



Mapping ‘Regional Security’ in the Greater Horn of Africa: Between National Interests and Regional Cooperation

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- National and regional security in the Greater Horn of Africa is largely defined and managed by linked networks of politico-military actors. These networks can, and do, unite around common regional security agendas in response to perceived extra-regional threats.
- Combined Ethiopian, Kenyan and Ugandan support for South Sudan, for example, has historically been linked to their shared perception that Khartoum poses a security threat to the region, while regional cooperation on the Nile Waters issue during the 2000s has come in response to perceived Egyptian aggression and brinkmanship.
- Regional cooperation often gives way to division and competition when national and individual elite economic interests are threatened or when states perceive their interests in certain theatres differently. This has occurred in eastern Congo, South Sudan and Somalia in recent years, where some governments have initially responded unilaterally to perceived threats to their regime security or economic interests.
- The biggest value of regional organizations in the Greater Horn of Africa is, at present, that they bring the leaders of the region together to discuss security issues.
- Regional security actors are rarely prepared, however, to clearly articulate their national interests at the regional level, in part owing to norms relating to ‘African solutions to African problems’ and pan-African solidarity.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper¹ is to explore the relationship between national interests and regional cooperation in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA) – a region which includes a range of states with Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda being of particular interest here. This represents a preliminary output of the *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)*'s 'Mapping National Security Interests in the Horn of Africa' project and, it is hoped, that the paper's conclusions and recommendations will inform the future development and shape of this project. The arguments of the paper are based on data collected during the author's own research in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda since 2009 as well as insights from roundtables facilitated by *FES* in these three states – as well as in Tanzania and South Sudan – during 2013 where a range of regional policy-makers, security actors, analysts and others participated in discussions on national and regional security. The paper also draws on a range of media-based material as well as secondary literature.

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented before an audience of national and regional policy-makers at the Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa in March 2014 at an event organized by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES: Addis Ababa Office) entitled 'Between national interests and regional security in the Greater Horn of Africa: Lessons – and warnings – from South Sudan'. I am grateful to the participants in this event for their helpful feedback and comments. I am also very grateful to Arne Schildberg, Katharina Newbery and other colleagues at FES for their advice and support during the writing of this paper and to Sally Healy and Paul Williams for their thoughtful and valued input into the shaping of the paper's conceptual framework.

Three key questions are posed in this study: Who defines security in this region? What is the relationship between national security and regional security for these actors and where are debates on this relationship articulated? The first part of the paper, Section 2, will explore the first question – relying particularly on conceptual and theoretical debates on this topic found within security studies literature. Section 3 will then delineate four key 'sites' where national and regional interests are negotiated in the GHOA while Section 4 will compare and contrast three case studies, the South Sudan 'project', the Nile Waters and the Somalia interventions, as a means to interrogate how national security and regional cooperation dynamics are contested and debated in practice in this region. Section 5 will offer some preliminary conclusions as well as reflect on some of the key implications of the paper's findings for international actors working on, and in, this region.

2. Whose Security? Whose Interests? Defining 'Regional Security' in the Greater Horn of Africa

Any discussion of security interests – national, regional or otherwise – must begin with a clarification of definitions; what does 'security' mean? As with most concepts commonly-used by social scientists, understandings of security are heavily contested. As Williams notes, however, the term itself 'as an intersubjective [one]... has no meaning..[it] is what people make it', rendering any quest for definitions even

more complex.² At a basic level, security interests are those concerned with the addressing or elimination of some kind of threat to something else. Consensus on what represents a 'threat' and what, or who, is threatened is less widespread among scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. This section will review different ways in which commentators have attempted to address these concerns before outlining how this paper approaches the issue. The applicability of this approach to the Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA) and the question of regional security interests and cooperation will then be delineated.

There have been two key dimensions of academic debates on security among which are useful for exploring the key questions of this paper. The first relates to the ultimate object of security (what should be 'protected') – whether it is the state/government and its institutions, borders and integrity (**'the national security approach'**) or those living in such states and their basic health, education, employment and other needs (**'the human security approach'**). The second relates to whether security exists objectively or whether it is 'constructed' by actors and institutions within society; the **Copenhagen School/ securitization approach** takes the latter as its point of departure. This paper will take the tenets of securitization theory as its conceptual approach, recognizing that security in the GHOA – as elsewhere in the world – is defined and not present independent of actors and power relationships. It is important to identify,

therefore, which actors and relationships are most important for 'defining' security in this region and whose security is prioritized in discussions on regional security in the GHOA – a focus informed by the national/human security debate. This paper views regional and national security interests as constructed primarily by regional security elites in the GHOA. The remainder of this section will elaborate on the two debates described above and why they are useful for understanding security in this region.

'Traditional' understandings of security, predominant particularly in International Relations theory during the Cold War, focused very much around the state and its military structures. Within this dispensation, threats were presented in mainly military terms (as invasions, terrorist attacks, rebel insurgencies etc) with the state and its institutions as the primary objects threatened therein. Much scholarly exploration of security during this period, therefore, centred around comparing the military capacities of various states (including nuclear arsenals and other weaponry stockpiles) as indicators of the level of 'threat' such states posed to others.³ This state-centric view of security has since been labelled as the 'national security' school of thinking on the concept and continues in much contemporary strategic studies literature.⁴

The end of the Cold War and the eruption in the 1990s of a range of conflicts in West Africa, Eastern Europe and elsewhere,

² Paul Williams, 'Thinking about security in Africa', *International Affairs*, 83:6, 2007, p.1022.

³ Danielle Beswick and Paul Jackson, *Conflict, Security and Development: An Introduction*, Routledge: London, 2011, pp.8-10.

⁴ *Ibid.*

which fitted less clearly into a state-centric understanding of global security, nonetheless led to an opening-up of conceptualizations of security and security threats among scholars and policy-makers. The deliberate targeting of civilians by states and insurgents alike in many of these conflicts challenged the prevailing view of security as being the major concern only of national politicians and military officials. Likewise, the gradual realization by many analysts – influenced by the work of Mary Kaldor, William Reno, David Keen and others – of the links between lack of development, criminal networks and conflict in many parts of the world prompted a questioning of prior assumptions of the state as the only relevant object of analysis for understanding security threats.⁵ A major consequence of this re-evaluation of the security concept therefore saw a shift of emphasis from states to people. The 'human security' approach defines humans, and not states, as the central 'referent object' of security thereby rendering a range of non-military phenomena (including poverty, disease, environmental degradation, unemployment etc) equally, if not more, salient as security threats for most people on the planet. As the 1994 UNDP *Human Development Report*, which outlined the human security concept clearly, argues:

[Security is] safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in daily lives⁶

⁵ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*, Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1999; David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, James Currey: Oxford, 2005; William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, Lynne Rienner: Boulder, CO, 1998.

⁶ Human Development Report 1994, UNDP: New York, 1994, p.23.

This substantial expansion of the security agenda has been criticized by some scholars as promoting a nebulous and unhelpful understanding of the security concept. Roland Paris has contended, for example, that:

'human security' is like 'sustainable development' – everyone is for it but few people have a clear idea what it means. Existing definitions... tend to be extraordinarily expansive and vague...and slippery by design'⁷

Attempts to overcome these potential problems can be found, to some extent, in the work of the so-called 'Copenhagen School of security studies'. Though not responding directly to critiques such as Paris's, the development of the concept of 'securitization' by Ole Waever, Barry Buzan and others has involved an extensive consideration of the processes whereby 'ordinary issues' become 'security issues'. For Buzan et al, security threats are those which pose an 'existential threat' to an actor or organization permitting the latter to 'break free of procedures or rules that he would otherwise be bound by', what securitization scholars refer to as the adoption of 'extraordinary measures'.⁸ These threats, however, are 'constructed' and defined by the actor(s) involved through 'speech acts'; Waever argues that 'by uttering "security" a state representative [for example] moves a particular development into a specific area'.⁹

⁷ Roland Paris, 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?', *International Security*, 26:2, 2001, p.88.

⁸ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner: Boulder, CO, 1998, pp.25-26.

⁹ Ole Waever, 'Securitization and Desecuritization' in Ronny Lipschultz (ed), *On Security*, Columbia University Press: New York, 1995, p.55.

Emphasizing the intersubjective nature of security (see above), however, Copenhagen School scholars stress that for an issue to become securitized it must not only be presented as a security matter by an actor but must also be accepted and acknowledged as such by a relevant audience – that is, those whose 'permission' or cooperation is required to 'abrogate...the [ordinary] rules of the game'.¹⁰ The securitization process therefore has three key elements: the actor making the securitization 'move', the issue or 'referent object' which is being presented as under threat and the audience who must legitimize the moving of this issue into the security sphere.

Each part of the securitization framework has been critiqued from a variety of perspectives. Ken Booth, for example, has argued that security threats do not need to be existential and that one should distinguish between 'survival' and 'survival-plus' with the latter being 'some freedom from life-determining threats and therefore some life choices'.¹¹ Others, such as Wilkinson, have argued that the concepts of 'speech acts' and 'audience' can be applied less convincingly outside of Europe and North America, particularly to politics and societies where discussion and exchange over policy priorities and issues occurs in a much less democratic or open set of fora.¹² 'The acceptance of validity claims about security...by the general public', Williams contends, 'may not count for much in authoritarian countries...the relevant

audience could just be the military'.¹³ Likewise, the distinction between 'normal politics' and 'emergency politics' - which the Copenhagen School place such emphasis on - is less clear in many semi-authoritarian states where the role of the military and security services in politics, governance and even service delivery is often ambiguously defined.¹⁴ These criticisms are particularly relevant for a study such as this one given the semi-authoritarian nature of most governments in the GHOA.

Securitization's focus on security as a constructed thing, defined by actors and aimed at or influenced by key constituencies is nevertheless a valuable perspective to adopt in any enquiry into the issue. It prompts analysts to look beyond a country's 'national security interests' and investigate who is defining these interests and why. 'Asking whose security we are talking about', as Williams has recently stressed, is the next most important stage of understanding security dynamics in any situation once a definition of security itself has been reached.¹⁵ Indeed, Williams, Booth and others among the Critical Security Studies school of thought view this approach not only as useful from an analytical perspective but, more crucially, as vital for developing clearer, more effective and more empathetic policy responses to security threats in Africa and elsewhere. They assert that asking

¹⁰ Buzan et al, 1998, pp.25-26.

¹¹ Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2007, p.102.

¹² Claire Wilkinson, 'The Copenhagen School on tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Usable Outside Europe?', *Security Dialogue*, 38:1, 2007, pp.5-25.

¹³ Paul Williams, 'Regional Arrangements and Transnational Security Challenges: The African Union and the Limits of Securitization Theory', *African Security*, 1:1, 2008, p.7.

¹⁴ Williams, 2008, p.6.

¹⁵ Paul Williams, 'Introduction', in Paul Williams (ed), *Security Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge: London, 2013, p.5.

who is defining security also means asking 'whose security should be prioritized' and that 'ensur[ing] that as many Africans as possible are able to voice their opinions' on this subject is the key task of policy-makers, practitioners, international organizations and other groups concerned with alleviating suffering in the developing world.¹⁶

An attempt to map regional security in the GHOA, therefore, must involve deciding which actors', or sets of actors', understandings of security to focus on. The security concerns of pastoralist communities in north-western Kenya and north-eastern Uganda, for example, are likely to be framed very differently to those of military elites in Nairobi and Kampala or those of traders in Juba or Mombasa. Such concerns may often be linked – Uganda's December 2013 military deployment to South Sudan was, to some extent, premised upon assisting and protecting the economic interests of over one million Ugandans living, working and investing in the newly-independent state. Fora may also exist where such groups can come together to debate security threats – even in more authoritarian states. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), for example, has organized annual conferences where regional practitioners and stakeholders come together to debate security issues in a number of contexts; the subject of its 2013 conference, indeed, was 'governance despite the state'. Likewise, since 2012 the High-Level Tana Forum on Security in Africa has been held on an annual basis in Ethiopia giving a platform to a range of non-state actors and groups to raise and discuss particular security concerns including human

trafficking and environmental degradation with current and former policy-makers from across the region and beyond.¹⁷

Opportunities for this kind of dialogue, however, are not commonplace in the GHOA and a desire to understand the security concerns of all those living in the region cannot overlook the overwhelming impact of state actors and institutions on the lives of these populations – both positive and negative. These actors and institutions are the primary forces claiming to be acting on behalf of the states and regions they inhabit and their responses to perceived threats to, and within, these territories impact heavily upon a range of non-state actors, both rural and urban, even when the security threats so-perceived conform to more 'traditional' frames, primarily rebel groups and hostile neighbouring governments. It is not only legitimate but also important, therefore, for a project like this to seek to better understand who defines 'national' and 'regional' security threats in the GHOA region, what the content of these understandings are, what – or who – influences them and where they are articulated.

Preliminary research undertaken by FES in the region during 2013 strongly suggests that the answer to this first question is a relatively small group of senior political and military figures in most GHOA states – primarily the presidency (or prime ministership in Ethiopia), army high command and security services. This conforms with the findings of a range of other studies undertaken into

¹⁶ Williams, 2007, p.1038.

¹⁷ More information on the 2012 Tana Forum can be found at <http://www.tanaforum.org/attachments/article/16/Tana%20Forum%20booklet%20email%20Final.pdf>.

policy-making in the region which highlight the overriding influence of the president/prime minister and his closest advisers in defining security threats both at a national and regional level.¹⁸ Given the prevalence of military officials and structures within most regional governance apparatuses (with the exception of Kenya and Tanzania), these advisers are more often uniformed officers (and former guerrilla commanders) or intelligence operatives than civilian diplomats or ministers. The role and influence of parliamentarians in contributing to this debate is more prominent in states such as Kenya than in Ethiopia or Uganda although even this distinction should not be overplayed.

In providing a framework through which to 'map' regional security interests and cooperation in this region, therefore, the remainder of this paper will explore how these elite security networks define national and regional security interests – and how they interact - through their actions and rhetoric. It will also enquire into where these interests are articulated and where the impetus for 'regional security solutions' derives from most strongly in the GHOA. In doing so, it will often be necessary to talk of the activities of states – of 'Ethiopia' or 'Kenya' behaving in a particular manner,

for example. This practice, however, should be seen as a shorthand for referring to the elite security networks already referred to within each country and not as an acknowledgement per se that these networks necessarily represent the views or concerns of their populations in their articulation of 'national' and 'regional' security interests.

3. Locating and Negotiating 'Regional Security Interests' in the GHOA

Before exploring the shifting nature of regional and national security interests in the GHOA in practice and the variety of issues which determine and regulate these shifts, it is first necessary to reflect on the fora and mechanisms where such interests are located and negotiated. For even when placing the focus of this enquiry on a small network of elite actors it must be acknowledged that these individuals interact in, and through, a range of formal and informal structures whose form may or may not influence the outcome of these interactions. Four such structures will be highlighted below: regional organizations; informal/personal networks; military operations and formal dialogue with non-state actors.

3.1. Regional Organizations

The African Union (AU) – headquartered in Addis Ababa – represents an important coordination mechanism for regional security initiatives in the GHOA with contemporary operations in Somalia being carried out under its aegis and a previous mission in

¹⁸ Sunil Bastian and Dylan Hendrickson, *State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making*, King's College London: London, 2008; John Clark, 'Explaining Ugandan Intervention in Congo: Evidence and Interpretations', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 39:2, 2001, pp.261-287; Gilbert Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons (eds), *African Foreign Policy: Power and Process*, Lynne Rienner: Boulder, CO, 2001; Gilbert Khadiagala, *Meddlers or Mediators? African interveners in civil conflicts in Eastern Africa*, Martinus Nijhoff: Leiden, 2007.

Sudan (2004-2007) also mandated by this institution's Peace and Security Committee. The GHOA also includes a range of regional inter-governmental organizations all tasked to some degree with security oversight – most notably the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC), the East African Standby Force (EASF), the International Conference on the Great Lakes and the Southern African Development Community (SADC, of which Tanzania is a member).

The extent to which any of these organizations possess independent agency, however, is an open question – and one which most participants in the *FES* roundtables would answer in the negative. A common complaint of many in the region, for example, is that most of these institutions are simply vehicles for regional hegemony to force their will upon neighbours; IGAD is often cited as an Ethiopian outfit while the EAC is frequently argued to be dominated by Kenya.¹⁹ Staffed by officials from across the region to foster a sense of regional cooperation and community, the operations of organizations such as EASF are – in practice – often stymied by national interest-based disagreements between staff and personnel.²⁰ Likewise, *de jure* regional peacekeeping missions can often become *de facto* tools for promoting national security interests – as the AMISOM mission has demonstrated (see below).

As Healy notes, however, the formal existence of these organizations themselves can play an important role in determining the major regional players in certain conflict resolution discussions and operations. With membership criteria based around regional geography in the main, certain states with an interest in a regional crisis can be formally excluded from the official diplomatic discussions herein on the basis of their non-membership of particular organizations. Healy points to the case of IGAD and the Sudanese civil war, for example, where Egypt and Libya (which opposed south Sudanese independence) were 'locked out' of formal regional talks in the 1990s and 2000s owing to their non-membership of the organization providing greater authority to those African states within IGAD who largely supported south Sudanese autonomy.²¹

Moreover, and as participants in the *FES* roundtables noted, organizations such as IGAD and ICGLR provide a setting for regional leaders and officials to talk through problems and disagreements face-to-face where otherwise this might be carried out through intermediaries or not at all. Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete and Rwanda's Paul Kagame, for example, fell out publicly in mid-2013 after the former suggested Kigali should consider holding talks with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, a Rwandan rebel movement formed by Hutu militia which fled into DRC following the 1994 genocide and which Kigali

¹⁹ *FES* roundtable discussions, Nairobi and Kampala; Katja Lindskov Jacobsen and Johannes Riber Nordby, *East Africa's Fragmented Security Cooperation*, International Relations and Security Network (ISN) Zurich, ISN Zurich: Zurich, 11 September 2013.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Sally Healy, 'Seeking Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa: The Contribution of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development', *International Affairs*, 87:1, 2011, pp.109-111; pp.119-120.

considers to be a 'terrorist' organization.²² A September ICGLR meeting – which both leaders attended – nevertheless provided an opportunity for the two to meet in person and iron-out their different perspectives on resolving insecurity in eastern DRC.

Following the meeting – which had come about after considerable discussions between Ugandan, Rwandan and Tanzanian officials before and during the conference – the tension between Dodoma and Kigali quickly dissipated with one official noting that they had 'reach [ed]...an understanding on almost all the issues they discussed'.²³ In the absence of ICGLR, or a similar forum, this discussion may not have happened and the situation may not have been resolved so swiftly and effectively. Even if regional organizations in the GHOA simply act as facilitators of discussions or as deciders of who sits around which tables, they nevertheless clearly play an important role in determining the context in which regional security issues are debated and resolved.

3.2. Informal/Personal Networks

Personal relationships and networks – particularly among leaders – also remain a crucial site where regional and national security interests are negotiated and

elaborated. Most polities in the GHOA are heavily centralized with regard to foreign and security policy-making with the president (or prime minister, in Ethiopia) and his key advisers heavily dominating the management, direction and implementation of security goals. A consequence of this is that key decisions on national and regional security are often settled during bilateral – or multilateral – talks between leaders either at regional summits (see above) or in other contexts. These can occur in the frequent visits of GHOA leaders to each other's capitals but also more informally with telephone conversations playing an important role on a day-to-day basis and in the midst of security crises.

In this context, the personalities of leaders and their relationships with each other can impact heavily upon the shape of regional security cooperation. Uganda's Museveni is widely believed to harbour regional leadership ambitions for himself and his country in the GHOA region and views military intervention and peacekeeping as a means to secure this. Hence, Uganda has played an important role in a range of regional discussions directing others towards intervention-based strategies and/or volunteering Kampala as a key mediator in conflict resolution architectures – most notably in Somalia and Sudan.

Relationships between leaders are also important in this regard. Personal animosity between Sudan's Omar al-Bashir and Museveni, between Meles and Eritrea's Isaias Afwerki and between Museveni and Kagame have negatively impacted upon the regional security dynamics of the GHOA. Furthermore, the late Meles of Ethiopia and Museveni came to power in similar

²² Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, 'Kikwete in trouble over FDLR, but does he really understand who they are?', African Arguments blog, 11 June 2013 (available at <http://africanarguments.org/2013/06/11/kikwete-in-trouble-over-fdlr-but-does-he-really-understand-who-they-are-%E2%80%93-by-frederick-golooba-mutebi>; accessed 1 February 2014).

²³ Haggai Matsiko, 'The peacemakers', Independent, 13 September 2013.

circumstances with similar visions for their country and the region – and with similar prejudices against governments north of the Sahara. Their close personal and ideological relationship meant frequent cooperation between Kampala and Addis Ababa on regional issues – most notably in Somalia where Museveni claims to have decided on intervening 'to help' Ethiopia but where, according to *Wikileaks*, Ethiopia appears to have promoted Uganda as the key force to lead AMISOM in discussions with Washington. Museveni's view of Kagame and Salva Kiir of South Sudan, however, as his 'subordinates' – given Uganda's support for both while fighting for power in the 1990s and 2000s – has nevertheless led to tension in relations between Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan, including violent clashes between the former two in 1999 and 2000. Resentment at Kampala's 'big brother syndrome', however, clearly gave way to pragmatism in Juba in late 2013 when Kiir called upon his former mentor to send military reinforcements to bolster his position in the face of conflict with Riek Machar and his forces.

Below the level of leaders, relationships and networks also matter – particularly given the dominance of military officials in the politics of most states in this region. Indeed, at various points in recent Ethiopian history the military high command has arguably played a more central role in determining national policy than the office of the prime minister.²⁴ Once again, relationships between security elites have been central here – particularly since many contemporary national armies in the region have fought

alongside each other or were even once part of the same guerrilla organization. The current militaries of Ethiopia and Eritrea, for example, grew out of the same rebel movement as did those of Rwanda and Uganda. Furthermore, Ugandan soldiers have fought in parallel with Rwandan, South Sudanese and Ethiopian counterparts in eastern DRC, southern Sudan and Somalia since the 1990s.

Though these common genealogies and socializations have certainly led to violence and conflict in parts of the region, they have also fostered the building of critical personal, ideological and economic links between many security elites in the GHOA. National leaderships must take these factors into account when making policy since going against the values and interests of the military in most GHOA states can render rulers very vulnerable – as Meles discovered when his opposition to invading Eritrea in the early 2000s²⁵ nearly led to his deposition.²⁵ Few clear mechanisms exist, however, for regional security elites to 'speak to one another' outside of a formal, task-based architecture such as EASF or regional military training centres. At present, national and regional institutions in the GHOA see military networks as apolitical and lacking in independence from their governments or states. The clashes between Ugandan and Rwandan troops in eastern DRC in 1999 and 2000, however, demonstrate that military elites in this region must be taken seriously as independent actors in some contexts and that their inter- and intra-relationships can change the course of regional security policy.

²⁴ Author interviews with Ethiopian officials, Addis Ababa, April 2013.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

3.3. Relations with Donors

International actors and organizations – notably the US, EU, Canada, UK and other European states – are key funders of many regional security mechanisms in the GHOA as well as major contributors to the budgets of many states and providers of training, logistical and military assistance to many of its armed forces. Discussions with Western officials, therefore, represent a further site where regional and national interests are negotiated for GHOA security elites. These often take place bilaterally – either in the West or Africa – by telephone or in person although regional and international summits, including the UN and AU general assemblies, have also been an important location for dialogue between Western and GHOA actors on security in recent years.

Donor influence on regional security policies in the GHOA is varied and is often criticized both in the region and internationally as informed very significantly by the geostrategic and counter-terrorism concerns of officials in Washington, Brussels and London. Broadly, however, it can be said that Western governments largely encourage formal regional solutions by providing funding to regional organizations such as IGAD and to other coordinators of multilateral peacekeeping missions, notably the UN and AU, and by publicly criticizing most unilateral interventions by GHOA militaries – such as that of Uganda in South Sudan in late 2013.²⁶ Since UN and AU peacekeepers are paid far more than Ethiopian, Ugandan or Kenyan soldiers, for

example, joining these formal, multilateral missions – either initially or post hoc entails a substantial financial reward for African security elites and one which donors encourage – if one is being generous – to promote a more general norm on regional solutions over unilateral ones.

This dispensation is, of course, undermined by the contradictions of Western policy in this region – as many participants in the FES roundtables highlighted – based on the counter-terrorism and strategic priorities of policy-makers in Western foreign ministries and executive mansions. The US, for example, provides far more support to the militaries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan bilaterally, for example, than it does to IGAD and other mechanisms. Likewise, donor condemnation of unilateral interventions is far from consistent – the US ultimately supported that of Ethiopia in Somalia in 2006 and failed to take a strong line on that of Kenya in Somalia in 2011. Furthermore, at the time of writing, only Norway and the US had criticized Kampala's 2013 intervention in South Sudan – two months after the event.

These meanderings have encouraged many GHOA states to call donors' bluff and/or intervene in neighbouring states against donor advice safe in the knowledge that their geostrategic importance will immunize them against thoroughgoing donor censure. Thus Ethiopia made clear to US officials in 2006 that it would intervene in Somalia in spite of their opposition while Kenya decided to invade Somalia in 2011 anyway even after the US strongly discouraged this in 2009 and 2010. Ugandan and Rwandan military activities in eastern DRC have also often been presented in Washington and other

²⁶ Julius Barigaba, 'Uganda to deploy troops in CAR as it withdraws from South Sudan', *East African*, 22 February 2014.

donor capitals as something these states will do 'with or without your permission'.²⁷ The direct impact of Western donor policy on the shape of regional dynamics in the GHOA, therefore, is less clear than might be first thought.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that there have been notable indirect effects. As this author has previously argued, the governments of Ethiopia and Uganda in particular have purposely aligned their regional security agendas around those of the US, EU, UK and others – especially in relation to Somalia and Sudan – in order to increase the level of support flowing to their general and military budgets from these actors as well as to protect against criticism over governance issues from these major powers.²⁸ Prestholdt has made a similar argument on Kenya.²⁹ Though this is not to say that Addis Ababa, Nairobi or Kampala will have pursued regional policies which they do not see as being in their national or regional interests, this dynamic will certainly have encouraged them to do so more through the lens of 'counter-terrorism' than might otherwise have been the case.

²⁷ Author interviews with former Bush administration officials, Washington DC, November 2009.

²⁸ Jonathan Fisher, 'Structure, agency and Africa in the international system: Donor diplomacy and regional security policy in East Africa since the 1990s', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 13:5, 2013, pp.537-568.

²⁹ Jeremy Prestholdt, 'Kenya, the United States and Counter-terrorism', *Africa Today*, 57:4, 2011, pp.3-27.

3.4. Dialogue with Actors outside the Executive/Security Services

Finally, it cannot be assumed that security elites in this region negotiate security issues only in high-level contexts and among themselves and their international counterparts. As already noted, the annual FES and Tana Fora in this region provide a platform for 'non-traditional' security concerns to be voiced to regional leaders – including those experienced by pastoralists, the victims of human trafficking and others. Though an encouraging development for placing 'human security' on the agenda in this region, other organizations like Tana are not common in the GHOA and it is unclear at present how influential it is, or has been, on the policies pursued by officials in Addis Ababa, Khartoum and elsewhere.

At a broader level, parliaments represent a forum for discussion of national and regional security issues and norms in some GHOA states. Following the Westgate terrorist attack in Nairobi in September 2013, for example, Kenya's Parliamentary National Security Committee led a debate calling for reform of the country's intelligence agencies while Ugandan parliamentarians summoned senior officials before it in January 2014 to explain why the UPDF had been sent into South Sudan weeks earlier, claiming that its permission was required for such a deployment under the Ugandan Constitution.³⁰ Such initiatives are often prompted, or supported, by non-state actors

³⁰ Stephen Makabila, 'Experts back calls for security reforms', *Standard*, 29 September 2013; Yasiin Mugerwa and Mercy Nalugo, 'Legislators okay deployment of Ugandan troops in South Sudan', *Daily Monitor*, 15 January 2014.

and organizations – particularly in Kenya which hosts the region's most vibrant and established civil society whose influence has been felt in a range of national security debates during the 2000s.³¹

Once again, however, the extent to which policy-makers in this region feel that they must take these alternative perspectives into account when making key security decisions is not clear. In the case of Uganda, for example, State House did not seek parliament's approval before deploying to South Sudan in 2013 and it is unlikely – but not obvious – what course it would have taken had the latter voted against a continued operation in the country. There are also clear limitations, in the minds of many regional officials, as to how far civil society should be permitted to debate security matters, as the temporary closure of Uganda's *Daily Monitor* in May 2013 – following publication of a letter by national security coordinator David Sejusa alleging a state plot to assassinate him – demonstrates.³² Interestingly, participants in all the FES roundtables were united in their beliefs that actors outside regional and international security elites play little role in influencing or determining regional security policies and approaches in the GHOA.

4. 'National Interests' vs 'Regional Interests': Interactions, Overlaps and Contradictions

If elite security networks across the states of the GHOA are predominant in defining and responding to security threats then any attempt to understand regional security dynamics must involve an exploration of how they view the relationship between defending national security interests and pursuing regional ones. The GHOA provides a particularly interesting case study in this regard since it appears replete with contradictions. On the one hand, for example, inter-state relations in the region over the last two decades have been largely characterized by conflict and competition including invasions (of DRC by Uganda in 1996 and 1998 or of Somalia by Ethiopia and Kenya in 2006 and 2011 respectively), border conflicts (Ethiopia-Eritrea; Kenya-Somalia; Uganda-DRC), support for rebel groups (SPLM/A by Uganda and Ethiopia; LRA and ADF by Sudan; ONLF and OLF by Eritrea) and economic protectionism (both bilaterally – e.g. Kenya and Uganda – and in economic cooperation architectures such as the EAC). From this perspective, regional security elites and networks appear deeply nationalistic and jealously protective of national borders and interests.

On the other hand, however, regional security and economic cooperation bodies have been expanded and augmented significantly by these same states since the 1990s. The mandate of the Intergovernmental Authority Against Drought Desertification (founded in 1986), for example, was expanded in 1995 to include responsibility for conflict prevention

³¹ Beth Elise Whitaker, 'Reluctant partners: Fighting terrorism and promoting democracy in Kenya', *International Studies Perspective*, 9:3, 2008, pp.254-271.

³² BBC News website, 'Uganda's Daily Monitor raided over Museveni "plot"', 20 May 2013.

and management while the East African Community, which collapsed in 1977, was revived between 1999-2000 by the leaderships of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The post-1995 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), indeed, has become the 'go-to' institution for facilitating dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms in virtually all recent East African conflicts with other fora, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (established 1994) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (2006) also acting in this capacity in some instances.

Unilateral defence or peacekeeping operations by GHOA states have also become increasingly uncommon during the 2000s with IGAD or AU-mandated interventions (e.g. AMIS in Sudan or AMISOM/IGASOM in Somalia) or formal intra-national arrangements (e.g. the 2008 joint SPLA-UPDF-FARDC offensive against the LRA) becoming the norm rather than the exception in terms of responding to perceived regional security threats.³³ Ambivalence among national and regional political elites regarding the legitimacy of unilateral interventions is also arguably demonstrated in the growing number of post hoc 're-hattings' of unilateral military operations in recent years; Kenya and Ethiopia's interventions in Somalia were incorporated into the AU mission in that

country in 2012 and 2014 respectively while Uganda's December 2013 offensive in South Sudan was rapidly re-badged as an IGAD mission weeks later.³⁴

To some extent, joining regional interventions in this manner represents, for many GHOA states, an easier and more sustainable strategy for pursuing national interests – IGAD, AU and UN missions generally 'pay better' than national army salary scales and receive more enthusiastic financial and diplomatic support from Western governments who view them as more legitimate. It is also clear that Western pressure on eastern African states to formalize their unilateral interventionary arrangements has often played a role in this dynamic. US officials, for example, lobbied the AU and Nairobi to 're-hat' the KDF as part of AMISOM in 2012.³⁵ Washington also leant heavily upon Kinshasa between 2009-2010 to ensure it granted formal status to UPDF activities against the LRA in its territory.³⁶

The tenor of debates between senior regional officials on this topic in recent years, however, suggests that there is more

³³ Danielle Beswick, 'Peacekeeping, Regime Security and "African Solutions to African Problems": Exploring Motivations for Rwanda's Involvement in Darfur', *Third World Quarterly*, 31:5, 2010, pp.739-754. One such notable exception, of course, was the October 2011 Kenyan intervention in southern Somalia which appears to have taken regional, as well as international, actors by surprise.

³⁴ Jonathan Fisher, "Some more reliable than others": Image management, donor perceptions and the Global War on Terror in East African diplomacy', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 51:1, 2013, pp.22-23; New Vision, 'Regional nations approve military force for South Sudan', Kampala, 22 January 2014; BBC News, 'Ethiopia joins Somalia's African Union force', London, 22 January 2014.

³⁵ Author interviews with US officials, Washington DC, May 2012.

³⁶ Author interviews with Uganda analysts, Washington DC, December 2013 and London, January 2014.

to this increasing collaboration than pure instrumentality. Ethiopia's denouncing of Uganda's 2013 intervention in South Sudan, for example, as an 'emerging obstacle to the [IGAD] peace process' in that country reflects wider sentiment among polities in the region that national interests should not be permitted to prevail over regional ones in all cases.³⁷ While these developments have not been accompanied by any 'appreciable reduction in the level of conflict' in the region, as Healy rightly points out, some of the major objectives sought by organizations such as IGAD in relation to key regional security crises – notably those in Sudan and Somalia – have, at least formally, been achieved.³⁸

In attempting to delineate patterns and consistencies in the ways in which elite security networks across the region view the relationship between national and regional interests, three case studies will be explored below. These cases – the South Sudan 'project', the Nile Waters debate and the Somalia intervention – have been selected for several reasons. Firstly, they are issues that virtually all states in the GHOA have taken strong positions on. Secondly, they are issues that regional states have engaged with for a significant amount of time and finally, they are issues which participants in the *FES* roundtables held throughout the region during 2013 consistently brought-up as important security matters – regardless of the state in question.

³⁷ Robyn Dixon, 'South Sudan ramps up rhetoric against UN as hopes for peace fade', *Los Angeles Times*, 22 January 2014 (also *Sudan Tribune*, 'S Sudan cancels IGAD summit as Ethiopia voices concern over Uganda's role', 22 January 2014).

³⁸ Healy, 2011, p.120 and throughout.

4.1. The South Sudan 'Project': Regional Solidarity and Competition

The independence of South Sudan, declared in July 2011, was in many respects the realisation of a regional project supported by the major GHOA states (Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda particularly) for several decades. In different ways and with varying degrees of enthusiasm, successive governments of all three of these states provided crucial military, financial, diplomatic, political and logistical assistance to the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) following its launching in 1981 of an insurgency against Khartoum, which it accused of marginalizing southern Sudan and attempting to 'islamicize' its largely non-Muslim population.³⁹ This assistance sustained the organization throughout the 1990s and early 2000s when internal splits and military setbacks in its war against the north would likely have rendered its cause lost.⁴⁰ Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Kampala also played a central role – both within and outside IGAD – in bringing the SPLM/A and Khartoum to the negotiating table in Naivasha, Kenya between 2002-2005. The negotiations ultimately resulted in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which ended the north-south war, brought the SPLM into a power-sharing government and laid down the timetable for an independence referendum.⁴¹ Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda were – and remain – 'guarantors' of the CPA, a role which each

³⁹ Dan Connell and Frank Smyth, 'Africa's New Bloc', *Foreign Affairs*, 77:2, 1998, pp.80-94.

⁴⁰ Oystein Rolandsen, *Guerrilla Government: Political Changes in the Southern Sudan during the 1990s*, 2005, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet: Stockholm.

⁴¹ Healy, 2011, pp.109-111.

government claims to continue to take very seriously and plays into their contemporary approaches to South Sudan.⁴²

Historically, Uganda and Ethiopia (along with Eritrea during the mid-1990s) have supported the SPLM/A more through military assistance and Kenya more through acting as a facilitator of peace talks.⁴³ This dynamic continues to play out, to some degree, in South Sudan's post-independence existence. Following the outbreak of conflict there in late 2013, for example, Kampala's immediate response was to send in troops to bolster the Salva Kiir government (reportedly at the latter's invitation) whereas Nairobi and Addis Ababa focused more on bringing the warring parties to the negotiating table via IGAD.⁴⁴ The motivations of these states for backing the movement's cause have also varied, to some extent. For Ethiopia's Mengistu government – as with that of Uganda's Museveni – Sudan's support for rebel movements in their territories played an important role whereas for Kenya, the creation of a buffer state on its north-western border – placing the SPLM/A between it and the 'Islamist' government in Khartoum held appeal.⁴⁵

⁴² Julius Barigbaba, 'Museveni's gung-ho foray into South Sudan conflict', *East African*, 4 January 2014.

⁴³ Connell and Smyth, 1998, pp.80-94; Kenya's Moi government did, however, provide assistance to the SPLM/A's humanitarian organs (including Operation Lifeline Sudan) which were reportedly used to transport weaponry and supply armed units by the movement (Edward Mogire, *Victims as Security Threats: Refugee Impact on Host State Security in Africa*, Ashgate, Surrey: 2011, p.60).

⁴⁴ Fred Oluoch, 'EA countries divided over military intervention in South Sudan as talks flounder', *East African*, 11 January 2014.

⁴⁵ Mogire, 2011, pp.59-61; Rolandsen, 2005, pp.27-34.

All three states, however, (along with Eritrea for a period) appear to have had a broader motivation for supporting the southern Sudanese cause – one which goes beyond simple tit-for-tat regional strategizing. All three have viewed – and continue to view to some extent – Khartoum as a chauvinistic, Islamist, Arab regime intent on forcefully spreading Islam and Arab populations further south across the continent, a perception which has held considerable validity in the past, particularly during the ascendancies of Gafaar Nimeiry (1969-1985) and Hassan al-Turabi (1989-1999) in the Sudanese polity.⁴⁶ For most governments in the GHOA, this has been seen as an attempt to undermine, disrupt and displace 'African' inhabitants south of the Sahara with Khartoum therefore posing an *existential* threat to the region and its peoples as well as a security threat to individual regimes and borders.

Museveni has been the most vociferous in his characterization of the 'Arab' threat⁴⁷ from the north although his sentiments are shared by regional counterparts – and this has changed little as successive administrations have taken office in Nairobi and Addis Ababa. He and other officials across the region have also complemented their anti-Khartoum rhetoric with a language of 'solidarity' and 'brotherhood' in relation to South Sudan. In doing so, GHOA governments have constructed a sense of regional identity around the South Sudanese cause which incorporates a range of states and does not clearly differentiate between borders – save that with the Republic of Sudan. Arguably,

⁴⁶ Khadiagala, 2007, pp.200-202.

⁴⁷ Fisher, "Some more reliable...", 2013, pp.16-19.

therefore, GHOA security networks have viewed the South Sudan project through a broader regional lens than simply a national security one. For them, Khartoum's putative intentions have represented a threat to the region as a whole and not just to individual states and leaders. This has rendered South Sudan as perhaps a symbolic manifestation of 'regional interests' over – or perhaps alongside – national interests.

The economic activities of these three states in South Sudan since the latter's independence, however, have given rise to tensions which perhaps qualify – or complicate – this conclusion. The state-building enterprise in South Sudan has rapidly created a range of economic opportunities for regional actors on a vast spectrum from petty trader through security guard to government contractor. Economic migrants from Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia have been particularly prominent in the nascent South Sudanese economy leading, in some cases, to conflict with local traders, security forces and other actors.⁴⁸ Most salient for this study, however, have been the tensions arising between these expatriates vis-à-vis which have more of a 'right' to benefit from opportunities in South Sudan. During *FES* roundtables in the region in 2013, participants suggested that officials and populations in their respective states resented the apparent 'preference' given to those from elsewhere in local markets and government procurement processes. In many cases, participants argued that their compatriots felt that they were 'owed' preferential treatment by Juba owing to the

sacrifices their governments had made to assist the South Sudanese cause and the support they had rendered to it over several decades.

This sense of being 'owed' a 'piece of the cake' in South Sudan among regional security networks reveals a possible fault line where regional and national sentiments diverge; politically, officials view the South Sudan project as a regional venture but economically perceive it very much in terms of national interests. A similar fault line could be said to exist in other regional theatres also. The governments of Uganda and Rwanda, for example, have historically worked in tandem in their political and military approaches to eastern DRC – an unstable region viewed by Kigali as the main external security threat it faces. When the two states' armies sought to benefit economically from their presence in the country through managing resource extraction industries they did so as separate entities. Indeed, when both began to compete over control of resources in the same area – as in Kisangani in 1999 and 2000 – the two forces came to blows, leading to a rapid deterioration in relations between Kampala and Kigali which reverberates to this day.⁴⁹

4.2. The Nile Waters: Protecting an 'African' Resource

Access to, and development of, the upstream Nile River waters represents another important issue where states in the GHOA

⁴⁸ Simon Masaba, 'South Sudan to pay \$41m to Ugandan traders for losses', *New Vision*, 3 May 2013.

⁴⁹ John Clark, 'Museveni's adventures in the Congo War: Uganda's Vietnam?', in John Clark (ed), *The African Stakes of the Congo War*, Macmillan: London, 2002.

appear to have largely united around a regional security agenda. The world's longest river and its tributaries flow through all the GHOA region's states, with the exceptions of Djibouti and Somalia, although Egypt and Sudan have long retained authority over utilization of the river's waters under a range of treaties and agreements signed during the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth. Cairo and Khartoum have jealously defended this dispensation ever since with Egypt's then president, Mohammed Morsi, making clear in June 2013 that 'all options [were] open' to protect the country's 'water security' in the face of Ethiopian plans to divert an upstream Nile tributary as part of a \$4.7bn dam construction project – a statement interpreted by GHOA officials, and participants in several of the *FES* roundtables, as indicating a willingness on Egypt's part to go to war over the issue.⁵⁰

For Ethiopian officials especially, the Egyptian position represents a direct threat to the country's economic security; Addis Ababa not only views its dam project ('The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam', initiated in 2009) as vital for meeting the energy needs of its own population, it also hopes to export hydropower to the rest of the region to enhance its economic and political position.⁵¹ Other GHOA states with growing energy demands also oppose the

Egyptian position but – along with Addis Ababa – frame their position as one which defends the position of 'Africans' against persecution from northern Arabs. In June 2013, for example, Uganda's Museveni criticized Morsi's comments and Egypt's approach to the Nile issue by emphasizing that 'the biggest threat of the Nile is the continued underdevelopment of countries in the tropics...Egypt cannot continue to hurt Black Africa'.⁵² Nairobi has even argued in the past that 'if we don't have an agreed co-operate framework', there will be no peace [in the region] – clearly linking water security to overall regional security concerns.⁵³

This sentiment has mobilized many GHOA states in recent decades to take a unified position on the Nile waters matter. In 1999, all the GHOA riparian states (except Eritrea), together with Egypt and Sudan, signed the 'Nile Basin Initiative' – a partnership aimed at fostering a cooperative regional approach to the issue. Frustrated by perceived foot-dragging in this regard by Cairo, however, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda signed a further agreement – the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) – in May 2010 aimed at moving closer towards increased access to the river's waters. This agreement has been strongly opposed by Egypt but was nonetheless pressed ahead with by GHOA states who have argued that they are 'tired of getting permission from Egypt before using river

⁵⁰ BBC News Website, 'Egyptian warning over Ethiopia Nile dam', 10 June 2013. It should be noted, however, that Morsi later clarified that he was 'not calling for war'.

⁵¹ Harry Verhoeven, *Black Gold for Blue Gold? Sudan's Oil, Ethiopia's Water and Regional Integration*, Chatham House Briefing Paper, Chatham House: London, 2011, pp.5-6.

⁵² Ronald Musoke, 'Museveni calls Egypt's statements about River Nile chauvinistic', *Independent*, 14 June 2013.

⁵³ BBC News Website, 'East Africa seeks more Nile water from Egypt', 14 May 2010.

Nile water for any development project'.⁵⁴ Though some states, notably Tanzania, claim to desire a more 'amicable' solution to the Nile controversy with Egypt it is vital to note that even they have signed the CFA, further solidifying a united 'African' position on the issue against that of Egypt.⁵⁵

As with South Sudanese independence/autonomy, therefore, the Nile Waters issue has been viewed by security elites across the GHOA as a shared, regional security problem to be resolved through unified action and commitment, for the benefit of all in the GHOA region. Additionally, regional officials, most notably Museveni, have viewed and presented this issue as being fundamentally concerned with preventing 'chauvinistic' Arabic regimes in the north from persecuting and mistreating their 'black African' neighbours to the south, as has been the case with the South Sudan cause (see above).

These similarities between these two seemingly quite different cases – one concerned with a political movement and agenda, the other with natural resource distribution – are interesting and reveal something important about how security threats are viewed in this region. Namely, that support for regional solutions to security problems, and regionalist sentiment itself, comes about primarily through shared opposition to a more distant 'enemy' rather than through a clear sense of regional solidarity founded upon key principles and norms. The inter-regional tensions regarding involvement in

South Sudan's economy, for example, arose after Khartoum became less clear a threat in the aftermath of South Sudanese secession. With the traditional 'enemy' somewhat removed, states in the region reverted to a more nationalistic identity in their approach to the new country. Morsi's comments in 2013, nevertheless, render the Nile Waters issue a far more imminent and immediate threat – their current position remaining more 'regionalist' as a result.

4.3. The Somalia Intervention: Same Threat, Different Perspectives?

The interventions of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda in Somalia since 2006, however, appear – on the face of it – to undermine this 'common threat leading to regional cooperation' hypothesis. For while all three states have intervened in the country – at least in part – to tackle terrorist threats purportedly posed by a range of Islamist groups (particularly *Al-Shabaab*), they have not done so in a coordinated fashion. Ethiopian forces, for example, intervened in Somalia unilaterally in 2006 and, again, in 2009 with Kenyan forces doing the same in 2011 without informing neighbouring governments, including the Somali administration itself and Uganda, which was then the leading contributor to AMISOM.⁵⁶

Though both have since been re-hatted into AMISOM, their operations on the ground have often been poorly coordinated - with Ugandan officers arguing that their Kenyan counterparts have largely 'done their own thing' in the south of the country since

⁵⁴ Tesfa-Alem Tekle, 'Ethiopians urge US to play major role to resolve Nile water controversy', Sudan Tribune, 9 August 2010.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Author interviews with Ugandan officials, Kampala, June 2012.

2011.⁵⁷ Considerable tension has also arisen between the three capitals since 2012 over basic issues such as the future structure of the Somali state (centralized or federal) and whose voice should be heard the loudest by Somali government officials in Mogadishu.⁵⁸ Arguably, therefore, the 'common threat' of Islamist terrorism posed to the region by unstable Somalia has not united major GHOA states around a common purpose but, in fact, increasingly divided them.

Whereas these three states have viewed the Nile waters issue and the South Sudan project through similar lenses, it is not clear – however – that they share a common perspective on the nature of the Somali Islamist threat. In the case of Uganda, there is little evidence that the Museveni regime viewed Somali Islamist groups as a genuine threat to his country until *Al-Shabaab* claimed responsibility for terrorist acts committed in Kampala in mid-2010. The Ugandan government's discussion of the Islamist threat – largely absent from its own domestic discourse on the Somali intervention between 2006 and 2010 – appears to have been primarily aimed at international audiences, particularly the US,

as part of what this author has previously characterized as an 'image management' strategy.⁵⁹

In the case of Kenya, however, the genuine and direct nature of the Somali Islamist threat appears to have been felt far more strongly among the country's security elite. The nature of the threat posed, however, seems to have been largely interpreted in economic terms – the invasion followed on the back of a string of abductions and attacks on Western holiday-makers along the Kenyan coast by *Al-Shabaab* militants threatening Kenya's vital tourist industry. Nairobi's long-standing apparent plan to create a 'buffer zone' in southern Somalia (the 'Jubaland project') combined with its reluctance to move its troops north of Somalia's southern region further highlight its view of the threat as one to be 'contained' to protect its economic interests.⁶⁰

Like Uganda, Ethiopia also appears to have instrumentalized the purported Somali Islamist threat in relations with Washington to augment an already close relationship, but also to further discredit the neighbouring Eritrean regime - which it has accused of supporting *Al-Shabaab*.⁶¹ Overall, however, Addis Ababa appears to view the Somali threat in much more fundamental terms than either Nairobi or Kampala.

⁵⁷ Author interviews with Ethiopia, Kenyan and Ugandan officials, Kampala and Addis Ababa, March-April 2013.

⁵⁸ Ibid; Jonathan Fisher, 'African donors and Somali ownership: The elephant at the Somali conference', International Development Department Blog, University of Birmingham, 14 May 2013 (available at <https://iddbirmingham.wordpress.com/2013/05/14/african-donors-and-somali-ownership-the-elephant-at-the-somalia-conference/>; accessed 1 February 2014).

⁵⁹ Jonathan Fisher, 'Managing donor perceptions: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 intervention in Somalia', *African Affairs*, 111:444, 2012, pp.416-422.

⁶⁰ Leonard Wanyama, *The Economic Diplomacy of Kenya's Regional Interests*, Occasional Paper No 137, South African Institute of International Affairs: Johannesburg, 2013.

⁶¹ Fisher, 'Structure, agency and Africa', 2013, pp.556-559.

The current Ethiopian regime's predecessor – that of Mengistu Haile Mariam – fought a war with Somalia between 1977 and 1978 when the latter attempted to annex part of Ethiopia's Somali region. This region – sometimes referred to as the Ogaden – has also played host to a number of Somali-dominated rebel movements, notably the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), who argue that the Ethiopian state is an occupying power in this territory. Ultimately, therefore, Ethiopian security elites have viewed the threat from Somalia as being against Ethiopia's territorial integrity and, in its more paranoid moments, against their hold on power itself. In this regard, it is telling that Museveni purportedly explained Uganda's presence in Somalia to IGAD officials in 2007 by declaring that Kampala had 'gone in to help out our friend Meles'.⁶²

The threat posed by Islamist Somali groups has therefore largely failed to foster meaningful regional military cooperation between Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda owing to their very different perspectives on the nature of this threat – and what these groups actually threaten. This observation further underlines the importance of taking a 'security as constructed' approach to understand how national and regional security interests evolve, interact and compete in this region. It also suggests that the more distant a perceived threat is seen as being by states in this region, the more likely GHOA powers are to view potential solutions to it in regional, rather than national interest-based, terms.

⁶² Author interview with former IGAD official, Kampala, February 2010.

5. Conclusions and Implications for Policy

This paper has sought to pose and explore some of the key salient questions related to understanding regional and national security dynamics in the GHOA region. Through engaging with conceptual literature as well as case studies – and informed by a range of roundtables organized across the region by *FES* in 2013 and the author's own research and conversations there since 2009 – a number of preliminary findings can be delineated which have clear implications for policy. These will be outlined below by way of conclusion:

- **'Security' is in the eye of the beholder:** Section 2 pointed out that security is an 'inter-subjective' concept and thus has meaning only when applied by someone to something else, regardless of context. Discussions in Sections 3 and 4 revealed that it is primarily the perspectives of national and regional military and political elites in the GHOA that are taken into account, and that 'matter' most for commentators, practitioners and policy-makers in understanding security dynamics in this region. This appears to apply whether or not the 'security threat' is a political or military one (as in South Sudan or Somalia) or one related to resources (as in the Nile Waters).

The security concerns of most civilians in the GHOA, however, are not necessarily the same as those of their leaders and an important area of focus for national and international actors should be to support and develop structures which allow the security perspectives and

concerns of those outside elite networks to be heard and taken into account. International support for fora such as the FES regional conferences and Tana, for example, would be an important means to do this since to be successful such platforms must have the buy-in of both non-elite participants and policy-makers. There is a convincing argument, however, for expanding the FES/Tana model and decentralizing it so that local officials can discuss security concerns with civilians at state or district-level. This would be a complex and expensive exercise and international support in this regard would therefore be valuable and well-justified.

Moreover, greater support for parliamentary security and defence committees, as well as for NGOs and CSOs working on security issues would further strengthen the capacity of those non-executive groups and institutions to articulate and represent the security concerns of their communities and regions to national and regional policy-makers.

- ***Regional security structures are important as facilitators of security dialogue:*** Section 3 highlighted four different 'sites' where national and regional security interests are negotiated in the GHOA with formal regional organizations such as IGAD and the EAC being only one. It also underlined the sentiments of many regional and international analysts and security personnel who largely consider these bodies to be lacking in independent authority and highly vulnerable to 'capture' from regional hegemony such as Ethiopia and Kenya.

For international actors, therefore, there is a clear case for continuing to invest in regional security mechanisms and structures – and, indeed, to increase funding for them and to make this funding more timely and reliable, particularly in relation to peacekeeping missions where funds to national governments are often delayed. There is a better case, however, for channelling more of this funding into supporting more regular, high-level summits at the regional level rather than into the everyday activities of secretariats and other bureaucratic organs within these institutions. The more often leaders in this region meet together – and the longer the opportunity they are given to talk around a range of issues – the more likely compromises and understandings will come about in relation to disagreements on security; this is – at present – where regional organizations' value is found in the GHOA. International actors should also, therefore, adjust their expectations and perspectives on these organizations in line with this. Weeks of negotiations between delegations in IGAD or elsewhere on South Sudan, for example, are likely to make less difference to security arrangements on the ground than would an afternoon of informal meetings between Salva Kiir, Riek Machar, Yoweri Museveni, Hailemariam Desalegn and Uhuru Kenyatta.

- ***Barriers to regional cooperation are often based on differing perspectives on 'national security':*** Section 4 explored the relationships between national and regional security dynamics in relation to three cases: South Sudan, the Nile Waters and the Somalia intervention

since 2006. In explaining why regional governments had approached security threats posed in relation to the first two through a regional set of frameworks and to the third through unilateral means it was argued that how each has perceived the nature of a security threat has been a pivotal factor. For while Addis Ababa, Kampala and Nairobi have all seen Khartoum's threat to the South Sudan 'project' and Cairo's policy on the Nile Waters through a collective security lens this has not been the case on Somalia where concerns have been linked to regime security, economic issues and international diplomacy respectively.

Ultimately, however, a unified, cooperative and functional joint operation in Somalia from the start would arguably have addressed each of these concerns making Ethiopia and Kenya's unilateral efforts less necessary and even counterproductive. The reasons why such an approach was not mooted are extensive but in part related to less open discussion between regional parties on their interests and intentions vis-a-vis Somalia. This is, in part, a consequence of the artificial and normative environment of regional security discussions in the GHOA where crucial national security interests of individual states are usually left unarticulated in deference to sentiments of 'African solidarity' and 'African solutions to African problems'. This environment is heavily supported by international actors who view organizations such as IGAD as bodies of collective, cooperative deliberation rather than as sites of intense contestation of national and regional agendas.

This state of affairs is neither desirable nor necessary for states in this region have clear national interests (at least, as they perceive them) which sometimes align with those of their neighbours and sometimes do not. Acknowledging these and debating them in regional fora should be encouraged to enable governments to more clearly make policy with their neighbours' perspectives in mind – and perhaps to compromise with them having understood their concerns. This is very much how the European Union operates – the organization's Common Agricultural Policy, for example, has served as an important area where member states clearly and forcefully articulate their national economic interests since the 1980s, resulting in an annual rebate to the UK. Acknowledging and considering national interests at the regional level should not, therefore, be seen as a danger to unity and security but, in fact, the marker of a more mature organization which reflects pragmatic concerns as well as ideological ones.

For international policy-makers, promoting this more reflective and realistic tone of debate in the region presents, of course, many challenges at both the logistical and diplomatic level. A worthwhile start, nonetheless, would be for such actors to establish and/or support a range of regional workshops where representatives from national armies, security services, foreign ministries etc could gather and discuss their state's perceived interests in key regions or countries away from the more artificial and constrained context of IGAD, the EAC, the EASF or other more formal structures. These workshops would promote the idea

that states in the GHOA can and should openly articulate their national interests with neighbours as a means to better understand different perspectives on key security crises as well as to explore means of working together to achieve what might ultimately be seen as common goals.

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The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia coordinates the work of FES on security policy in sub-Saharan Africa in the Horn of Africa and wider Eastern Africa region and, together with the FES offices in Abuja and Maputo, at the continental level. As a political foundation committed to the values of social democracy, FES aims at strengthening the interface between democracy and security policy. FES therefore facilitates political dialogue on security threats and their national, regional and continental responses.

In the framework of its regional programme on **security policy in the Horn of Africa**, FES Addis Ababa is running a project on 'Mapping National Security Interests in the Horn of Africa'. This project contributes to creating an open and inclusive debate on national security interests in regional fora in the Horn of Africa. The aim of the project is to increase transparency and thereby build trust between political actors in the region, enabling them to address competing interests in areas in which these (potentially) hinder a cooperative approach to regional security crises. This publication is, in part, based on the preliminary output of the FES 'Mapping National Security Interests in the Horn of Africa' project. It aims to contribute to the dialogue on national security interests and the regional response to security crises in the Horn of Africa by making relevant analysis widely accessible.

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