

РОССИЯ – АФРИКА

REVITALIZING ETHIOPIA AND RUSSIA'S BILATERAL RELATIONS

© 2022 Nardos Hawaz Yeheys

NARDOS HAWAZ YEHEYS, PhD, Assistant professor of International Relations, Faculty of social science and humanities, Gambella University, Gambella, Ethiopia, e-mail: narir@gmu.edu.et

***Abstract.** Since its successful establishment in 1898, the diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Russia were interrupted gently, but instantly revived in 1943. The two countries have traditionally enjoyed fruitful political, social, and economic ties over the past 100 memorable years. Russia has undoubtedly made significant strides in public relations, education and medicine since the modernization of agriculture in the economic sector, it has generously helped Ethiopia by progressively expanding the guiding principle of a mixed economy. In the modern political arena, the former Soviet administration had typically offered its necessary support for Ethiopia through ideological and military expansion. And even so, Russia has repeatedly demonstrated its historic commitment in various international forums. This relationship is growing more causal. They have presently developed into scientific cooperation and reached an agreement to establish a nuclear power plant in Ethiopia. What constitutes the official status of diplomatic relations between the two countries? In what areas is the cooperation more effective? And what represent the determination of the governments? The study examines the historical relationship between the two countries, studies cooperation agreements, and checks actual records to explain these fundamental questions. The analysis is typed in the qualitative method and uses secondary data as a reference.*

Keywords: Ethiopia, Russia, diplomatic relations, military, revitalization, mutual trust

DOI: 10.31132/2412-5717-2022-60-3-26-38

Introduction

The mutual friendship between Ethiopia and Russia is considered traditional. Russia has continued its active support with the successive Ethiopian regimes and the changing political landscape. No matter how the system of international relations and the moving political processes alter the world, there has been always strong vitality between the two countries.

During this historical process, monarchy, military, and democratic regimes have sprung up in Ethiopia. Significant historical events have also taken place in Russia. However, the two countries are making great efforts to bear their relations to a more elevated level. In addition to their frequent diplomatic, economic, educational, and health cooperation, they have recently reached agreements in different areas.

Both states secured a great deal of trust between them. However, previous agreements have constituted the basis for a tremendous spirit of cooperation. Regular agreements have boosted mutual conviction between the two countries. Nevertheless, what represents their

cooperation in modern times? What are the concepts that strengthened and challenged their relationship?

In the following pages, the study carefully examines the gradual process of cooperation between these states. The paper evaluates the potential benefits of this collaboration in light of political, financial, and social issues. The study evaluates the current level of cooperation using the contextual interpretation method with a qualitative approach from the social sciences. It also cites historical records as well as various academic journals and official government documents.

The historical narration

The first alliance was initiated on religious factors. Russia observed Orthodox Christianity and was attracted, as the religious practices of Ethiopians in various parts of Jerusalem in the middle of the 17th century were similar to those in Russia. Besides, the Portugal and the Ottoman Empire's religious promotion in the Horn of Africa at that time had contributed to the Ethiopian and Russian mutual interest (Denisova 2021). Nevertheless, their official relations began under Menelik II. Russia has established political, military, religious, cultural, and technical ties with Ethiopia during this time (Yakobson 1963). Russia has repeatedly shown solidarity with Ethiopia since the beginning of formal diplomatic relations.

Ethiopia at the time of Menelik II was under intense diplomatic pressure since it had conflicted with Italy. Some historical events can be mentioned here, as European countries closely monitored Italian-Ethiopian relations. Not unexpectedly, it was, at the best, an interest of the rivalry between them, rather than concerns about the Ethiopian case. In contrast, countries like Turkey have resisted Italian ingenuity, while Russia had steadfastly refused to cooperate with any of Italy's ambitious plans in Ethiopia (Henze 2000).

The Adwa war constitutes the first vital step in reinforcing diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and Russia. Russia has provided military equipment to Ethiopia (Pankhurst 2005) and became the first country to provide medical backing to those affected by the war adequately. Some historians indeed mentioned this support continued even after the end of the war (ShelArensen 2009).

Menelik II was keen to establish diplomatic relations with the European powers satisfactorily, and Russia was at the forefront of his concerted efforts to bring effective diplomacy. Thus, the emperor believed Russia would be a bridge between Ethiopia and Europe (Caulk 1974), with a specific focus on extensive modernization. The Ethiopian emperor did not possess the basic economic system needed to modernize the economy, nor had he enough educated human resources. Thus, the country had difficulty getting enough support from outside. Nevertheless, this does not mean the state did not take advantage of the opportunities convenient.

Even during the state-building campaign, Russian citizens have made great sacrifices in consulting and providing medical assistance to Ethiopian forces. The role of Alexander Bulatovich¹ was significant in this regard. Bulatovich first came to Ethiopia with the Russian Red Cross in 1896, where he became a close friend to the emperor and participated in many events. He played the role of making Ethiopia's Imperial World Power (Mirzeler 2005). He details his involvement in the construction of the Menelik Empire (Bulatovich 1900)².

¹ Alexander Bulatovich was a Russian military officer and diplomat who arrived in Ethiopia in the 1890s. He gradually became a close friend to the emperor and traveled with the Ethiopian army throughout the country. More importantly, Bulatovich had provided eyewitness accounts. In particular, in his book with armies of Menelik II, from Entoto to Baro river, and Ethiopia through Russian eyes.

² This Book is Translated by Richard Seltzer and available at <https://www.seltzerbooks.com/armies.html>.

After Menelik II, effective foreign relations continued during the reign of Haile Selassie I, and this field communication typically had its own positive and negative effects. The emperor's first attempt was inspiring a continuous line of relation to the West, with considerable diplomatic efforts with the United States, Britain, and France, but later turned attention toward Russia. The King's aspirational debate in the League of Nations was like a wake-up call for himself to realize his foreign standing. Russia, along with five other nations, morally opposed Italy's stay in Ethiopia, while all countries supported Italy's control of Ethiopia (Haile Selassie I 1966). However, Ethiopia defeated Italy for the second time with its noble patriots, though the League of Nations resoundingly rejected its historical claim. A few years later, the emperor made his first diplomatic visit to Moscow in 1959, where he held extensive talks with government and religious institutions. In addition to the first trade and economic cooperation alliance, they also signed a long-term loan agreement (Ethiopia 2019). However, the relationship between the regime of Haile Selassie I and Russia was not limited to the League of Nations event. Within the 1950s, Russia actively engaged in the King's political, economic, and social reforms and promptly began to support the developing countries through United Nations. Moreover, Russia thoroughly appreciated Ethiopia's active role in the Pan-African project (Patman 1990).

In the days of the monarchy, country's foreign relations were strained and began to decline for several reasons. The foreign relations of Menelik II had been affected by several factors. The response to the Italian invasion and the Ethiopian Unity Project held the priority among the king policy. Ethiopia's low economy and poverty situation also put pressure on Menelik's II goal of foreign relations.

On the contrary, during the reign of Haile Selassie I, initially, relations with Russia deteriorated as the king's foreign policy was primarily diverted to the Western countries. Having established relations with the West, the emperors sought the support that would prevent the second Italian invasion, which was fruitless. Nevertheless, Russia did not turn its back on Ethiopia.

In addition, the King's foreign policy was dominated by the alliance dilemma, as he had tried hard to establish stable relations. The emperor's relations with Russia were not well received by the West. The political differences between the West and Russia had an impact on his diplomatic relationships with Russia. These impacts had manifested themselves on several occasions. Nevertheless, Haile Selassie I responded that Ethiopia wanted a peaceful or healthy relationship with the West and the East (Patman 1990). The scenario advocates that there was a gap in the relationship itself.

Relationship during the military regime

The revolution in Ethiopia of 1974–76 contributed to the formation of the so-called "military" group. This group eventually overthrew the monarchy and took control of Ethiopian politics. The proclamation issued in December 1974 announced Ethiopia's adherence to the Socialist ideology – initiated relations between the former Soviet Union and the labour Party of Ethiopia.

As military government came to power in Ethiopia, it planned several projects that would strengthen national unity and create national consensus. Of these, education was the most important. The military government sent several Ethiopians to Russia, so that workers, party members, and soldiers would have a similar understanding of the national position and a better understanding of the regime. The state also designed a program to send orphans children to Cuba (Global Security) in large numbers.

The Ethiopian military government wanted to establish good relations with the Eastern European states in line with its political ambitions. As a result, many medical and agricultural

professionals have come to Ethiopia and served the community. Political relations between Ethiopia and Russia had gradually strengthened since the invasion of Somalia.

The Soviet government provided significant military support to Ethiopia. The state was reluctant to provide military advice and demonstrated its friendship with the Ethiopian government. The Soviet Union had had a strong political relationship with Somalia before Ethiopia, and the sudden turn of its face towards Ethiopia was an early and historical link between them, as well as other political interests that had gradually deteriorated with Somalia (Valenta 1980).

Moreover, with the support of the Soviet government, Cuban fighters were able to side with Ethiopia. Somalia has turned its attention to socialist ideology. Cuba's mediation efforts were thwarted by Somalia's stubbornness. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine Cuba's 15,000 troops on the Ethiopian side only because of Somalia's obstinacy: it happened after series of mediation and due to a close friendship between Ethiopia, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. The Cuban government, of course, decided to support Ethiopia (Zelalem 2016).

However, with the support of Soviet military consultation, equipment and the direct participation of the Cuban government, the Somali war ended in victory for Ethiopia. This fact further enhanced Ethiopia's diplomatic interest to the East. The two countries have been given more attention in military cooperation, and at the same time, people-to-people contacts have further strengthened to raise awareness of socialism.

Nevertheless, the military government did not use all the support it needed to strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union. In the late 1980s, there were indications that this relationship was slowly eroding. The military regime in the late 1980s was engaged in civil war. The Soviet Union did not deny cooperation with Ethiopia in its conflict with Somalia. Yet, the Soviet Union did not appreciate the fact that the government had created its design for the socialist ideology and merged socialism with the military regime, and this civil war was also a national issue. More vitally, though the Ethiopian government would slowly return to the proper socialism system, the state was centred on the military interface and deferring political, financial changes, and non-negotiation framework. These truths served as the most reason for the silencing the relations (Webber 1992). In addition, the Gorbachev administration has shown great interest in easing political tensions between the East and the West (Zubok 2007).

Post-1991 Relationship

In the early 1990s, relations between the two countries deteriorated for some reason. Russia during Boris Yeltsin demonstrated little exertion to restore and create a relationship with Africa in comparison to the previous Soviet (Shubin 2004). On the Ethiopian side, amid the political move, foreign relations were briefly solidified.

Ethiopia in the post-1991 period established a transitional government and began to work hard for political, social, and economic reforms. Diplomatic relations between the two countries have resumed since the establishment of the federal government in Ethiopia in 1995. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia visited Russia in 2001 and signed cooperation agreements with Russia on various issues. However, like the Haile Selassie I administration, the Ethiopian federal government reflected a different interest in the Alliance in the early years of establishment. In particular, the economic and political reform agenda was largely influenced by Western strategy. Nevertheless, within few years the government itself has been critical of Western economic growth.

During this period, Ethiopia shows a growing demand for closer ties with outside to achieve comprehensive economic growth especially to the East. The relationship between Ethiopia and Russia was within this framework. But a few years later, the start of a border war with Eritrea had a profound effect on foreign relations. The West side was unhappy with

Ethiopia's foreign policy, internal politics, and the shift of economic reforms and sought to impose sanctions on the country citing military equipment purchases. Russia reaffirmed its support for Ethiopia again this time. Russia has repeatedly opposed foreign agreements against Ethiopia since the Battle of Adwa and sanctions from the Security Council on different occasions. It is to be recalled that the people of Addis Ababa made a thanksgiving parade several times in front of the Russian embassy without any invitation, considering the Russian support during the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Table 1. **Predictive Russian Opposition Intended events in Ethiopia**

No.	Events	Year
1	Russia refused to cooperate with Italy's plan in Ethiopia.	1890s
2	Russia together with other five countries, reject Italian occupation in Ethiopia	1936
3	Russia and China opposed sanctions on Ethiopia and Eritrea until fighting stops along their border which was requested by the United States.	2000
4	Russia, India and China opposed, UN fails to approve the internal matter on Tigray violence	2021

After the Eritrean war, the Ethiopian federal government turned its attention to the development and forged strong ties with all countries that support the overall goal of Ethiopia. During this time, the governments sought to build on economic relations with Southeast Asian countries and forge closer ties with Korea, Japan, and China in particular. At the same time, the relations with Russia began to show significant renewal. On the contrary, the relations with the West were slowly eroding because of their political content.

In particular, the Ethiopian foreign policy determined that Russia could be considered a source of the market, investment, and technical support for economic development. It stated: "Russia is still a great country and will continue to play a major role in the world" (Information 2002), referring to Russia's transition to democracy. The statement in itself shows that there was a political attraction on the part of Ethiopia. It should be noted that, as mentioned earlier, that one of the major similarities between the two countries is that they both went through the same political-ideological transition.

The policy explains that its historical ties with Russia need to be strengthened for different reasons. At first, it was hoped that Russia would support Ethiopia's efforts to maintain peace and stability internally and the region in a fair and just manner, taking into account international politics. Historically, this has been the case with Ethiopia in times of crisis. On the other hand, the policy appreciates the impact of previous relations on diplomacy, politics, and security.

In particular, Ethiopia's policy and focus differ from that of the European Union, which makes the potential for conflict of interest with the West clear. However, the efforts of the Ethiopian government should be forged with all countries, if possible, while the policy concludes that the state will further strengthen ties with countries that support the country's political, social, and economic goals. In this way, its friendship with Russia grew robust.

There are many hypotheses that Ethiopia is slowly gaining ground in the BRICS. The country has been making great efforts to attract the investors of these countries to Ethiopia. With this, she has been able to create a conducive environment for many foreign direct investments.

Concerning Russia, however, the fact that Russia began to renew its relations with African countries in the early 2000s was also a wake-up call to the Ethiopian government itself. Russia's efforts to strengthen its geopolitical and economic interests included Ethiopia.

Since 2015, it has signed military agreements with 20 African countries (Hedenskog 2018), in which many countries have received significant support. Of course, this agreement with Ethiopia was late in 2018, and it was not very effective.

There are two main reasons for this. The first reason was that Ethiopia had already entered into a military agreement with the United States in connection with Russia's anti-terrorism campaign, including military intervention in Somalia. What happened after the operation was not made public. However, Ethiopia has continued its operations in Somalia with AMISOM. Thus, although the Ethiopians joined AMISOM considering a threat to national security and institutional cooperation, no information has been provided as to whether US support will continue. The second and main reason is that 2018 was a transition period for the Ethiopian political system, so there was no time to carefully consider international relations. The agreement was made during a period of government change that had an impact on the effectiveness.

Ethiopia's political transition in 2018

The political system in Ethiopia in 2018 was preoccupied with domestic affairs. The time implies the country was in the throes of political upheaval. The government has to try to make the country's political reform more inclusive. The reform indicates that not only domestic policies but also the amendments of the foreign policy. However, the priorities were to ensure domestic economic prosperity and good governance.

Returning to Foreign Affairs, the government mentioned some issues with the foreign policy that needed reform. Even though the foreign policy has not improved for a long time, the situation in the Horn of Africa, especially the relations with Eritrea and Somalia, has shown that the government needs to change its policy (Author 2020).

Relations with the West had been slowly deteriorating due to the government's previous stance on liberal democracy in Ethiopia. Yet, since the change of administration then, relations with the West have improved slightly. Nevertheless, the West, in turn, did not care about the situation in the other country. They would rather spread their views and turn their backs if their interests are not asserted.

After the change of government, the political structure of Ethiopia was not as revolutionary as it used to be, but a liberal trend revived the relations with Europe and North America. Many speculated that the move would weaken relations with the great powers of Asia. Be that as it may, it did not live up to desires, as the Ethiopian government expressed that it would not as it served the interface of the nation but to secure it. Relations with Ethiopia, China, and Russia, in particular, have been a major topic of discussion. Russia and China, on the other hand, have strengthened their ties with Ethiopia, not hesitantly. The ideology and political structure of the country does not seem to be their interest.

Russia is one of the first countries to cooperate in Ethiopia's transformation and political reform. At the time, Russia's foreign minister was in talks with its Ethiopian counterparts and other senior officials. Amid the assembly, they expressed their interest in collaborating with Ethiopia and discussed promising areas of further promoting mutually beneficial partnership in trade, the economy and investment, with an emphasis on implementing joint projects in energy, including nuclear energy, agriculture, transport, geological research, science and technology in Ethiopia. They also concurred to support enduring political exchange to form political solidness, to resolve and decrease conflicts within the Horn of Africa (MFA of RF 2018a).

In 2018, Russia would work hard to improve its relations with Ethiopia and the region. The state hold talks with the African Union, Ethiopian religious institutions, and Ethiopia's ambassador to Russia. She has previously supported the Ethiopian government in condemning

the June 23 attack on a rally in support of the Prime Minister and condemning the killing of five Ethiopians.

The Ethiopian government also has not neglected Russia's support. Ethiopia's relationship with Russia relies on historical ties, and it has been stated repeatedly that it will create opportunities for democracy and peacebuilding and economic ties in Ethiopia. It was at this event that new ranges of cooperation between the two nations were made and the craving to require their relationship to the next level started to be realized.

Revitalizing the relations

One of the events that took place as Ethiopia was preparing for a political transition following the resignation of the former Prime Minister in 2018 was the visit of the secretary of the US State department and the Russian foreign minister to Ethiopia at the same time. Although the two countries' interests have not been made public, it is clear that they were planning to establish a successful relationship with the new administration in order to align their political interests in the Horn of Africa with Ethiopia. Among the issues covered by media and analysis at the time were officials from both countries coming to Ethiopia at the same time and staying at a hotel but not shown any will to meet each other (Maza 2018).

However, since the focus of this article is not on the subject of the ministers, it is vital to link their discussions with their Ethiopian counterparts to foreign affairs statements. The United States State department made a joint statement with its Ethiopian counterpart, and most of the coverage was about the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia, and that the United States had repeatedly stated that it did not support the state of emergency as a resolution of public questions. The secretary praised Ethiopia's role in countering terrorism in Somalia, particularly in the Horn of Africa, and praised Ethiopia's efforts to alleviate the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. His remarks were followed by a series of questions from journalists (State 2018)³. It is widely believed that the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia is broader in terms of governance, security, and not economic issues. In this regard, Ethiopia will still have difficulty obtaining US economic support unless it modernizes its economic and trade infrastructure through privatization. Tillerson's speech reaffirmed Ethiopia's support for democratic reform and political participation rather than economic issues.

In contrast, in the conversation with Ethiopian counterpart the Russian foreign minister stated: *"We discussed the need to boost trade, economic and investment cooperation in various spheres: nuclear power and hydropower, as well as geological research, air travel and many other areas. We must also make use of the significant potential for cooperation in high technology, research and education."* (MFA of RF 2018b).

It is clear from this statement that the talks between Ethiopia and Russia were more comprehensive than the US. Fearing that these agreements would be mere rhetoric, journalists presented some cross-examination questions to the minister. However, the minister has already expressed that Russia has sincerely longed for the revitalization of Russian-Ethiopian relations and that the outcome of the agreement will begin soon. As the relations between the two countries have been strained by a shift in government and ideology, as well as a focus on policy, Lavrov's visit focused on renewing relations. Lavrov has repeatedly stressed the importance of historical ties, solidarity, and strength.

Nevertheless, why revitalization did occur in the relationship between Ethiopia and Russia and what is the outcome of this renewal remains the most important question. Revitalizing relations between the two countries may follow several incidences. A change of leadership, a new constitution, or a change in foreign policy may take a significant role.

³ See more also at <https://et.usembassy.gov/secretary-tillersons-meeting-ethiopian-foreign-minister-workneh-gebeyehu/> and <https://et.usembassy.gov/press-availability-ethiopian-foreign-minister-workneh-gebeyehu/>

Political intimacy, geo-political issues, trade ties, social events, and religion can also, to some extent, renew relations.

At the governmental level, attitudes toward leaders are likely to change. As a result, countries that are at odds with each other can easily renew their ties following the administration changes. Political views may also be raised regarding the constitution. Of course, the same can be said of constitutional provisions on regional issues. But ideology or political thought can change countries on a large scale. With this in mind, 2018 was a time that Ethiopia changed its government and started to make political reform. More importantly, the Ethiopian government has been focusing on the need to reform its foreign policy at a time. Thus, renewing relations can also serve as an input for policy.

Neither Ethiopia nor Russia has seen a change in ideology in 2018. In this manner, the ideological issue cannot be the reason for the renewing of this relationship, nor regional cooperation as both nations are found in completely different parts of the world. Thus, the 120th anniversary of relations, historical cooperation, and political partisanship or solidarity could easily be cited as a stimulus for the resumption of relations between the Russian and Ethiopian regimes, while the sudden change of government in Ethiopia may have been the immediate reason.

But the other basic question is whether the relationship has been renewed. To answer this question, it is important to review the agreement and relations between the two countries since 2018. Russia's Foreign Minister in 2018 has announced that he will soon realize several areas of cooperation. However, Russia has moved on to make this list more comprehensive. Take, for example, the Minister's discussion with the Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarch. It is well-known that religious institutions put humanity first, not work, and represent a separate community. However, they have not been able to participate internationally, as the catholic church does, due to their limited capacity and various reasons. They seem to think that such a challenge can be solved by the cooperation of institutions with similar agendas.

The Minister and the Patriarch discussed the traditional and religious ties of the two countries. They aimed to promote tolerance among the people, to strengthen the Church's humanitarian efforts, and to work together to help marginalized and oppressed Christians in the Middle East. The agreement will enable the Ethiopian Church to gain a foothold in the international arena. This view seems to emphasize this global role, given that the role of the Catholic Church in global issues, Ethiopian and Eastern Orthodox Churches is far limited participation.

As has been repeatedly stated, Russia's desire to establish comprehensive relations is not limited to political or diplomatic relations. Russia believes, it is important to include national culture, political thought, and social relations in foreign policy. Unfortunately, most foreign policy and bilateral relations do not include these cultural attitudes. As a result, relations between many countries can easily be broken (Wiarda 2013). Russia already appears to have taken up arms to deal with the situation. Although it has been known for its humanitarian support in Ethiopia since the Battle of Adwa, it still supports a large hospital in Addis Ababa. However, the strengthening of religious ties helps to broaden the horizons of public opinion and to further propagate cultural ideas.

Beyond that, however, there have been several positive developments in the government's agreement. Among the issues on the agenda of global engagement recently, Russia and Ethiopia have signed an agreement to build a nuclear power plant. The agreement, signed during the 2019 Russia-Africa Forum, will enable Ethiopia to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes (world-nuclear-news 2019). The agreement, in the form of a nuclear deal with Russia, would eventually give Ethiopia the option of renewable energy to revitalize the economy and provide electricity to millions of people (Joseph 2021). The agreement follows the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding.

The document strengthens cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including the establishment and development of Russia's nuclear infrastructure, regulation of nuclear and radiation safety, as well as physical protection of nuclear materials, radiation sources and nuclear storage facilities. The agreement provides for cooperation in accounting and control of nuclear materials, cooperation in industry, medicine and agriculture, as well as joint ventures. It also facilitates the use of radiation technologies and nuclear therapy and the training of nuclear personnel (Agency 2019).

The agreement is in line with international nuclear law, and Rosatom will do its part to share his experience with Ethiopia. ROSATOM is Russia's state atomic energy corporation that specialized in nuclear energy. It is headquartered in Moscow.

The implications of this agreement can be seen in some way. The agreement first enables Ethiopia to take the first step in the nuclear sector. It also allows to use nuclear resources for peaceful purposes. Thus, for the most part, Ethiopia, not Russia, will benefit most from this agreement. Russia's role, therefore, is clearly evident in its efforts to restore this relationship. Second, it will make Ethiopia stand out in the competition with other countries in the region. The Horn of Africa is a complex region, with security, infrastructure, and political problems. Countries are distrustful of each other and compete for influence in the region. It is well known how much Ethiopia has been affecting the politics of the region since the recent construction of the Renaissance Dam. However, it is hard to imagine how much more nuclear resources would add to this development. Third, it highlights Ethiopia's participation in the international forum. It is believed that the previous agreement with the Chinese government on space exploration was successful and that Ethiopia and China launched a spacecraft. It is hoped that the agreement with Russia will be fruitful as well, in addition to Ethiopia's recognition in international politics, the UN peacekeeping mission, and other areas.

In all three cases, Ethiopia's benefits stand out. Russia, on the other hand, has a diplomatic goal. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia wants more comprehensive military relations with Africa than previous military centred goal. However, Russia's political position with the West, especially with the United States, is well known. The United States is of the view that Russia's diplomatic efforts and political relations are still influenced with the former Soviet Union ideology. Russia, on the other hand, argues that the relationship of the United States and the West toward third world nations is not open and participatory rather conditional.

Nevertheless, some have seen this practice in a slightly different way. In view of the limited capacity of the governments in African countries, weak institutions and civil strife, care must be taken not to take a different approach on the nuclear plant deal (Malo 2019). On the other hand, it has been suggested that, as has been the case against China's relation with Africa in the past, Russia will facilitate its own political expansion project, explore Africa's natural resources, and facilitate arms sales (Adibe 2019).

Russia's efforts to mediate between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt on the Nile issue in 2019, although unsuccessful, can be cited as one of the revitalising efforts. At the time, Egypt was seeking American mediation, and the Ethiopian government accepted the US mediation, however, Russia was interested. The Russian government is still working to persuade the three countries to resolve their differences over the Nile through negotiations.

Another milestone in the resumption of bilateral relations is the agreement reached between the two countries' political parties. The Prosperity Party, and the United Russia Party are the two leading political parties in the two countries and have shown interest in working together on political issues. The United Russian Party differs from its Ethiopian counterpart in structure and organization. However, the party has a large network of foreign relations and has many affiliated political parties. In this combination, it has been observed that the party

has made extensive exchanges of experience, training of political parties, and visits to various countries to promote not only political but also social cohesion.

In the past, Ethiopian and Soviet Union politicians had a strong relationship. As a result, many Ethiopian politicians and intellectuals have received training to continue their socialist ideology. Now, the agreement between the Ethiopian and Russian parties is no different. The memorandum of understanding signed in February 2021 indicates, as the leading parties in the two countries, the parties are believed to work together on administrative challenges, political structures and human resource training. They also agreed to strengthen international interparty activity in a video discussion in March 2021. Representatives of the Russian Party are also expected to make their first visit this year.

Agreements between political parties are intended to bring experience, rationality, and political maturity, not ideological ones. Therefore, the agreement reached between the two countries is not on the ideology as the same as the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. United Russia, for example, is dominated by Russian nationalism, and Russian conservatism. However, the Ethiopia's prosperity has the political philosophy of "medemer" which is literally means "addition," or "coming together." It should be noted, however, that both are federal states. But these ideas are at the party level. Russia's interest is not linked to political pressure, but it is trying to form alliances with different parties in different countries.

The Ethiopian Prosperity Party has confirmed that it has won a majority in the recent elections to remain in power for the next five years. The party can use this opportunity to train its political allies, to deepen knowledge of the international political system, to develop mature and active diplomats, and to strengthen the party's quality.

Another factor that contributed to the strengthening of this relationship was the military agreement. Most speculate that the new form was used by the former Soviet Union. But that is not the case. The military agreement between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union focused on arms support and sales. This does not mean that there are no other lines of communication. In contrast, the recent military agreement will help equip the Ethiopian defence forces with knowledge, skills and technology. This in itself is a comprehensive agreement in the military sector.

Conclusions

This article extensively studies the historical relationship between Russia and Ethiopia. The pros and cons of the current state of affairs have been explored. Their relationship is considerably ancient and historic as it is also referred to as traditional. Though, they have had an unstable and steady relationship with each other due to the government's foreign policy and approach at a different time, they are now on the path to overcoming such challenges and building a comprehensive friendship.

Relatively speaking, the current frequent bilateral agreements show the urge in revitalizing their relation. Most of these agreements are largely in favour of Ethiopia's interest. This does not mean that Russia has no interest. All external contacts and agreements are centred on one basic need. But when the two countries share common interests, they create greater trust and cooperation. It is clear that Ethiopia has recently come under intense political pressure from the West, especially the United States and the European Union. However, the country has not established a clear-cut diplomatic relationship. Nevertheless, Russia has shown its solidarity with the people and government of Ethiopia in all of these occasions.

Russia noted that domestic issues do not require external pressure or intervention. In the case of the Ethiopian renaissance dam, the government also did not hesitate to urge the three countries to hold a diplomatic discussion and have confidence in the African Union.

These Russian positions and the significance of the agreement with Ethiopia are more indicative of Russia's efforts to renew its diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. There is no doubt that each aspect of the agreement has its own implications. However, the purpose of this article is to account for the historical diplomatic relations between the two countries and study the current scenario. Having said that, we understand that the relationship between the two countries is progressing to a higher level.

References

- Adibe, Jidefor. 2019. *What does Russia really want from Africa?* 14.11.2020. <https://brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/11/14/what-does-russia-really-want-from-africa/> (accessed 20.12.2020)
- Author, Chen Xi and. 2020. The justification of 2002 Ethiopian foreign and national security policy alteration. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 8, № 7 pp. 12–25. DOI: 10.4236/jss.2020.87002.
- Bulatovich, Alexander. 1900. *With the armies of Minilik II*. Saint Petersburg, 28 Angliyskiy St: Artistic Press Publishing House.
- Caulk, R.A. 1974. Russians in Ethiopia. *The Journal of African History*, vol. 15, № 3.
- Denisova, Tatyana. 2021. The first Russian religious missions to Ethiopia. *Politics and religion. Politologie des religions* № 1 (2021), vol. XV, pp. 49–64.
- Embassy of the Russian Federation in Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. 2019. *60 years since the first official visit of Haile Selassie I to Moscow*. July 22. https://ethiopia.mid.ru/en/press_center/embassy_s_news/60_years_since_the_first_official_visit_of_haile_selassie_i_to_moscow/ (accessed 5.05.2021)
- Ethiopian Press Agency. 2019. *Ethiopia, Russia sign agreement on cooperation in peaceful use of nuclear energy*. 10 24. <https://www.press.et/english/?p=14478#> (accessed 2.06.2021)
- Ezra Joseph. 2021. *Russian Nuclear Power in Ethiopia*. 3 25. <http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2021/ph241/yoseph1/#:~:text=The%20nuclear%20power%20deal%20with,electricity%20to%20millio ns%20of%20people> (accessed 17.06.2021)
- GlobalSecurity.org. Ethiopia Soviet Relations. *GlobalSecurity*. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ethiopia/foreign-relations-su.htm> (accessed 7.05.2021)
- Haile Selassie I. 1966. *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, Haile Sellassie I, King of Kings of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa, translated by Ezekiel Gebissa, et alia, Chicago: Frontline Books.
- Hedenskog, Jakob. 2018. Russia is Stepping Up its Military Cooperation in Africa. *FOI Memo 6604* (December 2018).
- Henze, Paul B. 2000. *Layers of time: a history of Ethiopia*. USA: Palgrave.
- Howard J. Wiarda. 2013. *Culture and foreign policy: the neglected factor in international relations*. Ashgate Publishing.
- Information, Ministry of. 2002. *The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Strategy*. Addis Ababa.
- Malo, Sebastien. 2019. *Russia, China back nuclear as a clean-power fix for Africa*. 2 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-energy-nuclearpower/russia-china-back-nuclear-as-a-clean-power-fix-for-africa-idUSKCN1PW0KV> (accessed 23.06.2021)
- Maza, Christina. 2018. *Rex Tillerson and His Russian Counterpart Stayed in the Same Hotel, Ignored Each Other, Then It Got Even More Petty*. 3 8. <https://newsweek.com/tillerson-and-lavrov-stay-same-ethiopian-hotel-cant-agree-meeting-leading-837378> (accessed 12.12.2019)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, The. 2018. *Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Ethiopia*. March 10. https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3115273 (accessed 17.12.2020)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, The. 2018. *Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions at a joint news conference following talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia Workneh Gebeyehu Addis-Ababa*. March 9. https://mid.ru/en/maps/et/-/asset_publisher/nTcGqZlsygE7/content/id/3115200 (accessed 10.07.2021)

Mirzeler, Mustafa Kemal. 2005. Reading Ethiopia Through Russian Eyes: Political and Racial Sentiments in the Travel Writings of Alexander Bulatovich, 1896–1898. *History in Africa*, vol. 32, pp. 281–294.

Pankhurst, Richard. 2005. British reactions to the Battle of Adwa: as illustrated by the Times of London for 1896. In *The Battle of Adwa*, by Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia, pp. 212–228. Algora Publishing.

Patman, Robert G. 1990. *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa*. USA: Cambridge University press.

ShelArensen. 2009. Russian Officer with King Menelik's Army. <http://oldafricamagazine.com/russianofficer-with-kingmeneliks-army/> (accessed 3.02.2021)

Shubin, Vladimir. 2004. Russia and Africa: moving in the right direction? In *Africa in International Politics External involvement on the continent*, by Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 102. New York: Routledge.

U.S. Department of State. 2018. *Remarks – Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu at a Joint Press Availability*. 3 8. <https://2017-2021-translations.state.gov/2018/03/08/remarks-secretary-of-state-rex-tillerson-and-ethiopian-foreign-minister-workneh-gebeyehu-at-a-joint-press-availability/index.htm> (accessed 10.06.2021)

Valenta, Jiri. 1980. Soviet-Cuban intervention in the Horn of Africa: impact and lessons. *Journal of International Affairs* 34, № 2, 353.

Webber, M. 1992. Soviet Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Final Phase. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, № 30 (1), pp. 1–30. DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X00007709.

world-nuclear-news. 2019. *Ethiopia, Russia extends cooperation in nuclear energy*. 10 23. <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Ethiopia,-Russia-extend-cooperation-in-nuclear-ene> (accessed 17.06.2021)

Yakobson, Sergius. 1963. The Soviet Union and Ethiopia: A Case of Traditional Behavior. *The Review of Politics*, vol. 25, № 3, Stable. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1405736329-342>

Zelalem, Zecharias. 2016. *Why Ethiopia will be forever indebted to Fidel Castro*. 12 21. <https://ethiocritical.com/2016/12/21/why-ethiopia-will-be-forever-indebted-to-fidel-castro/> (accessed 13.05.2021)

Zubok, Vladislav M. 2007. *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ДВУСТОРОННИХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ МЕЖДУ ЭФИОПИЕЙ И РОССИЕЙ

© 2022 Нардос Хаваз Йехейс

НАРДОС ХАВАЗ ЙЕХЕЙС, PhD, ассистент-преподаватель международных отношений, факультет общественных и гуманитарных наук Университета Гамбелы, Гамбела, Эфиопия, e-mail: narir@gmu.edu.et

***Аннотация.** Статья посвящена анализу двусторонних отношений между Эфиопией и Россией и их новейших тенденций. Автор рассматривает историю развития отношений между двумя странами, подчеркивая их конструктивный характер и уделяя особое внимание историческим культурным связям и традиционной дружбе двух государств. Особое внимание уделяется изменениям внешнеполитической парадигмы Эфиопии, порождаемым ее внутривнутриполитическими процессами и сменой формы власти в стране. Анализируя содержание заключенных в последнее время Россией и Эфиопией межгосударственных соглашений о сотрудничестве, автор приходит к выводу, что, в сравнении со странами Запада, в частности с США, Россия уделяет большее внимание не политической риторике, а вопросам взаимовыгодного сотрудничества в конкретных сферах. Такое сотрудничество, по мнению автора, особенно выгодно для эфиопской стороны, так как открывает для нее доступ к новым технологиям и возможностям, что будет способствовать как повышению уровня жизни населения Эфиопии, так и росту роли страны в региональных политических и экономических процессах.*

***Ключевые слова:** Эфиопия, Россия, дипломатические отношения, вооруженные силы, оживление, взаимное доверие*

DOI: 10.31132/2412-5717-2022-60-3-26-38