

THE SECURITIZATION OF THE EGYPT GOVERNMENT IN 2019-2023 AS AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

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The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a hydroelectric dam on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia, constructed to address Ethiopia's electricity needs. However, the GERD has sparked conflicts with Lower Nile countries, particularly Egypt and Sudan. Egypt relies on the Nile River for over 90% of its water supply and views the dam as a significant threat to its water security. This perceived threat has prompted Egypt to adopt securitization measures to safeguard its national interests. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, integrating securitization theory and national interest to analyze Egypt's securitization efforts concerning the GERD dispute from 2019 to 2023. The findings reveal that Egypt's securitization measures have not yielded significant outcomes. Furthermore, military action against the GERD is deemed impractical, as the dam's filling process has already been completed, and such action could cause severe flooding, endangering Egypt and its neighboring countries.

الملخص

سد النهضة الإثيوبي العظيم (GERD) هو سد كهرومائي يقع على نهر النيل الأزرق في إثيوبيا، تم إنشاؤه لتلبية احتياجات إثيوبيا من الكهرباء. ومع ذلك، أثار السد نزاعات مع دول المصب، وخاصة مصر والسودان. تعتمد مصر على نهر النيل لتلبية أكثر من ٩٠٪ من احتياجاتها من المياه، وترى أن السد يشكل تهديداً كبيراً لأمنها المائي. دفع هذا التهديد المحتمل مصر إلى تبني إجراءات تأمين لحماية مصالحها الوطنية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجاً وصفيًا نوعيًا يجمع بين نظرية التأمين ومفهوم المصلحة الوطنية لتحليل جهود مصر في التعامل مع نزاع سد النهضة خلال الفترة من ٢٠١٩ إلى ٢٠٢٣. وتظهر النتائج أن الإجراءات التأمينية التي تبنتها مصر لم تسفر عن نتائج ملموسة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يُعتبر اتخاذ إجراء عسكري ضد السد أمراً غير عملي، حيث إن عملية ملء السد قد اكتملت بالفعل، وقد يتسبب هذا الإجراء في حدوث فيضانات شديدة تعرض مصر والدول المجاورة للخطر.

INTRODUCTION

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a large-scale project in Ethiopia along the Blue Nile River, specifically in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. This project has been underway since 2011 and is scheduled for completion in 2023. The main objective of the GERD is to provide power resources to support Ethiopia's growing population and economy, as well as for export to neighboring countries. Ethiopia faces the challenges of energy shortages and the continuing problem of poverty. Designed to be 145 m high and

1,780 m long, GERD has a volume of 10.2 million cubic meters and a crest elevation of 655 m above sea level. This dam creates a reservoir that has a surface area of 1,874 square kilometers and a maximum length of 246 km. The reservoir has a total capacity of 74 billion cubic meters and an active capacity of 59.2 billion cubic meters with a maximum water depth of 140 m and a normal elevation of 640 m above sea level. GERD has a power plant in the form of 13 Francis turbines, including 11 turbines with a capacity of 400 megawatts each and 2 turbines with a capacity of 375 megawatts each. With an installed capacity of 5,150 megawatts, GERD will be Africa's largest hydropower plant (Chandramouli et al., 2023). In addition to providing electricity supply to more than 76 million Ethiopians currently experiencing power shortages, GERD is also expected to generate revenue through electricity exports to countries such as Kenya, Eritrea, Djibouti, Sudan, and South Sudan.

The reasons for the development of the GERD can be found in several historical and geographical factors. Approximately 86% of the total flow of the Nile River comes from the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia. Although the Nile passes through 11 countries, most of its water is utilized by Egypt and Sudan based on the "Nile Waters Agreement" in 1959 which granted them the privilege of using the river. However, Ethiopia does not recognize the treaty and has always demanded what it considers a fair and equitable share of the Nile's water (Pemunta et al., 2021). Known as "Africa's water tower" due to its abundant rainfall and high altitude, Ethiopia has not been able to effectively utilize its water resources due to a lack of infrastructure and investment. Ethiopia faces challenges of energy shortages, and chronic poverty, and has a large youth population that demands more opportunities and services. Therefore, Ethiopia sees GERD as a vital project that can meet its energy and development needs, as well as enhance its national pride and sovereignty (Attia & Saleh, 2021).



Figure 1. Location of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

The concept of building a dam on the Blue Nile River was originally proposed by the US Bureau of Reclamation in the 1950s and 1960s but was not realized due to political and financial obstacles. In the late 2000s, Ethiopia revived the project by commissioning a feasibility study and dam design (Krentz, 1982). Originally known as the Millennium Dam,

the project was later renamed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, reflecting its ambitious and transformational nature. The GERD project was launched by former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in April 2011 (Souza & Jara, 2023). The project secured public support and funding through Ethiopia's resources, including bonds, taxes, and donations. Italian contractor Salini Impregilo is responsible for the dam's construction, which is estimated to cost around US\$4.7 billion (Power Technology, 2015). This makes the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam one of the largest hydroelectric power plants in the world and the largest in Africa.

The construction of the GERD generated controversy and opposition, particularly from countries along the downstream, especially Egypt. Egypt is concerned that the construction of the dam could reduce water supply, threaten food security, and present a risk to their livelihoods. More than 90% of Egypt's water needs depend on the Nile River, while their population continues to grow (Mbaku, 2020). Egypt views the Nile as an issue of national security and historical heritage and threatens to use military force to protect its interests. Sudan, on the other hand, has a more divergent view, as they hope to benefit from the regulation of the dam in terms of flood control and the economical provision of electricity. However, like Egypt, Sudan also has similar concerns regarding water security and environmental impacts.

GERD will have an impact on the volume and timing of the flow of the Blue Nile into the Nile River, which is a vital lifeline for Egypt and Sudan. The dam will reduce water availability for irrigation, water consumption, and hydropower generation in both countries, especially during times of drought or low rainfall (Siddig et al., 2020). It will also impact the natural cycles of flooding and sedimentation, which play an important role in soil fertility and ecosystem health along the Nile. Countries on the lower reaches of the river are concerned that the construction of these dams could threaten their water security, food security, and economic and social development.

The effect of the GERD on the flow of water from the Blue Nile to the Nile is due to the dam's role as a barrier and regulator of river flow. The GERD dam reservoir can store 74 billion cubic meters of water, while the water release mechanism will be adjusted according to Ethiopia's plans and needs (Abdelhady et al., 2015). Therefore, downstream countries, especially Egypt and Sudan, will receive lesser amounts of water at different times than usual. The volume and timing of water flows will be affected by several factors, such as rainfall patterns, dam filling schedules, operating rules, and coordination and data exchange between countries.

Blue Nile River plays a key role in supplying water to the Nile, contributing about 85.6% of the total water supply during the rainy season (Power Technology, 2015). The flow of the Blue Nile is influenced by monsoon rains, and under conditions of excessive rain, the Blue Nile can even flow backward near the confluence with the White Nile. Floods in the Blue Nile account for 60 percent of the total floods in the Nile, making an important contribution to downstream countries for replenishment of their water supply and land irrigation. Nonetheless, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is expected to reduce the volume and duration of flooding as it holds most of the water within its reservoir. According to independent research conducted by Deltares, a reduction of 1 billion cubic meters of water could potentially eliminate more than one million jobs and reduce economic output by \$1.8 billion annually across all sectors of the Egyptian economy (DC, 2021).

The volume of water flowing from the Blue Nile into the Nile as a result of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) hydropower plant is influenced by several factors, including rainfall patterns, filling schedules, operating rules, and coordination and data exchange between countries. GERD is expected to reduce the average flow of the Blue Nile coming to Egypt by 25% (Farah Khayry, 2022). Therefore, while the exact amount of water flowing from the Blue Nile into the Nile as a result of GERD cannot be accurately ascertained, estimates suggest that the volume is likely to be significantly lower than the historical

average. The impact of this reduction may vary depending on hydrological conditions and dam management scenarios.

Since the dam will release water following Ethiopia's needs for hydropower generation, the effect of GERD will also be felt in the Nile's flow schedule. However, this may not align with the irrigation and water supply needs of downstream countries. Traditionally, downstream countries receive peak Blue Nile flows between July and October when the river overflows due to monsoon rains. However, the GERD will change this pattern by delaying and extending peak flows, storing water in the wet season, and releasing it in the dry season. The impact is to create uncertainty and variation in water availability, especially during periods of drought or low rainfall in downstream countries. Downstream countries emphasized the importance of Ethiopia respecting their historical and legal rights to Nile water.

GERD is a complex, multifaceted project that has important implications for development, security, and interstate cooperation in the Nile basin. Egypt sees the construction of the GERD as a threat to its water security and national interests (Matthews & Vivoda, 2023). They view the issue of the Nile and GERD as an issue of national security and historical rights. Egypt has sought to enter into negotiations with Ethiopia and Sudan to reach a fair and binding agreement on the filling and operation of the dam, respecting the rights and interests of all countries in the Nile Basin. The three countries have been engaged in negotiation and mediation efforts for years, but they have not managed to reach a comprehensive and binding agreement regarding the filling process, the amount and frequency of water releases, data coordination and exchange, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Egypt has also sought to mediate and enlist the support of regional and international actors, such as the African Union and the United Nations to resolve disputes peacefully and diplomatically.

These actions and statements reflect Egypt's efforts to portray the GERD as a serious threat to its water security and national interests. The aim is to gain political and public support to take extraordinary measures to protect its rights and interests over the Nile waters. The Egyptian Government's securitization stance is also a response to the intransigent and one-sided behavior of Ethiopia. The authors are interested in the conditions under which the Egyptian government pursued a securitization approach to deal with the GERD dispute. Our analysis will be focused on how the issue could be considered as a security challenge for Egypt which eventually prompted them to implement securitization measures. The purpose of this study is to analyze the securitization efforts implemented by the Egyptian government in response to the GERD dispute. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute as a source of learning and reference for further research, especially regarding the evolution of GERD development issues.

This paper will use a qualitative descriptive method based on the introduction that has been written beforehand. The data collection technique that we use in this research is library research, namely collecting data from literature such as books, journal articles, data archives from tripartite countries which are published boldly, working papers from meetings, related research materials, newspapers, and so on related to the research topic. Meanwhile, the data analysis method that will be used is deductive, namely looking at a phenomenon first and then using a theoretical analysis knife to explain the issue we are analyzing. This research will attempt to analyze the securitization effort from the government of Egypt to tackle the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam dispute that has been going on since 2011 through the lens of the Copenhagen School of Securitization theory proposed by Barry Buzan and the national interest concept. Securitization theory will be used to analyze how the steps taken by the government of Egypt are seen as securitization of the threat that was formed by Ethiopia through the establishment of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Furthermore, this security act made by Egypt's government can be explained and broken down through the four elements

used to assess an event so that it can be considered a security issue by the state. These four elements include securitizing actor, referent object, speech act, and target audience (Buzan et al., 1998).

According to the book 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis' written by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, security can be described as a survival effort when a problem is presented as an existential threat to a designated referent object—typically, but not always, the state, which includes government, territory, and society (Buzan et al., 1998). Similarly, security is defined by a unique approach distinguished by extreme urgency, prioritized action, and a departure from the conventional norms of politics. Through the process of securitization, a matter is accentuated as one of paramount importance, allowing an actor to validly argue for elevating the issue beyond the limitations of standard political rules and procedures. This enables the consideration of the matter through 'extraordinary measures,' breaking away from the usual practices of open debate (Stritzel, 2014). In the case of the Egypt and Ethiopia dispute, Egypt saw the build-up of the dam by Ethiopia as a risk and threat that would disturb the economic and political sector of the state. Therefore, the Egyptian government stepped up to initiate a few actions that will be seen as an act of securitization to eradicate the issue.

Joseph Frankel defines national interest as a tool to explain and analyze the foreign policy of nation-states and those who employ the term to justify or rationalize state behavior in the international realm (Burchill, 2005). The actions taken by a country on the international stage are seen as efforts to protect the nation. Scott Burchill, in his book "The National Interest in International Relations Theory", further elaborates on this concept. Burchill classifies national interest into five perspectives based on different implications and reasons related to national interests: realism, liberalism, marxism, constructivism, and the English school (Burchill, 2005). National interest itself can be divided into three classifications: first, those aligned with fundamental values like territorial integrity, independence, sovereignty, and other non-negotiable principles; second, those that, while significant, are negotiable, such as agreements related to arms control and disarmament, with the condition of preserving the initial balance; and third, interests or issues that are commonly negotiated (Metea, 2020). In this article, the Liberalism perspective will be used to examine Egypt's national interest in the face of the threats arising from the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, considering the Nile River as a source of life, the center of Egyptian daily activities, and a pillar supporting Egypt's economic market. National interests are not solely focused on the security state in terms of the military, but also on economic stability and markets, which must also be taken into consideration (Burchill, 2005). More specifically, the achieved national interest is the functioning of market mechanisms, allowing individuals in society to engage in economic activities (Burchill, 2005).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The United Nations General Assembly which was held in September 2019 became one of Egypt's mediums to gain international attention and empathy regarding the conflict of interest over the Nile river between tripartite countries, Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. On the occasion, the President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi conveyed "While we acknowledge Ethiopia's right to development, the water of the Nile is a question of life, a matter of existence to Egypt" (Middle East Online, 2019). Through this statement, it is clear that Egypt's intentions towards the GERD that is being built by Ethiopia. Furthermore, Egypt's foreign minister, Sameh Soukry stated that all options are on the table to deal with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (Ahram Online, 2021). This statement emphasizes more firmly the threats GERD imposes on Egypt. GERD is indeed a development effort for Ethiopia's future and a solution for challenges Ethiopia faces nowadays, but with the existence of GERD, the existence of life in Egypt is intervened considering that the Nile River is a very

important aspect of life for Egypt.

Furthermore, at a negotiation meeting between ministers of resources held in Khartoum, Sudan, the Egyptian Minister of Irrigation stated Egypt's openness to the fourth party to play the mediator role "Egypt has called for involving an international party in the Renaissance Dam negotiations to mediate between the three countries and help... reaching a fair and balanced agreement" (hydroreviewcontentdirectors, n.d.) Then, indirectly, Egypt wanted the United States to take this role. However, Ethiopia does not agree with this and assumes that having a fourth party as a mediator will only prolong the negotiation process indefinitely (hydroreviewcontentdirectors, n.d.). However, as time went on, the United States alongside the World Bank started to get involved in the negotiations.

In 2020, Egypt finally brought this case to the UN Security Council through a letter on May 1, 2020. Through this letter, Egypt emphasized again that the Nile River is a source of life for Egypt and the existence of GERD will threaten their lives. Apart from that, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his letter also highlighted things that Ethiopia had done which were considered to be exacerbating the conflict. Ethiopia's decision to start the GERD filling process without the consent of downstream countries is inconsistent with the etiquette of cooperation towards countries sharing the Nile River and Ethiopia's legal obligations (Egypt, 2020b). Ethiopia then also did not attend the last ministerial meeting which aimed to finalize the agreement after negotiations carried out by the three countries and moderated by the United States and the World Bank (Egypt, 2020b). Ethiopia also then asked Egypt and Sudan to agree to a proposed plan regarding GERD, but the proposal was deemed to lack detail and thus violated the 2015 Declaration of Principles (Egypt, 2020b).

Following up on Egypt's letter on May 1, 2020, Ethiopia also sent a letter on May 15, 2020. The letter sent by Ethiopia focuses on Ethiopia's interests and how the GERD can help Ethiopia overcome its problems such as electricity shortages and poverty (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2020). Apart from that, Ethiopia also discussed the Aswan Dam which is owned by Egypt, which during the construction process ignored protests carried out by Ethiopia and was carried out without any consultation with countries on the Nile River (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2020). Egypt then followed up its letter by urging the UN Security Council to immediately take action against the "violations" that Ethiopia had committed in its GERD development efforts (Egypt, 2020a).

In 2023, the final Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam filling will be completed. Various meetings and negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan, with mediators have also been carried out, but still have not resulted in significant developments. The latest negotiations held in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, did not bring significant progress to the conflict even though the construction and filling of the GERD had been completed (Middle East Monitor, 2023). Egypt, through its officials, has always said on various occasions that GERD is an existential threat to Egypt. The reduction in the flow of Nile River water into Egypt has had an impact on Egypt's daily life, economy, and even geopolitical situation. Even so, Egypt's securitization efforts did not produce significant results. Meanwhile, if Egypt wants to take military action it will not have an impact on Egypt or its neighboring countries. This is related to the filling of the GERD which has been completed, and if military action is taken it could cause flooding which would be detrimental (Holleis, 2023).

According to the explanation that has been written above, the Egyptian government has a significant concern regarding the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) revolving around the duration it takes to fill its reservoir. This extended filling period is anticipated to diminish Egypt's portion of the Nile River water, consequently posing a threat to Egypt's water security. Furthermore, the establishment of the massive dam itself on the Blue Nile had a big impact on both Sudan and Egypt but despite both Egypt and Sudan experiencing water shortages due to the dam's construction, Egypt is poised to lose three times the quantity of water compared to Sudan, as stipulated by the 1959 water

share agreement. It emphasizes the imperative for nations in the Nile Basin to adopt sustainable water resource management practices and enhance their water infrastructure (El-Nashar & Elyamany, 2018).

Using data obtained from the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the GERD's filling stages have negative impacts on the water budget especially in 2023 and 2024. The data stated that the more the GERD is filled, the greater the amount of discharge. The water in the Nile River continues to decline as can be seen in figure 2 by 53.05 BCM. Then in 2023, when the GERD has been filled with 41 BCM, the water discharge in Egypt's share of Nile River will decrease to 43.5 BCM (abdel hak hassan et al., 2024). The water discharge of Egypt's Nile River has continued to decline since the GERD filling began. And although it is predicted that there will be an increase in water discharge in 2025, the amount will not match the initial discharge before GERD filling began. Meanwhile, at the same time, the water needed by the Egyptian people continues to increase every year. Furthermore, Egypt's water river discharge did not decrease drastically during the GERD filling period because there was an increase in rainwater which then caused major flooding. However, if the GERD filling rate does not decrease and remains at the same figure in future years, the water discharge of the Egypt's Nile River could potentially decrease by 2.29 % ($16.57 \pm 1.07 \text{ km}^3$), which translate into an agricultural land loss of $\pm 1.81 \%$ each year (Ahmed et al., 2024).

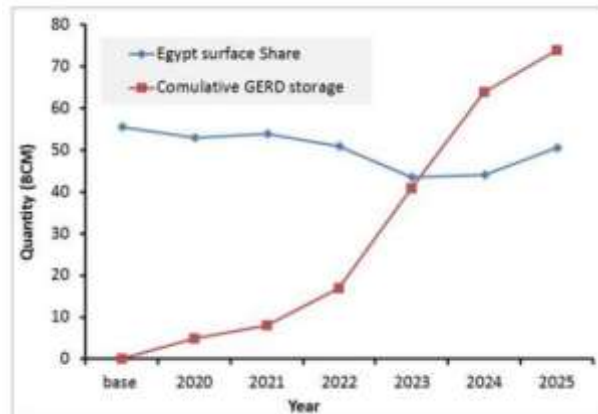


Figure 2. Comparison of the water discharge of the Egypt's Nile River and GERD in 2020-2025 (abdel hak hassan et al., 2024)

Due to Egypt's heavy dependence on the waters of the Nile, its government has adamantly demanded that the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) be halted as a prerequisite for engaging in negotiations. Egypt also sought regional backing for its interests, adopting an instrumentalist stance, and launched a diplomatic campaign to undermine support for the GERD's construction. Media reports, including those from respected sources such as The Washington Post, suggested that Egypt was contemplating plans to sabotage the GERD project. This underscores Egypt's strategic maneuvering to safeguard its interests in the Nile's waters because it poses a significant threat to its food, energy, and national security concerns on Egypt's side (Pemunta et al., 2021).

From this, it can be concluded that the Egyptian government saw this issue as a threat to its state. The development of understanding of these threats or problems can be seen in the Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Quoting from the report, these developments include, among other things, economic security, food, health, environment, personal security, community, and politics (Hadiwinata, 2017). Therefore, the analysis used by the author in this paper is Securitization Theory. This theory itself is the basis used by UNDP in writing its Human Development

Report. In International Relations, experts from the Copenhagen School claim that an event can be declared a security issue when the event is presented as an existential threat – a threat that needs to be immediately addressed with extraordinary measures – to some object. As the author already mentioned beforehand, four elements in Securitization theory will be used as a tool to analyze an issue to be seen as an existential threat and there are securitizing actor, referent object, speech act, and target audience (Buzan et al., 1998).

The first element that will be analyzed is securitizing actors. Securitizing actors or actors are the ones who have a role in providing optimal discursive information to the community regarding existing problems. Meanwhile, the discursiveness provided by the securitizing actor is a form of speech act. Speech act itself is an idea of the performativity of verbal language into the concept of security (Buzan et al., 1998). To be specific in this issue, the securitizing actor is the Egyptian government makes an effort to try and resolve the dispute. Efforts have been made by the Egyptian government to raise the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as an existential threat through actions taken by the President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who voiced his concerns about the construction of Ethiopia's dam which would disrupt the continued use of river water. The Nile in Egypt. Apart from that, the Egyptian government as a securitizing actor is also raising the issue of threats to Ethiopia's dam by seeking the attention of the international community to look at the ongoing issues between Egypt and Ethiopia. Apart from that, Egypt also carried out negotiation efforts and brought this dispute to the UN Security Council. In 2020, the country already persuaded the UN Security Council to help resolve the dispute with Ethiopia to reconsider their decision regarding the GERD so that it won't harm Egypt's side (Egypt, 2020b). The efforts described above also serve as a form of speech act that brings the problem of GERD and its impact on the welfare of Egyptian society into a national threat that must be immediately securitized.

Furthermore, the referent object has a definition, namely an object that is considered threatened and needs to be protected from existing threats (Buzan et al., 1998). In this case, the object that will feel threatened by this existence is Egyptian society. This can be seen from the potential impact that will occur when the GERD dam is completed, namely if there is mismanagement of the Nile River waters, this will harm population growth and cause food insecurity. Egypt also has the potential to experience reduced access to suburban land and a shortage of strategic resources, including energy. This lack of renewable resources can increase people's demands on government authorities and at the same time reduce their capacity to meet these needs. Pressures like this can increase the chances of the country fragmenting or making it more authoritarian (Pemunta et al., 2021). The last element is the target audience. The target audience comprises a specific group of audience involved in or affected by the Securitization Act, and the objective is to persuade them to acknowledge and accept the issue at hand as a genuine security threat (Buzan et al., 1998). In this case, the target audience in the securitization efforts carried out by the securitization actor, namely the Egyptian government, is apart from the Egyptian people themselves, namely the country of Ethiopia. As the opposition party to this dispute, Egypt is trying to carry out securitization with the aim that Ethiopia can see that the dam construction carried out by that country has caused losses for the Egyptian side.

As the referent object, the Egyptian people have a major influence on the decision-making made by the Egyptian government, which is the actor of securitization. The Egyptian people, through activists who voice their disapproval of the existence of the dam, believe that the dam will cause Egypt to face a major crisis. Several studies have predicted that more than half of the agricultural land in Egypt will be destroyed by the dam. Furthermore, this will then lead to a potential food crisis and even famine (Salahi, n.d.). On the other hand, Ethiopia as the target audience of Egypt's securitization efforts also has a major influence. Ethiopia has taken several actions that ultimately led Egypt to decide to make securitization efforts. First, Ethiopia has consistently rejected resolution efforts related to the GERD

dispute between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. When the Arab League suggested bringing in the UN Security Council to resolve the dispute, Ethiopia objected to this (AlJazeera, 2021). Then, the conflict escalated when Ethiopia announced that it would start filling the dam with water in July 2020, which was contrary to a decision that had been mutually agreed upon by the parties involved that the dam could not be filled before a legally binding agreement was reached (Mbaku, 2020).

All of these securitization elements then became the background for why the Egyptian government finally announced a speech act by stating that the GERD was an existential threat that should be resolved immediately. Egypt then took concrete steps by stating its desire to resolve the dispute by presenting a third party from both the World Bank and the UN. Egypt had previously also tried to resolve the dispute by asking the United States to intervene and become a third party in the case in February 2020. However, Ethiopia did not show good faith by coming to the meeting because it was persistent in its desire to resolve the conflict internally without using assistance from other parties. Meanwhile, efforts to resolve the dispute through a meeting of the three countries involved also met with many failures because the negotiations carried out did not produce significant results, especially for Egypt and Sudan. The action of filling the dam was considered by Egypt as an attempt to control the supply of Nile water which would affect the future development of the river's water capacity (VOA, 2020). Even then, up to three years later, the securitization efforts carried out by the Egyptian government still had not found a bright spot that was beneficial for them (Reuters, 2023). This happened due to several factors, one of which was because of the national interest of Ethiopia itself to insist on building a dam with the aim of increasing the electricity supply in the country. The negotiation efforts that had been made then made Ethiopia feel that the party that did not agree with its actions only wanted a monopoly on the water supply in the Nile. The failure of the securitization efforts carried out by Egypt also occurred due to the involvement of many parties outside the three countries, namely Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. This was because Ethiopia felt that intervention from outside parties was an aggressive and unnecessary approach (Yibeltal, n.d.).

Lattermost, based on the concept of national interest which refers to the foreign policy of nation-states and those who use the term to justify or explain state conduct in the international arena (Burchill, 2005). The efforts made by the Egyptian government to resolve the problem of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam built by the Ethiopian government are a form of Egypt's national interests. Based on the classification of the national interest, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is considered an interest by Egypt because this issue has already been negotiated several times. National interests, which are a complex interplay of economic, political, and security concerns, guides a nation's foreign policy decisions. Egypt's approach to the GERD shows a primary focus on water security, economic stability and political strategy. GERD is seen as a serious threat to Egypt's water supply, which relies heavily on the Nile River to meet 90% of its water needs. The most significant impact is felt by the agricultural sector, which is heavily affected by changes in water availability as it uses 70% of the water from the Nile River (Youssef, 2023). As water security is closely linked to economic stability, a decline in agricultural yields can exacerbate socio-economic problems. Therefore, Egypt has adopted a securitization approach by treating GERD as a national security threat that requires a diplomatic and even military response (Bouks, 2022). Given the importance of the issue, water security is high on Egypt's national agenda, prompting the government to allocate massive diplomatic, legal and political resources to reach an agreement that minimizes negative impacts on water supply.

If seen through the eyes of the Egyptian government, the existence of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is very detrimental to Egypt. The efforts made by Egypt are part of their way of defending their national interests as much as possible and getting the maximum benefits. However, the GERD dispute has had political and diplomatic repercussions for Egypt, straining relations with Ethiopia. In response to this situation,

Egypt has tried to balance diplomatic efforts with the protection of its national interests. A key challenge for Egyptian policymakers is to maintain a balance between regional cooperation and national security. Decisions regarding the GERD involve complex trade-offs. A focus on water security may increase tensions with Ethiopia and hamper regional cooperation, while prioritizing diplomatic relations may require compromises on water security. Egypt's strategy includes consideration of the short- and long-term impacts of different policy options. A more flexible diplomatic approach may provide immediate benefits, but could be detrimental to water security in the long term. Conversely, a tough stance may protect water supplies temporarily, but risks escalating conflict with Ethiopia.

CONCLUSION

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a hydroelectric dam construction project in Ethiopia. The construction of the dam has led to conflict between Ethiopia and the countries downstream of the Nile River, especially Egypt. Egypt, which depends 90% of its water needs from the Nile, considers the construction of the GERD dam as a threat to its water security and national interests. The Egyptian government has said on numerous occasions that the construction of the GERD is a serious threat to Egypt's security. They view the issue of the Nile and GERD as a matter of national security and a violation of their historical rights. The reduced water discharge of the Nile River flowing into Egypt has an impact on Egypt's daily life, economy, and geopolitical situation. Egypt has sought to enter into negotiations with Ethiopia to reach fair and binding agreements regarding the filling process, the amount and frequency of water releases, data coordination and exchange, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Egypt has also sought regional support for its interests by launching a diplomatic campaign. These efforts were made to weaken support for the GERD construction project. These actions are Egypt's attempt to deal with the serious threats to its water security and national interests caused by the GERD. The aim is to gain political and public support to take securitization measures to protect its rights and interests over the Nile waters. The securitization stance of the Egyptian government is also a response to the stubborn behavior and one-sided decision of the Ethiopian government in the construction of the GERD. The efforts made by the Egyptian government to resolve the GERD dam issue are also a form of defending their national interests as much as possible and getting the maximum benefit. However, Egypt's securitization efforts did not produce significant results. Egypt also cannot take military action due to the completed GERD filling. If military action is taken, it will harm Egypt and its neighbors.

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