

SOMALI PHOENIX

JAMA MOHAMED GHALIB

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To Dag Hammarskjöld

Dag Hammarskjöld



Dag Hammarskjöld (1905–1961) was a world citizen. During his period as Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1953 until his death in 1961 he became known as an extremely efficient and dedicated international civil servant. Dag Hammarskjöld emphasised that a major task of the UN is to assert the interests of small countries in relation to the major powers. He also shaped the UN's mandate to establish peace-keeping forces. Before he was appointed UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld held high positions as a civil servant in the Swedish government.

Dag Hammarskjöld also had strong cultural interests and was a member of the Swedish Academy. His book *Markings*, published after his death, has become a classic.

Most of Dag Hammarskjöld's childhood and adolescence were spent in Uppsala where his father was the provincial governor. The city's importance in the formative stages of Hammarskjöld's life is easily discernible in his writings, among them the moving essay *Castle Hill*, which was written in New York shortly before his death.

NB:

The above profile is included in the text by the kind permission of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, which was received on 26 March 2001, but printing of the book was delayed as explained in the Preface.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe immense gratitude to the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation for kindly permitting me to include Mr. Hammarskjold's profile in the publication.

I am also indebted to a few Somali friends, who prefer not to be named, for their financial contribution to the project. Without their help the book could not have been produced, at least not this time.

And lastly, but not the least, I am thankful to my daughter Suad who has not only edited the text, but was also a serious critic and that has greatly improved the material value of the work.

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PREFACE

The object in writing this work, to begin with, was primarily to complete an unfinished business that missed its inclusion in the text of my previous book, *The Cost of Dictatorship* printed in 1995, as well as material of subsequent development of the ongoing Somali crises, with the intention of producing a second account of that discourse.

The choice for the new title, *The Somali Phoenix*, and its text for a separate book rather than a second edition of the previous book, was prompted by the successful outcome of the Arta Process – The Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference held in the Republic of Djibouti during the year 2000. The Arta Process established transitional structures of governance for Somalia for the first time in ten years within the framework of a National Charter. These were among other things: a Parliament, Government, and an independent judiciary.

The new Somali Government that emerged from the Arta Process was re-admitted into all international organizations that Somalia had belonged to before the civil war: the United Nations, the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its sub-regional organizations, IGAD, etc., the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). By and large that successful outcome of the Arta Process was in my own reckoning an embodiment of a **Somali Phoenix**.

I completed that text by end October 2001, and sent it for publication under that title. I have to; however, withdraw it later from printing and publication because of the following two subsequent developments:

- (a) In May 2002, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, a veteran in Somali politics, who featured in the text died and I have to delete whatever my personal opinion about him that could be construed to have some negative connotations about a dead person. Of course, he still features a great deal in the present text, but that belongs to history and I owe it and cannot help its inclusion whatever effect that may have. And,
- (b) Any further positive progress of those developments of the Arta Process was curtailed and pre-empted by hostile external actors, a foreign aggression of perennial history inimical to Somali nationhood. It threw a shadow of doubt as to whether

the title of the book still matched the reality, the fact that Somalia was back to square one again? That caused me a great deal of procrastination and delay. However, the later development of the Sharia justice under the leadership of the then Union of Islamic Courts was yet another embodiment of a Second **Somali Phoenix**. And despite the temporary set back in aborting the Sharia justice by again foreign aggression, I am encouraged that still the rise of a Third and lasting **Somali Phoenix** will inevitably emerge whatever the hurdles may be, and whatever length of time that takes. Because the application of the Sharia justice has proven itself to be the only antidote to the Achilles' heel of Somali nationhood, the clanism. I have, therefore, finally decided to keep both this title and the publication of the book on course.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the recent development of United States sanctioned invasion of Somalia by Ethiopian proxy forces shall be the subject of separate studies in due course, if God wills. There are already a stream of articles and other works by many scholarly researchers of both Somalis and non-Somalis. In the meantime one cannot escape making a few references to that invasion and its aftermath tragedy in this text that harmfully affects the lives of the Somali people.

JMG

INTRODUCTION

The genesis of the Somali upheavals was the military dictatorship. The prevailing situation in the country, especially during the last decade of the Siad Barre regime's life span was characterized by worsening injustice in all its forms, corruption and overall misrule. One of the most internationally abhorred and brutal rule of law had been that of apartheid South Africa. Even that would be a luxury compared with Siad Barre's Somalia. In the former case, the first President of post-apartheid South Africa, Mr. Nelson Mandela, according to his book, *Long Walk to Freedom*, and other inmates of the notorious Robben Island maximum security prison, were at least allowed periodical visits by their own family members, despite difficulties encountered by the visitors from monitoring and intrusion by the prison security into those private visits. On the contrary, the inmates of Siad Barre's Labaatan Jirow (The Twenty-Old) maximum security prison would neither see each other nor communicate among themselves, let alone visitors from outside into their individual dungeons. Some of them were there in that isolation for about two decades. They included some detainees who nearly forget to talk.

The above situation understandably spawned the emergence of armed opposition movements. Even then, the regime counting partly upon external support, which had sustained it so long (at first by the former Soviet bloc and later by the United States and others, not the least Italy and some Arab financiers), was not only opposed to dialogue and counseling, but left no alternative to avert the armed struggle. The Liberation Movements, through long and arduous armed struggle ultimately broke the backbone of the regime, but the coup de grace was, however, administered by a popular uprising in the national capital, though by and large the supporters of the United Somali Congress (USC). This was the last formed opposition Movement, whose traditional constituency Mogadishu is. Nonetheless, the overall outcome resultant from the defeat and removal of the dictatorship was yet another national disaster. After achieving its primary objective, the armed struggle aimed at the dictatorial regime, instantly transcended itself into a bitter settling of past scores among various groups of the Somali society, which had been sown by the former regime among various communities. For more than two decades the former regime had been pitting one clan or group against another or all various clans and groups against one particular clan. First, all groups were pitted against the Majertain in the north-east regions and later all against the Issaaq in the north. And lastly, the Darod were pitted against the Hawiye. The disintegration of the Somali nation state and the collapse of central authority, therefore, unleashed the settling of those past

scores. This score-settling scenario was further compounded by the acquisition of new high calibre arsenal in abundance, which was captured from or left behind by the disintegrating forces of the defunct regime. Owing to this aggravation, the situation impeded any progress towards national cohesion among the former opposition Movements. Because of the unavoidable negative reality that the formation of each one of those Movements to begin with, had to be a single clan or even sub clan based for security reasons, to safeguard against penetration by agents of the former regime. The armed opposition, therefore, lacked not only the necessary co-ordination, but also even the prerequisite national agenda in the first place. Only after the late General Aideed had joined the armed struggle during the last few months of 1990 did the then three armed opposition movements: (1) the Somali National Movement (SNM), (2) the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) and (3) the United Somali Congress (USC), did the three leaders draw up a national framework in October 1990. It was then too late to have it translated into the mind set of the rank and file of the actual fighters of various different militia groups (see Chapter Five, under Aideed).

The above clannized formation of the militia groups and the development of the score settling trends blocked all chances for an early settlement and the restoration of national institutions post Siad Barre era. The worsening of these trends of hostilities and disharmony, coupled with the absence of any semblance of legitimate governance not only sapped the morale and social fabric of the society, but also further ushered in a total anarchy and later foreign interferences.

All foreign countries that could have cared about Somalia and the Somali people were those, which had supported and sustained the Siad Barre regime to remain so long in power. The governments of those countries were not, therefore, well disposed towards supporting new actors in such a chaotic situation. Furthermore, most former top aides, both civil and military, of the Siad Barre's regime had taken refuge in the capitals of those countries and advised the latter to take a *laissez-faire* attitude about the new upheavals in Somalia. This they did with the exception of Egypt and Italy, which tried to help arrest those upheavals: violence and anarchy and to restore normalcy in the country, but in vain, because the Somali scenario had become so daunting and got out of hand.

The total collapse of the Somali nation state, followed by the disintegration of the essential structures ultimately led to the involvement of external factors, and its subsequent aftermath had among others been

elaborately presented by Ahmed Qassim Ali in his Paper: "The Foreign factor in the Somali Tragedy," at the Fifth Congress of the Somali Studies International Association (SSIA) held during 1-3 December 1993, at Holly Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA.

The situation was further deteriorated by a serious famine a year later, which seriously affected some parts of southern Somalia during 1992. Food and other relief supplies by humanitarian organizations were not reaching the targeted vulnerable groups affected by the famine and by the civil war, because of looting by local armed bandits. Lawlessness reigned in many parts of southern Somalia. However, the Somali people had above all one, but important friend at that time: the international media, which alarmed the international community of what disturbed human conscience and at long last persuaded and forced the attention of the world to focus on the pathetic situation in Somalia. Many important personalities of some western countries including the then President of the Republic of Ireland, Mary Robinson, Senator Nancy Kassebaum of the United States, Government ministers and other politicians and heads of various non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) visited the disaster areas in southern Somalia.

Chapter One

THE INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA (1992-95) WHY DID IT FAIL?

At the above backdrop, the United Nations Security Council decided to intervene in Somalia by military force under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, to establish a secure environment. Former President George Bush (senior) of the United States despite his administration had been among the main sustainers of the Siad Barre regime so long, nevertheless, took the unprecedented step in the history of his country since the Vietnam War. This despite subsequent US media and other American sources that the US intervention was unaltruistically motivated by oil discoveries in Somalia whereby a number of American companies had stakes. However, on the advice of senators Nancy Kassenbaum, who had visited the crises area, and Paul Simon (see Ahmed Qasim Ali's Paper cited above), and may be also that of former US Ambassador to Somalia, Robert Oakley (see Drysdale's book, 'Whatever Happened to Somalia', p. 5), referred to here-below, President Bush (snr) committed American involvement in a third world country, Somalia. The involvement was composed of a large military force to lead an international Unified Task Force (UNITAF) and humanitarian assistance. The American people across the board, politicians not the least, were supportive of the president's actions vis-à-vis the situation in Somalia. Many other nations of the international community also followed suit and generously contributed to both the military intervention and the relief effort. UNITAF's mission was an unprecedented operation, which although authorized by the UN Security Council, nevertheless, it operated independent of the United Nations system. Some early successes were temporarily achieved in halting the spate of looting of the humanitarian relief supplies, thus saving human lives of many otherwise starving people that alleviated the overall effects of the calamities, and therefore reduced the scale of lawlessness. However, the net achievements of these international efforts were by and large palliative. The United Nations made at least two serious and irreparable errors in dealing with the Somali scenario. First, the Security Council's resolution which authorized the military intervention was itself a handicap to the success of the operations it had authorized. The first part of its mandate was that 'all necessary means were to be taken to establish a secure environment'; and its second part was 'for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance.' Accordingly, those operations were limited to the escort and protection of the humanitarian relief supplies and the safety of international personnel involved only in fulfillment of the second part of the

overall mandate i.e. the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance. It lacked the vital mandate for a simultaneous disarmament of as many Somali militia groups as possible if a secure environment were to be established and thus realize the first objective of the overall mandate. Only a total disarmament of as many as possible of those militia groups could have produced the desired effects of peace and stability in the country. Otherwise, a thirty-eight thousand strong international military force should not have been needed at that stage of the international intervention, but only a few thousand for those escorts of a temporary nature, after which the same kind of lawlessness would be free to resume. A UNOSOM II, former political advisor had expressed a similar opinion that the same result could have been achieved with a much lesser number of troops. Without a commitment to total disarmament, no full advantage was being availed of the military might that was put in place by the international community for peace keeping operations in Somalia. It is important to extract the following similar views expressed by Charles Petrie (*italics*) in his Paper: "Somalia Revisited - The Price of Failure", April 21-22, 1995 at Princeton University, USA:

"What could have been more effective would have been the physical Dismantlement of the heavy weaponry and not simply the cantonment of these arms of destruction. In other words weakening the war-lords' capacity to wage war once the forces withdrew."

Therefore, UNITAF's mandate expired without fully achieving its main objective, that of secure environment. And secondly, the new UNOSOM II forces after UNITAF's withdrawal should have primarily consisted of an international police force rather than military as the case was. President Bush might have envisaged a similar strategy, as was later confirmed by then UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali (page 59 of his book: UNVANQUISHED/A U.S.-U.N, SAGA). The UN planners were missing or rather ignoring the important point that any military deployment should only be availed of for a limited period, possibly of short term duration, to just neutralize a hostile situation. Once that objective was achieved, the role of the military should be reviewed and in most cases, unless it be totally dispensed with and phased out, it should have devolved into deployment of an international police force. It should be remembered that by its nature, a military is of necessity trained to kill even in peacetime. It is not the role of a military to enforce law and order among civic society. That is the role of a police force. In a subsequent development, the first Commander of the more than fifty thousand strong NATO led forces in Kosovo, General Michael Jackson of

Britain, immediately and repeatedly called for an early deployment of a law enforcement force in Kosovo. In essence a police force. This was speedily acceded to and deployed parallel with the military forces that led to the successful outcome of the Kosovo overall operations.

UNOSOM II's international police force could still have some militarized units as the then Somali situation would demand, as a matter of deterrence to any non-law abiding groups. The size of such militarized units would depend upon the scale of disarmament that should have been achieved during the earlier UNITAF phase of military deployment. It should, however, be accepted that mustering the required number of a large international police force would be a bit more difficult, since most contributing countries would not necessarily have any big numbers of uncommitted policemen whom they could spare, as they would have of military personnel. But it could still be possible to raise the necessary police manpower by proper planning as there would have been ample time in the case of Somalia during the earlier phase of military (UNITAF's) deployment. At least more than half of the required number of the police manpower could have been locally raised by recalling the great majority of the members of the more than thirteen thousand strong former Somali police force with a minimum incentive to the individual members so recalled. This would cost a small fraction per man of what would be paid to their international counter-parts. A UNOSOM II Police Force would be much better placed to bring about the re-establishment of the local police units. UNOSOM II police experts could have been much more productive if they operated under an international policing system rather than under a military force. In an interview with "L'Unita (Italian news paper) the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, also later expressed the opinion that the UN intervention in Somalia should have limited itself to policing operations. Unfortunately military deployment in Somalia was never replaced during the whole tenure of UNOSOM II for more than two years, the last tenure of the international intervention, because the situation in Somalia was never neutralized nor sufficiently stabilized due to the non-disarmament of the militia groups mentioned above.

Besides the above anomalies, the Clinton administration operatives of the United States grossly mismanaged the overall international involvement in Somalia. The latter greatly dominated the United Nations (UNOSOM II) role. Admiral Jonathan Howe, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and for that matter the head of UNOSOM II, himself an American, said in his Paper (*italics*) entitled, '**RELATIONS BETWEEN UNITED NATIONS AND UNITED STATES IN DEALING WITH SOMALIA,**'

"Today the UN does not easily cross or confront the world's only remaining superpower, but this is not a comfortable relationship for those who operate within the Organisation."

The US led UNOSOM II set itself an agenda, which not only deflected the mission from the defined goals, but also rather flouted the neutrality of the United Nations. It got mixed up itself into local by-partisan internal Somali politics, siding with some such groups and going against others, which rendered its role moribund and totally ineffective. See the Introduction - 'Obstacles to Efficacy' - to John Drysdale's book, **"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SOMALIA** - a tale of tragic blunders" (an inside story by a former UNOSOM II political adviser's book), page 9, described UN Special Representative, Jonathan Howe, as incapable of keeping in check his senior co-national advisers' prejudices, both civil and military, against General Aideed, which was endangering UN operations. The prejudices against Aideed were, according to Drysdale, because of some political gains he had already made during the March 1993 Addis Ababa conference.

Also, according to a Washington Post article, Sunday, October 15, 1995, whereby Frank Crigler, former US Ambassador to Somalia had quoted General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, as having had said (*italics*):

"Where things went wrong is when we decided, the UN decided that somehow we could tell the Somalians how they should live with each other. At that moment we lost the bubble"..."Powell said in offering an odd but apt description of the tragic sequel to Operation Restore Hope", said Crigler.

The African Confidential, Vol.38 (2) pp.2-3, January 17, 1997, also reported (*italics*):

"...in 1993's Addis Ababa conference an accord was signed for a Transitional Government (in Somalia) that never took off the ground, due to United Nations and United States intransigence ..."

The sort of intransigence had been partly explained as above by General Colin Powell, but the intransigence ascribed to the United Nations seems to be a misnomer, since the whole exercise was keyed to Clinton administration policy objectives.

The News International, Friday, August 20, 1993, quoted Albright, the

then USA permanent representative to the United Nations, as having had said (*italics*) *inter alia*:

"... the USA, already playing a leading role in UNOSOM was preparing guidelines to increase its participation in the reconciliatory efforts in Somalia, but we will ensure that they reflect our needs too."

What those needs were had not been elaborated, but it is not difficult to infer.

Still quoting Charles Petrie (*italics*):

"The Somali experiment pivoted around the 5 June massacre of twenty-four Pakistani troops. Up until then the international community's efforts remained nominally impartial, balanced and potentially effective. Following the violent and brutal deaths of UN troops, the international community took on one of the clans. ... It is debatable as to which contributed the most to UNOSOM's failure: the loss of (UN) impartiality or the fact that Aideed was not successfully brought to task."

"Many have often wondered whether it was inevitable that the humanitarian mission would become politicized, that the international community would end up taking sides in Somalia, become involved in Somali politics."

"UNOSOM was increasingly rejected as an impartial arbitrator of the Somalia crisis as attempts to resolve its confrontation with the SNA dragged on. The UN became perceived as an integral part of the crisis and conflicts in Somalia. The Organisation became viewed as a faction, forming alliances of convenience to intimidate its enemies."

According to ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun's (former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Somalia) Paper presented to the Fifth Congress of the Somali Studies International Association (SSIA), December 1-3, 1993 at the Holly Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA, said that the UN's discriminatory action of disarming only one group and not all was a recipe for the continuation of the civil war. And likewise an attempt to take over and close down one radio station (Aideed's) and not all such stations was not the best desired. In his view the Pakistani troops should not have been allowed to remain in Mogadishu after their involvement in those incidents.

Again, according to Ambassador Sahnoun, a Russian Plane chartered by a UN agency and with UN markings had delivered currency

(Somali Shillings) and military equipment in north Mogadishu apparently for the militia of one of the rival factions. This of course seriously infuriated the opposing rival and eroded the trust that Sahnoun had achieved. The UN promised to conduct an enquiry, which was never done. This failure again aggravated the suspicion against UN neutrality.

According to Mark Bowden, the author of 'BLACK HAWK DOWN', a story of modern war, page 27, the Clinton administration pursued a policy designed to remove Aideed from playing a role in Somalia. Bowden adds that prior to 3 October the Clinton operatives believed that Aideed had lacked popular support, but that fight turned itself into a popular uprising.

Ambassador Albright had deluded herself and her government by dubbing Aideed as a thug without support as reported by the News International, August 20, 1993.

Once the UN mission became partial and identified with local by-partisan politics, it ceased to be seen as a savior by the Somali people and lost public confidence. Again quote Charles Petrie (*italics*):

"The handling of the 5 June massacre constitutes the next missed opportunity. Our almost total dependence on the military to implement Resolution 837 (Security Council decision targeting Aideed) forced the UN into becoming a belligerent party in the eyes of the Somali people and those of the rest of the world."

Charles Geshekter concludes his Paper (*italics*) presented at the Somali Society International Studies (SSIS) in December 1993 at Holly Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA:

"UNOSOM was a 'white warlord spending \$1.5 billion to feed it-self. Little was left for the Somali people."

Thereafter, rationality in the Somali psyche in many instances gave way to opportunism. Many such opportunists began ingratiating themselves with UNOSOM II operatives in order to benefit from the abundant resources at the latter's disposal which were in any case destined for easy squandering. Many of these opportunists were awarded lavish contracts at inflated prices, without tenders nor any other serious scrutiny of either the contractor's qualifications or project evaluations, much less any post contract auditing. Some such contractors made fortunes within a short time and earned the right

Somali sobriquet 'Maalin Taajir (one-day rich')." No wonder that out of a UNOSOM II budget of \$1.5 billion, only \$0.7 percent was spent on humanitarian and development outside the UN fortress, (again see John Drysdale's "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SOMALIA," page 12). Many such other opportunists who could not get easy access to the bonanza resorted to other illicit means including covert swindling and overt looting from the UN coffers, in some cases facilitated by inside job conspirators. The loss of about \$4 million reported stolen from UNOSOM II offices in broad day light was one such example.

However, it is rather unfortunate that Somalia should have ever been at odds with the United Nations from whom it had received its independence. But alas, that was the United Nations of an acknowledged genius Secretary-General, the late Dag Hammarskjöld, who had given up his own precious life in defence of the principles of the United Nations. The leadership of Dag Hammarskjöld that had shaped the United Nations capability and prestige is still reminisced in the international arena. Among others, the Economist of London posthumously wrote in its issue of October 7th 2006 (p.15), in comparison with the profile of the then incoming new Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, ***"... shouldn't the secretary-general of the UN be much more than just an able bureaucrat? ... Dag Hammarskjöld showed in the 1950s that the right man in the right circumstances could indeed use the job to become a powerful international statesman, troubleshooter and problem-solver. ... And that would in turn seem to demand a top diplomat with supreme confidence and moral authority."***

It is all the more telling that Dag Hammarskjöld had died in Africa while defending the unity and territorial integrity of the Congo, and it could have just as well been in Somalia. The Congo and Somalia were the first and second nations in the history of Africa, which became the subject of United Nations intervention. The last seven years of Somalia's ten-year Trusteeship was during Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld's tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations. His leadership successfully over saw the implementation of that Trusteeship to Somali independence. His personal involvement included a visit to Somalia before independence to appreciate the base of progress by the Trusteeship administration. That development is very much remembered by the Somali people to this day.

The late former Secretary General was assassinated by white racists and although some gesture of Africa's minimum gratitude might have already been offered by African leaders and by other African peoples in memory and

honour of the late former Secretary General of the United Nations, I also dedicate this book to Mr. Dag Hamarskjold, in remembrance of his heroic service for the interest of mankind.

It is again unfortunate and rather sad indeed that UN peacekeepers should have died on Somali soil or in the hands of the Somali people. Regardless of provocations on the part of UNOSOM II US operatives, the victims were supposed to help the Somali people. However, the international community's policy of non-disarmament was also a contributory factor to this tragedy. There were apparently a number of other faults with the actions of the UN forces. First, the appropriate time for these forces to react to the killing of Pakistani soldiers, if they had to, was at the very timing of the latter's slaughter. Evidently, the UN forces either lacked proper co-ordination or were not alert enough to quickly re-enforce the beleaguered Pakistanis, despite UNOSOM II's overwhelming strength and abundant resources at their disposal, logistically or otherwise. Secondly, to mount a large scale operation including aerial bombardment of built up areas and the use of helicopter gunships against the civilian population (see John Drysdale's book, page 11) for pure vengeance, nearly two weeks later and after the situation had already returned to normal, was not only a blunder, but a total insanity. Subsequent UN statements of minimizing casualties of the non-combatant civilian population was neither feasible nor an anticipated reality. Aerial bombardment of mostly unmapped built up slum areas could not be expected to be limited to any precise targets. The loss of many innocent human lives and incalculable damages to property should have been foregone conclusions. And thirdly, adding insult to injury, by again deploying the Pakistani troops in the UN's reprisal operation, only meant giving them free rein to commit acts of vengeance. This view was strongly shared by Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, former Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General (see above). That should explain the higher rate of Somali casualties, many of them unarmed civilians and mere stone throwers of angry mobs reacting to the aerial bombardments.

According to Mark Bowden (*Black Hawk Down*) United Nations Special Representative, Jonathan Howe, was out of Mogadishu on a visit to Addis Ababa on October 3, 1993, the day of the worst debacle and provocative operation in the history of Mogadishu or of the Somali people whichever the case. Howe returned to the Somali capital that same evening of the fateful day and only then learnt about that operation and its debacle aftermath. This was later confirmed by the then incumbent UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his book, page 103, that that operation

was carried without the least knowledge of United Nations officials. Obviously that decision was taken by Clinton administration operatives without even seeking a United Nations rubber stamped approval that could be forthcoming with alacrity given Jonathan Howe's ingrained prejudices against Aideed. Boutros Boutros-Ghali accused Clinton of inclination to blame the United Nations of what he had defined as an "American disaster", (page 105) of his book. By their own count, the American losses in that operation were eighteen of their servicemen killed and seventy-three others wounded in action, plus four others killed and seven wounded by that incident related land mines. A total of 102 (one hundred and two) American casualties, plus four helicopter gun ships downed. The same American sources' estimate puts Somali casualties at about five hundred killed and over a thousand more wounded. The lowest Somali estimates of their number killed on October 3, 1993, is more than quintuple of the figure given by the American sources. However, subsequent statements by some of the American soldiers deployed on that operation admitted that the number of Somalis killed that day could exceed two thousand, which still comes lower, but nearer to the Somali claim.

According to Mark Bowden again who had the benefit of extensively interviewing the American soldiers including their wounded ones who were actually deployed on that particular operation, reported (page 78) that American fire power was at first directed against armed Somalis going towards the site of operations. But as the degree of shooting tremendously increased, any Somali with a gun became a target. He added that as many among the crowds were armed, whole crowds of what he called 'Sommies!', were mowed down.

In an interview published by the Daily Nation of Nairobi, Kenya, in its issue of Thursday, 5 April 2001, with the Global Viewpoint by former US ambassador to the UN, Richard Holbrooke, in comparison of the interventions in Somalia and Bosnia said, "In Somalia, the American troops got involved into a dispute between clans. They were caught in a situation they had no business being in and they were ambushed."

Charles Petrie's presentation (*italics*) is again quoted:

"It was reported that over forty percent of the casualties resulting from October 3 Bakara confrontations were women and children."

! a new American pejorative for Somalis

George Stephanopoulos in his book, 'All Too Human', page 214, reported President Clinton as having said in connection with the above incident, that whoever killed Americans should be killed in great numbers.

It can hardly be denied that the killing of Somalis in great numbers was by and large premeditated by the Clinton administration and that such indiscriminate shooting could have had heightened Somali casualties to such proportions. In fact, Aideed's camp sources put Somali casualties from the start of hostilities in early June 1993 up to the end at over thirteen thousand, killed or wounded, majority of them unarmed civilians.

In consequence, thereafter the UN mission became a fortress besieged by fear. UNOSOM II operatives and forces devoted almost all their efforts towards guarding themselves with hardly a time to address their mandate, except perhaps dealing with those contractors and meeting few so called faction leaders. And quote from Charles Petrie's Paper (*italics*):

"By the end of 1993, having seen the best equipped of its forces retreat in humiliation, UNOSOM no longer had the military capacity, and some would argue even the will, to contribute to the establishment of a secure environment."

Through this fear, the US led UNOSOM II forces demolished and destroyed numerous Somali properties, both public utilities and privately owned. Those demolitions included the Somali Capital City's main Fire Brigade Station and the ministry of livestock buildings with all the laboratories of the veterinary services, etc. Even the living quarters of the former Military Air Force Base at Balle-Dogle, 102 km west of Mogadishu were dynamited and left in ruins which are still in evidence to this day. The destruction of countless privately owned villas and other properties are also in evidence in Mogadishu.

The following is again extracted from Professor Charles Gesheker's Paper: "the Death of Somalia in Historical Perspective" at the Fifth Somali Studies International Association (SSIS), December 1993, at the College of the Holly Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA (*italics*):

"The ironies and coincidences abounded. For instance, the increasingly isolated UN special Envoy, retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, rarely left his armed compound throughout 1993-? Confined there like Siad Barre had been to his fortress at Villa Somalia in his final months. In tit-for-tat

assaults against the warlord factions, the U.N. demolished Mogadishu property in a manner reminiscent of the way of Siad's besieged forces in their final days directed heavy artillery attacks on 'hostile' civilian neighborhoods."

In reference to Mark Bowden, 'Black Hawk Down's book, page 96, the Clinton administration had listed many serious accusations against Aideed, from terrorism to starving his opponents, and even killing his own supporters in order to accuse the United Nations. Aideed challenged his accusers through former US President Carter and demanded the holding of an independent inquiry into those accusations labeled against him. However, the challenge was never faced up to. Even President Clinton's directive after Carter's intervention, for efforts to resolve matters peacefully was not implemented by his officials (again Bowden's, book page 96).

It is inconceivable, however, even up to now why the Clinton administration would at all need to involve them into such a parochial third world country's internal clan politics? As it were, the Clinton administration not only wanted to dictate, but to actually decide and select who should rule Somalia post Siad Barre era that led to their confrontation with Aideed. But was this really necessary or worthy of such a high price even from United States interest point of view? The answer is a big 'NO!' Because, first, any new ruler of a devastated Somalia could hardly afford not to seek friendly relations with the world's lone superpower, least of all Aideed whose whole family members had taken refuge in the United States as a safe haven during his detention as Siad Barre's prisoner of conscience. This has already been proven by subsequent development. The interim Somali President, Abdiqasim Salad, immediately after his election in late August 2000 at the Arta Somali Reconciliation Conference gave an apology through the United Nations during the Millennium Summit. However, it had already been a universally accepted reality that the international intervention in Somalia had failed by its own making. According to the evident findings of the many independent reporters and other writers as reproduced or extracts quoted above that failure was self-inflicted, to say the least of it, on the part of the international operatives concerned. Morally speaking, failures never deserved the courtesy of apologies and that international failure in Somalia should not have been an exception. It is, therefore, relevant to argue whether the Somali President's apology was not, with all good intentions, a superfluous gesture? And it could only be seen as ingratiating his incipient administration with the world body, which the former desperately needed. But any such gesture by a Somali leader was justly due, and is still due, but to the American people in general and the family members concerned in particular, for the dragging of an

American soldier's body by enraged Somali protestors. Although the latter were, however, themselves victims of injustice and were driven to mental extremes, nonetheless, their lack of solemnity for the dead was obnoxious. The dragging of that dead body was abhorrent both to Islamic principles and Somali ethics, the two pillars of our spiritual guidance and moral conduct. Nevertheless, this episode is another sad legacy of the failure of the international intervention. The Clinton administration only needed to cement former President George Bush (senior)'s leading role in the international intervention, and by fair play, to just invest good will and an even handedness, but neither hatred nor arrogance.

And secondly, any new ruler so installed or groomed by a foreign power would never endear himself to the Somali people. Such a ruler's term, if at all it became realizable, would hardly out live the departure of the international intervention forces. This has since been proven by subsequent development in Somalia. Abdullahi Yusuf was groomed by Ethiopia to win the 2nd interim Somali presidency in 2004, but remained besieged in one square km of Baidoa town and heavily guarded by forces of his groomers for more than two years until later escorted to the Somali capital under cover of the United States sanctioned Ethiopian invasion forces. And even then his successor remains in the same status quo also under foreign protection financed by the west powers at the time of going to press. But for how long can this situation remain imposed on the Somali people?

The mismanagement of the international intervention by the Clinton administration operatives was such a fiasco, which only served the purpose of spoiling former President Bush's positive contribution, eroded the American peoples' good will in resolving the Somali crises and loss of many American and Somali lives for no good cause. According to BBC News on Sunday, 15 October 2000 President Clinton in an interview with the New Yorker was quoted as having admitted that he could have done better. Had that international intervention been properly managed without political strings attached to its implementation, the still ongoing Somali crises might have had ended then and there more than fifteen years ago.

During the cold war era or even since the founding of the United Nations, superpower nationals as well as those of other permanent members of the UN Security Council were rarely involved in international (UN) peace keeping operations, much less to head such missions excepting of course, the Nobel laureate, Dr. Ralph Bunche and few others of his like. The role of these major powers nationals was, it seems, quite rightly often held in reserve to

keep those UN operatives in check. For some reason or another, the situation in Somalia was treated as an exception to the rule and a total departure from earlier practices and precedents. The peace keeping (or peace making as some scholars preferred to call it) operations in Somalia was headed by a national of the lone superpower who was not another Ralph Bunche per se. His appointment as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General was not only nominated by the Clinton administration (page 92 of Boutros Boutros-Ghali's book), but he was also surrounded by senior advisers of his co-nationals. The Clinton administration set itself clear-cut policy goals vis-à-vis Somalia, and there was no other power or institution able to keep a check on the lone superpower. The above mentioned US nationals would only be expected to implement those policy goals of their government to whom they owed their appointments, even at the expenses of the United Nations neutrality (see again John Drysdale's book: "a tale of tragic blunders", page 3). In this vein, it becomes relevant to borrow the dictum of the former British political thinker, Lord Acton, that, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Chapter Two

OTHER EXTERNAL ACTORS:

ETHIOPIA

Historical Background Summary

The relationship between the Somali people and their western neighbors in the former Abyssinian Empire, which was then only composed of the Amhara and the Tigray or that of later modern Ethiopia that now includes the Oromo and other conquered African nationalities had a long and bitter history of hostilities. These hostilities date back from the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa.

Abyssinian opposition to the development of Islam provoked those hostilities. Previously, however, the first group of Muslim refugees who had fled from the Arabian Peninsula because of atrocities by pagan Arabs during early 7th century A.D. were granted asylum by the then Abyssinian monarch. When the Prophet (PBUH) told those refugees to immigrate to Abyssinia, they asked (sic) if the ruler there was a Muslim. The Prophet (PBUH) replied (sic), there was at least a man (ruler) with a book.

Numerous intermittent religious wars were fought for years between Abyssinian Coptics on the one hand and Muslims mainly composed of Afars, Oromos, Somalis and several other African nationalities on the other. Victory changed sides in those religious wars from time to time until Muslim forces led by the late war hero Imam Ahmed bin Ibrahim Al-Ghazi, alias Ahmed 'Guray' or Ahmed 'Garan' in Afar language (the left handed) over run Abyssinian forces in about 1525 A.D. He captured and occupied more than two thirds of the latter's territory for about seventeen years.

The Muslims were later defeated there in 1542 A.D. The Abyssinians' such last victory was mainly due to substantial assistance in various forms from the western Christian world to whom the Abyssinian monarch had sent an SOS appeal. However, only Portugal had at that time actually committed its own fighting forces against the Muslims and thus came to the aid of the beleaguered Abyssinians. Portuguese fire actually hit and killed Imam Ahmed, but not before over two hundred of the Portuguese forces including the commander, Christopher da Gama, were killed. The Portuguese had the additional vested interest of intending to convert the Abyssinian coptics into Catholicism, which the latter ultimately rejected.

In the early sixteen century, a Portuguese fleet captured and burned the northern Somali coastal towns of Zeila and Berbera. It was believed that some of the earliest Muslim immigrants to Abyssinia mentioned above might have passed through Zeila. This seems to explain nearby Harar becoming the first Center of Islamic education and culture in the Horn of Africa at an early stage of the Islamic civilization. This also lends support to the belief that Islam had reached and spread among the Somali people and other communities in the Horn of Africa even before its consolidation in the Arabian Peninsula and other parts of the Islamic world. It, therefore, leaves little doubt that the burning of the Somali towns, especially Zeila by the Portuguese was retribution in those bitter religious wars.

The following passage is extracted from an address that a certain Gordon Waterfield delivered to a joint meeting of the then Royal African Society and the Royal Empire Society on October 3, 1957. It throws some light to explain the historical perspectives in the Horn of Africa, not the least of all such Ethiopian obsession about Islam:

"There was a period in the sixteen century when a notable character, Ahmed Gran (Imam bin Ahmed Al-Ghazi), invaded Ethiopia with Moslem Gallas (Oromo) and Somalis and came very near to conquering Ethiopia (1525-1542). In fact it is argued by some that if the Portuguese had not come in – being appealed to for help by the Ethiopians (Abyssinians) – Ahmed Gran would have been successful in conquering the whole of Ethiopia and it would have become a Moslem State. Ahmed Gran lived in the sixteen century, but he is clearly remembered today both in Ethiopia and Somaliland." "...One can see, therefore, why the Ethiopians continue to be apprehensive and to be on their own guard against expansion of the Islamic world."

"How can Ethiopia best deal with this problem? They like the European nations joined in the grab for Africa at the end of the nineteen-century. Menelik II, then the ruler of Ethiopia, was much an empire builder; and his influence is still strong with the Ethiopians (Abyssinians). They have shown determined resistance to any movements for independence among the Somalis anywhere." (Brackets are mine).

After Ahmed 'Guray's defeat the Coptic church's religious domination in the former Abyssinian empire or even in modern Ethiopia was never challenged. The European scramble for Africa in the nineteenth century in which Ethiopia acquired portions of Afar, Somali and other territories as its share of the spoils of the division of the continent was the culmination of

Ethiopia's south-eastern expansion. This expansionism added political dimensions to the religious animosities in the Horn of Africa and exasperated the hostilities that had already existed among those groups. The total conquest of Oromo territories that had been in gradual progress for some centuries was also completed during late nineteenth century to the first decade of the twentieth century in Menelik II's reign.

Abyssinian expansionism eastward into Afar and Somali territories simultaneous with similar southward expansion into additional Oromo territory than had already been conquered, progressed tremendously during Menelik II's reign, first as the self-proclaimed King of the Shao province and later emperor of Ethiopia.

The City of Harar was mainly the first Somali territory that fell to Menelik II on 8th January 1887 after an attack by a combined Abyssinian and Italian forces. Britain, which had earlier entered into treaties of protection with the Somali people since 1884, had acquiesced Menelik II's invasion of Somali territory in betrayal of her prior protection obligations. Thereafter Menelik II coveted the Somali port of Zeila as an access to seawaters. He tried to again enlist the support of Italy and wrote to his ally King Umberto during the following May 1887, in which he said, "My occupation of Harar augurs well for the commercial relations between Italy and Shao... But," he added, "More important is the question of Zeila, if Your Majesty will see to its cession to me, the port will be open to trade."

Harar thus became the launching pad for further Abyssinian invasion and expansion into other parts of Somali territory. Abyssinia next raided Zeila on 15 December 1887, followed by constant marauding of Somali properties; killing and kidnapping of Somali people, but could not retain Zeila, because of continued resistance by the Somali people. Britain not only continued to acquiesce, but further unilaterally ceded about nearly one third (over 25,000 sq. miles) of Somali territory under her protection to Ethiopia. It did this in order to expediently buy Menelik II's appeasement against the Mahdi's rebellion in the Sudan (see John Drysdale's 'The Somali Dispute' 1964 and Stoics without Pillows 2000) and also Louis Fitzgibbon's, 'The betrayal of the Somalis' Chapter Four, page 15 et seq (1982).'

While the Somalis and other African peoples were kept defenseless by the denial of arms acquisition by the European embargo through the Brussels Act, Abyssinia succeeded to gain acceptance in joining the European Berlin Club in the partitioning of the African continent. Abyssinia

(now Ethiopia) acceded to the Brussels Act, which denied weapons to Africans and signed it on 16 December 1890. Thereafter, the flow of European arms further enhanced the pursuit of Ethiopian expansionist policy. In the 1880s and up to 1900s Menelik II received initial supplies of the following light weapons and ammunitions from European powers:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Rifles</u>	<u>Ammunition</u>
Britain	15,000	500,000
France	500,000	20,000,000
Italy	50,000	10,000,000
Russia	150,000	15,000,000

The above mentioned Abyssinia conquests were always accompanied by religious conflicts and discrimination in favor of the Coptic Church. New Coptic churches were built upon the sites of demolished Mosques and other acts of sacrilege were wide spread.

Menelik II died in 1913 without leaving a male heir and was succeeded by his daughter's 19 year old son, Iyasu, who was fathered by an Oromo, formerly a Muslim named Mohammed Ali. He was the Governor of the Wallo Province, which is predominantly inhabited by Muslims even in today's Ethiopia. Menelik II politically married his daughter to Mohammed Ali and converted him to the Coptic Church. Upon his accession, Iyasu had secretly embraced Islam and became converted to it. He maintained close links and contacts with various Muslim leaders in Harar and helped the Somalis to build Mosques in Jigjiga. The British authorities in the former Somaliland Protectorate had information of the young emperor's contacts with Mohamed Abdilleh Hassan who had rebelled against British rule for twenty years (see Introduction to Major Dane's Garden by Margery Perham). Iyasu had sent a German, named Kirsh, to Mohamed Abdilleh Hassan to repair the latter's weaponry. Kirsh was never seen alive after Iyasu's fall. The Amhara establishment to whom emperor Menelik II also belonged soon discovered Iyasu's Islamic conversion. He was dethroned in 1916 through a coup d'état led by Ras Tafari (later emperor Haile Selassie). Iyasu escaped and went into hiding among the Muslims in the Afar region for several years, but was later arrested and held in detention until the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the mid-1930s.

In 1920 the British authorities in Hargeisa had learnt of a plot that was hatched by the Somalis, and no doubt also in league with other Muslims in Ethiopia, to free the imprisoned ex-emperor. The British must have had

shared that information with the Haile Selassie Government that must have had in its wake foiled the attempt. The Oromo generally believe that Iyasu would have been dethroned in any case, because the Amhara establishment would never accept an Oromo imperial leader, despite Iyasu being Menelik II's descendent and that the young ex-emperor's Islamic conversion only precipitated the inevitable. Iyasu was killed by poisoning him during mid-1930s for fear that the invading Italians might free him at a time when Haile Selassie was leaving the country to seek exile abroad.

The Current Perspectives:

Barely four months after the fall of Siad Barre in early 1991, had former Ethiopian ruler, Mengistu Haile Mariam, also followed suit. Unlike Somalia, however, Ethiopian central authority did not collapse and although those who succeeded Mengistu would claim credit, nonetheless, the former Ethiopian ruler cannot be denied his role in history. Mengistu acted with a sense of patriotism, rationality and statesmanship. He found the courage in himself to quit before it got too late and too worse and thus left his country intact. On the contrary Siad Barre had held on too long until all chances for a peaceful change had dashed out and the country slid into anarchy. In retrospect, Siad Barre should have given himself up to sanity and stepped down at least after his head injury in May 1986. But even then, he began grooming his inept son's succession.

A year later after the failure of the early Djibouti initiatives for reconciliation in Somalia, the post Mengistu Ethiopian regime was one of those external actors, which deeply involved itself into the Somali scenario. In May 1992, the Ethiopian government offered its mediation efforts. All Somali factions were invited to an iceberg breaking get together, even if only ceremonially. The new Ethiopian officials, amateur administrators themselves at that time, but feigning seriousness, were trying to learn from their contacts with the Somalis. Not all Somali factions responded, but there was still a fairly good turn out, majority of them from the Darod groups. After some preliminary meetings with senior government officials in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, the Somalis were air lifted and whisked to the Blue Nile resort of Bahidar in the extreme west of the country. They were left there in seclusion for a week or so.

While Ethiopian officials were still testing the water as to whether they would commit their full involvement in a volatile Somali reconciliation process, nothing of substance had resulted from the Bahidar seclusion other than that ice-breaking exercise. However, the water tasted sweet from Ethiopian geopolitical interest point of view and Ethiopian senior officials decided to be engaged.

In the meantime, thousands of displaced Somali families had taken up temporary residences in the main Ethiopian cities of Harar, Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. Others had in great numbers got reunited with relatives in the now so-called Somali region of Ethiopia. A new era of trust began to develop in the Somali psyche on both sides of the political boundary, which not only cajoled, but even mesmerized them to forget, for the first time, the nearly five hundred years old hatred between the two neighboring peoples. This trust was further re-enforced by the fact that the current Ethiopian leaders had some closer political association with Somalia, and in fact received some assistance from the latter for their rebellion that had helped them to overthrow the Mengistu regime. However, that association was by and large during the Siad Barre regime, unlike the Eritrean liberation struggle, which had developed Somali connections since its inception in 1961. Nevertheless, the new Ethiopian leaders appeared to be humanely accommodating.

The same year end as well as the following year of 1993 saw a few more meetings of various Somali factions held in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, officially under the auspices of the United Nations, but also with both the blessing and participation of the senior officials of the host country. Fifteen factions out of the then sixteen existing Somali Political Organizations fully attended those meetings and eventually signed the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement in March 1993, for transitional structures. The lone non-signatory of that Agreement, (the sixteenth) of those Organizations was the north based SNM, which had declared its secession two years earlier, although its representatives also attended those meetings as observers. It is important to note that according to that Peace Agreement this number of Somali factions could only be increased by the consensus of the signatories. This was not without justification, but because of bitter experiences of the proliferation of past political organizations in the country. Such proliferation was considered to have had been among the root causes of the ongoing Somali crises. Over eighty political parties contested in the last ever held general/political elections in March 1969. The outcome amid that proliferated political spectrum obviously failed to return an effectively representative government to power. As already recounted elsewhere in this work, chaos ensued and internal

disorders became the norm of life. The culmination of that malaise was the assassination, only six months later in the following October, of the second elected President of the Republic, Dr. Sharmarke. The situation then invited a change, and thus easily ushered in the military take over, leading to that long lasting misrule and the mismanagement of both the economy and the social fabric.

However, the above Peace Agreement has ever since been the basis for the exact composition of the Somali political organizations before the Ethiopian sponsored one-sided Sodere Meeting in November 1996 – January 1997. The number of sixteen factions was itself an already proliferated figure, thanks to foreign intervention and complicity in the Somali domestic affairs. United Nations (UNOSOM II) registered several non-entities as new factions, some of them as faction leaders of only one-man organizations.

Immediately upon Aideed's death on August 1, 1996, Ethiopia felt to have free rein vis-à-vis Somali affairs and not only renewed, but intensified its involvement. From then onwards Ethiopia's involvement would be undisguised for its geopolitical interests or rather expansionist policy instead of her earlier pretensions of promoting peace initiatives among the Somalis. Ethiopia invaded Somalia barely within a week of Aideed's death, a gambit they could neither dare nor dream to take during Aideed's lifetime. According to one of Aideed's close aides of the SNA/SPM Somali National Alliance, in November 1994 Meles Zenawi took up with Aideed what he termed his concerns about Al-Itihaad activities in the Lugh areas about 75 km inside Somalia (see map of Somalia). Al-Itihaad had earlier supported one of Aideed's rival Somali factions, the SNF, which then ejected combined forces of Aideed's SNA from Bardhere. The Ethiopians were, therefore, or at least Zenawi was, capitalizing upon Aideed's putative vengeance against Al-Itihaad and expected him to bless an Ethiopian operation against the former. Aideed out rightly rejected any foreign military operations on Somali-soil by friends and/or foes alike, nor would he enlist any foreign assistance against his Somali rivals. Aideed always viewed foreign interference as counter-productive and felt that his differences with other Somali groups were purely internal problems, which could be resolved without any external involvement or exploitation. According to the same source, Zenawi took Aideed's rejection as a snub and possibly must have thereafter decided to collaborate with the latter's adversaries whoever they might be, (for further details see under "Aideed" – Chapter Five below).

Again, according to the same source, in 1995-96 high level Ethiopian military officers met with Aideed at Qora-Jome on the western Somali-

Ethiopian boundary. The former raised the same subject but without mentioning any new development attributable to Al-Itihaad or to any other Somali group. Simply the proximity of Al-Itihaad's site albeit inside Somalia with the boundary was causing some jitters to the Ethiopian officials. But this time Aideed was even much more vocal in his rejection of any foreign intervention into Somali territory. The area concerned, the Gedo region, was not under Aideed's sphere of influence. However, he said that he was opposed to any destabilization against the neighboring countries and promised to use his good offices with the traditional elders in that area and would advise them to accommodate Ethiopia's security concerns, but he again ruled out his agreement for deployment of any foreign forces on Somali soil. Thus, though they were two ambitious men, Aideed was such a total contrast to Abdullahi Yusuf. The latter delivered the country to the Tigray led Ethiopia to destroy it.

In the meantime, after Aideed's death, Ethiopia also entered into an unpublicized relationship with the secessionist entity in north Somalia with whom she signed a number of co-operation agreements including semi-diplomatic representations under cover of liaison offices in a bid to further encourage the separatist manifestations detrimental to Somali unity. The following relevant free press report (*italics*) is extracted from the Horn of African Bulletin, 5/97, page 24:

"... Ethiopia has nevertheless agreed to receive a Somaliland delegation and to sign a bilateral agreement which must represent another step toward defacto recognition of the self-proclaimed Republic"

Ethiopian officials continuously promise the secessionist authorities in Hargeisa that they will recognize them as soon as one other country does so. Edna while once returning from a trip to Addis Ababa in her then capacity as the secessionist foreign minister was questioned about Ethiopia's policy vis-à-vis recognition of the secessionist entity. She replied that they had known that Ethiopia would not be the first to recognize them, but it would not be the third, she added. Ethiopia also hushes up its Trojan horse, the so-called Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia, from any reference to the status quo of the secessionist authorities in the north. In the meantime, Ethiopia lobbies on some other African countries and encourages the secessionists to seek majority vote of support from the member states of the African Union (AU). In conspiracy with some top officials of the AU Commission, Ethiopia twice sneaked a delegation from the secessionists to gain access into the corridors of the two AU Summit Conferences held in

Banjul, Gambia in 2006 and Addis Ababa in 2007. The so-called Somalia's TFG remained hushed up whilst at those Conferences. All the above manoeuvres coincided with Ethiopian officials' rhetoric feigning commitment to support Somali unity and territorial integrity.

The question that posed itself here was whether Ethiopian policy towards Somalia had changed as had been suggested by some press reports not quoted here? Or whether its seemingly initial good will and sympathy had not been a trap and an investment of a confidence building ploy in the first place? Ethiopia's subsequent behavior unequivocally supports the second premise. It was, however, the first and the last of a lost opportunity of its kind for any future mutual trust to develop between the two sides. Ethiopia's main interest in Somalia has always been motivated by its stratagem of expansionist ambitions. Ethiopia also believes that Somali irredentism vis-à-vis its annexation of Somali territories, the Ogaden, will not cease unless Ethiopia can dominate the whole of Somalia in one form or another. In September 1945, Ethiopia, in the very words of former emperor Selassie, at a press briefing, had sent a memorandum to the then Peace Council (Foreign Ministers of the Victor Powers of the Second World War) who were then meeting in London. The memorandum urged that Eritrea and ex-Italian Somaliland should be handed to Ethiopia "...as territories incontestably belonging to the Ethiopian Empire since before the Christian era" (Source: The book entitled, "Ex-Italian Somaliland, page 217" - by the renowned pro-Ethiopia, British born Sylvia Pankhurst). Historically speaking, there had never existed an Ethiopia before the Christian era or even before the beginning of the Oromo conquest during the last few centuries after the defeat of Ahmed Guray's forces. Only then the former Abyssinian Empire renamed itself as Ethiopia, which symbolizes "The Black People." Nevertheless, the mythical claim underlines Ethiopia's perennial expansionist policy towards both Eritrea and Somalia, which has not changed to this day.

In October 1996, former President Moi of neighboring Kenya invited the three key players in the continued hostilities in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. They were Hussein Aideed, Ali Mahdi and Osman Hassan Ali A'to and got them signed an Understanding aimed at resolving problems specific to the capital as a first step towards an overall eventual settlement of the long drawn Somali crisis. Upon announcement of this Understanding through the media and even before the ink was dry, Ethiopia hurriedly organized its Sodere Meeting mentioned above, countering President Moi's initiative. And impudently invited, among others, the signatories of the Nairobi Understanding while they were still guests of that most senior and elderly

African statesman, President Daniel arap Moi of the Republic of Kenya. I advised Hussein Aideed to accept the Ethiopian invitation only in principle, but not to go there until and before addressing the requirements of the Nairobi Understanding and that was what he did at that time. But the other two key players left at once as demanded by Ethiopia. Many other Somalis also invited by the Ethiopians to the same meeting included individuals who would later become new faction leaders, but without factions. This crude Ethiopian initiative was not only aimed at pre-empting that important Nairobi peace accord, but was also to monopolize and dominate the Somali reconciliation process for its own geopolitical manoeuvring agenda.

Ethiopian officials deliberately ignored the consensus and the position taken earlier by the hitherto existing Somali Political Organizations restricting the number of political factions. Ethiopia not only thus encouraged the number of sixteen political factions to grow to twenty-seven at one go, but also helped to unravel even the spirit of the 1993 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement, which she had been a co-midwife of the birth of that agreement. The reason was that agreement contained nothing of Ethiopia's geopolitical interest, although the substance of that agreement had already been aborted by UNOSOM II mismanaged by the U.S. Clinton administration operatives.

And adding insult to injury, Ethiopia again invaded Somalia on 12 December 1996 to the humiliation of its guests, the Somali conferees who were meeting under its auspices and upon its invitations. The Ethiopian officials were also obviously using that invasion as blackmail. Immediately after that invasion was in place, Ethiopian officials secretly invited some selected senior Somali faction leaders from among the participants of the Sodere encounter for a separate meeting with high ranking military officers. The Somalis were demanded of sanctioning total Ethiopia occupation of Somalia, which they were told would then facilitate an easy transfer of power to the Sodere group, since the Aideed led coalition of factions had refused to join that meeting. The majority of those invited rejected the demand. The rejection since drew a wedge between those individual Somalis on the one hand and the Ethiopian officialdom on the other. However, only the Aideed led Somali coalition partners were in a position at that time to condemn the Ethiopian invasion. The following press report extracted from the African Confidential, Vol.38 (2), pp.3, January 1997 is also significant, and quote: "This allowed Hussein Aideed to seize the role of defender of Somalia, condemning Ethiopian incursions."

Also African Confidential, Vol.38, No.7, 28 March 1997:

"Ethiopia has lost enthusiasm for Hawiye politics, especially since Hussein's vigorous condemnation of its incursions."

The Somali factions and individuals that had accepted to participate in the one-sided Ethiopian sponsored Sodere meeting were of two main categories. The first category was those that had credentials in their own right and enjoyed public support in their respective constituencies. This group included Ali Mahdi, Abdulqadir Mohamed Aden 'Zoppo' and General Mohamed Abshir. They were only using the occasion for a get together and to re-assert their political cohesion which had been somewhat side lined earlier by General Aideed's popularity and his subsequent intransigence; and to map out their future political direction. However, they would go no further to fulfill Ethiopia's geopolitical agenda at Somalia's expenses. When we met General Mohamed Abshir later in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, during May 1997, and criticized their Sodere meeting as an Ethiopian manipulation. Abshir who has a good knowledge of the Islamic Sharia, in answering our accusation, quipped by saying that some times it was permissible to eat from the dead corpse of an animal. By this he meant that their meeting under those circumstances and venue was better than not being able to meet, giving the then insecurity situation prevailing in many parts of Somalia for such a meeting to take place inside the country. He was right. They used the occasion to at least unite their ranks and reach a position of political parity with the Aideed led coalition.

The second category of those Ethiopian invitees included many new comers into the world of politics and non-entities that only jumped on the bandwagon and were thus amenable to manipulation at Ethiopian whims.

Ethiopia had at least four main objectives in organizing the Sodere meeting. First and foremost, to abort the Nairobi Understanding that was achieved under the sincere auspices of President Moi and did not guarantee any Ethiopian hegemony. Secondly, to unite and strengthen her sponsored Sodere group, among whom she had a number of stooges, to at least become competitive for any future power sharing or even to snatch the political initiative from the Aideed led coalition over whom Ethiopia neither had an influence nor other leverage. Thirdly, to cover up her incursions into Somali territories by grooming those who would acquiesce? And fourthly, to ensure the emergence of a future Somali satellite state that would be subservient to Ethiopia's dictation. The last is an over-riding Ethiopian policy objective, which the latter strives to achieve even after the formation of its Trojan horse, the current TFG.

With regard to the first objective, while the object of that Nairobi Understanding was to bring protagonists of opposing sides together, those huddled up in Sodere by the Ethiopians were all of them on one side of the Somali political divide, with no differences to settle among themselves. For this particular reason the Sodere process would ultimately fail, because the Ethiopian backed group had unilaterally set themselves an agenda for Somalia, which they could not deliver alone without the agreement of the other opposing camp. The following (italics) extracted from an article in the East African Standard of Nairobi, Friday 7, 1997, by a former senior Somali diplomat, the late Omar Mo'allim, the first Somali Ambassador to the USA and later a member of the last parliament during the civilian era, is also quite relevant to the subject matter:

"Can Ethiopia be an honest peace maker?

"There are pending questions on the venue and participants.

"The Sodere meeting had people who had not had any differences to settle.

"Another controversial question was venue. Sodere is an issue, because of Addis Ababa raids on Somali territory. The Ethiopian incursion on Dolo and Lug violates Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"While resentment lingers, the deliberations of Sodere is formality without support in Somalia."

That conclusion became the proven reality.

With regard to the second Ethiopian objective above, its whole diplomatic and propaganda machine was fully mobilized to rally international and regional support, politically and financially in favor of her sponsored Sodere group. The Ethiopian campaign blundered in its attempts to lure international public opinion to believe that only Hussein Mohammed Farah Aideed was the lone absentee from her sponsored Sodere process. It urged the international community to bring pressure to bear upon what Ethiopian officials called the lone absentee to come on board with that process. But the international community knew that Hussein Aideed was not the only important absentee from the Ethiopian sponsored Sodere Meeting. The Ethiopian campaign denied the existence of the coalition partners of Hussein Aideed who were in fact the majority of the original sixteen legitimate Political Organizations, the signatories of the Addis Ababa peace accord, plus the Somali National Movement (SNM) who since returned to the fore despite the secession of the north.

At one time, Hussein Aideed nearly gave himself up to compromise with the Sodere Camp, after meeting with Ali Mahdi, then a Sodere key member, in Cairo during May 1997, under Egyptian auspices. He showed willingness to go to Addis Ababa in order to meet with other members of the Sodere Group who had been staying there in a voluntary exile. This move was strongly opposed and over ruled by Hussein Aideed's coalition partners whose support he could not afford to lose and whose existence was denied by Ethiopia. Of course, meeting with those Somalis of the Sodere Group was not by itself objectionable, but a visit to Addis Ababa was, while Ethiopia still forcibly occupied some Somali territory in the Gedo region. Ethiopia, however, achieved some success in its second objective, despite much short of her ultimate goal, and received substantial amount of financial contributions in the name of the Sodere process for reconciliation in Somalia. The then OAU alone paid \$430,000 from its coffers, which the debt ridden Organization could ill afford, but it was paid only upon the Ethiopian urge that it would help bring about a resolution of the long dragging Somali crises. And worse, it served no useful purpose, but became a misspent and a total waste, because the Sodere process was not only a pipe dream, but also an Ethiopian experiment of the latter's geopolitical exploration. The OAU should have best been advised to give heed to the late Ambassador Omar Mo'allim's fore-warning reproduced above in which he had quite rightly defined the Sodere outcome as "a formality without support in Somalia." Among other generous contributors to the Ethiopian appeal were Italy and Norway.

Ethiopian officials had deluded themselves and took for granted that the subsequent Cairo Somali Meeting would only play a preparatory role for the Sodere projected conference planned to be held in the Somali northeast coastal town of Bosaso. Ethiopia had been encouraging the Sodere Group to form a government, even unilaterally if the Aideed led coalition would not come on board, but that would be opposed by Eritrea within the IGAD. Eritrea had always been against unilateral decisions without consensus in resolving the Somali crises and for that reason would not even recognize the government formed by General Aideed. But otherwise initially gave the Ethiopian initiative a chance that President Issaias Afworke had defined as a 'critical support', in a letter to Hussein Aideed. In late June 1997 a delegation led by Hussein Aideed paid a visit to Asmara upon the invitation of the Eritrean Government. The purpose of the invitation was an attempt to bring about some understanding between our coalition and the Ethiopian senior officials. After making note of our points of views and our reluctance of going to Addis Ababa in the face of Ethiopian incursions into Somalia, President Afworke advised us to come to Nairobi in about two weeks time when IGAD

leaders would be meeting there and he would then try to arrange a meeting between Zenawi and Hussein Aideed. We went to Nairobi as we had been advised and met with President Afworke and his senior aides, but without success. Zenawi must have seen himself as a prima donna personality and brazenly ignored such a meeting, unless he would be visited in Addis Ababa.

Nevertheless, representatives of the two Somali political camps met later in the Cairo Somali Meeting and then issued the Cairo declaration of 22 December 1997. This not only totally replaced the one sided Sodere process to the displeasure of Ethiopian officials, but also unlike its predecessor, the one sided Sodere process, the Cairo Declaration was the product of joint efforts of the two hitherto opposing political camps in Somalia.

The Cairo Declaration that replaced the Sodere designated venue for a national reconciliation conference with the southwestern town of Baidoa made Ethiopian officials wild. They impudently declared their opposition to the Cairo Declaration amid international acclaim. Despite Ethiopia's unfair accusation against Egypt for what they called, "hijacking of the Somali reconciliation process", in fact Egyptian officials had tried hard to persuade us, the Aideed led coalition partners, to accept and join the Ethiopian sponsored Sodere Process. They made several trips to Mogadishu for this sole purpose. I remember during one of such trips, the Egyptian team leader, Ambassador Badre Marwan later accredited to Ethiopia, lecturing us and said inter-alia that whether we liked it or not, we and the Ethiopians were permanent neighbors. He added that whatever problems we might have had with the Ethiopians could never be greater than problems that Egypt had had with Israel. He could not, however, find consensus among the coalition partners for his counseling while Ethiopia still occupied part of Somalia in the Gedo region.

Henceforth, Ethiopian officials embarked upon a series of measures designed to destabilize Somalia with a view to pre-empting the implementation of the provisions of the Cairo Declaration, which was agreed among all the Somali Political Organizations and Ethiopia succeeded doing so and aborted it through its own Somali stooges, and also with the support of some western governments (see under Italy).

During April 1998, in order to abort preparations for the re-opening of the Mogadishu port, which was stipulated in the Cairo Declaration, pro-Ethiopian elements took hostage ten staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other humanitarian aid workers and held them in captivity for about two weeks. Again, Ethiopian agents of

terrorists aborted a novice Benadir administration for the capital city and its environs, another requirement of the Cairo Declaration. These terrorist acts were for the same purpose of aborting the implementation of the Cairo Declaration, the outcome of the Cairo Somali Meeting, 12 November – 22 December 1997, for a settlement of the Somali problems. Again, on 27 March 2001, nine Medicine San Frontiers (MSF) and other international doctors and humanitarian volunteers were taken hostages at gun point by not other than that same group of the previous hostage taking three years earlier. Again, for the same purpose of undermining the then Somali Transitional structures that had emerged from the collective unanimous agreement of representatives of the Somali people, the civil society and other groups of all walks of life, during the Djibouti sponsored Arta Conference (2nd May – 27th August 2000). And most important, that time around Ethiopian complicity was not only conspicuous, but the latter also wanted to be seen firing the shots inside Somalia. According to the BBC focus on Africa reporter in Mogadishu, the Ethiopian agents of the hostage takers made no secret that their plan was to destabilize the new Somali interim government. At this backdrop, it was a well known fact that the war lord whose militiamen were responsible was himself in Addis Ababa on that fateful day of the second hostage taking as the guest of the Ethiopian regime. All his travel expenses, together with that of his companions, including air tickets: Mogadishu – Addis Ababa, via Nairobi and vice-versa, transit accommodation at the Grand Regency Hotel in Nairobi, etc., have been borne by the Ethiopian government. It is not coincidental, but obvious that a warlord in whom Ethiopia had invested so much could have gone alone with those hostage takings without the latter's' clearance, if not the instigation. Ethiopia was, therefore, on the one hand at best supporting and at worst sponsoring terrorism while on the other hand pretending to be pioneering anti-terrorism campaign in Somalia. The United Nations Security Officer for Somalia based in Nairobi, a U.S. citizen, knew all about these Ethiopian mischievous of terrorist connections at that time, but did not report and preferred to look the other side, because he was a national of a country that its policies had always acquiesced Ethiopian aggression against Somalia.

Ethiopia encouraged a policy of balkanization in Somalia into many mini-fiefdoms of clan based enclaves. The so called 'Puntland' fiefdom was the first so realized, in which Ethiopia had heavily invested resources including military interventions whereby its favourite protégé at that time, Abdullahi Yusuf, emerged the fiefdom's leader, while at the same time continuing to underpin the secessionist entity in north Somalia.

Parallel with her repeated incursions into Somalia, Ethiopia in gross violations of the United Nations Security Council resolutions of arms embargo on Somalia has been distributing large quantities of armament to some specific Somali renegades of both individuals and groups. And thus, always encouraging new hostilities of armed conflicts as the only its cherished option of settling the Somali problems in tune with her geopolitical interests, instead of its pretensions of promoting genuine peace initiatives. The following press reports corroborate with this statement:

(a) African Confidential, Vol.38 (2) pp.2-3, January 1997:

"The seven truck loads which arrived from Ethiopia's military base at Shilabo included one Kalashnikovs, plus 30 t. of ammunition, 20 T. of anti-tank and mortar rounds and 20 T. of missiles."

And (b) Horn of Africa Bulletin 5/9 pp. 19:

"The situation deteriorated in areas controlled by many Sodere signatories, often fuelled by arms from Addis Ababa. In defiance of the United Nations policy, Ethiopia rewarded some Sodere factions with substantial weapons consignments. Several recipients promptly put some on sale in Mogadishu where they were acquired by Ethiopia's opponents including both Hussein Aideed, still absent from the Sodere process, and by Islamist militia."

Ethiopian authorities knew and took no offence of their arms falling into the hands of Somali people other than their favoured groups, because after all that served the same purpose of Ethiopia's ultimate aim, i.e. the destabilization of Somalia, whichever side used its arms, friends and foes alike.

In defence of her incursions into Somali territories, Ethiopia claimed that prior attacks had been launched from Somalia into her territory across the common border by what she termed as Islamic extremists. Ethiopia further claimed killing or capturing numerous terrorists of non-Somali origins, but failed to substantiate these claims. The following press report is also relevant upon the non-substantiation of the claims:

Africa Confidential, Vol. 37, No. 21 (18 October 1996):

"The recent Ethiopian raid across the border was plainly an act of war. It may have a pyrrhic victory. Many Somalis who detested the Islamists saw the Ethiopian invasion as reminiscent of Habasha (Christian Ethiopia) imperial days. Addis Ababa trumpeted its success in destroying training camps and killing "Afghans"(Islamist veterans of the Afghan war). There is no doubt Itihad's foreign connection, but appears to have few foreign fighters in Gedo."

Ethiopian claims are not only pretexts to justify its incursions into Somalia, but also as part of its traditional official culture of disinformation and denials. The truth lies in the resurgence of the Abyssinian historical culture-cum-religious discrimination, as has always been the case during various successive Ethiopian regimes over the centuries. As already stated, from time immemorial the Coptic Church was the unrivalled official religion even in modern Ethiopia. Those of other religious faith, not only the Muslims, but also even the non-Coptic Christian minorities have been discriminated against. However, since the present regime came to power, a new constitution was promulgated for a secular system of federalism. This new constitution guarantees religious freedom and equality. According to this constitution, every nationality or community in Ethiopia can practice own religion and language, but this only remains to be on paper. Religious inequality and discrimination are unabated and in practice as they were before. While foreign missionaries from the wealthier Christian world have always been free to move about the country, of which there were at least sixty-two such Christian associations in 1997, to assist their co-religionist Christian communities.

Their Islamic counter-parts were not permitted to do the same. There was not one single such an Islamic association allowed to operate in the country at the time. That was despite the hopes and expectations raised by the new constitutional guarantees, in a country where more than fifty percent of its population are Muslims who are being denied their freedom to Islamic education. This denial of religious equality has created a great deal of dissent inside Ethiopia. This is not only limited to the Somali communities in that country but applies to all various Islamic communities and groups in Ethiopia. It is in this state of affairs inside Ethiopia that the present regime finds expedient to use Somalia as a scapegoat, because of the latter's current special situation and the bitter history of the two countries.

Despite the above backdrop, Ethiopian incursions into Somali territories were at first encouraged by the American Clinton administration and continued until the blatant sanctioned of invasion by the Bush Administration. During July/August 1996, a high-level Security Envoy of the Clinton administration visited Addis Ababa. The visit coincided with an announcement of a US Government grant of twenty million dollars to help Ethiopia curb activities of what it called, 'Islamist extremists' from Somalia and the Sudan. Ethiopia has ever since enjoyed the U.S. administration's acquiescence of its aggression against Somalia, including its gross violations of the United Nations arms embargo on Somalia. Not unlike Israel, Ethiopia ever since then

became immune from any punitive measures for its violations of UN Security Council resolutions vis-à-vis Somalia or Eritrea.

Since the withdrawal of the United Nations intervention forces from Somalia, beginning of March 1995, there has hardly been any US interest towards Somalia. Rare US policy statements from time to time were in support of Ethiopian involvement in the Somali situation that Ethiopia has been exploiting to the disservice of the Somali people.

Mr. Ali Khalif Glaydh, the first appointed Somali Prime Minister, after the Arta Conference, addressed the UN Security Council on 21 March 2001. He highlighted a number of initiatives that his incipient government was intending to address, but punctuated every item he mentioned with a proviso, 'if it were given a chance'. Those chances were never given by Ethiopian destabilization of his fragile administration. The following are short extracts from his otherwise long statement:

1. Ethiopia blatantly occupied the Somali towns of Dolow, Belet Hawo and Lugh in the Gedo region since August 1996.
2. Ethiopia similarly occupied towns in the Bay and Bakol regions since 1999.
3. Ethiopian military presence in Somalia has always been known and documented in the Humanitarian circles serving in Somalia including UN Agencies, international NGOs and donor and diplomatic missions based in Kenya. Terra Nuova and Care were among independent witnesses of the overwhelming Ethiopian military presence in Gedo, Bay and Bakol regions.
4. The TNG has used diplomatic channels to reason with Ethiopia to remove her forces from Somali territory.
5. Despite the protestations of the TPLF government that it was markedly different from the imperial and Mengistu regimes; it has justified enough ominously on the one hand the illegal occupation of Somali territory on the imperatives of its own national security needs and on the other hand blamed Somalia, the victim, for publicizing the presence of her troops deep inside Somali territory.
6. Ethiopia is campaigning vigorously to discredit and destroy the Arta peace process. Instead of the broadly based and supported process, Ethiopia is determined to anoint a few individuals as the leaders of Somalia. The TPLF government in Addis Ababa has vociferously claimed not to be imperial in its orientation. The corralling of few individuals from the political wilderness is truly imperial but lacks at

least the expected finesse. The selection of these individuals as the leaders of the Somali people is bound to be futile.

Mr. Ali Khalif Glaydh informed the Council that those were some of the blatant activities of interference in the Somali internal affairs carried out by the Ethiopian government that posed serious threat to the security, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Somalia. He stated that his government would like the Security Council to take note of those dangerous policies of grave concern to Somalia and its people which were being executed by Ethiopia. His appeal, however, fell on deaf ears, because Ethiopia was being protected by the lone superpower and its violations against Somalia would not be checked despite abundant evidence, while Eritrea was sanctioned on the basis of unsubstantiated flimsy reports especially emanating from Ethiopia.

Unfortunately, the Security Council, with a laissez-faire attitude just kept watching Ethiopian destabilization of Somalia to continue and taking its course unabated over the years, but did nothing. The Council ignored one of its main responsibilities of world peace and security, the very *raison d'être* of its existence. That was because the lone superpower was in favour of that destabilization of Somalia as subsequent development would demonstrate.

I played a lot of cards with Ethiopian official operatives at various levels, from security border guards to the highest diplomats since Somali independence in 1960. I met or interacted with many such Ethiopian officials representing three different of regimes: (1) Haile Selassie's imperial regime, (2) Mengistu's revolutionary or dictatorship regime and (3) the current regime with the claim of democracy and elected office. The legitimacy of this claim should best be left to the Ethiopian people themselves, not the least of all the Oromo majority. These operatives, all of them, shared a common official culture that had evolved through centuries of feudal system up to the modern times. This official culture is mainly based upon deception and coercion. Ethiopian operatives would at first try to deceive their adversaries by whatever means, lying, denial, persuasion, or other tricks. If and when these fail, they would resort to covert pressure or overt force, unless deterred by an equal or superior force. Their official culture permits the denial of any wrong doing based on an Abyssinian gimmick called the 'Assadh', even when they know that nobody buys or believes such denials. A vivid example was the denial of Ethiopian Government spokeswoman, Solome Tadesse's on a BBC interview about Ethiopia's incursion into the Somali western town of Beled-Hawa on 8 April 1999. The town is only less than half a km distance from the Kenya

border town of Mandera. Many independent witnesses including foreign journalists were prying into the Ethiopian involvement from across the border, but Solome Tadesse's denial remained unchanged. She was, however, later contradicted by certain Ahmed Yusuf who was also interviewed by the BBC on 9 June 1999. He was himself trying to justify the presence of the Ethiopian forces on Somali territory and thus confirmed the latter's involvement, which Solome Tadesse had totally denied.

The Ethiopian citizenry of non-Abyssinian stock continuously raise complaints since the promulgation of the so-called constitutional guarantees. However, these complaints are constantly confronted with the not unusual denials by higher official levels.

This Ethiopia official culture had further developed since the Abyssinian conquests of what are now other parts or nationalities of modern Ethiopia. During those conquests of other African peoples and their territories, the conquering Abyssinian armies were officially permitted to pillage properties in the territories to be conquered as incentives for the successful implementation of those conquests. In the absence of any appropriated official budgets those days, the conquering armies had to live upon the spoils of the conquests. A portion of the spoils would always go to the imperial court as tribute. Besides the imperial court, there would be a chain of intermediaries at various levels including higher echelons of military commands who would also have stakes in those spoils.

While the tribute system to the imperial court or to that highest level, whichever the case, might have phased out with modernization, the essence of the overall system with its chain of intermediaries has neither been dismantled nor ceased to exist. It has by and large transformed itself into one of bribery and corruption, which is sufficiently tolerated by the Ethiopian official culture.

One must, however, draw a clear distinction between the Ethiopian officials who have become tainted and influenced by that incorrigible official culture and the ordinary Ethiopian people. The average Ethiopian who is neither tainted nor influenced by that official culture can be as good as anybody else. But even the common adage that every society gets the kind of government it deserved is negated by the Ethiopian official culture.

In January 2002, after Ethiopia, with western support, paralysed the outcome of the Arta process (see under Djibouti); an IGAD Summit held in Khartoum, Sudan, mandated the three countries bordering Somalia:

Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya as a Preparatory Committee for yet another Somali reconciliation conference to be held in Kenya under the latter's chair. IGAD Foreign Ministers met in Nairobi during April 2002 and further charged the preparatory committee (also known as IGAD Technical Committee) to determine the date of convening the conference within that same calendar year 2002.

The first main step taken by the IGAD Technical Committee was a Fact Finding Mission into Somalia for determining criteria for participation and the quotas of participants for various stakeholders. The committee split over the terms of reference and Djibouti withdrew from participating in that mission. The representatives of the other two members of the Technical Committee went ahead and undertook their mission whereby Ethiopia succeeded in gerrymandering the allocations by ensuring majority of would be delegates for its allied groups. The greater number of the Civil Society's share was usurped and allocated to the SRRC of Ethiopian protégés. However, further progress of the Committee's work was stalled until President Moi sent a special envoy to Djibouti and appealed to President Ismail Omar Guelle for the return of the Djibouti envoys to the Committee work. The Djibouti envoys returned upon the understanding that the allocations made by the other two Committee members during Djibouti's absence would be reviewed with Djibouti's participation. However, Ethiopian envoys prevailed over the then Kenyan Special Envoy for the Reconciliation Conference and Chairman of the Technical Committee, Elija Mwangale. The status quo remained unchanged and Djibouti officials, nevertheless, restrained themselves in order to avoid another withdrawal and remained engaged despite the imbalances of participants' allocations already done notwithstanding that Ethiopia got away with it. The total number of participants earmarked to attend the conference was about 350-400. However, 800 persons arrived for the Opening Ceremony on 15 October 2002 at Eldoret City, Kenya, each one of them carrying a letter of invitation signed by the Committee chairman. The Technical Committee demanded of the Somalis to solve the former's own blunder and reduce the number of participants to the targeted figure, but in vain although many Somali invitees including Ali Mahdi withdrew from the conference in disgust and never returned to it. The conference agenda stalemated for good three months and ran into deficit.

In the meantime general elections held in Kenya installed a new government into office. By end January 2003 a new Kenyan Special Envoy for the Somali reconciliation process and Chairman of the IGAD Technical

Committee, former senior diplomat (rtd), Bethuel Kiplagat was appointed to replace Elija Mwangale. A sigh of relief and positive expectations were greeted with Kiplagat's appointment, especially among the donor community. The lone exception that reacted negatively to that appointment was Ethiopia. Information owned that the reason for the latter's displeasure with that appointment was their belief that during his tenure as permanent secretary in the Kenyan foreign ministry Kiplagat had treated Oromo rebels well and had also facilitated their safe passage through Kenya. According some diplomatic sources, after his retirement Kiplagat was arrested while he was transiting through Addis Ababa airport and detained by the Ethiopian authorities and that his eventual release took a great deal of Kenyan diplomacy.

By mid February 2003 the Conference site was moved from Eldoret to Mbagathi in the outskirts of Nairobi. One of the main tasks that faced Kiplagat at the outset was a divided committee charged with drafting a National Charter. It was one of six such committees that had been appointed by the IGAD Technical Committee under the chairmanship of Kiplagat's predecessor. The committee split into two groups. Each of the two Charter committee groups prepared own draft and both texts were delivered to Kiplagat. He returned them with instructions for the two sides to meet again and reconcile their two drafts. This proved not only difficult, but practically impossible as the group representing the SRRC warlords of Ethiopian protégés had specific instructions not to purge from their certain set of points and they were not disposed to any compromise. Kiplagat, thereafter, found it necessary to appoint a Harmonization Committee and he nominated a Somali-American Prof. Abdi Ismaail Samatar renowned for his strict professionalism to chair such committee. Ethiopian envoys and their Somali clients were alarmed and objected to both the harmonization process and Prof. Samatar's nomination. However, not only other members of the IGAD Technical Committee, but also some important donors whose support for the conference was sine qua non encouraged Kiplagat to go ahead with his plan. Prof. Samatar then selected people, Kenyans and Somalis, who would serve in the Harmonization Committee appointed by Kiplagat. Furthermore, Prof. Samatar secured a meeting place distant from the location of the conference venue to avoid interferences. The Harmonization Committee finally completed its work and presented its Report of harmonized Transitional Draft Charter to Kiplagat with an introduction by slides projecting a summary of the Report. He was delighted and requested a repetition of similar presentation to a combined gathering of the IGAD Technical Committee and donor representatives within the following days. When the presentation resumed the Ethiopian envoys rather disdainful quarrelled with Kiplagat's senior aides and

walked out of the meeting before even reading the report or hearing the presentation. The process continued without the participation of the Ethiopian envoys and the audience was very much impressed. The harmonized Charter would be the best suited for Somalia and there was a wide acclaim among the Somalis both inside and outside the country. However, Ethiopia's Somali protégés focused all their energy how to abort the harmonization process and said they would produce their own Draft Charter. Kiplagat capitulated. The warlords only resubmitted the same draft that their representatives in the Charter Drafting Committee had prepared and that remained to be the basis of the current Transitional Charter. A renowned Kenyan advocate, Ababu Namwamba, the Chief Counsel, Chambers of Justice, prepared the following critique on the warlords' draft charter for NOVIB-Somalia, a Dutch Funding Agency", as their retaineer:

"The document as drafted is, with all due respect to the drafters, such a flawed piece of draftsmanship that to attempt to ascribe to it the term 'charter' would be a classical misnomer. The draft reflects badly on the intelligence, commitment and wisdom of IGAD, the delegates and all other parties that have invested so much time, thought and effort in the peace negotiations. The mere act of discussing this draft, let alone considering its adoption, would be a bitter insult to those involved and would amount to washing down the drain the months of grueling work that has gone into the negotiations for the rebirth of the Somali Republic."

The Ethiopians, after demonstrating their dissatisfaction with Kiplagat's appointment must have, nevertheless, used that backdrop as a leverage to blackmail him and it paid off. Kiplagat later confided in one western diplomat that he "did not want to fight Ethiopia." He became so subservient to Ethiopian diktats and toed the latter's policy line vis-à-vis the Somali reconciliation process. He prevailed over a number of factional warlords and others to join the pro-Ethiopian camp. These included the leaders of the TNG delegation who defected and joined the pro-Ethiopian camp whom he treated by misusing the donors' resources earmarked for the conference. Some of such individuals, for some time, each of them had three suits in three different hotels in Nairobi. Kiplagat's actions thereby destabilized the TNG resulting into the replacement of both the prime minister and the speaker of parliament. Independent minded participants at the conference were unduly bullied by Kiplagat's staff, of which I happened to be one such victim as explained in subsequent passages down below.

Many ordinary participants would lose their accommodation even for short duration of absence, while pro-Ethiopians would have their accommodation reserved for long periods of absence until their return. Some participants would lose their accommodation to pro-Ethiopian participants. When we, members of the civil society, complained about this corruption to some western donors they just said that they had known about it.

Kiplagat paid more than ten visits to Ethiopia for consultations during that reconciliation process. He would always go through Addis Ababa and back whenever he left Nairobi to any destination. He never visited Djibouti, the other Frontline State that he represented as Chairman of the IGAD Technical Committee nor Somalia ever, the subject of his very appointment. Kiplagat would also pay some secret visits to Addis Ababa. On one faithful day, one diplomat of the international observer group at the conference was leaving to attend an important forum that would take place in Addis Ababa. He passed by Kiplagat and asked him if he would also be going to that forum. He said he was not and the diplomat bid his farewell and left him. Ironically, when that diplomat was returning to Nairobi he found Kiplagat inside the same plane at Addis Ababa airport. However, Kiplagat's submissiveness to the Ethiopians not only became a talking-point both among the Somalis and foreigners alike, but it also nearly cost him his job. Many Somali participant groups including the TNG pulled out of the conference and returned to Somalia where they formed new alliances against the Ethiopian protégés and threatened to hold a counter conference inside the country. Djibouti envoys also once again withdrew from the Technical Committee because of Kiplagat's uneven handedness. Only the pro-Ethiopian groups and Kiplagat remained at the Conference venue. The process stalemated for over a month until an IGAD Summit was held in Kampala, Uganda, whereby the delegations of some member states castigated Kiplagat for mismanaging the Somali Reconciliation process. The role of the Frontline States and its IGAD Technical Committee hitherto presided over by Kiplagat were both abolished by the Kampala Summit and substituted with an all IGAD Facilitation Committee at foreign ministers' level. The then Kenyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, a man of high integrity and remarkable personality, tacitly accepted responsibility for Kiplagat's blunders and promised to bring the future management of the reconciliation process under his closest supervision. However, bitter cracks soon surfaced within the governing coalition partners of the Kenya Government and Kiplagat became better connected with State House than the minister whose authority Kiplagat would continuously undermine.

The IGAD Facilitation Committee decided, in conjunction with some donors, for the holding of a 'Retreat' outside the conference venue for a selected number of participants. The object of that retreat was to break the logjam surrounding the conference by removing some impasses. The idea had been developed by British and Swedish envoys of the international observers group to the Somali reconciliation process who had also secured the additional funding for the retreat from their governments. Six places of the participants at the retreat were allocated to a divided Civil Society. As already stated above, the majority of the civil society's share of the conference delegates had been usurped by Ethiopian manoeuvring and were unduly allocated to supporters of the armed factions. Therefore, three places were given to each side of the divided civil society. I was among the three selected by the IGAD Facilitation Committee together with two strong intellectual ladies: Asha Haji Elmi, a two term member of parliament nominated by her constituency in preference to male candidates, and the late Sakia Abdisalam Alim who also would become a member of the new parliament, to represent the genuine group of the civil society. A letter of invitation signed by the Chair of that Committee, Foreign Minister Musyoka, was addressed to each selected participant for the retreat. The letters of invitation would be collected from the conference secretariat by afternoon on 8 January to forenoon of 9 January 2004. On that same afternoon of 9 January the participants of the retreat were to assemble at Safari Park Hotel, 15 km outside Nairobi city, where they would be received by the new Chair of IGAD, President Musevani of Uganda, to kick off the Retreat. Immediately the names of the participants became known, the inclusion of my name alarmed the Ethiopian camp and their Somali protégés. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear on Kiplagat who himself had opposed my nomination at the Committee meeting, but he was over ruled by the Ministers. Nevertheless, Kiplagat gave instructions for withholding my letter of invitation. When I went to collect it on the morning of 9 January, the lady at the office phoned up one of Kiplagata's aides, a certain Kiboi. He came at once and taking me aside, he said that they wanted to include me as a resources person, which he sugar coated its importance, instead of being a participant at the retreat. I told him that I knew that I was invited by the Chair of the IGAD Facilitation Committee as a participant of the retreat and that I only wanted to collect my letter of invitation. And further questioned him what authority did they have to alter that decision? He then left me without uttering a word any more, but his body language demonstrated a denial of my letter of invitation.

At that juncture, I called a Djibouti diplomat, Mr. Siyad who was an aide to his Foreign Minister and reported the anomaly to him. He phoned up

Kiboi who referred him to Kiplagat and the latter made himself unreachable that morning, perhaps after he was warned by Kiboi. The Djibouti diplomat then advised me to present myself at the Safari Park Hotel at the scheduled time. I accompanied my colleagues, the two ladies. When we arrived there a young lady, who was said to be the daughter of a former Kenyan Ambassador to Japan, was distributing the badges for the retreat. These must have had been prepared before Kiplagat had given the instructions for the withholding of my letter of invitation and fortunately the lady had not received any instructions to that effect or about me. So, I claimed my badge and received it. As soon as I wore the badge, the Ethiopian protégés around became alarmed again and exerted pressure to bear on Kiboi. I would not know what leverage they had over him, but he was certainly so amenable to their influence. Two men of Kiplagat's staff came to the young lady who was near to where we were and instructed her to withdraw the badge from me. They were talking in Swahili, but one of my colleagues, the late Sakia, knew that language and she overheard their conversation. The young lady complained how could she withdraw that badge from me? "Ask him", said one of the two men. "And if he refused", she questioned again? "That would be another matter", said the other man. Sakia passed all that information of their conversation to me, and I then removed the badge from my chest and put it in the pocket lest it might be forcibly snatched from me. The lady then came over to our table and asked to have a word with me. I obliged and taking me aside she courteously asked if I would give them back the badge. With due respect to the lady, I had to reply in the negative. No sooner than she left me Kiboi came to us and murmured repeating what he had said to me earlier that day, which I would not entertain. He seemed to have taken offence and on leaving us, said that he would never talk to me, but I would not remember the two of us ever talking together. My other colleague, Ms. Asha Haji Elmi obliquely advised Kiboi that he had better leave me alone lest the matter might not end there? He responded that it was less costly for him to confront with me rather than not.

President Musevani was receiving the groups late that evening. When the turn of the civil society came at about close to midnight, Kiplagat's staff said I was not among those to be received by the President and they physically denied me entry into the appropriate hall where we were supposed to meet the President. When the others entered the room Asha Haji Elmi complained to the President that I was one of them, but was not allowed to get in, to the astonishment of the President's entourage and the embarrassment of the Kenya senior officials present including Minister Musyoka and Ambassador Afi. The President ordered that I be allowed to enter. Ironically, the same people of Kiplagat's staff who had not only kept me

out, but threatened me with physical harm, then came running to fetch me. When I took my seat, Kiplagat half-heartedly greeted me with a sly nod which I returned, nevertheless, despite his wickedness, in order not to impair the atmosphere. I did not, however, comment on my ordeal in front of the President out of respect for Mr. Musyoka.

I was denied accommodation for the first night as my name was deliberately excluded from the Hotel guest list by Kiplagat's aides, but my two colleagues, the ladies, each had a room and they shared one and gave me the other for that night. Kiplagat's staff could not, however, deny me to dine in the restaurant and other facilities because I put my badge on again and wore it all the time.

In the following morning, the Foreign Minister of Djibouti, Mr. Ali Abdi Farah, met Kiplagat in the foyer and took him to task, demanding of him the reason for denying me my accommodation? Kiplagat, even without answering the Minister's question at first, hurriedly took me by the arm and led me to the reception as if apologetically, and ordered that I be given a room at once. When the receptionist argued that my name was not in the guest list that had been submitted by Kiplagat's staff. He hit back thumbing his chest that he was the boss in charge. I was given a room and that ended the saga. However, the retreat lasted for three weeks and ended without me ever receiving my letter of invitation.

The Uganda officials of the IGAD chair and assisted by some representatives of the international community observer group at the Conference managed to persuade those Somali groups who had pulled out to return to the fore by visiting them in Mogadishu and thus repaired the cracks caused by Kiplagat's mismanagement of the Somali Reconciliation process.

Minister Musyoka was soon assigned to another portfolio in a government reshuffle and Kiplagat resumed his free rein of the conference management and there was no other authority to keep his abuses in check, despite the efforts of the Facilitation Committee notwithstanding.

From Addis Ababa's machination of the Somali Reconciliation process emerged a Somali transitional structures, the so-called TFG coalition of warlords and cobbled together by the international donors and endorsed by the United Nations, but only an Ethiopian Trojan horse foisted upon the Somali people. And practically nothing more than a mere formality without much support inside Somalia. The TFG, so much devoid of public

support and not being able to locate itself inside the country, celebrated its first anniversary in exile in Nairobi. After at long last moving into inside the country the TFG split with the former Mogadishu warlords and others relocated themselves in Mogadishu, while others led by the president and prime minister first made Jowhar and then Baidoa their makeshift headquarters where they again celebrated their second anniversary under heavy Ethiopian guard.

The Baidoa Mysteries

On Friday, 28 July 2006, Member of Parliament (MP) and former speaker of the Somali parliament, Abdalla Deero Issaaq, was murdered just as he had stepped out of the main Mosque in Baidoa after the weekly congregation of the Friday prayers. Despite that crowded scene of so many worshippers nobody saw the killer(s). The still non-functioning transitional government (TFG) of Premier Ali Mohamed Geedi was facing a no vote of confidence challenge in parliament the next day. It survived. Again, on Monday, 18 September 2006, the TFG was seeking a confidence vote in parliament after a major reshuffle following dismissal of Geedi's previous government by President Abdullahi Yusuf. The president addressed parliament and he left the hall just before voting would begin. As his convoy of escort vehicles moved away, what seemed a remote control device exploded, killing about a dozen of people and wounding many others, majority of them members of the presidential guard, including also a Ugandan national. The explosion also destroyed a number of motor vehicles including those among the presidential convoy and others that were at stationary outside the makeshift parliament hall. No doubt the act was an assassination attempt on the life of the president who escaped unhurt. And again nobody saw the perpetrator(s) in such a crowded environment in broad day light.

Despite such disastrous situation, Premier Ali Mohamed Geedi remained seated undisturbed and did not even bother himself to go out and ascertain the fate of the president or assess the damage caused by the explosion(s). He managed to prevail over the panicked parliament to vote on his government and won. This was, however, after so many Members of Parliament had left the hall in order to see the extent of the disaster or were panicked and were replaced by many outsiders of non-MPs who might have been pre-arranged. They rushed into the hall, filling the vacuum and raised their hands in favour of government when a vote of show of hands was called for, as has been complained by very credible personalities

among the MPs.

The scenario of the Baidoa Mysteries shows an orchestrated pattern of expertly executed assassinations and attempted assassinations so that each time Ali Mohamed Geedi's TFG was in constitutional crisis, it won either by deceit or by intimidation. To be valid, however, this rationale must stand the test of answering the following two conundrums:

1. Who could be the expert executor(s) of such hideous crimes without leaving any clues of their identities? Somali personnel formerly trained for such operations were no longer around. They were among the first to leave the country at the collapse of state central authority, more than a decade and a half ago. The only possible actors were Ethiopian agents who were freely around and mixed up with the TFG affairs.
2. Could the Ethiopians ever contemplate assassinating Abdullahi Yusuf whom they had so strongly groomed?

The Ethiopians unreservedly supported Abdullahi Yusuf to win the Somali presidency by manipulating the IGAD sponsored conference for a number of reasons including:

- a) Among all its Somali clients, Abdullahi was the only one marketable who had the chance of winning and, therefore, the only one worthy of their investment;
- b) Abdullahi had demonstrated his aversion to Islamic principles and practices whether because of his personal nature, or by design vis-à-vis his relations with the Tigray-led Ethiopian officials.

However, the Ethiopian investment in Abdullahi Yusuf was only for a short term. By the same token, Abdullahi's association with Ethiopia, although it has irreversibly already cost him the trust of the Somali people may not be perpetual either. That short term Ethiopian investment in Abdullahi Yusuf almost came to its end. Abdullahi was rigid and not easily manipulatable animal. His relations with the Ethiopians were forged, in the first place, during the Mengistu regime. They could not, however, continue putting up with his rigidity and he was locked-up and indefinitely detained until the fall of that regime. And secondly, despite his close association with the Ethiopians, Abdullahi Yusuf after all wanted a Somali government of his own choice to be in place. The Ethiopians wanted a Somali government of their choice or none of it. The convergence of interests between Abdullahi Yusuf and the Ethiopians narrowed as far as the latter were concerned.

On his part, however, Abdullahi Yusuf still needed the Ethiopians, because he wanted to impose his will and authority on the Somali people under an umbrella of foreign forces instead of reconciliation and compromises. The only feasibly available foreign forces were the Ethiopians. Any other forces, even if available, would need prior funding, which may not be easily forthcoming. The Ethiopians would want funding too, for the deployment of their forces, but that was dispensable when it came to such deployment in Somalia. Because their forces in the Somali and Oromo regions never ever have budgets or full budgets at all, apart from their military equipment and uniforms. They have been living upon the resources of the conquered peoples since the Menelik II era. This is exactly the case now since the USA sanctioned invasion, the Ethiopian occupation forces have been collecting as many privately owned personal computers (laptops) and mobile phones as they can lay their hands on, upon the pretext of checking for terrorist connections. None of those collected properties have been restored to their owners who include very well known professionals, but instead they ended up in black markets in Addis Ababa. So, any such deployment in Somalia is only an extension of those Ethiopian forces already garrisoned in the so-called Somali region of Ethiopia.

Abdullahi knew the Ethiopians well as much as they knew him too. He would prefer their forces to come through IGAD and AU so that he might ask them to leave if and when it suited him. This was also ok with the Ethiopians to begin with and only as a short term, because they wanted to come to Somalia with legitimacy if at all possible for their geopolitical interests. Once their forces were inside Somalia they would always have Ali Mohamed Geedi to say he needed them, so they could remain as long as desired.

Abdullahi Yusuf wanted power to govern Somalia that run counter to Ethiopia's geopolitical interests and, therefore, Ali Mohamed Geedi was Ethiopia's best Somali investment. According to a statement by Geedi's representative in Addis Ababa during an earlier BCC interview, Geedi's TFG must have had already given a *carte blanche* for Ethiopian forces to enter Somalia at their whims during the TFG's seat in Jowhar even without parliament's approval, Abdullahi Yusuf might not have been made aware of the exact nature of that agreement. The only release of it made public was that of co-operation between the two countries. Abdullahi Yusuf later confided in some MPs that the entry of Ethiopian forces into the country during July 2006 was without his knowledge. Abdullahi is not a man given to tolerate such double crossings although he made a big mistake when he

appointed Ali Mohamed Geedi as his prime minister, a man chosen by Ethiopia. Had he not done that he would remain their only (Ethiopians') best Somali connection.

Therefore, the answer to the 2nd question above: "Could the Ethiopians ever contemplate assassinating Abdullahi Yusuf?" Is yes! Geedi was more useful to them then onwards and they must liquidate Abdullahi Yusuf before he would sack Geedi. Ethiopian military presence in Somalia had already existed in abundance even at that time before their subsequent American sanctioned invasion. And if the assassination attempt succeeded they would have immediately exerted their authority and intimidated parliament to elect Geedi to the Somali presidency. Geedi would then in turn appoint another Ethiopian supplicant as premier.

Abdullahi Yusuf was no doubt quite savvy of all those Ethiopian mischievous, but he would be most unlikely to divulge a word of it. He is given the stamina for such endurance. He already pretended suspecting Al-Qaeda and terrorism at large and he stayed on that course. Other TFG officials gave contradictory statements about the last incident. The most plausible of these was that of the minister of the interior, Hussein Aideed, according to his interview with the Xog-Ogaal Newspaper of Wed. 19 September 2006, p.2, and quote as per translation from Somali:

"Investigation is in progress to find out who was behind this act. Up to now the government cannot accuse anybody until the investigation is concluded."

The perennial hostilities between these two neighbouring countries, Ethiopia and Somalia have been a source of great concern to many people of both sides. A pertinent question that often poses itself is whether there can ever be a chance for any possible genuine and perpetual rapprochement in the foreseeable future? The balance of preponderance of knowledgeable opinions very much leads to a 'No' than a 'Yes' answer. The real basis for the negative rationale is that the *raison d'être* for the Ethiopian State is the perpetual Abyssinian (Amhara/Tigray) dictatorship over the conquered majority of other nationalities of the empire. The combined population of the conquered nationalities more than twice overlaps those of the Abyssinian stock. The Oromo people alone account for more than 40% of the overall population of the Ethiopian empire and alone quite well out number the Abyssinians. Any popular decision making that could fairly reverse the minority rule is forcibly obstructed by the long established Abyssinian mechanisms of the dictatorship. The Ethiopian

people have never, therefore, in their long history lived under a non-dictatorial system of polity. Consequently, the successive regimes in the history of that country have all been the Abyssinian led imperial regimes of the past, and again the Amhara led Dergue or the current Tigray led EPRDF with a claim of an elected office, all belonged or belong to the Abyssinian stock of dictatorial establishment. This is very much so, even if some of these regimes euphemistically styled themselves as a democracy, as is the case of the present authorities, whether they rig elections or massacre unarmed demonstrators. Despite their different tactics of political orientations by one regime to the next and their internally internecine power struggle notwithstanding, the commonality among various Abyssinian groups is the perpetuality of the status quo, the Abyssinian dictatorial rule. Whatever its particular shade may be, the system of governance in the foreseeable future in Ethiopia is, therefore, destined to Abyssinian dictatorship that is continuously underpinned by western support. Since people governed by any dictatorship are naturally restive, the Ethiopian people cannot be an exception. In response to such restiveness, the authorities in Addis Ababa always attempt to create a third enemy scenario on which to focus own people's attention and to divert it from their domestic concerns. The Abyssinian rulers, past and present alike, have consistently found it expedient to target Somalia as their scapegoat for all Ethiopian ills and projecting it as the third enemy of the Ethiopian people.

Despite claims of democracy, Meles Zenawi has turned Ethiopia into a police state. He rigged the May 2005 political elections and then stifled the resultant dissent. Thousands of the opposition is in incarceration on trumped-up charges, many of these carrying the death penalty. Tens of thousands of Ethiopian youths who protested against the rigged elections were also detained and were still languishing in detention at the time of going to press, several years later. Many local news reporters were also jailed, the press was hushed and foreign correspondents were deported. Several judges defected rather than forcibly administer Zenawi's justice. But still Meles Zenawi is a darling of the west in telling comparison with President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe who is hated by the west, but has never done anything comparable to Zenawi's misdeeds.

Only a total transformation of the power structure in Ethiopia would be conducive to fostering better relations.

Some time ago Meles Zenawi survived a leadership challenge and may again need a safe haven refuge in Somalia after the guards change in

Ethiopia, sooner or later. But this time around perhaps Mengistu would be more welcome in Somalia than Zenawi.

KENYA:

Kenya, the country with the second longest border with Somalia, bore the brunt of the impact of the Somali civil war upheavals. First, unlike Ethiopia, which has the longest frontier with Somalia, where almost every displaced Somali family or group found their kith and kin across the common border and benefited from the traditional accommodation of the extended family. Only a few specific groups in Somalia genealogically identify themselves with the Kenyan Somalis. Hence, the overwhelming majority of the thousands of displaced Somalis who had entered Kenya would find no kith and kin there and became true refugees in the real sense of the word to the detriment of the host country's infrastructures and security. And secondly, while the majority of Somali families who had taken temporary residences in Ethiopian cities were people, by and large, with financial means and thus temporarily boosted the economy of their host country, there were few with such means among those who had entered Kenya. This was because of the latter's stricter immigration restrictions and higher cost of living.

President Moi's vision that favored addressing, first and foremost, the problems specific to the Somali national capital of Mogadishu as the first step in resolving the overall Somali crises was not only a sound approach, but far more sighted. Even after the two main opposing political groups had jointly agreed upon a framework during the Cairo Somali Meeting, November-December 1997, the prior settlement of the problems of the capital proved to be a pre-condition to the implementation of the Cairo Accord. Again after the conclusion of the Djibouti sponsored Somali Peace Conference, the non-settlement of the problems of the capital was exploited by some former factional warlords and it thus impeded the functioning of the interim government. President Moi's peace plan for Somalia could have, therefore, worked successfully if only Ethiopia would have given it a chance. This was because of the following main reasons:

- a) Unlike Ethiopia, Kenya had no geopolitical interest vis-à-vis Somalia at least at that time.
- b) There had never been any historical animosities between Kenya and Somalia as there were between the latter and the Ethiopia since the beginning of the sixteen century, AD. The yardstick by which to measure such differences stems from the official culture of the two countries neighbouring Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. Majority vote in Kenya resulted both into a change of government and also a rejection of constitutional changes. On the contrary, a would be majority vote

for the opposition in Ethiopia was forcibly averted by election rigging, followed by a massacre of demonstrators and mass arrests of protestors to stifle dissent. This short comparison also explains the differences of the status of Somali-Kenyans and Somalis living under Ethiopian rule. The former can, among other things, aspire to positions of trust in public life. Somalis have, past and present, headed the most sensitive organizations of Kenya's security, both the army and the police. This affords the Somali-Kenyans a sense of belonging and those under Ethiopian rule, a sense of alienation. This in its wake has a tremendous impact on all ethnic Somalis, both inside and outside the boundaries of Kenya. Therefore, the absence of such negative feelings among the Somalis could have strengthened President Moi's mediation role. The President could have thus enjoyed the collective trust of the Somali people, which the Ethiopian rulers could not.

- c) There was no proliferation of the Somali Political Organizations at the time of President Moi's renewed initiative from which emerged the Nairobi Understanding in October 1996. Ethiopia had since then helped for these organizations to proliferate to unmanageable proportions that very much complicated subsequent Somali reconciliation process.
- d) And lastly, but not the least, President Moi's sincerity in trying to resolve the Somali crises was not only for Somali interest, but also for the best interest of security and stability for the whole Horn of African Region. His involvement in the Somali peace process was contemporaneous with the upheaval itself beginning with his attendance at the earlier Djibouti conference for the Somali reconciliation process in July 1991. Nor was President Moi's peace initiative limited to the Somali case. He had played a leading role in mediating between the Government of Mozambique and the RENAMO opposition. He was involved in mediation efforts in the Sudan conflict for nearly two decades and enjoyed the trust of the two sides, the Government and the SPLA rebellion, because of his sincerity, very much unlike Zenawi's. He had also mediated among the Ugandans in the past, as well as in the great Lakes region. And lastly, the President played a leading role in mediating the leaders of the Sudan and Uganda who agreed to reach a settlement under his auspices. President Moi had been an honest peacemaker in East, South and Central Africa.

It is reiterated that for the above four main reasons, President Moi's peace plan could have had a much better chance of success for the Somali reconciliation process, even despite the lack of full commitment by the President's bureaucracy until his re-election in late 1997. Only then his foreign ministry became much more assertive and actively engaged in the Somali problems in accordance with the President's policy. Before that time Kenya diplomats often endorsed Ethiopia's submissions whether in the United Nations or within the IGAD and other similar forum. When the Ethiopians were delivering their invitations to the signatories of the Nairobi Understanding in October 1996, it was clearly perceivable that their manoeuvre was meant to pre-empt that accord. I then advised one of President Moi's senior aides to forestall that evil scheming by visiting all the IGAD member states, starting with Ethiopia itself, and brief them about the Nairobi Understanding and ask them to come on board with the President's initiative. This he was either unable or unwilling to do.

Unlike Ethiopia, Kenya supported the outcome of both the Cairo Somali Meeting during November-December 1997 and the Arta Somali Reconciliation Conference sponsored by Djibouti in 2000.

EGYPT:

Apart from Somalia's membership of the League of Arab States of which Egypt is a founding and leading member, the relations and early contacts between the latter and Somalia date back from the Pharaonic era. According to the English Weekly Issue for February 18-24, 1999 of the Al-Ahram, Egyptian leading Paper, there still existed in Egypt, "inscriptions describing trade expeditions on their way to the distant land of Pont (modern Somalia) to procure myrrh for King Mentuhotep of the XIth Dynasty, who reigned during 2133-2118 B.C."

Egyptian-Somali relations that might have predated the above mentioned artefacts were mainly about trade until the establishment of Egyptian military garrisons at Berbera and Bulahar in the north Somali coast in 1874-75. Although Egyptian garrisons remained in the Somali coast for only about ten years they, nevertheless, built and left behind several important and durable infrastructures in Berbera. These included inter alia, the main Berbera water supply system, a light house, a port and some Mosques, all of which are still in good use today, except the old port which has since been replaced

twice. Succeeding British Protectorate administration had not done any comparable infrastructures for the next seventy-six years.

During their sojourn in the Somali coast, Egyptian naval expeditions sailed back and forth, the whole length of the Somali sea-lanes along the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean up to the southern end of Somali waters. The withdrawal of the Egyptian garrisons in 1884 was succeeded later that same year by British occupation of the whole north of Somalia on the basis of treaties of protection, which lasted for seventy-six years until Somali independence in 1960, despite British betrayal by giving away nearly a third of the Somali territory under its protection to emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia.

In addition to trade which further flourished, Egyptian-Somali relations from then onwards also assumed cultural dimensions. This has been so, especially since the spread of Islamic teaching which is still the case to this day and in which the Somalis have always been at the receiving end.

Egypt's support for Somali independence, educational assistance programs and military trainings were already recounted in my first book mentioned earlier. Egyptian co-operation continued in non-controversial areas throughout Somalia, like scholarships, medicines, etc., during the upheavals. And also the supply of teachers in areas permitted by the security situation inside the country.

However, despite the stand of the League of Arab States, as well as the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) and some States in the region in safeguarding the unity of Somalia, only Egypt's efforts most forestalled Ethiopia's attempts to dismember the country. Egypt has henceforth placed her active diplomacy in defence of Somali unity and territorial integrity, especially since the collapse of its central authority.

After Ethiopia failed to persuade Aideed's coalition partners of political organizations to join its sponsored one-sided Sodere process, Egypt succeeded in bringing the two Somali political camps together at a round table, the Cairo Somali Meeting during November-December 1997, from which emerged the Cairo Declaration of 22 December 1997 that could have resolved the Somali crises about a decade ago, which no doubt Ethiopia congratulates itself for having aborted it.

Egypt again played an active positive role in the two-year long Somali reconciliation process held in Kenya during 2002 to 2004, and unlike Ethiopia,

Egypt has no geopolitical interests vis-à-vis Somalia. Not unlike other countries in the region, except Ethiopia, the role of Egypt has always been one of genuine endeavors to help the Somali people to reassert their rightful position in the family of nations.

ITALY

A former colonial power over southern Somalia (two-thirds of the Somali Republic), had an ambivalent record during the Somali crises. Italy had been the linchpin of Siad Barre's dictatorial regime both economically and militarily, especially since the cessation of co-operation by the former Soviet Union. Thereafter, Italy became the chief supplier of armament, including arms sales paid for by some Arab Governments.

Even after the Siad Barre regime's internal repression had intensified in the 1980s and most other countries began distancing themselves from that repressive regime, Italian assistance increased tremendously, again both economically and militarily to make up for the short falls elsewhere even though the European media had time and again denounced the regime's repression. Italy underpinned that dictatorial regime beyond any reasonable justification and, therefore, shares responsibility for the destruction of Somalia. The following is an extract from a Paper entitled: DATELINE: ROME by Wolfgang Achtner, a journalist in Rome:

"The agony of Somalia has its roots in the endemic political corruption of Italy. Throughout the 1980s, Italian politicians and businessmen used the country, once a colony of Italy's, as a playground for huge construction projects that either did little to help the local population or actually disrupted and damaged Somalian society.

"Italy is definitely responsible for the tribal warfare and the genocide in Somalia," says Francesco Rutelli, a congressman for the environmentalist Green Party, which has played a leading role in exposing what has become a scandal in Italy.

"The reality of Italy's cynical role in Somalia is clear from documents made available to Parliament by the Italian Foreign Ministry. They show that Italy sponsored 114 projects in Somalia between 1981 and 1990, spending more than a billion dollars. With few exceptions (such as a vaccination program carried out by non-governmental organizations), the Italian ventures were absurd and wasteful.

"The Italian government paid about \$ 95 million for a fertilizer plant in Mogadishu that never became operational.

"Piero Ugolini, a Florentine agronomist who worked for the technical cooperation unit of the Italian Embassy in Mogadishu from 1986 to 1990, says that a majority of Italian cooperation projects were carried out without considering their effects on the local population. The results, he says, were increasing social tensions that led to the civil war. In February 1988, for example, Italy donated more than \$ 4 million to set up a joint venture company that would buy cattle and sheep from the pastoral population. The animals were fatten and exported to provide the Somali government with a source of hard currency. One year later, Siad Barre sold 3,500 heads of cattle to the Yemen, in exchange for weapons used to fight his rivals, according to Ugolini.

"The Italian aid program was used to exploit the pastoral population and to support a regime that did nothing to promote internal development and was responsible for the death of many of its own people," Ugolini says.

"Behind these misgotten projects lay old-fashioned corruption. The Italian construction and engineering companies who were awarded lucrative contracts for the projects provided kickbacks to the political class in Rome and local politicians. The Italian taxpayer footed the bill. Control over the aid and development projects was shared by all the political parties in exactly the same way that all jobs in the vast public and semi-public sector were divided up. Ethiopia, another former Italian colony in the Horn of Africa was awarded to the Christian Democrats. The Socialist party got Somalia (NB: That meant each Italian political party would benefit financially from Italian aid to the country of its sphere of influence, respectively).

"In October 1978, the Italian-Somali Chamber of Commerce opened in Milan, the first act of a new political alliance between the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party and the Italian Socialist Party.

"The corrupt relationship between Italians and Barre, which began in 1978, flourished after 1983 when Craxi became prime minister. The Socialists flooded Somalia with millions of dollars in aid. Said Barre obtained arms, military advisers and trainers for his armed forces. In September 1985, Craxi became the first Italian prime minister to make an official visit to Somalia, and he promised Siad Barre aid worth approximately \$ 450 million over the next two years. ... On the Somali side, all the money was allegedly handled by Barre's eldest son, 48-year-old colonel Hassan Mohammed Siad, who had an apartment in the Hotel Raphael in Rome ... the same hotel where Craxi had his permanent residency in the Italian capital. During these years many members of the Barre family ... acquired property and bank accounts in Switzerland. On the Italian side, the list of beneficiaries reads like a who's who

of major construction, engineering and communications firms.

"By the late 1980s, the Italian government had lost touch with reality in Somalia. 'We obviously had no idea of what was going on in Somalia and until the very last moment we tried to save Siad Barre,' says Francesco Rutelli. In May 1988, rising dissatisfaction with Siad Barre's regime led to rebellion in north Somalia. The dictator crushed the revolt by destroying three cities: 15,000 people died (Human Rights Watch had a death-toll estimated figure of 50,000). Back in Rome, opposition politicians demanded an end to the cooperation with Somalia and were rebuffed. Detailed reports of torture and atrocities committed by the Barre government, released by Amnesty International, had no effect on the Italian government. Rome maintained cordial relations with Siad Barre after the assassination of the Catholic bishop of Mogadishu Salvatore Colombo, in July 1989, and even after an Italian biologist was beaten to death in the headquarters of the Somali Secret Services in June 1990.

"Italy lost its final chance to win back some friends in Somalia when, just before Siad Barre was forced to flee Mogadishu in January 1991, Foreign Minister De Michelis tried to convince representatives of the rebel movements in Rome that a new political scenario must include the former dictator."

However, the Italian Government made some unsuccessful attempts during the early stages of the upheavals in Somalia to help restore peace and stability in the country, but resigned soon after the failure of the earlier Djibouti Conferences on the Somali reconciliation process in 1991.

Italy also supported and contributed to the international intervention in Somalia during 1993-5. Italian troops participated on the 17 June 1993 UN retaliatory operation described above in Chapter One, in which many unarmed Somali civilians were killed. The conduct of members of the Italian forces under the United Nations was of some subsequent controversy upon their return to Italy and became the subject of a judicial inquiry for abuse of trust and atrocities in operations against Somali civilians. Again, the former colonial power resigned her involvement in Somalia upon the failure of the international intervention.

Italy's interest in Somalia was once more revived two years later in January 1997 by Ethiopia's orchestration of her sponsored one-sided Sodere Meeting. Italy then committed itself to support that one-sided initiative, both diplomatically and financially. Such similar Italian support was not, however, forthcoming for the outcome of the Cairo Somali Meeting (Nov-Dec 1997) or The Arta Conference (Djibouti 2000) both which had better credentials and

better chances of success than that one-sided Sodere process. The first and second such Italian special envoys for Somalia after the Ethiopian sponsored Sodere orchestration, did not welcome the outcome of the Cairo Somali Meeting. They were without disguise supportive of the Ethiopian policy towards Somalia aimed at the balkanization of the Somali Republic. The second such Italian Envoy, Sciortini actually played a big role in aborting the outcome of the Cairo Somali Meeting mentioned above. However, the third Italian special envoy, Carlo Ungoro, was totally a different character. He was a sincere and shrewd diplomat of strong moral courage and supportive of fair play and proper reconciliation process of the Somali crises in which he was engaged for more than two years. He was, however, pre-maturely retired just at the eve of the closing stage of that process, presumably because of Ethiopian pressure. This assumption can hardly be expunged from the minds of many Somalis.

Unlike Italy, Portugal had severed diplomatic relations and all other ties with Indonesia for about two and a half decades over the latter's forcible annexation of East Timor, a former Portuguese dependent territory. Furthermore, Portuguese diplomacy had never relented during that long period of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. It mobilized international public opinion and finally succeeded in ending that occupation. By contrast, Italy, an industrialized country, a member of the so-called Group of Seven, Eight or Twenty and therefore much more resourceful than Portugal, with alacrity acquiesced both Ethiopia's repeated incursions into and occupation of Somali territories, as well as its continued violations of the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Somalia. All these even before the ongoing United States sanctioned Ethiopia's invasion and occupation of Somalia.

DJIBOUTI

The affinities, par excellence, between the Republic of Djibouti and the Somali people cannot be put on par with relations of the latter with some other neighboring countries, not the least of all Ethiopian. The majority of Djibouti's population is ethnic Somalis and Somali diplomacy had never been put to rest in one single day for seventeen years since the latter's accession to sovereignty in 1960 and until Djibouti also finally achieved its independence in 1977. However, the people of Djibouti might have paid back all those Somali efforts within a short time upon the disintegration of the Somali nation state in early 1991, which unleashed an influx of refugees and displaced people. Djibouti became a hospitable safe haven for those large numbers of displaced Somalis even though beyond

the capacity of Djibouti City that brought heavy pressure to bear upon the local citizenry of the host country. The Government, nevertheless, granted airport visas to all Somalis during the whole years of the absence of central authority in Somalia, which tremendously helped to ease the people's travel needs.

The Djibouti Government organized the first two Somali Reconciliation Conferences during May and July 1991 in an attempt to restore normalcy and central authority in Somalia. The final outcome of these conferences was aborted mainly by infighting within the Hawiye based United Somali Congress (USC). The USC, which had delivered the coup de grace against the former regime of Siad Barre, later split into two warring factions supporting Ali Mahdi or General Mohamed Farah Aideed respectively. However, the late Mohamed Ibrahim Egal who had co-chaired the above Djibouti conferences in a letter dated 20 August 1995 to the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (O.I.C) partly blamed former President Hassan Gouled for the failure of that outcome by not making any follow up of the implementation of the Conferences' resolutions. This was a far-fetched assumption, because that outcome was in any case bound to fail for a number of reasons. First, the convening of these meetings was just off the cuff without much prior preparations. Secondly, because of the intricacy of the Somali problems due to the seeds of hatred and divide and rule sown by the former regime for over two decades, there could have been no plain sailing for any sort of initiative at that particular time. And thirdly, as stated elsewhere in this work, the meeting of minds among various Somali key players was neither present nor ripe yet for a resolution of their country's problems. No additional efforts on the part of the Djibouti Government or the President himself could have therefore saved that process at that particular time. Nevertheless, Djibouti should have remained engaged in the Somali affairs ever since, instead of resigning into a position of laissez-faire and taking a back seat as it were. While Somali diplomacy for Djibouti's independence had never given way to fatigue despite being confronted with the intransigence of a formidable colonial power during those seventeen years, Djibouti diplomacy resigned at the failure of its first attempt only in a matter of days.

The failure of Djibouti's first major diplomatic initiative must have hurt the feeling and prestige of President Hassan Gouled. Thereafter, his senior officials would for a long time sneeze off at any mention of the Somali problems until the election of the second President of Djibouti much later. However, when Ethiopia's destabilization policy of Somalia had become manifestly clear, former President Hassan Gouled had belatedly

tried to help preserve Somali unity and territorial integrity. The timing of this attempt unfortunately, however, coincided with the former President's growing senility-cum ill health and he could achieve little. But he could have achieved some, even if not a full success, had he remained seized of the Somali situation since 1991 and never ceased his prior initiative, despite that initial failure and perhaps even possibly some more of would be subsequent set backs. Such a continuous engagement of Djibouti could have at least been a safety net for safeguarding and preserving Somali unity and thus warding off interference from other quarters like Ethiopia as has been the case ever since. Such a continuous engagement by Djibouti could have inevitably brought about an earlier resolution of the Somali crises.

Subsequent Development of the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Process:

The Horn of African Sub-Regional Organisation of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) had, even if with all good intentions, mismanaged an earlier OAU mandate (Yaounde Summit July 1996 resolution) collectively for the IGAD member States to promote a reconciliation process of the long dragging and intractable Somali problem. President Moi's initiative later in October of that same year was pursuant to that OAU Summit resolution. However, IGAD mistakenly and without circumspection, yielded to an Ethiopian manoeuvre by re-mandating her with that OAU decision. Ethiopia had already become a part of the problem in distributing arms to opposing Somali groups in violation of the UN Security Council arms embargo on Somalia and should not have been entrusted with such a responsibility. Nonetheless, Ethiopia styled itself as a mandated country for Somali affairs, despite the failure of its mission, because of its unaltruistic involvement the reconciliation process stagnated. A few other initiatives then emerged that offered to address the perennial Somali crises. The first of these initiatives came during early 1999 from the late Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, the then head of the secessionist entity in North Somalia. The offer was exclusively to reconcile opposing factions in the south of the country. Egal became a target of severe criticism from both north and south of the country, which were not unexpected. Northern critics demanded that Egal should first secure a prior recognition by the south of the north's self-declared separate statehood and independence before the southerners were invited to meet in the north. Those critics in the south, in their wake, demanded an end to the declared secession in the north before they could be invited to meet there as foreigners. Egal

remained in a state of inertia and his initiative seemed already dying a natural death when suddenly a new, third Djibouti initiative emerged on the center stage of the Somali scenario. Djibouti's new President, Ismail Omer Guelleh, a few months after taking office in 1999 made a dramatic speech in the General Assembly of the United Nations, that not only instilled interest and revived the long docile international arena vis-à-vis the situation in Somalia, but also made up for Djibouti's inactive diplomacy of that recent past. He proposed to host another Somali Conference for peace and reconciliation, Djibouti's Third. The President's proposal was hailed by the UN General Assembly. Although Ethiopia had not by then resigned its claim of a mandated role in the Somali reconciliation process despite its failures, because of its unaltruistic geopolitical involvement, the President of Djibouti knew that Ethiopia could not broker peace among the Somalis. He found it inevitable to seize the opportunity himself and save the situation. However, all IGAD members including Ethiopia supported the initiative of the Djibouti President, but Ethiopia could have had some other good reason for giving her reluctant support in order to, at first pre-empt another perceived initiative from Libya, which was also engaged by a quiet diplomacy in search of a solution of the Somali crises; and then Ethiopia would also campaign against the Djibouti initiative in due course.

Many faction leaders and allied politicians who had hitherto monopolized the Somali reconciliation process saw their role was being marginalized by the Djibouti proposal and thus felt threatened for the first time in a decade. They retaliated and strenuously opposed and campaigned against the President's initiative. However, the overwhelming majority of the Somali citizenry including the Diaspora positively hailed and welcomed the President's proposed package for peace and reconciliation in Somalia. This was especially so because of the President's ethnic Somali background, which earned him that much trust. Thereafter, Djibouti soon became a haven of Mecca where well over two thousand conferees assembled for over five months. The Djibouti Government appointed a Preparatory Committee chaired by its Foreign Minister that held a preliminary workshop during March 2000 to seek Somali expertise, unlike the unpreparedness of the previous Djibouti sponsored conferences. A number of traditional leaders, a few former politicians, businessmen and large number of cross-gender intellectuals were invited to that workshop, which determined the methodology of holding the Reconciliation Conference.

The Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference was officially opened by President Ismail Omar Guelleh on May 2, 2000 in the mountain summer resort village of Arta, 30 km west of the capital, Djibouti. In his opening address, the President of Djibouti over emphasized two preconditions: First the leading role of the Somali society; and secondly that his country was only hosting the peace conference and the decision making was left to the Somalis themselves. Thereafter, very unlike that of the subsequent IGAD sponsored Somali Reconciliation Conference held in Kenya, the ownership of the Arta Conference devolved to the Somali conferees. The Conference elected its own chairpersons sitting in a panel, composed of two co-chairmen, four vice-chairpersons including a woman, a secretariat and a drafting committee. The Conference further elected a Charter Drafting Committee of thirty experts and intellectuals including five women, which the author had the honour of chairing it.

The President personally and through his Preparatory Committee kept close monitoring of the orderly conduct of the conference. He always remained available to continuously receive representatives of all the delegations at the conference and gave his counseling for the way forward. He intervened whenever snags cropped up and diffused any logjam. There were a number of additional positive factors for the successful conclusion of the conference:

- The determination of the Somali conferees that they must not let that opportunity to pass. They were determined to reach a settlement of all controversial issues and formation of a government for the first time in more than ten years, even if at least for the symbolic value of a central authority.
- The Somali participants at the conference knew very well that they had little choice. They knew that the Somali scenario was so daunting that there could hardly be another similar gathering of representatives of all walks of life of the Somali society. They knew that there could hardly be other chances of hosting similar conferences without strings attached. Despite differences among the Somali groups themselves, no particular group wanted to be blamed for the least impatience and become the cause of any breakdown of the Peace Process. They also took stock of the President's hard choice in reaching the decision of his initiative.
- They were also touched by the sacrifices made by the people of Djibouti. The cost of maintaining the conference by the Djibouti Government and citizenry was monumental. They knew that the only

gratitude the people of Djibouti expected of their generosity from their Somali brethren was a resolution of the latter's own problems.

- And lastly another positive factor, which played a complimentary crucial role in sustaining the lives of the conferees, was the importance that the Djibouti Government attached to a proper management of the logistical arrangements in appointing a Special Committee chaired by the acting Prime Minister, independent of the Preparatory Committee. These arrangements included accommodation, catering, medical care, transport and a score of other side chores. The Chairman and his close aides who also included members of parliament and other senior officials were constantly on daily or sometimes even hourly inspection on all areas of their responsibility. The conference, throughout its duration saw the hot season in Djibouti with a temperature of 120° Fahrenheit. in the shade. Water was, therefore, not only the most important item, but also the most expensive. The role played by a young man called, "Hosh", who always promptly delivered water daily to all the guest-houses would never be forgotten.

During late August 2,000 the Djibouti sponsored Arta Conference for Peace and Reconciliation in Somalia successfully concluded all its deliberations and finally elected an interim President of Somalia. The President of Djibouti invited leaders of the countries in the region for the inauguration ceremony of the new Somali President. The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, was among the guests of honour. Zenawi was, however, uncomfortable with the successful outcome of that conference, because it did not guarantee Ethiopian hegemony over Somalia. This was obviously demonstrated by his body language at all the ceremonial functions for that occasion. Soon after Zenawi's return home, his government organized a meeting for the Somali armed factional warlords who had boycotted the Arta Conference after they had been denied the veto power they had hitherto monopolized and other individuals also opposed to the conference outcome. From that meeting held in Ethiopia emerged the so-called SRRC grouping of Somali warlords of Ethiopian protégés. Despite international recognition of the Transitional structures, the outcome of the Arta process also to be known by the acronym TNG, Ethiopia strived to nip those structures in the bud. Both the former OAU and the Horn of Africa sub-region Organization, IGAD, were all among the international organizations that recognized the TNG. In particular, the OAU Summit held in Lusaka, Zambia during July 2001 resolved and upheld the above structures as the basis on which to complete the Somali reconciliation process. Ethiopia was among the signatories of that

resolution, but never honoured it ever since. Its overt destabilization of Somalia never ceased.

It was hoped that once the Peace Conference agreed upon some structures for transitional arrangements, a wider international support would be forthcoming to guarantee the due process of implementing such structures against destabilization by those renegade factions. This was not to be. Only the UN System and other international organizations welcomed that outcome and the elected interim President was seated in the long time vacant Somali seat in the General Assembly and Somalia thus became re-admitted into the United Nations and participated in the Millennium Conference. However, the western countries collectively in solidarity with Ethiopia would not recognize the Somali Transitional Government (TNG) and led the international community to simply kick the ball rolling into the courtyard of a fragile and incipient TNG. And with new demands on the latter to reconcile with unreconciling, intransigent, recalcitrant factional warlords, most of who were aided and abetted by Ethiopia into an all out open rebellion against the transitional structures of that last conference held in Djibouti. The majority of those warlords were the creation of Ethiopia for that same purpose of destabilizing Somalia. The destiny of the Somali people was again heading back to square one. The international community just as usual was telling the Somalis to settle their problems, while at the same time watching, but doing nothing to stop Ethiopia's destabilization activities towards Somalia, which always pre-empted any Somali attempts of a settlement, the Cairo Accord before and then the Djibouti outcome. Ethiopia was always against any decision, even unanimously, taken by the Somalis for peace among themselves and it enjoys the acquiescence of both the UN Security Council and the western major powers for her continuous violation of the arms embargo on Somalia, an embargo that has become an Ethiopian monopoly of violations.

Although the outcome of the Arta Process, the transitional structures, did not endure to produce the desired results, by and large due to destabilization by Ethiopia, nonetheless, that process was a success in the long term of the socio-political spectrum in Somalia. President Ismail Omar Guelleh's initiative will be remembered for galvanizing the civil society. Significantly, that galvanization served the purpose of human resources development. The civil society have ever since become assertive and a socio-political-economic force to be reckoned with. They can no longer be ignored or easily sidelined and their frequent involvement in national issues is a *sine qua non*, despite derailment by the Ethiopian proxy invasion.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Since the withdrawal of the international intervention forces (UNOSOM II) from Somalia in the beginning of March 1995, the United States had demonstrated a low keyed or no interest towards Somalia. For more than a decade there was neither US interest nor presence in the subsequent over a dozen Somali reconciliation conferences. The US did not even attach much importance to the outcome of the last such conference sponsored in the name of IGAD that was held in Kenya during 2002-2004. From this emerged an Ethiopian maneuvered Somali Transitional structures, the so-called TFG, but cobbled together by western donors and endorsed by the United Nations.

In the meantime, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contracted a number of Somali warlords, especially in Mogadishu as watchdogs of alleged US suspected terrorists. Evidently, the US opposed the lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia that was repeatedly appealed for by the Ethiopian foisted TFG, lest its clients of CIA contracted warlords might be disarmed. When, however, the warlords were later defeated after all by an uprising of the Mogadishu citizenry under the leadership of the Union of Islamic Courts, the US neoconservative Bush administration, motivated by its anti-Islam policy, embraced the TFG whose appeals for lifting the arms embargo the U.S. had opposed for more than two years. And then also conspired with Ethiopia and sanctioned the latter's invasion of Somalia in order to abort the rule of law that was established by the Sharia justice. According to the Brussels based International Crisis Group (ICG)'s African Report No. 95 of July 11, 2005, p.2, Washington harboured deep reservations about Abdullahi Yusuf's ability to build consensus among the Somali actors and lead a continued reconciliation process. This was very true even later although the US never commented on that Report ever since, but nonetheless; Jendaye Frazer, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs then preached her optimism of Abdullahi Yusuf's leadership in hindsight.

Jendaye Frazer made a number of incorrect remarks, whether by ignorance or by design, in her address on Somalia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, on January 17, 2007. She blamed the Islamic Courts for among other things, of repeated

attempts to provoke Ethiopia into border conflicts. On the contrary, it was Ethiopia that had provoked and denounced the Islamic Courts as early as June 2006 and declared to the whole world that it would never accept Islamic rule in Somalia before the latter ever uttered a word about Ethiopia, good or bad. Jendaye Frazer further falsely accused the Islamic Courts of aborting the dialogue between them and the TFG while the opposite was true. The TFG never showed up for the second round of Khartoum talks and that eventually ended those talks. Jendaye's remarks were, therefore, euphemism for the concocted Ethiopian-United States conspiracy theory to create conditions for the US sanctioned Ethiopian invasion of Somalia.

Jendaye Frazer also blamed the Speaker of Somali parliament for making what she called unhelpful statement(s). What he had correctly said that might have irked her was that Somalia was under foreign occupation and its institutions were incompetent of any independent decision making. But that was the truth and the whole truth to the best knowledge of both Somalis and non-Somalis alike. The Ethiopian occupation forces took no orders from Somali officials. They conducted daily operations according to their whims. They kidnapped people from their homes and blackmailed them with accusations of Al-Qaeda connections in order to extort bribes. Those who yielded to the blackmail were often released. They looted whatever moveable properties they could lay their hands on and, especially cash of money in any currency, Mobile phones and personal computers. The last two items upon the pretext of checking them for terrorist connections, but they were never returned. Instead they ended up in black markets in Addis Ababa. The whereabouts of quite a number of people kidnapped from their homes at night including Oromo refugees are not known. Bullet ridden and tortured-charred bodies of some victims of such kidnapping found outside the camps of the Ethiopian forces were reported to Somalinet. Ethiopian commanders declined to be interviewed. These Ethiopian plunders provoked violent reactions from the local population and confrontations leading to lose of many human lives as reported elsewhere in this work. However, the US neoconservative administration could not have chosen a worse proxy than Meles Zenawi whose misrule has turned Ethiopia into a police state. The aftermath tragedy of the United States sanctioned invasion of Somalia by Ethiopian proxy forces more deeply unfolded. A number of internationally renowned professors, researchers and other scholars extensively addressed the crisis than I could have space to reproduce them all, in verbatim, but could not ignore them all either. Hence, the following more pertinent few extracts from some of them are significant:

CATASTROPHE IN SOMALIA –

By Mr. Richard Dowden, published by the Independent 25 January 2007:

"The Ethiopians are now trying to install the internationally accepted government. But anyone who has watched Somalia over the years will see how Ethiopia has undermined or destroyed every other attempt to establish a national government. A weak divided Somalia suits the Ethiopians if they cannot have a strong but Ethiopian controlled government. That is exactly what President Abdullahi Yusuf, an old ally of Ethiopia, represents. One of Somalia's nastiest warlords, he has made a pact with the country's age-old enemy ... And Ali Mohamed Geedi with strong Ethiopian links but with no credibility in Somalia ... Think Oswald Moseley being installed by the Germans as president of Britain in 1940 and you get close to the feeling Yusuf's government inspires in Somalia today."

ETHIOPIA'S INVASION OF SOMALIA

**By Prof. I.M. Lewis, London School of Economics,
Monday, April 16, 2007-05-12**

"Reports that the forces of 'transitional president' Abdillahi Yusuf and his Ethiopian allies have committed war crimes against civilians in the course of trying to subdue the citizens of Mogadishu is no surprise. Much more surprising, and morally satisfying, is the news that the European ministers and officials, who have so vociferously and uncritically supported Abdillahi in his bid to represent himself as Somali President, may also be implicated in these charges. Whatever the judicial position, the European Union is certainly morally guilty of doing its utmost to prop up the essentially otiose transitional federal government, whose only significant political action since its formation has been to get the Ethiopians to try to force their authority on Somalia.

"There is certainly no lack of ignorance within Somalia on how Abdillahi was appointed transitional president with massive Ethiopian support and how, with Ethiopian prompting, he chose as prime minister their candidate, a connection of Prime Minister Meles himself. These links to Addis Ababa underlie the Ethiopian invasion.

"The Americans, of course are equally ignorant of the really amazing achievements of the Islamists' brief months in power in southern Somalia, with their mostly humble and poorly educated local leaders, did more to restore order and social progress there than the US has done in Iraq in four years.

"Is this what the European Union wants? God knows what the Americans might want: the obscene results of their imperialist achievements in other parts of the Islamic world give little cause for optimism."

Also reported elsewhere in this work:

By Prof. Abdi Ismail Samatar

"In essence, the hallmark of America's bankrupt policy is the conspicuous gulf between its democratic rhetoric and its support for thugs, warlords, tyrants, and venal politicians in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. In the minds of most people in the region American foreign policy and practice has become synonymous with dictatorship and arrogance, and most people believe that those are the core values of the American government."

By Dr. Michael A. Weinstein

"...the Ethiopians and government forces met with determined resistance, leading to two waves of urban warfare that was the most intense that Somalia has experienced since the chaotic period in the early 1990s after the overthrow of the country's last central government. ... At least 400 and probably more than 1,000 people were killed in the violence, and more than 10,000 residents fled the city, bringing the number of refugees since February to 125,000; prices of food rose more than 50 percent; health services collapsed and businesses shuttered.

"... given the conditions on the ground ... only Uganda has been willing to deploy (forces), leaving Zenawi subject to Washington's pressure to stay, even though Addis Ababa would be satisfied with fragmented Somalia.

"..... Washington and Brussels experienced blowback in revelations that the former had acquiesced in Ethiopian purchases of North Korean weapons and had interrogated rendered terrorist suspects in secret Ethiopian prisons, and that the latter had been warned by its senior security adviser that the European Commission might be in violation of human rights laws by providing aid to Addis Ababa and the TFG, which had probably committed war crimes by bombarding residential neighborhoods in Mogadishu and attempting forced displacement of those neighborhoods' inhabitants."

MOGADISHU: Another Darfur in the Making?**By US Congressman Donald Payne****April 27, 2007**

"Innocent civilians in Mogadishu are being killed and maimed by Ethiopian security forces and the militia of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). The atrocities being committed against innocent civilians in Mogadishu are war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is shameful and criminal to use tanks and heavy artillery against civilians.

"Since the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, thousands of civilians have been killed and maimed and more than 320,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. The abuses that are being carried out by the TFG and the Ethiopian security forces are worse than during the dreadful days of the warlords. Instead of working towards peace and reconciliation, the TFG and the Ethiopian forces are engaged in collective punishment of innocent civilians."

SOMALIA: The Other (Hidden) War for Oil**By Carl Bloice****May 5, 2007-05-12**

"NONE (AL-QAEDA MEN) HAS BEEN CAUGHT, MANY INNOCENTS HAVE DIED IN AIR STRIKES AND ANTI-AMERICAN FEELING HAS DEEPENED

"The U.S. bombing of Somalia took place while the World Social Forum was underway in Kenya and three days before a large anti-war action in Washington, January 27. Nunu Kidane, network coordinator for Priority Africa Network (PAN) was present in Nairobi, and after returning home asked out loud how 'to explain the silence of the US peace movement on Somalia?' ... Amy Goodman's Democracy Now examined ABC's, NBC's and CBS's coverage of Somalia ... since the invasion. ABC and NBC had not mentioned the war at all. CBS mentioned the war once ... This, despite the fact that there have been more casualties in this war than in the recent fighting in Lebanon.

"THE CARNAGE AND SUFFERING IN SOMALIA MAY BE THE WORST IN MORE THAN A DECADE – BUT YOU'D HARDLY KNOW IT FROM YOUR NIGHTLY NEWS

"US political and military alliance with Ethiopia – which openly violated international law in its aggression towards Somalia, is destabilizing the Horn region"

That is the situation Jendaye Frazer myopically described as positive development. The United States neoconservative Bush administration preferred the status quo of insecurity and anarchy in Somalia that was created by its sanctioned Ethiopian invasion to any stability and peace under a Sharia rule. Anti-Islam was one of the convergences of interests between the Tigray led Ethiopia and the US neoconservative Bush administration. The United States sponsored UN Security Council resolution 1725 that was also rubber stamped by other members of the Council, was intended to end the Sharia justice that had fostered a secure environment in most parts of southern Somalia. Nonetheless, that resolution prohibited the deployment of forces from countries bordering Somalia. However, the United States neoconservative administration breached its own sponsored resolution even before the ink was dry by sanctioning Ethiopian proxy forces to invade Somalia.

The United States could not be even contented with the progress of its sanctioned invasion and joined the fray themselves. They carried out indiscriminate aerial bombardments, killing hundreds of innocent people, majority of them livestock herders. Independent sources including the Oxfam have confirmed seventy such deaths in one scene alone. US statements of only targeting Al-Qaeda hide outs in their air strikes in south Somalia is another absurdity of US fairy tales reminiscent of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. Hunting down such individual Al-Qaeda suspects from the air in a vast rural landscape was just like searching for a needle in a hay stake. However, the absurdity conforms well to the crude American way of conducting such operations. They may target the life of a single human being, legally or illegally, but pay little or no regard for the possibility of causing deaths of hundreds of innocent people in the same spot of their targeted operation. In Somalia's history, during the international intervention (UNOSOM II), on a faithful day on 17 July 1993 a general meeting of elders and others of the Haber Gidir (General Aideed's constituency) was taking place in Mogadishu. US war planes targeting Aideed's life bombarded the meeting place, with the fore knowledge that so many other innocent people would also be killed. Aideed was not there, but seventy-four men perished under the rubble with few wounded survivors.

The pattern of such indiscriminate American operation is always the same, be it in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia or elsewhere.

The neoconservative Bush administration's mantra of preventing Somalia from becoming terrorist strong hold is diversionary and totally baseless. This notion has already been unveiled by the non-finding since the invasion, of the three US designated Al-Qaeda foreign operatives that they insisted were being harboured in Mogadishu. Somalia is relatively a large country, but sparsely populated where all know almost everybody else in major towns including the capital city, Mogadishu, and in all other populated centres. It can, therefore, hardly be a choice for foreigner's hiding safe haven. Neither can Somalis themselves establish any sort of clandestine network, least of all terrorism without risking an instant discovery.

The US Ambassador in Nairobi, Michael Ranneberger, was quoted as over publicising what a good job the Ethiopians were doing in Somalia! Since they had not captured any of the so-called terrorists the Americans claimed were being harboured in Mogadishu that praised good job must only have been the great number of Somalis the Ethiopians had killed.

The above scenario again conforms to the well known and consistent pattern of anti-Islam policy of the United States neoconservatives led administration, but developed by Zionism, which is an integral part of American life. Some time in 1991, the then U.S. Secretary of Defence, Dick Cheney, was asked (sic) while he was visiting the Polish capital, Warsaw, in a BBC interview something to the effect as to whether continued existence of NATO was still necessary since Communism was no longer a threat, and especially since the Warsaw Pact military alliance had been dissolved? His reply according to BBC Arabic News was also something to the effect that there was an even greater threat from Islam that necessitated strengthening NATO further than to allow it to weaken much less to dissolve it. That Dick Cheney's anti-Islam thinking of more than a decade and a half ago still featured in policy objectives of the U.S. neoconservatives' Bush administration. That policy targets Islamic leaders in order of priority, in particular those who refuse to turn the other cheek, and Islamic countries and entities in general who also defy US diktat. The targets varied, be it the sanctioning, if not the instigation, of the execution of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Zulfkhar Ali Bhutto, for initiating Pakistan's nuclear development, the first Islamic leader to do so. He died

just for that whatever cover or pretext was later proffered by Pakistani generals of American agents.

The next target was Saddam Hussein; of course, whom Zionists feared had the determination to destroy Israel. This was confirmed by the assassinated former Israeli Prime Minister Rabin who admitted it to former US President Clinton (Clinton's book – *My Life*, p. 545). The American public were fooled and frightened with bags of lies of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, which never was. Saddam Hussein's death was a Zionist victory-justice by proxy, despite the Americans passing the buck to their Iraqi puppets. Saddam Hussein was always held in American custody up to the last moment he was taken to the gallows. The Americans therefore at best oversaw his death or at worst they killed him. Bush had already called for his death on the very day Saddam Hussein was captured and his execution was the implementation of that call. What authority did the so-called Iraqi government had over Saddam Hussein when American forces kept arresting and torturing foreign diplomats, Iranian and others, in Iraq of recent cases before going to press?

The United States had pressured the Palestinian Authority to hold what it called democratic elections with the only intention of eroding the authority of the former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. When elections were ultimately held, the United States opposed the outcome victory won by the Islamic Organization Hamaz. The latter has since been embargoed by the US and other western governments and is being pressured to unilaterally recognize Israel, which itself does not recognize Hamaz or even the Palestinians at all, but also continuously assassinates their leaders and other activists. The only way forward in fairness and justice, is for the two sides to negotiate terms of settlement of their myriad problems that may include reciprocal recognitions. But bullying the victim to unilaterally recognize his oppressor without any reciprocity is an American justice.

The Bush administration continues using Syria as scapegoat for its failures in Iraq long after Iraq and Syria had re-established their diplomatic relations and had even exchanged high level visits.

During the last Israeli invasion of Lebanon (July-August 2006) the United States and Britain opposed and frustrated international efforts for a cease-fire in order to give the Israeli offensive more time to achieve its objectives of that invasion, the elimination of the Lebanese Islamic Organization, Hezbollah, and the rescue of captured Israeli soldiers.

Israel's war was thus inhumanely allowed to continue for exact five consecutive weeks, but ended without the latter achieving either of the two objectives for its invasion. That war only served the purpose of destroying a great deal of Lebanon and killing thousands of innocent people as well as eroding the credibility of the Lebanese government, which the US government absurdly claimed to be supporting. The former lost ground to Hezbollah as the only defender of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity that strengthened its fortunes in the Lebanese political spectrum. The outcome of that war also deeply destabilized Israeli political institutions and the social fabric culminating into popular demonstrations calling for the resignation of the prime minister and others.

The United States sheds crocodile tears for the victims of Sudan's west Darfour, although that civil war is bad and unfortunate. Nevertheless, the US has no qualms about the Israeli's almost daily massacring of Palestinian non-combatant, innocent civilians. That was another American justice. If the neoconservative Bush administration was true to itself and really wanted to help the hapless people of west Sudan why did they insist on deployment of UN forces and not give the same resources to the African forces that were already on the ground and acceptable to the Government of Sudan?

Mr. Samuel P. Huntington commented in his book, *THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE REMAKING OF WORLD ORDER* that in the 15 years of 1980-95 the United States engaged against Muslims in 17 military operations and no such similar U.S. military operations were conducted against peoples of other civilizations.

And lastly, for the present time United States aggression, in collusion with Israel, is focused on the Islamic Republic of Iran. The US insists opposing Iran's nuclear development programme even for peaceful purposes. By contrast, the US has no qualms about Israel's possession of the nuclear bomb. This is another American justice. Ask any US official a question on this and he/she looks the other side, but gives no direct answer!

THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (LAS):

At the outbreak of the civil war and soon after the collapse of the Somali nation state the League appointed a seven member Special Committee on a permanent basis for Somalia. The committee, which became

to be known as the 'Committee of Seven' through out the period under review until the Ethiopian foisted so-called TFG emerged. And consisted of six members of the nine Afro-Arab member states, namely: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Sudan and the neighboring Yemen, but achieved little. The leaders and senior officials of three of the committee member countries: Egypt, Libya and Yemen took much deeper interest, both individually and jointly in trying to resolve the Somali problems. All Somali faction leaders were invited, some of them for several occasions, to the capitals of these three countries. The Secretary General also received most or all these Somali faction leaders at the League Headquarters in Cairo, again some of them for several occasions. Some League member states: Kuwait and Qatar once donated funds deposited with the League as advance contributions for financing an earlier anticipated Somali peace and reconciliation conference. Libya and Sudan maintained diplomatic missions in Mogadishu throughout the crises period.

Not unlike its sister Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States also committed itself to the preservation of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Somali Republic. Unlike the OAU, however, the League criticized and condemned Ethiopia's incursions into Somali territories. Also, unlike the OAU the Somali seat in the League was never kept vacant. It has been continuously occupied by the Somali permanent representative appointed by the last recognized Somali authority of the Siad Barre regime.

THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU):

The Somali seat in the then OAU was kept vacant since February 1993. Just prior to the opening of the 1997 OAU Annual Conferences in Harare, Zimbabwe, Ethiopian officials lobbied for the attendance of their sponsored one-sided Sodere Meeting group attend those conferences. However, The OAU Central Organ composed of the General Secretariat and the ambassadors of the member states in Addis Ababa ruled that since no particular entity was recognized by the OAU, all various Somali groups should be allowed to attend as observers on equal basis. The Secretary General then strictly instructed his staff for that ruling to be promptly brought to the notice of all the Somali groups concerned. I was in Nairobi when I received a call from the OAU Somali Desk Officer, a Ms. Coleman, whom I had met before. She defined the OAU ruling, not as an invitation, but an opportunity for all the Somali groups concerned. It was just few days before the opening session of the foreign ministers' meetings and From earlier experience, Zimbabwean

visas took much longer to process because they were not directly issued by the foreign office, but were processed through the ministry of home affairs. So, we were delayed for that opening, but it could have still been much worst had I not contacted Ms. Coleman in Harare and enlisted her assistance. Two of us from our side went to Harare, while three others came from the secessionist entity in the north and a large delegation of about 6-7 from the Ethiopian backed Sodere group. The latter group, unlike us, had no squeezes of financial constraints. Some of their group members were even accompanied by their wives and they were accommodated in the best hotels. They were funded from the generous donations that Ethiopia had received in the name of their sponsored one-sided Sodere Meeting (see Chapter Two under Ethiopia).

Arriving in Harare, we discovered that the majority of the African delegations including the host country had already taken over doses from the Ethiopian propaganda machine and were in favor of that one- sided process and the Sodere group.

In the absence of impartiality, we saw no point of making any statement to criticise either Ethiopia for her incursions into Somali territories or her Somali protégés, because that would mean going against the trend of the current of events and would only serve our alienation. Instead, we only took to see the OAU Secretary General, Dr. Salim and said to him quite frankly that the Sodere process was a futile exercise and would definitely fail despite that wide African support, and gave our reasons. The Secretary General might not have been so sure of our remarks at that time, but he must have since been, because the Sodere process was abandoned soon after. We only requested the Secretary General to do just one thing for which we were sure he would get the necessary consensus. That was a re-affirmation of the unity of the country. This he arranged instantly and it was the most important item of the resolution on Somalia by that conference and it was repeated ever since at all subsequent conferences during the remaining tenure of the OAU, and quote:

"(iv) REAFFIRMS the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia as one and indivisible State,"

As soon as we got our copies of the Draft Resolutions, we left Harare at the end of the foreign ministers' meetings, rather than wait for the African leaders' endorsement of the Ethiopian orchestrated Sodere process, which we were sure of its ultimate failure. Ethiopia later retaliated it's failure by aborting the subsequent Cairo Accord mentioned above.

Throughout the then ten years of the absence of a Somali sovereign state from the international fora, the former OAU held fast to keep the unity policy of the country preserved, despite many attempts to the contrary. This was not a small achievement on the part of the OAU for the interest of the Somali people. Unfortunately, however, neither the OAU nor its individual member states ever concern themselves with Ethiopia's incursions and occupation of Somali territories culminating the current invasion sanctioned by the United States.

At the outcome of the Arta Process, the last OAU Secretary General, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim twice wrote to all the member states if they had any objection (s) to the new Somali Transitional Government occupying the long vacant Somali seat in the OAU? When his first written communication was not answered, he wrote again and set a deadline time limit to receive any such objections. That was not answered either, not even by Ethiopia that was surely against the seating of Somalia. When the time limit passed, Dr. Salim then invited the new Somali government to resume their participation.

Chapter Three

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

The Somali crises must also be viewed within the context of an African perspective. The upheavals in Somalia have been contemporaneous with similar crises in many other African countries, some of them with equal or even much longer histories of instability. Among these are: The Sudan, Chat, Liberia, the Central African Republic, Angola, Algeria, the two Congos, Burundi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, the Comoros, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauritania, Uganda and Guinea. These are just, but the few more serious cases. Otherwise, the list could be much longer if all the troubled countries were considered, not to mention those with already simmering volcanoes, not the least of all the problems of the marginalization of the Oromo majority in the Ethiopian empire.

The Oromo people who number over forty per-cent of the entire Ethiopian population, themselves sons and daughters of Africa, have not only been the victims of black colonialism, but an African colonialism, whether fellow African brethren like it or not. The Abyssinian conquest of the Oromo people and their home lands, which ensued several centuries of resistance was finally completed during King, later Emperor, Menelik II's reign in the last third of the nineteenth century and up to the first decade of the twentieth century. They are still a colonized and subjugated people. Only upon the conquest of the Oromo and other Africans did the former Abyssinia Empire, solely composed of the Amhara and Tigray, renamed itself as the Ethiopian Empire in order to symbolically legitimize its black identity. This black colonialism thus succeeded in denying the Oromo people and other Africans the sympathies they deserve from other fellow Africans because of the high esteem the latter have for Ethiopia's unique history without a white man's domination. The Oromo people and other conquered Africans who still languish under black colonialism, have been sacrificed on the altar of that Ethiopian myth. A myth that has always served the ruling classes well at the expenses of the Ethiopian masses. By contrast, the former French settlers' claim of being Algerians was rejected out of hand, not only by the African peoples, but by the whole black race, which explains the role of Franz Fanon, a West Indian, and others in the Algerian liberation struggle. Similar claims of assimilation by the former Portuguese settlers in Mozambique and Angola, but without racial equalities, were equally failed. The frustration of the Oromo people, therefore, remains to be a simmering volcano, which only waits to explode sooner or later, with perhaps catastrophic consequences that might

not have been experienced yet in Africa. The following **bold** passages are extracts from the publications of a conference on Democracy and Peace in the Horn of Africa, but focused on the Oromo case which was held in Falkenberg, Germany, during August 25-29, 1997 as reproduced below that further highlights the plight of the Oromo people..

CONFERENCE ON DEMOCRACY AND PEACE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA - THE OROMO CASE

The Heinrich-Boll-Foundation (HBS), The German political foundation associated with BUNDIS 90/DIE GRUENEN (The German "Green Party") sponsored a conference on Democracy and Peace in the Horn of Africa – the Oromo case. This conference took place at the Lutherstift in Falkenberg from August 25 to 29, 1997. The leadership of Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), senior members of the OLF, representatives of Oromo civic and mass Organisations from the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, the United States, Canada and several countries from Europe actively participated in it.

The participants discussed the current political, social and economic issues in the Horn of Africa; human rights and the role of the judiciary; problems of development; prospects for a peaceful resolution of the Oromo Question and its right to self-determination and evaluated the political process in Ethiopia.

The following is a summary of observations made by the conference:

Analysis of the Current Political and Social issues in the Horn of Africa:

The Horn of Africa is characterized by instability caused by internal as well as inter-state conflicts. A combination of resistance to dictatorship and attempts to impose ethnic and other forms of dominance on subject populations by dictatorial regimes is at the root of the internal conflicts. The inter-state conflicts are partly a spillover effect of internal conflicts and the attempts by outside powers to impose their will on the region.

These conflicts have caused immense human suffering and economic conditions for the vast majority of the populations have deteriorated, infrastructure, health, education and social services have collapsed, forced movements of populations are widespread, and there are thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons in the region. Moreover, famine and starvation are still common.

Somalia is a grim reminder to the rest of Africa and the world of the social, political, economic and human costs of dictatorship. Unfortunately, most governments of the region have charted the same road that has led

Somalia to total collapse.

Ethiopia has been a conflict-ridden country. It has been fused and kept together by the sheer force of arms, and several historic opportunities to recast itself and to create meaningful participatory and accountable forms of rule have been missed. Ethiopia also is beset with conflict and instability within its own borders. It has openly violated the territories of the neighboring countries several times including those of Somalia, the Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti.

Evaluation of the Political Process and Human Rights Issues in Ethiopia:

The empire state of Ethiopia was built by the Abyssinian kingdom through a brutal conquest of the Oromo and other peoples at the end of the last century. Since then, the Oromo people have been waging struggles against the untold repression and human suffering imposed on it. Their struggle, coupled with those of similarly subjugated peoples, brought down not only the Haile Selassie regime, but also that of the brutal Military Dictatorship of Mengistu Haile- Mariam.

Sadly, the same mechanism of repression and ethnic domination are being continued under the current Tigray-led EPRDF. In spite of the professed full commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its promises to the international community to respect basic rights, the TPLF/EPRDF has reverted to all the vicious machinations of repression of the preceding regimes. Intimidation, unwarranted arrest, detention and extra-judicial killings have become practices of the regime. Since the TPLF/EPRDF came to power, thousands of Oromos lost their lives through mass detention, torture and deliberate denial of medical attention.

The systematic operation of mass detention is still going on, and Oromos of all walks of life are being hunted down and liquidated, made to disappear or are still languishing in various prisons and detention centers in thousands. Even according to own admission of the government, the regular prisons in Oromia are now incapable of accommodating the huge number of political detainees. As a result, schools, public institutions, military camps and even private homes of prominent TPLF members, that are inaccessible to human right observers, have become places of detention of Oromo political prisoners.

The fact that the regime is emboldened enough to perpetrate such arbitrary killings even in the streets of the capital is very alarming. It is deeply disturbing that the international community, particularly the Western countries that support the regime economically and diplomatically, have raised no voice when such crimes as the murders of Ebbisa Addunya, Tanna Wayyessa, Assefa Maru and Waqo Tola were committed just outside the American embassy in Addis Ababa. One can easily guess how many such crimes are committed in the countryside and in hidden prisons every day.

There are various factors that explain the EPRDF regime's persistent violation of democratic procedures. Economic interests, political culture and external support are the most important ones.

Beginning with the conquest and occupation of Oromia in the 1880, controlling the economic and human resources of the Oromo and other peoples has been the main incentive of the rulers of Ethiopia. Originating from a region suffering from chronic food shortage and lack of natural resources, the leaders of the EPRDF are even more motivated to control the resources of Oromia. In practice, they are plundering Oromo national resources and private properties to enrich themselves and to develop their home region of Tigray.

What is eminent and, therefore, is clear to anticipate given the present political scenario, is the escalation of conflict between the Ethiopian State and the Oromo people, whose quest for freedom and democracy is growing with an unprecedented momentum. Democracy is part and parcel of the Oromo cultural and political tradition – the Gada system. In the Oromo Gada tradition, political authority emanated from the people and delegated to democratically elected officials. Those who fail to carry their duties and responsibilities are removed from office by the people themselves.

Although the Gada tradition was suppressed for over a century under colonial rule, the struggle of the Oromo people for peace, development and self-determination has reactivated the democratic ethos of the Oromo society and has rendered the dictatorial rule of the EPRDF intolerable. Therefore the conflict between the Oromo and the TPLF/EPRDF regime can also be seen as a conflict between political cultures representing democratic traditions on one hand, and authoritarian values and practices on the other.

In spite of the fact that pro-democracy and human rights Organisations have voiced strong criticism against its human rights abuses, Western governments and international Organisations have given the EPRDF

generous economic and political support. The attitude of Western governments towards the EPRDF has given its leaders a wrong signal to continue with human rights abuses and their authoritarian practices.

In short, it can be said that the actions and conduct of the EPRDF has derailed the democratization process in Ethiopia and that peaceful resolution of conflicts seems unlikely.

Law and Order and the Judiciary in Ethiopia:

The supremacy of the law is crucial to a genuine democratic process, in which the concerned people ought to have an input directly or through their democratically elected representatives. A major feature of a democratic constitution would be the establishment of the separation of power between the different branches of government such the judiciary, legislature and the executive, and institution of the necessary checks and balances to ward off excesses by any one of these centers of power.

The present constitution of Ethiopia was drawn by the TPLF/EPRDF party that undermined the democratic process set in motion in July 1991 with deliberate exclusion of the majority political opinion and population groups. In an empire state composed of various population groups with diverse backgrounds and aspirations, the making of a single party constitution is a direct opposite of setting a democratic process in motion.

The TPLF/EPRDF party dominates the houses of parliament through manipulation of the electoral processes. According to TPLF/EPRDF constitution, a chamber of the two houses of parliament is invested with the authority to decide on constitutional issues, which complicate and confuse the administration of justice. Although surrogate groups are assigned to run administration and the courts in the national states or so called regions, TPLF/EPRDF military commanders rule supreme, exercising real and arbitrary power. Hence, it is clear that there is no effective law to protect collective and/or individual rights.

Problems of Development and the Environment:

The problems of development and environment are connected to the political instability in the Horn of Africa, particularly in the empire state of Ethiopia. As a colony, Oromia has not been able to control and manage the proper use of its mineral, forest, and water resources. Consequently, forests

in Oromia have been cut down for timber and private and government owned corporations have been allowed free access to the exploitation of mineral and forest resources without any regard to the damage to the eco-system caused by mining or the requirement that they internalize the cost of their pollution. People in the northern part of Ethiopia are also resettled in Oromia by clearing the rain forests and other natural vegetation. The lack of consideration of the carrying capacity of land in the resettlement areas for human and livestock use has also contributed to enormous environment damage in Oromia. The result has been serious soil erosion, desertification, and insect infestation of crops reduced agricultural output and stunted economic growth. By shifting resources from Oromia and elsewhere for the exclusive development of its own regions, the present regime in Ethiopia has also greatly contributed to the intensification of environmental degradation in Oromia.

For economic development to be sustainable, it is imperative to establish a mechanism for environmental protection in Oromia. Such a measure may include the intervention of international Organisations as the UN and NGO's in stopping the deliberate destruction of rain forests by the TPLF/EPRDF led government in Ethiopia. In the absence of accountable environment-friendly democratic government, proactive land reclamation and reforestation programs cannot be implemented for achieving economic growth.

Prospects of Peaceful Resolution of the Oromo Question: - the right to Self-Determination:

As stated previously, the modern Ethiopian State was created by force and conquest in the late nineteenth century. Since then, the Oromo people have continued their struggle for self-determination.

The following are some of the dates of conquests of Oromo territories and others:

<i>Kaifa and Jimma</i>	<i>1881</i>
<i>Arusi</i>	<i>1882</i>
<i>Wallaga 1882-5</i>	<i>1882-5</i>
<i>Illubaabuu & Harar</i>	<i>1887</i>
<i>Gurage</i>	<i>1889</i>
<i>Bale and Sidamo</i>	<i>1891</i>
<i>Gofa and Wallamo</i>	<i>1894</i>
<i>Borana</i>	<i>1897</i>
<i>Boni Shagul taken from Sudan</i>	<i>1898</i>

None of the successive Abyssinian rulers tried to solve this conflict peacefully. Instead, the Oromo people are subjected to cultural genocide and all signs of resistance were met with violence and repression. Having failed to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the OLF has engaged in an armed struggle as a last resort.

The oppressive Dergue regime was brought down through co-ordinated effort of various liberation fronts including OLF. This led to the formation of the transitional government (TGE) in 1991 in which the OLF took part. However, this peaceful attempt to find solution for the Oromo question was also violently suppressed resulting in the withdrawal of the OLF from TGE. Once again, the rule of gun over took the rule of the law.

Still the OLF never gave up hope for a peaceful resolution to the Oromo question but continued to participate in various peace talks. The source of the conflict has been the lack of genuine commitment on the part of the present regime to engage in finding a lasting solution to the conflict. This has naturally caused the Oromo people to be very apprehensive about any future talks with the TPLF/EPRDF regime.

It is possible that the settlement of disputed matters shall pave the way for the people to exercise its right to self-determination as established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Despite the obstacles and the Oromo people's distrust of the present TPLF/EPRDF regime, the spirit of the conference is that the OLF keeps the door to a peaceful resolution of the conflict open.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

Having thoroughly analysed the grim realities in the Horn of Africa in general, and in Ethiopia in particular, the Conference made a number of observations and forwards the following recommendations:

- 1. It recommends a vigorous pursuit of peaceful resolution of political conflicts in Ethiopia. The conference believes that a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Ethiopia and a just and democratic future, serves the interests of the Oromo people and indeed all peoples of the region.*
- 2. Having realized that the Oromo have the capacity to play a*

democratizing as well as a stabilizing role in the region, the Conference recommends that the OLF leadership also works with all other democratic forces to establish a broad democratic forum among all forces and peoples in the region to achieve freedom, lasting peace, justice and democracy.

3. It recommends that the traditional Oromo methods of conflict resolution be utilized in the quest for peace and grass roots democracy.
4. It demands that the TPLF/EPRDF regime ends its repressive actions immediately, release all Oromo and other political prisoners, and respect fundamental rights.
5. It asks all Western governments and international Organisations, particularly the government of the US, the European Union, the UN, the World Bank, and the OAU to support the Oromo and other peoples' legitimate quest for freedom, peace, democracy and development.
6. The conference calls upon the international community, particularly the UN, to establish mechanism for monitoring the human rights situation in Oromia. It also demands those responsible for extra-judicial killings be brought to justice.
7. It considers that it is imperative to establish mechanisms for environmental protection in Oromia and elsewhere in the region, and calls the intervention of international Organisations and NGOs to stop the rapid environmental degradation.
8. Having analysed the economic hardships, starvation and forced movements of people in and out of Oromia, the Conference demands that the Oromo Relief Association be re-instituted and be operational to meet the desperate needs of the victims of famine and forced displacement. In this regard, the Conference appeals to the international community to continue to put pressure on the Ethiopian regime.

In conclusion, the Conference brought to light several issues of great significance for the peaceful resolution of conflict between the Oromo and the Ethiopian regime. It has contributed greatly in enchanting our positions to

make the right choices and decisions regarding the solution of political problems facing our nation. Hence, all those who have made this conference possible deserve many thanks and gratitude. It is hoped that this conference is the beginning in the process of establishing a forum to exchange experiences, information and ideas for widening our views on concepts and methods for a peaceful conflict resolution."

The overall situation in Ethiopia has never changed for the better, but has worsened since the present regime came to power. Many of the other African crises mentioned above are also still ongoing at the time of going to press, while others have been addressed but most of them only palliatively and far from being permanently resolved. However, only in Somalia and some extent in Liberia did central authority actually collapse. A third likely case would have been that of Sierra Leone, but fortunately its elected Government was quickly restored, thanks to Nigerian led West African forces. The Somali case is eccentrically unique. While the dilemma of most of the other African countries might have primarily arisen from lack of homogeneity, even the claim of that value, as recorded elsewhere in this work, failed to be a viable safety net against the disintegration of the Somali nation state.

The denominator for these crises in Africa is by and large colonial legacy, although this is neither acknowledged by the former colonial powers nor starkly complained about by the majority of the African states concerned. It is, however, a historical reality rather than an exaggeration that arbitrarily drawn colonial boundaries in Africa either separated kith and kin from one another or lumped together in many of those countries peoples who had been alien to one another. They were peoples with different ways of life, different backgrounds, different languages and different religious beliefs. In nutshell, they were people without any common civilizations. Separation of a kith and kin from each other retarded harmonious human development and progress. Lumping together people alien to each other often led to friction and permanent conflicts. These colonial legacies were and continue to be the root causes of the current unrest and instability in many parts of this continent. These have become, especially so conspicuous since the attainment of national independences in most African countries, because one of the adversaries became the dominant power in each country. Both power and resources became concentrated in the hands of the dominant groups since their independence. And these dominant groups may not always be the majority of the concerned country's population either. Under such circumstances, resources conflicts often led to perpetual instabilities.

In the case of Somalia in particular, the Somali people were a single nation throughout their early history without any central authority before their division by colonial powers. They nevertheless always interacted and governed among themselves in their own way of polity which must have been the case of many other African nations. Even after independence, though two homogeneous societies of the ex-British administered north and the ex-Italian administered south reunited, still the effect of colonial legacy had its toll. The new Somali State inherited two very dissimilar systems of both administrative and legal nature. There was at the same time a great deal of language, English and Italian barriers, since the common national language had yet not been written those days. And although most of the Somali leaders and administrators in the south were bi-lingual in those two foreign languages, thanks to ten years of earlier British administration in the south too (after the Second World War when Britain occupied southern Somalia), it was just the opposite for their counterparts from the north, vis-à-vis the Italian language. The proportion of literacy in English was horizontally greater in the south than in the north even at the time of the reunion in 1960. Three factors accounted for this:

1. Mass adult literacy educational programmes in all the urban centres throughout the south during the ten years of British Military Administration (BMA). This was a British policy to replace former Italian Fascist policy denying education to black people. No such special efforts had ever been made in the ex-British north.
2. Establishment of Christian Missionaries during the BMA. First became established was the Sudan Interior Mission which despite some anticipated religious proselytizing, nevertheless, taught a good number of adult classes of English in Mogadishu on payment of fees. Then later also came the American Mennonite Mission which not only taught adult classes, but also opened regular full time private schools for school age children and young people up to the high school level, not only in Mogadishu, but also in a number of other centres. They were the best schools in the whole country and only existed in the south even after independence. Again, anything similar to these facilities had never existed in the north. After independence many people sent their children from the north to the Mennonite schools. I myself had a nephew who was schooled there.
3. And the south's numerical population strength in the ratio of three to one and with more urban centres would in any case produce more literate people even in English than in the north.

However, the combined differences in the above three areas of administration, legal and languages had later have some serious cultural repercussions. Despite the south's proportional advantage of literacy even in English, many southerners still envied the edge in favour of the few northern elites in advanced English. And this was perhaps not without some excuse. The southerners had felt that the worldly language, English, had undeniably offered a wider scope and benefits than the Italian language, which was their regular media of instructions and that was only spoken in Somalia outside Italy. The continuation of learning that language was the proper vehicle in preserving the Italian culture in Somalia. Italian educational institutions insisted that Somali students to Italian schools should know that language well before their acceptance while their colleague students from other African countries could study in English in special Italian schools. In hindsight, these cultural ties were mutually beneficial. After writing the Somali script, the only surviving positive legacy of the military regime, only Italy accepted to assist in the establishment of the Somali National University, without which it could have hardly taken off the ground, at least not for most faculties. Nonetheless, during 1970, hey days of the Siad Barre regime, some southern intellectuals claimed, or boasted rather, that the coup d'état which had brought Siad Barre to power was itself a cultural revenge against the north whereby writing of the Somali script equalized the education of all groups. This could have only been in hindsight on the part of those individual intellectuals who had advised Siad Barre rather than the real original motive as far as the coup makers were concerned. In any case, the claim might not have been without some substance as an after the fact development and could not be dismissed for a number of reasons. The relationship which had existed between secondary schools in the north and the University of London even since after independence was terminated by the military regime. Graduates from these high schools had after independence continued to receive their General Certificates of Education (GCE) from that university as a measure of maintaining the original standard of education with no cost to the Somali government. All the boarding schools in the north were closed down by the military regime upon the excuse of cutting costs, but similar schools were later built and opened in the south where such schools had never existed before. Today, the balance in education, both qualitatively and quantitatively disproportionately tilts in favor of the south, mainly because of the population ratio. Contributory factors leading to the imbalance include discriminations meted out to the north during the twenty-one year military misrule count among the secessionist arguments. In spite of this and other anomalies, secession would never be the right solution, even from the northern Somali people's interest point of view. It would only serve the interests of the common

enemy of the Somali people of both north and south. For this and other equally important reasons I have always been a staunch opponent of that secession. The claim that some parts of the north fared better in peace and security while their counterparts in the south were in turmoil is only an ephemeral argument, but of little substance for a durable perpetually and the opposite may happen anytime.

In overall, the newly born African nation state spawned multiple problems in the process of human development. An influx of a drift towards urban areas by the rural youth has become a trend. This increased urbanization calls for new demands for employment, housing and additional infrastructures, as well as other simultaneous demands for increased social services: more schools and more hospitals which in turn call for more trained teachers, doctors and paramedics. These and many other similar demands caused to stretch the resources of the country concerned, in the absence of parallel economic growth to offset the increased expenditure, in the majority of cases. The gap between the resources available for the new nation state's budget and new demands continued to widen over the years. This in its wake led to stagnation of government programs and frustration of a populace in demand of better standards of living conditions similar to those in the developed countries. People pay little attention as to how long it had taken the developed nations to attain their present level of development. These contradictions lead to new problems, not the least of all security problems. The nation state, unable to address the new problems for lack of resources, may resort to crack down and repression, which only erodes the social fabric.

The fact that the African nation state is beset with chronic problems since its birth does not necessarily mean that the African peoples were better off under colonial rule. Far from that they were even then worse off, but realistically they were less demanding than they have become since the birth of their own nation state.

Nevertheless, the continents' realities should not be measured up only against the backdrops of its negative aspects and those chronic problems. Such an attitude would be misleading and would be a disservice to African peoples' sacrifices for their freedom. Looking back to the last over half a century during which over fifty African nations had fought to their freedom, there is little reason for despair despite the lack of parallel economic progress. Every single African nation shed some blood for its own freedom, but some had shed much more blood in human cost than others. Again, some nations' struggle for their freedom was of a perennial duration and therefore much

longer than others. To just mention some, but a few of the latter two types of cases, no doubt the longest and bitterest struggle for freedom was that continuous ordeal for nearly over a century long which was waged by the heroic people of South Africa. And the heaviest in human losses was no doubt that of the Algerians, followed by those of the Mau Mau in Kenya, Zimbabweans, Mozambiqueans, Angolans, Guinean-Bissaus and Namibians (see below). Many African people including the author had never, at times, expected to see a free South Africa in their lifetime. My personal despair was because of what I had been reading and listening from the world's media about the then abhorrent situation in South Africa during the apartheid era. Fortunately, I was freed from that despair by an unforgettable event in 1967, which ever since inspired my optimism of the South African people's future until their final victory. Former President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, that great son of Africa, paid an official visit to Somalia at a time he was mediating between Kenya and Somalia. His itinerary included an overnight, twenty-four hours stay in Hargeisa, the provincial capital of the north, where I was the regional police chief. The president was accompanied by his Somali counterpart and host Dr. Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, their two wives and a large entourage of the officials of the two countries. In the evening there was a folklore dance held in the armed forces Officers' Club in honor of the guest of honor, the visiting President of Zambia. At the end of the occasion, President Kaunda made a short speech in which he paid tribute to the Somali artists for their entertaining performance. He added *inter alia*, "when Africa is totally free from Cape to Cairo, one of its greatest achievements will be in the field of cultural heritage." I would never forget that inspiring short speech and President Kaunda's optimism in an eventual African total freedom. I did not ever write down those remarks from the President's speech before now, but they remained recorded in my memory ever since. Thereafter, I always dreamed a lot of seeing a free South Africa in my lifetime, and thank God, I did, although I am still to see the Cape itself. The nearest I got to it was by Durban and Johannesburg.

While I was on an intelligence course in the United States in 1965, the topic of instruction was always the spread of communism in Africa and one day my American instructor just said, "Fortunately those countries like Mozambique, Angola and other Portuguese colonies will not be independent for the next ten years." By that he meant communism was barred by the nature of colonialism, which was true. He made no mention of South Africa. I got so annoyed by describing his anticipation of the non-independence of those African countries as 'fortunate'. He apologized to my annoyance. But it is amazing that those countries only achieved their independence in 1975,

exactly ten years later even though that resulted from the military coup d'état in Portugal itself.

However, one of the earliest African struggles known to the continents' history had been the late nineteenth century Mahdi's rebellion in the Sudan. In 1873 a British General, Charles George Gordon, was appointed Governor of what was then called, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The Mahdist Revolt begun in 1880 and resulted in the capture of Khartoum in 1885, with a complete victory. British reinforcements, desperately requested by General Gordon arrived too late. Gordon was already dead and the Mahdists were in complete control. The revolt was overwhelmed few years later and put down by large British expeditionary forces. One of Sudan's main political parties is led by the Mahdi's grandson, Saddiq Al-Mahdi, who twice became the Prime Minister of that country.

There was also the contemporary rebellion in late nineteenth century of more than two decades long up to 1920s led by Mohamed Abdilleh Hassan in Somalia. There was also a Biya-Maal community led rebellion in southern Somalia in 1908 onwards apart from other subsequent uprisings in the country north and south during its colonial history. Fifty-one Italians were killed in Mogadishu in one day during January 1948 coinciding with a visit by a four power commission (Britain, France, USA and USSR) ascertaining the wishes of peoples of the former Italian colonies. The incident was provoked by pro-Italian groups who disturbed a pro-independence rally.

Then there was that fierce rebellion from 1911 onwards in Libya led by the celebrated hero Omar El-Mukhtar. He was later captured and executed by the Italian Fascists.

There also followed, among many others, by the memorably more than a decade long saga of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya during 1950-60s. This rebellion was ignited by white settler's grabbing Kikuyu land and the cruelty meted out to the people who were robbed of their land. Kenya, not unlike the so-called Southern Rhodesia, the present Zimbabwe, was a country that white settlers had never dreamed of ever leaving.

Contemporaneous with that last mentioned Mau Mau rebellion was the Algerian revolution, which accounted for the greatest number of sacrificers who died for their freedom.

And finally, the very wide dimensional struggles by the African peoples of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, other former

Portuguese colonies and last, but not the least Namibia, all of which were rightfully inspired by the preceding achievements of freedom throughout the continent. The Ghanaian independence in 1957 had inspired many subsequent struggles for freedom. However, there were no doubt many other earlier struggles in other African countries included those of both Morocco and Tunisia, but since I do not have the precise historical data I apologize for my inability to complete the list of African people's heroic struggles. However, the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 and the Ghanaian independence in 1957 and the seven year long bloody struggle of the Algerian liberation were all great special stimuli and a beckon of freedom throughout the continent.

Upon the birth of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 its founding fathers not only endorsed the validity of those boundaries inherited from the former colonial powers, but even declared them sacrosanct, despite the following prior Resolutions unanimously adopted by All African Peoples' Conferences in 1958 and 1960, which abhorred those colonial boundaries:

First All African Peoples' Conference, Accra, 5-13 December 1958,

Resolution on Frontiers, Boundaries and Federation:

- Whereas artificial barriers and frontiers drawn by imperialists to divide African people operate to the detriment of Africans and should be abolished or adjusted.
- Whereas frontiers which cut down across ethnic groups are unnatural and are not conducive to peace and stability.
- Whereas leaders of neighboring countries should co-operate towards a permanent solution to such problems which accords the best interests of the people affected and enhances the prospects of realization of the ideal of a Pan-African Commonwealth of Free States.
- Whereas the 20 February 1959 will be an important date in the history of the Cameroons, when a special session of the United Nation's General

Assembly will discuss the question of unification and independence of the territory.

- Be it resolved and it is hereby resolved by the All African Peoples' Conference that the conference:
 - (a) Denounces artificial frontiers drawn by imperialist powers to divide the peoples of Africa, particularly those which cut out across ethnic groups and divide people of the same stock;
 - (b) Calls for the abolition or adjustment of such frontiers at an early date to this problem founded upon the true wishes of the people;
 - (c) Calls upon the independent states of Africa to support a permanent

solution:

- (d) Notes with satisfaction that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly will discuss the question of unification and independence of all the Cameroons on 20 February 1959;
- (e) Invites All African Peoples' to observe that as Cameroons Day.

Second All African Peoples' Conference, Tunis 25-30 January 1960,

Resolution on Somaliland:

The Conference, after a careful survey of the situation in Somaliland artificially divided:

- (a) Denounces the colonial repression, which is dealt with in this country;
- (b) Hails and supports the struggle of the people of Somaliland for independence and unity in order to give birth to a bigger Somaliland;
- (c) Requests the immediate liberation of detained patriots.

Succeeding African generations would perhaps forgive their former leaders for opting for that course of action vis-à-vis the retention of those arbitrarily drawn colonial boundaries so much abhorred by the overwhelming majority of the African peoples. Those former leaders had felt that to do otherwise would only open a Pandora box scenario. They, therefore, must have decided to just keep the lid on its boiling pot of that status quo. It was exactly the same reason that the former OAU during its tenure would neither accept a division of Somalia during the latter's first ten troubled years nor recognize the secessionist entity in the north renaming itself 'Somaliland'. Revising those boundaries even today would be counter productive, because every African state would spawn a multiple of mini-states, many of them may be neither self-supporting nor in any case viable. And worse still, the continuation of the status quo is conflict prone and only promises instability and disharmony for at least a half of the African states. The conundrum, therefore, is where does a solution lie then? There is no easy answer, but one practical best solution may lie in the salvation of the philosophy of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, former architect of Ghanaian independence and its first Prime Minister and first President later; and also a leading founding member of the OAU. The following is quoted by former OAU Secretary-General, Adem Kojo, in his inspiring book, "Africa Tomorrow", page 22:

"It is essential that we be bred in our own culture and our own history, if we want to create that African personality that must be the intellectual basis for our Pan-African future". Kwame Nkrumah.

President Nkrumah's vision was the ultimate attainment of a single united continental government of Africa. Unfortunately, however, the timing of

his philosophical program was coincidental with the Cold War era when most African leaders were pawns of superpower spheres of influence, while others felt jealous of preserving their own individual small domains. Consequently, not many of Dr. Nkrumah's contemporaries of African leaders endorsed his noble program. However, many Ghanians did not share Dr. Nkrumah's continental objectives either. They would say, "Hell with Africa at large" and that he should have concentrated on Ghana's national economic development. He could certainly do that, but it is worth remembering that developed Ghana alone would only become invaded by swarms of African economic refugees and would perhaps never be better off. A Somali proverb says "The rich in a poor society is the poorest, while the poor among the rich is the richest on earth". The best developed country in our continent is South Africa. That country has since long time been a target of economic migrants of both black and white, even during the apartheid rule. And since the coming into being of the black power, the African economic refugees have more than doubled. And there is the danger, not unlike the recent crises faced with the Ivory Coast and Libya, the same situation in South Africa may also lead to similar conflicts between the local people and the migrant population. Such problems can only be surmountable by the attainment of an African Union government. A continental union government would foster conditions for creativity of growth by the attainment of open and wider intra-markets, fraternity and social harmony among Africans. It would increase the overall horizon of the African human thinking and aspirations, transcending the conflict prone narrowly confined groups of clan based communities.

Nkrumah might have been a man who had lived before his time and unfortunately he had been in power hardly for a decade during which the over-whelming majority of the African countries were still under colonial yoke that consumed a great deal of his attention and Ghanaian resources. Nor did he live much longer to enable him to cultivate some concrete intellectual base for the pursuit of his philosophy by succeeding African generations that could outlive him after his death. His passing away was both premature and an African tragedy.

The Libyan leader Moammar Al-Qaddafi later discovered Dr. Nkrumah's vision and emphatically expressed similar manifestations for uniting Africa and many African leaders of younger generations who also took stock of Dr. Nkrumah's philosophy, not only keenly welcomed Qaddafi's call, but the majority of them endorsed the concept of an African union. A Union was proclaimed since Qaddafi's call, much sooner than expected although still far short of Dr. Nkrumah's cherished goal of a continental government.

However, the African unity program should not be limited to the mere consensus among the African leaders themselves. If that were the case, it only becomes a club for such leaders, without a commitment by the African peoples in general. Under such circumstances, the union becomes doomed to failure and that will be an African disaster. Instead, it should involve as wide a range and spectrum of the African peoples as possible in the form of categorized organizations. They should include all political groupings or parties of all ideological shades not the least those in opposition to current African governments and such others, as well as intellectuals: universities,¹ women's associations, lawyers, writers, researchers, poets, journalists, sports associations, etc.

The former OAU was itself born out of the consensus of the African leaders, but under different conditions and compelling circumstances, which suited the timing of that Organisation's founding. Although all African peoples hailed that Organisation's birth, and still approved its existence to its last day, nonetheless, the fact that its birth was not influenced by the African peoples had its toll on the effectiveness of that Organisation, notwithstanding the achievement of its main objective of the total decolonization of the continent from white colonialism. The Organisation's day to day programs had by a large been ever since shadowed by the usual annual ceremonies and their rituals of the African leaders' gathering, more often than not, without much tangible result and without the competence of ever addressing the continent's internal problems. African dictators killed people in their thousands with impunity under the cover of the ill-fated concept of non-interference in the internal affairs of the individual country concerned. Nevertheless, the OAU as an Organisation since its inception, forty years earlier, had survived the reflections of those perennial African dilemmas because of the existence of two main external factors: colonialism and the cold war, which served the purpose of third enemies.

However, the new African Union does not have so much of external factors to address. Its agenda should by and large be strictly intra-continental and inward looking. It is acceptable that the African governments should of necessity play the leading role in the new unity programs, because they are supposed to be better equipped with the requisite expertise. Equally important, however, is the role to be played and the involvement of the African peoples in general, but represented by the above-mentioned and any other similarly identifiable groups because they are more knowledgeable than the ordinary masses. And inevitably they are the groups from whom the future

¹ Include teachers and students of higher learning, etc.

African leaders should emerge. It is the rights and duties of all Africans, individually or collectively, to contribute whatever tips they envision towards that goal. It does not necessarily mean that every such suggestion ought to be accommodated. Many of them may not be. The agenda of priorities should be identified by the studies of the technical committees that must have already been formed by the African Union in conjunction with the African governments. However, it is anyone's guess that those African top priorities to be addressed, in summary are: economic problems, stability, human rights, transparency and lastly, but not the least: science and technology, etc. Any progress in these areas automatically nurtures and reflects on the social fabric of the societies. Apart from ratifications by parliaments and similar institutions, the above groups representing the civil society must be involved and co-opted with before final decisions are made on any important issues for the paramount interest of the unity programs. Some may argue that the African State represents the people. Yes, that is true, but it is only one of the many human resources available and the commitment of all such human resources is essential and must be tapped. In the absence of a better alternative and for the paramount interest of the African people, President Nkrumah's invention and also the Libyan leader's discovery) is worth examining. This by the new generations of African intellectuals and should be supported by the current incumbents of African leaders. The latter need not be concerned about their individual positions, because even with unanimous African support any realization of such a project will take decades by which time only few of the present office holders may be alive, let alone to be still in power. The acme of the current African leaders ought to be leaving a better legacy behind them for the interest of their peoples. There should be no illusions, however, that any road that leads to a solution to Africa's current plight will be long and arduous, but it is a challenge to Africa's sons and daughters. It needs the collective determination of the African people to do something that can change the present conditions in their continent and they should not accept their people to be condemned to perpetual want and suffering. All African civil societies, besides Governments, should join efforts and come up with some concrete proposals and draw up an agenda today and not tomorrow, in support of efforts for the realization of the African Union objectives. Solutions can be found through discussions and investigation of existing problems. That was Dr. Nkrumah's dream - A continental unity.

Why Africa must unite and there ought to be a Union Government? Because the continent's chronic problems are widespread rampant corruption, dictatorial bents, lack of transparent governance that marginalizes or denies public opinion and participation among many others. And above all, foreign

manipulations and exploitation. The few African leaders who strive for the well being of their people and pursue positive policies of good governance are under constant attack from some foreign powers with the collaboration of many so-called African leaders. The latter perceive that their ill-gotten gains and mal-practices are threatened by the positive policies of those few.

The numerous anomalies in Africa can only be curbed by the inherent nature of central powers of a continental Union Government that also nurtures the empowerment of the African masses in every social strata, the media, intellectuals, writers and all other enlightened groups and individuals, across the continent. The incumbents of a future Union Government will be enabled as well as obliged by the empowered public opinion to pursue a proper course of governance and transparency.

The end of the cold war for the last two decades also ended one side of the external manipulation. And that in its wake afforded an opportunity for African's freedom of action and the adoption of positive policies and programs. However, that opportunity has not been exploitable in the absence of the prerequisites of a Union Government for the revival of President Nkrumah's ideas.

However, before we can dream of seeing African Union Government practically working, a great deal of continental home work ought to be done. First, there ought to be an introduction of intra-African orientation. African orientation of inter-actions and human understanding among the Africans themselves, which in its wake facilitates co-operation in the socio-economic fields. And co-operation that first leads to regional integration and eventual continental integration. With socio-economic integration, the union is almost complete. It is a dream, but not impossible after a long and rough journey. Let politics work only behind the scenes in guiding the above development and political integration should never focus itself on the forefront until the very last stages, because politics are often ambition prone and lead to disagreements. The common areas which can be conducive to fostering the development of attaining the above goals may include, among others:

- (1) Sports, which are already an integrated African field, but orientation of both their current activities and frequencies should be greatly increased, not only to reach out participation for the World Cup. But for the wider continental integration of all African peoples.
- (2) Cultural exchanges. Those countries which can afford, should offer scholarships not only in their own institutions, but also pay for

- vocational studies of their nationals in other African, but especially the poorer countries, on a student exchange bases. And
- (3) Tourism and Trade Fairs. Only through these can intra-African trade flourish. One practically feasible tip to be suggested is that every African country hosting a regional economic Summit like COMESA or ECOWAS, SADC, etc., may simultaneously organize and hold a Trade Fair for the duration of the Summit or before and beyond, of the region concerned, but also open to other African countries and the world. Each of these economic zones should be free trade areas without tariffs.
 - (4) Communication: one of the greatest hindrances to intra-African intercourse and development is weak communication that curtails intra-African travels. Many such travellers from one part of the continent to another are often obliged to go by way of Europe. While many African countries have their own National Air Carriers, there are at least the following three larger African Carriers with worldwide international connections: Egypt Air, Ethiopian Airlines and South African Airlines. Better organized inter-African connections between these and the individual National Carriers can be achieved to make all inter-Africa travels much easier. Continental Rail and Road Transport systems should also be planned for as early as possible.
 - (5) The last but not the least is the urgent development of an intra-African media data base.

However, equally important is the selection of officers to be entrusted with the monumental tasks of realizing the Union objectives. It will be a tragedy and betrayal of the African people if such trustees turn the mechanism of the AU to serve forces of disunity in the member countries. I am prompted to write this by the Brussels based International Crisis Group (ICG) Report of May 2006, that said a report compiled by an African Union fact-finding mission led by its Deputy Chairperson, Patrick Mazimhaka, that had visited the secessionist entity in North Somalia during the prior April had strongly recommended its recognition that meant dismantling the unity of a member state. To the best of available information that ICG Report has not been denied by the AU Commission ever since. Since by conventional wisdom acquiescence means consent, the existence of such AU report should be taken for granted. The ICG Report further relays from AU sources that heavy weight countries including both Nigeria and South Africa had indicated their readiness to recognize the secessionist entity. It is farfetched to believe that Nigeria that had the bitterest experience of fending off the Biafra secession would entertain the dismemberment of

another African country. The claim looks preposterous and only wishful thinking of individual cronies of the secessionists. With regard to South Africa, however, there have been some flirtations and contacts by some officials with the secessionist entity. According to retrievals from websites some of these officials even claimed connections with higher personalities of South African officials. Nevertheless, nobody expects that South Africa will act without the greatest circumspection or would do anything that contributes to renewed civil war in the remote Somali desert with little prospects of policing such a fratricidal war.

In conspiracy with Ethiopian government officials, AU operatives ushered in representatives of that secessionist entity into the corridors of the AU Summit Conferences held in Banjul, Gambia in 2006 and in Addis Ababa in 2007 to lobby for recognition on the member states. These AU operatives seem to be held at short leash by Ethiopian officials whatever the stake might be. A danger lies in the possibility of African people's aspirations for unity may become allowed to serve the forces of disunity.

The Long War of Eritrean Liberation: 1961-1991

While the above narrations in this Chapter account for some of the African liberation struggles against white colonialism, the Eritrean war of liberation was unique and against a backward black African, feudal colonizer, Ethiopia.

As already stated in this Chapter, Ethiopia always got away with its colonization of conquered other African peoples with the support of its former allies, the white colonizers, with whom Ethiopia had shared the division of the African continent. And subsequently Ethiopia also enjoyed the acquiescence or even the support of many emerging African leaders for their esteem of Ethiopia's unique history of not having had been a white man's colony, but at the expenses of its subjects of conquered African peoples.

Eritrea became an Italian colony in 1890 during the division of the African continent. When Italy was defeated in World War II, Britain occupied Eritrea in 1941. During the British occupation the United States built a Monitoring Station near the Eritrean capital, Asmara, to eavesdrop the telecommunication system of the former Soviet Union.

After the birth of the United Nations other former Italian colonies, Libya, and Somalia, ultimately achieved their independence. But Eritrea was unjustly denied its right to freedom by United States' maneuvering, as was explicitly stated, or rather arrogantly boasted, by its then foreign minister, Foster Dulles, and quote:

"From the point of view of justice, the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless the strategic interests of the United States in the Red Sea basin and considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that the country has to be linked with our ally, Ethiopia."

The United States might have feared that future independent Eritrean government might opt for neutrality and would not allow the use of its soil by one foreign power against another and might thus shut down that monitoring station. Eritrea was then federated with feudal Ethiopia by a majority vote of the United Nations' General Assembly in December 1952 that was maneuvered by the United States, against the wishes of the Eritrean people.

The denial of the Eritrean people's right to independence totally thwarted their human endeavours for socio-economic development and other progress for more than four decades. Ten years later after that UN resolution, the despotic ruler of feudal Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, unilaterally annulled the symbolic federal status of Eritrea and reduced that country into a mere province of Ethiopia. That despicable development ignited the armed struggle for the long war of the Eritrean liberation on September 1, 1961.

The Eritrean people suffered bitterly during that three decades long war of liberation and paid dearly for their final victory. Over one hundred thousand Eritreans were killed and more than that number were wounded, many of them into permanent disability, both from amongst the liberation fighters and the civilian population victimized by the feudal forces, according to an Eritrean professor of history. No African state ever sympathized with the plight of the Eritrean people with the exception of Somalia. The latter was the first and the only African state that recognized the self-determination of the Eritrean people as early as in February 1962, only within six months of the start of the armed struggle. But even so its support was modestly moral before the military regime took over power in Somalia.

The Ethiopian military campaigns against the Eritrean liberation armed struggle were heavily supported by one or the other super powers, and its war machine was always re-supplied with modern weaponry, first, by the United States and later by the former Soviet Union. The latter even seconded its military advisers to the Ethiopian army in war operations. Nevertheless, the Eritrean people finally triumphed.

And any one interested to know a bit more about the Eritrean bitter ordeal and their ultimate victory is recommended to Don Connell's book entitled: "Against All Odds", besides the many other publications from Eritrean and other sources.

The Eritrean final victory on 24th May 1991, in its wake brought about the immediate down fall of the Derg regime in Ethiopia and its architect leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, fled the country the next day.

Chapter Four

TIPS ON THE SOMALI CULTURE

Reference to this subject is limited only in so far as it has mirrored in the current ongoing scenario in the country up to the time of going to press. Any detailed discussion of the myriad dimensions of this rich Somali culture is both beyond the scope and objectives of this relatively small book. Even the Research Paper by the late learned advocate, Yusuf Jama Ali Duhul, on the clan culture which is reproduced verbatim here below, primarily focuses on the Somali ethos of choosing clan leaders, etc., and also problem resolutions. Anyone desirous of making an in depth study of this vast subject is highly recommended to the many works of Professor I.M. Lewis and those of other specialized writers, not the least of all John Drysdale as well as other works authored by a number of Somali scholars and non-Somalis alike. A few books of the works of the two writers named here have been included in the bibliography to this text.

While all ethnic Somalis' ethos have common similarities, I have attempted to take those more specific to north Somalia as a basic example together with a brief anatomy of the northern secession issue. This is also preceded by the following summary of the social setting in the north and their historical background, the roles played by various national actors, their overall interactions since national independence and current perspectives.

Background Summary

The main communities that inhabit this part of the Somali Republic are composed of the Issaaq in the central areas including the main cities of Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera and extending up to the Erigavo town/district to the east along the Gulf of Aden, and also to the south up to and within the so-called Somali region of Ethiopia.

Other Dir groups, the Gadabursi and the Issa inhabit the west of that territory, and also but for a shorter distance along the coast of the Gulf of Aden and westward up to and within the boundaries of the Republic of Djibouti and that of Ethiopia. The main centers include Borama, the new provincial capital of Awdal and the ancient historical town of Zeila.

Of the two Harti groups of the Darod clan who co-inhabit the north, the Dolbahante occupy the east-central plateau including the Nogal valley,

with Las-anod as the new provincial capital and northwards up to the Erigavo town/district; and to the south-east up to and also within the Somali region of Ethiopia beyond the 8th parallel. And the Warsangali inhabit the extreme east of the north proper bordering the northeast region of Somalia and protruding into the Gulf of Aden. Erigavo is the new provincial capital and Badhan is the central district of their main homeland.

After some prior trade connections between the north Somali coast and Aden in the Arabian Peninsula, both areas became occupied by the British. Aden by conquest in 1839, and Somaliland by agreements with the people in 1884 onwards, after the withdrawal of Egyptian garrisons. The opening of the Suez Canal 1869 to sea borne traffic, especially between the British Isles and the then British possessions in the east tremendously increased Aden's importance to British interests as an economic and strategic link. These vital interests were vulnerable and undependable without the opposing Somali coast also becoming another British sphere of influence. In 1885 the British concluded treaties of protection with the elders of all the clans with the exception of the Warsangali until another year later in 1886 and never with the Dolbahante.

However, with the conclusion of those treaties of protection, the territory became to be known as the British Somaliland Protectorate for the next seventy-six years until its independence on 26 June 1960. It became the State of Somaliland and then part of the Somali Republic five days later upon reunion with the former United Nations Trust Territory of Somalia to its south.

Current Perspectives:

The current situation, which prevails in north Somalia, is one of the sad legacies of the last military regime. As will be recalled, there was a general uprising since February 1982 in the main cities of Hargeisa and Burao as well as in many other centers of the Issaaq inhabited areas. The backdrop of this rebellion was a long simmering grievance since the advent of the military rule. The wounds were scratched by the arbitrary arrest of a score of young scholars who had criticized the corruption and mismanagement of that regime in general and the overall misrule by the individual local administrators in the north in particular. The Issaaq based Somali National Movement (SNM) was spawned by that situation of the overall malcontent one year earlier in 1981 and since those arrests it steered both the political strategy and the armed struggle against the repressive regime.

The non-Issaaq communities in the north quite justifiably feared secession and perpetual Issaaq majority domination in the wake of an SNM victory. They, therefore, with the exception of the Issa, fought on the side of that regime in the ensuing civil war with internecine consequences to all sides. However, upon the fall of the old regime, end of January 1991, the SNM assumed control of most areas of the north. One of its first actions was the holding of a meeting of all the northern communities for reconciliation in a wise bid to prevent retribution and further settling of scores among the communities of the north that had characterized the south. The meeting took place in the port town of Berbera during mid February 1991 and concluded successfully. As such it was the SNM's best achievement post Siad Barre era ever. The holding of another conference for all the northern communities two months later was agreed upon at the Berbera meeting in order to consolidate the peace atmosphere already achieved during that last meeting.

The second conference or rather a Congress was held in Burao during April-May 1991. It was then that unfortunate decision of secession was opted for, mainly by the Issaaq majority, and cautiously endorsed by coerced few participants of the non-Issaaq northern communities. But such endorsement was not a consensual mandate by the non-Issaaq communities. An overwhelming majority of some of these latter groups have ever since been distancing themselves from the secession. Nonetheless, the secession was purely dictated by wrong diagnosis of the causes of the people's bitter suffering in the hands of central Somali authorities whose responsibilities included the welfare of the people. In essence, the rebellion should have only been limited against those central authorities that the armed struggle had been directed. Those authorities had by then ceased to exist, but it was a decision taken emotionally to the extremes and holding all southern people collectively responsible for the suffering of the northern people simply because the head of that government was a southerner. This notion was further strengthened by the all Hawiye United Somali Congress (USC)'s unilateral decision appointing Ali Mahdi as President of the Somali Republic, only the day after Siad Barre's flight from the capital, without direct consultation with the SNM, the Movement with the longest and bitterest history of the armed struggle against the former regime. Prior to that decision all national ills were attributed to the Darod since they had led all Somali governments for thirty years from the time of independence and reunion. Then the question arose whether the Hawiye would not have been worse rulers than the former? In this vein the northern people's perception was strengthened, which also

simplified the rationale for the secession decision, that the national dilemma was a phenomenon of a collective south rather than only Darod or Hawiye singularity.

However, the northerners themselves, and the Issaaq in particular, did not fare any wiser either, but much worse. Instead of trying to offer themselves as better alternatives for leadership, they only came up with the unpatriotic wrong surgery, a secession to dismember the nation and the country. It is a stigma that they can never erase from their record for generations to come whatever the ultimate fate of the Somali people. In any case the secession was not only taken over the head of the SNM leadership, but was rather imposed upon the latter as the administering authority by the masses, but manipulated by extremist groups. The momentum for the secessionist fever was maintained at a cohesive level for the next two years (1991-1993) of its inception, but only by and large among the Issaaq and the Gadabursi, plus a half hearted self-serving minority support from the other northern groups.

The Anatomy of the Secession

The population of northern Somalia is composed of the five groups of equal partners as mentioned in the Background Summary above.

The secession was the brainchild of the Issaaq and was supported by the majority of the Gadabursi and a minority of the Issa. All these three groups are sub-sets of the Dir clan. To the contrary, the overwhelming majority of the other two non-Dir eastern Harti groups of the Darod clan has been strongly opposed to the secession or for that matter any separate statehood of the north. Their commitment to national unity notwithstanding, they quite fairly fear of perpetual domination by the Dir groups and that fear is not without justification. The two top posts of president and vice-president of the secessionist entity have been alternating among the Dir groups for the last more than seventeen years at the time of going to press. The clan factor is the Achilles heel of Somali nationhood. Conventional wisdom would, therefore, dictate that all decisions of such importance should always be reached only by consensus of all the stakeholders, among the above five common groups inhabiting that area. Majority decision is not the least in the lexicon of Somali traditional values of decision making and fair play. Consensus is the essence. Unilateralism vis-à-vis the secession is conflict prone and can only renew a civil war among the northern communities on the one hand and re-invite armed clashes

between the authorities of 'Puntland' and 'Somaliland' on the other. Such armed clashes already took place for several occasions between these two authorities causing great losses of human lives and material damages. One of the main towns, Las-Anod, a regional capital, and all its hinterland, which is claimed by both sides changed hands since between the two authorities.

The Treaties of Protection that Britain had entered into with elders representing various Somali tribes or clans during 1884-86 were the basis of the north's colonial history for the following seventy-six years. As stated earlier in this work, the lone, but important non-signatory of those treaties of protection was the Dolbahante. The subsequent de facto association of this group and their homeland within the British Somaliland Protectorate administration was only by default and mutual expediency, but never a perpetual de jure. Nevertheless, since the essence of the north's independence in 1960 was perceived as a transitory process to reunification with the south, it was non-controversial among the northern communities and the Dolbahante played their positive role. In evidence of the nature of the transitory process, the new flag freely hoisted on Somaliland's independence on 26 June 1960 before the actual reunion and that replaced the Union Jack was the Somali national flag originally designed for the south only. And its pertinent description was commemorated with the poem of the famous Somali artist of the north, the late Abdullahi Gharshe, **"Qolabaa calankeedu waa caynee. Innagaa keenu waa cirkoo kale-ee oo aan caadna lahayn ee caashaqa ey."** Its literal translation from Somali is, **"Every nation's flag is one kind (colour). Ours is like the clear blue sky without the least bit of a cloud. So love it."**

If otherwise, however, that independence would have only been for the signatories of those Treaties of Protection, but the Dolbahante that was not a party to those treaties could have only joined it by own consent. This assertion is further corroborated by the historical fact of one precondition that the British Government had attached to the granting of Somaliland independence. That was the collective endorsement of Somaliland's traditional elders, the actual heirs of the signatories of the treaties of protection as the contractual counterparts to the British Government. It is, Therefore, quite obvious that the then new State of Somaliland could not have inherited the Dolbahante homeland in its own right without the latter's explicit consent, and would not even now, had that issue not been already resolved by the reunification process.

The following are among justifications often cited for the secession and the author's brief comments thereto as marked by the bullets:

(a) *Great suffering meted out to the Somali people of the north during the twenty-one year totalitarian military rule.*

- Although similar maltreatment was also equally meted out to many other groups of southern Somalis in the hands of that regime, nonetheless, some northern communities, especially the Issaaq, were collectively subjected to discriminatory atrocities to the culmination of mass extra-judicial executions. But the common Somali people, north or south, bear no responsibilities for these heinous crimes by a dictatorial regime.

(b) *The secessionists claim achievement of peace and better governance by being a separate entity.*

- It is agreeable that relative peace has existed in many parts of the north in contrast to comparable areas in the south. Some semblance of most ingredients of governance also exists there in some parts of the north. However, the prevalent situation in the north has only been the best of an overall bad environment since the collapse of the Somali nation state in early 1991. Nevertheless, these are not without dictatorial bents and bullying where the rule of law is flawed and corruption abounds. Of all parts of present Somalia, only in the administration of the north are the centres of the power remnants of the former dreaded security apparatus of the defunct regime of Siad Barre. Despite the existence of nominal houses of parliament, stifling of dissent by the authorities is widespread and there exists no mandatory habeas corpus to safeguard the liberty of the individual for the ends of justice. Just to select and cite a few very unhealthy examples: (i) during early 2005 or so, four defence lawyers were arbitrarily and simultaneously convicted in Hargeisa in connection with a legal argument with the public prosecutor inside a court room. It was highly improbable that all four lawyers should have together misbehaved. Even so, in legal ethics, an independent court would be expected to only require them to apologize to the court and failing that could have suspended their legal practices as the last resort. The treatment meted out to the four lawyers by the court was outrageous and was characterized by the mockery of the former military regime's legal system. The simultaneous conviction of all the four lawyers very

much prejudiced the defence of a female child who was, paradoxically accused and convicted of the serious crime of spying. The child was, according to Human Rights groups, incapable of committing such crime because of her age of childhood. Spying is an art that required special training and experience both of which could not have been accomplished during childhood. And (ii) Amnesty International Organization on February 02, 2007 sounded the alarm bells concerning the detention of three journalists for the independent Haatuf Media Network in 'Somaliland'. Amnesty International (AI) considered them prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to peaceful freedom of expression and appealed for worldwide support for their release. AI further reported, among other things, that armed police raided the office of the Haatuf Media Network in Somaliland's capital Hargeisa on 2 January 2007, ransacking the office and destroying property. The editor-in-chief and other staff members were arrested, even though the police did not have a warrant. AI expressed concern about the condition of two men held incommunicado who might be at risk of ill-treatment as well as another man who was unwell and might not have access to necessary medical treatment, all of whom were denied bail.

(c) The secessionists distort history and argue that the very object of the north-south reunion of the Somali Republic was in the first place for a greater Somalia. Since that became unattainable, the continued existence of the union was not the desired.

- Undeniably, it had long been the cherished goal of all Somalis to reunite all Somalis and their territories that had been arbitrarily grabbed by foreign powers and divided among them and to bring them all under one flag. Nonetheless, while the realization of such a greater reunion was a distant hope, the 1960 north-south reunion was an end in itself.

(d) The secessionists complain of their marginalization during the formation of the first Reunion Government.

- Notwithstanding the unanimous overriding agreement for the reunion, its immediate timing was hastily insisted upon by the northerners. They instead agreed to forego the two most important posts of both the Head of State and Prime Minister. Furthermore,

all key portfolios of Foreign affairs, Interior, Finance and Commerce also went to southern incumbents, but these later appointments were the results of individual political bargaining skills in which the northerners were novices. Somali leaders were, however, conscious of these regional imbalances and always endeavoured and continued to make the necessary amends during the first nine years of civilian rule. Half of the eight early ambassadorships appointed in 1961 were assigned to northerners in London, Paris Moscow and Addis Ababa and their southern counterparts were assigned to Cairo, Rome, Washington and the UN in New York, although the northern population strength was about one-third and their parliamentary representation only about one-fourth. In the formation of the second Somali government in 1964 under the premiership of Mr. Abdirazak Hagi Hussein, northerners were appointed to most key portfolios of that cabinet including Foreign Affairs, Finance, Defence, Agriculture and Planning. The only two key portfolios that went to southerners were those of Interior and Commerce. Likewise, almost half of all senior civil service posts were assigned to northerners. And about 36% of the few national development projects were allocated to the north.

(e) ***There has been a recent pro-secessionist erroneous mantra that claims the union, which I call reunion, was never ratified.***

- What is a ratification and when does its need arise? It arises when an agency of a state enters into and signs a tentative agreement with a third party. That agency then seeks final approval from its higher institution(s). Such approval is ratification. In the case of the Somali reunion, it was an act of parliament, which was the highest institution in the land and backed by predestined public approval. Who else would be needed to ratify it? Furthermore, there is nothing more authentic than the historical data of the reunification and the Act(s) of Union recorded, among other things, by the United Nations chief legal adviser, the late Dr. Paolo Contini, seconded to the then new government of the Somali Republic at the latter's request for during 1960-64, who was also the chairman of the legal integration committee. I extract the following relevant summary from his book, **THE SOMALI REPUBLIC: AN EXPERIMENT IN LEGAL INTEGRATION** (as per *italics*) here below:

- "The decision to form a union was reached at conference of Northern and Southern Somali leaders held in Mogadiscio between April 16 and 22, 1960.
- "On June 27, the day after its independence, Somaliland's Legislative Assembly passed 'The Union of Somaliland and Somalia Law No. 1 of 1960'.
- "On June 30, the Legislative Assembly of the Trust Territory met. After prolonged debate, in the evening of June 30, the Assembly approved the *Atto di Unione* (Act of Union).
- "At midnight of June 30, the Trusteeship Agreement ceased to be in force, and the President of the Legislative Assembly, acting in his capacity as provisional President of the Republic proclaimed the independence of the State of Somalia. During the same night he promulgated the Constitution, which came into force immediately.
- "In the morning of July 1, the members of the Legislative Assemblies of Somaliland and Somalia met in joint session as the first National Assembly. The President of the Assembly proclaimed the union and the members sealed it by standing ovation. As of that moment the Constitution was deemed to apply to both parts of the Somali Republic."

(f) *The secessionists claim former colonial boundary between the two Somali territories before the reunion as still consistent with the then OAU resolution for the inviolability of boundaries at the time of independence.*

- In the case of Somalia that boundary ceased to exist as from July 1, 1960, the date of the proclamation of the reunification. In spite of that, the secessionist entity still keeps begging the question that is only wishful thinking. The then OAU resolution, which was adopted by its Second Summit, held in Cairo in 1964, more than four years later since the Somali reunification and long after that boundary in question had ceased to exist, was neither retroactive nor was it designed to unravel already established institutions of its member states. Its only object was to be applied to future contingencies. And significantly, former President Julius Nyerere who had just before the Cairo Summit forged the Union of the Republic of

Tanzania by the merger of the two former states of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, thus changing the previous boundary between those two former territories, was the prime architect who sponsored that OAU resolution. And that alone explains that the spirit of that resolution was never meant to be retroactive.

(g) The secessionists distort history by citing examples irrelevant to the Somali case of other individual countries that had since split into becoming more different countries.

- To just briefly comment on each of the examples cited: (i) those separations were not opted for by either the peoples of Lebanon and Syria or Jordan and Palestine, but were engineered by colonial machinations and designs. (ii) Egyptian-Syrian union, not unlike West and East Pakistan (present Bangladesh), among other things, became dysfunctional for lack of geographical proximity. (iii) The Union of Gambia and Senegal lacked homogeneity among the two peoples. Likewise ((iv) the problem of north and south Sudan stemmed from lack of homogeneity-cum religious differences,

(h) The secessionists often remark that Djibouti's decision of separate independence in 1977 dealt a blow to the Greater Somalia endeavours.

- It is another distortion of fact and history. Djibouti is not inhabited by only ethnic Somalis. And in appreciation of this reality the Somali Government of Mr. Abdirazak Hagi Hussein declared to the whole world in 1966 its denunciation of any Somali claim over Djibouti. Only then Afar groups came forward and joined the pro-independence movement. Continued ethnic division of the people of Djibouti over that issue could have at best unduly delayed their independence much longer. Djibouti's separate statehood was, therefore, foreseeable by all sensible people including the Somalis, despite Siad Barre's attempts of last minute overtures.

None of those cases had any parallel similarity with the Somali situation.

(i) The secessionists often cite Egyptian-Ethiopian rivalry over the Nile waters as a bone of power play in Somali context.

- This is nonsense. The Somalis lack both resources and proximity to the Nile waters and can, therefore, contribute little to nil, in one way or the other. However, the inclusion of this assertion looks like an Ethiopian view point by proxy, as a Somali adage says: EE DHEH (say it for me). It is not a secret that Egypt always and strongly supports Somali unity and that is a paramount Somali interest; while on the contrary Ethiopia strives to dismantle that unity, which is inimical to Somali interest.

(j) Internationally observed and democratically held elections in the north are often mentioned to justify the viability of the secessionist entity.

- But omitted is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the people of some of the five main groups of the northern population did not take part in those elections, because they opposed the secession. Even so, there is a great deal of undemocratic provisions in the secessionist constitution. There are only three legalised political parties. That is fine in order to avoid proliferation, but the snag is that only leaders of the parties can run for president and independents cannot stand to compete. The political process is therefore hostage for the party leaders.

(k) Another attempt in seeking international support for recognition of the secessionist entity is a reference often made to the result of 1961 countrywide constitutional referendum where the majority of northern people voted against the draft constitution.

- That draft constitution was tailored to the conditions that had been obtaining only in the south before independence and the reunion. The northerners only wanted a new draft constitution in which they could have a say and make their own contributions. However, the difference for and against of the number of votes cast in the north was marginal.

(l) Another theory advanced in support of the secession, especially by John Drysdale and few other foreigners is an alleged economic viability of the north. While boasting the north's economic success, Drysdale said of the north in his book, *Stoics without Pillows*, "it refuses to reunite with Mogadishu's empty shell."

- I am not sure if this remark was not a mistake, or John Drysdale was intentionally speaking out of his mind to just and trying hard to secure recognition for the secessionist entity by any means? There was more wealth in Mogadishu than in Hargeisa and the rest of the north combined before the recent Ethiopian invasion had destroyed everything. Only one single enterprise in Mogadishu would have more liquid capital and other assets than everything Hargeisa boasts off. After all, the north's alleged economic progress is only a part and parcel of the overall Somali economic progress resultant from the unfettered market economy since the collapse of the nation state. Progress in this field has, by an article of faith, been among a few positive side benefits of the otherwise disastrous upheavals (see the Epilogue). The so much vaunted economy of the north has always been inter-dependent upon its counter-part in the south. The mainstay of trade throughout the country, north and south, is in livestock. Burao has always been the traditional livestock trade central market. The majority of these livestock come from Somalia and not from the so-called Somali zone of Ethiopia as Drysdale seems to have been led to believe. Some such livestock trade may still come from the latter source, but is very negligible in comparison with what comes from central Somalia. Drysdale is best advised to circumvent the disinformation in Hargeisa, which is intended to influence his writings. He should visit the livestock trade central market in nearby Burao when there is no ban on Somali Livestock export and meet the main leading dealers. He may better ask them how many purchasing grounds and agencies they have in central Somalia, specially in Abud-Waq, Adaado and Dus-Ma-Reeb districts, etc.,

(m) Another particular economic success story mentioned by Drysdale in support of the secession to merit recognition is the Dahabshiil (Goldsmith – literally a gold fryer) enterprise.

- But he forgets that even Dahabshiil's volume of business activities is far larger in the rest of Somalia than in the north alone.

(n) Very unfortunately, Drysdale has again chosen to write for the second time something not only incorrect, but totally fabricated by the perpetrators of the 1961 coup attempt.

- He first wrote it in his paper: *The Anatomy of Secession* in 1991, in support of that entity. I met him late 1992 in Hargeisa and drew his attention to the incorrectness of that reporting in his paper. I hoped then that I must have convinced him, but he has since proved me wrong by repeating it in his next book - Chapter 10 - mentioned (under letter I) above. A similar error also appears in Lewis's *Blood and Bone*, page 177. The BBC Somali section also twice in January 2000 broadcast dramatized interviews of that fabrication, disregarding an objection to the contrary. The reported subject concerned the above coup attempt and the resultant treason trial. The fabricated report and those other statements claim that the court's verdict of dismissing the case was that no Act of Union had existed between the former Somaliland and Somalia. That was not true. The quotation from the authentic record of the time as at (e) above, and also the following historical data suffice to disprove those claims:-

1. The coup attempt took place on 9-10 December 1961, more than good ten months later since the final adoption of the Act of Union retroactively by parliament and its promulgation that remedied the legal loophole cited by Dr. Contini.

2. The treason trial was held during Feb-March 1963 almost two years later than the adoption and promulgation of the Act of Union.

3. The motive for the coup attempt and its early failure had already been sufficiently recounted in the author's previous book, *The Cost of Dictatorship*: Chapter Eleven, pages 123-125 published by Lilian Barber Press, NY, NY (1995). In nutshell and to be precise, however, the coup attempt was purely over military rank maladjustment during the army integration.

4. The attempt was foiled and immediately nipped in the bud by the unanimous loyalty of members of the all North Scouts' Regiment. No single one-man's reinforcement was needed or came from the south.

5. The coup attempt lacked any prior public knowledge, much less public support. Nor was there any apparent public sympathy after the fact. Ironically some of that coup attempt perpetrators have been trying these days to take advantage of the north's current

secession. In order to salvage their reputation out of the ruins of the coup attempt failure, they portray that attempt as a precursor of the present secession. It is a distortion of history.

6. The acquittal was wisely maneuvered by the Somali political leaders behind the scenes. The leaders were fully conscious and took into account the sacrifices made by the people of the north for the sake of Somali unity. The leaders also acknowledged the fact that the people of the north did not support the coup attempt, despite having some other genuine grievances. By the very least, the people of the north transferred their seat of government to over a thousand km(s) away as the crow flies, otherwise twice as much longer a distance. A conviction of the perpetrators would carry the death penalty and execution would exasperate public feeling in the whole north and was, therefore, considered counter-productive. And failure to carry out execution of a sentence of death would, in its wake, create an unfavorable precedent for the future stability of the country. The best option from the leaders' perception was, therefore, a nominal dismissal of the case by a court of law and its prosecution was so tailored to produce such eventuality. As already stated in my previous book, the *Cost of Dictatorship*, the Somali leaders had acted behind the back of the former army Chief of Staff, the late General Daud who would be opposed to the dismissal of the case. He was highly respected otherwise and trusted by the political leaders. He would prefer a genuine trial as a matter of deterrence against future coup attempts.

During March 1993, the fifteen Somali political organisations then meeting in Addis-Ababa mandated the late General Mohamed Farah Aideed to negotiate with the SNM in order to end the secession of the north. Aideed instantly sent an envoy to Borama where the SNM and the northern community leaders were meeting. The SNM could not be available for any serious talks until the end of that Borama meeting, which prolonged till end of May 1993. Thereafter events taking place in Mogadishu from 5 June onwards vis-à-vis US led UN confrontation with General Aideed prevented any further contacts between Aideed and the SNM leadership for more than a year. The above Somali political organisations again met in Nairobi during March–April 1994. A Nairobi declaration among other things called upon the SNM to participate in the next reconciliation conference which was scheduled to take place in Mogadishu in a month's time. General Aideed then resumed his negotiations with the SNM. It was in the

light of this backdrop and also after allowing a period of cooling down emotions and after due process of reckoning, the SNM leadership eventually made its historic statement on 29 April 1994. This statement invoked the provision of the SNM Charter, which held the unity of the Somali nation sacrosanct and reversed its three-year-old endorsement of the secession. The SNM instead opted for, and proposed a federal system of governance for Somalia as a whole. The proposal was embraced by all the pro-unity northern political Organisations: Somali Democratic Association (SDA), United Somali Front (USF) and United Somali party (USP) who together with the SNM later issued a joint declaration after meeting in Djibouti during July/August 1994, collectively reaffirming the SNM's statement. These steps have had the immediate effect of dividing the people of the north into two ideological groupings of pro-federalism-cum Somali unity agenda and pro-secession diehards. The latter group, despite subsequent vaunted claims of achieving peace, waged that new civil war in the north that continued for three years. The main city of Burao, the second capital of the north, which had fairly escaped destruction by the old regime's barrage and was a model of survival and the only suitable place to host the 1991 all northern community conference, was now grounded during this renewed secessionist led civil war. Eventually, the traditional inhabitants of Burao, the Habr Je'lo and the Habr Yonis, reconciled themselves to the consternation of the secessionist diehards' alliance, which took the cue from the former dictatorial regime and often pitted clans or communities against each other. The Burao reconciliation process not only enhanced the mutual rapprochement between the parties immediately concerned, but also successfully encouraged other areas of reconciliation throughout the north. It also served the important purpose of morally weakening the unholy coalition of anti-Somali unity, despite short of ending the secession.

As Drysdale stated in his book referred to above, chapter 10, all of Europe is developing into a federation. And so Africa has also formed a union. Regional groupings had already developed the same objectives in many parts of the world. In the face of such many universal trends towards closer relationship wherever possible among various peoples, does it really make sense that already reunited Somali units should now unravel and separate? Besides this, a secession of northern Somalia will automatically spearhead a total and permanent disintegration of the other units of the Somali Republic. Such disintegration of Somalia will set a serious precedent for many other African nations, thus opening a Pandora box scenario throughout the continent.

During the early development of Somali nationalism under the leadership of the Somali Youth League (SYL), and other subsequent nationalist political parties, any claim to clan identity was abhorred in all parts of Somali territories first, especially in the south, and later also in the north. Such a claim was even prohibited morally for all SYL members. However, the attainment of the pre-independence internal self-government in the former United Nations Trust Territory of southern Somalia in 1956 onwards nurtured a new culture of privileges' pursuit and acquisition. Interested groups and individuals began competing for the possibilities of reaching those privileges. Much sought after of those privileges were primarily economic acquisition and positions in the government bureaucracy. The latter could facilitate the means of acquiring those privileges. Since the possibilities of reaching those goals became subject to government favors and blessing, the necessity arose for those interested groups and individuals to resurrect the hitherto dormant clan sympathies to the extent of nepotism. Interested privilege seekers would instigate their clan members in the government bureaucracy to use their official position in order to facilitate the means of acquiring those privileges. Once officials became involved, it led to a Pandora box situation of nepotism and corruption. At the above backdrop, Somali independence and reunion was born. The public consciousness of the two former territories was at variance. In the south, people had reached a degree of political realism of both negative and positive values and greatly influenced by interest groups. By contrast, people in the north were still at the early stage of intolerant and implacable emotive nationalism.

In general, there was a marked mismatch between the prerequisites of the post colonial modern nation state and traditional values of an egalitarian society, even at the height of such jubilant nationalistic emotions. The governing elite seriously attempted to forge the subordination of the mores and ethos of the Somali traditional culture and traditional authorities to the supremacy of the nation state. The former was considered incompatible with national aspirations. The governing elite, politicians and technocrats alike, emulated institutions inherited from the former colonial administrations and western liberal democracies to which the Somali independence constitution was also modelled. But these cultural values would not accede to their subordination to an alien culture nor could they be even quietly sidelined much less to be replaced or dispensed with. The clan cultural values were the embodiment of the way of life of the Somali society in general and especially indispensable to the majority,

nomads and other rural communities. These values were just not amenable to any alien culture or its by-products, the educated elite of Somalis. Furthermore, the traditional elders who administer these values were, and still are, the sole arbiters in solving disputes among pastoralists, even when, and so often, the latter cross over the political boundaries and become beyond the reach of Somali authorities. This alone makes the centrifugal traditional values and the role of the traditional elders a *sine qua non*.

Besides above, at the end of the day, as and when time approached for the holding of the periodical political general elections, one of the by-products of the alien culture, individual members of the governing elite, whether incumbents of political offices or newly political aspirants seeking elections or re-elections could not escape appealing to their respective clan constituencies. Political nationalist parties were no longer a useful vehicle for this purpose once colonial rule was replaced. The pre-independence political parties had degenerated into becoming clan based platforms and their premises, by and large, became clan meeting places, only retaining the national party names for electioneering tickets.

The Somalis were then competing for what they saw as 'spoils of war', the war of liberation and independence, i.e. limited national resources for social services programs: schools, health clinics and scores of other needs and positions in government. One's proximity to the nation state was measured by its centers of power. In other words, if one's clan member was the head of government or the head of an important department, then that Somali government or department was not only identified with that clan, but that it would also earn a fitting sobriquet, not to mention incentives to corrupt king makers or vice-versa. Much depended, however, upon the personal integrity of the official incumbents for the nation state to function properly or otherwise.

Those elites seeking re-election in order to merit clan endorsement and nomination to stand for election should have before hand accounted for their contributions to the clan cause by virtue of their official status. This was not only an encouragement, but also a demand on the part of the clan of nepotism and legalized corruption, which they saw as acquiring their share of the 'spoils of war'. In this vein, members of national governing elite would find themselves torn in between two contrasting commitments, to the nation state and to one's own clan collective security and solidarity. They would find themselves privately inseparable from obligations and loyalties

to their clan solidarities, the foundation of their upbringing while at the same time professing commitment to the national cause. The former by its centrifugal nature is not adaptable to changes in a changing world. Equally, at the same time a clan system cannot be a substitute for modern national governance. However, despite frequent occurrences of anomalies, the two, the clan culture and the modern state, could have after independence co-existed as they had co-existed during the colonial era. And despite the clan culture becoming more and more demanding and assertive than it had been before the national independence, they could have also developed new areas of common agreement if they were properly managed, despite the wide gaps dividing them. But it was not to be. Corruption by the post colonial political establishment: plundering of national assets and denial of equity, election rigging, nepotism and scores of other mal-practices leading to social ills, which were notoriously deteriorated by Siad Barre's totalitarian misrule sapped public confidence in the nation state. Former Prime Minister Abdirazak Hagi Hussein was, however, an exception. He was the only government leader in Somalia's history who dismissed three ministers for corruption and submitted their cases for legal action, but parliament would not lift their parliamentary immunity. His successor appointed some of those former ministers as members of his new government.

Nevertheless, above negative realities aside, we have here two conflicting legitimate issues: (1) the traditional clan cultural values which stays put as long as the overwhelming majority of the Somali people are nomads and semi-nomads, and (2) central authority, the embodiment of any symbol nationhood. When two such legitimate issues conflict, they should of necessity compromise. One such compromise is a federal system of governance, which was the most important feature of the structures adopted by the Somali Conference held in Arta, Djibouti in 2000. In federation, every province and its other units down below each deal with its own local affairs. The traditional elders can here assert themselves and offer their esoteric expertise in customary laws and cultural values. The central government only deals with security and other issues, which are in most cases alien to the Somali clan system. These are external relations and external defence, foreign trade, banking and currency and immigration, etc. Federal system of governance removes the coercive power of central authority and there is no reason why it should not work in Somalia now. On the contrary, Confederation is only suitable for separate entities, which are coming closer together like the Europe Union, but not to divide existing nations. However, the above-mentioned structures adopted by the Arta Conference were later eroded by the Ethiopian manoeuvring that foisted its

own brand of federalism on its Trojan horse TFG of Somali entity during the last Conference held in Kenya in the name of IGAD as shown above (Chapter Two) that can neither be enforceable nor sustainable.

The Somali Customary Laws

An integral part of the clan culture is the Somali customary laws. The bases of these laws have evolved over the centuries from nomadic traditions. Until the arrival of the colonial powers the Somali people were totally nomadic with the exception of some sea-faring migrant groups. Even to this day the majority of them (about 75%) are still nomads and semi-nomads. This will probably remain unchanged or little even for the current century, because the Somali urban economy is unlikely to develop that much to transform the nomadic life pattern. In fact, the urban economy is largely dependent upon the rural economy and not vice-versa.

During their long history of nomadic life, the Somalis had known no central authority, but they comfortably governed themselves through their customary laws, which were derived from own nomadic traditions and cultural values. They also traded with the outside world as far as China to the east and with the countries to their north, especially Persia, the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt. Not only these laws could not be replaced later by colonial laws and therefore co-existed with the latter, but even the colonial authorities themselves had often had recourse to these customary laws in settling complex litigations and similar cases among the Somalis. One further complication was and still is today, the unwritten nature of these customary laws and their enforcement would only be through the jurisprudence of almost illiterate Somalis. Therefore the guardians and administrators of the Somali customary laws were always and still are the traditional elders whose esoteric expertise was handed down from generation to the next. The ability of these elders in enforcing the customary laws later depended to a large extent upon the system of colonial governance. In the north, the British by and large always ruled the country through the elders, because the latter were their contractual counterparts in the first place. On the contrary, the Italians forced their occupation without any prior agreement or consent on the part of the Somali people in the south and directly colonized the country. Even so, they could neither totally abolish nor dispense with these Somali customs and customary laws.

Whereas, therefore, the role of individual elders in the north who were capable and charismatic would be very well known throughout the country, this was not the case in the south. With few exceptions, especially in the north-east, elders of similar caliber in the south were hardly known outside the limits of their individual localities or villages. Unlike their counterparts in the south, elders in the north were always involved in national issues. They often interacted among themselves through advisory councils or similar fora organized by the authorities on both ad hoc and regular basis. Instead, the first Somalis who were later on involved in national issues in the south were government employees, ex-servicemen and a few newly aspiring political activists, but included none or few traditional elders.

Besides that, a great deal of the Somali customary laws in both north and south had given way to modernization-cum alien culture over the years of colonial rule and the succeeding period of secular system of Somali governance. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these customary laws and the role of the traditional elders had never been so much needed during the last century nor had they ever been put to their litmus test until the disintegration of the Somali nation state and the collapse of central authority. In the north the elders played an important role to an all time record level in maintaining peace and stability. And even much more telling was that while in the past their actions would be backed up by government machinery and institutions, like the police and the courts, now they were of their own and acting alone. Unfortunately, after rendering such marvelous services, these elders slipped and overstepped their traditional line. They got involved in the management of modern political institutions about which they knew nothing and became manipulated objects in the hands of unscrupulous politicians. This involvement not only damaged the prestige of the individual elders, but also compromised their important traditional role and trust in the service of the people.

Despite the manipulations and misuse of the role of the traditional elders for political ends, I am still a strong believer in Somali traditional values, even if because of my nomadic birth. These values are the sole embodiment of our own culture of nomadic background. There is hardly any other possible alternative and compatible with the Sharia to implement social justice and to off-set the negative effects of clannish, as is explained in Chapter Six.

During the whole period of the civil war, which saw no central authority in the country people strived to pursue their own endeavors and managed to eke out their livelihood. Traditional elders with the requisite skills and expertise have been the only arbiters of the communities' inter-relationship during that long ordeal. This has proved not only the viability, but even the sanctity of the Somali cultural values despite some pitfalls notwithstanding. However, as the late advocate Yusuf Jama Ali Duhul had also unequivocally explained in his Paper on the Somali clan culture, tribalized politics have been a major negative factor in the Somali body politic. One such worse example was the political appointments by the authorities in the north of clan elders. This is a naked transgression and corruption of the Somali traditional system itself and its values. Traditional or clan elders are never appointed by either politicians in power or by any other authorities. They simply come up only as the choice of their own people who can select them as their leaders. Otherwise they would become mere appointees and marked servants of such politicians or authorities as the case might be, but neither elders nor leaders of their people. By so doing, the authorities get shielded from any accountability by a wall body of pseudo traditional elders, the so-called 'Guurti', a body that its majority is composed of political appointees and only answerable to the whims of such authorities to whom the former owe their appointments. So much so that this body on several occasions mysteriously extended the term of the top office that nearly caused collapse of the system of governance in the north.

In the south too, the traditional elders in many cases managed to defuse conflicts, but in some cases without lasting settlements.

Customary laws and traditional values specific to two main Somali groups changed little in substance despite modernization. These two are:

[1] the Abgal of the Hawiye who inhabit predominantly in Mogadishu and its environs and northwards, and

[2] the Issa who inhabit in the extreme northwest of the Somali Republic as well as in the Republic of Djibouti and parts of eastern Ethiopia. At the collapse of central authority, customary laws specific to the Abgal have resurfaced and asserted their traditional vigor and to a great deal over-rode modern political decisions. Today, Abgal clan members often adhere to their customary laws, but feel not so much bound by political decisions. This tilt towards favoring clan customs has very much

handicapped the role of Abgal politicians and their ability to negotiate resolution of the national crises. In this particular case, only when backed up by government machinery can political decisions prevail.

A question often raised by all concerned, both Somalis and foreigners alike, was the non-early settlement of the intra-Hawiye clan feud before the advent of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC)' rule? Power struggle aside, the two main adversaries, the Habar-Gidir and the Mudulood (Abgal and others) are both Hiraab descendants and are genealogically closely related to each other than the rest of the Hawiye groups. And together, these two Hiraab groups are numerically more than a half of all the Hawiye (55-60%). The next stronger Hawiye groups like the Hawadle, Murursade, etc., would feel politically marginalized by a united and further strengthened Hiraab. Politically ambitious individuals or even the mainstream majority of these non-Hiraab, but still strong Hawiye groups would never bless any early rapprochement between Aideed and Ali Mahdi, or for that matter between the Abgal or Mudulood and the Habar Gidir in general that could sideline or even make the less numerically stronger groups politically dispensable. In order to maintain the status quo vis-à-vis among the Hiraab, both the Hawadle and the Murursade often changed alliances from one Hiraab group to the other and vice-versa. When dispute within the Hiraab was limited to a personal contest for Hawiye leadership between Aideed and Ali Mahdi, the Murursade were overwhelmingly supporting Ali Mahdi and the majority of the Hawadle were with Aideed. When the rift widened so much and transformed into a Habar Gidir versus Mudulood internecine conflict, the Murursade became divided, and the majority were siding with the Habar Gidir while the Hawadle became overwhelmingly allied with the Mudulood. Likewise, the majority of the Gugundhabe were politically, though not so much militarily, with the Habar Gidir, while the Gaal-Je'el was siding with the Mudulood.

In addition to the major Habar Gidir-Mudulood conflict, similar hostilities existed among various non-Hiraab other Hawiye groups, although in a much lesser scale. No settlement was, therefore, possible unless it would include all those Hawiye main groups. Neither the Habar Gidir nor the Mudulood would settle with their immediate adversary unless that settlement also considers the interests of each side's alliances. It was a vicious circle and a situation that demanded an acceptable overall Hawiye leadership with the contemporary stature of Dr. Ismail Jumale or Aideed. However, with both Dr. Ismail Jumale and Aideed dead, the Hawiye destiny for acceptable leadership was left in abeyance. And since

the national capital Mogadishu, is in Hawiye homeland and under their control that too held the nation hostage for more than a decade and a half before the rise of UIC.

And (2) The Issa have a much more sophisticated intra-clan social contract (Xeer Ciise /Heer Isse) very unlike any other Somali customs. This social contract dates back from the sixteenth century following the last defeat of Imam Ahmed Guray's Muslim forces by the combined Christian Abyssinian empire and Portuguese forces and later also by Abyssinian-Italian forces. The Issa, being among the Somali groups closest to the ever eastward expanding Abyssinian Empire and vulnerable to such frequent marauding by the latter, had to eke out their own livelihood and existence under those precarious conditions. Although the intra-Issa social contract was unwritten until very recently, because there was no Somali written script until the 1970s not unlike those of other Somali clans, nevertheless, there had always been a mental record of the implementation and preservation of that social contract under the auspices of a permanent special council of forty-four elders. They were assisted by subcommittees of other elders during these last nearly five centuries. This council makes all important decisions for the clan members. Once made each such decision becomes a 'Curad' (precedent) and sets a permanent code of conduct. The Issa clan is composed of six main groups, three by blood related kinship and three affiliated groups. However, the Issa social contract (Xeer Ciise) prohibits any differentiation among the blood-related kinship and the affiliated groups. Nonetheless, it is a common knowledge that the Wardeeq from whom the Ugaas of the Issa had been chosen during the last century or so, is among the affiliated groups. The affiliated groups have the same rights and obligations as the blood related groups. Affiliations or adoption is common among most Somali clans, but the degree of the rights and obligations differs among the groups. Like the Issa, only those affiliated to or adopted by the Dighil and Mirifle and by the Abgal (Hawiye) can aspire to the highest leadership position of the clan concerned. This is not by and large the case among many other Somali groups.

The traditional nominal Issa leader is an Ugaas collectively elected by the Issa men folk, but he is practically chosen by the permanent council. The Ugaas is always selected from among the numerically smallest group or groups and succession is not hereditary. Neither a son nor a brother nor any other next of kin can lay claim of heir-ship. This by and large differs from most other Somali clan customs. In the latter case, heir-ship is

customary, but can be superseded by another family member if and when the heir apparent is considered unsuitable. In the Issa case, when the incumbent dies, as is the case at present, or he is removed from office, his successor is not selected for a minimum two-three years to enable the council of elders to make a thorough study before making a final choice. Again, this is in a great difference from other Somali customs. In some such other cases, the successor is actually elected by acclamation and announced before the burial of the predecessor. This is normally done in order to minimize the chances of squabbling over the succession or when by passing an unsuitable heir apparent. No appeals lie against such a decision once it has been made.

When the Issa council of elders finally selects the new Ugaas and he is collectively endorsed by all the different Issa groups, he becomes neutral and loses his sub-clan lineage membership. He is neither obligated nor permitted to contribute to his former lineage's collective security. The Issa collectively pay the Ugaas's blood compensation to his former di-paying group for the loss of a member for his role of their collective security. This is another exception to the rule of the customs of all other Somali clans or groups.

Some Negative Somali Tradition

A negative aspect of the Somali traditional values is female circumcision. However, there has been an ongoing campaign for the last more than thirty years against that practice, but hardly has there been any tangible progress. It is a social phenomenon that has nothing to do with religion. It is a tradition that had been practiced by the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt. It then spread throughout most parts of the African continent, but fortunately not so much into the non-African Arab and other Islamic countries. Besides that Islam disapproves the Pharaonic circumcision. The unceasing campaign in Somalia is spearheaded by women intellectuals including quite a few in their late fifties, who themselves had suffered through the negative ordeal of that practice and are capable of articulating its harmful effects. Medical doctors of both genders also assist the campaign to explain serious health hazards caused by the female circumcision. There was sometimes a weekly campaign programme entitled: 'Sahansaho' broadcast over the BBC in Somali and it is also continuously discussed through the local media. On the contrary, there are no visible defender(s) of the practice. Yet, there has not been much change, because the practice has an unbeatable hidden protection. It is

none other than the mothers of the young girls to be rescued from the agony of the horrible practice. The mothers are by and large defiant and overwhelmingly in favour of the status quo that the female circumcision ought to remain. This is because a Somali mother considers herself and is also considered by the society to be the embodiment of the sanctity of family life. She believes that without circumcision her daughter is at risk of losing her virginity unceremoniously and then her chastity that also brings dishonour upon the girl's family. A Somali adage says that a girl is her mother. In other words, if a girl is considered to be of ill repute, her mother too becomes suspect. Furthermore, mothers fear of Somali men not marrying uncircumcised girls. While the mothers' worries have some cultural basis, nonetheless, their stand does not the least compensate the suffering and risks confronting their daughters. Moreover, neither of the two premises on which the Somali mothers base their beliefs is valid any longer. First, circumcision does not guarantee to preserve virginity, because some circumcised girls conceive and become pregnant after all, before their lawful marriages. Only decent family upbringing values and the individual girls' will power can guarantee their virginity, but circumcision alone does not. And secondly, Somali men already marry uncircumcised foreign women and there is no reason why they should not marry uncircumcised Somali girls, especially if there were no circumcised ones to find. Despite this backdrop, still no major breakthrough is anticipated during the next generation either and certainly not while the majority of the Somali people are nomadic and majority of girls remain illiterate, despite the campaign's intensity and objectivity. So uneasy it is to change any such established customs of perennial history.

Appended below is almost the full text of paper by the late advocate Yusuf Jama Ali Duhul mentioned earlier, on several facets of the Somali clan culture. He was a keen researcher into the subject matter and his paper is much more scholarly than the author's above. Although this paper also focuses on the northern ethos, it is nonetheless applicable to all the Somali ethnic groups in the Horn of Africa. The late advocate used 'tribe' while I have often used clan. In the context, the two words mean the same thing.

The late advocate wrote and published this Paper in London during June 1993 and he translated it himself into Somali with the intention of educating and helping the northern Somali communities to put their house in order. He kindly gave me a copy for my research, and I have decided reproduce it in order to benefit others:

THE SOMALI TRIBAL TRIANGLE -- by Yusuf Jama Ali Duhul

"Tribal Solidarity-v-The State"

"The United Nations is humanity's fragile refuge against the perils of the inter-Statal conflicts inevitable by the inherent combativeness of each of the present couple of hundred sovereignty, and so notionally equal Nation-States."

"1. The UN Rule in Somalia"

"The complete disintegration of all Statal institutions and authority in Somalia poses a challenge to the UN not contemplated by its percepts. The challenge constituted by the Somali tragedy defies the whole European-erected Nation-State system, forming the foundations of the UN, and humanity's basic social structure since the Renaissance -- as the Europeans have designated their pioneering melting of the achievements of all mankind's earlier civilizations, which had bloomed at differing times in differing places, into humanity's first world-encompassing civilization."

"The many UN security Council Resolutions on Somalia, beginning with its adoption on 24/04/1992 of Resolution 751 establishing UNOSOM, were evidently designed to revive the authority of the Somali State and endow it with the means needed for its survival. The UN Security Council evidently now assumes that demoting Somalia to an unprecedented interlude of an informal UN trusteeship administration is its best way to the needed recovery. The Somali people realize that normal life, based on their usual communal values, cannot prevail again until the variety of armed groups, controlling the various parts of their country, are completely disarmed. They, therefore, accept in principle that the UN's pioneering scheme -- on its use of force, at its own initiative, and temporarily assume political power in a member country -- is the best of the options open to them in the circumstance."

"The Somali people's broad support for the objectives of the UN operation in Somalia was, however, dampened and rendered controversial by the unevenness and unfairness is provided by its widely publicized emotional controversy surrounding the UN operations against General Aideed and his supporters has been generated by the fact that General Aideed is only one among many warlords plaguing Somalia. Besides, even in the West, where General Aideed is viewed as being one of the worst of the bloody warlords, it is widely accepted that some of the others are even worst. For instance, the British (and the world's) oldest Sunday paper, **The Observer** of

24/06/1993, says: "The UN has personified [General Aideed] as evil incarnate. He may well be, but he is not the only one." It goes on point out that the UN is dealing politically "with warlords every bit as merciless as Aideed, and in the case of men like General Morgan, far worse." This writer's 01/03/1993 memorandum to UN Secretary-General on the small tragedy, chronicles some of the deeds of General Mohammed Said Morgan."

One key fact, largely unknown to the outside world is that peace prevails in most of the territorial pieces to which Somalia got splintered under the devastating pieces impact of the former dictator's colossal abuse of the resources, power and machinery of the State. Such general prevalence of peace and communal harmony is particularly strong in (ex-British) Somaliland – the only part of Somalia subjected to a decade-long hammering with combined firepower of all the arms and resources of the State. A chilling example of the savagery resorted to by the former dictator's regime against Somaliland is provided by the plan General 'Morgan' outlined in his famous 23/01/1987 Letter to Siad Barre, his father-in-law, which is reproduced here below with an unofficial translation:

II. A Somali's Maze of Tribes

The might pull of the Somali's pervasive tribal system constitutes the dominant factor behind phenomena as diverse as: (a) the broad prevalence, in most of Somalia, of communal peace and harmony when all formal Statal authority has ceased to exist (b) the emergence and configuration of the new post-dictatorship territorial entities and (c) the former dictator's specific targeting of the (ex-British) North for special devastation.

The Somali tribal system is an exact copy of that which prevailed among Hijaz Arabs at the drawing of Islam, over fourteen (Higra) centuries ago. Each of the vast majority of the Somali people believes that he descends from one of a half dozen founding-fathers, and traces his descent from the appropriate founding-father through an unbroken paternal lineage. The tribal affiliation of each Somali is not, however, confined to the main clan, headed by the founding father. As has been mentioned, each step up one's genealogical ladder, which could consist of anything between 15-60 ancestors, constitutes for each Somali a distinct tribal unit. Such multi-layered tribal affiliation represents for the Somali nomad his identity card, address, social security and defensive shield. The source of the pressure

necessitating the need for tribal solidarity determines one's tribe of the moment. For instance, only first cousins would constitute one's 'tribe' when the adversary is a second cousin. But all main clan, issuing from the founding-father, would be one's 'tribe' when momentary adversary belongs to another main clan with differing founding-father. The key factor here is that all the Somali people are, of nomadic background. They are therefore all invariably immersed in the nomadic values and outlook.

1st. The traditions of the traditionalist Elders

The system of tribal hierarchy, founded on paternal lineage, is simply the key survival instrument for the Somali people's nomadic life. And it still functions excellently when exercised by the communal elders in the context of their traditional use and their own expertise. A telling illustration of that is provided by their success in ensuring peace and communal harmony throughout most of Somalia – without any law-and-order organs or any governmental machinery, whatsoever. In fact, the various parts of Somalia – outside cosmopolitan Mogadishu and some tribally contested zones – enjoy not only communal peace and harmony but also, in many parts, wide-ranging regulation-free trade, and hence a truly free market economy.

2nd. The Alien Byways of the Alien State

The fate of institutional and foreign relations politics is Somaliland, since the overthrow of the former dictator, illustrates the limits of politicizing the Somalis nomadism-engendered tribal heritage. The communal elders, so effective and wise in promoting and oiling of the means needed for safeguarding communal peace and harmony, found themselves so hopelessly adrift in relation to the politics of the State's institutions, its central government and its relations with other States and inter-State Organisations.

Those with European-type training, known as the educated class, were supposed to provide the needed relief. They are, however, crippling handicapped by two realities. The first is that the acquisition of modern education, even at the highest levels, does not undo their nomadism-based tribal outlook and levels. The second is that their very education would marginalize for them the consensus foundations of all Somali communal decisions, and would interest instead instill in them European political concepts like the contested elections, spawning contested central governments. Their consequent endeavors to seek mandates from the nomadism-imbued electorate, leaves them no choice to playing the tribal card,

and so get sucked into the quagmire of politicized tribalism.

3rd. The Genesis of Secession In Somaliland

The gravity of the damages caused by the dubious leadership of the practitioners of politicized tribalism, among the Somali educated elements is shown to Somaliland through their political ineptitude.

The wholly superfluous unilateral declaration of the independence of Somaliland on 16/05/1991 was the result of the combined effects of two facts. The first was the overpowering pull of the ubiquitous tribal machine. The second was the inability of the educated class, and in particular their politically active elements, to escape from the blinkers of politicized tribalism to a modicum of the nationality inherent in the education attributed to them.

The move was propelled by the massive resentment of Isaac clan, constituting about two-thirds of the population of the ex-British North, against the former dictator's targeting them and their land for systematic annihilation, exemplified by his total devastation, largely through the military direction of his son-in-law, General Morgan, of Hargeisa, Somalia's second city. The genocidal overtones of the attacks unleashed against the Isaac, led, on the overthrow of the dictator's regime, to an understandable determination among the Isaac, at the popular level, not to be subjected again to similar attempts at wiping them out. The former dictator's premeditated use of all power and resources of the State for their collective elimination was, as is usual in such circumstances, attributed by the masses to the whole of the ex-Italian South. 'No more Mogadishu' was the popular synthesis of such sentiment. It is such popular opposition to a recurrence of their collective travail that appalling inadequacy of the political leadership of the educated class has translated into the needless braving of world opprobrium through the unfortunate unilateral declaration of independence.

Here is an outline of the self-evident political facts, which plainly obviated, at the time, any need for such a hazardous step. The first of such facts is that, at the time of such declaration, the State of Somalia had already largely disintegrated and ceased to exist. Consequently, there was no State to secede from. In fact Somaliland was, at the time (and evidently still is), the biggest territorial chunk of Somalia. Moreover, the fact that demographically and territorially it represented about a third of Somalia, and also encompassed one of the two Somali States which united in 1960 to form Somalia, made Somaliland the best qualified heir of the name and

resources of the Somali State. In addition to that, the Issaaq were the then only major Somali clan enjoying, on account of their unparalleled suffering under the overthrown dictator, great sympathy among all the other Somali clans. Consequently, the Issaaq assumption of Somalia's political leadership would have been the one development that could have saved Somalia from the present tragic disintegration.

It was, in any case, obvious that Somalia's old highly centralized political set-up, which led to Siyad Barre's highly personalized savage regime, was finished and dead. Equally obvious was the fact that the chaos then pervading the ex-Italian South rendered unrealistic any talk about the future political system for Somalia – until really representative solid administrations were established in all the territorial entities of the South. It was, in addition, clear even then, that Somalia could be reconstituted only on the basis of a new political system – clearly founded on the twin pillars of consensus and decentralization.

One corrective measure urgently needed is to raise Somaliland from its present limbo, to which it got internationally relegated. The international community's abandon of Somaliland and its people is glaringly shown by the fact that all its public utilities and infrastructure remain as devastated and desolate as the day the dictator responsible for them was overthrown. A few of the hospitals, schools etc have been restored to makeshift use. But obviously the former dictator's destruction mania has left little room for self-help improvisations. The completely devastated utilities include all the installations and equipment for electricity generating, telecommunication, water and all those of its meager industrial and artisanal plants – plus of course the schools, hospitals, bridges and other social facilities.

Clearly, the people of Somaliland will not be able to resume their coherent and productive social living until such primary utilities and infrastructures are restored. And it is the UN's failure to draw the attention of the international community to their sad plight that is jarring the people of Somaliland.

4th. A Plague Called Siyadism

The troubles of the people of Somaliland have been compounded by the incompatibility of their multi-layered tribal structure – so marvelously adapted for the Somali people's extravagantly egalitarian nomadic life style – with the intrinsic inequality of a hierarchy-based central government. To

neutralize the intrinsic divisiveness of the Somali tribal system, all mention or acknowledgement of any tribal affiliation was tabooed during the anti-Colonial struggle for independence. Such ban of all mention of any tribal affiliation has never been lifted.

However, even during the Fifties, when the Somali people's virtual unanimity on seeking independence was generating maximum pan-Somali nationalism, the ban on tribalism did not extend to its social security dimensions. The powerful tribalism-aborring nationalist parties did not object to, or even notice, that the better off continued to support their needy tribal kinsmen. The full-faceted tribalism itself re-emerged before the advent of independence. Such resurfacing was triggered by the lure of the benefits and patronages enjoyed by the members of the first Somali governments, installed for internal affairs by the colonial powers. The overthrown dictator gave caricatural inflation to both aspects of the preceding duality on the role of the tribal factor in Somali politics. At the official level, he not only continued the ban but also pretended to extirpate it completely by presiding over its public ceremonial burial. And, at the same time, he raised its actual practice to the unique status of being the one constant and overriding consideration of his regime's criteria for evaluating everything and everybody.

Somaliland is now bedeviled by the effects of the former dictator's two interconnected political innovations. The first is his astronomical elevation and extension of the sway of the tribal factor in all aspects of the use (and abuse) of the State's machinery and powers. The second is his consequent promoting to political prominence of an endless parade of the types who would feign believing in the dictator's pretence of being "the father of wisdom and the fountain of learning"; and, in addition, would always be prepared to espy the singularity of the virtues of the dictator's eponymous contribution to humanity's heritage, 'Siyadism', as incarnated by the ideological label sported by the dictator at that moment – be that Positive Neutrality, any of the variety of (non-scientific) Socialist tags (Arab, African, Islamic or simple Socialism) or either of the poles of Marxism-Leninism or Western liberalism.

III. Egal: The Tale of Tall Somersaults

The Issaq clan's instrument for the struggle against the dictator, the Somali National Movement (SNM) and its post-dictator Government of Somaliland, were both plagued by being taken over by the graduates of Siyadism. The Siyadists' three arms for their usurping of political leadership in Somaliland were all owed to the dictator and his Siyadism. The first was

Siyadism-sharpened expertise in the manipulation of politicized tribalism; the second was the communal prominence conferred by the (at least nominally) elevated posts held by them in the dictator's regime; and the third was the financial clout given to them by their shares of the public assets looted under the spoils system, sponsored, by the dictator.

IV. The Case for Authentic Tribalism

Egal's approach is, however, nearer to the traditional Somali ways of conducting communal matters than the half-hearted approach generally used in adapting the Somali tribal system to the needs and politics of the Somali State. But it was no more than a poor approximation of the concluding phase of the traditional method.

1st. The Eternal Tribal Angle

The Somali nomads naturally never selected anyone for the Presidency of a State or indeed any officers of any permanent central authority. In fact, the Somali nomads did not have, or need, any organized political authority. That of course does not mean that nomadic societies are immune to the frictions and tensions incidental to social living.

The disputes within the Somali nomadic society could, as in other human societies, be between individuals or groups. The Somali tribal structure gives individual disputes, even those between a husband and wife, a communal (i.e. tribal) dimension. The Somali nomad's machinery for the handling of such disputes, whether of individual or group origin, is an ad hoc body, formed for the specific dispute. It would invariably consist of the delegated representatives of the two sides, and its decisions would be reached by consensus. Occasionally, the two sides would agree to refer the dispute to the binding arbitration of a third party, acting through a similar ad hoc body.

The selection of the delegates of each side to such ad hoc bodies is the only electoral process known to Somali customary percepts. Each side's delegation would, as far as is possible, be representative of the sub-sections of the tribal level. The invariable practice is that the tribal entity concerned, whatever its level, would – as a matter of its tribal prestige and honor – select as its delegates the best qualified among its members for the particular task. Picking the persons best qualified for the particular job, among their members, needs no competitive campaigning. Such persons would have already emerged, and established their communal reputations, through earlier achievements.

2nd. Refurbishing the Original tribal Criteria

The crux of the present Somali problem is that the preceding basic Somali social norms are being not only ignored but ousted. They are being reversed and supplanted by the values and processes of the imported State and its central government. The intruding alien conceptual outlook and processes, incarnated by the State and its machinery, are not being adapted and fitted into the millennial Somali social framework. On the contrary, the complete reverse is being attempted – namely, using the values and needs of the imported State as the social mainstay, and adaptively subordinating to its needs and processes the tribal system underlying the Somali social fabric. Hence the sway of the prevailing pernicious hold of politicized tribalism in the selection of super-delegates, like the President of Somaliland. And hence the relegation into the oblivion of the impeccable pan-Somali tradition of selecting, as a matter of communal prestige and honor, their best qualified for the job.

3rd. Comprehensive tribalization - The minefield Ahead:

Clearly a most welcome monumental advance would be achieved if the traditional criteria for selecting the tribal delegates to the variety of ad hoc meetings could be applied to the nominating of the officers for the various institutions and organs of the Somali State and government. Obviously, the difficulties of the complete and formal tribalization of the Primary State machinery, like the civil service, are immense. Even more serious are the seemingly insurmountable barriers constituted by the ethos and Organisational structure of the armed formations essential for the existence of the State. A minimum of such armed formations would be a police force to ensure the law-and-order of the State and to guarantee the executability of its laws and administrative measures.

Such seemingly insurmountable difficulties may look less formidable when the top echelons of the State's institutions and machinery are manned by the best qualified elements of country's clans and their subsidiary tribal levels. There is an evident need for some representative organ to oversee, at the level of the Issaaq sub-clans and their non-Issaaq equivalents, the selection of their best qualified for the various parts, at all the appropriate tribal levels. It would be reasonable to rely, in that regard, on the continued prevalence of the give-and-take pragmatism so crucial to the day-to-day application of the traditional tribal affairs.

If we take as an example the post of the President of Somaliland, he would plainly belong to only one of the sub-clan level tribes of the Issaaq. The post would be allotted to one sub-clan on something like the following context. Each of the tribes at the sub-clan level would have selected its

candidate for the Presidency of Somaliland from the candidates emerging from the preceding selection processes of the network of tribal branches at each link at the (Issaaq) tribal lineage. The selection process at each tribal level would include some inter-tribal haggling. Each tribal side would refer to the special qualities of their candidate, the exceptional reasons for allotting the position of their side; and would emphasize points like the rival tribes having been assigned earlier benefits, some special needs of their side, some customary norms favoring their side etc. such informal bargaining eventually leads to a consensus on the tribe (not the candidate) to assign the post to.

V. The Borama Experiment and Experience

The proceeding of the shir (meeting) of the traditional elders of the tribes of Somaliland, held in Borama from 04-02-1993 to 15-05-1993, is instructive in that respect. It originated as a pan-Issaaq ad hoc assembly, empanelled at the level of the Issaaq sub-clans – the highest echelon of the Issaaq tribal structure – to determine a tribal dispute which had degenerated into some serious armed clashes between two Issaaq sub-clans. The participation in the meeting, in addition to the warring sub-clans, by the rest of the Issaaq sub-clans was intended, as is usual in such circumstances, to facilitate the peace process of the two opposing sub-clans. The success of that summit assembly of the Issaaq clan was not limited to its settling the dispute between the two sub-clans whose conflict was the cause of organizing it. It also similarly ended other less acute differences simmering among other elevated levels of the Issaaq clan tribal hierarchy. To make its peace mission not confined to the Issaaq but extended it to all Somaliland, the assembly invited the non-Issaaq tribes of Somaliland to make it a pan-Somaliland assembly by sending delegates, at corresponding tribal levels.

1st. The Impulsion of the Approaching vacuum.

It was after the successful conclusion of its peace mission that the assembly of tribal elders, representing the people of Somaliland, decided to examine in Borama, as the country's representatives, the wider issue of the political needs of Somaliland. They appreciated that one mishap was the main cause of the political problems facing Somaliland. This was the failure of the government of the first President of Somaliland, Abdurahman Ahmed Ali, to accomplish the preparatory assignments of its two-year transitional mandate. The crucial measures never even attempted by the transitional government include: the vital task of tackling the destabilization peril posed by the various tribe-based militia groups – by transforming their better

elements into the nucleus of the Somaliland army, and disarming the rest. The areas so totally neglected include: failure to enact the basic laws establishing the structures and powers of the legislative, executive and judicial organs of the State; the laws establishing and regulating the dues, levies and taxes needed to generate the revenue for financing the basic needs of governing; the re-establishing of the primary administrative machinery of the State; and the re-organizing and operating of the nucleus of the social services.

The assembly of tribal elders was faced, when it gave itself ultimate political authority of Somaliland, with a two-pronged peril. The first prong of the hovering menace was the highly precarious security situation inherent in the unabated prevalence of the political, legal and administrative vacuum incidentally pawned by the successful revolt against the former dictator's regime; and the second was the scheduled end, on 17-05-1993, of the two-year mandate of the transitional government.

The assembly of tribal elders' initiative of, in effect, investing their assembly with the powers of Somaliland's constitutive assembly, had, however, its own intrinsic problems. The important reality, lost sight of the tribal elders, is that their own field of expertise does not extend to the powers, structure and machinery of Nation-State. The requisites of a State are simply unknown to the norms and percepts of the Somali tribal system. Moreover, the Somali tribal criteria under which the Borama assembly was convened and conducted were not the genuine variety of the Somali nomads, but that of politicized tribalism – the debased, generally pernicious, convoluted *métis*, evolved from the vain endeavor of trying to fit precepts and values of Somali tribalism to the needs and methods of the Nation-State. As has been pointed out, the exact reverse should have been done. The needs and processes of the State should have been adapted to the norms and values of the native Somali tribal system. And aim of this paper is to show the ways and means of doing that.

2nd. The Strains of the Overlooked Criteria

The rectification needed would cover the formation of the assembly of tribal elders itself – and the assembly's subsequent functioning as the interim constitutive assembly of Somaliland, including its selection of Egal as the President of Somaliland. In both, the missing element is the respecting of the outlook and values of the Somali people's genuine nomads' tribalism, and the application and its criteria for the selection of its political representatives. As had been indicated, the sole political representatives, or indeed political authority, known to the Somali nomads and their

tribalism were the delegates of a tribal entity to an ad hoc meeting in which a communal matter concerning its members would be dealt with. The criteria of Somali tribalism for selecting its political office-holders or representatives are those used by the multitudes of tribal entities at the multitude of tribal levels in the selection of such delegates to an ad hoc meetings. And, as has been pointed out, the invariable rule of all Somalis in all parts of the Somali country has always been the selecting of their best qualified for each assignment.

C. Egal's 'Election'

Clearly such criteria were not applied in the selection of the members of the Borama assembly of tribal elders or in their subsequent selecting of Egal as the President of Somaliland. Even if all the earlier errors and faults are disregarded, the events of its closing phase – that of the day of 'electing' Egal, as recorded in the semi-official video tape – remove the assembly and its processes from any connection with the precepts of the Somalis' tribal system. Consensus is, after all, the foundations of all the Somali people's determination of, not only political issues, but of all communal matters. Yet, the Chairman of the Borama assembly refused to allow the three rivals of Egal for the Presidency of Somaliland their requests for addressing the meeting on their respective political programs. The Chairman, a strong partisan of Egal, pretended to cancel unilaterally the earlier formal acceptance by all, including the Chairman himself, of the principle of the candidates addressing the assembly on their respective programs. He further denied the candidates their requests for addressing the meeting on the arbitrariness and illegitimacy of his ruling. Consequently, the three candidates and their supporters walked out in protest.

The ensuing commotion was not confined to the protesting candidates and their supporters' walkout. It engulfed the Egal supporters, including many who were not members of the assembly but had walked in from outside. The Chairman still insisted that he would ballot those present in the hall, including the many intruding non-members. Egal was 'elected' as the President of Somaliland by such dubious balloting – additionally marred by much disorder and confusion surrounding the agreeing on the method of conducting it, and then even during the voting by the hand-raising which eventually prevailed.

It would be superfluous to point out that such 'election' has nothing to do with the consensus so vital to political and all communal decisions under the rules of the Somali tribal system. It would seem equally clear that, under the normal processes of the West, the fountain of the requisites and

processes of Nation-States, any general assembly meeting conducted in this way would be invalid. And so would of course be a business conducted by it.

VI. Some Thoughts for the Future

It may be appropriate to return now to the issue of fitting the essentially centripetal requisites and processes of a State to the manifestly centrifugal ethos and methods of the Somali tribal system's intricate network of graduated layers. Let us continue with the ways of filling, under Somali tribal methods and perceptions, of the variety of positions at the various levels of the variety of institutions and organs of a State. As has been noted, the daunting practical difficulty of applying Somali tribal norms to the Somali State is constituted by the impracticability of assigning on tribal basis of all posts of all the State's departments, institutions, establishments and organs – and particularly those in the armed formations, like the police and the army.

1st. The Pivotal Steering Committee

Such seemingly insurmountable difficulties may, however, be less formidable if, as would be the case if the tribal criteria is strictly followed, the top echelons of the State's institutions and machinery are first manned by the country's best elements. There would presumably be established – for the need is evident – a tribally representative organ, at the Issaaq sub-clan level and their non-Issaaq equivalents, to oversee the actual selection of the best available for the differing posts at the differing tribal levels. Such a superior, in fact sovereign, tribally mandated organ, would delegate the needed supervisions, at the medium and lower tribal echelons, to appropriate subsidiary organs. It would similarly delegate its authority in relation to the armed formations to its commander. The commanders themselves would have been put through the supervisory organ's selecting process, and so presumably would be equipped with the needed discretion and breadth of vision.

Such delegation at this level, and the subsidiary delegations of authority at lower levels, would be made in the context of the Somali traditional requisites of acceptance into the ranks of communal leadership. The qualities considered crucial for communal leadership include – as is known to all – fairness, discretion, breadth of vision and, above all the foundations on which such qualities would rest, namely plain common sense. Such officers would, when selected according to the Somali standard criteria, be amply endowed with the qualities needed to restrain them from the temptations of abusing their powers – and indeed from all excesses.

2nd. The Posts of the Tribe-based State

After this delineation of the social context in which the powers of State posts allotted on tribal basis would be exercised, let us begin with a State's top possible position –that of a person heading both the State and the government of a country, like the President of Somaliland. Normally, the post would be given to one of the Issaaq sub-clans, and, as has been observed, the background of the selection would be something like the following: Each of the tribes at the sub-clan level would have selected its candidate for the Presidency of Somaliland from the candidates who had emerged from the preceding selection processes by the lower network of tribal branches at each link in the (Issaaq) tribal lineage. The selection process at each of such lower tribal levels would have included some inter-tribal haggling at the given lineage. Each tribal side, in each of the differing tribal levels through which the matter had progressed, would have emphasized all matters likely to help their candidate – the special qualifications of their candidate, the meritoriousness of the claim of their tribal side, the advantage formerly allotted to the others, etc. Such informal bargaining would eventually lead to a consensus on the tribe (not candidate) to assign the particular position to.

The selection of the next officer of the State, the Vice-President in the case of Somaliland, would follow similar course except that it would be affected by the tribal repercussions of the preceding selection. For instance, the sub-clan given the top post would be out of the race for the Vice-Presidency and for all the following important posts until, at least, each of the Issaaq's major sub-clans and their non-Issaaq equivalents are allotted one of the chain of posts, next to the preceding one, in a descending order of importance. The bargaining, and its give-and-take approach of assigning posts, would continue until all the positions, subjected to partition at that tribal level, are exhausted. The posts subjected to direct division at the lower tribal levels would be similarly allocated.

The choice against such abuse are provided by the very Somali tribal system on the basis of which each of the powerful positions has been assigned to its holder. A member of a tribal entity has, towards his tribal kinsmen, a responsibility inherent in, and additional to, his instinctively rushing to their unquestioning succour. It is the duty of restraining a fellow tribal kinsman from transgression against the others. Such duty of dissuading fellow tribal kinsmen from wrongs against other others arises from the cardinal tribal character attributed by the Somali tribal system to both the initial transgression and the retaliation it provokes. The Somali nomads' instinctive hostility to the aggressions by the members of their

(tribal) side is dictated by self-interest. Such conduct would, if not restrained, provoke retaliation. And the workings of the over-powering tribal solidarity pull would ensure that the ensuing conflict would not be confined to the aggressor, but would engulf his tribal kinsmen. Hence the permeating of the Somali social fabric by the sentiment of the effectively taking the side of wronged strangers, as against the serious excesses of their tribal kinsmen, in the self interested preventing of the speaking of tribal conflicts.

It is, therefore, clear that the risks of abuse of power will not be increased by the tribal source of the relevant power. On the contrary, such tribal dimension is the best guarantee not only against the abuse of power, but also against all blatant excesses and inequities in any aspect of the organizing and administering of such open tribalization of the powers and structure of the Somali State. The offender's own tribe would, as his nominees and guarantors, be the first to pressure the offending officer to desist from any measures or conduct which provokes the justified hostility of the tribal entity concerned – that is because their very selecting of the offender for the position would make them tribally responsible for his excesses.

VII. And Some Concluding Observations

This paper argues that the Somali tribalism, so extravagantly practiced by the former dictator – and which was the principal cause of the disintegration of the authority and institutions of the Somali State – was not the genuine tribalism of the Somali nomads. It was, this paper maintains, the counterfeit alien politicized tribalism, propagated by its unscrupulous practitioners, generally known as 'afminshaaro' (the saw-mouths).

The Somali people's first priority is considered to be the reverting to the values and criteria of their nomads' authentic tribal system. Such return to the social values and criteria underlying the Somali peoples' authentic tribal system, entails the prior discarding of the basic error which has led to its being supplanted by the present politicized counterfeit. This is the unwary acceptance, and subsequent maintenance, of the departed Colonial powers' policy of using their own political outlooks and social values as the governing principle of their rule. They viewed the values and standards of the tribal structure underpinning the Somali society, as a vulgar 'native' monstrosity to be tamed and fitted, to the extent possible, to their 'civilized' values.

1st. Re-educating the Educated Class

The so-called educated class is the social stratum responsible for the

continuation, after the departure of its Colonialist begetters, of the reversal imposed on the Somalis' own millennial social standards and operating criteria. The 'so-called' tag is intended to underline the deficiencies of the arrogant assumption behind limiting the Status of being educated to those schooled according to the teaching methods, conceptual parameters and values pioneered in Europe. The imparting and acquisition of the fund of knowledge specific and essential to the Somali Society, and from which emanate Somali social values and culture, the fund of knowledge vital to nomadic life and its sustaining pastoralism – these are, by definition, excluded from the elements constituting 'education'.

Yet the indisputable fact is that the social stratum considered 'educated' by the yardstick is the one which has failed the Somali people. The Somali traditional elders, who are steeped in the Somali people's traditional education, reflecting its social standards and criteria, are the ones sustaining, despite the total disintegration of the State and its authority, the organized and peaceful communal life enjoyed in nearly all the parts of Somalia. The sad exceptions are areas in which Somali traditional values have been fatally weakened, like metropolitan Mogadishu, and the areas permeated by inter-tribal contests, deeply rooted in old rivalries.

A good example of the vital social contributions of the traditional elders, really educated in the ways of the Somali people, is provided by their communal role in Somaliland. Such tribal elders have been the social mainstay there not only since the completion of the disintegration of the Somali State in early 1991, but also during the preceding decade – when the former dictator's attempt at crushing, by limitless savagery, the Issaaq's long-simmering resistance, led to the big urban centers only, transformed into armed citadels, remaining in the former dictator's grip.

2nd. Loosening the Grip of Politicized Tribalism.

It would seem obvious that the solution for the present Somali tragedy is the discarding of the prevailing mischievous politicized tribalism, and reverting instead to the authentic tribal system of the Somali nomads. Still unresolved would be the thorny problems of the method and mechanism of actually determining the person's best qualified for the top positions of the State and indeed the nature of the qualifications needed.

One thing would be clear. The traditional leaders cannot be expected to repeat their successful deploying of their great expertise in the Somali traditional rules and the tribal system on which they are founded, for the preservation of communal peace and harmony – in the unrelated field of picking the best suited persons for each of the State's top posts, among those 'educated' in the alien ways, and so are needed for the running of the

alien State. They simply lack any knowledge of the scholastic ingredients of the expertise expected of the managers of the machinery of a State.

The top selectors of the nominees for the top positions of the State would have to come from the 'educated' stratum, who have been so pathetically ineffective up to now. Their past group failing, however, were not due to any in-built group-wide faults or deficiencies. Their trouble stemmed from the ramifications of politicized tribalism, particularly as escalated and exploited by the former dictator. He attributed to the others his own amorality and singular capacity for intrigues. He consequently was always on the lookout for those likely to rise to political leadership at the upper echelons of the main Somali clans. The educated elite were singled out for constant surveillance by his infamous National Security Service (NSS). Those with the integrity and ability components of effective leadership were targeted for intensive persecution. In consequence, the more decent and the more able members of the educated class had to flee out of Somalia or languish in one of the dictator's numerous prisons. The few of the category, who managed somehow to evade both the above fates, remained in the oblivion corners of the dictator's regime, depressed and depreciated by the constant fear of being found and flushed out. Thousands of the leadership-class category of educated Somalis, especially among those maturing during the last quarter of a century, are dispersed all over the world. It is merely a question of establishing the machinery to mobilize them.

The ultimate question is the way of establishing, through the open use of the traditional tribal criteria, of the pivotal Steering Committee itself – to be entrusted with the fundamental task of selecting, for the appropriate categories, the nominee for each leadership position in the political and permanent personnel of the State.

3rd. Steering Towards the Steering Committee

One Somali rhetorical traditions, frequently used in meetings on communal matters, is to ask the proponent of an unexpected or untried suggestion to furnish himself the needed elaborations. This writer proposed to follow that tradition, and put forward his suggestion on the formation, on tribal basis, of the cardinal Steering Committee. One of the basic requisites, implicit in the processes of the nomad's authentic tribal system, is the tribal identification of the parties concerned – by the tribal level appropriate to the circumstances. This writer proposes to respect that tradition, and tribally identify himself as a member of the Garhajis sub-clan of the Issaaq, which would be the appropriate level here. Hence the suggestion is being made in the writer's capacity of an elder of the Garhajis branch of the Issaaq educated leadership. Traditional elders do not usually identify themselves

in this way because the details of their tribal identity would well be known to their counterparts – and they certainly do not attribute to themselves specific qualities or talents. It is, however, suggested that the writer's claim to membership of 'the Issaaq educated leadership' is justified by the unprecedented context in which it is being made – namely the proposing of a way of nominating, on tribal basis, the members of the key Steering Committee, which will, in turn, nominate all the holders of all important posts in Somaliland.

To go, then, to the core of the suggested tribe-based State, this writer proposes, in his capacity of a Garhajis 'educated' elder:

That, firstly, the educated leadership of the Awal sub-clan of the Issaaq should select, on the basis and criteria of the authentic Somali tribal system, one of their members to be the President of the Steering Committee of Somaliland, the kernel of the proposed tribe-based government, which is entrusted with the selecting of the persons to fill each of the important positions of Somaliland; and

That, secondly, the educated leadership of each of the other main Issaaq sub-clans and their non-Issaaq equivalents select one of their respective members, on similar basis and criteria, to be a member of the said Steering Committee; and

That, thirdly, the wide discretion of the said Steering Committee would include its co-opting to its membership of full additional members to represent the people of Somaliland who do not belong to the main Issaaq sub-clans or the main sub-clans of their non-Issaaq equivalents."

The Media (see also the Epilogue)

Since the Somali script had never existed before the early 1970s, it makes the Somali media a new comer at the last decades of the twentieth century. Prior to this date, the only means of mass communication among the Somalis were through oral messages. This evidently made the Somali people an oral society which could not be easily replaced even after writing the Somali script itself. Prior to this development of the Somali script there used to be none or few newspapers in foreign languages. Even these ceased to exist at the advent of the military rule in October 1969, except one government mouth piece daily. This was first issued in Italian and later in Somali, with a weekly English language issue. Nevertheless, the Somalis being always prone to seek information in their lives of adventures had exchanged news about their environment or even the world at large. This was communicated orally. Even the luckier educated ones and other groups enlightened by their

urban environments could not escape this phenomenon. They had to look for news by oral means in the absence of an independently reliable media. A great deal of interactions would, therefore, follow orally.

It was a common practice during the good old days i.e. before the military take-over to always find a lot of group meetings of people at various gossip corners, especially in the capital. While in the rest of the world people look for news through the papers early in the morning, by contrast, Somalis would gather news in the evening after their daily work or business. These took place at coffee-shops, especially in the late evening until midnight when licensed places must close down by Municipality by-laws. One common such gossip's corner was known as Bar Fiat (so named after its proximity to the main garage of the Italian owned Fiat Automobile Company). One frequent participant of that gossip corner was Colonel Mohamed Siad Barre, then second-in-command of the Somali National Army, as Bar Fiat was close to his residence. One common topic of discussion among the gathered groups could concern the politics of the country and necessarily the conduct of the government of the day. Conflicts of interests would often arouse debates of pros and cons among people who might not be in that government themselves. Many believed that the topics of discussion at those corners by and large emanated from some shrewd Somali Ministers by proxy in order to sound out public opinion on certain trends of national issues in the absence of press reports. On one fateful evening the topic of discussion or rather the gossip was allegedly whether education helped the less wise to become any wiser. Mohamed Siad Barre was reported to have remarked that if there were wisdom on sale he would buy it for a certain 'So and so'. That 'So and so' prominently featured in Siad Barre's government for well over a decade,

After the midnight closure of those licensed places, the gossip corners would be transferred into mobile cars. It was, therefore, a common practice to see such fleets of private cars moving about in Mogadishu until late hours into the night. Each such car would have a number of occupants conversing among themselves to conclude their topic of the day's gossip.

These gossip corners were later severely discouraged by the military regime because Siad Barre knew that by and large the day to day conduct of his government would be an inevitable topic of discussion. And any such discouragement meant an outright prohibition.

Chapter Five

SOME SOMALI KEY PLAYERS

I have selected the following few personalities and groups from among a multitude of factions and political players or even warlords to write short accounts of their role in the upheavals in Somalia or before, although some of these accounts have unintentionally transcended into becoming their personal biographies:

DR. ISMAIL JUMALE OSSOBLE

He was born in 1931. In his youth Ismail Jumale had been an active cadre member of the youth wing of the pro-independence Somali Youth League party (sic). He later had his higher education in Italy and graduated from the University of Rome, majoring in law and minoring in journalism. Upon his return to Somalia in the mid 1960s, apart from legal practice, he also founded a prestigious monthly Paper, IL Tribuna. He was elected to Parliament during March 1969 in Mogadishu and joined that last civilian government, which was formed following those elections, becoming its Minister of Information. It was overthrown by military coup d'état only six months later. All members of that government including Dr. Ismail Jumale were detained for three and a half years without trial.

Dr. Ismail Jumale, after his release from detention in early 1973 resumed his legal practices, despite also becoming a renowned human rights activist. He had the rare quality of not taking civil cases against people he knew well. Instead he would offer to mediate the parties for an out of court settlement regardless of how much business he would lose. Only if a-would be defendant rejected such mediation would he take a case against him.

The withdrawal by the former SNM Vice-Chairman, the late Ali Mohamed Ossoble, alias 'Wardhigley' and his fellow Hawiye members from that Movement in 1987 was a precursor for the birth of a Hawiye underground caucus and secondly founding the Hawiye based United Somali Congress (USC) later. According to Dr. Ismail Jumale, that Hawiye group's withdrawal from the SNM became a hotly and widely debated issue among the Hawiye mainstream both within the country and abroad. Many people resented the withdrawal and considered it politically a step backward, while others defended it on the basis of Ali Wardhigley's

accusation of the SNM's hidden agenda of secession (Lewis: Blood and Bone p.213). However, the majority of the Hawiye mainstream including Dr. Ismail Jumale himself finally opted for the establishment of a Hawiye based political platform to demonstrate own clan identity. Dr. Ismail Jumale was secretly selected a leader and mandated to work out the details. He then selected other members of an underground Hawiye caucus under his chairmanship. Only few people, even among the Hawiye knew who those other caucus members were, while Dr. Ismail Jumale's secret political activities were common knowledge among all the Hawiye, especially in the capital and other main towns (see under Aideed). A year or so prior to the formation of the USC, Dr. Ismail Jumale was again reconfirmed by the Hawiye underground caucus in Mogadishu as their future leader. His name was not, however, specifically mentioned even in the unwritten code of conduct for fear of a leak and reprisal by the Siad Barre regime. The choice was therefore glossed over in broad terms, though still a strictly guarded secret, in the name of Dr. Ismail Jumale's Abgal subclan. Ali Mahdi also belonged to the same group and was the only other Abgal member of that caucus. This subclan membership would later create an heirship controversy in the wake of Dr. Ismail Jumale's sudden death.

Two specific Hawiye lineage groups who were considered vulnerable to penetration by the agents of the Siad Barre regime were neither represented in the Hawiye underground caucus nor were they required to make any contributions to the common cause. They were kept in the dark, until after the founding of the USC. Likewise, many Hawiye individuals considered security risk were kept at a distance.

Dr. Ismail's organisational structure included a second echelon of members to replace his caucus if the latter were discovered and dismantled by the regime or its members were arrested. He once orally gave me the names of some of those reserved candidates whom I could contact if the need arose.

After the founding of the USC Dr. Ismail Jumale widened his underground contacts and extended to other non-Hawiye Somali groups, especially the Darod whose leading contact members were the late Professor Ibrahim Mohamed Aryan and General Mohamed Abshir, among others. And to the best of my recollection, these underground contacts also included at least two prominent personalities from Siad Barre's Marehan subclan of the Darod. He had already contacted and opened channels of communication and dialogue with the SNM. Although Dr. Ismail Jumale did

a great deal of ground work and kicked the ball rolling for a regime change, unfortunately, he did not live to see the fall of that dictatorial regime. Had he lived after that regime was toppled, he would have emerged as an undisputed national leader post Siad Barre whom every body had trusted; especially the Darod and the civil war could have been averted. It was not to be. God had ordained otherwise.

A Human Rights Center was since established and named after Dr. Ismail Jumale where his widow has been the chairperson of the managing council.

HASHI WEHELIYE MAALIN

Was a successful businessman despite his relatively young age. He was the closest associate of Dr. Ismail Jumale among the members of the Hawiye underground caucus. He played a major role in financing the activities of that caucus and also eventually of the USC expenses in general.

Hashi paid dearly for the liberation struggle. He was killed together Musa Boqor in the midst of the Mogadishu uprising that toppled the former military regime. They were most likely killed by operatives of that regime. What happened was that an initiative by some members of that regime and concerned elders was to attempt to arrange a ceasefire of the then ongoing escalation of the deadly flare up in the capital. Two delegations of 6-7 elders each were sent to each command posts of the two warring sides, the regime's forces and those of the USC. Hashi was included in the delegation to the latter. The two sides had been notified before hand, but the location of the USC command post was unknown. The elders to the latter were therefore halted at some other location where some commanders of the USC fighters would come and meet them, as the USC would never want to reveal the venue of their command post. The vehicles of the delegation were parked there and the regime's operatives must have believed that position was the command post of their enemy and bombarded it. Musa Boqor died instantly while Hashi was rushed to the nearest hospital, but he was also already dead when he was taken there.

ALI MAHDI MOHAMED

Born in 1938, a former Government employee, he was also elected to parliament in March 1969 which was dissolved six months later after the military take over. He then became a successful businessman and an hotelier.

He was the second Abgal together with Dr. Ismail Jumale, in the all Hawiye underground caucus formed few years before the official founding of the USC; which committed their clan to join forces with the already existing armed struggle to overthrow the military regime. After Dr. Jumale's death, the Hawiye caucus renamed itself as an Executive Committee of USC. They later unilaterally appointed Ali Mahdi as president of Somalia only the day after Siad Barre fled the Somali capital, but was still within the country. This appointment raised a serious controversy throughout the country and ended up in failure, (see also under Aideed). However, six months later during the Djibouti II Reconciliation Conference, Ali Mahdi was the sole uncontested candidate for a two-year interim presidency of the Somali Republic. The conference resolutions never got off the ground due to Hawiye (USC) infighting of which Ali Mahdi and General Mohamed Farah Aideed were the main protagonists. Nevertheless, the late Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, who had co-chaired the above conference later put the blame for the failure of the above conference's outcome squarely and equally upon former President Hassan Gouled of Djibouti and the Somali presidential designate, Ali Mahdi. The former by not making any follow up, for the implementation of those resolutions. And the latter by unilaterally amending the old Constitution, which that last Conference resolved to be reinstated, in order to style himself as an executive president. For further details, see under Djibouti.

On their part, both Ali Mahdi and Djibouti officials blamed Aideed as the spoiler of that reconciliation process. The Djibouti Government had ever since maintained close relationship with Ali Mahdi, his supporters and his political allies up to the time of holding the Arta Conference.

Ali Mahdi remained Aideed's arch rival up to the time of the latter's death and would ally himself with anyone else against his common foe, despite the latter's reconciliatory gestures toward Ali Mahdi. He often ingratiated his political grouping with the American led international intervention forces (UNOSOM II), Aideed's declared adversaries.

After Aideed's death, Ali Mahdi and the former's succeeding son, Hussein Aideed, or the Aideed junior, began reconciliations, firstly for the normalization of the capital city, Mogadishu and its environs (The Benadir) upon the basis of the October 1996 Nairobi Accord, which might not have been possible during the Aideed senior's life time.

Ali Mahdi was among the key players in the Ethiopian sponsored one-sided Sodere Meeting during November 1996 - January 1997, which at least served the purpose of reuniting the anti Aideed (senior) coalition. However, Ethiopia's geostrategic interests at the expenses of Somalia drew a wedge between the latter and Ali Mahdi. The Ethiopians not only then supported his local rivals within the Abgal constituency, but also even supplied armament to some of them to encourage further armed conflicts. Ali Mahdi was also co-chairman of the Cairo Somali Meeting during November-December 1997 which for the first time brought together the two Somali, politically opposed, groups (the Sodere group and Aideed's coalition) at a round table since 1994 that led to the Cairo Declaration of 22 December 1997. He played a leading role in the attempt of establishing a Benadir joint administration that was stipulated in the Cairo Declaration.

The implementation of the Cairo Somali Meeting that produced the Cairo Declaration of 22 December 1997 was aborted by Ethiopia for its geo-strategical interests with the support of both Somali individual agents and foreign powers at the expenses of Somalia.

Ali Mahdi has always been a vocal advocate of the participation of the civil society in the Somali reconciliation process. He was, therefore, the first faction leader to support the Djibouti President's Peace Plan for Somalia. He remained committed to his principles of peace and reconciliation in Somalia. Ali Mahdi, however, withdrew from the presidential contest at the latest stage, but consequently supported the outcome of the conference and the Transitional Government that emerged. He was elected to the new Transitional National Assembly that was formed by the Arta Conference.

AIDEED

Mohamed Farah Hassan was born, according to his own autobiography on 15 December 1934 in Beletweyne, central Somalia. Mohamed's mother later nicknamed him 'Aideed' (also spelt: Aydeed, Aydid or Aidid). Aideed could have by itself been a given name proper instead of Mohamed in the first place. However, it seems to have only come in hindsight as his mother's choice and hence a nickname. 'Aideed' literally translated means 'the defier of insults'. There can be several such other similar translations, e.g., 'immune from insults or contempt, accepts no belittling, etc.,' but it would always be arguable as to which would translate it literally or to the closest. I have chosen the one given here above as the safest possible translation and welcome any alternative

suggestions. Mark Bowden, the author of *Black Hawk Down*, had a similar translation in his book, (page 93). Nicknames are normally given by mothers (fathers seldom do) both for girls and boys, which are always names of praise and are not uncommon among the Somalis. Nicknames, which are not given by mothers, would only be applicable to the malefolk, boys and young men, especially while either at school or serving in the armed forces and similar institutions (in the case of urban society). The latter type of nicknames, unlike those of praise given by mothers, would normally arise out of an individual's peculiarities like temper, eating habits, walking styles, etc., or even physical disabilities. If someone loses an eye, he can be unfairly nicknamed as, 'so and so, the one-eyed' and so on. Somalis often register their nicknames, especially if with a positive flavor, as their ordinary names. Hence, 'Aideed' becomes the preferred name of General Mohamed Farah Hassan; and it is also my preference to use it in reference to him in this work.

Aideed was among a group of young cadet officers trained as future military officers by the Italian administering authority of the United Nations Trusteeship of Somalia. The group graduated from an Italian Infantry School near Rome in the mid 1950s. Meanwhile, policy changed whereby western powers conspired with Emperor Haile Selassie of neighbouring Ethiopia according to which Somalia would not have an army after all (see below – under 'Role by the Military'). So those young military graduates were absorbed into the Police Force. And while the police force would greatly benefit from the officers' academic background, so the officers themselves gained from their police service a good deal of societal experience. It gave them some insights in dealing with a camaraderie civil society as opposed to dealing with military situations targeting alleged adversaries, real or imagined. This police experience would immensely benefit those former police officers who later on opted for politics, Siad Barre for one, or became politicians by an article of faith, as in my case.

The police force, being the only uniformed and armed national institution in Somalia during the Trusteeship era, was euphorically held in a high esteem by the general public. On its part, the police force maintained a high standard of discipline and performance, quite responsive of the popular expectations and thanks also to a prior British training of its senior members during the British Military Administration (BMA) after the Second World War.

As independence approached, in April 1960, the National Assembly (Parliament) of Somalia unanimously approved the formation of a National Army, upon the proposal of the internal self-government of former Prime Minister Abdullahi Issa who had never personally accepted the idea of not forming a national army. Those formerly militarily trained officers including Aideed were now badly needed to help build the new army and they were all transferred to that novice force. They later had their staff college training in Soviet military institutions.

The previous esteem in which the police force was held became a legacy of elitism after independence for all the armed forces in general including the newly born National Army. Existing police facilities such as officers' clubs, etc., became shared amenities for the whole officer corps of all the armed forces: the Police, Army and the Finance Guards (the last were absorbed into the police force by Abdirasak Hagi Hussein's Government five years later after independence). Upon the reunion of the two former Somali territories, members of the whole officer corps of these forces have had the opportunities of frequently meeting in their leisure time at the officers' clubs, wherever these existed throughout the country, but mainly in the capital and would inter-act to a great extent. Among those Italian trained group of military officers there were a few whose distinctive qualities, ambition or otherwise would invite one's curiosity. These included: Salad Gaveire a 1964 war hero; when Ethiopia invaded Somalia he fought at the Ina-Guha front defending Hargeisa and totally wiped out an Ethiopian attacking force. His front achieved the best performance by the Somali Forces in that war. Those officers also included Mohamed Farah Aideed and Abdullahi Yusuf. No one knew this reality better than Siad Barre himself. Immediately upon seizing power, he put the last two in detention without trial for six years and executed the first one upon the first pretext after only a little over a year of his coming to power. While Salad Gaveire was quite sociable, flamboyant, demonstrating a good deal of pomposity and indulgence into public posturing, the other two officers were highly reserved and very much attached to their military professionalism. However, I would still not know much else about their insights because our paths seldom crossed until well after the fall of Siad Barre regime. And even then I would only know a bit more about Aideed and much less about Abdullahi Yusuf.

Aideed was a modest and unconceited man contrary to what many people might have been led to believe. He was truthful, protocol minded and always dead on time for appointments. This he must have had

cultivated in dept during his diplomatic service. He had a family personality of the highest order and had no vices. He followed a strict routine of diet, but was fond of pure, raw Somali honey. He was well versed in the Somali culture and knew the Somali people well. Aideed was proud of being a Somali and of Somalia and its people too. He was a good listener, but also took his time to talk.

As already stated in the *Cost of Dictatorship*, Aideed and the late human rights activist, Dr. Ismail Jumale were not only intellectual contemporaries of their time among the Hawiye menfolk, but they were also comrades in-arms. They held totally identical views about the path through which Somalia should have been steered. They were both Italian trained, although Aideed's was tailored to military doctrine and had inclination for pan-African attachment, while Dr. Jumale was a realist liberal. I learnt about their close relationship from Dr. Ismail Jumale himself. Since Dr. Ismail Jumale, a lawyer and savant was more senior in politics, having been elected by the people of Mogadishu to Parliament in March 1969, and was also a cabinet minister in the last civilian government, Aideed would no doubt accept the former's leadership role with an unassuming alacrity. Professor Mohamed Farah Jumale, Aideed's closest political adviser concurs with me on this assumption. However, Aideed would not, for sure, stand down for anyone else among the Hawiye. Subsequent development already proved us right. As recounted elsewhere in this work and also earlier in my first book, the *Cost of Dictatorship*, Aideed had discovered Siad Barre's imminent coup and informed Dr. Ismail Jumale the prior evening, but Egal's government took no advantage of this vital information. Yassin Nur Hassan, the powerful former Minister of Interior very disdainfully rejected the warning. According to an eye witness whom I subsequently debriefed Siad Barre spent that faithful evening at Yassin's home. The former kept swinging the latter's swing at the ground floor verandah while it was laden with Yassin's heavy weight body. Siad Barre must have been fulfilling such a pseudo loyal service and thus had established a safe alibi for himself when Yassin received the warning calls.

After his selection as the Hawiye leader designate, Dr. Ismail Jumale in turn invited General Aideed to leave his ambassadorial post in India in order to organize and lead a Hawiye armed resistance. This was to establish a condition of preparedness against anticipated reprisals by the Siad Barre regime as soon as the USC would have been formed and demonstrated some activities of political showing. Aideed accepted the challenge, lost no time in putting up a fighting force in place in mid-1990

and established his first make-shift headquarters at Mustahil inside Ethiopia on the banks of the Shabelle River near the Somali border, facing Beletweyne (see map of Somalia). It was a sanctuary that had already been arranged by contacts with Ethiopian authorities through the mediation efforts of the SNM.

Upon Dr. Ismail Jumale's sudden death, the USC leadership split into three wings: (1) Mogadishu wing composed of the former under ground caucus members, (2) Rome wing composed of the officially designated office bearers, and (3) Aideed led former army officers group. Aideed having considered his heirship-apparent a foregone conclusion got himself named by the armed Hawiye groups under his command as an interim Chairman of the USC, although Dr. Ismail Jumale had never himself become USC Chairman, despite being the undisputed Hawiye leader. The USC officials were based in Rome, but Mogadishu had the cards and the office bearers were under Dr. Ismail Jumale's remote control.

Aideed concluded a tripartite agreement at the beginning of October 1990 with the other two Movements already engaged in the armed struggle against the Siad Barre regime, namely the SNM and SPM (The latter Ogaden based, Somali Patriotic Movement) to co-ordinate the armed struggle and no dialogue with the Siad Barre regime. They drew up a framework for post Said Bare Somalia, and bade farewell to each other to finish the task ahead and parted. Aideed then moved and established his headquarters in El-Bour inside Somalia at the heart of the Hawiye homeland, at a location almost in equal distance to Beletweyne to the west and Obbio to the north-east in central Somalia, (see map of Somalia). He intensified his campaign overrunning most of the army garrisons in central Somalia up to Bulo-Burte town on the banks of the Shabelli River and only two hundred kms to Mogadishu. He infiltrated some commando units into the capital itself. However, Siad Barre fled the Somali capital after he was overwhelmed by the masses of USC supporters already in Mogadishu even before the main thrust of Aideed's forces reached the capital, although Aideed himself and his escort had arrived the capital a day or two before.

The Hawiye caucus in Mogadishu, which had safely renamed itself, as an executive committee of USC, after Siad Barre's flight, rejected the legitimacy of Aideed's claim as USC interim Chairman. However, Aideed was later popularly and overwhelmingly re-elected by an all-Hawiye Congress which was held in Mogadishu during late June 1991 in between Djibouti I and II Somali Reconciliation Conferences, as a full fledged

Chairman of USC over the head of the Hawiye caucus, or the USC executive committee as the case might be.

Meanwhile, Ali Mahdi's supporters (mainly his Abgal) not only saw him as an equally rightful claimant to the Hawiye choice of an Abgal leader since Dr. Ismail Jumale had not been named in person. And so much so, now after latter's death, and since the former was the only other Abgal member of that Hawiye caucus, he should be considered the sole aspirant. The USC executive committee (Mogadishu wing) accepted this rationale and thus unilaterally appointed him as an interim President of the Somali Republic, the day after Siad Barre's flight from Mogadishu. Aideed rejected it and besides his prior agreement with the other two Movements for a framework of governance post Siad Barre, he also quite rightly challenged the Hawiye's unilateral decision to appoint a President for Somalia? So did the SNM and the SPM as well as all other non-Hawiye Somali groups. It was an impasse, and was further compounded by Darod-Hawiye renewed conflicts in Mogadishu and in several parts of the central regions. The Hawiye unilateral decision was also a provocative and contributory factor to the secession, which was later declared in the north. The appointment thus became ineffective and self-aborted until the second Djibouti reconciliation conference in the following July. After his election victory to the USC Chairmanship, Aideed was pressured by the Hawiye mainstream not to oppose Ali Mahdi's re-nomination for the Presidency during the forthcoming Djibouti II conference, as a matter of compromise where the latter was the sole uncontested candidate. Aideed acquiesced although neither he nor Ali Mahdi personally attended that meeting, perhaps each one of them keeping the other in check in the capital. Nevertheless, the whole process of that conference never got off the ground, mainly because of Hawiye infighting, after a USC split in Mogadishu; and later on the Darod groups also fought among them for the control of the port city of Kismayu. The security of the whole country in the south, excepting the northeast, deteriorated until the arrival of the international intervention forces, almost two years later. Aideed was skeptical of UN impartiality since, James Jonah, the U.N. assistant Secretary General's visit to Mogadishu in early January 1992. Jonah, after meeting Ali Mahdi, hastily accused Aideed of being obstacle to peace. Aideed was never against humanitarian assistance, as his adversaries would portray. He was, however, skeptical and against humanitarian intervention in which military intervention could be glossed over. He therefore conditioned Somali consent and transparency. On the contrary, Ali Mahdi, at least with a *de jure* Egyptian and Italian recognition welcomed the international intervention, in whatever form and without any

pre-condition upon the assumption of strengthening the legitimacy of his claim to the Somali presidency.

The former dictator Siad Barre, all along, remained at peace in his sub-clan's homeland in the Gedo region since his flight from the capital, and having been encouraged by the intra-Hawiye clan conflict still widening further, he was lured into making a come back. His forces reoccupied Baidoa in September 1991 where they menaced the local population and pillaged the latter's grain reserves and other resources. In April 1992, Siad Barre's advance units reached Afgoi, within 30 Kms of the capital, Mogadishu. Aideed then temporarily shelved his confrontation with Ali Mahdi and then prepared his counter attack (see John Drysdale's book mentioned above, page 43). And although he did not succeed to capture the former dictator, he nevertheless, chased him out of the country for good. Siad Barre escaped through the Kenyan border and eventually ended up in Nigeria where he died rather unceremoniously two and a half years later. Aideed handed over about five hundred prisoners captured from Siad Barre's forces to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Interesting enough, the resolutions of the Djibouti II conference contained an appeal to Siad Barre himself to leave the country voluntarily and give reconciliation a chance. He did not respond. After removing that impediment Aideed emerged the most powerful faction leader, and in order to offset the negative effects of his USC split, he allied his own faction with three other non-Hawiye Somali groups. He became the Chairman of this new and larger grouping to be named Somali National Alliance (SNA). All the other faction leaders of the new alliance became Aideed's vice-chairmen. This development gave an added impetus to Aideed's national outlook, which replaced his previous inward looking clan identity of a divided-Hawiye. At this backdrop, he participated in the all-Somali factions' reconciliation conference held in Addis Ababa in March 1993 which was organized by the United Nations. Most other faction leaders have, at least tacitly, acknowledged Aideed's leading role in the overall Somali reconciliation process. Two particular developments during that conference bore witness to this assumption: (1) Ali Mahdi who had been previously nominated for the then defunct interim presidency of Somalia was even then marginalized at this conference by not being a faction chairman. The chairmanship of his USC faction was held by Mohamed Qanyare Afrah of another main Hawiye subclan. Aideed went out of his way and lobbied for Ali Mahdi, his archrival, to be granted special equal status of faction chairman and succeeded in securing the agreement of all the other factions. And (2) all factions delegated Aideed to negotiate with the SNM

and further authorized him to offer them any price to end the secession of the north. There was, however, one important key player that was not happy with Aideed's status quo. This was the American led United Nations international intervention in Somalia (UNOSOM II) which was impatiently bent on reducing Aideed's political standing to naught. See John Drysdale's "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SOMALIA", a tale of tragic blunders, page 9. The rest of that story had been recounted in this book (Chapter One). This development did not only abort the Addis Ababa peace accord resultant from the above conference, the only tangible achievement of the International intervention, but also hampered Aideed's freedom of movement and delayed his negotiations with the SNM for the next thirteen months until April 1994. This anomaly was the beginning of external interferences into the internal affairs of Somalia since the collapse of the nation state.

During November 1993 another UN organized conference was being held in Addis Ababa, the last of its kind in the Ethiopian capital under UN auspices. Aideed initially stayed away for security reasons even after his confrontation with the US led international intervention forces had ended. Instead, SNA delegation led by vice-chairmen, Colonel Ahmed Omer Jees, attended that meeting. However, both the United Nations sponsoring the conference and the government of the host country insisted upon Aideed's participation. The Ethiopian ruler, Meles Zenawi, sent a plane to Mogadishu to pick up Aideed without the knowledge of the SNA delegation then present in Addis Ababa. Aideed declined without advice from his delegation. Zenawi then summoned the SNA delegation to that effect. Colonel Ahmed Omer Jees, head of that delegation declined to accede to Zenawi's request. The latter was annoyed and warned that his government would announce the failure of the conference because of Aideed's refusal to participate. At this juncture, Abdikarim Ahmed Ali, SNA Secretary General, took on himself to advise Aideed to travel to Addis Ababa after assurance from Zenawi about Aideed's security arrangement. Ironically, Aideed was flown to Addis Ababa on board an American aircraft and American security escort. On arrival in Addis Ababa, Aideed received a hero's welcome from the Ethiopian people. This was to the annoyance and protest by his Somali rivals, which wound up the conference inconclusively due to the jealousy of Aideed's opponents. Nevertheless, it demonstrated international acceptance that no Somali reconciliation process would produce any positive result without Aideed's participation.

Again, during March-April 1994 all Somali factions, excepting the north based SNM, met again in the Kenya capital, Nairobi, to review anew

the terms of the aborted Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of a one-year earlier. The meeting again ended up inconclusively, but with a consensus to resume it in one month's time and to be held inside Somalia (Mogadishu?). This consensus was stipulated in a Nairobi Declaration, which also, among other things, called for the participation of the SNM. At the end of that meeting all participants returned to their normal residences, whether inside or outside the country, except Aideed who had yet to address his all-factions mandate of negotiating with the SNM. Instead, he proceeded to Addis Ababa and Djibouti where the presence of SNM senior members abounded. He met with several personalities of the latter group in these two capitals. And finally after a week of intensive negotiations, the SNM leadership on 29 April 1994 made their historic statement, which was released in Addis Ababa. It renounced the secession of the north and instead opted for a federal system of governance for Somalia as a whole. Aideed who was also present in Addis Ababa at the time welcomed the SNM decision, but some other southern groups who had previously paid lip service to the unity of the country and had feigned opposition to the secession that had been declared in the north now resented the return of the SNM to the fore and saw it as an obstacle and new opponent in a power sharing contest. This would soon surface itself.

At the Nairobi Conference, Aideed and Abdullahi Yusuf (SSDF) reached an understanding of strategic co-operation during that next forthcoming reconciliation conference. Aideed would offer himself as a candidate for the presidency of Somalia and Abdullahi Yusuf for the premiership. They would accordingly mobilize their supporters towards implementing this co-operation and to assist each other to reach out those goals. As anticipated by some, the tranquility of this arrangement would be disrupted by the return of the SNM to the reconciliation process.

The holding of the reconciliation conference that was agreed upon in accordance with the Nairobi Declaration to take place within a month thereafter, was delayed for good six months for a number of reasons, but mainly due to disagreement over its organisation. Aideed's side wanted it to be managed exclusively by the Somalis. Ali Mahdi's side, always ingratiating themselves with the United Nations insisted the latter should organize it. There was an impasse for that six-month period before Aideed and his allies, including all the SNA factions, SNM and other northern factions and Abdullahi Yusuf's wing of the SSDF, as well as several other smaller factions went ahead unilaterally with their plan and inaugurated a reconciliation conference on 1 November 1994. Ali Mahdi's side retaliated

by inaugurating a counter conference, but only met for one day and then adjourned sine die, pending development of that other rival conference.

Aideed's side pursued their agenda more seriously, and appointed various committees to address all standing issues and tactically exerted pressure to bear on the rival groups to join the process. The latter did not respond positively, but kept accusing the unilaterality of their rivals (Aideed group's) conference. The appointed committees completed their respective assigned tasks within less than two months, culminating the finalization of a Draft National Charter. But further progress was hampered by disagreement over power sharing. Both the SNM who had been offered the choice of any price for renouncing the secession in the north, and Abdullahi Yusuf, counting upon the prior understanding between himself and Aideed, now demanded the premiership. Aideed found himself in an awkward position. He was torn up in between two previous commitments; and although he felt that the all-fifteen factions' (including Abdullahi Yusuf's SSDF) undertaking to the SNM through him (Aideed) was the over-riding; he nevertheless remained neutral and that pleased neither. He merely appealed to the sides to reach some compromise. They could not. Abdullahi Yusuf argued that both top posts of the President of the Republic and the premiership should not be taken by what he called 'the Irir', a legendary ancestor from whom the Hawiye and the Dir including the Issaaq had descended. In its turn, the SNM countered that both these two top offices should not go to the south as had been the case in 1960. Abdullahi Yusuf then suggested, but only as a bargaining chip, that if the north had to be considered for the premiership, then it should be given to the Darod of the north. When, however, a northern Darod, Ali Khalif Glaydh, was later appointed as Prime Minister after the Djibouti conference, Abdullahi Yusuf still opposed it. The SNM should have put Abdullahi Yusuf to a test by accepting his proposal. It was a lost opportunity. It was an impasse. Aideed then proposed dropping the indivisible single post of Prime Minister in exchange for two Vice-Presidents. The SNM accepted this compromise, but Abdullahi Yusuf rejected. The reconciliation process bogged down. I arrived Mogadishu at that stage in the last week of December 1994 and Aideed briefed me the second day of my arrival about that development. He asked me to see Abdullahi Yusuf as the latter and Abdurahman 'Tour' (SNM chairman) were deadlocked. I did meet Abdullahi once for one hour and we agreed to meet again in few days time when I would be back from a trip to the north and in the meantime we should both think about possible compromises. I thought each of the proposed Vice-Presidents should also have a key ministerial portfolio, if that option would remain on the table. I

discussed this with Aideed later and he agreed. However, Abdullahi left Mogadishu before I could discuss it with him. If he would still not be satisfied, I would then propose a reversion to the premiership option, but halving its term between the two sides and the alternate would always be the substantive holder's deputy with a key ministerial portfolio. In such an eventuality, the only remaining snag would be who would take the first half term? I think this too should have been easily surmountable. Unfortunately, Abdullahi did not give me a chance to go over these proposals with him and to consider any alternative ideas he might have. It was another lost opportunity for the next decade and a half.

Abdullahi Yusuf had before hand, decided to withdraw, unannounced from the whole reconciliation process. He told Aideed and also to me, that he was visiting Nairobi for only few days to renew his multiple Kenyan visa, etc. It was the second week of January 1995. In the meantime, the majority of his SSDF members and supporters of other allied factions i.e. USP and SNDU had individually or in pairs slipped away. It became obvious to almost everybody, except Aideed, that Abdullahi Yusuf would not be coming back. Aideed simply believed that Abdullahi, with whom he had such a long time of personal relationship, would have told him so if he had decided to leave for good. In the meantime Aideed was receiving messages and envoys from some of Abdullahi Yusuf's supporters assuring him of the latter's early return, but in vain. It took Aideed some good three months to accept the reality. A search then began for a Darod alternative. Two of the leading Habr Gidir groups were divided over the possible source of such a candidate for the post of a Darod Vice-President, each side favouring their closest neighbour. The Ayr strongly preferred a Marehan, but there were no Marehan takers. They were committed to a prior Darod consensus of no co-operation with Aideed. The Saad favored a Majertain and preferably a Mohamoud Suleiman (Abdullahi Yusuf's constituency). Unlike the Marehan, there were several interested individuals of the Majertain, but all of them would not measure up to requisite standard for that high office. Aideed briefed me one evening about those who had offered themselves and I felt that none of them could represent the opinion of the Majertain mainstream, let alone that of the whole Darod. Aideed knew that better than I did, but he was being overwhelmed by anxiety. On their part, the SNM unsuccessfully lobbied for Colonel Ahmed Omer Jeas, an Ogaden, Darod, who was already Aideed's SNA Vice-Chairman and always Chairman of the SPM. At that juncture, the senior members of the SNM then present in Mogadishu, namely the late Abdurahman 'Tour', SNM chairman, the late Hassan Adan Wadadid, the

author and others went to Nairobi to see former Prime Minister Abdirazak Hagi Hussein. We agreed that the late former cabinet minister Abdullahi Mohamoud Hirad, who had kindly arranged the meeting with Abdirazak, and I would first see him, and if Abdirazak were forthcoming, then we shall all meet with him. It was not to be. Abdirazak, for whom I had great admiration, was not disposed to the idea of doing business with Aideed. There was, however, a national obsession to any military man as a future national leader post Siad Barre for fear of another dictatorship and that some one as strong as Aideed would be hard to replace when the need arose. It was a raining evening and when we reached Abdirazak's apartment the light also went off. Abdullahi went up, brought Abdirazak down and we talked inside Abdullahi's car. After greetings, I briefed Abdirazak and informed the purpose of our contact and very clearly narrated the realities on the ground in Somalia as I saw them myself. I told Abdirazak among other things that Aideed was determined to form a government; he wanted to be its president without any compromises and if he failed to get people of quality who could assist him, he would take whomever he would find. I added that in addition to Aideed's leading role in the overthrow of the former dictatorial regime, he had also succeeded in ejecting Siad Barre from the country and again prevailed against the American led international intervention forces. All these had heightened Aideed's ambition to the extent that he considered himself the rightful claimant to that top Somali office. The majority of the Somali factions also conceded to his leadership role since the 1993 Addis Ababa conference. I added that, among other things, should we not help Aideed in his attempt to form a government in order to at least restore the repository of national sovereignty? Nonetheless, I could not prevail over Abdirazak. He felt that Aideed did not have the modesty to reunite the country. If on the contrary Abdirazak was forthcoming, it would be news to my SNM colleagues that I would have asked them to drop their demand for the premiership, I think they would have agreed in favor of Abdirazak, unlike his cousin, Abdullahi Yusuf, with whom the SNM had prior differences of great dimensions and they did not have high opinion of him. After failing to convince Abdirazak, I contacted Bashir Issa who I also knew well, a well-reputed intellectual and former President of the Somali Commercial and Savings Bank who was also present in Nairobi at that time. I did this without the knowledge of my SNM colleagues. I spoke to him in the same way as I had done with Abdirazak and also briefed him of the position taken by the latter. Bashir took a serious view of the Somali scenario and courteously sympathized with my genuine endeavors to resolve our country's problem. He could not, however, be forthcoming for any such appointment, and quite rightly too,

because he had no mandate from his constituency. Unlike Bashir, Abdirazak would not need such a mandate because he had become a national figure. Professor Ioan Lewis in his book, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*, page 15, described Abdirazak as one of the most effective Somali Prime Ministers. I could not agree with him any more. My personal admiration of Abdirazak's style of government was, among other things, discipline, an essential ingredient for the proper conduct of national affairs of a modern state, amid centrifugal egalitarian Somali society, not so easily amenable to central authority. His government was as such a total contrast to both governments of his predecessor, Dr. Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke and his successor, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal. If on the contrary Bashir was able to come on board, very unlike Abdirazak's case, it would not have been easy for me to persuade my SNM colleagues to drop their demand for the premiership in favor of someone they had not known well. In such an eventuality, the halving formula for the premiership described above could be applied as an alternative and it could have worked. On my part I wanted us to help Aideed to prevent development of pattern of failures of the formation of governments after that of Ali Mahdi, which I had also supported. If such failures were allowed to continue, it would become a practice of settling scores. And that was what happened ever since to all subsequent attempts: Aideed's, Sodere, Cairo Accord and to the most promising of all, the outcome of the Arta Process.

In retrospect, Abdullahi Yusuf would in any case withdraw from the whole reconciliation process, but he needed an excuse. The power-sharing anomaly helped to provide him with the necessary excuse. By some accounts, he had been under heavy pressure from the United Nations, Ethiopia and from some other important quarters to withdraw his co-operation with Aideed so that the latter might not be able to form a government in the absence of Darod political heavy weights. Abdullahi Yusuf did just that after establishing an excusable ploy over the power sharing impasse. The United Nations operatives also attempted the defection of at least two other faction leaders by practically offering them bribes. The UN operatives not only disclosed their connections with Abdullahi Yusuf, but also boasted of their achievement in securing his withdrawal from the reconciliation process. They made that disclosure in order to encourage such other defections. A senior Ethiopian diplomat, perhaps in order to shift suspicion from his government, said to two of us, Abdikarim Ahmed Ali, then USC/SNA Secretary General, and myself whilst in Addis Ababa in September 1996 that he had known that Abdullahi Yusuf was persuaded to leave by the United Nations and that he was not coming

back at all. He added that he could not convince Aideed. Interesting enough, Ethiopians still wanted to preserve Aideed's trust in them while at the same time conspiring with his adversaries. It was a true reflection of the Ethiopian double standard derived from Abyssinian official culture.

In order to back up their anti Aideed campaign, the United Nations prior to their final withdrawal were maintaining a daily routine of newscasts which was mainly broadcast over the BBC in Somali as well as in English and some other languages. These broadcasts owned that Mogadishu would witness very serious internecine conflicts as soon as the UN shall have left. Ironically, the United Nations intervention forces were not the least engaged in any security assignments, during their final stages, except that of guarding themselves. At that backdrop, the members of the northern factions then present in Mogadishu, namely the SNM, SDA and USF, were alarmed by the portending of the United Nations propaganda campaign. We got together and discussed to identify any possible sources of new conflicts in Mogadishu post United Nations withdrawal. The only services run by the latter were the management of the seaport and the airport. Both these two infrastructures were located within the political boundary of south Mogadishu and therefore under Aideed's sway. These could easily become the *casus belli*. The United Nations must have been betting on these and would leave behind large quantities of ammunition for Aideed's opponents. This was later reported by the Observer of London. UNOSOM II spokesman would not deny but dismissed the ammunition as useless after it had been dumped into the sea, a lame excuses that no one would swallow even it with a pinch of salt. We offered our mediation efforts and working behind the scenes, succeeded in bringing about an agreement for joint and shared managements of these two vital places of concern. We first contacted Aideed, since the locations of these infrastructures were under his control and got his agreement. We then went in a strong delegation to north Mogadishu crossing the then green line, to see Ali Mahdi and his companions and stayed there for some days as their guests.

Ali Mahdi's side was skeptical about our neutrality and this was not without some justification. Not only because of Abdurahman 'Tour's close association and personal friendship with Aideed was an accepted fact of life, but also we, all members of these three northern organisations, were then living in Aideed's south Mogadishu. The first day of our meeting with Ali Mahdi's group saw a tirade of accusations about our neutrality, but they nevertheless gave our mediation efforts a chance and treated us courteously and hospitably. On our part, we would not be deterred by any

unfavorable reactions to compromise our initiative. We kept criss-crossing the so-called 'green line' back and forth for day's on-end until we saw the joint management of the port practically at work. In fact, the airport could not be operated despite the agreement for lack of the necessary air traffic control equipment, which were taken away by the withdrawing international intervention forces (UNOSOM II). The port worked even though its handling equipment was also taken away in the same manner, but local engineers had improvised the minimum possible operational techniques. While Ali Mahdi would not have tolerated the functioning of the infrastructures under Aideed's authority, with income accruing to his rival, if he could then get a shared management of what was practically under Aideed's domain by peaceful means, he would welcome it. Both Ali Mahdi and Aideed signed, but without meeting face to face, a nine point peace Agreement for an overall maintenance of peace in the capital, but mainly focusing upon the joint management of the two agencies, just few days before the withdrawal of the United Nations to the latter's displeasure. Ali Mahdi wrote to General Mohamed Abshir that same day and informed him about the agreement he had signed with Aideed, in order to reassure him that he was not defecting from their alliance and added that he had done so for the cause of peace.

In the meantime, the Hawadle subclan of the Hawiye have wrested and retaken Belet-Weyne and the rest of their homeland in the Hiran region from Aideed's Habr Gidir. There were fears of a counter attack by the latter. In one of our visits to north Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi, having been encouraged by the positive development in Mogadishu so far, handed me a letter to Aideed in which he asked him not to attack Beletweyne. At the same time Ali Mahdi offered his (their side's) mediation efforts. I saw it as an important development, because although Ali Mahdi and Aideed were still not yet talking together *tete-a-tete*, they were at least somehow communicating each other. I delivered the letter to Aideed who not only accepted Ali Mahdi's proposal, but he was easily persuaded to do so, because he had been against the Habr Gidir attack and occupation of Beletweyne in the first place. The Habr Gidir did that behind his back at a time he was out of the country and he could not reverse it upon his return. Belet-Weyne was Aideed's birth place and he had special attachment to it and to the Hawadle. However, Aideed was then under heavy pressure from the Habr Gidir for a retaliatory action and Ali Mahdi's proposal served him well the role of a peace catalyst.

In another development, the two leaders and their collaborators formed a joint negotiating team for the establishment of a joint Benadir

administration for the capital city and its environs. We became thrilled by the positive trend of events and were even tempted to revive the original concept of a joint national reconciliation conference to bring all Somali factions on board. Ali Mahdi gave the idea a cautious welcome, but insisted upon representation of all classes of the Somali society; traditional and religious leaders, intellectuals, women's groups, the business community and so on, in sum total the civil society. That was also the case later of the last Djibouti conference. On his part, Aideed was skeptical about the revival of that idea lest it might unravel the arrangements that were already put in place, which he might have seen as favorable to his reckoning. In any case, he did not reject it out of hand and there was still a lot to be done. With regard to the representation, Aideed believed that it should be limited to the political organisations (factions) to avoid the chances of proliferation of participation which had always been a commonly held obsession. We were far off yet from any starting point, but no doubt there was a break through. To bring Ali Mahdi and Aideed together face to face was a sine qua non before going any further with our mediation efforts. Upon the approach of an Eid Festival, I went to see Ali Mahdi and suggested to him that he and Aideed pray together in one of the congregations for the occasion in any Mosque, to just shake hands as an ice-breaking and forgiving encounter. They might not necessarily engage into any discussion, political or otherwise. While he welcomed the idea of such an opportunity, after all, Ali Mahdi is too religious and felt reluctant to gloss over politics in his worship of God. He said he preferred such a meeting on a political occasion and regretted that their respective aides had not thought about it when they were last signing the nine-point peace agreement. He hinted that the possible inauguration of an anticipated Benadir administration might offer another opportunity.

All the above positive development became aborted when Osman Hassan Ali 'Aato' often defined by the western media as Aideed's former financier, broke ranks with the latter. The break encouraged Ali Mahdi to back pedal from any rapprochement with Aideed after making some acerbic excuses of pretext rather than of substance. This development categorically brought our promising mediation efforts to an unhappy end.

At the above backdrop, Aideed formed his long awaited transitional government on 15 June 1995, knowing only too well the odds he was up against. The international community spearheaded by the United Nations was opposing him tooth and nail. He did not have any Darod and Dighil and Mirifle heavy weight politicians in his government and had to settle on the

appointment of mediocre personalities as his vice-Presidents. Worst of all even his Hawiye clan together with the capital city was still divided. And finally, Aideed then had a new opposition in his midst led by Osman 'Aato' although he never considered him a serious challenger, but only a troublemaker. Aideed's aides and, therefore, naturally Osman 'Aato's critics, denied the latter ever being Aideed's financier as often publicized by the western media. They rather defined him as a mere cashier and the recipient of all contributions from Aideed's supporters. Some of these critics claimed the split between the two men was triggered by Osman 'Aato's squandering of the contributed funds after which Aideed stopped any more channeling of such contributions through the former. In any case, it had been a common knowledge that Osman 'Aato' had been committed to the armed struggle and spent a great deal of time and resources well before Aideed became actively engaged in the struggle. In that context, he was even more than a financier, but an active partner.

The conundrum was why Aideed did hurry to form a government which he knew had very little chance of recognition? There might be a number of possible answers to this. One obvious reason was Aideed's determination to forestall any future foreign interference into the domestic politics of Somalia. He had lost confidence in the impartiality of the United Nations, not only because of the Mogadishu debacle, but also for ejecting the forces of his SNA ally, Ahmed Omer Jees from Kismayu and supplanting Siad Barre's son-in-law, 'Morgan', among other things. Aideed was also counting upon the support of some African leaders among them Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, unbeknown to the former that the latter had already joined the international conspiracy against Aideed. Five days after the formation of Aideed's transitional government, the annual conferences of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) were opening at its headquarters in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Aideed hastily dispatched a large delegation led by one of his vice-presidents. Upon arrival in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian authorities denied Aideed's delegation any hotel accommodation, while a counter delegation from his opposition was able to stay in the Hilton. The government had reserved all the hotels in the city, which required authorization from the foreign ministry for all guests. That ministry became beyond our reach. Our opponents could not have hired rooms in the Hilton without Ethiopian official authorization. The main reason for denying us the hotel accommodation was to prevent us from meeting with other African delegations. For the first two nights our delegation split into pairs of two each to rent spare rooms from Ethiopian families, thanks to the efforts of a go-between local Somalis. We later found

a tourist-class hotel accommodation about 16 kms outside the city. Every morning we traveled to hotel Webe Shabelli and stayed at the lobby almost all day long. We could neither get contact with Ethiopian senior officials nor access to the conference. Instead we contacted and met the OAU Secretary General and some foreign ministers through their embassies. At the same time the Ethiopian officials were monitoring our contacts and reactions. One evening, just before leaving for our hotel a Sudanese official met us at the Webe Shabelli lobby to deliver a message that their foreign minister, Mr. Ali Osman Taha, would receive us at 10 a.m. the following morning at the Sudanese Embassy following our request. That same official would meet and pick us up at the Hilton Hotel just before the appointed time. When we got there the following morning, a messenger was waiting for us there to tell us that the Ethiopian foreign minister would also receive us at exactly the same time as that for our other appointment. It was a calculated ruse to cancel our prior appointment and thus impairing our relations with the Sudan. Any way, through the same messenger we sent our thanks for the appointment offered to us, but excused ourselves because of the prior engagement and requested another appointment. We never got it. One day, some of us took a taxi from outside the Webe Shabelli car park in order to lunch at another restaurant. The taxi driver said to us, just out of the blue, "Don't worry. The Ethiopian people are with you. Never mind the government." We were surprised as to how would he know about our problems? We were convinced that he was a security agent and was trying to provoke some reaction from us. We did not respond to the ploy.

We were in telephone contact with Mogadishu and when we reported our ordeal, Aideed kept telling us, "Be patient until you meet the President." That President was Meles Zenawi. So we waited until the conferences closed down and the delegations had departed. Still, not only Meles Zenawi would not receive us, but even Aideed's personal letter to the former could not be delivered.

The international community spearheaded by the United Nations would not disguise their partiality and was siding with Aideed's opposition. However, some African leaders acknowledged Aideed's actions as steps in the right direction, among whom were President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and the Libyan leader, Colonel Moammar Al-Qaddafi, and the leaders of both Nigeria and Uganda were reported to have had given their cautious welcome (sic). Nevertheless, only Libya extended diplomatic recognition to Aideed's Government. On his part, Aideed ruled out any more Somali

factional meetings in order to deny the international community any direct role in the internal affairs of Somalia up to the time of his death. This had always been his cherished goal. He chose to negotiate with his Somali opponents on individual basis and in fact gained some more new alliances before his death. There was, however, neither any organized reconciliation process nor recognition, excepting Libya, of Aideed's transitional government for further seventeen months since the withdrawal of the United Nations from Somalia.

Meanwhile, Aideed's opposition by and large remained divided and disorganized. Their only common ground was opposition to Aideed. Ali Mahdi's side unilaterally terminated the nine-point peace Agreement that had been signed with Aideed's side. Before doing so, however, a makeshift jetty had to be built for north Mogadishu. The United Nations co-financed the construction of this port in collusion with Aideed's opponents in order to bring about the closure of Mogadishu main port. At the inauguration of the new port at El-Ma'an, 25 kms north of the capital, according a local tabloid, Ali Mahdi thanked certain Jan Carlo, an Italian national for his contribution in financing the construction of the new port. Jan Carlo was the sole agent, custodian and distributor of the World Food Program's donated food aid which was often monetized and from which the above port project was financed. After the completion of this new makeshift port in October 1995, Ali Mahdi's side shelled the Mogadishu port and rendered it dysfunctional for the next more than ten years until it was re-opened by the Union of Islamic Courts in 2006. The closure of the port also automatically dissolved the joint management committee. Aideed did not retaliate, not only because of experience in the futility of fratricidal urban warfare he was then against any renewed conflict in the capital, and especially so since his claim of being the President of Somalia. But furthermore he did not want the temporary peace achieved by the mediation efforts of the Imam of the Hiraab spoiled. The Imam who is from Ali Mahdi's Abgal brokered peace with Aideed's support among the Hiraab (Mudlood including Abgal and Habr Gidir) in 1994, which was still holding. Ever since, Aideed was not only maintaining a good rapport with the Imam, but was also competing for his blessing with Ali Mahdi. The fact that the Imam's brother formed a rival political faction, the USC North Mogadishu, opposed to Ali Mahdi and allied his faction with Aideed whereby he became one of Aideed's vice-presidents was not a small achievement in the latter's long term political stratagem.

In the light of the above development, Aideed was confident that ultimately time was on his side. He almost had all the requisites of a sound

leader and could have salvaged Somalia from its abyss, if he were given a chance. He was a courageous man, patriotic, conscientious, generous, humorous, a good planner and an efficient administrator. Many of his former critics now admit that his death was a loss to Somalia.

A topic of great controversy and criticism of Aideed, both by some local quarters and internationally was his occupation of Baidoa in August 1996. Two months after the formation of his Transitional Government, the Rahan-wein communities fought internecinely among themselves. Allied Rahan-wein groups ganged up against the Elay of Aideed's Vice-President Mohamed Nur Alio. The latter group was outnumbered and seriously overrun, their grain farms were pillaged and all their villages ransacked, besides loss of human lives. In the wake of this development, the Elay elders sent a large delegation to Aideed and sought his new government's protection. It was a challenge, which Aideed could not ignore, even if it afforded him the chance of extending his authority into those areas, and this it did. Aideed would not in any case extend his authority to many parts of Somalia, sooner or later, nor would he bear any additional blame for his occupation of Baidoa than forming a government for a greater purpose. He nevertheless, restored peace, reconciled the warring groups and established his authority throughout the Bay and Bakol regions (most of the Dighil and Mirifle homeland) until his death one year later, despite the existence of Rahan-wein armed resistance. He sought to hand back local administration of these regions to the Dighil/Mirifle Governing Council, which had been elected, before his occupation. Return of the Chairman of that Council, Hassan Sheikh Ibrahim, from abroad was awaited when Aideed passed away.

Again, Aideed's opponents still maintained that had he succeeded heading a recognized government, he would become another dictator not unlike Siad Barre. I would doubt it very much. When Siad Barre seized power he was overwhelmingly applauded by the Somalis across the country. This was because the civilian government which he had overthrown was not only unpopular, but was dreadfully hated. The applause was more than anything else, a settling of scores with that previous corrupt government. People were thus rewarding Siad Barre for just removing that hated regime, come what may. A great deal of sycophancy then evolved beyond correction through those popular applauses, which contributed to Siad Barre's consolidation of power and helped him to get away with it so long. Aideed had not only made great sacrifices through dangerous paths in order to help remove a dictator, but

at the same time he knew how much the people had hated dictatorship and its rule. It would therefore be very unlikely for Aideed to take the same road through which he knew Siad Barre had ultimately ruined himself. However, in the absence of any such development, Aideed, despite his ambitious tendencies, was entitled to the benefit of the doubt.

Furthermore, Aideed's critics accused him of being a killer. This is easily rebutted by the fact that he was the only one faction leader who handed over about five hundred prisoners he had captured in combat from Siad Barre's forces to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). No doubt, however, Aideed led an uprising against a formidable and strongly established order. The victory over the latter, unfortunately, degenerated into a tragic civil war and inter-clan strafes to which Aideed's militia was also a party. People therefore died on all sides throughout these conflicts, whether combatants or innocents. Many personalities including Aideed could not therefore escape responsibility for the upheavals per se, but he was never personally accused, let alone proved, of any particular willful murder of non-combatant civilians. He was also accused of militarist tendencies and depicted as the main obstacle to a just resolution of the Somali problems. This accusation is self-defeating because the obstacles to solutions remained for further nearly decade and a half after Aideed's death and even took longer than they perhaps would if he had lived.

Aideed after all, did have some human shortcomings. He was uncompromisingly over ambitious, but so were many of his rivals and other competitors of much lesser role in the struggle that had removed the former dictatorship. Even so, he should have given a chance to Ali Mahdi's nomination to a transitory period. He did not. And according to one African senior diplomat Aideed was sometimes unwilling to compromise, and "might have lost some opportunities. However, while the Hawiye were solely responsible for the failure of the Djibouti II conference resolutions, individual Darod intransigence, like Abdullahi Yusuf was also later responsible for failing Aideed's initiative, which was the only possibility of forming a government at that time. That intransigence would retard a solution of the Somali scenario for further decade and a half, and for no one's interest.

I visited Hargeisa; the provincial capital of north Somalia just a few weeks before the then forthcoming Congress would opt for secession. I met Abdirahman 'Tour' who told me that he would resign if secession would be declared. When he would not resign after the declaration of the secession, I

assumed that General Aideed might have advised him against any such resignation, while the latter strove to prevail over his co-Hawiye political rivals in Mogadishu. I was led to that assumption by Aideed's silence over the secession in the north and his failure to denounce it unlike most other southern politicians? The two men met in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, after my meeting with Abdirahman 'Tour' in Hargeisa, but still before the above Congress. Abdirahman 'Tour' later confided in me that Aideed might resort to force in an attempt to change the situation in Mogadishu to his advantage. However, Abdirahman 'Tour' denied there was any such advice to him by Aideed and so did the latter's former political adviser, Prof. Mohamed Farah Jumale. Neither of them, nevertheless, proffered any plausible explanation about the laissez-faire position maintained by Aideed vis-à-vis that secession in the north. In hindsight, Aideed might have decided not to add more flame to a fire, which might further alienate people of the north. He might have possibly pinned his hopes on the likelihood that the northern people would ultimately change their mind after duly testing the odds. In the meantime, he would, perhaps leave the sleeping dogs lie, i.e. just wait and watch the secession exhaust its limits.

Sometime mid May 1996 an Australian private pilot, named Justin Fraser was detained by Aideed's forces after he had landed at Huddur, the chief town of the Bakol region (see map of Somalia). He had regularly landed there before Aideed's forces had taken it over, and had been on the latter's wanted list for suspicion of clandestinely ferrying weapons for their opposition groups. He had no weapons on board when he landed, but other sorts of cargo including human cargo (passengers). He was, nevertheless, charged with violation of Somali air spaces and landing without authorization. He admitted making over two hundred flights into Somalia over a period, but contested the need for authorization in the absence of a recognized government, which only served the purpose of hardening his captors against him. He was fined the maximum for each of those two hundred flights and landing without permission that totaled over two hundred thousand US Dollars or twenty-five years imprisonment in lieu of the fine. He could not pay the fine and therefore began serving his long prison sentence in Baidoa.

At the above backdrop, I advised Aideed that the sentence was highly excessive for a first offender. He agreed and asked me to work out with his Attorney General, Abdullahi Ossoble, and to make some recommendation to him. I would recommend reducing the whole sentence to that portion of it for the period which the prisoner had already been in detention, about six weeks. I believed that the Attorney General's view would be identical with mine.

However, before the two of us meet to formulate a proposal, Aideed received a petition from the pilot's mother, a Mrs. Dickinson who wrote to him from neighboring Nairobi. He decided to release the pilot without any pre-conditions and ordered the preparation of the necessary relevant documents, decree, etc. At that juncture, Aideed's security in Baidoa foiled an attempt to hijack the pilot out of his prison custody. The hijacking plan was, according to Aideed's security hatched by some Somalis in collusion with the Australian High Commission in Nairobi. If the initial operation of freeing the prisoner from prison custody succeeded, the pilot would be picked up by a light aircraft from a pre-arranged makeshift strip in the countryside. The hijacking flight's destination would be Kampala instead of Nairobi. Neither the choice nor the necessity for the flight's change of direction was ever explained. Aideed was in outrage because of the hijack attempt and he suspended any further action on the subject matter. He was unlikely to make a decision any time soon during which the pilot would have anguished in prison.

The Australian High Commissioner in Nairobi later wrote to Aideed's Attorney General and very strongly denied any knowledge of such attempt, much less its involvement. I personally believed that the Australian embassy would not have initiated such an operation of folly, but could not have escaped rewarding its success.

Aideed died soon after and pressure mounted upon Aideed's succeeding son, Hussein Aideed, by the states in the region for the release of the Australian pilot that would never exerted on the Aideed senior. The regional states were in competition, each one of them asking for the release through itself. Hussein Aideed in a press conference undertook to release the pilot. In addition to the states in the region, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also offered their services to transfer the pilot upon his release. I was then in Nairobi waiting to be received by President Moi and in anticipation that the President might also ask for the pilot's release through him. I sent an urgent message to Hussein Aideed to postpone the release until my return within the next two days time. President Moi received us, Abdikarim Ahmed Ali and me on 1 October 1996. We flew to Mogadishu next day, carrying a letter in which inter alia the President asked for the release of the pilot through him. We recommended that only President Moi's request be honoured for a number of valid reasons. First, the pilot had been in custody for about five months and he should reach the place of his freedom of choice by the shortest travel distance and that was Nairobi with daily air flights, where his mother had also been waiting for more than three months. Secondly, President Moi was the most senior statesman in the region and was

unequaled in protocol. His request was in writing, while other requests were verbal and by middle echelon diplomats. And thirdly, among the neighboring countries, Kenya was the only country with Australian diplomatic representation for the speedy hand over of the prisoner. The pilot was accordingly flown and escorted to Nairobi and was handed over to Kenyan officials on 3 October 1996,

I served the transitional Government formed by General Aideed, which failed to get international recognition, in the capacity of a foreign minister, after Aideed's reluctance to appoint the SNM's designated candidate for that post. However, many people, friends and foes alike of both foreigners and my co-nationals, criticized or disapproved my participation. Many of my northern colleagues and I had to join that government, not only because its formation was a prior commitment among many political organisations, but also for two other special reasons: (1) as already stated here-above, we had strove for a political settlement between the two opposing sides in the Somali national capital, Mogadishu. When the other side withdrew from our mediation efforts without giving us either a notice or explanation, we owed solidarity to Aideed. And (2) without us northerners joining it, the government formed by General Aideed would not be a national one, but only a southern regional administration of equal status to that of the north and could have in its wake legitimized the secession.

ABDULQADIR MOHAMED ADEN (ZOPPO)

Zoppo means 'lame' in Italian, but Abdulkadir who had been afflicted with polio during his childhood never took offence if he were addressed in his nickname.

He was born on 15 May 1919 in Bulco-Burte on the banks of the Shabelle River in the Hiran region, southern Somalia, where his father was a policeman. After attending prior Quranic schools, Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' was admitted into an Italian language elementary school in Mogadishu. He could not, however, advance to any higher grade because of the introduction of Fascist rule, which prohibited education for black people. His education thereafter was self-taught, becoming fluent in Arabic, Italian and later English to the extent of making a living as a petition writer-cum translator.

He joined politics while still young and later became the undisputed leader of the Dighil and Mirifle. He was an early advocate and the first

proponent of the concept of federal governance since 1956 prior to independence. He strongly believed that his people's interest was best served by federation than by a unitary system of governance. He was, however, opposed before independence by the stronger party, the Somali Youth League (SYL). The latter believed that the concept of federalism was an Ethiopian brainchild in order to deny Somalia any strong central authority and history repeats itself, that is exactly the current Ethiopian government's political strategy. However, Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' must have been acting independently regardless of any coincidence even with Ethiopian objectives. 'Zoppo' still saw federalism as the best option of governance in Somalia until his death and he was not alone then.

Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' was a political force to be reckoned with during the civilian rule era. He always held a key cabinet portfolio: Finance in Abdirashid's Government (1960-1964) and Interior in Abdirazak's Government (1964-1967). He was the second strongest man in the latter government and always acted for the Prime Minister in the absence of the incumbent from the country.

I very closely worked with Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' when he was the Minister of Interior in my capacity as head of the Police Special Branch (Intelligence and Security at the national level). I always accompanied him on his many travels throughout the country and enjoyed both his confidence and support. Our relationship has ever since become the legacy of camaraderie. He had one rare quality, which was uncommon among his colleague politicians of that era. He would never appease neither demagogues nor demagoguery. He would not, however, ignore respectable citizens and the common people.

Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' was highly intelligent, courageous, pragmatic, frank and an efficient minister. During my tenure as head of Intelligence and Security there were two particular incidents which need not be let pass without comments. In general, security was lax in all government offices when I took over my assignment as head of Intelligence and Security. People entering the ministries or other public offices were not screened. In most ministries, there were no separate storage's for classified material. Where there was some semblance of such separate storages, there were no limits of access to such material. Most senior civil servants hardly knew material that was worth classifying or the differences between various classifications: Restricted, Confidential, Secret or Top Secret, etc. I devised some guidelines for minimum routine security precautions to be observed

and applied by all ministries. I visited all the Directors-General in the Ministries to persuade them to implement those guidelines. The majority of them were reluctant. With the help of the Chief of Cabinet in the Prime Minister's office, the late Dr. Ahmed Shire Lawaha, a man of high integrity and sense of dedication to duty, I held a seminar and trained some civil servants as security officers, one for each ministry and to be responsible to their respective Directors-General. There was hardly any progress until on a fateful day, the Director of Government Personnel (Establishment), a young brilliant graduate, Dr. Osman Omer Shego, was stabbed to death. He was murdered by an unauthorized visitor while the Director was in his office on a broad daylight. The Establishment offices were not only located in the government offices mansion, but on the same floor as the Prime Minister's offices. Only then ministers took security matters serious enough and applied my security guidelines. The gates of all ministries were then manned by permanent gatekeepers and all people entering were screened. The entrance to the government mansion where the offices of the Prime Minister and several ministers were located was placed under police guard round the clock. Only ministers' and visiting diplomats' cars were allowed parking inside the compound. All other cars including visitors would be parked outside. People entering the mansion were sufficiently screened. All these instructions were issued in writing by the competent Minister of the Interior, and copy was affixed on the wall inside a newly erected Guard Room by the entrance gate. On another fateful day, one flamboyant Member of Parliament who had never been used to any restrictions arrived at the gate in his car. He wanted to drive in. The police explained the new procedure and asked him to park his car outside and they would not open the gate for him. He took offence, got off the car and locked it, blocking the entrance and walked into the offices. The matter was instantly reported to the responsible Minister of Interior. Luckily, Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' was then in his office. He came down, saw the blockade and asked for a hammer which was soon brought to him. He personally smashed both front seat windscreen glasses of the parliamentarian's car and ordered its removal by towing it away from the entrance. This security re-arrangement was to my utmost satisfaction, but there was an outburst in parliament over the car incident. It was later settled behind the scenes.

Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' became a victim of political vindictiveness after his side lost the presidential race in 1967. Two years later he was denied registration of his candidacy for the 1969 general election. He was thus deliberately made to lose his seat in parliament, in an otherwise safe constituency. In hindsight, however, that harsh treatment unjustly meted

out to Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' became a blessing in disguise. First, the life span of that five-year term parliament lasted for only six months, having been dissolved by the military regime. Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' had no further regrets on that score. And secondly, since Siad Barre had the inclination of befriending people who had trouble with the previous government that he had overthrown, my own appointment as Police Chief being a case in point, Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' remained politically in safe haven during the long rule of Siad Barre.

Since the collapse of the Somali state and central authority Abdulqadir 'Zoppo', had been, apart from Egal, the only veteran politician of the independence (1960s) era still, not only active, but also a key player in the current Somali crises until his death in 2000. He participated in all the Somali reconciliation meetings since 1991. He was a key player in both the Ethiopian sponsored Soderre Meeting during November 1996 - January 1997 and the Cairo Somali Meeting November-December 1997. He was, especially in the latter meeting, the most influential and respected figure to knock heads together. His political stature was a stimulus for compromise and forged a break-through, which brought the two sides together.

However, one of Abdulqadir 'Zoppo's' special concerns was the withdrawal of Aideed's forces from Bay and Bakol regions sine qua non (see map of Somalia). An agreement was signed to that effect by Hussein Aideed and Abdulqadir 'Zoppo' that formed part of the Cairo Declaration as an Annex. That agreement was not honored by Hussein Aideed's camp. Besides Ethiopia's destabilization, the breach of that agreement was another contributory factor for the overall failure of the Reconciliation Process stipulated in the Cairo Declaration. Not unlike Ali Mahdi, Ethiopia has since groomed and supplanted 'Zoppo's' rivals because of his role in the Cairo Somali Meeting.

GENERAL MOHAMED ABSHIR

He was the first Somali to head the National Police Force and successfully led that institution for more than a decade. He disagreed with the last civilian government's rigging of the general political elections in March 1969 and resigned over that issue. He declined an offer of ambassadorship and retired peacefully.

Abshir was in retirement when the military took over power in October 1969. The latter still perceived him as a risk to its security and he was placed

under house arrest for three and a half years during which he wrote to Siad Barre, criticizing his autocratic rule and called for his resignation and return to civilian rule. He was released together with other political detainees including the majority of the members of the former civilian government. But for Abshir the release was for short lived as Siad Barre would neither forget nor forgive Abshir's criticism of the former's regime. He was soon re-arrested and detained for further 8-9 more years. He was held in incommunicado and without any legal formality. After his release in February 1982, Abshir not only later publicly criticized the destruction of the north by the former regime, but also liaised with Dr. Ismail Jumaale in an underground opposition against the Siad Barre regime. Both Dr. Ismail Jumaale and General Abshir were among the signatories of a critical Manifesto in May 1990, which advocated political reform. Abshir was among those arrested, but was later released along with his companions in the face of popular demonstrations against their arrests.

When Mogadishu finally exploded, in late December 1990, Abshir was a founding member of the 'Suluh' forum with the intention of securing a cease-fire and demanding Siad Barre stepping down and leaving the country. When about one hundred members of this forum went and saw Siad Barre in his last staggering days, Abshir was one of eight speakers to deliver that demand to the former dictator. After the out break of the civil war, Abshir tried hard to help restore peace and normalcy, but came very close to be killed for clan animosities.

Abshir later re-activated the political wing of the then defunct SSDF faction and became its interim Chairman. He ever since played a key role in all the Somali peace and reconciliation processes up to that held in Djibouti in 2000 and he was elected to the National Assembly that was formed at Arta.

Unlike Abdullah Yusuf, Abshir condemned Ethiopia's incursions into Somali territory. However, If Abshir remained in office; the army led coup d'état could have been averted. And although the police force was no longer a counter weight as the former had tremendously evolved numerically and in weaponry, nonetheless, all its senior officers had served under Abshir in the police force before the formation of the army in 1960. And they owed more loyalty to him than to Siad Barre, the then army Chief of Staff.

COL. ABDULLAHI YUSUF

He is believed to be an age colleague of Mohamed Farah Aideed and together they were among a group of young officers militarily trained by

the pre-independence Italian administration in an Infantry school near Rome in the mid 1950s. On returning to Somalia, he and his colleagues were absorbed into the Police Force in the absence of an army.

When a national army was formed at the approach of independence, early 1960, Abdullahi and his colleagues were transferred to the new force. They later had their higher military training in the former Soviet Union military institutions.

Abdullahi was the commander of the military garrison in Burao when in December 1961 when young northern junior officers attempted a coup d'état. He was placed under house arrest, but only for few hours until the attempted was foiled by loyal soldiers of the former Somaliland Scouts Regiment.

During the 1964 Ethiopian military incursions into Somalia, Abdullahi commanded Somali forces that heroically defended the southwest front of the motherland.

Upon his accession to power, Siad Barre put Abdullahi together with Aideed in detention without trial for six years. After his release, Abdullahi Yusuf was believed to have masterminded the 'Irro' led April 1978 coup attempt to overthrow Siad Barre, which followed the failed debacle of the Ogaden war. Abdullahi now boasts that he had done so. That war itself might have been used as an occasion for planning the coup attempt. The former Soviet Union was about to throw Somalia over board, the hitherto only Soviet client state in the Horn of Africa at that time, in favour of a newly born socialist Ethiopia. The Soviets were deadly against Siad Barre's Ogaden war, much less his victory, the very purpose of Somali-Soviet military co-operation to begin with at a time Ethiopia was an American ally. The Soviets were using the Somali military high command, whose members were Russian trained to sabotage the war operations. A self inflicted defeat of the Somali army would save the Soviets their direct military intervention, which they had to do later on the side of Ethiopia, and would thus remain a strategic god father of both countries.

In order to sap the morale of the army, the Somali military high command on many occasions supplied wrong materiel than that was needed or requested by the fighting units on the war front. On other occasions, attacking units would be kept under strength. Units on the front line were neglected. They were not properly re-enforced to replace

casualties. Communication was deliberately inadequate. The object was to find faults and then accuse the unit commanders for lacking fighting spirit. Officers who complained or criticised the war operations were especially targeted and eliminated. Eighty-four military men, most of them non-commissioned officers (NCOs), but also including some of the officer ranks were executed in Jigjiga the day before the withdrawal of Somali forces. Two days later six senior officers and twenty-five NCOs were executed in Hargeisa upon trumpeted charges of disobedience. They were accused of opposing the withdrawal. Apart from these six officers and the NCOs executed in Hargeisa, most people including family members and relatives of the victims still believe to this day that those others were killed in action. General Samatar's hand-picked Chief Staff Officer for War Operations, Mohamed Osman "Irro" who had masterminded the above executions in order to eliminate future contenders, was none other than the leader of the failed April coup attempt on behalf of Abdullahi Yusuf.

As part of the sabotage ploy, Somali soldiers were encouraged to commit acts of pillage against the local population in the occupied territories in whose freedom the soldiers were supposed to be fighting for. This was particularly aimed at sapping the local people's confidence in the Somali Government of Siad Barre.

Although Siad Barre must have approved all the above-mentioned executions, it was nonetheless certain that he had not known about the treachery of his military high command. General Samatar was the protégé of Khadija, Siad Barre's powerful senior wife. Not many officers would, therefore, dare to volunteer information to Siad Barre about Samatar. The only ones who could do so were among the Marehan of Siad Barre's subclan, but not many of them had been sent to the front, as they were retained to keep the internal situation in check. They were therefore uninformed of that treachery.

Nevertheless, Siad Barre had a knack for information gathering and any subsequent post mortem investigation that he could have made was averted by the coup attempt which distracted his attention from all other issues for a long time. It had brought him very close to his grave and was perpetrated by the same group whom he had always feared the most, the Majertain. Irro, the coup leader and about dozen other accomplices were later executed. However, Abdullahi Yusuf escaped to Ethiopia immediately after the coup had failed, the first Somali ever to seek political sanctuary in that country. There he founded the Somali Salvation

Democratic Front (SSDF) which carried out operations against targets inside Somalia with Ethiopian backing. Abdullahi was also supported by Libya, which lavishly invested in him. He later fell out with Mengistu and was put in detention until after the fall of the latter's regime. In the meantime, the SSDF remained docile up to the collapse of the Siad Barre regime and central authority in Somalia. Many of its activists had, however, already surrendered to Siad Barre and were given positions in government.

Current Ethiopian officials had seriously groomed Abdullahi Yusuf to become the helmsman in post Siad Barre Somalia, which did not endear him to the Somali people nor did Abdullahi ever condemn or even criticized Ethiopian incursions into Somalia either. He still, however, seemed to have a strong support in his Majertain constituency in northeast Somalia, even for his collaboration with Ethiopia at the expenses of the Somali people. For further details (see under Aideed).

Abdullahi Yusuf was another key player of the Ethiopian sponsored Sodere Meeting, but one of only two dissenters of the Cairo Somali Meeting (November – December 1997). He then established the Ethiopian backed fiefdom of Puntland in the northeast region.

In order to legitimize his fiefdom of Puntland, Abdullahi Yusuf in collusion with Ethiopia insisted that all other Somali regions establish similar entities. He for sometime refused to participate in any reconciliation process, as he claimed others were not his equals unless they had first established their individual administrations of similar fiefdoms. This concept was an Ethiopian brainchild of its own geopolitical interest in order to thwart the re-emergence of a stronger Somali central authority.

Abdullahi was the vanguard of those faction leaders who boycotted the 2000 Djibouti held Somali Peace Conference, but attended counter meetings sponsored by Ethiopia to abort the Djibouti outcome.

The following passage is extracted from an article entitled, 'Catastrophe in Somalia' by Mr. Richard Dowden and published by the Independent of London in its issue of 25 January 2007: which is also reported elsewhere in this work (under Chapter Two):

"The Ethiopians are now trying to install the internationally-accepted government. But anyone who has watched Somalia over the years will see how Ethiopia has undermined or destroyed every other attempt to establish

a national government. A weak divided Somalia suits the Ethiopians if they cannot have a strong but Ethiopian controlled government. That is exactly what President Abdullahi Yusuf, an old ally of Ethiopia, represents. One of Somalia's nastiest warlords, he has made a pact with the country's age-old enemy ... And Ali Mohamed Geedi with strong Ethiopian links but with no credibility in Somalia ... Think Oswald Moseley being installed by the Germans as president of Britain in 1940 and you get close to the feeling Yusuf's government inspires in Somalia today."

For further details see also Chapter Six.

THE SO-CALLED 'RED FLAGS' GROUP:

The above title is a misnomer; as many things in Somalia often are, not the least the origin of the very name, 'Somalia' itself, which results from the last letter of the Italian noun suffix 'a'. (For details see chapter 6).

The so called 'Red Flags' Group were at first composed of former army officers, most of them of mediocre military calibre, who had defected in the wake of the public uprising in the north from the Siad Barre regime where they could not aspire any much higher. Their defections were initially seen as solidarity with the people and were hailed as a heroic act of camaraderie. They all joined the Somali National Movement (SNM), the only mass organisation, which came into being in the early 1980s. However, the 'Red Flags' perceived militarist ambitions soon surfaced. They coveted the leadership of the organisation, but the people denied them that role during the whole period of the 9-10 years of the armed struggle. They then acted maliciously to cripple the Movement's progress, instead of its success, until such time they could assume the leadership themselves.

In the old days during the civilian rule era, there used to be some left leaning political platforms, such as Somali Democratic Union (SDU), a leftist political party, as well as other independent groups and individuals with such similar tendencies. These leftist groups and individuals would always oppose the policies and actions of those moderate successive civilian governments whatever their programs. That trend of opposition commenced as early as during the pre-independence Trusteeship era against the internal self-government of former Prime Minister Abdullahi Issa. The people easily perceived identical behavior in these two types of groups and thus dubbed the

above-mentioned former armed officers as the 'Red Flags'. The above Group hence earned that soubriquet, though without the leftist red ideology.

Despite being denied of the organisation's leadership, the 'Red Flags' would continue intensifying their campaign to assert themselves by all means. They would recruit into their ranks anyone who was in opposition to the leadership, in order to create more and new problems for the Movement rather than to help and solve problems as had been expected of them at the time of their defections. The 'Red Flags' were thus joined by many civilian renegades who swell their numbers within the Movement, which at the same time enhanced their leverage of destabilization. They would always invoke the clan factor through which neither sympathy nor identity would be lacking - the Somali's Achilles heel - which always accorded them a degree of possible accommodation. Through these natural weaknesses, of the Somali ethos, the 'Red Flags' managed to continue destabilizing the Movement. They ganged up against anyone who knew or understood their mischief, but differed. They unleashed a campaign of character assassinations through the slogans, "Burn so and so's card", which has since become a common place remark throughout the trouble ridden Somalia. In the end, however, the 'Red Flags' only succeeded in burning their own cards collectively, because they lost public confidence and support. They then resorted to the parochial inward clan emotions as opposed to popular mass appeal, which impelled them to assassinations and similar criminal activities.

The "Red Flags" hated any further defections of other army officers from the Siad Barre regime, especially those of higher calibre who could contribute to the armed struggle's early success. They would by any means forestall such a development before they could take over the leadership role of the Movement. At one time they feared the possible defection of a certain Colonel, Ibrahim Mohamed, alias 'Koutbour'. The 'Red Flags' planned to assassinate 'Koutbour' before he would leave Hargeisa so that the foul play would be attributed to agents of the Siad Barre regime. They sneaked one of them into Hargeisa to execute their assassination plan. The designated would be assassin got drunk and easily exposed his presence whilst in Hargeisa. He was arrested, not even by Siad Barre's elite security, but by the local petty militiamen. He was taken into custody, pending a mock trial and an eventual execution. He was rescued in the nick of time by none other than 'Koutbour' the very same man he had been assigned to assassinate. The 'Red Flags' were, however, believed to have had killed several SNM activists including Abdullahi Daud, a former teacher. And also attempted the murder of others including 'Silanyo', the Movement's longest term Chairman after he had

sought and won a vote of confidence before the end of his second term election of the leadership, despite the 'Red Flag's' challenge and opposition. Several of them were arrested and detained for this incident by the Ethiopian authorities, but they managed to buy their release.

In furtherance of their design to retard the armed struggle, the 'Red Flags' even spied for the Siad Barre regime whom they warned on many occasions about SNM plans. How many lives were imperiled or operations aborted are anybody's guess! Reliable SNM sources own that the 'Red Flags' might have conspired with Siad Barre agents in the assassination of Colonel Adan 'Shine'. According to the same sources, the possible assassin had traveled from Hargeisa via Djibouti in order to camouflage his movements and from there on the railway line to Diredawa, Ethiopia. Upon his arrival in Diredawa, he was picked up by some known 'Red Flags' members in order to shield him (the assassin) from the SNM routine security clearance. They traveled with the assassin in a special vehicle up to Jigjiga, the scene of 'Shine's' murder, within few days thereafter. Adan 'Shine' was himself opposed to the SNM leadership, but he was not in league with the 'Red Flags'. The latter were, therefore, killing two birds with one stone. First, they were eliminating a serious potential rival and secondly, they would spread plausible rumors that blamed the SNM leadership for the murder to the ultimate impairment of the Movement.

Upon the defeat of the old regime, one of the SNM junior officers who had taken control of the Borama town, later reported the discovery of document(s) which had been sent to the former regime by a well known member of the 'Red Flags'. Another more senior officer, himself a marked 'Red Flags' member, took charge of the documents and neutralized them. According to other sources of the SNM activists, when on a previous occasion an ad hoc group were discussing that serious problem of enemy infiltration, Chairman 'Silanyo' named one particular 'Red Flags' officer as a more like agent of the Siad Barre regime. That same officer was the alleged author of the documents later seized in Borama. The two SNM sources were totally independent of each other. Their only common denominator was the name of that 'Red Flags' officer.

It was a common knowledge that another former army officer whom Siad Barre had married him one of his known mistresses was infiltrated into the Movement. He was identified with the 'Red Flags' whether by prior design or by subsequent affiliation and among other things, he facilitated the capture

of an important artillery weapon by the enemy. He had not been held to account for it, because he was shielded by senior officers of the 'Red Flags'.

One of the permanent weaknesses of the SNM as a Liberation Movement in an armed struggle was the lack of any disciplinary code of conduct. The Movement depended upon the collective support of all the Issaaq subclans for the armed struggle, the same subclans that the 'Red Flags' also depended upon for their protection against alienation. Although the 'Red Flags' were by and large ostracized by the Movement, they were nevertheless, still active within, through the clan factor, even if they would some unwitting members by proxy in some cases. They recruited many unwitting young men from their respective subclans into their sinister schemes. They later committed these youths to armed conflicts to a point of no return. These armed conflicts were directed against the SNM leadership and later its administration headed by Abdirahman 'Tour', but failed to supplant themselves, because of lack of broad public support. Instead they would later groom Egal and support his candidature. As far as the 'Red Flags' were concerned, their support for Egal was an interim measure and means to an end, but not an end in itself. It was not to be. On the contrary, Egal would use the 'Red Flags' as a stepping stone in order to consolidate his position. This was, however, a pyrrhic to Egal, because his early unholy marriage with them set their common enemies against him and his administration.

After Abdirahman 'Tour's announcement of the federal option, two well known members of the 'Red Flags', while still in a honeymoon marriage with Egal, wrote to the late General Aideed and informed him of their support of the federal concept, but expressed their strong opposition to Abdirahman 'Tour's leadership of the SNM, which they said could become an obstacle to co-operate with him (Aideed). Aideed mentioned to me the two names of the 'Red Flags' and said that he would have liked to open a channel of communication with them, but vacillated in order not to act behind Abdirahman 'Tour's back. Aideed sought my opinion and I encouraged him to do whatever he considered to be the best course of action and I promised to brief Abdirahman 'Tour' accordingly. The latter then saw Aideed and gave his blessing, but put a bet on the 'Red Flag's sincerity. Perhaps, Abdirahman 'Tour's misgivings about the 'Red Flags' sincerity was not without justification from past experience. Until the defeat of the Siad Barre regime, the only positive element in the 'Red Flag's credit was their putative pro-national unity stand. The Charter of the SNM was (and is to this day) uncompromisingly committed to national unity and the 'Red Flags' were all along believed to have shared that notion. However, when the majority of the northern people

later opted for secession, the 'Red Flags' were the very first to change their position and endorsed the secession. They must have gambled upon the belief that the SNM leadership would not endorse the secession in violation of the Organisational Charter and were therefore destined for a head long collision with the masses. In such an eventuality, the Red 'Flags' hoped the people might turn to them as an alternative for guidance and leadership. The latter thereafter became newly born secessionists.

General Aideed then made some soul searching contacts with the 'Red Flags'. At first, he personally wrote to one of the two signatories of the letter he had received from them. He sent this by hand of an emissary to secretly meet the addressee in either Berbera or Sheikh or even in Burao, but avoiding Hargeisa lest such contact might invite some sensitivity. This was about the end of 1994. Again, Aideed sent other emissaries, in early 1995 to meet some members of the 'Red Flags' in Djibouti as had been agreed with the previous emissary. Aideed was not impressed by the outcome of those two contacts and must have thereafter accepted Abdirahman 'Tour's assessment of the 'Red Flags' lack of sincerity. By contacting Aideed in the first place, the 'Red Flags' sole intention must have been to just draw a wedge between Aideed and Abdirahman and thus pre-empt political co-operation between the two men.

The unholy marriage between Egal and the 'Red Flags' has since long unraveled itself. The latter having detected Egal's half-heartedness vis-à-vis the secession strongly capitalized on this as his Achilles heel and tried hard to blackmail him. Egal, however, prevailed over his new opponents, both because of his grip and manipulation of the so-called Guurti, the traditional elders, who by then became a power to reckon with. And, the general public's belief that Egal was at worse the lesser of two evils. For further details, see under Egal and Abdirahman 'Tour'.

The 'Red Flags', to the SNM Mujahideen and their supporters of the population at large, were the equivalent of the International Mafia.

ABDIRAHMAN AHMED ALI (ALIAS 'TOUR'),

He was born in the early 1930s. As already recounted in this work Somali nick-names are some times given according to one's peculiarities (see under Aideed). 'Tour', the hunchbacked is one such example. 'Tour' literally means a hump in Somali. And although it does not have a positive flavor per se, Abdirahman never took offence if he were called or addressed by his

nickname.

He had the best athletic record in school. After his intermediate schooling in the former British Somaliland, Abdirahman 'Tour' had his high school education in the Sudan, which made him not only bilingual: Arabic and English in addition to his own mother tongue, but one of the best Arabic scholars among the Somalis. He was the first Somali direct from school, without prior civil service experience to be trained in the United Kingdom as a potential administrative officer. He graduated with a diploma in Public Administration from the University of Exeter. Upon his return home in late 1956, he joined the British Somaliland Protectorate civil service and started through the administrative ladder with the position of an assistant to a British District Commissioner whom he replaced in few years time, just before independence. He later twice became a Provincial Governor and also held a senior post in the ministry of Interior before his transfer to the Foreign Service in 1964. He was accredited on his first assignment to the Sudan as the first Somali ambassador. He also served his second diplomatic assignment in the Sudan, after an interval between these two postings. He thus spent more than half of his diplomatic career in the Sudan, which had become his second home country. He was also later accredited to Ethiopia, the former East Germany and lastly to the United Arab Emirates. He was the first proposer to Siad Barre's Government for Somali membership of the League of Arab States.

He defected from his last diplomatic post in 1989, as did many of his Issaaq colleagues elsewhere. Mutual trust between the Siad Barre regime and this particular group of diplomats was rapidly fading away due to the confrontation between the former and the Issaaq people having reached its climax. He joined the SNM and shortly became its secretary for external relations.

In the spring of 1990 at the SNM's last Congress he was elected as its Chairman, which made him luckier than his predecessors. Within nine-ten months of his election, the Siad Barre regime fell which became the acme of the Movement's main objective.

The Hawiye based USC's unilateral decision, despite being the SNM's main ally in the armed struggle, of appointing Ali Mahdi as the President of the Somali Republic, the day after Siad Barre's flight from the capital without any prior consultation or consideration of the north presented a night-mare for the SNM leadership. The decision unleashed an outcry of an

already simmering, albeit misconstrued northern mistrust of the south, which had been leading the nation since independence.

The SNM's Charter, even to this day, is strictly committed to Somali Unity. Its leadership could not, however, find it easy to placate general public becoming so distrustful of their southern reunion partners. It is a factor that continues to sustain the secessionist agenda. To ward off further deterioration of the internal situation, Abdirahman 'Tour' at that time took the best possible course of action. He temporarily shelved any debate about the heated issue of Somali unity and instead initiated a process of reconciliation among the northern communities – the Issaacs and non-Issaacs. The latter, with the exception of the Issa, had sided with the Siad Barre regime in that internecine civil war with disastrous aftermath for the northern communities, as a whole and especially in the Sanaag region. The meeting was a success and as such the best of SNM's few achievements in post Siad Barre era.

The SNM leadership could not, however, eventually avert the declaration of a secession, which was spearheaded by the Issaac masses and cautiously endorsed by coerced representatives of the non-Issaacs, in a Congress held in the northern second capital of Burao during May 1991. This forced the hands of the SNM leadership. However, the endorsements by the non-Issaacs had no consensual mandates from the communities concerned.

The Rift between 'Tour' and 'Silanyo'

The development of the personal relationship between Abdirahman 'Tour' and Ahmed 'Silanyo' and their subsequent rift which may be of some interest, especially to Somali readers is summarized here below, to the author's best knowledge.

As already stated elsewhere in this work, 'Silanyo' had been the SNM's chairman with the longest legitimate term of office (not considering 'Tour's' long caretaker period after his term had expired). 'Silanyo' had a hard time leading a Movement in armed struggle, yet beset by internal destabilization and enemy infiltration – both these through the 'The Red Flags'. When Abdirahman 'Tour' joined the SNM after defecting from the Siad Barre regime, it was viewed by the 'Red Flags' as harmful to their militarized ambitions. This was because of 'Tour's' experience as a former Governor and his good knowledge and understanding of the traditional elders. He therefore had the best chance among the urban groups of working with the common nomadic and rural people. On the contrary, many

others including 'Silanyo' saw 'Tour's' experience as beneficial and a contribution to the cause of the Movement and, therefore, welcomed the latter's new membership. In the face of the 'Red Flags' hostilities to all people with better credentials than themselves, 'Silanyo' and 'Tour' were of necessity drawn closer together. They became new allies and comrades-in-arms. 'Silanyo' would not only soon appoint 'Tour' to the much coveted, though nominal, assignment of the Movement's secretary for external relations, but also groomed him as his successor. At the end of his last third term, 'Silanyo' stepped down and he strongly supported 'Tour's' candidature. The latter's election victory was only made possible by the block vote of the Habr Je'lo ('Silanyo's constituency). This marked the beginning of a major development of political co-operation between 'Silanyo's Habr Je'lo and 'Tour's Habr Yonis for more than three and a half decades since the clan conflict in 1954-56 between the two groups (see also under Egal). This co-operation was by and large made possible by the Siad Barre regime making itself a common third enemy of the Issaaq people.

After the declaration of secession in May 1991, the self declared republic of 'Somaliland's' new administration would be headed by the chairman of the SNM as its new President, ex-officio, and his vice-chairman would become the new Vice-President. 'Tour', however, wanted to create the post of a Prime Minister for Ahmed 'Silanyo' as *quid pro quo*. At first 'Silanyo' declined it, because the situation was so fluid and the viability of the secession was uncertain. He must have, perhaps, doubted whether the job was worth taking it at that early stage of uncertainty and he would perhaps not risk his personal involvement.

In the meantime, the Arap felt that their subclan's leading politician, 'Tour's' SNM vice-chairman, Hassan Issa Jama's role as vice-president of the new administration would be marginalized by the appointment of a Prime Minister, and sure it would. They, therefore, brought a heavy pressure to bear upon 'Tour' in order to forestall such an appointment. However, 'Tour' had no longer had any strong beliefs about the premiership since after 'Silanyo' had declined. He therefore, not only found it easier to concede to the Arap's demand, but also reassured his vice-chairman that there would be no such appointment of a premier. In their wake, the Habr Je'lo mainstream of both clan elders and politicians came to know about the story and brought similar pressure to bear upon 'Silanyo' and forced him to change his mind. By the time 'Silanyo' retracted his decline, 'Tour' had already reached a point of no return of his undertaking to the Arap.

Thereafter, 'Silanyo', encouraged by the 'Red Flag's' promised support for him, his erstwhile enemies, but now his successor's opponents and always ready to fish in the SNM leadership's troubled waters, forced a show down with 'Tour'. The structure of the new administration would be decided by the SNM central committee. 'Silanyo's' side proposed the inclusion of the post of a Prime Minister in the structures, while 'Tour's' team counter proposal or vice-versa omitted the post of a Prime Minister. The latter was carried.

Even after 'Tour' had thus prevailed over 'Silanyo', he would still reward the Habr Je'lo collectively for supporting him for the SNM chairmanship that virtually made him the President of the new administration. He assigned the biggest share of ministerial posts to the Habr Je'lo including the two most important and sensitive portfolios of defence and interior, the two security ministries at a time of a volatile security situation.

The 'Red Flags' newly ingratiating themselves with 'Silanyo' paid off well and brought them politically closer to the latter, because he was then not the leader of the Movement, but an important heavy weight politician. This development in turn drew an irreparable wedge between 'Silanyo' and 'Tour'. This also instantly eroded not only Habr Je'lo's support for 'Tour's' new administration, but also reminisced the erstwhile mistrust that had long existed between the Habr Je'lo and the Habr Yonis. New skirmishes followed between the two communities. In its wake, this scenario all the more bolstered the 'Red Flags' chances of ultimately toppling that new administration.

As stated earlier, after the former declaration of the secession Abdirahman 'Tour' headed an interim administration by virtue of being the SNM's chairman ex-officio. The 'Red Flags' continued to oppose the new administration as they had always done in the past to all the SNM leadership. They committed young 'Mujahideen' of their respective clans into violence to a point of no return. Abdirahman 'Tour', having been bewildered by the fratricidal conflicts in the South of Somalia became too much peace conscious. He would not allow his forces and supporters to react or retaliate the 'Red Flags' adventurous behaviour, thus putting the cause of peace before anything else. His passivity would not endear him to either his supporters or to the members of his administration including his forces. He would not budge despite pressure brought to bear upon him from many quarters. All that he did was to always invoke the palliative

services of the traditional elders, the so-called 'Guurti'. The source of the traditional elders' strength is the customary laws and similar traditional values, which can only be enforceable by common consensus. The 'Red Flags' would not abide by any decisions under these customary laws. This is one main reason why the 'Red Flags' lost public support as a group for good. 'Red Flags' members can only reassert themselves individually under the banners of their respective clan cards. They burnt their collective identity cards while attempting to burn those of others.

Abdirahman 'Tour' went out of the country on a short visit. During his absence the Vice-President and then acting President took some drastic actions. He arrested the former minister of defence who was one of the 'Red Flags' front-runners and put him in detention. This put the rest of the 'Red flags' on their heels, which restored public confidence in the new administration. So fragile were the 'Red Flags', if they were faced and confronted with a determined force. They were only capitalizing upon Abdirahman's over prudence toward peace. Abdirahman 'Tour' returned and at once released the detainee. This further emboldened the 'Red Flags' to resume their heinous deeds. 'Tour's peace consciousness became his Achilles' heel which was exploited by the 'Red Flags' to the maximum. They eventually seized the Berbera port by force of arms to deny the administration its main source of revenue and in fact paralyzed it. Still Abdirahman 'Tour' would not react with equal or greater force, lest should any such retaliatory move may precipitate a wider clan or community conflict, to the dismay of his supporters and his administration.

Since the 'Red Flags' had committed armed youths of their respective clans into their destabilization orgy, that also invited counter armed youths from the Garhajis who went over the head of both Abdirahman 'Tour' and the Garhajis mainstream. Unfortunately, however, that retaliation afforded propaganda chip to the 'Red Flags' and their supporters including the overwhelming majority of Egal's Habr Awal, to defame Abdirahman 'Tour' as being behind it, but that never was. He could have done that earlier if he had wanted it and with so many other non-Garhajis groups also behind him. In any case, the 'Red Flags' for their lack of public support, could not even then succeed to supplant themselves to replace Abdirahman 'Tour's administration, but in fact they toppled it, nevertheless. They then forged their unholy marriage of convenience with Egal (see under Egal).

Again, when Abdirahman 'Tour' and other candidates and their supporters rejected the electoral fraud, through which Egal was declared the winner. The former later retracted his rejection, acting over the head of his supporters'. He handed over responsibility rather ceremoniously to Egal just to ward off the possibilities of a communal conflict. However, while Abdirahman 'Tour' so cautiously avoided conflicts. Egal just did the opposite and got away with it.

About one year later after leaving office, on 29, April, 1994, Abdirahman 'Tour' invoked the provisions of the SNM Charter vis-a-vis Somali unity and renounced the secession. Instead, he proposed a federal system of governance for Somalia as a whole. The decision not only arose many controversies, but divided the people of the north into pro-federation, a euphemism for pro-Somali unity groups and diehard secessionist groups. The latter groups were spearheaded by the 'Red Flags'. Always ready to fish in someone's troubled waters, the 'Red Flags' were now disturbing Egal's wavering nerves, and looking for a chance of wresting power from him. Just before Abdirahman 'Tour's retraction of the SNM commitment to the secession, Egal was looking for a federal option, but was nevertheless pre-empted by Abdirahman 'Tour's declaration. He was entrapped by his prior commitment to the secessionist agenda and also feared the 'Red Flags' campaign against him. Abdirahman 'Tour' sent him several feelers that he should count on him if he (Egal) would come on board with the federal option, but Egal remained hesitant and finally decided to become a new born secessionist.

MOHAMED IBRAHIM EGAL

In May 2002, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, a veteran in Somali politics, who featured in the text died. And I had to delete whatever my personal opinion about him that could be construed to have some negative connotations about a dead person. Of course, his name still features a great deal in the text, but about his public life, which its inclusion is un-avoidable because I owe it to history.

He was born in 1930 by his own claim of being 70 years old in November 2000 according to Al-Hyatt press report. He was the lone child and son of a prominent wealthy merchant in the former British Somaliland Protectorate. After leaving school at the intermediate level, the highest standard of education that was locally available those days, the Egal junior (jr.) joined the then government civil service as a junior elementary school

teacher, but for a short period. His father would soon send him for further education to a Business College in England. He failed to graduate with any distinction, but gained a firm grasp of the English language that became a considerable asset to him in his future political career. Upon his return home in the early 1950s, he joined the family business. His father was soon afflicted with a serious illness from which he never recovered. Thereafter, the management of the family business devolved upon the Egal junior.

Egal's early political destiny would be greatly influenced by the following development in the country:-

In 1954, the British finally decided to hand-over to Ethiopia the Haud and the Reserved Areas (Somali territories which they had unilaterally ceded to the latter in 1897). This was with neither the consent nor the knowledge of the Somalis, but which for the most part had ever since practically remained under British physical control, despite some ineffective boundary demarcations in the 1930s. The British action was both in violation and betrayal of prior treaties of protection, which the latter had entered into with the Somali people. In the wake of this disastrous development a new Somali mass Organization, The National United Front (NUF), came into being as a forum for public expression under the leadership of the late Michael Mariano. The front's immediate task was to persuade the British to rescind their decision before the hand-over. A delegation of Somaliland elders led by Mariano visited London and appealed to both Houses of Parliament and Government. When all that failed, the NUF campaigned for an early independence in order to terminate British rule as the only alternative option open to the Somali people. Unbeknown yet to the Somali people at that time, however, was the unpublished British policy to grant Somaliland its independence at an early date in order to keep abreast of that other Somali territory to its south. Professor Ioan Lewis briefly, but precisely described the prevailing reaction of the general public in Somaliland to the British betrayal in his book, *Blood and Bone*, pages 8-9.

At above backdrop, two of Somaliland's main groups, Habr Je'lo and Habr Yonis got involved into a serious clan conflict, the first of its kind in the annals of their history.

In 1955, a Habr Yonis scholar, Sayed Ahmed Sheikh Musa, returned to the country from Egypt with a Nasserite anti-British influence. And exploiting an already existing anti-British popular feeling resulting from

the giving away of the Somali territories, he formed another mass Organization, The Hisbullah (The Party of God). Although with an Islamic label, the new Organization had in fact had a Nasserite political orientation with an anti-imperialist appeal that was already spreading throughout Africa. And was, therefore, anathema to the British Colonial authorities of the Protectorate those days. The Habr Yonis altogether withdrew from the NUF led by Mariano, a fellow Habr Je'lo, and joined the Hisbullah en-masse. Other Somali groups did not, however, follow suit to join that new Organization. The Hisbullah then remained to be an exclusively Habr Yonis club.

In 1956, the first Legislative Council (LEGCO) was established in the former British Somaliland Protectorate as the first step towards future constitutional changes in the country. The Protectorate Governor appointed six prominent Somalis to serve as nominated members in the new LEGCO, one representative for each of the six administrative districts of the country. These new LEGCO members were selected from among the traditional elders, businessmen and from among the few non-civil servants educated elite. Educated Somalis outside the civil service were in very short supply those days. Egal had, therefore, coveted one of those appointments as a suitable candidate; both because of his education and business standing, plus his fathers decorated status as a Member of the British Empire (MBE). He was, however, excluded perhaps because of his young age and his way of life much more influenced by European culture, while lacking experience in his own Somali cultural background which mattered most to the colonial Governor at that time. And this assumption was not without some basis either. About thirty-seven years later in March 1993 Egal addressed over five hundred delegates for a Somali reconciliation conference in Addis Ababa's African Hall. He lectured them irrelevantly about how the Roman Catholics select the Pope! However, Egal felt bitterly jealous about not having been nominated for the LEGCO membership and indulged himself into anti-British political rhetoric, though his personal outlook would hardly make him to become anti-British. The colonial authorities understood this very well and never took his waffling any more serious. He, however, lacked a platform in which to exercise his rhetoric or to experiment his political ability and thus remained frustrated for sometime.

The gulf between the two main mass Organizations, the NUF and the Hisbullah, each supported by one of the main Somali groups, themselves hostile to each other, was not only the harbinger of Egal's political upsurge, but also a blessing in disguise. Some Habr Yonis wise

men became appalled by their group's isolation despite being the most numerous community in the country, while the NUF still enjoyed the affiliation of other non-Habr Je'lo Somali groups. These wise men proposed the formation of a third broad-based mass Organization, to which the Hisbullah could also become an affiliated organ. The proposal soon attracted receptive audience from among all other Somali groups including even a segment of the Habr Je'lo. That led to the birth of a new Political Party, The Somali National League (SNL). The new party's priority objectives were early independence and union with the South (the then United Nations Trusteeship of Somalia administered by Italy) and as such in competition with the NUF. The choice for a new SNL party leader fell on Egal, thanks to a strong Habr Yonis support and also helped by his (Egal's) anti-colonial rhetoric. He was elected as the first Secretary General of the new party at its inauguration in mid 1957.

To the credit of Egal's leadership, even if by an accident of fate, the SNL won a sweeping victory in the country's first general elections held in February 1960, even though personally a pyrrhic victory to Egal, because of the depletion of his inherited wealth for financing the party's electioneering campaign. The SNL won twenty seats of the twenty-one Issaaq constituencies out of the total of thirty-three seats for the whole country. Although the popular vote was 55% for the SNL and 45% for the NUF, nevertheless, the latter won only one seat. Only Mariano, the party leader won his seat, because the electoral system in the north was based on single constituency as opposed to the south's proportional representation. In the case of the latter system the SNL would have won 12 seats and the NUF 9 seats.

Upon the announcement of independence, which would take place unexpectedly within four months of those elections, the people of the north forced immediate reunion with the south while the latter was still undecided about the timing. One main reason for the rush decision was a well founded fear in the people's mind that once delayed the momentum might be lost and the reunion would never become realizable again. Such a mistrust of the northern people, especially among the rank and file of the SNL/USP ruling coalition, was a leading factor for the hasty reunion.

When the two, north-south, sides met for the first time during April 1960 in Mogadishu to discuss the unity issue, the south proposed out rightly a deferment of only six months. The north acting under public

pressure rejected the deferment and insisted upon immediate reunion. The south then asked if the north had any preconditions. They had none.

As independence approached the governing Somali Youth League (SYL) party in the south was divided over power sharing. Abdullahi Issa, the pre-independence self-government Prime Minister dominated the ruling party with a comfortable majority in Parliament. Aden Abdalla Osman was the President of the National Assembly (Parliament). The set up conspicuously symbolized a total Hawiye leadership of the political establishment and an undisguised marginalization of the Darod. At this backdrop, Dr Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, the first Prime Minister of the reunion government after independence, and later second Head of State of Somalia led an opposition parliamentary group, mostly composed of Darod members, within the SYL ruling party.

Upon their arrival in Mogadishu on the south's independence eve, the northern SNL-USP also became divided into two cross-coalition groups. However, these two groups were nevertheless united in Egal's leadership at that moment, although Egal was himself leading one of these two groups. The other group was led by the late Ismail Nahar. The latter group and the Abdirashid led SYL opposition members of parliament met to discuss power sharing. The meeting took place in a standing position at km/4 and lasted for only about seven minutes. The Abdirashid group's main objective at that time was to pre-empt the chances of Abdullahi Issa becoming the new President of the Republic. Only Abdirashid spoke for his group and informed of their support for Aden Abdalla's candidacy for President and suggested that the North should take the premiership. The other northern group led by Egal was the guests of the outgoing government with whom they had negotiated with earlier and they perceived that the incumbent Premier Abdullahi Issa and his colleagues had the upper hand. And also as a matter of courtesy to their hosts, they avoided any contact with the southern opposition members. Ismail Nahar and his SNL/USP companions, therefore, not only found it difficult, but impossible to arrange a meeting between Egal and the Abdirashid. Aden Abdalla was elected as a provisional President and became the first Somali Head of State on 1 July 1960, but his successor to the presidency of the National Assembly was not appointed until 7 July, because of lack of broad agreement between MPs of North and South. Thereafter, two important developments emerged from a new alignment. First, the division among SNL/USP delegation widened and Ismail Nahar's group allied themselves with the SYL opposition group and accepted a proposal by the latter for the

Presidency of the National Assembly. They nominated Jama Abdullahi Ghalib, former Deputy Speaker of the Northern Assembly before the reunion and he was appointed to that post, which in its wake automatically pre-empted a northern premiership. Ismail Nahar's group then supported Abdirashid's candidacy to the premiership. And secondly, Abdulqadir Mohamed Aden 'Zoppo' who had emerged as a strong leader, of the Dighil and Mirifle felt that he had been over-looked by the Hawiye and also supported the candidacy of Abdirashid's premiership. Those two developments also galvanized a legitimate theory that since the new incumbents of the Presidencies of the Republic and National Assembly were both from the legendary 'Irir' (then unknown in the north) the remaining third high office of the premiership was Darod's legitimate share. And Abdirashid was appointed as the first Prime Minister of an independent, reunited Somali Republic. He inherited a ruling SYL Party and Parliament; both of them hitherto dominated by his predecessor. He put all his whole weight on reuniting these two important organs to rally behind him and to support his new government's programs. The North, therefore, neither lobbied for itself for its own share of the key portfolios, although lack of experience might be a factor for consolation, nor was given any attention of priority by the southern leaders who were pre-occupied with their own other immediate problems.

Egal's popularity waned later, as soon as the effects of the North's marginalization, in power sharing were felt. The results of those failures were perpetual imbalances and the North's inability to influence any important decision making. After failing to negotiate for the north's share Egal accepted the nominal Defence portfolio where real authority rested with the Army Chief of Staff, the highly respected and religiously revered General Daud Abdulla Hersi. One year later, the provisional Presidency of the Republic came up for re-election after referendum adopting the Draft Constitution. The late Sheikh Ali Jumale, another prominent southern politician, challenged the incumbent, Aden Abdulla Osman, and Egal sided with the new challenger. The latter lost though narrowly by just one vote at the third round ballot. This compounded Egal's frustration. He accepted the education portfolio in the formation of the second government.

There were gossips of Egal's complicity in the coup attempt by junior army officers in the North on 10 December 1961, in which his brother-in-law, one of the coup conspirators was killed. These accusations were, nevertheless, apocryphal and below the belt whoever might have fabricated them. I have already reported in my previous book, the *Cost of Dictatorship*

that the coup attempt had resulted from purely maladjustment of military ranks during the integration of the armed forces. Egal, however, remained frustrated and resigned from that Government one year later upon a minor excuse.

In 1963, Egal co-founded a new political party, The Somali National Congress (SNC), together with Sheikh Ali Jumale and some other prominent politicians of both North and South into which his former party, the SNL, was also incorporated. The new party, however, failed to make up the anticipated showing in the next general elections a year later except in the Issaaq areas of the North and in the Hiran region of the South, Sheikh Ali Jumale's strong-hold. This failure further compounded Egal's frustrations, although he was re-elected with a comfortable majority. He then leaked rumours of his even considering emigration to Brazil. This would only be a pipe dream, because Egal had neither had enough money to sustain him in a strange land, nor would he be hardy enough for new adventures. One year later he left the SNC altogether and joined the ruling SYL party.

Just prior to the 1967 presidential election Egal and Abdirashid mended fences and settled their restrained relations that had led to the resignation of the former from the latter's government in 1962. They joined their forces against the then incumbent President Aden Abdullah Osman and his team of supporters led by the Prime Minister Abdirazak Hagi Hussein, and in fact succeeded in defeating their opponents, even though narrowly and by the third round ballot. The newly elected President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, in turn appointed Egal as the new Prime Minister. Surprisingly, American sources later claimed credit for facilitating Egal's rise to power by giving him financial support during or prior to that presidential election campaign as published by Grossman Publishers, Division of the Viking Press, New York 1976:

"The CIA FILE EDITED BY ROBERT L. BORSAGE AND JOHN MARKS..... SOMALIA: CAMPAIGN FINANCING AROUND THE HORN OF AFRICA."

"If Zaire enjoyed its moment of chic in world politics and the covert investment that flowed from it, Somalia by contrast seems an obscure backwater of international politics. But the CIA intervention there in the mid sixties as Ecuador earlier is reportedly another tribute to what a small CIA station can do, however remote from national interest.

"An impoverished land of less than three million along the

northeastern coast of Africa where the Indian Ocean meets the Gulf of Aden, Somalia was of concern to Washington for a number of reasons. Irredentist claims threatened border warfare with Kenya and Ethiopia. The latter a long time U.S. client state under Haile Selassie and the site of a major intelligence base. Somalia was an early recipient of Soviet aid in Africa and its coast line held potential strategic ports for any future ally in the Persian Gulf or Indian Ocean, an interest shared by France and Britain. At that, however, the country was apparently not an urgent concern in U.S. diplomacy. When Somalia predictably rejected a 1963 offer of defensive arms conditioned on the exclusion of all other supplies, the State Department leaked its 'displeasure' but seemingly did no more.

"Over the next four years, 1963-1967, official U.S.-Somali relations were distant and U.S. aid next to nothing while Somali leaders visited the Soviet bloc, Somali newspapers published anti American forgeries planted by Soviet intelligence and the country fought a brief but bloody ... war with Ethiopia. Then suddenly early in 1967 history took a turn for the better. President Abdirashid Shermarke was elected for a six-year term as President in June and in July appointed as Premier Muhammad Egal, American educated and avowedly pro-western. By fall U.S. aid was resumed in amounts twice the previous total since independence and Somalia had concluded a border agreement with Ethiopia. In 1968 Egal visited the United States following a visit to Somalia by Vice President Humphrey and was hailed by President Johnson as 'Enormously constructive in troubled area of Africa.' 'What the two leaders did not discuss', say official sources was how 'constructive' the CIA had been for Egal whose rise to power was reportedly facilitated by the thousands of dollars in covert support to Egal and other pro-western elements in the ruling Somali Youth League Party prior to the presidential election.

"In retrospect, this clandestine bankrolling in Somalia seems very modest by CIA standards. Only a tiny fraction of what the Agency has spent in a month in Southeast Asia or even what it spent in the Congo in the sixties. And its immediate benefits - in rising U.S. influence, in détente with grateful Ethiopia - no doubt seem real enough at the time. In any event, several sources say the subsidies were discontinued in 1968, but the withdrawal was to be perhaps too late. On October 15, 1969 while Egal was again visiting the United States President Shermarke was assassinated. A week later the army seized power dissolving the National Assembly and constitution and arresting the entire cabinet including Egal. Among the charges against Egal would be corruption of the electoral process and complicity with foreign intelligence services. Ironically, the bizarre CIA political contribution before 1967 may have been a decisive factor in the eventual fall of the Agency's candidate.

"Little changed for the people of Somalia as a result of the CIA intervention. They are still grindy poor with a negative growth rate in 1968-1970 and less than 70 dollars' GNP per capita. The main beneficiaries of the covert action, Egal and his colleagues are mostly in jail or dead. In the last five years the country has turned again toward the Soviet bloc and there are reports of Soviet naval bases and airfields menacing the Indian Ocean. Perhaps it is out of some sense of bureaucratic defensiveness rooted in the memories of the Egal episode as well as out of valid differences of view that CIA Director Colby is now reported to be less alarmed by the Soviet presence in Somalia than are his Pentagon counterparts."

Despite the above elaborated account, the American claim of financing Egal during that presidential election campaign was not the least corroborated by the realities that had existed on the ground in Somalia those days. According to well placed reliable sources that were deeply involved in that particular election campaign, Egal was financially broke throughout that decisive period. Other interested politicians had to raise his share of the campaign finances among themselves. Besides this, the story of Egal's financial constraints was a public knowledge prior to his appointment to the premiership. The American claim also seems to have some other flaws or at best inaccuracies. Egal was not known to have had any American education, for example. Even the border agreement with Ethiopia (The Khartoum Accord) was not concluded in 1967 or after as suggested by the American claim, but in 1964 at a time Egal was not the Prime Minister, but in a political limbo.

In hindsight, however, the American claim could have only been possible well after Egal's appointment as Prime Minister, when he took a number of bold steps all of which were keyed to the United States foreign policy objectives of that era. He tacitly froze Somali territorial claims to Northeast Kenya; improved relations with Haile Selassie's Imperial Ethiopia, after a period of restrained relations due to Somalia's support for an Ogaden rebellion, and cut off funds to Somali groups that were waging armed operations against both these two neighboring countries. He also suspended the issue of Somali passports and other support to the Eritrean Liberation Movements that rebelled against Haile Selassie's violation of the Eritrean federal status with Ethiopia. He took all these actions at a time when Somali domestic politics were neither compatible nor reconcilable with such rapprochement. In retrospect, the American claim would make some plausible sense here.

As already stated in my previous book, however, the period of Egal's premiership was marked by a total malaise of mismanagement, corruption, electoral fraud and scores of other malpractices. Only his détente with the neighboring countries could have been a foreign policy feat, but that too had no local support either. Egal could not even dare to seek parliamentary ratification for his actions, which he knew could otherwise be annulled by any subsequent Somali Government, as did Siad Barre later. The consequences were catastrophic. Chaos and ungovernable disorderly situation ensued. At this backdrop, the elected President was assassinated while Egal was holidaying in the United States that easily ushered in Siad Barre's coup d'état and his twenty-one year totalitarian misrule, which upon the latter's demise, finally engulfed the Somali nation into a serious plight of disintegration and total destruction. However, the initial popular support for the military take over was itself a public condemnation of Egal's Government.

Political insiders were convinced that if President Shermarke had survived his assassination he would have definitely replaced Egal as Prime Minister in order to insulate his presidency from the growing unpopularity of that last civilian government. Apart from others mentioned as possible candidates for a new premiership, the name of the late former Prime Minister Abdullahi Issa was also suggested as the most likely successor to Egal. Issa a pragmatist and western oriented had by far the greatest experience in government business and the overall management of national issues in general. It may not be out of place to just cite an appropriate example here? As Prime Minister, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke paid an official visit to the former Soviet Union in 1961, the first of its kind by a Somali leader. The Soviet Government pledged the financing of a number of socio-economic projects. These included the construction of Berbera port, Las-qoray fish factory, Kismayu meat canning factory, Mogadishu milk processing factory, Benadir Secondary School, two modern hospitals and a Printing Press, in addition to a great number of scholarships. Apart from equipment and other materials directly imported from the Soviet Union, local costs of financing the projects were to be met from the cash sales of Soviet goods delivered to the Somali Government. The goods which mainly consisted of sugar, cement, white cloth sheeting, etc., however, failed to be competitive in the local free market and the anticipated cash flow was not realizable. It was a situation further compounded by corruption and the malpractice's inherent in any public sector mismanagement. There were long delays of project completion and frequent work stoppages due to lack of employees' wage payments. It was

a vicious circle to the constant and chronic embarrassment of successive Somali Governments. Fortunately, Abdullahi Issa became the new minister of commerce and industry in the last reshuffle of Abdirazak Haji Hussein's Government in late 1965. Issa solved the dilemma almost overnight, accord to one of his then senior aides.² Immediately upon taking over the new ministry, Abdillahi Issa presented a concrete proposal to the Council of Ministers that Somalia should henceforth import the only competitive Soviet commodity – fuel – if those projects were to be rescued. The Soviet fuel was not only competitive, but also even much cheaper than the then western cartel prices and this allowed some budgetary increase or savings for the national treasury. The cabinet embraced the proposal and approved it almost at once. AGIP of Italy, which had monopolized the fuel import at that time, had strong Somali lobby that shook the whole political establishment. But Issa would not budge and the Cabinet stood by him. A final compromise was, however, reached in that AGIP retained the handling and distributing agency for the Soviet fuel supplies to Somalia. This decision was a practical conclusion because AGIP alone had the necessary infrastructure for the fuel distribution and handling. The decision regarding the fuel import was hailed by the general public and it was a credit to both Abdirasak's Government for standing up to formidable pressure from some important quarters and to Abdullahi Issa personally for his thoughtfulness and political courage. However, it had never been the latter's forte to seek personal credit for his actions such as this, so important to the Somali people. Issa's credentials must have, therefore, later caused some jitters to Egal who quite rightly viewed the former as a strong and serious contender. In the wake of Sharmarke's assassination Egal was grooming Haji Musa Boqor, a long time political foe of Abdullahi Issa, to succeed the slain president. Musa had served as minister of interior in the pre-independence internal self-government and was dismissed by Premier Abdullahi Issa, which Musa would never forget or forgive. If elected president, therefore, Musa would be very unlikely to appoint Abdullahi Issa as Prime Minister. Egal's maneuver for that matter would not only have been self-serving, but a shrewd investment had it not been derailed by Siad Barre's coup d'état.

After spending three and a half years in detention Egal was put on trial for misappropriation of public funds. And although his conviction was a foregone conclusion given Siad Barre's judiciary system, nevertheless,

² Another knowledgeable former senior Somali official gave another interpretation for the Soviet fuel importation. The government owed debt to AGIP for accumulated fuel consumption and the latter stopped further credits of fuel supplies. The Soviet Embassy then offered a long term credits in fuel imports.

Egal's personal folly gave way to somewhat deny him any public sympathy and morally legitimized the severe sentence that was later meted out to him. Whilst prime minister, Egal built himself a private mansion in the Somali capital with additional luxurious facilities including tennis courts (which Egal had never played) and outdoor swimming pools amid impoverished Somali citizenry. The construction was totally financed from the Prime Minister's confidential funds. These funds were appropriated by parliament without any accountability, but only for official business. Egal could have better managed those funds a bit more astutely and could have, therefore, taken out as much cash as he needed at any time and then made payments by himself or through his household staff. This could have saved Egal from naiveté rather than absolve him from blame. Instead, he wrote chits to his official cashier, a civil servant, to pay for construction bills as they came in, both for materials as well as well as for labor. These documents (the chits) were seized by the military junta and were more than enough to prove Egal's spending of those appropriated funds for his own private ends, instead of legal official purposes. Upon conviction, Egal received a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment. The mansion was confiscated, turned into a Government Guest House and renamed Villa Baidoa. It became a propaganda feat for the Siad Barre regime as an anti-corruption drive. The first official guest to stay there was former Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia whilst attending an African Summit held in Mogadishu. Egal served two and a half years before Siad Barre granted remission for the rest of his long sentence. After the lapse of a total of six years of prison life Egal was released late 1975.

Siad Barre appointed all the three former Prime Ministers: Abdullahi Issa, Abdirazaq Haji Hussein and Egal (the other two having had also spent some years in detention without trial) as ambassadors in that order of priorities of their seniority. The first two had already taken up their new posts in Sweden and at the UN Somali mission in New York respectively, while Egal's 'Agreement' was still awaited from India. In the meantime, he was posted to the Foreign Ministry as an ambassador designate. Two former ministers: Yassin Nur Hassan and Adan Issaaq Ahmed were also offered ambassadorships. Yassin declined and was reported to have even ridiculed Egal's acceptance. Yassin predicted that Egal would soon be recalled for an orientation course, which was a phenomenon those days; just to make him participate in some physical training (PT) exercises along side his former junior civil servants. Thereafter Egal's political image and personality would wane or cease to exist. It so happened that one day while Egal was still at the Foreign

Ministry, the President of the West African country of Benin was visiting Mogadishu. It was customary during such visits that in addition to Government Ministers, all the senior government officials at the director level and their counterparts in the armed forces should report to the airport in honor of the VIP. When I arrived at the airport I came face to face with Egal, whom I had not seen for about seven years. As soon as we exchanged greetings, he pointed a finger at the arriving VIP's plane and said he had to join the line-up and left me. Yassin's remarks then immediately reflected in my mind as a proven prophecy, which seemed to suggest the end of an era.

Within few months Egal was recalled from India where he had just established himself as the first Somali ambassador to that country, not for the likeness of the course of Yassin's prediction, but for a much more ignominious and different type of a course: a repressive detention. It was even without a trial this time, at the notorious Labaatan Jirow (The Twenty Old) maximum security prison, about 60 kms northeast of Baidoa, where he was held in total isolation and incommunicado for more than further five years. During this second detention Egal regained a great deal of sympathy and solidarity from the Issaaq people upon the belief that he was just suffering merely for his clan identity. That belief was bedrock, but it might not have been so had Egal just remained in jail serving his long court sentence. It was the second detention without trial, which supported that belief. Egal would soon draw a question mark upon himself vis-à-vis that high public spirit.

Egal's final release from prison in February 1982 coincided with the climax of confrontation between the Issaaq people and the Siad Barre regime. He was temporarily accommodated in an officially protected guest house so that his early contacts and movements would be monitored for a while. Almost all the Issaaq senior Government officials as well as many members of the general public of well wishers visited him there, as a true reflection of the prevailing popular sentiments. Jama Abdullahi Ghalib, the former speaker of parliament, not my first cousin as our last names suggest, but still a close relative had himself already visited Egal and he gave me his impression of the latter's morale and physical outlook after such a long ordeal. So I visited Egal one morning at his temporary residence. We were soon cut off our conversation by the deliberate intrusion of his monitors who engaged us into a boring conversation. We then briefly stood aside and he suggested that we go out for a drive one evening to escape interruption. I agreed and called on him two days later. I

offered to take him to my favorite American Golf Club restaurant for a dinner, but he got scared to be seen on American soil so soon after his release. That was quite understandable, given the ordeal he had endured for so long. He would not, however, know that in those days he would be much better off to be seen there by Siad Barre's agents than in my company even elsewhere. However, in order to reassure him, I took him to the Government owned Hotel Uruba, where we were courteously seated at a quiet terrace porch and I later took him for a drive until late into the night. I sympathized with him after discovering how much he did not know about the world around. More than three years later, he had not yet heard about the Camp David Agreement between Egypt and Israel or about Egypt's expulsion from the League of Arab States and the severing of relations by most Arab countries, etc. I briefed him and even risked informing him more than I perhaps should have about almost everything I could remember that had happened in Somalia since his detention. I told him about the degree of Issaaq sympathy and solidarity he had regained since his second detention and reminded him the importance of preserving that golden public goodwill. I then drew his attention to Yassin's comments about him, in case he might not have heard about it. He did not comment on this. I neither reminded him nor commented upon our earlier, but last brief meeting at Mogadishu airport.

Egal very well understood my point, but did not take my advice. He soon got very close to Siad Barre and later accepted the nominal chairmanship of the Chamber of Commerce with other minimal favours. He not only lobbied for Siad Barre, but even became one of his close collaborators at the expenses of the SNM and its Issaaq supporters (Egal's born again sympathizers) and thus put a question mark on himself once again, in the eyes of the Issaaq people. Many Issaaqs dismissed Egal's ingratiating himself with Siad Barre as that of a spent force who could not endure the test of the time any longer. They considered his actions as cowardly and of a cowed man after a long period of detention and isolation. While there could have been some truth of these assumptions, Egal had, nonetheless, much stronger motives for his actions. He perceived that his interests converged with those of Siad Barre, at least temporarily. Egal must have feared the emergence of new Issaaq leaders to sideline him in the future. He saw the SNM as the most likely source to produce such future leaders and thus chose to join forces with Siad Barre's regime in an attempt to nip the SNM in the bud. In a handwritten note (in Somali) that Egal sent to Siad Barre on 7 June 1988, he described the SNM activities as stinking and dirty. The note was among documents retrieved from Siad

Barre's official palace after his flight. It was then photocopied and reproduced by a local tabloid with a quiz: "What do you know about Mohamed Ibrahim Egal."

Egal toured the Gulf countries to sow seeds of discord and division among the Issaaq migrant workers who were the most important contributors of the SNM's finances. He held meetings with those workers in Kuwait, Jeddah and Abu-Dhabi and lectured them against supporting the SNM. Egal would go to any length and at any price to forestall an SNM victory in that armed struggle against the Siad Barre regime lest should such victory would produce new leadership among the Issaaq. Egal had never expected the blessing in disguise that such Issaaq sacrifices and future SNM victory held in store for him.

When Siad Barre was fatally injured in a road accident in May 1986, there was a great deal of speculation about his possible survival or whether he would ever be able to resume his functions. Meanwhile his family members and relatives were jockeying for the succession. By chance, one day, I met an Issaaq elder in Mogadishu who had met Egal. According to that elder Egal had said to him that he was afraid of being put in jail again for the fourth time by the other Politburo members, Siad Barre's top aides, who he said had envied his close personal rapport with the latter, if the old man would leave the scene. The elder then asked Egal as to what could be a solution to avert such an eventuality? Egal then said that he needed help in order to groom Siad Barre's son, Muslah, whom he considered his future saviour. The elder was just amused and left Egal in a state of desperation.

Upon the defeat of the dictatorial regime, followed by the collapse of the Somali nation state and its central authority in January 1991, the North of the country declared its secession in the following May. Egal did not initially support the secession, though he might if he had felt that he would have a personal stake. Reconciliation conferences were held in the neighboring Republic of Djibouti (Djibouti I, May 1991, and Djibouti II, July 1991) in an attempt to restore the repository of Somali sovereignty. Egal co-chaired these pro-Somali unity conferences which the secessionist north refused to participate and by some accounts, he even coined the phrase, "Somali unity is sacred (sic)".

After the failure of the resolutions of those conferences, Egal took an involuntary exile in the United Arab Emirates instead of returning to his

constituency in the secessionist held north. So much did Egal distance himself from the secession at that time? However, as Abdurahman 'Tour's' two-year term drew close to its end, Egal, coveted the leadership of the secessionist entity. He was believed to have had contacts with some members of the 'Red Flags' group. He, however, returned to the north of Somalia during the beginning of the all Community Congress (Jan-May 1993) and after testing the waters, which must have tasted sweet, Egal decided to embrace the secessionist slogan as a matter of expediency. This he did rather lavishly to begin with and finally offered himself as a candidate. The country's main revenue through the Berbera port was then falling into the hands of Egal's sub-clan members and he was, therefore, campaigning from a position of financial strength and succeeded in winning the support of panel of the Congress chairmanship. However, the strange paradoxes were that Egal had not only openly opposed the liberation struggle of the people, but had also sided with their oppressor, and now he wanted to lead them! And in fact he got his Habr Awal's total support who had been the most brutally affected group, not only in terms of the loss of human lives and material wealth that were suffered by all Issaqs across the board. They were dishonourably singled out in the hands of Siad Barre's officials with whom Egal was collaborating. This simply boils down to the mere fact that the clan solidarity is capable of easily over-riding any other issue of principle or human conscience. The short memory of the people and the consistent disregard of all record of historical events and personal standing are glaring. Within a short span of few years the historical struggle of the Somali National Movement (SNM) were already forgotten, and it is likely even that history may never be written down. Worse still, all the SNM leadership and activists who had sacrificed so much for the common cause have been ignored after the ultimate victory. They would be replaced by others who had not had the least credible credentials for that leadership, but who were undisguised opponents to the cause of the Movement and who had openly distanced themselves from any association with it.

Two days before the election, the panel of chairmen of the Congress informed all the four candidates including Egal that every one of them was required to make a statement before the delegates to outline his future plans of action if he were elected. Egal, whom the 'Guurti' (the elders of the panel) thought that their favorite candidate would outbid the others, because of his putative political depth, did not, after all, like the idea of making such statements. Some believed that Egal was afraid that the statements might invite questions, especially about his past or his last

association with Siad Barre and open a Pandora-box. In either case, Egal must have preferred to leave the sleeping dogs lie. The idea of making statements was, therefore, dropped the night before the election, whatever rationale Egal might have proffered. The other three candidates were not informed of this sudden change. Early following morning the latter reported to the conference venue, ready to deliver their policy statements. Only then they were told that the statements had been dispensed with, but instead voting for the election would take place at that very moment. This was also news to them. They got suspicious and expressed their dissatisfaction with the hasty arrangement and raised a number of genuine procedural questions, which the Egal manipulated 'Guurti', most of them illiterates were incapable of understanding, but in any case they would not deviate from their remote controlled course. Legally, only the official delegates to the Congress that were nominated by their respective communities and registered as such were entitled to vote. All those who were already sitting in the conference hall should have been screened and non-delegates including observers excluded. Therefore, credentials and vote counting committees, etc. should have been appointed prior to the vote taking process. Each candidate should have had the right of nominating his own representatives to each of such committees. None of these prerequisites were in place. These three candidates demanded that the voting be postponed until proper procedural mechanisms were agreed upon to the satisfaction of all the candidates and their supporters. The demands were rejected out rightly. Then the other three candidates concerned and all their supporters walked out in protest. There was no quorum left in the conference hall. A large crowd of on-lookers, but non-delegates who were hanging around the conference vicinity was let in and they voted illegally. A videotape recording of that particular scene showed even Egal's private servant in that fraudulent process. Egal was declared the winner of that electoral farce. It was ultra vires to permit voting of that nature to take place where a protest is raised by any candidate(s) without at first addressing the merits or otherwise of such protest(s). The panel of chairmen should have, therefore, at once appointed a committee to report upon the validity or otherwise of those protests and only then after receiving the committee's report and a resolution of the disagreement, voting should have been allowed to take place. The absence of that process should have alone invalidated that election result, regardless of all the other illegal practices. Those elders who made up of the panel (the so called 'Guurti') most of them illiterates, would not understand the management of modern institutions in spite of their esoteric expertise in their own traditional values of decision making, but for Egal who knew, the fait accompli must have

been that the end justified the means. For further analysis, see the following extracts from the late advocate Yusuf Jama Ali Duhul's Paper: (himself a former Siad Barre's prisoner of conscience, but who upon his release did not turn to the repressive regime):

"III. Egal: The Tale of Tall Somersaults"

"The Issaq clan's instrument for the struggle against the dictator, the Somali National Movement (SNM) and its post-dictator Government of Somaliland were both plagued by being taken over by the graduates of Siyadism. The Siyadists' three arms for their usurping of political leadership in Somaliland were all owed to the dictator and his Siyadism. The first was Siyadism-sharpened expertise in the manipulation of politicized tribalism; the second was the communal prominence conferred by the (at least nominally) elevated posts held by them in the dictator's regime; and the third was the financial clout given to them by their shares of the public assets looted under the spoils system, sponsored, by the dictator."

"A. The Egal Paradox"

"The present leader of Somaliland, President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, represents the paradox of not being a beneficiary of any of the three gifts to the Siyadists by the former dictator – and yet being the worst of the Siyadists.

"Egal's father was one of the richest men of (British Somaliland) at the end of the Second World War. He was educated at his father expenses in one of England's private schools.

"In 1959 Egal won the leadership of the Somali National League (SNL) – the Party then leading the campaign for the approaching independence. An important factor in that success was the popular sympathy generated by his preceding arrest, trial and conviction on drinking charges by the British Colonial government in Aden, South Yemen. That led in turn, to his emerging, on 26-06-1960, as the Prime Minister of the first independent government in Somali history, namely that of Somaliland.

"In 1969, he became, through the convergence of a number of fortunate coincidences, the Prime Minister of the Somali Republic, better known as Somalia, which was formed on 01-07-1960 by the union of the ex-British and the ex-Italian Somalilands. Egal hurried home from Hollywood, where he was enjoying the hospitality of film stars, when Somalia's President Sharmarke was assassinated in Las-Anod, in the ex-British North, on 15-10-1969. His government was overthrown five days later, and he was bundled off to 12 years of arbitrary inhuman detention by

the former dictator, who had led the military coup of 21-10-1969.

"Egal's present selection as the President of Somaliland is the outcome of a combination of some of the most unlikely factors. In 1991 Egal was, together with former Somali President Adam Abdulla Osman and former Somali Prime Minister Abdurazak Haji Hussein, one of the three politically disinterested Somali elder statesmen, endeavoring to facilitate Somali reunification. He jointly presided, in that capacity, with the other two elder statesmen, over the Somali Reconciliation Conference, hosted in July 1991 by the Government of Djibouti. It was attended by all armed factions, controlling the various territorial chunks of Somalia, except for the SNM, who refused to participate on the ground that their Somaliland was not part of Somalia but its independent equal.

"Egal's opposition to the SNM, the political arm of the Issaaq, and the independent Somaliland it declared in the ex-British North, was not part of the reluctance of many of the educated stratum of the Issaaq against the gratuitous assumption by their clan of the sin of dismembering Somalia. He was ferociously against the SNM because he was a fervent partisan of the dictator."

"A. The Hosannas to 'Aabbe' Siyad"- "Egal's aide memoir

"The extravagance of Egal's bizarre attachment to the former dictator can be glimpsed from the devotional language of the 'aid-memoir' he addressed to the dictator in 1986, when Egal was the president of the Somali Chamber of Commerce.

"It has to be here above, remembered, in that connection, that Egal and the members of his government were arrested, with some other Somali personalities, by the former dictator on the night of his coup, and that Egal was among the few excluded by the dictator from his 1973 general release from the total isolation in one of the dungeons of the terrible laanta Buur prison in 1984.

"His acceptance of the modest presidency of the Chamber of Commerce – from which he sent the dictator his stridently laudatory aid-memoir – had itself caused some surprise. As can be seen from the following quotes: "The last two weeks were of historical import. They owe their great import to you. You retreated into a seance [Egal's Somali word 'khalaawais' is even more devotional] to milk your brain power, and then you came up with decisions and policies founded on wisdom and learning which will uplift the heart of every nationalist, wishing success and welfare for his country." Egal's memorandum goes on to identify the first of the dictator's supposed phenomenal achievements as a circular, responding,

according to Egal, to the repeated requests of the business community for the reorganization of the collecting of the taxes/dues reaching the State.

"The public are enthusiastic about the circular and are most grateful to you," is the para's concluding sentence.

"The second para of Egal's memorandum is about Somaliland: "The second matter you pronounced on is that of the [ex-British] North. I did not agree with those complaining about Comrade Gaani [a tribal kinsman of the dictator, given absolute power over all the North, who launched the dictator's directive on harnessing of all the State's power and the resources to maximize the deaths and devastation visited on the Issaaq and their land]. "Only God is immune to faults. It is, therefore, possible that a number of transgressions may have come from Ganni's side. I am convinced, though, that without Gaani this region would have been engulfed by mind-numbing turmoil. Whatever some may say, Gaani has performed, with manly courage, an invaluable service for the state. There have been great changes in the affairs of the North. The real need was the coming up with some new idea to give new direction to the affairs of the North. God has shown you the right path, and you have done a wonderful job. I expect, and pray for, that a great success will be by your reward.

"Para 3 of Egal's memorandum is the longest and is consecrated to lauding the dictator's appointment of his son-in-law as the Somali Ambassador to Saudi Arabia – specifically, according to Egal, on account of the nominee's supposed abilities and character, and the anticipated Saudi appreciation of the dictator's selection of a member of his family as his envoy to "the Court of the Saudi Royal family, ...

"Para 4 of Egal's memorandum is no less submissive and devotional. "Comrade President, in view of the sagacity you have displayed and the indispensability of call emanating from you, I would like to add my modest contribution towards them, expressing my earnest hope of the early success of your endeavor for social readjustment and the cleansing of our heritage from all impurities." Egal's four-point contribution is also studded with similar awe-struck admiration for the dictator. They include suggestions which are obviously designed to hit the Issaaq – like the one on, in effect, the black-listing of all business men other than those "showing nationalist [pro-regime] convictions" through their appreciating that when "the law of the State [qaranka, then understood to signify the dictator's regime] bestows rights on the public, it implicitly imposes on the public reciprocal duties towards the State"; and the one advocating the ending "on account of the selfishness and short-sightedness" of the beneficiaries, the preferential foreign currency use, enjoyed at the time, by the exporters of livestock.

"C. Egal, the President of Somaliland"

"Egal's astounding metamorphosing into the President of Somaliland has been made possible by the social values and vision reflected by the pervasive and pulverizing dimensions of the Somali tribal system. There are, in particular, the manipulating contortions inflicted on it by the demands of applying its norms to the wholly alien needs of a modern mass society – like the processes for the formation of a central government. The effect is that the tribal card is used by far more than those aspiring to the contested political offices of the moment. Any available political affray is invariably joined, at virtually all lineage levels of the tribal entity concerned, by a myriad of non-candidates, all anxious to trade their tribal influence to the real candidates. What gives every Somali some chance of a rewarding exploitation of politicized tribalism is his ability of appealing to tribal solidarity at some level of his paternal lineage.

"The crucial tentacular hold of the tribal factor is such that every Somali candidate for any political (or politicized) office is bound to use, at the differing stages of his campaign, differing levels of his tribal kinship. It does not, however, follow that he is always free to choose the level of his tribal chain with which he identifies himself publicly. For instance, the paternal lineage of the average Issaaq is around 18 forefathers. As each step up the paternal lineage ladder constitutes a distinct tribal entity, the average Issaaq would have 18 tribal levels, and each of such 18 tribal levels would be a person's 'tribe' as against all those outside that particular point of the paternal lineage – the point of the need triggering the appeal for tribal solidarity.

"The Issaaq holder or candidate for a political office must identify himself publicly with the level, in the 18 segments or 'tribes' of his lineage, which encompasses all those represented by the political office held or sought. For instance, if the office sought or held is the Presidency of Somaliland, the 'tribe' of the party concerned would be the summit of the pyramid constituted by the configuration of the ascent of the 18 steps of his lineage, i.e. that of being "Issaaq". In the case of the Presidency of Somaliland, however, even that ultimate level would not suffice. The Issaaq clan may represent two thirds of Somaliland's demographical and territorial dimensions. They still are, however, only one of the four distinct major clans of Somaliland. The Somali tradition of formal disowning of tribal tags, in relation to the processes and institutions of the un-Somali Nation-State, is necessitated by such considerations.

"Egal's discovery of the dictator's learning, wisdom and monumental political acumen first surfaced at the time of his release by the

dictator. He declared in a BBC interview that the dictator's regime had achieved marvelous during his absence, the Somali people, that the pre-dictator past is something to forget, and that he himself was a believer in making a success of the present.

"The other facet of Egal's devotion to the dictator was his hostility to the Issaaq, presumably because they were the bastion of the opposition to the dictator's regime, and the source of the increasingly effective armed challenge to the violence of his blood-drenched dictatorship. The ferocity of Egal's distaste for the SNM, the Issaaq's political arm, was expressed publicly, for instance in interviews with the BBC's Somali Service."

"His sudden emerging as the President of Somaliland, and so in effect the embodiment of the Issaaq political leadership, was made possible by the baffling byways that can be produced by the effects of deploying, in the alien context of the Nation-State, the values, criteria and norms honed for the traditional nomadic life. Immediate and unconditional responding to the invocation to the tribal solidarity by fellow tribesmen is fundamental to the Somali tribal system. The responding kinsmen's first task is to fly to the support of the solidarity-seeking fellow tribesman. The rights and wrong are looked into later, at the dispute-settling stage by the elders. Such responding to tribal solidarity-seeking appeal is made instantaneous and automatic by the exigencies of nomadic life – its isolated camping in the wilderness, with no access to any of the basic public services, like the police, the courts, the hospitals or even the next door neighbor to turn to for temporary help."

"It is the plague of Somali politics because it is so crucial for nomadic life, and hence entrenched and overwhelming in the Somali psyche. It is, at the same time, so inimical to the Somali State and its governing institutions because of the inevitability of its development in all Somali politics, and its exploitation at all levels by the practitioners of politicized tribalism."

"A. Egal: The abandon of all Restraints"

"Egal's innovation in that respect is his discarding the restraints respected by all those holding or aspiring to any central government positions. The essence of that, as has been already indicated, is to refrain from publicly identifying oneself with any tribal label which excludes sections of those whose interests are represented or covered by the office held or sought. As has been indicated, the tribal groups whose interests the Presidency of Somaliland touches include not only all the Issaaq clan but also the members of the other three major clans of Somaliland."

"Egal's unfortunate innovation was essential to his scheme for by-

passing the obstacles constituted by his fawning adulation of the dictator and his consistent hostility to SNM, the political arm of the Issaaq, which nationally still controls Somaliland. He had to rely on the precipitate succouring by kinsmen produced by the appeal for tribal solidarity. A usual practice in such appeals is to start at a comparatively low tribal level, and then use the collective weight of the tribally closer of the broader, more distant, tribal echelons. Egal presumably used that tactic at lower levels, then used it to win over the Issa Musa wing of the Awal (one of the major sub-clans of the Issaaq). The next step would have been his formal gaining the backing of the whole Awal sub-clan. And that he did, at least formally."

"It is, in fact, normal for candidates for a position of the importance to engage in some tribal wheeling-dealing. Where Egal has introduced an unprecedented innovation is his declaring himself formally and publicly as "the candidate of Zubeir Awal".

"Egal's move is, however, nearer to the traditional Somali ways of conducting communal matters than half-hearted"

At any rate, the other candidates and their supporters rejected the result of that electoral fraud and the situation was deadlocked for two days for lack of the necessary consensus. However, the always over peace conscious Abdirahman 'Tour', one of the other three candidates and still the sitting incumbent, responding to an appeal made to him by some elders later acted over the head of his supporters in order to avert new conflicts between the northern communities and handed over responsibility rather ceremoniously to Egal.

Egal's installation as head of the northern secessionist administration was not, therefore, born out of popular support, excepting his Habr Awal subclan, but only came out of combination of expedient factors: (1) The traditional elders over whom Egal had always prevailed throughout his political career were on the one hand a useful vehicle to bring about such a result; (2) the 'Red Flags' delusion that once installed, Egal would remain to be a Naguib like figure head in a back seat, while they would emerge to become 'the Nassers' or the centers of power, and (3) the impression created by Egal's earlier campaign rhetoric of securing international recognition for the secessionist entity within six months was an additional persuasive leading factor. It was a notion further reinforced by Egal's pro-western posture. What the Somalis fail to understand or at least the elders did not understand was that while Egal was avowedly pro-west (to borrow the American definition above, p.185), the latter were not necessarily pro-Egal per se.

Despite Egal's election being the subject of such an obvious controversy, it was nonetheless endorsed, because the people just wanted to put division and internal conflicts behind them.

Putting aside the over riding illegality of the secession itself, the problematic situation in the north had developed from a number of undercurrents including the following:

1. During the last Congress of the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the spring of 1990, two of the Issaaq main groups, Egal's Habr Awal and the Habr Je'lo, jointly and in collusion with all the other non-Garhajis Issaaq groups, conspired and maneuvered to reduce the representational strength of the most numerically stronger Habr Yonis. The latter is the single largest and numerous group of all the northern Somali communities (see the General Survey of the Somaliland Protectorate, 1944-1950, pages 121-122 by John A. Hunt, M.A, F.R.G.S.). The maneuver was designed in the form of a proposal that all the eight descendants of the patriarch ancestor, Issaaq, should have equal representations of delegates to that Congress as well as in the policy making Central Committee that would be elected by that same Congress. This was regardless of each group's numerical strength or contribution capability to the then ongoing armed struggle against the dictatorial regime. Although the sponsors of the maneuver were portraying themselves as benevolently protecting fellow Issaaq brethren's minority interests, they very well knew that the four smaller groups in whose cause they were pretending to be championing for, were in fact their traditional allies. Evidently, the Hunt Survey makes no mention of the numerical strengths of these four smaller groups, because they were always counted as part of the above two main groups respectively (see page 150 of the Hunt Survey – under the heading: Sundry Small Tribes and Sections; and also page 169). The proposers were, therefore, deceitfully and by indirect means increasing their own groups' representational strengths in real terms at the very expenses of those more numerically stronger Habr Yonis. The latter were not lost to the ploy of the maneuver, but nevertheless, yielded to and accepted a compromise arrangement. It was a high price they willingly paid in the wake of Abdirahman Tour's election victory to the chairmanship of the SNM, in order to help a fellow clan member to keep the Movement intact at a crucial final stage of the armed struggle against the old

regime. Besides that, it is an accepted customary Somali code of conduct that whoever has the upper hand in such circumstances should show restraint and compromise. In this vein, Abdirahman Tour's election victory against his rival posed that extra obligation on the Garhajis in general and on the Habr Yonis in particular. The compromise was that the whole of the Garhajis, Habr Yonis and Eidagalla combined would only get and accepted an equal representation of seats to that of each of the Habr Awal and the Habr Je'lo proper. In real terms the whole of Garhajis would only get and accepted much less than the Habr Yonis's legitimate proportionate share. The fourth of the bigger four Issaaq groups, the Arap, whose numerical strength was according to the Hunt Survey (page 122) less than one-sixth of that of the Habr Yonis, in fact got nearly twice as many as that of the latter group, in the final compromise arrangement. The representation of the four smaller groups were also comparatively increased, but for the no-secret advantage of the Habr Awal and the Habr Je'lo over the Garhajis. Nevertheless, to the Garhajis this compromise arrangement was never intended to be perpetual or to out live the armed struggle. To its sponsors, however, and to other beneficiaries (all the non-Garhajis Issaaq groups), it was the opposite and was intended to be the basis for all future power sharing and polity, as opposed to proportional representation.

2. During the Borama Grand 'Shir' (Congress) of the northern Somali communities an indispensable principle enshrined in the Somali cultural values and justice was deliberately ignored by the panel chairmanship. This was the principle of consensus, which is the cornerstone of Somali traditional democracy of decision making. When it came to the distribution of the Issaaq delegates to the Borama 'Shir' or seats for the subsequent constituent assembly and council of elders, the 'Shir' invoked the previous allocations for the 1990 SNM Congress. The Habr Yonis who were not represented in the panel chairmanship out rightly rejected these allocations. But they were unprecedentedly out voted by the ganging up of all those other interested groups and the 'Guurti' (the elders). They were also betrayed by the two Eidagaleh members of the Guurti who should have defended all Garhajis interests. The reason for the Habr Yonis's absence from the Guurti was of their being a party to a prior dispute for which the official Guurti had been formed in the first place. With the consequence, the Habr Yonis did not accept the outcome of that

so much vaunted Borama 'Shir' until their case was later reviewed and their claims were reconsidered by the 1997 Congress of the northern communities, and although their complaint was not fully redressed, but at least partially, on a compromise basis that was accepted by their own representatives, over the head of the Habr Yonis majority.

3. Egal's first administration, even to the dismay of his important supporters among the traditional elders was dominated, as a pro quid quo, by the 'Red Flags' who had not only opposed, but in fact toppled his predecessor's administration. The result was that the majority of the former supporters of Abdirahman 'Tour' including many of the SNM militiamen not only withheld their support and loyalty from Egal and his administration, but in fact opposed him because of his new alliance with the 'Red Flags'.

At the early stages of his installation, Egal might have believed neither the viability nor the validity of the secession. Even as late as early 1999, Egal hinted possibility of eventual Somali Unity. The following text is extracted from recorded BBC World News Summary:

Source: Al-Hayat, London, in Arabic, 6 Feb 1999 Interview with Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal:

"Somaliland leader denies claims of impeding reconciliation (Somalia) efforts: We are advocates of unity and do not seek partition. The declaration of the Republic of Somaliland was part of our unity program. We succeeded in restoring security, peace and stability in our country. We are still working to develop our institutions, which were destroyed by the former regime. But while doing our work, we have continued to wait, and have been waiting for nine years, for our brothers in the south to form a strong central government with which we can negotiate the new basis for unity."

However, Egal continued paying lip service to the secession's platform while he would fathom his other options. He must have felt nostalgic for his previous clout and authority over all of Somalia prior to the overthrow of his government, and thus coveted the presidency of a reconstituted Somalia proper. And somehow Egal was counting upon American support, especially since the appointment of an American as head of the United Nations Mission for Somalia. One month after Egal's installation during June 1993, the American led UNOSOM II forces went against General Mohamed

Farah Aideed and his SNA supporters. Egal's hopes and ambition were tremendously heightened by the restrained relations between the American led UNOSOM II and the most powerful aspirant, General Aideed. Egal was reported to have enthusiastically faxed his unqualified support to Admiral Howe through UNICEF Hargeisa channels for the UN action against Aideed. While the hunt for Aideed still continued Egal received a warning from some UNOSOM II sources that his American friends were not grooming him for the top Somali office after all, but in fact some one else. Egal then hit the roof and went crazy. He could hardly believe that someone else would out bid him in his relations with the Americans. He could not, however, afford to quarrel with his erstwhile benefactors, the Americans. Instead, he exposed his wrath against the nominal UNOSOM II, forgetting the reality that it was itself also an American led entity. Egal created a rationale that accused UNOSOM II of attempts to dismember 'Somaliland' by annexing Sool and Sanaag regions of which Erigavo and Lasanod were the new provincial capitals to the northeast administration. By indirect implication, it was an accusation against the Americans, but the latter tolerated his rhetoric and did not react adversely. He closed down UNOSOM II offices in the north and only re-opened them after he was appeased. Having challenged the authority of the United Nations which had set itself responsible for all of Somalia in the absence of a central authority, Egal's conduct was far more objectionable and serious than Aideed was accused of, but that raised neither UN nor American offence. During the tenure of Ambassador Sahnoun as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to Somalia, the United Nations was not only determined to extend its authority all over Somalia. But Sahnoun had already secured the agreement of the SNM administration of stationing UN troops at the Berbera port in the north of the country. This policy was not pursued any further when Egal's installation coincided with UNOSOM II becoming an American de facto entity.

Having lost hope of any American support for his high ambition, Egal must have felt that a bird in hand was better than ten on the perch. He still had to keep the secession in place for at least as a bargaining chip for his future political contingencies. Egal kept telling the international community that as soon as the southern factions reconciled themselves and put up a Government in place, he would be ready for a dialogue and negotiations. Many foreign leaders and personalities were easily taken in by Egal's rhetoric and saw his stated stand as positive. In a faint attempt, Egal was looking for a second opportunity to make up for the past northern failures under his leadership forty years ago and to start re-bargaining the reunion on north-south basis anew. This was a pipe dream. The present Somali scenario was

no longer a north-south equation, but rather a matter of restoring the national sovereignty and central authority throughout the country including the north. It would then be the competence of that central authority to address the internal problems of the country of whatever nature, which could include anomalies arising out of the original reunion. This was one reason for the SNM leadership opting in April 1994 for a federal system of governance, which was later endorsed by all the Somali factions during the Cairo Somali Meeting in 1997 and finally enshrined in the Arta drawn National Transitional Charter. Federalism was considered a viable legal framework to keep a check on any overstepping by a stronger central authority at the expenses of the federated states.

As the overall Somali problems continued to escape solutions year after a year, the patience of the north's secessionist diehard groups also grew thinner and questioned Egal's sincerity and/or ability to deliver his campaign promises in which he had committed himself to secure diplomatic recognition. The failure of this commitment was the subject of debate in the secessionist parliament even as late as mid 1999 – see the weekly Hargeisa Republican paper of 19 June 1999. Egal already, long ago, felt uneasy and defensive in the face of such public demands. And furthermore, the secession not only by then became his commitment, but also a necessity for Egal's political survival, rather than a luxury. In order to prove his commitment to the secessionist diehards' camp and also for his personal gain, Egal started printing a 'Somaliland' currency to replace the Somali legal Bank notes. He also drafted and promulgated a 'Somaliland' constitution. Only then did Egal make any serious attempt as a litmus test of international public opinion vis-à-vis recognition of the secessionist entity. He visited all the neighboring East African countries (the so-called IGAD member states except the Sudan). He also used the occasion of those visits to meet with all the ambassadors of the big powers. Egal's rationale for appealing for international recognition was that the main purpose of reuniting the two former Somali territories (north and south), the two components of the Somali Republic, in the first place was to spearhead a greater Somalia, which failed because of international, especially western, opposition to its realization. And since, therefore, that concept of greater Somalia was ultimately abandoned, so must then the reunion of the two former territories. Egal knew only too well that while the realization of a greater Somalia was only a distant hope during the reunion, nevertheless, the reunion itself was not perceived as an experimental process, but rather as an irreversible development. The reunion was neither intended nor perceived as contingent nor conditional upon the realization of the greater Somalia concept. Egal was, therefore, only begging the question and his appeal fell on deaf

ears. All African leaders expressed their commitment to the unity of Somalia, unless the Somalis agreed on something else among them once and after a central authority was restored. But for Egal, the trip was a worth-while attempt, even if only to convince his co-secessionists of his commitment to their agenda.

Egal then turned to Israel. It would appear to have taken him some time in finding out how to communicate, since the secessionist entity not unlike the rest of Somalia, did not have outside representation that could arrange such contacts. Egal, however, had a supporter living in London in the name of Dr. Omar Duhod, a northern Somali Psychiatrist, who paid frequent visits to Hargeisa where he treated traumatic cases of the Somali civil war victims. The latter would also see Egal a lot whilst in Hargeisa. Dr. Duhod had some Jewish contacts in London and Egal must have delegated him to make the initial approach. He thus obtained a written note of advice dated 19 June 1995.

It appears that Egal must have then acted with an accelerated speed and sent two emissaries to Eritrea to contact the Israeli Ambassador there whose name and other details were mentioned in the written note of advice. Upon the return of the two emissaries, Egal wrote the a letter on 3 July 1995, to the late former Israeli Prime Minister, Yitshak Rabin, in such a way that might have been intended to woo Jewish sympathies, hoping that they could influence the United States in favor of Egal's secessionist appeal. He seemed to forget the plain fact that while Israel could get whatever it wanted for itself from the United States, it could not, even if it wanted to, get that for others and especially not for those so far removed from US interests, as certainly Somalia was a backwater in US African foreign policy. But Egal might not have been alone among the Third World peoples to believe that license to American attention lies in friendship with Israel, as Fawaz A. Gerges says of Turkey's Generals in his book 'America and Political Islam', page 200 and quote:

"...the Israeli card appears to be the safest course for appealing to the U.S. foreign policy apparatus."

And also according to the Economist/May 7th-13th 2005 Issue, p.29, sources close to both United States and Israeli officials owned that the last visit to Israel by the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr. Erdogan, was seen by the two governments as part of a campaign to repair Turkey's relations with America.

However, Egal not only proposed a project for strategic partnership between the Jewish State and the so-called 'Somaliland', but at the same time, he blasphemed Islam by irreverently describing the Islamic Sharia as "The Dark Sharia".

The reason for this absurdity of blasphemy is inconceivable, unless Egal might have thought that by doing just that would endear him to the Jews in transition to United States' attention. In any case, Egal's blasphemous letter got leaked and was distributed to many of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The Israelis must have held back as a result of that leak. Six weeks later he would act in the opposite way. On 20 August 1995, Egal wrote to the Secretary General of the OIC based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in which he implied his deep belief in the Islamic faith. In a veiled attempt, it seemed that Egal was indirectly seeking an audience by the late King Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz, the then Sovereign of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the OIC Secretary General. By then Egal's letter of blasphemy of Islam must have become a common knowledge and possibly not even an acknowledgement to Egal's letter was forthcoming. Had Ayatollah Khomeini's death not preceded this blasphemy of Islam, the Ayatollah would have perhaps issued his Fatwa (judgement) for Egal's execution, not unlike Salman Rushdie.

When he was in office Egal styled himself as a former Colonial Governor. The latter ruled the country through the elders, known elsewhere as the indirect rule, because the elders were the Colonial Power's contractual counterparts. Egal was a very strong believer of that outdated system. Refer to the following Press Report: Associated Press, April 8, 1996, by Karin Davies:

"Egal, who was Prime Minister of Somalia before Siad Barre imprisoned him in 1969, said Somaliland has been able to fend for itself because British rule left clan and cultural traditions in tact."

Egal thus not only always attempted to implement his plans through, often unwitting, elders and cared little about popular feelings. From his long sufferings in the hands of Siad Barre, Egal embraced the former dictator's style of doing business and his rule of law. Since his coming to office as the head of the northern secessionist administration, Egal was imitating and experimented Siad Barre's methods, including suppression of the local press and civil liberties and pitting clans or groups against one another. He also appointed many of Siad Barre's security officers including his successor

Riyale, to positions of trust.

Egal's secessionist administration was consistently committing gross violations of human rights. Just to mention a few such cases:-

1. There was the illegal arrest and subsequent deportation in late 1999 of a group of Somali teachers from the northeast region, who were invited to attend an internationally sponsored seminar in Hargeisa. No reasonable explanation was given either for the illegal arrest, or for the arbitrary deportation.
2. Since the convening of the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Congress in the neighboring Republic of Djibouti, early 2000, the secessionist entity harassed, arrested and imprisoned or detained people of the north who participated in that Congress. Similar treatments were also meted out to other Somalis from the regions beyond who were transiting through the north on their way to the Congress.

The participation at the Congress was a mere expression of opinion. Both the participation and the travel to Congress venue in Djibouti were within the realm of the individuals' freedom of thought and movement. By themselves, these actions constituted no criminal offences in any civilized society, even if the secession were a legitimate entity. Those measures were, therefore, gross violations of human rights. Egal and his associates knew this fact well enough, because every person so arrested, detained or imprisoned was later released after only a short period of political blackmail and intimidation aimed at prolonging the life span of the secession. People so arrested included Gerad Abshir Salah, a member of the Somali traditional nobility who should have been immune from such arbitrary and frivolous acts of blackmail and intimidation. The Gerad attended the Somali Peace Congress where he was also selected for the Transitional Parliament of Somalia. He was arrested at Berbera airport whilst transiting from Djibouti to Las-Anod, his home town, after the Congress had concluded. His arrest was a serious violation of human rights and, therefore ultra vires, not only because the secessionist entity lacked legitimacy, but also for a number of both historical and legal grounds. First, the secessionist entity's claim could at best be one of authority over areas under its jurisdiction during the absence of a recognized central authority throughout Somalia. The Gerad's own constituency had neither then come under the jurisdiction of the secessionist administration nor recognized the secession itself. The secessionist's only other claim was a reminisced claim of the colonial boundaries of the former

British Somaliland. Any such claim is completely null and void. First, Somaliland, by its own people's freely expressed will became part of the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960 and that ended the former colonial boundary. And secondly as mentioned elsewhere in this work, even in the absence of such a reunion, the Dolbahante territory could not have been legally inheritable by the then new State of Somaliland upon the latter's independence from Britain without the expressed consent of the Dolbahante people much less by the secessionist entity now. The Gerad's Dolbahante had neither signed the treaties of protection between the British and other Somali clan elders nor had ever expressly consented to the treaties of protection between the British and their contractual counterparts. Under the above circumstances, the secessionist entity had no jurisdiction over Gerad Abshir or over the Dolbahante people for that matter. The Gerad's arrest, detention and imprisonment were, therefore, all illegal of illegalities and a gross violation of human rights. The Gerad had the right to sue for damages, if any legality existed there.

Also refer to Press Report: Africa Confidential V37, N4, and 16 February 1996:

"Increasingly autocratic, Egal wants a United States style of Executive Presidency. Deputies want a parliamentary democracy."

"Meanwhile, Egal governs by Presidential Decree. His opponents accuse him of violating the Borama Charter, the foundation of the state, which prescribes the separation of powers. His cabinet ministers complain that he treats them like secretaries."

"Consultation is shrinking and so are Egal's horizons. In recent months he has rarely left the presidential palace. His cabinet critics say he tries to run the country from his bedroom. The lengthening list of uncertainties include the question, is he coming down today? Politicians and businessmen alike are increasingly dismayed by the resulting policies especially on money and economies."

"Raging inflation followed last year's introduction of a Somaliland Shilling to replace the Somali notes. Prices of some food staples have arisen fivefold impoverishing a hungry population. Egal's critics say he fails to consult his ministers over financial decisions and puts too much cash into circulation...."

The Borama Charter (secessionists' temporary constitution) guaranteed autonomy of the regions and districts to establish their own administrations and appoint their administrators. Egal defied these constitutional guarantees and instead appointed his own hand picked

administrators. The civil war which erupted and grounded the second northern capital city of Burao early 1995 in fact resulted from Egal's futile attempt to forcibly exert his authority in that particularly important city with strong presence of the Habr Yonis majority who did not recognize his authority.

The Sheikh and Borama peace accords contained provisions that local administrations, and not Egal's central authority within the secessionist context, were responsible for the control and security of the national infrastructures (including airports) in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Egal's claim of the control of Hargeisa airport was, therefore, both illegal and unconstitutional. When the acting mayor of Hargeisa, himself one of Egal's Habr Awal, proposed to take over the control of the airport in accordance with the interpretation of the above legal instruments (the peace accords) Egal reportedly burst into fury and severely reprimanded the mayor, exclaiming,

"Don't you take me off my pants! " Or better put it in Somali, "**Waar ha i qaawinin!**" literally translated: "**Don't make me naked!**" However, most of the functions of the airport, i.e. immigration, customs and civil aviation would be the competence of a central authority and Egal's administration would have

no difficulty in performing its duties without any hindrance once and after the local administration assumed responsibility for the physical control and security of the airport. Had Egal's ego allowed him to see the light of reason and he would not obstruct the local administration's take over, the Hargeisa airport anomaly would have peacefully ended as early as July 1993, only two months after the adoption of the Borama Charter and its supplementaries (The Sheikh and Borama Peace Accords). Egal never, however, wanted a peaceful settlement at that time. He was bent on promoting Habar Awal supremacy to avenge what he had reminisced and haunted him as his groups humiliating defeat in the hands of the Garhajis in November 1947 fighting, which is briefly recorded in the Hunt Survey (page 157, paragraph 480) mentioned above and also commemorated in the 'Gabay' (poem) by the famous poet, the late Abdi Warsame (alias Abdi Gahair). In order to settle such old scores with unsuspecting Garhajis, Egal was more than anything else sustaining Habar Awal solidarity who were already united in his selection, because in Somali clan culture one way of preserving such clan solidarity is to create a third enemy for them. The Issaaq's overall unity against the Siad Barre regime was the creation of such an example by the former regime. After a mock trial on uncorroborated flimsy charges, 44 Issaaq men including the local police commander who were summarily shot by extra-judicial execution were buried together in a mass

grave in Burao in November 1984 and similarly 26 others in Hargeisa and 15 more including a woman in Sheikh during the same month, despite manifold other repressive measures and atrocities. The woman's alleged sin was that she had ululated when a military convoy was ambushed by the SNM on the Sheikh pass.

Fifteen months later after the conclusion of the Borama Congress, on 15 October 1994, the twenty-fifth anniversary of President Sharmarke's assassination (the prelude to the overthrow of Egal's civilian government), Egal ignited the fire of a new civil war in the north upon a pretext for the control of Hargeisa airport. A firepower, far greater than that was employed and directed against the main northern towns of Hargeisa and Burao by the Siad Barre regime in 1988 was then targeted at the predominantly Garhajis residential areas of Hargeisa city. The new civil war only served the purpose of human suffering and ridiculed Egal's incumbency. Hundreds of non-combatant civilians were killed or wounded and maimed while thousands of others were displaced whose dwellings were destroyed and became refugees again. It is still a mystery why did Egal choose President Sharmarke's assassination anniversary for igniting the fire of the new civil war? One possible suggestion is that Egal might have been avenging of himself. He might be punishing as many people as he could find the excuse for the popular support that was then given to the military take over after overthrowing his government. The assassination had facilitated that take over. Only Egal knew the real reason for that choice and we would have looked forward to see his memoirs to tell us the secret had he lived? Egal's style of leadership not only manifested his prima donna cult, but also his inward looking of a self-centered Subeir-Awal. Egal wrote a letter on 12 January 1995 to the Djibouti based Subeir-Awal wealthy merchants.

It seems Egal wrote this letter whilst in a euphoria mood and thrilled by what he saw as his acme, an ephemeral, one day's victory in a futile civil war, and with a highly exaggerated account. Not surprisingly that only one day's victory in an intermittent clan warfare may mean an important achievement to reach to Egal's Subeir-Awal who had not been traditional fighters until they were, thanks to Siad Barre's repressive regime, forced out and deprived of their homes, their families and driven to the walls. But that would not necessarily make them more enduring or more skilled fighters than the Garhajis who had always known such ordeals throughout their lives. To the Garhajis, however, who had known many such ordeals of victories as well as defeats in clan warfares for centuries, only one day's victory or defeat, one way or the other, was not much to reckon with. And although Egal boasted

rather prematurely and dubbed the Garhajis's fighting prowess as a myth, history bore witness that while he might have won only one battle, he lost many such battles and after all that civil war too. The civil war dragged on for further two and a half more years, despite abundant resources at Egal's disposal, in comparison with a modicum for his adversaries. He was losing the war because his fighting manpower shrank as the other non-Subeir-Awal groups, the linchpin of his war capability, became reluctant to continue fighting and dying since Egal's Subeir-Awal were not. Egal then conceded and opted for peace through his manipulated 'Guurti'.

Refer to Press Report: Africa Confidential Vol.38 (2) pp.2-3, January 17, 1997,

"The Hargeisa leadership is at present involved in the third Congress of Somaliland Communities attempting to settle problems between the Habr Awal Issaaq and the Garhajis Issaaq....."

Initially the Subeir-Awal would pay for Egal's war and ration the non-Subeir-Awal fighters, but otherwise denied their involvement and kept saying that the war was between the 'government' and the opposition, the Garhajis for that matter. The non-Subeir-Awal groups were mobilized in the name of Somaliland's independence against what were called, 'the spoilers' - the Garhajis, and they were doing the fighting and the dying. However, according to Egal's letter, any credit, when there was some, belonged to the Subeir-Awal and none to the fighting and dying non-Subeir-Awal groups of 'Somalilanders'. No wonder, Egal used the possessive pronoun, 'our' in that fateful letter for not less than eleven times. He cautioned maximum secrecy in handling his letter in order to keep it secret from their non-Subeir-Awal allies against the Garhajis who were not being given any credit for their fighting and dying, but it was not to be. Egal's letter leaked. The rest of Egal's letter speaks for itself and reveals his inner personality and leadership style or the lack of these two qualities, as well as his intentions for printing his currency as an economic proposition for his subclan's interest, exclusive of the other so-called 'Somalilanders'. On their part, the Garhajis mainstream all along refused to talk peace unless and until the Subeir-Awal admitted their active involvement in that civil war and accepted responsibility. Nor could Egal reopen the Hargeisa airport to traffic that was his casus belli for the war before that settlement. This included a review of the Habr Yonis seats in the Secessionist houses of parliament, although their new allocation was still far short of their rightful share, nevertheless, it was a compromise that was accepted by their representatives. However, the 2005 elections in Somaliland conspicuously revealed the numerical population strength of the Habr Yonis.

They won about nearly one-fourth of the total seats in the house of representatives (19 seats out of 82 = 23.17%).

Egal seemed to have had cashed some credit, especially in foreign circles, for the North's relative peace and tranquility since 1997. Any such credit belongs to the people and not to the secessionist diehards who had ignited the fire of the civil war in the first place and plunged that part of the country into chaos. In fact, the war would have continued for a long time had Egal achieved any military victory. He only accepted peaceful settlement because he was losing. To his credit, however, Egal at first sidelined, then neutralized and finally isolated the dreaded 'Red Flags' group. Without their isolation, peace would never have returned. In hindsight, even if only by an accident of fate, this could be a measure of Egal's contribution to the peaceful settlement.

Before concluding the writing of this part of the text, it is worth commenting upon the assumption held by some people that Egal and I were personal enemies. I think people who know me well believe what I say. There was a time when I got involved in a minor traffic accident during a mobile police patrol on night inspection. I knocked off a small piece of a plinth wall of a government department compound. I immediately recorded the incident in the Police Station Occurrence Book. The European police officer, my superior, read all about it early following morning even before I could have time to report it to him. He immediately telephoned the officer in-charge of the department concerned to apologise on my behalf. It had then become a talking point among the police rank and file those days, some of them even exaggerated it saying that I had arrested myself. I still have to sometimes answer questions to that effect these days. My juniors would expect me to report the incident in any case to the officer in-charge, but quietly rather than to record what they considered an act of foolishness on my part, in other words to hide it out of pride. By all this I mean that I might have done many things wrong in my life, but would never tell a lie.

And returning to the theme and speaking for myself, I wish to make it quite clear and also for the record, that I had never harbored any personal enmity or hatred towards Mohamed Ibrahim Egal. We differed of course and rather seriously at least on three specific occasions. First, some time in 1959 Egal was a defense witness in a technically criminal court case in which I was the prosecuting officer, he took a serious offence of a question I put to him in cross-examination. In hindsight and in the light of my subsequent public relations experience since that long time, it was a question that I would

probably not ask today. Nevertheless, it was a genuine and relevant question, neither frivolous nor vexatious and I cannot, therefore, offer any remorse even today. By some accounts, however, Egal had reminisced, that particular question and it haunted him. Secondly, during 1969 general elections in Somalia, I defied Premier Egal's policy to rig those elections. The laws of the land did not permit the rigging and in my capacity as a law enforcement officer, I was forbidden to obey an unlawful order. On the contrary, I am proud to have had thus helped save the political rights of many fair competitors from that rigging by preventing the misuse deployment of the police personnel under my command. And thirdly, during the all Northern Somali communities Congress in 1993, I did not only question Egal's credentials, but actually opposed his candidature as leader of the North. This was my political right to oppose or support whoever I thought worthy of it or not and it was a sense of immaturity on the part of anyone to ascribe my actions to personal enmity.

However, Egal no doubt harbored some enmity because of our differences mentioned here-above, and there had been some indications by subsequent evidence to that effect. Nonetheless, in my own personal judgement of Egal, I would never believe his entertaining the wicked idea of assassinations. I would have thought that he knew the significance of the common adage that, 'those who live by the sword also die by the sword'. On June 1, 1994 my private house in Hargeisa was attacked at midnight by some riflemen while my family members and I were asleep. Fourteen rounds of Kalashnikov ammunition were fired through the windows of one room, which the attackers thought I might be sleeping. The crime was, however, attempted with a degree of cowardice, so nobody was hurt. My own private investigation led to strongly suspecting two militiamen, both of them belonging to Egal's Habr Awal. I would never still suspect Egal's complicity, much less his planning or masterminding that operation until more than five years later. His former minister of interior, Musa Bihi, himself another Habr Awal, who had since broken with Egal, on 30 December 1999 published an article in a local Hargeisa Paper, *Jamhuuriya* (The Republican) together with Egal's handwritten instructions to his then Vice-President, Abdirahman Aw Ali, who had also since broken with Egal. An unofficial translation from Somali handwritten instruction of 16 September 1994 is produced here which is self-explanatory:

Unofficial Translation:

Berbera, 16.9.1994

Abdirahman Aw-Ali,

O' Be blessed (literally be prayed for)

I have just received your letter, which pleased me very much. Each day we put off our action, some people assume that we are not ready to raise our hand and they see the Eidagaleh (the author's subclan) as brave men capable of teasing the government. This can possibly encourage others to join them, but if they see them whipped (severely beaten), they will only be laughed at. Therefore our victory is today or never. Let me remind you God's Words:

The Arabic script in that otherwise Somali written note is a quotation from the 8th Sura (Chapter) of the Holy Quran, Surat Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:57 (see Italics) in which Egal portrayed himself as a saint and his opponents as sinners:

"If Ye gain mastery over them in war, disperse with them, those who follow them, that they may remember."

The following, again in italics is the full explanation of the above verse by the late savant Abdullah Yusuf Ali, May God bless his soul, in his book, "The Meaning of the Holy Quran, Note": 1224.A – page 428:

"The purpose of the verse is to urge Muslims to act against their enemies described above with a severity and resoluteness which would serve as a deterrent to other enemies of Islam who might be inclined to follow their example and act treacherously towards Muslims."

"Today, the Eidagaleh must pay for their pride (arrogance), and you should have no mercy on them. Our earlier tolerance compensates our present tough action. Today, you are taming mischievous boys (Egal's own remarks: "Spare the rod, spoil the child"). Whatever you do will be a lesson to all non-law abiding ragtags. If the Eidagaleh militiamen shed their blood, there will neither be any more road blocks nor mischievous boys. We must, therefore, become unforgettably invincible.

Secondly, after you shall have dealt with the militia, you should round up Jama Yare (the author) and his men (companions) all of them; unless they join the war and meet their final destiny (they should have got

killed). Brother, do not underestimate that man's case. He is the biggest lawless militia himself. His case must end up with that of the other lawless militia. Otherwise, our victory will be meaningless.

"Remember me to Bihi and all the others. I pray for victory and for God's support.

Sd/Egal".

In publishing Egal's handwritten instructions, Musa Bihi was according to the tone of his article, responding to some prior accusation by Egal's camp that might have blamed him for starting the 1994 civil war. That civil war was ignited by Egal's administration in which Musa Bihi was himself a key member. Besides that Musa Bihi was Egal's acknowledged war hero in his letter of 12 January 1995 to the Subeir -Awal merchants in Djibouti which is mentioned above. The latter would always execute Egal's instructions; come what may, with a great zeal during their temporary honeymoon. In fact, the two militiamen suspected of attacking my residence were Musa Bihi's henchmen, and he cannot now, by publishing Egal's secrets, endear himself to anyone.

In retrospect, the group seemed to have later turned on themselves to accuse one another for responsibility of their collective folly vis-à-vis that futile civil war.

Despite the foregoing controversies, I would neither be inhibited by our differences from writing what I feel about Egal; and after all this is something I owe to history nor would I fail to give him his dues. I never hesitated to do business with him either if and when so dictated by common national interests. In this vein and regardless of my opposition to him, I would not recognize Egal's leadership of the secessionist entity in north Somalia inasmuch as I oppose the secession itself ipso facto. But Egal had three times become Somali Prime Minister in his own right and I would not overlook to observe that reality either, whenever an opportunity presented itself.

As I stated in my previous book mentioned above, in April 1966, I was retransferred to the North. Egal suggested through some mutual friends that we meet before I leave Mogadishu, although we were not directly seeing each other much. Ismail Ahmed Ismail, the then

Commandant of the Prison Services, conveyed the message to me and I accepted it. One or two days later the late Anthony Mariano arranged what looked like my welfare dinner party at the 'Tre Fontana' (The Three Fountains) Restaurant for just the four of us. After the dinner Ismail and I rode with Egal in his car for a drive. Egal made no mention of the purpose of his suggestion for our meeting, but he dwelled upon a number of topics. Among these was why he had joined the SYL party and left the SNC that he had co-founded. My perception that I read in between the lines was that Egal was directly briefing me in case I might be asked something about it on my return to the North. Another unforgettable subject that Egal narrated was a statement he attributed to Mohamed Siad Barre. According to Egal, Siad Barre then a Colonel in 1964 had met a group of opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) including Egal and said that if those MPs would not stop harassing the government they (the army?) would do their duty! Egal said that they (MPs) took his statement as a direct threat of a coup d'état and they were all shocked. He added that unless that man was compulsorily pensioned off, he would one day over step the mark. Egal became the Prime Minister, the head of the executive branch of the government; three years later and Siad Barre overthrew his government after further two more years later.

Upon the collapse of the Siad Barre regime, I paid several visits to the North and perceived some simmering manifestations of secessionist tendencies. On one of my return trips to Mogadishu, I voluntarily went to Egal, then an ordinary man, and reported my observations to him. I did so because: (1) Egal being the prime minister of the last civilian government which was overthrown by that now defunct military regime, and (2) since I knew that Egal had commanded more respect in the south, especially in the capital and among the Hawiye menfolk than in the north as a whole and even in his own constituency, I thought he would feel to have a stake in the unity of the country. He was rather taciturn, and perhaps not without some justification! He was attending to his mother on her deathbed whose only progeny Egal was and I sympathized with him. She passed away only few days later and I visited Egal at the burial and offered him my condolence.

In March 1993 the Panel Chairmen of the all northern Somali communities Congress mentioned above who were already grooming Egal for the future leadership of the north also selected him to lead a northern delegation to a United Nations sponsored conference for Somalia to be held in Addis Ababa. We arrived there at about 11 a.m. and were met by a junior local UNOSOM II female employee. After a long delay and inefficient

process of clearance, registrations, inoculations, etc., we were at long last taken to the Hotel Afrique just before sunset, nearly seven hours since our arrival. Besides that, it was Ramadan and we were fasting. The UNOSOM employee said that every two of us would share a room. I thanked her on behalf of the whole group and said it was fine for the rest of us, but could she better not find a suite for ex-Prime Minister Egal? She agreed, but later said there was no suite available. He was at least given a single room by himself.

After the conclusion of the Cairo Somali Meeting (November-December 1997) I returned by way of the United Arab Emirates and wanted to contact Egal from there for the first time in nearly five years. I would be going through the Somali Ambassador who was still working there, himself a close clan member of Egal's. I wanted to brief him, especially about the unpublished dynamics of that meeting which his secessionist administration had not participated. I would not only advise him to join the national reconciliation process, but also remind him the need for political unity of the people of the north if they were to fare well in power sharing with other parallel Somali groups. However, Egal was either unable or unwilling for such a contact between the two of us.

I had already recorded in my previous book, the degree of protection I had accorded Egal and Sheik Ali Jimaale as opposition leaders from excesses of over zealous junior officers under my command as the then head of Intelligence and Security.

ROLE PLAYED BY THE MILITARY

Another historical factor that adversely affected the lives of the Somali people was the role played by the military. Its creation in the first place was due to Somali leaders' reaction to imperialist maneuvering likely to affect future Somali national defence by subjecting later independent Somalia becoming a pawn of major powers' play. Western powers conspired with former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, who was a darling of the former, to deny Somalia defensive capability in order to accommodate the emperor's expansionist ambitions. In that vein, Somalia should have no military, but only a Police Force for internal security. The United States had already maneuvered through the United Nations to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia, thus compromising the independence of the Eritrean people. In return, Haile Selassie allowed the United States a base in Eritrea, then in his domain, where they built a huge eavesdropping

satellite station for monitoring and deciphering Soviet communication network. Haile Selassie later violated even that Eritrean federal status and turned it into a mere province of Ethiopia proper. The Eritrean people rebelled in mass and ultimately regained their freedom, but after a long and bitter armed struggle of thirty years standing. About thirty thousand martyrs sacrificed their lives.

Immediately after Somali independence and reunion Abdirashid's government requested western governments to help arm and equip the novice Somali national army with defensive weapons. In the meantime, the Somali population in the Ogaden still colonized by Ethiopia became restive and was subjected to repression. There was a rebellion and many subjugated groups sought sanctuary in Somalia. Ethiopian incursions intruded into Somali territories claiming hot pursuit and molested defenceless Somalis. The new Somali Government could not even properly defend its own territory and kept following up of their request for defensive weapons, knocking the doors of those western governments for good two years. In 1962 at long last Premier Abdirashid personally visited countries of all the major western powers and met their leaders; President John Kennedy in Washington, Prime Minister Macmillan in London, Chancellor Adenauer in Bonn and Prime Minister Fanfani in Rome, mainly for that sole purpose. They later jointly offered him to arm and equip an army of not more than five thousand men, but on condition that Somalia would not accept arms from any other quarter. Abdirashid felt humiliated and rejected that modicum offer. Because the perceived external threat to Somali's independence and territorial integrity was Ethiopia, which already had thirty thousand regular armed forces fully armed and equipped by the United States, plus additional thirty thousand under arms composed of police and other irregular forces. In sum total, sixty thousand Ethiopian forces were under arms.

Abdirashid confided only in General Daud that they had no choice, but to approach the Soviet Union. As mentioned elsewhere in this work, Abdirashid had already visited the Soviet Union and was well acquainted with Premier Khrushchev. In the meantime, that decision was a guarded secret between the Prime Minister and his army Chief of Staff until the right moment would arrive. As fate would have it, the Speaker of the Somali National Assembly, Jama Abdullahi Ghalib, was invited to visit the Soviet Union and he would lead a parliamentary delegation. Abdirashid and Daud would then seize the opportunity of using the Speaker as an emissary to convey a message to the above effect to Khrushchev. General Daud at first

visited the Speaker in his office and briefed him, adding that Abdirashid and he would together come and see him again before he would leave. However, Abdirashid must have felt that the two of them going together and visit the Speaker in his office at the eve of the latter's departure for Moscow might invite somebody smelling something and reading in between the lines. The best suited time was when seeing him off at the airport and they just did that. The three of them then stood aside and Abdirashid emphasized upon the same message that the Speaker had already been briefed about by Daud.

The Speaker and his delegation were lastly received by Khrushchev at his holiday resort at the Cremea in the Black Sea. At the end of the reception, the Speaker only with the Somali ambassador to the Soviet Union, Ahmed Mohamed Adam (Ghaybe), stayed behind and delivered Premier Abdirashid's verbal message to Khrushchev. The latter also instantly gave his verbal approval. Thereafter began the official formalities of the military co-operation between the two countries.

Interesting enough, although Abdirashid had refrained from reducing his message to Khrushchev into writing for security reasons, nevertheless, the information about the arms deal leaked and three western ambassadors of the United States, Germany and Italy urgently and individually requested to meet with the Prime Minister. Abdirashid, then quite confident, gave the ambassadors appointments of five minutes interval between every two such appointments. They all conveyed the same identical message that the west would reconsider and increase their previous arms offer if Somalia would not accept similar arms offer from other quarters. Abdirashid replied in an identical eight-word sentence to each one of them that "Somalia no longer seeks arms from the west."

Abdirashid internally gained a great deal of fame from the Somali people of a defence conscious nation, and he was re-elected unopposed only few months after the arms deal. However, relations between him and President Aden Abdulla Osman became restrained, because, among other things, Abdirashid did not brief the President early enough about the new arms deal before a fait accompli and the President would not re-appoint Abdirashid as Prime Minister, after the next new elections.

Neither Abdullahi Issa nor Abdirashid, the architects of the formation of the Somali national army would ever dream of their efforts

becoming instrumental for the abrogation of the constitutional order. That would never have happened, however, had Daud lived.

Even the general public would not contemplate Mohamed Siad ever succeeding Daud. After Daud's death speculations abounded that General Mohamed Abshir, the then Chief of national police force would become the new army Chief of Staff. But Abshir did not want to change hats. He personally went to the Minister of Defence, Adan Issaak, and so informed him. Nevertheless, time was on Mohamed Siad's side. He was the most senior officer in the army and was already acting in the vacuum. Premier Abdirazak Hagi Hussein's government respected that seniority order and President Aden Abdulla Osman also approved the appointment of Mohamed Siad as the new army Chief of Staff. He would later detain both his two benefactors for three and a half years, although the former President had already retired peacefully after losing the last presidential election and Abdirazak was already replaced as prime minister.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

The Somali people are among few, if not the only one homogeneous society in the whole of black Africa, with a unique common language, religion, customs, ethnicity and culture. This homogeneity would not, however, save them from civil war. This civil war which has so much debased the Somali people was inevitable as stated earlier in this work and should not have surprised many people after all. Because, the former regime's intransigence, in the face of mass rebellion, against the prolongation of the tyrannical rule, did not leave any other option to avert the civil war. The former regime's repressive rule and moral bankruptcy is underscored by its own 'Letter of Death' by General Mohamed Said Hersi, alias 'Morgan' dated 23/01/1987 to his father-in-law, President Siad Barre, which is also recorded elsewhere in this work, is commented upon here below by *Richard Greenfield*:

"Somalia's Letter of Death" - by Richard Greenfield

New African has acquired a copy of a top secret letter by a Somali General threatening terrible vengeance on the people of the North. We are satisfied it is a genuine letter that was sent to President Siyad Barre. A former President of the Somali Supreme Court, Mohamoud Sheikh Musa, have both translated it and certified, on oath, its veracity. Richard Greenfield, for nine years political adviser to the Somali Government, examines this revealing and disturbing document and its political setting.

The letter of death is by General Mohamed Said Hirsi, known as 'Morgan', the sector army commander of the Northwest region. It is one of his regular secret security reports sent to President Barre, senior ministers and party chiefs. It was delivered by special courier, but not before one copy had come into the hands of New African.

The General complains about the attitude and conduct of the people of the North, particularly members of the Issaaq clan. He calls them Qurmis, meaning 'the rotten', a derogatory term for guerilla groups. He writes:

"We took punitive measures against the positions jointly occupied by Qurmis and the Ethiopians, resulting in losses to both of them and in the obliteration

of villages, including Dibile, Rabaaso, Raamaale and Caranuugle (small villages, south of Hargeisa, the northern capital). All our measures were implemented at night and, except for some light injuries, all the troops returned safely to base".

'Morgan' refers to popular resentment against the curfew – the most recent having been in force since January 1, 1987 – current SNM propaganda leaflets, anti government slogans written on the walls of buildings and an increase in rebel enlistment. "They have appealed to their various sections to recruit 2,000 persons for Qurmis to be trained in Awaare. So far, 400 individuals have joined". Awaare is a settlement in the Somali populated areas administered by Ethiopia, popularly known as the Ogaden".

'Campaign of obliteration'

It is clear, 'Morgan' claims, that the guerrilla opposition "... and its supporters are subjected to a campaign of obliteration, there will come a time when they will raise their heads again". He therefore outlines a series of repressive measures:

1. "Balancing the well-to-do to eliminate the concentration of wealth (in the hands of the SNM supporters).
2. The reconstruction of Local Councils in such a way as to balance present membership which exclusively from a particular people, as well as the 'dilution' of the school population with an infusion of children from the Refugee Camps in the vicinity of Hargeisa.
3. Rendering uninhabitable the territory between the army and the enemy, this can be done by destroying the water tanks and the villages lying across the territory used by them for infiltration.
4. Removing from the membership of the armed forces and the civil service all those who are opened to suspicion of aiding the enemy – especially those holding sensitive posts".

The children in the northern refugee camps are largely from Somali clans, or are Oromos, the majority group in Ethiopia, who though related, are not Somalis at all: most do not even speak Somali.

General 'Morgan' then describes how he has re-interpreted economic regulations in order to victimize Somali merchants who might sympathize with the rebels.

Before there were 337 buses used as public transport, two thirds of which were owned by members of one clan (the Sa'ad Musa). However, on investigation, it became clear that most of the buses were not operating in accordance with the security procedures, due to defects in their registration and circulation documents; and when information received revealed that they were sometimes used to carry Khat (a mild narcotic plant) or persons open to suspicion, in secrecy and without notification to the security Organizations; and since the number of buses exceed the needs of the city, the following decisions were adopted and implemented:

Buses Confiscated, redistributed:

- a) The number of the buses must not exceed 80;
- b) Every bus must have a serial number for identification purpose;
- c) The buses must be evenly distributed amongst the districts of the city with each bus limited to a particular route and departure and finishing point;
- d) A just and balanced redistribution of licenses regulating bus ownership in such a way to give preference to persons relating to the Revolution, and to deny those politically opposed to it;
- e) Six four-wheel drive vehicles were confiscated at Berbera harbor, and similarly, the removal of vehicles in the city is in progress; those found to be serviceable will be mounted with weapons and the others used as transport for reconnaissance purposes and for officers in command of forces in forward positions; we are also engaged in a process of reclassifying transport. 'Morgan' enumerates his most recent political prisoners and asks for them to be transferred urgently to other regions lest popular demands for human rights lead to attempts to free them.

Businessmen detained:

"The persons detained as suspected supporters of Qurmis are 45 from Hargeisa, 30 from Burao, while seven are officers. Most of them are businessmen and well-to-do people, while some are headmen. They are held in Mandhera prison. However, it is hereby requested that they be transferred urgently to Laanta Buur prison, or Bari prison, etc., in order to ensure their continued incarceration during the reorganization of the local prisons which show many defects from a security standpoint.

The General reserves his strongest wrath for the Issaaq – an

important northern clan family – consisting of four main clans from which several leaders of the SNM are drawn.

"Since it has become evident that the Issaaq were, by act and intent, with the SNM and since we could not see them giving up the line they have pursued so deceptively for some time and in order to forestall them, we arranged continuous meetings for the other inhabitants of the north (whom he lists) and a mobilization campaign designed to rouse them to action and to raise their level of awareness.

The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) all but disbanded following largely Italian pressure on Somali leaders, has also been remobilized apparently on a clan divide-and-rule basis.

"... 300 men have been stationed at a place near Geed Deeble (near Hargeisa) ... they will be rearmed and then put amidst those brigades and battalions considered to be capable of furthering the fight against Qurmis. At the same time they can implement operations inside (i.e. in the Ogaden) whenever required.

Banking secrecy has already gone by the board 'Morgan' reveals:

"We are still engaged in identifying the positions of those people who maintain accounts at banks in the Northwest and Togdheer Regions. The accounts of those recognized as Qurmis supporters will continue to be frozen... We see the economic strangulation of the people who work for the enemy as serving a useful purpose. However, it is absolutely essential that this should be accompanied by the strengthening of the economic positions of non-Northerners, with a view to raising the level of their capabilities and their interests in these Regions.

Northerners cannot be trusted

He concludes by recommending a "purge of the Somali Police Force, the Security Forces and the military police, the members of all of which are largely recruited locally, by finding a force to "dilute" them and by transferring present members." The Corps of Prison Warders, he admits, is largely northern in origin and "cannot be entrusted with the task of guarding the prison" and should be reconstituted. To affect all this, he asks for another division of troops to be transferred to reinforce his command.

'Morgan' at least realizes that his activities "will arouse anxiety" amongst many in Mogadishu but urges that they "not be listened to or heeded so that the impetus of the war being waged does not drop.

Leave nothing behind

"Up to now we have been walking on ground deliberately strewn with broken glass to reduce the momentum of (our) efforts. It is essential to sweep away the broken glass without leaving a single piece behind. There is a Somali proverb: Oh hyena, you cannot drag away hides without making a sound". His letter ends:

"The implementation of such a savage policy is certain to seriously embarrass potential friends and aid donors. But even more important is what it will mean for the continuing unity of the Somali People and for the future of the north, on which the whole country depends.

Military clashes, serious disturbances, curfews and arbitrary imprisonment have typified the northern areas of the Somali Republic in recent months. Indeed, especially since May 1986, mounting political instability has been manifest.

This is particularly true of the northern regions of Somalia, formerly a British Protectorate, and amalgamated five days after independence in 1960, with the former Italian colony and UN Trust, Italian Somaliland. Since then, and particularly in the last few years, most northerners have resented being denied what they see as a proper share of the few economic developments that have taken place in nearly three decades of independence. RG."

What, however, not only puzzled many outsiders, but even caused anthropologists fail to diagnose is the lack of subsequent settlement of the long drawn Somali crises among such a homogeneous society? While external factors have played no smaller part and done a great deal of destabilizing the internal Somali situation to pre-empt settlements, nonetheless the crux of the problem lies in the politicization of the Somali clan culture.

The Somali scenario may somewhat be comparable to that of the Irish people. Since long time the Somalis were dubbed as the Irish of Africa. Ironically the two peoples have little in common, except that they

were both considered war like societies by the former British colonial power which had ruled over both peoples; and they were both divided nations. There end up their shared affinities, nor were the Irish ever called the Somalis of Europe or the West. However, the Irish people in the north of their divided island, not unlike the Somalis, have also been involved for decades in a long drawn internecine civil war despite their belonging to the so much vaunted western civilization. And despite the unceasing attempts of some major powers like the United States, Britain and the ethnic related neighboring Republic of Ireland to their south to help them to reconcile. Nevertheless, the Irish are not as fully homogeneous as are the Somalis. Although the former share a common language and may be a common way of life, they are, nonetheless, divided on the wider civilization of religion, mainly into Catholics and Protestants. The effect of this religious divide on the part of the Irish people could have been the negative equivalent of the politicized Somali clan culture. The prolongation of the two civil wars and their non-settlement may be considered some additional psychological Irish-Somali shared affinities. Admittedly, both peoples by their own deeds of the civil wars confirm their British given sobriquet of being warring societies.

Nevertheless, The Somali people were abandoned in the midst of civil war and anarchy for more than 16 years. They were left alone as nobody was competing with them in such misery. Only after they at long last succeeded ending their crises and reconciled among themselves with no cost to the international community, yet another war of foreign invasion and anarchy were imposed on them. They would not be left alone in peace to benefit from their own achievements of ending their crises to rebuild their country in the same way as they had been left alone in anarchy and misery. Simply because Ethiopia sees any progress of peace and stability in Somalia as its own destruction and the west just supports that with alacrity.

A community based Islamic Courts were established in a number of Mogadishu quarters since mid-1990s. Their role was limited to administer Sharia justice among their own respective communities in the absence of an overall official system of polity. It was later attempted to amalgamate these courts with a new judiciary system after the Arta process in Djibouti, Transitional Structures were established in 2000. When the latter was again aborted by foreign destabilization, the Islamic Courts were reactivated by their concerned communities. Each such court had jurisdiction only over citizens of its own community.

The Islamic Courts served their communities tremendously

well and in the light of experience they formed a Union among themselves whereby any persons suspected of committing crimes in any area were arrested by any court and were then exchanged and transferred to whichever courts had jurisdiction over them. The Islamic Courts thus proved their usefulness and markedly reduced crime and anarchy in all areas within their spheres of jurisdiction to the envy of people who were living in other areas still under the sway of individual Mogadishu warlords where lawlessness still prevailed.

In the meantime, the United States Government was making acerbic accusations against Somali clerics, real or imagined, of harbouring terrorist fugitives wanted for their role in bombing U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in 1998. The Mogadishu warlords who had already envied the role of the Islamic Courts were also contracted by the United States CIA to capture those wanted fugitives. In January 2006 six such warlords and later also joined by 3-5 others formed a so-called anti-terrorist alliance, although they were themselves regarded as among the most hated terrorists by the local people. They were believed to have kidnapped scores of people they had suspected of being those wanted by the CIA, but the latter declined to take them except one (sic). The rest were not the ones the CIA wanted, but further information owns that none of those rejected by the Americans came back alive. The warlords were assumed to have eliminated them for the secrecy of their operations. Only the CIA can tell how many such people they had rejected.

The warlords' alliance accused the Islamic Courts of harbouring those wanted terrorists and issued an ultimatum demanding them to hand them over or else face the consequences. The Islamic Courts always denied any knowledge of such terrorists. In February 2006, after the timing of the ultimatum had elapsed, the warlords' alliance declared war on the Islamic courts. Internecine armed conflicts flared up and continued for more than four months, but punctuated by a few spells of unholding cease fires. A popular uprising of the Mogadishu citizenry supported the Union of Islamic Courts that finally precipitated the warlords' defeat by end May to early June 2006 and the seizure of all their strong holds in Benadir (the capital and its environs) and the Middle Shabelli province. In most other parts of central and southern Somalia a home grown Sharia justice emulated the development in Mogadishu. In all areas under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Courts in Mogadishu and elsewhere total peace was restored within short time. As the Somali people saw the light at the end of a long tunnel for the first time in sixteen years, anarchy and hideous crimes

including the following were eliminated from the face of the nation:

"Assassinations and other types of killing, kidnapping and hostage takings for ransom, rape, car-jacking and other lootings of property, erection of road blocks for extortion on all public thoroughfares by warlords' militia or by freelance bandits and sea piracy. These and scores of other serious crimes were of daily occurrences in Somalia in general and in Mogadishu in particular for more than 16 years, causing misery and destruction."

A real peace and stability dawned in Somalia under the leadership of the Union of Islamic Courts and rule of law by the Sharia that ended anarchy and injustice. It was the rise of a second '**Somali Phoenix**' since the Arta process. Within the short space of six months the Somali people, especially in the capital city, greatly benefited from their peace environment. They undertook tremendous amount of rehabilitation programs. The city was cleared and cleaned of filth and debris of destruction that had accumulated in the streets over a period of more than a decade and a half. Potholes in public thoroughfares were filled with makeshift improvisations. Both the seaport and the international airport were re-opened to normal traffic after more than eleven years since the withdrawal of the international intervention forces in March 1995. Numerous other rehabilitation programs, especially in the private sector, were either in progress or planned for, when they were disrupted by the United States sanctioned invasion by proxy Ethiopian forces that has since turned the clock back to square one and much worst. Thuggery and road blocks for extortion, kidnapping of people for ransom and looting have all resumed in Mogadishu and in many other centres. All schools and most of health clinics have been closed down for lack of security at the time of going to press.

The 'Tigray' led Ethiopian government had always coveted such an opportunity of even its own invasion against Somalia, especially since its organized Sodere Meeting over ten years ago (see Chapter Two), but it lacked enough Somali stooges/puppets and overt western support for such aggression until now. But, the lone superpower has now sanctioned it to fulfill the realization of their symbiotic interest and shields it even from international criticism.

The international community just watches the present aggression taking its course and the pathetic plight of the Somali people with

indifference, despite few lip service initial rhetorics by some quarters that have since been easily persuaded to die down. However, Ethiopia that always perceives the well being of the Somali people as its imminent destruction had sounded the alarm bells in western capitals and through Africa, accusing the Islamic Courts in Somalia as an immediate threat to its stability. In fact Ethiopia made the first provocative ultimatum and denunciation of the Islamic Courts as early as in June 2006 that they would never allow or accept Islamic rule in Somalia allowing itself that the latter was an extension of its own. That was well before the Islamic Courts even uttered a word about Ethiopia, good or bad. Nonetheless, the west was receptive to the Ethiopian propaganda machine and accepted with alacrity the latter's false claims for its security concerns. Since the disintegration of Somalia the western Christian world in general and the United States of America in particular, by and large supports Ethiopia's policy objectives that any reconstituted Somalia should only become a satellite state of the former. It is not surprising, therefore, that the west would not support the Arta Process, the outcome of the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference sponsored by the Republic of Djibouti in 2000. Because that Process did not contain provisions for Ethiopian hegemony over Somalia. That Arta Process had, otherwise every chance of success if at all it received a modicum of international support. It enjoyed broad agreement among all the Somali clans and communities and very wide support on the ground inside the country. The sole exception was few factional warlords of Ethiopian protégés and armed by the latter who had monopolized and failed all previous attempts for peace and reconciliation in Somalia for ten years prior to the Arta Process. They still wanted that monopoly and veto powers, which the above Conference denied them.

Unlike the case of the Arta Process, the west has been strongly supporting the Ethiopian foisted Trojan horse, the so-called TFG since its inception although it has no support inside Somalia, but because it accommodates Ethiopian geopolitical hegemony. This western role underlines the mere fact that its benevolence has been for Ethiopian interests rather than solve Somali problems. The TFG entered its third year and did not so far take off the ground, not to mention addressing its promises, but remains under heavy Ethiopian guard. Because, unlike the Arta Process, not only that it always lacked Somali public support, but adding insult to injury it also subjected the country to foreign invasion and occupation.

The United States was opposed to the lifting of the arms embargo

on Somalia lest its allied warlords might be disarmed, who were also opposed to the Ethiopian foisted TFG. After the defeat of the warlords by popular uprising led by the Union of Islamic Courts, the United States not only embraced the TFG that was then holed up in Baidoa town under heavy guard of Ethiopian troops, but also hurriedly sponsored UN Security Council resolution 1725 for lifting the arms embargo on Somalia that the US had been opposed to. Furthermore, the United States by its own admission not only sanctioned the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, but it joined the fray itself in this aggression and was also supported by Tony Blair's Britain that always emulated the aggression and other blunders of the US Bush administration whether it was in Iraq, Lebanon or now in Somalia.

Besides the foregoing perspectives, since the Union of Islamic Courts led victory over the former Mogadishu warlords a great deal of western interests became abound in general vis-à-vis the overall situation in Somalia. A mass campaign was mounted to lift the arms embargo on Somalia since 1993, to allow more arms to enter a country already awash with weapons. Deployment of foreign troops was being heralded. The culmination of the campaign was the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia not only sanctioned, but also aided and abetted by the United States of America and Britain. All these had only one stratagem and that was to thwart Islamic rule and justice in Somalia by forcing the allegiance of the Somali people for an Ethiopian foisted Somali puppet entity that in its wake accommodates the hegemony of the former over Somalia.

The United States having planted the invasion of Somalia, its protégés of both Ethiopian proxy forces and their Somali puppets claim control over Somalia at the time of going to press. The irony so far is the failure and the unveiling of US false claims of Al-Qaeda suspects hiding in Mogadishu by not finding them at all? The US must had known this reality that there were no such Al-Qaeda members in Mogadishu, but they were only creating a rationale for that invasion in order to abort the Sharia justice in Somalia. That was why they launched their own air strikes and bombed vast swathes of the Somali rural landscape in order to lay claim on yet another false premise of having killed there the Al-Qaeda suspects, but instead they killed hundreds of innocent Somali livestock herders. But when can the United States reconcile itself with its contradictory approaches in world affairs? In general, it preaches its commitment to democracy and human rights. It sheds crocodile tears for the Sudanese people of Darfour, but praises Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia as a strongman and ideal, while he

rigs elections, stifles dissent, massacres civilian demonstrators, muzzles the press, jails local journalists and deports foreign correspondents. By contrast, the US continues accusing President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe of human rights abuses. Simply because Zenawi is an agent of the US that Mugabe is not. In the case of Somalia's recent US sanctioned invasion, apart from summary reports above (Chapter Two), the following is extracted from an article in the Sudan Tribune by Prof. Abdi Ismail Samatar of 14 February 2007:

"In essence, the hallmark of America's bankrupt policy is the conspicuous gulf between its democratic rhetoric and its support for thugs, warlords, tyrants, and venal politicians in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. In the minds of most people in the region American foreign policy and practice has become synonymous with dictatorship and arrogance, and most people believe that those are the core values of the American government."

Despite the perennial propagation of the Sharia justice by Islamic scholars, the Somali people have only recently fully tasted its fruits. However, that development could never have materialized at a better time than in the midst of a total anarchy as it were. The Sharia justice is acknowledged by the overwhelming majority of the Somali people as the only antidote to clanism, corruption and injustice. The fact that it has been aborted so soon by foreign aggression and the country has already slid into chaos again at the time of going to press, the purpose of this aggression will never be lost to the Somali people. It is crystal clear that those enemies of the Somalis deny them whatever their best interest is, the Sharia justice. And whatever ultimate destiny may have in store for the Somali people, and despite the present set backs, the Sharia remains to be the only salvation and the eventual rise of a third '**Somali Phoenix**' is inevitable, because there can never be an alternative to it.

Governance

The National Transitional Charter approved by the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference held at Arta, Djibouti, during 2 May – 26 August 2000, which was the interim constitution of Somalia and the embodiment of those transitional arrangements, a system of a decentralized governance of federalism-cum regional autonomy was opted for. Those structures were the product of the combined efforts of the Somali society across the board including representatives of the nobilities,

religious leaders, women groups, intellectuals, former politicians, business communities and representatives of the Somali Diaspora abroad, in sum total, the entire civil society. However, governance in Somalia had already decentralized itself by virtue of the collapse of central authority a decade earlier and it was only a matter of legitimatizing that decentralization. The degree of the decentralization differed from one area to another. The most conspicuous of this decentralization has been that of the secession declared in the north, and the second noticeable, that of the northeast, the so-called 'Puntland' administration. Nevertheless, federalism is a new concept of governance in the history of Somalia and is not, therefore, easily and immediately implementable without planning and prior studies. That was the main reason that the Arta Process lumped federalism with regional autonomy, which the current Ethiopian foisted TFG Charter omits. There are numerous types of federal systems in the world around and worth examining in order to select and recommend the system best suitable for Somalia and submit it for parliamentary approval during the current transitional period and then to the people in an internationally supervised referendum. The current TFG has not been well disposed towards studying those federal systems. On the contrary, the TFG blindly copied Ethiopia's improvised federal model. This creates insurmountable anomalies for Somalia, but offers no solutions.

Where in the unitary system in the past Governors of various regions were appointed by the Central Government, in federalism and regional autonomy they will have to be elected by their own people of the provinces. Therefore, as stipulated in that Arta Charter, the starting point of legitimatizing the decentralization is the autonomy of the regions, which unlike the Federal system can be implemented at once or as early as possible. Ironically, however, while the TFG claims representing federalism, they arbitrarily continue to appoint governors for the provinces, so far in Hiiran (Beletwein), Middle Shabelli (Jowhar), Lower Jubba (Kismayu) and Benadir, Mogadishu and met with stiff resistances from the local people which are still unresolved at the time of going to press. Since the federal concept has been blurred by the adoption of the Ethiopian model, which its object is to thwart the effectiveness of workable governance for Somalia, such problems created by the TFG authorities without knowing their remedies will continue.

Despite destabilization by Ethiopia and its protégés of Somali warlords, the Arta structured TNG incumbents were themselves inept lot and lost a number of opportunities. The President of the Republic of the

Sudan, in his capacity as the then Chairman of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), appointed a special envoy to help facilitate the process of reconciliation in Somalia, but was rejected by the TNG. Their response incorrectly said that such nomination of the special envoy would weaken the momentum of the reconciliation process of what it termed 'at this stage of positive evolution of the situation in the country'. Regretfully, the above statement was not only incorrect, but also totally misleading of public opinion. There was no such momentum of any reconciliation process between the TNG and the former faction leaders. They were deadlocked at the time. The only weak guess that one could think of the TNG ducking that important offer was a false superiority complex of its incumbents that the role of such a special envoy would put them on par with the opposition. But that had always been the case elsewhere, of the Governments of Mozambique, Burundi and the Sudan and their respective oppositions.

The relationship between the two so much vaunted administrations in the north and the northeast is a conflict prone over territorial claims in the Sool and Sanaag provinces. The north claims the whole territory of these two provinces by merely being the heir of the outdated colonial boundary, while the northeast incorrectly claims the whole of the Sool on clanship.

The longest direction of the jurisdiction of Sool from its provincial capital is to its north-west. It stretches about up to 375 km and the Gulf of Aden washes its shores, where the majority of the inhabitants in that particular area have no clan relationship with the population of the northeast. The northeast also claims east of Sanaag, more than a third of the region's territory. Without an intervention by a central authority, the situation is a recipe for yet another new civil war. Similar claims exist between the communities of Bay/Bakol, Gedo and the Jubba regions in the west of the country. These and other anomalies make the early process of reconciliation a *sine qua non* during the transitional period. Thereafter, the new federal structures should dictate the basis of relationship between various units of the state.

Any new Somali Transitional Government not only inherits the task of reuniting a disintegrated nation, but also the twin culture of corruption and nepotism. Most of the country's infrastructures are ruined. They have been looted, vandalized, destroyed or otherwise dilapidated beyond any common use. The prospects of any early major programs of national reconstruction at the central level are remote in the foreseeable future. The

main reason for this uncertainty at best, or pessimism at worst, is that there is no local national wealth to finance such programs of reconstruction. The donor community would only commit any resources, if at all they may, upon tangible evidence of some progress, especially in areas of peace and reconciliation in the country. The current TFG incumbents are incapable of satisfying these requirements because it has opted for a foreign invasion and foreign occupation, which in any case, is not only unacceptable to the Somali people, but is also itself the source of insecurity. Any progress of reconstruction under central authority is, therefore, prone to slowness and delays at best or nothing at all at worst.

Under the above constraints, a new Somali Transitional government would be best advised to instead give priority and encourage regional level reconstruction programs in the light of the projected autonomy of the regions and eventual federalism, but not the present Ethiopian foisted model. Regional reconstruction programs can be both smaller in scope and realizably easier to manage. There can be a great deal of voluntary public participation on self help basis and motivated by a sense of belonging in such regional programs as opposed to programs at the national level that do not attract similar public sentiments. This obviates the most important ingredient of transparency, and thus even attracts possible investment opportunities. This regional priority approach will, after the reconstruction stage, lead to the dual advantage of: (a) Horizontality of eventual national economic growth as opposed to the African ethos of development concentration around the national capital. Somalia has never been an exception to that negative African trend, and (b) curtailment of population densities in the capital and other main centers and by urban migration from the rural areas. The regional reconstruction priority approach can also encourage a great deal of grass roots human resources development and in its wake this can lead to eventual self-reliance.

The above regional priority approach calls for an urgency of institutional building to strengthen the administrative capacity of the regional authorities. They should be able to administer their individual local affairs of all sectors. These include security and law and order, social services, maintenance of the infra-structures and equities and mechanisms for a taxation base, etc; so that they can be able to raise funds locally and meet the running costs of their respective individual administrations. A new government should, subject to the constraints of financial limitations and lost of old records, nonetheless, endeavor to present appropriate, viable,

and sustainable rehabilitation programs, both at the national and regional level to gain public confidence and acceptance of its policies.

In conclusion, the question of ethics cannot be over emphasized as basis for any public institutions. A government is the institution that embodies the will of the people (the governed) and in whom the trust of the people is placed. A government is enjoined to steadfastly work for the welfare of its citizens, maintain peace and security and keep the social fabric in harmony. Any government that earnestly applies the principles of justice, fairness and equity and puts the public interest above that of personal or factional interests is a responsible government. And even if not an ideal one is nonetheless true to the trust placed upon it and no doubt provides a positive environment for its citizens to pursue their own endeavors. The essence of any government can be easily measured by a close scrutiny over its conduct in two very specific aspects. Namely: (1) the application of justice and fairness among its citizens, its observance of legal propriety in government endeavors with the laws of the land and its subjection to the rule of law. And (2) the management of the national resources and the finances entrusted to it. Such management should have to be open and conducted strictly in accordance with the rules and regulations applicable to appropriate procedures.

While the highest personal propriety is observed by all concerned in liberal institutions, this is further enforced by the independent judiciary, the subjection of all including the heads of government, etc., to the rule of law. And also the existence of a free press able to dig out and publish any monovalent conduct and the weight of public opinion that determines the fate of the individual politicians or political parties. One or two relevant examples to the above are: (a) the case of former American President Nixon who was driven out of power for violating the law; and (b) the dismissal of three former Japanese Prime Ministers for some misconduct and as were also the recent removal from office of the Presidents of Peru and the Philippines.

Many Third World Governments are notoriously renowned for bending the laws to their personal advantage and to the interests of their factional cronies or clan affiliates, and for openly and unashamedly plundering the national treasury as well as other public assets.

In the context of Somalia in general that trust had seldom been fulfilled by the successive governments, both civil and military, with the

exception of former Prime Minister Abdirazak Hagi Hussein's government (see Chapter Four). In the case of the secessionist administration of the so-called Somaliland in particular, the plundering of public funds is in ample evidence.

Any new Somali government can only survive the abhorrent twin culture of corruption and nepotism by the strict application of the principles of ethics mentioned above and transparency. Any new Somali leaders should very well know that their predecessors of previous Somali Governments went down the road to their ruins by their own folly of ignoring these principles of ethics and transparency. The choice will once again be that of the new Somali leaders.

However, the current Somali incumbents of the so-called TFG are in the first place foreign foisted Trojan horse and whatever temporary accommodation they could have attained for the symbolic value of a central authority, they have themselves aborted it. They do not, therefore, enjoy the trust of the Somali people and out rightly lack the essential moral authority to lead a nation. And adding insult to injury they cast their last card by supporting the United States sanctioned invasion of the motherland, and yet implemented by Ethiopian forces of proxy in fulfillment of their symbiotic strategic and hegemonic interests. Both Abdullahi Yusuf and Ali Mohamed Gedi thus lost for good whatever scant pockets of such temporary support they could have won among few segments of the Somali society. The Ethiopian forces that have been unleashed on the Somali people resisting their occupation spare no quarter in their brutal operations and the excessive indiscriminate use of firepower. Kidnapping of people, especially Oromo refugees but also including Somali professionals and businessmen considered opposed to the Ethiopian occupation have become a common practice. The whereabouts of many such people are unknown.

On his part, Abdullahi Yusuf knowingly chose to take the wrong path by politically allying himself with Ethiopia, the Somalis' arch-enemy of nearly five centuries standing. Although he has been maneuvered into the driver's seat, it has cost him the irreversible trust of the Somali people. He quite well knows that he is not only very unpopular, but is a pariah. And still, he has the insatiable ambition to rule Somalia, but under cover of foreign forces, and especially under Ethiopian hegemony rather than to lead. The only such foreign forces that can willingly fulfill the role of Abdullahi Yusuf's Police State are the Ethiopians. That was one paramount

reason that he even swallowed his feelings for the attempted assassination on his life (see the Baidoa Mysteries above, Chapter Two). The most likely perpetrators of that attempt were Ethiopian actors in their preference for Ali Mohamed Gedi, and especially at a time of restrained relations between him and Abdullahi Yusuf. In spite of all that, Abdullahi has his own personality and originality and his parting with the Ethiopians one day can never be ruled out. The latter know that very well and will resist Somalia slipping out of their hands after their so long involvement and investing a great deal of time-cum energy. Ali Mohamed Gedi is Ethiopia's most favourite Trojan horse, but he does not have personal qualities comparable to those of Abdullahi Yusuf and he believes that his political survival only depends upon his continued subservience to Ethiopian whims. By nature, Ali Mohamed Gedi is a waffler and each time he goes off track and says or does something not approved by the Ethiopians who always keep him at a short leash, he has no problem to say or do the opposite next day. Just to cite few examples of his recent utterances: (1) he congratulated the Islamic Courts the first day of their victory over the warlords as recorded by the local Radio Stations. Two days later after the Ethiopians resented his statement he uttered derogatory remarks against the Islamic Courts and even defamed them by accusing them of raping women, etc., a defamation which he had to retract during the first round of Khartoum talks between the two sides. (2) He purposely aborted the dialogue between the Islamic Courts and the TFG, because both he and his Ethiopian mentors feared that the post of prime minister was the only one dispensable to Abdullahi Yusuf for compromise in a power sharing with the Islamic Courts. (3) Just before the American sanctioned invasion of Somalia, Ali Mohamed Gedi said whilst in Nairobi that there would be no new war in Somalia. He was summoned next day to Addis Ababa where he held a press conference the same day saying that war was inevitable. And (4) Ali Mohamed Gedi, at first issued a reconciliatory statement towards members of the Islamic Courts after the war of invasion. Few days later he leveled serious accusations against them and threatened their prosecution, especially the leader of the Islamic Courts, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.

Ali Mohamed Gedi is a non-entity in the eyes of the Somali people. However, Abdullahi Yusuf will also resist the Ethiopians easily taking the carpet under his feet. In the Transitional Charter, Abdullahi is more or less a Constitutional President while executive power is vested in the Council of Ministers under the chair of the prime minister. But Abdullahi has already usurped a great deal of the executive power. He already prevailed over the so-called parliament to pass emergency powers to be solely invested in the

President instead of the executive branch, the council of ministers or the prime minister. He already used those emergency powers to curtail civil liberties and appointed many of his cronies and his clan related former militiamen into government posts. The Qaran News listed some 35 such recent appointments without cabinet approval or even without the knowledge of the latter. By all these, among other things, Abdullahi sent strong signals to the Ethiopians that only through him and no one else can they exercise their hegemonic influence over Somalia.

EPILOGUE

POSITIVE SIDE BENEFITS SINCE 1991

Unregulated businesses by the private sector in the absence of a central government have made tremendous strides during the period under review. In Mogadishu the business community had invested a great deal of resources in security and succeeded in reducing lawlessness to a minimum in many parts of the country. They had often coordinated their security mainly through the Islamic courts to thwart banditry, before the establishment of the Transitional Government that had emerged from the Arta process, Djibouti (Reconciliation Conference). The Mogadishu business community supported the new authority during the early stages since the establishment of that Transitional Government. They maintained over five thousand strong new police force aspirants for the capital city for more than seven months as well as maintaining all members of that government and the members of parliament during the same period.

Private Sector telecommunications have become revolutionized during the period under review to the extent that no future public sector system can catch up with, much less to replace them. There are three such main Telecommunication companies headquartered in Mogadishu. These are: Al-Barakaat (the blessed), later renamed Hormoud (the Vanguard) after Al-Barakaat had been embargoed by the United States (see Chapter Two); Nationlink and Telecom Somalia. Information owns that most of the Telecommunication companies in the north are franchises of the aforementioned southern based companies.

Among the other viable enterprises undertaken by the business community is a credible banking system with international connections that universally facilitates transactions with sweeping speed. This banking system was pioneered and managed by Al-Barakaat headquartered in Mogadishu until it was embargoed as stated above and Dahabshiil Pvt Ltd Co., with head office in Hargeisa.

Al-Barakaat had been a model of the entrepreneurial success story of the positive side benefits of the civil war. Its enterprising began in 1986 as one of many clandestine Money Transfer Agencies poised to fight the then prevalent monopolistic economic system and the denial of fair business competition in Somalia. These agencies managed remittances by the migrant Somali workers in the Gulf countries to their families and

relatives living in Somalia, by passing unilateral banking exchange rates of the old regime. Al-Barakaat's Money Transfer tremendously expanded at the collapse of central authority in Somalia and eventually transformed itself into a reliable banking system since 1996 as already mentioned. Al-Barakaat joined the Telecommunications business in 1995, which operated in all regions throughout Somalia. Al-Barakaat was in partnership with two other companies for subsidiary joint-ventures: (1) Kolobtel in Hargeisa and Red Sea Telcom in Bosaso to cater for the rural centers in these regions, especially down to the village level in the case of the former.

Al-Barakaat had constructed and developed Soft Drinks plant in Mogadishu that sells purified mineral water in abundance.

A Construction unit was at its planning stage by Al-Barakaat when it was embargoed.

There were over six hundred personnel employed by Al-Barakaat throughout Somalia and abroad, who manned branch offices, plus technical and security personnel.

Dahabshill Pvt. Ltd. Co. is now the largest Money Transfer Company with more than 111 agents in the UK and more than 300 payout locations in the Horn of Africa at the time of going to press in 2007, serving migrants regularly sending money to their families and friends in Africa.

Dahabshill has developed innovative money transfer services that provide a lifeline to millions of Somalis. It is now recognized as one of the most reputable commercial enterprises in the sector. Customers find it trustworthy, reliable, cost-effective and efficient.

The company's long-term strategy is to be the first choice of money transfer services for migrants from the Horn of Africa. Its mission is to be an innovative customer-oriented company that consistently exceeds customer's expectations.

TRANSPORTATION:

Another area of the positive side benefits in which tangible progress has been made in the private sector is in air transport. There have been several individual airlines, although some have since ceased operations.

Daallo Airlines has been both one of the earliest establishment in early 1991, headquartered in Djibouti and with the widest coverage. It has scheduled flights to all the neighboring countries; to and from most regions in Somalia, north and south, and with international flights to and from Djibouti, London, Paris, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Kenya. The ownership is one hundred percent Somali owned at the time of going to press (2007). The Airline employs 120 employees composed of managerial staff, administration, operation and ground handling personnel. Labour Laws of the countries of the employees' residences are applicable to their conditions of services.

Jubba Airlines and another privately owned Kenyan African Express Airways are the other carriers with regular flights.

EDUCATION

Educational enhancement in general and Islamic education in particular has been another area of the upheavals' positive side benefit, despite limited scope of resources wise.

A Mogadishu University (MU) is in its ten year of teaching in 2007. MU is private and non-profit making institution that was inaugurated on September 22, 1997 with a student population of seven hundred. It is governed by a Board of Trustees and the Academic Council. MU operates on a semester system based on credit hours and offers BA degrees. Duration of the BA degree program is four years (eight semesters), plus 138 graduating credit hours. Media of instruction is Arabic and English. MU consists of the following four faculties and an institute of Health Sciences and Nursing (as of 2007):

- Faculty of Sharia and Law.
- Faculty of Education: Arabic Language, Mathematics, Islamic Studies and Social Sciences.
- Faculty of Arts and Humane Sciences: English literature, History and Civilization.
- Faculty of management and Economics.

The first-fourth year students graduated in May 2001.

The Health Science Institute currently caters for a Nursing School of three years diploma course. Graduates from this course can with further one year study qualify for a bachelor nursing degree.

The university library is stocked with over three thousand books which are opened to both students and teachers alike.

MU is funded by:-

- (a) Contributions and donations;
- (b) Trust Funds; and
- (c) Discounted Students Fees.

One of the objectives of MU is to enter-act with other educational and cultural organizations. In this vein, it is a member of both the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World and the Association of Arab Private Institutions for Higher Education.

The Horn of Africa Islamic University

Above university is in Bosaso and is in its sixth year in 2007. It commenced with an enrollment of one hundred and fifty students. The Islamic education has also improved women's adherence to Islamic principles, especially in dress.

Somali Institute of Management and Administration Development (SIMAD)

The above is another non-profit making private educational institution established in 1999 and is based in Mogadishu. Its vision is to become a provider of high quality educational profession in Somalia. And its mission is to provide sustained basis for high quality training in management, accountancy and information technology.

Amud University

The above is a private institution, which caters for the local needs and has filled the gap in the decade absence of higher education. The Amud University is located in Borama, the provincial capital of Awdal. It was opened in 1998 and began with four faculties teaching courses including college of Education, Agriculture, Medicine and Business

Management. A few more colleges were in the planning stage as of 2007, depending upon the availability of resources.

N.B.

Generally, there are twelve thousand orphaned and displaced children under the care of Islamic organizations throughout the country. These are in schools from Quranic stage up to the secondary level of Islamic education and other subjects.

THE MEDIA

At the collapse of the Somali nation state a sense of media emancipation presented itself, even in the absence of the prerequisite training in this field. Typed and photocopied tabloids mushroomed almost over night throughout the country, especially in the capital, Mogadishu. However, most of these tabloids by and large began with the traditional speculative gossips. The local novice media was, therefore, only absorbing and reporting the oral society's gossips and speculations. Many of those tabloids were, therefore, misused by various political factions and their warlords for their own propaganda purposes, reporting myths, character assassinations of opponents, etc. After the outbreak of the civil war almost all factions in the conflict established their own individual media outlet. However, the incipient Somali media initially have not been able to contribute much to the search for a solution of the national crises.

Quite a few of those original tabloids including Xog-ogaal (The Observer), Ayaamaha (The Times - literally: the Days), Qaran Press (National) and Codka Xorriyadda (Voice of Freedom) all of Mogadishu and Jamhuuriya (Republican) and Haatuf (the Messenger) of Hargeisa have evolved into a viable journalistic standard, despite lack of the necessary specialization techniques in the way of training, printing equipment, etc., at least for some of them.

However, in December 1999 a group of Somali businessmen and intellectuals for the first time invested and established an independent, privately owned commercial Radio Television Station, The HornAfrik Media Inc., in Mogadishu. The station releases a variety of daily programs, advertisements, news, announcements, television shows, talk show debates on any programmed subject on socio-politico and economics, especially health, education, sports and Islamic programs, etc. The BBC

has formal affiliation with this Media Network to relay its programmes in Somali, Arabic and English several times a day.

HornAfrik played a crucial role in the Somali Peace Conferences held in Djibouti and Kenya in 2000 and 2002-20004 respectively and particularly contributed much to the successful conclusion of the former conference. The ownership of that second conference was not Somali owned and the chances of making such contribution were not facilitated.

Other important Radio Stations including Al-Jazeera and the Shabelli have also tremendously complemented the media output since their subsequent inception.

GENERAL OUTLOOK

Peter. T. Leeson, Department of Economics, West Virginia University, USA, mentioned in his brief entitled, "Better Off Stateless", that a number of United Nations Agencies: UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO and the World Bank had also shown indicators in their annual reports of marked improvement in social welfare in Somalia under statelessness than under the last government. Life expectancy has grown, access to health facilities has increased, infant mortality has dropped and civil liberties have expanded.

The above mentioned indicators had also owned (sic) that the Somali Shilling had showed greater stability under the statelessness than the national currencies of both Ethiopia and Kenya. From 1996 – February 1999 the So.Sh depreciated 12.14 percent against the US\$. While the Kenyan Sh. Lost 32.55 percent against the US\$ and the Ethiopian Birr depreciated 26.58 against the US\$ dollar.

APPENDIX

There were two events of significant public interest, among others, during my tenure as head of Somali national Intelligence and Security. Both these two events were reported in my first book, the cost of Dictatorship that was published in 1995. They were also later broadcast over the BBC in Somali during early 2003 in a program entitled, "Wax Aan U Soo Joogay", that was roughly translatable as, "What I knew".

I later received questions from curious listeners of those broadcasts, and I now seize the opportunity of reproducing here below a summary of the accounts of the two events, as the best way of answering those questions, though belatedly:

1. After general elections in March 1964, President Aden Abdulle would not re-appoint the then sitting Prime Minister, Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, and appointed instead Abdirazak Hagi Hussein as the new Prime Minister. Abdirashid became a critic in Parliament of his successor's government programs.

An over zealous officer in my department arranged surveillance on the movements of Abdirashid without my knowledge, much less seeking my approval.

There were no Newspapers in Somali those days as the Somali script was unwritten yet. People exchanged the local news orally in the evenings at various gossip corners in Mogadishu. Some times in late evening I used to pass at one of such corners in order to drive home one participant and he would brief me while on our way to his home. To my dismay, on one such occasion the topics of the gossip included gossips that scooter riders in my department were surveilling Abdirashid. I was disturbed a lot, not only because I knew nothing about such thing was happening under me, but also that was being meted out to the just out going Prime Minister was obnoxious.

Early following morning I summoned the officer responsible into my office and questioned him about the anomaly. He simply said that had been the custom, meaning that any critic of the government would be checked regardless of one's personal status, a reminiscent practice inherited from the former colonial

administration. I warned him severely and ordered him to cease it forth with.

Abdirashid enjoyed Parliamentary immunity and those surveillances were only nuisance and had no effect except to annoy him. But to be followed by those scooters had a bad image. They were normally used to follow and harass Ethiopian junior diplomats who were engaged in spying activities, whenever relations between the two countries got sour. Such overt and undisguised surveillance was just a burning exercise in 'spying slang', but had no intelligence value. And to mete out such similar treatment to Abdirashid was akin to treason.

After given that order I still suspected that over zealous officer might arrange human surveillance on foot to continue following Abdirashid. Abdirashid was a keen cinema goer. He watched two films a night. He frequented the Hotel Shabelli roof restaurant for a short duration in between the two film shows. I would occasionally meet him there, greet him in a military decorum in order to scare and neutralize any possible surveillant. I would always leave him quickly without uttering a word and take a seat at distant corner. I was later re-transferred to the north.

A year later after my transfer Abdirashid won the Presidential election. Some Ministers visiting the north would tell me that the President wanted me to be re-appointed as the head of Intelligence and Security. I guessed that Abdirashid might have learnt about the action I had taken about the surveillance gaffe. The news bothered me, because as a senior police officer I would have liked any decision concerning me should only emanate from the police high command and not from political authorities. I did not know anyone of those ministers well and could not discuss the subject with them. Then fortunately another minister also visited the north later, the late Mohamoud Abdinur, who I knew well and had closely worked with him in my capacity as the then head of Intelligence and Security when he was the Minister of the Interior. He too told me the same thing as the other ministers. I discussed everything with him without any reservations including the surveillance anomaly vis-à-vis Abdirashid and the action I had taken. I informed him that no-one in the previous government ever asked me or questioned those actions I had taken. I added that former Prime Minister Abdirazak was then in opposition and I

would accord him the same treatment as I had done in the case of Abdirashid. I asked him for his opinion if those present senior officials including Abdirashid, Egal and Yassin would tolerate the respect I would extend to Abdirazak? He knew them all very well and thought that they might not. I then asked him to do me a favour. It was customary for any minister returning from a trip to visit and brief the President. I asked the minister to inform Abdirashid that I had heard about the President's desire to have me re-appointed as the head of Intelligence and Security. And while I appreciated the confidence the President had in me, I personally would not like that job any more. Mohamoud Abdinur just did that and saved me embarrassment.

The President then ordered that the same officer who had arranged the surveillance over his movements be appointed to that post. I was re-assured that Abdirashid had neither known who had done what to him nor the actions I had taken in that regard. It seemed that he just did not trust my successor in that important office.

2. During the first week of February 1968 one day whilst in my office in Hargeisa I received a large Somali Government envelope with the official address, " REPUBBLICA SOMALA" printed on the top. It was addressed to Hassan Gouled Aptidon, then an opposition leader in the then French Colony of Somali Coast, who would later become the first and long time President of the Republic of Djibouti.

Accompanying that large envelope was a small cover addressed to me from the Police Headquarters, Mogadishu. It contained brief instructions that I was charged with delivering that large envelope from the Somali Prime Minister to Hassan Gouled and to get a reply from him as soon as possible. The purpose was that the Somali Prime Minister would be visiting Europe shortly and would like to get Hassan Gouled's views before he would meet with the French President, De Gaulle, about the future of that territory.

In those days the Gaullists in France treated any politicians in that territory having connections with Somalia as traitors and they were persecuted even though France had diplomatic relations with Somalia. Travelers to and from Somalia were thoroughly

searched, even their socks, at the border. Therefore any such Somali official communication had to be very securely sneaked. I had to devise a water tight method of sneaking that letter, but before doing so I had to find a reliable courier willing to take it to Djibouti. I knew an ex-French army service man that was a pensioner and visited Djibouti once every few months to collect his pensions, etc. He agreed to take the letter despite great apprehensions. I decided to make a pair of sandals for him in which to put the letter. I then took him one evening to my house and took his foot measurement on a foolscap sheet of paper. I had already contacted the administrator of a camp in Hargeisa where the handicapped were taught some trades like shoemaking and tailoring, etc. I had to give a reason for wanting to put paper inside a shoe, otherwise it might look strange to the shoemaker and he could talk loose that could somehow be heard by French spies who were expected to be abound. I always kept the letter with me and the shoes had to be brought to me when inserting the letter in my presence.

Both the administrator and the shoemaker each of them contributed an indispensably important point. The shoemaker wanted to see the size and weight of the folded letter so that he would reduce an equal amount of the leather in order to balance the two shoes. It was about a half of the palm after discarding that large envelope. The administrator knew the letter would be removed later and he told the shoemaker to stitch the edge of the shoe through which the letter was inserted with a twine and not with leather, because the twine could be easily cut off with a knife.

Both, the would be courier and I then left for the border. I gave him a privately owned land rover so that he would never be seen in my company. I kept the shoes containing the important letter in my custody until the last moment the courier would be crossing over the border.

I went ahead of him to the Police/Custom house at Loya-ado at the border where he joined me later, put on the new shoes, leaving his old shoes there until he would return and went through the nose of the vigilant French security.

He promised to be back in three days time. I got worried when he would not show up within the three days. He turned up on the fifty day, happily having accomplished his mission, but I got shocked. They put Hassan Gouled's reply in the same place, but without restitching the edge of the shoe and one could see the paper. If only the so much vaunted vigilant French security would have looked at his shoes, it would have been a disaster.

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