**Foreign policy dimension of Ethiopia during the regime of Emperor Theodore II**

Theodore II, who reigned in the mid-nineteenth century, was the first modern Ethiopian leader to try to develop a foreign policy that transcended the Horn region. Before Theodore’s time Ethiopia did not have a foreign policy and her relations with other countries were sporadic and spasmodic. His primary concerns were the security of Ethiopia's traditional borders, obtaining technology from Europe (or modernization), and to a lesser degree Ethiopian rights to the monastery of Dar-es-Sultan in the city of [Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem).

Theodore’s forerunners among the mesafint, sahale Selassie, ali and oobie and to some extent even the earlier Tigreans Sabagadis and Welde Sellasie had all been receiving explorers and adventurers, missionaries and more or less official representatives of European governments. They had accepted the gifts brought to them and by the eighteen-forties had even started to sign official treaties brought for their signatures. But beyond this and asking for more gifts, usually firearms, the Ethiopian part in opening of the country was passive. All this changed under Theodore, who used foreign policy as an instrument to achieve Ethiopia’s national purposes.

Theodore alone fully appreciated not only the necessary of acquiring firearms but also the importance of producing them and restructuring the Ethiopian society as an effective response to the increasing pressure of European imperialism. Theodore’s foreign policy was not just a response to Europe’s pressure; it was dynamic, anti-imperialistic and anti-Islamic. While it opposed outside imperialism I aimed to promote Ethiopian imperialism, And was thus a forerunner of the policies of the succeeding Ethiopian rulers, particularly Menilic II.

Emperor Theodore II had clear foreign policy goals. He wished to develop close relations with Christian Europe, Particularly Britain and France, as he hoped to procure from them the much aspired “technical aid” to modernize his army. An equally important aim was to check the turko-egyptian imperialism that threatened his country’s independence and to carry on a crusade against those Muslim powers to achieve the ancient frontiers of Ethiopia. Thus close relations with Europe were fundamental to Theodore’s foreign policy.

Theodore was interested in foreign diplomatic relations with as many European countries as possible. However, he was determined to treat with them on equal terms only, to initiate contacts with those powers that might advance his own aims, and to seek technical aid that would be offered without prejudice to his sovereignty. In all these aspects Theodore’s foreign policy was very modern.