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**SOMALIA
DJIBOUTI TO MBAGATHI
Making or Breaking Peace?**

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Djibouti (2000) and the ongoing Mbagathi talks (2003) fail to provide the right remedies for establishing a durable peace and ending Somalia's thirteen-year civil war. By examining the political motivations behind the involvement of national, regional and international stakeholders, this paper will seek to draw comparisons between the achievements and shortcomings of past and current peace process in order to map the tendency of Somalia's failure to attain peace.

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INTRODUCTION

Twelve years after the fall of the Syad Barre regime Somalia still remains without any administration and central authority. No other state in the contemporary era has such experience of a total collapsed state as Somalia. The warfare and armed criminality is spread along the country making Somalia one of the most intricate “complex political emergencies in the post-Cold War era”¹. Djibouti (2000) and the ongoing Mbagathi talks (2003) fail to provide the right remedies for establishing a durable peace and ending Somalia’s thirteen-year civil war. By examining the political motivations behind the involvement of national, regional and international stakeholders, this paper will seek to draw comparisons between the achievements and shortcomings of past and current peace process in order to map the tendency of Somalia’s failure to attain peace.

1) BACKGROUND

A. THE SIAD BARRE’S REGIME

The human cost and the impacts of the twelve-year civil war in Somalia perpetuate the current crisis. There is no central government, widespread illiteracy and poverty, and an established culture of violence and impunity. Even during Siad Barre’ regime Somalia was one of the poorest countries in the world but twelve years without any government has ensured a further decline. According to the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) currently Somalia “ranks among the poorest in the world on key of human development such as life expectancy, per-capita income, malnutrition, and infant mortality, making much of the population highly vulnerable”².

The Siad Barre’s regime was able to lead Somalia for more than 30 years by employing a clan identity based approach that thrived on a divide-and-rule strategy. The former regime is blamed for the rise of clannism after its fall. Furthmore a lineage based –society in which all members enjoy in a family clan, in a sub-clan and in a sub-sub clan is become desctructive for the country. Presently, the fragmentation of the Somali society poses a huge obstacle to achieving peace and reconciliation among the current factions.

The level of corruption within Somalia and the stronghold of the former regime was one, can be attributed to the resources provided to Somalia through foreign assistance programs (over than 50 per cent of the national GNP)³. Syad Barre was able to build up a strong military force that made him able to spread his control for long time over the entire territory of Somalia. More than thirty years of a government based only on corruption, authoritarianism and patronage have caused a

¹ Menkhaus, K: Somalia: a situation analysis and trend assessment. Writenet Paper UNHCR (August 2003).

² Human Development Programme Report 2003, and Somalia Human Development Report, 2001.

³ Menkhaus ,K. *US Foreign Assistance to Somalia: Phoenix from the Ashes?* Middle east Policy Journal, Vol.5, No.1, January 1997,pp.124-49.

distorted view of the state. “The history of a state as a cash cow has contributed to a tendency to a part of the Somali political class to view positions in the state as a prize to be won, not as an administrative responsibility to be assumed”⁴. Nowadays faction leaders and warlords view their power as a piece of national cake and they are not willing to accept to reduce it for any possible agreement.

During the Cold War, due to its perceived strategic importance in a geo-political context, Somalia was able to rely upon the steady flow of foreign aid. Initially, the country was a recipient sizable loans and grants from the former U.S.S.R. and later from the U.S.A. The end of the Cold War reduced the strategic importance of Somalia making possible for the Western donors to impose political conditions in exchange for assistance.

During 1990-92 the offensive against Barre’s regime, led by the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the subsequent rise of other clan-based liberation fronts caused a cessation of aid from donor countries. In the 1991 the United Somali Congress pushed the regime out of Mogadishu but it did not succeed in establishing a unified and functioning national government. From that time Southern Somalia started to become territory governed by chaos, in which lawlessness, the merchants of war, and the gunmen ruled. On the other hand, gradually, Somaliland seceded and created a more peaceful state by establishing the rule of law, disarming the vast majority of the population, and encouraging free enterprise. With the exception of Somaliland, the rest of the country remained consumed by civil war and Somalia by and large was regarded as a “castle built on Cold-War sands”⁵.

B. THE UN OPERATION

The UN operation (1993-1995), proposed by the Bush administration, was driven by a desire to build up the UN capacity to manage the emergencies. The operation aimed to establish corridors for the safe passage of humanitarian supplies to a population that was in dire need of food, medicines, and other basic supplies and services. The intervention soon encountered difficulties, as “Operation Restore Hope” quickly became embroiled in an armed conflict against one of the most dominant warlords, General Aideed. However, the UN “humanitarian intervention” (UNOSOM) failed to promote reconciliation and to rebuild a central government. The UN failure, caused from the US withdrawal, contributed to a sense of “donor fatigue” with Somalia. The Somali debacle left the country without external aid and a diminished political will on behalf of the international community to intervene and relieve the suffering caused by the crisis.

⁴ International crisis group Report: Negotiating a blueprint for peace in Somalia. (6 March 2003).

⁵ Menkhaus, K: *Somalia: a situation analysis and trend assessment*. Writenet Paper UNCHR (August 2003).

The most important consequence of the “Restore Hope” operation has been its impacts on the Somali economy. By pouring hundreds of millions of dollars in the economy UNOSOM intervention created a new class of businessmen in the Hawiye clan, helping especially the Haber Gedir/Ayr subclan to establish themselves as a hegemonic group. The absence of a state caused the rise of the local Sharia courts funded by businessmen and controlled by clan elders. This has largely been due to the resources availed during the UNOSOM intervention and as a consequence it has caused a shift in the Somali economy the political landscape. Businessmen gained more power and local and faction leaders became less powerful. Factions continue to act as spoilers to processes for reconciliation but they are now against the political and economic elites that have interest in the rule of law in order to secure their commercial arteries. Armed conflicts have also become smaller in scale, more localized, occurring as clan clashes developed as a result of disputes among sub-clans. As a consequence the sub-clan clashes are not supported by the broader clan structure and clan-elders are often able to contain the fighting. However is becoming more difficult to differentiate between armed hostilities from responses to sub-clan disputes and criminality. As the income of faction leaders are becoming more restricted, criminal activity is increasing as warlords attempt to maximize their incomes. The kidnapping industry is largely attributed to this phenomenon.

C. POST-INTERVENTION PERIOD

Even if the traditional modes of production continue to do poorly, post-intervention economy trends are positive. According to Menkhaus no other aspect of the Somali society has changed as its economy. “Somalia went from a statist and foreign assistance economy under Siyad Barre to an economy of plunder in 1991-1992 and an economy sustained almost entirely by employment in and contracts for the UN in 1993-1994. Since 1995 the economy has shifted yet again; today it is a radically privatized, unregulated economy focusing mainly on commercial trade and the service sector”⁶. The increasing influence of the Somali diaspora has caused a rise in the remittances channeled into the economy in the last ten years. Remittances are now a significant revenue stream. Money transfer companies or *hawilaad* and the growing and lucrative services of the telecommunications sector in Somalia is continuing to strengthen the influence of the diaspora community. Using a fairly sophisticated technology, these private companies are now able to provide to the population with inexpensive phone and many transfer services. According to UNDP, US\$750 million to \$1 billion is transferred annually from Somalis living abroad to their families and businesses within Somalia.

Furthermore the lack of any costumer tax and the lax border controls in Kenya make Somalia an ideal land for the international transit trade. All the products directed into Kenya market can be bought for a lower cost if they come from Somalia than if they arrive directly into Kenya. Correlated with the incredible rise

⁶ Menkhaus, K: *Somalia: a situation analysis and trend assessment*. Writenet Paper UNHCR (August 2003).

of the remittance in the Somali economy is the increasing of the gap between privileged people, that can gain an income from the members of the family abroad, and destitute people. There is the real risk that this trend could produce new vulnerable groups. The long civil war produced a lost generation of young Somali who came of age in a time of collapsed state, without any education these young people have only the choice to be employed in a faction militia. Finally the mild narcotic *qaat*, according to Menkhaus is always mentioned by Somali people as one of the main obstacle to the development of the country because it is a drain on meager household income. Today *qaat* is an “alternative currency” to pay a salary to the militia and can be also a source of armed conflicts.

2) ACTORS

A. INTERNAL ACTORS

Arta peace talks in Djibuti 2000 created a **Transitional National Government (TNG)** led by President Abdiqassim Salad Hassan. Originally this new government was permitted to serve for a three-year interim period as the recognized national authority. The Arta peace agreement in Djibuti declared that after this period a national government should be selected through a national election. In the beginning the new administration seemed to be eager to face the hard challenge: restoring good relations with the neighboring Ethiopia, and controlling the Southern Somalia territory by promoting a new order. Initially, the Transitional National Government started to work with the high support of the powerful Mogadishu businessmen, TNG fell short of domestic and international expectations. TNG quickly failed to gain any political result: it never administrated more than a portion of the Somali capital Mogadishu, it has never had good relations with the neighboring Ethiopia, as a consequence it didn't attract the foreign assistance that it needed to make its administration efficient and the small foreign aid arrived from the Arab countries it has been used as a private resource. The missed opportunity to rebuild constructive relations between the TNG and Ethiopia made potential rival factions serious enemies.

The **Somali Reconciliation and Restore Council (SRRC)** is a huge coalition of political groups and leaders, they are held together only by the common thread of Ethiopian Patronage. It is composed of:

- 1) Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) led by Hassan Mohamed Nur “Shatigaduud”.
- 2) Hussein Aideed (son of the General Farah Aideed who fought UN during the operation “Restore Hope”) with his militia.
- 3) General Morgan, he is a political pariah and according to Menkhaus he is “likely to be the first Somali leader charged with war crimes at some point in the future”(1). He doesn't control any territory but he commands the Mijerteen militia currently based in Bakool region.
- 4) The Abgal/ Warsangeli clan militia led by Mohamed Dhere who declared himself Governor of Middle Shabelle region.

- 5) The Biimal clan, based in the Merka area and in Lower Jubba region.
- 6) Abdullahi Yusuf: he is the Puntland administrator and the most influential figure in the SRRC.

Puntland is a non-secessionist, trans-regional state, it was the unique region in the country which manage to remain without conflict in his territory, however the long period of peace ended in 2001. At that time President Abdullahi Yusuf didn't call elections in order to gain an extension of his rule. As a consequence clan elders and a high court judge rejected it, leading to armed clashes between Abdullahi Yusuf, sponsored by Ethiopian patronage, and Ali Jama, supported by TNG. In May 2003 General Ade Muse succeeded to Ali Jama and decided to shift political strategy. He concluded that he did not have the capacity to defeat Abdullahi Yusuf and calculated that Yusuf could present at the Mbaghati talks as President of a unified Puntland. In return for this granting General Ade Muse gained the integration of his opposition militia into Puntland army and some cabinet posts. However, currently, according to International Crisis Group last report, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf maintains a "shaky grip through force, rather than the population mandate that brought him to power in 1998"⁷. In the Mbaghati talks he intends to use the position of Puntland President as a "launch-pad for national ambitious"⁷.

Another opposition front is the **Group of eight (G-8)**, a coalition set in Southern Somalia (especially in Mogadishu). They are openly opposed to the TNG administration but, on the other hand, are neither clients of the Ethiopian patronage. They allied not because of a common interest, but rather because they concluded that collectively, they are a more powerful opponent to the larger militia groups in Mogadishu. The **Business community** empowered during the UNOSOM operation are the real nexus of power, and perhaps the Mogadishu business community is the most powerful in Somalia. For the most of the last decade these Mogadishu businessmen faced the government and security lack by paying taxes to the warlords in return for their militia protection. However since 1999 the south Mogadishu businessmen concluded that was arrived the point to refuse the warlords militia security. They currently face the lack of security by sub-contracting out control of the militia to a sharia court system. However, despite their power, they do not always have the same interests and their policies shift in accordance with their aims and targets.

There is also a small group of Isaaq businessmen in Somaliland. During 1990s they supported Somaliland President Egal, in exchange for their assistance, the President exempted them from having to pay seaport taxes. Now the alliance is completely shifted and the current government is raising seaport customs making Berbera a non-profitable area, creating tensions between the administration and business elite. However, according to Peter D. Little in his new book entitled "Somalia an Economy Without State", " the lack of a recognized government does not discourage legitimate international firms from dealing with Somalia. Dale Fruits

⁷ Menkhaus, K: " *Somalia: a situation analysis and trend assessment*" Writenet Paper UNHCR (August 2003).

Inc. had investments in Somalia's agricultural sector in the 1990's , as did Italian agribusiness companies". In Somalia is working DHL, Total Oil Company operates in Somaliland and, BBC have established a formal affiliation with one of Somalia's new media companies"⁸.

The Somali Civil Society is composed of NGOs, religious groups, and clan elders; according to Menkhaus "these disparate groups run the spectrum from progressive to traditional, and a result are not capable of much cooperation"⁹.

By gaining secession from Somalia, Somaliland has taken a promising trajectory. Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal (UDUB party) was the former **President of Somaliland**, he led the country from 1993 to 2002 when he died. After his death a peaceful transition took place (through an election in 2003) and the former Vice-President Dhir Rayale Kahim was ushered into the position of the presidency in Somaliland. By accepting a President from a small clan, in a country in which Isaaq is the dominant clan, Somaliland has demonstrated that the people of Somaliland are able to overlook clan differences in the interest of having good leadership. Moreover Somaliland administration does maintain control over the entire territory, and it has succeeded in establishing a working police force, disarming the vast majority of the population, and providing a judicial system as well as other public services.

B. ISLAMIST GROUPS

Despite the fact that Somalia is the only country in the Horn of Africa in which the population is almost entirely Muslim, Somalia has never been home of radicalism as its neighbors like Ethiopia and Sudan that are internally religiously divided. Historically Somalia is based on clannism and not on religion, however currently various types of Islamist activism (Sharia Courts, al-Ittihad cells) "tend to be organized by clan and work within the parameters of clannism"¹⁰. As a rule radicalism Islam cover areas in which Somali find themselves a minority in a non-Somali land: Kenya, Ethiopia, Europe, and North America as a consequence of Somali diaspora. For example is not surprisingly that Ogaden clan that live in the border area of Kenya and Ethiopia is one of the most radical Islamic clan. However " Somali pastoral life imbues the culture with a strong preference for a pragmatism over ideology, not so much as a matter of choice, but as a matter of survival"¹⁰. In

⁸ Little, P.D. " *Somalia: economy without state*" Indiana University Press; Hargeisa: Btec Books, 2003.

⁹ Menkhaus, K: " *Somalia: a situation analysis and trend assessment*" Writenet Paper UNHCR (August 2003

¹⁰ Menkhaus K. *Political Islam in Somalia*, Middle East Policy Journal, Vol 9 No 1 March 2002.

the absence of a nationalist ideology, political Islam in Somalia began its ascent in the mid 1970s, for want of overcoming clannism, encouraged during the violent and repressive Barre's regime. The patronage of Saudi Arabia has also encouraged young Somalis to emigrate in Saudi Arabia to seek education and employment, and many have been influenced by the radical Islamic cells.

The first strategy of Political Islam in Somalia was to control territories in order to start the development of a network throughout the country. They temporarily gained the seaports of Kismayo and Merka in 1991 and they administered the commercial crossroad town of Luuq in Gedo region. Wherever they went, they established Islamic law rather than customary clan law (xeer), the punishment included amputation (not allowed in the customary clan law), the women were forced to wear a veil, and the qaat was banned. Free education was provided (courses were taught in Arabic). However most of the Sharia courts in the country are the result of a lack of government and rule of law and are present even where Al-Ittihad (AIAI) does not control the area. In a country ruled by anarchy, the areas presided over by Al-Ittihad were the most stable in Somalia. As AMREF annual report claimed "for AMREF working in Luuq district, security is not a major issue- the district benefits from the good security, which is the result of strict administration by the Islamic Association. However, most implementing agencies working in the other districts of Gedo still face problems of intimidation, kidnapping, theft and violence"¹¹.) In a country without any government in which rule the anarchy people become more individualistic and gravitate around Al-Ittihad not for ideological and global reasons but for pragmatic motives. The fear that Luuq was becoming a base from which transitional Islamic movements would attack the Ethiopian government led Ethiopia to attack Luuq.

The second and ongoing Al-Ittihad strategy is completely shifted. First, they concluded that holding a town would be a too easy target for the power external actors such as Ethiopia and second they realized that Somalia and its people were not yet ready for an Islamic rule. Since then Al-Ittihad has opted to integrate into local communities and to establish itself in local communities and in key sectors – business, local courts, schools rather than attempt to assume direct political control. As a result, today it is very difficult to distinguish between who promotes available services to the people following an apolitical agenda (Al-Islah), and who is involved in a deeper Islamization with global and political targets (Al-Ittihad). Al Islah is an Islamistic charity group that operates in the country with the dozens of other Islamic non-profit organizations. "The diverse strategies and dispositions of al-Ittihad groups in Somalia mean that external observers must be extremely careful not to indulge in the simplifying but inaccurate algorithm which runs something like this: Al-Islah = Al-Ittihad; Al-Ittihad = Al-Qaeda"¹².

¹¹ AMREF Annual Report of the Luuq District Health Programme, Nairobi, 1994

¹² Menkhaus K. *Political Islam in Somalia*, Middle East Policy Journal, Vol 9 No 1 March 2002.

Today, Al-Ittihad members, in order to build up a power base, have moved successfully into commercial ventures in the country. As a result, some remittance and telecommunications companies have been accused of having links with radical Islamic groups. Furthermore, in October 2001 after the terrorist attacks in New York, U.S has decided to freeze the assets of Al Barakaat (the largest Somali remittance and telecom company), claiming that the company facilitated the transfer of funds within Al-Qaeda. According to Menkhaus external actors as U.S have to be careful not to be manipulated by local power (also Ethiopia) because they are the principal source of exaggeration of Islamic terrorism inside Somalia. The TNG government two weeks after September 11 established a “national anti-terrorism task force”, but in reality they saw (as every Somali faction) the opportunity to gain external aid and legitimization. Even if TNG is financed by Arab States it does not mean that it is a “Trojan horse” for Al-Ittihad and that it supports Al-Qaeda.

C. EXTERNAL ACTORS

It is not possible to analyze Somali conflicts without considering it within the complex regional context. The historical power of Horn of Africa is Ethiopia. This country is placed in the middle of the region and it is without a seaport and surrounded by Muslim countries such as Sudan (even if internally religion divided), Somalia and Arab Peninsula. The religious and political history of Ethiopia has it diametrically opposed to the political and social culture of Islamic countries. The Ethiopia Christian government, in a country where about half of the population is Muslim, is unceasingly obsessed by the political Islam danger. It has been waging a ten years battle against Islamistic insurgency groups who enjoy support from external Islamic backers.

Another past regional issue is Somali nationalism and its claim on Ethiopian and Kenyan Ogaden territories. As a consequence Ethiopia has two several diplomatic options. On one hand Ethiopia can adopt a belligerent foreign policy in order to deter the enemies such as Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia, and on the other the country can choose to cooperate with the rivals and promote a peace building process as a means to defend its principal interests.

Ethiopia has nothing to gain from a unified and powerful Somalia. However, the Ethiopian government clearly believes that there is more to be gained from deterring an Islamic dominance in the region. To this end, it constantly interferes in Somali domestic affairs by supporting either one faction or the other. However Arab states seek a strong and central government in Somalia in order to create a counterbalance to Ethiopia in the region. If Somalia was ruled by an Arab ally government, Somalia could be used by Arab country as a Trojan-horse in order to promote an Islamization. Furthermore if Somali government is able to maintain the control over territory Ethiopia would fear the return of a strong central state which could again take up Somali irredentist claims on the Ogaden.

Focusing on the current international relations in Somalia we can argue that the moribund Transitional National Government (TNG) led by Abiqassim is supported by Saudi Arabia and the main opposition party (Somali Reconciliation and Restore Council) enjoys the Ethiopia aid. According to Menkhaus African Union (AU) is becoming a more influential actor in Somali affairs, and it is exploring the solution of introducing AU peacekeeping forces in Somalia. European Union is the major western donor and it is playing a humanitarian and diplomatic role inside Somalia. Since *September 11th*, the USA counter-terrorism policy could also have an impact inside Somalia.

2) THE PEACE PROCESS

A. MBAGHATI

The ongoing peace process, sponsored by IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development), began in Eldoret (Kenya) in October 2002 with the “Declaration on Cessation of Hostilities and the Structures and Principles of the Somalia National Reconciliation Process”. The Declaration of Hostilities was accompanied with the arms embargo¹³ “which established an embargo on all delivery of weapons and military equipment to Somalia”. Despite the promising start the Resolution adopted by the Security Council of United Nations at its 4737th meeting on 8 April 2003 claimed: “Noting with regret that the arms has been continuously violated since 1992, including since the signing of the Declaration on Cessation of Hostilities and the Structure and Principles of the Somalia National Reconciliation Process (Eldoret Declaration) in October 2002, and expressing concern over the illegal activities linked to the financing of arms purchases and military activities by the violators of the arms embargo in Somalia”¹⁴. However the growing irrelevance of the Peace Process on the grounds of Somalia is a fact and public confidence in the country is close to zero.

Several members have violated, as the Security Council claimed, both the embargo and the ceasefire, the peace process works have been characterized by posturing and recrimination rather than a “genuine search for consensus”, the TNG in the capital has collapsed in all and Mogadishu faction leaders usually control no more than a few kilometers area, and Ethiopian sponsorship of the Somalia Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC) is matched by Djibutian and Arab patronage of the TNG, and both violate the arms embargo. According to International Crisis Group “what should have been an important step toward restoration of peace and government in Somalia has evolved toward an unimaginative cake-cutting exercise in power-sharing by an un-elected and only partially representative political elite that threatens to repeat the history of earlier failed initiatives”¹⁵. In mid February 2003, as a cost saving measure, the

¹³ Security Council Resolution 733 of 23 January 1992.

¹⁴ Security Council Resolution at its 4737th meeting, 8 April 2003.

¹⁵ International crisis group Report: Negotiating a blueprint for peace in Somalia. (6 March 2003).

peace process was relocated in Mbagathi, on the outskirts of Nairobi. By drafting papers on various aspects of reconciliation and state building, in order to present them to a final plenary session, the Mbagathi process completed the second phase of the peace process. The second phase has produced a Declaration of Agreement on the 5 July 2003 in which leaders agreed to a transitional parliament comprising 351 members apportioned by clan, as recommended during the Arta peace process (Djibouti 2000) formula. At the time Somali delegations agreed on the “4.5 formula” in which the four major clan families (Dir, Darood, Hawiye, Digil-Rahanweyn) are represented in equal numbers, while minority hold half as many seats. This guarantees that clan elders will have a role and it is presumed that any aspiring leader must pose as a representative of his clan. The current coalitions as TNG, SRRC, and G-8 are multi-clan and the real political fights are within and not between clans “What will emerge from political maneuvering and the talks in the Mbagathi process is not an attempt to create a government of national unity, but rather an effort to poach and co-opt disgruntled members of other clans into one’s coalition at the expense of one’s rivals. This is an old game which Somali political figures are very adept. Clan is, from this perspective, as much a tool to be used by political elites as it is an autonomous political force”¹⁶.

However on the first day of talks in Eldoret one thousand delegates turned up and the organizers were expecting 300. Delegates (in the typical Cushitic sense of kinship) simply brought their kin so that they too would profit from the expected accommodation and other allowances. According to Nixon Ng’ang’a the beautiful and expensive Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi paid by IGAD, which hosts the Somali delegates, could have a negative effect on the talks: “Why rush to end a means to a peaceful night in a decent hotel and a full tummy, away from the sound of the gunfire?”¹⁷. A number of incidents involving warlords refusing to pay their bills at hotels in Nairobi is indicative of the general non-committal attitude of a number of peace talk participants.

The main difference between Arta and Mbagathi framework is that while in Djibouti they discussed economic recovery, the future constitution, land and property disputes, the Kenyan process planned to “tackle them head-on through thematic reconciliation committee”

B. KEY ISSUES

The main Key issue in the Somali peace process is to design a structure of government acceptable to the majority of Somali people. As a consequence the dilemma between a unitary or federalist state is basilar. Actually there is not consent about what federalism will be in practice, however some clans as the Digil-Rahanweyn for example, have a strong interest in a federal state, by contrast the Hawiye clan-family that are the majority in Mogadishu prefer a more centralized government in order to translate Mogadishu control into a national dominance. In a

¹⁶ Menkhaus, K: “*Somalia: a situation analysis and trend assessment*” Writenet Paper UNHCR (August 200).

¹⁷ East African Standard (Kenyan Daily Newspaper) January 9 2004.

federal state, the number of states and their relations with the central state could cause potential conflicts. The federal state would be divisive, and there is the real risk that would become mini-ethnic enclaves (clan-stands). As a consequence minority in a “fence state” would be treated as second-class citizens. “The drafts suggests not so much an ideological schism as a political one”¹⁸.

Politics of clan and nation, fascinating as they are, have obscured the underlying roots of conflict in the modern history. According to Besteman and Cassanelli, “analysts retained a predilection for seeing conflict solely as a result of personalities and political factions rather than for the struggle of the land”¹⁹. The problem is that in the 1970’s and 1980’s Mogadishu grew dramatically by accessing unfairly to the rural land resources making a critical connection between central state and local production. Now the factions that are fighting after the Barre’ regime collapsed expect the same ready access to the local resources. The question of the struggle of the land is linked with the unitary-federalism state. There is the need to find a balance between national policy a local practice in order to change the way of land, water and pasture are allocated secured and managed. Additionally, Somalia must completely rethink its economy and potential revenue earners in an era in which the donor largesse of the Cold War is no longer possible. Also this issue is linked with the unitary-federalism dilemma.

CONCLUSION

WILL THE “SLOW GENOCIDE” CONTINUE ?

On the 9 January 2004 the last ditch efforts to save the Somali peace talks has started in Nairobi. The Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the IGAD chairman, and Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki held consultations with Somali leaders ahead of a proposed retreat to the resort town of Mombasa in order to promote the peace process. On the day of the launch of the Somali talks the 20 factional leaders boycotted the 11 am meeting and only agreed to return to the negotiation table at 5 pm, leaving Kibaki and Museveni waiting for six hours in Safari Park Hotel (Nairobi).

This meeting was meant to launch a 10-day retreat to enable the Somali leaders to come up with a power-sharing arrangement. Four warlords stayed at home in Somalia and they sent junior deputies to represent them in the talks, even the interim President Abiqassim (TNG) and Somaliland administration delegations were not present making the Ethiopian patronage the partial winner of the talks²⁰.

¹⁸ International crisis group Report: *Negotiating a blueprint for peace in Somalia*. (6 March 2003).

¹⁹ Bestemen and Cassanelli: “*The struggle for the Land in Southern Somalia*” Boulder, Col. : Westview Press, 1996

²⁰ I had these information from UN and IGAD staff and from Somali faction leaders in Safari Park Hotel during my short stay in Nairobi on January 2004.

Currently in Somalia there are 20 warlords supported by either Arab countries or by Ethiopia, who wield much of the power within Somalia. At present, likely gains from the particular economic interests of warlords are more apparent than the likely gains that will result from facilitating and establishing peace within Somalia. Maintaining peace in Somalia, could potentially be at the expense of their livelihoods. Maintaining the ongoing status quo in order to keep an income generated from extortion / taxation within the territories they control, and in order to stay in a position to that is advantageous to their other enterprises could be compromised in a time of peace and rule of law.

Two scenarios are most plausible in the coming year:

1) If the peace process collapses due to a general disagreement, TNG President Abiqassim will claim an extension of his mandate. Abiqassim's position will be contested from the majority of the Somalis as illegitimate and TNG will continue to control only a small area in Mogadishu. This scenario will bring Southern Somalia in a pre-arte situation (sharia courts, localized and intra-clan armed conflict), Somaliland will continue to build up its regional administration and Abdullahi Yusuf will seek to make Puntland a "repository of Somali sovereignty" in international affairs.

2) If the Kenyan peace process produces a Transitional federal government that is ultimately rejected by Mogadishu groups, forcing it to name an alternative capital. In this scenario it is plausible that two rival groups, one supported by Arab countries (TNG and Mogadishu group) and the other by Ethiopia and African Union (SRRC and Yusuf) will emerge as the most powerful within Somalia.

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