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EGYPT: Cairo Likely to Use All Options to Counter Ethiopian Nile Dam

Summary: Since the start of the year, talks between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) have broken down, while the occurrence of alleged Egyptian-backed proxy conflict has increased at the Sudanese-Ethiopian border. Recently, Cairo has taken action to increase its regional influence and acquire new allies. This endeavor may provide Cairo an advantage when talks over the GERD resume during a new African Union session.

Background: Cairo, Kartoum, and Addis Ababa remain in a bitter dispute over the GERD that Addis Ababa continues to build on the Blue Nile, which provides 85% of the greater Nile's discharge. Cairo states the GERD poses an existential threat to its national security because it will significantly reduce the flow of the greater Nile, affecting its agricultural sector. Addis Ababa insists that it needs the vast reservoir to drive about 6,000 megawatts (MW) of hydroelectric power. Khartoum hopes to benefit from the GERDs electricity but fears the potential impact on its own Roseires Dam and water supply. Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi reached out to the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and newly appointed Chair of the African Union, Felix Tshisekedi, to address the issue of the GERD. Cairo and Khartoum demand a "legally binding" agreement that regulates the dam's filling and operation. Addis Ababa has refused to sign any agreement and proceeded to begin to fill the reservoir.



Figure 1: A map of the Nile River system & the location of the GERD

Increasing Proxy Conflict: Cairo will likely continue to push for conflict as the GERD's completion threatens its water supply. Approximately 95% of the water consumed by Egypt comes from the greater Nile; 85% goes toward agriculture which provides 46.3% of Egypt's gross domestic product (GDP). The Nile Waters Agreements of 1929 and 1959 between Cairo and Khartoum gave Cairo the right to veto any upstream construction projects, though Addis

Ababa does not recognize these rights. Officials in Addis Ababa accuse Cairo of pushing the Sudanese army to ignite a border war in the area where the GERD remains under construction. Skirmishes have broken out in the disputed Al-Fashaqa border region throughout early February where Ethiopian farmers cultivate fertile land claimed by Khartoum. Addis Ababa responded by launching a missile attack on the Abu Toyour Mountain. Addis Ababa also accuses Cairo of funding various militia groups within Ethiopia to disrupt the filling of the GERD. Geopolitical changes have left Cairo uncertain; most notably, the post-Mubarak era has weakened Cairo's global and regional leverage. These changes allowed Addis Ababa to change its historical power position in the Horn of Africa region, disrupting Cairo's hegemony over the Nile basin and making it more vulnerable to water-based pressure.

Spreading Influence: Political weakness will likely cause Cairo to seek new allies in Africa while Addis Ababa gains power in the Nile basin. On 18 February, President Sisi met with the United Nations (UN)-appointed Interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibeh of Libya. President Sisi stated Egypt "backs the Libyan people" in its quest for stability, and the meeting reportedly covered ways to boost security cooperation between the two governments. Cairo likely views gaining access to Libya's oil fields through improved relations as a way to increase its regional strength. Cairo also signed a series of infrastructure, energy, and drinking water agreements with Kinshasa on 2 February to boost Egyptian investments in the DRC. The agreements call for building an administrative capital, a national fiber-optic network, and a drinking water plant on the Lubi river. Cairo likely aims to strengthen its political ties with Kinshasa to ensure that the DRC remains an ally in the dam crisis. On 6 February, President Sisi, during the 34th ordinary session of the African Union, stated that he has confidence that under President Tshisekedi's chairmanship the African Union will reach an agreement on the dam crisis.

Outlook and Implications: Cairo, by continuing to push for conflict as its water supply faces a threat under a fully operational GERD, will likely experience increased tension from Addis Ababa as border skirmishes occur more frequently. Addis Ababa already retaliated against Khartoum when the Sudanese army threatened its farmers, signaling to Cairo that it has no issue defending what it claims as its territory. Addis Ababa will almost certainly take a more aggressive approach toward Egyptian-backed militia groups operating within Ethiopia. Cairo likely realizes that its global and regional leverage remains weakened in the post-Mubarak era and it will have a harder time challenging Addis Ababa over water resources. Cairo's substantial reliance on the water of the greater Nile puts the nation in an uncertain position as Addis Ababa continues to fill the GERD, which may force Cairo to take more direct actions against Addis Ababa as the dam nears completion.

Cairo will likely continue to seek new allies throughout the region to improve its political and military strength as it faces increased pressure from Addis Ababa. Cairo will almost certainly continue to support Khartoum as it continues to engage in proxy border skirmishes with Addis Ababa. Cairo likely views the UN appointment of Interim Prime Minister Dbeibeh as a way to

improve relations with Tripoli. Cairo may view this meeting as a way to increase Egyptian influence throughout Libya and gain access to its oil fields. Cairo likely views its investments in the DRC as a form of bribe to gain another regional ally and favor when the African Union initiates talks over the GERD. Addis Ababa will almost certainly question Kinshasa's neutrality when the talks begin and may indirectly accuse Kinshasa of favoring Egypt at its expense. This would likely cause talks to break off again.

[August Kather]

INDIA: Potential Link Between Cyberattack and Beijing May Signal Future Attacks

Summary: New studies show that a Chinese state sponsored hacking group likely executed the attacks behind a 2020 power blackout in Mumbai following the border conflict between India and China over Galwan Valley. The attacks will likely continue if New Delhi continues to push against Beijing's border presence.

Development: On 1 March, the Maharashtra cyber department submitted a report substantiating that malware caused the 2020 blackout in Mumbai but does not make any claims about the malware's author. On 28 February, Inksit Team, a group of threat researchers, published a report pinning a cyber-attack from last year on a Chinese state sponsored hacking group, RedEcho, in the midst of a border dispute between the two countries. The attack targeted twelve organizations, ten of which operate in power generation or power transmission. This led to a massive blackout in Mumbai among other power grid failures.

Analysis: The likelihood of these attacks ending remains low unless New Delhi submits to China and the conflict at the border ends. The findings of the report will likely inflame tensions. If New Delhi substantiates that Beijing executed these cyber-attacks, retaliatory strikes will likely follow. An increase in cyberattacks could throw the region into turmoil, potentially involving neighboring countries in the conflict.

[Dan Eisen]

GUINEA: Ebola Likely to Spread to Border Nations Due to Unpreparedness

Summary: As Guinea experiences the first resurgence of the Ebola virus since the 2013-2016 outbreak, public health efforts in the region may deprioritize its COVID-19 response.

Development: On 5 March, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a high risk of international spread of Ebola from Guinea to border nations. Guinea's neighbors include Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, all of which lack the healthcare capacity to implement effective vaccination campaigns according to the WHO. Storage requirements for the Ebola vaccine include subzero temperatures and a short shelf life, similar requirements to the COVID-19 vaccines that Guinea recently received from Beijing. Currently, Guinea and its border nations do not have enough doses of the Ebola vaccine to perform widespread inoculations.

Analysis: Due to the severity of the Ebola virus, Guinean public health officials will likely prioritize Ebola vaccinations over COVID-19 responses. Global demand for medical refrigeration systems during the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines may result in a shortage of cold storage in and around Guinea. A regional shortage in refrigeration space will likely cause COVID-19 vaccines to expire before use without sufficient medical staff. Without vaccinations for Ebola and COVID-19, medical personnel in Guinea and its bordering nations risk contracting one or both viruses, which could further destabilize regional public health infrastructure by eliminating staff from the front lines.

[Savannah Grace Riddles]

RUSSIA: Naval Base Likely First Step Towards Heightened Military Presence in Sudan

Summary: Russian warship *Admiral Grigorovich* entered a Sudanese port where Moscow plans to build a naval base on the country's Red Sea Coast, potentially signaling the start of increased military presence.

Development: On 1 March, Moscow docked its frigate, *Admiral Grigorovich*, at its's developing naval base in Sudan. This follows an agreement in December 2020 between Russia and the Sudanese Government allowing Russia to establish a defensive naval logistics base to monitor the Red Sea. According to Sudan's military, the vessel serves to advance "diplomatic relations" between the two countries. The new naval base plans to "uphold peace and stability" in the region, according to the deal. This deal also allows Russian military officials to assist in training Sudanese troops and to supply troops with weapons and other military equipment. The new Red Sea naval station acts as Russia's first naval base in Africa and oversees vital international trade routes.

Analysis: This deal could allow Moscow to potentially undermine other superpowers in the region by creating alliances and gaining access to ports throughout the continent. This deal likely indicates Russia's expanding influence in Africa. The naval presence will likely allow Russia to monitor trade routes and pressure foreign adversaries and potentially interfere with the transportation of goods through the region. Should it prove successful, Moscow's new partnership will likely promote further alliances throughout the continent after other countries in the region see the benefits of Russian infrastructure and military capabilities in Sudan.

[Austin Perez]

LATVIA: Baltic Energy Independence Might Contribute to Russian Tension

Summary: The Baltics' transition to further energy independence will probably raise tensions between Russia, the EU, and other European countries.

Development: On 2 March, Latvian and Estonian leaders met in Riga to discuss efforts to develop a Western European power grid uniting the Baltic states with most of central Europe. This comes after the European Union decided to provide the Baltic States with approximately \$1 billion to connect its current power grid to central Europe's. This EU infrastructure support package also supports making the Baltics states mostly energy independent. The EU plans to complete this energy infrastructure renewal by 2025. The EU says this aligns with the interest of fulfilling green energy goals. In 2010, the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant closed, changing the power generation landscape for the Baltics drastically. The Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant provided the Baltics with almost 40% of its power. The pre-existing Soviet power grids caused the Baltic states to buy power from Russia to sustain their energy infrastructure.

Analysis: The Baltics severing its connection to the post-Soviet power grid will most likely raise tensions in Eastern Europe. Though the EU stated that the addition of the Baltics to its power grid aligns with the interest of greener energy production in Europe, it most likely holds with the EU's expressed interest in the national security of its eastern borders. With Russia losing energy influence in the Baltic states, other European nations not in the EU, like Belarus, could see an increase of support from the Kremlin. The shifting relationships in the Baltic region will probably raise political tensions within Europe.

[Ethan Anderson]

AFGHANISTAN: ISIS Attacks Against Female Journalists Likely to Continue

Summary: The increasing trend of killings targeting pro-government female media workers indicates more killings will almost certainly occur.

Development: On 3 March, ISIS claimed responsibility for the killings of three female journalists working for the pro-government Enikass Radio. This follows the December 2020 killing of another female journalist also working for Enikass Radio. Enikass director Zalmay Latif reported that the station often receives threats from extremist groups regarding its news coverage. ISIS holds strict beliefs regarding women, including the belief that women do not belong in the public eye.

Analysis: ISIS most likely monitors the media for pro-government targets and will probably continue targeting female journalists until the group gains more political control. The specific targeting of these women likely mean that the attacks are almost certainly pre-planned in response to ongoing broadcasts and its dislike of women working in the public eye. The targeting of female employees may signal an effort to intimidate Enikass Radio and the women who work there. Fear and anger among citizens regarding the attacks will almost certainly continue to rise if attacks continue.

[Taylor Begley]

About GSIS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's (ERAU) Bachelor of Science in Global Security & Intelligence Studies (GSIS) degree program at our Prescott Campus blends both academic and professional studies to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement. The program provides students with a sound foundation in the liberal arts, including international relations, foreign languages and cultures, international law, foreign policy, political and military history, and other essential topics.

About EE

Eagle Eye Intelligence (EE) is an intelligence and research organization led by the students of the GSIS program at ERAU in Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Philip E. Jones founded EE and Embry-Riddle's GSIS program in 2002, following a career with the Central Intelligence Agency and consulting work in international development and global security. Currently, Professor Dale R. Avery, a former career intelligence analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence, serves as EE's faculty advisor.

EE strives to provide actionable intelligence and analysis to its customers during the academic year. We are driven by a number of goals – continuous development, nonpartisanship, interdisciplinary studies, global awareness, and professionalism.

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not represent the position Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University or the College of Security and Intelligence.

Alli McIntyre, a junior in the GSIS program, currently serves as EE's Editor in Chief. For questions or comments, contact the team at editorsee@gmail.com or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708.

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