

Instability, War & Peace from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East

Alex de Waal



Key Concepts

- The political market
 - Supply and demand for loyalties/political services
 - Competitive/open or regulated/cartel-like
- The political budget
 - The funds that a politician has to buy loyalties or political services
- Political business management
 - Goals, strategy and skill

and turbulence...

Dictionary Definitions of Kleptocracy

“A society whose leaders make themselves rich and powerful by stealing from the rest of society.”

“Rule of thieves.”



A Sociological Definition of Kleptocracy

The essence of kleptocracy is that the functioning of the organs of authority is determined by the mechanisms of supply and demand rather than the laws and regulations ...

Normally kleptocracy is not 'pure' but intertwined with coercion by armed force; so that strategy and tactics as well as price theory are needed to explain the functioning of a system consisting of a mixture of venality and gangsterism.

Stanislav Andreski 1968

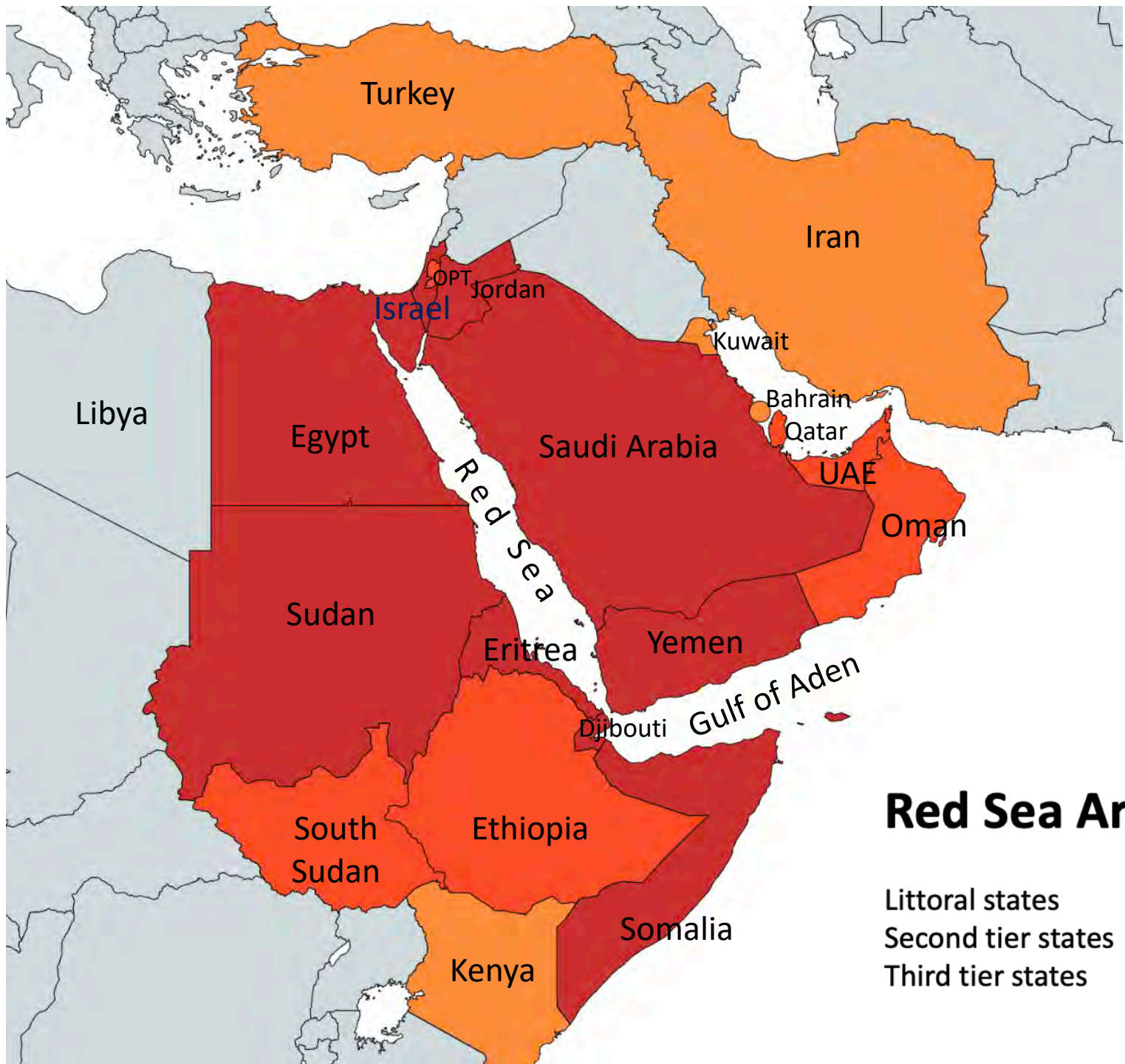
Three Kinds of Corrupt Acts

“Corruption with exchange”: the investor pays the bribe to the official and the road gets built as promised. (“Speed money” or “access money”.)

“Corruption with theft”: the official steals from the public purse or from the investor and a sub-standard road might get built.

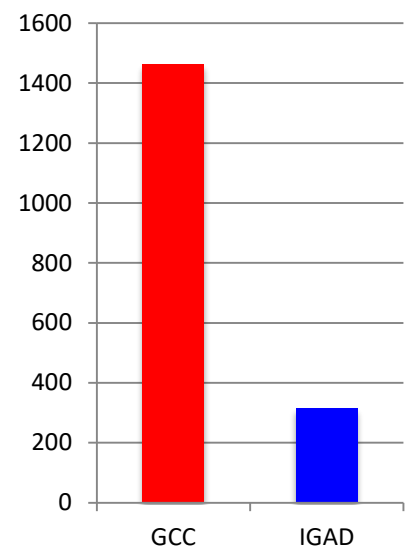
“Corruption with robbery”: the official steals from the citizenry at the point of a gun, and no investor will contemplate investing.

Based on Yuen Yuen Ang, *China’s Gilded Age: The paradox of economic boom and vast corruption*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2020

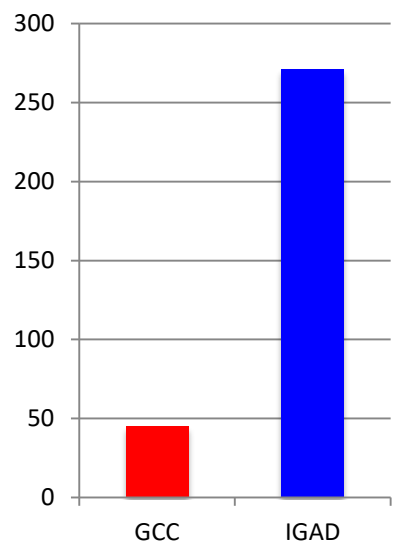


Red Sea Arena

- Littoral states
- Second tier states
- Third tier states



GDP (\$ billion)



Population (m)

Saudi Arabia



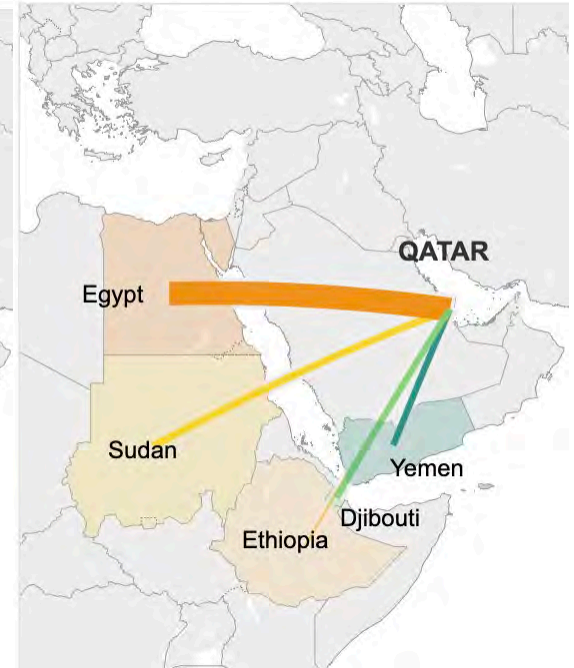
\$29 bn

United Arab Emirates



\$69 bn

Qatar



\$ 23 bn

Gulf Financial Aid and Direct Investment Tracker

By Karen E. Young

American Enterprise Institute

Period 2003-2021; KSA, UAE and Qatar to selected Red Sea Arena countries (no data for Eritrea or Somalia)



Major Chinese Investments in Ports and Industrial Parks



Source: Washington Institute for Near East Policy



Saudi Arabia

Red Sea

Oman

Eritrea

Yemen

Gulf of Aden

Socotra

Djibouti





Ethiopia

Somalia

Kenya

2010

-  Turkey
-  Russia
-  China
-  Japan
-  France
-  Saudi Arabia
-  Italy
-  U.S.
-  UAE

-  Commercial port
-  Military base
-  Commercial port and military base
-  Proposed naval presence



Three Kinds of Corruption in Peace

All peace deals involve legitimizing previous illegalities – the question is which ones, how much, and whether this is seen as a regrettable necessity or openly acknowledged.

“Peace with corruption with exchange”: The political-military leaders on both sides get sweetheart crony capitalist deals

“Peace with theft”: The political-military leaders get to steal the country’s resources (e.g. oil) and foreign aid.

“Peace with robbery”: The political-military leaders have to turn to pillage or shakedown of the citizens to sustain their political businesses.

Peace Agreements 1990s

Political settlements between belligerents, sometimes with discreet third party mediation

- Simple short texts, modest external monitoring
- Ideological compromises and new democratic constitutional systems;
- Transitional justice;
- Economic reform;
- Underpinned by peace dividends

A general sense that these were settling the leftover problems of the Cold War – emphasis on “transitional”.

Peace Agreements 2000s

“Comprehensive Peace Agreements”, mediated and monitored by third parties, especially the UN.

- New constitutional systems (often very complicated)
- Promises of transitional justice (rarely honored)
- Economic reforms
- Underpinned by peace dividends (commodities boom era) and U.S. security cooperation
- “Payroll peace” and material rewards for leaders

The “real deal” was usually done in a backroom, the expectation was that all would work out because of rising general prosperity.

Peace Agreements 2010s

On paper: “Comprehensive Peace Agreements, mediated and monitored by third parties. But the subtext looking shakier and shakier.

- The same structures and process as before...
- No tangible progress beyond sharing power and wealth towards democracy
- Weaker peace dividends (commodities boom fading – esp. 2014 oil price crash) and less U.S. security cooperation
- “Payroll peace” and material rewards for leaders swallowing most of the available money

Shifting from “peace with corrupt exchange” to “peace with theft”.

Peace Agreements 2020s

Disorder and confusion...

- Foreign mediators grasping at minimum or partial deals (e.g. on humanitarian access or ceasefires)
- No serious talk of democracy, constitutional reform, transitional justice
- No peacekeepers, no robust monitoring
- No peace dividends and (almost) no U.S. security cooperation
- “Payroll peace” and material rewards for leaders swallowing up all the available money ... and still not enough

Shifting from “peace with theft” to “peace with robbery”

Imperial-Era Sovereignty

- **Sliced:** Divided into territories with arbitrary boundaries
- **Diced:** Different functions allocated to local authority and imperial power (finance, law, trade, defense, diplomacy)
- **Ranked:** Valued differently in protocol (gun salutes etc.)
- **Traded:** Bought, sold, swapped...

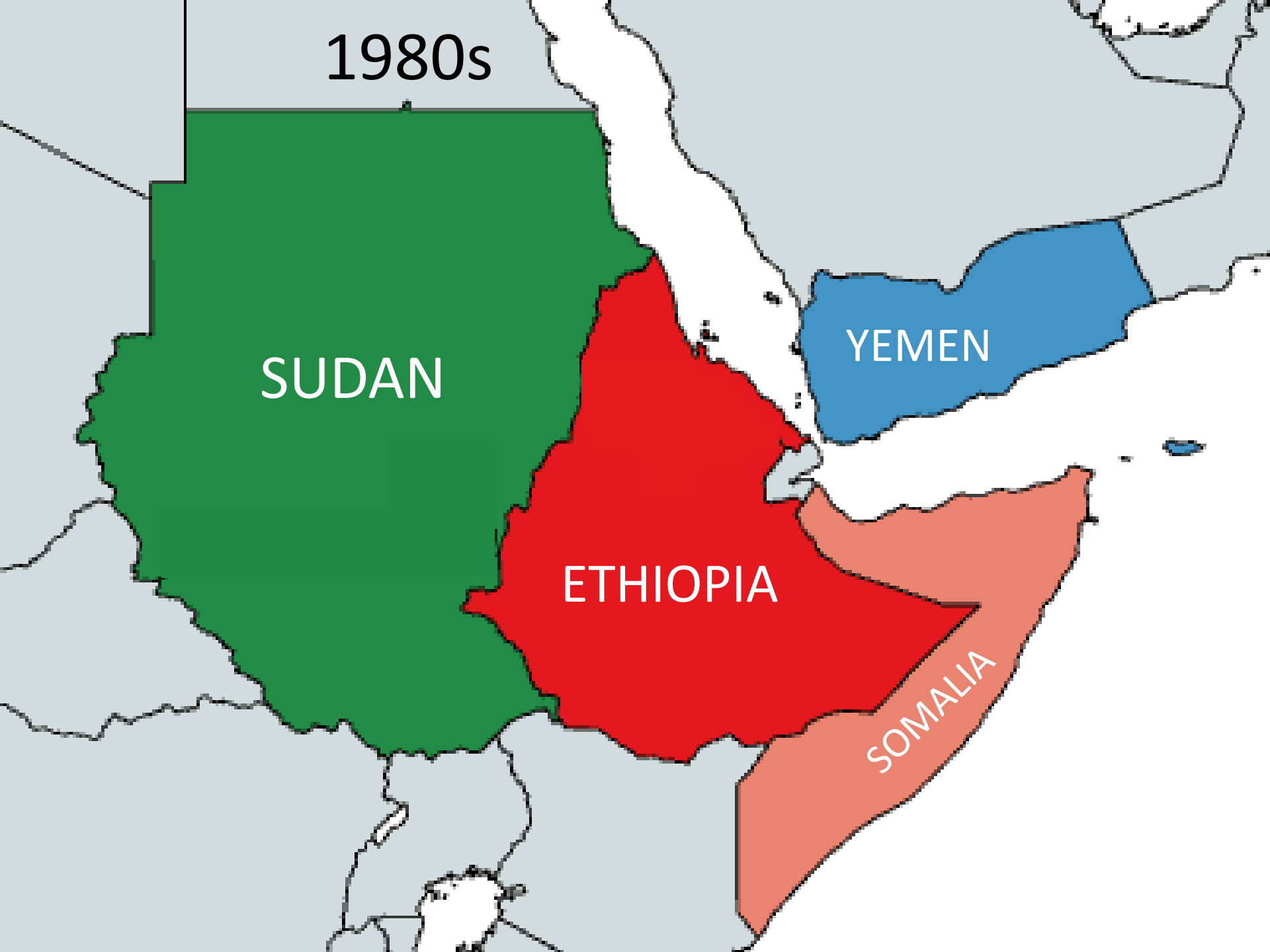
1980s

SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

YEMEN

SOMALIA



2010s

SUDAN

ERITREA

YEMEN

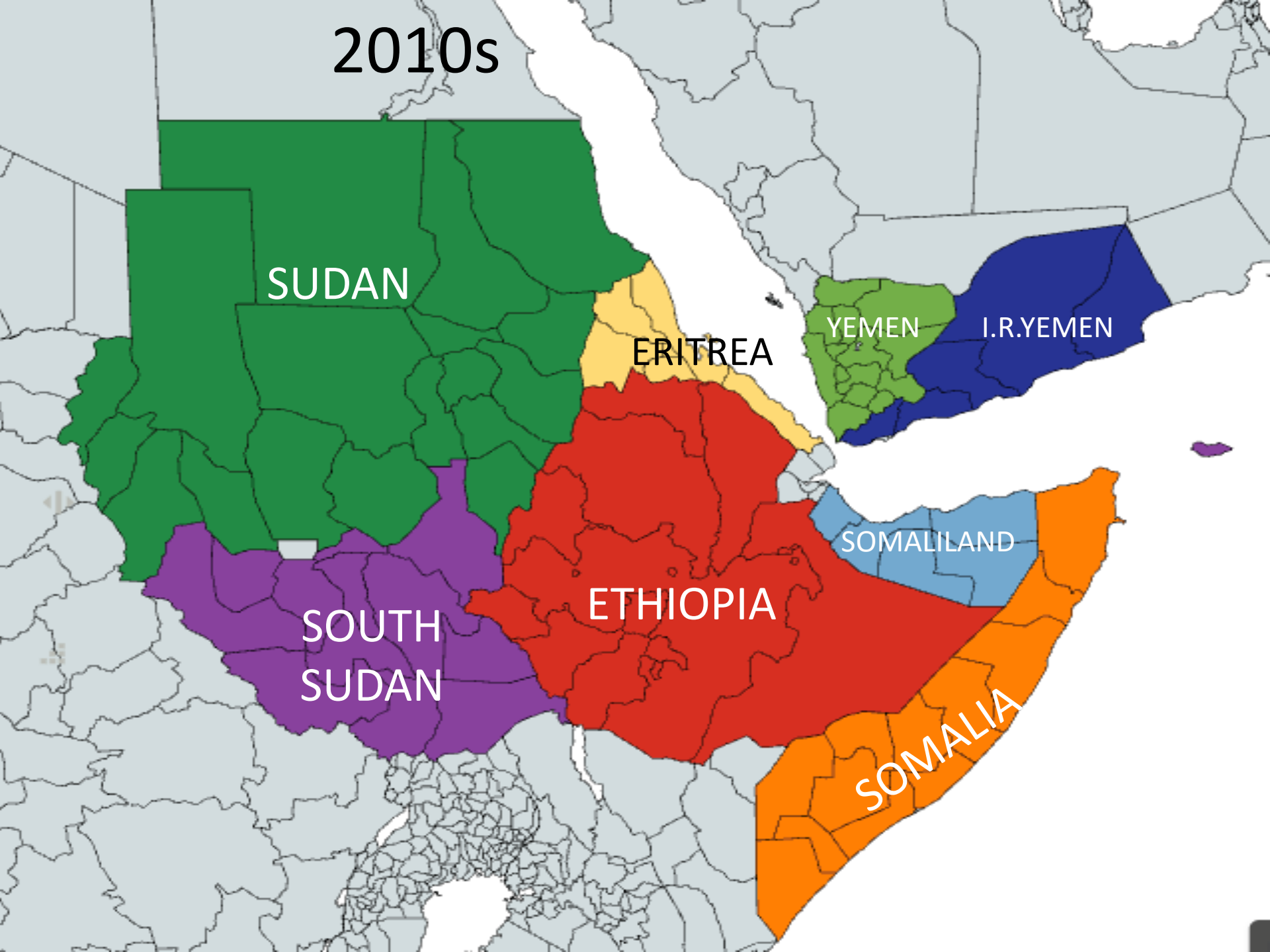
I.R.YEMEN

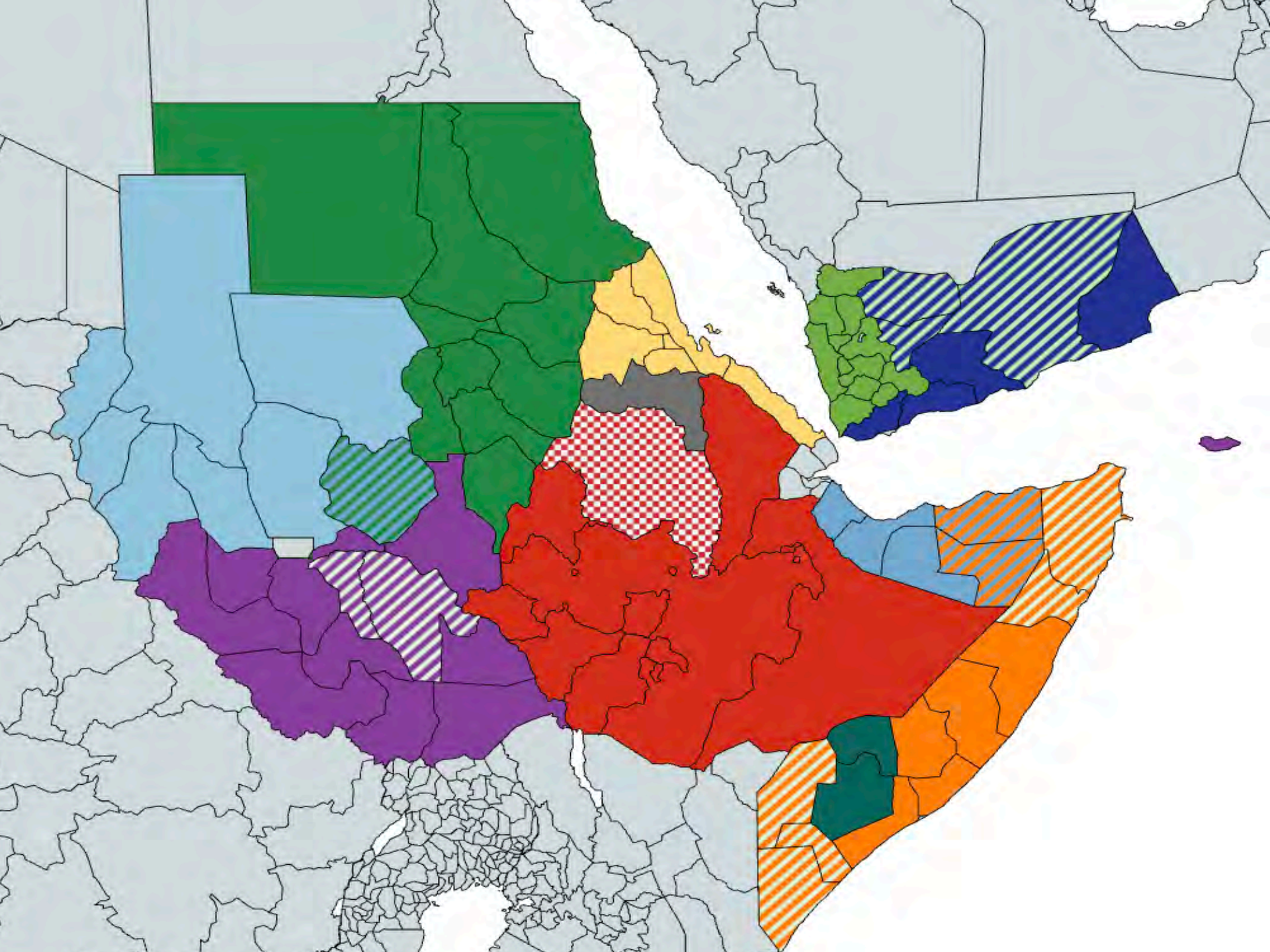
SOUTH
SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

SOMALILAND

SOMALIA





Rival Alliances; Converging Vortices

