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United Nations Security Council (UNSC)





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MUNUC-SFLS 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAIR LETTER.....	3
REMINDER FROM THE DAIS	5
STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEE	7
HISTORY OF COMMITTEE	10
TOPIC: THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM.....	18
History of the Problem.....	18
Statement of the Problem.....	24
Past Actions	31
Possible Solutions	38
Bloc Positions	43
Bibliography	59

CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

I am so excited to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council at MUNUC-SFLS 2023! My name is Elizabeth Williams, and I will be your chair for this committee. Currently, I am a third-year student at the University of Chicago majoring in Business Economics on the pre-med track, and I am originally from New Jersey. For the past two years, I have been an Assistant Chair for UNSC, and I also staff our collegiate conference, ChoMUN. When I'm not participating in MUN or studying at the library, I love playing the piano, trying out new recipes, watching K-dramas, and exploring campus with my friends.

MUN has been an important part of my life for quite a while. My sophomore year of high school, I participated in my first conference as a delegate in a crisis committee. This experience, although fast-paced and intense, sparked my love for the world of international relations, improved my debate and negotiation skills, and allowed me to make connections from across the globe. The Security Council also holds a special place in my heart since it's the committee I've participated in or chaired most often, both in and out of UChicago—this year's MUNUC-SFLS will be my 7th time staffing a Security Council committee.

Throughout the conference, you will discuss the conflict surrounding Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and devise solutions to its political and humanitarian ramifications, along with considering the crisis in broader regional and economic relations. Addressing these issues requires dialogue, diplomacy, and inclusive decision-making, and I am sure that all of you will bring fresh perspectives to the table. As delegates of the Security Council, you hold unique and nuanced power, and it is your responsibility to strategically and diplomatically negotiate conflicting interests within Africa.

It is essential that you treat the discussion with the utmost respect, both in regards to the topic, and toward your fellow delegates. I can't wait to see your engaging debate and dynamic solutions at the conference. If you have any questions during your research and preparation, don't hesitate to reach out to me—I am here to help. Good luck, and see you in December!

Best,

Elizabeth Williams

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REMINDER FROM THE DAIS

Delegates, it is easy to remove ourselves from the situation surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. In this committee and throughout the background we will discuss the conflict in clinical, diplomatic terms. At some point these discussions can feel impersonal. It is difficult to imagine the extent of even one family's trauma, and even more difficult to do so in a way that respects their suffering.

In some ways, we are asking the impossible of you. We are asking for your compassion and objectivity--for both the humanity to grieve with those suffering and the detachment to analyze their political systems critically. In this committee we ask that you only focus on concrete solutions, while in our hearts, we constantly weigh the impact of these solutions. It is a balance that even seasoned diplomats struggle with, and yet this dais will expect that of you in every speech that you give and clause that you write. We hold you to this standard because we believe you are capable of it. Year after year, we have been astonished by your maturity, your creativity, and your humanity in addressing problems that have baffled the international community for decades. We ask you to direct that humanity to the conflict brewing over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

This means two things. First, it means that we expect the highest level of respect in discussing this issue. Debate on how to deal with violence and how to best provide assistance and refuge to those affected by it, will be welcomed. Taking advantage of crimes against humanity in committee or crisis, on the other hand, will not be tolerated by the dais. Second, it means that if at any point this weekend, you want to talk about the GERD in a context removed from Model UN or competition, you need only ask. Above everything else, this weekend is an opportunity for you to grow as citizens of the world: to acknowledge but never accept the unspeakable horrors that have confronted students just like us, half a world away.

While the dais will focus on analysis and facts for the rest of this background guide, we sincerely hope you pause every so often to allow yourself to digest and come to terms with the situation. Your

dais is here to support you in any way we can; we will always be available over email for whatever questions or concerns you may have.

STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEE

Introduction

Model United Nations is a simulation that may not be highly realistic, but nonetheless is a critical learning experience for all those involved. The dais hopes that every delegate in this committee walks away with a meaningful understanding of the contradicting mandates that diplomats can face; the struggle of balancing multiple perspectives in policy; how to maximize payoff for all parties while minimizing damages, future tension, and unintended consequences. From this simulation we hope delegates will learn to question all sides of an issue and critically examine the underlying reasons for a country's policy. Additionally, delegates should focus on how to balance both the macro-impacts of an international policy with the micro level consequences that real people will face as a result. Lastly, we hope that the committee recognizes there are no correct solutions and there are no final solutions. International policy is a difficult realm that requires solutions that continue to evolve to fit the needs of the situation.

Single Topic

The UNSC at MUNUC-SFLS will cover only one topic: the conflict brewing over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The rest of this background guide will cover several subtopics pertaining to the construction of the dam and the tensions surrounding it, but it will not delve into a second topic. As executives, we hope that only having one topic will encourage delegates to thoroughly research all sides of the issue and come into committee with comprehensive solutions, with little question of what will be debated once you enter the committee room. Delegates should come into the committee prepared to discuss all subtopics covered in the background guide as there is no ambiguity about what the committee will cover.

Resolution Elements

The resolution side of this committee will simulate policymaking in the UNSC; the careful, calculated process by which resolutions are proposed and adopted or struck down. There are two main skills

that we will simulate: debate during the creation of these policies and lobbying for those policies once they have been decided.

Speeches simulate the debate surrounding the creation of each policy considered by the UNSC. Generally speaking, there are two types of effective speeches in this committee. The first is meant to broadcast your country's position on a topic. The second, is meant to critique another country's policies. Policy speeches explain how the policy you are advocating for should be implemented, and why it is necessary to solve the problem at hand. Ideally, the policies in these speeches are feasible, relevant, and leave the world and your country better off. Proposing a policy of this caliber requires careful research into case studies and similar policies, with careful attention toward how those approaches can be tweaked to maximize impact in the current situation.

The second type of speech opposes a policy proposed in a speech. The best critical speeches are direct but respectful. Clearly stating a pitfall with a solution will not be perceived by the dais as hostile, unless those pitfalls are conveyed in a manner that is disrespectful. No delegate will walk into the committee room on Thursday with a perfect solution. This means that every policy proposed will be workshopped and debated. We will argue over whether one consequence is less significant than another, and for the sake of time and clarity, those arguments should be concise and clear. Critical speeches are the main way in which this debate happens, and as long as criticisms are grounded in country policy, research, and respect, this dais will encourage them.

A speech that is dramatic or flashy but doesn't actually keep people's attention, won't serve the purpose of the speech. Likewise, a speech that is full of content, but misses the pulse of the debate also fails to shape the direction of the room. *Whatever your style of speaking, you should be able to shape the discussion in the room to your advantage.* But these are generalizations. Debate in the committee room is a conversation, and conversations don't always happen in a stiff, two-sided back and forth. There is always room for style and thoughtful comments, whatever form those might take. This dais will listen to every word you say, and consider it in terms of your sincerity, research, verve and understanding of the flow of debate in the room.

Resolutions, as you can read from the MUNUC delegate training resources, are often the culmination of a conference. They are the committee's response to the challenges it faces, and the combined solutions of multiple policy proposals that have been debated and negotiated throughout the conference. UNSC resolutions, in particular, should focus on directly addressing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam situation, with the secondary concern of mitigating future problems that might arise in the region.

HISTORY OF THE UNSC

Mandate

The Security Council first took form at the Yalta Conference of 1945. There, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin outlined the council's powers as the UN organ responsible for international peacekeeping.¹¹ Security Council resolutions are binding under collective security; all UN Member States must, in theory, adhere to a Security Council resolution. The council derives its "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security" from Article 24, Chapter V of the Charter. The Charter goes on to describe how the Security Council can receive input and draw resources from various other UN bodies, specifically only at the request of the Council; in executing its mission to resolve international disputes, the council is limited only by the reservations of its member states.

Of particular interest are Chapters VI and VII, which describe the unchecked nature of the Security Council's powers of enforcement.² Article 36, in particular, endows the body with the power to take action in "any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction."³ Given the undefined criteria for what might lead to "international friction," Security Council interventions run the risk of being arbitrarily directed by the interests of its members.

The magnitude of force theoretically commanded by the Security Council is breathtaking; Chapter VII gives the council the authority to enforce sweeping sanctions and military operations against an aggressor state. In Article 41, the Security Council may exercise,

*"complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations."*⁴

Since 1945, the Security Council has relied heavily on sanctions to take joint action without resorting to drastic military measures. These military measures include:

¹ Lynch, "United Nations."

² Sarooshi, *The United Nations*.

³ "Chapter V."

⁴ Ibid.

"such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security...includ[ing] demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations." (Article 42)⁵

While Article 45 includes a provision intended to provide a standing military for the Council, the clause has not been implemented in seventy years. To compensate for this lack of immediate military power, the Council draws on other UN bodies for military enforcement. The Security Council has delegated military forces to regional defense organizations like NATO in Bosnia, individual UN Member States in the coalition against Iraq, and international tribunals like the War Crimes Tribunal for Rwanda.



Information regarding these missions flows between the General Assembly and the Security Council on a one-way street controlled by the council; while the Security Council releases reports and

⁵ Ibid.

updates on its decisions to the General Assembly, the General Assembly may only make recommendations to the council with the consent of the Security Council.⁶

Despite the Security Council's vast mandate, the Charter makes room for individual nations to defend themselves as they see fit, without Security Council approval. Article 51 most clearly acknowledges the "inherent right of individual...self-defense if an armed attack occurs...until the Security Council has taken measures" to restore security.⁷ This one clause acknowledges the significant possibility that collective security could fail to protect UN Member States in a timely and effective manner.

The dais highly recommends that delegates skim the Chapter VI through VIII of the UN Charter, since those sections outline the scope of the Security Council's power, and can inform delegates on the kinds of actions the body can reasonably take.

Structure

Since 1966, when Article 23 was introduced, the Security Council has consisted of representatives from 15 member states. This was an increase from the eleven member states that sat on the council for the twenty years before 1965.⁸ Those fifteen member states are divided into two groups: the P-5 and the elected Members.

The current P-5 nations are the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They are dubbed P-5 because they hold the five permanent seats on the Security Council.⁹ These nations also have veto power, which means that any permanent member may unilaterally dismiss collective action by the Security Council, even if the action has the nine required affirmative votes. This power is outlined under Article 27 of the UN Charter.¹⁰ Veto power is at the heart of the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "The United Nations," *The Green Papers*.

⁹ Russia assumed the Soviet Union's P-5 position in 1991, and the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China in 1971.

¹⁰ Lynch, "United Nations."

Security Council's ineffectiveness, and gives teeth to the threat of individual states pursuing their own interests. Any proposal that would disadvantage a P-5 nation is highly unlikely to be seen on the floor of the Security Council, meaning that a threat to international peace and security, if posed by a P-5 nation, will go unaddressed by the body tasked to address such aggression. That this power has been wielded by the same five nations for the past seventy years further highlights how entrenched this advantage is on the international stage.

In addition to the P-5, the Security Council has ten non-permanent members that are elected, usually with somewhat equitable geographical distribution. Each elected member serves a term of two years, although regions have previously split that two year term between nations of similar geographical standing. A retiring member cannot be immediately re-elected to a seat on the Security Council, and their terms are staggered so that five of the ten elected members retire each year.¹¹ These ten members are distributed across four geographic regions: five from Africa or Asia, one from eastern Europe, two from Latin America, and two from elsewhere in the world. Each member on the council presides over the Security Council as its president for one month.¹² The Council President has powers that include calling meetings as necessary and presiding over them, approving the provisional agenda, and choosing the order in which amendments to draft resolutions (if there are two or more of them) are voted upon.¹³

While critics of the Security Council argue that its composition reflects the Western, colonial power structure of the mid-1900s, this committee will steer clear of reforming any internal flaws inherent to the Security Council over the course of the weekend.

¹¹ "Chapter V."

¹² Lynch, "United Nations."

¹³ Thompson, Shamala et. al. "The UN Security Council Handbook." New York, NY: *UN Headquarters*, 2019. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCE9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/the-un-securitycouncil-handbook-by-scr-1.pdf>

Procedure

The dais will discuss procedural matters later in this background guide as well as field questions on the Thursday of the conference. For the purpose of simulating the Security Council, most of the parliamentary procedure rules will parallel that of a General Assembly, with two notable differences. Procedural matters will be decided by an affirmative vote of any nine members.¹⁴ A negative vote by a P-5 member for a procedural matter does not count as a veto. Substantive matters, which involve an action taken by the Security Council, also require nine affirmative votes, but those nine votes must technically include those of the P-5. In practice, P-5 members have abstained from voting without causing the motion to fail.¹⁵

Theoretical Authority

The Security Council and General Assembly jointly determine UN Membership. All candidates for UN Membership must receive the recommendation of the Security Council as well as a two-thirds vote in favor by the General Assembly.¹⁶ Due to tensions from the Cold War, Security Council approval was a major roadblock for countries attempting to gain membership. For example, the United States vetoed the People's Republic of China's application at every General Assembly session for twenty-one years before finally allowing mainland China both membership and a seat on the Security Council.¹⁷

The Security Council can address concerns raised by any state, even if said state is not a member of the UN. According to Security Council protocol, the council prioritizes any possibility of orchestrating a peaceful resolution before authorizing the use of force or sanctions. The Security Council may also deploy peacekeeping forces to separate the opposing parties, although their success has repeatedly been called into question. Only when a party commits an act of aggression under Article 39 of the UN Charter is the Security Council authorized to sanction the party. An act of

¹⁴ The definition of a procedural matter is sometimes disputed, however, a vote to determine whether something is procedural or substantive counts as a substantive vote.

¹⁵ "United Nations Security Council," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 21 July 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/UnitedNations-Security-Council>.

¹⁶ Lynch, "United Nations."

¹⁷ Ibid.

aggression is defined as “the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations.”¹⁸ Military action is only allowed when all previous measures are insufficient to establish and maintain peace.¹⁹

The Security Council is also vested with the power to create and maintain committees as necessary for the maintenance and investigation of its various missions. Each sanctioned state, peacekeeping mission, and tribunal undertaken by the council has a Sanctions Committee, Peacekeeping Forces Committee, and International Tribunal Committee, respectively, that oversee the day-to-day logistics of the body.

Authority based on Precedent

Decades of accumulated precedent limit the Security Council to interventions that are necessary and proportional to the aggression; there is little basis for the fear of a regularly over-reaching Security Council. Furthermore, while the Security Council is theoretically capable of calling on the military and economic might of 193 UN Member States, that level of power has not translated to the real world. A classic example of this discrepancy is found during the Cold War. Tensions between the US and the Soviet Union rendered the Security Council an ineffective institution, with both states vetoing resolutions proposed by or benefitting the other. Between 1948 to 1978, only thirteen missions were approved by the Security Council. In half that time, beginning in 1987, three times as many missions were approved in geopolitically critical areas like the Balkans, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Angola.²⁰ While the stalemate was somewhat resolved with the end of the Cold War, the underlying problem of a standoff between two P-5 nations was left unaddressed.

A recent issue faced by the Security Council is its ability to address non-state terrorist organizations. Because these groups are not affiliated with states, they are therefore not bound to any of the ICJ laws or other institutions that usually step in before the Security Council. While the council can exercise its power over non-state and non-UN-Member-States, its ability to effectively address these

¹⁸ Thompson, “The UN Security Council Handbook.”

¹⁹ “United Nations Security Council,” Encyclopedia Britannica.

²⁰ Lynch, “United Nations.” s

organizations is doubtful due to its bureaucratic nature; a UN mission takes anywhere from months to years to become reality on the ground. While the UN Security Council may not be the best suited to tackle inter-state terrorist organizations, it is the most legally suited to doing so.

Past Paradigm: Collective Security

Collective security is a mechanism by which all member states participate in the enforcement of international laws, regardless of whether they were directly impacted. It attempts to deter interstate conflict through alliances guaranteeing that all members will come to the defense of any member of the system.²¹ This is the principle the UN Charter refers to in its preamble when it calls on Member States to “unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.”²² This system proved ineffective, as collective security requires collective action, and states rarely act against their own interests. Both the League of Nations (1921) and the United Nations (1946), which operated under the collective security system, failed to prevent proxy conflicts between major powers. As the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is as limited as it is empowered by collective security.

Current Paradigm: Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The Security Council’s role on the international stage is defined, in part, by tension between upholding the sovereignty of its Member States and protecting the humanitarian rights of the people within them. Recalling the failures of the Security Council in Rwanda and Srebrenica, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan summarized the problem thus:

“If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond...to gross and systematic violation of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” (Millennium Report 2000)

The expression “responsibility to protect” has since emerged as the answer to the former Secretary-General’s question. The term was first used in a 2001 report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and referred to a State’s responsibility to protect the

²¹ Lynch, “United Nations.”

²² “The United Nations,” *The Green Papers*.

people within its border. It made state sovereignty contingent on the government preventing “large-scale...and serious violations of humanitarian law.”²³ While acknowledging that states have primary authority and therefore responsibility within their territory, the report shifts that responsibility to the international community--specifically the Security Council--when states are “powerless or unwilling to prevent” humanitarian violations. R2P changed the discussion around international security from one of collective security to collective responsibility.

In September 2005, all UN Member States accepted their responsibility to protect their populations from crimes against humanity, and to help people outside of their populations should they be threatened by such crimes. The 2005 World Summit also legitimized the use of force by the UN Security Council to exercise R2P based on whether the threat was serious, all other options were exhausted, and the response was proportional to the threat.²⁴

The Security Council first referred to R2P in the context of protecting civilians in armed conflict in April 2006 ([S/RES/1674](#)). That reference was then used to justify the deployment of peacekeeping troops to Darfur later that year ([S/RES/1706](#)). Since then, the Security Council has used the concept of R2P routinely to authorize peacekeeping missions. Examples include Libya (2011), South Sudan (2011), Côte d’Ivoire (2011), Yemen (2011), Syria (2012) and the Central African Republic (2013).²⁵

²³ “Background on R2P,” *The United Nations*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

TOPIC: THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM

History of the Problem

Abstract

Following years of strong relations, Ethiopia and Egypt are now at an impasse over the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) as they each attempt to secure long-term economic growth opportunities for their countries. Ethiopia is invested in this project primarily in order to meet the energy needs of its citizens and, hopefully, to establish itself as a global player, while Egypt has already structured much of its output around the Nile waters and enjoys a comparatively stronger economy. Sudan has experienced far more strained relations with Ethiopia and, as a downstream country, will be similarly affected as Egypt by the potentially limiting effects of the dam. An understanding of the historical interactions between the countries can highlight the root causes of the present-day conflicts as the countries work towards a collective compromise.

Relations between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt

Ethiopia - Sudan Relations

The Ethiopian Civil War, which lasted from 1961 to 1991, ultimately ended when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrew the Derg — officially the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia — to establish a system of ethnic federalism. During the long period of conflict, EPRDF representatives often sought refuge across the border and, as a result, established close relationships with those in power in the Sudanese government. Once the EPRDF had gained power, it continued to maintain these close ties and reduced its support for the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), an organization working to overthrow the existing Sudanese government. However, a later change in Sudanese government ignited concerns that the positive relations between the countries would be strained.



The governments of both Ethiopia and Sudan faced much opposition from parties within their borders, and external support and financing from the other government varied depending on the group in power. Due to the overly reciprocal nature of government support for rebellious insurgents within the borders of the other country, the relations between Ethiopia and Sudan quickly turned far more hostile in the mid-90s as the EPRDF strengthened its power in Ethiopia and SPLA did the same in Sudan.^{26, 27} A series of small but escalating conflicts occurred between the two countries for the

²⁶ "Human Rights Watch World Report 1995 - Ethiopia", Human Rights Watch, 1 January 1995, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/467fc9a1a.html> [accessed 11 August 2020].

²⁷ "Human Rights Watch World Report 1995 - Sudan", Human Rights Watch, 1 January 1995, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/467fc9a1a.html> [accessed 11 August 2020].

next few years as they each worked to regain political strongholds in their country while battling the insurgencies supported by the other. Only after Ethiopia engaged in a two-year conflict with Eritrea, formerly a close ally, did the Ethiopian government begin to mend its relationship with Sudan and shift its alliances within the Horn of Africa region.²⁸

Although tensions appeared to have simmered down, they have recently flared up again as a result of multiple border skirmishes in recent months. The border was initially created following a series of treaties between Ethiopia and colonial European powers, but lacks clear demarcation between the two countries. Ethiopia and Sudan share about 993 miles (1000 km) of the border, but the lines appear to be fluid in certain areas. Sudan's al-Fashqa region, for example, offers much fertile land and has been a source of income to Ethiopian farmers for many years. However, the Sudanese transitional government currently in place has begun talks with the Ethiopian government to remove these farmers from this land. Increased militarization in this region, among others, has led to heightened tensions both along the border and in talks between government parties. Recently, the Sudanese government has also withdrawn its previous support for GERD and although some argue that the recent border disputes are not a factor in this decision, resolving these tensions could support the GERD compromise regardless.²⁹

Ethiopia - Egypt Relations

Although interactions between the two countries began long before, formalized talks in 1927 to ensure a consistent water supply to Egypt through Ethiopia marked one of the defining moments in the early periods of officially recognized relations between the countries.³⁰ This relationship, built on the importance of the Nile to both economies, was further entrenched through the development of multiple collective organizations aiming to unite countries built on and around the Nile river. However, many of these initiatives failed because they did not include all of the Nile riparian

²⁸ Shinn, David H. "Ethiopia: Coping with Islamic Fundamentalism before and after September 11." CSIS: Africa Notes, No. 7, (2002).

²⁹ Mwakideu, Chrispin. "What's behind the Ethiopia-Sudan border row?" Deutsche Welle. April 06, 2020.

³⁰ "The Chargé in Egypt (Winship) to the Secretary of State," Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol. 2, 884.6461, (1927).

countries and/or did not address the legal challenges faced by these countries.³¹ In 1999, the founding of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) unified all ten Nile riparian countries and expanded the scope of its work to a more holistic manner of evaluating initiatives within the Nile region.³²

The governments of Ethiopia and Egypt have continued to foster close ties through additional economic and religious ties. In 1904, Ethiopia's first formal banking system, the Bank of Abyssinia, was supported in its initial development by the National Bank of Egypt (NBE). The NBE was granted a 50-year period in which they were allowed to operate a monopoly through the Bank of Abyssinia on government-related financing, among other concessions.³³ Even more recently, close corporate ties and extensive investments in Ethiopian companies highlights the extent to which these two countries are economically linked. The former Ethiopian Prime Minister himself urged Egyptian businesses to continue their investments in Ethiopian businesses as the conditions were, according to him at least, ideal.³⁴ In 2018, over 60% of the total investments made by Egyptian companies were in Sudan and Ethiopia, emphasizing the great interdependency of these countries.³⁵ The establishment of the Egyptian-Ethiopian Business Council serves as another reminder of the longstanding economic ties between the two countries.³⁶

The close relation between Egypt and Ethiopia can also be seen in their joint religious history. Although there have been tensions due to both negative Muslim sentiment towards Ethiopia and Christian Ethiopians' distrust of Egyptian Muslims, a joint history in Christianity overrides some of these differences. Ethiopia's original Christian church (the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) was initially dependent on the Coptic Egyptian church, as seen by the fact that the Ethiopian bishops, or *abuns*, were all Egyptian for countless years.³⁷ Political differences often overflowed into church interactions and affected the type of *abuns* that Ethiopia was granted. After much negotiation, political debate, and cultural tensions, in 1959 a formal separation of the Ethiopian and

³¹ Cascão, Ana Elisa. "Changing Power Relations in the Nile River Basin: Unilateralism vs. Cooperation?" *Water Alternatives*, 2(2): 245-268, (2009).

³² "Who We Are," Nile Basin Initiative, June 14, 2020.

³³ Schaefer, Charles. "The Politics of Banking: The Bank of Abyssinia, 1905-1931," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 361-389, (1992).

³⁴ "Ethiopia keen to receive Egyptian investors, says PM Hailemariam," Ethiopian Investment Commission. June 14, 2020.

³⁵ Mena. "COMESA: Sudan, Ethiopia receive 60% of Egypt's investments," *Egypt Today*. December 7, 2020.

³⁶ "About Us," Egyptian - Ethiopian Business Council. June 14, 2020.

³⁷ "Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church," *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*. June 14, 2020.

Egyptian church was granted. Upon finalization of the deal, much of the divisive rhetoric used previously had vanished, and instead the countries focused on reviving their unique cultures and developing their individual identity.³⁸



Treaties on the Nile

Over the years, there have been many different treaties and collective calls for unification in addressing how Nile resources are to be divided among the riparian countries. Beginning with the 1891 Anglo-Italian protocol that aimed to demarcate clear boundaries for Italian Eritrea and British Sudan, the question of where each country's influence lies has led to much debate. The 1902 Anglo-Ethiopian treaty was no different; it too served to outline the border between Sudan and Ethiopia. Although there have been quite a few additional agreements, the two main ones that are still considered to be legally binding (at least by Egypt and Sudan) are the 1929 Anglo-Egyptian treaty and the 1959 bilateral agreement between Egypt and Sudan. The 1929 Anglo-Egyptian treaty guaranteed an annual Nile water allocation of 48 billion cubic meters to Egypt and 4 billion cubic meters to Sudan, while also granting Egypt the right to veto any construction projects that had the

³⁸ Erlich, Haggai. "Identity and Church: Ethiopian - Egyptian Dialogue, 1924-59," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 23-46, (Feb., 2000).

potential to interfere with the Nile water flows. The 1959 agreement expanded water allocations to 55.5 billion cubic meters for Egypt and 18.5 billion cubic meters for Sudan, while again ignoring the needs of other riparian countries including Ethiopia.³⁹ Other countries consider these treaties to be outdated and irrelevant to modern-day discussions, but Egypt and Sudan maintain that their rights outlined in these agreements must be upheld.

Given that initial agreements often prevented Ethiopia and other riparian countries from receiving a fair share of the resources offered by the Nile, the Nile Basin Initiative was established to overcome these historical differences. Although the countries are often united in ensuring the long-term health and stability of the Nile, individual countries have varying priorities to secure their own economic growth. There are calls to abolish the effects of older treaties that favor certain countries and regions to instead redesign a more equitable system. Countries such as Egypt — which already established claims for themselves — are strongly against doing so, while other countries such as Ethiopia — which were not as fortunate during earlier periods — argue heavily towards a new distribution.⁴⁰ When evaluating the future of the water resources in the region, it is vital to consider the precedent established in the area, and the weight with which such potentially biased historical documents are evaluated.

³⁹ Kimenyi, Mwangi S. and John Mukum Mbaku. "The Limits of the new 'Nile Agreement'," Brookings. April 28, 2015.

⁴⁰ "The Political Economy of Transboundary Water Resource Management in Africa," Brookings. June 14, 2020.

Statement of the Problem

Origins of Construction

In August 1957, as relations between Ethiopia and Egypt became increasingly strained, Ethiopia contracted with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to conduct a holistic analysis of the Blue Nile and the opportunities it could provide for the Ethiopian economy. In 1964, the final report presented multiple options for Ethiopia to more effectively harness the power of the Nile, while minimizing potential impact on downstream nations. Not only did this report provide the foundational information for the eventual construction of the GERD, but it also served as a major signaling tool. By partnering with the United States government in building this report, Ethiopia used the opportunity to demonstrate its powerful international connections in response to Egypt and its alliance with Russia.⁴¹ Although the report initially outlined multiple areas for potential dams, construction and further development of any hydraulic structure in the area was paused due to political instability within Ethiopia. Announced on March 12, 2011, with the official cornerstone being placed on April 2, the GERD (initially named Project X for secrecy, and then the Millennium Dam, before its present name) came as a surprise to other riparian countries. Despite being touted as having the sole purpose of generating hydroelectric power for Ethiopia to consume domestically and export to Sudan and Egypt, the dam's potential for disruption to Sudan and Egypt has created much consternation.⁴²

Given that the project was initially developed in secrecy with no input from neighboring countries or affected citizens living on the dam site, construction did not go as smoothly as planned. Initially projected to have been completed by 2020, the \$4 billion dam has faced many delays.⁴³ In late September 2018, the manager of the GERD committed suicide.⁴⁴ Political tensions continued to rise as Egypt and Sudan grew increasingly concerned about the rate at which the reservoir would be

⁴¹ Mina Michel Samaan, *The Nile Development Game: Tug-of-War or Benefits for All?* (Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 209), 100-102.

⁴² Wossenu Abtey and Shimelis Behailu Dessu, *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile*, 72-75.

⁴³ Aidan Lewis, "Factbox: Key facts about Ethiopia's giant Nile dam," *Reuters*, November 6, 2019.

⁴⁴ Tamiru Tsige, "Government announced GERD Manager committed suicide," *The Reporter - Ethiopia*, September 7, 2018.

filled as the longer it takes to fill, the less impact it will have on downstream water flows.⁴⁵ Although Ethiopia has expressed interest in maintaining negotiations with Egypt and Sudan, continued disagreements have exacerbated many of the relevant issues.



Benefits of the GERD

The primary purpose of the GERD (at least as it was explained to the public) was to provide hydroelectric power for Ethiopian consumption and exportation to neighboring countries.⁴⁶ Although there is much skepticism from international analysts regarding the ability of the dam to actually provide the projected energy wattage, the Ethiopian government is relying on the dam to help shift the country's labor force away from predominantly farming roles into more new, non-agricultural positions. Current projections claim that the dam will only reach its maximum operating capacity about 28% of the time, a percentage that will likely be further plagued by expectations of low rainfalls and a more variable water flow in the coming years.⁴⁷

Additionally, the dam is also projected to have many additional impacts on society more broadly, touching aspects ranging from flooding potentials to potential food and water shortages. Based on

⁴⁵ Aidan Lewis, "Factbox: Key facts about Ethiopia's giant Nile dam," *Reuters*, November 6, 2019.

⁴⁶ Wossenu Abtey and Shimelis Behailu Dessu, *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile*, 72-75.

⁴⁷ Mervyn Piesse, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Power for Ethiopia, Disaster for Egypt?," *Future Directions - International*, June 13, 2019.

historical data from other dams, the GERD is projected to help minimize sedimentation along the river, helping reduce the cost of cleaning irrigation canals further downstream. Compared to the Aswan Dam, the GERD is projected to result in less evaporation due its location and also potentially help stabilize water flow in the Nile.⁴⁸ Egypt considers the initial few years of filling the reservoir to constitute the greatest threat to its downstream water flow, so a good solution must consider all potential impacts — positive and negative — of the dam.

Drawbacks of the GERD

Potential negative consequences of the GERD center on six key issues: resettlement, water security, climate change, power, financing, and broader environmental implications. Although it may not be possible to solve for each concern, it is vital to address the impact of each on final negotiations.

Resettlement

The dam is currently projected to displace up to 20,000 people.⁴⁹ Relocation may be quite challenging, particularly as 70% of the Ethiopian population currently lives in inadequate housing.⁵⁰ The government could face domestic backlash if they force people residing in the affected area to leave their homes without properly compensating them or providing new housing. A history of ‘strongly encouraged’ resettlements in Ethiopia has dislocated millions of people, and the proposed plans for the resettlement of Gumuz farmers (the majority of the community projected to be displaced by the GERD) must ensure a smoother transition than those in the past.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Mervyn Piesse, “The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Power for Ethiopia, Disaster for Egypt?,” *Future Directions - International*, June 13, 2019.

⁴⁹ “The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Fact Sheet,” *International Rivers*, January 24, 2014.

⁵⁰ “Housing Poverty in Ethiopia,” Habitat for Humanity, accessed July 5, 2020.

⁵¹ Sarah Vaughan and Mesfin Gebremichael, “Resettlement of Gumuz communities around Ethiopia’s Blue Nile dam,” FutureDAMS Working Paper 0010. Manchester: The University of Manchester.



Water Security

As mentioned before, Egypt is quite concerned about maintaining a consistent water flow through the Nile as much of its economy is centered around farming in the Nile River Basin. Especially during the first few years as the reservoir is filled and water sent downstream is limited, Egypt and Sudan are at the greatest risk and thus hope to extend the time in which the reservoir is filled (the longer it takes to fill, the more water is released downstream each year). Additionally, since the dam is not projected to reach peak capacity continually throughout the year and the reservoir will create higher rates of evaporation than flowing water, there are many fears surrounding potential future water shortages.⁵² A lack of flooding in the area could also mean that the agricultural land nearby will not receive the nutrients it traditionally has gotten through the water, perhaps leading to poorer yields in the future.

Climate Change

Globally, climate change has resulted in drastic weather extremities with no clear end in sight. For countries dependent on the Nile, such changes severely impact their economies directly. Frequent

⁵² Henry Storey, "Crisis on the Nile: Egypt's water security under threat," Foreign Brief - Geopolitical Risk Analysis, June 30, 2019.

droughts and floods have challenged the large agriculture industry that has developed in the area, and the potential of the dam may heighten these effects. Although there may be environmental benefits such as cleaner energy, there is at least equal potential for more harm.^{53, 54}

Power

Based on current projections, the dam is only expected to operate at full capacity about 28% of the year. Given that the current dimensions are meant to capture hydroelectric power during the peak months of the year (at the height of the rainy season, generally during May through August), some argue against the scale of the dam as a large portion will be ineffective for much of the year. In order to maximize efficiency while minimizing cost, the current scope of the project may be too large to be justified.⁵⁵

Financing

In order to fund the nearly \$5 billion undertaking, Ethiopia is financing the project primarily through government bonds and tax revenue, a model that has been used previously by other African countries with varying degrees of success. Although some experts warn that this method of private financing for a public project may stunt future growth, the Ethiopian government is assuaging those fears with assurance that it will be able to return the funds after selling electricity to other African countries. National pride, a budding private equity sector, and perhaps most importantly, a strong unwavering faith in the success of the project are all contributing factors to the current financing method.⁵⁶ Whether this model is successful remains to be seen.

⁵³ "GERD and its role in tackling climate change," *The Reporter - Ethiopia*, June 20, 2020.

⁵⁴ Essayas K. Ayana and Raghavan Srinivasan, "Impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and climate change on water availability in Sudan," *Extreme Hydrology and Climate Variability: Monitoring, Modelling, Adaptation and Mitigation* (2019), 137-149.

⁵⁵ Mervyn Piesse, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Power for Ethiopia, Disaster for Egypt?," *Future Directions - International*, June 13, 2019.

⁵⁶ Kingsley Ighobor and Busani Bafana, "Financing Africa's massive projects," *United Nations: Africa Renewal*, December 2014.

Environmental

One of the most pressing concerns regarding the construction of the dam is the environmental impact on the local area, as well as the broader ecosystem. Extensive research on the topic, including the usage of various models to project the impact on biodiversity, have suggested that the dam could change the quality of the water flowing downstream, thus affecting the living species that call the river home.⁵⁷ Additional research has outlined the correlation between increased rates of malaria are large dams in the area, a problem that could be further exacerbated by the large sitting body of water behind the dam.⁵⁸ In addition to the concerns outlined above, pronounced changes in the water quality and surrounding areas could have dramatic consequences for the development of the riparian countries.

Opposition to GERD

Egypt has been at the forefront of quite a vocal opposition to the GERD. After it felt as if its concerns were going unheeded as the dam approaches completion, it has begun to consider additional political and military actions should the need arise. Although considering these concerns is key, it is also important to note the compromises that have been made thus far. In 2021, the International Panel of Experts was established to review the GERD's design and construction plans. In 2014, the Tripartite National Committee was created to continue this work, and in 2015, the Declaration of Principles on the GERD was published in which Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia outlined ten principles (emphasizing cooperation and progress) that would guide the development of the dam.^{59, 60}

Since then, Egypt has asked Ethiopia repeatedly to slow down the pace at which the dam is expected to be filled in order to ensure that the water supply downstream remains relatively constant and is sufficient for Egyptian farmers. The Ethiopian government responded that the dam reservoir is

⁵⁷ Abdelkader T Ahmed and Mohamed Helmy Elsanabary, "Hydrological and Environmental Impacts of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Nile River," *International Water Technology Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 4, December 2015.

⁵⁸ Solomon Kibret, Jonathan Lautze, Matthew McCartney, Luxon Nhamo & Guiyun Yan, "Malaria around large dams in Africa: effect of environmental and transmission endemicity factors," *Malar J* 18, 303 (2019).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12936-019-2933-5>.

⁵⁹ Agreement on Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Possible with Sufficient Political Will," UNSC Briefing, June 29, 2020.

⁶⁰ Noha El Tawil, "Declaration of Principles on Renaissance Dam is 'exclusive agreement' binding Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan together: intl. law expert," *Egypt Today*, June 23, 2020.

within its own borders and will be filled as it deems necessary, exacerbating the existing tensions. Egypt is exploring other options through which it can mitigate the effects of the dam, as it concurrently stepped away from US-led negotiations between the three riparian countries.^{61, 62} The onset of the rainy season caused further confusion due to a particularly heavy rainfall, and the stalemate of negotiations has led the US to temporarily pause aid to Ethiopia.⁶³ Sudan has criticized Egypt for having inflamed tensions with its actions and has declared itself a neutral party.⁶⁴

As the countries grapple with a global pandemic in addition to more localized problems, it is clear that no single solution will be enough to reconcile the differences caused by the construction of the dam. A holistic approach to the unique needs of each country is key.

⁶¹ Khalid Hassan, "Egypt promotes local projects to mitigate GERD effects," *Al-Monitor*, August 6, 2020.

⁶² Nadine Awadalla, "Egypt to withdraw from latest dam talks for internal consultations: statement," *Reuters - World News*, August 4, 2020.

⁶³ "US suspends aid to Ethiopia over Blue Nile dam dispute," *Al-Jazeera*, September 3, 2020.

⁶⁴ Bilal al-Masri is an Egyptian diplomat who has served as ambassador to Angola, "Egypt Should Adopt Active Neutrality Toward the Sudanese Revolution," *The Washington Institute*, May 31, 2019, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/egypt-should-adopt-active-neutrality-toward-the-sudanese-revolution>.

Past Actions

When construction over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam began, it was not mired in the tensions that now surround it. Since the announcement of the project, many actors have been involved in attempting to facilitate an outcome that will allow the project to be completed while also looking out for the wellbeing of those in the Nile River Basin. Internationally, there has been increased pressure on the region to find positive solutions from countries such as Russia and the United States that have allies amongst the counties in the dispute. Regionally, the Nile Basin Initiative has attempted to stop tensions from boiling over with meditation help from the World Bank. And individually, each country has attempted to influence the major players in the conflict to make sure their preferred interests come out on top. With construction costs of the dam totaling \$4.8 billion USD, Ethiopia will do everything in their power to ensure that the dam is finished in its entirety.⁶⁵

The complexity of international agreements combined with the historical disagreements in North Africa have caused the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam situation to seem as though every step taken toward peace comes at the cost of two taken backward toward conflict. While the Security Council has not officially stepped in regarding this issue, we task our delegates with taking the first steps in officially negotiating peace in the region and mitigating the possible damage. To ensure that progress can be balanced with the needs of the people, delegates must take careful steps and consider all sides of the issue. While there are several potential solutions, finding the most diplomatic of them will require careful research and problem-solving skills.

2012-2013: International Panel of Experts

While the official Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project was announced in 2011 meaningful diplomatic talks were not engaged until a year later. This first foray was the creation of the International Panel of Experts. The Panel was made up of experts from Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt

⁶⁵ Reuters Staff, "Factbox: Key Facts about Ethiopia's Giant Nile Dam," Reuters, November 6, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-dam-factbox-idUSKBN1XG21L>.

as well as independent entities and their primary goal was to solve engineering problems in the Dam as well as provide an estimate of the damage it might do to those living in the Nile River Basin. The breakdown of this panel is as such:

- 2 members from Egypt
- 2 members from Sudan
- 2 members from Ethiopia
- 4 members International experts in the field of water resources

On the goal of finding possible engineering flaws in the current Dam design, the Panel made two major recommendations for changes to the Dam. The first was to increase the length of the emergency spillway near the rock saddle dam, and the second was to find a method of ensuring that the underlying rock basement of the dam would not be susceptible to becoming a sliding dam.⁶⁶

Regarding the secondary goal of determining what the impacts of the Dam would be on upstream nations the news were far more mixed.⁶⁷ The panel found that construction of the Dam would have an outsized impact on upstream nations like Sudan and Egypt, and that to further determine the true impact further studies would have to be conducted.

Once the first reports from the International Panel of Experts came out, the attempts at peace talks truly began between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. In 2012 the then-president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir expressed support for the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam despite the widespread protest of the project in his own country and those surrounding it.⁶⁸ Prior to this, Egypt and Sudan had argued that construction of the Dam would negatively affect their access to water and were completely insistent on blocking its construction. Later, in 2013, talks over the Dam stalled as the Egyptian President, Mohamed Morsi, was deposed in a coup d'état in the middle of the year, but negotiations were able to begin again under the direction of Aldy Mansour.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ ይግዛውዘረሁን አበበ, "The International Panel of Experts' Report on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," አባይ Abbay Nile (blog), June 17, 2013, <https://zenileabbay.wordpress.com/2013/06/17/the-international-panel-of-experts-report-on-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Sudan's Bashir Supports Ethiopia's Nile Dam Project - Sudan Tribune: Plural News and Views on Sudan," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article41839>.

⁶⁹ "Army Ousts Egypt's President; Morsi Is Taken Into Military Custody - The New York Times," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/04/world/middleeast/egypt.html>.

2014-2015: Malabo Declaration and Declaration of Principles

Real strides toward finding a solution for all countries involved were made through the Malabo Declaration. The Declaration formed a Supreme Committee under the direction of President Abdel El Sisi of Egypt and Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia to handle the political, economic, social, and security issues that could occur as a result of the Dam.⁷⁰ This agreement emphasized the importance of the Nile River as a basic resource needed for life for Egyptians and the necessity of development for Ethiopia. The seven principles listed in the Malabo Declaration were critical to building a cohesive agreement over use of the Dam that suited each country's primary needs. Having the two leaders sign a declaration that formally declared that the rights of Egyptians to water was as important as the right of Ethiopia to develop their power sources was viewed as an important step, and by the end of 2014 Ethiopia had finished 32% of the dam.⁷¹ In September of 2014, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan came together to form the Tripartite National Committee, a group that built on the work done by the International Panel of Experts and began conducting the additional environmental and engineering surveys that were requested.⁷² The TNC was made up of four members from each of the four countries and the location of each meeting would rotate between them. In order to preserve accuracy, an independent internal consultancy firm was hired by the TNC to carry out the studies and other relevant issues.

In early 2015, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan came together once again and signed the Declaration of Principles. A document consisting of 10 basic principles as follows:⁷³

1. Principles of Cooperation
2. Principle of Development, Regional Integration, and Sustainability
3. Principle Not to Causes Significant Harm
4. Principle of Equitable and Reasonable Utilization
5. Principle to Cooperate on the First Filling and operation of the Dam

⁷⁰ "Egyptian-Ethiopian Negotiations on Renaissance Dam," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/121622/Egyptian-Ethiopian-negotiations-on-Renaissance-Dam?lang=en-us>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "Briefing: 1st Meeting of Tripartite National Committee on Renaissance Dam," Horn Affairs (blog), September 29, 2014, <https://hornaffairs.com/2014/09/29/briefing-1st-meeting-of-tripartite-national-committee-on-renaissance-dam/>.

⁷³ Ibid.

6. Principle of Confidence Building
7. Principle of Exchange of Information and Data
8. Principle of Dam Safety
9. Principle of Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity
10. Principle of Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

Of these, the most important was considered to be Principle 5, stating that final outcomes of the joint studies conducted as agreed upon by the Tripartite National Committee and recommended by the International Panel of Experts would be used to agree on guidelines and rules of the first filling of the GERD, agree on guidelines for the annual operation of the GERD, and all downstream countries must be informed of any unforeseen or urgent circumstances requiring adjustments in operation of the GERD. The Ten Principles were meant to look past negotiations of just construction of the Dam and instead delve into what sharing the resources of the Nile would look like after the GERD had been built. While the Ten Principles seemed to be a step in the right direction, tensions began to simmer between Egypt and Ethiopia over the technical studies that are being done, as Egypt wanted to reject the implementation of the technical studies of the GERD at the ninth meeting of the TNC because at a previous meeting it was agreed that two companies would be chosen to conduct the studies to ensure there was accuracy in the results.⁷⁴ This protest caused further stalling of the long-term technical studies that had been requested since 2013 by the International Panel of Experts.

2016-2017

At the start of 2016, Ethiopia rejected a request by Egypt to increase the amount of water holes in the GERD from two to four.⁷⁵ Egypt's reasoning for requesting the increase was that having four water-passing hotels would ensure that there was continuous water flow during periods when the Nile was very low in the direction of Sudan and Egypt. Ethiopia defended their rejection of this proposal on the basis that they had done ample research on the Dam and felt confident that only two holes would be needed to provide sufficient water to the downstream nations. This view was supported by Sudan, with representatives remarking that they felt comfortable with the current

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Egyptian-Ethiopian Negotiations on Renaissance Dam," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/121622/Egyptian-Ethiopian-negotiations-on-Renaissance-Dam?lang=en-us>.

design on the Dam. A month later there was another meeting of the Tripartite National Committee alongside the two international consultancy companies, and the goals of the joint technical presentation between the two companies were finalized. During this meeting it was also decided that the funding of the technical studies on the GERD would be equally divided between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia and the total cost would come to about 4.5 million euros.⁷⁶ In late 2017, another ministerial meeting of the three countries was held to discuss the first findings of the introductory report made by a consultancy company as the precursor to the official implementation of the technical studies. Despite several meetings, there was a failure to reach an agreement on the report as Sudan and Ethiopia rejected the introductory report, and Egypt saw the rejection as a serious cause of concern and talks are not able to continue. At the end of that year the President El Sisi made an official statement saying that Egypt considers Nile water a matter of life or death, a statement many think is hinting at possible military interventions if further agreements cannot be reached.⁷⁷

2018-2019

In order to gain an impartial view that might be able to resolve the dispute over the report, Egypt suggested the participation of the World Bank as a third party, but this was rejected by Ethiopia.⁷⁸ Later, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry announced that an agreement was reached between the three countries that would end the technical studies by February 2018 and reiterated the commitment of Egypt to abide by the Declaration of Principles signed by the three countries in 2015. In May of 2018 the three countries' intelligence chiefs and foreign and water ministers established the National Independent Research Study Group to discuss the dam's impact, filling, and operation.⁷⁹ The meeting allowed the technical studies on the Dam to once again continue after a halt earlier in the year. During the meeting, new proposals were considered, supporting technical issues of the Dam in addition to building cooperation and confidence between the three countries as

⁷⁶ "Technical Studies Finally to Go Ahead on Ethiopia's Controversial Nile Dam - News - GCR," accessed December 14, 2020, <http://www.globalconstructionreview.com/news/technical-studies-finally-g70-ah7ead-ethiop7ias/>.

⁷⁷ "Sisi: Nile Water Is a Matter of Life or Death," Asharq AL-awsat, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/1088421/sisi-nile-water-matter-life-or-death>.

⁷⁸ Aaron Maasho, "Ethiopia Leader Rejects Call for World Bank Arbitration in Dam Dispute," Reuters, January 21, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-dam-idUSKBN1FAoWE>.

⁷⁹ Kevin G. Wheeler et al., "Understanding and Managing New Risks on the Nile with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," *Nature Communications* 11, no. 1 (October 16, 2020): 5222, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-19089-x>.

a whole. A month later, President El-Sisi and the new Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came together and agreed that confidence and cooperation needed to be enhanced and that the two countries would need to work on a final GERD agreement to uphold the Egyptian rights to the water while increasing the development of the Ethiopian people.

By 2019, negotiations resumed but were facing increasing roadblocks, with all sides calling for increased trust and commitment to former agreements. The talks were suspended for months but resumed in September of that year. However, that round of negotiations failed on the issue of filling of the GERD reservoir and rules of operation. This is because Ethiopia rejected an Egyptian proposal on the claims that the deal would violate their national sovereignty. That same month, at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Egyptians and Ethiopian Prime Ministers addressed the GERD problem and called for international intervention.⁸⁰ By October, another round of meetings of the irrigation and water resource ministers of the three nations kicked off in Khartoum, but a spokesperson of the meeting leaked that the negotiations reached a dead end because of “intransigence” on the side of the Ethiopians.⁸¹ At this point the United States began to be more involved in the conflict and called upon all sides to reach a good faith agreement that will respect Nile water equity.

2020

Early this year, Ethiopia refused to sign another draft agreement suggested by Egypt on the grounds that the United States and the World Bank, who had stepped in as mediators, were overstepping their roles and instead were supporting proposals for drought mitigation that clearly favored Egypt to the detriment of Ethiopia.⁸² Ethiopia’s counter-proposal that would cover the first two years of filling of the GERD was flatly rejected by Egypt and Sudan. Although they had been in support of Ethiopian proposals in the past, they declined to sign this counter-proposal because they felt that a

⁸⁰ “Egypt and the Renaissance Dam-SIS,” accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.sis.gov.eg/section/7302/9426?lang=en-us>.

⁸¹ “Ahram Online - GERD Negotiations Reached a Dead End, Says Water Ministry Spokesman,” accessed December 14, 2020, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsPrint/352256.aspx>.

⁸² Aaron Maasho, “Ethiopia Leader Rejects Call for World Bank Arbitration in Dam Dispute,” Reuters, January 21, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-dam-idUSKBN1FAoWE>.

comprehensive agreement had not been reached yet.⁸³ While Egypt brought the issue to the Security Council in July, Ethiopia with the support of South Africa was able to lobby for the issue to be handled first by the African Union.⁸⁴ The South African President welcomed the resumption of trilateral talks between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia and called upon the parties to reach an amicable agreement under the supervision of the African Union. The agreement between the three countries is becoming increasingly elusive, however, because of Ethiopia's admittance that they had begun filling the Dam, a move directly violating the Declaration of Principles that stated that an agreement between all three nations was needed before filling of the Dam could begin. Filling of the Dam means that Ethiopia has now announced that the GERD will begin to generate electricity over the next 12 months, and that the Dam was now 76.53% finished.⁸⁵ In August, Sudan's Irrigation and Water Resources Ministry announced that the current round of the talks would end without a consensus on the deal as "Continuation of the talks in their current form will not lead to achieving practical results".⁸⁶ In another escalation due to pressure by Egypt, the United States halted \$130M USD to Ethiopia as a result of "a lack of progress" on a deal on the GERD, and Ethiopia's decision to continue filling the Dam before an agreement is reached.⁸⁷ As of November 2020, talks between the three nations were continuing, but the timeframe for reaching an agreement was narrowing as Ethiopian's scientists pressed for the GERD to be filled quickly. Egypt also refused to agree to a filling agreement that does not include a provision guaranteeing increased water downstream during drought years.

⁸³ "Ethiopia Rejects Egypt's Proposal to Manage Nile Dam | Africanews," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.africanews.com/2019/09/19/egypt-ethiopia-disagree-as-talks-over-nile-dam-project-resume//>.

⁸⁴ "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Agreement within Reach, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council, as Trilateral Talks Proceed to Settle Remaining Differences | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14232.doc.htm>.

⁸⁵ "Ethiopia Close to Finishing 70% of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," Daily News Egypt, May 28, 2016, <https://dailynewsegypt.com/2016/05/28/ethiopia-close-to-finishing-70-of-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/>.

⁸⁶ "Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia Fail to Agree on Nile Dam Draft Deal," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.sify.com/news/sudan-egypt-ethiopia-fail-to-agree-on-nile-dam-draft-deal-news-internationalui3fkwithhdae.html>.

⁸⁷ "US Suspends Some Aid to Ethiopia over Dam Dispute with Egypt - The Washington Post," accessed December 14, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-suspends-some-aid-to-ethiopia-over-dam-dispute-withegypt/2020/09/02/497b1dc2-ed40-11ea-bd08-1b10132b458f_story.html.

Possible Solutions

The reservoir has already begun to be filled without a standing, legally binding agreement regarding water distribution. Negotiations have stalled out several times within the past few months. Egypt has increasingly been putting pressure on its allies for an international intervention, and has already called on the United Nation Security Council “to intervene and assume its responsibilities to avoid any sorts of tensions and to preserve international peace and security.”^{88, 89} Ethiopia has expressed its strong opposition to UNSC involvement. In the meantime, the United Nations has generally taken the backseat on the GERD conflict, deferring to the African Union to act as mediator and negotiator between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan.⁹⁰

Delegates are expected to craft their own solutions to the problems facing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and its interested parties. However, here are some suggestions that have been discussed by the international community to tackle problems presented by the dam’s construction. As previously stated, there is little UN precedent regarding the GERD. Ultimately, these proposed solutions and suggestions provide a basis from which to first explore, both on their own and in conjunction with each other. However, research into solutions beyond the ones discussed in the next few paragraphs is highly encouraged and expected. Indeed, an effective resolution will likely include a combination of the below solutions and solutions developed by the delegates.

Possible Solution: Regional Body Support/Special Envoy Appointment

The UNSC and the UN at large have avoided interfering with the GERD conflict, supporting the African Union’s work in brokering a peace and expressing their desire for unilateral regional agreement and enforcement.⁹¹ As such, the UN seems to not classify this as an issue of national sovereignty or as an absolutely imminent threat upon international security. It has promised to lend

⁸⁸ “At UN Assembly.”

⁸⁹ Egypt Today Staff.

⁹⁰ “Egypt Pushes.”

⁹¹ Dicarlo.

“technical and expert support, as appropriate and as requested by the three countries, including any support that may be required by the African Union-led process.”⁹²

The UNSC may offer specific UN cooperation with and support for regional bodies such as the National Independent Research Study Group and the Tripartite National Committee formed by Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan, with the intent of providing specific guidelines and independent measurement of the dam’s impact.⁹³

The UNSC has the power to appoint a special envoy, or team with a specific purpose, or may ask the Secretary-General to utilize his special representatives. Delegates may propose the appointment of special envoys to guide the negotiations alongside the AU or in a new set of negotiations, given that the most recent negotiations have stalled out. These actors may offer themselves in an advisory role, advising of and proposing solutions to the risks so that their negative impacts can be minimized or eliminated. These envoys may act as peace brokers, as technical experts with the purpose of studying the potential impact of the dam on the Egyptian and Sudanese water supplies, or in other capacities.⁹⁴ We encourage delegates to think creatively about the capacity of such regional body support and the role of special envoys should the conflict worsen or standards not be agreed upon.

Possible Solution: International Court of Justice

The Security Council may also choose to closely monitor the situation and decide that countries should refer the dispute to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for further analysis of a possible international law breach under Article 36 (3) of the UN Charter. All litigants must agree to follow the ICC’s decision before the arbitration begins; if they do, they are legally bound to the Court’s judgment. If these conditions are met, the UNSC will then have enforcement power over the ICC’s decision. The Security Council may recommend Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan to the ICC for an outside arbitration of the conflict. The UNSC may also ask for an advisory opinion from the ICC regarding the

⁹² United Nations.

⁹³ Mbaku.

⁹⁴ Wheeler et al.

Council's work. In this case, they may refer the question of whether or not Ethiopia is breaching international law to the Court.

However, it should be noted that the Security Council has only referred disputes twice in its entire history. In 1947, it referred to a dispute between Albania and the United Kingdom to the ICC. In 1970, the UNSC asked for an "advisory opinion on the legal consequences for states of South Africa's continued presence in Namibia." It has never exercised its power to enforce the ICC's judgements. The UNSC has generally been hesitant to allow for such important decisions to be made by bodies outside of the United Nations, and there is dangerously minimal precedent for protocol and enforcement.⁹⁵ Delegates should be aware of this, recognize the difficulty in ensuring compliance from all actors, and would have to thoroughly research UNSC protocol and history with the outlined past cases.

Possible Solution: Sanctions

Sanctions have been one of the greatest and most-used tools of enforcement of the UNSC, used to pressure countries into compliance with international law since the Cold War.⁹⁶ General sanctions upon a country's general exports tend to harm the very people they try to help as they are unable to shield themselves from the effects of the sanctions: in this case, the normal civilians of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan who will be affected, both positively and negatively, by the GERD. The UNSC can decide to create targeted sanctions regimes, aiming at certain industries and/or specific individuals so as to put pressure on those with the power instead of the civilians in the crosshairs. These include "arms embargoes, assets freezes, or travel bans".⁹⁷ However, Arms sanctions and travel bans can be particularly difficult to enforce in regions with more porous borders like Ethiopia.⁹⁸ Sanctions have varying levels of success, which is generally contingent upon the intended target and the given methodology.⁹⁹ Additionally, sanctions are extremely difficult to enforce.

⁹⁵ "In Hindsight."

⁹⁶ "UN Sanctions."

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Gashaw.

⁹⁹ Hufbauer.

In the case of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the goal of the sanctions may be to force the three countries to come to an agreement within a specific timetable, avoiding the possibility of the negotiations stalling out again. Sanctions could act as insurance in a contingency plan, particularly in the cases of a dam-induced drought or other unaddressed environmental issues caused by the GERD such as Ethiopia not releasing enough water in the case of a drought, Ethiopia not recognizing outside arbitration in times of drought, and of Egypt and Sudan recognizing Ethiopia's sovereignty over the portion of the Nile within the country's borders.^{100, 101}

Similarly to the solutions proposed above, delegates will need to get creative with sanctions. The implementation of such measures in the current state of affairs unprompted by no concerned party would certainly be seen as an act of unwelcome international escalation by Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, and the African Union.

Possible Solution: Peacekeeping

The Security Council has the particular responsibility for establishing UN peace operations to maintain international peace and security. Historically, peacekeeping has been a vital instrument in pursuing its mission.¹⁰² Since they were first deployed in 1948 to Israel to monitor the Armistice Agreement, peacekeepers have been deployed in over 70 missions.¹⁰³ Peacekeepers have been deployed once in Ethiopia in the United Nations Mission to Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) from 2000-2008, and under intense pressure from Eritrea, the UNSC withdrew the mission. Many have expressed fears over the potential precedent of a country being allowed to force out UN peacekeepers.¹⁰⁴

The current situation does not indicate a need for peacekeeper intervention, and similarly to sanctions, any such solution would be considered an act of unnecessary escalation by the involved parties. However, should tensions heighten in the region and negotiations fall through again, peace operations may be necessary if any involved party or their allies makes an act of aggression or

¹⁰⁰ Raghavan.

¹⁰¹ Associated Press.

¹⁰² "Mandates."

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ "Security Council."

restricts the water source of other countries' civilians.¹⁰⁵ Delegates should particularly consider regional history with peacekeeping forces and the reception such forces would receive by the region. These conditions will vary depending on the grounds of peacekeeper deployment and the intended purpose of the peacekeeping.

¹⁰⁵ "Egypt Wants."

Bloc Positions

Ethiopia

As the country that is home of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam there is obviously a lot of support both from the leadership of the country and from its people for the project. The original site for the GERD was identified by the United States Bureau of Reclamation in 1956, but due to turnovers in the Ethiopian Government a second survey was not done until 2009 and the official design for the Dam was submitted in 2010 with a public announcement coming soon after in 2011.¹⁰⁶ Finishing the GERD is of especially high stakes for Ethiopia since of the \$4.8 billion USD needed for construction of the Dam, \$3 billion is coming directly from the Ethiopian government through taxes, donations, and government bonds.¹⁰⁷ Ideally, the money made from selling electricity made by the Dam would more than make up for the cost of investment, but one of the reasons why Ethiopia is so insistent upon filling the GERD quickly is the need to recoup this funds.

The possible impacts on environment and energy production were Ethiopia's primary motivations for going forward with the Dam in the first place. All energy from the GERD will flow to the national grid of Ethiopia allowing rural and urban areas of the country to have near constant access to electricity. At full capacity the GERD can store 70 billion cubic meters of water, and electricity generated from it will be stepped to 500kV and then transmitted to overhead lines.¹⁰⁸ An excess energy produced from the GERD can then be sold and exported to neighboring countries, ideally bringing greater African unity over a shared resource. With the introduction of the Dam there will be a regulated flow of water that can improve agriculture in Ethiopia. The GERD would also serve to reduce flooding on the 15km that sits in Ethiopia, however, there are those in the nation who will be

¹⁰⁶ "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project, Benishangul-Gumuz," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.watertechnology.net/projects/grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-africa/>.

¹⁰⁷ "Financing Africa's Massive Projects," Africa Renewal, December 5, 2014, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2014/financing-africa%E2%80%99s-massive-projects>.

¹⁰⁸ "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Hydroelectric Project," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.nsenergybusiness.com/projects/the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-gerd-hydroelectric-project/>.

displaced as a result of the building of the GERD but even they are hopeful that the project can bring them some sort of benefit.¹⁰⁹

Ethiopia has made clear that their foremost priority is development of their nation and the GERD is the best way to achieve that. In order to fill up the Dam in a timely manner and begin extracting resources from it as soon as possible, scientists are urging the government to fill up the Dam now and fill it up as quickly as possible. While Ethiopia has made clear the concerns of neighboring countries valuable, the decision to fill up the GERD without reaching a peaceful settlement has put the chances of an agreement further away.

Egypt

In stark contrast to Ethiopia stands Egypt, which has been against the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam since it was first announced publicly in 2011. Early in the process, Egypt was against even beginning construction on the Dam until an agreement could be reached between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan on the water rights and usage of the Nile. Egypt has long been protective over usage of the Nile, continually citing the 1959 Nile Waters Agreement that gave full control of the Nile to Sudan and Egypt.¹¹⁰ This agreement has been the basis of many previous geopolitical disagreements in the Nile Basin and is continually cited by Egypt during the negotiations on the GERD as they feel its construction is a violation of the agreement.

Egypt's opposition to the GERD has several different points. The first of which are fears that there will be a temporary reduction of water availability during the filling of the dam, and then as a later result of evaporation from the reservoir there will be a permanent reduction in Egypt's accessibility to water. Because Egypt's largest dam, the Aswan High Dam (AHD), also has a large effect on the Nile, it is critical for the nation that the GERD does not affect access to the AHD and subsequently power production in Egypt by 25 to 40 percent. Over two million farmers in Egypt depend on flows from the Nile, and the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam could dramatically affect their

¹⁰⁹ "Getting Filled In on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, with Annalise Blum," Resources for the Future, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.resourcesmag.org/resources-radio/getting-filled-grand-ethiopian-rennaissance-damannalise-blum/>.

¹¹⁰ Reuters Staff, "FACTBOX: Nile River Agreements and Issues," Reuters, July 27, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-nile-factbox-sb-idUSTRE56Q3MD20090727>.

income. As it stands in negotiations, Egypt has been uncompromising on their right to veto on water allocation of the Nile based on the 1959 Nile Water Agreement, often leading to stalls and delays in negotiations. In 2013, while being unknowingly recorded, Egyptian political leaders suggested methods to destroy the Dam including supporting anti-government rebels while discussing a report from the International Panel of Experts. While Egypt apologized for the remarks, the country has continually made it clear that it will not agree to anything that could possibly compromise the security of Egypt's water.

Sudan

As the third country involved in the primary conflict over the GERD, Sudan holds an important position, and often serves as the swing vote on critical issues between Ethiopia and Egypt. Initially, when the GERD was announced the Sudanese government had the same concerns as Egyptian and wanted to ensure that there were strict rules set in place to ensure that the downstream nations were not negatively impacted by it. But, by 2012, Sudan's President came out in support of the GERD during a meeting of Ministers of Water. Since then, the country has served primarily as an ally to Ethiopia in negotiations, often protesting what they see as unreasonable Egyptian demands on the project. Sudan has maintained that their primary support for the Dam arises as they feel the benefits of development not just for Ethiopia but for the entire Nile Basin region are far greater than the potential harms that might arise from it. However, the country has also been insistent on ensuring that an agreement is reached before the Dam is ready to be fully utilized so that no country is disadvantaged. As a result, they have recently opposed Ethiopia's decisions to begin filling the GERD before an official consensus was reached.¹¹¹

Over the last few years Sudan has become increasingly less involved as a direct party and has instead served to further facilitate as an independent nation because of a change in power in the Sudanese government that occurred as part of a coup in 2019. While Sudan was granted rights to the Nile alongside Egypt as part of the 1959 Agreement between the nations, Sudan is far less beholden to the agreement and has shown a willingness to compromise for the good of the region. Primary

¹¹¹ "Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia Fail to Agree on Nile Dam Draft Deal," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.sify.com/news/sudan-egypt-ethiopia-fail-to-agree-on-nile-dam-draft-deal-news-internationalui3fkwithhdae.html>.

interests for the new Sudanese government lay in ensuring that their water source is not compromised, development can occur in the Nile Basin, and stronger trilateral relations can occur between the three nations.¹¹²

United States of America

As of September 2020, the United States has made the decision to pull up to hundreds of millions in aid to Ethiopia as a result of their unwillingness to compromise, and Ethiopia's decision to start filling the dam while negotiations were still underway. Funding cuts have been tied to nutrition, regional security, political competition, and consensus building, but funds tied to HIV/AIDS outbreaks, migration, refugee assistance, and food would all remain the same. While Ethiopia has asked the United States to reconsider the funding cut, this is unlikely as there is speculation that the funding cuts are partly a result of Ethiopia rejecting US-led mediation for the Dam in 2018. Regardless, this move has stoked anti-American sentiments in Ethiopia and added to the nationalistic sentiment behind the Dam. It may only strengthen Ethiopia's refusal to compromise on some of their more stringent positions. The United States first became involved when, after a round of unsuccessful talks, the US Treasury Department and the World Bank called for a new round, which also ended up failing.¹¹³

To understand why the United States would make such a bold move in a negotiation where they are an official observer, it's important to understand the geopolitical connectedness of Egypt and the United States with regards to the Middle East. The US-Egypt relationship has long been mutually beneficial; the United States provides economic and military support, and Egypt's unique geographical position makes it a keystone to achieving stability in the Middle East. While the nuances of the conflict in the Middle East are not important to understand for the purposes of this committee, knowing that the interests of Egypt and the US align when it comes to Israel, Iran, and

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ "US Suspends Some Aid to Ethiopia over Dam Dispute with Egypt - The Washington Post," accessed December 14, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-suspends-some-aid-to-ethiopia-over-dam-dispute-withegypt/2020/09/02/497b1dc2-ed40-11ea-bd08-1b10132b458f_story.html.

counterterrorism is critical to comprehending the near unilateral support the US has shown for Egypt on the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

People's Republic of China

While the vast majority of the Dam is funded by the Ethiopian government, \$1.8 billion in funds have come from Chinese banks and companies. Subcontracts for the construction of the GERD have also been given to Chinese construction companies. Although the Chinese government itself is not directly involved with the Dam, whatever decision they make during official negotiations will have a very large impact on the direction of the conversation. The size of investments that Chinese banks and companies have made in the Dam make the government far more inclined to support Ethiopia when it does decide to take an official stance on the issue. This outcome would be greatly appreciated by Ethiopia and its allies as they attempt to combat further interference in the construction of the GERD as well as recover from the loss of the aid from the United States.

Another critical reason why Ethiopia is hoping Beijing chooses to support them is the vast experience China has in the construction of dams and management of mega dams as a result of the Belt and Road Initiative. This expertise is quite valuable. As the three nations come together to debate, China could provide important technical assistance in drafting an agreement that ensures Ethiopia maintains national sovereignty while Egypt's needs of water are still being met. However, China will likely be far more willing to compromise and avoid escalation at all costs on any given deal as it has financial and development projects in Egypt and Sudan in addition to Ethiopia. China does not want to jeopardize its relationship with any of the three countries, but rising pressure in negotiations may force their hand.¹¹⁴

Russian Federation

While Russia has not yet been formally involved in negotiations between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia in 2019, Russia President Vladimir Putin reached out and offered to mediate the water dispute at the Russia-Africa summit. Russia lacks direct ties to the situation but is motivated to become further

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

embroiled in it in an effort by Moscow to become more involved in the African continent and build stronger ties to the Nile Basin countries. Notably, the Russian Federation has had poor luck in the past mediating disputes in the Horn of Africa, and the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea over borders stands out as their most prominent failure.¹¹⁵ Like China and the US, the Russian Federation's direct relations with each of the three nations will likely have a significant impact on the stance they choose to take. Moscow and Cairo have been increasingly interconnected since Mohammed Morsi was deposed in 2013. Over the last seven years, Russia has become very close with Egypt through military and trade relations. In fact, Egypt has agreed to buy \$3.5 billion worth in arms from Russia, and, in 2017, Russia signed an agreement that would allow them to build Egypt's first nuclear reactor and supply nuclear fuel in exchange for a Russian Industrial Zone being built along the Suez Canal. Russia and Egypt also align on international issues, with both countries supporting the Syrian government in the Syrian Civil War and both supporting the Libyan Government in the Libyan Civil War.¹¹⁶

Ethiopia is also one of Russia's main partners in the Horn of Africa. In addition to trade agreements that have brought them together, the two countries share religious bonds through the Orthodox Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have their own separate dialogues with one another. Russia has made strategic investments in Ethiopia's burgeoning energy sector outside of the Dam, including in hydrocarbons and nuclear energy.

Additionally, the two countries have a viable area of cooperation on science and education as the Joint Russian-Ethiopian Biological Expedition has been operating for 30 years and thousands of Ethiopians study at Russia universities both civilian and those run by government departments like the Defense Ministry. In Ethiopia, Russia sees a possible chance to further its goals in Africa and not only have presence in the Horn but throughout the continent.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ ISACHENKOV, Vladimir, and Cara Anna. "Putin Courts Africa, Offers to Mediate Nile Dam Dispute." AP NEWS, October 24, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/22edo2597e9a415a9cc5cefe3ab48caf>.

¹¹⁶ Miller, Chris. "After Five Years of Fighting in Syria, Putin Has Gotten What He Wants." Foreign Policy (blog). Accessed December 15, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/08/after-five-years-of-fighting-in-syria-putin-has-gotten-whathe-wants/>.

¹¹⁷ ISACHENKOV, Vladimir, and Cara Anna. "Putin Courts Africa, Offers to Mediate Nile Dam Dispute." AP NEWS, October 24, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/22edo2597e9a415a9cc5cefe3ab48caf>.

Finally, Sudanese-Russia relations are based primarily on arms. 87% of the weapons within Sudan come from Russia, and despite serious reprimands from the UN, Russia has refused to honor arms embargoes targeting that nation. Sudan and Russia also have an agreement that purportedly gives the Russian navy access to Sudanese ports. As a result of these warm relations, Sudan is one of the few countries to officially recognize the Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Russia's influence in the nation has only gotten stronger with the military coup against President Bashir in 2019. Broadly, Russia is well positioned to support any of the three competing nations on the GERD but will likely stay away from any serious hardline plans that will close the door on working with the other two permanently.¹¹⁸

United Kingdom

Since Brexit, the United Kingdom has been increasingly hesitant to enter international conflicts or broker agreements. As a result, the United Kingdom has been able to stay away from making any real statements about the GERD over the last several years, even as the tensions began to ratchet up. Until 2020, the UK had made no direct public statements on the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam outside of the joint EU statement that encouraged the countries to broker an agreement that all would abide by and be beneficial for each. In June, however, the British Embassy in Cairo announced that Egypt and the UK have agreed to coordinate on several regional issues in the Nile River Basin, one of them being the GERD. However, the statement did not go into specifics on what a partnership with Egypt on the Dam would entail. More generally, the United Kingdom and Egypt have a very interesting diplomatic relationship; when England was a colonial power, Egypt was under British rule, and in fact colonial mandates are behind the 1959 agreement that Egypt is using to fight against Ethiopia's work on the GERD. Modern-day relations between the two are largely positive, and the UK is the largest investor into the Egyptian economy, accounting for 41.3% of foreign direct investment. However, the UK has been one of Ethiopia's greatest partners in development. Ethiopia is the second largest recipient of UK development support and 80% of the total development aid goes toward services such as education and healthcare. The United Kingdom's history of valuing development in Ethiopia may mean they are more willing to broker an arrangement favoring the

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

GERD, as the Dam has been hailed as one of the quickest drivers of development available to Ethiopia. Two decades of sanctions have strained the Sudanese-United Kingdom relationship, but since President al-Bashir was ousted, relations have improved, and both nations have made an effort to improve them further.¹¹⁹

As mentioned before, the growing wave of conservatism in Britain has made the United Kingdom pull further and further back from the international stage, however, since deciding to leave the European Union, the country is desperate to fill their trade gaps. Caught between the newfound economic independence and the reluctance to become involved internationally, the United Kingdom has a number of options when choosing how to effectively broker an agreement over the GERD.

France

France has played a small role in the construction of the GERD, although not directly through their government. The two consultancy firms selected in 2016 by Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan to conduct impact studies on the GERD were both French. Additionally, another French company, GE Hydro France, has signed a deal with the Ethiopian Electric Power to provide turbines for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. France has not openly backed one side of the GERD disagreement over the other, but when Egypt first approached the EU and asked for internal arbitration of the dispute, they also approached France individually and requested help. In September the Secretary of the French National Assembly's committee on foreign affairs discussed the GERD and Egypt's position on it as part of a routine trip in the Nile River Basin.¹²⁰

Broadly France plays an important role in Africa, especially in its former colonies, through aid programs, commercial activities, and military agreements. Many feel that French policy in Africa is an arm of neocolonialism on the continent. France has no significant relationship with Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan outside of the standard embassies and aid packages for social services as well as military agreements when needed, although they are attempting to reduce the French military

¹¹⁹ Tekuya, Mahemud. "Colonial-Era Nile River Treaties Are to Blame for the Unresolved Dispute over Ethiopia's Dam." Quartz Africa. Accessed December 15, 2020. <https://qz.com/africa/1827558/ethiopia-egypt-grand-dam-battle-has-roots-in-british-colonial-rule/>.

¹²⁰ France ONU. "The Renaissance Dam : Avoid Escalation and Resolve This Dispute." Accessed December 15, 2020. <https://onu.delegfrance.org/The-dispute-surrounding-the-Renaissance-Dam-could-lead-to-further-tensions-in->

footprint in the continent. Additionally, former French President Hollande (2012-2017) was a proponent of non-interventionism. Since becoming president in 2017, though, Emmanuel Macron has attempted to flex French soft power in Africa while reassuring African nations that France is interested in more than just neocolonialism. As a president whose mission is to put France back on the world stage, Macron has made serious efforts to help develop education partnerships and fund technology startups. Brokering a peace deal over the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam would allow France to strengthen their bilateral relations with the relevant nations.¹²¹

Norway

In the 21st century, Norway has become well known for their role as a third-party mediator in a number of international conflicts, notably including mediation for Israel, Sudan, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Eritrea. However, some countries have accused Norway of supporting separatist groups to an unfair extent. For instance, when Eritrea sought liberation from Ethiopia, Ethiopia expelled six diplomats from Norway because the government supported Eritrea. In return, Norway cut off aid to Ethiopia for a time. However, in more recent times the two countries have experienced far stronger relations, and Norway sees Ethiopia as one of its 13 focus countries for development corporations and a pilot country for a Norwegian global education program. Norway played a critical role in reaching the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Sudan and South Sudan to end the Second Sudanese Civil War. Since then, Norway has had a strong partnership with Sudan involving heavy development support and several aid programs, and Norway was among the first nations to support the new transitional government that replaced President al-Bashir in 2019. Egypt and Norway have also been looking to strengthen relations and in a call between the foreign ministers of the two nations they discussed ways to improve the bilateral relations of the two countries.¹²²

With no direct statements on the GERD but friendly relations with all three countries involved and a reputation to uphold as peacemaker, Norway is unlikely to make a one-sided decision. All of this

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "Getting Filled In on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, with Annalise Blum," Resources for the Future, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.resourcesmag.org/resources-radio/getting-filled-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-damannalise-blum/>.

shows that Norway will do its best to maintain its position, first and foremost, as an impartial mediator and attempt to maximize benefits to all nations and minimize harm to all nations.

Ireland

Like other European countries, Ireland has yet to make an official statement on the GERD. However, the nation does enjoy healthy relations with Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. Ireland and Ethiopia established diplomatic relations in the mid-90s, and since then, Ireland has offered grants focusing on vulnerability, health, and education. Ireland has given a large amount of foreign aid to Sudan as well, especially in the wake of the 1998 famine in Bahr El Ghazal and has continued to support them through grants both from the government and NGOs. Egypt and Ireland have also enjoyed good relations and are committing to expanding the economic links in food, health, and scientific fields.¹²³

Ireland is described as one of the most neutral nations in the world, and since the 1930s, its foreign policy has been characterized by non-interventionism. Ireland does participate in peacekeeping missions for the United Nations, it has not joined NATO, and it does not participate in European Union military missions. While the Irish are willing to give aid, and have supported certain sides in conflicts, the country has committed to staying out of conflict directly. However, the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union in 2016 has made Irish policy makers increasingly seek out new allies and economic partners in order to abate the possible catastrophic consequences. In the context of situations that have not yet escalated to a military conflict, but may, Ireland still practices neutrality and often encourages that situations be handled directly between nations or regionally rather than internationally. Ireland's neutrality but need for more economic partners will factor a large role in the position they take on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.¹²⁴

¹²³ Kevlihan, Rob. "Irish Bilateral Aid to Sudan—From Modernisation to Conditionality: Lessons Learned and Future Prospects." *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 147–66.
<https://doi.org/10.3318/ISIA.2004.15.1.147>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Estonia

Since assuming the Security Council Presidency in May, the Estonian Foreign Minister has expressed pleasure with Egypt's handling of the GERD crisis at the regional level and his desire to have close cooperation with Egypt as a member of the Security Council on calls with the Egyptian Prime Minister. Furthermore, in a statement to the UNSC in June of 2020, Estonia has made clear that all three stakeholders, Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, have interests that need to be respected in the conflict and that as negotiations continue, concessions should be made to create an agreeable understanding between all three parties. Estonia experiences friendly bilateral relations with both Egypt and Ethiopia, and as part of the European Union's efforts to become more integrated with Africa, Estonia is committed to stronger digital and educational partnerships with both countries. Relations between Estonia and Sudan are far newer and were not established until 2018, though they have been positive since then. Estonia has not yet made a formal diplomatic statement on the issue of the GERD; they will likely be looking to establish themselves as a peacemaker as well as solidify their relations in the Horn of Africa. The Estonia delegation should consider how to best develop a stronger relationship with African nations without caving to partiality. They will also seek to make sure that a mutually beneficial tripartite agreement can be reached.¹²⁵

Kenya

As another Nile Basin country, Kenya has a much more nuanced perspective on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam than other members of the Security Council. When Ethiopia abandoned a recent set of talks in September of 2020, Egypt appealed to Kenya to step in as a mediator, and the country agreed. Kenya has made clear its preference for regional cooperation through the African Union as a method to solve the problem as opposed to international mediation involving countries such as the United States and Russia. Kenya itself has experienced trouble with another Ethiopian mega dam and its effect on those who depend on scarce water in the country. Gibe 3, an Ethiopian mega dam on the River Omo, has dwindled the fish stocks of Kenyan farmers, and reports from the United States Department of Agriculture shows that the water level of Lake Turkana, an offshoot of the

¹²⁵ "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Agreement within Reach, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council, as Trilateral Talks Proceed to Settle Remaining Differences | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14232.doc.htm>.

River Omo, dropped when Gibe 3 opened. Kenyan farmers and environmental activists have called for action by the government to cooperate with Ethiopia and help poor communities in both countries. So far, the Kenyan government has not directly addressed these farmers' concerns, but the situation of these farmers may make the Kenyan government far more sympathetic to the cause of Egypt in negotiations. On the other hand, like other Nile Basin countries, Kenya has often felt that Egypt's Nile Rights gained from treaties in 1929 and 1959 are unfair and rooted in colonialism; many Nile Basin countries were British colonies at the time and received no say in the agreement.

Consequently, Kenya will be careful that an agreement reached does not further enforce the colonial agreements on rights to the Nile and instead will work to create a solution that does not compromise water security for one nation while still furthering their goals of one day gaining more access to the Nile.¹²⁶

Niger

So far on the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Niger has refrained from making any statements that commit them to one side or the other, however, the President of Niger has spoken with the Egyptian foreign minister and reaffirmed the need to respect international law as an agreement is drafted. Niger sees the agreement they have with their neighboring countries over the Niger River as a possible model of how the Blue Nile can be shared between the two nations. When briefed on the GERD issue on the Security Council, the Niger representative praised the three countries for continuing to participate in talks until an agreement was reached and espoused the importance of regional bodies like the African Union to mediate disputes such as these. Niger has faced serious development challenges of its own and may consider the need for development more heavily when weighing how to best solve the crisis over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Ratner, Baz. "Kenya Fishermen Say They Are Squeezed by Ethiopian Mega-Dam." Reuters, July 20, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-environment-lake-turkana-idUSKCN24LoS1>.

¹²⁷ Reuters Staff, "FACTBOX: Nile River Agreements and Issues," Reuters, July 27, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-nile-factbox-sb-idUSTRE56Q3MD20090727>.

Tunisia

Tunisia has, as of yet, made no formal statement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, but their relations with the three involved countries as well as foreign policy concerns will dictate their actions as the matter is brought to the Security Council. Tunisia and Egypt have enjoyed a long, historically amicable relationship as two North African Arab countries. The two countries enjoy education exchanges as well as trade relationships, and leadership of both countries has committed to strengthening that relationship with time. Tunisia views Egypt as a critical partner in North Africa as both countries were at the forefront of the Arab Spring movement and the two nations face common challenges from the same terrorist groups. Ethiopia and Tunisia also have strong diplomatic relations, and as of 2019, they are committing to growing their economic ties to one another further. Tunisia is also attempting to foster a closer relationship based on solidarity and understanding as both countries continue to develop on all levels. Tunisia's foreign policy is still developing as the first free elections in the country did not occur until 2011, however, the country is focused on rapid development and continuing to grow its influence in North Africa as the only country categorized as "Free" by Freedom House. The nation will choose carefully how to proceed on this issue.¹²⁸

Vietnam

Vietnam has raised concerns about the climate, security, and stability issues that arise when international waterways are being utilized in unsustainable ways and how that may harm other riparian countries. It has emphasized the importance of friendly negotiations and of international law and expressed its support of the African Union's involvement.¹²⁹

Vietnam has friendly relations with Egypt, as the latter was the first Arab state to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Vietnam's second-largest trading partner in Africa is Egypt, with Egyptian President Sisi declaring that Egypt as Vietnam's gateway into Middle Eastern and African

¹²⁸ Freedom House. "Tunisia." Accessed December 15, 2020.
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/tunisia/freedomworld/2019>.

¹²⁹ International Institute.

markets. The two countries often work together and advocate for each other within the United Nations.

Vietnam and Ethiopia have generally warm relations and have publicly supported each other's positions in international organizations.^{130, 131} While they have signed many economic cooperation agreements, their trade remains modest.

Vietnam has also indicated that they and Sudan have great cooperation and trade potential, though the two countries have little in terms of formal trading relations.¹³² Vietnam has opened formal relations with South Sudan, a point of some friction, but both Vietnam and Sudan have since signed cooperation documents.¹³³ Vietnam has generally advocated for a policy of non-interventionism in the African continent and continues its goal to develop economic ties to African countries.¹³⁴

India

Despite not having made an official statement on the building of the GERD, India's preeminence as a hydropower nation will likely have an influence on their position. India is fifth globally for installed hydroelectric power, and in 2019, the government began paving the way for its own controversial dam project. The 2,880 MW Dibang hydropower Dam is believed to be the largest in the world, but the negative impacts hydropower dams can have on the environment have brought the project much scrutiny. As a rapidly developing nation itself India, sees the pursuit of development through large scale infrastructure projects as very valuable and will shirk from deprioritizing development needs. Ethiopia and India have history dating back almost two millennia and have enjoyed close and friendly relations marked by India supporting many Ethiopian developmental efforts and Ethiopia in return supporting greater Indian influence in the United Nations. The two countries have similar position on the importance of multilateralism and how to handle cross-border international terrorism. India is the fourth largest trade partner of Egypt, and the two countries also have good bilateral relations with mutual visits to capitals by high-ranking government members and

¹³⁰ VNA.

¹³¹ "Vietnam."

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ VIR.

¹³⁴ Phi.

collaboration on global issues. India and Sudan however did not become important partners until an India national oil company acquired 25% of Sudan's Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company leading to greater engagement between the two countries. India provided Sudan with \$350M in 2014 for the construction of a 500MW power plant.¹³⁵

India's foreign policy toward Africa has focused on achieving progress together as equals and bringing the Global South together. Since India is a nation in the midst of several long-term development projects in infrastructure and the social sector and is a nation that has been on the verge of water wars in the past, it will play a critical role in balancing the two primary issues of the situation. Because of this, India will need to make sure that development is held as a priority for developing nations while continuing to support the needs of its longstanding allies.¹³⁶

Saint Vincent and Grenadines

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has expressed its belief that the collective interests of Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan will allow them to work through their credible concerns. It does not have formal relations with any of the three countries and does not have trade with them. It advocates for non interventionism, and thus generally does not wish for foreign arbitration in what they consider a regional dispute.¹³⁷

Mexico

Mexico has not made an official statement concerning the GERD, and generally has avoided high profile involvement in the African continent as a whole.¹³⁸ They generally play a passive, noncommittal role in African relations. They have not opened meaningful trade or diplomatic ties to Sudan. Egypt and Mexico have signed bilateral trade and cooperation agreements and maintain

¹³⁵ "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Agreement within Reach, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council, as Trilateral Talks Proceed to Settle Remaining Differences | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14232.doc.htm>.

¹³⁶ "Getting Filled In on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, with Annalise Blum," Resources for the Future, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.resourcesmag.org/resources-radio/getting-filled-grand-ethiopian-rennaissance-damannalise-blum/>.

¹³⁷ Gonsalves.

¹³⁸ Mballa.

formal diplomatic relations, and trade between the two countries has totaled over \$150 million in 2019.^{139, 140} Ethiopia and Mexico have had formal relations for over 70 years and maintain friendly relations with many cooperation agreements but remain relatively minor trading partners.^{141, 142}

¹³⁹ Chabaud.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

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