

*Moshe Terdman*

**Somalia at War – Between Radical Islam and  
Tribal Politics**



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The S. Daniel Abraham Center  
P.O.B. 39040  
Ramat Aviv  
Tel Aviv 69978  
Tel: +972-3-6406667  
Fax: +972-3-6406660  
E-mail: [dacenter@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:dacenter@post.tau.ac.il)  
[www.tau.ac.il/humanites/abraham](http://www.tau.ac.il/humanites/abraham)

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## PREFACE

This is an important publication on a topic that still receives surprisingly little attention from scholars of the modern history of the Middle East and Africa. This essay incisively analyzes how under-developed Somalia was transformed into one of the primary battlefields in the global "war on terror." Civil wars in Somalia are not a new historical phenomenon. However, the emergence of radical Islam in Somalia has altered the political balance in this small state in the eastern Horn of Africa. This monograph expands the current body of empirical knowledge provided by existing works on the subject.

Developments in Somalia in recent years have fallen into a category that is similar to the political dynamic in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Somali regime has been toppled by external military intervention which led to foreign occupation and ended in the emergence of a weak central government that has not been able to control its sovereign territory and quell armed opposition.

The post-intervention regime in Somalia has been challenged by both internal and external threats. The unprecedented active involvement of foreign players in Somali domestic affairs, the immediate local, regional, and global circumstances at hand, and the critical role radical Islam has played in the conflict have turned Somalia into one of Africa's tragic stories.

The goal of this monograph is to explain how the immediate local, regional, and global circumstances have currently transformed Somalia into one of the principal battlefields between regional powers, the U.S., and al-Qa'ida. The monograph begins with an analysis of the social and historical roots of the current conflict in Somalia, and then explores how the conflict has developed, the role of radical Islam, and the intervention of external regional and global players in the conflict and their respective motives.

This thoughtful monograph certainly adds to the growing body of knowledge on al-Qa'ida and its evolving relationship with the peoples and states in the Horn of Africa. The author, Moshe Terdman, provides a convincing and well-balanced portrait of a society caught between the strains of tribal tradition, longstanding feuds, and the fresh and threatening wave of Islamic radicalism.

I would like to thank my hardworking colleagues who enabled this publication to come to fruition; first and foremost, the author himself, Moshe Terdman who patiently bore the brunt of our editorial demands. It is my pleasure to thank the directors of both the Daniel Abraham Center and the Institute for National Security Studies, Raanan Rein and Zvi Shtauber, for their encouragement and sponsorship. Thanks also go to Talma Kinarti, the Assistant Manager of

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Uzi Rabi

Vice Director, The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies



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Map 1: Somalia and the Horn of Africa

## Introduction

During the last decade or so, but especially during the last year and a half, Somalia has become one of the main battlefields in the US global "war on terror", together with Afghanistan and Iraq. The situation has been further complicated by a chaotic situation prevailing in the country, caused by sixteen long and devastating years of civil war between various Somali clans and sub-clans, while the rival regional powers – Ethiopia and Eritrea – have tended to take different sides and aid rival clans and sub-clans fighting against each other. Thus, the Somali civil war has developed into a regional and global conflict, which involves many other players, other than those mentioned above, including: al-Qa'ida, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt, IGAD, the African Union, the Arab League, and the UN.

Throughout its history, Somalia has witnessed a lot of local conflicts between rival clans and sub-clans as well as some major regional conflicts with Ethiopia. The common characteristic of all those major conflicts has been its development into regional conflicts between Ethiopia and the Arab world, while some of them have even developed into religious and global conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

Yet, this current Somali conflict is different from all past Somali conflicts in the numbers of regional, continental, and global players involved; the unprecedented active involvement of foreign players in Somali local affairs; and the immediate local, regional, and global circumstances at hand as well as the most important role radical Islam has played in the conflict.

So, the aim of this research is to explain how the immediate local, regional, and global circumstances at hand have made Somalia currently one of the main battlefields between regional powers and between the US and al-Qa'ida. Thus, this research will analyze the social and historical roots of the current conflict, the course of the conflict, the role of radical Islam in the conflict; and the intervention of external regional and global players in the conflict and its motives.

The question asked in this context is: what has contributed to the development of Somalia again and again throughout its history into a major regional and global battlefield?

Another aim of this research is to explore the relationship between tribalism or tribal identity and Islam in Somalia. Has the religion of Islam succeeded to be a unifying force transcending clan lines throughout Somalia history? Or, has

it served only as a tool in a certain point in history to unify the various Somali clans against a foreign Christian aggressor, and when the danger passed, the Somalis splintered back into their various tribes?

One of the most important local circumstances that must always be taken into account while trying to understand the causes for the emergence of Somali local, regional and global conflicts throughout history is the geography of Somalia and its strategic location.

## **Historical Background**

Somalia, officially the Somali Republic and formerly known as the Somali Democratic Republic, is located on the east coast of Africa between the Gulf of 'Aden on the north and the Indian Ocean on the east and has the longest coastline in Africa. Together with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti it is often referred to as the Horn of Africa because of its resemblance on the map to a rhinoceros's horn. It is bordered by Djibouti on the northwest, Kenya on its southwest, the Gulf of 'Aden with Yemen on its north, the Indian Ocean on its East and Ethiopia on the west.

Due to its strategic location in one of the world's main maritime arteries and trade routes, connecting the Middle East and Europe with the Far East, and its location on the shores of the Gulf of 'Aden and the Indian Ocean, just across the Gulf of 'Aden from the Arabian Peninsula, Ethiopia and the Arab world struggled over expanding their influence zones over Somalia. For Ethiopia, which has always striven for an outlet to the sea and to world commerce, spreading its control and influence into Somalia has been vital, while the for the Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt, Somalia served as the gate for the proliferation of Islam and Arab influence into the rest of Africa, especially East Africa. Thus, there is no wonder that Somalia has developed from the Middle Ages onwards into a battlefield between the Arab world and Ethiopia as well as between Christianity and Islam and, nowadays, due to the same strategic considerations, Somalia has developed into a battlefield between the US and al-Qa'ida.

Somalia is Africa's easternmost country and occupies the tip of the Horn of Africa. It has a land area of 637,450 square kilometers, slightly less than that of the state of Texas. Its terrain consists mainly of plateaus, plains, and highlands. The weather is hot throughout the year, except at the higher elevations in the north. Rainfall is sparse, and most of Somalia has a semiarid-to-arid environment suitable only for the nomadic pastoralism practiced by well over half of the population. Only in limited areas of moderate rainfall in the northwest, and

particularly in the southwest, where the country's two perennial rivers, the Jubba and the Shabeelle are found, is agriculture practiced to any extent. Favorable rainfall and soil conditions make the entire riverine region a fertile agricultural area and the center of the country's largest sedentary population. Furthermore, Somalia's local geology suggests the presence of valuable mineral deposits and oil.

Thus, climate is the primary factor in much of Somali life. For the large nomadic population, the timing and amount of rainfall are crucial determinants of the adequacy of grazing and the prospects of relative prosperity. There are some indications that the climate has become drier in the last century and that the increase in the number of people and animals has put a growing burden on water and vegetation.

This brings me to discuss the second most important local circumstance that must be always taken into account while trying to understand the causes for the emergence of Somali local and regional conflicts throughout history, which is Somali tribal society.

According to an official census taken in 1975 by the Somali government, Somalia has a population of approximately 9,118,773, though according to UN estimates in 2003, it has a population of around 10,700,000, 85% of which constitute ethnic Somalis, while the other 15% constitute Bantu and non-Somali inhabitants, including 30,000 Arabs. It should be mentioned that population counting in Somalia is complicated by the large number of nomads and by refugee movements caused often by famine and clan warfare.

The Somalis are an ethnic group located in the Horn of Africa. The overwhelming majority of Somalis speak the Somali language, which is part of the Cushitic sub-group of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Ethnic Somalis number around 20-25 million and are principally concentrated in Somalia (over 9 million), Ethiopia (4-5 million), northeastern Kenya (up to 1 million and even more than that during times of crisis in Somalia due to migration), Djibouti (350,000), and over a million living in non-East African countries and parts of the Middle east, North America, and Europe due to the Somali civil war.

Somalis are split up into many clans and sub-clans. The clan is the most important social unit in Somalia and, thus, clan membership continues to play an important part in Somali culture and politics. Clans are patrilineal and are often divided into sub-clans, sometimes with many sub-divisions. The number and size of sub-clans within a clan varied; the average sub-clan in the twentieth century numbered about 100,000 people.

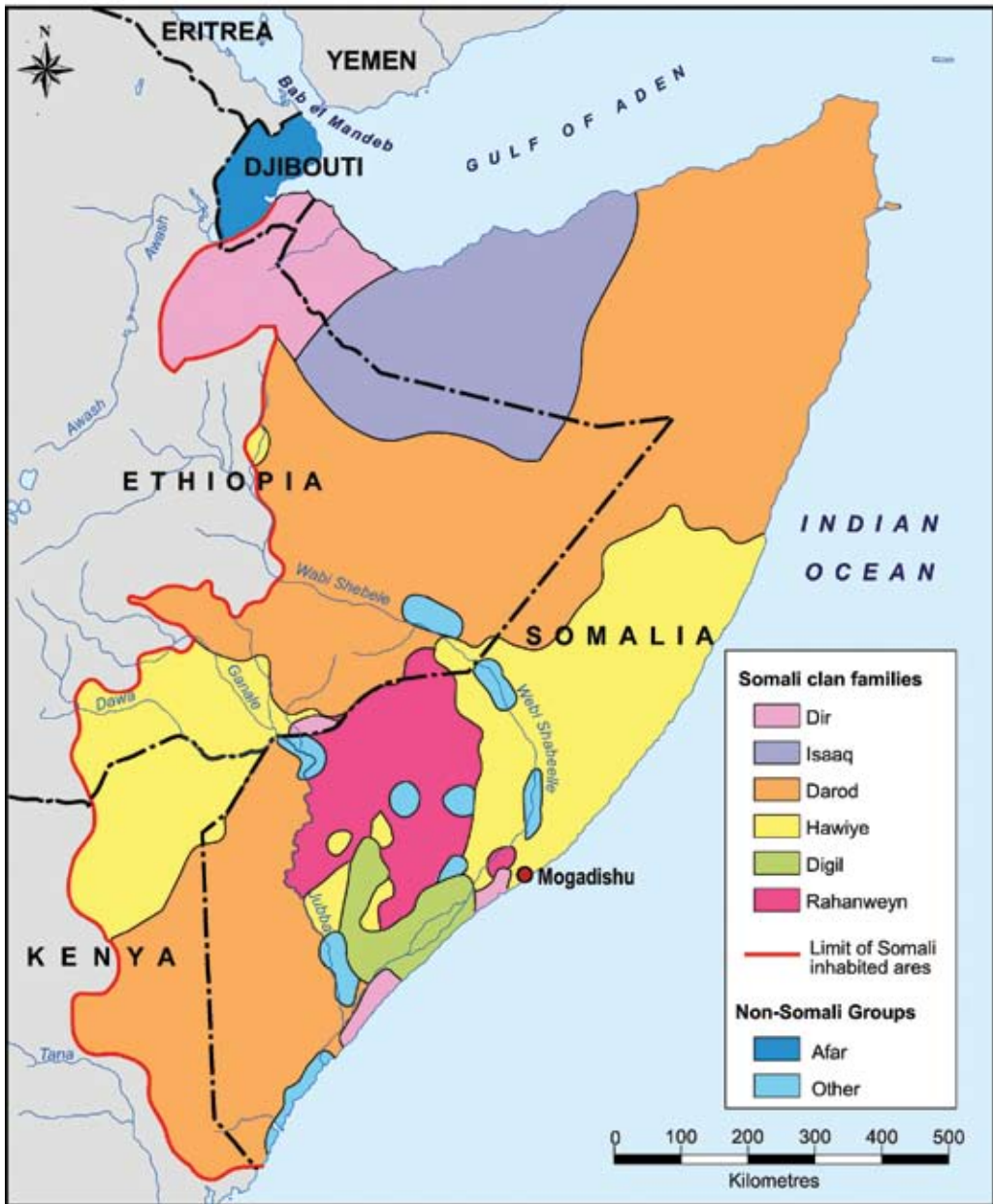
Certain clans are traditionally classed as "noble clans", referring to the belief that they share a common Somali ancestry, whereas the minority clans are believed to have mixed parentage. The noble clans are believed to be descended

from Samaale, and are sometimes referred to collectively by this name. The four noble clans are Darod, Dir, Hawiye, and Isaaq. Sab is the term used to refer to minority clans in contrast to Samaale.

The Hawiye members live in central and southern Somalia, in larger numbers in Kenya and Ethiopia, and in smaller numbers in other countries. As of 2007, the Hawiye is the most dominant clan in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. The Darod is the largest Somali clan and its members live throughout northeastern, southwestern Somalia and the Jubba River Valley as well as in northern Kenya and in Ogaden. The Isaaq members live mainly in Somaliland and the Somali region in Ethiopia. The Dir members live mostly in northern Somalia, central Somalia (Mudug), southern Somalia, as well as in Ethiopia's Somali region and in Djibouti.

The Rahanweyn is a Somali clan, composed of two major sub-clans, the Digil and the Mirifle. The Digil sub-clan consists mainly of farmers and coastal people, while the Mirifle consists mainly of nomadic pastoralists. They are concentrated mainly in the area between the Jubba and the Shabeelle rivers as well as in Mogadishu. They are also found in neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia, but not in Djibouti. They occupy a kind of second tier in the Somali social system. They do not follow a nomadic lifestyle, live further south and speak a group of Somali dialects (Af-Maay) which have recently been classified as a separate language and so they have been isolated to some extent from the mainstream of Somali society.

A third tier within Somali society includes several thousand persons, including some ethnic Somalis, who are integrated into traditional society but are not included within the five major clans. Among them there are Somali clans descended from ancestors predating or otherwise missing from the genealogies of the five major clans. Others are lineages of relatively unmixed Arab or Persian descent, whose members used to live in the coastal towns. Such lineages or communities have varying relationships with local Somalis. Some are clients subordinate to Somali groups, while others are independent entities in the larger towns. A second category consists of the so-called Habash, or Adoon, cultivators or hunters of pre-Somali origin who live among the Rahanweyn and Digil in the inter-riverine areas. A third category consists of occupationally specialized caste-like groups, members of which are attached to Somali lineages or clans. These occupational groups have sometimes been treated as outcastes, because traditionally they can only marry among themselves and other Somalis consider them to be ritually unclean. They live in their own settlements and perform specialized occupations, such as metalworking, tanning and hunting. These clans include the Midgan, Tumal, and Yibir. Finally, until the last were freed in the 1920s, there were a small number of slaves attached to both pastoral



Map 2: Somali Ethnic Groups and its Distribution

The Somalis are a culturally, linguistically, and religiously homogeneous people (99% of the overall population are Sunni Muslims, while the remainder one percent are Christians), who are divided along clan lines. Moreover, there are significant distinctions among sectors of the population, related in part to variations in means of livelihood. In the early 1990s, roughly 60% of the overall population was still nomadic pastoralists or semi-nomadic herders. Twenty to 25 percent of the population was cultivators, most living in the southwestern part of Somalia, on or between Somalia's two major rivers, the Jubba and the Shabeelle. The remainder was town residents, the vast majority of them resided in Mogadishu. However, with the fall of General Muhammad Siad Barre's regime on January 27, 1991, and the ensuing civil war that resulted in the disintegration of the Somali state, patterns of residency changed dramatically and Mogadishu has been overcrowded since then with thousands of refugees flocking to it from all over the country.

The Somalis segment themselves into a hierarchical system of patrilineal descent groups, each said to originate with a single male ancestor. Their constituent units are the clans, which in turn are made up of lineages, which themselves are further segmented. Among the sedentary Somalis, however, descent gives way in part to territoriality as a framework for social, political, and economic organization. Membership in clans and lineages shapes the allocation of individual rights and obligations. Contracts or treaties bound specified descent groups and their individual members together for the making of war and peace and, above all, for the provision of compensation in cases of homicide and injury.

The overwhelming majority of Somalis trace their genealogical origin to the mythical founding father, Samaale or Samaal. Even those clans, such as the Digil and the Rahanweyn in southwestern Somalia, whose members in many cases do not trace their lineage directly to Samaal, readily identify themselves as Somalis, thereby accepting the primacy of Samaal as the forebear of the Somali people. Thus, genealogy constitutes the heart of the Somali social order. It is the basis of the collective Somali nationalism as well as of the Somalis' sense of being distinct.

The Somali social order has been marked throughout Somalia's history by competition and often by armed conflict between clans and lineages, even between units of the same clan or sub-clan. Among the Samaal, the search for pasture and water has driven clans and lineages physically apart or pitted them against each other. Within each unit, Somali males considered better warriors, wiser arbiters, or abler speakers have commanded greater respect in council. However, pastoral Somalis have looked down on sedentary ones, and both have looked down on non-Somali clients of the sedentary Somalis and members of



despised occupational groups, who have made up only a very small proportion of the population.

Located in the Horn of Africa, adjacent to the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia is steeped in thousands of years of history. The ancient Egyptians spoke of it as "God's Land" (the Land of Punt). Chinese merchants frequented the Somali coast in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and, according to tradition, returned home with giraffes, leopards, and tortoises. Greek and Roman merchant ships and Arab dhows plied the Somali coast. For them it formed the eastern fringe of Bilad al-Sudan, or "the Land of the Blacks". More specifically, medieval Arabs referred to the Somalis, along with related people, as the Berberi.

Still, it is unclear from this Arab reference who are the Somali people and where they originated from. Due to a lack of written evidence of the early history of the Samaal, numerous historical perspectives on their origins have been presented. According to Arab historical sources, the ancestors of the Somali people migrated south from the shores of the red sea into the Cushitic-speaking Oromo region from approximately the tenth century, with the Oromos displacing the Bantu-speaking people further south. According to another source based on northern oral history, the Somali are a hybrid group originating in the marriages of two Arab shaikhs to local Dir women, whose descendants migrated from the Gulf of 'Aden towards Northern Kenya in the tenth century.

Based on a hybrid of archaeological, anthropological and historical linguistic evidence, it is now widely asserted that the Samaal originated in the lake regions of current day southern Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, as sub-group of the Cushitic peoples. In the first millennium BC, it is believed that the sub-group known as Omo-Tana moved northwards from the lake highland areas until reaching the Tana River and the Indian Ocean. Some settled along the Lamu peninsula, situated near the northern Kenya and southern Somalia border, while others continued to move northwards into southern Somalia. There the group's members eventually developed a mixed economy based on farming and animal husbandry, a mode of life still common in southern Somalia. Members of the Omo-Tana group who came to occupy the Somali Peninsula were known as the so-called Samaale, or Samaal, a clear reference to the mythical father figure of the main Somali clans, whose name gave rise to the term Somali. The Samaale again moved farther north in search of water and pasturelands. They swept into the vast Ogaden (Ogaadeen) plains, reaching the southern shore of the Red Sea by the first century A.D.

The expansion into the Somali peninsula as far as the Red Sea and Indian Ocean put the Somalis in sustained contact with Persian and Arab immigrants who had established a series of settlements along the coast. From the eighth to the tenth centuries, Persian and Arab traders were already engaged in lucrative

commerce from enclaves along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean as far south as the coast of present-day Kenya. The most significant enclave was the renowned medieval emporium of Saylac on the Gulf of 'Aden. In the sixteenth century, Saylac became the principal outlet for trade in coffee, gold, ostrich feathers, civet, and Ethiopian slaves bound for the Middle East, China, and India. Over time Saylac emerged as the center of Muslim culture and learning, famed for its schools and mosques. Eventually, it became the capital of the medieval state of Adal, which in the sixteenth century fought off Christian Ethiopian domination of the highlands. Between 1560 and 1660, Ethiopian expeditions repeatedly harried Saylac, which sank into decay. Berbera replaced Saylac as the northern hub of Islamic influence in the Horn of Africa. By the middle of the sixteenth century, both Saylac and Berbera had become dependencies of the Sharifs of Mocha and in the seventeenth century passed to the Ottoman Turks, who exercised authority over them through locally recruited Somali governors.

The history of commercial and intellectual contact between the inhabitants of the Arabian and Somali coasts may help explain the Somali connection with Islam. Early in the Prophet Muhammad's ministry, a band of persecuted Muslims had, with the Prophet's encouragement, fled across the Red Sea into the Horn of Africa. There the Muslims were afforded protection by the Ethiopian negus, or emperor. Thus, Islam may have been introduced into the Horn of Africa well before the faith took root in its Arabian native soil. Yet, the large-scale conversion of the Somalis had to await the arrival in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries of Muslim Sufi shaikhs, in particular, the renowned shaikh Daarood Jabarti and Shaikh Isahaaq, or Isaaq. Daarood married Doombira Dir, the daughter of a local senior. Their marriage gave rise to the confederacy that forms one of the two largest clans in Somalia, the Darod. For his part, shaikh Isaaq founded the Isaaq clan in northern Somalia. Along with the clan system of lineages, the Arabian Sufi shaikhs probably introduced into Somalia the patriarchal ethos and patrilineal genealogy, and gradually replaced the indigenous Somali social organization, which, like that of many other African societies, may have been matrilineal.

Islam's penetration of the Somali coast, along with the immigration of Arabian elements, inspired a second great population movement reversing the flow of migration from north to south. This massive movement, which ultimately took the Somalis to the banks of the Tana River and to the fertile plains of Harar, in Ethiopia, began in the thirteenth century and continued to the nineteenth century.

In addition to southward migration, a second factor in Somali history from the fifteenth century onward was the emergence of centralized state systems. The most important of these in medieval times was the Sultanate of Adal, whose

influence at the height of its power and prosperity in the sixteenth century extended from Saylac, the capital, through the fertile valleys of the Jijiga and the Harar plateau to the Ethiopian highlands. The Sultanate of Adal's fame derived not only from the prosperity and cosmopolitanism of its people, its architectural sophistication, graceful mosques, and high learning, but also from its conflicts with the expansionist Ethiopians.

For hundreds of years before the fifteenth century, good relations had existed between the Muslims and Christian Ethiopia. One tradition holds that Prophet Muhammad blessed Ethiopia and enjoined his disciples from ever conducting Jihad (holy war) against the Christian kingdom in gratitude for the protection early Muslims had received from the Ethiopian emperor. Whereas Muslim armies rapidly overran the more powerful empires of Persia and Byzantium soon after the birth of Islam, there was no Jihad conducted against Christian Ethiopia for centuries.

However, Muslim-Christian relations soured during the reign of the aggressive Emperor Yeshaq (ruled 1414-29). Forces of his rapidly expanding empire descended from the highlands to attack Muslim settlements to the east of the ancient city of Harar. Having branded the Muslims "enemies of the Lord," Yeshaq invaded the Muslim Kingdom of Ifat in 1415, killed its king, Sa'ad al-Din compelled the Muslims to offer tribute, and also ordered his singers to compose a hymn of thanksgiving for his victory. In the hymn's lyrics, the word Somali appears for the first time in written record.

By the sixteenth century, the Sultanate of Adal was tributary to the Ethiopians. By then, the Muslims had recovered sufficiently to break through from the east into the central Ethiopian highlands. Led by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (1506-43), nicknamed Gagn, or Guray in Somali (the left handed), the Muslims poured into Ethiopia, using scorched-earth tactics that decimated the population of the country and brought three-quarters of Ethiopia under the power of the Sultanate of Adal between the years 1529 – 1543. In desperation, the Ethiopians were forced to ask for help from the Portuguese, who landed at the port of Massawa on February 10, 1541, during the reign of the emperor Gelawdewos (1540 – 1559). Knowing that victory depended on the number of firearms an army had, the Imam sent to his fellow Muslims for help. Imam Ahmad received 2000 musketeers from Arabia, and artillery and 900 picked men from the Ottomans to assist him. Finally, after suffering some defeats, the joint Ethiopian-Portuguese force, drawing on the Portuguese supplies, attacked Imam Ahmad on February 21, 1543 in the Battle of Wayna Daga, where their 9,000 troops managed to defeat the 15,000 soldiers under Imam Ahmad, who was killed by a Portuguese musketeer.

This was the first conflict in the Horn of Africa that pitted Somalia and the

Arab world against Ethiopia and Muslims against Christians. Ethiopia, which in that period was an island of Christianity encircled by Muslims, had no choice but to ask for help from the closest Christians at hand, the Portuguese. By then, the Portuguese ruled the Indian Ocean littoral and tried to dominate the Red Sea. Imam Ahmad, however, asked for the Ottomans' help. Then, the Ottomans ruled the Red Sea and struggled with the Portuguese over the domination over the Indian Ocean and tried to prevent the penetration of the Portuguese into the Red Sea.

Thus, this regional war turned out to be another battlefield between the Ottomans - who in the sixteenth century advanced in Europe until Vienna and struggled with the Portuguese on the hegemony over the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean and seemed to be unstoppable – and the Christian powers, who tried to block its rapid advance, and, in this case, to prevent the fall of Christian Ethiopia to the Muslims' hands.

In this sense, this conflict serves to illustrate the strategic location of Somalia and the Horn of Africa and its growing importance in global affairs as from the sixteenth century onwards following the expansionist policy of Ethiopia towards the sea and the arrival of the European powers at the Indian Ocean. Moreover, it must be mentioned that many modern Somali nationalists consider Imam Ahmad Guray a national hero and the first great Somali nationalist, who emerged on the scene just on time in order to defend the country from foreign invaders like the Christian Ethiopians and the Portuguese.

Later on, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Omanis exercised a shadowy authority over the Banaadir coast. Omani rule over the Somalis consisted for the most part of a token annual tribute payment and the presence of a resident qadi and a handful of askaris (territorial police). Whereas the Banaadir coast was steadily drawn into the orbit of Zanzibari rulers, the northern coast, starting in the middle of the eighteenth century, passed under the sharifs of Mocha, who held their feeble authority on behalf of the declining Ottomans. The Mocha sharifs, much like the sultans of Zanzibar, satisfied themselves with a token yearly tribute collected for them by a native governor. Farther east on the Majeerteen (Bari) coast, by the middle of the nineteenth century two tiny kingdoms emerged. These were the Majeerteen Sultanate of Boqor Ismaan Mahmud, and that of his kinsman Sultan Yusuf Ali Keenadiid of Hobyo (Obbia). While acknowledging a vague vassalage to the British, Ismaan Mahamuud kept his desert kingdom free until well after 1900. In the 1870s, Keenadiid carved out the small kingdom of Hobyo after conquering the local Hawiye clans. Both kingdoms, however, were gradually absorbed by the extension into southern Somalia of Italian colonial rule in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw political developments that

transformed the Somali Peninsula. During this period, the Somalis became the subjects of state systems under the flags of Britain, France, Italy, Egypt, and Ethiopia. The new rulers had various motives for colonization.

Britain sought to gain control of the northern Somali coast as a source of mutton and other livestock products for its naval port of 'Aden in present-day Yemen. As a result of the growing importance of the Red Sea to British operations in the East, 'Aden was regarded as indispensable to the defense of British India. British occupation of the northern Somali coast began in earnest in February 1884, when Major A. Hunter arrived at Berbera to negotiate treaties of friendship and protection with numerous Somali clans. Hunter arranged to have British vice consuls installed in Berbera, Bullaxaar, and Saylac.

The French, having been evicted from Egypt by the British, wished to establish a coaling station on the Red Sea coast to strengthen naval links with their Indochina colonies. The French were also eager to bisect Britain's vaunted Cairo to Cape Town zone of influence with an east to west expansion across Africa. France extended its foothold on the Afar coast partly to counter the high duties that the British authorities imposed on French goods in Obock. A French protectorate was proclaimed under the governorship of L'once Lagarde, who played a prominent role in extending French influence into the Horn of Africa.

Recently unified, Italy was inexperienced at imperial power plays. It was therefore content to stake out a territory whenever it could do so without confronting another colonial power. In southern Somalia, better known as the Banaadir coast, Italy was the main colonizer, but the extension of Italian influence was painstakingly slow owing to parliamentary lack of enthusiasm for overseas territory. Italy acquired its first possession in southern Somalia in 1888 when the Sultan of Hobyo, Keenadiid, agreed to Italian "protection." In the same year, Vincenzo Filonardi, Italy's architect of imperialism in southern Somalia, demanded a similar arrangement from the Majeerteen Sultanate of Ismaan Mahamuud. In 1889 both sultans, suspicious of each other, consented to place their lands under Italian protection. Italy then notified the signatory powers of the Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884-85 of its southeastern Somali protectorate. Later, Italy seized the Banaadir coast proper, which had long been under the tenuous authority of the Zanzibaris, to form the colony of Italian Somaliland. Chisimayu Region, which passed to the British as a result of their protectorate over the Zanzibaris, was ceded to Italy in 1925 to complete Italian tenure over southern Somalia.

What the European colonialists failed to foresee was that the biggest threat to their imperial ambitions in the Horn of Africa would come from an emerging regional power, the Ethiopia of Emperor Menelik II (1889 – 1909). Emperor Menelik II not only managed to defend Ethiopia against European encroachment,

but also succeeded in competing with the Europeans for the Somali-inhabited territories that he claimed as part of Ethiopia. Between 1887 and 1897, Menelik II successfully extended Ethiopian rule over the long independent Muslim Emirate of Harar and over western Somalia (better known as the Ogaden).

Thus, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the ethnic Somalis were divided between British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Ethiopian Somaliland (the Ogaden), and what came to be called the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya. As a result, the Greater Somalia vision, or Pan-Somalism, of unifying all these territories under an enlarged Somali state developed. The pursuit of this goal has led to conflict, with Somalia engaging in armed warfare repeatedly with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region.

Given the frequency and virulence of the Ethiopian raids, it was natural that the first Pan-Somali or Greater Somalia effort against colonial occupation, and for unification of all areas populated by Somalis into one country, should have been directed at the hated Ethiopians as well as the European colonialists; the effort was spearheaded by the Somali dervish resistance movement, headed by Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdallah Hasan (1856 – 1920), nicknamed by the British "the Mad Mullah", who for twenty years led armed resistance against the British, Italian, and Ethiopian forces in Somalia.

Sayyid Muhammad was born on April 7, 1856, in northern Somaliland and by the age of twelve he had decided to dedicate his life to the religion of Islam. His subsequent travels throughout Arabia and East Africa in search of knowledge, his reputation for learning, and his abilities as a teacher soon earned him the honorary title of "Shaikh." While in Saudi Arabia, he joined the fanatical Sufi order of Muhammad Salih, whose tenets were of a harsh and uncompromising nature as compared with those of the Qadiriyyah, which was then and still is the predominant Sufi order in Somalia. When he returned to Somalia in 1895, he began to condemn all excessive indulgences and luxuries and exhorted his people to return to a strict path of Muslim devotion.

During that era of the European partition of Africa, Sayyid Muhammad's contact with Catholic missionaries and British colonial officials convinced him that Christian colonization sought to destroy the Islamic faith of the Somalis. He believed that his passion to deepen Somali faith would never be realized until they were free, so he intensified his efforts by urging his countrymen to remove the European "infidels". In his attempt to create a national movement, he used kinship ties as bases for political alliances and deftly utilized marriage ties to cement alliances with clans with whom his relations were poor. Sayyid Muhammad's success as a mediator between clans and tribes over water and grazing rights – main concerns for the pastoral Somalis back then and still nowadays – and his remarkable abilities as a poet further enhanced his fame, so

that by 1899 he had attracted 3000 followers, whom he called "dervishes".

Sayyid Muhammad acquired great influence with his mother's kinsmen in the Dolbahanta country, where he grew up. His followers credited him with supernatural powers. Some were hotfired by his religious and political teachings. Others were attracted by promises of the wealth to be gained by raiding the stock of those tribes, which espoused the infidel's cause. Others were inspired by a dual motive, religious and material: they saw an admirable opportunity to lay up for themselves treasure in the Islamic paradise by confiscating other tribes' treasure upon earth.

At first, Sayyid Muhammad began attacking neighboring tribes friendly to the British, and in 1899 he declared himself a Mahdi, inspired by the rebellious Sudanese Mahdi, who acted in the Sudan until 1898. He acquired weapons from the Ottoman Empire, Sudan, and other Arab countries. After heavy fighting in 1900 and 1901, British forces drove Sayyid Muhammad and his followers into Italian Somaliland. By 1903, however, he was a problem again. With the cooperation of the Italians and Ethiopians, and after much fighting, he was once again driven out of the colony. The Italians seemed to solve the problem through reaching an agreement with him. In 1909, Sayyid Muhammad was once again raiding tribes friendly to the British. The British withdrew from the interior of the colony due to financial stringency, while confining their control to coastal towns. Many Somalis unsympathetic to Sayyid Muhammad's movement were then subjected to reprisals, and Somaliland lapsed into a state of unparalleled confusion and chaos. After a while the British decided to retake the interior, and launched an offensive in the summer of 1914. Unfortunately, the military commitments of World War I allowed for little more than defensive operations in their small Somali colony. In January 1920, however, the British government organized a carefully combined air, sea, and land attack on the dervishes. They routed dervish forces by bombing Taleex, the center of Sayyid Muhammad's rule located in the heart of Nugaal, and he was forced to abandon it to reorganize. He rejected a British offer of free pardon upon surrender. Further attacks forced his dwindling forces into eastern Ethiopia, where he eventually succumbed to an attack of influenza and died on December 21, 1920.

Sayyid Muhammad, like his predecessor Imam Ahmad Guray, was a Somali politico-religious leader. Both were born in northern Somalia and concentrated their war efforts against the Ethiopians. Both were Muslim religious leaders fighting the advance of Christianity into their country.

Yet, unlike Imam Ahmad Guray, whose actions were limited to northern Somalia and Ethiopia, Sayyid Muhammad is considered to be the father of Somali nationalism for his inspiration and leadership of the Dervish resistance movement in a more than twenty years of holy war against European and

Ethiopian expansion into his country, in particular against the administration of British Somaliland and their Somali allies, but also against the Italians in southern Somalia. Being one of the longest and bloodiest conflicts in the annals of sub-Saharan resistance to alien encroachment, this holy war devastated the Somali Peninsula and resulted in the death of an estimated one-third of northern Somalia's population and the near destruction of its economy.

Above all, the importance and the long lasting heritage of the Dervish resistance movement and Sayyid Muhammad derived from the inspiration they gave future generations in Somalia, and especially the current generation, in their quest to unite all Somalis under the joint banner of Somali nationalism and Islam.

The vision of Greater Somalia came true sooner than expected. Italy's 1935 attack on Ethiopia led to a temporary Somali reunification. After Italian premier Benito Mussolini's armies marched into Ethiopia and toppled Emperor Haile Selassie in 1936, the Italians seized British Somaliland. During their occupation (1940-41), the Italians re-amalgamated the Ogaden with southern and northern Somaliland, uniting for the first time in forty years all the Somali clans that had been arbitrarily separated by the Anglo-Italo-Ethiopian boundaries. The Italian victory turned out to be short-lived, however. In March 1941, the British counterattacked and reoccupied northern Somalia, from which they launched their lightning campaign to retake the whole region from Italy and restore Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne. The British then placed southern Somalia and the Ogaden under a military administration. Following Italy's defeat, the British established military administrations in what had been British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and Ethiopian Somaliland. Thus, all Somali-inhabited territories - with the exception of French Somaliland and Kenya's Northern Frontier District (NFD) - were for the second time brought under a single tenure.

Although southern Somalia legally was an Italian colony, in 1945 the Potsdam Conference decided not to return to Italy the African territory Britain had seized during the war. The disposition of Somalia therefore fell to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, which assigned a four-power commission consisting of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States to decide Somalia's future. The British suggested that all the Somalis should be placed under a single administration, preferably British, but the other powers accused Britain of imperial machinations.

In January 1948, commission representatives arrived in Mogadishu to learn the aspirations of the Somalis. Based on the its hearings conducted with the Somalis, the commission recommended a plan to reunite all Somalis and to place Somalia under a ten-year trusteeship overseen by an international



body that would lead the country to independence. But the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, under the influence of conflicting diplomatic interests, failed to reach consensus on the way to guide the country to independence. France favored the colony's return to Italy; Britain favored a formula much like that of the plan recommended by the commission, but the British plan was thwarted by the United States and the Soviet Union, which accused Britain of seeking imperial gains at the expense of Ethiopian and Italian interests. Britain was unwilling to quarrel with its erstwhile allies over Somali well-being and the plan recommended by the commission was withdrawn. Meanwhile, Ethiopia strongly pressured Britain through the United States, which was anxious to accommodate Emperor Haile Selassie in return for his promise to offer the United States a military base in Ethiopia. For its part, the Soviet Union preferred to reinstate Italian tenure, mainly because of the growing communist influence on Italian domestic politics.

Under United States and Soviet prodding, Britain returned the Ogaden to Ethiopia in 1948 over massive Somali protests. The action shattered Somali nationalist aspirations for Greater Somalia, but the shock was softened by the payment of considerable war reparations to Ogaden clan chiefs. In 1949, many grazing areas in the hinterlands also were returned to Ethiopia, but Britain gained Ethiopian permission to station British liaison officers in the Reserved Areas, areas frequented by British-protected Somali clans. The liaison officers moved about with the British-protected clans that frequented the Haud pasturelands for six months of the year. The liaison officers protected the pastoralists from Ethiopian "tax collectors" - armed bands that Ethiopia frequently sent to the Ogaden, both to demonstrate its sovereignty and to defray administrative costs by seizing Somali livestock.

Meanwhile, because of disagreements among commission members over the disposition of Somalia, the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers referred the matter to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. In November 1949, the General Assembly voted to make southern Somalia a trust territory to be placed under Italian control for ten years, following which it would become independent. The General Assembly stipulated that under no circumstance should Italian rule over the colony extend beyond 1960. The General Assembly seems to have been persuaded by the argument that Italy, because of its experience and economic interests, was best suited to administer southern Somalia.

Indeed, the British government acquiesced to the force of Somali nationalist public opinion and agreed to terminate its rule of British Somaliland in 1960 in time for the protectorate to merge with the trust territory on the independence date already fixed by the UN commission. In April 1960, leaders of the two territories met in Mogadishu and agreed to form a unitary state. An elected

president was to be head of state. Full executive powers would be held by a prime minister answerable to an elected National Assembly of 123 members representing the two territories. Accordingly, British Somaliland received its independence on June 26, 1960, and united with the trust territory to establish the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960.

Although unified as a single nation at independence, the south and the north were, from an institutional perspective, two separate countries. Italy and Britain had left the two with separate administrative, legal, and education systems in which affairs were conducted according to different procedures and in different languages. Police, taxes, and the exchange rates of their respective currencies also differed. Their educated elites had divergent interests, and economic contacts between the two regions were virtually nonexistent. Many southerners believed that, because of experience gained under the Italian trusteeship, theirs was the better prepared of the two regions for self-government. Northern political, administrative, and commercial elites were reluctant to recognize that they now had to deal with Mogadishu.

The colonial heritage resulting in post-colonial difficulties to integrate former British Somaliland with former Italian Somaliland continued to affect Somali society and politics until the 1990s and the establishment of Somaliland in 1991 in the territory of the former British Somaliland.

Despite the difficulties encountered in integrating north and south, the most important political issue in post-independence Somali politics was the unification of all areas populated by Somalis into one country. Politicians assumed that this issue dominated popular opinion and that any government would fall if it did not demonstrate a militant attitude toward neighboring countries occupying Somali territory.

Preoccupation with Greater Somalia shaped the character of the country's newly formed institutions and led to the build-up of the Somali military and ultimately to the fighting in the NFD in Kenya and to the war with Ethiopia. By law, the exact size of the National Assembly was not established in order to facilitate the inclusion of representatives of the contested areas after unification. The national flag featured a five-pointed star whose points represented those areas claimed as part of the Somali nation - the former Italian and British territories, the Ogaden, Djibouti, and the NFD. Moreover, the preamble to the constitution approved in 1961 included the statement that the Somali Republic would promote the union of the Somali-inhabited territories by legal and peaceful means. The constitution also provided that all ethnic Somalis, no matter where they resided, were citizens of the republic. The Somalis did not claim sovereignty over adjacent territories, but rather demanded that Somalis living in them be granted the right to self-determination. Somali leaders asserted that

they would be satisfied only when their fellow Somalis outside the republic had the opportunity to decide for themselves what their status would be.

In this spirit, Somali representatives from the NFD demanded at the 1961 London talks on the future of Kenya, that Britain arrange for the NFD's separation before Kenya was granted independence. The British government appointed a commission to ascertain popular opinion in the NFD on the question. Its investigation indicated that separation from Kenya was almost unanimously supported by the Somalis and their fellow nomadic pastoralists, the Oromo. These two peoples, it was noted, represented a majority of the NFD's population. Despite Somali diplomatic activity, the colonial government in Kenya did not act on the commission's findings. British officials believed that the federal format then proposed in the Kenyan constitution would provide a solution through the degree of autonomy it allowed the predominantly Somali region within the federal system. This solution did not diminish Somali demands for unification, however, and the modicum of federalism disappeared after Kenya's government opted for a centralized constitution in 1964.

The denial of Somali claims led to growing hostility between the Kenyan government and Somalis in the NFD. The province, thus, entered a period of running skirmishes between the Kenyan army and the Somali-backed Northern Frontier District Liberation Movement (NFDLM) insurgents. The northeast, declared a "special district", was subject to nearly unfettered government control, including the authority to detain, arrest or forcibly move individuals or groups, as well as confiscate possessions and land. Adapting easily to life as shiftas, or bandits, the Somalis conducted a guerrilla campaign against the police and army for more than four years between 1963 and 1967. Then, the then Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, mediated peace talks between Somali Prime Minister, Muhammad Igaal, and Kenyan President, Kenyatta. These bore fruit in October 1967, when the governments of Kenya and Somalia signed a Memorandum of Understanding that resulted in a ceasefire.

One immediate consequence was the signing in 1964 of a Mutual Defense Treaty between Kenya and Ethiopia in response to what both countries perceived as a continuing threat from Somalia. This pact was renewed in 1980 and again on August 28, 1987, calling for the coordination of the armed forces of both states in the event of an attack by Somalia. However, the treaty had little effect as neither Kenya nor Ethiopia was able to stem the cross-border flow of materiel.

Even though this was a very limited conflict owing, first and foremost, to the Kenyan government's wish to keep it that way, Kenya has been watchful of Somalia ever since, especially from the 1990s, in order to ensure that the Somali civil war will not spill into its still pre-dominantly Somali North Eastern Province. As for Somalia, it did not renounce its claim to establish a Greater

Somalia including all Somali-inhabited territories.

Somalia refused to acknowledge in particular the validity of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1954, recognizing Ethiopia's claim to the Haud or, in general, the relevance of treaties defining Somali-Ethiopian borders. Somalia's position was based on three points: first, that the treaties disregarded agreements made with the clans that had put them under British protection; second, that the Somalis were not consulted on the terms of the treaties and in fact had not been informed of their existence; and third, that such treaties violated the self-determination principle.

Incidents began to occur in the Haud within six months after Somali independence. At first, the incidents were confined to minor clashes between Ethiopian police and armed parties of Somali nomads, usually resulting from traditional provocations such as smuggling, livestock rustling, and tax collecting, rather than irredentist agitation. Their actual causes aside, these incidents tended to be viewed in Somalia as expressions of Somali nationalism. Hostilities grew steadily, eventually involving small-scale actions between Somali and Ethiopian armed forces along the border. In February 1964, armed conflict erupted along the Somali-Ethiopian frontier, and Ethiopian aircraft raided targets in Somalia. Hostilities ended in April through the mediation of Sudan, acting under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Under the terms of the cease-fire, a joint commission was established to examine the causes of frontier incidents, and a demilitarized zone ten to fifteen kilometers wide was established on either side of the border. At least temporarily, further military confrontations were prevented.

Though both conflicts were low-scale ones and very limited in their scope – unlike past conflicts involving Somalia and Ethiopia – they alienated most OAU members, who feared that if Somalia were successful in detaching the Somali-populated portions of Kenya and Ethiopia, the example might inspire their own restive minorities divided by frontiers imposed during the colonial period. In addition, in making its irredentist claims, the Somalis had challenged two of Africa's leading elder statesmen, President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

Among those most dissatisfied with the government were intellectuals and members of the armed forces and police. Of these dissatisfied groups, the most significant element was the military, which since 1961 had remained outside politics. It had done so partly because the government had not called upon it for support and partly because, unlike most other African armed forces, the Somali National Army had a genuine external mission in which it was supported by all Somalis – that of protecting the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya. So, the stage was set for an army coup d'état, which deposed the civilian government on October 21, 1969.

Although not regarded as the author of the military takeover, army commander Major General Muhammad Siad Barre assumed leadership of the officers who deposed the civilian government. The new governing body, the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), installed Siad Barre as its president. The SRC arrested and detained at the presidential palace leading members of the democratic regime, banned political parties, abolished the National Assembly, and suspended the constitution. The new regime's goals included an end to "tribalism, nepotism, corruption, and misrule." Existing treaties were to be honored, but national liberation movements and Somali unification were to be supported. The country was renamed the Somali Democratic Republic.

At least in the beginning, however, the Siad Barre's regime pledged continuance of regional detente in its foreign relations without relinquishing Somali claims to disputed territories. But, then, all of a sudden, Siad Barre sent his army in 1977 to fight with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, in what would develop into a conventional conflict between the two countries.

While there is no doubt that the cause of the conflict was the desire of the Siad Barre's regime to incorporate the Somali-inhabited Ogaden region of Ethiopia into a Greater Somalia, it is very unlikely Barre would have ordered the invasion if the circumstances had not turned in his favor. By the beginning of the war, the Somali National Army (SNA) was only 35,000-men strong and was vastly outnumbered by the Ethiopian forces. However, throughout the 1970s, Somalia was the recipient of large amounts of Soviet military aid. The Somali National Army (SNA) had three times the tank force of Ethiopia, as well as a larger air force.

Even as Somalia gained military strength, Ethiopia grew weaker. In September 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie had been overthrown by the Derg (the military council), marking a period of turmoil. The Derg quickly fell into internal conflict to determine who would have primacy. Meanwhile, various anti-Derg as well as separatist movements emerged throughout the country. The regional balance of power now favored Somalia. One of the separatist groups seeking to take advantage of the chaos was the pro-Somalia Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), operating in the Somali-inhabited Ogaden area, which by late 1975 had struck numerous government outposts. From 1976 to 1977, Somalia supplied arms and other aid to the WSLF.

A sign that order had been restored among the Derg was the announcement of Mengistu Haile Mariam as head of state on February 11, 1977. However, the country remained in chaos as the military attempted to suppress its civilian opponents. Despite the violence, the Soviet Union, which had been closely observing developments, came to believe that Ethiopia was developing into a genuine Marxist-Leninist state and that it was in Soviet interests to aid the

new regime. They, thus, secretly approached Mengistu with offers of aid that he accepted. Ethiopia closed the US military mission and the communication center in April 1977.

In June 1977, Mengistu accused Somalia of infiltrating SNA soldiers into the Somali area to fight alongside the WSLF. Despite considerable evidence to the contrary, Barre insisted that no such thing was occurring, but that SNA "volunteers" were being allowed to help the WSLF. Somalia decided to make a decisive move and invaded the Ogaden in July 13, 1977, according to Ethiopian documents, while some other sources state July 23. According to Ethiopian sources, they numbered 70,000 troops, 40 fighter planes, 250 tanks, 350 APCs, and 600 artillery, which would have meant practically the whole Somali army. By the end of the month, sixty percent of the Ogaden had been taken by the SNA-WSLF force, including Gode, on the Shabeelle River. By September, Ethiopia was forced to admit that it controlled only about ten percent of the Ogaden and that the Ethiopian defenders had been pushed back into the non-Somali areas of Harerge, Bale, and Sidamo. However, the Somalis were unable to press their advantage because of the high level of attrition among its tank battalions, constant Ethiopian air attacks on their supply lines, and the onset of the rainy season, which made the roads unusable. During that time, the Ethiopian government managed to raise a giant militia force and integrated it into the regular fighting force.

The Soviet Union, finding itself supplying both sides of the war, attempted to mediate a ceasefire. When their efforts failed, the Soviets decided to abandon Somalia. All aid to Siad barre's regime was halted, while arms shipments to Ethiopia were increased. Soviet military aid plus Soviet advisors flooded into the country along with around 15,000 Cuban combat groups. Other communist countries offered assistance to Ethiopia: The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen offered military assistance and North Korea helped train a "People's Militia"; East Germany likewise offered training, engineering and support troops. As the scale of Communist assistance became clear in November 1977, Somalia broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and expelled all Soviet citizens from the country.

From October 1977 until January 1978, the SNA-WSLF forces attempted to capture Harar, where 40,000 Ethiopians backed by Soviet-supplied artillery and armor had regrouped with 1,500 Soviet advisors and 11,000 Cuban soldiers. Though it reached the city outskirts by November, the Somali force was too exhausted to take the city and was eventually forced to retreat outside and await an Ethiopian counterattack. The expected Ethiopian-Cuban attack occurred in early February. The Somali defense collapsed and every major Ethiopian town was recaptured in the following weeks. Recognizing that his position was

untenable, Siad barre ordered the SNA to retreat back into Somalia on March 9, 1978. The last significant Somali unit left Ethiopia on March 15, 1978, marking the end of the war.

This war was the first and only Somali-Ethiopian conflict initiated by Somalia without any previous Ethiopian provocation, as was the case in the previous conflicts described here. If the decision to go to war was the result of regional circumstances turning to Somalia's favor on Ethiopia's account, then the end of the war must be seen also as a result of the Soviet Union shifting sides from backing Somalia to abandoning it in favor of Ethiopia. At the end of the day, this shifting of Soviet alliance is what turned the tide of the war against Somalia.

Following the withdrawal of the SNA, the WSLF continued its insurgency. By May 1980, the rebels, with the assistance of a small number of SNA soldiers who continued to help the guerilla war, controlled a substantial part of the Ogaden. However, at the end of 1984 the WSLF announced a temporary halt in military operations against Ethiopia. This decision was impelled by the drought then ravaging the Ogaden and by a serious split within the WSLF, a number of whose leaders claimed that their struggle for self determination had been used by Somalia to advance its expansionist policies. These elements said they now favored autonomy based on a federal union with Ethiopia. This development removed Siad Barre's option to foment anti-Ethiopian activity in the Ogaden in retaliation for Ethiopian aid to domestic opponents of his regime.

Moreover, for all intents and purposes, Ethiopia's victory during the Ogaden War ended Somalia's dream of recreating Greater Somalia. Even before the setback in the Ogaden, Siad Barre had relinquished his claim to Djibouti after 95 percent of the voters in that country indicated a preference for independence over incorporation into Somalia. An accord was signed with Kenya in December 1984 in which Somalia "permanently" renounced its historical territorial claims, and relations between the two countries thereafter began to improve. Subsequently, the level of insurgent activity along the border was minimal. However, the activities of Somali shiftas, or bandits and ivory poachers and the periodic influx of Somali refugees into Kenya continued to strain relations between Mogadishu and Nairobi. A second armed clash between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1988 was resolved when the two countries agreed to withdraw their armies from the border and, thus, from another possible confrontation in the Ogaden.

Following the Ogaden war, Somalis were severely disappointed and faced an internal identity crisis. Siad Barre was coming under immense internal and external pressure for political and economic liberalization. So, in the aftermath of the Ogaden debacle, a group of disgruntled army officers attempted a coup d'etat against the regime in April 1978. Their leader was Colonel Muhammad

Shaikh 'Uthman, a member of the Majeerteen sub-clan. The coup failed and seventeen alleged ringleaders, including Usmaan, were summarily executed. All but one of the executed were of the Majeerteen clan. One of the plotters, Lieutenant Colonel 'Abdallah Yusuf Ahmad, a Majeerteen, escaped to Ethiopia and founded an anti-Siad Barre organization initially called the Somali Salvation Front (SSF; later the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, SSDF). During their preeminence in the civilian regimes, the Majeerteen had alienated other clans. Thus, when Siad Barre sent the Red Berets against the Majeerteen in the Mudug Region, other clans declined to support them.

The Red Berets (Duub Cas), a dreaded elite unit recruited from among the president's Mareehaan clansmen, systematically smashed the small reservoirs in the area around Galcaio so as to deny water to the Majeerteen sub-lineages and their herds. In May and June 1979, more than 2,000 of the Majeerteen sub-lineage of Colonel Ahmad died of thirst in the waterless area northeast of Galcaio, Garowe, and Jerriiban. In Galcaio, members of the Victory Pioneers, the urban militia notorious for harassing civilians, raped large numbers of Majeerteen women. In addition, the sub-clan lost an estimated 50,000 camels, 10,000 cattle, and 100,000 sheep and goats.

Opposition movements to Siad Barre's regime, such as the SSDF, had already begun to organize since the early 1980s. The Somali National Movement (SNM) was formed in London on April 6, 1981 by 400 to 500 Isaaq émigrés and remained an Isaaq clan organization dedicated to ridding the country of Siad Barre. The Isaaq as a clan occupies the northern portion of the country. Three major cities are predominantly, if not exclusively, Isaaq: Hargeysa, the second largest city in Somalia until it was razed during disturbances in 1988; Burao in the interior, also destroyed by the military; and the port of Berbera. This clan, which had constituted a majority in the north under Great Britain and later held key political positions in the post-independence civilian governments, also played an important role in the lucrative livestock and ghat trade. The Isaaq felt deprived both as a clan and as a region, and Isaaq outbursts against the central government had occurred sporadically since independence. The SNM launched a military campaign in 1988, capturing Burao on May 27 and part of Hargeysa on May 31. Government forces bombarded the towns heavily in June, forcing the SNM to withdraw and causing more than 300,000 Isaaq to flee to Ethiopia. The military regime conducted savage reprisals against the Isaaq. The same methods which were in use earlier against the Majeerteen, were used also against the Isaaq - destruction of water wells and grazing grounds and raping of women. An estimated 5,000 Isaaq were killed between May 27 and the end of December 1988. About 4,000 died in the fighting, but 1,000, including women and children, were alleged to have been bayoneted to death.



By 1989, members of the Hawiye clan were also eager to overthrow Siad Barre. The Hawiye occupies the south central portions of Somalia. The capital of Mogadishu is located in the country of the Abgaal, a Hawiye sub-clan. Southern Somalia's first prime minister during the UN trusteeship period, 'Abdallah Iise, was a Hawiye; so was the trust territory's first president, Aadan 'Abdallah 'Uthman. The first commander of the Somali army, General Daauud, was also a Hawiye. Although the Hawiye had not held any major office since independence, they had occupied important administrative positions in the bureaucracy and in the top army command. In the late 1980s, disaffection with the regime set in among the Hawiye who felt increasingly marginalized in the Siad Barre regime. The Hawiye had meanwhile formed its own opposition movement, the United Somali Congress (USC), which received support from the SNM. From the town of Beledweyne in the central valley of the Shabeelle River to Buulobarde, to Giohar, and in Mogadishu, the clan was subjected to ruthless assault. Government atrocities inflicted on the Hawiye were considered comparable in scale to those inflicted against the Majeerteen and Isaaq. By undertaking this assault on the Hawiye, Siad Barre committed a fatal error. By the end of 1990, he still controlled the capital and adjacent regions but by alienating the Hawiye, Siad Barre turned his last stronghold into enemy territory.

In the course of Siad Barre's various reprisals against the Majeerteen, Isaaq, and Hawiye an estimated 50,000 unarmed civilians were killed, thousands more died of starvation resulting from the poisoning of water wells and the slaughtering of cattle. In addition, hundreds of thousands sought refuge outside the country.

Siad Barre thus progressively alienated an increasing number of clans, including some, such as the Ogaden, that originally had given him strong support. The Ogaden blamed him for Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden War and opposed his 1988 peace treaty and resumption of diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. As a result of Siad Barre's actions, many Ogaden officers deserted from the army and joined the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), an opposition group that had been formed in 1985 and that also received SNM support.

The various opposition groups waged relatively intense warfare against the national army during Siad Barre's final three years in office and gained control of extensive government areas: the SNM in the northwest, the USC in the center, and the SPM in the south. Following a July 1989 demonstration in Mogadishu in which about 450 persons were killed by government forces, leaders from various sectors of society, representing all clans, formed the Council for National Reconstruction and Salvation to press for political change. In May 1990, they published a manifesto calling for Siad Barre's resignation, the establishment of an interim government representing opposition movements, and a timetable

for multiparty elections. Siad Barre ordered the arrest of the 114 signatories, but the security forces could only locate 45 persons. Foreign protests over their detention forced their release. Meanwhile, the opposition groups recognized the need to hold talks among themselves to coordinate strategy. Time, however, did not allow mutual trust to develop.

## **The Eruption of the Civil War and the US and UN Intervention (1991 – 1995)**

In the escalating waves of government repression and resulting popular resistance that followed, Somali society exploded into violence and anarchy, and Siad Barre and his remaining supporters were forced to flee Somalia in January 27, 1991. Long before the government collapsed, however, the armed forces, the police force, the People's Militia, government ministries, and institutions such as the People's Assembly, schools, and health facilities, for all practical purposes, had ceased to operate. Siad Barre fled Mogadishu, and, after a stay in Kenya, ultimately sought refuge in Nigeria. The USC announced the formation of a provisional government in February 1991, with 'Ali Mahdi Muhammad of the Hawiye clan as president and 'Umar Arteh Ghalib, of the Isaaq clan, as prime minister. However, former army commander General Muhammad Farah Aidid opposed Muhammad's presidency and eventually split off to form his own USC faction.

In the Mogadishu area, each of the opposition groups drew support from a particular sub-clan and each resorted to arms to further its claims. The result was disintegration of government, civil society, and essential services by September 1991 if not earlier. Serious fighting in Mogadishu began in September 1991, intensified in November, and by the end of March 1992 was estimated to have caused 14,000 deaths and 27,000 wounded. Ali Mahdi Muhammad, a member of the Abgaal sub-clan of the Hawiye clan and leader of one USC faction that had a force of about 5,000 fighters, gained control of northern Mogadishu. He was challenged primarily by Farah Aidid, of the Habar Gidir sub-clan of the Hawiye, who led a USC faction of about 10,000 guerrillas that advocated cooperation with the SNM. During 1991 and 1992, outside parties, such as Djibouti, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the United Nations made numerous unsuccessful attempts to end the fighting in Mogadishu.

The USC's establishment of a provisional government angered other opposition groups who felt they had not been consulted. In the subsequent clashes, the SSDF and the SPM aligned themselves against the USC. In the course of the fighting, control of various towns such as Chisimayu and Baidoa changed hands several times. A number of cease-fires were announced between early April 1991 and the latter part of 1992, but none remained in effect long.

Meanwhile, in the north the SNM refused to participate in the unity talks proposed by the USC. In May 1991, the SNM proclaimed the Republic of

Somaliland as an interim government, pending 1993 elections, and decreeing the shari'a as its legal base. The formation of Somaliland occurred as a result of the settlement of issues between the Somali National Movement (SMN) and the pro-Siad Barre Gadabursi Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA). Although de facto independent and relatively peaceful compared to the tumultuous south, it has not been recognized by any foreign government.

Thus, instead of peace, Somalia experienced a power struggle among various clan- and region-based organizations: the Somali National Movement (SNM, Isaaq-affiliated); the SSDF (Majeerteen); the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM, Ogaden); Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA, Gadabursi); and the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM, Rahanweyn). Lineages and sub-lineages, fighting over the spoils of state, turned on one another. The state collapsed and Somali society splintered into its component clans.

The collapse resulted from certain features of Somali lineage segmentation. Somali clan organization is an unstable, fragile system, characterized at all levels by shifting allegiances. This segmentation goes down to the household level with the children of a man's two wives sometimes turning on one another on the basis of maternal lines. Power is exercised through temporary coalitions and ephemeral alliances between lineages. A given alliance fragments into competitive units as soon as the situation that necessitated it ceases to exist. In urban settings, for example, where relatively large economic and political stakes are contested, the whole population may be polarized into two opposing camps of clan alliances. To varying degrees, the poles of power in the politics of independent Somalia generally have tended to form around the Darod clan and a confederacy of the Hawiye and the Isaaq clans.

Two features of lineage segmentation require further comment. First, the system lacks a concept of individual culpability. When a man commits a homicide, for example, the guilt does not remain with him solely as an individual murderer as in most Western societies; the crime is attributed to all of the murderer's kin, who become guilty in the eyes of the aggrieved party by reason of their blood connection with the perpetrator. Members of the aggrieved group then seek revenge, not just on the perpetrator, but on any member of his lineage they might chance upon. In the Somali lineage system, one literally may get away with murder because the actual killer may escape while an innocent kinsman of his may be killed. Second, the system is vulnerable to external manipulation by, for example, a head of state such as Siad Barre, who used the resources of the state to reward and punish entire clans collectively. This was the fate of the Isaaq clan and Majeerteen sub-clan, which suffered grievous persecutions under Siad Barre's regime.

In a system of lineage segmentation, one does not have a permanent enemy

or a permanent friend - only a permanent context. Depending on the context, a man, a group of men, or even a state may be one's friends or foes. This fact partially explains why opposition Somalis did not hesitate to cross over to Ethiopia, the supposed quintessential foe of Somalis. Ethiopia was being treated by the Somali opposition as another clan for purposes of temporary alliance in the interminable shifting coalitions of Somali pastoral clan politics.

Lineage segmentation of the Somali variety thus inherently militates against the evolution and endurance of a stable, centralized state. Although exacerbated by Siad Barre's exploitation of inter-clan rivalries, institutional instability is actually woven into the fabric of Somali society. The collapse of the Siad Barre regime in early 1991 led to inter-clan civil war that has been continuing ever since.

Thus, the severe fighting that broke out in Mogadishu in September 1991 and spread throughout the country in the following months with over 20,000 people killed or wounded by the end of the year led to the destruction of the agriculture of Somalia, which led to starvation in large parts of Somalia. The international community began to send food supplies to halt the starvation. However, vast amounts of food were hijacked by Aidid's personal militia and brought to local clan leaders. The hijacked food was routinely exchanged with other countries for weapons. An estimated 80% of the food was stolen. These factors led to even more starvation of which an estimated 300,000 people died and another 1.5 million suffered from between 1991 and 1992.

The situation in the country as a whole deteriorated rapidly, as a result not only of the civil war but also of the drought in central and southern Somalia that left hundreds of thousands starving. By August 1992 Somali refugees were reliably estimated at 500,000 in Ethiopia, 300,000 in Kenya, 65,000 in Yemen, 15,000 in Djibouti, and about 100,000 in Europe. The civil war destroyed Somalia's infrastructure and brought all economic activities, apart from minimal subsistence agriculture, herding, and internal trade, to a virtual halt. Following an official visit to Somalia in early August 1992 by Muhammad Sahnoun, the UN Special Representative, and Bernard Kouchner, the French minister of health and humanitarian affairs, an estimate was released that approximately one-fourth of the population, about 1.5 million people, was in danger of death by starvation - other estimates ran as high as one-third of the population.

The problem of food distribution to the starving was aggravated by armed bandits. These bandits, who recognized no authority except occasionally that of local warlords, looted warehouses in Mogadishu and other major centers as well as shipments of food to the interior. The rise of local warlords, who controlled the cities, including harbors and airports, as opposed to traditional clan leaders, clan councils, and clan-recruited militias in the hinterland, was a

relatively new phenomenon in Somali society. Their rise has been attributed to the breakdown of central government authority and the lack of strong, well-organized opposition parties. The availability of vast quantities of arms in the country from earlier Soviet and US arming of Somalia (between the early 1980s and mid-1990, the US provided Somalia with US\$403 million in military aid), from the large caches of arms gained in gray and black markets, and from the cross-border trade, particularly in ammunition, as well as the military training that the Siad Barre regime required all school and college graduates and civil servants to undergo further facilitated the rise of warlords.

Following the eruption and escalation of the civil war in Somalia in 1991, the UN and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) strived to abate the suffering that was caused as a result of the high-intensity conflict. The UN was engaged in Somalia from early in 1991 when the civil strife began. UN personnel were withdrawn on several occasions during sporadic flare-ups of violence. A series of Security Council resolutions (733, 746) and diplomatic visits eventually helped impose a ceasefire between the two key factions, signed at the end of March 1992. These efforts were aided by other international bodies, such as the OAU, the Arab League, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The UN, with the active support of all rebel faction leaders, felt that some sort of peace keeping force would be required to uphold the ceasefire and assist the humanitarian relief effort, in conjunction with other relief agencies and NGOs. By the end of 1992, the Security Council adopted resolution 751, which provided for the establishment of a security force of 50 UN troops in Somalia to monitor the ceasefire. This detachment would be known as the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and it existed at the consent of those parties who had been represented in the ceasefire. The resolution also allowed for an expansion of the security force, with a number of around 500 troops initially discussed. The first group of ceasefire observers arrived in Mogadishu in early July 1992.

Despite the UN's effort, all over Somalia the ceasefire was ignored, fighting continued, and continued to increase, putting the relief operations at great risk. The main parties to the ceasefire, General Muhammad Farah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Muhammad, once again showing the difficult and troubled relations between the warlords, proved to be difficult negotiating partners and continually frustrated attempts to move the peacekeepers and supplies. In August 1992, the Security Council endorsed the sending of another 3,000 troops to the region to protect relief efforts. However, most of these troops were never sent.

Over the final quarter of 1992, the situation in Somalia continued to get worse. Factions in Somalia were splintering into smaller factions and splintering again. Agreements for food distribution with one party were worthless when

the sores had to be shipped through the territory of another. Some elements were actively opposing the UNOSOM intervention. Troops were shot at, aid ships attacked and prevented from docking, cargo aircrafts were fired upon and aid agencies, private and public, were subject to threats, robbery and extortion. Meanwhile, hundreds, if not thousands of refugees were starving to death every day. By November 1992, General Muhammad Farah Aidid had grown confident enough to formally defy the Security Council and demand the withdrawal of peace keepers, as well as declaring hostile intent against any further UN deployments.

In the face of mounting public pressure and frustration, UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, presented several options to the Security Council. Diplomatic avenues having proved largely fruitless, he recommended that a significant show of force was required to bring the armed groups to heel. Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations allows for "action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security". Boutros-Ghali believed the time had come for employing this clause and moving on from peacekeeping. Significantly, this invocation of Chapter VII waived the need for consent on the part of the state of Somalia; effectively, it was the first time ever that the UN secretariat had endorsed such an act (See on-line at: <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter7.htm>).

However, Boutros-Ghali felt that such an action would be difficult to apply under the mandate for UNOSOM. Moreover, he realized that solving Somalia's problems would require such a large deployment that the UN secretariat did not have the skills to command and control it. Accordingly, he recommended that a large intervention force be constituted under the command of member states, but authorized by the Security Council, to carry out operations in Somalia. The goal of this deployment was to prepare the way for a return to peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Following this recommendation, on December 3, 1992, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 794, authorizing the use of "all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia". The Security Council urged the Secretary-General and member states to make arrangements for "the unified command and control" of the military forces that would be involved (the full text of Resolution 794 can be found online at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N92/772/11/PDF/N9277211.pdf?OpenElement>).

Prior to Resolution 794, already in November 1992, the US had approached the UN and offered a significant troop contribution to Somalia, with the caveat that these personnel would not be commanded by the UN. Resolution 794 did not specifically identify the US as being responsible for the future task force,

but mentioned "the offer by a member state". On the evening of December 4, 1992, President George Bush made an address to the nation, informing them that the US would send troops to Somalia. Known as Operation Restore Hope, the mission would formally become UNITAF. The first elements of UNITAF landed on the beaches of Somalia on December 9, 1992. Thus, UNITAF was authorized to utilize "all necessary means" to ensure the protection of the relief efforts. Accordingly, the Security Council suspended any further significant strengthening of UNOSOM as UN affairs in Somalia were subsumed by UNITAF. With only a handful of the 3,000 plus troops envisaged for UNOSOM ever put in place, the Security Council left it to the discretion of the Secretary-General as to what should be done with the abortive mission.

UNITAF was comprised of forces from 24 different countries, with the vast bulk contributed by the US. UNITAF soon secured the relief operations which were being coordinated and carried out by UNOSOM, which was also attempting to negotiate a political end to the conflict. Indeed, although UNOSOM had been replaced by UNITAF, it was technically still in operation and would remain ready to resume its function when UNITAF had met its goals of creating a secure environment for humanitarian relief.

United States forces and those of their allies gradually branched out from the airport and harbor of Mogadishu to the surrounding area. In succession they secured the Soviet-built airport at Baledogle (halfway to Baidoa), Baidoa, and then Chisimayu, Baardheere, Oddur, Beledweyne, and Jalalaqsi. The plan entailed setting up food distribution centers in each of the major areas affected by the famine and bringing in large quantities of food so as to eliminate looting and hoarding. By doing so, the operation would ensure that food was no longer a "power chip," thereby eliminating the role of the warlords. As the provision of food to southern Somalia reached massive proportions, however, it became clear that as a result of the August rains and resultant domestic crop production, it would be necessary to sell some of the donated grain in local markets at a suitable price in order to safeguard the livelihood of local farmers in the hinterland.

The question of the security of food shipments proved a difficult one with respect to disarming the population. The commander in chief of the United States Central Command, Marine General Joseph P. Hoar, announced on December 14, 1992 that the United States would not disarm Somalis because the carrying of arms was a political issue to be settled by Somalis. However, by January 7, 1993, after completing the first stage of Operation Restore Hope, United States forces began to pursue "technicals" and raid arms depots in order to safeguard the operation and protect US and allied personnel and Somali civilians.

Meanwhile, on the political level, in an effort to further reconciliation, Aidid



and Muhammad met several times, as arranged by former US ambassador to Somalia, Robert B. Oakley, who served as special presidential envoy. On December 28, 1992, the two Somali leaders even led a peace march along the Green Line separating the two areas of Mogadishu controlled by their forces. Yet, there were other factors complicating a political settlement. These were the control of Baardheere by Muhammad Siad Hersi Morgan, the son-in-law of Siad Barre and leader of the Somali National Front, a Mareehaan-based organization; and the control of Chisimayu by Colonel Ahmad Omar Jess, a leader allied with the SDM and the Southern Somali National Movement (SSNM). Jess was reliably reported to have killed between 100 and 200 individuals whom he regarded as potential enemies before United States forces reached Chisimayu.

As a symbol of support for United States forces and their efforts in Somalia, President Bush arrived on New Year's Eve for a one-day visit and received a warm welcome from Somalis. In contrast, the UN Secretary-General faced an angry reception from Somali crowds on January 3, 1993. The Somalis remembered Boutros- Ghali's former cordial relationship with Siad Barre when Boutros-Ghali served as Egyptian minister of foreign affairs. They also faulted the UN for its long inaction in relieving the starvation in Somalia; voluntary organizations, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross, had proved much more effective than the UN in sending food to Somalia and in setting up kitchens to feed hundreds of thousands daily. Despite this negative reception, on January 4, 1993, the leaders of fourteen Somali factions attended meetings in Addis Ababa chaired by the UN Secretary-General, at which the US was also represented. After considerable discussion, on January 15, the faction leaders signed a ceasefire agreement and a disarmament pact and called for a national reconciliation conference to be held in Addis Ababa on March 15. Despite the ceasefire, fighting and instability in Somalia continued to exist in late January.

Thus, on March 3, 1993, the UN Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council his recommendations for effecting the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II. He noted that despite the size of the UNITAF mission, a secure environment was not yet established and there was still no effective functioning government or local security/police force. The Secretary-General concluded therefore that should the Security Council determine that the time had come for the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II, the latter should be endowed with enforcement powers under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to establish a secure environment throughout Somalia. UNOSOM II would therefore seek to complete the task begun by UNITAF for the restoration of peace and stability in Somalia. The new mandate would also empower UNOSOM II to assist the Somali people in rebuilding their economic, political and social life, through

achieving national reconciliation so as to recreate a democratic Somali state.

UNOSOM II was established by the Security Council in Resolution 837 on March 26, 1993 and formally took over operations in Somalia when UNITAF was dissolved on May 4, 1993. UNOSOM II was the second phase of the UN active intervention in Somalia. The objective of UNOSOM II was to initiate "nation building" in Somalia. This included disarming the various factions, restoring law and order, helping the people to set up a representative government, and restoring of infrastructure. UNOSOM II had 28,000 personnel strength, drawn from 26 countries.

On June 5, 1993, 24 Pakistani troops were assassinated and more than 80 were wounded by Somali militia members while inspecting an arms depot belonging to Muhammad Farah Aidid, the most powerful of the Somali warlords. It was widely reported that the bodies of the UN peacekeepers had been mutilated. Some were even skinned. Aidid and his followers were accused of being behind this massacre. On June 12, US troops started attacking targets in Mogadishu related to Aidid, a campaign which lasted until June 16. On June 19, a \$25,000 warrant was issued by US Admiral Howe for information leading to the arrest of Aidid, but he was never captured.

Thus, the hunt for Aidid characterized much of the UNOSOM II activity. The increasing tempo of military operations carried out in Mogadishu began to cause civilian casualties and affected the relationship between the foreign troops and the Somali people. The UN troops were easily portrayed as evil foreign interlopers by the militia leaders, particularly after incidents of civilian casualties caused by wholesale firing into crowds.

On July 12, 1993, a US-led operation was launched on what was believed to be a safe house in Mogadishu where members of Aidid's Habar Gidir sub-clan were supposedly meeting to plan more violence against US and UN forces. In reality, elders of the sub-clan, and not gunmen, were meeting in the house. According to UN officials, the agenda was to discuss ways to peacefully resolve the conflict between Aidid and the multi-national task force in Somalia, and perhaps even to remove Aidid as leader of the sub-clan. During the 17 minute combat operation, US cobra attack helicopters fired 16 TOW missiles and thousands of 20-milimeter cannon rounds into the compound, killing more than 50 of the sub-clan elders. It would also lead to the deaths of four journalists, who were killed by angry Somali mobs when they arrived at the scene to cover the incident. This attack turned many Somalis, including moderates and those opposed to the Habar Gidir sub-clan, against the US and UN, and helped to raise the Somali nationalist spirit against foreign intervention.

Paradoxically, Somalis disappointed by the failure of the UN to disarm the warlords in Mogadishu actually began to support those same warlords in an "us

versus them" mentality. The specter of radical Islam also began to rise, as militia leaders sought to use religion as a rallying point for anti-UN sentiment. As the Americans became more insular, the warlords began to reassert control of many Mogadishu districts. With each failure to apprehend Aidid, the militias grew bolder. Serious rifts between nations contributing to UNOSOM II also began to develop, with Italy in particular being a major critic of the American methods.

On August 8, 1993, Task Force Ranger was deployed. It was composed of Delta and Ranger forces not under UN control and so able to conduct more aggressive operations. Fighting between Aidid forces and UNOSOM II forces escalated until the battle of Mogadishu, or for Somalis, "The Day of the Rangers", that was fought on October 3 and 4, 1993, in Mogadishu. The assault force of the task Force Ranger was composed of nineteen aircrafts, twelve vehicles, and 160 men. During the operation to capture several Aidid faction leaders, two US MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were shot down by rocket-propelled grenades, and three others were damaged. Some of the soldiers were able to evacuate wounded back to the compound, but others were trapped at the crash sites and cut off. An urban battle ensued throughout the night. Early the next morning, a joint task force was sent to rescue the trapped soldiers. American Ranger and Delta Force were rescued by the 10th Mountain Division, who was partly helped by UN troops, notably those of Malaysia and Pakistan. Somali casualty figures are unknown, but American estimates are that between 1,000 and 1,500 Somali militiamen and civilians lost their lives in the battle, with injuries to another 3,000 – 4,000. Eighteen American soldiers died, while two of them had their bodies dragged through the streets, and 73 were wounded. Among UN forces, one Malaysian soldier died and seven were wounded, along with two Pakistanis.

Following the Battle of Mogadishu, the 1st Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment of the 24th Infantry Division, based at Fort Stewart, Georgia, was sent to restore and maintain order in Mogadishu. This deployment, under the name Task Force Rogue, established Victory Base in the west of the city in October 1993. With the use of heavy tanks and a strong overt military presence a semblance of order was maintained in Mogadishu until President Clinton, under pressure of American public opinion and Congress, ended the US deployment in Somalia, setting a deadline of March 31, 1994 for their complete withdrawal.

Other nations – such as Belgium, France, and Sweden – also decided to withdraw at this time. In early 1994, the Security Council set a deadline for the mission of March 1995. Various reconciliation talks were carried out over the next few months providing for a ceasefire, the disarmament of militias and a conference to appoint a new government. However, preparations for the conference were repeatedly postponed and many faction leaders ignored

the agreement at will. So, with no real progress occurring and a dwindling of support from member states, UNOSOM was disbanded in March 1995.

Thus, the first US and UN intervention in the Somali civil war ended in failure, especially due to the shift in these forces' objectives from merely peacekeeping work and assisting the humanitarian relief work, which might have been welcomed by Somalis, to a much more aggressive policy aimed at initiating nation building in Somalia, including disarming the various factions, restoring law and order, helping the people to set up a representative government, and restoring of infrastructure. This, together with the occasional targeting of civilians during its actions, helped to raise the Somali nationalist banner against what was perceived as an aggressive foreign intervention in internal Somali affairs that could be settled only by the Somalis themselves. So, the US and UN forces left Somalia to its destiny for the time being.

## **Division of Somalia and the Emergence of the Islamist Emirate Vision**

Following the civil war and the ensuing anarchy, some factions managed to exert a degree of hegemonial authority over certain regions of Somalia where they maintained broad, clan-based support. This allowed these factions to establish working administrations and eventually coherent states, which would be able to restore order to their regions. This occurred first in Somaliland.

Somaliland is a de facto independent republic, located within the internationally recognized borders of Somalia. On May 18, 1991, the people of Somaliland, most of them of the Isaaq clan, declared independence from Somalia. However, it was not recognized by any other country or international organization. The Republic of Somaliland considers itself to be the successor state of the former British Somaliland protectorate. It is bordered by Ethiopia in the south and west, Djibouti in the northwest, the Gulf of 'Aden in the north, and the autonomous region of Puntland in Somalia in the east. Control over the eastern half of Somaliland is unclear due to disputes with Puntland over the primarily Darod regions of Sool and Sanaag.

Somaliland has formed a hybrid system of governance under the Constitution of Somaliland, combining traditional and western institutions. In a series of inter-clan conferences, culminating in the abovementioned Borama Conference in 1993, a qabil (clan or community) system of government was constructed, which consisted of an Executive - with a President, Vice President, and Council of Ministers - a Legislature, and an independent judiciary. The traditional Somali council of elders (guurti) was incorporated into the governance structure and formed the upper house, which is responsible for selecting a President as well as managing internal conflicts. The government became in essence a power-sharing coalition of Somaliland's main clans, with seats in the Upper and Lower houses proportionally allocated to clans and sub-clans according to a pre-determined formula. In 2002, after extensions of this interim government, Somaliland finally made the transition to multi-party democracy, with district council elections contested by six parties, which is considered to be the most peaceful in Africa for the last 17 years.

Later, the period of 1998 - 2006 saw the declaration of a number of self-declared autonomous states within Somalia. Unlike Somaliland, they were all movements of autonomy, but not outright claims of independence. Those states were Puntland -which declared its autonomy in 1998 and consolidated its control over the Mudug, Nugaal, and Bari regions, located in northeastern

Somalia – Jubbaland, which also declared its autonomy in 1998 and which consolidated its control over southwestern Somalia. A third self-proclaimed entity was formed by the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) in 2002. The RRA is an autonomist militant group, which was established in 1995, operating in the two southwestern regions of Somalia, Bay and Bakool. Its stated goal is the creation or recognition of an independent state of Southwestern Somalia. Thus, Southwestern Somalia was founded on April 1, 2002 by Hasan Muhammad Nur Shatigadud. The state was officially called the Southwestern State of Somalia and intended to consist of six Somali administrative regions including Bay, Bakool, Middle Jubba, Lower Shabeelle, Gedo, and Lower Jubba, where the majority of the residents comprise of Rahanweyn and Digil-Mirifle clans. A fourth self-declared state was formed as Galmudug on August 14, 2006 by the sub-clans of Sacad, Dir, Shikhal, and Hillibi elders in response to the growing power of the Islamic Courts Union, which will be dealt with later. It is a state in the central region of Somalia, based in the southern half of the city and district of Galcaio. It is bordered to the east by the Indian Ocean, to the west by Ethiopia, to the north by Puntland, and to the south by Somalia. Its three ex-districts of Mudug region; Galcaio, Hobyo, and Haradhere consist of several Hawiye sub-clans.

Also during this period, various attempts at peacekeeping and reconciliation met with lesser or greater measures of success, until most parties agreed to the formation of a new Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004.

Already in late 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed an expansion of the UN humanitarian mission to Somalia to include nation building activities, including the disarming of the warring militias of the country. The UN missions to Somalia would not result in the disarmament of the many factions taking part in the Somali Civil War. Too many warlords, as well as too many common Somalis, wished to keep their weapons, and to keep their feuds alive. In 1995, the last of the US peacekeepers were pulled out of Somalia. UN Security Council intervention in Somalia's Civil War went back to Resolution 733, in which an arms control provision established a weapons embargo on the country.

Efforts at mediation in the Somali civil war have been undertaken by many regional states. In the mid-1990s, Ethiopia played host to several Somali peace conferences and initiated talks at the Ethiopian city of Sodere, which led to some degree of agreement between competing factions. These talks were boycotted by Aidid's faction as well as by the newly-declared government of Somaliland. The governments of Egypt, Yemen, Kenya, and Italy also had attempted to bring the Somali factions together. But to no avail. In 1997, the OAU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) gave Ethiopia the mandate to pursue Somali reconciliation.

In 2000, Djibouti hosted a major reconciliation conference (the thirteenth such effort), which in August resulted in the creation of the Transitional National Government (TNG), with a three year mandate to pursue national reconciliation. The 2000 Somalia National Peace Conference, officially dubbed the Somalia National Peace Conference (SNPC), and sometimes called the Djibouti Conference, was a series of meetings held in Arta, Djiboutu, on April 20 – May 5, 2000. The conference was aimed at bringing together representatives of the warring factions of Somalia to end the civil war. This conference succeeded in ending the violence between the USC factions, and made strides towards unity, but failed to set up a comprehensive government. Many factions refused to attend as they could not set the terms of reconciliation, and their backer, Ethiopia, was against the TNG. These Pro-Ethiopian factions formed their own national government movement, called the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC).

Thus, a second attempt at forming a more comprehensive national government was undertaken under the auspices of IGAD in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2004, at which the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was agreed to. This time the warlords were allowed to set terms, and Ethiopia granted the influence it desired. The TFG was formed in October – November 2004 by the selection of 275 Transitional Federal Parliament members, the approval of the Transitional Federal Charter, the election on October 10, 2004 of the President of Puntland, Abdallah Yusuf Ahmad, as President of the Somali TFG, and the appointment of the Council of Ministers, including Prime Minister 'Ali Muhammad Ghedi on November 4, 2004. Because of the terms of the reconciliation, the factions and warlords remained completely autonomous fiefdoms, and the TFG became more of a Somali League of Nations in miniature, and virtually powerless.

In parallel to the division of Somalia into various administrations and states and the formation of the TFG, the period of civil war in Somalia in the early 1990s saw also the rise of the Salafi-Jihadi current. Salafi-Jihadi activists have been committed to violence because they have been involved in what they consider to be the defense of Dar al-Islam and the community of believers against infidel enemies. This current was represented at first by al-Itihad al-Islami (AIAI), whose main aim was to build an Islamic emirate in Somalia.

AIAI was founded as a result of the steady growth of Salafiyah in Somalia during the 1970s. One of the most successful Wahabi centers emerged at 'Eel Hindi, a suburb of Mogadishu. The group, al-Jama'a al-Islamiya, considered itself a Salafi society concentrating on "purification of the faith". Its most prominent imams were Shaikh Dahir Indhabuur, Shaikh Abdallah 'Ali Haashi and Shaikh Abdalqadir Ga'amey – all would be prominent leaders of AIAI. During the early 1980s, the leadership of al-Jama'a developed a relationship

with Wahdat al-Shabab al-Islamiya, a northern Somali Islamist group popular among secondary school teachers and students in Hargeysa and Burao. Among its leaders was Shaikh Ali Warsame, a Muslim cleric from the northern town of Burao, educated in Saudi Arabia, who would also become a key figure in AIAI.

The merger of the two organizations at some point between 1982 and 1984 brought with it the new name of al-Itihad al-Islami (AIAI). In practice, however, the organizations retained their identities, and towards the end of the 1980s al-Wahdat reemerged as a distinctly northern entity, with only a few members – Warsame among them – who retained their AIAI affiliation. In Mogadishu, AIAI soon began to attract attention for both its growing popularity and its radical new message. The movement's visibility grew as its membership expanded to include faculty and students at secondary schools, colleges and the Somali National University. AIAI's assertion that Islam could not be separated from politics offered a bold challenge to the regime at a time when Barre's "revolution" had run out of steam.

Following the collapse of the Barre regime, north eastern Somalia had fallen under control of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). The seat of the SSDF administration was the port town of Bosasso. With the tacit blessing of the SSDF chairman, General Muhammad Abshir Musa, AIAI took control of strategic facilities across the northeast, including Bosasso port and hospital. They also established a large base near Qaw, some twenty kilometers west of Bosasso. Modeled on training facilities in Afghanistan, it was known as Nasradin and rapidly became the hub of AIAI activity in the region. By mid-1991, an estimated 1000 AIAI militia were based in the region. AIAI derived part of its revenue from Bosasso port charges but got much more from foreign donors, including the Saudi charities Muslim World League (MWL) and the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). On the morning of June 19, 1992, AIAI's forces in Garowe sealed the roads leading to and from the town and seized control of a former military compound on the outskirts where the SSDF leadership was in session. At the same time they attacked in three locations throughout the northeast, including Bosasso. With the leadership of the SSDF and the key strategic towns of the regions in their hands, they declared a new Islamic administration for the northeast. However, AIAI's Islamic emirate was short-lived. SSDF forces, supported by hastily assembled militias from local clans, responded quickly and effectively. Hundreds of AIAI militia and their leaders were killed and the movement was routed. By June 26, 1992, over 600 AIAI militias had been killed and no Jihadi fighters remained in the SSDF-controlled areas of the northeast.



Following this failed attempt to create an Islamic emirate, a second attempt was conducted, this time in the Gedo region, near the Ethiopian border. It first established a presence in Luuq, the principal town of Gedo region, in August 1992. Over the next few years it emerged as the pre-eminent military and political force in Gedo, largely thanks to the order and discipline it represented in the otherwise lawless and chaotic environment. The new administration banned the carrying of weapons by private citizens, guaranteed a measure of security and persuaded a number of international NGOs and donors to carry out relief and aid activities. But the Islamists' efficiency did not translate into popularity. Edicts such as those calling for strict implementation of Shari'a law and the banning of ghat were very unpopular.

Just as AIAI's influence in northeast Somalia had brought the movement into conflict with the SSDF, so its presence in Gedo antagonized the Somali National Front (SNF), a political-military faction anchored in the Mareehaan clan. The SNF found an ally in the Ethiopian government, which had long sought to eliminate the AIAI presence in the Somali inhabited "Fifth Region" of Ethiopia. In communications with Ethiopia, the SNF alleged that AIAI camps near Luuq and Armo were training Islamist guerillas from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda in variety of activities, including small arms, guerilla warfare, mines and explosives, espionage and logistics. According to the SNF, the camps were financed in part by an Islamic NGO based in Dublin, Mercy International Relief Agency (MIRA).

Yet, the most virulent strain of AIAI militancy emerged in Ethiopia, where the movement's armed struggle against Ethiopian control over Somali-inhabited territories in the east culminated in a series of terrorist attacks in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. In 1990, or even earlier, al-Itihaad al-Islami ee Soomaaliya Galbeed (The Islamic Union of Western Somalia) began to agitate for liberation of the Ogaden. It envisioned the reunification of all Somali territories within a single polity. Yet, its objectives included an Islamic political order based on a narrow interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunna. The organization described itself as a front for Da'wah and Jihad and cast its struggle in terms of the liberation of Muslims from a Christian oppressor. The organization continued to develop its military wing, building a fleet of gun-mounted four-wheel-drive vehicles and maintaining training facilities at various facilities in the Ogaden. AIAI fighters made their presence known throughout the region by steadily escalating guerilla actions. As a result, Ethiopian forces stepped up ground and air attacks on AIAI along the Somali borders in late 1993 and early 1994. In December 1994, Ethiopian military pressure appeared to be paying off when al-Itihaad agreed to meet with the Ethiopian regime's representatives for peace talks, which broke down in March 1995. The breakdown of the peace talks signaled the resumption

of hostilities between the two sides.

The collapse of the talks heralded a new phase in al-Itihaad's campaign against Ethiopian rule. In May 1995, a grenade attack at a busy outdoor market in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia's second largest city, claimed fifteen lives. Eight men, all alleged members of AIAI were subsequently convicted by an Ethiopian court. Less than a year later, bomb blasts at two hotels in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa left seven dead and 23 injured. An AIAI spokesman in Mogadishu subsequently claimed responsibility on behalf of the organization. In July 1996, Ethiopian minister for Transport and Communications, Abdalmajid Husain, an ethnic Somali, was shot while arriving at his office, though he survived. Once again, AIAI spokesman in Mogadishu claimed responsibility. Ethiopia resolved to eliminate AIAI. So, on August 9, 1996, it launched the first of two raids on AIAI bases across the border in Somalia at Luuq and Buulo Haawa. The strike was limited and targeted but failed to find and destroy the AIAI leadership, which had gone into hiding. In January 1997, Ethiopian forces returned. Many of the Islamists were killed or injured, the training camps were dismantled and AIAI's short lived terrorist activities in Ethiopia came to an end. Officially, at least, AIAI, both in Ethiopia and in Somalia, ceased to exist, although during its heyday in the early 1990s, AIAI had a militia of more than 1,000 strong.

The dissolution of AIAI, however, did not mean its total disappearance. Its leaders returned to their communities as respected Salafi clerics and have continued to inspire followers with their beliefs. Many other members stepped into visible public roles as religious leaders, judges, elders, and businessmen. Only a few, like Hasan Dahir Aweys and Hasan Turki, continued to be associated with militancy and even may have played a supporting role in the 1998 US Embassies Bombings in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, in which 224 people were killed. It is further alleged that some leading members of al-Qa'ida's East African network, who were also responsible for the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned tourist hotel in Mombasa and the simultaneous attempt to shoot down an Israeli charter aircraft, continue to hide in Somalia.

Following the 1998 US Embassies Bombings and the September 11 attacks, Somalia has been regarded as one of the training and refuge places for al-Qa'ida activists. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, these camps were dismantled and the hundreds of trained militants sailed for the safety of tribal areas in Yemen. In 2001, the US named AIAI as a group linked to international terrorism.

In 2003, a new, ruthless independent Somali Jihadi network emerged. It was called al-Shabab and its most visible figure was a young militia leader known as Aden Hashi Farah Ayro. It was based in Mogadishu and its core membership numbered in the tens. Since August 2003, Ayro's group was linked to the murders

of four foreign aid workers in Somaliland and over a dozen Somalis, who were believed to be working with Western counter-terrorism networks. Ayro himself was in some respects a product of AIAI. He was the protégé of its former vice chairman and military commander, Hasan Dahir Aweys, and was reportedly trained in Afghanistan. In July 2005, Ayro was appointed commander of the Ifka Halane court militia in Mogadishu, whose responsible judge was Hasan Dahir Aweys.

In Mogadishu, these new Jihadis appeared to be an alarming new player on the Somali stage. Ayro's appointment as Ifka Halane militia commander established a disturbing link between Jihadi Islamists and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Signs of support for Ayro's militia from the businessmen reinforced the perception that the Jihadis were no longer as isolated as they once had been and may be set to assert themselves even more boldly. The new face of Somali Jihadism resembled less the AIAI of the 1990s than the many other local radical groups worldwide inspired by al-Qa'ida. Its adoption of fluid organizational structures and unconventional and terrorist tactics has proved to pose a greater menace to regional and wider international security than the old AIAI.

The notoriety and effectiveness of these militants has contributed to perceptions of Somalia as a breeding ground for Islamist extremism and a hub of terrorist activity. In reality, Jihadism is an unpopular, minority trend among Somali Islamists. AIAI's military wing had been largely dismantled, the new Jihadi network's effective membership probably was in the tens rather than the hundreds, and ranking al-Qa'ida operatives in Somalia probably numbered less than half a dozen. Several Western countries host larger and more sophisticated Jihadi networks.

What makes Somalia an object of special concern is its lack of a functioning central government, which renders the country a "haven for terrorist groups". In the absence of functioning police, immigration, customs and intelligence agencies, foreign security services - predominantly from the US - have taken up the challenge of countering terrorism in Somalia. An American military presence - the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) - was established in neighboring Djibouti in 2002 to coordinate and underpin regional counter-terrorism initiatives. But for many of the same reasons that Somalia is a focus of concern, it is unlikely ever to become a refuge for al-Qa'ida on a par with Afghanistan under the Taliban: there is no sympathetic authority to provide protection; the flat, open terrain offers few opportunities for concealment; and a rich oral tradition makes it difficult to maintain secrets.

## **Somalia as a Battleground between Al-Qa'ida and US Counter Terrorism**

Al-Qa'ida first became involved in Somalia during the US and UN intervention between 1992 and 1995. Islamist militants of diverse origins, including al-Qa'ida, reportedly flowed into the country at that time, offering resources, arms and training in the hopes of transforming Mogadishu into a "second Kabul" or a "second Beirut" for the Americans. Bin Laden denounced the intervention as a beachhead for American domination of Muslim lands in the region and called upon his followers to "cut the head off the snake". It was to be one of al-Qa'ida's most ambitious and least successful initiatives.

During the summer of 1993, violence between Somali militia loyal to Aidid and foreign troops escalated, culminating in the October 3, 1993 battle that bin Laden and others believe led to the US withdrawal. Bin Laden subsequently claimed the episode as a victory for Somali Muslims, in cooperation "with some Arab holy warriors who were in Afghanistan". Yet, nothing suggests that the al-Qa'ida members' contribution was more than marginal.

The withdrawal of US and other international forces from Somalia led al-Qa'ida to shift its focus to countries where soft American targets were more readily available, such as Kenya. Wadi' al-Haj, an American of Lebanese descent, took the lead in setting up al-Qa'ida's Kenyan infrastructure, establishing an NGO, Help Africa People, and becoming closely involved with the Nairobi office of Mercy International Relief Agency (MIRA), a Dublin-based organization headed by a Saudi dissident, Safar al-Hawali - one of bin Laden's ideological mentors. MIRA's Nairobi office was headed by a Somali whom Odeh described as a close associate of bin Laden's during the al-Qa'ida chief's sojourn in Sudan during the early 1990s. In Somalia, MIRA supported AIAI's regional administration in the Gedo region until it was shut down by Ethiopian raids in 1997, and apparently also served as a conduit for the travel of foreign Jihadis to and from Somalia.

When al-Haj had to return to the US to appear before a grand jury investigating bin Laden, Fadil 'Abdallah Muhammad, a Comorean national with a Kenyan passport, replaced him as Nairobi cell commander. The cell's direct communications with bin Laden, however, were channeled through the leader of the Mombasa network, Salih 'Ali Saleh Nabhan. On August 7, 1998, the painstaking preparations paid off when a massive truck bomb driven by "Azam" detonated at the Nairobi embassy, and minutes later a second bomb exploded outside the Dar-es-Salaam embassy. Together the bombs killed 225 people and wounded over 4,000. Only twelve of the dead were American; the vast majority was Kenyan or Tanzanian bystanders.

Subsequent trials of al-Qa'ida team members demonstrated that travel to and from Somalia had continued in the years prior to the bombings. According to US intelligence sources, al-Qa'ida's residual linkages with Somalia reflected the involvement of AIAI cells led by Hasan Dahir Aweys and Hasan Turki in the preparations. Odeh told American investigators that just over one month before the attack, Aweys dispatched a message to bin Laden requesting a meeting in Afghanistan. Aweys was designated as an individual with links to terrorism by the US government in November 2001; Turki was added in 2004 and has been formally indicted for the murder of an American citizen.

In the aftermath of the 1998 embassy bombings, several members of al-Qa'ida's East Africa cell were apprehended, but Fadil and Nabhan remained at large and began assembling a new team. In November 2001, less than two months after al-Qa'ida's attacks in New York and Washington, Fadil assembled part of this new team in Mogadishu. Finances were handled by a Sudanese national, Tariq 'Abdallah (a.k.a. Abu Talha al-Sudani), operating between Somalia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

One month later the group dispersed. Fadil returned to the Kenyan coastal village of Siyu, where he had established a new identity and married a local girl. Meanwhile, under the leadership of Nabhan, one cell began to reconnoiter possible targets in the Mombasa area. By April 2002, the choice had been made: Moi International Airport and the Paradise Hotel, a beachfront lodge in the coastal village of Kikambala, owned by Israelis and frequented by Israeli tourists. Under Nabhan's supervision, the team began to prepare crude bombs: two propane gas cylinders filled with homemade explosives based on ammonium nitrate.

Back in Mogadishu, the remaining al-Qa'ida team members - guided by occasional visits from Fadil - set about procuring additional materials for the operation. According to Somali counter-terrorism sources, these included materials for a detonator that would later be smuggled into Kenya and joined with the explosives in Mombasa. From the local arms market, they ordered two "Strela 2" surface-to-air missiles that had found their way via Yemen onto the streets of Mogadishu (J. Peleman, E. H. Johnes, P. S. Sandhu, and J. Tambi, "Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1474 (2003), United Nations Security Council (S/2003/1035), October 27, 2003, p. 29).

In July 2002, the operation was nearly derailed when Kenyan police reportedly arrested Fadil in connection with an armed robbery in Mombasa but they did not realize he was a wanted terrorist with a \$25 million bounty on his head, and he escaped the following day (Andrew England, "A 'Most Wanted' Qa'ida Terrorist Slips Kenya Police", Associated Press, June 15, 2004).

Roughly one month later, Fadil apparently smuggled the missiles across the Somali border. According to a UN report, the launchers had been painted blue and white, presumably to camouflage their military character and minimize the risk of discovery during transport to Mombasa (J. Peleman, E. H. Johnes, P. S. Sandhu, and J. Tambi, "Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1474 (2003), United Nations Security Council (s/2003/1035), October 27, 2003, p. 30).

On November 28, 2002, Kenyan police believes, as Arkia airline flight 582 departed Moi International Airport for Tel Aviv, Nabhan and another Kenyan, 'Isa 'Othman Issa, fired the two Strela missiles. Their primitive guidance systems and the two terrorists' lack of practical training apparently caused them to miss their target. At the same time, two more Kenyans, Fumo Muhammad Fumo and Haruni Bamusa, armed with a Kalashnikov assault rifle and a Tokarev pistol, drove Nabhan's blue Pajero into the Paradise Hotel, killing fifteen and injuring about 80. The next day the remaining team members regrouped at the boat in Lamu. Two days later they crossed the border into Somalia.

Since then, al-Qa'ida's Somalia cell, has been still considered a regional security threat. Americans have believed al-Qa'ida members in Kenya and Somalia have continued a high level of activity since the 2002 bombing. The members of al-Qa'ida's Somalia cell have been among the most wanted fugitives on the planet. As the "wildcard" of the group, Fadil has been considered the most dangerous and has been, therefore, the most sought after. Next to Fadil, Nabhan and al-Sudani have been highest on the wanted list. Al-Sudani is believed by Somali counter-terrorism sources to have married a Somali woman in Mogadishu and settled there. Nabhan was often reported sighted in the city during 2003 and 2004, but by early 2005 seemed to have disappeared. Other al-Qa'ida suspects whom intelligence agencies believe may be in Somalia include 'Ali Swidan, 'Isa 'Othman 'Isa, Samir Said Salim Ba'amir and Muhammad Mwakuuza Kuza.

Thus, it is not surprising that the US has long kept a watchful eye on Somalia as a potential haven for terrorists, including the al-Qa'ida network. As early as 1998, when the Clinton administration launched cruise missiles at terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, the head of its Counter-Terrorism Group, Richard Clarke, became concerned that bin Laden might be planning to adopt Somalia as an alternate refuge (Thomas H. Kean (chair) et al, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, New York, 2004, p. 125).

Al-Qa'ida did not relocate to the Horn of Africa but immediately after September 11, US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, instructed his senior commanders to examine options for military action in Somalia (Kean et al, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 336). From late 2001, the US stepped up its counter-

terrorism efforts in the region, effectively opening a new front in its "war or terror". A military base, the only one of its kind in Africa, was established in Djibouti. A massive increase in the collection of human and signals intelligence has been underway ever since. In 2003, the Bush administration pledged \$100 million in new funds for an East African Counter-Terrorism Initiative aimed at boosting the capabilities of the states of the region.

US intelligence resources have financed development of a variety of Somali counter-terrorism organizations and networks. In Puntland, a local intelligence agency established in 2002 with American assistance has become a central pillar of the regional administration's security apparatus. The Puntland Intelligence Service's (PIS) responsibilities include surveillance, investigation and arrest of suspected terrorists; monitoring of ports and airports; and protection of foreigners. After a rocky start, Somaliland's National Intelligence Service (NIS) also began cooperating closely with the US in mid-2003 and has begun to participate in regional intelligence coordination efforts.

In southern Somalia, counter-terrorism efforts have depended on the collaboration of faction leaders and former military or police officers. Muhammad Omar Habeeb (a.k.a. Muhammad 'Dheere', regional "governor" of Middle Shabeelle), Bashir Raghe (a north Mogadishu businessman), Muhammad Qanyare Afrah, Husain Aidid, and Generals Muhammad Nur Galal and Ahmad Jili'ow 'Addow were widely considered the most prominent figures in the Mogadishu counter-terrorism networks. Each reportedly managed a network of informers, often at own expense, in the expectation that compensation will come at some point in the future. The US investment in Somali counter-terrorism capacity has been rewarded with some signal successes, the most celebrated of which was the seizure of Sulaiman Ahmad Hamed Salim (a.k.a 'Isa Tanzania) in April 2003. Acting on a tip from American intelligence, militiamen loyal to Mogadishu faction leader Muhammad Dheere prepared an ambush for him in south Mogadishu. He escaped but was injured and sought refuge at Keysaney Hospital in north Mogadishu, which was managed by the sister of one of his employers. Dheere's men traced him to the hospital, apprehended him, and turned him over to US officials for extradition to Kenya.

Although the US has been by far the largest player in Somali counter-terrorism, other Western countries - including the UK, France and Italy - have maintained active interest. The intelligence services of Ethiopia and Djibouti have been both active throughout Somalia, while Kenya has kept a close watch on its remote northeastern border. Ethiopia has been the most significant of these additional players. Ethiopian intelligence services have maintained a significant presence throughout much of Somalia, monitoring al-Qa'ida, AIAI and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

Over the years, Somali leaders have also attempted to exploit the small Jihadi presence for their own political ends. After September 11, faction leaders queued up to declare their country a potential haven for terrorists. Ethiopia backed these claims and denounced the Transitional National Government (TNG) as a front for Islamist groups and terrorists. In 2001, Addis Ababa backed formation of a coalition of opposition factions, the Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council (SRRC), which soon set to work providing "intelligence" about the TNG and its supporters. SRRC reports included lengthy lists with names of its political rivals and their alleged affiliations with various "extremist" groups including AIAI and a shadowy group with Egyptian origins, Takfir wal-Hijra. Some leading TNG figures were indeed associated with AIAI and with more progressive Islamist movements, but the claims were absurdly exaggerated: much of the TNG cabinet and the nucleus of Mogadishu's business elite were alleged to have extremist affiliations, as well as their sponsors and business partners in Djibouti.

Concerns about the TNG's Islamist ties and the threat of terrorism provided much of the impetus behind an initiative of Somalia's neighbors, acting within the framework of the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to replace the floundering TNG with a more reliable partner. In October 2004, peace talks conducted in Kenya under IGAD's auspices established a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) for Somalia, based in Kenya, which was headed by President Abdallah Yusuf, a central figure in the SRRC, and dominated by his clan and factional allies. Yusuf earned his credentials as anti-Islamist campaigner by fighting and defeating AIAI militarily in northeast Somalia in 1992 and has lived on this success ever since. As president of the regional government of Puntland, he cooperated closely with the Ethiopian and American intelligence services, and many observers expected him to win the enthusiastic endorsement of both governments. Ethiopia did back Yusuf to the hilt but the US - like many other Western countries - remained noncommittal because it harbored deep reservations about his ability to build consensus among the Somali actors and lead a continued reconciliation process.

International concerns appeared justified when almost immediately after its formation, the TFG was beset by severe crises and prevented from functioning. Abdallah Yusuf's choice as prime minister of 'Ali Muhammad Ghedi, a veterinarian with no political experience or visible constituency within his Hawiye clan, was perceived by many as an attempt to sideline the Hawiye. Furthermore, the cabinet concentrated power within a narrow circle, mainly pro-Ethiopian allies from the SRRC, at the expense of clans and movements from the failed TNG. Thus, those elements that the TFG and its Ethiopian backers sought to marginalize emerged as their most potent rivals. Chief among these was the



Habar Gidir Ayr sub-clan, the lineage of the previous TNG president and the most commercially and militarily important sub-clan in southern Somalia. The Ayr is dominant in trade and share control of territory extending from south Mogadishu to Chisimayu. They have also produced some of the top Islamist leaders.

By March 2005, two rival camps had emerged within the TFG. One was led by President Yusuf and Prime Minister Ghedi and the other, the "Mogadishu Group", was composed of parliamentarians and cabinet members mainly based in the capital and principally from the Hawiye clan. The Mogadishu Group was formally represented by Speaker of the Parliament, Sharif Hasan Shaikh Aden, himself a member of the Digil-Mirifle sub-clans. Real power in it was held by dissident cabinet members commanding significant clan militias.

In March 2005, this rivalry exploded into an open split, culminating in the departure of the Mogadishu-based parliamentarians and ten Hawiye clan cabinet members from Nairobi, where the TFG was provisionally operating, to Mogadishu. Two issues polarized the groups – the site of the capital and the proposal to invite peacekeeping forces in to support the TFG. Abdallah Yusuf appealed for a 20,000-strong multinational military force to return his government to Somalia in October 2004 and later announced he would relocate his government not to Mogadishu but to the towns of Baidoa and Giohar. Meeting on the sidelines of the African Union (AU) summit in Abuja on January 31, 2005, IGAD member states, other than Eritrea, seized on the request and pledged to send troops and equipment to Somalia. On February 7, 2005, the request was endorsed by the AU's Peace and Security Council. Although routinely described as a peacekeeping mission, the operation was in fact proposed as peace enforcement, involving "all measures necessary" against any party deemed to threaten the process: precisely the kind of mission that brought US and UN forces into conflict with Somali militias in the early 1990s. The original concept also included a reference to counter-terrorism, indicating that peace keeping was not the only consideration of Somalia's neighbors.

These critical issues polarized the TFG between Yusuf's SRRC wing and a coalition of mainly Mogadishu-based faction leaders. The transitional parliament divided similarly, with one wing - led by Speaker Sharif Hasan - returning to Mogadishu, while the other, led by President Yusuf and Prime Minister 'Ali Muhammad Ghedi, remained in Nairobi. The Mogadishu-based group rapidly set to work, galvanizing a coalition of civil society organizations, women's groups and former military and police officers in order to restore security and stability to the capital, in the hopes of demonstrating it was a suitable location for the TFG, and no foreign troops were required. Yusuf's wing continued to insist that Mogadishu was too insecure, and foreign troops were essential. The

impasse, which lasted ten months, threatened to fracture the TFG into hostile armed camps, derailing the fragile peace process and plunging Somalia back into crisis.

From a Jihadi perspective, Yusuf's rash appeal for foreign troops - especially from neighboring Ethiopia - and the furor it unleashed must have seemed like an answer to their prayers. A prominent Somali Internet columnist warned in an editorial on al-Jazeera: Fatwas on Jihad would be issued, and streets of Mogadishu would witness bloody clashes between the Somalis and Ethiopian soldiers. Such clashes would also grab the attention of the Muslim world, thus spurring foreign legions of bin Ladens and Zarqawis to find their way to heaven to kill the infidel Abyssinian soldiers in Somalia (Bashir Goth, "Ethiopia as an Enemy is Engraved in the Collective Memory of Somali People", Al-Jazeera, March 19, 2005). Shaikh Hasan Dahir Aweys, a prominent Jihadi leader in Mogadishu, predictably condemned the proposed deployment and warned Somalis would wage Jihad against any foreign troops who dare set foot on Somali soil. His view was echoed by the leadership of Mogadishu's influential Shari'a courts and a variety of religious leaders.

TFG supporters were quick to brand opponents of the deployment plan as "extremists"; Ethiopia likewise tried to play down the opposition as a handful of Islamic militants. But Yusuf's rivals within the TFG, including several key ministers, perceived the peacekeeping proposal as a ruse the interim president and his Ethiopian allies would use to crush them - a sentiment widely shared within the Hawiye clan.

Recognizing the risks, a variety of international actors moved quickly to head off a potential catastrophe. The US came out strongly against an international military intervention, partly out of fear it could serve as a catalyst for the rise of a "Jihadi movement" inside Somalia. The EU, IGAD's Partners Forum and the UN Security Council all followed the US lead in urging restraint by IGAD and Somalia's neighbors. On March 19, 2005, IGAD put forward a revised deployment plan that excluded Somalia's neighbors from the first phase. The counter-terrorism component was removed at AU request. In May, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) approved only the first phase of the planned IGAD deployment, effectively proscribing Somalia's neighbors from taking part, and sought UN Security Council approval for the operation - approval it was unlikely to receive given US reservations about introducing foreign troops into the country.

After nearly nine months of procrastination, the TFG finally wore out its welcome in Nairobi. On June 13, 2005, the Kenyan government bade it farewell in a carefully staged ceremony that left President Yusuf and his followers no choice but to depart to Giohar. In Mogadishu, efforts to prepare the city for

the TFG's entrance were well underway, including the removal of roadblocks and cantonment of militia outside the city. Calls for Jihad went silent; even Hasan Dahir Aweys agreed to contribute 28 battlewagons with crews to the disarmament process. Although Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, continued to warn of the "very active" al-Qa'ida presence in Somalia, he affirmed that a Somali government was the best way to eliminate it, apparently aligning his government with the broader international consensus. The threat of a broad-based Jihadi insurgency appeared to have receded.

Overall, Counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia have won a few key battles against extremists but they have been steadily losing the war for Somali hearts and minds. Many Somalis have believed the war on terror is in fact a war on Islam. Counter-terrorism measures have left the country more isolated than ever: the Somali passport has been practically useless, restricting overseas travel essentially to the small minority who possess foreign passports. The remittance companies that transfer money from the Somali Diaspora to families at home have come under increasing regulatory pressure. The country's reputation as a terrorist sanctuary has discouraged potential investors, including aid agencies. Many Somalis have doubted there are terrorists on Somali soil and believed their country has been wrongly targeted. Some of the irritations are relatively minor. The occasional surveillance flights over Mogadishu have reminded many residents of the American AC-130 gunships that frightened the city in 1993, breeding anxiety and indignation. Others, such as the closure of the major Somali money transfer company, al-Barakaat, directly affected thousands whose savings were lost when the company's assets were frozen. Furthermore, the abduction of innocent people for weeks at a time on suspicion of terrorist links, and cooperation with unpopular faction leaders all seemed to add to public cynicism and resentment. Without public support, even the most sophisticated counter-terrorism effort is doomed to failure. Militants have responded by assassinating at least a dozen Somalis working for Mogadishu's Western-backed counter-terrorism networks.

Within all this turmoil, the TFG was revived in January 2006 by an accord signed in Yemen by the president and parliament speaker. The latter only partially represented the views of the Mogadishu Group, since his standing as a member of the Digil-Mirifle sub-clan, which had no militia in Mogadishu and was divided between the TFG's rival wings, afforded him greater political latitude to negotiate but also gave him little leverage over Mogadishu-based militia leaders from the Hawiye clan. The accord bound both sides to convene parliament within 30 days, and, thus, on February 26, 2006, the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) was convened in Baidoa, with some 250 parliamentarians attending, a very considerable achievement under the circumstances.

Yet, by February 2006, the TFG controlled virtually no territory in Somalia and had made virtually no progress in extending its authority at the local level. Even in Baidoa, it was a guest, while a variety of local leaders exercised variable control entirely independent of, and sometimes in direct conflict with it. Abdallah Yusuf's regional base, Puntland, had recently distanced itself from the TFG due to disputes with the prime minister over the right to sign commercial agreements for mineral exploration. Abdallah Yusuf had forged alliances with a number of local and regional authorities, in Beledweyne, Gedo region, and Chisimayu, but TFG claims of authority there were indirect.

## **The Rise of the Islamic Courts Union to Power and Its Struggle with the TFG**

The TFG's alienation of the Hawiye community and its failure to establish functional local administration left a political vacuum. The Mogadishu Group sought to fill this void, enhancing its own legitimacy by articulating widely held Hawiye grievances in order to obtain a greater share of political power within the TFG. What its leaders failed to appreciate, however, was the extent to which their own credibility had ebbed and the influence of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and their supporters had grown. The competition between these groups burst unexpectedly into the open in early 2006, ending in a decisive victory for the ICU.

All was set then for the rise to power of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). After the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, a system of Shari'a-based Islamic courts became the main judicial system, funded through fees paid by litigants. Former AIAI members presided over the establishment of Islamic courts in north Mogadishu. Over time, the courts began to offer other services such as education and health care. The courts also acted as local police forces, being paid by local businesses to reduce crime. The Islamic courts took on the responsibility for halting robberies and drug-dealing, as well as stopping the showing of what it claimed to be pornographic films in local movie houses.

Somalia is almost entirely Muslim, and these institutions initially had wide public support. The early years of the ICU included such outfits as Shaikh 'Ali Dheere's established in north Mogadishu in 1994 and the Beledweyne court initiated in 1996. They soon saw the sense in working together through a joint committee to promote security. This move was initiated by four of the courts – Ifka Halane, Circolo, Warshadda, and Hararyaale – who formed a committee to co-ordinate their affairs, to exchange criminals from different clans and to integrate security forces. In the absence of a police force, each court maintained its own militia, usually paid for by contributions from the clan's businessmen. In comparison with the various clan and factional forces working in anarchic Mogadishu, the court militia acquired a reputation for discipline and good conduct.

In the year 2000, the courts formed a union of Islamic courts, partly to consolidate resources and power and partly to aid in handing down decisions across, rather than within, clan lines. Yet, the ICU remained firmly established in the Hawiye clan. Its assembly of 63 members elected as its chairman Shaikh 'Ali Dheere, and Hasan Dahir Aweys was appointed secretary general. The Union's

primary functions included prisoner exchanges and occasional joint militia operations. Although they represented only some of the sub-clans in the area, the collective leverage of the courts was formidable: their influence extended throughout much of Mogadishu and the Lower Shabeelle region; their militia numbered in the thousands; and they physically controlled many major courts and prisons. Few people shared the courts' puritanical religious views, but they were popular for their ability to provide security.

In 2004, a new umbrella organization was established for Mogadishu's 11 Shari'a courts: the Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts of Somalia. The Council members elected as its chairman Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad, a cleric previously associated with the traditionalist Sufi association Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ), which had played a leading role in the establishment of the judicial system in Middle Shabeelle. Under the leadership of the new Council, and in collaboration with voluntary "neighborhood watch" committee, the Shari'a court system in Mogadishu experienced unprecedented expansion.

As the courts began to assert themselves as the dispensers of justice they came into conflict with the secular warlords who controlled most of Mogadishu. In reaction to the growing power of the ICU, a group of Mogadishu warlords formed the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT). This was a major change, as these warlords had been fighting each other for many years. The TFG's Prime Minister, 'Ali Muhammad Ghedi, demanded that the warlords cease fighting the ICU, but this command was universally ignored and so Ghedi dismissed them from the parliament. By the beginning of 2006, these two groups had clashed repeatedly, and in May 2006 these clashes escalated into street fighting in the capital, claiming the lives of more than 350 people and causing the displacement of thousands. By June 4, the ICU had taken Balcad and seized the primary ARPCT base in Mogadishu. The ICU was poised on the brink of victory, and, indeed on June 5, the ICU claimed that they were in control of Mogadishu.

By then, the ICU consisted of three groups, each with its own goal and objective. Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad headed the moderate group. In general, it had only one goal, to bring back security, and unite the country. Shaikh Hasan Dahir Aweys headed the Jihadi-Salafi element, which wanted to establish a Taliban-like regime in Somalia. The third group consisted of the remnants of the Greater Somalia advocates.

Each member of the ICU was a Shari'a judge in charge of a specified court in a particular district of Somalia, and it was up to him to determine how Shari'a law was enforced. These interpretations could either be very literal or very broad, with various hadiths being either regarded or disregarded, and correspondingly had led to varying levels of liberty and repression. Some courts

did not enforce beyond what the Qur'an required; others used to beat people for watching western movies or playing "licentious" music.

In order to organize the courts into a more coherent organization, rather than a like-minded collection of independent judges, a "Supreme Islamic Court of Banaadir" was created on October 5, 2006, with the most senior judges forming this high court. This court dealt with wide issues, as well as foreign relations, and commanded the ICU military forces as a whole. The chairman of the Supreme Islamic Court was Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad. A consultative Shura council chaired by Shaikh Hasan Dahir Aweys approved the decisions made by the Supreme Islamic Court, and therefore was called the "real power" within the ICU, though the Shura could not act unilaterally. Below the Supreme Council and Shura Council were the regional courts spread throughout the country, which governed over the day to day issues of justice and law. These courts had enormous independence, and so the laws and regulations in ICU territory could vary from town to town based on the particular moderation or radicalism of the local court.

Another body affiliated with the ICU was Hizb al-Shabab, also known as al-Shabab, which was mentioned earlier in connection with the Jihadi elements active in Mogadishu following the dissolution of AIAI. It was a radical and independent organization under the ICU umbrella. It was integrated quite tightly with the ICU armed forces, acting as a sort of "special forces" for the ICU. The Shabab used to abduct journalists, harass overly-hip youngsters, and even murder wounded Jubba Valley Alliance soldiers in a Bu'aale hospital. The Shabab was headed by Adan Hashi Ayro.

The attempts to explain the ICU's success in defeating the warlords and taking control of Mogadishu have focused on the weariness of Somalia's population with chronic conflict and its weakening effects, and on disaffection with the warlords who were responsible for the distress. Yet, above all, the ICU's ability to move so effectively with singleness of purpose was due to the eruption of Somali nationalism throughout the first half of 2006. Thus, the immediate cause for the ICU's power surge was revelations in early 2006 that the ARPCT had been receiving funds to arm itself from the US through the CIA working with the Ethiopian secret services. These revelations, and especially the implication of Somalia's traditional adversary Ethiopia in the affair, set off a nationalist reaction, which was exploited to the full by the ICU.

The ARPCT's defeat had at least temporarily ended a complex period of tri-polar politics defined by the rival camps of the TFG, the ARPCT, and the ICU. The ascent of the ICU fundamentally recast power relations in Somalia. The ICU was then the most powerful military and political group in the southern part of the country and a force that the TFG could neither ignore nor isolate.

Thus, for the first time after 15 years of anarchy, Mogadishu was controlled by one force. Since control over Mogadishu was and still is the key to the control over Somalia, all was set for the expansion of the ICU to other parts of the country and to the struggle with the TFG over the control of the country.

By June 6, the warlords who had banded together to resist the ICU either retreated to Ethiopia or surrendered to them, making the ICU the new masters of Mogadishu and its port. The ICU had imposed strict law and order over the parts of Mogadishu they controlled during the battles, and with their final victory law and order was declared to have returned to Mogadishu for the first time in 15 years. This accomplishment was applauded both internationally and domestically as a significant achievement, but worries and fears of the ICU's intentions began to appear both domestically and internationally.

The ICU, having consolidated Mogadishu entirely with the surrender of the last warlord of the city, moved out from Mogadishu northward in a rapid consolidation campaign to link up with allied courts in other cities, and to push out the remaining regional warlords who had opposed them in Mogadishu or supported the ARPCT. Giohar was the most important warlord stronghold outside of Mogadishu, ruled by Muhammad Dheere. After securing allies in the town, the ICU advanced on Giohar, forcing Muhammad Dheere to flee north to Ethiopia and capturing the city on June 14.

The collapse of the ARPCT returned Somalia to bi-polar politics, pitting the Mogadishu-based, anti-Ethiopian, Habar Gidir-dominated ICU against the Baidoa-based, pro-Ethiopian, Majeerteen and Abgaal dominated TFG. At the same time, a variety of forces, internal and external, seemed to be propelling Somalia towards a new and wider conflict in which clan rivalry, ideology, regional geopolitics and the US-led war on terror converge.

Riding the nationalist reaction following its taking control of Mogadishu, the ICU had the possibility of really becoming a force that transcends clan loyalties. But, to achieve this aim, it had to overcome its internal divisions and moderate its Islamist program first. However, the division between moderates and radicals had already surfaced in debates within the ICU over whether to negotiate with the TFG on a national unity government or to form a separate government based on Islamic law.

Another bone of contention between the two factions was the attitude towards foreign influences. The hardliners wanted to curb foreign influences, which in their view were regarded as immoral. They had closed down cinemas showing foreign films and football matches. Some radio stations had also been told not to play foreign music or local love songs and had been closed if they continued to do so, while other radio stations and cinemas, most probably under the supervision of moderate courts, had not been harmed.



However, immediately after the taking of Mogadishu, it seemed like the moderates gained the upper hand. At that time, the ICU wanted to solidify their rule, while reassuring Western leaders that they did not intend to impose an extremist, Taliban-like government on Somalia. In a coordinated effort including private conversations and public declarations, the ICU portrayed itself as a moderate force capable of stabilizing Somalia. A letter sent by militia leaders to foreign governments said they wanted a friendly relationship with the international community.

To further prove their point that the ICU's aim is to bring back security to chaotic Mogadishu and Somalia, the ICU announced on July 3, 2006, new guidelines on travel to Mogadishu, saying it wanted to boost traveler safety, following the killing of a Swedish cameraman, Martin Adler, on June 23, 2006, by an unidentified gunman as he covered a demonstration in Mogadishu. On July 15, 2006, it opened Mogadishu international airport, which had been closed for the last eleven years. On August 15, 2006, the ICU captured Haradhere, some 500km northeast of Mogadishu, which had become a safe haven for pirates, who had forced shipping firms and international organizations to pay large ransoms for the release of vessels and crews. On August 25, 2006, the Islamic Courts reopened historical Mogadishu seaport, which was formerly one of the busiest in East Africa but had been shut down in 1996.

Despite the ICU's efforts to present itself as wishing only to bring back order and security to Mogadishu and Somalia and to allay the international community's fears of its real intentions, it seemed like the international community was poised again to plunge into Somalia's complex conflicts more than eleven years since the last UN peacekeepers beat an ignominious retreat in March 1995. This time the aim was not to rescue the population from famine and disease but to prop up the faltering TFG, contain the expansion of the increasingly powerful ICU and prevent establishment of a Taliban-style safe haven for al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups. The African Union (AU) has unanimously authorized deployment of a military force to support the TFG. The first Ethiopian troops were in Somalia by August, with more massed along the common border. Eritrea gave the ICU military aid. Western governments, including the US, wavered nervously between declared support for the TFG, concerns about extremist elements within the ICU and fear that Ethiopian-led intervention could turn Somalia into a Jihadi battlefield or a proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

As the ICU took control of Mogadishu, the US hastily formed the Contact Group (CG), composed of its allies Britain and Italy - the former colonial powers in Somalia - and potential honest brokers Norway, Sweden and the European Union, along with Tanzania, the only East African state outside IGAD. The UN and AU were invited to

be observers, and IGAD and the Arab League were excluded, provoking their anger. The formation of the CG represented the handover of US's Somalia policy to the State Department, which had pressed for multilateral, diplomatic initiatives across the board against the unilateralists based in the Defense Department and the vice president's office. The composition of the CG signaled tentativeness in the US about weighing in on Somalia's new balance of power. The CG met on June 14 and issued a statement affirming the TFG as a "legitimate and viable framework" for stabilization in Somalia, urging unrestricted access for relief agencies to the country and calling for dialogue between the ICU and the TFG. Conspicuously absent from the CG's statement was support for a peacekeeping mission and exemptions to the UN arms embargo. The ICU influenced the deliberations of the CG with its letter promising not to harbor "terrorists," which prompted Jendayi Frazier, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, to say that Washington was encouraged by the ICU's assurances, but was suspending judgment on opening relations with the group pending an assessment of its future behavior. On the issue of exemptions to the arms embargo, Frazier said that each country in the CG would consider the question separately.

Thus, the CG was not a robust response to the ICU's ascent, but a stopgap measure that kept support for the TFG in place, but did not give it the resources it needed to stand up to the ICU. The CG placed the US at a safe distance from Somalia's internal conflicts, but too far removed to exert effective influence. Given how the US had been discredited in the Somalis' eyes, the CG was probably the best that it could do at that time. The US had to decide whether to acquiesce actively in a strong Islamist presence in a Somali regime or in an outright Islamist takeover, or to resist the ICU. The first alternative would send a message to other states populated by Muslims that the US might back down from its opposition to Islamist governments, whereas the second alternative would leave the US with scant influence over Somalia's political future. Ethiopia – the single most important foreign actor in Somali affairs – was and still is the TFG's patron and principal advocate in the international community. It had and still has legitimate security interests in Somalia and in the past, it used to intervene constructively to support reconciliation and state-building, notably in Somaliland and Puntland. But its current engagement has been deeply divisive and has undermined its own security objectives. Ethiopia considered the ICU to have been infiltrated by AIAI, and as a potential entry point to the region for al-Qa'ida. Ethiopia's security concerns related not only to the ICU's 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 formation in 2004, Ethiopia provided military materiel and training to the TFG, while Eritrea assisted the

ICU. Ethiopia was deeply unpopular with many Somalis, who believed it feared the re-emergence of a strong, united Somalia and so seeks to perpetuate instability and division. Thus, Ethiopian support of the TFG had already sapped it of credibility in the eyes of many, who considered its leadership to be more responsive to foreign priorities than their own.

A relatively new major player in the Horn of Africa, and particularly in Somalia, is Eritrea. In 1991, allied movements led by a pair of distant kinsmen, Meles Zenawi's Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and Isaias Afewerki's Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), succeeded in overthrowing the brutal Marxist dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam which had tyrannized Ethiopia since he overthrew the Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. While the EPRDF entered Addis Ababa and, with its other partners, went about forming a transitional government which, three years later, gave birth to a new order with the promulgation of the constitution for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the EPLF assumed control of Eritrea and, after an internationally-sanctioned referendum in 1993, led the onetime Italian colony to separate independence as the State of Eritrea ruled by the single legal political party that the EPLF transformed itself into, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).

Ethiopia, with its population of 76 million and vast natural resources, was better positioned, while Eritrea, with less than 5 million inhabitants, almost no natural resources, and an economy almost entirely dependent on remittances from emigrants in the West, had only the advantage of its access to the sea. Therefore, the Eritrean President tried to exploit nationalist pride to shore up his economically-troubled regime, picking a fight over unsettled boundaries with Ethiopia. In May 1998, Afewerki sent his army to occupy the contested border town of Badme. The ensuing conventional war claimed over 100,000 lives and displaced 1.5 million people before a peace accord, largely brokered by the US, was signed in Algiers in December 2000.

Under the Algiers Agreement, Eritrea withdrew its forces back 25 kilometers from the Ethiopian lines, with the vacated "transitional security zone" subject to monitoring by an international peacekeeping force, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), with an originally authorized troop strength of 4,200 that has subsequently scaled back to under 1,700. The border dispute was submitted to international arbitration by a specially-appointed Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC). The EEBC was mandated to delimit the border on the basis of a series of early 20th century colonial treaties and "applicable international law."

In April 2002, the EEBC issued its decision awarding Badme to Eritrea on the basis of the colonial era frontiers. Ethiopia objected, but could not prevail

upon the commissioners to revisit their ruling, despite prolonged entreaties and considerable foot-dragging on implementation. Finally, in November 2004, Prime Minister Zenawi accepted the ruling in principle, but proposed opening negotiations with his counterpart given the on-the-ground realities of local communities which the proposed lines would divide. President Afewerki, however, insisted that the demarcation proceed and took measures aimed at forcing the process forward, including banning helicopter flights by UNMEE, halting the peacekeepers' activities, and forcing their withdrawal from certain sectors. The Eritrean ruler became even more intransigent when, at the end of 2005, an international claims commission ruled that even though Badme belonged to his country, aggressive actions to secure it when the ownership was still unresolved violated the UN Charter and thus, Eritrea was liable for damages Ethiopia incurred as a result of the conflict.

Thus, Eritrea's involvement in Somali affairs 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 for their Somali allies – Aidid's militia. After the war, support diminished, although Eritrea maintained relations with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and other Ethiopian rebel groups. ONLF fighters routinely entered Somalia and obtained weapons from Somalia's arms markets. Eritrea had been passive in IGAD, allowing Ethiopia and Kenya to drive the Somali agenda. Unsurprisingly, however, as from 2005, Eritrea has appeared to have dramatically augmented its engagement. UN monitors alleged that between May 2005 and May 2006, it delivered at least ten arms shipments to Somalia, mainly to leaders aligned with the ICU and to the ONLF.

The Arab League had been mostly peripheral in Somalia since the formation of the TFG but has also re-emerged as a major player. Yemen took the lead in brokering the January 2006 San'a's talks that temporarily healed the rift between the TFG president and parliament speaker. Sudan, as the Arab League chair, had also stepped forward to broker negotiation between the TFG and the ICU. Although the international community had broadly welcomed this initiative, some observers believed that Sudan was fronting for Egypt, which has historically competed with Ethiopia for influence over the Somali peninsula.

Al-Qa'ida is another major player which must be mentioned. Throughout the ICU's rise to power and its expansion policy in Somalia, al-Qa'ida confined itself to a passive and verbal support to the Islamists, while threatening the West not to interfere and portraying the conflict there as another battlefield against the "Crusaders". On July 1, 2006, just a short time following the taking of Mogadishu, a Web-posted message written by Osama bin Laden urged Somalis

to build an Islamic state in the country and back the ICU in its fight against the TFG. He further called on them to oppose the arrival of military forces in Somalia from any country, saying that such an arrival would be "a continuation of the Crusade against the Islamic World". Bin Laden warned Western states that his al-Qa'ida network would fight against them if they intervened in Somalia.

Indeed, the multifaceted nature of the crisis made pursuit of a peaceful settlement complicated. Any settlement had to satisfy not only the two main Somali rivals but also other internal actors, such as Puntland and the Jubba Valley Alliance, and regional powers such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, and Egypt. To earn broader international credibility and support it had also to address the legitimate counter-terrorism concerns of the US and other Western countries. The first and most obvious challenge was that neither the TFG nor the ICU spoke with a unified voice. Pragmatists on both sides were prepared to seek a negotiated settlement that avoided armed conflict, while ideologues in both sides believed their objectives were best served by confrontation.

Still, on June 22, 2006, shortly after the ICU victory over the ARPCT, Sudan invited the TFG and the ICU for talks to prevent a direct confrontation. Despite lack of engagement in Somali affairs over the past decade, Sudan's Islamist credentials and its warming relations with Ethiopia recommended it as a mediator. Its support to AIAI in the early 1990s also implied an unparalleled degree of access to the militants within the ICU. The first round of talks achieved little: the parties agreed only to refrain from hostilities, to recognize one another and to meet again on July 15. But as the second round approached, they accused each other of having violated the initial agreement, and the TFG announced that it would not take part in the second round and called for a postponement. The TFG's refusal to participate almost revived the rift within its institutions. Speaker Sharif Hasan announced that parliament would send its own delegation and, in what amounted to a vote of no confidence in the TFG's leadership, secured a significant majority in support of his initiative. The TFG initially responded that parliament was behaving unconstitutionally but later agreed to send a joint-albeit low grade-delegation. At last, however, the peace talks resulted in the Treaty of Khartoum of September 5, in which it was agreed that the ICU and the TFG would be merged; however, the ICU insisted on the precondition Ethiopian troops would leave the country beforehand. Ethiopian forces did not withdraw, and the treaty agreement fell apart.

One of the greatest threats to the peace process was the growing international openness to lifting the UN arms embargo in order to allow the TFG to arm and train its security forces and to the eventual deployment of a regional peace support operation. The issue received renewed impetus in July 2005 with the AU's Peace and Security Council issuing a communiqué requesting the UN

Security Council for a partial lifting of the ban to enable regional peacekeepers to be deployed. However, the Security Council declined to grant the requested exemption.

The international community was divided about the nature of any intervention force. The UN, Arab League, AU, and IGAD agreed – at least rhetorically – that the TFG is the only legitimate framework for political reconstruction but this had little meaning on the ground: the most powerful group in southern Somalia, the ICU, was not party to any ceasefire, did not subscribe to the Transitional Federal Charter and had not endorsed the TFG's National Security and Stabilization Plan, which was supposed to chart the path for development of the government's security sector, and upon which foreign deployment would necessarily be based. Therefore, one school of thought, led by Ethiopia, believed that the TFG had to be supported politically and reinforced militarily in order to compel the ICU to come to the table. However, since many Somalis – especially those who supported the ICU – viewed the TFG as a faction rather than a legitimate national government, they were likely to perceive any direct support to it as a provocation. Either way, as long as the ICU opposed foreign military deployment, the character of such a deployment would be that of a protection force.

Resolution of this debate had been pre-empted by the deployment of Ethiopian forces, which had begun patrolling in strength in the regions of Gedo, Bay, Bakool, and Hiraan. In late July 2006, as the ICU began to expand their influence into the Bay region, Ethiopians moved in large numbers into Baidoa and the surrounding areas. The Ethiopian Minister of Information declared then that his country was ready to strike the ICU militarily.

Steadily, the ICU took control of much of the southern half of Somalia, normally through negotiation with local clan chiefs rather than by the use of force. Yet, the ICU stayed clear of the government headquarters town of Baidoa, which Ethiopia said it would protect if threatened. In the beginning of August, the ICU moved into the Mudug region, capturing Adado on August 1, following negotiations with the local clan head. This drew the ICU even closer to Puntland, since Adado borders the city of Galcaio. Conflict ensued almost immediately after an Islamic Court was founded in south Galcaio (Puntland disputes ownership of south Galcaio with the local Sacad sub-clan) and escalated rapidly up to August 9. The Sacad sub-clan was largely divided between those Sacad who supported the ICU (the Sacad have their own Islamic court in the capital) and those who opposed the ICU (led by Muhammad Warsame 'Ali "Kiimiko" and Abdi Qeybdid). The anti-ICU Sacad sub-clan united together to form their own state in south Galcaio, in order to resist both Puntland and the ICU. Thus, local Sacad sub-clan elders of south Galcaio and the regions of Mudug and

Galgadud chose to form their own regional state, bringing in the territory of Abdi Qeybdiid into Galmudug on August 14 in order to avoid annexation into Puntland or the ICU.

In order to prevent the ICU from capturing any more territory, the TFG stepped up their pressure for regional East African peacekeeping force to be deployed in the country and for the primary anti-ICU countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda) to pull together troops and funds to deploy a force in Chisimayu. ICU leaders opposed this plan and lobbied AU member states at an AU ceremony conducted in Libya on September 9, 2006 to abandon plans to send peacekeepers to Somalia. But, to no avail.

Thus, in order to prevent the deployment of thousands of AU troops in the country, the ICU invaded Jubbaland and seized Chisimayu on September 25, after the Jubba Valley Alliance withdrew from the town in the face of the overwhelming opposition and the defection of several JVA factions to the ICU. As a result, relations with the TFG collapsed. Ethiopia deployed hundreds of troops in Baidoa, and those numbers would continue to increase into thousands in the next three months. The capture of Chisimayu soured relations with both Somaliland and Puntland, as Jubbaland was recognized as a political entity in many Somali circles, as opposed to the warlords who were universally viewed as being illegitimate.

Later, on September 29, the ICU declared its intention to unify and centralize its military forces under a single command and put an end to the decentralized militias. Consequently, on September 30, Indha-adde, the ICU-allied warlord ruler of Lower Shabeelle, agreed to surrender his militias and territories to the ICU voluntarily, and in return was granted a senior position in the ICU leadership as head of the ICU security. In October, the ICU captured the regions of the Lower Jubba and Middle Jubba from the JVA forces.

On November 1, ICU forces assumed control over Hobyo, which is part of Galmudug. Religious leaders in the northern half of Galcaio (the half controlled by Puntland) set up an Islamic court, which the government of Puntland vowed to dismantle or destroy, creating a tense situation as ICU forces headed towards Galmudug-controlled Galcaio to protect the new Islamic court. Abdi Qeybdiid, former member of the ARPCT and an important figure in Galmudug, vowed to defeat them. Heavy fighting broke out in central Somalia on November 12, when Islamic militia captured the town of Bandiiradley (possessing an airport and an important Puntland military base protecting Galcaio) after claiming they came under attack from pro-government militia backed by Ethiopian troops near the border of Puntland. Puntland's President, Adde Musa, signed a deal with the Islamic court of Galcaio in order to stem the tide of violence. The details of this deal include the establishment of Shari'a as the legal code, and holding



Map 3: ICU Expansion in Somalia



The tension between the ICU and the TFG reached its highest peak when on September 18, the ICU were alleged to make the first overt move against the TFG. Just minutes after a speech to the Transitional Parliament, which was based out of the town of Baidoa, a suicide car bomber attacked the presidential convoy, in what was the first suicide strike in Somalia's history. Six government officials were killed in the suicide strike, including President Yusuf's brother. President Yusuf blamed al-Qa'ida for the attack. Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad, on his part, blamed Ethiopia for the attack. On November 30, a second suicide bombing attack was conducted against the TFG. Nine were killed after a car suicide bomb detonated at a checkpoint outside of Baidoa. Hasan Dahir Aweys encouraged further suicide strikes.

In the meantime, the ICU became more and more radicalized. Thus, radical Islamic courts shut cinema halls and decreed in June 2006 that sport is a "satanic act". Thus, sport was banned during Ramadan. A group of teenagers playing soccer in Mogadishu was taken into custody in September 2006 and only released when their parents promised they would never allow their children to play football again.

More repressive measures were enacted by the ICU against the Somali population. For example, Islamic Courts militias had beaten members of the Mogadishu Stars, a musical band, with "electric cables" after performing at a wedding ceremony, since the wedding included the mixing of men and women as well as playing music, which were regarded as un-Islamic. All these radical measures culminated on November 17, to banning the use, sale and transportation of the ghat, while the Islamic Court of Chisimayu banned the sale of cigarettes. This was a controversial move as it was the main source of income for many war widows and orphans and a huge export-import business in the whole Horn of Africa region. Another repressive measure was enacted on December 6, in Bulo Burto; a town located about 124 miles northeast of Mogadishu. The chairman of the Islamic Court there decided that as from that date a resident of the town who would not pray five times a day, as a good Muslim should, will be beheaded. This decision, however, was not binding on courts in other towns. Some of the courts had introduced public executions, flogging of convicts, bans on women swimming at Mogadishu's public beaches, etc.

This notion of radical Islam, which resembled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, but which contrasted with the moderate Islam that has dominated Somali culture for centuries, led the Somalis to demonstrations against the regime. The ICU that in the beginning was regarded as bearing the banner of Somali nationalism was now regarded as preaching radical Islamism, alien to most Somali citizens, who belong to Sufi orders.

Regional concern of the ICU's real intentions were also heightened on

November 2, 2006, when the US Embassy in Nairobi issued a terrorist warning of suicide attack threats in Kenya and Ethiopia, stemming from Somalia. Terrorist attack warning for Ethiopia and Kenya was reiterated on November 28, citing a letter purportedly written by Shaikh Hasan Dahir Aweys, to attack US citizens in those countries.

Thus, when the ICU's intentions' were clarified, the UN took sides in the conflict. On December 6, 2006, the UN Security Council passed a pair of resolutions involving Somalia: Resolution 1724, which stressed the arms embargo on Somalia and called for all UN member nations to avoid exacerbating the conflict by shipping arms into the region; and Resolution 1725, which authorized "IGAD and Member States of the African Union to establish a protection and training mission in Somalia" (The full text of resolution 1725 can be read on-line at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/SOMALIA%20SRES1725.pdf>). This mission was dubbed IGASOM, and for the purposes of their mission, the arms embargo was lifted to allow them to bring weapons into the country. Somali reaction to the resolutions was generally supportive for supporters of the TFG, and negative for supporters of the ICU. It was seen as a US-backed plan. IGAD and AU members balked at creating the necessary peacekeeping force. There was ICU resistance to allowing Ethiopian troops be part of the mission. Uganda, the one nation that initially committed to provide a battalion of troops, later backed away from its pledge when the ICU threatened to attack any UN peacekeepers that entered the country.

By the authority of the UN Security Council 1725, the member states of IGAD and the AU were enchartered to conduct a peacekeeping mission to Somalia. Dubbed IGASOM, the mission would seek to put UN-sanctioned peacekeepers in the country for the first time since the 1992 – 1995 missions. On December 2, 2006, representatives of IGAD and the ICU met and published a cordial and formal communiqué, committing the ICU to the IGAD plans. Subsequently, the ICU has declared its opposition to the mission. IGASOM, however, never deployed to Somalia. Instead, in early 2007, the mission was expanded to invite willing members of the broader AU, and dubbed the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

On December 8, heavy fighting broke out between ICU forces and TFG forces, backed by Ethiopian troops, in the town of Dinsoor, in what many feared would spark an invasion of the heavily-fortified city of Baidoa by the massed ICU forces stationed in Buurhakaba. Residents in Baidoa began fleeing the city, in fear of the fighting spilling over into Baidoa. Sharif Shaikh Ahmad ended months of speculation on December 10 by formally declaring the ICU's intention to capture Baidoa. On December 11, the ICU began advancing towards

Tyeeglow, continuing the encirclement of Baidoa.

Meanwhile, Italian special envoy to Ethiopia, Mario Raffaelli, met with the ICU in Mogadishu to attempt peacemaking, but was met with skepticism. Somalia's parliament speaker and Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad met in succession with the Yemeni president. Arab League efforts for peace talks in Khartoum, Sudan, were postponed, angering the ICU. Parliament speaker bypassed the TFG and signed an agreement with the ICU toward a peace initiative. However, the TFG said the agreement was invalid, as had bypassed its authority. Yet, diplomacy did not succeed to prevent the looming war.

On December 20, major fighting broke out around the TFG capital of Baidoa, after a lapse of a one-week deadline the ICU imposed on Ethiopia on December 12 to withdraw from Somalia. Ethiopia, however, refused to withdraw from its positions around the TFG capital in Baidoa, and thus, to leave the TFG to the mercy of the ICU. Just as major hostilities were breaking out, European Union Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, conducted shuttle diplomacy between the TFG seat in Baidoa and the ICU government seat in Mogadishu. The warring parties agreed to talk, but the conflict continued to rage on, worrying observers whether the prospects of talks were moot.

The war officially began on December 21, when the ICU's leader, Hasan Dahir Aweys, declared Somalia in a state of war and called all the Somalis to take part in the Jihad against Ethiopia. Two days later, on December 23, officials of the ICU called on Muslim fighters from all over the world to come to Somalia and help them to fight against Ethiopian troops in the country. Shaikh Yusuf Muhammad Siad Indha-adde, the ICU's defense chief, said that "The country is open to all Muslim Jihadis worldwide. We call them to come to Somalia and continue their holy war in Somalia. We welcome any one, who can remove the Ethiopian enemy, to enter our country". He further said: "Let them [Muslim Jihadis] fight in Somalia and wage Jihad, and god willing, attack Addis Ababa".

Three days later, on December 24, Ethiopian forces launched unilateral air strikes against the ICU forces and against strong points across Somalia. This was the first use of air strikes by Ethiopia and also its first public admission of involvement in Somalia. That same day, Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, announced that his country was waging war against the ICU to protect his country's sovereignty. Thus, the ICU was engaged in fighting against the forces of the Somali TFG, and the autonomous regional governments of Puntland and Somaliland, all of them were backed by Ethiopian troops. The fighting caused a speedy collapse of the ICU. In Mogadishu, hardliners were confronted with widespread defections by clan militias, businesspeople, and moderate Islamists.

On December 25, Ethiopian and TFG forces captured Beledweyne. On December 26, the ICU was in retreat on all fronts, losing much of the territory they had gained in the months preceding the Ethiopian intervention. On December 27, Ethiopian and TFG forces were reported en route to Mogadishu after capturing the strategic town of Giohar, 90 kilometers from the capital. On the same day, the ICU dissolved itself, surrendering political leadership to clan leaders. The ICU was, then, in control of little more than the coast. ICU leaders evacuated many towns without putting up a fight. On December 29, after several successful battles, TFG and Ethiopian troops entered Mogadishu following its evacuation by the TFG one day earlier after local clan and business leaders refused to allow it to conduct a guerrilla war in the capital, on the grounds that that would produce devastating loss of life and damage to property. After the fall of Mogadishu to the Ethiopian and TFG forces on December 28, fighting continued in the Jubba River valley, where the ICU retreated, establishing a new headquarters in Chisimayu. Intense fighting was raging on December 31 in the Battle of Jilib and the ICU frontlines collapsed during the night to artillery fire, causing the ICU to once again go in retreat, abandoning Chisimayu without a fight after they were again blocked by local residents from using the city as a base, and retreating towards the Kenyan border. On the same day, Sharif Shaikh Ahmad, chairman of the ICU, along with other ICU officials in the port city of Chisimayu, urged Islamist supporters across Somalia to wage guerilla war against the Ethiopian troops backing the TFG. In effect, it was an admission in defeat. On January 12, 2007, the Ethiopian army backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces captured Ras kaambooni, the last remaining stronghold of the ICU in southern Somalia, after five days of heavy fighting. Thus, it completed the defeat of the ICU.

During the fighting, the US stood actively on the TFG's side. Although not announced until later, a small number of US special forces troops accompanied Ethiopian and TFG troops after the collapse and withdrawal of the ICU to give military advice and to track suspected al-Qa'ida fighters. As part of their efforts to track suspected al-Qa'ida fighters, US Marines, operating out of Lamu, Kenya, assisted on January 2, 2007 Kenyan forces patrolling the border with Somalia with the interception of Islamists. At the time, the US Fifth Fleet's maritime task force (Combined Task Force 150) based out of Bahrain, was patrolling off the Somali coast to prevent terrorist from launching an attack, or transport personnel, weapons or other materials. But, the aim of the patrols shifted on January 2 to stop ICU leaders or foreign military supporters from escaping. On January 8, the US openly intervened in Somalia by sending Lockheed AC-130 gunship to attack suspected al-Qa'ida operatives in Ras kaambooni. None of the al-Qa'ida suspects was killed in the attack, though dozens others were killed.

Unlike the US active involvement in the fighting, al-Qa'ida seemed to be passive throughout the fighting. Following the ICU's defeat, Ayman al-Zawahiri urged the Islamists in Somalia not to give in, but to continue fighting. On January 5, 2007, Ayman al-Zawahiri issued a videotape, titled "Help your brothers in Somalia!". He told the Islamists in Somalia that "the true battle will begin with your attacks against the Ethiopian forces". He advised them "to resort to mines, ambushes, incursions and martyrdom attacks. By employing these methods, you will overwhelm their forces, erode their morals and eventually defeat them like a prey consumed alive by a lion". He again called on the Mujahidin "to respond to the call of Jihad in Somalia". Indeed, he turned to all the Mujahidin, but he also made a special plea to those from Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Sudan, and the Maghreb, i.e., all the countries close to Somalia, to "rush aid to their Muslim brothers in Somalia by means of fighters, money, opinion and expertise".

This videotape as well as the repeated calls for the Mujahidin to flock into Somalia issued while the war was still raging there may teach us that the attitude of the Mujahidin toward the pleas for help from the ICU as well as from Ayman al-Zawahiri was passive. It seems that only a few Mujahidin, if any at all, really came to Somalia.

Thus, despite all the advices, moral support, pleas for the Mujahidin worldwide to come to Somalia and take an active part in the Jihad against the Ethiopians and the TFG, it seemed that no aid had been sent to the Islamists in Somalia. It seemed like al-Qa'ida had failed to attract the Arab and Muslim Mujahidin to Somalia. This failure might have stemmed from the remoteness of Somalia from the main Jihadi theaters - Afghanistan and Iraq - and from the preference of the Mujahidin to go to participate actively in these Jihadi theaters instead of going to Somalia.

The end of the war, then, meant much more than just the defeat of the ICU by the combined forces of the TFG and Ethiopia. It was also a victory of Ethiopia over Eritrea in its proxy war in Somalia as well as a victory of the US over al-Qa'ida in its global war on terror.



Map 4: December 2006's Joint TFG-Ethiopian Occupation of Somalia and the Collapse of the Islamic Courts Union Rule

## The Mogadishu Insurgency and Reconciliation Efforts

The defeat of the ICU seemed to open a new chapter in the history of Somalia. On January 8, 2007, as the Battle of Ras kaambooni was raging, TFG President, 'Abdallah Yusuf, entered Mogadishu for the first time since being elected. He announced that the government would be relocated to Mogadishu from its interim location in Baidoa. Thus, following the ICU's defeat, there was, at last, a centrally-established government in control of the Somali capital for the first time since 1978, symbolized by President 'Abdallah Yusuf's first visit to Mogadishu.

Still, whether the TFG would succeed to stay in control and extend its authority throughout Somalia depended on three major elements: its ability to control the warlords; its ability to disarm the warlords as well as the whole population, a great feat achieved by the ICU; and how it intended to deal with the defeated Islamists – if not the leaders, at least the rank and file. Some of the ICU's moderate leaders, amongst them the ICU's foreign affairs chief, Ibrahim Adow, and Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad, found refuge in Yemen and announced their commitment to the peace talks with the TFG. But, to no avail. The Somali government, under external pressure, promised an amnesty to all the ICU's rank and file, in condition they would disarm, while its leaders would continue to face persecution and would not be negotiated with. Thus, the TFG did not give in to an international pressure to let the moderate Islamists, like Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad, to play positive roles in the government.

Yet, all those elements depended on another key and crucial element, which is the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces from Somalia. Meles Zenawi, Ethiopian Prime Minister, said several times that he intended to withdraw his forces from Somalia within weeks, since the cost had been huge and beyond Ethiopia's means. Moreover, the intervention had had heavy political costs at home as well as abroad. Given that Ethiopia is almost equally divided along Christian and Muslim lines, the Ethiopian government faced multiple internal challenges from the civil society, and especially within the Ogaden region, where the ONLF attacked Ethiopian military targets. On the international front, the Arab League, the AU, the EU, and the UN Secretary General had all called for the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia.

In light of the soon expected Ethiopian withdrawal, the TFG had invited African peacekeepers to help provide security in Somalia, but they were unlikely to come if fighting continued. Nevertheless, AU officials approved a 8,000-peacekeeper mission on January 19, 2007 at the 69th meeting of the Peace and Security Council.

Thus, the situation in Somalia immediately after the ICU's defeat was unpredictable and precarious. The potential for violence remained high because of clan rivalries, resentment of the government's Ethiopian backers, a threat of guerilla war from remnants of the ICU, hiding among the civilian population, and a relapse into the previous warlord-controlled anarchy. In these consequences, while the Ethiopians were still present in Somalia and the Ethiopian-backed TFG would not have anything to do with the ICU's moderate leaders, the moderates within the ICU, even those who still wished to negotiate with the TFG, became radicalized too.

Indeed, within a week of the TFG and Ethiopian Army's arrival in Mogadishu, the first insurgent attacks began. Ethiopian and TFG forces responded by sealing off areas around the attack sites and conducting house-to-house searches. The TFG also passed a three-month emergency law in parliament and called for disarmament of the militias on January 13. The provisions of the emergency law gave the TFG much wider powers and allowed President 'Abdallah Yusuf to declare martial law and rule by decree to restore order.

Furthermore, an estimated 3,000 or so members of the ICU who went underground began to form insurgency and armed cells across Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia, and conducted attacks against the TFG and allied Ethiopian forces. On January 19, the Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations (PRM) was formed. Shaikh Abdalkadir was announced to be commander of the PRM in the Banaadir region on January 24. On January 31, the PRM released a video, warning AU peacekeepers to avoid coming to Somalia, claiming that "Somalia is not a place where you will earn a salary – it is a place where you will die". On February 9, a gathering of 800 Somali demonstrators in north Mogadishu burned US, Ethiopian, and Ugandan flags in protest of the proposed peacekeeping mission.

By this date, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, and Burundi had committed to the peacekeeping mission, but the total force was about half of the 8,000-strong force. Uganda had pledged 1,400 troops and some armored vehicles for a mission lasting up to nine months. On February 15, Uganda announced it would deploy 1,500 troops as early as February 17, under the command of Major General Levi Karuhanga. On February 21, the UN Security Council authorized a peacekeeping force with a mandate of six months.

Thus, as of early February 2007, the situation in Somalia was still precarious. The TFG coalition remained narrow, and was deeply resented by most Mogadishu groups. Top TFG leaders appeared committed to imposing an elusive victor's peace on Mogadishu. Armed attacks against TFG personnel and buildings were on the rise. Efforts to deploy an AMISOM peacekeeping force to Somalia remained the subject of intensive diplomatic energies, while Somali insurgents



had issued threats to kill foreign peacekeepers should they be deployed. The TFG had made almost no progress in providing improved public security or other government services in the capital. This record stood in stark contrast to the performance of the ICU administration, the standard against which the TFG was being judged by impatient Mogadishu residents.

Between February and the end of April, Mogadishu has been the scene of persistent violence, in which hundreds of people were killed, thousands were wounded, and more than 200,000 people fled the city. At first, the violence included mortar and rocket attacks on TFG and Ethiopian installations, and the city's airport and seaport; machine gun attacks on police stations and checkpoints; targeted assassinations of public officials, military and security personnel, nongovernmental activists, and their relatives; unexplained homicides; intra-clan gun fights; car hijackings; and the erection of road blocks by local militias to extol tolls from motorists.

The fighting in Mogadishu was further escalated since the end of March, when the insurgents introduced new Iraqi-style warfare tactics, such as: planes' downing; burning TFG's and Ethiopians soldiers and mutilating their bodies; open artillery duels instead of hit-and-run mobile mortar assaults; and the use of roadside bombs and other improvised explosive devices. And in April, it seemed like the fighting escalated yet again with the introduction of suicide bombing operations.

The escalation in the fighting began following a failed March 21 and 22 disarmament operation conducted by the TFG, which resulted in the capture of TFG troops, and – in scenes evocative of the deaths of US soldiers in 1993 – the mutilation of their bodies in Mogadishu's streets. The fighting started when pro-government forces tried to take control of strongholds of the Hawiye clan, whose leaders oppose the presence of Ethiopian forces. Shooting and mortar fire started and quickly spread to other parts of the city. Crowds dragged and burnt two TFG soldiers killed in the streets of Mogadishu. On March 23, a TransAVIA export Airlines Ilyushin Il-76 airplane crashed in Mogadishu. The plane was shot down. The 11 people on board, all Belarusian crew members, died in the crash. On March 24, the traditional elders of the Hawiye clan and the Ethiopian top military officials reached a ceasefire deal while the Ethiopians promised to start mediating between the TFG and the Hawiye clan. However, the second round of meetings between the two sides had ended in failure after the Ethiopians informed the Hawiye elders that they would carry out house to house search operations in the capital.

Heavy gun battles have restarted on March 29 as the Ethiopian forces supported by tanks captured new areas in Mogadishu. On March 30, an Ethiopian Mi-24 helicopter was shot down in Mogadishu as it bombed military

positions held by insurgents. On March 31, a Ugandan soldier was killed by artillery in Mogadishu. The death toll of the four days of heavy fighting in the capital was at least 849 killed civilians, 200 insurgents and 36 Ethiopian soldiers along with one Ugandan soldier, for a total of 1,086 dead. Fighting was essentially halted on April 2, after Hawiye clan elders declared a truce with Ethiopian military officials starting April 1 in order to bury the dead. They further called on Ethiopian troops to withdraw from areas they had occupied during the past few days of fighting.

On April 11, at least two people have been killed and three others were wounded in a renewed fighting that erupted in northern Mogadishu between TFG troops and local insurgents overnight. On April 14, two government soldiers were killed in an ambush in the capital. On April 17, heavy street fighting renewed in the northern part of Mogadishu, with at least 11 dead civilians. On the next day heavy mortar fire erupted killing another three civilians. The fighting continued into April 19, with another 12 civilians dead, while a suicide car bomb exploded at an Ethiopian army base wounding at least 10 Ethiopian soldiers. In addition, 10 more soldiers were wounded when their truck hit a landmine in the city. On April 26, Ethiopian troops took insurgent strongholds in northern Mogadishu.

Yet, the most significant component of the ever escalating violence was and still is the presence of an insurgency against the TFG, Ethiopian occupiers and the AMISOM Ugandan peacekeepers, who arrived in Mogadishu in early March and who had also been under attack. Although most of the incidents have not been claimed by any group, the PRM and as from March, the Youth Mujahidin Movement, had taken credit of some of them. A new insurgent movement – the Popular Defense Army, composed of Somali army veterans – announced its formation, stating: "We see that three enemies have made an alliance in humiliating our reputation and religion, and they are the United States, Ethiopia, and Kenya". In the insurgency have also been involved regrouped militias of the warlords, especially Muhammad Dheere, Muhammad Qanyare Afrah and Abdi Nur Siyed, who had formed in February a covert alliance and bought weapons, as well as disaffected businessmen. However, the most important element in the insurgency has been the Hawiye clan's militia.

The attempts of the Ethiopian and TFG forces to forcibly disarm the Hawiye clan's members while giving key security posts to members of President Abdullah Yusuf's clan, the Darod, have alarmed and alienated the Hawiye clan. Much more importantly, it seems like these moves had brought the Hawiye sub-clans, who previously fought each other for the control of Mogadishu, to unite their forces to oppose Ethiopia and the TFG. Since a large part of the Islamists has always based on the Hawiye, especially its Habar Gidir Ayr sub-

clan, they have seemed to adhere to their clan identity and affiliation, while still maintaining their Islamist teachings, and giving the insurgency a taste of the Iraqi-style insurgency.

Thus, the most prominent groups among the insurgents have been the Islamist ones. They claimed responsibility for most of the qualitative operations that were carried out, including the planes' downing and the suicide bombings. It seems like they have been responsible for the introducing of Iraqi-style tactics into the Somali scene. In the beginning, the PRM was the most prominent group among the insurgents. But, as from March, the most prominent Islamist group among the insurgency is the Youth Mujahidin Movement (Harakat Shabab al-Mujahidin), under the leadership of Aden Hashi Ayro – the former head of the ICU' military arm - which announced its establishment on March 26 in the form of a communiqué circulated throughout the Jihadi forums. It presented the Somali conflict as a link in the chain of the battles fought between the infidels and the Muslims. It presented itself as an Islamist Salafist movement, which goes by the ways of Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a and achieves its goals by Islamic legal means, including propagation (Da'wah) and Jihad.

Yet, despite the prominent role of the Islamist groups within the Mogadishu insurgency, the leading role is still reserved to the Hawiye clan leaders. Thus, On March 21, when Ethiopian and TFG troops started entering some neighborhoods in Mogadishu to disarm the residents by force, the event triggered the most intense violence Mogadishu has seen in years. Especially, since the Hawiye's senior clan leaders declared war on Ethiopian troops and called on all Somalis to join them. The violence then included the burning of two Ethiopian and government soldiers, numerous mortar and rocket attacks, fierce street battles, and the downing of a cargo plane at Mogadishu Airport. Hawiye clan leaders had also a crucial role in putting an end to that cycle of fighting. But this truce did not hold much time. At the end of March, the Ethiopian troops used tanks and helicopters in an offensive to crush the insurgents. But still, at the height of the fighting, the Ugandans in AMISOM reached a non-aggression agreement with the traditional elders of the Hawiye. The Hawiye's senior clan leaders were also those who on April 1 brokered a cease fire with the Ethiopians to put an end to bury the dead from both sides.

Facing determined resistance from a coalition of the Hawiye clan, ICU militants and Somali nationalists in Mogadishu, Ethiopian and TFG forces launched a major offensive in late April that succeeded in breaking the armed opposition, but not in eliminating it. After a brief lull in the violence, the TFG's opponents switched their tactics from artillery attacks to roadside bombings and targeted assassinations that have continued on a nearly daily basis since May 5.

So, depending on external military support for its survival, the TFG has

relied on Ethiopia as a stopgap pending the full deployment of a planned 8,000 member AU peacekeeping mission, of which only a 1,400 member Ugandan contingent has been on the ground.

The tenuous situation of the TFG has been evidenced by the fragility of its military support. Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, has been eager to withdraw from Somalia because of the financial burdens of the occupation, growing domestic opposition to it, the heating up of an insurgency in Ethiopia's ethnic-Somali Ogaden region and the unpopularity of the occupation in Somalia. Ethiopia, however, has been under AU and Western pressure not to withdraw until AMISOM replaces its forces, which is an increasingly unlikely eventuality as African states that had previously pledged their troops to the mission – Benin, Burundi, Ghana, and Nigeria – hang back, citing security concerns and inadequate funding from the Western donors and the AU. Accordingly, Meles Zenawi announced on March 13 that the remaining two-thirds of its occupying forces would withdraw in two phases, as AMISOM replaces them and the reconciliation process "quiets things down". Two days later, on March 15, Ethiopia's foreign minister, Seyoum Mesfin, announced that Ethiopia would help the TFG until it gained control "across Somalia".

The Western donors had been aware that Ethiopia cannot sustain the occupation indefinitely and that the occupation was counter-productive to the TFG's legitimacy. They were using their diplomatic and financial leverage to try to convince the TFG's leadership to hold a planned National Reconciliation Conference (NRC) quickly and to ensure that it represented all Somalia's significant political forces, including moderate Islamists and opposition sectors of the Hawiye clan.

This national reconciliation conference was finally announced by President 'Abdallah Yusuf on March 1, to be held in Mogadishu to reconcile differences among Somalis and to move Somalia toward a stable, democratic future. According to the announcement, the conference, scheduled to begin on April 16, would bring 3,000 participants from throughout the country and the Diaspora together for two months of meetings and discussions. The basis of the talks would be "reconciliation among clans", which would leave unquestioned the TFG's clan-based constitution and would not allow the political opposition to negotiate in an organized manner, severely diminishing the prospect of power-sharing. Indeed, both the President and the Prime minister had ruled out allowing anyone representing the Islamists to participate.

This announcement was met with immediate rejection from the opposition. Most importantly, major elements of the Hawiye clan held a meeting and issued a statement condemning the TFG for inviting Ethiopian troops into Somalia, declaring a state of emergency, infringing on the transitional constitution's

formula for clan representation and making illegal appointments, and urging the TFG to hold an open reconciliation conference including the ICU as a political entity, and to request that the international community affect the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia and organize a "real national reconciliation meeting" based on political representation in a "neutral place". The ICU also responded to the TFG's reconciliation project with its moderate wing – based in Yemen – expressing willingness to negotiate, but only as political equals. On March 1, the ICU issued an official statement, in which it called for a reconciliation process that would include all sectors of Somali society in the political process, especially intellectuals, experts, traditional elders, members of civil society and civil servants. The militant wing of the ICU, led by Adan Hashi Ayro, released a tape in which Ayro declared that he would continue to fight troops who are the "enemies of Islam", and called for Jihad against the foreign occupation, including AMISOM.

Thus, although the international community had envisaged it would reconcile the TFG with moderate elements of the former ICU, the conference has provoked further divisions over its inclusiveness, location and agenda. The TFG stated that only clan nominees should attend, barring participation by civil society organizations and opposing political sharing. The chairman of the NRC organization committee – the Abgaal politician and former presidential contender, 'Ali Mahdi Muhammad – made some attempts to include moderate elements of the former ICU. However, Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad stated that they would not enter talks before the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. The Hawiye sub-clans – particularly the Habar Gidir and Murosade – behind much of the resistance to the TFG, vacillated over participation.

The 2007 Somali National Reconciliation Conference was finally held from July 15 until August 30 in Mogadishu. More than 3,000 people from all of Somalia's regions and clans as well as from the Somali Diaspora participated. It was originally planned to be held from April 16 until mid-June, but was postponed thrice, first to May 15, then to June 14, and finally to July 15. When the conference finally opened on July 15, it immediately adjourned until July 19 to allow for more delegates to arrive, since the moderate Islamists had not yet ended their boycott of the conference. The conference building was being attacked with mortars on that date as well, and again on July 17. The conference eventually opened for real on July 19; however, moderate Islamists and Hawiye clan elders still boycotted it, claiming that the venue were not neutral. Islamists have scheduled a conference in Asmara instead.

With the closing on August 30 of Somalia's National Reconciliation Conference (NRC), which was sponsored by the TFG and failed to produce

substantive and enforceable agreements; and the conclusion on September 12 of the Somali Congress for Liberation and Reconstitution (SCLR), which brought together the country's political oppositions and narrowed its focus to the single aim of removing Ethiopian occupying forces, a political vacuum has opened up in Somalia.

The NRC was compromised from its inception. Originally pressed upon the TFG by external actors as an instrument for political reconciliation with its non-violent political opposition, the TFG's president, 'Abdallah Yusuf Ahmad - in a move to preserve the power of the transitional executive - transformed the conference into a meeting to resolve disputes among the country's clans, effectively avoiding engagement with political issues and finessing the donor powers, which acquiesced in his counter-initiative. After two weeks of discussions on clan-related issues, which resulted in commitments to a cease-fire, disarmament and restoration of property stolen in clan conflicts, the NRC's chair, 'Ali Mahdi Muhammad, abruptly announced on August 1 that the clan phase of the conference had ended successfully and that its political phase would now begin. Mahdi's action came in response to pressure from donors who were holding their purse strings tightly. The political phase of the NRC effectively ended on August 9, when rancorous debate over the issue of natural resource distribution led to the adjournment of the conference. Members of the Hawiye clan attending the conference also asked for an adjournment in order to mount an effort that proved unsuccessful to persuade Hawiye factions that had boycotted the NRC to participate.

When the NRC reopened on August 19, the majority of delegates signed a document reaffirming their August 1 agreement without providing enforcement mechanisms for the cease-fire or disarmament, and devolving property restitution to an arbitration committee. On August 22, political debate on the definition of religious extremism, which had not been resolved in early August, was revived and once again reached no conclusion, with some delegates arguing that there was no "religious war" in Somalia and others contending that the killing of civilians and suicide bombings are "un-Islamic." On August 29, Mahdi announced that the NRC would conclude the next day, angering many delegates who believed that matters of concern to their clans had not been adequately addressed.

The closure of the NRC, which had run its projected 45 days, was due in greatest part to unwillingness of donors to provide more funds and also to fears of the TFG executive that the conference might get out of control addressing political issues. At the closing ceremonies, Mahdi said that reconciliation would continue at the regional and village level, while Yusuf assured that he was ready to hand power over to whomever is elected by the people in projected 2009

elections for a permanent government.

The NRC met in Mogadishu against a backdrop of an escalated insurgency. Ethiopian and TFG forces were generally able to protect the conference, although a leading delegate from the Hawiye clan was assassinated on August 19, and two delegates from Puntland were wounded in one of the several attacks on hotels housing delegates. The Youth Mujahidin Movement took responsibility for more of the attacks than it had previously done, and they persisted in the face of a security crackdown and a flight of residents from the neighborhoods most affected by violence to areas immediately south of Mogadishu, where they took refuge in squalid and unhealthy refugee camps. Inter-clan violence also continued, notably in the central Hiraan and Galgudud regions, casting doubt on the credibility of the cease-fire agreement reached at the NRC.

On September 17, 'Abdallah Yusuf was in Saudi Arabia, where he and some former delegates to the NRC signed the pact that had been agreed upon at the conference. The ceremony, which was attended by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, was not a new step forward in reconciliation, but a symbolic event aimed at showing Arab support for 'Abdallah Yusuf's version of reconciliation. 'Abdallah Yusuf also took the opportunity to call for a UN peacekeeping mission that would include both Arab and African contingents. It seems like the US had urged Saudi Arabia to support the TFG in order to isolate its domestic opposition, which quickly announced its rejection of the pact.

Having achieved no substantive reconciliation, the NRC also does not appear to have strengthened Yusuf's power base. The TFG remains a weak protagonist in Somalia's tangled conflicts, and it has probably lost some of the "blind confidence" of the donor powers in it.

The political alternative to the NRC was the SCLR, which was conducted by the TFG's political opposition in Asmara, Eritrea's capital, from September 6 through September 12. At first glance, it seemed like there were tendencies toward coalescence in the opposition that might have made it a credible movement that could pressure the TFG into power-sharing negotiations, but that possibility was not realized in the face of divisions among the opposition's components - the ICU; dissident members of the transitional parliament favoring an accord with the ICU.; significant portions of the Somali Diaspora; nationalists; and dissident clan warlords, notably the former TFG deputy prime minister and defense minister, Husain Farah Aidid.

Originally planned as a vehicle to form a national political opposition, the SCLR was narrowed down - as a result of the inability of the opposition factions to agree on a common political formula - only to address the aim of removing Ethiopian occupation forces from Somalia. The ICU remained insistent on a Somalia ruled by Shari'a law; the "Free Parliament" and the Diaspora groups

avored a wider power-sharing agreement involving the TFG; and the nationalists, who backed out of participating, favored a strong non-theocratic state transcending clan divisions. Their diverse aims and support bases made it impossible for the oppositions to engage political issues, leaving them with a common commitment to resist a foreign occupation.

Signs that the SCLR would falter came on August 28, when the spokesman for the Hawiye sub-clans that had boycotted the NRC, Ahmad Diriye, announced that the anti-TFG Hawiye elders would not go to Asmara, although they continued to denounce the NRC as a ploy to gain international support. On September 1, Diriye reiterated the elders' refusal to participate in the SCLR, saying that they had been invited and promised flights to Asmara, but would not attend because the conference had been mobilized by people with special interests and has no relationship with Hawiye tradition and unity clans. In the absence of the Hawiye, the SCLR lacked a base of deeper organized social support, which weakened its credibility, even as simply a resistance to the Ethiopian occupation.

Scheduled to open on September 1, SCLR was delayed on August 31, when Sharif Hasan Shaikh Adan, ex-speaker of Somalia's transitional parliament and leader of the Free Parliament, announced that sessions would begin on September 6 because of "technical reasons" and the failure of all the delegates to arrive - the same reasons given by NRC organizers when that conference was delayed.

The SCLR opened on September 6 and the diversity of the opposition was evident at its outset, centering on the interpretation of the term "reconstitution." As a designation of the positive aim of the conference, "reconstitution" was chosen in deliberate contrast to "reconciliation," which, for the TFG, meant the settling of clan disputes within the framework of the transitional institutions and their present officials. The opposition groups were agreed on the principle that a future political formula for Somalia would "reconstitute" a national state transcending clan, and one of their few positive accomplishments was to repudiate the clan-representation formula on which the TFG is based. Nationalism and promotion of a strong sovereign state united the opposition rhetorically, but beyond that consensus collapsed.

The divisions among the opposition groups hinged on the question of whether "reconstitution" meant determining a political formula for a future Somali state or simply forming an alliance aimed at "liberating" the country from Ethiopian occupation. That the latter was the most that could be expected was signaled by the withdrawal of the nationalists before the proceedings began.

The nationalists' pull out was based on their judgment that the conference would be dominated by the ICU and would not consider their case for building



a single national movement, rather than an alliance of convenience. They complained that there would be no attempt to forge a "post-liberation vision," a point also made by Aidid, who called for a "common agenda, platform and vision," aiming at a consensus including Somalis who disapproved of the SCLR. The nationalists now plan to form a Nationalist Movement for Salvation and Revival of Somalia to resist the occupation and mobilize the population to create a strong national state.

With the maximum definition of reconstitution shunted aside, the conference became a tug of war between its three major elements - the ICU, which held fast to its formula of a Somali Islamic state, the Diaspora groups, and the Free Parliament faction, which favored a democratic formula for Somalia and were willing to accept power-sharing negotiations within the TFG institutions if the Ethiopians withdrew from Somalia.

Confronted with the ICU as the major grouping among the approximately 400 delegates, the other factions were placed in the position of attempting to resist its takeover of the opposition. On September 14, disputes had broken out over the institutional structure of the alliance - a Central Committee to function as a legislature and an Executive Committee. Originally, the Central Committee was to have 151 members with 68 apportioned to the ICU, but its size was later increased to 191 with 76 apportioned to the ICU to dilute its influence by including "intellectuals" and representatives of civil-society organizations.

Having had to make concessions, the ICU stood firm against appeals that a non-Islamist take formal leadership of the alliance in order to increase the prospects for international support, and was able to place Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad as chair of the Executive Committee, with Hasan Dahir Aweys assuming the leadership of the Central Committee. The remaining nine seats on the Executive Committee were not filled, reflecting continued disagreement.

As the conference drew toward its close on September 12, its spokesman, Zakariya Mahmud Abdi, announced that the movement it had formed - the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) - which was, in fact, a Somali opposition government in exile, would pursue a dual-track policy of armed resistance and diplomacy to achieve an Ethiopian withdrawal from Somalia, and would be "dissolved" when the occupation ended, reflecting the inability of the opposition to agree on a positive program.

The communiqué issued at the end of the conference stated that the ARS would not hold talks with the TFG prior to an end of the Ethiopian occupation and demanded the withdrawal of AMISOM from Somalia, accusing the Ugandan detachment of siding with the occupation. The communiqué also denounced US's charges that the conference was harboring "terrorists," insisting that the ARS would not be a "terrorist organization" and was composed of "devoted Muslims."

The SCLR called on the US to "reverse its anti-Somalia policy" and refused to renounce armed resistance or to repudiate the Youth Mujahidin Movement. After the communiqué was issued, Abdi clarified that the "national liberation struggle" would be concentrated in Mogadishu and its environs, and would transcend clan and religious divisions. The next move would be for opposition leaders to infiltrate into Somalia in order to recruit fighters and make alliances with anti-TFG sub-clans.

Most recently, the violence in Somalia has been escalating as insurgents increase the fight against the feeble TFG and their Ethiopian military backers. Rifts, however, are growing between more moderate opposition and harder extremist elements of the former ICU, raising fears that it will drive fighting outside current conflict zones in Somalia.

The formation of the ARS on September 12 brought together Islamist chiefs, former senior TFG leaders and Diaspora representatives. The ARS is Islamist-dominated, with ICU leader Shaikh Sharif Shaikh Ahmad its chairman, and with ICU members or Diaspora sympathizers in all strategic posts. The ARS aims to unify the armed opposition, claiming its first direct responsibility for an attack on a Mogadishu police station on September 30. Yet, the long-running violence preceding that attack clearly indicates that they are only one of many factions. There are notable absences in the ARS leadership, especially the failure to include leaders of the radical Youth Mujahidin Movement militia. Their representation in ARS is marginal, with only Abdifatah Muhammad, the former deputy governor in Chisimayu, appointed as ARS finance secretary.

Key players, especially the more extremist Islamist core, remain outside the alliance. The ARS appointed the former Islamist defense chief, as its head of Logistics and Defense, claiming he is leading the fight from inside Mogadishu. That, however, puts them on a collision course for control of fighters with Adan Hashi Ayro, the leader of the Youth Mujahidin Movement.

So, after the US-supported Ethiopian intervention in Somalia, the Western powers had pinned all of their hopes on an "inclusive" national reconciliation process that would bring together all political forces and isolate revolutionary Jihadists. The conditions for such a process were that the TFG "reach out" to the political opposition and that the opposition be coherent and willing enough to engage in negotiation. Neither condition has been met; the NRC was clan-based and held under the aegis of the TFG and secured by Ethiopian forces; while the SCLR took on an uncompromising militant hue. Thus, the Western powers and associated international and regional organizations, and interested states are left without options. The US threatened to put Eritrea on its list of state sponsors of terrorism for allowing militant Islamist figures - most notably ICU leader Shaikh Hasan Dahir Aweys - to attend the conference, and for allegedly

funneling arms to the insurgency in Somalia.

On September 12, the Contact Group for Somalia (CG), including the US, EU, European donor states, and international and regional organizations, met in Rome and repeated its consistent calls for African states to contribute to AMISOM so that Ethiopian forces, without which the TFG would collapse, can withdraw, and for the TFG and the political opposition to negotiate. Thus, the gap between the desires of Western and associated actors, and the positions of Somali actors has widened to the point that the donor powers have lost connection to the realities on the ground.

Ethiopia, facing a stepped-up insurgency in its Ogaden region and international censure for its severe efforts to suppress it, is financially strapped and can no longer economically or strategically afford to stay in Somalia. Aside from Uganda, which has deployed 1,600 peacekeepers in Mogadishu, no other African states have been willing to contribute forces to AMISOM, citing Somalia's insecurity, lack of their own resources and inadequate financial and logistical support from Western powers. A UN Security Council resolution of August 20 that extended AMISOM's mandate for six months was met with unprecedented displeasure in African states, including Uganda. The AU wants the UN to take over the Somalia mission and African leaders accuse the great powers on the Security Council of hypocrisy - urging African deployment when there is no peace to keep and deferring a UN mission until there is "political progress" in Somalia.

There are several scenarios for Somalia's political future. The most likely one is continued devolution intensified by a possible spread of wider and more unified armed resistance against the Ethiopian and TFG forces, and augmented by a loss of interest in Somalia by external actors, which will leave the country in the state of neglect that it suffered in the decade between 1995, when an international presence ended, and 2004, when the TFG was formed.

The two conferences were the only political events on the horizon that carried any prospects for the movement of Somalia toward political integration and the reversal of the devolutionary cycle into which the country has fallen following the ICU defeat. Their failures to engage the form of a future political order in Somalia, the disposition of political forces within such an order, and the way toward power-sharing has shown that neither the TFG, which initiated the NRC at the urging of Western donor powers, nor the opposition is united enough within itself to provide Somalia with a credible political formula and is much less disposed to compromise with its rival. With no other major political initiatives in the offing at a national level, fragmentation will persist in Somalia as power devolves to regional, local, clan and sectoral centers and solidarities. The signs of political evolution in Somalia have for the most part been erased

and have been replaced by the possibility of violent polarization within a devolutionary context.

## Conclusion

Throughout history, the fate of Somalia has always been determined by external actors. Due to its strategic location, it has been and still is a battleground between Christian Ethiopia and the Muslim Arab world. In that sense, the rise and fall of the ICU was only the most recent episode in a long historical cycle, beginning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in which Ethiopia has competed for influence in Somalia with Egypt and other Arab states and always won.

The fall of the ICU, if looked from internal Somali point of view, is perceived by many Somalis as a humiliating defeat for certain clans, mainly the Hawiye and Ogaden, by two of their historical adversaries, the Darod and Ethiopia, which as from the breakout of the Somali civil war in 1991 and even before that has been regarded as a clan.

Moreover, it should be seen as the failure of the ICU to transcend Somali tribal politics and clan lines and unify all Somalis under the banner of radical Islam and the implementation of Shari'a law. Indeed, although it claimed to be above clan and tribal lines, the very base of most members of the ICU has been the Hawiye clan. Without the support of the Hawiye, as could be seen most recently, the opposition to the TFG and the Ethiopian occupation could not find any common ground other than the expulsion of Ethiopian forces. In the aftermath of the Ethiopian occupation, as happened before the fall of the ICU, it seems like radical Islam will not appeal for most Somalis, who are moderate Muslim Sufis.

Yet, radical Islam did serve to define Ethiopia's attitude towards the ICU. From this perspective, the ICU was defined less in terms of clan constituencies than in terms of their external agenda. Over the long term, Ethiopia feared that an Islamist authority in Somalia might stimulate radicalization of its own large Muslim population, as happened in the mid-1990s with AIAI. But the decision to invade Somalia was driven by more immediate considerations: the ICU's links to transnational terrorism, irredentist rhetoric, support for Ethiopian rebel groups, and reliance on Eritrea.

The confrontation between the TFG and the ICU must be seen also as a second front in a wider regional conflict, one which threatens to escalate at any time between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Despite Ethiopia's battlefield victories, Eritrea's strategic gambit paid significant dividends. At relatively low cost, Eritrea maneuvered Ethiopia into a confrontation on two fronts: a major intervention in southern Somalia and a large defensive deployment along the Ethiopian-Eritrea border in order to prevent demarcation of the boundary.

Though Ethiopia's military victory was a blow to Eritrea's strategy of proxy warfare, Eritrea has continued to provide support and arms as well as a base for Somali opposition groups in order to tie down Ethiopian troops in Somalia for as long as possible.

As for the internal situation in Somalia, although each conflict situation needs to be analyzed in terms of its own particular configuration of power and interest, developments in Somalia have fallen into a pattern that bears resemblance to the political dynamics of Afghanistan and Iraq. In all three countries, a regime or an ascending movement has been displaced by external military intervention followed by a foreign occupation propping up a weak central government that has not been able to control its territory and quell armed opposition to it. The three countries are also decentralized Muslim societies in which political devolution to regions, localities, sects, ethnicities and – in Somalia – clans occurs spontaneously when central authority deflates. A post-intervention regime that is dependent on occupying forces and external financial aid finds itself under pressure from all sides. Domestic opposition mobilizes around a nationalist backlash against occupation and – in contemporary Muslim societies – around Islamism; local leaders strive to assert their control independently of the central authority; and external occupying and donor powers demand that the weak regime imposes security and share power with disaffected sectors of the society. At the same time, the regime attempts to preserve itself intact as much as it possibly can, exacerbating opposition to it and alienating the protectors and donors on which it depends. Afghanistan and Iraq have been in this condition for several years with no end in sight; Somalia is in its early stages and there is no reason to believe that its prognosis is any different.

Determining the present moment of Somalia's political history is the fate of the TFG. Unpopular, weak and dependent on an Ethiopian occupation force for survival, the TFG is nonetheless backed by the Western donor powers that sustain it, and the international and regional organizations that follow their lead, as the sole means of achieving stability in Somalia.

The TFG has now become too divided to be the vehicle of a coherent transition to permanent institutions scheduled to be in place for elections in 2009. There are signs that the international community has also reached that judgment, but that it cannot act on it because it has given itself no other option than support of the TFG. If the TFG implodes, the external powers will be left without a policy.

With a clan-based structure dominated by clan warlords, the TFG has been weak and divided from its inception in 2004. If there is a central figure in the TFG, it is 'Abdallah Yusuf, who is backed by Ethiopia, who was the President of Puntland and retains a power base there, has militias from his Majeerteen sub-clan at his disposal, and is a crafty political tactician. It is difficult to imagine

the TFG with any coherence without 'Abdallah Yusuf; the fate of the TFG is synonymous with 'Abdallah Yusuf's fate, and he has succeeded thus far to hold on in his position.

Yusuf's current embattlement, which has a high probability of breaking his grip on the tenuous power that he exerts, can be understood by putting his position in the context of the political systems of the three other states in the Horn of Africa – Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti – all of which share the common formula of a political machine run by a strongman under the cover of a constitution. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea, and President Isma'il 'Omar Guelleh of Djibouti were all able to lead sectoral movements into control of the state and then to build machines based on their core support and to extend them outside that base to include just enough other political forces to maintain their rule. Successful bosses take care of their bases and avoid marginalizing outside groups sufficiently to provoke effective resistance from them.

At the root of Somalia's condition as a failed state was the absence of a movement that could take over power after the overthrow of Siad barre in 1991, rendering the emergence of such a machine impossible. The successful resistance against Barre was popular, but it was also regional and clan based, and none of its components were strong enough – as was Zenawi's Tigre People's Liberation Front – to form the nucleus of a machine. From then on, Somalia devolved into statelessness and power drained to local and regional warlords, despite 14 attempts by external actors to broker power-sharing agreements.

When Ethiopia defeated the ICU militarily in December 2006, it left the TFG formally in political control, but in fact powerless to prevent the devolutionary cycle from taking hold once again. 'Abdallah Yusuf was in a better position than ever before, but he had no movement – he had been placed in power by foreign occupiers and donors, and presided over a fragmented clan-based government, not a machine of his own making. Yusuf aspires to be a real strongman, but he does not have the resources to become one.

The new twist in Somalia's devolutionary cycle is the erosion of the scant power that Yusuf had. Without him, the external actors have no one with whom to turn to anchor their policy. The inherent weakness of Yusuf's position as a strongman in search of a machine who survives only by virtue of foreign military and financial support has now become obvious, as determined opposition to him mounts inside and outside the transitional institutions. He is a wasting asset for the external actors, but he has maneuvered himself into a corner and drawn them into it, and they have nowhere to go. Meanwhile, Somalia's devolutionary cycle accelerates.

To sum up, it seems like this accelerating Somali devolutionary cycle serves

Ethiopia well. While Ethiopia's military success has created an opportunity to advance stability in Somalia, it seems like Ethiopia would not be dissatisfied if its always suspect neighbor remained indefinitely disunited and preoccupied with internal quarrels. Yet, from the perspective of the West, the presence of radical Islam in Somalia makes it more difficult to abandon the country as the great powers did after the fall of Siad Barre's dictatorship and the failure of a UN peacekeeping mission in the early 1990s.



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