops to neighboring states to help create a strong and functioning government not a matter of altruism but national security.

3.3.2   Political Influence

Ethiopia assumes a regional hegemony in the Horn of Africa (Le Gourielleck, 2018). Its foreign policy has been geared towards ensuring its regional hegemonic interests, particularly since the post-1991 years, with the backing of global powers and through international and regional institutions (Michael, 2018). Ethiopia's regional hegemonic position is founded in its power projection capability, which is rooted in its growing economy, strong military, large population and territory, geostrategic location, and history (Clapham, 2017). In addition, Ethiopia's army, one of the largest forces and has long experience in peacekeeping missions, especially in the continent, enables it to depict itself as a security provider in the Horn region, on which its development and security depend (Dias, 2013). Its relative political stability in the last two decades has enabled it to position itself as a regional power (Muligeta, 2014).

Ethiopia's foreign policy has been driven by its regional hegemonic politics by employing a foreign policy strategy of stabilizing the region by actively engaging in regional peacebuilding and security provision through peacekeeping missions. This resulted in political influence through image-building, national prestige, and diplomatic leverage. The current Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the following about Ethiopian international role and peacekeeping deployment:

> The role it is playing for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa region and the African continent is a manifestation of Ethiopia's determination to this cause. The peacekeeping work we carried out in Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi is enormous. Our Defence

force is a highly disciplined army that efficiently discharges its peacekeeping missions. The role Ethiopia is playing in mediating countries is also considerable. Countries that are either pursuing their interests in the Horn of Africa or observing the ongoing political developments in the region can clearly witness the role Ethiopia is playing in the region. Thus, Ethiopia's outstanding role in keeping peace in the Horn of Africa is one of the reasons why Ethiopia is enjoying an ever-increasing influence in the region (Ali, 2019).

Bellamy and Williams, in their argument for the political rationale of states' involvement in UN peacekeeping, note states are mostly interested in 'contributing to certain easier, 'safer' UN missions (Bellamy, 2012). However, in the case of Ethiopia, though its participation highly contributed to regional order, almost all the missions ENDF has been undertaking are far from 'safe.'

3.3.3 Economic Gain

There is a direct economic gain from UN and AU reimbursement for troop-contributing member states for providing equipment, personnel, and support services to military or police contingents (United Nations, 2019). In addition, peacekeeping deployment provides economic gains for the soldiers participating in missions. The indirect financial gain of these peacekeeping missions is forming a peaceful region that attracts foreign investment and harnesses regional trade and development.

One of the incentives the governments provide for foreign investment, besides low tariffs and cheap labor, is security (Davison, 2016). Negative spillover to neighboring nations is likely to occur from disruptions of trade, heightened risk perceptions by would-be investors in the region, severance of input supply lines, collateral damage from nearby battles, and resources spent to assist refugees (Sesay, 2004). The effects of civil wars are not only felt in the countries where they are fought but also in neighboring countries and beyond. Conflict in one country reduces the economic growth of its neighbors and significantly affects other growth-enhancing variables (Sesay, 2004). Unless Ethiopia tries to help neighboring countries to achieve peace, the spillover effects of conflict will hinder its ongoing economic growth.

3.3.4 Historical Legacy and Conviction to Collective Security

Ethiopia deployed its troops to the US-led peacekeeping mission in Korea based on two main intentions. The first one is because of the historical legacy of the League of Nations' failure to defend Ethiopia from Italian aggression in 1936, though Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations states, "The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political

independence of all Members of the League." Ethiopia demanded the League to punish Italy for invading its borders so that the punishment would halt Italy's conquest of the country. However, the League failed to do so. This historical incident is an important landmark in Ethiopian history and a significant motivation for the Ethiopian army's deployment in Korea and Congo at the time of the Emperor.

The Ethiopian peacekeeping operations can be considered an extension of credence in fighting for those who are beleaguered. Emperor Haile Selassie I affirmed that 'people who love freedom and who are trying to fight for their freedom should be respected and helped' (Techane, 2006). This statement remains a core value in all Ethiopian regimes' foreign policy and military conviction.

3.3.5   Prestige

According to Firsing (2014). participating in peacekeeping helps countries such as Nigeria who seek to become a Permanent Member of the Security Council and for other African countries such as Rwanda to gain more leverage in UN bodies. During Emperor Haile Selassie's reign, Ethiopia's peacekeeping deployment in Korea, Congo, and Jammu and Kashmir missions significantly bolstered the emperor's and the nation's prestige on the global stage. The deployment of Ethiopian troops as the only independent African state at the time showcased Ethiopia's commitment to international peace and security, elevating its status as a key player in global affairs. This contributed to the nation's prestige by demonstrating its willingness to contribute to peace efforts beyond its borders, earning respect and admiration from the international community.

Additionally, after the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia continued its participation in UN and AU peacekeeping missions, further enhancing its reputation as a responsible and proactive member of the international community. Through its continued involvement in post-1991 peacekeeping efforts, Ethiopia solidified its position as a reliable partner in promoting stability and security in conflict-affected regions, thus contributing to its national prestige. Overall, Ethiopia's sustained commitment to peacekeeping operations both during Emperor Haile Selassie's era and in the post-1991 government has played a crucial role in enhancing its global standing and reputation as a peace-loving and responsible nation.

3.3.6 Military Capability

Finaly, the Ethiopian military's involvement in peacekeeping deployments with the UN and AU has greatly contributed to the enhancement of its capabilities. These missions provided the Ethiopian military with invaluable opportunities to gain practical experience in operating within

complex, multinational environments, thereby honing their skills in areas such as conflict resolution, peace enforcement, and humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the exposure to diverse operational challenges in different conflict zones allowed the Ethiopian military to adapt to various scenarios, fostering a versatile and adaptable force.

Moreover, participation in peacekeeping missions facilitated the modernization and professionalization of the Ethiopian military through interactions with global partners, exposure to international best practices, and the adoption of new technologies and tactics. This exposure to modern military practices and equipment from other contributing nations helped to enhance the Ethiopian military's capabilities and readiness, ultimately contributing to its overall effectiveness in both domestic and international operations.

4.   Current Challenges of Ethiopian Peacekeeping Efforts

Post-2018 witnessed unprecedented developments in the Ethiopian military diplomacy sphere regarding United Nations peacekeeping. First, due to a souring relationship between Sudan and Ethiopia over a border dispute, the Ethiopian peacekeeping force in Abyei was forced to withdraw from the area on Sudan's request (Addis Standard, 2022). Sudan wants Ethiopian forces replaced by peacekeepers from other countries. This was an unprecedented development in the history of Ethiopian peacekeeping missions. As peacekeeping contribution is considered to be an important tool for pursuing various foreign policy and national security objectives, the event unfolded in Sudan was not a welcome development for Ethiopia's military diplomacy (Sigatu, 2022).

Most importantly, political instability has soared in Ethiopia since 2020. The Tigray War in Ethiopia has impacted Ethiopia's participation in peacekeeping operations. The conflict, which began in November 2020 between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), has diverted attention, resources, and personnel away from Ethiopia's involvement in international peacekeeping efforts. To deal with the Tigray crisis, Ethiopia has had to recall some of its troops from United Nations and Africa Union peacekeeping missions, including ethnic Tigrayan soldiers (Lynch & Gramer, 2020). Ethiopian soldiers who were previously deployed in countries like South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia were needed for domestic operations, reducing Ethiopia's peacekeeping contributions.

Moreover, the Tigray conflict has attracted significant international attention and criticism due to reports of human rights abuses and allegations of atrocities (US Department of State, 2022). These incidents have raised concerns about Ethiopia's commitment to peace and security, which could affect its standing as a reliable contributor to peacekeeping missions (US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 2021). In relation to this, Ethiopian

non-ATMIS troops in Somalia were accused of human rights violations, including meddling in internal politics (Garoweonline, 2023).

The Tigray conflict has impacted Ethiopia's involvement in peacekeeping missions and strained relationships with neighboring countries. The spillover effects of the conflict could worsen regional tensions and affect Ethiopia's ability to collaborate effectively with other countries on peacekeeping initiatives.

The consequences of the Tigray War, including the displacement of people, the destruction of infrastructure, and the humanitarian crisis, may require sustained efforts by the Ethiopian government to stabilize and rebuild the region. These domestic priorities could limit Ethiopia's capacity to contribute significantly to peacekeeping missions in the near future. It is important to note that the impact of the Tigray War on Ethiopia's peacekeeping participation is a dynamic situation that may evolve over time as the peace and reconciliation processes are undertaken.

Conclusion

In conclusion, examining Ethiopian defence diplomacy focusing on peacekeeping contributions reveals a complex and multifaceted dynamic. Ethiopian involvement in peacekeeping operations has significantly projected its regional and global influence, promoted stability, and reinforced its commitment to international norms and values. The country's historical commitment to peacekeeping, demonstrated by its status as one of the top troop-contributing countries, underscores its dedication to conflict resolution and recognition of the importance of collective security efforts.

Ethiopia's most prominent and ongoing peacekeeping involvement in Somalia has been crucial in pursuing peace, stability, and regional security. Through its contributions to ATMIS and unilaterally, Ethiopia has exemplified its commitment to collective security efforts and its determination to address common challenges faced by countries in the region. By supporting Somalia's stabilization process, Ethiopia can help pave the way for a prosperous, secure, and self-reliant Somalia, contributing to regional peace and development.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the dynamics of Ethiopian defence diplomacy are not static. Factors such as domestic conflicts, like the Tigray War, impacted Ethiopia's peacekeeping participation by diverting resources and attention away from international commitments. International perceptions of Ethiopia concerning its handling of internal conflicts may also influence its standing and reputation as a contributor to peacekeeping missions.

It is essential for Ethiopia to navigate these dynamic dynamics effectively while maintaining its commitment to peacekeeping. Balancing domestic priorities with regional and international obligations will be crucial

to sustaining Ethiopia's role as a reliable and significant partner in promoting peace and security. Continually evaluating the effectiveness of defence diplomacy and peacekeeping strategies will aid in optimizing Ethiopia's contributions to international peacekeeping efforts.

Moreover, Ethiopia should actively seek avenues for collaboration and cooperation with regional and international partners to enhance its capacity in peacekeeping operations. Strengthening partnerships, sharing expertise, and leveraging support from the international community will contribute to Ethiopia's ability to address emerging security challenges and maximize its impact on conflict resolution.

In conclusion, understanding and unveiling the dynamics of Ethiopian defence diplomacy, particularly in the context of its peacekeeping contributions, provides essential insights into Ethiopia's role as a critical regional actor. By striking a balance between domestic imperatives and international obligations, Ethiopia can continue to contribute effectively to peacekeeping initiatives, bolster regional stability, and reinforce its commitment to peaceful resolutions of conflicts.

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