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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my own original work. It has not been published or submitted in any other college, institution or university other than United States International University - Africa for academic credit. All the material obtained herein from other sources is duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Somalia has been without a functioning central government since January 1991, when the military regime collapsed and civil war among clan militias broke out. During the subsequent decade, de facto decentralization of political power largely along clan lines has occurred, with varying degrees of territorial control achieved by militia leaders and local administrations in different areas of the country.

The study focuses on the factors and dynamics at play in the Somalia conflict by determining the escalators or de-escalators of violence in the Somali conflict. Main methodology employed is the collection of material from secondary sources. The study’s findings are that the Somali civil war is neither a traditional war nor a byproduct of East-West competition in the Horn of Africa, though the two dimensions have played varying roles at different times. It is a modern conflict that has been fed by a long list of grievances against the state, its policies, its ruling elite and its clients. Its roots are in the blockages of the command economy that the Siad Barre government attempted to impose on the country after the coup in October 1969, its reluctant and partial move toward economic liberalization in the 1980s while at the same time attempting to use state levers to maintain political control, its growing reliance on a small group of family, sub-clan and business associates to run the country and its intensified policy since 1978 of 'divide and rule' towards clans, regions and business interests.

While none of these moves proved successful for the country in the long term, they sowed such deep divisions in the country that it was only after a decade and a half of civil war and strife that a reconciliation conference, the fourteenth, succeeded in electing a broad-based national government, the Transitional Federal Government in 2004.
ACRONYMS

AMISOM – African Union Mission in Somalia
ARPCT – Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter Terrorism
AU – African Union
CENTCOM – (US) Central Command
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
EU – European Union
IDP – Internally Displaced Person
IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IGASOM – IGAD Stabilization Force
JVA – Juba Valley Alliance
KGB - (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti) – Russian translation for Committee for State Security
MP – Member of Parliament
OLF – Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF – Ogaden National Liberation Front
RRA – Rahanweyn Resistance Army
SNF – Somali National Front
SNM – Somali National Movement
SRRC – Somali Redemption and Rehabilitation Council
SSWS – State of South Western Somalia
SYL – Somali Youth League
TFG – Transitional Federal Government
TNG – Transitional National Government
UIC – Union of Islamic Courts
UN – United Nations
UNOSOM – United Nations Operation in Somalia
US – United States (of America)
WSLF – Liberation Front for Western Somalia
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Somalia is located on the east coast of Africa and north of the Equator between the Gulf of Aden on the north and Indian Ocean on the east. Together with Ethiopia and Djibouti it is often referred to as the Horn of Africa. It borders Djibouti on the northwest, Ethiopia on the west and Kenya on southwest. Somalia comprises Italy’s former Trust Territory of Somalia and the former British Protectorate of Somaliland. The coastline extends 3,025 kilometres - the longest coastline in Africa. The country’s capital is historic Mogadishu.¹

Somalia continues to be in a state of chronic emergency, beset by conflict and division, prone to natural calamities like drought, with large segments of the population living in poverty who are often being displaced and are perennially vulnerable to both abuse and disease.

Somalia’s modern experience of governance has been less than satisfying, for reasons that are steeped in the history of colonialism and its aftermath. It can be reasonably said that Somalis have not had a government of the people for the past century. Rather, they suffered the extremes of government corruption, incompetence and subjugation. In the colonial period, and indeed, under the independent regimes that followed, Somalis learned that they had no rights of their own, but that they had obligations of loyalty and obedience to the authorities.

Since independence in 1960, the ordinary Somali learned that government was a place where those governing were allowed to serve their interests without accountability or sense of impropriety or shame. Such experience further alienated the people from government and firmly implanted in their psyche the desirability of distancing themselves from it, not trusting it, its programmes or its promises. The initial cry of triumph at independence in 1960, “an maalno hasheenna Maandeeq” (the milk of our camel Maandeeq is enough to feed us all, let us share it) was soon transformed into an even louder cry of foul play, “Adduunyo hal baan lahaa. Hashii horror baa la tegey. Haruub maran baan sitaa” (All my worldly possessions consisted of one camel. That camel has been snatched away by a beast. I now roam the land with an empty milk container).  

The downward slide into chaos was continuous and precipitous. Abuse of power, venality, injustice, nepotism and violations of human rights all drove the society lower than ever. These trends accelerated the erosion of the sense of nationalism and unity of the independence period, replacing them with more local and often parochial interests. The profound sense of disillusionment that accompanied the decline goes some way towards explaining why so many Somalis today identify themselves first with local identities (Puntland, Somaliland, Jubaland) or with clan, before being a “Somali”. Understanding all these variables by reviewing the conflict trends in Somalia underscores the points above.

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Adam Bibi, Building from the bottom: Basic institutions of local governance (Nairobi: WSP Somali Programme, 2000), p. 3.
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Somalia continues to be a country characterized by what is termed a complex emergency situation. Compounding the situation is the fact that several parts of the country, especially in the central and southern regions, are characterized by internal conflict and periodic localized warfare.

Since 1991 Somalia has been torn apart by conflict from within and without. There is presence of deep seated suspicion and officially sanctioned ethnic hatred which have been the root of the political conflicts in the country and which are likely to keep the implementation of the Somali peace accord in a delicate balance.

Several parts of Somalia continue to be de facto, ruled by different shades of political authority exercising power over local regions through private militia. This complex political reality means Somalia is a country without a unified state structure. Why is this so and what implications will this have as to how international assistance to the country is channeled, implemented, monitored and reported?

Unattainable a goal as it may seem, it is beyond doubt that abandoning tribalism is the key to development and that is the biggest challenge facing the Somali people and their politicians. It is the history and the roots of the Somalia conflict that the research attempts to analyse and document.
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Given the mosaic of complex conflict relations apparent in Somalia, the research will attempt:

- To identify the factors and dynamics at play in the Somalia conflict.
- To determine how clannism propagates anarchy in Somalia.
- To explore the challenges and future prospects of the Somalia conflict.

1.4 HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

- Somalia as a unitary state is seemingly dead and may never be resurrected from its intractable state.
- The meddling of foreign influence, to which Africans are forever victims, has accelerated Somalia’s collapse into anarchy.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

In “THE SOMALI DILEMMA: NATION IN SEARCH OF A STATE” Said Samatar suggests that Ethiopia and Kenya should give internal autonomy to their Somali subjects, a limited self rule which will give the inhabitants the opportunity to run their internal affairs, allowing them to remove border restrictions and to plan joint economic ventures with their neighbouring kinsmen in the Somali Republic. Samatar has also suggested that the interests and welfare of the Somali may ultimately be better served by their readiness to enter into larger political and economic compromises with their neighbours which could pave the way for an eventual bringing together of the various nations of the Horn in a federation worthy of the children of the Queen of Sheba.
Saadia Touval's article "PARTITIONED GROUPS AND INTER-STATE RELATIONS" states that the obvious remedies that could reduce strife are the fostering of liberal, pluralistic political systems within states, and the liberalization of boundary regimes so as to minimize the hindrance to contact between groups living on opposite sides of the line. Such measures could reduce the incidence of disaffection and alienation of groups within states, and thus also reduce the frequency of irredentism, separatism and inter-state conflict.  

According to Makumi Mwagiru in his book CONFLICT: THEORY, PROCESSES AND INSTITUTIONS OF MANAGEMENT, conflict analysis and management from a conflict system perspective entails the acknowledgment that every conflict is interconnected with other conflicts in a region. Conflict management should not concentrate only on one dimension; it should take into account the other conflicts in the region which are all interconnected. In comparative terms, the conflict systems perspective poses serious challenges to ideographism, the belief that particular conflicts are peculiar and do not share any characteristics with other conflicts. Since all conflicts in a conflict system are interconnected, they cannot logically possess peculiarities that are not shared by the other conflicts in the system.  

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6 Makumi Mwagiru, Conflict Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management (Nairobi: 2000)
These ideas are important for regional conflict management. They suggest that conflicts within a region, such as the Horn of Africa or the Great Lakes, cannot be managed effectively on an ad hoc basis. Thus, systemic conflict management must trace the larger regional pattern of a conflict. It must identify and trace the across-system causes of conflict and ultimately it must design a conflict management repertoire that takes these systemic factors into account.

Iedian Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, in "REFUGEES AND THE SPREAD OF CIVIL WAR", believe that certain regions of the world experience more conflict than others. Analyses have shown that a civil war in one country significantly increases the likelihood that neighbouring states will experience conflict, a finding that still remains largely unexplained.

Population movements are an important mechanism by which conflict spreads across regions. Refugee flows are not only the consequence of political turmoil. The presence of refugees and displaced populations can also increase the risk of subsequent conflict in host and origin countries. Refugees expand rebel social networks and constitute a negative externality of civil war. Although the vast majority of refugees never directly engage in violence, refugee flows may facilitate the transitional spread of arms, combatants and ideologies conducive to conflict. They alter the ethnic composition of the state and they can exacerbate economic competition. The link between refugees and civil conflict shows that presence of refugees from neighbouring countries leads to an increased probability of violence, suggesting that refugees are one important source of conflict diffusion.
According to David Bearce in "MILITARY ORGANIZATION THEORY" a theory is proposed explaining how alliances as international security regimes reduce military conflict between member states through their internal provision of information concerning national military capabilities. Bargaining models of war have shown that a lack of information about relative military capabilities functions as an important cause of war.  

It is argued that alliances provide such information to internal participants and greater knowledge within the alliance about member state military capabilities reduces certain informational problems that could potentially lead to war. Bearce stresses that the information provided within the alliance matters most for dyads at or near power parity: the cases where states are most uncertain about who would prevail if a military conflict did emerge. In power preponderant dyads where the outcome of a potential military conflict is relatively certain, the internal information provided by military alliances become less important.

According to David Francis in "CIVIL MILITIA: AFRICA’S INTRACTABLE SECURITY MENACE" the author describes the intractable security menace in Africa. Francis argues that complex security emergencies have ushered in a shift from the traditional conception of security in terms of state and the military, (where it was the state’s responsibility to provide security for its citizens through the military) to a humanitarian concept of security that encompasses individuals and non-state actors as actors on security issues.

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6 Makumi Mwagiru, Conflict, Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management (Nairobi: 2000)  
Francis portrays states in Africa as either having collapsed or having lost their sovereignty and therefore as states that are in need of reconstruction, resurrection and saving. Africans existed as tribal, clan entities, chiefdoms or kingdoms before they were colonized. After independence amorphous states came into being. Somalia is, for example, considered by the author to have collapsed yet in Somalia, there was never a functioning state in the past. Francis argues that African countries are influenced from outside and thus their sovereignty has been lost.  

In his book GLOBALIZATION OF WORLD POLITICS, John Baylis contests that the end of the Cold War did not and will not, in and of itself, result in an end to conflict. One sees evidence of this from all sides: the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia and the conflicts across the face of sub-Saharan Africa in Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Liberia. More recently, there is the pyrrhic and seemingly intractable war of the US invasion of Iraq. These all make clear that the world of the future will not be without conflict, conflict between disparate groups within nations and conflicts extending across national borders.

Racial, religious and ethnic tensions will remain. Nationalism will be a powerful force across the globe. Political revolutions will erupt as societies advance. Historic disputes over political boundaries will endure. Economic disparities among and within nations will increase as technology and education spread unevenly around the world. The underlying causes of third world conflict that existed long before the Cold War began remain now that it has ended. They will be compounded by potential strife among states of the former Soviet Union and by continuing tensions in the Middle East.

In UNDERSTANDING CIVIL WAR: EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS Paul Collier argues that it is not political and social grievance per se that leads to civil war, but the opportunity to organize and finance a rebellion. Additionally, Paul argues that the existence of such opportunity is largely determined by particular socio-economic conditions such as widespread poverty, low levels of education and heavy dependence on natural resources.

However, there is need to understand how and when civil war breaks out which will improve the ability to identify countries at greater risk of an outbreak of civil war. The more one understands the process of conflict escalation, the better it is in designing time-sensitive policy interventions. \(^{10}\)

According to Richard Greenfield in "SOMALIS ON THEIR OWN TERMS", the author states that it is no accident that the efforts of East African presidents to create a climate for peace in Somalia have promised more than heretofore. The presidents know well that the history of independent Africa is replete with examples of the folly of foreigners attempting either to choose or to overthrow national leaders or to support unpopular ones. The author states that what is needed in Somalia is to help Somalia negotiate a stable peace, to rebuild their own institutions within a decentralized governmental structure, and above all to choose their own leaders.

\(^{10}\) Peter Collier and Nicholas Sambonis, Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2001)
Weapons, with the exception of equipment for the police, are not needed as there are too many already. Gun ships have not helped, for the Somalis too can make war. Many even enjoy it. All are very conscious that Somalia and Somaliland are their countries. Their elders are proud and their young combative and fearless but provided the Somali social structure holds, the elders can also display firmness and a considerable talent for making peace and promoting compromise. The fact that northern Somalia has restored a semblance of law and order, a civilian administration and a basis for economic take off, the south of Somalia needs a chance to follow suit, with help of course, but on its own terms.  

According to Jennifer De Maio in “MANAGING CIVIL WARS” the virtual absence of international diplomatic intervention in Somalia in 1991 resulted from lack of political will. The international community was more preoccupied with the Gulf War and its aftermath than with civil wars in Africa. Unprepared for stateless diplomacy, the international community was unable and perhaps unwilling to find new avenues for diplomatic intervention. Furthermore, the absence of regional, sub regional and local actors meant that no party had a vested and direct interest in ensuring the successful aversion of civil war in Somalia. The international community believed that the unrest and political tensions were signs of an imminent military coup to overthrow Siad Barre rather than an impending civil war. Thus, the failure to correctly analyze and interpret the situation in Somalia resulted from misperception, miscalculation of costs, inflexibility of policies and geostrategic imperatives.  


1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The complexity of conflicts suggests the existence of different types of conflict. These different types of conflict reflect among other things the complexity of human society, its interactions and its motivations. This infinite variety of human nature and theatres of action is reflected in classifications of conflict.

Conflict, according to C.R. Mitchell, "entails a situation of incompatible goals, a range of psychological conditions experienced by the parties involved and a set of behaviours used by the parties to achieve the disputed goals. Underlying this situation is a conflict of visions, and often an inability or unwillingness to see the other person's point of view. More complex conflicts are defined through this incompatibility of goals. The effect of conflict, essentially if and when it occurs, dislocates values and structures of which the society is formed. A functional conflict is one that is beneficial because it is managed properly, while dysfunctional conflict leads to the breakdown of social order, as well as of social and personal relationships."

Conflict is both violent and non-violent. Violent conflict is the most manifest as it inflicts physical harm on those affected by it. Non-violent conflict can neither be seen nor even imagined. The best form of this type of conflict is structural conflict which gives rise to structural violence. Structural conflict is embedded in the structure of relationships and interactions. The structure presents an unjust and inequitable situation where the weaker part suffers. Structuralist theorists provide this theoretical basis for the structural conflicts and explain the character of the international system, particularly, interactions. Therefore, to solve a structural conflict, there is need to change the structure responsible for the conflict.
The subjective view of conflict argues that conflict cannot exist unless an incompatibility of goals is subjectively experienced. For, if people cannot subjectively perceive a conflict, and hence its effects, they cannot be said to be in a situation of conflict.

On the other hand, the objective view of conflict argues that it is possible for people to be in a state of conflict even though they do not immediately or readily experience it. This is because conflict is embedded in the social structure and can exist independently of people’s perception of it.

The nature and nurture theories, also known as the inherent and contingent theories are other types of classifications. The nature/inherency view contends that human beings are by nature violent and aggressive; this derives from an innate drive in human beings for domination. The nurture/contingent theory argues that human beings are not violent and aggressive by nature. Violence and aggression are conditioned by the environment in which people find themselves. Violence, is therefore, inevitable in human society, and just as it was learned, it can be unlearned. Since it was caused by the environment, changing the environment would obviate violence. These theories form the conceptual backbone of the biological explanations and provide a platform for discussions about power and how it is used.

References:
Biological explanations of conflict have their roots in Darwinism. Social Darwinism is based on the notion of the selection of the fittest, in that there will be a natural selection in favour of the more aggressive who will, therefore, gain more material resources. By looking at how animals behave, it is possible to understand and explain the behaviour of human beings.

Sociobiology, a branch of biological theory, argues that human behaviour can be explained by the existence of genes in the human body which account for their behaviour, especially when not driven by gain. Within the Somalia context, biological theories accounts for the tribalism within the political setting of the country that has led to the current anarchical state of affairs.

Psychological theories are germane to the Somalia conflict. They include the frustration-aggression theory which states that all aggression is the result of frustration and all frustration is aggression. Simply put, while aggression is not innate in human beings, the potential for aggression is, and always activated by certain kinds and levels of frustration. Another psychological theory is that of relative deprivation. It is activated by the reference group which a person compares oneself, and one’s fortunes with. It is the reference group that changes and conditions peoples perceptions of what to expect and what to believe they are entitled to.

The above theories shed some light on the individual and the society within a conflict situation. They have played a role in the Somalia conflict. How could a people seemingly much more coherent and cohesive, much more homogenous than most African countries, have descended to forms of behaviour that are to outsiders, almost inexplicable? This study therefore, uses these theories as its framework for further analysis of the challenges and future prospects facing Somalia as a nation in search of a state.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

In an attempt to analyze the drivers and dynamics of the Somalia conflict, the research looks at the period 1969 to 2006. Significant armed conflict was absent during Somalia’s first seventeen years of independence, 1960-1977, which were marked by vibrant but corrupt and eventually dysfunctional multiparty democracy.

Between 1977 and 1991, the country endured three major armed conflicts. The first was the Ogaden War with Ethiopia in 1977-1978, in which Somali forces intervened in support of Somali rebel fighters in a bid to liberate the Somali-inhabited region of the Ogaden.

The second major armed conflict was the war between the Somali military and the Somali National Movement for control over northwest Somalia. The third armed conflict before 1991 pitted embattled government forces against a growing number of clan based liberation movements in 1989 and 1990. This multifront war presaged the predatory looting and banditry that characterized the warfare in 1991-1992.
The ouster of the Barre regime was followed not by a replacement government but by a prolonged period of violent anarchy and warfare. Armed conflict raged across southern Somalia through 1991 and 1992, pitting clan-based militias against one another for control of valuable towns, seaports and neighbourhoods. By contrast, in the northwest and northeast of Somalia, the collapse of the central government did not precipitate the kind of warfare and plunder that devastated the south.

Once a pearl on the Indian Ocean, Somalia today bears the scars of long years of fratricidal war. The warlords who had controlled the capital and terrorized its inhabitants for almost a decade and a half were finally driven away in June 2006 by a militia force calling itself the Union of Islamic courts. Fighting between soldiers from the Transitional Federal Government, heavily backed by well-equipped Ethiopian forces, and remnants of the Union of Islamic Courts militias has been on-going for most of January 2007. At the same time, the United States aircrafts have bombed locations and reportedly killed civilians in southern Somalia in an attempt to take out suspected al-Qaeda terrorists. On Saturday 13 January, 2007, Somalia’s Parliament declared a state of emergency for three months in order to restore security in the country. If the dream of a peaceful Somalia is to become a reality, reconciliation should be encouraged. Through a series of negotiated for assistance, issues leading to and having triggered the conflict should be addressed to find a lasting solution to the Somalia conflict.

The research also covers attempts by Somalia to form a state despite different setbacks. It focuses on various attempts by regional and western blocs to quell conflict in the region. Out of this a number of issues have arisen as to the ability of the international community to respond to African conflicts. The issue is further complicated by the
sovereignty of states and their right to handle their affairs internally without external intervention.

The study of international response to conflicts is very rarely targeted at African states, with very few exceptions, compared with studies in the area of responses to conflicts in other regions of the world. Coupled with this, the literature on international response to conflicts in Africa is not conclusive. More so majority of the literature is written by European and western authors and does not focus on the crisis in the Africa region.

1.8 OPERATIONALIZATION/DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Somali is a term referring to the Somali ethnic group whose territory encompasses Somalia, half of the Djibouti Republic, the entire Eastern Ethiopia (the Ogaden and Haud region) and the Northern part of Kenya (region of the Northern Frontier District).

Somalia refers to the Republic of Somalia, founded in 1960, following the unification of the Italian colony (Somalia Italiana) and the British colony (Somaliland).

Greater Somalia is the region occupied by Somali speaking peoples in the Horn. It encompasses all of Somaliland, the Ogaden region in Ethiopia and the Northern Frontier District in Kenya.

Pan-Somalism is the unification of the territories occupied by Somalis and has been the cornerstone of Somalia’s foreign policy since her independence in 1960. The Somalis demand that Somalis living in adjacent territories be granted the right to self-determination. The concept of self-determination as a modern political principle can be traced to the seventeenth century, particularly after the 1648 Peace of Westphalia.
Its application is deeply rooted in man's moral feelings. Self-determination gained recognition after the American revolution of 1775 and the French revolution of 1789. These revolutions achieved for the people better constitutional order, people's representation in the government and administration by the government in the interest of the people. What is important after the emancipation of peoples under the rubric of self-determination is the maintenance of a stable territorial base for their activities. Pan-Somalism as a transnational ideology was an attempt to redress grievances suffered by Somalis at the hands of European and Ethiopian empire builders.

**Ogaden** is a region in the South East of Ethiopia, bordering on Somalia. It is an arid region, inhabited mainly by Somali pastoral nomads. Menelik II of Ethiopia conquered the region in 1891. Since 1960, Somali nationalists have demanded the union of the Ogaden with Somalia and there have been violent clashes over the precise boundaries of the Ogaden.

**Irredentism** – It is originally the Italian nationalist movement for the annexation to Italy of territories — *Italia irredenta* (unredeemed Italy)—inhabited by an Italian majority but retained by Austria after 1866. These included the Trentino, Trieste, Istria, Fiume and parts of Dalmatia. Agitation took place both inside Austria-Hungary and in Italy itself. The liberation of *Italia irredenta* was perhaps the strongest motive for the entry of Italy into World War I. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 satisfied most of the irredentist claims. Irredentism has, by extension, been applied to nationalist agitation in other countries, based on historical, geographical and ethnic reasons, for the incorporation of territories under foreign rule. It is thus closely connected with nationalism and with minority problems.23
Secession is a term in political science, which means the formal withdrawal from an association by a group discontented with the actions or decisions of that association. The term is generally used to refer to withdrawal from a political entity. Such withdrawal usually occurs when a territory or state believes itself justified in establishing its independence from the political entity of which it was a part. By doing so it assumes sovereignty.

Islamist – Political use of the Islamic religion. The word should not be used synonymously with jihadi. There are several families within the Islamist movement. The tendency is to look only at the jihadi. One can also find the usuliyyin (from the Arabic al-usul, that is, base, foundation, origin) who are conservatives wanting to go back to the political dispensations of Islam’s golden period, the Bagdad Caliphate of the khulafat al-Rashidun, the ‘well-advanced or well-inspired’ Caliphs. This family is not present in Somalia.  

Other Islamists are ‘modernists’ (Mujahidun) trying to find in the Islamic tradition elements of interpretation (ijtihad) which provide a reasoning by extended analogy (qiyas) without falling into blameworthy impious innovations (bida’ah). This trend is embodied in Somalia by the Jama’a al-Islam created in 1975 by Sheikh Mohamed Gareyare. The Islam clerics started to filter back into Somalia in 1978 after Siad Barre’s defeat in the Ogaden war forced the regime to abandon ‘scientific socialism’ and the Soviet alliance.

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Jihadiyun (supporters of the jihad Holy War) are those thought of in the West as 'terrorists'. Their vision of political Islam is radical and usually primitive. Their theological knowledge is very limited. They easily resort to violence and see themselves as the Amir (provincial commanders) of a world-wide movement. The Islamist movement in Somalia was born in 1975 when Siad Barre tried to enact socialist family laws which were seen as impious by many Muslims. When some protested, eight Imam were summarily shot. Activists migrated to Saudi Arabia and Cairo and they came back after 1978. The two branches of the movement (the modernizing Jama'a al-Islax and the more traditional al-Ittixad al-Islami) were often seen as the two sides of the same coin.

Al-ittixad was the organization which entered the shadowy world of Islamic violent radicalism in the early 1990s. One of its early leaders who is still active today was Sheikh Hassan Daweyr Aweys. In 1991, he and a number of others tried to take over what had not yet become the Puntland quasi-state of Somalia. 25

Islamic Courts Movement has a history which is quite distinct from that of al-ittixad. It entirely dates from the period following the collapse of the Somali state in 1991. The first court was set up in the Medina section of Mogadishu in 1993 and it was linked with Ansar as-Sunna groups. Its purpose was to use Islam as a political guarantor for law and order and for commercial contract enforcement. The court had its own militia and worked according to Islamic shari‘a law, thus avoiding getting embroiled in long and costly mag (blood price) quarrels. 26

25 Ibid., p. 34.
1.9 METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out using Library research, informal interviews and data analysis. The information used in the study was obtained from relevant and available literature from various sources and locations such as the Lillian Beam Library, Kenya Embassy to Somalia, and the Arab League office in Nairobi. Data collection for the study was done using content analysis. This mainly included use of secondary sources of data.
CHAPTER TWO

THE CLAN FACTOR

It is clear that clannism is one of the root causes of Somalia’s destruction and is still one of the main obstacles for the restoration of the Somali state. It is therefore, necessary to analyze and understand various aspects of this social disease in order to attempt some kind of remedy to the Somalia crisis. The chapter discusses the different dimensions assumed by the Somali conflict and the way division on clan identity manifests itself as conflict. It highlights clannism as a common pattern and common driver of conflict escalation. The clan is the primary social base for the individual Somali, and therefore also the most important base for protection and insurance. The clan is therefore, historically, also the most important political constituency, political dividing factor, and hence fault-line in conflicts in Somali society.¹

For nearly fifty years, it was a taboo to mention the names of the Somali clans in public, and yet at the same time the base and reality of Somali politics rested on the clan system. In preparing for Somali unity in a modern state without tribal barriers, the Somali Youth League (SYL), the first Somali national party, tried to abolish the traditional, segregational use of clan labels. Thus people, especially in the urban areas, used to answer ‘I am Somali’ for the traditional question ‘who are you?’ intending ‘which clan do you belong to?’ This habit was continued even after independence then a new form of asking a person his clan developed. ‘What is your ex?’ meaning ‘Now we are all Somali, but what was your ex-clan?’ This form was used in a confidential manner, never in public.²

² Ibid, p. 15.
Clan is integral in Somali society and influences all aspects of Somali life. The Somali experience demonstrates that clan is a double-edged sword - it closely links Somalis and tears them apart. Clan and sub clan identities are used to underscore differences and sharpen cleavages for specific objectives. Such differentiation in identities may be based on real or constructed differences and may change depending on the goals being sought. In the name of clan protection, identities are politicized to mobilize clan members and wage war, thus seriously damaging inter- and intra-clan structures.

Although versions of the traditional genealogies varied in their telling from group to group, it was believed that the clan families stemmed from the sons of Aqiil, son of Abu Taalib, uncle of the Prophet Mohamed. Somali society is divided into two tribal groups: Samale or Somali proper and the Sab. The former make up the bulk of the nation, and their name Samale, has come to include the Sab, perhaps in the same fashion as the word ‘English’ is applied by foreigners to all the inhabitants of the British isles. This larger fraction of the Somali nation consists of four principal groups of clans or ‘clan families’. The Samale clan families comprise the Hawiye, Darod, Isaq and Dir all of whom are pastoral nomads and variously distributed throughout the land.

The Dir clans are mainly concentrated in the western part of the northern regions of the Somali Republic (the former British Somaliland), in the Djibouti Republic and the east of Harar Province of Ethiopia. A smaller nucleus also occurs in the south in Merca district and between Brava and the Juba River.

The Isaq live mainly in the centre of the northern regions of Somalia, but in their grazing, movements extend also into the Ethiopian Haud. As well as the eastern part of the former British Somaliland protectorate, the Darod occupy the Eastern, Nugal and Mudug regions, most of the Haud and the Ogaden; and finally, although interrupted by a large wedge of Hawiye in the centre of Somali, extend virtually into the north eastern region of Kenya. The Hawiye live to the south of the Majerteen Darod in Mudug, Hiran and around Mogadishu. They extend some way across the Shebelle basin where they mingle with the Sab tribes and are found again in strength in the northern part of Kenya.4

The Sab tribes are less numerous, less widely distributed and have a stronger cultivating bias than any other Somali group. Their habitat is primarily restricted to the fertile region between the two rivers, Shebelle and Juba, where their pastoral and cultivating sections mingle not only with each other but also with pastoral nomads of the other Samale groups. They mainly include the Digil Rahanweyn clans.5

In addition to these divisions of the Somali nation whose distribution and relative strengths are vital to an understanding of both past and present events, there are a number of smaller ethnic communities which require to be mentioned. The most numerous are somalized Bantu scattered in cultivating villages along the Shabelle and Juba Rivers and in pockets between them. These derive in part from earlier Bantu and Swahili speaking groups, as well as from former slave populations freed by the suppression of slavery at the end of the nineteenth century.6

4 Appendix on Somalia clans
5 Ambassador Hussein Ali Dualeh, From Harre to Aideed, Somalia: the agony of a nation (Nairobi: Stellagraphics Ltd. 1994).
6 Ibid., p. 90.
Although they still retain today much of their physical distinctiveness, socially these communities are becoming increasingly absorbed in the wider Somali society. The best known groups are the Shidle and Shabelle on the Shebelle River, and the Wa-gosha or Gosha and Gobaweyn on the Juba. All of these clans are themselves sub-divided into several sub-clans and family groups. There are thus, six major Somali clans: Hawiye, Darod, Issaq, Dir, Digil Rahanweyn (See appendix 1)

2.1 SOMALIA: KINSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS DERIVED FROM IT

Nearly all armed conflicts in contemporary Somalia break out along clan lines. Clan identities are malleable and can be shaped by leaders to pursue control of resources and power. Clan identities are not the basis for conflict; rather, their deliberate manipulation creates and exacerbates divisions. Clan groups can serve as destructive or constructive forces as well as traditional conflict moderators.

In lineage based Somali where clans define relationship, clan identity is not static and fixed but is shaped and manipulated according to changing situations. This does not suggest that clans are inherently conflictual but that rather clan identities can be manipulated purposefully to acquire control over resources and power. Warlords and divisive leaders emphasize differences among clans and formulate demands that play on those differences. Warlords are instrumental in invoking loyalty to raise or lower the level of identity from clan to sub-clan and sub-sub clan and back again depending on what is most convenient. 

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Different clan identities are used as a tool to mobilize clan members when in conflict, and cleavages are drawn upon to wage war. In this way, clan and sub clan differences can be a force for division and fragmentation, particularly when manipulated for political purposes.

Contrary to the European’s notion of kinship, which limits the family group to the closest members, Somalis will grant the title of relatives to remotely related people and even to people with whom they share only the bonds of the clan or the tribe. In fact, Somalis have developed an entire network of ‘family relations’ which allows each individual to have an identity, to be acknowledged and identified and that he can use according to his needs and circumstances.

A first analysis would lead to a belief that this network of family relations is based on the father’s bloodline which determines the notion of clan or of tribe. In fact, it is more complex. Relationships with the mother’s side also play a part. The kinship system is therefore double. Studying the kinship system demonstrates its evolution. That very evolution led to the current Somalia crisis. The Somali family system not only determines the behaviour of individuals, but also that of groups, and it plays an important role in the history of Somali society. Many suggest it is the kinship system that is largely responsible for the horrors committed during the civil war. This fact being established, can the Somalis continue to fight and commit robbery, murders and massacres in the name of a clan which most likely does not truly exist? If a solution is to be found, what is to prevail, is it the social kinship, meaning the totally unrealistic clan system or family kinship, meaning the ties born out of marriage - the alliance systems?

The workings of SomaH society are rather complex but are essentially based on four pillars: a social system based on kinship, social morals, religious morals and a state system. The kinship system is a twofold organization of society. First, it gathers individuals from the Somali ethnic group (nation) into families or family cells. It places the families into extended families which include the descendants of a close ancestor (grand or great-grandfather) and their relatives. These extended families are in turn grouped into lineages, the lineages into sub-clans, the sub-clans into clans, the clans into clan families, and the clan families constitute the nation. Each grouping is built around a common ancestor called the xigaalo. It corresponds to the genealogies and the lineages on the father’s side. It allows each individual to have an identity.

On to the vertical system of kinship is grafted a horizontal system of alliances, based on marriages, the xidid. Besides its vast kinship system with its multiple vertical and horizontal ramifications, Somali society has developed, in the very bosom of the system, a division into age and sex classes, which defines each individual’s role in society. The kinship system is also recreated at the level of soil or space occupancy. Indeed each group, whether it is simply a portion of the xigaalo or the result of a marriage alliance, owns a territory, with camps, pasture and water holes. The social organization is thus complex, combining patriarchal lineages, alliances through marriage, age and sex based classes and the land distribution system. Such an organization could not function without rules imposed by social and religious morals.

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2.2 LINEAGES AND GENEALOGY (XIGAALO)

A man, in the Somali society, can deal with another person in different ways. His attitude may vary according to the clan or tribe that person belongs to. If he is facing a man from the same extended family, he will show him respect due to his rank or age. On the other hand, if his interlocutor belongs to a neighbouring extended family, he can either treat him as an equal or brother thus taking into consideration the fact that they are both from the same ancestor, close or remote, or he can emphasize their being different. In fact, it all depends on current or future circumstances. It is wiser to treat one's neighbours well. Who knows if tomorrow they might not be needed. That mode of reasoning is positive for it promotes solidarity and views the community and more generally, society, as forming one unit.

On the contrary, the downward reading of patriarchal lineages and carrying that system to its extreme, divides the nation (the ethnic group) into smaller and smaller groups until they finally are reduced to a large mass of individuals, without family or social ties. That constitutes a system of exclusion, which, in recent years has been applied beyond reason. In such a vision, all relationships with other people are conducted on the basis of rivalry and difference. There is no social coherence. The xigaalo is therefore a double edged sword whose anarchical use, outside the rules of the customary rights system, finally led the Somalis into a civil war. One thing the Somalis have forgotten today is that the system of patriarchal lineages is not an immutable one. No Somali can be certain that the genealogy he claims links him to his real ancestor.

Indeed, for various reasons (distance, war, the necessity for a larger territory, fear of another group with expansionist tendencies, dissidence within the tribe) a group such as a clan, can separate from its mother tribe and form, alone or with other groups, a new tribe or associate with another tribe or ask it for asylum. According to circumstances, the groups that separate from their mother tribe ‘renounce their blood and their specific traditions’. If they reject them, they then adopt those of their new tribe.

Somali society is thus a dynamic one, breaking up and rebuilding itself constantly, depending on the times, the circumstances and the needs of the various communities. No Somali can therefore be absolutely certain of the identity of his ancestor and as a consequence, there is no reason for ‘xeno-clano-phobic’ sentiments.

2.3 CLANNISM AND THE IMPACT OF COLONIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE

The arrival of colonists suddenly brought turmoil to the Horn of Africa. The coastal peoples, willingly or under pressure and force, signed the first commercial agreements and treaties with representatives from European powers such as France, Italy and England. The Somali territory was split between the three powers who managed portions of it, very unequal in size. Soon, Menelik, who crowned himself king of the kings of Ethiopia, claimed the entire Somali territories as his kingdom. His successor, Haile Selassie, through secret agreements signed with England, obtained the Haud and Ogaden provinces in 1948 and 1954.

12 Ibid., p. 98.
Later on, the Northern Frontier District was placed under the authority of a newly independent Kenya. Only Somaliland and the Somalia italiana colonies were spared such distribution and were able to regain independence and reunification.

All through the colonial era, the authorities exploited the fact that the Somali ethnic groups were composed of many tribes and clans. Basing their actions on stories told by European explorers, the Europeans developed a management strategy that played on internal Somali divisiveness. Explorers had labeled Somalis anarchistic, undisciplined warmongers, cruel, ever ready to fight at the slightest provocation, but also organized in rival clans. The explorers, in fact, only related to epiphenomenons – appearances. The governors of the Somali provinces manipulated clan rivalries to the point of causing clan wars, whose flames provided weapons to the clans who became their allies, and warlike relationships developed between those clans and the ones who refused to accept the foreign presence and submit to it. Inter-clan rivalries crystallized.

During that time, the Somali were exposed to their first known form of a central state. Indeed, the ancient Somali social system was based on distributed power, with the exception of a few small coastal kingdoms. Having to appeal to the chief of an entire tribe was relatively rare and was limited to the most grievous cases. The chief, assisted by his counselors, delegated a large part of his powers to the chiefs of factions and clans. Figuratively, independence in 1960 seemed a reality only for some Somalis, those from the provinces who consolidated and formed the Republic of Somalia while others remained under foreign domination.14


Colonization and decolonization brought forth a modern Somali state, whose foundation is a European style constitution. The modern state decreed its own laws but the passing of time proved that its real power remained in the cities; the country dwellers kept their traditional system of managing their affairs. However, that system was greatly modified because of tribal wars and is going to undergo substantial transformations due to the governments in power, the Transitional Federal Government.

In the Somali constitution, a fact is stated plainly – the Somali state will endeavor to free the other Somali provinces from the colonial yoke using all legal means but when those means fail, the state will then help the Somali liberation movements in these regions, like the Liberation Front for Western Somalia (FLSO or WSLF). The Siad Barre military regime which took power in 1969 also used the constitution as a means to rebuild the Somali nation, along with eradicating tribalism. The military regime eradicated tribalism by engaging unemployed urban youth, mostly intellectuals excluded by the tribal system, for a series of public works.

Legal means failed in Somalia from 1976-77 and Somalia attempted to retake by force, the Ogaden. The attempt failed and coupled with the Russian broken alliance, created numerous enemies for Siad Barre in the midst of the intelligentsia as well as among the population. From then on, feeling continually threatened and desirous to stay in power, Barre turned to tribalism.

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15 John Markakis, National and class conflict in the Horn of Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
16 Ambassador Hussein Ali Duulch, From Barre to Aideed, Somalia: the agony of a nation (Nairobi: Stellagraphics Ltd, 1994)
After Somali’s defeat in the Ogaden war Siad Barre, the man responsible for instigating the worst tribalism to keep his power, actually facilitated the clannist movements, to complete the destruction of Somalia in his search for power and clan-hegemony.

Siad Barre kept all leftist intellectuals likely to oppose his policies away from power. Other intellectuals, who had a certain tribal prestige, were opportunistic and were in full agreement with Siad Barre, replaced the previous ones. Everywhere in Somalia, tensions between clans arose.

Traditionally, the clan system was a moderating force used to bring about reconciliation and cooperation. It appears that mainly in the post independence period, particularly under Siad Barre’s regime, manipulations of clan identities for economic and political ends became prominent. A case in point is the Darod, one of the six clans of Somalia. There is general animosity by majority of Somalis felt towards this clan which dates back to the first Somali government formed immediately after independence. Since the Ogaden, constituting seventy per cent of the Darod mainly live in Ethiopia and Kenya, the only sub-clan of the Darod that played a very effective role in Somali politics proper was the Majeerteen. The other main sub-clan of the Darod resident in Somalia was the Marehan but they were mainly herdsmen who tended their livestock and played no role in Somali politics. This changed when Mohamed Siad Barre, a Marehan, came to power in 1969. The majority of the Somalis were hostile towards the Majeerteen and not towards the Darod in general. The Ogaden and the Marehan, who are from the Darod clan, were also hostile to the Majeerteen.

The Majeerteen in Somalia live in the most inhospitable and arid parts of the country. This necessitated their immigrating to the main non-Darod urban centres to join the colonial army, police and the civil service. Naturally, therefore after independence, the Majeerteen were predominant in the most important state organs, particularly the police. The most effective force in Somali, immediately after independence, was the police force, equipped and trained by the US, Germany and Italy. 18 The army in its embryonic stage had no foreign backing, and was therefore weak. Western governments were determined not to help Somalia form a strong army. They were convinced that what Somalia needed was a strong police force. These are some of the reasons why the Mogadishu populace, after the fall of Siad Barre, was only victimizing the Majeerteen and other small sub-clans allied to them and not the Ogaden and Marehan, despite the fact that they all belong to the Darod clan.

At independence on 1 July 1960, President Aden Abdulla Osman, from the southern Hawiye clan appointed Dr Shermarke, a southerner from the Majeerteen as Prime Minister. This move by President Aden took Somalis by surprise which soon changed into resentment against the President and the Majeerteen. Most Somalis felt that the post of Prime Minister should have gone to a northerner as the south had taken the presidency. The people felt that the Majeerteen, were indeed selfish and unnationalistic in taking advantage of the president’s marital links with the Majeerteen. President Aden, though a Hawiye from a small sub-clan was married to a Majeerteen.

Being a shrewd politician, he knew that within Hawiye political circles, he could not compete with powerful Hawiye politicians. He needed a political base. By giving the Majeerteen the Prime Minister’s post, he earned Majeerteen loyalty. 19 Mohamed Siad Barre fell victim to his sinister agenda of elevating his Marehan sub-clan above all the other Somali clans. He knew that the Darod were a minority in Somalia, for the simple reason that the Ogaden, a sub-clan who constitute seventy per cent of the Darod, were Ethiopian and Kenyan citizens. Barre’s later invasion of Ethiopia was purely for tribal reasons, to wrench the Ogaden out of Ethiopian clutches and with the Ogaden clan incorporated into Somalia, the Darod would be at par with the three largest clans in Somalia, the Isaq, Hawiye and Dir.

To offset the minority status of the Darod in Somalia, Siad Barre embarked on the plan of putting the political and economic power of the country in Darod hands. Through a decree, passed in 1973, he legalized any mention of clan or tribe by name. Any offender was to be taken before the National Security court where the normal minimum sentence was five years. No appeal was allowed from a conviction of the court. 20 This was an indirect way of silencing the non-Darod clans so that they would not complain about the ‘darodisation’ of the political machinery. Throughout Barre’s rule, the commanders of the army, air force and navy were Darod. When Barre came to power, the economic life of the country was mainly in the hands of the Isaq and Hawiye. This was against his personal policy. He soon embarked on a policy of enriching Darod businessmen so that they could take over the economic leadership from the Hawiye and the Isaq.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Isaq and Darod clans have always viewed each other as traditional enemies. The Isaq and Hawiye clearly saw that Barre was working towards Darod domination of Somalia. The Isaq launched their movement in London, the Somali National Movement (SNM), to fight the Barre regime. Most senior civil and diplomatic posts were Darodised by Barre. Somalia had 39 ambassadors. With the exception of Pakistan, where Barre posted a Hawiye ambassador, and Saudi Arabia, an ambassador of Arab origin, the rest of Somali ambassadors were Darod. Barre felt that Hawiye and Isaq ambassadors would take over his power. He preferred to die than to lose power, hence the calamity that befell Somalia.

Mengistu Haile Mariam’s regime in Ethiopia made the most of the problems between clans to oppose Siad Barre and defeat Somalia. Clan affiliated parties appeared, supported by Ethiopia. For its part, Somalia supported the Liberation Front for Western Somalia (Ogaden) as well as the Liberation Fronts for the Abbo Somali (Oromo), for Eritrea and Tigre that constantly attacked Mengistu’s regime. In that way, through the fronts, the two governments of the Horn confronted each other. The clan fights went on for several years, weakening Siad Barre’s government. On the other hand, Mengistu’s regime was destabilized by the war in Eritrea and Tigre, by the Oromo revolt and by the Liberation Front for Western Somalia (FLSO/WSLF) guerilla warfare.

In an effort to save their own positions, the two dictators, Siad Barre and Mengistu Haile Mariam, met in 1986 and discussed agreements of mutual non-intervention in each other’s affairs.

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21 Ambassador Hussein Ali Dualeh, From Barre to Aideed, Somalia: the agony of a nation (Nairobi: Stellagraphics Ltd. 1994) p. 90

On April 6, 1988, they signed a peace agreement which allowed Mengistu to empty the Ogaden of army reserves in order to send help to Eritrea and Tigre where the situation was desperate. The treaty led Siad Barre to believe that the clan affiliated parties, deprived of Ethiopia’s support, would collapse. Neither of them could stop fate in its tracks. The revolutions, of an ethnic nature in Ethiopia and a clanic nature in Somalia, revolts which these rulers themselves had set in motion, became more and more pressing. A collective popular upheaval set the two countries afire and overthrew the two military leaders, but, if in Ethiopia the conflict was resolved, such was not the case in Somalia, where the war still raged on.

2.4 CLANNISM IN THE CONTEXT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Studies of the kinship system show its evolution as a movement which was partly responsible for the Somalia crisis. The huge mutations which the Somali people have experienced in the course of the century and since independence have modified their established values.

The pastoral clan system, a system of a balanced but perpetually evolving society, existing at the beginning of colonization, has slowly changed into a ‘modern’ clan system of exclusion, in which the strongest dictate their rules, and crush and isolate the weakest in the name of their given clan affiliations.

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23 Peter Schrader, Intervention into the 1990s: US Foreign Policy in the Third World (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992)
Although there is no such thing as a ‘pure clan’ in the sense of a group of male individuals issued from the same ancestor or limited group of ancestors, those who created the theory out of thin air had only one goal – dominating and crushing the peoples in their power. It was an easy way for them to get rid of undesirable peoples. They only had to cause dissensions between the clans and then make sure to revive them regularly.

The clan wars born in that fashion were responsible for a tremendous number of victims. They were more deadly because the fighters were using modern weapons supplied by the colonists. Customary laws, which, until then, had always been able to resolve dissensions in a manner fair to all involved, became incapable of finding satisfactory solutions.

Customary rights thus lost part of their influence on the population and that opened a door inviting future transgressions. The clan theories, used by all the clan leaders to avenge their honour evolved naturally, creating a more and more powerful system of exclusion. The entire Somali tribal system was based on alliances, mutual help pacts, persistently sealed by marriages and constantly questioned when they proved unsatisfactory. It was in a state of permanent evolution, due to the fact that it was always being built and rebuilt.

Such a change between the clans, meaning the birth of new clan theory, along with the disappearance of old alliances and mutual help pacts, also affected the behaviour of individuals to the point that what was previously forbidden now became a new virtue.

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25 Gassim Mariam Asif, Somalia: Clan versus nation, United Arab Emirates, 2003
For instance, marriage, which used to be a way of forming alliances and thus of strengthening bonds between clans (exogamy) slowly became more exclusive, meaning that wedding among clan members took place more frequently (endogamy); what used to be forbidden became the norm, such as marrying the paternal uncle’s daughter.26

Moreover, customary laws lost more and more respect. First, unable to solve the issue of clan wars, it was then cast aside, considered obsolete by the first Somali government that wanted to impose modernity and progress, notions that its members had learned when studying in European schools. The colonists wanted to apply a system of government based on European conceptions but in the end, they failed to get the Somalis to understand it. People only saw it as a tribal system on the scale of a state and as an administration whose function was paralyzed at all levels by corruption.

The new state, therefore, had nothing to offer them in exchange for the customary laws whose use it had forbidden, that first Somalia, born with independence, can be called a democracy as far as it was founded on a multi party system and freedom of speech but in reality, democracy, designed according to a European model, was totally unsuitable to Somali people.27 The military men who came later when Siad Barre overthrew the government, were quite welcome, for their initial political program was clear, simple and answered Somali aspirations – Rebuilding the great Somali nation dismantled by colonization, cleansing the administration, eradicating tribalism through new laws whose goal was to limit the tribes’ power, promulgating laws limiting the impact of traditions (equality between men and women for example) and simultaneously, giving new value to Somali culture by means of its language, its folklore and the cult of Somali heroes.
Siad Barre’s accession to the presidency and his increasing taste for power caused the initial program gradually to lose its substance. Within a few years, things were back to where they were when the civil government left. Corruption had settled in again and was led by men directly connected to the government. Tribalism had also made a full comeback, orchestrated by Siad Barre and his men.\(^{28}\)

The Somali people lost a good deal of their social references and found few new ones to replace the old. By comparison with the previous situation, the gap, opened between the population and its ancient traditions, had widened even more. Islam, which had until then always provided a haven, had been banished by the military regime, the reason being the espousal of communist theories\(^{29}\) on one hand and on the other hand the Imams’ daring disapproval of regime’s use of power.

Siad Barre installed a dictatorship, created a private police force, censored the press and tolerated no freedom of opinion. All these facts, accumulated since the constitution of the Somali state, have presented their many obstacles to the creation of Somali democracy and have caused the Somali kinship system to degenerate, leading to the civil war that broke out in December 1990.\(^{30}\)

One of the most dramatic consequences of the Somali anarchical state, and certainly the most tragic as far as Somali unity is concerned, is the splitting up of Somali national territory into a cantonization of clans.\(^{31}\) Clans and sub-clans have delineated boundaries according to population concentration. A zone is cantonized by a clan whose members make up the majority of inhabitants in that zone. The ruling clans enact a sort of ethnic cleansing in an attempt to rid their canton of members of rival clans.


Sadly, the atrocities committed evidently seem to be on a par with the horrors witnessed in former Yugoslavia. Whole groups of people considered to be members of rival clans were massacred or driven from lands where they had lived for generations. Minority groups not linked to any of the belligerent clans were forced to flee from cities and villages in which they were born, after having suffered every type of imaginable violence and robbed of their every possession.

Within the clans themselves, things are not much better. According to the atomizing logic of tribalism, each clan is divided into sub-clans and families. Each sub-clan or family claims the right to control that portion of the clan's territory considered to be its own.

There being no centralized power to coordinate and control these subdivisions, each tends to be totally disconnected to the other; each acts more as a sovereign state instead of a region that is part of a unified state. The dissolution of the Somali state has led to the collapse of Somali society and into the worst kind of ill-fated and exploited tribalism. Some Somalis, among whom the actual authors of the destruction may be counted, consider the breakdown of the Somali social fabric a completely natural and inevitable phenomenon. They argue that tribalism is inherent to Somali social organization, and as such, must be duly taken into account when formulating the conception of any Somali state and in the subsequent distribution of state powers. Backed by a host of foreign sociologists, anthropologists and 'experts', these designers of a new tribalism seek to interpret every manifestation of life in Somali society from a purely tribalistic point of view.

29 Ibid., p. 18.
No one denies that tribalism has, for centuries, been the basis of Somali social organization and that this is part of Somali cultural tradition, but the type of tribalism currently fomenting in Somalia has nothing to do with traditional Somali tribalism. In fact, traditional tribalism, despite defects and limits intrinsic to its nature, such as the absolute irresponsibility of the individual and the position of inferiority to which women are delegated, contained and still contains today in areas inhabited by nomad populations two main functions.

First is collective solidarity where a group defends its members in case of outside aggression and gives both material and moral support in times of difficulty and need. In other words, the group provides those social functions that in modern society are furnished to the individual by institutions like the health care and insurance industries.

Secondly, there is individual identification where the majority of the Somalis lead a nomadic life, in continuous migration. The individual has neither an identity card nor a fixed residence. The only possible way to identify oneself is through declaration of clan membership. Belonging to a clan is for the individual a sort of identity card, a way in which one may be recognized. This type of tribalism constitutes no threat to the existence of the state and national unity. It is a primitive form of socio-political organization that all societies have passed through over the course of social evolution and development. However, though it is no threat to state and nationhood, such a system cannot co-exist with the realities and needs of the socio-political organization of a modern state.33

31 Ibid. p. 68.
33 Ibid. p. 74.
A politicized tribalism must, however, be considered a very real threat to the existence of the state and national unity. Politicized tribalism was introduced into Somalia and efficiently made use of by colonial powers that sought to undermine existing social cohesion and snuff out the movement for national independence. Once independence had been achieved, politicized tribalism was the key to success of the governing elite's struggle for power. Tribalism of this type serves only to create and secure the position of the ruling elite. Dominant positions in political economic and cultural spheres may be obtained through the fostering of politicized tribalism.\(^{34}\)

Struggles for power inevitably provoke conflicts that are apparently tribal in nature, but in reality are between rival factions of the elite. The conflicts assume a character of struggle between political factions bidding for power, rather than of a tribal nature. The most acute conflicts arise not so much between classes but between elites that possibly make use of ethnic saying that the ruling elite and contenders also rely heavily on the lack of formal education and political awareness of the masses.\(^ {35}\)

Politicized tribalism as an instrument in the struggle for power may have its own logic, but it is unjustifiable in that, other more suitable ways and means of conceiving politics and tribalism exist. Disintegration of society should not be the desired goal of any political system, even more so in areas that contain different ethnic groups and antagonistic tribes. Conflicts are manipulated to serve the power struggle of the elite. Politicized tribalism, however, loses any objective logic in a socio-cultural context of homogeneity, which is the case of Somalia. It serves only a handful of greedy, power-hungry and unscrupulous men.
In Somali, the first signs of this phenomenon, as implemented by Somali nationals, came after the realization of the Somali constitution, in the mid-fifties, and thereafter grew into the sure-fire method of crooked governing that Somalia has since come to know. Every clan stakes its claim to adequate representation in government. Power is thus strictly divided according to the dictates of clannism. Since high government positions are awarded not on the basis of competence and capacity but rather on the basis of clan membership, every political leader or state functionary holds steadfast to his position and becomes irremovable.

He utilizes power and public funds as if they were his own private property and lavishes favours and benefits upon members of his clan in order to create a solid base and continued clan support. This new type of tribalism has seeped into the nerve centre of state organization and corrupted the distribution and management of public power. Political tribalism has become the standard practice in the governing of Somalia.

In fact, the various groups of elites, in vying for power, transformed a people’s war against a dictatorial oppressor, Siad Barre, into a tribal civil war. In time, the dictatorship could have been dismantled by means less cruel, with less tragic consequences. The tragic consequences of the civil war, the total material and moral destruction of the country, the deep lacerations cut into the Somali social fabric and the systematic atrocities committed against the weak and innocent, could not have been better described than by tribalism.

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2.5 CLANNISM IN THE SOMALI POLITICAL CONTEXT

Clan leaders can serve as forces of division and conflict management by shaping identities that divide or unite. Most of the time clan leadership tends to express what is perceived as the dominant interests of the clan, especially related to economic gains and political power. This is likely to determine the extent to which clan groups would seek to wage war, as in the period immediately after the collapse of the state, or pursue dividends of stability and peace, as increasingly evident in recent years. The latter has indirectly contributed to many warlords converting to politicians and businessmen, and seeking non-violent means to achieve clan goals.37

In Somalia, clan identity both impacts and is impacted by conflict. In the post independence period until the outbreak of the civil war, conflict resulted from divisions among major clans battling over power and resources. In recent years, conflict increasingly has devolved to sub clan and even sub-sub clan levels. The collapse of the central state led to fragmentation and an economy of plunder that brought leaders into conflict with other leaders, sometimes from the same clan, vying for control of the same local area and resources. It was this struggle for territorial control, political power and economic control of a region that prompted lowering the level of clan identities so as to mobilize support from the sub clans. Thus, with the collapse of the central state, the clans tended to clash less across regions and more within regions.

Examples from three regions illustrate this point. In Puntland, Somaliland and South-central Somalia, homogeneity of the clans has given way to the emergence of sub clan identity as dominant, with clans lowering their level of identity to the level of sub clans in the competition for economic power and political ascendancy.
In South-central Somalia, protracted conflict over control of the Gedo region has been waged within the various sub clans of the Marehan clan. In Puntland, within the Majeerteen, which is numerically and politically the most dominant of the Harti clans, rivalries between sub clans and sub-sub clans struggling for political dominance in the regional administration and economic control of Bossaso port often manifest themselves in violent conflict. Finally, in Somaliland, Isaq unity to overthrow Siad Barre’s regime gave way to intra-Isaq conflicts. Prominent among them was the conflict between the Habar-Yonis and Habar – Je’lo subclans of Isaq. When the Habar-Yonis dominated administration attempted to disarm the clan militia, the Habar-Je’lo interpreted it as an attempt to weaken them. This set in motion a series of events that led to full fledged conflict between the two sub clans.³⁸

The conflicts among Somali clans and sub clans seem to be for political ends – quest for power, position in a potential new government – and material ends especially the control of resources. At a social level, there have always been networks of rich and deep relationships across clans. Currently, conflicts seem to appear at lower levels of clan identity than in the past. These clan and sub clan conflicts increasingly are being countered by efforts of civil society organizations (CSOs), businesses and clan leaders to channel clan identities to peaceful ends and encourage cross-clan cooperation. These two opposing forces are at play in Puntland, Somaliland and South-central Somalia.

Certain types of clan conflicts, however, are more prevalent in specific regions. In South-central Somalia, it is common to find pastoralists and urban dwellers seizing the valuable plantations and real estate occupied by agricultural clans and other weaker clans.

In the aftermath of the civil war, for example, the armed occupation of Rahanweyn lands by raiding pastoral sub clans of the Hawiye and Darod, acting independently or as a militia of a sub clan, have led to violent conflicts. In Puntland, the correspondence of clan and sub clan fault lines with regional divisions has the potential to fuel conflict if development benefits are distributed along geographic lines. For example, within the regions of Bari, Nugal and North Mudug, in the north of Somalia the sub clans in the remote districts feel that they are disadvantaged compared with the sub clans in districts closer to the tarmac road and the commercial corridor, who are the beneficiaries of assistance and economic activity.

This has led to fewer opportunities for sub clans in the periphery and could be a catalyst of violent conflicts. The main proximate cause of the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) is popular opposition to the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter Terrorism and its activities, especially the violence and insecurity it spread in Mogadishu. The Islamic Courts is not a new phenomenon as they emerged in 1994 in Mogadishu in order to fill up the vacuum created by the collapse of the State in 1991. The lack of formal justice service providers allowed the creation of the courts, which were a mixture between clan-based and traditional Islamic practices. Initially, the first courts were influential amongst the Abgal clan and gradually gained support through the radical Sheikh Ali Dhere. They then expanded into other clans and sub-clans in both Mogadishu and Merka. Each court started to have its own militia and private prisons in order to provide security in the absence of police authorities.

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40 Ken Menkhaus, Somalia: A situation analysis and trend assessment, UNHCR, Protection and Information Section, Department of International Protection, 2003.
41 BBC Focus on Africa, “The Islamists”, Rashid Abdi, November, 2006, p. 27
The Union of Islamic Courts started to emerge as a real political force when the United States decided to support the Alliance Against Terrorism in opposition with the Sharia courts militia whom certain elements are suspected to be linked with Jihadist and terrorists. The Alliance Against Terrorism was composed of prominent warlords who at the same time belonged to the TFG and their militias were notorious for human rights abuses. On the contrary, it is often said that the Sharia courts militia had a better conduct than the freelance or warlords militia and they therefore received the support of the population and civil society groups willing to leave in a more peaceful and secure environment.

When the Union of Islamic Courts defeated the warlords and took the control of Mogadishu and later Jowhar in May 2006, international observers and media warned the public opinion on the danger of the imposition by force of a Sharia administration over Mogadishu and potentially to the rest of the country. Perhaps inevitably for Somalia, the situation also involves a clan dimension.

For many Somalis, the conflict conjures up memories of the early days of the civil war, when Hawiye and Darod clan militias engaged in bloody clashes from Kismayo to Galkayo towns. Many Hawiye perceive the UIC as clan-based. Conversely, the TFG President, Abdullahi Yusuf, a Darod, is widely believed among the Hawiye to seek revenge against them. Such perceptions are reinforced by the absence of credible Hawiye leadership in the upper echelons of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), but also by the composition of its militia forces (which its leaders call a national army), drawn predominantly from Puntland (Majeerteen and other Harti Darod), Ogaden (also Darod) and smaller numbers of other clan groups.
That the TFG’s security sector leadership is also dominated by members of the Darod compounds the problem.\(^4^3\) Clan remains important and has in fact gained heightened salience in recent months. In the division of senior posts, especially in the security sector, the TFG marginalized the Hawiye, especially the Ayr clan. Indeed, for the first time since 1990, a Darod-led coalition is in power— or so it is perceived by most Somalis and especially the Hawiye. The inhabitants of Bay region (Rahanweyn) also see the TFG in this light, though they fear the Darod-Harti less than the Hawiye and will probably therefore support the TFG in preference to the UIC.

On their side, most Hawiye leaders in Mogadishu see the UIC primarily as a means for the Hawiye to organize effectively, despite perceptions that it is dominated by the Habar Gidir Ayr sub clan. They see that the Hawiye factional leaders have been ineffective in promoting their collective interest and view them as having become compromised by receiving support and patronage from foreign powers (Ethiopia and the United States) and having dissipated their energies in internal fighting.\(^4^4\)

The situation between Hawiye and Darod is thus more polarized than at any time since 1991. For the first time since the immediate aftermath of Siad Barre’s overthrow there is real prospect of a major war with the belligerents organized as clan-families. A confrontation between the TFG and the UIC would in many respects be a continuation of the civil war that followed Siad Barre’s ouster in the early 1990s. By evoking clan loyalties and rivalries, both sides could potentially mobilize resources on a scale unseen over the past decade. The humanitarian consequences would again be catastrophic.

\(^4^3\) The Daily Nation, Wednesday June 7, 2006, “Islamic militia troops head North”, Reuters, p.13
\(^4^4\) The East African, November 6-12, 2006, “Dialogue holds the key to lasting Somali peace”, Abdulkadir Khalif, p. 18.
CHAPTER THREE

A NATION STILL IN SEARCH OF A STATE

Caught in the middle of the Cold War, Somalia as a strife-torn and impoverished African nation has always found itself in the grip of forces much more powerful than its own government. Calling Somalia a country or a nation today may not be quite true. Lacking a formal and central government authority since 1991, the country possesses no ingredient necessary for independent states. Warlords and Islamists wield de facto power in their particular territories, making the formerly homogenous nation a fragmented one by default. Though possessing a flag and a coat of arms, the former Somali Democratic Republic has been broken into pieces, with breakaway regions such as Somaliland and Puntland to the north and the rest of the country divided among warlords. Understanding Somalia as a solidified whole, therefore, can be more difficult than imagined and makes one question how a paramount homogenous nation in Africa could fall into such a quandary.

3.1 THE COLD WAR IN AFRICA: A SPOTLIGHT ON THE HORN

The United States and Soviet Union, the single most important rivalry of the twentieth century, started as a partnership. This is ironic considering the fact that the Germans’ intent of taking over Europe forced them into this relationship. Once Hitler was eliminated and Berlin destroyed, the tensions began rising. These two nations had completely opposite ideologies, from the economic system to the political system. The changing relationship has evolved from a forced partnership, a possible World War and now finally a steadying friendship.

For forty five years the Cold War was the central factor in world politics. It dominated the foreign policies of the US and the Soviet Union and affected the diplomacy and domestic policies of most other nations around the world. Few countries, in fact, escaped its influence.²

The Germans and the Russians were allies at the beginning of World War Two but Hitler turned on the Soviets. This provoked the Soviets into an alliance with the British and American side and led the advance on Germany from two fronts. The German war machine kept this alliance at bay only for so long before the two nations destroyed Berlin. The Soviets were already keeping control of all that was East of Germany, and this was causing the US great anxiety due to the fact that communism was spreading.

The Cold War period was characterized by a great deal of suspicion between the West and the East. Western perceptions of the Soviet threat have their roots in the period between 1945 and 1959. It was during those years that the public indictment of the Soviet Union was firmly established. That period saw the Soviet subjugation of Eastern Europe, the blockade of Berlin and the invasion of South Korea.

It was towards the end of that period that the claim first emerged that the Soviets’ military capacity greatly exceeded their requirements for defense.³ A great sense of relief came to the US as the Nuclear Age began with the Manhattan Project and the bombing of Japan.

On the other hand, the East became very mistrustful of the West after discovering the manufacture of the bomb. Stalin became afraid that the US would one day force capitalist ideas upon Mother Russia, until the most intriguing aspect of the Cold War came along: spies.

3. Idem, p. 54.
A great change came when in the early 1950s the Soviets started testing their own nuclear weapon. The US was baffled as to how they had their own nuclear weapon so quickly; the answer today is so simple – the plans were stolen. The Anglo-American project to build an atomic bomb was officially revealed to Stalin in July 1945 by US President Harry Truman. Stalin's KGB had for almost two years been collecting information about the project which they had code named "Enormaz" and which the West called the Manhattan Project. The Russians used several sources to keep track of the complex process, the heart of which was a highly secret laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico.  

If Stalin had been told officially about the atomic bomb, his post-war policy might have been the same, but Western secrecy contributed to Soviet suspicion and spurred the Soviet Union to develop its own bomb. When Foreign Minister Molotov heard what Truman had said about a new weapon of unusual destructive force at Potsdam, he was in as an attempt to gain concessions from the Soviet Union. The Soviet leaders regarded the use of the bomb in Japan as part of an effort to put pressure on them, as a demonstration that the US was willing to use nuclear weapons against any of its enemies. Consequently, Soviet security now seemed to be at risk from a new threat.

The rush to independence of African nations took Washington by surprise and stirred deep concerns. During the last 1950s and early 1960s, a time when most African colonies attained their political independence, the superpowers were ill prepared to understand or deal with the independent African states even though the Soviet Union portrayed an anti-imperialistic posture to appeal to African nationalists.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{Viktor David, Espionage and the roots of the Cold War: The conspiratorial heritage (London: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 74.}\]

The poverty of these former dependencies, many of which made clear at the United Nations their readiness to receive aid from any source, fuelled western fears that they might be lured into the Soviet camp if they were not given support in the form of economic assistance.6

Nonetheless, the US enjoyed two formidable advantages in the quest for influence in Africa: it could provide far more economic aid than the Soviet bloc and its European allies retained great influence in their former colonies. It would be US policy to push these Europeans to the forefront, to let them carry the burden. Such was their fear of communism spreading in Africa and of their calling to lead the nations of the Third World that even the presidents had a blueprint of what should happen in independent Africa.

Consequently, both the US and the Soviet Union led a series of interventions and possibly prolonged and/or exacerbated several conflicts on the Dark Continent. Tensions and problems in the Horn are complex and cannot be explained unidimensionally. At play at any particular time are multiple forces. Arguably, militarization in African states is primarily a post-colonial phenomenon. It crystallized as a consequence of the Cold War rivalry between the US and the former Soviet Union, and the inordinate schemes developed by these powers to win friends and allies for their geopolitical strategies.

Militarization is the process and condition within a state where heightened security consciousness leads to a steady growth in the military potential, usually accompanied by an increasing role for military institutions both in national affairs, including the economic, social and political spheres and in international affairs.

Because militarization gained ascendancy among states with either disputed common borders or unsettled domestic politics, the phenomenon also could be said to have had demonstrable historic relationships with the European colonialists' irresponsible demarcation of boundaries and management of political transitions to self-rule.  

The growth and sustenance of military build up could also be attributed to the insatiable desire of African ruling elites to maintain themselves in power through the threat or actual use of force. Nowhere in Africa were the manifestations of militarization more evident than in the sub-region of the Horn. Countries in the region expended much of their scarce resources and engaged foreign powers in their efforts to militarize.

In the Cold War era, the Horn attracted much attention in global politics when the superpowers scrambled for strategic advantages and used elevated military assistance as the prime tool for achieving these ends. One immediate impact of the bipolar competition on interstate relations was to increase divisiveness among the countries as ruling elites cashed in for their self-aggrandizement. This condition facilitated the selling of themselves to global competitors for armament and support to carry on their conflict. This is a crucial point because the globalization of conflicts in the Horn led directly to militarization and its attendant consequences.

It has been suggested that conflicts in the Horn of Africa are exacerbated by outside factors. These include the Russian, Chinese involvement in Somalia and Egyptian intent on extending their influence down the Red Sea and the Nile. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and Iran were engaged in arms shipments to Somalia.  

Somalia has received economic and military aid from both the western and eastern countries. The Horn of Africa is generally viewed by the western industrialized countries, particularly the US, as a region of strategic importance and one where both superpowers are engaged. This view is based on what is often referred to as East-west chessboard, which was earlier used to deter the soviet influence in the region.

The Horn of Africa is important for the West because of the oil in the Gulf region. It was because of western European dependence on the Gulf oil, among other reasons, that when the British pulled out of the Indian Ocean in 1968 the US moved in to fill the vacuum. In order to protect their own interests in the area, the US and other western countries have provided the countries in the Horn with economic and military aid. The western countries’ aid to Somalia has mainly been economic.

Somalia has since the early 1960s received her military support from the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet-Somali military cooperation was severed in 1977 giving room for the West. It was because of this western position that in 1961 Somalia began to develop its relations with the communist countries.

This was done not only to obtain more aid but also to prod the West into showing greater sympathy for Somali aspirations. Somalia turned to the communist world for military aid because all three parts of the territories Somalia was claiming lay in countries heavily supported by the West.

It is worth noting that the Soviet Union’s military aid to Somalia began in the early 1960s. The Somali-Soviet relations continued until 1978. The Soviets interests in the area were mainly geographical.

Specifically its interests derive from its proximity to the strategic shipping lanes of the Red Sea, its strategic position on the Indian Ocean, its peripheral position to the Middle East and its midway position between the Soviet Union and the strategic and troubled southern tier of Africa. The former Soviet Union’s presence in the area could therefore be understood on these terms. That is not to argue, however, that these were the only reasons why the Soviet Union tried to maintain its presence in the area for more than two decades.

Somalia’s military build-up was mainly supported by the Soviet Union. It is argued that the Soviet military presence in – and Soviet arms aid to - Somalia was the greatest destabilizing factor in the Horn of Africa.

The late 1970s and early 1980s marked a major change in Somalia’s external relations. The change was caused mainly by the 1977-78 Somali-Ethiopian war. Several factors have emerged which require identification.

After the Soviet Union and Cuba strongly supported Ethiopia during the conflict Somalia expelled the Soviets, paving the way for the US to fill the vacuum. Somalia thereafter began to seek economic and military aid from the Western industrialized countries.

After the 1979 fall of the Shah of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the US negotiated the use of military facilities in Somalia, an indication of former US President Reagan’s Administration’s determination to strengthen the US presence. US military supplies to Somalia consisted mainly of air defensive weapons, meant to deter the Ethiopian threat against Somalia.  

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Between 1975 and 1979 Somalia was the only one with strategic implications for the US. The US air and naval facility in the Northwestern Somali port town of Berbera formed part of US military network defending the Persian/Arabian Gulf against Soviet aggression. Hence, US-Somalia policy was important to the US Central Command (CENTCOM) based in Tampa, Florida. (CENTCOM is responsible for US military operations in the Middle East, the Gulf, and the Horn of Africa. It became well known to the public during the Gulf War against Iraq in 1990-91).)

The US became closely allied with an unsavory regime in support of their Middle Eastern and Cold War interests. American objectives in Somalia differed from those of the Somali regime, a dissonance that produced constant strain. US wanted strategic base rights, made reliable by sub-regional stability.

The Somali regime wanted military assistance to enhance its internal power and its military capacity to liberate occupied Somali territory. From the moment Ethiopia fell into the Soviet orbit, Siad Barre assumed the US would be delighted to support his efforts to liberate the Ethiopian Ogaden. Backing local wars, however, was incompatible with the US concept of sub-regional stability.

United States ignored warnings throughout the 1980s by African specialists, human rights groups and humanitarian organizations that continued American aid to the dictatorial government of Siad Barre would eventually plunge Somalia into chaos. Aid from the bastion of democracy was ironically used to prop up the regime of an increasingly authoritarian figure, Siad Barre. It was truly the beginning of the end for Somalia, with United States aid funding the violent and divisive Barre government for almost fifteen years.

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13 Samuel Makinda, *Superpower Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1987)
Barre’s regime, supported by the United States, lasted longer than it would have without support. Siad Barre weakened traditional government structures by concentrating power on himself alone. United States aid was destructive not only because it maintained a violent authoritarian regime for so long. It was, unfortunately, also the indirect cause of the destruction of Somalia’s economy, resulting in massive famine and the death of thousands. In the waning days of the famine, the United States flooded the country with imported food, thereby destroying whatever was left of the agricultural industry.

In 1992 Operation Restore Hope marked the continuity of American intervention in Somalia, this time through “humanitarian assistance”. It was a fiasco that left Somalia even worse off than it was previously. The US’s effort to “assist” Somalia through intervention is largely considered one of the greatest international humanitarian aid failures.

The United States, however, has largely washed its hands off the entire mess. She has largely played up the issue of tribal politics as the main source of strife in Somalia. The United States has not, however, acknowledged its own role in the formation of Somali’s bleak present and possibly even worse off future. A power vacuum, a surplus of armaments and grinding poverty: these are the legacy left by the United States in Somalia.

3.2 FROM DEMOCRACY TO DICTATORSHIP

Significant armed conflict was absent during Somalia’s first seventeen years of independence (1960-1977). The first ten years of independence were marked by vibrant but corrupt and eventually dysfunctional multiparty democracy. When the military came to power in a coup in 1969, it was initially greeted with broad popular support because of public disenchantment with the clannishness and gridlock that had plagued politics under civilian rule.

In the context of the Cold War, the regime, led by Siad Barre, recast the coup as a socialist revolution and with funds from international partners, mainly the Soviet Union, built up one of the largest standing armies in the sub-Saharan Africa.

Between 1977 and 1991, the country endured three major armed conflicts. The first was the Ogaden War with Ethiopia in 1977-1978, in which Somali forces intervened in support of Somali rebel fighters in a bid to liberate the Somali-inhabited region of the Ogaden. Somalia lost the war and suffered casualties. Those losses sowed the seeds of future internal conflict, prompting the rise of several Somali liberation movements, intent on overthrowing the military regime of Siad Barre, whom they held accountable for the debacle. The first of these movements was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), established in 1978 by current TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf. This mainly Majeerteen clan movement engaged the regime in periodic skirmishes in the northeast of the country and was met with harsh repression.

The second major armed conflict was the war between the Somali military and the Somali National Movement (SNM) for control over northwest Somalia. The SNM was formed in 1981 by some members of the Isaq clan following the Ogaden War. Isaq grievances deepened over the course of the 1980s, when the Barre regime placed the northwest under military control and used the military administration to crack down on the Isaq and dispossess them of their businesses. The civil war mounted by the SNM began in May 1988 and produced catastrophe. Government forces committed atrocities against civilians, aerial bombardments leveled the city of Hargeisa and Somalis were forced to flee across the Ethiopian border as refugees while others were internally displaced. These atrocities fueled Isaq demands for secession in what became the self-declared state of Somaliland in 1991.

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15 Africa Watch, “Somalia: A government at War with its Own People” (New York, 1990)
The third armed conflict before 1991 pitted embattled government forces against a growing number of clan-based liberation movements in 1989 and 1990. The strongest of these movements included the United Somali Congress, USC (Hawiye clan), the Somali Patriotic Movement (Ogaden clan), and the Somali Salvation Democratic Movement (Majeerteen clan). This multifront war presaged the predatory looting and banditry that characterized the warfare in 1991 – 1992.

In addition to these wars, many other legacies of the Barre period fuel conflict in contemporary Somalia. First, the state was oppressive and exploitative, and was used by some political leaders to dominate others, monopolize state resources and appropriate valuable land and other assets. As a result, reconciliation and power sharing discussions in Somalia are complicated by high levels of distrust and a ‘zero-sum game’ mentality toward political power and the state.

Second, the leadership skillfully manipulated and politicized clan identities over two decades of divide and rule politics, leaving a legacy of deep clan divisions and grievances.

Third, this period coincided with the height of Cold War competition in the Horn of Africa. That allowed the Barre regime to attract large quantities of military and economic aid. When the war ended, the level of expenditure, especially to maintain the bloated bureaucracy, was not sustainable and precipitated the fall of the regime. As the Cold War waned in the later 1980s, Somalia’s strategic importance to the West diminished, enabling donors to place human rights conditions on aid to Somalia.

17 Somaliland’s claim of sovereign independence has not received external recognition from the United Nations or any state.
Western donors froze aid to Somalia in response to the war with the SNM in the north. Stripped of its principal source of revenue, the Somali state shrank and eventually collapsed. An initiative by a group of eminent Somalis known as the ‘Manifesto Group’ to broker reconciliation and establish a provisional post-Barre government was met with arrests by the Barre regime in April 1990.18

3.3 STATE COLLAPSE AND COMPLEX POLITICAL EMERGENCY (1991-1999)

The ouster of the Barre regime was followed not by a replacement government but by a prolonged period of violent anarchy and warfare. Armed conflict raged across southern Somalia through 1991 and 1992, pitting clan-based militias against one another for control of valuable towns, seaports and neighbourhoods. The wars, which began as struggle for control of the government, quickly degenerated into predatory looting, banditry, and occupation of valuable real estate by conquering clan militias. Young gunmen fought principally to secure war booty and were under only the loosest control of militia commanders. Powerful merchants and warlords were implicated in this war economy too. The principal victims of this violence were weak agricultural communities and coastal minority groups caught in the middle of the fighting.

Looted of all their belongings, they faced a massive famine in late 1991 and early 1992, prompting large international relief operations. The food aid quickly became part of the war economy, a commodity over which militias fought and that which warlords diverted to fund the wars. The war of 1991-1992 also produced a powerful array of interests in perpetuating lawlessness and violence and blocking reconciliation. Warlords’ power base depended on a chronic state of insecurity, so that their clan constituencies needed them for protection. Illiterate gunmen saw war, plunder and extortion as their only livelihood.

Some businessmen were enriched by war related criminal activities such as weapons sales, diversion of food aid, drug production and exportation of scrap metal. Whole clans found themselves in possession of valuable urban and riverine real estate won by conquest, which they stood to lose in a peace settlement.

By contrast, in the northwest and northeast of Somalia, the collapse of the central government did not precipitate the kind of warfare and plunder that devastated the south. In Somaliland, interclan clashes did occur, including two serious wars in 1994 and 1996 but for a variety of reasons like more robust authority of traditional clan elders, greater political cohesion among the clans, more support from businessmen to support peace and subsidize demobilization, and more effective political leadership, to name a few, the fighting never devolved into anarchy and generalized violence.

Instead, the self-declared state of Somaliland gradually began to build a modest capacity to govern and a national assembly of traditional clan elders helped to manage the peace and keep young gunmen under control. In the northeast in Puntland, chronic interclan tensions were contained by traditional elders as well. In both regions, a modest economic recovery fueled by import-export activities through their seaports helped to divert energies toward commerce and away from warfare.

3.4 UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA (UNOSOM), 1993-1994

U.N intervention in Somalia was initially prompted by a desire on the part of the international community to protect food relief and end the famine ravaging southern Somalia. It was initially a U.S - led, U.N. - sanctioned multilateral intervention involving nearly 30,000 troops. In May 1993, the operation was formally handed over to the United Nations.

The U.N. mandate was much more expansive - to assist Somalis in promoting national reconciliation, rebuilding the central government and reviving the economy. The intervention initially succeeded in freezing armed conflicts in the country. US commanders decided not to embark on a campaign of disarmament, for fear of arousing resistance leading to US casualties. The cessation of hostilities provided an opportunity for the main fifteen Somali factions to meet and negotiate the framework for a Transitional National Government and the terms of a national reconciliation, the Addis Ababa Declaration of March 1993, but the ambitious UNOSOM mandate of rebuilding a Somali government via locally selected district councils directly threatened the interests of a number of militia leaders and their clans, who controlled valuable riverine and urban real estate through conquest, and who viewed UNOSOM's program as a move to disenfranchise them. A confrontation was inevitable.

In June 1993, only one month after the United Nations assumed control of the operation, the militia of General Aideed, representing the Haber Gedir/Hawiye clan, attacked UN forces, killing twenty-four peacekeepers and precipitating a four-month battle between the United Nations and Aideed's militia. The subsequent failure of US and UN forces to capture Aideed, the paralysis that the fighting imposed on UN nation building efforts, and the disastrous losses sustained in the October 3 "Black Hawk Dawn" incident sealed the fate of the UN operation, which departed in March 1995, leaving Somalia still in a state of violence and anarchy.

The post-UNOSOM period is marked by several key developments. First, it began a failed pattern of externally funded national reconciliation conferences. More than a dozen such conferences have been convened, of which only one - the 2000 Arta Peace Conference - came close to bearing fruit.
The conferences have tended to provoke conflict inside the country, divert energies of the political elite from governing areas they claim to control to jockeying for positions in a proposed state, and elevate the status of factional and militia leaders, whom some argue are part of the problem, not the solution.

Second, UNOSOM’s civil and political work helped to empower a small but growing civil society in Somalia, which has since been an important force for peace-building in the country. Third, UNOSOM’s enormous presence transformed the Somali economy in ways that helped to undermine the war economy and reshape interests in greater levels of security and rule of law. Merchants who in 1991-1992 had profiteered from diverted food aid and looting now made small fortunes in quasi-legitimate business ventures, from procurement and construction to remittances and import-export commerce. Their shifting interests helped to contain armed conflict and lawlessness in the post intervention period.²⁴

3.5 POST INTERVENTION AND WRENCHING CONFLICT

Armed conflict continues to plague much of Somalia, but since 1995, the nature, duration, and intensity of warfare have changed significantly. With few exceptions, armed conflicts today are more local in nature, pitting sub clans against one another in an increasingly fragmented political environment. This devolution of clan warfare means that armed clashes tend to be much shorter and less lethal, in part because of limited support from lineage members for such internal squabbles, in part because clan elders are in a better position to intervene, and in part because some clans have successfully consolidated their occupation and control over territory and for the moment meet little resistance.

²⁴ Mark Bowden, Black Hawk Down (New York: Penguin Group, 1999)
Atrocities against civilians still occur but are less common than in the past, as combatants and their clans are more likely to be held accountable for such crimes via blood compensation payments. Pillaging and looting are less common as well, mainly because most assets are in the hands of businessmen with paid security forces protecting them. Warlords are much less of a factor since 1999, when Mogadishu-based businessmen, emboldened by their growing wealth and dissatisfied with the lawlessness caused by militias, bought militiamen away from militia leaders and handed them over to local Sharia courts to serve as police. Armed clashes in Somalia now are increasingly difficult to distinguish from armed criminality. Many of the worst clashes in recent years began as acts of robbery or murder that produced a counterattack, leading to a cycle of violence between two clans.

While armed conflict has changed significantly since the mid-1990s, Somalia remains without a functional central government. Even its systems of governance have evolved in interesting ways in the past decade. Local police, generally comprised of Sharia courts or municipalities, have sprung up in towns and neighbourhoods across much of southern Somalia, providing sporadic and variable levels of law and order. Even modest levels of law and order tend to reduce armed conflicts by minimizing retaliation and revenge killings as a source of justice. Unfortunately, clan elders and militia leaders proved incapable before and after the overthrow of the Siad Barre regime of forging an alternative political arrangement to govern the country and to prevent the collapse of the central government and a protracted civil war among clan militias that brought widespread human rights abuses against the civilian population.

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In the first half of the 1990s in south-central Somalia, the civil war destroyed most of the social and economic infrastructure, forced large population displacements, disrupted food supplies and led to mass starvation. The international community mounted an unprecedented humanitarian and military operation, first led by the US and then by the UN, but failed to end factional fighting or engender a process of national reconciliation. Following the failed peacemaking attempts by US and UN missions in the early 1990s, a low-intensity state of conflict and anarchy has persisted to this date in southern and central Somalia, with only small pockets having in recent years established localized and weak forms of governance.

The Bay and Bakol regions established a well structured regional authority under the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) and later by the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA). Bay and Bakool is the centre of the country, between the Wabi Shebele and Juba rivers, relatively thickly populated by the various Rahanweyn clans. The Rahanweyn are particular in that, although 'somalized', they are not Somali by blood. They are a mixture of Oromo, Bantu Negroes and Somali migrants. They are not pastoralists like the other Somali but rather settled agriculturalists. Used by Italians, who called them Digil Mirifle, an old term still seen at times, despised by the ‘true Somali’, massacred during the early states of the civil war from 1989-1992 because they had no weapons but a lot of food worth stealing, they eventually created their own militia movement, the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA).

The RRA, under the leadership of Hassan Mohamed Nur "Shatti Gudud", set up an independent quasi state on the Somaliland/Puntland model on 1 April 2002 and called it the State of South Western Somalia (SSWS). However, the administration collapsed twice, in 1996 after rival militias occupied the region and again in 1999 after differences within the RRA led to fierce fighting within its ranks and insecurity in the region.
A process of reconciliation was initiated in July 2004 but has yet to be finalized. The region remains moderately secure, with some security forces and local administration under the control of the RRA leaders.

In August 2000, a Somali National Arta Peace Conference in Djibouti formed a Transitional National Government (TNG). Despite initial promise, the TNG faced considerable oppositions from both internal factions and neighbouring countries. The Arta process was not a comprehensive peace, as key actors, including Puntland, Somaliland and a number of militia leaders in the Mogadishu area were not brought into the talks, ensuring a large collection of rejections at the outset. Making matters worse, the TNG leadership devoted most of its attention to securing foreign aid and external recognition, rather than engaging in the arduous process of rebuilding a central government. Funds it did secure, mainly from Gulf States, were lost to corruption, further reducing public and international confidence in the TNG. As a result, the TNG was never able to extend its authority beyond parts of the capital Mogadishu and eventually became largely irrelevant. TNG’s official mandate expired during the summer of 2003.

The Banaadir region that includes the capital, Mogadishu, remains a divided city contested by various factions. However, Mogadishu, is also the seat of a vibrant commercial sector, expanding educational institutions and Sharia courts under different jurisdictions. It is also the seat of some remnant of local police under the defunct TNG and several sea and airports controlled factional leaders. Since the fall of the Siad Barre regime and up to the recent Islamist victory, the capital had been in the hands of various, mostly, Hawiye warlords who kept fighting each other along various lines of clan, sub clan and even lineage alliances.

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The motivations of the fighting were purely scrupulous and the resulting violence eventually set the stage for a popular reaction which took the shape of spontaneous support for the Islamist forces when they started to fight the warlords.33

In the Lower Shabelle region, serious conflict over the control of the rich agricultural and marine resources continues to prevent formation of a regional authority. Different political and militia groups claim ownership of various pieces of land and the control of the port city of Merca. This is an area which in 2003 came under the control of warlord Yusuf Mohamed Siad "Indha Adde" who is clinically a Hawiye/Habr Gidir/Ayr, but he is also a protégé of Islamist leader Hassan Daher Aweys, a fellow clansman, who gave him the control of the Merca Islamic Court when it was created in 1998.34 Merca and the lower Shabelle are thus in an uncertain state at present, even more so than the rest of the country.

In recent years, the political security situation has been stable in the Middle Shabelle region under a newly formed administration. It is an area that was under control of Mohamed Dheere until late 2002 and was recently taken over by the Islamists in Mogadishu.35

The administrative and security situation is similarly unsettled in the Lower Juba area, around the port of Kismayo near the Kenyan border. Kismayo is a semi-structured area, more so on the coast than in the interior of Somalia. Its immediate surroundings have been under the control of a loose alliance of Darod and Hawiye clans since they managed to literally occupy the Kismayo harbour in 1993 from the Operation Restore Hope.36 A clan-based regional authority followed the collapse of UNOSOM administrative structures after 1994.

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33 Arlan Hanshe, The sons of Somal (Cologne: Omimee Publishers, 1993)
34 Since Muslim names (Mohamed, Omar, Hassan) are monotonous and confusing for the Somali themselves, they often give each other nicknames. These nicknames are better known than the ‘real’ names themselves. The chapter will put them in quotation marks when they exist.

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Since then, the port and the surrounding agricultural and forest resources were contested and changed hands among different factions a number of times until another clan-based movement, the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA), a conglomerate of bandits, albeit a rather efficient one, established in later 1999 a firmer grip. They have been in power for years, in spite of periodic fallouts amongst themselves. Kismayo was formerly under the hands of Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan", the Harti warlord who used to control Kismayo before 1993. The JVA is at present under the leadership of Colonel Barre Aden Shire "Hiraale", a Darod/Marehan and former TFG Minister of Defense.

The Middle Juba and Gedo regions have similarly seen little peace or any semblance of organized administrative authority since the civil war started. The Gedo region also experienced military incursions from Ethiopia, ostensibly to pacify the common border area of any element of Islamic militant groups. The Gedo hinterland and the Kenya border are much less organized. Since the demise of the Islamist bases in Luuq and Ras Kamboni, there has been very little coherent authority in the area. The only limited form of authority in Gedo is the Somali National Front (SNF), a Marehan militia group created in 1992 to save the clan from being destroyed by other Somali clans. The area under the authority of SNF is limited to the territory between Luuq and Garbaharey.

To the northwest of Mogadishu, in parts of Mudug and Galgaduud regions, the governors and district commissioners appointed under the UNOSOM in 1993 still claim authority, but with no visible authority or legitimacy to govern. There are no structures for providing public services, but parallel power structures run by elders and Islamic Sharia courts operate in the region.

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1 Satelle Media Network, Sunday July 16, 2006, "Somali government says will form team to meet Islamists". Source: Somaliland.net
Similarly, in the Hiraan region, no elected authority exists. The governor, who was appointed in early 1993 and served until his death in 2004, and other local administrative bodies exercised little authority and had little capacity to deliver any social service. Traditional leaders and an array of other civic groups and Islamic Sharia courts maintain some security. Galgaduud and Hiran regions are where the really anarchic Somalia begins. The whole area has been a zone of shifting warlord allegiances, without any form of organized authority. Its clanic population is mixed with a variety of Hawiye and Darod clans. Its southern limit is the Wabi Shabelle Valley, the rest of Hiran already belonging to the Rahanweyn country. Fighting for the control of pastures and water has been sporadic all over the area since 1991.

The northern regions instead managed for a longer timeframe and with considerable success, to limit internal and external violent confrontations, establish functioning political and administrative organs of governance, and ensure relative personal security. Since formally seceding from the rest of Somalia in May 1991, the regional state of Somaliland in the northwest has been rebuilding state structures within the boundaries of the former British protectorate. Somaliland covers practically exactly the old British Somaliland colony, that is, extending from the Republic of Djibouti border all the way along the Ethiopian Haud to the border of former Somalia Italiana between Sanaag/Nugaal on one side and Bari province on the other. It is populated by one clan family, the Isaaq. When the Siad Barre regime lost the Ogaden War against Ethiopia in 1978, the malaise between north and south Somalia grew exponentially, leading to the creation of the Somali National Movement (SNM) in London in 1980. The civil war lasted between 1980 and 1991 and resulted in Somaliland proclaiming its independence.

References:

1. “Somalia At Crossroads of America Foreign Policy.”
Following the failure of various national reconciliation efforts, the regional state of Puntland was formed in August 1998 as an autonomous self-governing entity in the northeastern region – albeit one still wed to the long term goal of Somali unity. It is a quasi-state, quite homogeneous from the clanic point of view with majority of the population belonging to various sub-clans of the Darod/Majeerteen. Puntland also shares a long common history, being the part of Somaliland which opposed the greatest resistance to the colonizer. Puntland was born out of a long foundation shir and has worked well despite some periodical difficulties. Its degree of government institutionalization is lower than that of Somaliland but all in all it works along fairly constitutional lines. Colonel Yusuf Abdullahi, a former rebel against the Siad Barre regime, became president of Puntland in 1998 and ran the country with an iron hand until October 2004 when he became President of the Transitional Federal Government. He was then replaced by his Vice President, General Mohamed Muse, a respected member of the royal Osman Mahmood clan of the Majeerteen. Puntland extends from the border of Somaliland down to the southern limit of Majeerteen territory, that is, the Mudug Province, slightly south of Galkayo. Both regional states, Somaliland and Puntland, claim political control over two border areas, Sool and Sanag, where there are divided loyalties to either side.

Although it was twice affected by civil strife, 1992 and 1994-1996, Somaliland has managed to establish a bicameral parliament, judiciary, police force and municipal structures and to hold a locally financed referendum on a constitution in May 2001, local elections in December 2002, and presidential elections in April 2003. The self-declared state has succeeded in maintaining what appears to be a durable internal peace, despite a crisis over contested elections in 2003.

\[1^{\text{JIB}}, p.44.

While shifting gradually from pure clan politics to party politics, the political debate recently focused on the parliamentary elections that were held in 2005. Despite Somaliland’s claim to independence, however, it has not secured political recognition by the international community, which continues to uphold the territorial integrity of Somalia. Relative security has revitalized the economy, private activity, remittance flows and an active NGO sector. In partnership with the private sector and other civil society organizations, Somaliland also has succeeded in restoring basic public services and attracting reconstruction and development assistance, though at modest levels.

In Puntland, the failure to agree on a transfer of power at the end of the previous administration’s term led in June 2001 to a constitutional crisis and a brief bout of factional fighting, but an internal negotiated provisional settlement was reached in 2003. The transfer issue was resolved peacefully in July 2004, with an extension of the mandates of the parliament and the government by six months instead of the two years originally proposed and the appointment of a new leaner cabinet. For its part, Puntland suffered its first serious instance of armed clashes in 2001-2002 over control of the Puntland state, but has since maintained a tenuous peace between the regional administration and opposition groups.

3.6 SOMALI PEACE PROCESS

There have been various attempts to peace initiatives in Somalia. The peace initiative was first started in a clan based manner to facilitate factional level reconciliation talks. In Mogadishu scenes of gatherings took place between the Abgal and the Habar-Gedir clans. As a step towards initiating broad based tribal reconciliation talks, the Imam of the Hirab tribe brought together the four clans that constitute the Hirab umbrella in Mogadishu in January 1994 in an attempt to surmount the clan obstacles that obstructed peace for several years in Somalia.
Main participants of those clans that belong to the Hirab ancestral lineage are: the Abgal, the Habar-Gedir, the Shekhal and the Dububes.

A similar tribal reconciliation conference took place in Kismayo to end hostilities among the tribes living in that area. The meeting was chaired by a well respected statesman, General Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed commonly known as 'liqliqato' who led discussions to a fruitful culmination. However, some sections of the Ogaden clan did not participate in the talks. This reconciliation conference had a greater impact on the status of security and stability in the south and central regions of Somalia. It was organized by Somalis who felt the need to have peace in their settlements, and was held inside the country without any external participation.

Despite continuous efforts to curb the Somalia problem, no idea has ever functioned better than to concentrate at the grassroots level and build on it until a solid groundwork basis is laid down for a lasting peace. Somalia needs a system of government whereby the individual person enjoys equal rights with his fellow citizens regardless of tribal originalities. This could be attained through fair power sharing, liberalized economic system, decentralization of management at all levels, accountability and transparency in government functions.

The Djibouti Conference held in 1991 was a positive step taken towards restoration of peace as it was the first time most of the warring factions in Somalia were brought together in a negotiating table.

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However, in as much as it aimed at reconciling the warring factions, the conference diverted to a political forum in which the participants started contesting for leadership and high government posts. Most of the faction representatives who attended the conferences had no legitimate representation of their supporters which led to divisions within factions and eventually increased the gap that existed between the factions.

The conference did not designate modalities to disarm the militia and restore peace which was a pre-requisite for a sound and effective reconciliation conference. There was also no strategy to resettle the displaced populations and also to deal with the neighbouring countries on the question of the Somali refugees. The participants were not committed to their pledge of getting rid of Siad Barre, thus undermining the dire need to reinstitute Somalia’s fragmented society. It was a waste of time, resources and energy.

The first meeting which aimed at reconciling the Somali and creating a national administration was the Addis Ababa Conference of 1993 under the auspices of UNOSOM, the UN authority for Somalia. It discussed various issues like disarmament and security, rehabilitation and reconstruction and transitional mechanisms aimed at bringing Somalis back into the political track. The conference was the biggest gathering by Somalis since fighting started in 1991 as it brought not only politicians but also different social groups such as intellectuals, women groups, traditional elders and representatives from the Somali NGOs. There was good understanding between the Somalis and the international community.

However, the conference resolutions did not stress the necessity to create monitoring committees who would follow up status of implementation and report back to signatories or any other group set up for that purpose. Likewise, there was no review committee formed for reviewing agreements in order to recommend possible changes and amendments.
The conference did not clarify the implementation strategies of the resolutions reached in Addis Ababa nor did it make clear who should be in charge of what in the process of implementation. Systematic hijacking of the roles of the Somali leaders led to serious consequences. In June 1993, UNOSOM unilaterally started to set up district and regional councils as part of the implementation of the Addis conference. This move frustrated the faction leaders who felt that UNOSOM was trying to keep them on the ice and forcing them to wait and see how their house was being managed for them.

The Arta Conference of 2000 was the fourteenth of its kind and in many ways it was a Djibouti show. Djibouti had always tried either to dodge aggressive policies from Somalia in 1977, cooperate with Somalia in the 1980s or meddle into its decomposition during the early 1990s. Djibouti tried to influence its recomposition during the Arta conference under the leadership of Ismail Omar Guelleh. At first the outcome of the Djibouti conference seemed relatively successful and the Transitional National Government (TNG) was created in 2000. Elected President Abdi Qassim Salad Hassan set up a cabinet and entered Mogadishu in triumph. However, he faced problems like the cabinet being torn by clan conflicts. Instead of trying to negotiate alliances, the TNG acted as if it were the undisputed legal government of Somalia and tried to dictate its will to the various factions. The TNG aimed for a fully centralized government as Siad Barre’s had been, but without the necessary tax base to support its functioning. The foreign donors who had promised money were not forthcoming with funds and did not substitute themselves to the non-existent tax base. The warlord militias refused to disband and it was impossible to create any kind of national army for lack of human and financial resources.


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In addition to these various woes, the regional situation was brutally affected by the New York September 11 2001 suicide attacks. For a while, in late 2001 and early 2002, the US government was close to bombing Somalia. 3,500 men from the US Central Command (CENTCOM) were assembled at Fort Campbell, Kentucky to prepare for eventual operations in Somalia. In March 2002 CENTCOM Chief General Francks declared in Addis Ababa after a regional tour “We are sure there are al-Qaida men in Somali but we do not know where”. US intelligence on Somalia was inadequate.

Since the Ethiopian government, the most powerful regional player was unremittingly hostile to the TNG which it suspected of Islamists sympathies and of involvement with the al-Ittihaad al-Islami ee Soomaliya Galbeed networks, Addis Ababa convinced the Americans to let them operate as they chose in Somalia. The Ethiopians supported a coalition of various warlords known as the Somalia Redemption and Rehabilitation Council (SRRC) which did everything in its power to sabotage the efforts of the TNG. There were a series of armed clashes during 2002 in which TNG allies were drubbed by the SRRC supported militias. By the end of 2002 the TNG was reduced to controlling only a small area of Mogadishu and was a government in name only. In October the international community through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) attempted the creation of a national government for Somalia. A fifteenth conference opened in Eldoret in Kenya.

The latest attempt to broker a peace and revive a central government in Somalia began in October 2002 and was undertaken by IGAD, with the Kenyan government hosting the effort and external partners such as the EU providing support. 54

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53 State Union of Western Somalia. This was an Ogadeni branch of the original al-Ittihaad al-Islami movement form Somalia which carried out terrorist attacks in Ethiopia during 1995-1996, leading to an eventual Ethiopian counter-strike inside Somalia in 1996-1997.
The framers of these rounds of talks came up with several innovations, including an initial phase, which pledged parties to a cessation of hostilities, and a second phase devoted to reconciliation, which required the participants to address key conflict issues.

The second phase was to provide a blueprint for whatever government emerged from the talks. Over the ensuing two years, the peace process encountered numerous obstacles and lengthy delays. Long-standing disputes over the size and composition of representation in the talks, and disagreement over who controlled the selection of members of parliament, created crises that prompted walkouts and boycotts by some key political leaders.55

The third phase of the talks centred on power sharing negotiations. It encountered predictable problems initially – disputes over allocation of seats by sub clans, control of the nomination process and selection of individual members of parliament – leading to delays in the parliament for the Transitional Federal Government.

The first institution of the new TFG had been the Parliament which had been chosen after many difficulties and incidents, some of which involved physical fights between the delegates according to the ‘four and a half’ formula. 56 This meant that the Parliament was going to be chosen according to rough clan family lines, with two Members of Parliament (MPs) for the Darod, two for the Hawiye, two for the Dir, two for the Rahanweyn and one for the minority clans and the Sab. This Parliament then chose Colonel Yusuf Abdullahi as President. This election was strongly influenced by Ethiopia which considered Yusuf a reliable ally but the TFG was soon divided between three different tendencies which found it difficult to work together.

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1. IGAD is a regional organization comprising the seven states in the Horn of Africa – Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda.

There was the Parliament with its Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan of the Rahanweyn clan family; a cabinet headed by Ali Mohamed Gedi, a Hawiye/Abgal/Mudalood and President Yusuf Abdullahi himself, a Majeerteen from the Omar Mahmood sub-clan, who surrounded himself with fellow Majeerteen clansmen.

The Somali National Reconciliation Conference that began in October 2002 led to representatives of 22 Somali groups establishing a 275-member Federal Transitional Parliament in August 2004, largely based on clan affiliation. In October 2004, the parliament elected Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed, the former president of Puntland, as the interim president of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. The following month, Mr. Abdullahi elected Ali Mohammed Gedi as Prime Minister, who in turn obtained approval of his cabinet in January 2005. 57

In order to avoid the SRRC trap which had played a major role in the undoing of his predecessor, President Yusuf co-opted many of the SRRC warlords as ministers but the warlords refused to play along and to submit to the government. Yusuf then agitated with the African Union until he got an AU pledge to send foreign peacekeepers to Somalia in February 2005. 58

The Mogadishu group was of course hostile, fearing the foreign troops would be used against them. In July 2005, the AU Peace and Security Council issued a communiqué asking the UN to lift the arms embargo on Somalia. The aim was of course to enable the TFG to buy military equipment and start building a national army.

Meanwhile the TFG Parliament did not even know where to convene. After a lengthy stay in Nairobi. It finally moved partially to Mogadishu though the conditions there seemed too insecure by Yusuf and many others who went to Jowhar which was under the control of warlord Mohamed “Dheere”.

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This started a tug of war between Jowhar and the Mogadishu group, the warlords seeking to physically bring the TFG to the former capital so as to have it under their control. By September 2005, the tension was such that Yusuf saw no other choice but to resort to his old Portland base.

As open war seemed imminent, President Yusuf Abdullahi tried to tighten his own camp by signing a reconciliation agreement with his Parliamentary Speaker in Aden, Yemen in January 2006. As part of the agreement, the TFG left Jowhar and convened in Baidoa on 26 February 2006. The disarray of the RRA made the move possible, even if the TFG was tolerated rather than welcome among the Rahanweyn in Baidoa. Parliamentary Committees and their chairmanships were then reallocated on the basis of the ‘four and a half’ formula to balance out the government but the TFG had reached the limits of what it could do on its own. The tax base was an inextensible as it had been for the TNG, the military capacity remained close to zero and the government’s only asset remained its theoretical international support.

Despite the length of the negotiations in Kenya, there was no real reconciliation among clans, warlords and political leaders, but only an agreement over power sharing under a Transitional Charter and over the principle of federalism among regional states for the future. Moreover, the long squabbles among politicians owing to security concerns over the temporary seat of government – Jowhar was chosen over Mogadishu in 2005— and over the role of foreign peacekeeping forces have fueled political divisions that raise concerns about the TFG’s future.

4. The Nation, “Monitors list states backing factions in war-torn Horn of Africa country”, Monday 20 November 2006, Samuel Siringi, p. 6-7
At present, the authority of the TFG is still being challenged by the Union of Islamic Courts who, until December 2006 were mainly centred in south-central Somalia, before being driven out by the combined forces of the TFG and Ethiopian troops.

Among the many difficult challenges the TFG will have to address is a true reconciliation process among Somalis themselves and inclusive of the Islamic Courts, a definition of its role vis-à-vis regional states, especially in south-central Somalia, where such administrations have yet to be formed or lack legitimacy, and negotiations with the self-proclaimed independent homeland.

The establishment of a broad based TFG was a positive but only a first step in the long road of rebuilding the Somali nation, ensuring continued peace and stability and moving the country onto the path to sustainable development. However, the consolidation of stability and a non-factional central government in Somalia will take time. In the coming years, the general security environment throughout Somalia is likely to remain fragile and prone to armed conflict and criminality whether or not a government of national unity is maintained.


CHAPTER FOUR

ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY AND THE SOMALIA CONFLICT

In late 2005 the CIA sent a team of experts to Mogadishu. Their mission was to locate, and if possible, exfiltrate Fazul Abdallah, Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan and Tariq Abdalla. They soon realized that their warlord contacts wanted a lot for achieving these targets and that political support was more important for them than just money. This led to the creation of the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and to Counter Terrorism (ARPCT) on 18 February 2006.

In fifteen years of state collapse and constant rounds of negotiations and realignments, Somalia has produced an impressive array of coalitions and alliances, none of which lasted more than a few years. The ARPCT, formed in February 2006 and defeated within four months, is one of the most short-lived but its impact on Somali politics may be lasting.

4. THE FIGHT FOR THE CAPITAL MOGADISHU

Why did the ARPCT act as it did? The reason is linked with clan politics. The core of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) movement, particularly its radical wing, was linked with the Hawiye/Habr Gidir/Ayr clan and sub clan. The warlords were either member of or in alliance with the Hawiye/Abgal, often Warsengeli. This created a rivalry over commercial control. On 1 January 2006, in what were the first shots of the new war, two Abgal/Warsengeli businessmen, Bashir Raghe and Abubakar Adani fought it out for the control of the el-Maan port. The two men belonged to the same clan and sub clan, but Bashir was close to the Americans while Adani was close to the UIC.

The Hawiye were split right down the middle and the non-Habr Gedir camp feared that the Islamist militia would eventually gain overall control of the capital city. In simple terms, the Habr Gedir had managed to garb themselves in Islamist dress while their adversaries had put on an anti-terrorist mask.

On 20 February 2006, in the course of a pre-emptive strike, the UIC forces attacked the ARPCT. From then on the conflict developed into a series of pitched battles, separated by moments of uneasy lull. By April 2006, a factor which was going to be the undoing of the Warlord alliance had come into play: for the ordinary populace in Mogadishu the war had turned into a “Warlords against all” type of conflict.

The fact that the ARPCT had taken on all of the UIC, without making any difference between moderate or extremist courts, between *jihadi* militias and those which had enforced the law in various sections of the city, showed that the fight was a raw grab for power. The so-called “anti-terrorist” credentials of the ARPCT were not believed by anybody for one moment. ARPCT fighters were motivated by clan loyalties. By 4 June 2006, the remnants of the Warlord alliance fled to Jowhar.

4 THE ISLAMIC COURTS TRIUMPHANT

Following the defeat of the Alliance Against Terrorism by the Union of Islamic Sharia Courts (UIC) in Mogadishu, the international community and the media has expressed several concerns. To what extent is the UIC unified? What is the composition of the UIC? To what extent shall one consider the UIC as a monolithic radical movement in its approach of the international actor model of foreign policy analysis?

*Sunday Standard, October 1 2006, “Now Islamists extend control over Somalia”, Reuters, p.27.*
How does the UIC connect with other Islamic movements in Somalia? Is the UIC transcending clan-based rivalries? In order to grasp the logic of the UIC, it is necessary to have background knowledge of the Islamic movements in Somalia, as Islamic courts are the expression of the ideology behind these movements.

Despite the common faith to Sunni Islam, Muslim movements in Somalia should not be perceived as a singular group given their diversity or antagonism in terms of political and religious principles. All Islamic movements in Somalia are Sunni Wahabi except Ahlu Sunna, which is a Sufi movement.\(^5\) Amongst the Sunni Wahabi, some have a political agenda either through violent (salafist) or non-violent means, others restrict their action to missionary activities without direct implications in politics.

It is also important to note that the Sunni Wahabi movements in Somalia tried to be integrated into a society which is mainly Sufi. Modern political Islamic movements emerged in Somalia in the 1960s, when Somali students or workers returned from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries after being acquainted to the Muslim Brotherhood.\(^6\) Their ideologies were severely repressed by Siad Barre’s regime but however, emerged back after the collapse of the state in 1991.

4.1 The logic of the UIC

The Islamic Courts is not a new phenomenon as they emerged in 1994 in Mogadishu in order to fill up the vacuum created by the collapse of the State in 1991. The lack of formal justice service providers allowed the creation of the courts, which were a mixture between clan-based and traditional Islamic practices. Initially, the first courts were influential amongst the clan and gradually gained support through the radical Sheikh Ali Dhere.\(^7\)

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\(^5\) As quoted in "The Islamists", Rashid Abdi, November 2006, p. 27.
\(^6\) As quoted in "The Islamists", Rashid Abdi, November 2006, p. 27.
They then expanded into other clans and sub-clans in both Mogadishu and Merka. Each court started to have its own militia and private prisons in order to provide security in the absence of police authorities.

As opposed to Islamic movements described above, the Sharia courts are not cross-clan-based and the application of both customary and Sharia laws differs from one court to another. In Mogadishu, eleven sharia courts are active and despite their divergence in terms of Islamic ideology - some being more radical than the others - they started to be unified against a common enemy: the warlords. Despite the clan-based segmentation, the Sharia courts created a Council in order to coordinate the courts.⁸

Officially away from the political arena, the Union of Islamic Courts started to emerge as a real political force when the United States decided to support the Alliance Against Terrorism in opposition with the Sharia courts militia whom certain elements are suspected to be linked with jihadist and terrorists. The Alliance Against Terrorism was composed of prominent warlords who at the same time belonged to the TFG and their militias were notorious for human rights abuses. On the contrary, it is often said that the Sharia courts militia had a better conduct than the freelance or warlords militia and they therefore received the support of the population and civil society groups willing to leave in a more peaceful and secure environment.⁹

When the Union of Islamic Courts defeated the warlords and took the control of Mogadishu and later Jowhar in May 2006, international observers and media warned the public on the danger of the imposition by force of a Sharia administration over Mogadishu and potentially to the rest of the country.

This perception considers that the Union of Islamic Court is (a) monolithic in its political and religious ideology, (b) not willing to dialogue or negotiate with the TFG and (c) able to remain unified on the basis of cross clan-based and Islamic values.10

The Union of Islamic Courts is composed of different movements or groups which do not have necessarily the same ideology or political agenda and it seems that the unification of the Sharia courts was only motivated by one factor, defeating the warlords. It seems that all the different elements included in the UIC are willing to raise the Sharia law as the dominant justice model but the modalities of its application are divergent, some advocating for its imposition by force and others willing to integrate it through peaceful means.11

So far, beyond clan-based rivalries, which are nevertheless to be considered as an additional layer leading to other rivalries, two distinct ideological groups are identified inside the UIC, the Jihadists on one side, and the moderates on the other side. The real challenge is to identify which of these two groups is going to impose itself as the dominant one as it might lead to crucial political changes into the peace process. While the moderates show interests in entering into the peace process despite some conditions such as the rejection of both the peacekeepers and the lifting of the arms embargo, the radicals reject in bloc the TFG.

4.2 Unveiling the Islamists

Far from being a monolithic force, Somalia’s Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) is heavily divided along ideological lines. These divisions have been masked by the fact that the Islamists had a common enemy: the US backed warlords but having defeated them in the capital, Mogadishu, and in other towns in South Central Somalia, the cracks within the UIC are becoming more noticeable.
The swift installation of Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys as the de facto head of the UIC and the apparent sidelining of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the soft spoken moderate cleric, is the clearest sign of tension between the Islamist movement’s Salafist and Qutubist tendencies.\textsuperscript{12}

Aweys, an ex-army colonel and a veteran of Somalia’s 1977 Ogaden War, is widely believed to be the genius behind the military campaign that led to the UIC’s victory. While Aweys was secretly plotting the military campaign, Ahmed, a Sudanese trained former secondary school teacher, was slowly carving a niche for himself in the international media as the acceptable face of political Islam in Somalia. With no formal training as an Islamic cleric, Aweys’ conversion to radical political Islam occurred in the early 1990s. He and like-minded junior officers in Somalia’s army, along with some intellectuals, joined a group called \textit{al-Itihad il-islamiya}, which means Islamic Unity.\textsuperscript{13} As its name suggests, its ideology and heterogeneous membership brought together all the various strains of modern political Islam, just like the UIC had done.

But after al-Itihad’s defeat at the hands of Ethiopian forces and militia loyal to Puntland leader Abdullahi Yusuf, who is now Somalia’s interim President, Aweys retreated to his home region in central Somalia and later to Mogadishu, where he embarked on a period of self-education. Observers say this spiritual reflection eventually led him to the Salafi ideology.\textsuperscript{14}

This doctrine, an off-shoot of the Saudi Wahhabi school, seeks to promote a version of Islam that emphasizes ritual purity and frowns upon all forms of \textit{bid’a} (modern innovations). It is in this context that UIC-aligned militiamen cracked down on cinemas showing World Cup football matches.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Nordland, “Heroes, Terrorists and Osama”, Newsweek, 22 July 2006.
\textsuperscript{13} Daily Nation, Tuesday 11 July 2006, “Mogadishu remains dangerous”, Abdinnoor Haji, p.17.
\textsuperscript{14} East African magazine, September 11-17, 2006, Sheikh Sharif: A man of the people, Fred Oluboch, p. 1.

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The Salafi ideology regards television and sports as *lahw* (vulgar past times). Salafism is opposed to rationalism and is virulently anti-modernist. The Salafists favour a rigid and literal interpretation of Islamic texts and regard other Muslim sects as deviants. Salafis teach against compromise and holy war is the pivot around which their beliefs evolve. The counter-current to Salafism in Somalia is Qutubism, which owes its birth to the Egyptian Islamist thinker Sayyid Qutub. Qutub’s vision is less atavistic than the salafist vision and his critique of modern western civilization is, in the main, not too extreme.

In the last few years, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has emerged as the principle proponent of Qutubism in Somalia. He has spoken in favour of engagement with the West and with the transitional government, in contrast to the Islamic blitzkrieg favoured by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Ahmed is widely respected for his intellect and piety, but in a society where the gun rules, it is difficult to see how he can become a powerful player in the new dispensation. Real power lies with Aweys.

Given the deep grudge Sheikh Aweys bears with Abdullahi Yusuf following al-Itihaad’s bloody defeat, Aweys may capitalize on his new-found power to make life difficult for the weak president and further his ambitions for a greater Somalia.

There have been suggestions that violence could break out between the rival Islamic groups, as they jostle for power. At the moment, Aweys needs Ahmed to mollify the critics of the UIC at home and abroad, but a major falling out is inevitable at some stage.
The Islamists were fast squandering the public goodwill they earned since they ousted the hated warlords. Liberal minded Somalis felt uncomfortable with their puritanical creed. Islam in Somalia has traditionally been moderate, relaxed and tolerant. Even the urban intelligentsia, which had been largely supportive of the UIC, was getting worried. Not only had the UIC’s moral vigilantes raided cinema halls, but they also stormed wedding parties and mixed-sex gatherings. Petty traders were also unhappy with the high taxes imposed by the UIC. In fact, there were protests, some bloody, in UIC-controlled towns such as Jowhar, north of the capital Mogadishu.

Mainstream Sunni sects and Sufi orders that loath the Wahhabi creed promoted by the UIC had also been stepping up their criticisms. These groups are not effectively organized, but they have a big following in the country. The honeymoon now appears to be over for the UIC. In Somalia’s chaotic and fluid political landscape, a major backlash against the courts cannot be ruled out.

43 THE UIC AS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Politically, the Islamic Courts remain an enigma. Statements about their political aims made by Chairman Sheikh Sharif in recent months had often been contradictory: the actions and declarations of some elements had been denied or denounced by others; their decision-making system was anything but transparent and key policy decisions that would shed light on the political agenda had yet to be taken. Still, a few observations can be made with reasonable confidence.

The Islamic courts are a very loose coalition of individuals and groups whose views on political Islam span a wide spectrum. This was evident in the positions of the top two leaders. Sheikh Sharif’s Islamic pedigree as a member of a traditional Sufi order is far different from the salafist worldview articulated by Hassan Dahir Aweys. The differences in islamist ideology within the Islamic courts are much more complex than a crude moderate versus hard-line dichotomy. Mogadishu’s galaxy of islamists includes progressives who embrace democratic values, opportunists using the courts’ power for personal advancement; socially conservative Salafis whose agenda is focused on public morality; hard-line islamists who want an Islamic state but do not advocate political violence; and jihadists whose use of assassination as a tactic of choice has led to dozens of deaths in what amounts to a silent war in the streets of Mogadishu. Which strain emerges as dominant remains a major question mark.

The Islamic courts include other tension-ridden coalitions as well. One is cross-clan. They offer roughly two dozen sharia courts, each representing a different Mogadishu sub-clan, with a shared political platform. Clan tensions and fissures are endemic and easily manipulated by spoilers. This will be a major challenge as the Islamic courts try to stay unified.

The partnership between the Islamist leaders and Mogadishu business leaders is also uneasy. The victory over the ARPCT means that the two largest militia forces in the city are at odds of the Islamic courts and the business community. Some business leaders who tactically backed the Islamic courts may now see them as a threat. Finally, the Islamic courts have brought together Islamist leadership together with an array of civic movements who share a common interest in improved rule of law in Mogadishu and little else. This may be the most fragile part of the coalition. Collectively, the multiple fault lines make the courts prone to fissures, internal feuds and defections unless they can exploit, and perhaps provoke, an existential threat.
The decision to make Chairman Sheikh Sharif the visible face of the Islamic courts was an attempt to present the movement as moderate, conciliatory and acceptable to most Somalis and external actors. The emergence of Aweys as head of the Shura (council) and a high profile public figure raised the troubling question of whether the Islamic courts could be used as a Trojan horse by radicals and jihadis operating under cover of a moderate Islamist movement either unwilling or unable to restrain its most dangerous wing.

This latter concern is critical, because the leadership has gone to great lengths to portray the movement as moderate and a popular uprising against warlordism but has been casually dismissive about credible allegations of jihad violence and the presence of foreign al-Qaeda operatives in Mogadishu safe houses reportedly operated by some of its top figures. Sheikh Sharif had repeatedly portrayed these concerns as ‘propaganda’ and claimed the U.S. has been misled by warlords exploiting the war on terror. Sharif is correct that the ARPCT militia leaders sought to portray all Islamists as terrorists and use American counter-terrorism for parochial aims, but the question about a small number of Somali jihadis and foreign al-Qaeda suspects cannot be waved away. It is an enduring concern for the U.S. and its allies.

There is compelling evidence of jihad violence emanating from within at least three of the hard-line courts in Mogadishu, and the U.S. insists that at least three foreign al-Qaeda operatives are in Mogadishu. If Sheikh Sharif is unwilling to acknowledge even the possibility of a problem, he risks being accused of complicity. If he cannot acknowledge the threat posed by radicals in his coalition, troubling questions arise about the ability of such radicals to coerce and intimidate erstwhile allies.

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2. ibid.
4. ibid.
For moderates in the courts, the dilemma is that the *jihadis'* tactic of assassination, which helped eliminate their potential opposition in Mogadishu, could be used against them. This puts them in a difficult situation, especially when faced with international demands to marginalize the radicals.

Concern that hardliners in the courts were driving policy was heightened following the decision to capture Jowhar, despite earlier assurances they would not resort to force. The decision immediately thereafter to move militias up the Shabelle Valley as far as Jalalaqsi and then to orchestrate an Islamist take-over of the strategic town of Beletweyne near the Ethiopian border seemed intended to provoke Ethiopia to send troops into Somalia.26

Much has been made of Sheikh Sharif’s contradictory statements. In a letter to selected states and international organizations, he committed the Islamic courts to good relations and the democratic process. ‘We want the Somali people to decide which form of governance they want and to choose their leader for the first time in decades.’27 In other settings rhetoric has been more radical. In a Mogadishu rally on 2 June, he called the U.S. ‘an enemy of Islam’,28 and in another public address told supporters the fight would continue until the entire country was under the courts’ authority.29 While inconsistencies can be explained as reflecting political inexperience or the need to placate both hardliners and the international community, a clearer line is needed. More importantly, rhetoric must be consistent with actions. If the courts continue to articulate conciliatory policies while taking expansive action which provoke both the TFG and Ethiopia, they will quickly lose the benefit of the doubt.


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The Islamic courts' withdrawal from talks with the TFG in response to parliament's discussions of authorizing an IGAD stabilization force, to be known as IGASOM, was predictable but unfortunate. Opposition to foreign peacekeepers has been a central part of the platform over the past year and cannot now be given up easily. The issue has worked well. It taps into xenophobic sentiments which resonate with part of the population. The courts' core Mogadishu constituency fought against the UN force in 1993 and deeply distrusts such peacekeepers. Despite their essentially clannish composition, the Islamic courts are the only credible movement articulating strong Somali nationalist rhetoric, conflating Islamism with pan-Somalism, seasoned with anti-Ethiopian and occasionally anti-Christian rhetoric. Despite rejecting the TFG, the Islamist movement has successfully portrayed itself as the main hope for state revival and despite its diplomatic overtures to the West, the leadership frequently condemns the U.S., tapping into growing Somali resentment and anger. If the Islamic courts form a government of national unity with the TFG, these positions will need to be revised.

The Islamic Courts' greatest political success has been their ability to merge their agenda with other agendas in the Mogadishu populace. They have conflated Islamism with a strong public desire for law and order and opposition to warlordism. The romanticized view of the war which defeated the ARPCT as a popular uprising had tremendous appeal to Somalis and foreigners who want to believe that the changes in Mogadishu represent a grassroots movement.

The record indicates otherwise. The battles against the ARPCT were waged by Sharia militias, not people's defense forces. The strong support the courts enjoy for providing security and defeating some unpopular militia leaders does not equate to a popular uprising. In fact, some hardline Islamist leaders in Mogadishu view civil society and civic leaders as rivals to be contained and if necessary intimidated.
THE UIC AS AN IDEOLOGICAL ENTITY

The Islamist coalition was much clearer about what it opposed - warlordism, crime and insecurity, immorality - than about what it stood for. Between the Jama'a al-Islam progressives and the Usuliyyin militants, between the business oriented militiamen and their jihadi comrades, the variations were important. Then there was what one would call the ‘clanic trap’. The majority of the courts were Haber Gidir and were clearly perceived as such, even by their sympathizers. Once the warlords were out of the way, was their opposition to the TNG a matter of trying to set up an Islamist Republic, or simply a matter of setting up a Haber Gidir domination of the political scene? Was their opposition to Ethiopian military intervention a principled nationalist attitude or was it simply because they saw Addis Ababa as a supporter of the Darod and Hawiye/Abgal alliance which was at the heart of the TFG?

Another dimension was the Ethio-Eritrean war by proxy which threatened to engulf the country. As early as January 2006, Asmara had started to deliver military equipment to the UIC alliance. For the Ethiopians, the threat was multiple. First, the Courts had revived the pan-Somali nationalist sentiment that, between 1960 and 1978, caused three wars between Ethiopia and Somalia, a long-running insurgency in north eastern Kenya and a short-lived urban guerilla campaign in Djibouti. On 17 November 2006, UIC Chairman Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys forcefully reiterated that position in an interview asserting: “We will leave no stone unturned to integrate our Somali brothers in Kenya and Ethiopia and restore their freedom to live with their ancestors in Somalia.”

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Second, the Courts have hosted and supported Ethiopian rebel groups, namely the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) since at least March 2005. Since October 2006, the ONLF and the Courts claim to have been coordinating military operations inside Ethiopia. The Courts leaders probably feel that such actions are justified by the presence of Ethiopian troops on Somali soil, but they have never indicated whether the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops would be matched by suspension of support for cross-border insurgents.34

Third, and perhaps most serious, are the Courts’ alleged links to terrorism. Addis Ababa holds Sheikh Aweys and other senior figures of the Courts Council to be responsible for a series of terrorist attacks in Ethiopia between 1995-1996. Other members of the Courts have been linked to the murders of Western aid workers, journalists and Somali civil society leaders in Somaliland and Mogadishu. For Ethiopia, seeing the most radical elements of UIC reactivate the al-Ittixad al-Islami ee soomaliya Galbeenn networks in the Ogaden and seeing Eritrea immediately collaborating with these various hostile forces was a threat Ethiopia could not take lightly. When Sheikh Hassan Aweys Dahir set up a training camp for an army nucleus in north Mogadishu in August 2006, part of the training staff was Eritrean.35

The UIC seems to be trying to escape from the ‘clanic trap’. It has attempted to create twenty new courts, with a wide variety of clanic composition. These courts are, with a few exceptions, all in Mogadishu. The key question is will the ideology of political Islam enable the UIC Hawiye supporters to eliminate their competing Hawiye brothers; unite into alliance with other non-Hawiye clans; eliminate or completely marginalize the TFG; outline some kind of a new dispensation announcing a possible national government; keep the ordinary Somali on the Islamist side as was the case during the battle for the capital Mogadishu?
None of these questions can be answered with certainty at present. Each time the Islamists flogged youth who were 'indecently dressed', they lost out. Each time they occupied a port which was a known pirates' nest or each time they reopened an airport or harbor for public circulation, they won points. The problem of the TFG is that it is so cut off that, apart from producing a cleverly balanced new cabinet on August 2006, it has not been able to do much, either good or bad.

1.5 TOWARDS A WIDENING OF THE CONFLICT: SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND PROXY WAR

The single most important foreign actor in Somali affairs, Ethiopia, is the TFG’s patron and principal advocate in the international community. It has legitimate security interests in Somalia and has in the past intervened constructively to support reconciliation and state-building, notably in Somaliland and Puntland. Its current engagement has been deeply divisive and has undermined its own security objectives.

Ethiopia considers the Islamic Courts to have been infiltrated by al-Itihaad, and a potential entry point to the region for al-Qaeda operatives. Despite official denials, persistent and credible reports, confirmed by diplomats and UN sources, continue from much of south western Somalia concerning the presence of Ethiopian forces. Ethiopia’s security concerns relate not only to the Courts’ Islamist character, but also to Eritrea’s role as their backer. During their 1998-2000 border war, Ethiopia and Eritrea opened a second front in Somalia by proxy, each backing client factions. Since the TFG’s inception in 2004, Ethiopia has provided military material and training, while Eritrea has more recently begun to assist the Courts. If the TFG and the Islamic Courts fight, Addis Ababa and Asmara will again sponsor rival proxies.


Ethiopia is deeply unpopular with many Somalis, who believe it fears the re-emergence of strong, united Somalia and so seeks to perpetuate instability and division. Ethiopian support of the TFG has already sapped the interim government of credibility in the eyes of many, who consider its leadership to be more responsive to foreign priorities than their own. Leading parliamentarians in Baidoa express deep disquiet over the presence of Ethiopian forces around the town. \(^\text{38}\) The prospect of Ethiopian military intervention would rally a broad cross section of Somalis and serve as a foil against which hard liners within the courts could mobilize for defensive jihad. \(^\text{39}\) Jihadi propaganda already seems crafted to portray Somalia as part of a cosmic conflict between Muslims and infidels and to engage the support of foreign jihadis.

Eritrea’s involvement over the past decade has been intermittent, driven almost entirely by desire to frustrate Ethiopian ambitions. During the 1998-2000 border war, it provided arms, training and transport for Ethiopian Oromo insurgents operating from Somalia, as well as their Somali allies-Hussein Aideed’s militia. After the war, support diminished, although Asmara maintained relations with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and other Ethiopian rebel groups. ONLF fighters routinely transited Somalia and obtained weapons from Somalia’s arms markets. Eritrea has been passive in IGAD, allowing Ethiopia and Kenya to drive the Somali agenda.

Over the past year, however, Eritrea appears to have dramatically augmented its engagement. UN monitors allege that between May 2005 and May 2006, it delivered at least ten arms shipments to Somalia, mainly to leaders aligned with the Islamic courts (including Aweys and Indha’adde) and to the ONLF. Two unidentified aircraft that landed at Mogadishu’s international airport in July 2006 were reportedly carrying arms for the Courts from Eritrea. \(^\text{40}\)

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The reawakening of Asmara’s interest comes at a time when demarcation of the Ethio-Eritrean border has stalled and tensions are high, as both sides prepare for a reduction of the UN peacekeeping forces along the frontier.

The Arab League had been mostly peripheral in Somalia since formation of the TFG but has also re-emerged as a major player. Yemen took the lead in brokering the January 2006 Sana’a talks that temporarily healed the rift between the TFG president and parliament speaker. Sudan, as the Arab League chair, has also stepped forward to broker negotiations between the TFG and the Courts. Although the international community has broadly welcomed this initiative, some observers believe Khartoum is fronting for Egypt, which has historically competed with Ethiopia for influence over the Somali peninsula. In July 2006, TFG Prime Minister Gedi lashed out at Egypt, Libya and Iran, accusing them of supporting ‘terrorists’ in Somalia.

46 REGIONAL INTERVENTION: PEACEKEEPING OR CONTAINMENT?

The multifaceted nature of the crisis makes pursuit of a peaceful settlement complicated. Any settlement must satisfy not only the two main Somali protagonists, but also other internal actors with the potential to emerge as spoilers, including the Puntland administration and the Jubba Valley Alliance, and regional powers such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen and Egypt. To earn broader international credibility and support, it will also have to address the legitimate counter-terrorism concerns of the US and other western countries.

The first and most obvious challenge is that neither the TFG nor the Islamic courts speak with a unified voice. Pragmatists on both sides are prepared to seek a negotiated settlement that avoids armed conflict.

Ideologues in both camps believe their objectives are best served by confrontation. Hardliners have the upper hand; pragmatists have no way of securing their compliance with a negotiated agreement and would have little choice but to rally behind the firebrands if shooting starts. If the hard men on either side feel their interests are threatened by an unfavourable sentiment, they are likely to undermine the peace process by both overt and covert methods.

One of the greatest threats to the peace process is the growing international openness to lifting the UN arms embargo to allow the TFG to arm and train its security forces and to the eventual deployment of a regional peace support operation. Any decision by the Security Council to lift the arms embargo for the benefit of the TFG would greatly risk expanding violence in the country. Anticipation of a confrontation between the TFG and the Islamic courts has led to a significant increase in arms flows to Somalia in recent months. Despite near universal disregard for the embargo, UN monitoring has had an impact. The naming of individuals engaged in small arms import and sales worries many Somali leaders that the data could eventually be used in legal proceedings. Governments named as suppliers of weapons to Somali clients have generally found the charges unwelcome and disputed them. Most importantly, the embargo has prevented the TFG from legally securing external assistance to arm and support its security sector and created a legal impediment to the deployment of regional peacekeeping or stabilization forces. Consequently, President Yusuf and his key external supporters have regularly called for its partial lifting.

The mixed messages on an IGAD deployment reflect both confusion about the actual situation and unstated divisions about the nature of any intervention force. The UN, Arab League, AU and IGAD agree, at least rhetorically, that the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) are the only legitimate framework for political reconstruction but this has little meaning on the ground. The most powerful group in southern Somalia, the Islamic courts, is not party to any ceasefire, does not subscribe to the Transitional Federal Charter and has not endorsed the TFG’s national security and stabilization plan, which is supposed to chart the path for development of the government’s security sector, and upon which any foreign deployment would necessarily be based.

Somalia’s partners are currently divided as to the best way to obtain the Islamic courts’ buy-in to the TFIs. One school of thought led by Ethiopia, believes that the TFG must be supported politically and reinforced militarily in order to compel the courts to come to the table. A more realistic view is that since many Somalis, especially those who support the Islamic courts, now view the TFG as a faction rather than a legitimate national government, they are likely to perceive any direct support to it as a provocation. Either way, as long as the courts oppose foreign military deployment, the character of such a deployment would be that of a protection force, not peace support, and contributing countries would have to be prepared for their soldiers to fight to preserve the TFG.

Ethiopia’s intention is to provide the TFG with a shield against a possible attack. Rather than bolstering the TFG’s fortunes, intervention seems bound to produce exactly the opposite result by undermining the TFG’s pretence that it represents the will of the Somali people and enforcing the claim that it is a manifestation of foreign interests. Likewise, it would galvanize opposition from a broad coalition of groups and interests, both Somali and non-Somali.
Given their clan-based support structure and control of major ports and airports, the capacity of the Islamic courts to mobilize and sustain a military effort far exceeds that of the TFG, which is almost entirely dependent on foreign assistance.

In response to the Ethiopian deployment, the leadership of the Islamic courts has called for a defensive *jihad*, an appeal that resonates across the country. The head of the courts security committee, Sheikh Yusuf Indha’adde, has reportedly threatened that a war would not be confined to Somali, but would be carried to Addis Ababa. Such threats deserve to be taken seriously.

The asymmetrical nature of any conflict between Ethiopia and the courts, the presence of court sympathizers in the Somali Diaspora and probable links between the courts and Ethiopian rebels suggest that violence might well spread beyond Somalia’s borders.

Despite their risks inherent in deployment of an Ethiopian or even a multilateral military force in support of the TFG, many countries are even more alarmed by the specter of a radical Islamists regime in Somalia that could potentially provide safe haven to international terrorists.

Although the courts have been at pains to offer assurances that they oppose terrorism in all its forms, their forays into morality policing and the prominence of known militants within the leadership have led numerous observers to draw parallels with the Taliban’s rise in Afghanistan in the 1990s.

For concerned governments, the choice is whether to pre-empt the emergence of such a regime by supporting the TFG and denying the courts legitimacy, or to engage with the courts to make them internationally accountable for their conduct.

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Any external attempts to isolate moderates from hardliners within them, however, are likely to breed mistrust and xenophobia, strengthening radical tendencies rather than weakening them.

The courts attitude towards the security concerns of neighbouring states and western governments will be a key factor in defining relationships. Continued denial would reinforce claims they are a Trojan horse for radical agendas and a potential threat to the region. If they allow investigators to verify the presence or otherwise of al-Qaeda suspects and cooperate with investigations into crimes, it could go far towards assuaging concerns and ending their isolation.

In December 2006, the Ethiopian forces ousted the Islamists in a two week war. The dramatic victory by Ethiopian troops was the culmination of months of preparation inside and outside Somalia by US and British Special Forces and US-hired mercenaries. The professional assistance was recruited by officials based in the US embassy in Nairobi at the end of 2005 as part of a deniable operation. Both American intelligence and its military have been bankrolling the Ethiopians since the start of 2006, as well as providing them with satellite surveillance, technical, military and logistic support.⁴⁵

Somalia’s interim government then requested African peacekeepers to be deployed as soon as possible to prevent anarchy and a power vacuum once the Ethiopian troops left Somalia. Somalia wanted African peacekeepers to be deployed after its troops, backed by heavily armed Ethiopian forces, ousted Islamists in a lightning offensive. IGAD, with the African Union expressed willingness to support efforts to send more than 8,000 troops into Somalia.⁴⁶

In January 2007, there was a call for the immediate deployment of an AU-IGAD stabilization force to Somalia in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1725 of 6 December 2006. Currently, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces totaling 1,500 Ugandan troops have been deployed in Somalia’s capital, Mogadishu.

Apart from the spasmodic and ambiguous initiative of some rich merchants and religious figures, there is little evidence of any widely based will to restore government, in the broadest sense, to Mogadishu and southern Somalia. Unacceptably strange though, it seems to some politically correct foreign pundits, part of the problem is that conflict and war are normal conditions in Somali experience down the ages. There is thus a high tolerance of disorder and violence, especially amongst the recent invaders of Mogadishu.

It is not that people do not know how to make peace or reach political compromises, as some international organizations naively suppose, it is a matter of motivation. In the South for the moment, the stakeholders have other objectives.

The cost of peace and political settlement is estimated as too high by the scrap merchants who have risen to such prominence and manifestly want to retain or increase their economic and political status. Most of the pressures for restoring government in ex-Italian Somalia (usually seen as having also to include Somaliland) comes from external influences: Ethiopia, Kenya and Egypt (anxious to check any extension of Ethiopian power). Somali irredentism, Ethiopia and Kenya and especially the former have been heavily involved in the conflicts between rival clan militias.
The visionary Somali state of the 1960s had failed to persuade African leaders to speak on its behalf as it sought to redress colonial and imperial grievances. The perennial questions posed in the Horn are how to maintain security and stability without sacrificing the jealously guarded sovereignty of states and the protection of peoples from human rights violations by their own governments or marauding rebels. Will Somali factional leaders finally come together to craft a viable system of administration that meets the needs of Somalia’s stateless inhabitants? Will Somalia be balkanized following the model of Somaliland?

Evolving alliances and counter alliances need to be understood within their historic context and the imperatives of state survival in a region whose postcolonial existence has been marked more by crises and confrontation than by the peaceful resolution of old and new conflicts. Any understanding of the foreign policy of Somalia thus requires exploration of Somalis idea of the state, definitions of security, and Somalia’s role in regional and extra regional affairs extending beyond its national boundaries.

Urgent questions that remain unanswered are how to resolve conflicts that pit nationalists against clan-based power brokers in Somalia. Whether Somalis can reconstitute their state and reconfigure a more effective organizing ideology will depend on whether their survival as a polity is aided or eroded by neighbours whose interests lie in weakening or strengthening the collapsed state.

Somalia and the United States have a rather tumultuous past. The United States, in an effort to contradict their Cold War rival, flooded Somalia with aid and armaments, propping up a tainted authoritarian regime. The aid from the United States weakened the Somali economy and eventually destroyed its industries.
Famine struck and the United States once again intervened by dumping imported food on the market, thereby weakening the already failing agricultural industry. Violence and strife also occurred as the United States sought to weed out Somalia’s warlords and extend its influence over the country. It has, overall, had a very negative impact on Somalia.

Somalia, on the other hand, has no specific foreign policy towards the United States. It is, after all, currently fragmented and without a centralized government. It is important that the United States admit to its part in the crisis currently raging in Somalia. It must acknowledge its role in pushing Somalia to the brink of starvation and death. All these will have to be reflected.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

Somalia, a sparsely populated country in the Horn of Africa, and the world’s undisputed failed state, has been without a functioning central government since January 1991, when the military regime collapsed and civil war among clan militias broke out. In that time, the country had been and still is torn apart by warring clans and their militias, hundreds of thousands have died as a result of the conflict and the country has become a byword for anarchy. During the subsequent decade, de facto decentralization of political power largely along clan lines has occurred, with varying degrees of territorial control achieved by militia leaders and local administrations in different areas of the country.

The country experienced only nine years of multi-party democracy after two colonial territories, British Somaliland and Italian Somalia, peacefully united to form the Republic of Somalia in 1960 and before the 1969 coup d’état by Siad Barre. In its first decade, Siad Barre’s government aligned itself with the Soviet bloc. Coupled with mounting domestic dissatisfaction with governance and economic performance, the defeat in the 1978 war with Ethiopia, with which the former Soviet Union had sided in the conflict between its two erstwhile allies, proved a turning point on both the political and economic fronts.

On the international front, the regime switched political allegiance to the western camp. On the domestic political front, the response by Siad Barre’s regime to the mounting internal threat to its political survival was to centralize power around the president and to fan and exploit clan rivalries, beginning with the harsh repression meted
against the clan to which most of the leaders of the 1978 failed coup belonged. Loyalty replaced merit, as Siad Barre became increasingly reliant on nepotism and patronage, the state’s controls over domestic resources and aid were used not for development purposes but to reward selectively pliant sub clans and their leaders and businesspeople and punish disloyal ones. Such tactics, however, soon backfired, as they fueled the rise during the 1980s of armed, clan and sub-clan based opposition movements first in the northeastern region, and then the northwestern, southern and central regions of Somalia—everywhere but the southwestern part of the country, from which Siad Barre’s family originated.

Over sixteen years after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime, Somalia remains the only country in the world without a government, a classic example of the humanitarian, economic and political repercussions of state collapse, including a governance vacuum that terrorist groups can take advantage of for safe haven and logistical purposes.

On 27 October 2002, Somali political leaders gathered in the Kenyan town of Eldoret and signed a new declaration that envisaged an end to the protracted crisis in their country. After more than a decade as the only country in the world totally devoid of a functioning central government and no less than twenty unsuccessful national-level peace initiatives since 1991, the Eldoret Declaration raised hopes that resolution of the Somali crisis was then within reach.

The declaration in Kenya, of a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in October 2004 was heralded as a breakthrough in Somalia’s protracted crisis of statelessness and civil strife. The peace process has largely gone downhill since then. The Transitional Federal Parliament’s choice for interim president, Colonel Abdillahi
Yusuf Ahmed, was divisive and controversial. To many Somalis, his election represented not a step toward peace but continuation of the war by other means. The archetypal Somali warlord, Yusuf’s opposition to the now defunct Transitional National Government (TNG), his advocacy of a federal structure for Somalia and his close ties with neighbouring Ethiopia, together place him firmly in one camp in Somalia’s long-running conflict. In order to cement his victory, Yusuf called for deployment to Somalia of a strong multinational military force. His choice for Prime Minister and the composition of the first TFG cabinet confirmed his pursuit of a narrow political agenda, provoking a parliamentary revolt, a no-confidence vote and dissolution of the government.

The roots of the Somalia crisis are profoundly parochial and have more to do with practical power, prestige and clan issues than ideology. The core of the dispute is the TFG’s failure to make itself a genuine government of national unity and the emergence of the Islamic Courts as a platform for opposition from large sections of the Hawiye clan, probably the largest, most powerful kinship group in southern Somalia. The Islamic Courts are a loose coalition of Islamists, including many moderates, who have built a well trained militia and independent funding sources.

The situation is, in part, a by-product of the long decline of Mogadishu factional leaders, who a decade ago monopolized political representation in the country but have gradually faded creating a political vacuum filled by the Islamists. Their decline had multiple causes, including unwillingness to provide basic services and rule of law in areas they controlled and the rise of rival business elites. The clan-based Sharia court system in Mogadishu, which began a decade ago as a local mechanism to deal with chronic
lawlessness and is almost entirely affiliated with Hawiye lineages, is valued by local people and business interests as one of the few sources of local governance in the south. Its ascent has radically altered Somali politics. Since the Courts defeated prominent faction leaders in four months of heavy fighting in Mogadishu in 2006, they had consolidated their grip on the capital and its environs, establishing a new political force in the south which threatened to eclipse the fragile TFG.

Ironically, the crisis is a direct product of ill-conceived foreign interventions. Ethiopia's attempts to supplant the earlier Transitional National Government (2000-2003) with one dominated by its allies, alienated large sections of the Hawiye clan, leaving the TFG with a support base too narrow to operate in and near Mogadishu. The calls of the AU and IGAD for foreign peacekeepers, intended to bolster the TFG, have instead cast it as ineffectual and dependent on foreign support, and provided a rallying cry for diverse opposition groups. After all, most *dejuris* governments would want to respond in a similar fashion in the face of a national crisis in order to avoid high human and material cost. US counter-terrorism efforts meant to contain foreign al-Qaeda operatives have accelerated the expansion of *jihadi* Islamist forces and produced the largest potential safe haven for al-Qaeda in Africa.

Following Ethiopia's offensive into Somalia and its stunningly quick overthrow of the fundamentalist Council of Somali Islamic Courts in the south, there was a real opportunity to restore a semblance of order and peace to the country for the first time in many years, if only the warring parties were willing or could have been encouraged to take it.
5.2 CONCLUSION

The world has largely ignored Somalia since the death of eighteen US troops in late 1993 that led to the ignominious pullout of US and UN peacekeepers, events later dramatized in the film and renowned book Black Hawk Dawn. In the past months, the country has been back in the headlines, first as the al-Qaeda linked Islamic Courts took control of Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia, and then more dramatically as Ethiopia sent its troops, tanks and planes across the border and drove the Islamists from power and into hiding.

There is currently prevailing unrest in Mogadishu. Somalia’s weak but internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government has been installed in the capital by Ethiopia. This transitional government has tacit US backing and has promised to restore peace to the war-weary country: a daunting task in a nation still dominated by well armed clan militias.

There are numerous agendas at play. At its most simplistic, the conflict is between the fundamentalist Islamic courts and the factionalized transitional government but as with most conflicts, there are also regional dynamics. Neighbouring Ethiopia feared the Courts’ stated intention to absorb Somali areas of Ethiopia, and their support of Ethiopian rebel groups. Sworn enemies Ethiopia and Eritrea backed opposing sides in Somalia as proxies for their deadlocked border war.

The Courts used the unpopular Ethiopian involvement as a rallying cry and recruitment tool in Somalia and the wider Muslim world. Meanwhile, according to the UN, an assortment of countries, including Libya, Syria, Uganda and Yemen, supplied weapons to the opposing groups in breach of an arms embargo.
The US viewed the Islamists' rise with alarm, fearing the emergence of a Taliban-style haven for al-Qaeda and other Islamists extremists. Its fears were stoked by Jihadist elements in the Courts and credible reports that they were harbouring known al-Qaeda operatives. It responded by cobbled together a coalition of Somali warlords funded by the CIA but the alliance was short lived and its collapse at the hands of the courts only increased the latter's legitimacy.

This fragile balance has now been overturned. Following the passage of a UN resolution authorizing the deployment of an African Union peacekeeping force, the Africa Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Courts threatened jihad if any international troops entered Somalia. With tensions rising, Ethiopian forces launched a lightning offensive across southern Somalia in mid-December 2004, killing hundreds of Islamist fighters and scattering the rest. The offensive had US, but not UN support.

It is however, far too early for the transitional government to declare victory. The abrupt collapse of the Courts left a political vacuum across much of southern Somalia, which the weak and ineffectual transitional government is currently unable to fill. Despite their damaged credibility, elements of the Courts' militias, including their al-Qaeda associates, have survived the conflict largely intact and are threatening to wage an urban guerilla war. Likewise, the grassroots network of mosques, schools and private enterprise that has underpinned the spread of salafist teachings and their extremist variants is also firmly in place and continues to expand thanks to generous contributions from Islamic charities and the private sector.
The Islamic Courts’ success and the rise to prominence of some hard-line *jihadi* Islamists within them, has alarmed neighbours and the broader international community. Ethiopia, Kenya and the US all share determination not to allow Somali to become an African version of Taliban-Afghanistan. The TFG and Ethiopia claim too simplistically that the Islamic Courts are merely an umbrella organization for terrorists, and the Courts have responded to Ethiopian deployments in Somalia by calling for a defensive *jihad* and breaking off peace talks under Arab League auspices. Skirmishes between TFG and Islamic Court forces south of Mogadishu in late July 2006 were widely perceived as the first exchange of a coming conflict.

It will be difficult for the two sides, the TFG and the Islamic Courts, to find middle ground and share power but they should be urged, as a first step, to send signals to one another aimed at reducing hostilities and building confidence. Ethiopia and Eritrea should be pressed to cease their military involvement and refrain from inflammatory rhetoric. There is no ideal candidate to lead a mediation. Diplomatic efforts cannot continue to tiptoe around the core issues.

The transitional government remains feeble, unpopular and faction ridden. Many Somalis are deeply concerned by the presence of Ethiopian troops in the Somali capital and the likely return of deeply unpopular militia leaders who had been overthrown by the Courts. Mogadishu is still awash with weapons and violence is rampant, with dead bodies scattered all over the streets.

During February 2007, 1Mogadishu experienced escalating violence and insecurity with a stark increase in mortar attacks on strategic locations as well as indiscriminate shelling that resulted in dozens of civilian casualties.
As a result of the unrest, people fled the capital moving to the regions of Lower and Middle Shabelle, Bay, Gedo and as far as Hiran and Somaliland. The vast majority of those who left moved to areas where they benefit from clan support, while others have settled with host communities. Insecurity in the capital has also resulted in reduced mobility and access. The spread of acute watery diarrhea and cholera is taking its toll. As of mid-April, the number of acute watery diarrhea had already risen to 16,000 cases in south central Somalia. The situation in Mogadishu has become extremely alarming. Many people are trapped in the city. Despite the ceasefire declared on 1 April 2007, little confidence in the truce prompted people to continue moving out, including merchants who are reportedly leaving with their merchandise.

The majority of the displaced are destitute women, children and elderly in dire need of water, sanitation, food, health services and shelter and in some areas people are renting trees. As they move, the displaced are subject to threats, intimidation, theft as well as rape.

After almost ten to fifteen years of protracted displacement in the capital Mogadishu, some people continue to travel back to their native regions where they have relatives or clan links. The journey by truck takes days with many illegal road blocks. Family members are at risk of theft, rape, kidnapping or murder as clan lines are crossed and personal security is exposed to revenge killing. Most internally displaced persons (IDPs) depend heavily on other IDPs for support, placing additional pressure on limited resources.

1. Goobjoog website and Shabelle Media Network website. Mogadishu. 1 April 2007
In March 2007, at least 1,391 Somalis and 818 Ethiopians arrived in Yemen on boats originating from Bossaso, Puntland. UNHCR records show that since the start of 2007, 4,400 people have landed in Yemen while at least 166 people died during the crossing. Despite efforts to curb human smuggling, people cross the Gulf of Aden with reports of deaths, or missing persons.

Media reports titled 'the damned of the Aden Gulf' have become increasingly tragic. On 22 March 2007, at least 29 people were confirmed dead and 71 missing after smugglers forced some 450 Somalis and Ethiopians into stormy seas off the coast of Yemen. Survivors reported that those who resisted were stabbed and beaten with wooden and steel clubs, then thrown overboard into shark infested waters. Some recovered bodies showed signs of severe mutilation. Several women were raped by the smugglers during the voyage. Upon arrival, some passengers reportedly had their money confiscated by Yemeni security forces. Smugglers are said to increasingly fear being caught by the Yemeni coast guards, and thus coercing passengers, both asylum seekers and economic migrants, to disembark increasingly further from shore in dangerous waters.

Lasting peace and security might be achieved if the transitional government is reconstituted as a genuine government of national unity, including credible leaders from both the Islamic Courts and the broader Hawiye community. The international community with the US and Ethiopia playing key roles, must push the transitional government to transform itself and Somalia's institutions into inclusive and functional entities. The Ethiopian troops should be replaced with a broader, multilateral, peacekeeping presence to defuse public resentment toward the Ethiopian occupation.
Radical Islam in Somalia has been struck a heavy blow and the country now has a historic opportunity to end the devastation that has plagued it for the past sixteen years. The coming months will determine whether Somalia emerges as a functioning state or follows the Afghan route back into anarchy, condemning its citizens to many more years of conflict. The international community must remain engaged and fulfill its responsibility to end the suffering of the Somali people. Every effort must be made to reverse the slide toward war, otherwise another tragic chapter will be written in what is approaching a generation of failed efforts to help Somalia come back together.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The international response to date of the Somalia crisis has been tepid and insufficient. Somalia has been drifting toward a new war since the TFG was formed in late 2004 but the trend has recently accelerated dramatically. The stand-off between the TFG and its Ethiopian ally on the one hand, and the Islamic Courts threatens to escalate into a wider conflict that would consume much of the south, destabilize peaceful territories like Somaliland and Puntland and possibly involve terrorist attacks in neighbouring countries unless urgent efforts are made by both sides and the international community to put together a government of national unity.

(A) A successful strategy will have to allow time for harmonizing divergent approaches of neighbouring states, addressing structural issues and bringing international leverage to bear on the relevant actors. The declaration in Kenya of a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in October 2004 was heralded as a breakthrough in Somalia’s protracted crisis of statelessness and civil strife but the peace process has gone largely
downhill since then. The Transitional Federal Parliament’s choice for President Abdullahi Yusuf was divisive and controversial. To many Somalis, his election represented not a step towards peace but continuation of the war by other means. The status of the peace process is grim but not altogether hopeless. President Yusuf and his partners need to use their political advantage to form a genuine government of national unity, rather than attempt to impose their own agenda on the transition. The international community needs to make clear that only if this happens will the TFG get the recognition and support it desperately seeks. The probable alternative is resumption of Somali’s conflict through all-too-familiar means.

(B) The Security Council Resolution which authorized the deployment of AMISOM forces in support of the TFG has exempted the TFG together with troop contributing countries - Ethiopia, Uganda amongst others from the existing UN arms embargo. While its objectives are to strengthen the TFG, deter the Islamic Courts from further expansion and avert the threat of full-scale war, it is likely to backfire on all three counts. The deployment of a regional intervention force, especially one involving front-line states such as Ethiopia, unless it has the consent of all warring parties, calls for more robust enforcement of the UN arms embargo. There is need to strengthen the arms embargo through surveillance of all Somali borders.

(C) Instead of authorizing deployment of a regional force, the Security Council should push both parties, the TFG and the Union of Islamic Courts, to resume peace talks immediately. There should be a comprehensive ceasefire covering disengagement of opposing forces, withdrawal from Somalia of all foreign troops and military trainers and deployment of an international verification mission to monitor compliance with the
agreement. Any UN-sponsored military deployment should be designed to support an agreed ceasefire, not undermine efforts to achieve such a ceasefire, and should be made up of forces acceptable to both parties. If either party fails to demonstrate genuine commitment to this process, the Security Council should impose travel bans on its leaders, freeze assets and authorize economic sanctions against business interests. As so often in Somalia, the consequences of an ill-considered intervention is likely to be more conflict, not less. Military measures must remain a weapon of last resort.

(D) Unfortunately for Somalis, the US and other members of the UN Security Council are taking actions that make war more likely, not less. The Bush administration must resist the urge to tackle political problems with military solutions. The US policy response, understandable at first glance, has been to focus overwhelmingly on capturing terrorists, neglecting in the process Somali appeals for assistance in building a functioning state. State building and counter-terrorism are not mutually exclusive, and the US approach of supporting warlords that served its interests has been shortsighted. While many Somalis do not want their personal freedoms restricted and reject the Islamists extremism preached by the militia, they are even more opposed to foreign intervention. The militia has painted its jihad in national colours, and this has led to an outpouring of popular support. The US should focus on averting a war, not triggering one by investing in a peace process, which means getting involved in promoting a power-sharing deal between the weak TFG and the Union of Islamic Courts. Rebuilding a government in Somalia is the only viable way to combat the terrorist threat and prevent violent Islamists extremism from expanding. Delicate diplomacy is required to reconstitute this transitional authority as a government of national unity.
Only then will the US help create an effective counterbalance to the Islamists and an eventual partner in the international struggle against terrorism.

(E) Full-scale war in Somalia is not yet inevitable. There is still time for both sides, the TFG and the Islamic Courts, to step back from the brink, return to peace talks and conclude a comprehensive ceasefire agreement. Unfortunately, both sides seem committed to a test of military strength. If war does erupt, it is likely to prove messy and inconclusive. With or without AMISOM’s military support, the TFG will remain ineffectual and unpopular. Even if defeated on the field of battle, the Islamic Courts’ political and economic strongholds in Mogadishu and Kismayo will remain intact, allowing them to regenerate and re-arm. If peace is to prevail, the situation requires urgent international attention. As a party to the conflict IGAD may no longer be in a position to play peacemaker. Instead, the Arab League and the African Union must begin working now towards a joint mechanism for securing and policing a ceasefire agreement. The diplomatic architecture of the peace process must provide scope for regional security concerns about the Islamic Courts’ intentions to be brought to the table. The transitional process envisioned in the Transitional Federal Charter must be retooled to reflect new realities on the ground.

If the dream of a peaceful Somalia is to become a reality, reconciliation should be encouraged. A lasting peace can only be achieved at the negotiating table, and there is no point in waiting until the guns fall silent to begin preparing. Planning for peace must begin now.

(F) A multilateral approach to peace building is necessary to prevent protracted insurgencies from engulfing the Horn of Africa. Many Ethiopians worry that an extended
war with Somali Islamists could create religious divisions at home, pitting in particular, Muslims against the government.

Rather than relying primarily on military force, regular intelligence from and occasional intervention by Ethiopia, anti-Islamist warlords and a weak transitional government as it has done, Washington must adopt a more nuanced approach to Somalia. It should work with the European Union, the AU, the Arab League and IGAD to pressure all parties into negotiating a power-sharing deal between the TFG, clan leaders in Mogadishu and the Islamic Courts. The TFG will negotiate only if pressed by Ethiopia, and the US has more clout with Ethiopia than does any other external actor. By contrast, Washington lacks direct leverage with the Islamic courts and excluded clan elders, and so US diplomacy on that front should focus on getting governments in the region and the Arab League to persuade them to accept a government of national unity. None of these will be easy.

(G) The most important challenge facing the TFG and any future government of Somalia is that of building trust. Only to the degree to which government succeeds in gaining the trust of the ordinary citizen will its programmes and priorities for rebuilding and development have a chance of success. Government needs to prove to its citizens that it means what it says and delivers what it promises. It needs to select its employees by demonstrated merit, and ensure their accountability. It needs to demonstrate on the ground that it will not condone mismanagement, and will punish transgression in accordance with established laws. It needs to prove that the rights of the person are protected under the law and not tampered with or abused. Above all, trust of the people must be earned. It cannot be achieved through empty rhetoric and government pronouncements.
(H) The TFG needs to draw on the culture and traditions of the Somali people. A leadership that ignores the participatory, anti-authoritarian inclinations of the Somali pastoral democracy, does so at its own risk. The Somali tradition for active participation in the affairs of the community through the *shir* and Somali respect for poetry and oral debate and presentations are powerful tools for popular participation in government affairs. Somalis respect and generally abide by decisions reached in *shir* fora, open to all. By respecting such traditions and using them as a means to involve the people in the decision making process, acceptance, trust and support may come more easily. Indeed the government that neglects these forces is likely to face a popular backlash.

(I) Democratization of leadership – Abuse of power, mismanagement of public office, corruption, nepotism, suppression of human rights were all contributing factors to the collapse of the Siad Barre regime and the decline towards civil war. In large part such excesses were made possible because the people were unable to elect and remove their leadership from public office. The reappearance of such a system within the TFG – lack of political maturity of the people, lack of security and stability - would be but an invitation to return to the past. A system of regular, fair elections through which leadership can be held accountable for their actions, is the best way to make sure this does not happen. Democratization and exercise of political rights are learned. Each society understands these concepts differently and applies them through trial and error.
The TFG would advance democratic participation by insisting that communities select their own officials: mayors, municipal councils and executive officers. It should provide them with the necessary encouragement, mobilization, facilitation and support to do so. Success at one level could then allow the extension of participatory leadership to other levels, both higher (region and state) and lower (district and village).

(J) Islamic principles in government – The compliance of national and local legislation with Islamic principles and the Sharia is a formidable challenge with which the Islamic societies and states have been grappling for centuries. Contemporary thought and practice on the issue is rich in diversity, offering Somalia the opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of experiences elsewhere, while benefiting from the wealth of scholarly work that exists on the subject. Islam can provide much needed guidance and support on such issues as sovereignty, democratic participation, interpretation of the law and human and minority rights. It can also be misused, as it has been in a number of countries around the world, as a justification for the kinds of abuses perpetrated by the previous Siad Barre’s military regime. The TFG will need to seek the best advice and support available in ensuring that the application of the Sharia becomes the foundation of the well being of the whole community, and is not misused as a vehicle for the ambitions or interests of a clique.

(K) Respect for the traditional system – The Somali people have a rich and well developed traditional system of governance, of determining right and wrong, of resolving differences, settling disputes and building consensus around common values, rules and objectives. This rich tradition had been further enriched and supported by the teachings of the Islamic faith, which is seen by the faithful as a total way of life that affects all
aspects of being: public, private and spiritual. This traditional system, despite its shortcomings, helped Somalis survive the tribulations of colonialism, dictatorship and civil war. On the other hand, the traditional system is no substitute for the formal structures of government, nor is it well suited to meeting the challenges of the global village. Harmonizing the benefits of local tradition and faith with those of globalization is a challenge facing peoples and governments of the world. In building a new government capable of meeting contemporary challenges, Somalia must recognize that tradition and faith are powerful sources of both guidance and legitimacy. Traditional and religious leaders represent a vital bridge between government and the public but they should in turn respect the role of government as the sovereign authority in the territory. The TFG can and should offer its leadership in harnessing the energies of its traditional and civic partners by inviting traditional or civic leaders to address parliament, parliamentary committees, and government officials on public policy issues. The TFG could also conduct regular briefings with traditional and civil leaders on government business, seek their advice and enlist their support in explaining policies and issues to their constituents.

2 Ibid., p. 4.
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Figure A-1. Outline of clan and sub-clan structure

Darod

- Marchan
  - Reer Dini (Siad Barre)
  - Reer Hassan
  - Eli Dhere

- Kabalah

Dir

- Gadabursi
- Bimaal
- Issa

- Absame
  - Ogaden
  - Jidwaq

- Harti
  - Dolbahante
  - Warsangali
  - Majerteen

(Abdullahi Yusuf)

ISAAQ

- Haber Awal
- Haber Geelo
- Garhajis

RAHANWEYN

- Digil
  - Tuni
  - Geledi
  - Sagaal
  - Sideed

- Harin Eelay Leysan

Haber Yonis Idagale
Somali Minorities: Bantu, Benadir, Baravans (these groups generally stand outside Somali kinship but occasionally enjoy adopted status within a Somali clan).

Note: This is a partial and simplified lineage chart of the five main Somali clan-families, intended to highlight sub-clans of particular political relevance in 2003. Many lineages are omitted while others are compressed or their relationships simplified.

Notable Somali political figures are identified in parentheses below their sub-clan identity.
Figure A-2. South-central perspective on subclan structure
Figure A-3. Puntland perspective on subclan structure:

SOMALI (SAAMAL)

DAROD

ISAAQ

HAWIYE

DIR

RAHANWEYN

DIGIL

MAREHAN AWRTABLE LEUKASE

SUBCLANS: refer to south-central

GADABURSI IISE

SUBCLANS: refer to south-central

HABAR GIDIR

BIYAMAAL

MURURSADE

ABGAAL

HAWAADLE

LUUURAN

HABR YOONIS HABAR AWAL HABAR TOL JAALO HABAR JAALO IIDAGALE