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Russia's Renewed Interests in the Horn of Africa As a Traditional and Rising Power

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Abstract

During the Cold War, the Horn of Africa became one of the struggle areas in a bipolar world system. In the Post-Cold War period, situation was changed and Russia decreased the level of relations with African states because of economic catastrophe and psychological factors. At the same time, the Horn of Africa has continued to produce deaths and destruction. After the lost years with Yeltsin, Russian foreign policy concept shifted in Putin's presidency. Russia has projected its hard and soft power as a great power in Africa again. Russia's trade with Africa has increased immensely in recent years. Russian armed forces has involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Still, Africa is not in the central of Russian foreign policy. But the developments in Gulf of Aden can make Russia more eager to concentrate on the Horn of Africa. This article examines of renewed political, military, economic and cultural links of Russia with the Horn of Africa under Putin leadership, including the reasons for failure and rise in the 21st Century.

Keywords

Horn of Africa, Russia, Foreign Policy, Rising Power, Conflict

Introduction*

The Horn of Africa is both geographical and political expression. In general geographical meaning, consists of rhino-horn shaped part of Northeast Africa countries, including Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea. However, geopolitics enlarges the definition of Horn to "the Greater Horn" by attaching Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan. This paper will addresses to 'the Horn' as "the Greater Horn". Also, the Horn of Africa has close ties with the petro-states of Arabia, particularly with Egypt and Yemen. The Horn controls the Bab el Man-

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deb Strait which is one of the important global transportation routes, dominates part of the Gulf of Aden, the gateway from the Mediterranean with Suez to the Indian Ocean.

The 20th century demonstrated three different Russia to the world: the Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Russia and the Russian Federation. Although some differences in regional and politically, Russia has always been and named a great power in world politics. Russia and the African states have had relations for more than a century. The sectarian centric contact to Africa which started with Ethiopia in Tsarist Russia era continued in the Cold War years, the Soviet Union was the ideological role model, ally and supporter for many African states seeking self-determination and freedom against the Western colonialist states (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.6).

Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced an era of dramatic political transform and uncertainty in the global policy area. A country that was once a superpower in a bipolar world began to raise a suspicion its place in the international system. The end of the USSR left Russia in a state of economic, political, and social chaos, marked by declining economic output and increasing inflation, foreign debt, and budget deficits. (Govella & Aggarwal 2011, p.1).

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union have disrupted the ties of Russia with Africa continent. After the prolonged era of economic trouble and decline, at the beginning of the 2000's, the nation reemerged as a global powerful imminent force. It contributes to BRICS and Shanghai Five of rapidly developing nations which expected to occupy the major places in the world economy of the new century. The years of Vladimir Putin's presidency gives a clear idea about Russia's re-emergence as a global power with interests across the world (Mankoff 2009, p.4).

Since the end of the Cold War – and particularly over the past decade – Africa's status in the international geopolitical order has risen noticeably (Volman 2009, p.6). Also, the Horn of Africa remains one of the world's most conflicted regions which still to struggle with conflict, hunger, poverty, and increasing instability and inequalities. In contrast, the region has a dynamic, young and entrepreneurial population and plenty of natural resources. The region has more than its share of conflict causes a unique challenge for foreign investments (Klomegah, 2016 para.3).

Still, Russia does not regard the Horn of Africa as a top geopolitical strategic region and has demonstrated minimal high-level interest in Africa ((Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015, p.22). However, by its latest military campaigns in Ukraine and Syria, also relations with US and China, Russia still continues to reconstruct

its role as a great power in global politics. The Horn of Africa, from Suez Canal to Gulf of Aden, was one of the strategic region made Tsarist Russia and Soviet Union great or super power during their ages. The last decade has witnessed Russia's powerful return to the international area under Putin's administration. Russia today is definitely wealthier and more stable than it was at any point during the 1990s. Therefore, we can say that Russia will change the point of view over the Horn of Africa, in terms of to achieve its aim to become a superpower again in the near future.

In this context, the paper focused on examining the foreign policy of Russia respect with the Horn of Africa in general and with each particular state in the Horn after new millennium. The paper may fill the existing literature gap in the Russian foreign policy towards with each Horn of African states after 2000. In this paper, the author will also evaluate changing Russian interests to seek opportunities and challenges in the Horn of Africa region, the recent realization of this aim, and overall Russian objectives in the region.

Background of Russia and the Horn of Africa Relations

Tsarist Russia could not find a place in colonialist race in 17th and 18th centuries. After the second half of the 19th century, Russia increased the concentration on Ethiopia due to the British and Italian penetration into the Horn of Africa. Different from the other European powers, tsarist Russia was influenced that Ethiopia had huge economic potential with untapped natural resources. Providing with arms, military advisers and medical aids created an important positive effect on relations between Russia and Ethiopia during Italian-Ethiopian war. Russia also provided technical aid in gold mining operations and geological surveys as well as educational training for some Ethiopian students. After the revolutionary turmoil of 1917, the new Bolshevik regime didn't interest the relationship with Ethiopia at first. On the other hand, Ethiopia became a sanctuary for many professional Russian who had fled from Bolsheviks and served as advisers to the Ethiopian government (Patman 2009, pp.27-30).

In the early 1930s, Soviet diplomacy in the Horn began to bear some fruit in the sphere of trade. At the end of 1931, a representative of the Soviet foreign-trade corporation, conducted conversations in Ethiopian government, French Somaliland and Italian colony of Eritrea. On the road to World War II, USSR was one of the first states to condemn Italian aggression and support Ethiopia in the League of Nations. However, neither France nor Britain would take powerful sanctions against Mussolini. Stalin did not make any contrary policy against Italian Fascist annexation nor did he break Soviet ties with Italy. At this point, commercial relations became essential component with Italy and Ethiopia in USSR's policy (Patman 2009, pp.31-2).

During the World War II, the tradition of reciprocal interest relationships re-established between USSR and Ethiopia as allies in the fight against Nazi Germany and Italy. On the other hand, many of the territories under British military administration experienced nationalist movements in Somalia and Eritrea. After the war, the USSR sought a trusteeship over the territories of unknown status in peace conferences. However, these initiatives could not get any result due to Britain's objection. At Stalin's era Soviet concern was minimal in the Horn of Africa (Patman 2009, p.35). Following the World War II years, USSR placed socialist-communist ideology at the center of its internal and foreign policy. Thus, ethnic or religious boundaries or barriers could easily be exceeded.

The Cold War Period

Through the Cold War, Moscow gave high weight to Africa in terms of global competition with USA. The large and fast growth of Moscow's relations with African countries began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when they were achieving independence respectively. Non-Aligned Movement also provided a momentum to encourage other African communities towards independence, thus, USSR showed its support to the decisions of the Bandung Conference regarding them as anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist, and argued for peaceful coexistence that included respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

Followed by 1956, Khrushchev emphasized the importance of the 'collapse of the colonial system of imperialism' and declared the USSR's 'irreconcilable struggle against colonialism' at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Supporting struggles for national liberation and social progress was aimed in the 1977 Soviet Constitution as a foreign-policy objective. Thus, national liberation movements were considered as 'detachments' of the world anti-imperialist struggle. (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.6).

American and Soviet foreign policy on the Horn of Africa made more conflict in the decade of the 1970's. Not coincidentally, in the 1970-1980s the Horn of Africa was the arena of strong competition between the U.S. and the USSR for supremacy in regional forward military presence. The interests of the US can be explained in terms of securing some strategic points like the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf also became major in the general American strategy about the Soviet Union in the Cold War era. It was, therefore, in the interests of the US to block any expansion of Soviet power and influence, whether through proxies or not, in the Middle East, Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa (Mesfin 2011, p.19)

Nevertheless, superpower rivalry was not the only factor for Soviet activism in the Horn of Africa. During the Cold war era, US National Intelligence Council Memorandum 'Soviet Policy and Africa' (1975) determined the USSR's interests

in the region as; reducing Western influence, power, and presence; gaining political influence on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea littoral, and supporting and protecting its flanks in the Middle East; securing access to support facilities for its naval forces in the Indian Ocean; countering Chinese influence. All of the interests are related not only geopolitical but also including economic and culturally.

The USSR used military aid as the most effective means of gaining influence and cooperation. In 1962, Moscow gave \$ 32 million credit to Somali in order to raise the number of soldiers to 14,000 and modernize the army. When it came to 1965, the USSR found technical and military assistance to build the Somali Navy. On the other hand, the USSR also made attempts to establish the Ethiopia national armed forces. Socialist leader Mengistu Haile Mariam also played an active role to strengthening of aid on Ethiopia. In 1976, \$ 100 million secret military agreement was signed between the two sides. An estimated 20 000 Ethiopian were trained in the USSR, and thousands graduated from military and political schools. (Öztürk 2016, p.294). In 1977, The United States stopped all military aid, departing it without any influence on the strategic important Horn. This significant loss of influence resulted in total Soviet control over the Horn that made the situation even more complex (Schulz 2011).

On the contrary, the Soviets were not active in the economic field, except for fishing and sea/air port construction. The USSR gave economic credits to almost all the Horn of Africa countries, but could not embolden their use. During the Cold war era, the USSR signed a number of agreements includes military, economic, cultural and other fields with many African countries. In fact, only a small part of the 40 countries in Africa could comply with the agreements signed with the USSR. In the education field, Soviets also trained at least 200,000 specialists on African soil. The USSR made agreements with 37 African countries on technical and economic assistance, and with 42 countries on trade agreements. Also, About 25,000 Africans trained in Soviet universities and technicians in various fields, and thousands graduated from Soviet military and political schools (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015, p.21).

Somalia-Ethiopia conflicts played an important role for Moscow to determine policy over these countries. In the beginning, The USSR supported both rivaling states, Somalia and Ethiopia. Concerning this geopolitical contest, the socialist bloc had achieved an important outcome. However, Ogaden Battle between Somalia and Ethiopia changed the alliances in region and Somalia joined the Western camp and demonstrated the cliché that “there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies’. While the United States was arming Somalia, the USSR and Cuba were helping Ethiopia. Ogaden Battle became one of the reasons of demise of the SALT II agreement and détente between the Cold War

superpowers. Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski went so far as to declare that "SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden", signifying the death of détente (Woodroffe 2013, p.2).

During the late 1970-80s, each government in the Horn supported rebels fighting its neighbor and rival, but none of these opposition movements received significant backing from the US or USSR. Even the Soviet advisors and Cuban troops helped the Ethiopians in the Ethiopia-Eritrea war in 1978 (Griffiths 2005, p.135). Soviet support for Mengistu was not sufficient to defeat the Eritreans or the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). For a while, after the defeat of the military regime in Ethiopia in 1991, it seemed that there might be a new peaceful order in the Horn. However, along with the end of the superpower rivalry in the region, the United States no longer had any real need for Somalia (Woodward 2002, p.150). The United States finally suspended all financial aid, and it showed the Somali regime's full weakness and sudden collapse. As a result of Soviet and American proxy war in the Horn of Africa has been one of the most conflict-prone zones in the world (Abbink 2003). Lyons and Samatar (1995) emphasized to the failure of the U.S.-backed UN military intervention in 1992-94, Somalia fell off Washington's radar screen (cited in Lefebvre 2012).

Lost Years: Post-Cold War Period

The end of the Soviet Union disrupted the ties of Russia with African countries. The relations with Africa turned into one of the last places among foreign-policy priorities. In 1992, Russia locked nine embassies and four consular offices doors and most cultural missions and centers disappeared on the continent (Korendyasov&Shubin 2009, p.125). On the other hand, it was especially accepted in the 1990s that the African mass media began to insist on the theme "Russia has left Africa to the mercy of fate" (Deich 2009, p.135). Emelyanov attaches that African countries also reduced the number of their representatives in Russia. Heads of African states did not begin to go to Russia until 1997. At that point, Soviet model lost its validity, and there was no longer new model to suggest at hand (cited in Fidan&Aras 2010, p.49).

However, economic failure of Russia in the 1990s cannot explain by itself the declining importance of Africa. Psychological factor also played an important role. Russian pro-Western media and nationalist politicians held negative stances toward Africa as a scapegoat for the troubles, charging that Africans were a heavy burden on the Russian economy. In truth, the USSR's economic co-operation with African countries was equally beneficial. Nonetheless, the claims about Africa proved both damaging and dangerous, because they encouraged expressions of xenophobia and intolerance (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.7).

After the end of the Cold War, the Horn of Africa has by no means lost its

geostrategic importance, but the US effectively unnoticed it from Clinton's 1994 retreating to the August 7, 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania by Al Qaeda. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US accepted a much more forceful counterterrorism policy in the Horn of Africa (Francis 2010). De Waal (2015) emphasizes that the 1990s was an interim period in the Horn of Africa, the Cold War security perceptions had gone, and the Global War on Terror security perceptions had yet to begin. Thus, the argument of "radical Islamic/Islamist" became the new threat of the post-Cold War era.

Putin's Era

"Yeltsin era" is regarded as a lost decade in terms of Russia's Africa policy by many researchers (Shubin 2010, p.5). In the last period of Yeltsin, even if it was for a short time, the constructive transformation began with the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov to the Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister in January 1996. With "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation" of June 2000, Putin declared the new approach to foreign policy is often seen as the result of the change in leadership from Yeltsin to Putin (Fidan&Aras 2010, p.52). On the other hand, during the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war, Russian weapons including aircrafts and rockets were, reported to have been used by both the warring parties (Wezeman 2007, p.3). Thus, Russia and post-Soviet states prevented the role of major arms suppliers in to the conflict regions.

The interruption in relations between Russia and Africa became more dynamic with a determination to return to the region, fostered by concern that growing interests of China, India, Brazil, and especially the United States on Africa with the purpose of secure access to natural resources and energy reserves (Giles 2013, p.8). Thanks to its natural resources Russia closed its debts for a short time and saved itself from the 'monitoring' by the IMF. Thus, Russia has begun to conduct a more independent foreign policy again (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.7). Another point without a doubt, Russia's participation to the G8 supported this greater self-confidence, signaling its membership in a "group of the privileged". Although this new position had enhanced Russia's international prestige, "the joining the ex-colonialists club" caused Moscow to pay more attention to its traditional friendly relations with African countries (Shubin 2010, p.5).

From the beginning of the new century, several official visits to Russia were performed by the leaders and foreign ministers of African countries including Kenya, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. In turn, Russian ministers and other officials visited African countries. More than 30 political meeting with diplomatic departments of African countries were hold in 2005-2006. The Russian leadership broadened cooperation with African regional organizations, primarily, with the African Union. In 2005, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ethiopia was accredited

at the Commission of the African Union (Deich 2009, p.135-6). In November 2006, Russia was the host of the G8 Summit. According to the St. Petersburg Summit a document on “Update on Africa” was approved. African problems were also referred in the basic documents of the Summit and President Putin’s final press briefing.

President Vladimir Putin signaled Russia’s intention to expand business ties with the continent a decade ago in 2006, when he became the first Russian leader to visit Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2007, Putin continued to show Russian interest to Africa with summit of G-8 and pointed to the solution to Africa’s energy problem would lead to the continent’s development. Putin sent a congratulations message to African presidents and governments on “Africans Day” celebrations. In the same year, the Russian Foreign Ministry published a document “A Comprehensive Look at Russian Federation Foreign Policy” which stated “a new dynamism started to appear in the development of Russia-Africa traditional friendly relations” and confirmed the importance of Africa for Russia (Fidan&Aras 2010, p.53).

In the 2008 Foreign Policy Concept signed by Dmitry Medvedev, Africa was the ninth, followed only by Latin America, on the list of the ten most important regions for Russian interests in the 2008 document (Sergunin 2016, p.160). The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, which President Vladimir Putin signed on 30 December 2016 and like in the earlier version of 2013, Africa, cannot still find the interest of Russia sufficiently. The Concept essentially repeated previous promises by declaring that “Russia will expand relations with the African states in various areas both in bilateral and multilateral settings by improving political dialogue and promoting mutually beneficial trade and economic ties, stepping up comprehensive cooperation that serves common interests, contribute to preventing regional conflicts and crisis situations, as well as facilitate post-conflict settlement in Africa. Promoting partnership ties with the African Union and a sub-regional organization is an important element of this policy”.

Another important document is “Russia’s National Security Russian Federation to 2020”, which President Vladimir Putin approved on 12 May 2009, almost completely neglects Africa. However new version of this document, which President Vladimir Putin approved on 31 December 2015, states that “The Russian Federation is developing political, trade and economic, and military-technical cooperation, collaboration in the field of security, and also humanitarian and educational contacts with states of Latin America and Africa and with regional associations of these states”, shows new approach to Africa with the changing situation and Russia’s statue in international order as a rising power again after Ukraine and Syrian War.

Russia, compared to other great powers as BRICS country China, India, or EU and USA, keeps an exceptional place among the so called 'rising actors' in Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa. BRICS has a significant role to gain access to Africa; however Russia has to compete against other BRICS' country for taking a slice from Africa cake. At last, Each BRICS' member country has its own interests in Africa. On the other side, Africa is still risky business with challenges and opportunities for Russia struggling with many conflicts on many fronts. The question that emerges is how Russia will evaluate these challenges and opportunities of Horn of Africa according to its interests and "make Russia superpower again"?

Russia's Renewed Interests with each of Horn of African States

Although Russia's superpower status disappeared with the Soviet Union, there is a remarkable consensus in Russia has been, is and will remain a great power on the global arena because of its geopolitical status, rich energy resources, armed forces with nuclear capabilities and its permanent member of the UN Security Council (Oldberg 2007, p.13). In contrast, since the end of the Cold War, particularly over the past decade, Africa's status in the international geopolitical order has risen dramatically. While significant consideration has been paid to the emerging role of China, India, and other new powers in Africa, the return of Russia to its theatre of operations of the Cold War has been mostly ignored, except by a few regional specialists.

In general, Russia's as several interests in Africa, and the Horn of Africa in particular. In order to categorize Russia's renewed interests of today, it will be helpful to identify the Cold War interests in the Horn of Africa which is mentioned above. They were produced in bipolar world rivalry and security approach of the Cold War. Today, Russia's position in international system is different from the Cold War and also Yeltsin's era. Currently, Russia's the Horn of Africa policy is not only focused on the flow rate and volume of natural resources, trade and economic partnership but also is interested in humanitarian issues as peace and education, together with security issue.

Despite the potential natural resources and its geopolitically strategic location, the Horn of Africa is one of the problematic regions of the world with economic threats, internal conflicts and political instability. The key economic and social indicators of the states of the region clearly point to these realities. Even though poverty is widespread in large areas of the region, the area is supposed one of the richest regions of the world in terms of oil and rare metals. Economically, Russia's renewed interest in the Horn of Africa is clear. During Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union years, the region was renowned for its plenty of cheap raw materials such as cotton, livestock, honey and grain. At present, Russia grows more confident in its foreign policy objectives, Russia and Africa "need each other" in

order to ensure the security and sovereignty of 60 percent of the world's natural resources, which lie in Russia and Africa combined (Shubin 2010, p.6).

At present, Russia, as a major producer and exporter of oil and natural gas, does not need new supplies of energy from Africa. On the other side, to enhance its control over oil and natural gas and lines to support its own economic and political influence is more important strategically all over the world. Nevertheless, Russia is still trying to improve its economic situation from the global financial crisis, due to existing sanctions and other foreign policy priorities. In this respect, Moscow's relationship with the Horn of Africa still remains in the un-desirable level as in rest of the continent. Losing the influence of the Cold War era to the United States and China, Moscow will likely concentrate on political cooperation, arms sales, and investment into natural resources with the Horn of Africa for the near term (Giles 2013).

Russia and Ethiopia-Eritrea-Sudan Triangle

Some analysts and researchers have contended that "Africa is increasingly becoming a target of Russia's renewed international assertiveness; its economic and military activity into Africa are often concealed, however, by Russian aggression in the Ukraine including the annexation of Crimea and its military backing of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad" (Pirio & Pitelli 2015, para.1). Therefore, it is noteworthy that Russia's economic and military co-operation with the region countries that have undergone sanctions such as Eritrea and Sudan.

The development of Russia's good relations with, especially in Eritrea, Sudan and the other actors of the Horn of Africa, can be considered as a challenge to re-establish geopolitical influence in the critical Red Sea / Suez Canal region as in the US-Soviet Cold War rivalry. In simply political terms, Moscow's long-term foreign policy goal is a multi-polar international system aimed at countering the unrestrained influence of global forces in Africa, especially the United States and China. A veto in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is Russia's key lever of power in international affairs for African regimes. In return, Moscow supports African nations in the UNSC. Russia's vote against imposing sanctions and arms embargos on African states provides to infiltrate to the future potential arms markets.

Russia is the second largest arms exporter globally behind the United States (SIPRI 2016). Using arms sales as a point of doorway, Russia has been active reestablishing political, military and business relationships across Africa. Moscow has used this model of arms first, business concession later in many African countries as Sudan and Eritrea. In 2016, Somalia, a long-standing Soviet ally, asked for Russian military equipment against Al-Shabaab. In addition to Russian military cooperation with Sudan and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa region, Russia has been

asking for Egypt, another old ally of the Soviet Union. Given the rising impact of Russian military forces in Syria together with Egyptian, Sudanese and Eritrean military cooperation, it should be seen Russia is on the way to building a forceful presence in the Suez Canal and Red Sea (Pirio&Pitelli 2015, para.2).

Improving relations with the Horn of Africa countries has increasingly gained importance for Russia, but quarrels amid the region countries has revealed the question of which state has a priority for Russia. Even though Eritrea and Sudan have boosted political and economic ties, winning Ethiopia means being in the right track to win the rest of Africa especially in competition with China. Russian strategic investments in Ethiopia's promising energy sector could open the door for a more healthy partnership between the two historically friendly states and should thus describe the focus of Moscow's reengagement with Addis Ababa. As Korybko (2016) stated, in the global context of the accelerated trend towards multi-polarity, Ethiopia may possibly become a reliable anchor in Africa in order to establish a concrete and visible presence on the continent for Russia's urgently needs.

Russia and Somalia

Somalia is another option with its geopolitical position for Russia to gain old influence in the Horn of Africa. Somalia was a long-standing Soviet ally as it had a Marxist-Leninist government for much of the Cold War. Today, there is neither ideological nor cultural similarity between these ex-allied states. Somalia, with its untapped oil, gas, uranium, other mineral resources, and prolonged instability, is the microcosm of the region and in need of a strategic partner to help rebuild the state in every sense of the word (Ball & Davies 2015, para.3). On April 19, 2016, Somalia's Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke held a bilateral meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Prime Minister Sharmarke requested Russian assistance to strengthen the Somali military's ability in the fight against Al-Shabaab, an Al-Qaeda affiliate terror organization based in East Africa and to see Russia's support in developing the country's economy. During meeting, Lavrov said Russia is ready to consider military cooperation to help Somalia battle terrorism in the hostile region (Sputnik News 2016). According to Ramani (2016), while Syria has been a focal point of Russia's anti-ISIS efforts in recent months, Sharmarke's demand might change Somalia to future theater of Russia's anti-ISIS campaign with other players.

Of course, indirect or direct Russian military and economic assistance to the Somali government can create a highly positive atmosphere for regional security. It may also strengthen Moscow's superpower status as a leader in combating terrorism besides struggle against ISIS in Syria. After president Erdoğan's apology letter in order to renewing and treating the wounded relations by the downing of

a Russian jet by two Turkish F-16s near the border with Syria in November 2015 (Roth, A & Cunningham 2016). Russia's response in the first hours after the July 2016 coup attempt, and assassination to Russia's Ankara Ambassador Karlov in 19 December 2016, clearly has produced positive results in Turkish-Russian relations along with ceasefire in Syria (Malsin 2016). It is known by international community, Turkey has given a significant economic and military assistance to Somalia. Turkey's first military training center abroad in foreign state will also be an important base to provide military training to all of Africa and it will probably expand Turkey's influence over the region (Sucuoğlu & Stearns 2016).

Still, Djibouti embassy represents Russia in Somalia concurrently, and we can easily say that Russia has no influence in Somalia. As relations between Russia and Turkey remain pretty good, Turkey might help Russia to advance relations with Somalia on security and economic cooperation (Ramani 2016, para.16). Growing Russian military and economic supports to Somalia may create significant security and status advantages. Russia's military and economic assistance to Somalia not only can play an influential role in restoring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa but also will strengthen the claim that Russia is the rising power again.

Russia and Djibuti

Djibuti is the most important place with small area and low population, insufficient resources, but has great strategic importance and precedence. It has been the most stable state compared to its neighbors dealing with terrorism and piracy threats in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandab strait and Gulf of Aden, as well as conflicts in Yemen and Somalia. Djibouti's strategic significance also derives from the fact that it is the key, and sometimes the only, port for land-locked African countries, such as Ethiopia and South Sudan. Also, Ethiopia-Eritrea war increased the strategic significance of Djibouti. Though before the war United States had a hope to cultivate more cooperation with Ethiopia and Eritrea than Djibouti, the war disturbed the situation. So, United States took Djibouti as an important ally due to the increasing of terrorist threats in the Horn of Africa (Woodward, 2006)

In addition to French and American presence, Germany, as well as Japan is maintaining presence in Djibouti. While China has strategic interests in the region, it appears more concentrated on investment (Aluwaisheg 2015, para.10). It also helps that China has just built a railroad between the port of Djibouti and the Addis Ababa, meaning that Russia could clearly use this 'African Silk Road' to boost its own economic relations with the region and create strategic depth to its non-Western economic diversification mission (Korybko 2015). On the other hand, that Russians have tried but failed to convince Djibouti to establish a base, but 'African Intelligence' asserted that China offered Russia to allow the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov land at its base, so that it could deploy its ves-

sel to Syria at short notice during the summer. It was a great challenge from new rising powers to US and western club in the region.

Russia and Uganda

Uganda is landlocked and depends on foreign imports for most of its consumer goods and energy requirements. Recently, Uganda is one of the developing countries of Greater Horn of Africa with newly found natural resources. The oil presents Uganda a chance to transform itself into an important economic power in the region (GlobalSecurity 2015, para.1). Uganda has a good relation with Russia since Soviets Union era. At Uganda President Museveni's visit in 2012, Russia showed it's eager to develop military and technical cooperation, as well as cooperation in the energy sector and infrastructural projects with Uganda (The Voice of Russia 2012). On the other hand, Uganda has asked Russia for help in the development of nuclear power to boost its generation capacity to support planned industries under its Vision 2040 development program (Mungai 2016, para.2). Russia appears keener to share its expertise and nuclear technology than other nuclear technology owners and it is a good instrument to develop with countries has energy poverty. In addition, there are over 40,000 Ugandans who studied in Russia and can read and write Russian language (Chimpreports 2016, para.5). This is a significant cultural heritage from Soviets Union to Russia to enhance its soft power in the region.

However, After US President Bill Clinton designated Sudan as a state sponsor of terror; Uganda positioned itself as an ally in the frontline of "Global War on Terror." About 20,000 Ugandans worked in US military bases in Iraq and more than 6,000 peacekeepers in Somalia is still as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM 2016). Despite the developing relations in strategic area as natural resources and nuclear power, it is not easy to see Uganda becomes a strategic partner of Russia in the Greater Horn of Africa, because of ties with USA and its geopolitical position.

Russia and Kenya

By its geographical aspects, the Republic of Kenya is rich in natural resources, and Nairobi and Mombasa are commercial hubs of the East Africa. Kenya's economy is the largest by GDP in Southeast and Central Africa. Many foreign investors choose Kenya due to it is a politically and socially stable country and a preferred investment destination that serves as a gateway to the burgeoning market in East Africa. Kenya's foreign relation has been on the rise, mostly concentrated on strengthening economic cooperation with foreign countries. On the other side, Kenya is one of the Greater Horn of Africa states which are attacked by the terrorist groups as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda in many times. As a result of this and other issues has made Kenya closed ally of United States particularly on counter-

terrorism acts. Like Uganda, more than 3,000 peacekeepers of Kenya in Somalia is still as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM 2016).

Nevertheless, Russia has longstanding and cordial relations with Kenya dating back to independence in 1963 (Modern Ghana 2015, para.2). Trade between the two countries, however, is relatively limited, totaling around \$200 million per year (RWR Advisory Group 2016, para.2). Despite limited economic and financial activity between the two countries, Russia demonstrated renewed interest in Kenya following the election of President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2013. Shortly after being President Kenyatta elected, his first overseas visit was to Moscow and then Beijing, calling for closer trade relations. In this connection, Russia launched a new institution in 2015, called the Russian-African Forum, which was founded to nurture new business ties between the two countries ((RWR Advisory Group 2016, para.3). Also, Russia's Senate Speaker Valentina Matviyenko said her country viewed Kenya as a strategic partner in Africa and was keen to see relations between the two countries strengthened (Citizen News 2015).

Like many other African countries, Kenya purchases a significant amount of Russian arms and has passed a number of its security professionals through Russian-sponsored training programs and scholarships. Kenya purchase of Russian arms has grown considerably in recent years, although Russia is still just one of a number of procurement sources for the country (RWR Advisory Group 2016, para.1). In addition, On May 30, during the 8th international nuclear energy forum- Atomexpo 2016, held in Moscow, Russia's state nuclear energy corporation- Rosatom and the Kenya's Council for Nuclear Energy signed a memorandum for cooperation in peaceful use of nuclear energy (Energy news of Bangladesh 2016, para.1).

As relations with Uganda, despite the developing relations in strategic area as natural resources and nuclear power, it could be said that it is unlikely possible for Russia's relations with Kenya to go beyond the economic dimension, in the Greater Horn of Africa, because of Kenya's ties with USA.

Using Problems of Soft Power Instruments in the Horn of Africa

Economic interests especially in natural resources and arms trade is the main portion of the relations between Russia and the Horn of Africa countries. However, soft power instruments as ideology of communism, education in Soviets Union and learning Russian language were as important as hard power instruments in the Cold war era. Today, many instruments of 'soft power' that Moscow had used before have been lost. First of all, Russia has not any ideology to export to any state in Africa. As ideology was disappointed by post-Soviet government as a determinant of policy in Russia, the concepts of "economism," "universalism" and

“pragmatism” started to emerge as the guiding principles of Russia’s foreign policy. Indeed, the idea of “economization of politics” has taken a top place in the analysis of Russia’s foreign policy (Natufe 2011, para.11). As a matter of fact, Russia’s forgiveness of \$16 billion in debt that African countries were unable to refund in the Soviet era was another significant step in 2008. Russia maintained this by cancelling \$20 billion in debt in 2012 (Comins & Yermolaev, para.13).

At the Soviet era, 50.000 Africans were educated in its universities from the 1960s to 1991, and gave 200.000 other Africans various kinds of training on the continent. Russia still continues to educate more than 8,000 African students who half are on full scholarships (Comins, & Yermolaev 2015, para.5). However, these are limited attempts at using soft power in the region, as part of a global Russian aim to influence of Russian language and culture compared with other international players such as USA, China and even Turkey. Also, racist and extremist movement against African students needs to be avoided problem for Russia’s image in Africa (Deutsche Welle 2011; BBC News 2006). The Russian media’s insufficient reporting of Africa developments shows another problem because it focuses on armed conflicts, natural disasters or at best African nature and safaris. Most news comes from western sources as the Russian media has a limited number of African offices (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015, p.21).

One of the important aspects of assistance to Africa was the reduction of the debt burden for the states as Ethiopia in the region under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Russia provided humanitarian aid to countries in the region as Ethiopia and Somalia, including on a bilateral basis (Fituni&Abramova pp.187-8). These aids has had a positive effect on the relations among Russia and countries of the region, on the other side they are not reflective of the true untapped potential in terms of Russia’s impact on regions to gain people’s hearts and minds.

Russia’s Participation in Anti-Piracy Operation in the Gulf of Aden / the Horn of Africa

Approximately 12% of the world’s petroleum passes through the Gulf of Aden, which is one of the world’s most important waterways. The piratical attacks often affect the interests of numerous countries, including the cargo owner, transshipment, and destination states (Mekuriyaw 2016, p.135). The struggle against pirates in the Gulf of Aden has been conducted as part of the 2008 EU Naval mission Atalanta and the NATO operation Ocean Shield launched in 2009 (Sputnik News 2015, para.5). Piratical attacks off the Horn of Africa represent a threat to the lives and welfare of the citizens and many nations.

Russia launched its anti-piracy operations on 26 September 2008. The Russian Navy announced the deployment of the Baltic Fleet frigate Neustrashimy to So-

malia with the stated mission of “ensuring security in several regions of the world oceans” and protecting Russian citizens and commercial vessels. The significance of this operation is Russia has chosen to conduct its operations independent of any established task-force, but considers itself to be supporting international anti-piracy efforts. Despite not participating in a multinational anti-piracy task force, Russian naval vessels deployed to the Gulf of Aden reportedly coordinate their actions with other warships operating in the region. Russian naval vessels deployed to the region successfully escorting hundreds of commercial vessels, including non-Russian ships through pirate-infested waters off the Somali (MIT 2009, pp.27-8).

Conclusion

At the time of writing this paper, Russian foreign policy is preoccupied with a number of critical concerns including the conflict in Syria, Ukraine, relations with USA, Europe and China. There is an increasing involvement of the politically and economically among powerful actors of the world on the African continent. With a renewed interest in Africa, it has become clear that Russia and Africa need each other. In this context, there has been an increase in Russian investment in several countries in the Horn of Africa, especially in armed sales, natural sources, minerals and nuclear energy. However, Russian trade with the Horn of Africa has been especially insufficient. At the political level, Russia has showed minimum interest in Africa and it may not be an immediate policy priority, at a longer-term strategic level. These conditions are not probable to appear any change in near time.

In contrast, still rising tensions between Russia and West and thinking of secure line from Suez Canal to Gulf of Aden may build a more clear and defined presence in the region. Russia’s economic dependency on natural resources and ongoing conflicts will maintain Kremlin’s interests in the Horn of Africa, and a visible return to importance on the list of Russia’s foreign policy priorities should be expected. Finding new allies in various regions has become quite important to Russia. Weak governments and blurred future of the Horn of Africa region generates more risk and more benefits. Russia, as being a country with a non-colonial presence in Africa, has a major advantage. Russia has an anti-colonial policies heritage from its predecessors in Africa and its readiness to adopt a policy of equal rights partnership.

Briefly, Tsarist Russia and Soviet Union interest in the Horn of Africa emerged as an inevitable necessity of being a great power in their era. After the destruction of the post-Cold War era, today, Russia strengthen its position with Syrian conflict in Middle East and Ukrainian crisis in Europe against by way of the purpose of establishing a multi-polar order and being a superpower again. In general Africa, in particular the Horn Africa again appears a scramble area of great powers to

protect their long-term energy security, emphasizes the changing dynamics of security. If Russia is thinking to play the great power game in grand chessboard, it should not evaluate the Horn of Africa as a pawn.

Bio

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