Regional Problems in the North-East Africa

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Abstract:

This paper deals with the analysis of the regional security problems in the North-East Africa. The author refers in the introduction to the colonial past of the African continent, when the territory of African countries was arbitrarily divided between the major colonial powers. After the Second World War as a result of raising the national liberation movement the African peoples gained independence, but the colonial past has left its imprint on the new independent states in the form of a series of armed conflicts, upon which the author dwells in the main part.

The author pays major attention to the conflicts in the North-East Africa, particularly, in the Horn of Africa. The author exhaustively covers the main causes of African conflicts such as the colonial past of these countries, arbitrarily set boundaries, as a result of which many of African nations were divided, as well as difficult post-colonial national-state development, and the active intervention of external forces.

The conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, inter-state conflicts between Ethiopia and Somalia and between Ethiopia and Eritrea have been considered. There have been distinguished regional and international organizations, which in prospect should assume the responsibility for the maintenance of regional security.

Keywords: Africa, the horn of Africa, North-East Africa, colonies, Somalia, Sudan, pirates, security, Ethiopia, Eritrea.

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1. Introduction

Africa, the second largest continent after Eurasia, found itself in a difficult position after the collapse of the bipolar system of international relations. Africa has always played an important role in the global politics and international relations. Already in 15-16th centuries, this continent started to be actively invaded by Europeans. The Spanish and Portuguese made the greatest contribution to the development of Africa after the end of Reconquista. By the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese took control over almost all of the west coast of Africa, and launched an active slave trade. Slave trade with Zanzibar gradually led to the colonization of East Africa. Meanwhile, by the beginning of the 17th century, the whole North Africa (except for Morocco) became a part of the Ottoman Empire.

The process of the African continent colonization intensified in the second half of the 19th century. The final division of Africa took place at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. It began in November 15, 1884 and ended in February 26, 1885. The conference was initiated by Portugal, which proposed to the other colonial powers the so-called "pink" card, which involved the incorporation of the Portuguese possessions in Angola and Mozambique in a single colony. The United Kingdom blocked the Portuguese plans, due to considering the whole Sub-Saharan Africa as a sphere of its own interests. France and Germany, in turn, expected to raise at the conference the demarcation problem of spheres of influence in the Sahara. However, the main issue in Berlin was the status of the Free State of Congo, which served as a screen for the Belgian expansion of the Congo Basin.

The general act passed on the proposal of the Chairman of the Conference of Chancellor Bismarck, both recognized the legitimacy of the colonial conquests, and for the first time ever secured in writing the obligations of powers imposed on them by the spheres of influence. In particular, it proclaimed the principle of effective occupation, calling the country for getting the raw materials in their colonies and placing it into requisition, and, in case of their own inability to develop the wealth of the colony, - to admit other powers and their cartels to conduct the affairs in its territory. After that a real scrable for Africa flared up, which culminated in the Fashoda incident, which in 1898 brought Britain and France on the brink of war.

After the Second World War in connection with the defeat of the most reactionary regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan, the process of democratization of international relations has started. It became a kind of catalyst for raising the national liberation movement of the peoples of Asia and Africa. The process of the African continent colonization took its rise. 1960 became a point of no return in this process. New independent states of the African continent enriched greatly the mosaic of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations and brought new motives in its substance. All Africa treated the liquidation of colonial regimes and the transition of political power to Africans as a great achievement.

2. Methods

The study uses systematic approach and historical and comparative methods. The Africans pinned their hopes on the proclamation of independence. It was widely believed among them that a radical improvement in the lives of most of the population will come almost immediately. Many African leaders shared optimistic hopes with the majority of the population, albeit with a lesser naivety. Post-colonial realities, unfortunately, turned out to be completely different. After becoming independent, the young African States faced a choice of further development model.

In the context of the Cold War, they were drawn into the struggle between the two military-political blocs for influence on the African continent. Many of young African states closely associated capitalism with colonialism, and therefore tended to the Soviet-socialist model of development based on local specifics. Other States chose the traditional capitalist model. Thus, Africa was split into two parts. On the one hand, active intervention of the Soviet Union and the United States in African affairs played a positive role in terms of getting various assistance by the African countries, including financial and food, which affected the stabilization and improvement of people's living standards.

On the other hand, it has become one of the causes of many conflicts which settlement actively involved the United Nations Organization. Another reason for such conflicts is the difficulties of state development. These difficulties are associated with both the colonial past and the traditions of the pre-colonial period. Colonial control apparatus, despite the many defects and deficiencies, was based on extensive experience, served by professionals and acting as a well-adjusted mechanism. With its collapse, all management system had to be recreated. The African countries started to be governed by people inexperienced in state governing. As a result, most countries received a bulky, unprofessional, inefficient bureaucratic state apparatus with all its shortcomings. This led to internal political conflicts in several countries, which settlement was also attended by UNO peacekeeping forces (e.g., in Congo).

Another reason for conflicts between African countries is due to the territorial disputes. The fact is that the boundaries of most countries in Africa do not coincide with the boundaries of the settlement of tribes and ethnic groups. At the Berlin conference in 1884-1885, the colonial powers arbitrarily divided Africa in territorial units, based on their own interests. As a result, many tribes and nations were divided, while others, on the other hand, were artificially combined. New independent states have inherited these colonial boundaries. Already in 1960s, the African continent becomes a point of conflicts generated by the above-mentioned reasons, which settlement was actively conducted by the United Nations Organization (Shagalov, 2011). The most difficult in terms of security situation was in the North-East Africa. The Horn of Africa concentrates a great part of both internal and inter-state conflicts in the region. Most of these conflicts began in the framework of the bipolar system of international relations.

One of the most longstanding armed conflict is the internal conflict in Somalia, which is complicated by the interference of external forces and strained relations with the country's neighbors - Kenya and Ethiopia.

Colonization of the Horn of Africa has led to that at the end of the 19th century, the Somali people lived in the territory of the five states. Northern Somalia in 1887 became a British protectorate - Somaliland. Central and Southern Somalia passed under the control of Italy in 1889. In British Kenya, the Somalis lived in the northern border area. Ethiopia secured for itself the Ogaden Somali territory. In French Somaliland (since 1967 - French Territory of the Afars and the Issas) - a modern Djibouti - half of the population were Somalis (Konovalov, 2010).

In 1960, Italian Somali and British Somaliland became independent and have united. The government in Mogadishu has proclaimed the right to self-determination with following separation and joining to the Somali territory for the Ethiopian Ogaden, for Northern Frontier District of Kenya (NFD), for French Territory of the Afars and the Issas (Djibouti). In the Ethiopian Ogaden, since 1961, the Somali rebels began their activity. From 1963 to 1967, in the Northern border district of Kenya, local NFD Somali Liberation Front led a guerrilla war with the support of Mogadishu (Konovalov, 2010).

The Ogaden war began on July 23, 1977. Initially, the Somali army made a good progress. By September 1977, 90% of Ogaden were under the control of the Somalis. From October 1977 to January 1978, there was heavy fighting over the strategic points. February 1978, the Ethiopian offensive began and eventually Somali army suffered a crushing defeat. March 8, Siad Barre ordered his troops to drop back to the territory of Somalia. March 23, 1978, Mengistu Haile Mariam officially announced the end of military activities (Tareke, 2000).

After the defeat in the war with Ethiopia, S. Barre's regime was rapidly losing its popularity and the rebel movement in the country started. April 6, 1981, political and religious leaders of the Isaac clans in London formed the Somali National Movement, which started an armed struggle against the regime. The SNM parties conducted their activity in the north of the country, from the territory of Ethiopia. The received support of the governments of Ethiopia, Yemen and Libya.

In January 1991, after the overthrow of the S. Barre's regime, the country faced with conflicts between the clans that further turned into a civil war. In the first half of the 1990s, the international community represented by the UNO tried, with the support of the USA, to resolve the armed conflict in Somalia by sending a peacekeeping force to the country. The international community failed. After withdrawal of the peacekeepers in 1996, the civil war resumed. In the 21st century, a second attempt was undertaken to settle the conflict in Somalia. Along with the UNO, it is attended by African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which brings

together the countries of North-East Africa, some countries in Africa, in particular, Djibouti.

3.   Results and discussion

Today, armed conflicts in Somalia continue, despite the presence of the country's peacekeeping forces of the African Union. Moreover, some Somali armed groups threaten the security of neighboring countries, in particular, Kenya.

Lasting for decades, armed conflict in Somalia has led to the occurrence of armed groups of pirates in the Gulf of Aden who attack the merchant vessels for their subsequent capture and ransom. Thus, according to the International Maritime Bureau, only during the first nine months of 2008 there were 199 cases of attacks by pirates in the world, 63 of which were in Somalia. During the same time, Somali pirates seized 26 ships and 182 crew members (Shagalov, 2010).

The international community has seriously taken the piracy threats and organized a series of anti-piracy operations and tracking of merchant ships through the Gulf of Aden. In particular, the European Union in December 2008 launched its first ever naval operation "Atalanta", aimed at the fight against Somali pirates.

A serious problem for regional security is the situation in Sudan and South Sudan. First Sudanese Civil War began in 1955, a year before declaration of independence. It lasted until 1972, when a peace agreement was signed between the warring parties in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. This agreement marked the beginning of a relatively peaceful period, but in 1983 the war resumed, when the President of the country, D. Nimeiry, violated the peace agreement (Sabala, 2011).

In 1993, the leaders of the states of the Intergovernmental Organization on Development of East Africa joined the initiative of the international community to promote peace negotiations between the warring parties. This gave rise to the long process that eventually led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 (United Nations, 2005).

Since July 2002, 6 protocols were signed, which dealt with different aspects of the settlement of the conflict, including the right of the people of Southern Sudan to hold a referendum on independence (United Nations, 2005).

The referendum took place in January 2011. 99 percent of voters, who came, voted for independence (BBC News). However, after proclaiming the independence, an armed conflict arose in South Sudan that has forced the United Nations to send peacekeepers to this country (UN Security Council, 2011). Resolution No.1996 of the UN) Security Council, adopted on July 8, 2011, determined the main objective of the peacekeeping operation in South Sudan – the maintenance of peace and security, and

assistance to the young state government in the creation of conditions for effective and democratic governance (Shagalov, 2015).

Another zone of instability is the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. For a long time, Eritrea formed part of the Ethiopia. In 1993, it became an independent state and since that time the contradictions between the two countries have been growing. Against the background of multiple economic disputes, a border dispute has flared up more and more. The border has not been demarcated, as relied on various Ethiopian-Italian treaties and maps of the age of Italian colonization of Eritrea, which the parties have interpreted to their advantage. In May 1998, a real war started with the use of heavy weapons. The preponderance of forces in this war was on the side of Ethiopia.

The main strategic goal of Ethiopia in this war was the capture of the port of Assab in the Red Sea. However, the Eritreans managed to stop the advance of the enemy 35 km from the city, and on June 18, 2000, Algeria signed a cease-fire agreement. In June 2001, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed an agreement on the creation of temporary demilitarized zone of 25 km wide under the supervision of the UNO peacekeeping forces. However, on July 31, 2008, the Security Council decided to withdraw the peacekeepers from the conflict zone (Konovalov & Shubin, 2012).

The border conflict between the two countries is still not resolved. In addition, Ethiopia would not miss the opportunity to try once again to regain the status of sea power, which it had before the recognition of the independence of Eritrea. All these circumstances create a potential threat to the security in the north of the Horn of Africa.

4. Conclusion

Thus, North-East Africa has many existing and potential conflicts that turn the entire region into a zone of instability. Regional and international organizations have been established, primarily, to fend off threats and prevent conflicts. The region has three institutions – Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community and the high-readiness forces of the North-East Africa. Each of these structures deals with specific problems. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development - IGAD (before March 1996 - Intergovernmental Authority on Drought Control and Development) established in 1986 to coordinate the efforts of the Horn of Africa on food security, elimination of the results of drought and desertification, as well as environmental protection.

In 1996, the decision was taken to extend the mandate of IGAD, with the inclusion of political and security issues, and settlement of conflicts in the sub-region. The East African Community was established in 1967, ceased to exist in 1977 and was officially revived on July 7, 2000. The main objective of the Community is economic integration. However, this community includes Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi,

and Rwanda. Their political value (except for Kenya) and their effect on the conflicts in the North-East Africa is limited.

The high-readiness forces of the North-East Africa were formed in 2004 as part of the high-readiness forces of the African Union. They can be deployed in conflict zones by the decision of the African Union and the UNO. Active members of this regional structure are such countries as Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi.

In our view, it is the high-readiness forces, acting on the mandate of the African Union and the United Nations Organization, that are able to become a real tool for the maintenance of peace, security and resolution of conflict in the North-East Africa.

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