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Neo-colonialism: a discussion of USA activities in the Horn of Africa

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ABSTRACT

Neo-colonialism is considered by many writers to be a strategy of the former colonial powers and the new superpowers to implement various socioeconomic and political strategies in developing countries. The Horn of Africa, as a parcel of a developing region, is recognized as a piece of the 'grand chessboard' of world geopolitics. In particular, US neo-colonialism has become an invisible government in almost all countries in the Horn of Africa. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to examine and write about the origin, discourses, concealment (mask), normative agents, and potential perils of American neo-colonialism in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, the paper also answers the question of whether the US is a straightforward ally or a neo-colonialist in the Horn of Africa. To document this, the paper would be limited to primary sources such as letters, reports, and published secondary texts that have been available to this writer to date.

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Introduction

A significant number of African states were colonized by some European nations between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the second half of the twentieth century. These nations included Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal, and they established economic systems that permitted what appeared to be massive exploitation (Lewis, 2002; Hess, 1966; Hess, 1966). In the years after the end of World War II, these European countries handed formal independence to their African colonies, yet they nevertheless managed to maintain their economic sway and control over their former colonies (Nyikal, 2005).

Meanwhile, many African colonies started gaining independence in the 1960s, and as they did so, they soon came to understand that the emancipation they had imagined was absurd. Despite their adoption of leadership roles in politics, Africans rapidly understood that the political and economic environment was still in some way under the influence of their old colonial masters. It does seem that the former colonial powers did not want to free their former subjects from colonialism; instead, they just sought to grant them political freedom. This suggests that the circumstances that influence the intellectual underpinnings of neocolonialism in Africa began as soon as the majority of African states attained political autonomy. In essence, colonialism's remaining capitalist structures, influences, and practices now known as 'neocolonialism' were to be restrained or eradicated when a country gained independence (Hallen, 2002).

Circumstances and occurrences in the postcolonial continent of Africa have shown the way neocolonialism was fostered from the day that independence was conferred. This claim is supported by the neocolonial impacts that are constantly present in interactions between former colonial masters and their former colonies. Neocolonialism was used by the leaders of the Cold War USA and the Soviet Union

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as well as the former colonial masters to compete with one another. To their dismay, recent superpowers like China and the US continue to practice neocolonialism (Hallen, 2002).

The Horn of Africa is the northeastern region of Africa, bordering the Red Sea to the east, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Nile Basin to the west. Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti are the principal countries that make up the Horn of Africa (Danfulani, 1999; Reatile, 2004). The region became recognized as a piece of the 'grand chessboard' of world geopolitics as a result of being somewhat affected by the Cold War phenomenon (Brzezinski, 1997; Lyons, 1992). The use of resources to lure a region into one ideological bloc or another during the Cold War was done through the provision of foreign aid, which was a component of the two Cold War foreign policies. The Cold War ended without significant improvements in the region's economy. Incredibly, it is more accurate to say that things have gotten worse. A 'New World Order' known as Pax Americana became imperative as a result of the demise of the Soviet Union. The United States, which has long used its authority in the Horn of Africa, was at the forefront of neocolonialism which is the point of discussion below (Falola, 2003; Maduagwu, 1999).

Objectives, questions and methodology of the study

The overall objective of this paper is to examine and understand the nature, features, concealments, and impacts of American Neo-Colonialism activities in the Horn of Africa. To document these interesting themes, this study sought to answer questions such as; whether the US is a straightforward ally or a neo-colonialist in the Horn of Africa? What were the features and impacts of US Neo-Colonialism in the Horn of Africa? What are the US concealments and normative agents that would enable it to exert its Neo-Colonialism on the Horn of Africa? Why do leaders of the region accept neocolonial policies and strategies without considering the benefit of their nation? From a methodological standpoint, this article is based on grey both primary and secondary sources, such as letters, reports, and published secondary texts, that have been available to this writer to date. The collected data was systematically verified, analyzed, and interpreted through qualitative data analysis.

The nature and origin of neocolonialism

Jean-Paul Sartre was the first person who recorded the use of the term neo-colonialism. The phrase has emerged as a crucial theme in African political philosophy. He claimed that considering the term 'neo-colonialism' in the context of African philosophy necessitates critical thought about the socio-economic and political situation in which Africa currently finds itself, as well as the persistence of the socio-economic and political beliefs of the former colonizers (Satre, 2001).

In his article 'Philosophy and Post-Colonial Africa', Tensay Serequeberhan expounds neocolonialism as a discrepancy in sovereign state, political, economic, or military that is exploited disproportionately by the prevailing power in order to covertly persuade the subjugated segments of the dominated society to carry out its will (Serequeberhan, 1998). In *On the Post Colony*, Achille Mbembe investigates the dynamics of neocolonialism in Africa in a more detailed way and claims that the philosophy that informs it is based on bald assertions without any acceptable reasoning. Undoubtedly, in his opinion, following the end of colonialism in Africa, the Western world did not think that Africans were able to organize themselves socially, economically, and politically (Mbembe, 2001).

In his book *Mind of Africa*, William Abraham addresses the issues and difficulties of post-colonial Africa confronts in relation to the continent's connections to Europe on the basis of their unique culture. Neocolonialism is acknowledged to exist in Africa, but Abraham suggests a holistic form of culture in which some beneficial elements of Western culture may be incorporated with African culture to create a stronger relationship (Abraham, 1962).

Nkrumah predicted and now observed that if Africans did not alter the economic and political structures they obtained from the colonizers, they would just enter a stage of 'neocolonialism'. Neocolonialism, which occurs when more prosperous countries try to take advantage of increased access to resources and new consumers, can frequently be just as damaging to developing countries' economies as colonialism was (Nkrumah, 1966).

Neocolonialism leads to the plundering of foreign capital rather than its use for the advancement of regions with fewer amenities of the world. Neocolonialism's emphasis on investment widens rather than narrows the global wealth divide. In a basic sense, the term 'neocolonialism' refers to all socially active policies, infrastructures, and agents that, if not explicitly, continue the colonial era's customs. The core of neocolonialism is that, despite the state appearing to be independent and to have complete control over its affairs; it is actually subject to outside economic and political pressures (Hallen, 2002; Nkrumah, 1966).

Neocolonialism can be considered as the covert proliferation of socio-economic and political activity by previous colonial leaders with the intention of bolstering capitalism, neo-liberal globalization, and the cultural domination of the territories they formerly controlled. In a neocolonial nation, the previous colonial administrators make sure the newly independent colonies continue to depend on them for economic and political supervision. Thus, instead of direct military control as was the case during the colonial era, this is typically accomplished through indirect control of the political and economic policies of the newly independent governments (Attah, 2013; Oseni, 2017; Ziai, 2020).

American neocolonialism concealment in the Horn of Africa

The question of whether the US is a straightforward ally or a neocolonialist in the Horn of Africa is still up for debate. As a result, debate concerning America's role in the region has persisted. The US has been charged with pursuing its own interests instead of those of the Horn, frequently prioritizing security objectives over legitimate human rights concerns. This accusation ranges from supporting dictatorships since the end of the Cold War to advocating an economic adjustment that harmed public services (Hussain, 2017).

The Horn of Africa, as a whole, wouldn't be better off without American involvement. According to Hussien, the US should support delivering what the nations themselves clearly want, including free and fair elections, accountability for their leaders, the ability to live in peace and security, and the respect and hearing of their voices (Hussain, 2017).

Although sentiments toward America vary across the Horn of Africa, assessments have revealed that the majority of people want to live in a democracy that cooperates with other nations. Others also think that US involvement will become more crucial to offset the dictatorial tendencies coming from the socialist countries of China and Russia (Williams, 2011a).

In essence, US elites have neglected the geostrategic significance of the Horn of Africa. This was evident during the Cold War; the US, in the meantime, frequently gave more attention to the nearby Red Sea and Arabian Peninsulas. However, the US supported anti-communist governments in the Horn of Africa with little respect for their democratic objectives or development plans (Williams, 2011a). To its dismay, there was no analogous comprehensive strategy for American policy in the region after the decade-long Cold War ended. However, things changed, and the Horn has since intermittently shown up on Washington's foreign policy radar. Specifically, during three crucial years; 1991, 1998, and 2001, the US changed its strategic assessments in the Horn. Consequently, the military regimes of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia and Siad Barre in Somalia were overthrown in 1991. This allowed Eritrea to gain independence and also brought about the commencement of two decades of oppressive rule by the EPRDF in Ethiopia under Meles Zenawi. On the other hand, Somalia went over fifteen years without a central government. In 1998, The attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the start of the war between the former allies in Ethiopia and Eritrea, which later that year resulted in US missile strikes on Sudan's al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum, fundamentally changed the geopolitics of the region (Prendergast & Colin Thomas-Jensen, 2007).

The wake of the '9/11' terrorist attacks on the United States, drastically changed regional dynamics once more. Subsequently, combating terrorism has emerged as the most important overarching issue in American strategy throughout the Horn of Africa, and in 2002, Camp Lemonier in Djibouti became the only American military facility in Africa (Prendergast & Colin Thomas-Jensen, 2007). It is obvious that the US has good reason to want to adopt a successful counterterrorism strategy in the Horn. However, in the long run, this should be regarded as largely a problem of political and economic development, not one that can be resolved through military force (Williams, 2011a).

In essence, US relations with regional governments are varied. Thus, relationships between the US and the leaders of the Horn are good but frequently difficult. However, it is onerous to justify that their relationship is restricted not only by their common interests but also by sensitive issues and grounds of contention. This was made clear by the fact that US relations with Eritrea are also obviously acrimonious. Asmara has changed from being seen as a potential partner of the United States in the 'War on Terror' to being seen as the region's top popular enemy. Ironically, after the Algiers Agreement, US-Eritrean relations started to deteriorate, particularly after the Boundary Commission's decision to grant Badme to Eritrea while rejecting Ethiopia. There is currently no Eritrean ambassador in Washington, and the last American ambassador to Eritrea left in July 2010 (Assefa, 2011).

Surprisingly, the US supported the client nations in the neighboring Horn of Africa mainly by injecting military aid, and it weakened adversarial states by supporting rebel movements and forging unfriendly alliances and counterbalances in the competition to establish positions of influence and military advantage in the strategically significant regions of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean (Abbink, 2003).

Therefore, US authorities practically use all available policy concealments (masks) in the Horn of Africa, known as neocolonialism, which is associated with efforts to combat terrorism, provide economic assistance, promote democracy, provide humanitarian relief, and implement peace-building initiatives (Williams, 2011a). The following sub-topics will try to build on and expand on these American concealments in the Horn.

Combating terrorism

The Horn of Africa has long piqued the interest of strange powers, first during the time of European legitimate commerce, and colonization and again during the Cold War. Thus, the region served as a battlefield between East and West. Meanwhile, the Horn has caught the attention of the US as a possible hub for worldwide terrorism, prompting Washington to create a number of programs aimed at thwarting or preventing terrorism in the Horn of Africa (Moller, 2009). Basically, the region has the potential to be a refuge for terrorists because of the myriad political, economic, social, cultural, and regional issues that are pervasive there. Authoritative sources in the field of terrorism have identified underlying reasons such as poverty, social injustice, regional conflict, economic and political marginalization, open borders, and closeness to terrorist hotspots that contribute to terrorism in the region. Here, the Horn contains every one of these fundamental causes (Assefa, 2011; United States Institute of Peace, 2004).

In fact, hundreds of terrorist attacks have been committed against both foreign and domestic targets in the states of the region since the mid-1990s. According to West, US concern about terrorism in the Horn of Africa and Yemen was instigated by the incident of two military helicopters that were part of the peacekeeping mission being shot down in Mogadishu, resulting in the deaths of eighteen US soldiers and hundreds of Somalis (West, 2005).

Undeniably, Kenya, whose 10% of the population is Muslim, was the scene of a missile attack on an Israeli commercial airplane in 2002, a hotel explosion in Mombasa, and a terrorist attack on the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998. These actions have heightened concerns that fundamentalist influence may spread to Kenya's Muslim-dominated coastal regions, endanger the state's internal order and international ties, and worsen already-present socioeconomic and ethnic tensions (Abujamal, 2009). Following September 11, Somalia is the country that the US is most concerned about in the Horn of Africa, claiming the region as a hub for Al Qaeda. Hence, as Al Qaeda was assaulted and expelled from Afghanistan, Somalia soon rose to the top of the list of nations that could be susceptible to a resurgent war on terrorism (Menkhas, 2005).

Moreover, after the terrorist strikes in the US, Somalia was closely monitored by US intelligence agencies and armed forces. Thus, the US feared that Al Qaeda might build training bases there or utilize it as a hub for funding, personnel, and materials for upcoming terrorist activities outside of the Horn of Africa because of Somalia's extensive and easily breachable seacoast and its protracted lack of a functioning government. Thus, the US established the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, whose domain of responsibility included the Horn of Africa and Yemen (Assefa, 2011; Prendergast & Colin Thomas-Jensen, 2007).

The US has solely concentrated on curtailing terrorist groups' capacity to move about and conduct operations in the region. The US's actions blatantly demonstrate a conflict between its own interests in combating terrorism in the Horn of Africa and those of the regional regimes, who have nothing but contempt for its worries. Noticeably, the dissemination of cutting-edge organizational methods and sophisticated military technologies that the US approaches involved extended beyond the upgrading of the military and the transfer of weaponry. It resulted in the spread of ideologies like Islamist fundamentalism and the ensuing security issues, particularly in Somalia, as a result of the institutionalized surveillance of entire communities and the blind mass suppression of all political opponents (Assefa, 2011; Mesfin, Ny; Moller, 2009).

According to a Horn of Africa observer, strangers should react wisely to the claims of terrorism made against different parties to the conflict in the region. The regional war on terrorism is more recent compared to the root causes of conflict there, which will likely outlast it. In order to protect their interests, foreign powers must understand the tactical importance of their support and the risks involved in painting local rivals as terrorists. Additionally, they must balance the potential benefits of intervention (in terms of combating international terrorism) with the dangers of increased radicalization, isolation, and conflict-making in the region (Healy, 2008; Mesfin, 1989).

Providing economic assistance

African nations that gained their independence have faced economic bankruptcy because of poor management, bad planning, and corruption, which have caused them to become more and more dependent on Western nations. Meanwhile, the region reliance on only one or two exportable goods limits the country's potential to create domestic earnings. Therefore, obtaining support from abroad in the form of foreign financial assistance during the early years of independence was a pipe dream. Such assistance, now known as development assistance, has always been insufficient or difficult to obtain. Despite the fact that some nations are fortunate, the outcome is occasionally not favorable. Whenever there are external investments, the potential benefits might not be enormous (Falola, 2003; Nkrumah, 1966).

Neocolonialism refers to a system in which previous colonial powers, along with the new superpowers, employ various economic and political strategies in order to maintain control of the region. The US, as a neocolonialist, controls the Horn of Africa in its sphere of interest by providing economic assistance. In fact, it is onerous to justify that success in the US translates into success in Africa. Somewhat, the progress of the US might result in the underdevelopment of countries in the Horn (Falola, 2003). Harold Markus argued that Ethiopian investment sustained 70 percent of U.S. Point Four efforts. The capital came from a burgeoning economy, which in 1953 and 1954 yielded a net surplus of about \$50 million, but Ethiopia still became a developing nation (Marcus, 1994).

As a neocolonialist nation, the US gives its businesses a competitive advantage in the manufacturing and distribution of goods. Thus, there have been instances where imported items have damaged domestic production, including that of food crops like grains. What is hurtful is the recruitment of those who are part of the region's political elite as agents to advance US neocolonial ambitions. Hence, the US double standard is evident: the US criticizes the region for a variety of issues, yet their businesses also look for ways to make money in the region, even when things are chaotic. US financial institutions keep the money that Horn of Africa governments have embezzled, and their businesses engage in widespread corruption to win lucrative contracts. The parameters of commerce are usually negative since the products from this region that trade with the US brings in fewer dollars than imports. Since all of the currencies of the nations located in the Horn of Africa are expensive to convert into other currencies and few are widely traded, they are compelled to maintain reserves that exist abroad on the continent (Marcus, 1994).

Promoting democracy

Obviously, from Greece and Rome in the ancient world to the US in more modern times, democratic republics have fallen prey to the imperialist desires and follies of mighty powers throughout history

(Petras & Veltmeyer, 2012). As capitalism developed, democracy was established as the political expression of a growing capitalist state. This enables an emerging capitalist class to secure its power while pushing the 'forces of freedom and democracy' as an ideological front (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2012).

In essence, the US imperial project did not involve the aforesaid ideological mask in the nineteenth century. However, things changed after World War II, that US government positioned itself as the defender of 'freedom and democracy' against its adversaries (Communism and terrorism). Thus, US frequently provided itself as the leader of the global custodian for freedom and democracy in the post-World War II. (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2012).

Despite the US supported anti-communist regimes in the Horn of Africa with very little concern for their democratic aspirations or growth initiative during the Cold War, the US was frequently more focused on the nearby Red Sea and Arabian peninsulas. Unfortunately, there was no comparable comprehensive plan for American policy in the region after the Cold War ended. It was replaced by an enigmatic web of evolving bilateral relations that included attempts to force democratic transitions in place of challenging Cold War obligations (Williams, 2011a).

The U.S. has continually one of the biggest contributors of foreign assistance to the region, spending tens of billions of dollars over the past several decades on initiatives for democracy. However, behind the veil of this cover, US would engage in supporting military coups against democratically elected leaders, donating different rebel groups of the region, recognizing trickery votes, and others. In fact, the US intelligence services generated odd terrorist schemes. This was evident, US undemocratic states of the region such as she supported the imperial regime under Emperor Haile Selassie, and peppercorn EPRDF in Ethiopia. US assisted antidemocratic rebel groups in Somalia and Kenya (Hussain, 2017). Thus, US did nothing for Ethiopia and Eritreans to exercise democracy since 1940s. This was due to; Emperor Haile Selassie fulfilled US interests in the region by forwarding Radio Marina, the latter Kagnev Station. Radio Marina was an Italian facility in Asmera that the US military took control of in 1942 and later enlarged and integrated into a global network that gathered and beamed information to the Pentagon, US intelligence offices. The location of Radio Marina in an area that Washington wished to retain free of Soviet influence was crucial to American security (Marks, 1974). Although Somalis saw the intervention as a period of excess and the 'dollarization' of their economy, the US-led UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was initially established in April 1992 to ensure the safe delivery of relief aid following the civil war (Yusuf, 2006).

Providing humanitarian relief

Prior to the dissolution of the Somali state, Cold War politics played an integral part in foreign aid (including humanitarian and development aid), until the early 1990s that the relationship between humanitarian action and international relations consolidated. The Horn of Africa now has one of the worst and longest-lasting humanitarian crises in the world. It also has one of the most constrained and unsafe conditions for humanitarian players (Hammond & Vaughan-lee, 2012).

According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the Horn has registered 32 state-based armed conflict tandems, 179 non-state armed conflict tandems, and 22 tandems of one-sided violence campaigns since 1990. Around 231,510 people have died in battle in these state-sponsored armed wars; 31,511 people have died in non-state armed conflicts; and 25,264 people have been slain in one-sided violent campaigns (Williams, 2011b).

More than thirteen million people in need of humanitarian aid are currently living in the Horn, which is currently experiencing the worst food security crisis in the history of the planet. These developments forced the US government's recent 'Feed the Future' food security project to be a welcome step in the right direction. Thus, while Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia may be among its focal countries, it is likely to be advantageous to the people of the Horn of Africa. US neocolonialism's concealment was evident in 'Feed the Future'. It will not be able to feed the starving populations of Somalia and Eritrea, and it must find out how to stop governments and insurgents from using food as a weapon (Crist, 1987; Williams, 2011b). The original intentions of foreign aid were to contain communism, expand U.S. markets, undo wrongs against the third world, and feed the hungry. Even with the good intentions of this program, it provided hidden subsidies to businessmen

and sustained democracy instead (Tendler, 1975). The process of foreign aid is chocked full of corruption and ulterior motives.

It is widely acknowledged that providing aid during a conflict is always politicized. Some people view negotiating access with non-state actors or delivering services in their control zones as certifying these actors, which frequently raises worries about aid being exploited as a means of financing or igniting conflict. Through deliberate and outright integration of humanitarian action by political players, such as the use of emergency assistance in military operations and as a kind of payment for fostering peace, aid has frequently become politicized. Thus, there is a connection between politics and humanitarian action, whether it be through the influence that humanitarian aid can have on political systems or through the politicization of aid, which occurs when aid is purposefully used to further political objectives (Hammond & Vaughan-lee, 2012).

Implementing peace building initiatives

John Prendergast and Colin Thomas Jensen encouraged the U.S. government to cooperate with the AU and the UN Secretary-General on establishing a 'Greater Horn peace initiative' in 2007. According to them, fostering peaceful resolution of conflicts and sound governance in the region should be its main goals (Williams, 2011b).

According to Hansen, the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Russia (USSR) have provided significant financial and military support to nations in the Horn of Africa which has contributed to the region's ongoing conflicts. They purposefully stoked political unrest to maintain the region's reliance on them for technical assistance and the supply of armaments (Hansen, 1987; Reatile, 2004).

US efforts to promote peace in the area have so far been quite selective and have yielded variable outcomes. A successful conflict resolution involves much more than just signing a peace accord, as seen by the conflicts in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. The US and other international actors have not served critical peace agreements that have not been implemented or completed, such as the CPA process between Sudan and South Sudan or the Doha agreement (2011) on Darfur, the Algiers Agreement (2000), and the Djibouti Agreement (2008) (Williams, 2011a).

Normative agents for American Neo-colonialism in the Horn of Africa

Imiru asserts that neither the Horn of Africa's resources nor any other continental advantage have ever given the region strategic prominence (Zelege, 1989). Instead, as Jeffrey Lefebvre argued, the region has consistently been assigned an increasingly significant strategic value because of its proximity to the Red Sea, which is a vital and quick route for global commerce and communications. He claimed that the Horn evolved into a gateway connecting Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East while also serving as a shipping route for the delivery of crude oil from the Persian Gulf to consumers in North America and Europe (Lefebvre, 1996; Legum, 1985).

By and large, the US interest in the Horn of Africa was to safeguard oil in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. That is why the US is highly engaged in deterring any increase in Soviet power and influence in the Middle East, Indian Ocean, and the Horn of Africa, whether it is done so through proxies or not. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, sought to increase its stature as a superpower by influencing and arming most client states in key regions, (Zelege, 1989) jeopardizing oil tankers bound to the West via the Suez Canal, and reducing to nil the influence of the US in the abovementioned regions. Geopolitical realism also demanded that the Soviet Union dominate the areas extending from South Asia to the Horn of Africa in order to provide its fast-expanding navy with marine assembly places (Farer, 1979).

In order to safeguard the abovementioned interests of neocolonialism under the names of terrorism, humanitarian aid, democracy, economic axle, and peacekeeping force, the US used its normative agents in the Horn of Africa. Etymologically speaking, 'US normative agents' refers to US agents who would enable her to advance her sphere of influence over another country by (re)shaping established norms (such as economic growth, digitization, and security) in line with its political, economic, and social objectives.

One of the normative agents of US neo-colonialism became national and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Since time immemorial, in the 1980s, US financial institutions wanted to grant loans at a high-interest rate to countries in the Horn of Africa. While this was happening, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund approved the loan requests, facilitated many of them, and provided their own loans. In this situation, external control of the Horn of Africa's economies has been brought about by loans from the aforementioned financial institutions, led by the US (Farer, 1979; Mkandawire & Soludo, 1990; Petras & Veltmeyer, 2012).

In essence, the World Bank and the IMF designed a number of prerequisite conditions, Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), aiming to transform African countries and enable lenders to receive their funds. African nationalist writers metaphorically express, 'SAP is the kiss of death'. Among the prerequisites are the privatization of state-owned businesses, the cessation of subsidies, the lowering of trade barriers, the reduction of financial support for social programs, and the restriction of state intervention in the economy. Thus, in order to be accepted by the neoliberal global capitalist system, the countries of the Horn altered their internal affairs. Moreover, unpaid debts and foreign investment may contribute to an impoverished country becoming financially dependent on the investor (Falola, 2003; Petras & Veltmeyer, 2012).

By the beginning of the 1990s, about forty countries had obtained loans from banks, and the consequences that followed were comparable. In accepting loans, these countries disintegrated their economic and political problems. To maintain their positions of power over their racial supporters, authoritarian dictators require funding. Whatever the countries of the Horn become dictatorships but are suitable for US interests, they have got financial loans (Falola, 2003; Prendergast & Colin Thomas-Jensen, 2007). This was evident in countries such as Eritrea and Ethiopia, which are known for detaining journalists, the absence of rule of law, the absence of a fair and free election, famine, starvation, and unemployment, found in the strategic region of the Horn, and so many other things they share in common. However, due to its interest, the US favors Ethiopia in gaining loans from international financial institutions while blocking Eritrea.

Another normative agent of US neo-colonialism became United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which was created in 1961. The major assistance program objectives are to assist the region to mobilize their own resources and to expand the monetary economy by increasing commercial agricultural and industrial production, developing manpower training and education, and improving organizational and administration skills. However, the assistance directly or indirectly forwarded for the regional states if and only if the US sphere of interest would not endanger.

Another significant normative actor of US neo-colonialism in the Horn of Africa is the establishment of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in 2002 at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, which has now been centered at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti since 2003. Its goal is to strengthen regional partners' capabilities to advance peace and security in the region, avoid contention, and safeguard US and coalition interests through a deceptive strategy that emphasizes populations, security capabilities, and the fundamental human need to combat violent extremism. In practical terms, CJTF-HOA seeks to avoid violence by establishing and relying on strong regional alliances. However, the US used CJTF-HOA for its interest in assisting rebel groups (Assefa, 2011).

The Marshall Plan's goal of opening up Africa to the United States was helped by the Point Four program. Only three percent of American foreign investments were in Africa before World War II, and less than five percent of the continent's trade was with the country. Markus claims that Ethiopia benefited from seventy percent of the US Point Four operations in the area (Nkrumah, 1966; Marcus, 1994).

The impacts of American neocolonialism in the Horn of Africa

Neocolonialism has led to socioeconomic and political consequences over under developing countries. In the Horn of Africa, where US decisions were mainly made, sovereignty has been lost due to its neo-colonialism. As a result, the US was providing material donation and financial aid through its normative agents, and these initiatives could not benefit the recipient because they were dictated and monitored (Gavin W. , 1981).

US Neo-Colonialism has increased unemployment in the Horn of Africa, where the educational system of countries in the Horn modelled from US produce more job seekers than entrepreneurs. Low technological development in the Horn, where inappropriate machines entered the region and the people lacked the knowledge to operate them. In addition, the influx of foreign expatriates, led to the loss of motivation and repatriation of profits (Rodney, 1972).

Additionally, US neocolonialism has produced titular leaders in other countries. These were usually used to promote its objectives rather than the interests of countries in the region. The US attempted to reduce violent extremism in the Horn of Africa by implementing various counter-extremism projects. According to Ploch, the counter-extremism activities of the US include influence operations, public diplomacy, financial sanctions, travel bans, support to combat terrorist financing, limiting terrorist mobility, and enhancing the counter-terrorism capacities of regional allies (Lauren, 2010).

Political climates become extremely erratic and violent. Protests, strikes, food riots, and student demonstrations became commonplace in most nations in the 1980s and 1990s. The issues caused by the SAP resulted in several political developments, including the escalated use of violence to quell the unruly populace, the fall of some administrations, and a change in leadership (Falola, 2003; Cooper, 2001).

The SAP policies of the IMF, one of the US normative agencies, had an impact on the socioeconomic and political advancement of nations in the Horn of Africa. For instance, the tuition system and the reduction of staff and teachers in the educational system politicized youngsters. Inflation numbers started to appear in a number of digits. Government disapproval is at an all-time high as a result of rising unemployment and inflation. Civil society deteriorates, becoming more organized and acrimonious at the same time. Most governments initially reacted with intimidation and violence, locked up dissidents and opponents and forced many others into exile (Falola, 2003).

In general, cultural changes have both positive and negative effects, and some societies might not be prepared to accept those changes if they are thought to be too harmful to long-standing traditional institutions. I find it difficult to deny the cultural changes generated by US neocolonialism in the Horn of Africa. No community can afford to exist or continue to exist in a stagnant state. Countries in the Horn are no different, but there must be significant adjustments (Gavin, 1981).

A culture of equality replaced the inferiority attitude that was established by the slave trade and colonial rule in relation to the West. The Horn of Africa has gotten over the challenges brought on by US neocolonial relations. Democracy requires a shift in political culture that includes fair, free, and frequent elections, stability, citizen empowerment, and broad public engagement in decision-making. In addition, governmental institutions changed in order for the public to accept them as legitimate. In fact, the cultures of countries in the Horn of Africa have continued to undergo changes as a result of US influences, adjustments to the systems of production and distribution, and adjustments to the systems of education, health, and families.

The most terrible thing of all is that neocolonialism originated in the West and has since spread to other countries, including China. In the last twenty years or so, China has been a reliable source of investment and financing, technology, and entrepreneurship for Africa. It has also increased trade, provided access to each other's markets, and supported capacity-building. Chinese investors were drawn to the Horn's high achievers in particular due to their potential for economic expansion, expanding consumer markets, low labour costs, and wealth of natural resources. Not only has China rushed to send special envoys to the Horn of Africa, but the United States and the United Kingdom have done the same. The U.S. designated two Special Envoys in fast succession: Ambassador David Satterfield in January and Ambassador Mike Hammer in June 2022. Both the nominations were formed out of the awareness that the Horn's continued volatility and interconnected political, security, and humanitarian concerns demand a sustained focus by the United States.

In response to the above-mentioned backdrops, the elite within African nations are under immense pressure to be white, and they do so by sucking up all the wealth. There is enormous pressure to be corrupt in this atmosphere, and the corruption trickles down. Bribes at low levels are shared by elites, and the circle completes. This is also a process seen in the West, but the amount of money involved compared to the states in Africa largely goes unnoticed. US aid fuels conflict, kids serve as soldiers, and instead of assisting the populace, authorities embezzle money from the nation. Although this paper does not extensively examine leadership aspects. In order to be united with their people, the

leaders must either change or commit class suicide by giving up the luxury items they have pilfered (Parenti, 2011).

Conclusion and possible solutions

Neocolonialism is commonly defined as a system in which former colonial powers and the new super-powers (the USSR, USA, and most recently China) implement various socio-economic and political strategies in developing countries. In fact, there are strong paradoxical arguments about whether the US is a neocolonialist or a straightforward ally in the Horn of Africa.

However, according to reliable sources and logical views, the US is described as a neocolonialist in the Horn of Africa. This made it clear that US perceptions are very different in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Thus, the US has been called an international bully that is willing to violate international law to protect its interests and willing to turn a blind eye to the human rights abuses committed by brutal governments as long as they support its anti-terrorist agenda.

There are several mechanisms in which US neocolonialism operates in the Horn of Africa: multinational corporations, foreign aid (often becomes self-perpetuating), intelligence agencies, militaries, tax-exempt foundations, corrupt leadership, and psychological dilemmas. Strategies such as combating terrorism, providing economic assistance, promoting democracy, providing humanitarian relief, and implementing peace-building initiatives are the best masks for US neocolonialism to advance its national interests in the Horn of Africa.

Sadly, the covert agents of US neocolonialism become invisible governments in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Thus, the invisible influence of the US on countries in the region can be seen in various institutions, policies, and organizations. To mention a few, international financial institutions and organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and its organs, US national organizations, and policies such as Pont Four, USAID, SAP, and CJTF-HOA.

US Neocolonialism is causing the blockade of the Horn of Africa nations through economic imperialism, corruption, and historical conduct. In essence, the US became described as a milking cow for its useful source of resources, whether in the form of development aid, humanitarian assistance, or military training and support. In contrast, the US government has been described as fictitious, talking widely about the importance of good governance and human rights but being powerless to determine outcomes on the ground.

The road to the actual emancipation of the Horn is riddled with problems. While it is an organic component of this process, the fight against neocolonialism is also a long-term economic and political aspect. Consequently, rather than heedlessly giving money to already wealthy elites, intervening governments and organizations must listen to communities and invest in human development to reverse the detrimental impacts of US neocolonialism in the Horn of Africa.

Restriction on foreign capital's freedom, the ability to choose for oneself what to use resources received from USAID, and the fight for fair trade conditions with the United States should rank among the most crucial policies. Ironically, they would be a better option for trade, not aid.

The governments of the Horn states are attempting to bring foreign capital under their control and to attenuate the negative consequences that foreign capital holds for the weak economies of their countries. Moreover, the Horn states are taking energetic steps to improve the extremely disadvantageous terms of commodity exchange with the USA and to occupy a more equal position in the world capitalist market.

The Horn countries are trying to raise the level of their revenues, increase the influx of hard currency, and secure additional employment for the indigenous workforce through the organization of the processing of raw materials locally. In general, the Horn has the chance to liberate itself from neocolonialism if it builds a strong central government, reduces export dependency, and allows the states to play a large role in economics.

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