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A Masters's Thesis Entitled:

US-China Military Rivalry in Djibouti: The Territory for a Proxy War?

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By

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ABSTRACTS

The emerging new world order of the 21st century is witnessing an increase in instability and militarization in the Horn of Africa. The growing intra-state conflicts and their spill-over effects in the region have endorsed the necessity for the militarization of the region in which arms allocation and the assembling of military forces became significant. The global rivalry between the U.S. and China is increasing in Djibouti and it is visible through the militarization of foreign policy in this tiny country. However, the vivid geopolitical competition and its strategic location to the Middle East, Asia and the Red Sea have created so many military presences turning the region into a proxy racetrack for global power, and this is viewed as a major challenge to the regional power balance. Therefore, this thesis examines growing tension between U.S. and China in Djibouti and argues that, while external powers intervened in the region to protect their economic and security interest, this will further decline fragile states in the region. The U.S. and China military rivalry in Djibouti - either continuing or short-lived- has militarized societies with minimum political institutionalization deluged to domination by the military.

Key words: Militarization, foreign policy, colonialism, geopolitics, Cold War, region, rivalry

Özet

21. yüzyılın yükselen yeni dünya düzeni, Afrika Boynuzunda istikrarsızlık yaratmakta ve militarizasyonda bir artışa tanıklık etmektedir. Artan devletlerarası çatışmalar ve bunların bölgeye yayılan etkileri, silah tahsisi ve askeri güçlerin bir araya getirilmesinin önem kazandığı bölgenin militarizasyonunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. ABD ile Çin arasındaki küresel rekabet Cibuti'de artmakta ve bu küçücük ülkede dış politikanın militarizasyonu gerçekleşmektedir. Ortadoğu'daki güç dengesi ve ülkenin stratejik konumu devletlerin davranışlarını şekillendirmekte ve Cibuti'yi Afrika Boynuzunda garip bir konuma yerleştirmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu tez, Cibuti'de ABD ve Çin arasında artan gerilimi ve askeri üslerin kurulmasını incelerken, dış güçlerin ekonomik ve güvenlik çıkarlarını korumak için bölgeye müdahale ederken, bölgedeki kırılgan devletleri daha da düşkün hale getireceğini savunmaktadır. Cibuti'deki ABD ve Çin askeri rekabeti -devam etsin ya da kısa ömürlü kalsın, minimum siyasi kurumsallaşmaya sahip toplumları militarize etmiş ve bu toplumlar ordunun tahakkümüne sürüklenmiştir.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Establishing military bases overseas is not a new occurrence, it can be traced back to the colonial era when colonial powers created defense bases to protect their sea routes, and territories from external threats. However, when we talk about the colonial era, it simply means a phenomenon which emerged between the 1800-1960s, a period known as colonialism. Colonialism is the process by which "stronger countries exploited weaker country's resources to strengthen and enrich the stronger country" (Gideon, 1971). Colonialism started in the 15th century when Portugal began exploration for new trade routes outside Europe, they conquered many territories. By the end of the 15th century, England, France, the Netherlands and Germany began their exploration overseas, battling Portugal and Spain for territories they had already conquered, competing with each other, colonies were dismantled, forceful exploitation of natural and labor resources because more territories a country has they more powerful it becomes. Moreover, colonies are regarded as property in power balance, negotiation and bargaining (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). By 1840, colonial powers had established trade routes to Asia and India and demarcated central and Eastern Africa for strategical concerns.

This rivalry and the emergence of the industrial revolution, which brought about a change in the socio-economic conditions and the protection of resources among Britain, France, Italy, Germany and a host of other western powers paved the way for the Berlin conference of 1884 which is also known as the scramble and partition of Africa which regulated colonization and trade in Africa. This partition and scramble of Africa led to the establishment of military and naval bases to protect already partitioned territories which lasted for centuries (Omolewa, 2014).

Immediately after World War II, the decolonization process spread across the African continent; this saw the emergence of nationalist movements demanding for independence rather than being controlled by colonial powers. By the end of the century, colonial powers were devoured with post war debt and could no longer afford financial means to sustain their territories. This allowed for nationalist movements to come to terms with colonial powers quickly with little constraints. Many countries gained independence and this event marks the beginning of a new era for newly independent African states.

The end of colonialism marked the demise of foreign domination in Africa, but the colonial powers still maintained their already established military bases in their former colonies, notably the French forces in Djibouti and the British forces in Kenya and other parts of Africa. Evidently, the struggle for predominance in Post-World War II began with the policy of containment, regional security and military alliance by the U.S. which became the leading and dominant forces to serve their military and political goals. Interestingly, the bipolar world of the 1970s and 1980s, between the United States and Soviet Union became ferocious, making the region a part of the Cold War (Ikenberry & Gaddis, 2006). The Cold war rivalry increased US foreign policy concerns that the communist parties might forge alliance with newly independent African states and could create a shift in the balance of power in benefit of the Soviet Union that will remove the United State from accessing economic resources from allies (Khapoya, 1985).

However, the dominant U.S. policies in the late 1980s opted to balance regional security issues with keen attention on economic interest in the Horn of Africa. The US policy was to contain and reduce the power and influence of Soviet Union, China, eastern Europe, and Cuba in the apogee of the cold war. The quest for military power, dominance and influence, where states rely on great-powers in the international system became prominent (Deery, 2018).

Since the passing of the cold war which marked the collapse of Soviet Union and the ascendency of the United State as global power, the repercussions saw a shift in attention of the US to that of maintaining the world hegemon which created a vacuum in the political and economic dispensation of African countries that once forged alliances (Nyang, 2005). In the beginning of the 1990s the United States had nothing to do with the security challenges of African countries. Interestingly, in the mid 1990s the US Defense Department stated that their economic and security structures on the African continent are confined. Until 1998 when terrorist activities of the Middle East spilled over Africa as al-Qaeda bombed the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salam (Wiley, 2012). These events attracted the attention of the world especially the United State on account of security and economic interest aided by the September 11, 2001 terrorists attack, the United State shifted its attention to Africa with a keen interest on terrorism. The US stationed military forces known as the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti (Mpondo, Karba, & Mbugua, 2017). Therefore, in response to this, the United State changed its policies toward Africa to

further stability and security as Africa is seen as a safe haven for terrorist groups to operate freely (Penn, 2008).

However, rapid changes and recent events show that global powers have started a new race for Africa not far different from the scramble of the 19th century when Britain and France wanted raw materials, slaves, and geopolitical influence (Ibid). In the 21st century, global powers: Canada, the United State, the European Union, Israel, India, China and Japan are in more or less the same race for Africa. The quest for power and influence is gaining momentum, but this time it is between the United States and China that are competing for dominance. Seemingly, Djibouti is hosting many foreign military bases, which includes; Japanese base, Chinese naval base, Italian base, French air base and the United States Naval Expeditionary base. The Horn of Africa is now the epicenter with the largest military presence in Djibouti (Campbell, 2008).

Besides, numerous fronts in investment, military power, infrastructure, diplomacy, trade, geopolitics, the Horn of Africa has gained attention and become more important to global powers because of its strategic location.

The vivid geopolitical existing rivalry and its strategic location to the Middle East, Asia and the Red Sea have created so many military presences turning the region to a proxy racetrack for global competition and this is viewed as a major challenge to the regional power balance (Thee, 1977).

This geopolitical rivalry between the United State and China is an enthralling semblance of a new cold war which is manifesting in the growing trade war and thus creates economic volatility and militarization across the region with a potential for instability (Lee, 2018)

This existing volatility is seen in the using of armaments as instruments of foreign policy, to achieve economic growth and hegemony. Therefore, the traditional means of conducting foreign policy using hard power "the ability to use the carrot and stick approach to make others follow and to create a balance of power or to change a status quo of political hegemony[1] is still eschewing the "soft power" described by Joseph Nye[2]. Therefore, this thesis argues that military involvement in the Horn of Africa for economic and political goals of the global powers has a potential for instability. This argument posed will be further analyzed in a section later as it has created a hearty

[1] Wilson, E. (2008). Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616, 110-124. Retrieved October 23, 2020, form http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097997

[2] Nye, J. S. (2011). Power and foreign policy. Journal of Political Power, 4(1), 9-2

scholarly debate. One view is that, there has been so many controversy on how global powers conduct their foreign policy and its implication and when they do, those policies are either been referred to as being "neglected or manifest destiny" on the other view, the post-cold war era brought a significant shift in the US foreign policy. Within this context, Africa is seen as a strategic partner in the United State security interest and thus created a change in military focus. Due to 9/11 terrorist attack, the Bush administration established the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2006. The AFRICOM is an acronym for US-AFRICOM, this establishment is a manifestation to provide for the militarization of US foreign policy. Thus, the United State sees the region as a front to secure resources especially oil, its global war on terror (GWOT) and to reduce the expansive and pervasive dominant force of China's growing influence and investments on the continent. However, the United State is using US-Africa Command (AFRICOM) as a tool to justify its war on terror (Keenan, 2008). In turn, China is using the influence of China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) established in 2000 to "promote traditional China-Africa friendship and cooperation" in politics, economics, international affairs and social development on the continent for its investments (Earl, 2018).

The geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic significance of Eastern Africa has created a military domain of western powers, using diplomatic, military and other forms of bilateral relations for control over resources and market. But the existing trade wars in this globalized world have restored aggressive diplomatic relations of "is either you are with us or against us" especially the realist approach of military force to achieve liberal goals style of forging alliance (Eikenberry, 2013).

These extensive military forces are shaping the way states behave, and how these pressures of foreign policies affect the domestic decision-making processes which explains why state international politics is seen as "old fashion power struggle" has been present in East Africa in recent years (Waltz, 1996). Whereas the scramble for the horn of Africa in a neoliberal political economic world dominated by the United State being challenged by emerging powers using diplomatic and aggressive military presence to achieve their economic goals. This militarism in our contemporary times has been vividly seen as territorial conquest, global power politics and imperialism similar to the one that created the arms race and the dominating influence of the military in politics, economy and social life (Thee, 1977).

Therefore, this thesis examines the militarization of foreign policy in Djibouti and how prevailing military instruments are affecting diplomatic relations in the region. Special emphasis on the case of Djibouti due to the ongoing rivalry between major powers for control and dominance which is eschewing the traditional method of conducting foreign policy and also focusing on the usage and the impact of soft and hard power in the region. Militarization has deepened Africa increasing the weaponization of economies, trade, phycological warfare and the establishment of military bases in the so-called security reforms (Campbell, 2020). Many literatures have exaggerated these reforms and paying little attention on the instability of the Horn of African due to militarism and its impact on the security situation in the region. Therefore this thesis addresses the gap created by such literature.

1.2 Structure of The Study

This thesis adopted a case study approach of qualitative analysis and it is divided into five chapters. *Chapter one* begins with introduction of the topic in the area of the foreign involvement in the Horn of Africa, the structure of the study, research question, significance of the study, problem statement, and research methodology.

Chapter two examines the theoretical framework of major theories of militarization focusing on their relationship with foreign policy.

Chapter three examines concept of militarization and analyzes US and China's foreign policy in the case of Djibouti.

Chapter four provides a critical analysis of the US-Africa relation through AFRICOM (Africa Military Command) and the presence of foreign military bases in Djibouti

The concluding chapter comprises the discussion of the findings and other literature resources arriving at conclusion.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the place of militarization in foreign policy?
2. What are the challenges of militarizing foreign policy in East Africa?
3. Is militarization of Foreign Policy in East Africa an attempt to expand US and China's investments or for economic and security interest?

1.4 Significance of The Study

This study seeks to contribute to the literature of foreign policy using data that are reflecting the contemporary realities of policies and issues unfolding in East Africa. This study will provide a broad understanding on issues of the military involvement in foreign policy and the role of state actors in conducting diplomatic relations and to evaluate strategies in enhancing its international relations. Data gathered will help initiate collaboration among member states and to help in broadening scholars of foreign policy and international relations in analyzing militarization as a tool for foreign policy.

Importantly, this study will attempt to provide recommendations that could be used by state actors in forging alliances and conduct their economic and foreign relations in the future in our globalized world.

The end result of this research provides an important reference point for experts and scholars of foreign policy, international relations, student, state actors interested in areas like militarization of foreign police in Africa.

1.5 Statements of the Problem

In the aftermath of the Cold War which marked the beginning of multipolar world order and democratization, sovereign states saw a change in forging relations with other countries they once saw as enemies. The challenges of the bipolarity of the Soviet Union and United States weakened states' capability to establish ties, this created a vacuum for low income countries in the region. The situation changed radically with the emergence of a multipolar world order. The multipolarity brought the Horn of Africa to the lime light due to its proximity to the troubled oil producing Middle East for trade and security interests of both China and the U.S. this changes cemented Beijing growing and expansive influence in the region and the United State interest in the fight against Global War on Terror (GTWO) and maintaining predominance as global power, this saw a shift in foreign policy of external powers in the region.

Despite the strategic location of the East African region, instability has created a safe haven for militias, terrorist groups, pirates to carry out their activities freely and thus prevented the region from attracting foreign investment but this narrative is changing gradually. Djibouti, a country of one million people has been hosting extensive military bases more than any other country on the planet ranging from the United State,

Japan, France, Italy, and the new arrivals china and Saudi Arabia making them a strategic partner to global powers due to the establishment of military bases in the region.

This recent development is fanning a hearty debate between scholars, state actors, and regional organizations because it is undermining the ideals of diplomatic relations and to intervene in complex political matters of states in the region. The contemporary militarization of foreign relationships between great powers and developing nations is creating a socio-economic predicament in the new world hierarchy. An attempt to reduce the military presence by the Africa Union which has become a fierce struggle for global power has not been addressed by the host countries.

With this neocolonial, military, economic presence in East Africa, and the challenges of natural disaster; drought, famine and ethnic/tribal conflicts over the years, states are facing huge pressure in containing military forces and balancing their economic and political relations with world powers vying for influence in the Middle East and Africa. Despite all the challenges in the region, great powers are using the military mainly as a tool of policies and diplomacy but many states in the region use them as a tool for domestic suppression and to maintain their status in the international arena and the effects of this are affecting the African continent as a whole. Therefore this thesis will examine the role of the military in foreign policy which serves as a vital component in conducting economic and political ties in an already globalized world dominated by the United States and China and the future prospect of the region and its foreign relations.

1.6 Research Methodology

This thesis adopted a case study approach to analyze the US-China military rivalry in East Africa, from the body of knowledge gathered in the field of international relations and foreign policy. This qualitative analysis used in this thesis allow the researcher to adopt a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the subject matter and use it as a framework for the study. Case study is a method in research that is typically seen in social sciences, this method examines complex phenomena to broaden the understanding of a particular event unfolding and narrow it down to a more sizable research question (Gustafsson, 2017).

This case study assess theories of international relation literature based on individual, domestic and systemic level of analysis, scholarly and decision makers, the reviewed literature provide us the context of military involvement in foreign policy.

This study made use of secondary data gathered from different sources which includes; research articles, government reports, media websites, articles, journal, interviews, textbooks, United Nation, Africa Union. These sources comprehensively helped us review previous literature and critique them constructively in the context of military involvement in foreign policy.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter includes the theoretical framework of the study by giving a brief overview of militarization. It first brings about the perspective of the military and then goes to highlight the military involvement in domestic politics and foreign policy and its applicability by states in a complicated international environment. There are many scholars in this field of study who have focused on the same assumptions and analysis. This chapter aims to connect the study to practical illustrations to highlight the existing gap in the literature.

The usage of military in modern times can be traced back to the French revolution of 1790s when the French state man and military leader Napoleon Bonaparte designed the imposition of the military into large national armies with structured professional class positioned with political elites to defend the republic from attacks of European monarchs since then, many countries have emulated the system even in peacetime. However studies have begun to examine the role of the military in molding the international environment.

2.1 Military in Politics

National circumstances such as economic growth, social and economically marginalized groups, weak political institutions, and security environments often triggered military involvement in politics. a study conducted by Kim (2019), argues that unstable security situations in a particular country create conducive space for the involvement of the military in politics. These security threats lead to militarization and build a unified environment for the military to make their way into politics. This occurrence strengthens the capacity of the military intervention in politics, where military personnel function as an institutionalized political player. Domestic politics have a significant interpretation of the state's behaviour and its influence in the international system. However, this has sparked hearty debate among scholars who have conducted studies on the role of the military in politics. Studies conducted by scholars indicate that there is a significant spread of military regime, power politics, military intervention in politics, territorial conquests and war in developing countries, and the important role of military intervention in complex political emergencies (Fearon, 1998). another study by Thee (1977) opine that, the effects of the military and militarization has been significantly perceive in the international system and it is

soaring in the domestic politics of many sovereign states and that it is the military that brought about the arms race, and the direct influence of military in political matters, economy and domestic policies.

A study conducted by Bah (2015) regarding the military involvement in politics argues that the prolonged participation in domestic political affairs creates a potential for instability in a country, due to the fact that armed conflicts are more often than not linked to military involvement in politics. Despite the military linkage to armed conflict, he concluded that the military played a significant role in preserving political stability in the republic of Guinea, a western African country between 1984-2010. However, Bah's studies contradict the current dispensation of military involvement in most African states which are linked to civil conflicts and war.

Moon (2006) emphasizes that modern occurrence distinctly illustrates the expansion of militarism in foreign policy which is referred to as hostile and aggressive. Consequently, the usage of military as a tool for power has risen to prominence in the case of the fact that its strategy integrates all other forms of state power, diplomatic, economic, and informational.

Additionally, when a nation has military, diplomatic, economic and cultural influence over other countries it can be easily identified as powerful. Due to the competitiveness and the hostile environment in the international system.

In analyzing the growing influence of militarism in foreign policy and domestic politics, Joseph Nye (2003) opine that the military has the capability to make use of the "carrot and the stick" approach in terms of economic and military strength to compel others to obey. The carrot he refers to represents inducement in the form of military cooperation, removal or reduction of tariffs and the forging of alliances and the stick represents coercive diplomacy, intervention and economic sanction. This form of conducting foreign policy is always related to powerful nations who have the capabilities to transform other states political affairs by using military threat to create or prevent states hegemony and the balance of power in the international system.

Edah and Ugwueze (2014) argue that, inasmuch as third world countries politicians are unable to solve societal problems, military participation in political affairs will continue to be fashionable. Nevertheless, the growing influence of the military in the daily political life of the people has not reflected any significant changes in governance. They concluded that it would be difficult for any military government to

rule according to a civilian led government, in light of the fact that they (military) are trained to fight and kill not to govern.

According to Alam (2014), military involvement in domestic politics has become a common occurrence, although the traditional role of the military is to protect sovereign states from external threat and to adhere to civil authority, it still holds an important position on states policies because of the power the military poses to change government and take over institution. He further emphasized that sometimes political crises ignite the involvement of the military into domestic politics.

Halperin (1975) argued that, even in the most developed countries the military still poses a stumbling block for leaders. Thee (1977) observed that, developed countries are using the military as an instrument of policies and diplomacy, developing countries are using the military as a framework for domestic suppression to affirm their position in the international system.

2.2 The Position of Military in Foreign Policy

The military has been dubbed as multi-dimensional in modern politics today due to the great power reliance in an exploitative world order; many repressive and autocratic leaders are supported by the military. More often than not, their (military) role has changed but the principles remain the same, the military has become a part of the global fierce struggle for resources and control for world dominance. (Farish, 2016).

A comparative study was conducted to examine how the military involves in foreign policy and decision making, the studies opine that, terrorism is one of the safe route the military uses to shape the way states behave or conduct it policies. More often than not, States actors demand military competence to combat terrorism and reinforce national security. However, the data analysis reveals that, the more domestic and transnational organized crimes threaten the existence of the state by nonstate actors, increases the military involvement in politics and decision-making process (Bove, Rivera, & Ruffa, 2020).

Another study by Barany (2018) on the military influence in policy making, in north Africa countries such as; Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia contend that a region constituted of military and authoritarian regimes had significant and major political influence on foreign policy decision making processes. Seemingly, the role of the military is changing without losing aggressive trait in protecting it geographical proximity which influence foreign relations is not underrated but due to globalization

and the spread of democratic tenet and the dynamics of the 21st century, the military of powerful nations have created economic and neocolonial appearance around the globe mostly developing nations.

Ebaye (2010) asserts that one of the significant imperatives of a state actor is to create harmony between the military and political will to enhance its diplomacy by the use of threat when the need arises. In the quest to formulate foreign policy goals, nation states develop several techniques. One of them is many military strategies due to the fact that the use of force is sometimes considered as a tool for the conduct of relations when morality supersede legality whether it is being used defensively or offensively by the military.

There have been a series of questions raised regarding policy output of the military involvement in foreign policy and how state actors formulate policies and the military execute them.

According to Farish (2016), the involvement of the military in decision making stemmed from the geopolitical atmosphere of 21st century world politics where military personnel are occupying significant positions in agencies and organizations. To illustrate this with reality, they are expected to perform more tasks besides war, in areas such as diplomatic, intelligence and even development programs in other nation states.

2.3 Military and Economic Rivalry Between China and United States

The China-US relationship started in the 1970s and became stronger in the 1980s when they forged an alliance to limit the powers of the Soviet Union. Interestingly, that premise of cooperation was destroyed after the demise of the Soviet bloc. Due to the change in global power structure and drastic growing economic conditions in both countries their relations were strengthened in the 1990s (Heath & Thompson, 2018).

However, there are many international relations scholars that have argued and predicted a potential world crisis if and when China equals the United States in economy and military and there are many who think this is as a result of China's growing influence in the world. US-China relations are a continuing competition in a changing international order, China is pushing the US to an extent that the US sees it as a security threat to its national and international interest (Womack, 2010).

In recent years, scholars and policy experts have had lengthy dialogue on the growing rivalry between the United State and China and its consequences for China's foreign policy, some are concerned about the potential of a new cold war (Zhao, 2019).

Rana (2015) notes that the US is always at an advantageous position in their relation because China is a growing power, but this rising power has the potential to confront and reduce the influence and expansion of the US both regional and international. Regardless of this growing tension, the significant point is that they have managed their relationship rationally.

Womack (2010) emphasizes that China's growing presence is now occupying an important position in both regional and global arena and its spreading influence is posing a threat to the US in light of the fact that China's popularity is affecting United State political and economic interest globally. Seemingly, the thirst for global power balance between China and US could be the end of the United States post-cold war hegemony which is constructed on the undisputable position of political, military, and economic supremacy that the United states has enjoyed for decades.

Conteh-Morgan (2018) argues that, the rational motive behind the occurring contention between the two stemmed from their grappling world views and their shifting attention to obtain Africa energy/oil and other important natural resources. The techniques these world powers are using have the tendency to dwindle their impact on the continent. This competition has taken different form and shape, thus from lenient to average, to enormous with one and other by expanding their initiative and reducing Africa's previous predicament of exploitation.

Cordesman and Hwang (2020) opine that the extensive tension between the United State and China entail both civil and military rivalry on a global level. Whereas civil trade investments, and its existence overseas play a pivotal role. Therefore, in the aspect of military rivalry, they might not use their own force or maybe employ them in a restricted means but the economic struggle might become intense in the coming years. However, ranging from technology, economy to political impact, the tension between the United States and China is escalating in all aspects of human existence.

2.4 Military Rivalry

It is widely recognized that the United States spends a huge amount of money on its military than any other country in the world. In 2019 the US spent 732 billion dollars and the recent military budget for the United States is approximately 684.6 billion

dollars. On the other hand, in 2019 China military budget was around 261 billion dollars and in recent times its military spending dwindled to 181.1 billion dollar[3] This indicates that the US and China are the world's biggest and highest military spenders. Some scholars argue that the US has awakened to realize that it no longer exists as the only military power in the world. It could also be argued that China is currently spending more on its military than the United States if military personnel costs and purchasing power are taken into consideration.

Chen and Feffer (2017) opine that China's annual budget indicates the increment in their military spending, interestingly, many commentators are doubting the credibility of the figures of the military improvements. However, the leadership of China sees military innovation as a path to achieving hegemony in the global power status but the skepticism surrounding its military spending is raising concerns that it is going to hinder China's ambitions to claim global power status.

According to Womack (2010), there are several reasons for the US fear of China with regards to security. Apparently, the growing strength of China's military is a source of concern, it is obvious that China wants to limit the United States military aid to Taiwan and thus eliminate the US as a key player in the "cross-strait" relations (Taiwan-China relations). Therefore, China's military innovations include areas such as; space, missile, and submarine technology have widened the ramification for the total domination of the United State global military power.

Kreisberg (2016) posited that, China still finds fault with the US selling arms to Taiwan, on the other hand China has become a more strategic partner in arms trade with third world countries, these two factors have generated more tension in the US-China relations.

Al-Rodhan (2014) critique of the China "threat theory" argues that it is unimaginable for China to attain world predominance easily but China will be regarded as a threat to the United States. Seemingly, it is the fact that China might not require to reduce the gap existing to compete with the US, China like any other sovereign state has the capabilities to pose a threat to the United State but it is important to note that China is a strategic competitor. However, China's position in the world is sometimes over emphasized by academics, pundits and politicians, this exaggeration is somehow deceptive and inefficient to figure out the sort of threat China poses.

[3] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2019 world military expenditure https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex

According to Mearsheimer (2001), states in their characteristic attribute are not violent or aggressive; their main aim is not power maximization but to hold on to their position in the international system. This anarchic nature of the international system always incentivizes states to strengthen their military capabilities. For instance, China is not portraying any violent means of getting to super power but its military strength will be perceived as a force to reckon with in the international system.

Offensive realists opine that the anarchic nature of the international system is the reason why states are behaving aggressively in international politics and further emphasized that rational actors cannot predict the behavior of others and their offensive military capabilities to maintain their survival. Therefore, states always seek to maximize power to maintain their security status in the absence of others (Labs, 1997). Mearsheimer's offensive realism portrays a worst possible outcome of international politics entangled by rigid interstate security competition which might result in conflict outbreak and war (Ikenberry & Mearsheimer, 2001). However, the absence of legitimate universal government is creating a space for states to seek for power maximization compared to others because the more powerful a state is the more secure they become (Taliaferro, 2000). Additionally, offensive realists argue that for a state to survive it has to work hard to be the most powerful in the international system whereas defensive realists posit that states must increase their power capabilities which is enough for its security only.

Despite defensive realism's positive impacts in international relations theory it has been criticized by scholars and offensive realists. One of the crucial criticisms is that defensive realists failed to distinguish between the "offense-defense balance" in the international system. This is as a result of the ambiguity of the military instrument to conduct war, this process is neither defensive nor offensive, this emphasized when policies of the state, strategies, relations are considered (Snyder, 2002). However, China has got to a point where she understands that there are many foreign powers who are annoyed at her rapid growth. Interestingly, it is reasonable to hold the view that China poses a major security threat to the United States due to its significant military spending and presence in the world. But even if the possibility of war is slim, the rising tension is likely to blow out of proposition the relations and the military competition between these two great nations (Heath & Thompson, 2018).

2.5 Economic Rivalry

In a world dominated by the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic, the United States is still the main global power but China has not fallen behind. The two nation-states have a significant influence and economies that produce huge affluence in the world.

According to Fordham and Kleinberg (2011), China's economy is rapidly growing more than the economies of the United States. It is important to note that the significant economic growth of China is controlled by a communist autocracy but the trade relations between China and the United States have lengthened completely over the decades. However, this trading relation is generating international competition and the potential for trade war is eminent between them.

Womack (2010) opine that the current dispensation of China's continuous economic growth centers around four aspects which includes; "trade imbalance, the low valuation of China's currency, Chinese holding of American public debt and the unreliable quality of Chinese imports".

Kreisberg (2016) emphasizes that China is still criticizing the limitation of textile and other exports to the United States and the unwillingness of American businessmen to trade more in China. On the other hand, the United States is condemning Chinese national policies with regards to Tibet, human rights issues and the way China is conducting business with third world countries.

According to Heat and Thompson (2018), China's growing economy has paved the way for new assets to stamp its authority on the United State and its allies. But with all the economic success, China is in a deep domestic socio-economic crisis. In essence, these socioeconomic issues might create a negative impact on China's domestic dictate.

Beckley (2012) argues that the increasing gap between the United State and Chinese per capita gross domestic product (GDP) indicates that the United State is expanding stronger. Therefore, it is important to note that the United States' economic strength is decreasing comparative to China across diverse economic quantifiers. From an economic perspective China is currently the second largest and fastest growing economy in the world due to the fact that China's yearly gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 10% in 2012 which is much higher than that of the United State during the past few years. Although the United States has maintained its position as the world's largest economy, the "trade war" between China has had a significant

impact on the world markets and some pundits argued that it will continue to be in the coming years. But in recent years China's economic growth is tied to it foreign direct investments (FDIs).

Morrison (2014) contends that China preserves several of its pernicious economic policies such as protective industrial policies and an undervalued currency that threaten United States economic interest.

Berger (2011) opine that China's position as a significant economic player is creating a major power shift in the global economic dispensation. Due to its low-cost manufacturer and the influx of its cheap products supply in the global market is creating instability in the world markets.

Yue (2018) argues that the United States policy to incorporate China into the global market system is 'self-defeating' in the future. This strategy has generated 'restless empire' efficient to confront the United States. However, the Chinese 'miracle' has eventually failed due to the liberal order created after World War II.

Lai (2011) argues that recently, the United State demand for energy is met, the decreasing global supply and demand are creating huge competition between nations of which conflict is inevitable.

In sum, the quest for power balance between China and the United State has the potential to terminate the United States post-cold war power. Despites, the power vacuum between the two countries, China's economy and military capabilities are growing faster in the past few years. This signifies that China is relatively a growing power in the world and that the United States power is gradually reducing in terms of world dominance. But one might argue that it is very difficult for China to reduce the gap between the United States in the anticipated future.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Militarization

Militarism attracted attention prior to World War I (one) in relation to German expansion between the wars, it was relatively linked to dictatorship and aggressive policies of Germany, Italy, and Japan but after the two wars (World War I & II), Germans and Japanese started restoring their military. In recent times, militarism has become connected largely with great power politics, imperialism, territorial occupation and war. However the bipolar rivalry that emerged after World War II known as the Cold War was waged on economy, politics and propaganda front, during the course of the war, the US and the Soviet Union took avoiding actions to engage in direct military battle in Europe and embark on a tactics to maintain their allies from switching sides[4]. For many, it was this ideological warfare between Soviet Union and the US that brought the notion of militarism as both of them possessed weapons that can cause devastating effects on the planet.

Although, militarism in the current global dispensation has a changing traits; as a consequences of global powers and the third worlds socio economic dilemma, today, militarism is occupying a significant position in global politics without evading its belligerent peculiarities of the past, in light of the fact that it has been incorporated into the ferocious struggle of great powers for the world predominance. Seemingly, militarism has several appearances, due to the major power dependence on military in international affairs, in most cases, repressive governments in third world countries are backed by the military in an exploitative world order.

The widespread militarism in developing countries gave rise to many dimensions ranging from; military expenditure, armed forces, arms imports, wars and military regimes (Ross, 1987). These dimensions indicate the magnitude of militarization in developing countries. However, the term militarization itself does not denote the reign of weapons or armed conflicts and the contractors that sustain their operations but a pattern of governance and a system enforced on the people without their consensus. Generally, militarization can be used to illustrate the ensuing conditions; the means of seizing political power by the military through coup d'état, armed conflicts, the

[4] For definition of the Cold War see; https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War "in the peak of the cold war 1948-53 the two superpowers intention were to keep their allies from defecting"

importation of arms by which war is executed, the arms stockpile and military expenditure.

3.2 Militarization of Africa

The discourse of the military has generated a global debate about an occurrence branded as militarization. More often than not, it is tied to third world countries which has generated major concern. For instance, colonel Neguib and Nasser toppled the Egyptain monarch in a coup in 1950, has been largely considered as part of militarizing politics in Africa (Cervenka,2019). Militarism itself does not imply the rule by the gun, or military conflict and arms suppliers.The term is used to describe the following circumstances; the course of intrusion of political power by the military through coup, armed conflicts in Africa and the importation of arms which wars are preserved and arms build up and military expenditures. Others contend that militarization is one of the major obstacles facing developing countries today, due to the fact that global powers are exploiting the resources which includes; military alliance, trade, aid, economy, society and culture of third world countries under the notion of external and internal security pursuit. In recent times, many third world nations are devastated by unnecessary military obligations and therefore refer to militarization as a curse that needs to be done away with.

The discussion of African militarization appeared in the 1960s when the struggle for political power spun in the situations of democracy and civilian governance, during this period, the military involvement in policies became prominent as the armies made their way into politics (Alam, 2014). To illustrate this, the trends of coup d'état and contrecoup d'état became a norm for many states in the continent as a product of their time.

During the 1970s, the importation of arms became a common attitude more than several regions in the globe, between 1970-77 the demand for weapons in Africa increased. Due to the growing interstates conflict (conflict between states) in the continent, cemented the establishment of the military in many countries because military capabilities allow negotiation from the position of strength (Conteh-Morgan, 1993). The dawn of the 1980s brought about a decline in the importation of weapons due to the continent's growing economic crisis coupled with the cold war. During the cold war, external power agreeable conveying military inventories to their client as a

part of the cold war strategy of containment, as a cooperation pact with their allies for the triumph of its objectives (Wiley, 2012).

African combatants (states soldiers and rebel groups) in a changing intensity became prone to external control as they grew to be reliant on external power for support to continue their war efforts. Africa has become drenched in small arms and light weapons. In the course of the cold war period dealers had little or no intentions for regional stability but relatively for access and control of lands and military bases

Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

The Small Arms Survey's yearly Trade Report for 2020 digs into examples of approved small arms ammunition shipments to Africa by examining the possibilities of non-traditional data sources. The survey highlight ammunition imports from opaque exporters to countries affected by armed conflict states subject to arms embargoes, and other areas on the continent equally prone to seeing arms and ammunition diverted from licit to illicit markets, based on peacekeeping operations, national customs, and civil society research. In 2017, ammunition made about 42% of all permitted African small arms imports.

In addition, Trade Update 2020: An Eye on Ammunition Transfers to Africa examines the global approved small weapons trade, which was valued at USD 6.5 billion in 2017. This is a small (1.35%) declined from the previous year, owing primarily to a 19% drop in US imports compared to 2016. In contrast, between 2016 and 2017, the aggregate value of imports by the Middle East's top six importers—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar—more than quadrupled. In 2017, these six importing countries accounted for 20% of worldwide small arms imports, including 57% of all imported light weapons and 49% of all imported small arms. Imported military guns, as well as 29% of all ammunition imported worldwide. Ammunition accounted for 41% of reported small weapons shipments from 2015 to 2017, totalling USD 2.7 billion in reported and approved exports.

Approximately, there are 800 million firearms (small arms and light weapons) in worldwide circulation, the bulk of these weapons are manufactured in developed nations but they end up in third world countries. Small arms are weapons that are easily accessible and utilized by ordinary citizens without proper training, this mostly consist of; revolvers, pistols, rifles, assault rifles, and several kinds of machine guns.

and light weapons are those invented for a number of people operating in a specific group or crew because they can be easily maintained, utilized and carried by small groups (2-3 persons) or transported by small vehicles or pack animals. Put simply they are generally used by military, police forces, terrorists and insurgents' groups

The demise of the Cold War, enormous stockpiles of small arms and light weapons surged the global market, because global biggest exporters of arms include; the US, Russia, China, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy and other nations have the ability to produce large quantities to meet the demands of the international markets

Figure 1. World Arms transfer from 1950-2019



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Database (2019)

The mid-1990s saw an influx of a huge portion of the black-market transaction in second-hand weapons, as many states have no access and control over small arms and light weapons trade because of their porous borders. On the other spectrum, many governments in weak and failed states in Africa were unable to provide political, economic and physical security to the extent that law and order malfunctions and disintegrates. More often than not, political oppositions become recipients of purchased illicit weapons while armed lawbreakers and criminal groups, give access to citizens the power to pick up weapons to protect themselves for example [the 1990s civil war in Sierra Leone] (Graaf, 1997).

However, the process of democratization also gave rise to new wars known as intra-states wars (conflicts within states) pioneered by non-state actors demanding for democratic change of governments; the spillover effects threatened the security of many sovereign nations in the continent. Huge chunks of arms on the continent are

illicit-meaning they are legally sold to security forces but later stolen and transferred illegally to the black market and put in the disposal of gangs, terrorist groups, and civilians (Bourne, 2005).

The availability and the unchallenging method of obtaining weapons have led to many outbreaks of unrest in most countries, this process has compromised state control which give rise to armed rivalry and growing outlaw of nonstate actors. This generates a situation where people armed themselves because the government is unable to provide adequate security for their citizens. Such conditions are visible in many countries in Africa. South Sudan for example has soared in the figure of civilian armament on the continent, because of its history of violent conflict. The increased ownership of small arms emanated from the 1950s, when the South Sudan separatist movement gathered tension amid the country's civil war, this event was amplified by the cold war, where external powers supplied both governments and rebel forces with weapons as an instrument for proxy warfare,[5] which stemmed from the proliferation of small arms and light weapons shaped by the dependency on external powers for military support.

For decades, many states in the Horn/Eastern Africa witnessed protracted civil/armed conflicts and natural disasters; these situations saw the influx of refugees across regions. These events are common and have created insecurity across borders. As a result of this, states are in intense competition to increase their military capabilities to protect their territorial proximities. In light of the fact that insurgencies are accelerating into a full-blown civil war aided by external support (Cervenka, 2019).

Therefore, the emerging new world order of the 21st century is witnessing an increase in instability and militarization evolving in Africa. One might be left wondering why the militarization of Africa? Since independence, African states have relied on one major supplier for military and other support but we have seen a shift from depending on one to several suppliers of military inventories (Penn, 2010).

Put simply, the growing intra-states wars and their spill-over effects in the region has endorsed the necessity for the militarization of Africa in which arms allocation and the assembling of military forces became important. The ramifications either continuing or short-lived has militarized societies with minimum political institutionalization deluged to domination by the military.

[5] Karp, A. (2013). (Rep.). Small Arms Survey. Retrieved May 28, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10602

The noteworthy of the militarization of Africa can be viewed from point that out of the 54 sovereign states, presently there are 17 dictators in the continent some of which have been in power for decades in countries such as; Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Gabon, South Sudan, Uganda and Djibouti to mention just a few.[6] In countless matters the civilian states government where political Parties willpower is tantamount to the head of states, is implemented by a controlling security system, which is a semblance of military regime.

Circumstances where incumbent governments and oppositions leaders have access to weapons from outside suppliers, increases the possibility of civil wars, terrorism, organized crimes, domestic violence similar to the wars in Chad, Sudan and Somalia which centered around the course of political change, idea of state building and the significant influence of external powers in conflict. These situations are sometimes coordinated by internal and external powers for political reasons (Conteh-Morgan, 1993). The increasing violence and terrorism in the Horn of Africa is seen as major threats to national security and the geo-economic relevance for both China and the US, an occurrence they needed to control through the use of military tactics to get rid of the threat. This process of eliminating threat created the atmosphere for the setting up and deployment of military troops to protect their investment and political interest.

This militarization process is considered as strategies of making sure that African countries continue to depend on America and Chinese forces to widen military control of its security systems, protect incumbent regimes, economic, political and security interest of global powers, especially the US and China (Farish, 2016).

The militarization of Africa portrayed the geo-strategic significance of Africa to both China and the United States, this has conveyed the creation of military bases and the positioning of troops to safeguard their security and economic interest in the continent through the use of the military.

3.3 Regional strategic context

Eastern Africa is traditionally made up of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the Horn of Africa; Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia This region is enclosed by the Rift Valley elongated from the Red Sea, between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East

[6] Kim, Y. (2015). A Troubled Marriage? Divided Minority Government, Cohabitation, Presidential Powers, President-Parliamentarism and Semi-Presidentialism. Government and Opposition, 50(4), 652-681. Retrieved May 28, 2021, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26349786

lies Bab el Mandeb Strait which is a key chokepoint connecting the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea to the Indian Ocean (Ndee, 2010).

This geographical importance facilitated the 19th century exploration where they established commercial contact with other parts of the world.

The growing instability in the Horn of Africa emerged from the legacies of colonialism. Especially the scramble and partition of Africa in 1884-85 in the so-called Berlin conference, a period where African kingdoms were divided and shared among imperial powers joined by the unripe political transition to self-governance. The decolonization period saw a change in the new world order; the cold war strategies of the two powers' rivalry conveyed the Horn of Africa into the spotlight of proxy relations, during this period large amounts of military inventories and military forces were brought into the region. Interestingly, the struggle for dominance and control was primarily to gain access and control of waterways as part of their security strategies.

The value for the location has not changed over the course of the 21st century where other powers opted to gain influence in the Middle East and East Africa due to the largest shipping path for oil suppliers of the Middle East linking it to Europe and East Asia. Due to the change in international political economy, the region has been seen as an integral part of the global powers' politics as the demand for oil and gas continues to expand (Legrenzi & Lawson, 2017). But recent events show how important it is to the United State and China for resources and Middle Eastern oil and the quest for influence.

The Horn of Africa is a multipolar region where global powers are competing for advantage due to its major choke point for international trade, this growing notion that the Red Sea is a strategic theater has generated global ambition for control of oil and commodities that flows from this axis, these proliferation of new players have created a real transformation of policies in this region (Melvin, 2019b).

3. 4 Djibouti posture in the regions

Great nations have clashed for access and control over Djibouti in the 19th century European scramble for Africa. During this period, France colonized this tiny country while Britain fought very hard to penetrate its coastal regions. In 1977, Djibouti obtained independence from France, under a bilateral defense protocol agreement, the French government stationed 5,000 troops in Djibouti as part of a commitment to

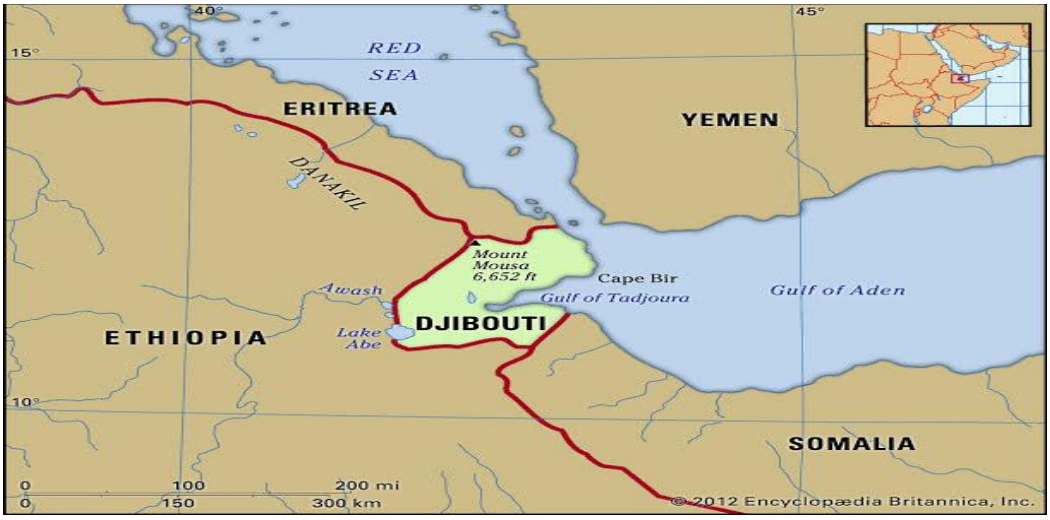
protect its former colony (Bollee, 2019). The defense pact signed by Djibouti placed its security issues on France to protect the country in a region marred with instability.

Djibouti, a country in Eastern Africa, has approximately one million people with a total area of 23,200-kilometer square which is largely occupied by two ethnic groups, the Somali and the Afar people and it is located in the horn of Africa, sharing border with Somaliland in the South, Eritrea in the North and Ethiopia in the Southwest.

The figure below shows how strategic Djibouti is located around the world's busiest shipping ways monitoring the gateway to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Djibouti operates as a pivotal point for refueling, transshipment and it is a major maritime port for import and export.

This strategic significance of Djibouti has attracted attention to global powers over the past decades including to both China and the US and has experienced a major shift in conducting it foreign policies with the west.

Figure 2. Map of Djibouti's posture in the region



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (2020)

However, Djibouti is chasing an aspiring program to position itself into a strategic and major commercial trading hub on the continent. This agenda is mostly financed by the People Republic of China (PRC) which is occupying a significant position in the country.

3.5 United States Relations with Djibouti

The United States has been a colonial power; American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Vietnam, Philippines and some others but never in Africa. This is an important reason for the positive relations in the aftermath of World War II. In the 1800 and 1885, many

western powers; France, Great Britain, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, and Spain started competing for control and dominance for African territories. This period is known as the scramble and partition of Africa which marked the establishment of fifty-four colonial dependence states. At the dawn of the 20th century, nearly 90% of the African continent was in total control by western powers except for two countries Liberia and Ethiopia. From this backdrop, official diplomatic relations between the United States and Djibouti started in 1977, subsequent to Djibouti's independence from France. Since then Djibouti has become an important ally on security, regional stability and humanitarian pursuit throughout the region. In strengthening this, the government of Djibouti is always in furtherance to US investments.

A bilateral agreement signed by both parties paved the way for the establishment and deployment of the United States military forces and also offered the US access to Djibouti sea and air port services.

Since the September 11 2001 attacks, Africa has been in the center phase in security discussion, and the United States demand for oil including the 'war on terror' fight. Africa is seen as a new oil trading zone more than central Europe and the former Soviet Union put together. this shift, and the growing global terrorism threat are considered as the emerging security challenges of the continent. Therefore, global powers that have infiltrated African economic policies are also tackling the security challenges on the continent, which is visible in the US military assistance in many parts of Africa. This event cemented the way for the deployment of sizable military troops labelled the Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti (Walle, 2010). In addendum to this, in 2003 President Bush announced $100 million funding for counter terrorism program for East and the Horn of Africa and the US European Command (EUCOM) organized series of training and military support operations in the region (Mpondo, Karba, & Mbugua, 2017).

The positioning of the US military in Djibouti in recent years has been determined largely by geopolitical factors including; safeguarding the Bab al-Mandab strait which serves as a passage choke point for both import and export, upholding stability in the region, intervention in complex political emergencies, anti-piracy, protecting their investments, ensuring the safe passage of oil and steering public diplomacy. These are some of the major factors that triggered the US to create a military base in Djibouti (Degang Sun & Zoubir, 2016).

Obviously, the US is a major contributor to the bilateral support in Djibouti. The United States has spent more than $338 million in Djibouti in the last two decades. Subsequently, on August 21st 2020, the US secretary of state announced the government decision to provide $2.5 million additional funding to Djibouti (US embassy Djibouti 2020). These grants indicate how significant Djibouti's bilateral relations with the United State are.

However, the government of Djibouti's resolution to accommodate the US military stemmed from the geopolitical involvements; geo-economic intentions and the insecurity posed by neighboring countries with the fear of the spillover effects that might affect the progress of the country. Besides the grants, the United State and Djibouti signed a $38 million lease agreement for 10 years in Djibouti, this deal is described as important in fighting terrorism. The US also proposes to spend approximately $10 billion in the next two and half decades to expand and renovate its military base (VOA News, 2014).

The U.S. has calculated that putting the access into what's seen as a relatively stable country in a very strategic location with access to a lot of unstable countries will pay off both in the near and the long term, said Joe Siegel, research director at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

This military base known as Camp Lemonier acts as an antiterrorism center for the region and the Arabian Peninsula and the camp is currently hosting 4,000 US soldiers.

More often than not, Djibouti is seen as a country that is economically and militarily brittle and its relations with the United State is metaphorically refers to as a 'marriage without a certificate' in view of the fact that its democratic and human right records are not in tandem with the democratic tenet and values of the United States and there is a potential for this relations to collapse if the US decided to uphold its liberal values in the country and the presence of other global powers in the country might have the propensity for instability or creates tension between military bases.

3. 6 China's Relations with Djibouti

China - Djibouti relations began in 1979 few years after the United States had established ties with Djibouti. China and Djibouti relations have progressed and accomplished significant outcomes in several areas. Subsequently, cooperation between China and Djibouti has moved smoothly for the past three decades. These deepened bilateral relations paved the way for both countries to sign strategic

partnership in trade and investments, this marked a new dawn in the Chinese- Djibouti relations (Ploch Blanchard & Collins, 2019).

This progressive relation became strategic due to the establishment of the Forum on China African Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 which cemented Chinese firm grip on the continent. Since then Beijing has financed numerous development projects worth approximately $16.6 million in Djibouti[7]

The recent agreement between Djibouti and China is part of an effort to implement the consensus reached in the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa. To complement this, the two countries agreed to construct logistic base that will benefit the Djiboutian people. The mutual pact signed by both countries emphasized the significant location of the tiny country connection to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden which is important to Beijing because of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). A project that extend from China to the Indian Ocean the Gulf of Aden and up to the Red Sea through the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean Sea. The maritime silk road enforce plan to increase commercial activities so that Djibouti see huge inflow of economic investments (Dutton, Kardon Conor, & Kennedy, 2020).

Djibouti, a pint-sized country with little or no resources has become one of the most perilous properties for Chinese economic importance because of its strategic location at the chokepoint of one of the busiest sea transport passing lanes in the world. A bulk of the Beijing market with European Union, with an estimated cost of over $1 billion goes through the corridors of Djibouti and nearly 40% of China's overall imports and exports passes through Djibouti's water ways (Brass, 2008).

In order to protect Chinese investments and trading activities in Africa, in 2016 Beijing signed an agreement to construct a naval outpost in Djibouti. The military installation cost approximately $600 million and an annual payment of $20 million to the Djiboutian governments for a period of ten (10) years with an option to extend for another period of ten years. This event marks the beginning of Chinese military presence in the Horn of Africa (Barton, 2018). Besides the lease and rent payments, infrastructural developments projects; port facilities, railways, pipeline to bring water from neighboring Ethiopia are estimated at $14.4 billion and are largely funded by Chinese banks. The Chinese port project is worth $3.5 billion, and will transform

[7] The 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, see http://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/

Djibouti into an international free trade zone which is going to be the largest free trading area on the continent. This plan positioned Djibouti as a major shipping center for commercial activities globally and Beijing companies will conduct their business through an authorized structure. The Chinese and Djibouti relation is divided into two folds; the one belt one road strategy- China vow to play a significant role in the region to maintain regional security as well as maintaining the safety of the Chinese citizens and increasing business activities of Chinese companies in East Africa and the second fold of this relation is that China is really developing a strong relation with all nations in Eastern Africa especially Ethiopia with approximately 90% of its port going through Djibouti. Chinese economic investment position in Djibouti is outstanding and incomparable with other foreign powers. Interestingly, Chinese presence in the tiny country is not necessarily for raw material but for its strategic location on the continent of Africa. Beijing's massive investments in Djibouti are just a few indications how China is having a firm grip on the continent. For decades, former African countries' colonial masters embarked on giving loans and aid combinations to influence trade and security deals but the Chinese investments in projects have created enormous infrastructure developments in a short period of time.

The significant position China holds in the amount and dimension of Chinese imports to Djibouti have grown rapidly since Beijing announced the construction of a military base in 2015. All the 24.4% is accounted for by the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI). An initiative that gears toward connectivity and development plans on the region and the continent of Africa linking it to Asia. China-Djibouti relation has drawn so much attention over the past decade, due to China's recent swirling around in conducting its foreign relations. This relation ranges from; economic, infrastructure and military.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Africa Military Command (AFRICOM)

Prior to the millennium year (2000), the United State had little or no intention to establish significant ties with many African nations, this is due to the fact that there was no official system to distinctly determine the US interest in Africa. For several years, the considered vision of the US was that it has no compelling interest in Africa and does not want anybody either to establish strong relations. However, every time a powerful or western nation wants to create relations with Africa the US feels threatened. This is exactly what happened during the cold war when the USSR wanted to expand its communist ideology in Africa. (Wafula Okumu, 2007). The aftermath of the cold war brought a significant shift in the United State government, within this context, two major themes surfaced and developed. The first theme portrays the significance of Africa to the US national interest and the second theme connected with the changing global security structure (Penn, 2008).

In our contemporary times, many scholars and foreign policy experts think the US is extremely worried, because China has attained a high degree of investment and the growing terrorist, piracy activities and instability in many parts of Africa.

4.2 The establishment of US Africa Military Command

For many decades, the United States did not establish a military command for Africa; most of its security undertakings in Africa were carried out by three military groups: the European Command (EUCOM); its duty was for the supervision of the largest part of the continent, the Central Command (CENTCOM); which responsibility was to watch over Egypt, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Pacific Command (PACOM); its task was to establish military alliance and to keep an eye on Madagascar and several island along the Indian Ocean (Volman, 2016). The spread of terrorism has appeared to be one of the major security concerns for the US and its allies. The 2001 September 11 terrorist attack revealed the extreme threat posed by terrorist organizations to the US national and international interest (Woodward, 2016). Subsequent to the attack, the then president Bush administration conferred power to the National Security Strategy (NSS) to fight global terrorism, regional conflicts, and stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions. One of the significant parts

of this fight is to identify weak and failed states that were more often than not a safe haven for terrorist groups (Dumbuya, 2016).

However, in 2007, then president George W. Bush unveiled that the United State is going to establish a military command for Africa, that will be named Africa Military Command (AFRICOM). This pronouncement crystalized what the narratives of security and Africa's military studies have ignored for many years (Dumbuya, 2016), the USAFRICOM is one of many combined combatant commands of the US Department of Defense (DOD). It is dedicated mainly to Africa and answerable to the Secretary of Defense for US military affairs.

USAFRICOM was formally launched on 1st October 2008, its headquarters is in Stuttgart, Germany, considering that many African states refused to host the African security structure due to fear of instability and insecurity on the continent. Its formation was to a larger extent better than the aftermath of the cold war understanding of the United States universal military systems (Keenan, 2009). The mission statement of the Africa command states that; "USAFRICOM, with partners, counter transnational threat and malign actors, strengthens security forces, and responds to crises in order to advance US national interest and promote regional security, stability and prosperity". The AFRICOM is in charge of the US military actions on the continent, comprising the fight in regional conflict, and military collaboration with the 53 out of the 54 African states, excluding Egypt which is under a part of the US central command's duty. The setting up of AFRICOM created the platform for the US to initiate training and educational programs to African military personnel, and its military activities are cooperatively carried out by allies (Volman, 2016). The militarization of foreign policy is visible through the establishment of AFRICOM, this event illustrated the rational move towards peacetime commitment operations on the continent. Its establishment could also be viewed as a chance for the European Command (EUCOM) to put more efforts on its primary responsibility as a defense for Russia's regional resurgence. The Africa Command (AFRICOM) is designed in a different way compared with EUCOM and CENTCOM that were created mainly to fight wars.

4.3 Context for the Creation of Africom

The hybrid system of AFRICOM is often criticized and labelled as '*Trojan Horse'* which is intended to provide the platform for tackling the continent's security

problems (Dumbuya, 2016). However, AFRICOM was established to carry out sustained security engagements to promote a stable and secure political environment in Africa in support of US foreign policy. During the global war on terror fight, the US has created African allies; Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti and Ethiopia for AFRICOM to carry out its counterterrorism operations, against Somalia's al-Shabab and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb region; al-Shabaab is a terrorist group based in East Africa, Somalia, it has been alleged that, this group have links with al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda is a multinational terrorist militant organization (Heinrich, Machain, & Oestman, 2017). Regardless of the claim that the creation of AFRICOM is to promote security through joint military operations, humanitarian and development, the framework of its establishment and the historical involvement of the US in Africa, imply that AFRICOM's influence on the continent is difficult to achieve (Besteman, 2013).

Since inception, AFRICOM has contributed to many military operations including; the Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (JTF-HOA) to fight pirates off the coast of Somalia. It has embarked on several ongoing maritime operations before its establishment [8]. Subsequent to the 2012 attack on US diplomats in Libya, AFRICOM stationed military troops in Djibouti to prevent potential attacks from occurring. AFRICOM continued to deal with terrorist risk posed by al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab through joint military operations.

Although its initial task was the usage of *hard power* (which uses military force and coercion) to dismantle and conquer terrorist escaping from Afghanistan and Iraq after the US invasion, due to the current changes in global geopolitical system AFRICOM incorporated *soft power* approach into their operations (power to attract) to make an environment that enables continued economic growth, democratic consolidation and sustainable broad-based development. Hard power here is the capability to control others through the use of threat of force, coercion, or inducement. On the other hand, soft power has the ability to determine the way others behave through cultural, political values and the legitimacy of the policies which help to control the targets.(Nye, 2008). Therefore, the strategy of AFRICOM possibly will be a part of the US foreign policy plans of using *smart power* in third world countries, putting importance on development, health, education, democracy, and economic development on the African continent. This may be an effort to strengthen US influence and to restore trust

[8] History of U.S. Africa Command, retrieved from https://www.africom.mil/history-of-us-africa-command

in the minds of African leaders (Stephens, 2010). Smart power is a perspective that emphasizes the importance of the military, but further infuses cooperation, alliance, and institution in all aspects to strengthen, induce and create legitimate outcomes. Recently, the most productive method of conducting foreign policy in modern politics is to combine hard and soft power (Nye, 2004).

Furthermore, smart power entails the extensive use of diplomacy, effective persuasion, to influence political and social legitimacy in tandem with military forces and other diplomatic tools to conduct foreign policy (Wilson, 2008). Put simply by Joseph Nye smart power is either hard or soft it is both.

At an early stage, AFRICOM was put to the test in March 2011, when a United Nation Security Council Resolution 1973 was passed, thus placing an arms embargo and a no-fly zone over Libya. "Operation Odyssey Dawn" marked AFRICOM's first military operations which led to the downfall of Libya's Muammar Gadhafi.

The formation of AFRICOM is characterized as "enhance our effort to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of developments, health, education, democracy, and economic growth on the continent".

Maintaining peace, security and stability was one of the many reasons for the establishment of AFRICOM mainly to help with peacekeeping operations on the continent.

Figure 3. Instabilities on the Continent



Source: Maryknoll office for global concern (2020)

The fight against terrorism, piracy, Africa's enormous natural resources and the current growing instabilities within the continent are components that attract global

powers to strengthen Africa's security system (Stephens, 2010). The continent's expanding instabilities and security challenges have created concerns in the international system considering the fact that failed and weak states are a safe haven for terrorists and insurgencies to operate. Figure 3 above shows the magnitude of instabilities on the continent. In this context, several experts claim that the US to a greater extent is attracted to Africa's natural resources, the unstable Middle East and the increasing demand for oil have pushed the US to create a system that will enable them to pursue its energy security (Besteman, 2013). Another motivating circumstance for the US to establish AFRICOM is the increasing economic growth and Chinese influence on the continent which is seen as a competition for US investments and resources.

4.4 Presence of Foreign Military in the Horn of Africa

Many African countries are hosting foreign military bases. Foreign Military Bases (FMB) simply refers to a space, an area on land or sea outside a country's territory, which is positioned with military personnel executing military operations, organized institutions and military facilities (Degan Sun & Zoubir, 2011). This method is a significant way for sovereign nations to project power, be involved in regional matters, spread culture, protect foreign interest and political influence globally.

Despite the bilateral agreement signed by African Union member states and foreign nations the proliferation of military bases is a cause for concern. Approximately 13 foreign global powers have military bases on the continent, among these the United States and France are the leading countries operating in Africa (Gregory, 2000). Although the Africa Union (AU) Peace and Security Council is concerned about the increasing presence of these military bases on the continent, the Africa Union is also dissatisfied with the way it handles, supervises the transfer of military inventories to and from these military bases.

However, it is visible that the Horn of Africa is the hub of foreign military installations in Africa, foreign military troops have been stationed there to respond to threats posed by terrorist organizations, pirates, and to support external security interests.

In the past two decades, the Horn of Africa has seen an influx of foreign military expansion. Widespread regional and international security forces are presently operating in the region and external military systems includes land-based facilities such as; base, ports, airships, training camps, logistics hub, and naval forces, the most

noticeable feature of this expansion is the growing military bases in coastal areas along the red sea (Melvin, 2019b).

The recent foreign security politics of the Horn of Africa have attracted major external security involvement in the region, this unfolding occurrence is giving rise to an insecure environment. This external security situation is exposing different actors and their competing security interest. The initial intention of external security involvement was on national security threat and protracted domestic conflicts of the region, coupled with the shift in counterterrorism approach of global powers, however, the Horn of Africa is now the epicenter for external rivalry for global predominance. The region is witnessing significant changes in its external security settings; many international security actors ranging from; Europe, the United States, the Middle East, and Asia are presently functioning in the region. The militarization of the region is seen as a major threat to future stability and security. The increasing significant of commercial, military and the geo-political competition have created a major shift in the security systems of the global powers to protect their foreign and national interest abroad, thus create the deployment of military troops in the tiny country (Djibouti) due to its strategic location at the chokepoint notably, at the center of the red sea and the Gulf of Aden. However, the growing influence and importance of the Middle East and Gulf States as a major security player in the region have raised concerns in recent years, as several Asian powers have instituted security alliances across the region. The rising figure of nations with security engagement in the region is creating a militarized zone. A region that has been incorporated into the geo-economics and geopolitical program of global powers in the past two decades to combat security threats and the enlargement of the Gulf and the Horn of Africa in to the global power security mechanisms, in this context foreign military deployment in the region is seen as a way of protecting their investments and security interest both national and international due to the increasing terrorist activities in the Middle East and its spillover effects in the Horn of Africa

4.5 Foreign Military Bases in Djibouti

The reality that several countries want to be in Djibouti has to do with its strategic location. On one hand the tiny country shares a border with Somalia where a civil war is going on and many countries are involved in trying to bring peace to the region and the formerly British colony known as Somaliland aspires for its independence. In the

west, the Somalia government is fighting al-Shabab militants affiliated with al-Qaeda. In this fight, the Somalia government is supported by the African Union as well as the United States which conduct their operations from Djibouti.

Therefore, Djibouti has become the main anchor point of the Horn of Africa, hosting military bases from France, United States, China, Japan and Italy. No other country in the world has so many foreign military bases. Djibouti has become strategically important for the United States, France, Japan, China, Middle East and the Gulf States, its location has attracted global power rivalry in the region due to its strategic trade route. Over the years, this region has had a strange political and security environment, East and the Horn of Africa consist of huge remote areas that are mostly ungoverned by recognized state authorities. In those peripheries, several non-states actors including; insurgency, terrorist groups etc. are calming to provide security for citizens in those localities, such activities thus pose a threat for government security forces to gain access to these areas regarded as a safe haven for terrorists to operate. However, global powers are engaging in bitter rivalry that is playing out through indirect means, the most extreme case is Djibouti where foreign military powers are operating within and outside its borders.

As illustrated in figure 4 below, Djibouti has been hosting major military forces for the past decades in the region, thus enabling them to become a strategic partner in global affairs. This tiny country plays an important role in the Horn of Africa because of its location at the choke point of the Red Sea-the crossroad of Africa and the Middle East. Djibouti has attained status as an important player in the fight against terrorism, its posture as a link to the middle east and other part of the world has renewed its position in the military system and the operations of major power seeking for dominance in the global political, economic and security system (Schermerhorn, 2000). Military bases in Djibouti mainly operate as passage points for military inventories supplies required for operations in other parts of Africa and the Middle East. For many the motive behind the establishment of military bases in Africa are the increase in investment, getting closer to their allies, and to gain influence and dominance on the continent that is the focus of rising global rivalry. Therefore the government of Djibouti has presently leased property to the United States, China, France, Japan, Italy and Saudi Arabia. The tiny country will soon host India in the near future.

Figure 4. Foreign Military Bases in Djibouti



Sources: Agence France-Presse Straits Times Graphics

The geographical proximity of Djibouti to the overly sensitive Middle East and Africa placed it in a significant position for global powers to set up military bases in the country. To illustrate its importance, to its south-east Somalia prolong conflict with international effects with the increasing pirates' activities in the region and al-Shabab militants unending threat to this unstable region. This tiny country has a pivotal role to play in this volatile region in the world ruined by domestic conflicts, therefore Djibouti is seen by several nations as a model of stability.

4.6 United State Military Base in Djibouti

The beginning of the 21st century saw significant changes in the security policies of the Horn of Africa in view of the fact that the number of counterterrorism and counterpiracy appeared to be an important issue for external security powers. Critically, in response to the September 11 2001, attack in the United States, the Bush administration strengthened and expanded an already established network of foreign military in almost all parts of the world, including its permanent military base in Djibouti, Africa (Kitissou, 2014). After extensive negotiation with Djibouti the US gained full access to Camp lemonier which is a former French base. In 2014, then president Barack Obama completed the original agreement of the Bush administration agreeing on a $60 million rent each year which doubled the initial agreed amount.

The Horn of Africa has emerged as an epicenter for US counter terrorist operations, especially the protracted conflict in Somalia and as a base for its military operations in the Middle East and many parts of Africa. However, subsequent to the terrorist attacks in the United States, the Global War on Terror (GWOT) took center stage in international security discussion, the US amplified its strengths to respond to violent extremism in the Horn of Africa. Subsequent to the 9/11 attacks, 'Operation Enduring Freedom-Horn of Africa' (OEF-HOA) was introduced as a military operation to deal with insurgencies, pirates, and terrorism. During the same year, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was launched to execute the operations goal. Officially, the CJTF-HOA's mandates include; Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and the Seychelles, the CJTF-HOA has also conducted operations beyond these areas (Melvin, 2019a). In a bilateral agreement signed in 2003, the Government of Djibouti leased Camp lemonier to the US, this base is positioned in a small town called Ambouli on the southern part of Djibouti, the base was initially under the control of the French forces but later occupied by the Djibouti Armed Forces. with access to air and port facilities, this camp became a naval expeditionary base for the US. After the agreement, in 2003 the CJTF-HOA stationed in camp lemonier and since then Djibouti has become the host of the permanent US military facility in Africa (Wallin, 2018). The establishment of the military bases has been reinforced by military deployment from allies, Camp lemonier has become a cornerstone of the US drone system and supervision network within and outside the continent including aerial operations in the Gulf, the United States has also embarked on the fight against counterpiracy and maritime activities in the region. As part of the 2007 agreement to make the base a permanent facility, in 2012 the US Department of Defense (DOD) unveiled that they are going to spend $14 billion to improve the military base in Djibouti since then, the base has contained several; ground troops, air, and navel units. The footprint of the base is amazing, in the south is the Ambouli international airport with the current French base on one side and the US base on the other side. For the US, the location of camp Lemonier is so important with regards to the ongoing war in Yemen to support legitimate authority in the conflict.

4.7 China's Military Base in Djibouti

China has been developing its military relations with African countries for decades through peacekeeping missions, military personnel and the China-Africa Peace and

Security Initiative Forum. However, with China's global power and to strengthen its security pursuit across the globe, specifically in Africa and the Indian Ocean, Beijing is gradually shifting its attention on solidifying its economic posture in the Horn of Africa, technically competing with the United States and realizing how to become a major player in world affairs. As China's strengthen its presence in the region, Beijing leadership has granted the powers to the military to protect its security and economic interest on the strategic sea-lines.

China's foreign policy, military aspirations and external rivalry not only with the United States but also with west-dominated world order, and China's involvement in the anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden in 2008 has spurred up Beijing's political will to create a military base in Djibouti since then the People Liberation Army (PLA) has slowly become a part of Djibouti's plans to strengthen its national security.

Therefore, in 2015, Beijing declared its intentions to establish a military base in Djibouti, the base is positioned near the deep-water port, eight (8) miles away from camp lemonier. The formation of these bases in Djibouti across the Bab-el-Mandeb strait- a chokepoint linking Asia and Europe- will strengthen the Chinese military to safeguard its sea interests. After years of construction the base was officially launched in 2017, its mandates are to foster military relations, combined operations, training, emergency rescue and securing strategic sea lines, counterterrorism and intelligence gathering (Cabestan, 2020). In a bid to maintain its influence, the communist nation's ship transporting its military personnel to its first ever military base in Africa left Beijing. However, due to the controversy regarding the establishment, Beijing has claimed that the base is not only a military base as such but a 'logistic support facility' mostly to help Chinese troops participating in the Gulf of Aden, Somalia operations and for humanitarian purposes especially United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. The Beijing administration's priority was to restore confidence in Africa and the globe about its security and economic interests in the 21st century. These geo-economic and geo-strategic objectives give the impression that the establishment priorities are in two folds; commercial and strategic military interest in the region (Chaziza, 2018).

Chinese base in Djibouti is a significant part of the 'Belt Road Initiative' (BRI), this initiative is a visible manifestation of China's economic plans and military component wherein China's major goal is to continue its dominance in the global shipping route, both economically and militarily. This military base will allow Beijing to respond quickly to any security threat emanating from Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Analysis

The augmented instability in the Horn of Africa has gathered lots of attention, because of the proliferation of military installation, port, and the surge in military and economic assistance from external powers. The region has encompassed unstable political and economic structures; from failed states, rentier, and economic development based on authoritarian regimes. Forging alliances between neighboring states have been difficult, due to border disputes, ethnic conflicts, and battle for resources. Recently, the wind of change is widespread in the region, exposing internal, regional underlying issues and the effects of foreign powers.

The competition between global powers (China and United States) in Djibouti owing to geostrategic relevance is tied to many issues – 'the ongoing war in Yemen, the changing balance of power in the Middle East and China's Belt and Road Initiative' have made Djibouti a center of international competition. (Finn, 2013)

Throughout history, the Horn of Africa has been a vital geo-strategic region, the area was among the conflict-ridden competition between the United States and Soviet Union, this ideological warfare played out in the region. Creating the Suez Canal also added significant value to it, because the Red Sea became a central shipping route which connected Europe and other parts of the world. The major chokepoint is the proximity of the Horn of Africa to the oil producing Middle East, this proximity has huge consequences for development and the conflicting parties in the region.

This historical and strategic location has played an attractive role for global powers, in the interaction between existing internal and external powers-China, United States, France, Japan, Italy and Saudi Arabia. The strategic sea lane has triggered the Horn of Africa to become an epicenter for political commotion, instability, economic crisis, chaos, and civil strife and the most pirated region of the world. These situations have aided global powers to interfere in the matters of the region and stamp their authority easily. Out of the six global powers present in Djibouti, three are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - China, United States and France – and they are recognized as having enormous stake in the region. Italy has a long-standing relation with Ethiopia and Japan is seen as an emerging player in the region, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have strong cultural, economic, political, religious, trade and military ties and has been a major player in the history of the Horn of Africa.

These major powers have common as well as hostile interests, these great powers are making sure that no single nation has a total dominance and influence over the other. They are in constant rivalry to make sure that the chokepoint/sea lanes are not controlled by an antagonistic country to them and that there is a constant and secure crossing point through the Bab-el-Mandeb straits. Consequently, the choke point has been squared up for super-power rivalry for Djibouti and the Red Sea, and these global powers would not show reluctance to embark on a full-blown war if they deemed fit.
Djibouti's commitment to host both United States and China's military forces continue to position the country in the spotlight of global power politics. Outside the growing competition between the US and China, the limited area in Djibouti served as a platform for the two global powers to improve their relations because instability and insecurity in the region are likewise detrimental to both Beijing and Washington. But these powers continue to counter each other's authority in the tiny country.

5.2 Threat to Peace and Security in the Region

Civil wars or armed conflicts in neighboring countries; Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, and Somalia influence the security situation in Djibouti. The country's proximity to many war-turn nations and the government inability to control its porous borders increases worries over the likelihood of cross-border terrorism, because there is continuous terrorist threat targeted at western and Djibouti interests. These attacks including; bombing, suicide operations, kidnapping, attacks on aviation and maritime vessels in the country.
The importance placed on the war on terror has increased US relations with the region, the Horn of Africa is now a battlefield for global powers seeking for influence inside and outside the continent of Africa. The mixture of political instability, ethnic conflict, institutional decay, and foreign intervention are ignitable factors of a region that is always lingering on the fringes of insecurity. Instability and conflict have compelled state governments in the region not only to rely on external power for military and economic support but also to buy sophisticated military inventories and to maintain foreign military presence in the region (Macfarlane, 1984).
The existence of military bases of United Nations Security Council members and Gulf Nations in littoral areas is an evidence for the considered significance to their security and economic interest in Djibouti. Besides, it could be contended that constant militarization of Africa through collaborative training of hostile happenings with

advanced military inventories of American and Chinese forces might create instability and give rise to more terrorist attacks and non-state actors posing as rebel groups against China, the United States and incumbent governments in the continents. This signifies that the more presence of external forces to protect their interests the more it creates instability in the continents. Despite the fact that Djibouti's government strengthened the search for those involved in the previous attacks, several individuals responsible linger and operate in the region.

5.3 US-China Friction in Djibouti

Amongst the global powers based in Djibouti, there has been a huge military collaboration in the past years, with the exception of Japan, they are all NATO members but Japan has frequently been involved in NATO operations. Therefore, during these periods the density of countries stationed in Djibouti have not caused tensions/problems in the past, but in recent times, that has changed when China started operating a military base in Djibouti, the facility is surrounded by high walls and sophisticated security system, with the commencement of the base operation, mutual accusations quickly arose. The pentagon claimed that China's lasers were aimed at US pilots blinding them and putting them at risk, China denies these claims.

> Dana White a Pentagon spokeswoman said " these activities poses a true threat to our airmen, we have formally demarche the Chinese government and we have requested Chinese government to investigate"
>
> In response to this, Hua Chunying Beijing foreign ministry spokeswoman said " after strict verifications we have told the US that what they have alleged is absolutely untrue"

China on the other hand accused Japan of having sent divers to the Chinese military ship to collect information, this accusation is also denied by the Japanese.

Djibouti's geostrategic importance to both China and the United States has the possibility to stimulate interstate and intrastate conflict in the near future. Endless, devastating issues in the region have reduced economic growth, political stability which served as an indicator for global powers to intervene in the matters of the region, ignoring the fact that these actors have little or no interest to stabilize their countries except the engagement of undercover activities (spying) and secret operations in the region. The closeness of their military bases is an indicator of the increasing competition between the two powers. The AFRICOM position report 2018, raised

concerns about Beijing's military base in Djibouti, stating that "US-AFRICOM considered security and access to the tiny country as high-level of importance" put simply US perceive Chinese presence in the country as a major threat (Muñoz, 2010)

Change of Policy and Strategies

The divergent style of domestic and international conduct portrayed by external powers in Djibouti explains the shift in their policy orientation. The initial policy of the US was centered on counterterrorism but in recent times, it has shifted its attention to reduce the influence of rival powers with emphasis on trade, investment, and security which is seen by many as moving away from its commitment to democracy. Washington has realized the fact that cooperation and development have been deprived of keeping African states, including Djibouti, from familiarizing closely with Beijing, which has a significant influence and its loans with less conditions on the continent. Beijing's economic position with Djibouti and the establishment of its first ever overseas military base in the tiny country cannot be separated from its expansive economic position in Africa and its Belts and Road Initiative (BRI) objectives. However, China's logistic base was established to safeguard its investments in Africa, and there has been a shift of its initial plan to expand the objectives to political and military influence to prevent Indian and Japan's activities in the Indian Ocean.

Djibouti in a difficult position in regional power balance

The geostrategic location of Djibouti and its "military base diplomacy" have placed the tiny country in a difficult position to balance its relation with other countries. The small country located itself in the middle of US-Chinese diplomatic hostility because it is home to both superpowers' military bases. These two global powers' military installations are just a few kilometers away from each other, overlooking Asia, Africa, and the Middle East competing for global predominance. China's military base main target is to protect Chinese goods exports that transits through the sea-lanes destined for Europe, the base in the tiny country is a component of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), this scheme is to connect, strengthen cooperation and infrastructure both land and sea lanes and Djibouti is seen as a significant player for the maritime BRI project. The country is vital to China's long-term objectives and Beijing will endure to strengthen its ties with Djibouti due to the country's economic and security importance to China's aspirations on the continent.

The United States is concerned about the possible influence of the BRI scheme benefits to Beijing, and the ripple effects it might have on America's control in many parts of

the world, which put the military base in Djibouti in a difficult position to compete with China.

However, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa stationed in Djibouti has been utilized by the US to carry out its operations against al-Qaeda and al-Shabab. This operation is often viewed as bringing the tiny country into the fray of the political objectives of the United States, leaving the host nation vulnerable in the hands of terrorist's groups and its neighbors.

Djibouti could also be exposed to danger from other countries' conflicts, because the Middle East and the Horn of Africa are at peace with each other and Djibouti might realize itself creating rivals not by its actions but as a result of its military guests.

Economic Factors

The growing piracy and maritime crime remain a threat for ships passing through Djibouti's coast lines putting seafarers in danger and costing states and companies' huge amounts of money in ransom, insurance and maritime operations. This has exposed states in the littoral areas ability to handle such situations.

The increasing security problems in the Gulf of Aden uncovered the urgent intervention for external powers to protect their commercial and economic pursuit.

In 2008, the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) was launched to combat the spreading piracy issues in the region.

In spite of the mutual economic benefit rhetoric of 'win win' between Beijing and Djibouti, this relation is often black-listed and criticized by many western global powers, when China and the United States relations plummeted resulting in trade wars between the two nations. This growing trade tension could cause huge economic decline in Africa and the world. China and the US are competing to expand their political and economic influence in the region. Knowingly and violently directed to their investments to obtain a strategic position over the other.

The weaken relations in both China and the US has major implication such as; China's expansive economic diplomacy and the deplorable economic conditions of many states in Africa is pushing several states into debt-trap and the US is concern about the potential loss of a firm grip on the region due to Chinese expansive and debt-trap diplomacy.

Rising tension between the two countries (China and US) could end up endangering the tiny country's peace and security because both nations are militarily active in the region. The country is trying very hard to maintain a beneficial relationship to

substitute for diplomatic and economic security. Although it could be reflected in Djibouti no matter how hard it tries to maintain and prevent the tensions by respecting the rules stipulated by the host nation.

Security Interest

Foreign military positions in Africa clearly show that the primary goal is securing their interest, protecting cooperative regimes, propelling their influence during the growing tension between global rivals and responding to international peace and security threats created by terrorist groups and pirates.

Djibouti has gained a significant position in the international security system; the country shares borders with two of the most unstable and hot-spot countries; Yemen and Somalia. Its proximity to these countries is a source for concern because Yemen is wrecked by prolonged civil war between the Houthi rebels and loyalists, while Somalia is home to al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group al-Shabab which has carried out many terror attacks in the region. As exhibited by AFRICOM, the main focus of the US in the region is security, because it wants to thwart al-Shabab from having total control of Somalia, to prevent this, Washington operations are carried out by special forces, airstrikes against all groups posing as terrorists and also offers training for Somalia National Army and helps Africa Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) because terrorists operating in the region are always seen as a threat to US interest.

Nevertheless, the US military base (Camp Lemonier) in Djibouti is a hub for the Global War on Terror (GWTO) operations in the region, the counterterrorism operations carried out by US were launched from the tiny country[9].

Washington regarded Djibouti and the entire region mainly through a security perspective, while China viewed the region in a developmental perspective.

As the relation between China and Africa has developed, so has China's security interest expanded. Beijing has emphasized its pursuit to protect its shipments along the sea lines by linking the Horn of Africa to Chinese military installment in the region. Because neighboring states conflicts; the activities of terror groups such as al-Shabab in Somalia and the Sahel region is seen as a threat to Chinese workers and pose a huge economic obstacle for Beijing’s investments in Africa

[9] Rogers, P. (2011). The 'War on Terror' and International Security. Irish Studies in International Affairs, 22, 15-23. Retrieved May 28, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/41413190

The establishment of China's first international military base in Djibouti is a pointer for Beijing's expansive security and economic objectives, investments and protection of their citizens abroad and also increased its troop involvement in international peace and stabilization. Although Beijing has been included in the counter-piracy operations in the region and the Gulf of Aden, the Asian country with an export-oriented economy and major logistic industries, has concern in maintaining security in the sea-lanes.

US-China Soft And Hard Power Projection in the Region

China's resource extraction and infrastructure loan initiatives in Africa are part of a well-funded campaign to strengthen Beijing's soft power on the continent. Over the years, China's educational and media outreach programs have grown significantly. Thus far, the results have been mixed. In certain countries, they are welcomed, while in others, they are viewed with suspicion. Even those Africans who are attracted by Chinese gifts do not always change their opinions about the People Republic of China (King, 2013)

When it comes to Africa, the Chinese government has made a conscious effort to stress the continent's moral vision rather than mutuality, win-win, and generosity as the fundamental pillar of China's soft power. In praticular terms, this entails a significant investment in engaging with and forging new connections of affinity with African publics, particularly elites (Paradise, 2009). In the context of East Africa, Chinese cultural, educational, and media programs focus on access or as presenting China as a real country, in contrast to the US approach, which emphasizes abstract values and ideals of liberal democracy while making limited investments in educational and cultural programs (Liang, 2012)

Maria Repnikova said "The Chinese government has put a lot of effort into debunking these myths. China is currently the most popular training location for African elites, including journalists, with over a thousand of them receiving training each year. It is home to the world's highest number of African students, estimated at 80,000 each year the United States welcomes around 40,000 per year or half that number. China has built 62 Confucius institutes throughout the continent, teaching Chinese language and culture, and Chinese state-owned media has opened a Nairobi headquarters that distributes information to many other countries."

China's growing military engagement in Africa is aimed at advancing Beijing's economic and strategic interests, in particular its Belt and Road Initiative. The focus of the debate on China-Africa ties has been on Beijing's enormous infrastructure

projects across the continent. Security activities, which have grown in scale and scope alongside President Xi Jinping's signature One Belt, One Road strategy—known internationally as the Belt and Road Initiative—to create new international infrastructure, trade, and investment links to the Chinese economy, China's expanding military presence in Africa is part of a program aimed at rejuvenating the Chinese country and restoring its status as a "Great Power." In its 2015 Africa Policy Paper, China advocates for more military participation, technical collaboration, and security sector capacity building in Africa. While Beijing's aid to the African Union and its regional security communities has risen considerably as a result of this strategy, the majority of its support is channelled bilaterally, with arms sales playing a key role. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, China is currently the biggest military exporter to Sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 27% of all weapons sold in the region. Compared to 2008-2012, there was a 55 per cent rise between 2013 and 2017. Algeria, Angola, Gabon, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda are just a few of the 22 African nations that have recently received weaponry from China.

China has expanded its sale from small arms and light weaponry to tanks, armoured personnel carriers, marine patrol vessels, planes, missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and artillery. It is also putting a greater emphasis on developing institutional capacity in Africa's security sector (Hunter, 2009). China's State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND) stated in 2018 that it has reached bilateral agreements with 45 African nations on defence technology transfer and the development of defence businesses.

5.4 Conclusion

Having gone through so much literature it is viable to conclude that the region is fairly stable and at the same time it is not free from conflicts. It is striking to see national problems of the region being dominated by external powers interests, the general shared interest is to making sure that the movements of ships carrying huge amount of investments passes through the Bab el-Mandeb straits and to resolve Somalia prolong civil war and eradicating piracy which is in the interest of all parties involved in the region.

The potential conflict emerges largely from two key issues; struggle for dominance in Djibouti’s key choke points of global trade, and the rivalry for influence in the Horn

of Africa. Getting total control of the straits by a single power is impossible because other powers will be so worried due to the presence of military forces of other countries. The proximity of the military bases posed a difficult task for powers to trust each other in Djibouti, whereas both US and China have different objectives in the tiny country, the conflicts of interest might lead to an increase in their already broken relations. The fragility of states in the region have influenced external powers to dictate the way security and economic conditions of the region are conducted which is affecting other countries outside the region.

The situation in Djibouti is a conflict between the US and China for influence and control that emerges from the global level. It appears that both countries are unlikely to trigger a conflict around Djibouti that might slow down the free flow of imports from Asia to Europe and other parts of the world.

Within this context, it is very challenging for the United States to equal Beijing's 'Soft Power' or its investments in Africa, this is one of the reasons as to why China's strategic influence on the continent is a threat to US interests, in view of the fact that China is Africa's major trading partner. That is the main reason the Chinese built its military base in Djibouti to maintain its influence and to secure its economic activities in Africa

There is no question that the rivalry between the US and China is not visible in Djibouti. This competition has the ability to determine the present and the future of those within and outside the region. The significance of the US in the Horn of Africa is seen by many has declined due to the competition between Washington, Beijing and other global powers deepens, this is contrary to what is happening because the US is not distracted from its initial counterterrorism objectives and global power competition. African countries are always going to be allied and significant to US global policies.

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