Beat: News

Egypt and Somalia's Strategic Alignment Against Ethiopia

Analytic Report

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), 06.10.2024, 14:05 Time

Global Strategic Communications - Recent news reports highlight escalating tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia, primarily revolving around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile. The involvement of Somalia, through recent agreements with Egypt, has added a new dimension to the already complex geopolitical scenario. The strategic alignment between Egypt and Somalia appears to be a calculated move against Ethiopia, raising concerns about regional stability in the Horn of Africa.

Key Points:

1. Historical Context of Nile Water Disputes:

* Egypt relies on the Nile for 90% of its water supply, and historic treaties (1929 and 1959) allocated the majority of the river's water to Egypt and
Sudan, excluding Ethiopia and other upstream nations.

*Ethiopia, contributing over 85% of the Nile’s water, has contested these agreements, seeking to use the Nile's resources for its development, particularly through the construction of the GERD.

2. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD):

* GERD is Africa’s largest hydroelectric project, crucial for Ethiopia's electricity and economic development.

* Egypt views the dam as a direct threat to its water security, fearing reduced water flow to its territory.

* Diplomatic negotiations between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia regarding the operation of GERD have consistently broken down.

3. Ethiopia-Somaliland Maritime Agreement:

*Ethiopia signed an agreement with the breakaway region of Somaliland, leasing part of its coastline for 50 years. This move provides Ethiopia, a landlocked country, with vital access to the Red Sea for commercial and potentially naval purposes.

* Somalia condemned the agreement, leading to a strain in relations between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa.

4. Egypt-Somalia Military Pact:

* In August 2024, Egypt and Somalia signed a defense agreement to enhance security cooperation, including Egypt’s commitment to deploy 10,000 troops to Somalia. Half of these troops will assist in peacekeeping operations, while the rest will work under a bilateral arrangement with Somalia.

* The pact involves joint military exercises and the supply of weapons, signaling Egypt's readiness to project military strength in the region, especially near Ethiopia's border.

5. Strategic Motivations:

Egypt’s Goals:
* Secure a geopolitical advantage by increasing its military presence in Somalia.
* Send a warning to Ethiopia over the GERD by positioning troops near Ethiopia’s border.

* Use Somalia's strained relations with Ethiopia as leverage to pressure Addis Ababa into reconsidering its stance on the Nile.

Somalia's Objectives:
* Strengthen its defense capabilities, particularly in its fight against militant groups like Al-Shabaab.
* Align with Egypt to counter Ethiopia's influence, especially after the Somaliland-Ethiopia agreement.

Insights and Analysis:

* Water Security as a Catalyst for Conflict: The Nile has long been a source of tension between Egypt and upstream countries. Egypt's reliance on the river for agriculture, industry, and drinking water makes it particularly sensitive to any changes in its flow. Ethiopia's GERD project, though essential for its development, is perceived by Egypt as an existential threat. This water security issue remains central to Egypt's foreign policy and its recent military alignments.

* Somalia's Alignment with Egypt: Somalia's defense pact with Egypt is a clear signal that it views Ethiopia as a regional competitor. The maritime dispute over Somaliland further deepens this animosity. Somalia's decision to align with Egypt might be seen as an effort to assert its sovereignty over Somaliland and leverage Egypt's military power against Ethiopia.

* Geopolitical Ramifications in the Horn of Africa: The Horn of Africa has long been a volatile region due to internal conflicts and external interventions. The recent alignment between Egypt and Somalia against Ethiopia risks further destabilization. Ethiopia's partnership with Somaliland already threatens Somalia's territorial claims, while Egypt's military involvement in Somalia could exacerbate tensions.

* Risk of Escalation: The growing tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt raise concerns about a potential proxy conflict in Somalia. If Egypt continues to build its military presence near Ethiopia's border, it could provoke a direct response from Ethiopia, especially given Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's firm stance on national defense. While a full-scale war remains unlikely in the immediate term, localized skirmishes and proxy confrontations could occur, destabilizing the region further.

Implications:

1. For Egypt:
* Diplomatic Influence: Egypt's military presence in Somalia could enhance its influence in the Horn of Africa, potentially allowing it to negotiate from a position of strength concerning the GERD.

* Military Commitment: The deployment of Egyptian troops to Somalia marks a significant military investment. This commitment could be costly and may lead to further regional entanglements if Ethiopia responds aggressively.

For Ethiopia:
* Strategic Pressure: Ethiopia now faces increased pressure from both Egypt and Somalia. The country's naval ambitions and access to the Red Sea via Somaliland might be compromised by Egypt's presence in Somalia.

* Defensive Posture: Ethiopia must balance its internal development goals with its defense needs, particularly in the face of a potential proxy conflict involving Egypt.

3. For Somalia:
* Military Strength: Somalia's defense capabilities will likely improve with Egyptian support, but its involvement in the broader Egypt-Ethiopia conflict could complicate its internal security situation, particularly in its fight against Al-Shabaab.

* Regional Relations: Somalia's alliance with Egypt may strain its relations with other neighboring countries, especially Ethiopia, further complicating regional diplomacy.

4. For the Horn of Africa:
* Increased Instability: The overlapping interests of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Somalia create a highly volatile situation. Any further escalation could spill over into broader regional conflicts, drawing in other Horn of Africa nations such as Sudan and Kenya.

* International Intervention: Given the strategic importance of the Nile and the Red Sea, global powers may seek to intervene diplomatically or militarily, further complicating the regional power dynamics.

Final Assessment:

The alignment between Egypt and Somalia against Ethiopia over the GERD and related geopolitical issues marks a significant shift in the balance of power in the Horn of Africa. Water security, territorial integrity, and military strength are all at play, creating a multifaceted and delicate situation. The risk of conflict, whether through direct confrontation or proxy warfare, remains a real possibility as regional actors continue to pursue their national interests.

Sources for this analysis:

Voice of America. (2024). Somalia's security dilemma, Ethiopia tensions dominate discussions on AU peacekeeping. VOA News. https://www.voanews.com/

BBC. (2024). GERD: Ethiopia hits out at Egypt as Nile dam row escalates. BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa

Reuters. (2024). Egypt says talks over Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam have failed - statement. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com

Atlantic Council. (2024). Egypt is cozying up to Somalia to thwart Ethiopia. Atlantic Council. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org

See the full report log on select one of the subscription plans:

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-24919/egypt-and-somalias-strategic-alignment-against-ethiopia.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com

www.gna24.com