

# SOMALIA

## Past and Present



Mohamed Osman Omar

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*Also by Mohamed Osman Omar*

Diplomacy and Protocol (in Somali)

The Road to Zero  
Somalia's Self Destruction

SOMALIA  
A Nation Driven to Despair

The Scramble in the Horn of Africa  
History of Somalia  
(1827-1977)

SOMALIA  
Between Devils and Deep Sea

# **SOMALIA**

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**Mohamed Osman Omar**

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*For the Somali People*

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## Preface

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The history of the Somali people goes back to thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians spoke of Somalia as land of God (Land of Punt). The Chinese merchants frequented its coast and carried on lucrative trade long before the arrival of the European Powers in their quest for empires.

The Somalis were (and still are) mostly nomadic people and did not live within clearly defined boundaries. However, it should be noted that the modern state emerged only after the decline of the Roman Empire. And that too took many years to materialise. Somali nomadic tribes moved over the land in search of greener pastures. Nonetheless Somali people had a clear identity of their own. There were magnificent cities built by them. Ibn Battuta, the well known Arab traveler and historian, visited Mogadishu in 1330 (1328). He arrived at Zaila and then headed for Mogadishu. He has described the city as a town of enormous size. Certainly, Mogadishu existed as a magnificent city long before Ibn Battuta noted its existence. For want of a written script for Somali language much of its history has passed into oblivion. What we do have is recorded by others which do not give the Somali perspective of their history. Somalia's ancient history lives in oral traditions and folklore.

The records documenting history remain

fragmentary. As a result the present work suffers from the limitation imposed by these conditions. It concentrates its effort to present the Somali perspective on the struggle of the Somali people to regain control over their own destiny.

The first important encounter between the Somalis and the Europeans began when Vasco da Gama on his way back from India in 1499 assailed Mogadishu. But he failed to capture the city. Even Da Cunha in 1507 did not succeed in occupying the town. Twenty-five years later, in 1532, Dom Estavam da Gama, Vasco da Gama's son, visited Mogadishu to buy a ship. On 5 December 1700 a British squadron of men-of-war stopped near Mogadishu in what could be considered with the intent to threaten, but they did not land and after a few days they moved on probably to India.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Sultan Bargash bin Sa'id of Zanzibar occupied Mogadishu and ruled the town by means of a *Wali*. The conflict between those who wanted to establish their dominance over Somalia is illustrated by the incident of occupation of Mogadishu and other towns on the Somali coast by Sef b. Sultan, Imam of Oman, who had to fight a war against the Portuguese. After a little while the Imam ordered his troops to return back to Oman.

Although there is no record to indicate that the Germans ever were in occupation of the Somali territories, in 1855 the German officials claimed that the German East African Company had signed a

Treaty with the Mijerteyn Chief under which the Somali territory from the east of the town of Berbera to Cape (Ras) Asurad had been ceded to the German company. They also claimed to have entered in to a Treaty with the Ruler of Obbia, whereby the Company acquired sovereign rights over the entire territory between Obbia and the town of Warsheikh.

In 1889, the Sultan of Zanzibar leased the town of Mogadishu to the Italian Government, which in 1906 bought all the settlements of Zanzibar on the Somali coast. The Italians stayed in the south of Somalia until they were defeated in the Second World War and Britain, which was the victor, took over the administration.

In the north of Somalia the British maneuver started from 1825 with a visit to Berbera. Following the Scramble for Africa in 1884, Britain signed friendship treaties and later on Protectorate treaties with the Somalis. It stayed in the country until 1960.

France also occupied part of Somali territories from 1862 until the territory of Djibouti obtained its independence in 1977 and became the Republic of Djibouti.

I have written in detail about this phase of the history of Somalia in my earlier work "The Scramble in the Horn of Africa" (Mogadishu 2001). A briefer version is included in the present work.

Somalia is the only country in Africa that many European colonial powers have conquered and divided in as many as five pieces, and if one includes Socotra, which is distinctly a Somali Island presently

with Yemen, six. Somali territories were gifted to other countries by the colonial powers, before the scramble of Africa and after. This continued even after Somalia obtained its independence in 1960.

Two parts of Somalia, former British Somaliland and former Italian Somaliland won their independence respectively on 26 June 1960 and 1 July 1960 and formed the Republic of Somalia. Nine years later, the army took over in a “Bloodless Revolution”. It remained in power for two decades before being deposed by opposition groups in a bloody civil war.

The counter coup which ousted the military regime was spearheaded by the opposition groups—the USC and others in the south and SNM in the north. The groups in the south failed to organize an orderly take over of power, instead its militias went in rampage, looting private and public property, and indiscriminately killing innocent citizens. Millions were forced to flee to neighbouring countries in search of safety.

Although there were some conflicts, in the North the SNM managed to bring relative peace through dialogue. In 1993, it declared a unilateral secession from the rest of the Somali Republic and established “the Republic of Somaliland” which so far no country has officially recognized. The leadership there has been praised for bringing the relative calm that the people are enjoying today. While in the South, the never-ending quarrel between the groups who claim power and the lack of solution is generating more



fear in the minds of the people. This may lead to a new conflict that might cause more bloodshed.

Somalia has been a victim of bloody conflicts. It is the misfortune of the nation that people are not united in the pursuit of national interest. And some blindly support, due to tribal loyalties, selfish leaders who indulge in divisive politics in their self interest to the detriment of national interest. The nation is suffering for the lack of viable system of administration. This is the only country on earth that for over a decade has no central government to look after national interest.

To be a leader is to be able to deliver good things to the nation and not to abuse the nation's rights.

As early as the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the founder of Toubenan movement, Nasir al-Din, in Senegal, proclaimed,

*"God does not permit kings to pillage, kill or enslave their peoples. He appointed them, on the contrary, to preserve their subjects and protect them from enemies. Peoples were not made for kings, but kings for peoples."*

The subject of this book is not new to the students of history of Somalia, but I hope that it would be of use to many others who are interested in understanding the history of the country from the beginning of the colonial intervention to the present crisis.

## Acknowledgement

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Somalia is in the news again but as in the past for the wrong reasons. The world has been forewarned the country is threaded with the prospect of a devastating famine and unless it soon comes to its assistance the famine may claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of unfortunate Somalis. The country has been devastated by internecine factional wars for more than a decade and a half. One wonders how this country so well endowed by nature with rich resources came to its present state of utter poverty and degradation. Why its problems do not appear to be ending.

I thank God that I was born as a Somali. I am proud to be a Somali. I cannot even think of belonging to any other country than my beloved Somalia. Home is always "sweet home". As it is said "East or West Home is Always the Best." This is also true for those who are forced temporarily to make home somewhere else due to difficulties at home. As a true believer, I lived with the hope that one day the future generations of Somalis would see the end of their problems which their beloved country faces today. By the Grace of Allah, the dawn of that day may not be too far away. After all, every dark cloud has a silver lining, and the darkest nights end in glorious dawn. The Holy Qur'aan declares:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا  
إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

(So, Verily, With every difficulty, There is relief,  
Verily, with every difficulty There is relief)

Against all odds, I proudly represented Somalia in different capacities in many parts of the world. As its humble servant, I had proudly held its flag high. This could have not been possible without the encouragement and support of good friends around the world. I would heartily like to express my gratitude to all of them.

The young generation of Somalis must know the long history of their country's trials and tribulations. It is only through an understanding of that history that they would acquire the capacity to frustrate and defeat the enemies of their beloved motherland and take her to the glorious height of peace and prosperity as a proud and respected member of the international community. Somalia does not covet an inch of territory of any other country but only wants all its children in various parts of its territories under foreign domination to be free and to be united under a single flag. It is with this specific purpose I have written this book.

Many friends have helped me in the preparation of this. It is not possible here to thank all of them individually. I sincerely thank all of them. My special thanks are due to my family members: my wife Mana

Moallim Ibrahim, and my children Jeylani, Ali, Abdullahi, Osman, Ibrahim, Amina and Halima and their espouses as well as other relatives for their understanding and support without which it would have been hard even to retain my mental peace much less to write this book. My greetings to my grand-children who are a source of joy and happiness and I pray for them a joyous and prosperous future.

MOHAMED OSMAN OMAR



# 1 | British Somaliland

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The early penetration of foreign powers into the Somali territories began in 1517 when Sultan Salim I annexed Egypt to the Ottoman Empire. Forty years later, the Portuguese were driven out of the Red Sea. The Turks occupied Zeyla, but not Berbera, and placed a garrison there. This was withdrawn in 1663 and Zeyla came under the rule of Imam of Sanaa in Yemen. Throughout this period Berbera remained independent.

Berbera seems to have attracted the attention of the British for the first time in 1825. It was the time when Britain's East India Company was expending its possessions in India. In April of that year the ship *Mary Anne*, under the command of Captain Linguard touched Berbera for, what they called, trading purpose; apparently thinking that the inhabitants of the town would not even notice their presence. But he was attacked by the inhabitants while on shore. One of his passengers and one of his native crew were killed, and his second officer was wounded. With the help of some of the natives, Captain Linguard and his party succeeded in getting on board of another boat, *Duria Dowlat*, which took them to Aden.

The British sent an expedition consisting of two

King's ships *Tamar* and *Pandora* and the East India Company's vessel *Amherst* to Berbera to avenge the action of the inhabitants.

Arriving at Berbera, the British attacked the inhabitants and apparently forced the Sheikhs of the Habr Awal tribe to sign a treaty on 6 February 1827, by which the Shaikhs agreed to compensate both Linguard for his losses and for the bereaved families for the loss of their men.

According to the treaty, the Sheikhs "bound themselves to remain at peace with the British Government and to allow British vessels to trade unrestrictedly at '*any port under the authority of the Sheikhs of Habr Awal tribe*,' similar privileges being accorded to them in respect to British harbours." This was a meaningless gesture intended to convey symbolic equality for the Sheikhs who were in no position to carry on their goods to the British ports.

The British were systematically extending their overseas empire. When they occupied Aden on 19 January 1839 their interest in Somaliland increased. A year later, the British Political Agent at Aden, Captain Moresby was sent to meet the Shareef of Mocha and obtain his permission to conclude a treaty with the Governor of Zaila. As a result of his visit, not one but two treaties were concluded; one with the Shareef of Mocha on 1 September 1840 and other with the Governor of Zaila two days later.

Tajoura and Zaila became of great interest to the British largely because in 1840 British

Government purchased the islands commanding the approaches to these two harbours. These islands known for the slave trade were never occupied. They were principal outlet of trade for southern Abyssinia.

In 1840, rumours about an expedition from Bourdeaux (France) heading for the port of Zaila reached the British Government. It asked its Political Agent at Aden to establish and ensure the British influence among the inhabitants of the African coastline near Aden as the settlement of any other power on that coast would have been "highly detrimental to the British interest". The Government especially directed the Political Agent to purchase a station that would command the harbour of Tajoura. Captain Moresby and Lieutenant Barker were entrusted by the Political Agent with the task of ensuring that the Sultan of Tajoura signed a treaty ceding the Mussa Islands to the British. The two officers succeeded and the desired treaty was signed on 19 August 1840. The British formally took possession of the islands on 31 August 1840. The treaty had two important clauses, according to which Sultan Mahomed bin Mahomed agreed not to enter into any treaty or bond with any other European nation without first consulting the British authorities at Aden. He also agreed not to acquiesce in any bond or treaty detrimental or injurious to the British interests.

In 1847, the Imam of Muscat sent an emissary to Berbera to claim the port of Berbera his by right, but the Somalis refused to acknowledge this. Lieutenant Cruttenden, who visited that coast in

April, reported that the Mijertain Somalis paid tribute to the Imam.

Towards the end of 1851, the British Political Agent at Aden reported disturbances between two tribes, which led to the closure of Berbera trade. The problem was that the British discovered that Sheikh Ali Shermarke, the Governor of Zaila, had written a letter to the Turkish authorities at Hudeida proposing to place Berbera under the Turkish flag.

Towards the end of March 1852 a boat from Aden flying the British flag was attacked off Berbera. The British blamed the squadron of Sheikh Ali Shermarke for the attack. He was asked to compensate the owner of the boat and further pay a fine of Rupees 500 for the "insult to the British flag". Shermarke asked for the fine to be excused. The Assistant Political Agent at Aden Lieutenant Cruttenden feared that the Pasha of Yemen would resent the fine as Shermarke was a Turkish subject. While the Political Agent Captain Haines observed that Shermarke was not a Turkish subject but a Somali by birth and that the "outrage was purely of his doing and without the knowledge of any other authority."

In 1854 a mission, named Somali Expedition, under the command of Lieutenant Richard Burton, was dispatched to explore the country between Berbera and Zanzibar. In a report dated 22 February 1855, Lieutenant Burton described Sheikh Shermarke as a Chief who had "rented" Zaila and its dependency Tajoura from the Turks. Burton added that, "the height of Shermarke's ambition was to fly

the British flag at Tajoura and Zaila. He described the Sheikh as a good ruler, who maintained tranquility at Zaila.

Richard Burton who stayed in Zaila, from 31 October to 27 November 1854, wrote in his book, *"First Footsteps in East Africa"*, published in 1856: "The Governor of Zaila, El Haji Shermarke bin Ali Salih, is rather a remarkable man. He is sixteenth, according to his own account, in descent from Ishak El Hazrami, the saintly founder of the great Gar Hajis and Awal tribes". He went on to recommend the establishment of a British Agency at Berbera, a measure strongly supported by Brigadier-General Coghlan, British Resident at Aden, who also wanted it to *"Secure our daily provision which is now at the mercy of any Arab fanatic whose hatred of us or our friends may impel him to acts of aggression"*. (Emphasis added)

On 19 April 1855, Burton's Mission was attacked and Lieutenant Croyan of his party was killed. For this "offence", the British blockaded the port of Berbera thinking that this would force the Chiefs to surrender the alleged murderers of Croyan. The Chiefs did not surrender the "murderers". Eventually the blockade was lifted on 9 November 1856 after a treaty was signed between the British and the Chiefs. This treaty, as the earlier one, secured the commercial interests of the contracting parties; it further bound the Somalis to abolish the slave traffic.

Berbera was of the greatest value to the British as the garrison at Aden obtained its supplies of fresh

provisions from there. The British authorities were apprehensive that their supplies could be stopped at any time. The Political Resident noted that disorder existed among the tribes in the territory. It was a place where, "every man has his share; the assembly is a democracy without laws and regulations of any kind."

As far as commerce was concerned, the Somalis exported mainly *ghee*, (clarified butter), to Aden. According to *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, the Somalis had learned the art of clarifying butter, and exported it in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the same class of ships that had brought it to them from India in the First century. The *ghee* will keep in the tropics not only for years but for centuries. The account given by Burton (*First Footsteps in East Africa*, pp. 136 and 247) shows that modern caravans took it for trips of six weeks or more under the same hot climate of Somaliland. Lieut. Cruttenden in his description of the Berbera Fair wrote of modern ships laden with *ghee* in jars, bought in Somaliland for trade elsewhere; probably along the Arabian coast.

Towards the end of the Second World War, the Somalis in the north established the Somaliland National Society (SNS) which became active. It was composed of a diverse group of town-based Somalis from the independent business sector, and people generally better educated and with a wider range of experiences. It absorbed some smaller parties that had started in the early 1930s before the war but which had not had much impact. Civil servants

were prohibited by the Protectorate government from joining political parties, though many were clandestinely involved or sympathetic. In 1946 they merged with the Somali Transport Company (STC), a self-help organization led by Mohamed Jama Urdoh. In 1951 it reorganised itself and assumed a new name, the Somali National League (SNL) and it set its own political programmes as follows: (i) independence and unification of the Somali people under one political unit, (ii) social, political, and economic development, and (iii) the cessation of tribal feuding.

The National United Front (NUF) was not originally a political party, but was an organisation created in 1955 by the Somalis in British Somaliland to put pressure on the British to reverse the decision on the handing over of the administration of the Haud and Reserved Area to Ethiopia. The NUF provided a political framework for all parties including SYL and SNL and other organisations like the Somali Officers' Union that represented the civil service, to have their say. The NUF sent a delegation that represented all such groups in the Protectorate to Britain, and subsequently to the United Nations to protest the ceding of land to Ethiopia. The delegation was led by Michael Mariano. Later the NUF evolved into a political party in its own right. The NUF was led by Michael Mariano and the other main political party, Somali National League, was led by Mohamed Ibrahim Egal.

## 2 Turkish Involvement

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Although the British had gained a firm foothold on the Somali territory, they warily watched the maneuvers of other powers who were also flexing their muscles in the age of imperialism. On 25 February 1870, Major General Sir E.L. Russell, the British Political Resident at Aden, wrote to C. Gonne, Secretary to British Colonial Government in Bombay, India, that he had received a verbal report from *Subedar* (Non-commissioned officer) Mahomed Mahmood that the Somalis had been somewhat taken by the display made by the Egyptian (Turkish) Bey, who paraded his men with band playing and they thought the Turkey must be a great nation.

Russell wrote that if some British vessels-of-war did not soon visit the ports of Bulhar and Berbera and demonstrate the British power to them, they will fall into the hands of Egypt and Turkey. The problem was that the ship *Sind* had no troops on board and evidently was not a warship. It was looked on as a trading vessel. On the other hand, the Ottoman vessel *Khartoum* with the Bey would remain at Bulhar or Berbera until the season closed, in about five or six weeks. During this time, Russell cautioned that "unless we can hinder it, it is probable the Somaliees may submit to the Ottoman or



Egyptian rule. This will be ruinous to Aden, as all our livestock and a large portion of our trade come from these ports; and if we may judge from the territory on the Red Sea under Turkish rule, it will be disastrous to the country." He went on to recommend that a British warship be sent as soon as possible to Bulhar and Berbera. He said: "The Somalees know the straightforwardness of our Government, but they are barbarians, and are attracted by present display; and I fear, unless I can give ocular evidence of our power, as would be by a vessel-of-war visiting the country, I shall not be able to undermine the action of the Turkish Bey." Russell's letter reveals how the British regarded themselves as superior moral beings and the Somalis as barbarians who only understood the language of force.

*Subedar* Mahommed reminded the Somalis that they had signed an agreement with the British Government not to sell either Berbera or Bulhar to any foreign power. The *Subedar* drew the attention of Russell to the fact that the agreement was made when the British withdrew the blockade of these ports some 40 years back, and the British ensign was planted at each place, and the agreement was sent to Calcutta and approved. Russell did not know that they had an agreement with the Somalis. He said, "I will search the Office records, and see if any trace of it is to be found. I require the *Sind* to take the Native Infantry Relief to Perim, and when this is completed, about the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, I shall send the

*Sind* again to Boolhar, and shall endeavour, by advice and presents, to gain the Somalees to object the disposal of their territory."

Russell's apprehension did not abate. He again wrote on 4 March 1870<sup>1</sup> to the Secretary to Government of Bombay, saying that he heard from Berbera through a local person that the Bey of the Egyptian Government had re-embarked the guns, soldiers, and tents, and landed them at Berbera and that it was his intention to hold on to the sea coast territory of Berbera and Bulhar for his government.

The General informed: "The (Ship) *Sind* has just returned from taking the relief to Perim, and will be sent again to Berbera on Monday to watch affairs, and to prevent, if possible, the tribes from committing their country to Moslem rule."

This was the first time that the British official explicitly mentioned religion in his dispatches to his superiors. Whether this was the British policy, or not, at this time, the Political Resident explicitly stated that he sent his men to Berbera "*to watch affairs and to prevent, if possible, the tribes from committing their country to Moslem rule.*" (Emphasis added)

Unknown to the Somalis the British and Turkish governments were competing with each other for the control over their territories. In 1870, there were rumours that the Turkish authorities in Egypt had

1. NAI, Foreign Department, Letter N.51-307, New Delhi.

appointed Momtaz Pasha as Governor of all the African Coast from Suez to Cape Guardafui, including Bulhar and Berbera.

After nearly a month General Russell heard the rumours again. This time he decided to write to the Turkish Pasha, Commander of the *Khartoum* (ship), on 5 April 1870, and told him that the Somalis were under treaty engagements with the British. The Pasha rejected the contention and claimed that these countries and all the surrounding countries were under the Sultan's Government, and therefore there was no necessity to take them, as they were already under the Turkish flag and that his present object was to settle disputes.

The British did not give up. Disputing Pasha's contention, Russell again wrote to him two weeks later on 19 April saying that the British was unaware that Berbera and Bulhar were claimed by the Turkish Government. The British had been at Aden for more than 30 years and they would have certainly heard of the Turkish claims before. He argued that in 1855-56 they had blockaded the ports of Berbera and Bulhar, and that the then Turkish Government had offered no remonstrance. Furthermore, the Chiefs and elders would not have subsequently entered into an independent treaty with the British had the two ports been under the Turkish rule.

In 1874, Redhwan Pasha, Commanding the Egyptian Corvette *Lateef*, closed the port of Bulhar and did not allow any British ship to enter. On this occasion, the British Government had to swallow

their pride and told the Political Agent at Aden that, "it would be advisable that some amicable understanding should be come to with the Turks, about the commercial and other advantages, which the British wish to preserve at Berbera and elsewhere. Moreover, as long as these are maintained, we should not oppose the extension of the Turkish power on the African Coast of the Gulf of Aden." Britain at this point of time was not interested in taking on the Ottoman Empire. No matter how much they quarreled, in the end the colonial powers always understood each other and reached a compromise at the expense of the peoples of the territories.

Three years after this incident, the Turkish and British Governments reached an understanding over the Somali territories by concluding a convention on 7 September 1877 for the recognition of Turkey's jurisdiction over the Somali Coast, as far as Ras Hafun. The Khedive (Turkey) agreeing on his part to declare Bulhar and Berbera free ports, and entering into further engagements with regard to commerce and navigation, the appointment of Consular Agents, and the suppression of the slave-trade in the territory so recognized to be under Turkey's jurisdiction. The Turkish Sultan moreover undertook for himself and his successors that no portion of the territory in question shall ever be ceded to any other foreign Power.

Marques of Salisbury, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, wrote in a letter, 1224 dated Foreign

Office, London, to the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir A.H. Layard, on 10 October 1878.

"In view of the necessity of obtaining supplies for the British station at Aden, it is of importance to Her Majesty's Government that the ports on the opposite coast should be in the hands of a friendly Power able to keep the native tribes under proper control and willing to allow unrestricted intercourse for British trade." In the letter His Lordship made an assessment on the condition prevailing in Somalia. He wrote:

"In its normal condition of Somali rule, it had no particular master, each member of the community assembled has a voice in the administration of affairs; hence broils were incessant". Unfortunately, the conditions in Somalia are not much different in the twenty-first century than described in this letter.

After nearly a year later in 1879, Ambassador Layard informed his government that in his response to his query, he had received an answer<sup>1</sup> from the government of Turkey that it considers that,

"authority of the Sultan should be established at once over that country, so as not to permit any foreign influence from taking advantage of the present state of things. Consequently Tewfik Pasha has been directed by telegraph to take possession of it in the name of the Sultan, and to prevent any foreign authority from being established in it on any pretext whatsoever."

1. NAI, Foreign Department, Telegram N.544, dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 1879.

However, next day, 14 July 1879, the Ambassador sent other telegram (N. 548) to his Government, saying that Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey says that note on Somali question, of which "I telegraphed you substance yesterday, was sent to me by mistake, and has withdrawn it."

In 1880, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Earl Granville, informed the British Agent and Consul-General in Cairo, E.B. Malet, that the British Government wanted one of the Assistants attached at the British Resident at Aden, be given a Consular Commission, which would give him jurisdiction over the territory from Tajoura inclusive to Ras Hafoon, and to enable him to visit the Somali coast.

As the territory was under the Turkish Authority, Melet spoke with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moustapha Pasha Fahmy in Egypt on the subject. After obtaining no objection from the Turkish authority, the British Government appointed Captain F.M. Hunter, who was at the Bombay Staff Corps to the post of 2nd Assistant to the Resident at Aden.

### 3 Turkey Withdraws, Britain Comes

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Things were changing rapidly. Turkey decided to withdraw from the Horn of Africa. As their withdrawal from the Somali territories became imminent, the British Secretary of State in a letter dated 14 June 1884 ordered that Major F.M. Hunter should be sent to Berbera to facilitate the Turkish evacuation and conclude agreements with the local chiefs on terms similar to agreements signed on Socotra.

The Secretary also said that if it became necessary Aden should be ready to send force to Berbera. Britain already had agreements signed with the Somali tribes, i.e. with the Sheikhs of Habr Awal in Berbera on 6 February 1827 and 7 November 1856 and with the Mijerteyn at Bander Murayeh on 20 February 1866. He suggested that the treaties with the tribes might be supplemented by new agreements about Bulhar with which Aden had much to do.

The Secretary of State went on to give elaborate and detailed description of the coast line, the places of importance for the British and tribes inhabiting and in control of the area. He wrote:

“The next section of the coast line from Zeyla to Ras Hafun is from Berbera to Meyt or Burnt Island.

This includes Seyareh belonging to the Habr-tel-Jaalo tribe, and Meyt, which belongs to the Habr Gerhaji tribe",

"The third section of the coast is from Meyt to Cape Guardafui, and there are several ports of various descriptions. The Chief of them are as follows: - Habr Gori, (*sic*) belonging Warsangali tribe; this was the starting point of Speke's journey; Bandar Ziadeh, where the Mijerteyn Somali begin; Bander Khor and Bander Ghashem, trading ports, where a good anchorage can be got; Bander Marayeh, where lives the Sultan, and which possesses a good harbour; and Bander Aluleh, the Chief of which place is one of the parties to the Mijerteyn treaties. All along this section of the coast, we already have entered into friendly relations with the Chiefs, and therefore we can supplement our existing treaties with them. The last section is from Cape Guardafui to Ras Hafun. The land of Ras Hafun is the only important place. This also belongs to the Mijerteyn Somali. The best ports and most flourishing of the places thus enumerated in the second division of the coast with its four sections are —

Bulhar,  
Berbera,  
Meyt,  
Bander Ghassem,  
Bander Khor,  
Bander Marayeh,  
Hafun,

with the tribes owning all of these, except Meyt, we



have already entered into some relations, if not treaties. I presume that Major Hunter will be given a general discretion, but we can mention these ports as deserving attention. It is quite possible that the Mijjerteyn will refuse to sign any treaty."

On return from Berbera on 15 July 1884, Major Hunter wrote to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for India in London that he was upset about the news of the British intention on Somaliland that appeared in the Indian newspapers.

Hunter told his Government: "I accordingly proceeded to Berbera before the news could reach the African Coast, and on arrival at that port collected nearly all the responsible elders of the Habr Awal, to the number of 29, and obtained their signatures to the agreement, a copy of which is enclosed", "Hereafter", he continued, "It may be desirable to execute agreements with other tribes, but now that Berbera is safe, and our policy understood, the remainder of the Somal (*sic*) will only be too ready to make treaties with us". On conclusion of the treaty, Hunter reported that he presented Rs. 1,400 to the various Somali elders and others.

The British Consul saw to it that the treaties with the Somalis would be one-sided and solely in Britain's interest. Either through coercion or ignorance, the elders signed all the treaties as the British had prepared them. They accepted the condition that no foreign nation would have the right to appoint an Agent to reside in the territories of the Habr Awal without Britain's consent. The treaties provided

that all livestock exported to Aden were to be free of duties of all kinds and no duty was to be charged on articles for the use of the employees of the British Government.

The British Government communicated to France in February 1885 the establishment of the British Protectorate from Ghubet Kharab to Ras Galweni, and the conclusion of agreements with the several Somali tribes. In July 1887 the same communication was sent to other Powers.

Following Treaties were signed with the Somali tribes:

1. Habr Awal tribe, 6 February 1827, Treaty of Peace and Commerce.
  2. Habr Garhajis and the Habr Toljaala tribes entered into an Engagement with the Political Resident at Aden 1855 to prohibit the slave trade.
  3. Habr Awal tribe, in 1856, to withdraw the blockade of Berbera.
1. Habr Awal, 14 July 1884. Prohibition to cede, or part with, territory save to the British Government; free permission to British vessels to trade with all Habr Awal ports; protection of British subjects in Habr Awal territory; abolition of slave trade; appointment of British agents at Berbera or elsewhere in Habr Awal territories.
- Habr Awal, 15th March 1886. Protection by the British of Habr Awal Tribe and territories; prohibition of correspondence or treaty with foreign powers.

2. Habr Toljaala, 26th December 1884. Prohibition to cede; or part with, territory; free permission to British vessels to trade and protection of wrecks and crew of the same; protection of British subjects; abolition of slave trade; appointment of British agents.

Habr Toljaala, 1st February 1886. Protection by the British; prohibition of correspondence or treaty with foreign powers.

3. Habr Garhajis, 13th January 1885. Prohibition to cede, or part, territory; free permission to British vessels to trade; protection of British subjects; abolition of slave trade; appointment of British agents.

Habr Garhajis, 1st February 1886. Protection by the British; prohibition of correspondence or treaty with foreign powers.

4. Warsangeli, 27th January 1886. Protection by the British; prohibition of correspondence or treaty with foreign powers; assistance to wrecks and protection of crews of wrecked vessels; abolition of slave trade; appointment of British agents; assistance to British officers and acceptance of their advice.

5. Gadabursi, 11th December 1884. Prohibition to cede, or part with, territory; free permission to British vessels to trade; protection of British subjects; abolition of slave trade, appointment of British agents.

6. Esa, 31st December 1884. Prohibition to cede, or part, territory; Free permission to British vessels

to trade; protection of British subjects; abolition of slave trade; appointment of British agents.

Hunter not only got what he wanted or was asked to obtain from the Somali tribes. But asked his superiors whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to make the Somalis pay for the British Agent and his guards, and other necessary administrative charges. "If so", he said, "The customs can be fixed at a rate that will cover such expense, and yield a fair amount of profit to the Habr Awal."

A secret letter in January 1886 (no date) described the British "Protectorate" on the Somali Coast as follows:

"Originally the term "Protectorate" was applied only to British relations with Bulhar and Berbera and the intervening coast, which were based upon the first of Major Hunter's treaties, namely that made with the Habr Awal. Following the lines of the Habr Awal, four others have been negotiated with the following tribes:

- (a) The Easa Somalis, between Ghubbet Kharab and Zaila;
- (b) The Gadabursi, to the east of Zaila and between that place and the Habr Awal who then carry on the line to Bulhar;
- (c) The Habr Gerhajis, to the east of Berbera;
- (d) The Habr Tol-Jaala, to the east of the Habr Gerhajis, as far as Hais."

If that was the case, Hargeisa, which became the capital of the entire territory of the British

Somaliland, was free from colonial rule. There was no local council of elders to claim authority over it.

In 1891, when the news that the Abyssinians would probably attack Hargeisa reached the British Headquarters in Berbera, the Assistant Resident, Lieutenant H. Merewether suggested two measures: One, that Shaik Mattar (*sic*) be granted some *Baladiyas* (Locally recruited guards) at Hargeisa, and two, that he be given a British flag. The British official further informed that Shaikh Mattar had asked him to apply for thirty men for him. The number appeared to the Assistant Resident excessive, but he believed that as Shaik Mattar was one of the few stipendiaries who had consistently rendered good service to the Agency, he certainly deserved all the help the British could give him. The official presumed that if Shaikh Madar would be given the rifles he would find the men. He argued that as regards the flag it would show the Abyssinians clearly that Shaikh Madar was "our servant", and that he believed, was sufficient to give him protection. He thought that the Abyssinians were unlikely to take initiative against Britain, at least for sometime to come.

The British flag was hoisted at Hargeisa by David Morrison, Deputy Assistant Political Agent at Bulhar, on 17 February 1891, at 4:30 p.m. near the mosque and Shaik Madar's house. As Shaikh Madar was not in town, they placed the flag in the custody of his son, named Omar Madar, till the return of his father.

Although Shaik Mattar, (known to the Somalis as Shaikh Madar) was appointed as the custodian of

the flag in Hargeisa, the British neither gave him protection nor military support in case of a possible attack by the Abyssinians. On the issue of granting him some security men for defending the interest and the prestige of the British Empire, Major C.W.H. Sealy, Political Agent and Consul, Somali Coast, told the Resident at Berbera:

"There is no objection to your granting Shaik Mattar 15 *baladiyas* 'as a temporary measure and at his expense', but in the event of an overpowering force of Abyssinians marching on Hargeisa it would be better for Shaik Mattar to '*retire to Berbera*', as already suggested in the 7th paragraph of your No.135 of 9th instant." (Emphasis added)

This was how the colonial powers treated even those who were serving their interest. That was not the end of the story. Merewether sent by a special messenger, via Bulhar, a letter to Shaikh Madar, stating:

"These are the *Sirkars*' orders regarding your *kariya* (Village):

"The flag which Mr. Morrison hoisted you will pull down and keep. Should any spies or single individual visit you to collect information for our enemies show it to them. Should any large force come near you re-hoist it. Should any larger force come against you retire with all speed to Berbera."

"Do not fear, the *Sirkar* knows everything and is doing what is best for everybody. Regarding the Biladias let me know if you are prepared to pay and feed so many yourself. May you be preserved."

By telling Shaikh Madar, *"Should any large force come against, you retire with all speed to Berbera"*, meant that the British colonial administration was not ready to defend Hargeisa in case of an Abyssinian attack.

On 29 July 1891, the Secretary to the Government of Bombay (British Colonial Office in India), Political Department, W. Le-Warner, reported that Merewether, Assistant Resident at Berbera, had privately recovered the British flag that was in the possession of Shaikh Madar. Le-Warner admitted, "It became necessary to act secretly in this matter, because if it became publicly known that the flag had been withdrawn, the effect upon the Somalis would have been bad."

The British Administration stayed in the Northern Region of Somalia and in 1943, following the defeat of Italy in the Second World War, added the Southern part of Somali territory which had been under Italy's occupation since 1889. The United Kingdom handed over the former Italian Somaliland to the United Nations in 1950 when the country was placed under the UN Trusteeship for ten years, while retaining British Somaliland.

## 4 French Somaliland

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The scramble for the Somali territories continued with accelerated speed. After Britain, France entered into the colonial race with the signing of a treaty for “peace and friendship” with the Chiefs of the Danakil tribes on the coast of Adel on 11 March 1862. The treaty gave it a large piece of territory exclusively. According to Article 3 of the treaty France agreed to give 10.000 *Talaris*, that was then equal to 55,000 Francs.”

The treaty guaranteed several rights for construction and grazing to the Frenchmen settled in Obokh. The most important clause of the treaty was that the Chiefs “engage themselves singly or collectively to decline any overtures which may not have met with the approval of the Government of His Majesty, Emperor of France”. This was the same provision that the British had inserted in their treaties with the Chiefs.

Twenty-two years after France signed the treaty, the French Commandant of Obokh signed two treaties in 1884; the first with the Sultan of Gobad in April and the second with the Sultan of Tajourra in October. The treaty with the Sultan of Gobad conferred on the French several rights for carrying on commercial activities and the rights of construction in his territory. It again provided for an



undertaking by the Sultan that he would "conclude no convention and sign no treaty without the assent of the chief of the colony of Obokh". The treaty signed with the Sultan of Tajourra was even more astounding. The Article 2 of the treaty stated that Sultan Hamad "gives his country to France in order that the latter may protect him against every foreign power". Article 5 promised, "Not to sign any treaty with any foreign nation without the assent of the Commandant of Obokh".

Another treaty between M. Legarde, the French Commandant of the colony of Obokh, acting on behalf of the Government of France and Chiefs of the Easa Somali tribe was signed on 26 March 1885. According to which the Chiefs gave their territory to France and undertook to "assist France on all occasions and not to sign any treaty or conclude any Convention without the consent of the Commandant of the Colony of Obokh."

Article I of the Treaty said that, "There shall be eternal friendship between France and the Issa Chiefs and Article II said: "The Chiefs give their country to France in order that it (the latter) may protect it against all foreigners."

In the year 1885, a bill was presented to the French Chamber of Deputies to open a credit of Fr.624,720.00 for the Minister of Marine and Colonies, "on account of the organization of the Colony of Obokh, and of the French Protectorate over Tajourra and the neighbouring territories up to Gubbet-Kharab".

Office the Law Officers of the Crown, dated, Foreign Office, September 10, 1902. Regarding the Agreement of the 9th March 1897, by which Emperor Menelek of Abyssinia gave permission to M. Ilg, a Swiss engineer, and His Majesty's Principal Adviser, to form a Company for the construction of a railway from the port of Jibuti, in the French Somaliland, to Harrar, in Abyssinia, and thence to Antoto and the White Nile.

On the 6th February last the "*Compagnie Imperiale des Chemins de Fer Ethiopiens*," the Company formed in accordance with the permission given by the Emperor, concluded a Convention with the Government of French Somaliland, by which the latter granted to the Company on certain conditions an annual subvention of 500.000 fr. (20.000/.) for fifty years. The Convention contained *inter alia* the following stipulations:

"Article V provides that in future all members of the Council of Administration shall be Frenchmen, except in special cases sanctioned by the Ministers of the Colonies and of Foreign Affairs.

"By Article VI the Company is forbidden to modify the course of the railway or to authorise the construction of any branch lines without the consent of the aforesaid Ministers.

"Article XIX provides that, at the end of ninety-nine years from the opening of the line to Addis Harar, the French Somali Coast Protectorate shall succeed to all the rights of the Company over the section of the railway between Jibuti and Addis Harar.

"By Article XV the Protectorate has the right of acquiring by purchase the portion of the line between Jibuti and the course of the Hawash at any time after the 1st January 1920."

These two latter provisions are, however, by Article XVIII, made subject to an Agreement between the French and Abyssinian Governments in regards to those portions of the line, which are outside French territory.

There were times when the powers discussed among themselves about exchanging Djibouti for other territories or passing it over to others. On 21st September 1891, The British Ambassador sent the following letter (Confidential) to the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London: "In compliance with his promise, recorded in my telegram N.44 of yesterday, the Marquis di Rudini has forwarded to me confidentially a copy of the telegram received by the Italian Government on Saturday from their Consul at Aden.

The text of the telegram, in translation, runs as follows:

"A large caravan with important Abyssinian personages has arrived at Ras Jibuti. There is continued talk of the cession of the port of Jibuti to Menelek. Lagarde is expected at Obokh on the 24th instant, it is said, with instruction to treat, respecting the cession of Jibuti, with the Abyssinian Chieftains.

"The Marquis di Rudini mentioned that the Italian Agent at Aden was a very reliable officer, and unlike to be led away by a mere rumour."

In January 1914, Thesiger had first reported that he could see no prospect of any amelioration in the situation unless the British persuaded France to exchange French Somaliland for territory elsewhere. When he brought forward this proposal, Thesiger had suggested Gambia for exchange, "but the scheme for certain reasons did not commend itself to His Majesty's Government."

In 1917, the British Foreign Office sent a telegram to their Mission in Cairo (letter N.264 dated March 1917) quoting "the Foreign Office members of the committee" as saying: "As regards Somaliland, they suggested that in the event of our being able to obtain by exchange French Somaliland, we might give British Somaliland to Italy.

"I should be grateful for your views as to this proposal and as to whether we could in any case surrender British Somaliland, supposing we did not acquire French Somaliland."

The letter also said, "The Foreign Office representatives point out that Italian aspirations are probably directed to British East Africa and they recommend that if such proposals are received, they should be considered."

According to Somali Government official publication, "*The Portion of Somali Territory Under Ethiopian Colonization*", dated 1974, "In a BBC broadcast on 28th August 1966, Emperor Haile Selassie is reported to have said "If Somalis gave up claiming French Somaliland, Ethiopia will thank God; I would like France to stay in the French Somali

Coast for ever." However, that sinister wish of the Emperor did not materialise. In 1967, France decided to hold a referendum in French Somaliland. As the outcome of the referendum went against what France desired and following the uprising of the people of Djibouti against the French occupation, the French Government decided to change the name of the territory from "French Somali Coast" (*Cote Francaise des Somalis*) to "The French Territory of Afars and Issas" (*Le Territoire Francaise des Afars and des Issas*) by Law N. 67-521 dated 3 July 1967.

The purpose for this change was clear; it was to eliminate the word "Somali" from the territory's name and to create enmity among the people of the territory so that it could apply the policy of "divide and rule".

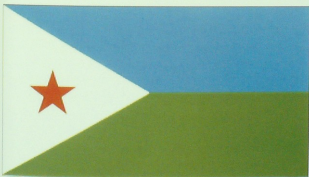
In 1975, the French Government began to increasingly accommodate insistent demands for independence of the people of the French Coast of the Somalis. The people voted for independence in a May 1977 referendum, and on 27 June 1977 the country gained its independence and the Republic of Djibouti was born.

Haji Hassan Gulaid Aptidon became the first democratically elected President of the country. Unlike in some part of Africa, where Presidents stick on to power until they die or deposed by military coup, President Hassan Gouled Aptidon announced that he would not seek re-election in 1999. Ismail Omar Guelleh, was directly elected President of the Republic of Djibouti on 9 April 1999. Born on 27

After its independence on 27 June 1977, the Republic of Djibouti adopted the following:



The National Emblem of the Republic of Djibouti.



The National Flag of the Republic of Djibouti.

The Republic of Djibouti is situated in the Horn of Africa. It is a member of the African Union and the League of Arab States, as well as of the regional organization Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which also includes Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Uganda.

## 5 Abyssinian Invasion and Occupation of Harrar

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The Acting Consul for the Somali Coast, Captain Sealy reported on 10 July 1883 to the British Consul General in Cairo, Sir E.B. Melet, that Menelek of Shoa "is about to march on Harrar with 60,000 men." This information was given to him by Abubakr Pasha of Zaila. One of his sons was in Shoa. Sealy said that he was not sure whether there was any truth in the news and asked for information on the subject and the cause of the threatened attack. Later, in August, Melet informed the Government that there was no foundation for the earlier report that King Menelek of Shoa was about to march on Harrar.

But the rumours regarding Menelek's march did not die. Four years later, on 22 January 1887, Major Hunter, who was the official who had made the Somalis sign the Protectorate Treaties a year earlier, reported that Menelek of Shoa "was within three days' march of Harrar, and that the Emir had gone out with all his force to fight the Abyssinians, who were to be accompanied by several Italians."

Jebril Marijou, interpreter of Menelek, who had been in Zeyla for some days past, informed M. Estemios Moussaya that at the instigation of the French, the King was about to attack Harrar. In fact, the rumour was a screen behind which the real action



was going on. An army of 15,000 men of which 5,000 were cavalry and reminder infantry and artillery were on the move to invade Harrar.

After invading and occupying Harrar, on 8 January (20 January 1887) Menelek wrote the following letter to the British Consul at Aden:

"From Menelek, King of Shoa and of all the Galla, good and bad,

"To the English Consul at Aden,

"How are you"

"By the Grace of God, I am well. Amir Abdillahi would suffer no Christian in his country.

"He was another "Gagne" but by the help of God I fought him, destroyed him and he escaped alone on horseback.

"I hoisted my flag in his capital and my troops, &c., occupied his city, Gagne died: Abdillahi was in our days his successor.

"This is not a Mussalman country as every one knows".

The British Consul Major Hunter wrote back 10 February, 1887:

"After compliments—We have received Your Majesty's friendly letter informing us that you captured and occupied Harrar and hoisted your flag there.

"There can be no need to recall the terms of the treaty concluded with Her Majesty the Queen in 1841 by Your Majesty's predecessor King Sahela Selassie, Negus of Shoa, Efat and Galla.

"Your Majesty may rest assured of the continued

friendship of the British Government, and we hope that under Your Majesty's protection may revive and the trade route be safe.

"On all the Somali Coast from Ghubbet Kharab, and especially at Zaila, Bulhar and Berbera, where our troops are now stationed, we shall always be glad to further Your Majesty's interests".<sup>1</sup>

Rennell Rodd was appointed on 24 February 1897 as the British Special Envoy of Queen Victoria to King Menelek. In a letter to Marquess of Salisbury, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Rodd wrote about the Abyssinians:

"The Abyssinians themselves are a military race in a perpetual state of mobilization. They inhabit circular huts of mud and wattle roofed with thatch, even the great Chiefs contenting themselves with such a modest domicile, while their followers pitch their tents round about compound of their masters, and the suggestion of permanency is certainly absent from their habitations."

Speaking about the Abyssinian soldiers, Rodd, wrote, "The soldier lives for the most part sparingly, and is satisfied with the rude (crude) sour bread manufactured in the country, which, seasoned with pepper and, more rarely, with meat, forms his only food. The desire of a better mode of existence appears to be entirely absent. At the same time, in order to secure the little that is necessary, as he

1. NAI, Foreign Department, Somali Coast-Shoa and Harrar affairs, 1883, New Delhi, India.

doest work himself, it must be wrung from the subject races."

He added: "Preserving their supremacy and extending their borders of recent years over the savage races by which they are surrounded, then have become a dominant military caste, for whom occupation in warlike enterprises must be found continually to compensate them for the extremely scanty pay and indifferent nourishment which they receive".

He further described the Abyssinians as: "War waged, as a rule, upon weaker races who are without adequate arms to resist his incursion successfully, raiding, in other words, is his real occupation, and the prospect of plunder his incentive".<sup>1</sup>

Wilfred Thesiger, in his book "*The Life of My Choice*", wrote:

"The Amharas and Tigreyans, as opposed to the Galla and the other tribes they had incorporated into their empire, resembled no other race in appearance or character. They regarded themselves, however fallaciously, as light-skinned; in their paintings they were invariably shown full face and almost white, whereas their enemies were always depicted in profile and black, unless they were Europeans. Before he was incapacitated, Menelik had won recognition for his conquests and acceptance of his new frontiers. He had incorporated

1. NAI, Foreign Department, Red Sea and Somali Coast, Confidential, May 14, 1897, New Delhi.

into his empire, the Ogaden, the town of Harrar, the lands of the Galla tribes, the Gurage country, the ancient kingdom of Kaffa, and the Anuak and other tribes on the borders of the Sudan." (London 1988, pp.43-44)

Major Polson Newman in his book "*Ethiopian Realities*", narrates that when Emperor Theodore earlier in his life was at a monastery "he first heard of the prophecy that there would one day appear in Ethiopia a king called Theodore, who would rule justly and righteously, would wipe out Islam from the world, and would take Jerusalem and reign over a world that would be entirely Christian."

Major Newman chronologically lists the Amhara territories and the territories conquered by Menelek as follows:

AMHARA TERRITORIES: Amhara, Tigre, Gojjam, and Shoa.

#### TERRITORIES CONQUERED BY MENELIK

As King of Shoa:

1886. Guma. Gomma. Ghera. Limmu. Gimma (as protectorate).

1887. Harar. Gurage. Galla Tulama (conquest begun).

1889, Cambatta.

As Emperor of Ethiopia:

1890. Leca Galla. Jianjero.

1893. Wolamo. Sidamo. Galla Tulama (conquest completed).

1894. Ogaden (conquest begun). Imi.

1895. Arussi.

1897. Ogaden (conquest completed). Kaffa.  
Jambo. Gimira Conso. Burghi.

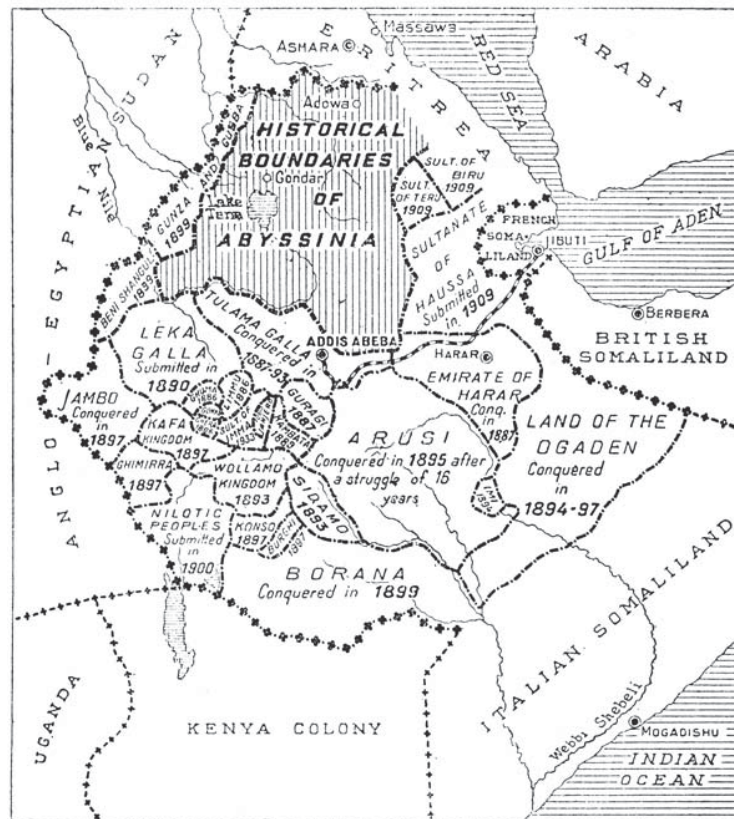
1899. Gubba. Gunza. Beni Shangul. Boran.

1900, Nilotic Tribes.

1909, Aussa, Beru, Teru.

Gimma was annexed by the Emperor Haile  
Selassie in 1935.<sup>1</sup>

1. Major Polson Newman, *Ethiopian Realities*, George and Unwin,  
London, 1936.



Map of Amharic and Non-amharic Regions of Ethiopia

Source: Major Polson Newman, *Ethiopian Realities*, London, 1936.

## 6 Abyssinian Somaliland

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King Menelik sent the following a circular on 10 April 1891 to European Heads of State in which he outlined the boundaries he claimed for his empire: "While tracing today the actual boundaries of my Empire, I shall endeavour, if God gives me life and strength, to re-establish the ancient frontier (tributaries) of Ethiopia up to Khartoum, and as far as Lake Nyanza with all the Gallas."

To seek a favourable response for his claim, he underlined his Christian credentials. He wrote, "Ethiopia has been for fourteen centuries a Christian island in a sea of Pagans. If Powers at distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to be an indifferent spectator."

"As the almighty has protected Ethiopia up to this day, I have confidence He will continue to protect her and increase her borders in the future. I am certain He will not suffer her to be divided among other Powers.

"Formerly the boundary of Ethiopia was the sea. Having lacked strength sufficient and having received no help from Christian Powers, our frontier on the sea coast fell into the power of the Mussulman", Menelik said.

"At present we do not intend to regain our sea

frontier by force, but we trust that the Christian Powers, guided by our Saviour, will restore to us our sea-coast line at any rate, certain points on the coast."<sup>1</sup>

Menelek presented himself as the defender of the Faith in Africa against the possible designs of the Muslims. It would appear that his plea struck sympathetic cord in the hearts of some Europeans. His plan received support from European Governments. Rennell Rodd openly justified and encouraged King's claim that his country too should have its share of the African territories to be divided among the colonial powers.

In a report to the Government, Rodd said: "It will be enough here to state that it has become sufficiently effective to make it an extremely difficult task to negotiate with a King, who, fully confident that his pretensions had been made publicly known and had remained undisputed; confident, moreover, that, as a Christian African Power, his claims to a sphere of influence were better founded than those of Powers whose seat of Government is in another continent."

On 8 December 1885 King John of Abyssinia told Queen Victoria among other things: "The Kings of England before Queen Victoria, and the rest of the Christian Kings of the world, were friendly with the Abyssinians, and waged war against the Moslems

1. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1891, N.233-249, NAI, New Delhi, India.



Britain had signed protection treaties with the Somalis in the last quarter of the 19th century, but even then it had no intention of defending the Somali people or risk the lives of their citizens for the Somali territories. The British officials were concerned some of them pondered what they would do if the Abyssinians decided to give effect to their claim. W. Lee Warner, an official in the Political and Secret Department of India Office, contended in a report dated 25 November 1896, that the British established Civil Criminal Courts on the Coast, rebuilt Berbera in 1888, fortified the ports, erected jails and "in many effective ways established ourselves. "Our garrison consists of barely 200 men scattered about." Le Warner argued, "We have no force at Aden or on the coast which can resist Abyssinian incursions. If we remain, the settlement of our limits with Abyssinia seems an urgent and immediate necessity. If we retire, we had better do so in accordance with settled plan and without unnecessary appearance of compulsion. The failure of Italy to hold her African protectorate without collusion with Abyssinia has its lessons".

Lee-Warner's suggestion was a clear betrayal of

the trust that the Somalis bestowed on Britain and a flagrant violation of the treaties signed by them which created the British Protectorate. In all the protectorate treaties signed by the Somali Elders of the tribes, there was a clause which prohibited the Somalis to enter into correspondence or treaty with any other foreign power or to cede, or part with, territory. Britain was not bound by that clause, and considered itself free to cede, or sell Somali territories to whomsoever they wished. There were no clauses that prohibited the British "to cede" Somali territories to others, and the Somalis being so ignorant of what would happen in the future, just signed or put their thumb mark on the treaties by which the destiny of their own homeland was to be decided.

Le-Warner said: "If we only want food supplies from the coast, we can still get them without asserting by force our right to the whole of the Protectorate as delimited with Italy. Three solutions are possible. Events will show which is the best of them:

1. *We can abandon not merely Biyo Kaboba actually held by Abyssinian, but also a considerable part of hinterland, retaining the ports.*
2. *If that will not secure peaceful occupation, we can give Abyssinina one of our ports.*
3. *If events prove that we cannot remain on the coast without a strong military*

*establishment there, we might retire altogether, making a treaty with Abyssinia that live-stock shall be exported free, that imports and exports from Zaila and Berbera shall not be charged more than the present, and the ports shall not be given to any European power without our leave.*

He also said: "The next step, I think, is to follow the precedent of 1877, and address the Foreign Office an enquiry whether:

1. *We must deal in this matter with Makunan or with Menelek;*
2. *We can assign Zaila to Abyssinia, if such surrender seems desirable (a) without further reference to Turkey, (b) without reference to France our neighbour at Jabuti.*

To show how much the British cared less about the Somalis and how they wished to appease Abyssinia at the expense of Somalia, the British colonial officer told his government: "*As to whether it is fair on the tribes, with whom we have protectorate treaties, to abandon them, that is a question which we must consider ourselves*".<sup>1</sup>

Earlier Captain Hunter too argued in a memorandum he sent to his government in 1884 saying: "This Residency has no knowledge of, or concern with, Abyssinian politics; but with France

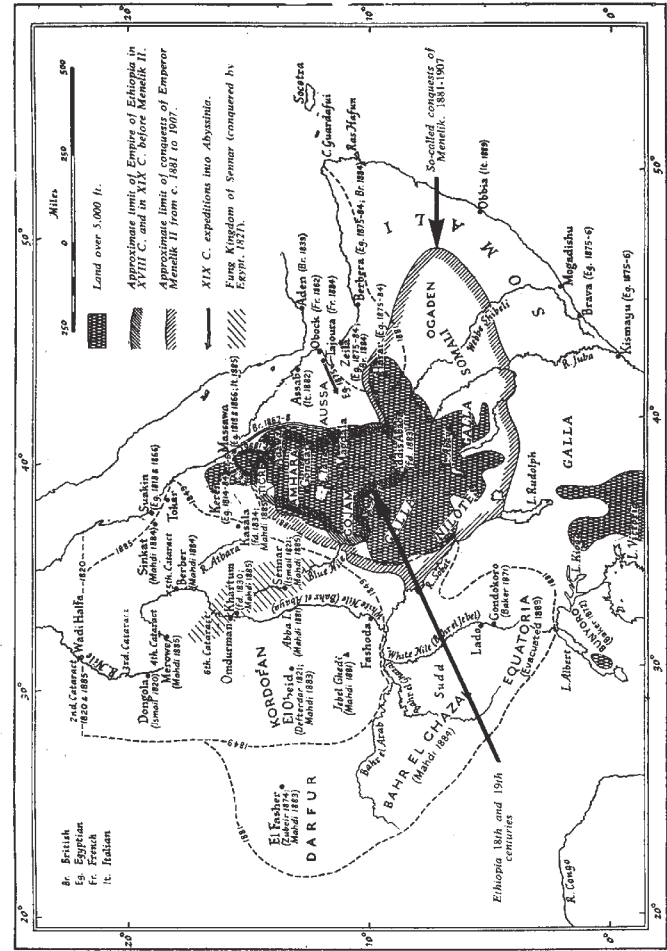
1. NAI, Foreign Department, Secret letter N.189, dated 28 October 1896, New Delhi, India

at Tajourra, Turkey at Zeila, and Italy at Assab, Southern Abyssinia will be pretty well dominated by other European powers". He believed that to prevent this domination by another European Power and to maintain their own Britain could pursue another alternative. He wrote:

*"There is one alternative which can be suggested as regards Tajourah and Zeylah, but it is not possible for this Residency to pronounce on its merits. Let Tajourra and Zeylah be offered by the British to King Menelek of Shoa on such conditions as Her Majesty's Government think suitable. The local tribes, there is reason to believe, would not oppose such a course, and if we do not give Menelek a port, France or Italy will, for Obokh and Assab were acquired, we all think here, principally with the object of treating favourably with the King of Shoa".<sup>1</sup>*

This was the bitter fact. The British cared more for the provision for Aden than the Somali people and their territories. They cared for their friendship with the Abyssinians than with the Somalis. However, by sheer luck, the British intention did not materialise, other wise, not only Ogaden, but also a big portion of the Somalia's northern region would have been today under the Ethiopia rule.

1. NAI, Foreign Department, Letter N.3478, dated Bombay Castle, 4 July 1884, Confidential, New Delhi.



North-eastern Africa, 17th to 19th Century

Source: Somali Democratic Republic—The portion of Somali Territory under Ethiopian colonization, Mogadishu, June, 1974

## 7 Italian Somaliland

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Italy started colonisation of Africa around 1885. By then Britain and France were already in the North of Somalia. The coast of Benadir, the port of Kisimayo, Brava, Merca, Mogadishu and Warsheikh were the dependencies of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The rest of the territories were divided among the various Somali tribes. The sovereignty of the Sultan of Zanzibar over these ports was recognized by Germany, France and Great Britain in June 1886.

The Italian intervention began with the signing of the commercial treaty of 28 May 1885, precisely few weeks after the Italian occupation of Massawa on 5 February of the same year, when the ship *Barbarigo* was sent to Zanzibar for the purpose of visiting the coastal territories which were under the Sultan and to explore the outlet of Giuba River.<sup>11</sup>

On 17 March 1886 in London the German Ambassador Count Hatzfeldt verbally informed the British Foreign Office that on 6 September 1885 the German East African Company had signed a treaty with the principal Chief of the Mijerteyn Somalis, the Sultan Osman Mahamoud Youssouf at Alula. Under this treaty the whole Somali territory from

1. NAI, Foreign Department—Secret—January 1889, India.

the east of the town of Berbera to Cape (Ras) Asurad was ceded to the German company. The representative of the company had also signed a treaty with the Sultan Yussuf Ali Yussuf, the Ruler of the Somali town of Obbia (Hobbiah), whereby the company acquired the entire territory between Obbia and the town of Warshaikh with all the sovereign rights. The territory belonged to the Sultan of Zanzibar and was on the one side between the Indian Ocean and the Galla frontier and about twenty-five days' journey inland on the other. Count Hatzfeldt informed that on the strength of these treaties, the German East African Company had asked the German Government to undertake the Protectorate over the Somali coast, and make sure that no encroachment by England was made on their rights.

Four months later, Sultan Yusuf Ali visited Aden and met with the British Consul, Major F.M. Hunter. The latter discussed with the Sultan about the agreement German claimed to have concluded with the Mijerteyn Chief. During the meeting the two sides discussed bilateral agreement. Afterward the British official reported to his Government that Sultan Yusuf Ali made the following statement:

"I was not present when the agreement was made between Sultan Osman and the German, but I have seen the Arabic copy.

"I do not recollect what the preamble said as to the actual parties making the agreement, whether it was on behalf of themselves or of their Governments.

"The substance was that the German were to be allowed to trade and were entitled to protection; the consideration was 1,000 dollars payable to the Sultan and 1,000 dollars to myself annually. There was no mention of sovereignty or territorial rights, or flag. When the second time the Germans came I was present; they asked for the Sultan's flag to fly on their boat for protection. They also wanted to build a house and fly their own flag over it. Both these requests were refused. We have not received any portion of the annual stipend, but we have accepted presents of cloth.

"Since I arrived at Aden, I visited the German Agent Max Winter here and showed him the paragraph from the "*Standard*" about his Company having annexed the Somali country from near Berbera to Warsheikh; he declared he knew nothing of any such intimation having been published."

The British themselves claimed to have already established contact with the Chiefs of the Mijerten and signed agreement with the Chief of Alula in March 1879. In October 1880, Acting Political Resident, Aden, Major G.R. Goodfellow, was sent to Alula to deliver the ratified copy of the agreement to Sultan Yusuf Ali. But the Sultan was out of town.

In a letter to C. Gonne, Chief Secretary to Government of Bombay, dated Aden Residency, 15 October 1880, Major Goodfellow reported:

"I regret to say that in consequence of the Sultan's absence from Mareyeh, in the interior, his representatives there would not receive the treaty,



or amount of subsidy due, from Commander Byle, R.N. A local copy of the Convention was delivered to Yousuf Ali, who accepted it. A sum of dollars 150 was expended in presents, for which the sanction of Government is solicited."

On 16 January 1883, Brigadier-General J. Blair, V.C., British Political Resident at Aden, wrote the following letter to the Sultan Othman Mahmoud:

"It is not hid from you, oh, friend, that in March 1879 you and the other Chiefs of the Mijerteyn entered into an agreement with Major Goodfellow, and that this agreement has been ratified by the Governor General of India. We now send you our Acting First Assistant Resident, Captain Sealy, who will deliver to you the copy of the ratified agreement.

"It is also known to you that the arrears of the stipend mentioned in the said agreement are due to you and Captain Sealy is authorized to pay you the same, amounting to 720 dollars, to March 1882."

The British official also said:

"You will also recollect that the Great Government was pleased with your kind treatment of the crew of the wrecked steamer *Fleur Castle*, last year, and we have much pleasure to informing you that Captain Sealy is commissioned to deliver to you 500 dollars, which the Great Government desires to give you as a mark of appreciation of the services rendered by you on that occasion. This is quite separate from the payment mentioned in the agreement.

"We rely on your friendship to meet the wishes

of the Great Government in the above matters. May you be preserved".

Sultan Osman Mohamud sent a letter dated 19 February 1883 to the British Political Resident in which he said:

"We received your kind letter, and the same day we visited Captain Sealy, on which occasion he delivered to us 500 dollars, which the Government had ordered to be given to us as recompense for the treatment shown by us to the steamer wrecked at Ras Asir.

"As regards the agreement, we are willing to agree to all terms in it except the lighthouse. God willing, we will send some men to you on our behalf. On meeting together we will converse and salutation."

Three years later in 1889, the German Government asked the British Government for the permission to recruit, within the British Protectorate on the Somali Coast, a small force of as it said of blacks that were indented to serve as police in the territories of the German Company at Zanzibar. But the British considered it "extremely undesirable to accustom the Somalis to the use of firearms."

The British Political Resident at Aden, Brig. General A.G.F. Hogg, reported in a letter dated 24 April 1889 that in accordance with the instructions received from the Secretary of State for India (Foreign Office, London) September last, the Italians were permitted to enlist Somalis for service at Massawah. About 150 men were regularly trained

in the use of firearms during the last six months, and have now been sent back to Aden.

The Political Resident argued: "If foreign nations are thus permitted to train the Somalis to the use of firearms, and then send them back to their own country, most undesirable results will ensue; and I trust that future permission may be refused to any foreign nation for their enlistment as soldiers of Somalis within our Protectorate."

"Possession by the Arabs of rifles, is becoming very common indeed, and if Somalis receive a military training, they are certain to use every endeavour to obtain possession of firearms which are now almost unknown in their country", he said.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 1888, the Sultan of Obbia requested Italy for protection. The "Acceptance Act" was signed in Obbia on 8 February 1889 by Italian Consul Cavaliere V. Filonardi and Sultan Yusuf Ali. With this treaty all the possession of the Sultan from El-Marek to Ras Auad passed under the protection of the Government of Italy. Italian Foreign Minister Rudini informed the Italian Parliament that the treaty of protection placed the Sultan and his possessions under the protection of the Italian Government, undertaking not to make, without the consent of the latter, treaties or contracts with any other Government or person whatever. In compensation, an annuity of 1,200 dollars was granted to Sultan Yusuf Ali Yusuf.

1. NAI, Foreign Department—Secret E—July 1889 Nos. 119-121, New Delhi, India.

The Minister told the Parliament, "Being a region bordering the sea, the Protectorate over the Sultanate of Obbia was notified to the Powers in the telegram of the 3 March and the Circular of the 11 May 1889, according to Article XXXIV of the General Act of the Berlin Conference."

The Sultan of the Mijertejn reached an agreement with Italy on 7 April 1889 at Bender Alula. The Agreement placed under the Italian protection the Sultan's possession on the Indian Ocean from Ras Auad to Ras el Kyle, including Nogal Valley, promising that he would not enter into further treaties with other Powers for the remaining territories in his possession.

The Acts relative to this Protectorate were ratified on 7 April 1889. They bear on the part of the Italian Government the signatures of Cavaliere Filonardi and the Commanders of the Royal ships *Rapido* and *Staffetta* and the other contracting party emissary of Sultan Osman Mahmud.<sup>1</sup>

The way the colonial powers acted showed that they consulted with each other well before taking over a territory. They decided among themselves which power takes what. Before taking over the Somali territory, the Italian Government asked the British whether they had any objection to the Italian occupation. The British Secretary of State informed the British Viceroy in India on 3 January 1889 that

1. Comando del Corpo d' Stato Maggiore, SOMALIA—*Memoria sui Possedimenti e Protettorati Italiani*, Roma, 1908, p.7.

Italy "proposes to occupy or protect territories from eastern limit of British protectorate of the Somali Coast as far as the border of Zanzibar and asked whether "India (British Authority) has anything to say against the proposal." The answer came within two days saying that, "They had no objection."

Italy took possession of the Somali territories on the coast of Benadir from the Sultan of Zanzibar through a treaty signed on 12 August 1892 and it was presented before the Italian Parliament by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 1 June 1896 and was approved as Law No. 373 of 11 August 1896.

Article I of the Treaty stated;

"the Government of H.M. the Sultan of Zanzibar accords to the Government of H.M. the King of Italy, all the ports which he possesses on the cities and ports of Benadir namely Brava, Merka and Mogadishu, with a radius towards the interior of 10 maritime miles, Warshaikh, a radius of 5 maritime miles, besides the islands and the nearby small islands, to be administered politically and juridically in the name of the Government of H.M. the Sultan of Zanzibar and under the protection of his flag; but is agreed that the Government of the H.M. of the Sultan will neither be responsible nor called to regulate the administration or others such as what might come as a result of the conflict of price of blood nor any complain that may arise."

According to the Treaty, the Italian Government and its representatives had the right to buy and to dispose the public lands only within the limits of the

above territories. The Sultan granted to the Italian Government the right to establish a bank or more banks in the cities which were subject of the Convention, with exclusive privilege to issue bank-notes or gold currencies, silver and of copper.

Article VII of the Treaty stated said:

"All the above-mentioned powers, rights and privileges are accorded to H.M. the King of Italy or to his representatives for the period of 25 European years which will start from the day in which the present concession will be approved by the Government of H.M. the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, the Empress of India and by the H.M. the King of Italy." At the end of the 25 years the agreement was renewable for the same period and on the same conditions and with a simple declaration to this effect by the Government of the King of Italy.

By Article VIII Italy pledged to pay to the Sultan of Zanzibar the sum of 40,000.- Rupees as initial payment when the Italian administration took over the ports, the cities and the territories. At the expiry of each quarter of the European year a sum of Rupees 40,000 was to be paid.

On 10 October 1892 the Sultan of Obbia wrote to Filonardi, the architect of the Italian colonial administration in Somalia:

"We inform that this year we have been abandoned and there was no steamboat that has come to us, as it was the practice.

Nobody has brought to us the woods and we have neither food nor cartridges.

There was a serious war this year. The inhabitants of the desert have rebelled against us and there was a fighting in which some of ours have been killed.

After the departure of the steamboat *Esfita* we hoped some one would come from your side, but until now nobody came.

On the date of this letter Abu Bakr bin Auad has arrived bringing to us the payment of the year 1891.

We hope you will help us with food and the supply of war material, because we are under your protection and your flag.

We would not think that you have abandoned us.

Now we wish your arrival together with what we have requested. Abu Bakr bin Auad will give full information.

We hope that you come soon; this year to negotiate together.

Now we have two countries: Obbia and Fil Hur and we have many soldiers different than before.

Those of our friends killed are 11.

Our *saia* (boat) has broken down this year at Obbia with some of our properties on board. We need money and we are without boat. You are our friend and we do not know other Christians besides you, and we defend your flag..

On October 19, 1892 (27 Rabi El Aual, 1310), the Sultan of Majerteyn, Osman Mohamud Jusuf, similarly wrote the following letter from Alula, to Signor Filonardi:

"Since long we have not seen you and we have a great desire to see you.

You are our friend and we do not know why you have abandoned us.

The steam boat *Esfita* has arrived this year, but without you. Now we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, because friendship and affection exist between us.

Kindly bring to us the rifles and the cartridges of which we have spoken about with you last year, because the rebellion has increased around us. We expect assistance from you because you are our friend and you will do it.

On the date of this (letter) Abu Bakr has arrived here bringing to us the salary of the year; we have recommended him to give detailed information.

When you come here we will understand each other.

We want *barut* (gun powder) for the *ofiat*, the seats and the other furniture.

We wish to construct a stone house in your name. For you we wish to work and we shall agree at which site the house will be built.

The tone of these two letters show that instead of behaving like Sultans that they were, they wrote like humble subordinates begging for money, guns and bullets for use against those who were opposed to their rule. They even offered themselves to work for Filonardi who was just a junior officer. The Italians were behaving like the Lords of the land. In July 1893 Filonardi issued a bank note for the



denomination of Rupees 5 (See p. 63). It was printed in Rome, but the place of issue was *Adale*, or *Itala*. He used Italian language on one side of the bank-note and Arabic on the other. On 24 October 1893 he issued a notification announcing that his company has taken over the administration of the Somali territories of Benadir.

Filonardi was a just a Consul of Italy in Zanzibar when he took over parts of Somalia for a small and private company which bore his own name. After coming back from abroad he proudly stated in a letter addressed to his family in 1894: "Here I am again in my possession; upon my arrival I found the completion of the wall of the city and now they are finishing the two new fortresses overlooking the big square, which later, I have the intention of it be the market."

Usually, Filonardi wrote about his activities in Somalia in the form of private letters to his family, particularly to his brother Angelo. In one of his letters (Doc. N. 33)<sup>1</sup>, dated 26 August 1894, he wrote how he enjoyed the life while in Mogadishu. He said: "Besides minor robberies on the caravans' routes, the country, for the time being is quiet. I am happy for these poor people, the only satisfaction I had, comes from them." In the same vein he described how happy he was to be in Somalia as the colonial administrator. Describing the feast annually held in Mogadishu by the inhabitants, he wrote: "The 16th

1. ISIAO, Archivio Filonardi, Rome.

of August is the beginning of the Somali Year. In this day, it is the custom of the male folks to come out in different tribal groups, well armed, and make feint against each other. Prior to the feast, the elders come to me to ask for permission to hold this extraordinary feast and permit to carry arms; they assure me that at the end of the feast, all arms to be brought back in the custody.

"It means to have all the citizens (about two thousand persons) armed during one day. It was a test and I tried. I gave the permission and I made sure that the Arab soldiers would not mix with the citizens, and notified that two shots of gun would indicate the beginning of the permission for the arms and two other shots would indicate the end of the permission. The first shot will be at 09:00 in the morning and the second will be at 7:00 in the evening." Filonardi took seat at the terrace to enjoy the event. He wrote in his letter:

"The four tribes of *Scingani* quarter, strong of about two hundred young people, dressed like warriors; the elders walking in the front of their respective tribes, inspired the youngsters to sing and dance." Overwhelmed by the feeling of his power, the founder of the first Italian colonial administration in Somalia, wrote: "to my astonishment and my emotion were great when the groups paused in front of me, raising their arms towards me, chanting "*Ao-Filo*" (*Ao* meaning father and *Filo*, short form of Filonardi) and there was a chorus of good wish for power for me." Becoming

sentimental, Filonardi recorded: "My satisfaction was immense, I would never had hoped so much and was unable to stop some tears." He went on: "I did not, therefore, worked for nothing, and if in Italy it is not recognised, luckily, the Somalis recognize. Later on, the four tribes of the Hamar-Weyn, followed the same ceremonial. Being the most populated and richer quarter, the various groups were, greater in number and better equipped, it was a splendid show."<sup>1</sup>

While the Italians were claiming to be the protectors of the Somali territories, the Abyssinians crossed the borders and harassed the Somali people and looted their properties. In a letter datelined Mogadiscio, 1 December 1894 to Comm. Pisani Dossi of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Filonardi reported:

"The Abyssinians, meanwhile, after having devastated and plundered the Ogaden, in search of profitable loot, moved towards Borana-Galla and, passing through nearby Lugh, have sent a messenger to collect the "tribute". The Sultan of Lugh, fearful, sent the tribute and at the same time sent a mission to me asking for protection."

On 2 June 1895 the Sultan of Lugh, Sultan Alio bin Sultan Hassan Aba Malle, wrote to Filonardi: "I am afraid that the Amharas might return to my country and we cannot defend ourselves. Please send us urgently your flag and the Protection Act.

1. ISIAO, pos. 255, 1894. Filonardi Archives, Rome.

Do not forget my request; you can send the flag and the Protection Act with Sceik Mohamed bin Harun."

In 1896, the Filonardi Company was replaced by a new company called "Societa Commerciale Italiana del Benadir" (Italian Commercial Company of Benadir) and on 25 May 1898 the Italian government decided to pass the administration of the territories of Benadir to the new company.

On 25 November 1896 the Somalis rebelled against the Italians. They massacred at Lafole (20 km from Mogadishu) the Commissioner, Cecchi, ten officers, five civilians and seventy *askaris* (local soldiers). Commander Dullio took over the responsibility on behalf of the Government and from



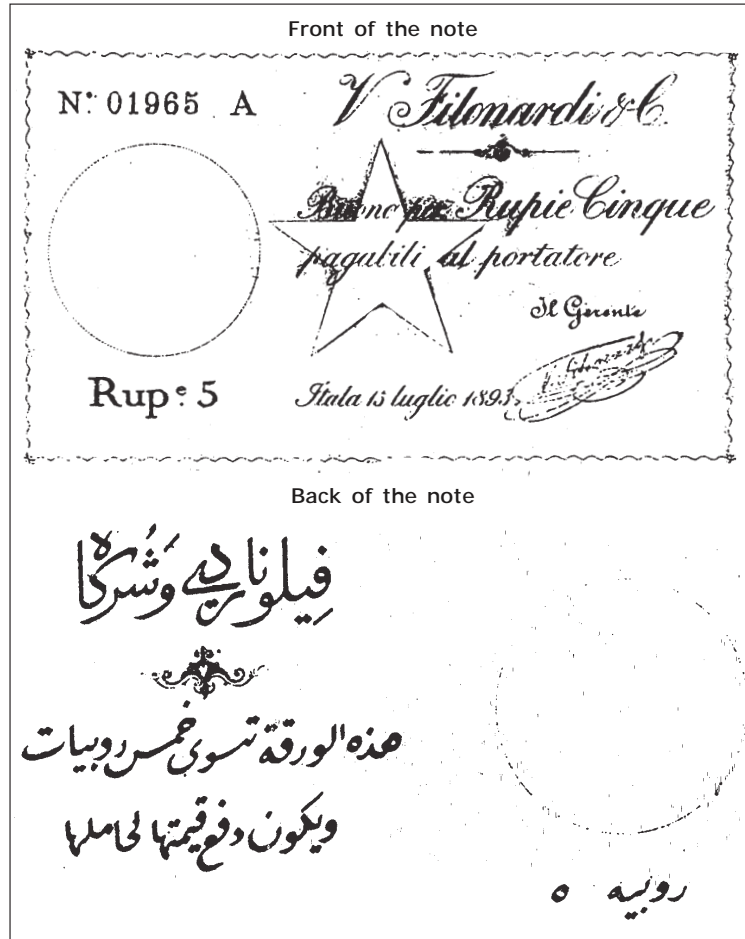
Mogadishu—The Colonial Arch.





that moment the Italians started military operation in Benadir. In January 1905 Italy acquired outright possession of the Benadir ports for which it agreed to pay 144,000 Pounds to the Sultan of Zanzibar.

Italy continued its occupation of Somalia until it lost the Second World War.



Bank Note of Filonordi Company



**Mogadishu—Partial view from the sea.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Mogadishu—Sea-front in 1900.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Mogadishu—The Vali's Palace and nearby market-place in 1900.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Mogadishu—The Landing-place in 1900.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



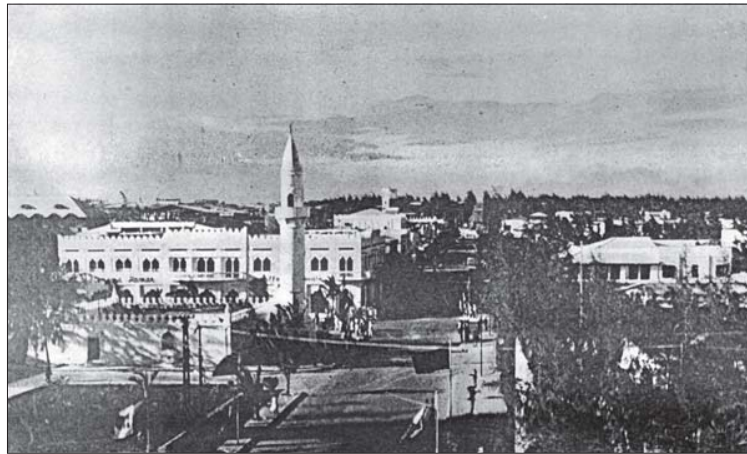
**Mogadishu**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946

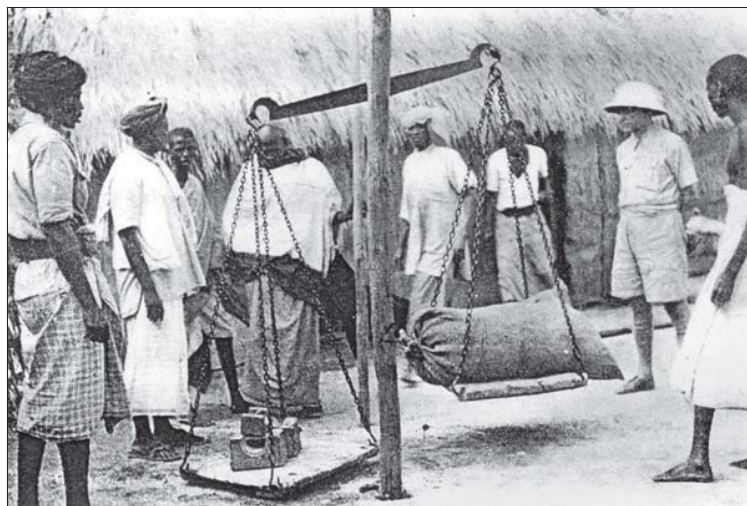
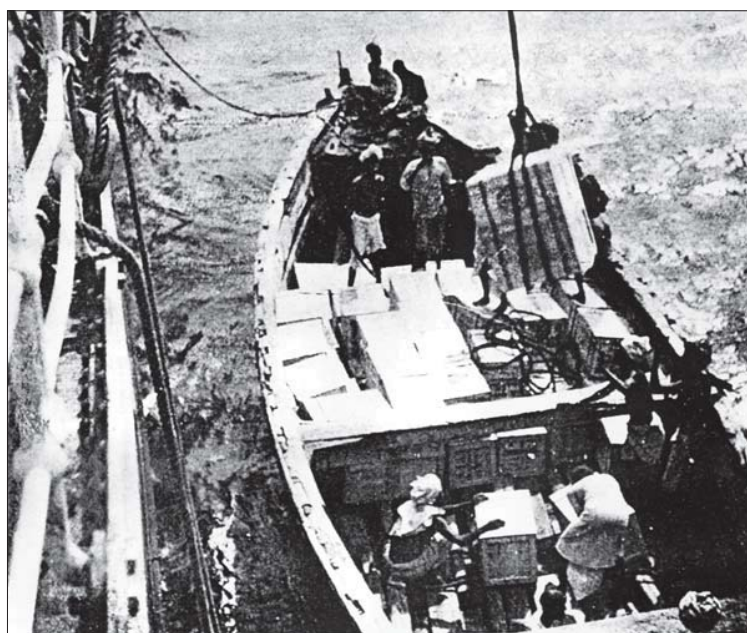
**Migiurtinia—Collection of incense.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Migiurtinia—Packing of incense.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Migiurtinia—Shipment of incense.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Chisimaio—An Air-view.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



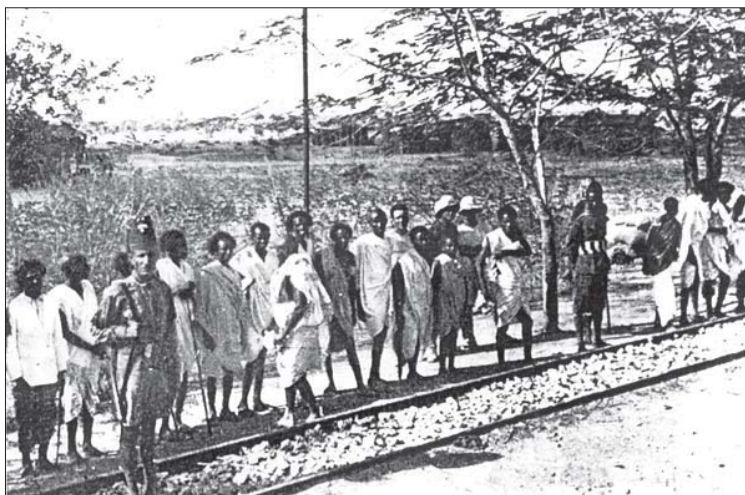
**Merca—A view from the sea.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Brava—A view.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



**Somalis waiting for train.**

Photo published by Istituto Agricolo Coloniale—Firenze 1946



## 8 | Bone of Contention Between Somalia and Ethiopia

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When Britain decided to give Somali territories to Abyssinia, the Somalis had no central authority or person, like a King, that could speak on their behalf and defend their lands. The British, with whom the Somalis had treaties of "Protection", acted against their interest by handing over Somali territories to the Abyssinians.

On 24 February 1897, the Queen Victoria appointed Rennell Rodd as Her Special Envoy to the Abyssinian King, Menelek. Rodd was instructed by the British Foreign Secretary Marquess of Salisbury to "assure King Menelek of the friendly feelings entertained towards him by Her Majesty's Government, and of their desire to maintain with him the most cordial relations. You must explain to him further, that the operations which the Egyptian Government have undertaken against the Khalifa are solely for the purpose of regaining provinces which were formally under Egyptian rule, and that there is no intention whatever of taking any steps which could be considered hostile to Abyssinia, or which would involve any encroachment on Abyssinian territory."

The British Foreign Secretary told Rodd, "You will remember that one of the principal objects of your mission is to come to arrangement with King

Menelek for a definite understanding as to the frontier between Abyssinia and the Protectorate and for friendly intercourse and relations between the British and Abyssinian authorities and the inhabitants on either side."

In his instruction to the Special Envoy, the British Foreign Secretary said:

"You are authorized, if absolutely necessary, to make concessions in regard to the frontiers of the Protectorate, as defined in the Protocol signed with Italy on the 5th May 1894, provided such concession are not of a nature to interfere with the main object for which the Protectorate was assumed, *viz.* the securing of adequate supplies for the support of Aden, and the administration of the Protectorate itself on a basis which shall as far as possible be at least self-supporting, and should afford some prospect of further development of the resources of the country."

In his report (N.35 NAI, Foreign Department, New Delhi) dated Harrar, 4 June 1897, Rodd said that the line proposed by Ras Makunan had started at Ellan, on the Zeyla-Harrar road. But the British team Captain Swayne and Captain Harrington recommended in preference the hill or mountain of Somadou somewhere near Bia Caboba. The line was then drawn to about half-way between the 9th and 10th parallel, and "the Ras had hoped when it came to defining it, I afterward discovered, to be able to deflect it towards Hargeisa."

According to Rodd, "The Ras had not the most elementary knowledge of geography or geographical

expressions, nor did he know the country in question sufficiently well to be able to identify the places on the line. He had collected a few merchants and Somalis, who frequent those parts to advise him, but owing to the difference of pronunciation many of the names on the maps, which are only locally known, could not be identified, and again the same names, or names very similar, repeatedly occur in different parts of the country."

"Now, Hargeisa or Shaikh Mutta (Madar) is in a way the sacred city of the Somalis who come to Berbera; and to hand over to the Abyssinians would mean to lose all influence and prestige with many of the tribes of great importance to us in view of the Aden food supply, which my instructions specially directed me to safeguard, whatever else might be abandoned. I therefore met him with simple *non possumus*, and over this point ventured to use language somewhat stronger than I should have been warranted in doing had I not felt that he would give way before a firm attitude", Rodd told his superiors in London.

Any how, at the end of all these so-called negotiations or discussion between the British Government's Mission led by Queen's Special Envoy Rennell Rodd and Menelek or Makunan, the conclusion was that Britain would handover the Somali territories to the cruel Abyssinians.

The only difficulty which arose during the discussions or negotiations was in what language the treaty should be written. The King told the British delegation that he had no English interpreter and

his Swiss Adviser had little knowledge of English. So they agreed to use Amharic, French and English.

The Treaty was signed by Rennell Rodd and Menelek on 14 May 1897. Rodd telegraphed from Aden to his government on 12th June 1897 saying that "Somali frontier delimitation completed today. He informed Menelek in a letter dated Cairo, 30 August 1897 that the treaty has been ratified by the Queen.

The notification issued by Political agent Sadler summed up the content of the treaty.

### **NOTIFICATION**

Be it known to you that by the Treaty between Great Britain and Ethiopia signed at Addis Ababa on the 14th May 1897, by the Emperor Menelek II and Her Majesty's Envoy, and which was ratified in December last, the frontiers of the British Protectorate on the Somali Coast have been recognized as follows:

Starting from the seashore opposite the well of Hadou, the boundary-line follows the caravan road by Abbasouen till Mount Somadou; from Mount Somadou to Mount Egu; from Mount Egu to Moga Medir; starting from Moga Medir it goes in a direct line to Eylinta Kaddo and Arran Arrhe on 44° up east of Greenwich and 9° north, and again in a direct line until 47° east and 8° north, thence along 8° north to 48° east, thence in a straight line to the inter-section of 9° north with 48° east, and thence along 49° east to the sea.

In the event of the occupation by Ethiopia of territories inhabited by tribes who accepted and



enjoyed British protection in the districts excluded by the present boundary-line from the limits of the British Protectorate, the Emperor Menelek II has engaged that such tribes shall be well treated and have orderly government.

The subjects of both Governments are at liberty to cross the frontier and graze their cattle, but these people, in every place where they go, will be subject to the jurisdiction of the Government in whose limits they may for the time be.

The wells which are in the neighbourhood of the boundary-line will remain open to both sides.

The subjects of, or persons protected by, each Government shall have full liberty to come and go and engage in commerce in the territories of the other, enjoying the protection of the Government within those jurisdiction they are; but it is forbidden for armed bands of either side to cross the frontier of the other on any pretext whatever without previous authorization from the competent authorities.

The caravan route between Zeyla and Harrar by way of Gildessa shall remain open throughout its whole extent to the commerce of both nations.

(Signed) J. HAYES SADLER, Political Agent and Consul, Somali Coast.

Somali Coast Political Agency and Consulate, Aden, March 12, 1898.

Sadler went to Zayla and Berbera to inform the people about the handing over of their territories to Abyssinia. He reported back: "The Akils listened attentively, and when I had concluded they agreed to accept the boundary and abide by the conditions

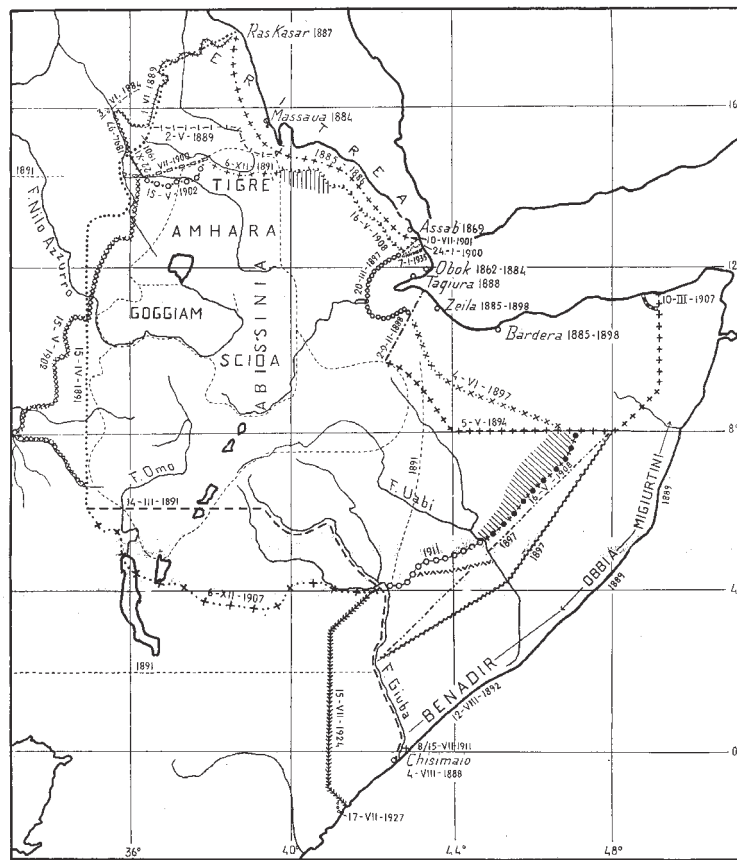
they had heard, saying that all would be well if the Abyssinians treated those who went over properly."

Prof. Ray Beachey, the author of *The Warrior Mullah* observed, "There was no attempt to consult Somali tribal elders in the matter. Even the doughty Swayne, despite his grave doubts as to the morality of it all, did not speak up on behalf of the Somalis." (*Warrior Mullah*", London, 1990).

According to Somali Government publication, "*A Portion of Somali Territory under Ethiopian Colonization*", June 1974, Britain unilaterally decided to hand over on 24 September 1948 and in 1955 the Haud and Reserved Area to Ethiopia.

That was how and when the territories known as the Ogaden and the Haud and Reserved Area were given to Abyssinia, now Ethiopia, by the British Government and that is why all the previous governments in Somalia, since independence in 1960, supported the right to self-determination and just struggle of the people for the liberation of the occupied territories. This is the main cause of the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia.

One can only hope that one day this root-cause of the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia would be removed after Ethiopia returns the Somali territories it has unjustly occupied. Solution of this thorny issue will create a climate of closer cooperation in the Horn of Africa. It will bring peace, stability and prosperity to long suffering people of the entire region.



The variations of frontier in East Africa.

## 9 Northern Frontier District (NFD)

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Although the British Government knew that NFD was a Somali territory, in order not to jeopardize the British interest in Kenya and for the due to the fear that if they gave the territory to Somalia they would put at risk the lives and the properties, farms etc of a large British population in Kenya it decided to give the territory to Kenya.

To show the world that justice was being done on the future of the territory, Britain concocted a sort of referendum supervised by a Commission composed of two members: a Nigerian Judge, G.C.M. Onyuke and a Canadian Major General, M.P. Bogert. The Commission toured the territory and held extensive talks with the population of the region from 22 October to 26 November 1962. The Commission finally submitted a 34-page-Report entitled "*Kenya-Report of the Northern Frontier District*" to Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, then he presented it to the British House of Commons in December 1962.

In his book "*The Modern History of Somaliland - 1965*", Prof. I.M. Lewis, an Anthropologist and a well known expert on Somali Affairs, commenting on the Report said, "The Commission found that the Somalis, who they estimated made up 62 per cent of the NFD's population, 'almost unanimously'

favoured secession from Kenya with the object of ultimately joining the Somali Republic."

Lewis added: "At last, in March 1963, it fell to Mr. Duncan Sandys, the new British Colonial Secretary, to announce the Government's decision. To the satisfaction of Nairobi and Addis Ababa governments, but to the chagrin of the Somalis, this was that the NFD was to be brought into Kenya's regional constitution. A new, predominantly Somali Northern-Eastern Region was to be created in which Somalis would enjoy the same degree of local autonomy as had already been accorded elsewhere in Kenya's other six Regions."

The University of Dar-Es-Salaam in its publication a "*Case Studies in African Diplomacy, N. II 'Ethiopia-Somalia-Kenya Dispute, 1960-67'*, OUP, 1969, quoted *The Observer* (London) as saying:

"By every criterion, the Kenya Somalis have a right to choose their own future. They differ from other Kenyans not just tribally but in almost every way ... A better solution would be for Britain to refer the matter to the United Nations."

Angered by the British decision, the then Somali Prime Minister, late Abdirashid Ali Shermarke tabled a motion in the Parliament calling for breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain in protest against its move over the Northern Frontier District (NFD). On 14 March 1963, Somalia severed diplomatic ties with the United Kingdom.

The relations with Britain were resumed following the joint Declaration reached by Kenya and Somalia

during the Fourth Ordinary Meeting of the African Heads of State and Government held in Kinshasa, Congo, from 11 to 14 September 1967 through the Good Offices of the President of Zambia and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the President of Kenya and the Prime Minister of Somalia on 28 October 1967 at Arusha, Tanzania to restore and normalize the two countries' relations. The territory lost to Kenya was not mentioned.

The Somali Government morally and materially supported the just struggle of the people of the Northern Frontier District, which the Kenyan Government called "*Shifita*" that included press and radio propaganda. Forty years later, in 2004, declassified documents of the Government of Kenya, published by *Sunday Standard* (Nairobi) on 25 January 2004, revealed that the Kenyan Government believed that,

"The *Shifita* menace would not be eradicated without a multi-million shilling propaganda war waged in North Eastern Province.

"But even as the broadcasting equipment and station was being set up the top military brass and intelligence officers knew one thing. They were fighting a guerrilla war in a terrain they hardly knew about.

"Inside intelligence circles, Radio Mogadishu was worrying the Kenyatta government more than the *Shifita*.

"In public Kenyatta was to maintain a hard-line

stance against the *Shifto* and on October 20, 1965, as he drove to Kamukunji Stadium for the first Kenyatta Day, then organized by Kanu, he told the cheering crowd that Kenya had "sufficient forces to deal firmly with any situation." "It was a lie."

Since the signing of the Arusha Memorandum, the Somali Government left the people of the Northern Frontier District at the mercy of the Kenyan Government. Although it was said that it would enjoy equal benefit with other regions. However, the Northern Frontier District is treated even today as an alien territory and the Kenyan Government considers it unwise to develop it because in its heart it does not believe that the territory belongs to it.

## 10 | Socotra and Dependencies

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The Island of Socotra lies 148 miles east of Cape Guardafui (the most easterly point of the mainland of Africa) and directly therefore, in the route of ships from the Red Sea to India. "SOKOTRA is the most easterly, and by far the largest of a group of four islands under the British protection which lie in the Indian Ocean to the north-east of Cape Guardafui. These islands command the ocean trade-route from the Suez Canal to the East and to Australasia. Of the other three islands off Cape Guardafui Abd el-Kuri, the most westerly, is about 20 miles long and 3 ½ miles wide at its widest part, while the other two, known as the Brothers (Darzi and Samneh), are respectively 3 miles and 6 ½ miles in length and 1 mile and 3 miles in width. (Phil Robinson, *Cyprus and Socotra*, London: 1878-Robinson's book was prepared under the direction of Historical Section of the British Foreign Office).

A journalist, Irena Knehtl regular contributor to Yemen Times newspaper in Yemen describes the geographical position of Socotra and the dependencies in the website Buzzle.com as follows:

"Positioned near the southern gateway to the Red Sea, already close to the Somali coast, lies the island of Socotra. It stands there as the guardian of



the African Horn and offers peace and tranquility. Known since ancient times as "The Island of Waiting" for better sailing conditions, a transshipment center for goods, it connected ports of the Persian Gulf with East Africa. The island lays on the route for ships heading towards Aden from East Africa and India.

"Socotra is the largest in a small archipelago of four Islands which include the Brothers Samhah and Drasa and Abd Al Kuri. Lying as it does in the Indian Ocean, on a mid-oceanic volcanic ridge 500 km south east of Mukalla, and 240 km from the coast of Somalia. It is roughly 130 km long and 40 km wide, and [has] an area of 3650 square kilometers. Its name may have been derived from Arabic "Suqs Outra", meaning the market of dragon's blood—a reference to the resin of its most famous tree species, or perhaps from a Sanskrit term for the "Abode of the blest".

"But it is the natural history of Socotra that is likely one of the most fascinating in the world. Their unique character is related to its geological history. It is believed that the separation of Socotra from the African mainland occurred in the middle of the Pliocene era (1.81 million years ago). The high degree of endemism in the flora and fauna is the result of this long isolation from the mainland of Africa. Two thousand years after Socotra is still listed among least explored parts of the world."

In 1886, Lieutenant-Colonel Kitchener prepared a note on the subject of the lines of British

communication in the Indian Ocean. On Socotra, he said, "One of the most important points on our communications with our Australian colonies is Socotra and the adjacent island of Abd-el-Kuri. He went on: "Our present hold on Socotra is very fragile "A treaty exists with the supposed Sultan, who lives on the mainland, and never visits the island, specifying that he will not part with his rights to any foreign power other than England. Our flag was at one time flying on the island, but was hauled down, thereby showing that we gave up any pretensions to the possession of the island. From all that is known there appear to be no laws, nor any recognized authority, and no form of existing government in Socotra ... It would not, therefore, be very difficult for any foreign power to deny the authority of the chief recognized by us, and to acquire rights under other treaties with unknown chiefs in the island." Kitchener contented, "Owing to the recent development of colonial enterprise by Germany on the East Coast of Africa, the possession of Socotra becomes to them a matter of considerable importance. Attempts have lately been made by Germany to acquire some position on the Somali coast, and as these attempts fail, as they apparently have done up to the present, Germany will see the necessity of taking a commanding position on the trade route to their new colonial possessions thus invitingly left open."

"Should such a case arise, it is most unlikely that we should fight for or even risk war for the

possession of Socotra, and yet, in foreign hands, the island becomes a source of considerable danger to our colonial development, and England would be rightly accused by the colonies if she allows such a position to fall through negligence into other hands." Kitchener concluded by pleading that, "The British flag be again hoisted on Socotra and the adjacent islands."

Kitchener's very critical statement angered the Government of Aden. In his memo, Schneider, the then Political Resident at Aden responded by saying, "The erroneous idea on the subject entertained by Lieutenant Colonel Kitchener may have been derived from a historical sketch published by Phil Robinson in the year 1878, where it is mentioned, "the island of Socotra upon which the British flag has recently been hoisted lies 148 miles east of Cape Guardafui (the most easterly point of the mainland of Africa)". As Schneider does not say where he believes Socotra and dependencies lie, it should be presumed that Kitchener was right.

According to local belief, the Meheri Somalis, who are the original inhabitants of the islands of Socotra and its dependencies, preferred to live on the mainland, Hafun and other places on the Cape Guardafui, for the reason that the sand of the Islands was harmful to the eyes or caused eye disease. A good number of them also reside in Sallala, the Sultanate of Oman.

Presently in the Somali Federal Parliament, elected on 22 August 2004, the Meheri tribe is

represented by Ambassador Mohamud Mohamed Hassan, Dr. Farah Hassan Mohamed and Abdullahi Abukar Jama.

Since the Somalis had no doubt on the ownership of these islands, they wrongly presumed that no one else could claim them. The 20th century politicians naively took it for granted that the British would not hand over the islands to a third country, let alone to a country on a different continent.

The Somalis are the only people who have suffered most in the eastern Africa and the Red Sea at the hands of the colonial powers. Its territory has been dismembered and unjustly distributed to other countries in the region and beyond, just like piece of cake. In 1897, Britain gave the Somali territory of Ogaden to Abyssinia; in 1948 and 1954 it handed over parts of the Haud and Reserved Area. In 1963, after independence of Somalia, it gave the Somali territory of NFD (Northern Frontier District) to Kenya and finally in 1967 the Island of Socotra and its dependencies to the then South Yemen.

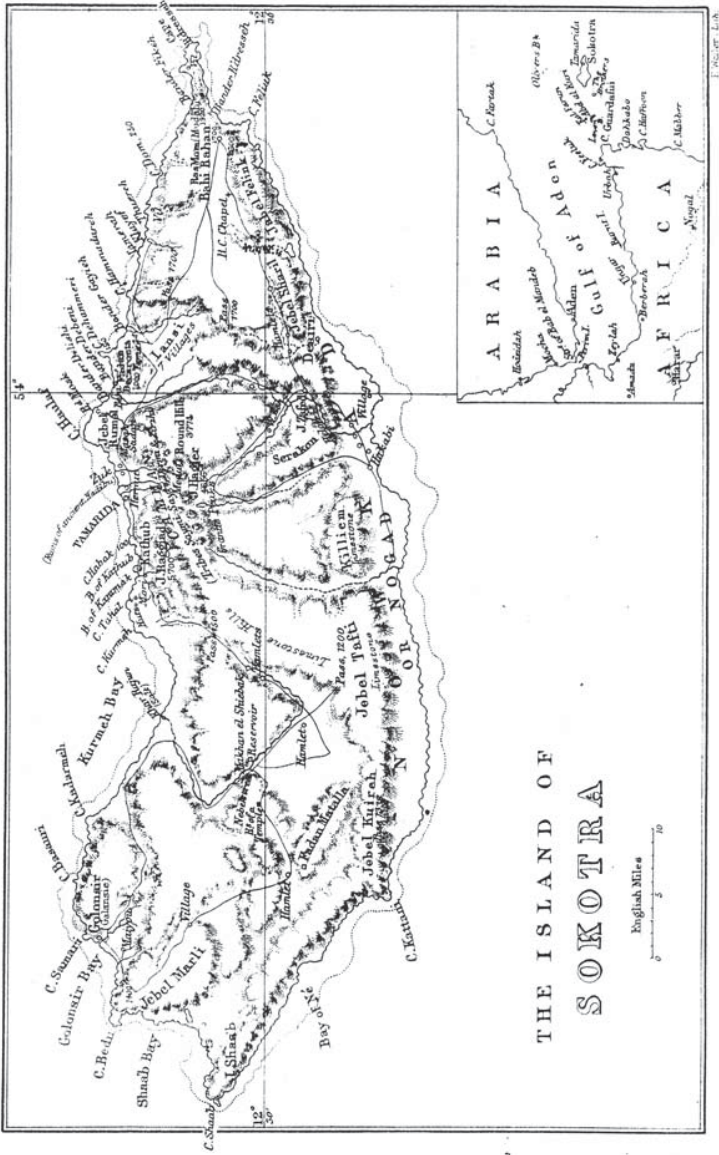
After the World War II, when Britain also took over the southern region i.e. the Italian Somaliland, it seemed to be reversing its policy. The Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, Ernst Bevin said in the British House of Commons on 4 June 1946 that, "In the latter part of the last century, the Horn of Africa was divided between Great Britain, France and Italy and about time we occupied our part, the Ethiopians occupied an inland area which is the grazing ground for nearly half the nomads of British Somaliland for

six months of the year. Similarly, the nomads of Italian Somaliland must cross the existing frontiers in search of grass. In all innocence, therefore, we proposed that the British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and the adjacent part of Ethiopia, if Ethiopia agreed, should be lumped together as a trust territory..." Bevin suggested, "That Great Britain should be made the administering authority," and said: "I hope the deputies at the Paris Conference will now consider a greater Somaliland more objectively." However, when Paris Conference took place in the Summer 1946, probably, due to pressure from other quarters, he dropped, at least for the Colonial Office proposal for a United Somalia.<sup>1</sup>

The British decision of not giving the Island of Socotra to Somalia after its independence in 1960 and handing it over to South Yemen in 1967 following the withdrawal of the British from Yemen had a rather sinister motive. As Somalia was already having conflicts with its neighbours, Ethiopia and Kenya, over territories that Britain unjustly gave to the two countries, the reason for giving Socotra to Yemen must have been to create for Somalia another area of conflict with Yemen.

Since independence in 1960, Somalia has maintained silence over the Island of Socotra and its dependencies in the hope that when the time comes the question of sovereignty over the islands could be discussed in brotherly and peaceful manner between the two countries.

1. Alan Bullock, *"Ernest Bevin-Foreign Secretary"*, London: 1983.



# 1 | War of Liberation

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The Somalis rebelled On 25 November 1896 against the Italian colonialism and at Lafole (20 Km from Mogadishu) massacred the Italian Commissioner Cecchi, ten officers, and five civilians as well as seventy *Askaris* (local Somali soldiers). Following the death of Cecchi, Commander Dulio took over the responsibility on behalf of the Italian Government and from then onwards the Italians started military operation in Benadir.

The popular uprising in the interior of Benadir led to the revolt of the Bimal. There were many clashes between the tribes and the *Askaris* of the Italian administration and the most serious battles took place in Merca, Benzale, Addadey, Gelib and Mellet. The most important battle for the Italians was at Danane which led to the temporarily suspension of the aggressiveness of those whom the Italians called "the rebels"

On 12 February 1897, at 14:00 hours local time, the Colonial Resident of the town of Merca, Trevis was stabbed to death by a Somali, who posed himself as a beggar. This was not an impromptu and impulsive act but a well-planned attack on the colonial Chief.

The Italian administrator in Merca, Trevis used to sit on a chair and carried by his attendants on

their shoulders to his office and back.

An Italian officer Difatti L'Aghida, who witnessed the incident at Merca described the event in these words:

"I was at the Custom when I saw Mr. Trevis getting down. I reached him when he just jumped down from the seat on which he was carried by porters. I shook his hand and accompanied him, placing myself on his left side. I could not see the killer before he hit Trevis; as soon as I realized, I pulled out my sword and hit the attacker, first on the head and then on the neck, forcing him immediately to fall down. Signor Trevis was carried by six Suwahili *Askaris*, two in front, and four in the back. The Suwahili (guards) thought that the man, who was crouching on the beach, was a beggar (*meskin*) who wanted to kiss the Resident's hand, and ask for alms. So they let him move closer."

The anti-colonial activities increased in Merca as more and more people, particularly religious, preached opposition to the colonial government. In Mogadishu people refused to join the colonial military service.

In the Northern Region, when the British authorities signed Protectorate Treaties with different tribes in 1884 and 1886, they were not occupying the territory just for the supply of meat and other provisions to their garrison at Aden, but also to interfere in the religious affairs of the country.

The British were working behind the back of the Somalis and planning to introduce a non-Islamic



religion in the country. As they had not till then officially established themselves in the country, the British sent their boats from their base in Aden and used Somalis to report to them about the situation in the country and the movements of other foreign powers which were having their eyes on Somalia.

Thirteen years after the signing of the Protectorate Treaties between the Somali tribes and the British government, Sayyid Mohamed Abdullah Hassan started his struggle against the British occupation.

In the middle of 1899, when the British Consul-General, Hayes Sadler returned from Zaila to Berbera, he found conflicting reports in connection with the activities of a Mullah, by the name of Haji Mohamed Abdullah, in the Dhulbahante country. The reports indicated that Mohamed Abdullah was collecting arms and men with the goal of establishing his authority over the southeastern part of the British Protectorate. The Consul-General wrote to his government that "it was his ultimate object, (that) should he find himself strong enough, to head a religious expedition against the Abyssinians."

In a long report on 12 April 1899, Sadler, said:

"This Haji Muhammad Abdullah belongs to the Habr Suleiman Ogaden tribe; he married into the Dolbahanta Aligherry, amongst whom he now lives. His place of residence is Kob Fardod, a village inhabited by Mullahs, a day's march east of Kerit, a distance about 70 miles from Berbera. He is a man in the prime of life, and in person is described as

dark-coloured, tall, and thin, with a small goat's beard. He has made several pilgrimages to Mecca during the last three years. At Mecca, he attached himself to the sect of Mohammad Salih, whose deputy he claims to be in Somaliland.

"The sect was established in Berbera about twelve years ago. It preaches more regularly in the hour of prayer, stricter attention to the forms of religion, and the interdiction of *Kat*—a leaf the Arabs and coast Somalis are much addicted to chewing on account of its strengthening and intoxicating properties. This teaching has not found much favour with the people of the town. It has been known for some time that the Haji had acquired considerable influence over the Habr Toljaala and Dolbahanta tribes inhabiting the remoter parts of the Protectorate, but hitherto it had always been thought that this influence had been exerted for good; he settled disputes amongst the tribes in his vicinity, kept them from raiding each other, and was generally thought to be on the side of law and order. Several communications had passed between him, and the Vice-Consul (Berbera), all written in proper terms, and three months ago he sent a prisoner into Berbera, against whom a complaint had been laid of robbery and violence in the interior.

"Inquiries were at once set on foot to ascertain what the rumours and reports concerning this individual meant, on what they were founded, and what his possible intentions might be. The result and his own communications made within the last

few days to the Vice-Consul, leave no room to doubt but that he is now organizing a religious movement antagonistic to the Administration.

"While the inquiries were proceeding", the British Consul told his government, "news was received that a man in the employ of Captain Cox, who was collecting natural history specimens in the interior, had ran away with a rifle supplied to him for escort purpose. There was reason to believe that this man had taken the rifle to Haji Muhammad Abdullah, and from information since received there can be little doubt but that this was so. This seemed a convenient opportunity of ascertaining the Mullah's attitude, and by my direction, Lieutenant Cordeaux wrote to him directing him to return the rifle to Berbera if it was with him. This letter was dispatched on the 29th ultimo, and the reply was received on the evening of 8th instant."

The British Vice Consul H.E.S. Cordeaux alleged that a rifle had been stolen by a person named Duwaleh Hirsi, and he wanted the rifle to be restored. In this connection he wrote to Sayyid Mahammad on 29 March 1899: "It has been reported to us that a man, by the name of Duwaleh Hirsi, in the employ of Captain Cox, has run away with a rifle which he has stolen from that gentleman, and that he has taken the rifle to you.

"We therefore write this letter to inform you that if the rifle is with you it must be sent into Berbera immediately.

Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan replied:

"THERE is no God, but God, Muhammad is the prophet of God.

"Oh man! I have not stolen anything from thee nor from any one else. Seek thy object from him who has stolen of thee, and serve whom thou pleaseth".

(The above letter was written in Arabic on the back of Cordeaux's letter)

He also wrote following letters to the British officials:

"This letter is from him who says, "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God. I reply in this letter to the officers of Government. First, two letters have been received from you; we have read them and understood their contents. The one brought by the *Ascar* was only a request for assistance. The second contained expressions which are the reverse of good. Both came from you, and we see they are signed by you. We were surprised, and say, 'what is this with such a one'; but I do not assist any but my friends, and do not render justice to one who denies me justice, and I do not make brotherhood with one who makes my ties of brotherhood void, and I do not incline towards one who destroyed my hopes, and I do not care for one who undoes me, and I do not have regard for one who ignores my position, and I do not give my friendship to my opponent; who has decreed that I should be profuse, and that he should hoard; that I should be lenient when he is harsh; and that I should melt when he freezes? No, by God! But we will be

alike in speech to the weight of a grain, and alike in deeds as one shoe is like its fellow. How can justice be attracted by oppression; when does the sun shine through a mist; and what free man would agree to this?

"Further, we inform you, oh, man, do not ride two horses at the same time; you are like one possessed of two feet, one of which is sound and the other has been struck by the times and halts.

"We also inform you that our history commences from 131 years after the Hijira of our prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, &c, and when our religion became weak, after it had been powerful and great, we restored it by redressing grievances, by promoting peace, and by stopping back-biting and enmity.

"And when our rule is such, then who is in the wrong? What Mahammedan will deny the restitution of the faith, and to what heretic is it allowable to object to this? This, and salaam.

(Undated and unsigned)

After being accused of harbouring the person who allegedly stole the rifle, Sayyid Mohammad retaliated by accusing the British of holding on to his camels which had been lost.

"Haji Muhammad Abdullah to the Officers of Government

"I have informed you before this of the camels I lost. Some of them have not been returned, and I am in want of them. I do not think you have returned them. This and salaam.

"Also, oh Sirkar, we have returned whence we came to our country according your order. God is God. We wish from you that you send us the remaining camels".

(Unsigned and undated)

Raising his resistance to much higher level of revolt, he told the British that if they would leave the country, the country would not suffer. The letter is an eloquent testimony of his patriotism and hatred against exploitation of his country. He wrote:

Haji Muhammad Abdullah to the Vice-Consul, Berbera.

"Praise be to God in all matters, and the blessing of God on our Prophet and his descendants, who are the best of men. This letter is sent by all the Dervishes, the Amir and all the Dolbahanta to the Ruler of Berbera. We say that we complain against you and against your subjects.

"Our camels are oppressed by you. We assist your *Biladiyahs*, and turn away those who backbite you; but you do not guard our reputation, and do not turn away those who backbite us. We inform you that there is peace in all the country; there is no fear.

"Secondly, I ask you, by God, by your Prophet, by your religion, and by your Church, do not create a disturbance in the country, do not ruin the country, for there is no harm on us if we leave your country, and drink our own milk, and eat our own meat. I ask you, by God, by your Prophet, by your religion, and by your Church do not create disturbance in

the country; for if you oppress us, beat our people, take our money, and imprison our people, we will leave coming to your country, and the country will be ruined. We are a Government; we have a Sultan, an Amir, and Chiefs, and subjects. And how much of wisdom and forethought have we?

"This is what we have written, and salaam"

The letters sent by Sayyid Muhammad to the British colonial administration in the Protectorate were always frank and defiant. He spoke with confidence and to the point. The British, of course, could not swallow, such behaviour from someone they considered their subject. Angered by the tone of his letters, the British Consul-General used only to subservience and submission, wrote the following:

"Consul-General Sadler to Haji Muhammad Abdullah

Berbera, May 4, 1899

"You have written several improper letters to the Vice-Consul, Berbera, which (have) thrown doubt on your good intentions.

"Further, reports have reached me that you are collecting men and fire-arms, and interfering in the affairs of the tribes.

"Know that no one but servants of the Government are permitted to possess fire-arms in the Protectorate, and that it is the business of a Mullah to engage himself in religious matter, and not to interfere with the affairs of the country.

"If, therefore, as you say, you wish for peace in the country, cease from these matters, and salaam".

The British officials used every means to find information about the movement and the strength of the Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, including making use of the services of local people. The Vice Consul Cordeaux informed on 10 April 1899 that one Ahmed Adan, who delivered his letter to Mahammad Abdallah reported back as follows:

"About ten days ago, on Thursday night, I left Berbera with a letter for Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. Travelling by Burao and Bur, I reached Wadamago on the fourth day after leaving Berbera. The first thing I saw was a number of people sitting outside the Tarika compound. As I approached, two men, who afterwards proved to be the Sheikh and one Abdi Awaleh, got up and came towards me. I went on and handed the letter to the Sheikh in person. A number of the people, mostly Mullah, then crowded round us, and the Sheikh drove them off with his whip. He and Abdi Awaleh then took me aside, and the Sheikh read the letter. He said to me, "What is this about the rifle?" I replied that I knew nothing about the contents of the letter. He said, "How should I know about the rifle?" "Why has the Sirkar written to me about it?"

There is no mention of the man's name or tribe in the letter, so what can I do? He then told a bystander, a Mullah, to take me to his (the Sheikh's) house. One of his wives and his mother lived there. I was given food, and slept in that house all the time. I was at Wadamago. There was no restraint put upon me. I was out most of the day looking



after my camel. On the third day, the Mullah sent for me. I had seen him before; he often used to come into the house. I went to him, and he said he would give me his reply to the letter which had been brought by a Somali. He asked me about it, but I told him I knew nothing about it, and asked him who had brought it. He said, "A Somali". A man named Salan had come in that day. I thought that he must have brought the letter. He then gave me a letter. It was written on the back of the letter I had brought him. I saw the Government stamp on it. He (the Sheikh) said, "This is the reply to your letter. I will give you the answer to the other letter tomorrow." He said that the second letter contained "bad words". Next morning he gave me two letters, and I then went away, and got into Berbera on Saturday night.

"I knew many of the people there—some of them were relations of mine. My brother-in-law, Dualeh Aoreb, was there. I asked them if they had any rifles, they said they at first had only six, but had just received fifty-five from Hafoon. I saw two or three of the new lot; they are Martins (new). They told me they had one or two "14-shot rifles." I saw the Mullahs walking about with Sniders. The Shaikh himself and some of his Mullahs used to practice daily shooting at a target; they put up a shield against a tree. I used to talk with people every day. We talked about many things, some of the words they said were good, and others were bad. They called me *Kafir*, and laughed at my uniform, saying

that I smelt, and asking me why I wore Sircars clothes. There were hundreds of people there, some from every tribe, Dolbahanta, Habr Toljaala, and Habr Yunnis. I saw one or two pistols; I did not ask about ammunition and did not see any. I saw an old man named Firin Goleh there. He is a Musa Ismail Jungly Akil; he came down to complain about a horse which the Mullah had taken from him; he did not get it back, and when the Mullah said he was going away to attack Mahmood Garad Berkal, he said to some people, "I hope God will not bring him (meaning the Sheikh) back to this place." The Sheikh heard of this and sent for Firmin, and the men who had heard him say this. When the Mullahs heard what the old man had said, they set upon the old man and beat him with shoes and whips, so that he became unconscious. They then threw some water over him, and lifted him up and put him under a tree. This was on the day I left, and he was lying under the tree when I came away.

Ahmed Adan concluded that he had no more information of any kind to give, and had not concealed anything.

However, Cordeaux believed that Ahmed Adan knew more than what he said in his statement. Cordeaux wrote that "this man knows more [than] he has said, and that probably he was sworn and threatened not to give information. He had a scared look on him when he returned."

Another local employee Deria Magan, reported:  
"I left Berbera on the 20th April, and went via

the Huduf Pass to Ber, and thence on about two days' journey to Ballihardli, about a day and-a-half distance this side of Kerrit.

"Two days' journey from Berbera I heard that the Mullah had collected 3,500 foot and horsemen on hearing that an expedition was being sent against him. This was true; I heard it confirmed as I went along. They were all Dolbahanta men. They remained with the Mullah for two days, consuming a quantity of provisions; then as the report of an expedition against the Mullah turned out to be false, they were dismissed. Some of the Rer Yusuf Habr Toljaala were going to and from Kob Fardod, but the tribe generally is seceding from him.

"From all the information I could gather, it is certain that the Mullah has about 52 rifles with him, of which 30 Martini-Henrys, with about 200 rounds per rifle, reached him about a month ago from the Mijjertein of Bunder Kasim, on the north coast near the boundary between the Mijjertein and the Warsangli. He sent his people there to get the rifles. He also wrote letters to the Mijjertein and Warsangli saying they had a quantity of arms, and asking them to send men to him. They replied that they had their own affairs to attend to, and could not go to him."

Whether true or just to please his masters, Deria Magan also told that as he went along he did not find feeling of hostility to the British *Sirkar*. He added "the people obey the Mullah because they fear him." To make his report sound authentic, he told that

"the people told him openly what they thought."

After a few days Sadler in a confidential letter to the Foreign Office, on 4 May, 1899, wrote that the Mullah pretended "to speak in the name of the Dervishes, their Amir (himself), and the Dolbahanta tribes. This letter shows his object is to establish himself as the Ruler of the Dulbahanta, and it has a Mahdist look. Reports had reached me that he might declare [himself] a Mahdi should he find himself strong enough to do so, but the general opinion is that he will lose his influence before matters get to that stage. In the Berbera mosque the Mullahs of the powerful Kadiriyah sect, which is followed by the Habr Awal and Habr Garhajis tribes, have begun to preach against the Mullah as an imposter."

It was difficult for the British officials to get accurate information regarding Sayyid Mahammad's activities and his future plans because of the distance involved. And the people with him would not give any information to the British. But despite these difficulties, it was absolutely essential for the British to collect information about him. As the Somali leader could acquire arms and ammunition only from outside the country, they spied on the Somalis who went to the neighbouring countries. The British were careful to conceal their decision to make an assessment of how much support the Somali leader had among the tribes. They wanted to be ready for war if it became necessary. The British Consul-General Sadler wrote:

"The Mullah has abandoned his former practice

of merely redressing grievances, and has commenced to proclaim himself a power in the land. He forces all within his reach to join his sect, and threatens expeditions against Dolbahanta tribe who hold aloof. He "has some sixty modern rifles, which he has obtained from the Mijjertein of either Ras Hafoon or Obbia, and it is said that he is expecting more from the same quarter. It is very doubtful if he has ammunition in any quantity. So far as is known he has some 3,000 men."

"It has been known for a long time that I purpose going out on tour this hot season, and it could easily be given out that I am touring in the eastern portion of the Protectorate, to meet the people and inspect the country, and that I am taking a large escort than usual as the country is little known to us. I would acquire information as to the location, strength and attitude of the tribes as I went along, and if I found I could deal with this Mullah I would do so.

"If on the other hand, I found him surrounded by a large force of horse and foot with which I could not cope, I should have to leave him alone for the time. Should matters so turn out we should not have struck at the root of the difficulty, but we would, at any rate, have shown our presence in that part of the country, demonstrated to the tribes that we are not indifferent to its affairs, and acquired reliable information as to the attitude of the tribe, which it is most difficult to do here at this distance off. I am, however, hopeful that my presence in the

neighbourhood, accompanied by such an escort, will change the aspect of the affairs in this remote portion of the Protectorate, unless the movement has wider scope than I am yet aware of.

"The great difficulty of a move direct on Kob Fardod, besides the present large following of the Mullah, would be the badness of the water supply after leaving Ber. Both at Kerit and at Wadamago the water is foul, and would be dangerous for troops. A large transport would be necessary to carry water."

The Consul-General requested for the approval of his government of his suggestion to employ Indian troops and keep them in readiness. "I would like to ask that the General Commanding at Aden may be asked to hold the men in readiness, so that they may at once be available should circumstances require their employment some time in May. I shall, in the meantime, try other measures to detach the tribes from this Mullah's influence, but I am not sanguine that any measures will be effectual which are not backed up by a show of force."

Sadler said that the precise object of Sayyid's movement has not been ascertained, but added, "it is religious movement, and this is always a matter for concern in a Mahomedan country. I am, therefore, not sure what steps may eventually have to be taken to meet it". He asked his government to supply the Protectorate with two Maxim guns from home (UK), affirming, "They may not be procurable at Aden".

Sadler estimated the number of men the Sayyid

had and thought that after the rains fall in May the tribes who were with him would be moving to the Haud and he will be left with a comparatively small following. "This is the time I should chose for the expedition", he told London. "No opposition would be met with unless operations were directly taken against this man, and as regards that I should have to be guided by the circumstances as I find them."

The Consul-General himself traveled through areas in the Protectorate where there was British influence. His objective was to try to confine the movement of Sayyid Mahammed to the eastern districts and to prevent its spreading. In one of his reports Sadler said, "I have ascertained that Sheikh Salih in Mecca, whose deputy in Somaliland Mullah Abdullah claims to be, is a native of the Soudan, of what part is not known. It is said that Sheikh Salih by no means approves of the Mullah's proceedings, and has written to him accordingly".

"I cannot say how far this may be true, but several reports to this effect have reached me. On the other hand, it may be that this movement has been fomented from Mecca; there are, however, one or two reasons against such a supposition. Sheikh Salih's sect has been established in various localities in Somaliland for a number of years without any disturbances having arisen; and had been in touch with the Dervishes in the Soudan, which he left five-and-twenty years ago, and wished to create a diversion in this direction, it is probable that this movement would have declared itself earlier."

"At the bottom of all is the pernicious influence of this Mullah, who seeks to undermine our authority with the tribes, and impose his own, for what I cannot but consider political rather than religious motives". According to Sadler, Sayyid Muhammad was against not only the British but also the Abyssinians. He cited reports that "he (Sayyid Muhammad) wishes to lead an expedition against Abyssinian if he can get the strength and men; but this is absurd. He has no supplies or arrangements for water, and the tribes would not follow him."

"He is an Ogaden man himself, and is therefore imbued with hatred for the Abyssinians. He has no quarrel with the British *Sirkar*, and from all I gather wishes to be friendly with them. He would have gone to Mecca this year, but could not collect enough presents for his spiritual Head, the Sheikh Salih. He is going to Mecca, I hear, for the next pilgrimage."

The Consul continued to report on the movement of Sayyid Mahammad. From his camp, Oodweina, he wrote to the British Foreign Office: "All those who have been attracted to the Mullah call themselves Dervishes, and give out that they do not want the Government. They further designate those who do not join them as *Kaffirs*, which has naturally aroused the indignation of the rival religious sects. He also admitted, "The question of religion, so far as the tribes are concerned, has little to do with the present movement".

The British were worried that Haji Muhammad Abdullah was purchasing arms and ammunition from



abroad and some of it was coming through the Italian occupied territories. On 18 April 1899, the British Ambassador in Rome informed his government that on the basis of his representation the Italian Government agreed to give orders to their Consul-General in Zanzibar to stop the arms destined to Sayyid Muhammed. According to the Italian Foreign Ministry's note dated 17 April 1899, the British were assured by the Italian authorities of Benadir and the Commanders of the ships stationed in Somali colony that they have instructions from the Royal Government of Italy, and would "do their utmost to hinder as far as possible the traffic in arms along the Somali Coast."

In the meantime, the British were sending news home that Haji Mahamed Abdullah Hassan had no more than fifty rifles that he had received from Ras Hafoun and might obtain more arms from the Mijjertein and the Ogaden in small quantities. Sadler's report said: "There may be some truth in the reports which have been current that this movement is ultimately directed against the Abyssinians; the Mullah is himself an Ogaden man, others from the Ogaden are with him and the treatment the Ogaden tribes for years received at the hands of the Abyssinians would nourish a feeling of hatred against them. From native reports, too, I hear that some intimation of this kind has reached Harrar."

Major Polson Newman writing on the movement of Mahammad Abdulle said in his book *Ethiopian*

*Realities*,<sup>1</sup> that the rebellion of the "Mullah" occurred in 1899 and "he had penetrated as far as Harar before his followers were defeated at Jijiga. Acting in conjunction with the British, Ras Makonnen was finally able to overcome them and to restore order in the Ogaden."

Writing about the movement of Sayyid Mahamed Abdullah Hassan, D.J. Jardine said in his book *"The Mad Mullah of Somaliland"* (London 1923):

"He started a movement advocating the expulsion of the British infidel from his Mohammedan country. Then early in 1899, he perpetrated his first overt set of hostility to the British Government". He expressed his goals clearly in a letter to the British people (on 1 September 1899):

"I wish to rule my own country and protect my own religion. If you will, send me a letter saying whether there is to be peace or war. I intend to go from Burao to Berbera I warn you of this—I wish to fight with you. I like war, but you do not. God willing, I will take many rifles from you, but you will get no rifles or ammunition from me. I have no forts, no houses, no country. I have no cultivated fields, no silver, no gold for you to take. I have nothing. If the country were cultivated or contained houses or property, it would be worth your while to fight. The country is all jungle, and that is of no use to you. If you want wood and stone, you can get them in plenty. There are also many ant-heaps. The sun is

1. First published in Britain in 1936.

very hot. All you can get from me is war nothing else. I have met your men in battle, and have killed them. We are greatly pleased at this. Our men who have fallen in battle won paradise. God fights for us. We kill, and you kill. We fight by God's order. That is the truth. We ask for God's blessing. God is with me when I write this. If you wish for war, I am happy; and, if you wish for peace, I am content also. But if you wish for peace go away from country back to your own. If you wish for war, stay where you are. Hearken to my words. I wish to exchange a machine gun for ammunition. If you do not want it, I will sell it to some one else. Send a letter saying whether you desire war or peace".

The movement of Mohamed Abdullah Hassan showed no sign of fading away. On the contrary, it moved from strength to strength. The British Political Resident at Aden, H.S. Barnes warned his Government:

"From what I have learnt since I have been here, I do not think the Mullah can be disposed of by regular troops alone. However, whatever plan is adopted, the business is likely to be long and expensive. Personally, I should be inclined to begin by building a line of posts to protect our own tribes, keeping a small number of regulars and a much larger number of irregulars at each post. Then when we had secured our own country, the hunting of the Mullah might be resumed".

The war continued and the colonial power did everything it could, internally and externally to

oppose the liberation movement. It failed to bring the leader and his followers to their knees. As the situation on the ground was not in their favour, the British authorities tried to find alternative ways to stop the arms and ammunition coming to him from abroad. On the other hand, for the British all the routes were open to bring anything they thought was necessary to suppress the nationalist movement. They had Somali soldiers employed by them. Besides, they could bring men and material, not only from Britain, but also from their colonies in Africa and Asia.

The British actions were not limited only to prevent the Somali leader from obtaining arms and ammunition, but they also stopped foodstuff destined for him. On 18 March 1904, the Commander-in-Chief, East India Station, Rear-Admiral George Atkinson Willes, reported to the British Political Resident at Aden that "he found the dhow *Fath-al-Khayr* unloaded a supply of rice and dates for the Mullah".

The Political Resident reported the matter to his superiors in Bombay and admitted that there was no law or regulation under which the authorities at Aden could prevent exports to the Somali Coast, British, or Italian. But he also said, *"As far I can see, the only action which could be taken at Aden to prevent supplies of food being sent for the Mullah, would be to prohibit the export of any food grains or of dates, to any port of Somaliland, so long as the war continued. This does not, however, appear*

*to me to be practicable*". It meant that if they would not be able to win against the Sayyid and his followers, they were ready to starve them and the rest of the people to death.

## 12 | Treaty Between Sayyid Mahammed And Italy

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The Italian Ambassador in London went to the British Foreign office on 28 March 1905 and informed it that an agreement had been concluded at Illig on the 5th inst ant between *Cavaliere* Pestalozza and the Sheikh Muhammad-bin-Abdullah, with the object of establishing the latter on a tract of territory in the Italian Protectorate and of assuring his peaceful relations with the British authorities and neighbouring tribes. For Italy the agreement was signed by Cavaliere Pestalozza.

The Italians were playing a double game. On the one hand, they worked in their own interest and on the other, sided with the British against the Somalis,. But Mohammad Abdullah considered Pestalozza as someone whom he could trust. In 1904, he allowed Pestalozza to visit his camp at Illig who described his encounter with Somali leader as follows:

Pestalozza: After complete silence, the Mullah addressed us.

Sayyid Mahammed: You are the first European to have come amidst the Dervishes, what brings you here?

Pestalozza: As I have already written to you, we are coming here for the purpose of peace.

Sayyid Mahammed: You are Pestalozza?

Pestalozza: Yes. I am. As you are a person of law and observe the Holy Book, I believe, you will listen to me in the interest of all the Somalis.

Sayyid Mahammed: But are you coming on behalf of Englishmen?

Pestalozza: No, absolutely not. I am coming from the Italian Government.

Sayyid Mahammed: Do you have full power and authority to decide?

Pestalozza: No, I am a person who has the full trust of the Government of Italy but I can neither decide nor determine. I will convey what you think and if that will be approved by the Government, I will bring back the answers and the conclusions.

Sayyid Mahammed: Why do want peace and for whom do you want peace?

Pestalozza: For all the Somalis who since many years have suffered and particularly for the Mijerteyns who depend on us—but the peace cannot be sincere and long-lasting if it is not inclusive—it is not possible to close the windows and let the door open.

Sayyid Mahammed: Then do you want me to have peace also with the British?

Pestalozza: I want the good, and for this I have simply come to consult you in the interest of all the Somalis, whom you love as a sensible and inspired man. As this is a long matter, when we sit in your home we can talk more about it.

Sayyid Mahammed: You are right; you have seen

what splendid reception I have organized for you that no one else has ever been accorded so far. I assure you of full immunity, no harm will be done to you and we will soon discuss again.

In the long meeting that took place between them, they also discussed the bitter feelings towards the British, whom the Somali leader blamed for every wrong, thanking the Almighty "for having always defeated them."

The Italian Consul presented to the Sayyid the proposal for peace which included the following:

- (a) Comprehensive peace including the English, the Abyssinians, and their dependent tribes.
- (b) Freedom for the Mullah to settle in the fixed place from Ras Garad to Gabee (Black Bay) under the protection of the Italian flag, keeping for himself the Government of the interior tribes.
- (c) Prohibition of sale of arms and slaves.
- (d) Guarantee in money or with hostage of persons.
- (e) Suspension of hostilities to have time for obtaining consensus and observations of the Government to those clauses.

Sayyid Mahammed received the Italian Consul again on 17 October 1904, but this time without the ceremony with which he was received during his preceding visit. The former was not convinced that Pestalozza was not speaking also on behalf of the British. Pestalozza asked Sayyid Mahammed



whether he wanted his companions to testify that he was not coming on behalf of the British. Pestalozza's two companions, Sylos and Paladini, rushed to testify that what their Chief said was true. But the Italian envoy insisted the necessity of peace with all, including the British.

According to the first point of the peace proposal presented to the Sayyid by the Italian, it was clear that Italy was not only working for the British but also for the Abyssinians. When Sayyid Mahammed raised question on the point concerning "Prohibition of sale of arms..." (c) the Italian cleverly convinced the Somali leader that Italy would provide him with arms if necessity arose.

In the end Sayyid Mahammed Abdullah Hassan, agreed to sign a peace treaty with the Italian Consul Pestalozza on 5 March 1905. On 24 March, an accord was signed between the British Commissioner of Somaliland and a representative of the Sayyid Mahammed. It affirmed that peace had been established between the British Government and the Somali leader.

Signor Pestalozza said in one of his letters to his Government that the negotiation by the British to summon Sayyid Mohammad Abdullah Hassan to Berbera failed, because, according to Pestalozza, the Mullah's first condition was "prohibiting the Christian missions from giving shelter to the Somali children who were converted from Islamic faith. The denial of his request irritated Sayyid Mahammad and became the starting point of the Somali uprising

against the British.

The Italian Commissioner granted permission to three delegates of the Sayyid to travel to Aden. They were Abdullah Shahri, Malin Mahamed and Mohamed Adan. However, he told the British Residency at Aden, "I should be obliged if you could keep a watch on them-especially with reference to possible purchase of arms, but in view of peace negotiation with Mullah, it is important that their suspicions should not be aroused."

Despite the care to conceal his distrust, Sayyid had come to the conclusion that the Italians were also working for the British against him. Therefore, he had to prepare his movement for the final decisive war.

## B | Declaration of Jihad

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The British Political Resident at Aden sent on 18 August (1906) the following short message to his government:

"The latest rumour from Somaliland is that the Mullah has now definitely commenced preaching a *Jihad* against the British and means mischief."

There were large number of political activities in the territory in 1907. The British Official Major O'Neil met with several *Aqils* (elders of the clans) of different tribes discussing with them the general situation in the country. He reported: "Some expressed the opinion that the Mullah has become reckless with regards to keeping faith with us, and that he has nothing to fear from the British Government." O'Neil thought this was an exaggerated view and there was no immediate cause for anxiety. He believed that "Mullah has shown nothing but a desire to keep peace and it seemed unlikely that he would suddenly change his policy", or, as the British official put it, "even risk breaking present friendly relations."

The British imposed restrictions on Sayyid Mahammed but he managed to acquire arms and ammunition through his own representatives and foreign agents. On 17 August 1908, Captain

Mc-Conaghey, the British Political Agent and His Majesty's Consul at Maskat, reported that the Somalis visited different ports of the Sultanate of Maskat for the purchase of arms. He asked the Persian Gulf Political Resident what steps, if any, should be taken to prevent the Somalis from trading in the area. He said that in 1907, the number of rifles exported by the Somalis from Maskat was 450 together with about 50,000 rounds of ammunition. The British Consul said that 11 Somali boats visited Maskat. He observed that, "the Italian Government were also concerned by reason of facility with which the Mad Mullah may be able to provide himself afresh with arms from the Sultanate of Maskat and have already proposed the establishment of a Consulate at Maskat, which would, in every probability, only add to our troubles in this place." The British Agent in Maskat asked the Sultan of Oman to forbid the Omani nationals in the arms trade from selling any rifles or war store to Somalis. The fact that Sayyid Mahammed Abdullah Hassan was proposing to establish a Somali Consulate at Maskat, shows that he was not only fighting to rid the country of colonialism, but was also acting as a political leader of an independent state.

As the war continued on different fronts, the Dervishes of the Sayyid Mahammed dealt the biggest blow on the British colonial troops in the history of the liberation struggle. The nationalists attacked the enemy forces, which included Camel Corps, chanting *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Great, Allah is

Great). They attacked the colonial force in waves. They just went forward, despite the fierce fire from the opposite side. The nationalists believed in their just and legitimate cause for which they were waging war of liberation against the foreign occupiers. It was a Holy war, a *Jihad*.

Ray Beachey thus described the battle in his book "*The Warrior Mullah*" in which the British forces suffered one of their worst defeats. He wrote:

"A few excitable spirits among the Camel Corps, unable to stand the strain, darted forward in the interval between the waves of attack, and had to be rescued and brought back. Suddenly, caught unawares by a sharp change of Dervish tactics weakened the Camel Corps and were enveloped on their right flank. The result was disarray and panic. Some 25 of the Camel Corps fled, later to be dismissed with ignominy from the service. More serious, the Maxim gun, on which so much depended, was manhandled and scarcely brought into position before it was silenced by Dervish fire. Corfield, struggled manfully to unsnarl the feed back, and while doing so was shot through the head and killed instantly."

"The ace card, the Maxim, had gone. A last desperate stand was made by forming a small *zariba* with the heaped-up bodies of the dead ponies and camels. The Camel Corps would go down in a glorious defeat."

The severe defeat that the colonial power suffered at the hands of the Dervishes led by the

Great Hero, Sayyid Mahammed, forced the British colonial administration to call for immediate reinforcement. The British Political Resident at Aden sent a message on 12 August 1913, to the Political Department of the Colonial Government in Bombay:

“Acting Commissioner of Berbera sends message to (the) effect that he is proceeding to Burao to endeavour to relieve Camel Corps which has been mutilated” adding, “Officers Corfield killed, Dunn wounded. Whatever garrison there is in Berbera has left for Burao and two Double Companies of 18th Infantry are today embarking in hired steamer from Aden for Berbera. Had men of war Dalhousie been present valuable help might have been rendered.”

## 14 | Tragic End of a Hero

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The British Chief of the General Staff informed the General Officer Commanding, Aden Brigade on 30 April 1915 that the new Commissioner of Somaliland Geoffrey Francis Archer would arrive at Aden on 2 May 1915 for consultation with the Commanding Officer and Lieutenant-Colonel Cubitt. He told the Officers that the Colonial Office considered it inadvisable to take any action before the arrival of Mr. Archer. Archer was authorised to communicate with the Officer Commanding His Majesty's ship "Philomel" and "as regards these arrangements neither you nor Aden need take any action."

Colonel Cubitt was appointed as commander of the operations and the responsibility of the General Officer Commanding, Aden, was confined to placing the troops and other details authorized in accordance with the arrangements to be made in consultation with Mr. Archer.

The British were so cautious of the Dervishes that the Chief of the General Staff told the Officers that it was important to observe secrecy as regards the proposed operations in order to prevent them from anticipating the attack.

Colonel Cubitt estimated that the Somaliland

operations would last at least six weeks, "and that is impossible to make an advance inland from Bagdaria, the force should disembark at Berbera and move on its objective via Les Dureh, a march of over 200 miles, which will render it impossible to keep the movement secret."

After consulting Archer, the Political Resident at Aden sent a message on 3 May 1915, to the Secretary of State for India informing him that Archer required the following troops from Aden to complete his force:

- (a) One composite battalion of composite headquarters units, two companies 126th Infantry, four companies 109th Infantry,
- (b) Three officers for duty with Camel Corps. Two officers and one conductor for supply and transport work,
- (c) Half company 23rd Pioneers to provide explosives and road making parties,
- (d) One signaling officer and 13 signallers for improvised signaling unit,
- (e) One improvised section (of) Indian field ambulance to provide (for) 30 British, 1200 native,
- (f) Captain Gwyer, Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, Aden, as Staff Officer, Field Force,
- (g) Approximately 100 mules, accompanying above.

All these were required to fight against Sayyid Mahammed and his Dervish forces. It shows how



panicking the British were. Sayyid did not have as many men, arms and ammunition as the British had. What he and his followers had was faith and the support of those Somalis who believed in the just cause for which the Somali hero was fighting.

Although in January 1918, General Hoskins had visited Somaliland to report on the position there, but after nearly a year, the British Secretary of State sent a telegram on 13 January 1919 to the Viceroy (Army Department), that no decision regarding the operations has been arrived at. He also said that, "any request for reinforcements on the ground that military operations are impending is premature". However, the General was thinking of sending a large force against the Sayyid Muhammad's Dervishes. His plan included planes from the RAF (Royal Air Force) and 6 warships for coastal action and 3 battalions of the King's African Rifles, 2 Indian Infantry battalions and an Indian cavalry unit, a company of sappers and miners, 5 wireless sets with 200-miles radius and a general wireless set. There were to be 40 Ford vans for motor transport and ambulance work and a stationery hospital. There were to be 3.7-inch guns and 16 Hotchkiss guns. Most notable was the provision for an Aden-based fleet of four-engined Handley Page bombers. Finally, there would be 5 companies (900 mounted troops) of the Camel Corps.

On 28 November 1919, a letter was sent to the Under Secretary of State, India Office from the Colonial Office, Downing Street, London, signed by

H.J. Read appointing Geoffrey Francis Archer, C.M.G, who was Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief for the Somaliland Protectorate, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Protectorate with effect from 4th November 1919.

Frustrated by the iron will of the freedom fighters, and the defeat suffered in the war fronts on the ground, the colonial power embarked on a more sophisticated method of warfare. It decided to bomb the Somali warriors from the air. In September 1919, Britain created an air detachment, which had 12 DH9 bombers, two of which were modified to become air ambulances to be used for the evacuation of field casualties. Group Captain R.G. Gordon commanded it and the Chief of Staff was Wing Commander F.W. Bowhill.

Besides the Air detachment, a special formation known as "Z Force" was also established to be included in the already existing ground troops with reinforcements. At Berbera, the crated aircraft were unpacked and assembly commenced on 1 January 1920. Three aircraft had been air tested by 8 January and by the 20th a total of eight bombers were ready for operation including two ambulances DH9s, D3117 and H5551, the latter were fitted to take two patients at a time. All eight aircraft were flown up to Eil dur Elan on January 20 and on the following day, the first bombing raid was carried out by DH9s against Jid Ali and Medishi Fort.

According to the *Aircraft Illustrated Extra* magazine, the aircraft dropped bombs on the main

building of Medishi Fort and exploded in the very room occupied by the Sayyid Muhammed Abdullah Hassan, killing an aide standing next to him and burning the Somali leader's clothing.

Although the British claimed that it met with no opposition, one bomber was forced to land at Las Khorai, which they said was due to "engine trouble". Another aircraft DH9 was forced to land in wild scrubland. Its crew walked 12 miles to the coast where they were rescued by HMS *Odin* and were taken to Berbera safely. Clearly, the colonial power had the upper hand, as the Dervishes were only using rifles and were unable to purchase arms and ammunition from outside. Therefore, the Sayyid had no alternative, but to withdraw to the interior.

It could be true that the British bombers did not encounter any opposition, because the Dervishes were not prepared to counter bombs coming from the sky. When I visited the Royal Air Force Museum in London in 2000, I bought a copy of the magazine *De Havilland* (issue n. 1164, 1996 Squadron/Signal Publications).

I read the following paragraph written under the photo of the aircraft, *De Havilland D.H. 9*:

*"The last RAF D.H. to action were the twelve aircraft serving with "Z Force", a British unit operating with Camel Corps against the "Mad Mullah" in Somaliland for three weeks in January and February of 1920, bombing missions by D.H. 9s led directly to the Mullah's capture."*

This is not true because the British forces never

captured the Sayyid. For him and fellow Dervishes this was new type of warfare and he and his forces as well as his other followers were shocked by the noise of the flying machines. As the pressure became unbearable, the Somali hero and his forces had no choice but to withdraw to a safer place. Instead of reaching a safer place, they ended up in an enemy trap.

Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan and his heroic warriors the Dervishes waged the war of liberation for two decades against the mighty Britain and forces drawn from its colonies. Britain was unable to defeat the Somali hero in the ground warfare, despite his having lesser fire power than those of the occupation forces. It failed to bring him and his forces to their knees. Sayyid Muhammed withdrew his forces to the interior only when the British employed air power against the Somali liberation forces for the first time in Africa. They could neither kill nor capture him. The Sayyid and many of his Dervishes and other followers were starved to death by the Abyssinian who denied him food while in the Somali territory, Goanneh, Imi, under Abyssinian colonial rule.

To show that the Sayyid was never captured by the enemy as claimed by the British magazine *De Haviland*, I reproduce below a letter written by the British Diplomatic Mission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia which indicates that Sayyid Muhammed and his followers were starved to death.

AFRICA

CONFIDENTIAL

[A 561/561/60]

No. 1

Mr. C. Russell to the Marquess Curzon of  
Kedleston-(Received January 24,1922)

(No. 164)

My Lord, Addis Ababa, December 31, 1921.

I HAVE the honour to state the agent referred to  
in my dispatch No.137 of the 1st October has  
returned here, and reports as follows:-

Mohammed-bin-Abdullah Hassan, accompanied  
by his wives, brothers, and about 100 Somalis armed  
with rifles, arrived at Goanneh, near Imi, on the  
Webi Shebeli, early in October 1920. A fort was built  
by them with a wall 6 feet high and 4 feet thick,  
with two entrances. They made it as strong as  
possible, and cleared a space in front of the fort. As  
soon as news of the Mullah's presence reached  
Fitaurari Seyoum, who was in command of the  
Abyssinian garrison at Ginir, he sent one of his  
officers, Garazmatch Ayale, to find out who the  
invader was, and why he had entered Abyssinian  
territory. The Mullah received this messenger well.  
He said that he had been beaten in battle by the  
English, and had come to Abyssinia in search of  
protection. After two days Ayale returned to Ginir.  
He took with him as presents from the Mullah two  
rifles and a revolver for himself and two Lee-Metford  
rifles for the Fitaurari. Before leaving he undertook  
to send provisions to the Mullah. Fitaurari Seyoum  
reported the matter by telephone to Ras Taffari,

January 24

Section 1.

who gave orders not to attack the Mullah, but to keep him under observation, and prevent his escape. The promised provisions were not given, and the Mullah sent one of his brothers and a follower, Abdi Sheikh, to ask the Fitaaurari for food. The latter, acting on the orders of the Central Government, threw these envoys into chains. Sickness and famine fell on the Mullah's camp. In December he died; his death was caused by bleeding and vomiting blood. He was buried in a hut at Goanneh. In accordance with Moslem custom, a small oval mound was erected over his grave. The spot is not regarded as holy, nor is it a place of pilgrimage.

Many of his followers died at the same time of sickness and hunger. Among the survivors were Abdi Sheikh, Ussuf Sheikh, Sultan and Jama. Subsequently they were raided by men of the Karanle tribe, who looted what little property remained with them. A hundred and seventy rifles were found in the fort. These were appropriated by Fitaaurari Seyoum. There are still a few of the Mullah's kin and followers in the district. They eke out a precarious livelihood by begging.

(Copy sent to Berbera)

I have, &c.

CLAUD RUSSELL

That was, unfortunately, the end of the struggle and the life of a great hero who wanted to liberate his country from colonial domination. The Sayyid and his Dervish force fought for two decades one of the most ruthless colonial powers of the 20th century with courage and determination.

Prof. Said S. Samater, a Somali intellectual and historian, wrote: "The Sayyid is today a towering figure in the Somali eyes, the hero of Somali nationalism and one of their finest poets. If he failed in his objective of ridding his country of alien rule, his failures are regarded a 'failures of the tragic hero', at once sad and inspiring".



Taleh—The fort of the Somali hero Mohamed Abdulle Hassan.



The aircraft used by the British against the Somali hero Mohamed Abdulle Hassan in January and February 1920.





Mogadishu—The Monument of Mohamed Abdulle Hassan.



Mogadishu—Monument of Unknown Soldiers and behind it the old Parliament building.



Mogadishu—The Independence Memorial—Dhagax Tuur.

## 5 | Hope for Greater Somalia Killed

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Following the defeat of Italy in the World War II, Britain occupied the Italian Somaliland in 1943 and the majority of the Somali territories came under its rule. In 1946 the British government showed that it had a positive attitude towards uniting the Somali territories. Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin suggested that all the Somali territories be united and placed under a single administration: the British Administration. Bevin stated in the British House of Commons on 4 June 1946 "the British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the adjacent part of Ethiopia, if Ethiopia agreed, should be lumped together as a trust territory."

The British proposal was criticized by Russia. Bevin said: "But what attracted M. Molotov's criticism was, I am sure, that I suggested that Great Britain should be made the administering authority." Bevin asked "Was this unreasonable?" Justifying his proposal, Bevin said, "It is like the Englishman's desire to go into Scotland to get a decent living. We must consider it objectively. If the conference does not like our proposal, we will not be dogmatic about (it); we are prepared to see Italian Somaliland put under the United Nations trusteeship." Concluding his argument, he said, "I hope the deputies at the

Paris Conference will consider a greater Somaliland more objectively." However, according to Alan Bullock, when the Paris Conference was held in the Summer of 1946, probably, due to pressure from other quarters, Bevin dropped, at least for the time being the proposal for a united Somalia. (Alan Bullock, *"Ernest Bevin-Foreign Secretary"*, London 1983).

At the Paris Conference, the Italian delegation indirectly but clearly rejected what the British Foreign Secretary had said earlier about the fate of the Somali territories. The Italian Memorandum presented in May 1946, at the Conference stated:

"Italy considers the question of her four African territories with the same deep interest (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Eritrea, and Somalia).

Italian Somalia has nothing in common with British Somaliland.

- (a) British Somaliland is inhabited by nomad tribes of shepherds. Italian Somaliland is inhabited by an agricultural population;
- (b) British Somaliland is inhabited by tribes of pure Somali stock mixed with a few Arab immigrated from Yemen. Italian Somalia is inhabited by tribes of the most various origin (Somali mixed with Bantu negroes etc.).
- (c) The tribes of British Somaliland differ from the tribes of Italian Somalia also from the point of view of language; in Italian Somalia besides southern Somali also Bantu

languages such as Bravano, Bajiuni, etc. and dialects of other families are spoken.

- (d) The question of the grazing rights of some boundary tribes in British Somaliland, of which mention has been recently made, is a question of detail concerning the normal relation of good neighbourhood across the borders, and had already been settled by Anglo-Italian agreements.

Italian Somalia where 20,000 Italians are still living at this very moment, owes all its economic life to the activity of the Italians who by building dams and river installations have transformed Somalia into a country of remarkable agricultural production."

Italy denied the Somalis the right to be one nation on the ground of differences of dialects and the kind of people's activities. It ignored the stark reality that Italy itself was made of peoples with different characteristics. Italians in the North are taller than those in the South; have blonde hair, while in the south are short with dark hair. Even the southerners are of darker complexion than the northerners. As far as the language is concerned, the Italians speak different languages. In Sicily and Sardegna the people in the 'fifties learned Italian language only during the eighteen months of military service and in some other parts, they learned proper Italian only from the television.

As recently as 2004 while waiting for the Metro train in Rome, (the Underground), I heard a teen-

age girl telling her girl friend with pride, "Parlo Romano, Siciliano e Italiano" (I speak Roman, Sicilian, and Italian). She sounded like she spoke three different languages. If one language was to be the criterion for a nation then Italy too should not have been united due to differences in the dialects.

The Allied forces assisted by the democratic elements defeated Italy and the Fascist regime was overthrown on 25 July 1943. It surrendered unconditionally and signed the armistice on 3 and 29 September of the same year. As a defeated country, Italy should have been made to pay damages to its colonies instead of being rewarded with territories to administer.

At the end of the Paris Peace Conference a Peace Treaty was signed. Following is the Article regarding the territories which were under Italy including the Somali territory:

**SECTION IV  
ITALIAN COLONIES  
Article 23**

1. Italy renounces all right and title to the Italian territorial possessions in Africa, i.e. Libya, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.
2. Pending their final disposal, the said possessions shall continue under their present administration.
3. The final disposal of these possessions shall be determined jointly by the Governments of the Soviet Union, of the United Kingdom, of the United States of America, and of France within one year

from the coming into force of the present Treaty, in the manner laid down in the joint declaration of 10 February 1947 issued by the said Governments, which is reproduced in Annex XI.

The Treaty entered into force generally on 15 September 1947.

Annex XI provided, inter alia:

"If with respect to any of the territories the Four Powers are unable to agree upon the disposal within one year from the coming into force of the Treaty of Peace with Italy (15 September 1947), the matter shall be referred to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation, and the Four Powers agree to accept the recommendation and to take appropriate measures for giving effect to it."

The Paris Peace Conference killed the hope of the Somali people when it decided to discuss only the Italian Somalia and completely ignored other Somali territories which were languishing under colonial rule.

The Council of Ministers at the Paris Peace Conference was composed of the four Powers, United States, United Kingdom, U.S.S.R. and France and the final disposal of the territories were to be made by them. Two of the Powers, France and United Kingdom, were themselves colonizers of Somali territories. Since they were at the same time also the judges who were supposed to announce the final verdict, they managed to keep their possessions. As it did in the case of Italy, the Conference could also ask Ethiopia to relinquish its

colony of Western Somalia, generally known as the Ogaden, so that all the Somali territories could be united into a trust territory.



## 16 | Somalia: Victim of UN Decision

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The Somali issue moved from the Paris Peace Conference to the United Nations in New York. The Article 23 of the Peace Treaty that Italy had signed on 17 July 1946 provided that only Italian Somaliland would be discussed, while all other Somali territories would remain under colonial rules. Having suffered the harsh treatment at the hands of the colonial powers during the 19th century, Somalis hoped that with the birth of the United Nations in October 1945, their sufferings would end. But alas! The United Nations extended the sufferings of the Somalis in less than a year after the world body was founded.

Somalia was one of the worst cases of the UN decision on de-colonisation. It was the only country on the entire continent of Africa that was divided into five parts and the Island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean. These Somali territories were colonised by Abyssinia, Britain, France and Italy. At the Paris Conference the Somalis were denied the right to be one nation. While the conference decided that only the fate of the territory under Italy was to be taken for discussion, the other colonial powers were to hold on to their possession by default for no other reason except that they were on the winning side in the war.

During the debate at the United Nations in 1949, the representative of New Zealand was not convinced that adequate regard had been paid to the wishes of the inhabitants as the rest of the Somali territories under Abyssinia, Britain and France were left out. He went on to suggest that, "that no opportunity be lost in providing for the ultimate reunion of all Somalis under one administration." In the end, the United Nations ignored the views expressed by the New Zealand's representative and some other delegates and denied the Somalis the opportunity to be united.

Article 73 of the Chapter XI on declaration regarding non-governing territories states

"Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

- (a) to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;

- (b) to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement."

Article 23 of the Treaty of Peace provided that the final disposal of the Italian colonies in Africa, including Somalia, should be decided within a year of the Treaty coming into force by the Four Powers, France, the United Kingdom, United States and the USSR. If they failed to reach a conclusion the matter should be referred to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for recommendation and the Four Powers were to accept and implement the recommendations. The Four Powers declared on 10 February 1947 that they could not reach the conclusion and referred the issue to the UNGA.

The UN General Assembly established a Commission of Investigation composed of representatives of each of the four Powers. The Commission visited each of the four countries (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica (These two constitute Libya), Eritrea and Italian Somaliland) under consideration between October 1947 to May 1948. On 15 September the Four Powers again informed the Secretary General of the United Nations (A/645) that they had been unable to reach an agreement regarding the disposal of the territories and that, in

conformity with the terms of the Peace Treaty, they were referring the question to the United Nations in order that it might be examined during the third regular session of the Assembly. At its 143rd meeting on 24 September 1948, UNGA referred the question to the First Committee but, owing to pressure of business, the examination of the issue was deferred until the second part of the third session in April-May 1949. By that time, it was clear that the idea of the re-unification of the Somali territories put forward by the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin was dead. The Somali people were destined to stay separately under various colonial powers.

The Somali people were not only the victim of the Berlin Conferences of 1884/85, but also of the Paris Peace Conference and the United Nations. Had there been no ulterior motives behind the discussion on only the Italian Somaliland, the UN could have taken up all the Somali territories, instead of singling out the Italian Somaliland to be prepared for independence. It could have even discussed the proposal put forward by Ernest Bevin in the British House of Commons in 1946. Had the UN been for freedom and justice, it would have worked out a solution for the independence of all the Somali territories under colonial rule.

During discussions in the First Committee, it was felt that, with few exceptions, the territory should be placed under the United Nations Trusteeship with a view to preparing the country for ultimate independence. Italy was most frequently suggested

as the Administering Authority. Ethiopia proposed itself.

The initial proposals included the following:

- (a) Italy to be entrusted with the administration of the territory within the framework of the United Nations Trusteeship System (Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Netherlands, Paraguay, Panama, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States and Venezuela voted in favour).
- (b) Ethiopia to be entrusted with the administration of the territory (Ethiopia voted in favour).
- (c) United Nations Trusteeship, with an Administrator to be appointed by the Trusteeship Council and to be assisted by an Advisory Committee (USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Ukrainian SSR and Byelorussia SSR).
- (d) Independence at the end of ten years under the United Nations Trusteeship; Italy to be excluded from any administrative authority (Pakistan).
- (e) United Nations Trusteeship, with United Nations as the Administering Authority. A plebiscite to be taken after ten or twenty years to determine the wishes of the inhabitants with respect to independence or incorporation in adjacent territories (India).

- (f) United Nations Trusteeship, with the United Kingdom as the Administering Authority. Ethiopia to be substituted for the United Kingdom should the latter country decline the responsibility. Italy to be excluded from any form of administration (Liberia).
- (g) The territory to be placed under the International Trusteeship System with a view to its future independence (eighteen Latin-American States).

Eighteen countries voted in favour of Italy as the Administering Authority. Ethiopia that also wished to administer Somalia got a single vote and that was its own.

During the discussion in the United Nation considerable concern was shown with respect to reports that sections of the Somali population were opposed to any form of Italian administration. Although no delegate pressed for the discussion on the rest of Somali territories under colonial rule, the Representative of New Zealand suggested that no opportunity be lost in providing for the ultimate reunion of all Somalis under one administration. Earlier, Pakistan's delegate also observed that political consciousness, as it existed in that territory, was directed towards the eventual reunion of all Somali people. Some countries criticized any plan to bring Italy back to the territory in any administrative capacity.

In fact, in 1948, in many parts of the country, as

well as in the Ethiopian occupied territories, as far as Harrar, Somali people staged demonstrations against foreign domination and for the unity of all the Somali territories. The famous anti-colonial demonstration referred as "*Hannolaatadii*" (Long live) and "*Dhagax Tuur*" (Stone throwing) was held in Mogadishu.

In 1949, Abdullahi Issa, while he was in London for a conference, sent a memorandum dated 8 March 1949 to the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, in which he asked for India's support for the following Somali demands:

- (a) To avoid the restoration of Italian Administration under any form or guise over our country Somalia; and
- (b) Unification of all Somali lands.

On the 9 June 1949 the Central Committee of the Somali Youth League (SYL) also sent a Memorandum to various world leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru. The SYL memorandum, signed by its President Hagi Mohamed Hussein and all other members of the Central Committee also strongly opposed the return of Italy to Somalia and gave a detailed report on the past moral, mental and physical atrocities that Italy had inflicted upon the Somali nation.

During the discussion on the Somalia's future on 15 and 18 October 1949, the First Committee heard representatives of political parties:

"The *Somali Youth League and Hamar Youth*

*Club*—The representatives denounced the so-called Bevin-Sforza Agreement and asked for immediate independence. They expressed a willingness to accept a United Nations Trusteeship for an interim period of short duration but were opposed to any form of foreign rule, particularly Italian administration. It was observed that demonstrations had already been staged in protest against proposals concerning the return of Italian Administration to Somaliland, and it was intimated that further disturbances might follow.”

Somali Youth League also denounced the British Military Administration in the British Somaliland where the administration prohibited public demonstration in support of the unity of the Somali territories and banned the SYL Party in the territory.

To justify their repressive acts, the Representative of the United Kingdom claimed at the United Nations, “the demonstrations had taken place in Mogadiscio against the proposals made in the United Nations for the disposal of Italian Somaliland and, in the subsequent action to preserve law and order, there had been a number of casualties. It had also been necessary to impose curfew and close all political clubs, regardless of party.”

The letter from the Somali Youth League was the subject of lengthy discussions in the Committee. Poland appealed to the administering Power in Somaliland to permit free expression of opinion and to prevent victimization of persons and political organizations.



According to the Yearbook of the United Nations, 1948-49, the proposal to entrust the administration of Italian Somaliland to Italy was vigorously opposed by a number of representatives (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Liberia, Pakistan and Syria) who emphasized the objections which had been recorded by many groups of the indigenous population. On the other hand, the representative of the United States was of the opinion that Italy was entitled to bear its share of the great task of assisting the peoples of Africa in their political and economic revolution.

The world knew that Italy which lost the war and was economically a weak country could hardly afford to feed its own people, let alone develop other countries. It had colonized Somalia for over seventy years from 1889 until 1943. It had no positive and successful record that entitled it to be appointed to a position of administering a country. This was the country that in 1896 was shamefully defeated by the Abyssinians in the battle of Adua and humiliated to the extent that it was denied by the Abyssinians the permission even to accompany the goods they wanted to deliver to the Italian prisoners of war. A caravan organized by the Roman ladies and led by a Catholic priest was sent to Shoa to assist the prisoners.

What it did during this period was clearly exposed in a Memorandum to Nehru, dated 9 June 1949 by the Central Committee of the SYL in which the Party stated among other things:

"We feel, and quite rightly so from the bitter

experience of the past, that the Italians of today are just the same Italians of by-gone days dressed only in a different garb. The past is too strong with us and we cannot erase its bitter memories when its ill-effects stare us glaringly at every twist and turn—in the economic, social, political, cultural and religious spheres. Our people have been treated as cattle in the past. They were deprived of their lands forcibly and without compensation. Villages were set on fire to make room for Italian plantations. Thousands were made homeless and whereas a few of them escaped, the majority of them—men and women and children—were all seized and forced to toil as slaves for Italian planters.”

Despite all the calls for justice at the 250th meeting of the UN General Assembly on 21 November 1949, the resolutions adopted included the Resolution (289(IVA)). It recommended:

1. That Italian Somaliland shall be an independent, sovereign state;
2. That this independence shall become effective at the end of ten years from the date of the approval of a Trusteeship Agreement by the General Assembly;
3. That, during the period mentioned in paragraph 2, Italian Somaliland shall be placed under International Trusteeship System with Italy as the Administering Authority;
4. That the Administering Authority shall be aided and advised by an Advisory Council

composed of representatives of the following States: Colombia, Egypt and the Philippines. The headquarters of the Advisory Council shall be Mogadiscio. The precise terms of reference of the Advisory Council shall be determined in the Trusteeship Agreement and shall include a provision whereby the Trusteeship Council shall invite the States members of the Advisory Council, if they are not members of the Trusteeship Council, to participate without vote in the debates of the Trusteeship Council on any question relating to this territory.

The United Nations denied the Somali people its sacred right to be united as one and allowing the majority of its territories and peoples to remain under colonial subjugation in breach of its own Charter.

The ten years of Trusteeship with Italy as the Administering Authority, *Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia* (A.F.I.S) started on 1 April 1950 to prepare the former Italian Somaliland for independence. On 12 October 1954, the sky-blue flag with five-pointed Star was hoisted aloft.

People gathered in front of the office building of the Government known as *Ufficio del Governo* (Government Office) on the morning of 1 April 1950 to witness the transfer their country to Italy again despite the opposition of the political parties to the return of Italy to Somalia in any form. Neither the political parties nor the people of Somalia had the power to prevent it, as the Big Powers wanted it that way. Italy was now wearing the UN mantle and its duty was to prepare the former Italian Somaliland for independence within ten years.

The Government building is situated in Hamar Weyne in the heart of Greater Mogadishu. It was built by the Italian Fascist regime during the 'thirties as their headquarters. The building has similar balconies to those in *Piazza Venezia* in Rome, from where the Fascist leader Benito Mussolini used to address the people. After independence, this was the only building housing almost all the Government Departments, including the office of the Prime

Minister. The National Assembly or the Parliament used the building called *Casa del Fascio* (House of the Fascist) which later became the Mayor's office.

Opposite to the balcony, where the dignitaries stood, there was a huge Arch in the center of the city's garden. The inscription engraved on its top: "*Umberto di Savoia*" and below it "*Romanamente*" (See Page 62).

I happened to be there on that occasion with Mrs Geeran, my British teacher of the Hamar Jab Jab school, who took me to the ceremony. For her it was the final act, as her administration was going to vacate the place for the Italians. I was a teenager and could hardly understand what was going on. Those who were there to witness the handing over of our territory to another colonial "authority" had no voice but to accept what was decided by others. It was the beginning of the end of the wish of the Somali people, who had hoped to see all the Somalis under a single flag. Italy which was taking over the responsibility to lead Somalia to independence gained great prestige even if it was just one of the defeated countries in the Second World War.

In 1956 the SYL won 43 of the 60 seats in the Legislative Assembly which were allocated to the Somalis. The Hisbia Dighil Mirifle (HDM) Party won 13. After winning the majority of the Legislative Assembly in the general elections, the SYL was invited to form the first government. Abdullahi Issa Mohamud, became the first Prime Minister during the period of Trusteeship.

As the time was relatively short for the people to be ready to take power in their own hands, the Trusteeship Authority had to do everything in a hurry. The Trusteeship Council during its 18th and 20th sessions was informed that in 1955 the administration of all regions and districts had been entrusted to Somalis. In 1956, it had established the Legislative Assembly and appointed the Prime Minister as the Head of the Council of Ministers. These Somali authorities had power with regard to internal administration. The Trusteeship Administrator had, however, the right to veto any legislation and the power to issue laws in case of emergency.

AFIS also trained Somalis to take the place of the Italian experts who were brought to train the Somalis. The process was known as *Somalizzazione* (Somalisation).

In 1957, a UN Mission visited Somalia to see how much progress the Italian administration had made to prepare the Trust territory to achieve independence by 1960. In its "Report on Somaliland, under Italian Administration", dated New York 1958, the Commission recorded the activities of the Administration and heard the opinion of the Somali Internal Government led by Abdullahi Issa and other political parties in the country.

During its visit to Mogadishu, the Acting Administrator informed the Mission, "that in general, responsibility in all internal matters had been transferred to the Government of Somalia and that such limitations on its authority as still existed

pertained mainly to the responsibilities of the Administering Authority in external affairs." He added, "However, an increasing number of Somali civil servants were receiving training in the diplomatic field—a Somali official had been appointed assistant to the *Chef de Cabinet* and another was serving in the Italian Embassy in Cairo—and the Italian Trusteeship Administration kept the Government of Somalia informed on all questions relating to external affairs." As an example of this policy he cited the appointments of three Somali officials as advisers to the delegation negotiating in Addis Ababa on the question of the border with Ethiopia.

During the Trusteeship, the Italian government brought 1,028 Italians at their own expense. Of these 621 were civil servants and 407 were attached to the Police and military units. In addition, there were also a number of Italians in the category of casual or non-contract employees who were paid by the Somali Government.

The Trusteeship Authority believed that the posts held by the Italians could not be filled by Somalis after independence in 1960 and it estimated that 150 experts would be required in the following sectors as far as the South was concerned:

Magistrates and administrative,	
fiscal and accounting experts	16
Primary and secondary schoolteachers	30
Medical officers, chemists,	
pharmacists and laboratory technicians	58
Engineers, surveyors and other	

<i>Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana Della Somalia</i>	153
public works staff	15
Livestock experts	10
Agricultural experts	15
Communication and telecommunications experts	4
Press and radio	2
Total	<hr/> 150



## B | Birth of the Republic

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Two parts of Somalia celebrated their independence day on two different days. British Somaliland celebrated it on 26 June and the Italian Somaliland on 1 July 1960. The two parts were united on the day of the latter's independence and this marked the birth of the Republic of Somalia.

As the two sides formed one single government, the officials of the two regions were also amalgamated. Of course, the people of both regions spoke the same Somali language, but since it was only a spoken and not a written language, Italian and English, inevitably became the language of official correspondence between various departments and with foreign governments. The services of the experts from the former colonial powers also became necessary for achieving developmental goals.

The British kept Northern Frontier District (NFD) and the Island of Socotra and its dependencies under its rule. Western Somalia or the Ogaden remained under Ethiopia and the French Somali Coast remained under France. At the time of the discussion on the Somali territories in the United Nations in 1948/49 despite few countries expressing their views on the Somali aspiration for unity, the United Nations under the pressure of the colonial powers appeared

to have deliberately allowed the continuation of Somalia's colonisation.

On its first working day, the National Assembly elected Aden Abdulle Osman as the first President of the new Republic. The President moved to Villa Somalia, the official residence. Jama Abdullahi Qalib, was elected as the President of the National Assembly on 7 July 1960. President Aden Abdulle appointed Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke as the Prime Minister. Four years later he was succeeded by Abdirizak Hagi Hussein.

The First Constitution of the Republic stated in Article 6, paragraph 4 that:

*"The Somali Republic shall promote, by legal and peaceful means, the union of Somali territories and encourage solidarity among the peoples of the world, and in particular, among African and Islamic peoples".*

After the end of term of President Aden Abdulle Osman, Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was elected as President on 10 June 1967 and appointed Mohamed Ibrahim Egal as Prime Minister on 15 July 1967.

The President and the Prime Minister changed but what remained unchanged was the overall situation of the country, particularly its economy. It did not generate enough revenue to cover expenditure. The Government was unable even to pay the salaries of the civil servants and the armed forces and continued to depend on foreign aid to sustain itself.

As everything was concentrated in the capital people from the interior started to migrate to it. Even the nomads who spend their lives with livestock and farmers who spend their lives on their land also started moving to Mogadishu after independence leaving behind their properties. They believed that either the government or their relatives in the capital would look after them.

During the old days, the civil servants were respected as the highest class in society, but due to the miserable economic situation that prevailed, most of the government employees faced financial problems making their own survival difficult, let alone maintain those who were coming from the interior to seek their help. Social problems and pervasive corruption further fuelled the economic downslide that led the country into a deeper political crisis.

Probably, it was due to chronic social, political and economic crisis that President Shermarke was assassinated on 15 October 1969 by a guard during the tour of the regions. After a few days, on 21 October 1969, the military took over.

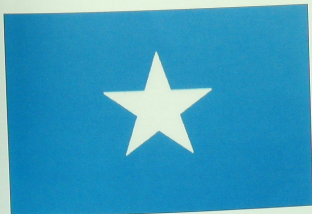
Following are the leaders who came to power during the civilian administration beginning 1 July 1960 to October 1969:

1. Aden Abdulle Osman, President of the Republic from 1960-1967
2. Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, Prime Minister from 1960-1964
3. Abdirizak Haji Hussein, Prime Minister, 1964-1967

After independence and unification of the former Italian Somalia and former British Somaliland on 1 July 1960, the Republic of Somalia adopted the following:



**The National Emblem of the Somali Republic.**



**The National Flag of the Somali Republic.**

4. Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, President of the Republic from 1967-1969
5. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, Prime Minister from 1967-1969.

## 19 | Bloodless Revolution

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After Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated, the ruling SYL was to nominate a candidate for the post of the President. He was to be presented to the Parliament on the morning of 21st October 1969, but at 03.00 o'clock in the darkness of the morning and only hours before the fateful meeting of the Parliament, a group of Army Officers overthrew the government in a military *coup d'etat*.

The military swooped down upon the residences of the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues and took them to an unknown place. It was a smooth overthrow of the nine years' old civilian government in a bloodless revolution. The growing corruption, nepotism and the total disregard of the common men had driven the people to a point where they were willing to welcome any change. They believed that anything would be better than the prevailing situation. The people poured in the streets of the capital and welcomed it with green leaves in the hope that the new comers would begin a new chapter in combating corruption and eliminating the mismanagement of the administration. The army changed the name of the country from the Somali Republic to Somali Democratic Republic. In Africa where military seized power in coups, the word

Democratic was fashionable and was added to the name of the country, but the country became more undemocratic and the leaders more often than not assumed dictatorial powers.

After the coup the Parliament was closed down, the Constitution was suspended and political parties were banned. A Supreme Revolutionary Council composed of 23 members and headed by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre as its Chairman, replaced the old system.

The Supreme Revolutionary Council issued its First Charter (Declaration) in Italian "*Rivoluzione Senza Spargimento di Sangue*" which had 7 points on Internal Policy and 6 on Foreign Policy. In 1971, the Supreme Revolutionary Council issued the Second Charter declaring that the,

*"Repubblica Democratica Somala ha, con effetto dal 21 Ottobre 1970, adottato il SOCIALISMO. SCIENTIFICO..." (With effect from 21 October 1970, the Somali Democratic Republic has adopted the Scientific Socialism).*

On the third anniversary of the "Revolution", in October 1972, the President of the SRC, Major General Mohamed Siyad Barre, announced to the nation that the Revolutionary Government had chosen the Latin alphabet with some modifications for writing of the Somali language. This was a step that the civilian government had no courage to take since independence. Somalia had no written language. Its language, Somali, was only spoken. The country's schools used Arabic, Italian or English

as medium of instruction. Although Somali was not properly developed, school text books had to be written. It was absolutely essential at some stage in the history of the country that the people of Somalia ceased to be viewed as an oral society. For centuries it had been called so. Only a few who knew how to read and write foreign languages had the privilege of expressing their ideas in writing.

During the early days, oral messages in the form of poems were exchanged between the Somalis through messengers who would memorize and recite them to the other party at a distant place. When the tape recorders arrived in our towns and villages, people started recording their voice-messages on magnetic tape and sent them with people. The problem was that the recorded message could only be sent to persons who also possessed a tape recorder to play back the tape. All that ended when the military government took the decision to adopt the Roman alphabets for writing the Somali language in 1972 and embarked on a literacy campaign throughout the country to spread it.

One has to admit that a lot remains to be done. To develop the Somali language and to have text books in science and technology for higher education would be the responsibility of the government and the Somali experts. No one can deny that so far the adoption of the script has been an achievement of the country which has a rich culture.

The critics rightly say that it has destroyed the administration because many people who did not



have even basic education, but just wrote Somali, entered the government service in a very large number. But that does not mean that the Somali language should not have a script. In future, the criterion for employment in the administrative services, civil or military, could be adequately corrected and the necessary requirements could be laid down. Language is one of the best means to spread the culture and knowledge within the wider society. Although it had weak points, I still believe that the adoption of the script for the Somali language was a milestone in the history of the nation.

The Third Charter of the Revolution dated 1 July 1976 and signed by the President Major General Mohamed Siad Barre established the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP). From then onwards it became the sole political party in the country and all its members were thoroughly scrutinized before being admitted whether they were faithful to the socialist and revolutionary doctrine. It held parliamentary elections whose candidates were hand-picked by the Party.

The Revolutionary Government enjoyed tremendous support of the people during the early years of its existence. Like in many other countries where the military *coup d'etats*, took place in the 1960s, Somalia's army also believed that they were more nationalistic than the civilians. After over-staying in power, the Army itself developed the same corrupt mentality as the civilians.

Corruption, bribe, suppression, nepotism and

abuse of power, became the norm of the one time "the saviours" of the nation. The army refused to surrender power to civilians through democratic process. After more than two decades in power, the army faced people's wrath. It declared war against anyone who opposed its rule.

During the nine years of civilian rule, Somalia had the worst form of governance where able people had no place in the bureaucracy. "Whom do you know?" replaced "What do you know?" The country was on the verge of collapse. The people had no power to change the situation except to pray for the better. The foreign aid donors labeled the country as the "Graveyard of Foreign Aid". The disillusionment of the people reached a point where they were willing to welcome anyone that could overthrow the corrupt government. It was unfortunate that in the early sixties the leaders who took the reign of power from the colonial administrations in Africa, not only failed to bring prosperity to their people but destroyed even what their countries had inherited from the colonial powers. They became the elite of the society, manipulated the political system, and adopted a constitution that allowed them to stay in office as long as they wished or gun or God removed them. Governments are established to protect the life and the property of the people and to respect the dignity of its citizens. It should not deny the people the exercise of their democratic rights. What happened must have been injected by the colonial

administrations, because the African way of thinking of the relationship between the rulers and ruled during the past were extremely different. As early as the end of 17th century, the founder of Toubenan movement, Nasir al-Din, in Senegal, proclaimed: *"God does not permit kings to pillage, kill or enslave their peoples. He appointed them, on the contrary, to preserve their subjects and protect them from enemies. Peoples were not made for kings, but kings for peoples."*

If the leaders in Africa would think that they have the responsibility for the welfare of their own citizens, most of the problems which the continent faces today would have been avoided. The power of the citizens has been eliminated by the introduction of the one man rule and the destruction of the democratic system.

After the 1977-78 war between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Ogaden, the Somali territory illegally occupied by Ethiopia, the grip of the army started to loosen and the opposition gained both in the North and in the South. The reasons that led to the army take-over in 1969 i.e. corruption, bribery, tribalism, abuse of power and mismanagement resurfaced again and in more virulent form to the point that even those who were sympathetic to the Revolutionary Government became disillusioned.

Throughout the country the opposition increased its activities. To defend itself and to hold on to power, the Government resorted to harsh measures. In the meantime, the public services declined, the banking

collapsed, hospitals lacked medicines and all the resources of the country were channeled into the war against the opposition. Even when it became clear that the government had lost the confidence and the support of the people, it refused to accept the demand of the local elders and foreign friends to give up and surrender power so that the total destruction of the country could be avoided. Its intransigence finally led to the defeat of the government's forces both in the North and the South.

On 26 January 1991, the regime of Mohamed Siyad Barre was overthrown with the same guns with which the dictator had taken over power on 21 October 1969. The man, who governed the Country for more than two decades with an iron hand, was forced to escape incognito, hidden in an armoured car.

After being President of the Somali Democratic Republic for twenty-one years Major General Mohamed Siad Barre could not even get an entry visa to a country of his choice. That is the fate of politicians who over-stay in power and lose support of their own people. Similar fate befell the former President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos and former Shah of Iran, Mohamed Reza Shah Pahlavi, who after having been toppled from the power fled their countries. No one wanted to have them; not even those who were their best friends. They could not find even a place to die.

Mohamed Siyad Barre first withdrew to the interior of the country. Then due to pressure of the

opposition, he crossed into Kenya in April 1992. After a short stay in Nairobi, he was asked to leave Kenya. He arrived in Nigeria on 17 May 1992, where he died in exile on 1 January 1995. After being the Head of the State of his country and accorded red carpet reception by foreign governments, his body was brought back to Somalia and buried without a ceremony.

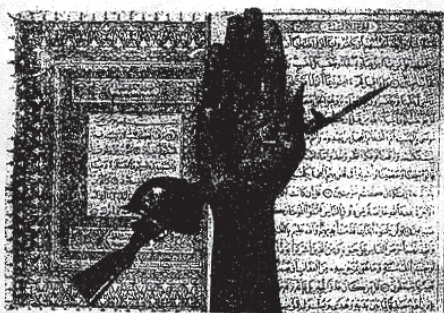
In the end the “Bloodless Revolution” in Somalia, which started with such a promise ended in the bloodiest conflict, which still continues and no one knows what would be its final outcome.

## First Charter of the Revolution.



21 OTTOBRE 1969

# RIVOLUZIONE SENZA SPARGIMENTO DI SANGUE



## IN NOME DEL POPOLO SOMALO IL CONSIGLIO RIVOLUZIONARIO SUPREMO

**CONSAPEVOLE:** DEL SACRO DIRITTO DEI POPOLI SOLENNEMENTE CONSACRATO NELLA CARTA DELLE NAZIONI UNITE E DELL'ORGANIZZAZIONE DELL'UNITA' AFRICANA;

**DETERMINATO:** A COLLABORARE CON TUTTI I POPOLI PER IL CONSOLIDAMENTO DELLA LIBERTA', DELLA GIUSTIZIA E DELLA PACE NEL MONDO, ED IN PARTICOLARE CON I POPOLI AMANTI DELLA PACE E DELLA GIUSTIZIA SOCIALE;

**PERMANENTE:** DECISO A CONSOLIDARE E TUTELARE L'INDIPENDENZA DELLA NAZIONE SOMALA E PER CREARE UNA SOCIETA' FONDATA SULLA SOVRANITA' POPOLARE E SULL'UGUAGLIANZA DEI DIRITTI E DEI DOVERI DI TUTTI I CITTADINI SENZA DISTINZIONI DI SESSO E DI CONDIZIONE SOCIALE.

### DICHIARA

#### A: POLITICA INTERNA

1. — Costituire una società basata sul lavoro e sul principio della giustizia sociale, considerando la particolarità dell'ambiente e delle condizioni del popolo;
2. — Preparare e orientare lo sviluppo economico, sociale e culturale per raggiungere un rapido progresso del Paese;
3. — Liquidare l'analfabetismo e sviluppare il patrimonio culturale del popolo somalo;
4. — Costituire, con priorità, le condizioni di base per la scrittura della lingua somala;
5. — Liquidare la corruzione, l'anarchia, il tribalismo ed ogni altro fenomeno di malcostume sociale nell'attività statale;
6. — Abolire i partiti politici;
7. — Indire, nel momento opportuno, un'elezione popolare con assoluta imparzialità.

#### B: POLITICA ESTERA

1. — Appoggiare la solidarietà internazionale ed i movimenti di liberazione nazionale;
2. — Lottare contro ogni forma di colonialismo e neocolonialismo;
3. — Lottare per l'unità della Nazione Somala;
4. — Riconoscere pienamente il principio della coesistenza pacifica tra tutti i popoli;
5. — Proseguire la via della politica della neutralità positiva;
6. — Rispettare e riconoscere tutti gli impegni internazionali precedentemente conclusi dalla Repubblica Somala.

Second Charter of the Revolution.



**REPUBBLICA DEMOCRATICA SOMALA**  
**PRESIDENZA DEL CONSIGLIO RIVOLUZIONARIO SUPREMO**  
**SECONDA CARTA DELLA RIVOLUZIONE**

—oO—

**IL PRESIDENTE**

**del CONSIGLIO RIVOLUZIONARIO SUPREMO**

**VISTO** la Prima Carta della Rivoluzione del 21 Ottobre 1969 che stabilisce la politica

interna ed estera della Repubblica Democratica Somala;

**CONSIDERATO** la necessità di chiarire ulteriormente gli obiettivi dello Stato;

**PRESO NOTA** dell'approvazione del Consiglio Rivoluzionario Supremo;

**DICHIARA**

che,

poiché la Prima Carta della Rivoluzione stabilisce che lo scopo basilare dello Stato è quello di creare una società basata sul Lavoro e sui principi della giustizia sociale;

e che,

considerato che il Socialismo è l'unico sistema filosofico che aiuterà a formare detta società;

la **REPUBBLICA DEMOCRATICA SOMALA** ha, con effetto dal 21 Ottobre 1970, adottato il **SOCIALISMO SCIENTIFICO** come suo ambito traguardo;

e adotterà qualsiasi passo necessario per la sua piena attuazione per il progresso e la prosperità del Popolo Somalo.

Mogadiscio, Gennaio 1971

**IL PRESIDENTE**  
**del CONSIGLIO RIVOLUZIONARIO SUPREMO**  
Gen. di Div. Mohamed Siad Barre

## 20 | Unilateral Declaration of Secession

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The former British Somaliland, which became part of the Republic of Somalia, declared a unilateral secession on 15 May 1991 calling itself the Republic of Somaliland. It gained its independence from Britain on 26 June 1960 and joined with the former Italian Somalia after achieving independence on 1 July 1960, forming the Republic of Somalia.

Since independence and the unification of the two parts of the Somali territories, the Northern Region or former British Somaliland complained about the inadequacy of the quota it was given in the power-sharing and the unfair distribution of the funds destined for the development projects in the country. Soon after independence, some officers of the army in the North expressed their dissatisfaction by attempting to split the territory from the South.

In April 1981, a group of people from the Northern Region living in London formed an opposition group named the Somali National Movement (SNM), which subsequently became the strongest of Somalia's various insurgent movements. According to its spokesmen, the Movement wanted to overthrow the military regime of Major General Mohamed Siad Barre. While in January 1989 a group from the South founded the United Somali Congress



(USC) in Rome, Italy. Both the organizations had a single point agenda to topple the government led by Mohamed Siad Barre.

As the conflict widened, Somalia's military regime used the air power to suppress the opposition in the Northwestern region. On 9 June 1988, the government's *Mig* aircrafts bombed Hargeisa, the capital city of the former British Somaliland, causing death and destruction in the town. It made the people of the region very angry. All attempts to mediate between the government and the movements failed, as each side convinced itself that the victory was on its side and saw no reason for reconciling. With each passing day the government was losing control and the opposition was gaining.

After the collapse of the military regime and the failure of various attempts to create an alternative administration, the breakaway "Republic of Somaliland" adopted a National Charter which was approved by the Council of Elders in its Congress held in Borama on 3 May 1993. Article One, paragraph Two of the Charter states:

*"Dalkii hore loogu yiqiin Somaliland ee Xorriyadiisii ka qaatay Boqortooyada Ingriiska iyo Waqooyiiga Ireland 26kii Juun 1960 ayaa dib loogu soo celiyey Madaxbanaanidii laga bilaabo 18/05/91".*

(The country previously known as Somaliland which obtained its independence from the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland on 26 June 1960 has restored its independence with effect from 18/05/91)

Late Abdurrahman Ahmed Ali (Tuur), who was the Chairman of the Somali National Movement, became the President of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. In May 1993, he was replaced by the Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, who died on 3 May 2002, in a military hospital in South Africa, where he had been taken for medical treatment. He was buried in Berbera on 6 May 2002. President Egal was temporarily succeeded by his deputy, Dahir Riyale Kahin who was re-elected.

The breakaway region did not participate in the various conferences organized for the Somalis to reconcile their differences and establish an inclusive parliament and government for the country. The administration's policy is summed up in the following words:

*"The Somaliland Government has made it clear that when the problem of the South is resolved and a national government is established it will have no objection to holding dialogue, as two equal partners, on issues of common interest and to identify future areas of cooperation."*

So far no country or the United Nations has officially recognised the independence of the territory, although international or regional organizations have continued their humanitarian activities in the territory. But as more time passes, the gap between the two regions would widen and would justify those who want to see a balkanized Somalia.

The Somali is the only homogenous race in Africa. They speak the same Somali language and the only

religion they believe in is Islam. Whether they are within the Republic or outside, they cannot be easily separated from each other, neither by the enemies of the Somali unity nor by the few ambitious politicians who seek personal advantage through the dismemberment of the nation. One can only hope that the advocates of separatism realize that they are playing in the hands of those who after raising their hopes high will one day pull the rug out from under their feet. Those who are today overwhelmed by the false promises of the age-old enemies of their own nation must remember the saying that in politics there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, but only permanent interest. Of course, sometimes even interest changes.

A decade and a half has passed since the declaration of unilateral secession by the region. In this period the leaders in the region have maintained a degree of peace unlike those in the South. The region has attracted sympathy for the efforts they are making to maintain the stability in the territory.

The neighbouring government of Ethiopia which was known to be the main supporter of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland came out with a well calculated statement by its Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, that "no one should confuse Ethiopia's establishment of trade links there as recognition of its bid for nationhood." *Reuters* news agency on 3 February 2006, said that Ethiopia last year sent a formal delegation to the former British Somaliland and signed deals to boost cross-border

trade and use the Berbera port, in what many saw as a tacit recognition of Somaliland's much-rebuffed bid for sovereignty. "The trade mission made it appear that, diplomatically, Ethiopia wanted to have it both ways: recognising Somaliland while publicly supporting a unified Somalia", the agency added.

Reuters quoted the Ethiopian Minister as saying: "'Hargeisa knows for historical reasons that Ethiopia would be last to give recognition to Somaliland", adding, "In fact, the international community including our region was busy helping those who were destroying Somalia rather than those who were trying to build their region."

Whether Ethiopia's statement was just a coincidence or had prior knowledge of what was coming up, the United Nations regional news agency, IRIN, reported that "Hopes of recognition of Somaliland's 15-year independence have been raised by the favourable report of an African Union mission that visited the territory last year."

According to IRIN "The report, a copy of which the *Mail & Guardian* has obtained, comes at a time when signs of a new flexibility in African thinking on boundary issues are emerging. It suggests that official African aid be tapped by this country of 3.5million people that was effectively destroyed by the Somali dictator Siad Barre."

To prepare the ground for the dismemberment of Somalia, the *Reuters'* article also said, "Unions between Senegal and Gambia, and Egypt and Sudan, among others, have been broken without affecting

the recognition of these countries." It added that the AU mission accepts this, stating in its report that Somaliland's case should not be linked to the notion of 'opening a Pandora's box'. As such, the AU should find a special method for dealing with this outstanding case.

If the existence of such a report is true, it is clear that the African Union has now changed its policy from uniting Africa to dividing Africa. *Reuters* quotes Iqbal Jhazbhay, an Africa analyst at the University of South Africa, who says "the report illustrates a new mood in the AU, an organisation Somaliland has officially applied to join. "The AU-sponsored peace deal in Sudan allows for a referendum, five years from now, on whether the south wants to go it alone. This could not have happened if it were business as usual. The AU now goes for results, and takes account of subjective facts and practical realities".

Unlike the founding fathers of the Organisation of African Unity, who were sincerely honest in their aims of uniting Africa, the present 21st century managers of the organization are going in the opposite direction by implementing the colonial politics of dividing the continent instead of solidifying what its peoples have scarified for during the past five decades.

If the existence of the report quoted by the South African newspaper the *Mail and Guardian* is true, then one sees no difference between the colonialists which divided the Continent and the present

leadership of the "African Union" which is now reported to be contemplating to divide the African countries, such as Somalia or the Sudan which are the two countries presently under the guillotine of the African Union. In that case, Africa must be prepared to accommodate hundreds of new states which will emerge, with the blessing of the AU, from the disintegration of present 53 states.

The African Union must support the right to self-determination and independence of the Somali territories under alien rule, which is more just than engaging itself in dismembering the existing republic.

## 2 | Failure to Deliver the Promised Heaven

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During their military or political campaign to oust the military regime, the opposition groups were trying to overwhelm the people with propaganda and promises that they would bring heaven into their homes if they defeat, Mohamed Syad Barre, whom they called the “Dictator”, the “Blood Sucker” etc. In the end the opposition won the war against the regime, but the promised heaven turned out to be a virtual hell. They turned their guns against the very people in whose name they claimed to be fighting. They started killing people, raping women and looting public and private properties.

In the North, the SNM, which had no difficulty in removing the remnants of the regime, established itself as the sole representative of the people. While in the South, the failure of the United Somali Congress (USC) to unite its ranks and to bring the militia under its control threw the country into an unprecedented chaotic situation. After overthrowing the regime the members of the USC started to overthrow each other. They were simply unable to agree on who would be their leader and whom they would like to see in power. Their mutual enmity was stronger than their enmity to the regime they had ousted.

In order to defuse the deepening crisis in Somalia, President of Djibouti, Hassan Gulaid Aptidon, offered his good offices to mediate and bring the different groups and parties to the negotiating table in Djibouti in June 1991. The SSDF (Somali Salvation Democratic Front), USC (United Somali Congress) and SDM (Somali Democratic Movement) were invited to the meeting. The Somali National Movement (SNM) declined to participate. On 3 December 1992, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 794 (1992) that authorized the use of "all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operation in Somalia."

One week later, on 9 December 1992, a United Task Force (UNITAF) commanded by the United States of America, was deployed in Mogadishu "to establish in Somalia a secure environment for urgent humanitarian assistance". Within weeks, the United States forces were joined by military units from Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. On 4 May 1993, UNITAF transferred the task to a UN force, named UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia).

While US/UN forces were already deployed in Somalia, another attempt was made at reconciliation in Addis Ababa in March 1993. But the outcome



was like the previous two conferences held in Djibouti which brought no improvement in the situation. The conflict between the rival branches of the USC deepened in 1994. The UN forces became part of the conflict and clashed with the local factions, particularly with the forces of General Mohamed Farah Aidid. October 3-4, 1993, United States Task Force Ranger's assault on Olympic Hotel to search for Aidid resulted in 17 hour battle in which 18 U.S. soldiers were killed and 84 wounded. Thousands of Somalis died in the conflict.

After two years of operation, the UN peacekeeping force, UNOSOM, ended its mission on 2 March 1995, without finding any solution to the crisis for which it was created. The United States contingent, which was the main force behind what was dubbed as "The Operation Restore Hope" left Somalia on 25 March 1995.

Thousands fled the country by any possible means. People walked kilometers by road across the artificial boundaries with Ethiopia and Kenya in search of safety. Many people lost their lives while traveling via the vast Indian Ocean on unreliable boats to reach the city of Mombassa, Kenya, and also while crossing the Red Sea to Yemen.

Once dubbed as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, the city of Mogadishu was reduced to a ghost town, totally devastated by senseless bombardments of the warring factions. Hospitals, schools, government and private offices were completely destroyed beyond repair by the same people who were claiming

that they would bring better administration if they deposed the regime they were fighting against. Those who were allies in the war for power became enemies of each other after "winning" the war. They failed to create an atmosphere conducive to normal transition.

The Somali situation was earlier variously described by the UNHCR in its Information Bulletin, dated 23 October 1992 as: "Hell on earth; Worse situation ever seen; most burning issue; a crisis of frightening proportion and the worse catastrophe in living memory." No one cared about Somalia. The United Nations continued passing one resolution after another while the chaos continued unabated. It passed Resolution 733 (1992):

"Deciding, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, that all States shall, for the purpose of establishing peace and stability in Somalia, immediately implement a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia until the Council decides otherwise".

It was easy to pass a resolution but what was important was its implementation. And that never happened. The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, appointed a Panel of Experts to monitor the violations or "to collect independent information on violations of the arms embargo and mandated by the Security Council to identify those who continued to violate the arms embargo and their active supporters."

The Panel of Experts in its "Executive Summary", reported that it: "it has found a clear pattern of violation of the arms embargo on Somalia. Weapons, equipment, training of militia and financial support to Somali factions have been given regularly by neighbouring states and others since the Security Council adopted resolution 733 (1992) on 23 January 1992." Despite this clear indication by its own Panel of Experts, the Security Council did nothing to stop the violation or impose sanctions on the violators of the resolution. It is clear that resolutions are implemented only against countries which have no strong voice or support in the Security Council. In the meantime the Somali people alone paid the price.

Nothing was spared during the ten years of self-destruction. The nation nearly disappeared from the world map and thousands of people decided to run, no matter where, just to survive. Hundreds of thousands of children, whose parents were forced to seek refuge in different countries are losing touch with their own lands and culture. Millions are in the country without any kind of health care and education. Only the Almighty knows what the future holds for them. Thousands who were forced to flee the country due to adverse situation are today crying or praying to see a return to normalcy in the country so that they can return to their homes. For the Somali people the change of regime did not bring about the needed peace and stability.



The National Museum of Mogadishu inside destroyed.  
The 19th Century items and Historic Documents  
on exhibition looted.



Mogadishu (Shingani)—Houses belonging to the  
inhabitants destroyed.



Mogadishu—The Old National Parliament Building in 1993.



Mogadishu—The Old Parliament Building in 2006.





Mogadishu—The historic and famous Abdulaziz Mosque before.



Mogadishu—The present condition of the historic and famous Abdulaziz Mosque in 1993.



Mogadishu—The New People's Assembly Building.



Mogadishu—The Plenary Hall destroyed and its chairs and tables looted during the civil war.



Hotel Al-Uruba—It was a national asset.



The same Hotel Al-Uruba. It was destroyed. Why?





The author in Hamar Weyne in 1993.



Mogadishu—Sea-side before the civil war.



Mogadishu—The Capital of Somalia—Known as the Pearl of Indian Ocean before the destruction.



Mogadishu—Reduced into a Ghost City by the senseless conflict.

## 22 | Past Attempts to Save Somalia

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Soon after the collapse of the military regime in Somalia in January 1991, the Republic of Djibouti organized two reconciliation conferences to heal the wounds caused by the conflict and to establish a national government. The first conference was inaugurated by the then President of Djibouti Hassan Gulaid Aptidon on 5 June 1991 and it was attended by the former first President of Somalia, Aden Abdulle Osman, former Prime Ministers Abdirizak Haji Hussein and late Mohamed Ibrahim Egal. At the time of the first conference, the deposed President Major General Mohamed Siad Barre was still in the country and his loyal soldiers were continuing their resistance.

After a week-long debate, the conference passed a resolution appealing to Mohamed Siyad Barre to leave the country within the shortest time possible. It warned him that otherwise a joint common force would be deployed against him.

It also appealed to the leadership of the Somali National Movement (SNM) and others in the Northern region "to participate in the National Reconciliation Conference, which was due to start in Djibouti from 13 June 1991. The Conference decided to send a Peace Mission and representatives of various groups to the North.

The second conference was held in Djibouti on 15 July 1991 and ended six days later. The foreign dignitaries who attended included the former President of Kenya, Daniel T. arap Moi, President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni and representatives from various countries including Germany, United States, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Nigeria, Ethiopia, the Sudan, Oman, former USSR, China, the League of Arab States, former OAU, OIC, EEC and IGAD.

The self-declared Republic of Somaliland did not attend.

The second conference, Djibouti Two, decided to arrange a ceasefire among the movements involved in the fratricidal war, with effect from 26 July 1991. Each community was to fully respect the ceasefire and ensure national security. The conference also reaffirmed that the unity of the people and the national integrity of Somalia were sacred.

Ali Mahdi Mohamed was appointed interim President of Somalia for the period of two years starting from the date of swearing-in. The conference appeared to have ended on a positive note. However, the contenders of power ignored the agreement and started fighting each other causing immense loss of lives and destroying the capital city of Mogadishu. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) described the fighting as "A human disaster of the worst magnitude". *The Daily Nation* of Nairobi wrote in December 1991: "General Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi

seek to oust each other from their respective positions in a clan-based power struggle for control of Mogadishu". Hundreds of thousands of the citizens of the capital and elsewhere were forced to flee the country to the neighbouring countries to save their lives. Hundreds lost their lives in the sea while trying to escape by boats to Kenya. The innocent people, particularly the unarmed civilians of Mogadishu, found themselves between the rock and the hard place. There were only two choices before them, either to jump in the sea full of sharks or to face death at the hands of the gunmen. Some people preferred death in the sea rather than seeing their teenage daughters raped in front of them.

On 15 March 1993, another Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia opened in the Africa Hall of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was chaired by Ambassador Lansane Koyate, the Deputy of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations. It was a four days conference that ended without reaching any solution. Nonetheless fifteen faction leaders signed the Addis Ababa Agreement on 27 March 1993.

A group calling itself G12 met in Cairo from 1 to 7 March 1994 for what was called "Consultations". The G12 issued a statement establishing the Transitional National Salvation Council (TNSC) composed of 17 members which included:

- (a) The 15 Chairmen of the Somali Political Organizations, signatories to the Addis Ababa

Agreement. Hon. General Mohamed Farah Aideed, Chairman of the USC/SNA, was to be among them.

- (b) Chairman of the SNM, who participated in the National Reconciliation Conference in March 1993, as an observer.
- (c) Hon. Ali Mahdi Mohamed whose membership was decided in accordance with the Addis Ababa Agreement.

The so-called the leaders of the Somali Political Organizations held another "Informal Consultation" in Nairobi, Kenya, from 11 to 23 March 1994 and reached "an understanding" based on the principles which included among other things,

- (a) Inviolability of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Somali Republic;
- (b) Repudiation of any forms of violence as a means of resolving conflicts and implementation of cease-fire and voluntary disarmament throughout Somalia.

In the meantime the killings and the looting in the country continued unabated. People continued to suffer at the hands of the militias belonging to the various factions.

Four years later, in December 1997, the Government of Egypt decided to hold another reconciliation conference in Cairo for the Somalis. All parties, except two, signed the Cairo Declaration. Like the previous ones, the Cairo agreement too did not lead to anywhere.



When no one appeared to be interested in Somalia's fate as the country was heading towards total decimation, brother Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, stood up in the United Nations General Assembly in September 1999 and told the world that his country would not let his fellow Somalis die. He had decided to hold a Peace and Reconciliation Conference. He arranged a mega meeting at Arta, Djibouti attended by over three thousand people, old and young, men and women. The conference began in February and ended on 27 August 2000. This was the third attempt by Djibouti to reconcile the Somalis. The first two—Djibouti one and Djibouti two conferences were held in 1991 soon after the collapse of the military regime in Somalia.

The Arta Peace Process was the first ever conference held without the factions involved in the civil war. It was a conference of the civil society. The factions were also invited provided they would join without factions' hats and as ordinary civilian representatives. It concluded with the elections of the parliamentarians and the President for the Transitional National Authority for a period of three years. Thanks to the Almighty, with the help of the brothers and sisters of Djibouti led by its President,

Somalia returned to life from its death-bed.

The President, the Government and the People of Djibouti made every effort to make the Arta conference successful. And they did succeed. It produced positive results. After ten years of the country being without a government, the Arta Peace Process established institutions of governance. At the inaugural ceremony of the new President, Dr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan, on 27 August 2000, President Ismail Omar Guelleh reminded the newly elected parliamentarians, the dignitaries and the people that:

"A year ago, on September 20, 1999, I endeavoured to draw the attention of the United Nations General Assembly on the immense suffering and pains caused by years of civil strife in Somalia the unleashing of forces of evil that plunged millions of families in utter trauma and disarray." He went on, "Against the climate of despair and hopelessness that prevailed for prolonged period, it was no surprise, therefore, that my statement at the UN would be met by scepticism and indifference. However, deep in my soul, something was telling me that this initiative would see the light of the day, and the yearnings of the distraught Somali people fulfilled."

The Somali people too hoped that the Government established at Arta Peace Process would restore normalcy and stability. Unfortunately, well before the newly established Transitional National Government (TNG) managed to stand on its own



feet, the UN Panel of Experts reported, "In March 2001, Ethiopia sponsored the creation of Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC) during meetings at Awasa, Ethiopia, in large part to undermine the TNG, which it believed to be hostile to Ethiopian interests. Since then, Ethiopia has supported members of the SRRC with training and limited supplies of arms and ammunition."

From the 1991 to 2000, the factions that were part of the new group set up by Ethiopia to oppose the Government established in Djibouti were same that had received support from the same source for their internecine warfare so that no one would be strong or able enough to form a government in Somalia. They were told that their own brothers and sisters were their enemies. Now it was the TNG which was projected as their enemy. They did not realize that what they were asked to do was to shoot their kinsmen. The group embarked on harassing the Government throughout the period of its mandate. The country was in dire need of an administration to reconstruct the infrastructure devastated by the ten years of civil war. It needed a government that could work on rehabilitation of the millions of displaced people and the demobilization and disarmament of the hundreds of thousands of the young militias.

Transitional National Assembly which was established during the process, elected Dr. Abdalla Deerow Issaq as the Chairman of the Assembly. The President appointed Dr. Ali Khalif Galaydh as Prime

Minister who held the post for about a year. He lost the office after a vote of no-confidence was passed in the Transitional National Assembly against his government on 1 November 2001. Then the President appointed Hassan Abshir Farah as the next Prime Minister on 12 November, who was replaced by Mohamed Abdi Yusuf on 1 December 2003, and held the post until the end of the mandate of the Government.

The outcome of the Arta Peace Process restored the name and the prestige of the Somali people when the newly elected President, Dr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan, represented the country at the Millennium 2000 and the UN General Assembly at the United Nations, New York. After a decade of absence from the world scene, finally the Republic of Somalia's flag was hoisted in front of the UN Headquarters, along with the flags of other countries. Dr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan attended the Summits of the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement, representing the Somali Republic. He participated in the OAU Summit for the Launching of African Union, held in Durban, South Africa, on 9 July 2002. He also attended the Summits of the regional organization, IGAD, as well as the Summit of Sahel and Sahara Countries.

At the end of the conference in Djibouti, the members of the newly established Somali institutions decided to go back to the country despite the fact that most of the capital was under the control of

the factions, which opposed the Arta conference. Their decision was not to be labeled as a "Government in Exile", but to be a government that would function from its own capital.

Soon after he was sworn-in, the new President and a number of the newly elected members flew to the capital, Mogadishu, despite all the difficulties and lawlessness that were caused by the opposition groups and their militias. They threatened that they will shoot down any plane carrying the President and the members of the newly established institutions that would enter the Somali air space. On 29 August 2000, the President and his entourage landed safely at Balledogleh, the former military airport that is situated 110 kilometer from Mogadishu.

In Mogadishu, the President and the parliamentarians accompanying him were welcomed by thousands, including the supporters of those who opposed the new government waving green leaves. The main reception was held at Mogadishu Sports Stadium which was full of well wishers chanting slogans and singing national songs. On the road from *Balledogle* to Mogadishu Stadium there were several lines of people, some waving green leaves and Somali flags and others applauding while women ululating contrary to what the anti-government people wanted.

As President Abdikassim called his government the Government for Reconciliation, he traveled to Nairobi on a short visit on 16 May 2001 to ask the

then Kenyan President Daniel T. arap Moi to arrange a meeting between the Government and the faction leaders who did not attend the Arta Peace Process. Moi welcomed the request and arranged two meetings between the TNG and the opposition groups in November and December 2001. Following the meetings some members of the opposition joined the Government.

The Heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) met in Khartoum, the Sudan, in January 2002. After hearing the report of President Moi, they requested “the front line states”—Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya—to organize a reconciliation conference between the Somali Government and the factions that did not participate in the Arta Peace Process and appointed Kenya as co-coordinator. The said conference was meant to complete the Arta Peace Process. But Kenya and Ethiopia manipulated the agenda and changed the nature of the conference, making it a completely new conference, one that had no connection with the Arta Peace Process.

Ethiopia managed Somali affairs for nearly a decade after the fall of the military regime in Somalia in 1991 and most of the reconciliation conferences, prior to Djibouti Process, were held by it on its own soil, with the full participation of the Somali political factions. None of these conferences produced positive results. Two factors contributed to the success of Arta Peace Process: first, it was not held in Ethiopia and second, it was not attended by the

factions. On the other hand, all conferences held by Ethiopia failed because both the host and the participants did not want any solution that would lead to the establishment of an effective government. When a Government was established in Djibouti without their involvement, Ethiopia and the Somali factions wanted to sabotage it.

The enthusiasm of the Somali people showed how much they desired to have a government. But throughout the three years' mandate of the government, the opposition, armed by foreign elements sabotaged the activities of the Transitional National Government and placed all possible obstacles to prevent it from functioning smoothly and peacefully. If the TNG did not achieve the required positive results or failed to do what the people expected, it was not because of the lack of good-will and ability to do so, but because of the obstacles it met and the indirect sanctions imposed on it by the international community. Despite all these hindrances, the TNG completed its three-year-mandate with dignity keeping the national flag flying high. That was a great achievement for a country which had nearly collapsed. The Government tried to bring on board the faction leaders who held the city at gun point, talking directly to them as well as with the help of friendly governments and elders in the country, but all these efforts failed, because the opposition groups saw peace and stability as a real threat to their selfish interest.

## 24 | Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Kenya

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As mentioned earlier, the 9th Summit of the Heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held in Khartoum, the Sudan, decided on 11 January 2002 to hold a “reconciliation Conference on Somalia in Nairobi, within two months, under President Moi as a coordinator of the frontline states to continue the peace process in Somalia and to report to IGAD Chairman.”

Accordingly, President Moi, organized a Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Eldoret, Kenya, on 15 October 2002. He invited the Transitional National Government and the faction leaders as well as the civil society. The religious leaders were also invited to the conference. Contrary to the decision of the IGAD Summit, Nairobi changed the nature of the conference into a completely new one.

Unlike the Arta Peace Process, which was concluded in less than a year, the Reconciliation Conference in Kenya lasted two years. Only due to the pressure from donor countries bearing the cost of the conference, the organizers had to wind up.

At the conclusion of the conference on 22 August 2004, 275 members representing various sections of the society were sworn-in as members of the Transitional Federal Parliament, TFP. On 15 September 2004, the TFP elected Sharif Hassan

Shaikh Aden as the Speaker of the Parliament and two deputy speakers. On 10 October 2004 it elected Col. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as the new President of Somalia for a five-year- term. He received 189 votes against 79 for Abdullahi Addow Ahmed. Four days later, the President was sworn-in exactly two years after the Reconciliation Conference began. Heads of State from Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Nigeria, Yemen, Burundi and Rwanda as well as Vice Presidents from South Africa and the Sudan and the Prime Minister of Tanzania, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, representative of the United Nations, Deputy Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, were also present at the swearing-in ceremony held at Nairobi's Sports Stadium. Ethiopia and Eritrea were represented by their Foreign Ministers.

The election of the new President of Somalia was praised by the UN Secretary- General Kofi Annan who said on 11 October 2004 that "the election of transitional President Abdullahi Yusuf is a key step toward regaining peace and stability in the Horn of Africa nation." The leaders from Eastern and Central African countries who were in Nairobi to attend the inauguration said that they would recognize the new government "with immediate effect." President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed asked the United Nations to send a mission to Somalia.

After the swearing-in ceremony of the President, the Heads of State from Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda and the Vice Presidents of the

Sudan and South Africa, as well as senior officials from Eritrea and Ethiopia, appealed to the UN to "take immediate action to deploy a mission to Somalia to assist in securing the new government and also help train security forces for Somalia".

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairman of the African Union, said that "The AU is ready to play a major role in restoring peace and security in Somalia." He said, "The success of Africans in finding an African solution to the Somali problem would not be allowed to go to waste."

The United States said that the election of Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as Somalia's President was a major step toward ending the East African nation's crisis. The Spokesman of the US Department of State Richard Boucher said in a press statement:

"The reconciliation process is central to the reestablishment of stability and effective government in Somalia. We urge the president and the assembly to focus on the immediate task at hand - the establishment of an effective government operating in Mogadishu."

It is important that the Government operate from the capital of the country otherwise it would be considered as a government in exile. It will lose its value.

All the leaders of Mogadishu factions, who had opposed the previous Transitional National Government (TNG) are now part of new team. Therefore, President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the Government should not have any problem in



returning to the capital. They have nothing to fear as the main trouble-makers and road-blockers that belonged to the group, called the "*Signatories of the Ceasefire Agreement*" signed at Eldored on 27 October 2002 and also to the main group that constituted the SRRC. The group operated under a single command. Besides, the new government has the "full" support of the giant neighbour, Ethiopia, which played a decisive role in the establishment of the new government and of the international community as well.

Since the collapse of Mohamed Siyad Barre's regime Somali armed groups fought each other for power. But none succeeded in eliminating others and gaining control. All they did was to continue fighting each other at the expense of the people and the country.

In politics, if groups striving for power do not succeed by themselves, then forming a coalition through negotiation and accommodation is the only other alternative available. The groups should understand that a democratic political system operates only on the basis of give-and-take. Only in a totalitarian system power can be captured and retained by force. Our problem is whether the so-called "Somali Politicians" have any agenda to establish a government that would end this never-ending crisis.

After taking oath of office on 14 October 2004, the newly elected President said that he and his government would return to the country's capital

within two months. His predecessor Dr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan traveled to Mogadishu two days after his official inauguration at Arta in the neighbouring Djibouti on 27 August 2000 as President of the Republic despite the threats by the opposition groups supported by Ethiopia, who were occupying most parts of Mogadishu.

The Somalis spent two years in Kenya for the Reconciliation Conference. It was only reasonable that the President and the members of the parliament and government return to their country. President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya urged members of the Somali government to go back to Somalia in his New Year's message. He said that they should not be discouraged by "small fights" inside their own country.

This pressure on the new Somali government was further increased by the Nairobi hotels where the Prime Minister and the Ministers were staying by issuing notices asking them to pack their things and leave. It was embarrassing for everyone including well-wishers not to be able to return to the country even when all those factions who control the capital are members of the cabinet. To some that was not a strange case. During the two years of the so-called reconciliation in Eldoret and Nairobi, Kenya, none of the antagonistic Somali groups were reconciled. Even the groups which formed the SRRC which was sponsored and formed by Ethiopia at Awasa in March 2001 turned their guns against the President, who was a member of the same Council.



H.E. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed (R) taking Oath of Office as President of Somalia in October 2004. On the left, Parliament Speaker administering the ceremony.



H.E. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of Somalia (C),  
Sharif Hassan Sh. Aden, Speaker of SFP (L),  
Prof. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, Prime Minister (R).

Returning to Somalia was not just a symbolic act but essential for the President and the governmental institutions to avoid to be labeled as a "Government in Exile". But the new President believed that it was impossible for him to go to Mogadishu citing lack of security there as the reason.



At the very outset, the President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed antagonized the Parliament when he appealed to the African Union to send peacekeeping forces to Somalia to help in disarming the militias without consulting or obtaining its approval. This appeal immediately touched the nerves of the factions that have armed militias in Mogadishu. They interpreted it as an action directed against them and not just the few freelancers who roamed the city with rusty A47s.

The President was reported to have asked the African Union to provide 15,000 to 20,000 peacekeepers to disarm militias and to stabilize the country which had been devastated by a decade of civil war. The troops would have also guaranteed the safety of the new Government if and when it would be established in Mogadishu.

The Security Council of the African Union and the IGAD discussed and hastily decided on the deployment of African Forces in Somalia without properly studying the situation in the country and the eventual repercussion of the decision. Already there were negative reactions to the inclusion of the Ethiopian troops among the forces from the front line States. This arbitrary decision either of the African Union or IGAD provoked a storm of criticism

from politicians, including government ministers, faction leaders, as well as the majority of the Somalis and some members of the international community. It was absurd that the African Union or IGAD was oblivious of antagonistic relations between Somalia and Ethiopia which have been at war since Somalia's independence or, even before that, due to Ethiopia's occupation of Somali territories.

The *News Vision* of Uganda on 7 March 2005 published a report in which it quoted Lt. Gen. Aronda Nyakairima, Uganda's Military Chief as saying to the Ugandan soldiers under training for the said deployment in Somalia: "IGADSOM" would be deployed throughout Somalia, with the exception of the self-declared republic of Somaliland. We shall deploy from Puntland all the way to the south."....

"We hail your shining achievement in helping clear the LRA (Lord Resistance Army) from Tesso, Lango and Kitgum, flushing the terrorists back to southern Sudan, killing some, capturing others, recovering weapons, and rescuing abductees."

While the General spoke hundreds of the soldiers yelled, "Tuko tayari. Tuta songa mbele. Kazi tutaifanya (we are ready. We move forward. We shall execute the assignment):

The General went on: "Unlike in the past when commanders were mobile merchants, don't command and operate kiosks. Don't steal soldiers' salaries. Behave well. Learn their culture. Somalia is not like the DRC, where we sent 400 soldiers and received back 600 including 200 wives. In Somalia

don't dare touch their women." There was thunderous applause to the statement. He went on to caution: "Guard against HIV." "You are young and healthy. Remember HIV/AIDS kills."

The soldiers that Uganda government selected for Somalia are those who have committed all that General Nyakairima told them not to repeat again. If this was the brigade that the General praised for their professional performance, I am afraid they will be disappointed because the kind of profession they were doing in the Congo are now-a-days the main occupation of many Somalis. There will be a kind of conflict of interest if the Ugandan soldiers take over the main source of income of the Somalis who survive as mobile merchants and operators of kiosks.

If the commanders were stealing the soldiers' salaries and running the kiosks", what were soldiers doing? When 400 soldiers are sent to Congo and 600 returned, including 200 wives, is this something to be proud of and applauded?

In any civilized country, such soldiers would have been either fired or imprisoned for the immoral acts they committed while on a humanitarian mission in DR Congo. They should not have been in training camps for being sent to Somalia. It is immoral to send soldiers with such an ugly reputation on peacekeeping missions to countries where militias, looters etc. had to be rehabilitated so that they can return to society as good citizens. How can a person who has a bad record, teach good conduct to others?

What saddens the Somalis most is that the

General's advise to the soldiers to guard against HIV/AIDS. Somalia has never been among the countries heavily infected. Even the few HIV/AIDS cases it has must have come from across the borders as it lost control of its borders due to the devastating civil war. The world knows in which countries the disease is more endemic. One reason for Somalia's reluctance to accept soldiers is that the countries from which they are supposed to come are known to be severely affected. It would probably be advisable that the soldiers destined to Somalia as peacekeepers, Ugandans or others undergo medical check-ups for any communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS, under the supervision of the World Health Organization (WHO) prior to their departure.

A week later, President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni, as the Chairman of IGAD, speaking at the IGAD Defence Ministers' meeting in Entebbe said on 15 March 2004: "We are going to deploy with or without the support of the warlords," "Why should the warlords for example reject Ethiopia and Kenya?" He rhetorically asked: "If the two countries go there, what will happen? It is a shame for one of [the] ancient races in Africa to suffer for so long, as the rest of Africa looks on." He should have known better the sensitivities of the Somali people regarding Ethiopia. He went on: "What are we waiting for? "You should work out the deployment programme as soon as possible."

In a report from Nairobi, Kenya, IRIN, a UN sponsored news agency, commenting on the issue



of inclusion of soldiers of the neighbouring countries in the peacekeeping force wrote on 21 March 2005 that this "has divided Somali politicians; with some supporting the deployment and others saying that soldiers from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya might be tempted to meddle in Somalia's internal affairs."

President Museveni's statement provoked strong reactions both in Somalia and outside. It angered even some members in the high echelon of the new Government and a large part of the population. Everybody else except the leaders of the African Union, with offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, understood the eventual consequence of the deployment especially of the Ethiopian troops in Somalia.

Matt Bryden, director of the ICG's Horn of Africa Project told IRIN (12 March 2005): "It would be premature for foreign governments to send troops into Somalia when the [Somali transitional federal] parliament is yet to debate the issue. "There is popular opposition to the peace mission within Somalia, and such a move could jeopardize the peace process."

Earlier on 3 March 2003, the US Department of State pointed out:

"The United States shares the concerns of the international community and many Somalis regarding the introduction of foreign troops into Somalia. The African Union and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development would likely play an important role in a peace support mission for Somalia

at the appropriate time. Such a mission, however, must be carefully evaluated and have the support of the Somali people. In order to support this process, all nations must honor the United Nations arms embargo for Somalia.

"Somalia's neighbors have legitimate national interests that are best protected by the successful establishment of a stable and effective central government in Somalia; however, any external force should exclude troops from those countries. To include troops from neighboring countries at this time could pose an insurmountable obstacle to the Transitional Federal Government's ability to gain the support and trust of the Somali people due to the perception within Somalia that some neighboring countries may be biased towards one or more elements of the Transitional Federal Government."

Two days after President Museveni's declaration on deployment, the Somali Federal Parliament overwhelmingly passed the motion rejecting the deployment on 17 March 2005, despite government's position favouring deployment. The motion was passed by 156 votes against 56 and 6 abstention. In a highly emotional debate, the two sides of the Federal Assembly, pro and against the motion, attacked each other with whatever they could find, including the metal chairs and ash-trays. Those who entered the Chamber with their walking sticks used them against their opponents. Three Somali politicians were wounded during the debate in the Parliament on the deployment of troops. The fight

started when the Chairman Sharif Hassan Shaikh Aden announced the results of the vote. Abusing their power and violating the immunity that the members of the parliaments enjoy, the Kenyan police detained Somalia's Minister of Commerce, Muse Sudi Yalahow and two other MPs alleging that they were involved in the fighting in the Parliament. They were later released on bail following the intervention of the Chairman of the Somali Federal Parliament, the Minister of Somali National Security and officials from the Kenyan Foreign Ministry.

Usually conflict is provoked in parliaments on controversial issues. The debate on the deployment was a highly emotive issue that concerned the entire nation. It is normal to see fighting erupting in parliaments, during debates. I wonder, therefore, why the minor skirmishes in the Somali Parliament should be considered barbaric or primitive, or even ridiculous.

On the day that the Parliament approved the motion rejecting the deployment, a statement issued by the American Embassy in Nairobi observed:

"The US has launched a stiff opposition to the planned deployment of a regional peacekeeping force to the war-torn Somalia and indicated it would veto any UN Security Council mandate on the same. The US has declared that it would not finance the deployment of the peace support mission, saying there was no need to use force in Somalia, preferring to treat the over 60,000 militias in the country as a problem to be solved through dialogue."

It issued another statement reiterating its position against the deployment of forces. It said: "While we appreciate IGAD's intentions of stabilizing Somalia, we do not understand the rationale behind the IGAD deployment plan and do not support the deployment of troops from the frontline states in Somalia."

Although Kofi Annan supported the deployment of forces under the African Union he cautioned that the mission "must be carefully considered and planned with the support of the Somali people."

Following the opposition expressed by the Somali Federal Parliament and the popular demonstrations held in Mogadishu, IGAD retracted from the position of its Chairman, President Museveni. It decided that two countries of the rear line, Sudan and Uganda "will be the first countries to send peacekeepers to Somalia."

IRIN quoted on 21 March 2005 Sam Kutesa, Ugandan Foreign Minister and Chairman of the IGAD Council of Ministers as saying: "The regional body had decided to send just Sudanese and Ugandan troops "because of the suspicion among many Somalis that frontline states, such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti, supported different factions during the war, and therefore have their own interests".

The question of deploying Ethiopian troops as part of the peacekeeping mission in Somalia is a sensitive issue; it is a matter that concerns all the Somalis. The Somali people do not trust Ethiopia as a neutral peacekeeper or honest broker. The

Ethiopian leaders' anti-Somali and anti-Islam threats to invade Somalia on the pretext of fighting against the alleged terrorist movements are fresh in their memory.

The Board of Directors, National Civic Forum wrote in an article dated 29 March 2005 in the Website *Markacaddeey*, wrote:

"In the past, various Ethiopian regimes have wished for such an arrangement. However, even in their most disabling moments of internal factionalism, the Somali people and their leaders have, until the current state of apostasy, always stood together when it came to the protection of national integrity. Bluntly, this option is a non-starter. All it will accomplish will be to trigger a new and perhaps more vicious version of the civil strife, as well as seal the fate of the TFG as a neocolonial and illegitimate phenomenon."

Although the Somalis generalized their objection against foreign troops to be sent to Somalia, their main objection was against forces from Ethiopia. The two countries have been in a state of war since time immemorial and in more recent times because of hostile attitude of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi towards the Somali people. Ethiopia openly opposed the first government established at the Reconciliation conference held in Djibouti in August 2000 after a decade of lack of Government in the country. It created and sponsored an opposition group called SRRC. A UN Panel of Experts appointed by the Secretary General, testified that

Ethiopia created the SSRC "in large part to undermine the TNG" which it believed to be hostile to its interests. Since the day one after the establishment of the TNG, it employed all kind of tactics, military, diplomatic and political, to make life difficult for the Transitional National Government.

The same groups that Ethiopia cajoled and supported before and during the Nairobi conference are giving it hard time by blocking the implementation of its agenda in Somalia. The question is, why the groups are opposing Ethiopia today when it is supporting the government of which they are also part, while they were earlier accepting its guns to carry out Ethiopia's sinister plot to destroy their country and topple their Government.

Ethiopia is probably anxiously hoping to settle old accounts with the Somali people. The Ethiopian Prime Minister on 12 May 2005 alleged that, "an al-Qaida terror cell is operating in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu." The question the Somalis want to ask the AU or the IGAD is whether there would be a mechanism to prevent the Ethiopian soldiers, who will be operating for and in the name of African Union Peacekeeping Forces, from killing innocent Somalis or destroying mosques on mere suspicion. The Prime Minister also said in his interview with the Associated Press that "his government supported the transitional Somali government that was formed in neighboring Kenya last year and would do everything possible to help that government." Any help that comes from the international community

including from the neighbouring countries is always welcome provided that is genuine and above everything else is in the interest of the Somali people.

When strong opposition was voiced inside and outside Somalia against the "Peacekeepers from Frontline States" including Ethiopia, African Union devised a new mechanism that would open a window for entry of Ethiopian troops. It established a 5,000 strong "Rapid-Reaction Force of East Africa Peacekeepers" in Addis Ababa on 12 April 2005. However, the UN Security Council frustrated the African Union by deferring the consideration of the AU's decision to send troops to Somalia.

The statement of the President of the UN Security Council<sup>1</sup> read:

"The Security Council takes note of the PSC's request to the Security Council for the authorization of an exemption on the arms embargo imposed against Somalia by resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992, contained in the AU's PSC Communiqués of 12 May and 3 July 2005. The Security Council stands ready to consider this matter on the basis of information on the mission plan mentioned in paragraph 6 in due course."

The statement warned those who were threatening the use of force to settle the differences between the two wings of the new federal government:

"The Security Council expresses its concern at

1. S/PRST/2005/32.

the recent disagreements and increased tensions among Somali leaders, which threaten the viability of the TFIs. The Security Council calls on all leaders in Somalia to exercise maximum restraint and take immediate effective steps to reduce tension. Violence or military action by any member of the TFIs or other parties is unacceptable as the means for dealing with the current differences within the TFIs. The Security Council reiterates that any member of the TFIs or other parties who persist on the path of confrontation and conflict, including military action, will be held accountable."

The United Nations had the worse experience in the history of peacekeeping when it was forced to withdraw from Somalia after bloody clashes with the militias. To land forces in other countries always seems easy at the beginning, but maintaining its control becomes increasingly difficult. The failure of the UN peacekeeping forces in Somalia, which included those of the United States, that has the strongest army in the world, with highly sophisticated land, sea and air power, has become an unforgettable experience for all those who were involved in the Somali operation.

The IGAD Heads of State and Government again decided in their latest Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya on 20 March 2006 to deploy security forces into Somalia to help find lasting peace in the country without asking each other about the outcome of their decision on the matter taken last year.

Under the IGAD, the Presidents, Mwai Kibaki of



Kenya, Omar Hassan Ahmed El Bashir of the Sudan, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed of Somalia, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti and Eritrean Minister for Agriculture Arefaine Berhe stated "the deployment of a peace mission to Somalia should be followed by an African Union team", but, as usual, they failed to give a time-frame for the implementation of their decision. Knowing that the UN Security Council has already rejected, the IGAD leaders again urged the United Nations to lift an arms embargo on Somalia; a request which is undoubtedly to be rejected again by the United Nations Security Council.

If United Nations and United States with such an experience were forced to withdraw their forces from Somalia it is difficult to imagine that an African military expedition whose soldiers hardly receive their salaries regularly or walk barefooted could step in the shoes of the former to help restore peace in Somalia. Unless the idea is to throw Somalia into deeper crisis, the African Union could help Somalia better by refraining from taking steps which might only add fuel to the already inflamed situation.

The UN peacekeeping mission which was joined by many other countries was forced to pull out in 1994 after encountering tough resistance from local militias. A clash in 1993 in which 18 US soldiers were killed has been depicted in the film: "Black Hawk Down."

After President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed had stayed in Kenya for nine months after the swearing-in ceremony. The President and his government cited lack of security in the Somali capital as the main reason for prolonging their stay in Kenya. The Government of Kenya set 13 June 2005 as the day of departure for the Somali Government from Kenya despite the fact that it and the international community knew that the President and the Prime Minister were not yet ready to move to Somalia. After having been saluted by the highest authority in Kenya and the dignitaries from the United Nations and other organizations, involved in the process of the Somali reconciliation held in Kenya, at a highly organized farewell ceremony at the State House, the Somali President and other officials with him had no alternative but to fly from Kenya without even knowing where to land.

President Kibaki of Kenya was under pressure from the members of the Kenyan parliament to send the Somalis home. He sent invitation cards to the local officials and foreign dignitaries to bid farewell to the Somali President and his government. The Kenyan decision must have had the blessing of the international community or the donor countries that were bearing the expenses for the Somali

reconciliation process that had gone on for nearly three years.

"Go where you want to go but leave Kenya at once", was the "order". It was right. It was the problem of the elected Government that once the conference ended; it had to decide where to go. Irritated by the rumours and insinuations that were falling in their ears, regarding over-staying of the Somalis, many members of the Government and the Parliament on their own decided to go back to Mogadishu. Their action was welcomed by the inhabitants but condemned by the President and the Prime Minister as a unilateral decision and not the Government policy.

Going to Mogadishu was out of the question. Two towns, Baidoa and Jowhar, were considered as alternative until security situation improved in Mogadishu or African forces came to provide security to the government. Fighting broke out in Baidoa between those who supported the relocation of the government there and those who opposed it. After fighting subsided, one of the Baidoa leaders Mohamed Habsade demanded that the Government should move to the capital and not to Baidoa, in defiance of the wish of the President. On the other hand, Jowhar was ready to welcome the President and the Prime Minister as well as all those who wished to join them.

The same day, on 13 June 2005, after the farewell ceremony held in Nairobi by the Kenyan President the newly elected President Col. Abdullahi Yusuf

Ahmed took a plane en route to an unknown destination. No one knew where he was heading. The official statement issued by the President's office indicated that the President was going to an international conference prior to his arrival in Somalia. His destination was not named but people knew that he would go to Jowhar. But due to lack of night-landing facilities there, the President's plane had to continue its flight to Djibouti. The failure to land at Jowhar angered Mohamed Omar Habeb, who controls the town and the next day he was quoted by the French News Agency AFP as saying that "Jowhar is a small town and we are advising the government to go to Mogadishu, which is the capital." But in the end, after negotiations, he allowed the government to settle in Jowhar, which is now the headquarters of the new government.

In the meantime, the members of the Parliament who were in Nairobi were told to vacate the hotels and be ready for the departure. At that time there were about 90 members of parliament including Sharif Hassan Shaikh Aden, Chairman of the Federal Parliament were in Mogadishu working on the "improvement" of the security of the capital. The President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the Prime Minister Prof. Ali Mohammed Ghedi regarded the action of those who went to Mogadishu as nothing less than rebellion against the Government.

There was no sign of the promised 1,700 African troops from Uganda and the Sudan. Moral pressure mounted on the top echelon of the Somali

Government to get out of Kenya to avoid embarrassment before the world. The Kenyan and the international press were already calling the Government "the Government in exile" and some governments were saying that they would not provide any assistance unless the government operated from its capital. It must have been difficult for the newly elected President and the Prime Minister who had the responsibility for the relocation of the government to Somalia. Both considered Mogadishu a dangerous place to go for want of security.

After taking oath of office on 14 October 2004, President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed promised that he was taking the government to Somalia within two months. Nine months later, he was still in Nairobi and the Government of Kenya apparently felt that unless it takes a unilateral action, the Somalis will never move from Kenya. It called upon the Somali Federal Government to move to Somalia on several occasions, but the President and the Prime Minister kept requesting for more time to find out where to relocate if they were compelled to leave. Of course, Kenya was not their homeland but just a venue for the reconciliation conference.

The members of the Parliament and Government who went to Mogadishu against the wish of the President and the Prime Minister insisted that it should be the capital and the seat of the government institutions, as enshrined in the Charter or the Constitution of the country adopted in Nairobi. On

their part, the President, the Prime Minister, the parliamentarians and Cabinet members who were with them believed that Mogadishu lacked security and insisted that until that was restored the Government had to be relocated in another place.

No one can deny the problem of the security but it is the duty of the Government to face the challenge through dialogue and persuasion. The armed faction leaders who are also members of the Cabinet, control the capital and the national infrastructure like the airports and seaports and seem not to be ready to give up that privilege until some kind of solution is reached for the general demilitarization and demobilization. They are not ready to surrender their control to government, although they are part of it. These assets have made them independent of any kind of organized administration. That puts the government in a very difficult position as it does not have the power or the support of the African Union to disarm the armed factions who have now become more fearful of a reprisal from the Government if they gave up their weapons. Taking this reality into consideration, the only possible solution could be similar to the one adopted by the British and Irish Governments to the Northern Ireland crisis where the Sinn Fein was allowed to join the Government and the Parliament without initially surrendering their arsenal. By the time these lines are being written, its military wing IRA has surrendered its arms. The other solution to the Somali problem is the formula "money for gun"

applied in some countries where similar situation prevailed.

The first anniversary of the establishment of the Federal Parliament and government on 22 August 2004 in Nairobi passed while they were still quarreling about the seat of the administration. The government operates from the town of Jowhar, 90 km North of Mogadishu and part of the parliament led by the Speaker operates from Mogadishu..

The present Federal Government enjoys the support of the international community. However, the difficulty that it is facing today is a direct result of the negative role played by the Chairman of the IGAD sponsored conference. The Chairman, Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat of Kenya, must have realized that the house he and his allies built would have been solid had he and like-minded members of his "Committee" would have been honest brokers. The situation would have been different. The entire affair of the reconciliation was just a joke to deceive the Somalis. The good Somalis could do nothing about it besides murmuring in the lawn of Mbagathi (the part of Nairobi where the conference was held) while some others innocently participated in the plot against their own nation by collaborating with the devil wearing the angel's mask.

Two years after he declared the "Reconciliation Conference" closed, Kiplagat, who diligently worked to divide instead of uniting the Somalis, was quoted by IRIN on 15 July 2005 as saying:

"We are involved in encouraging dialogue

between members of the Transitional Federal Government [TFG] to encourage them to end their disagreements so that they can begin the important work of rebuilding their nation."

For any person acquainted with the way the Ambassador conducted the conference, it would be hard not to notice that the above remark is just a diplomatic statement, like a mouse blowing cool air while biting. What the Somali people are harvesting today are the seeds of hatred that the IGAD committee has sown during the long conference of which Kiplagat was the Chairman. He knew the outcome of the conference was actually what he and his allies planned for Somalia. Do the Somalis still need or believe that Kiplagat and whoever he is referring to as "We" should be "involved" in Somali affairs again. Or should we accept his involvement and let him and those he referred as "We" do again what they did before. It was IGAD that certified that the "Reconciliation" has been concluded and it was time to select or elect a parliament. If that was the case, why there should be more dialogue? The reality is that IGAD and others who believed that they would force the Somalis at gun point, or would put through their plan by hook or crook failed.

The members of the Somalia's Transitional Federal Government were given a deadline of Wednesday, 7 June 2005 to vacate the hotels they occupied. They did not know where to go. Kenya's envoy to Somalia, Muhammad Abdi Affey told IRIN: "All Somali MPs and government officials must start



leaving Kenya by 14 June. Where to go in Somalia is a decision for the Somali government."

The time for the hard decision had come for some. The situation became what the Somali proverb says, "*Laba kala darran mid dooro*" (Choose one out of two bad things). The Somalis could do nothing about it. There was no other choice. A guest has to leave if the host asks him to do so. Some felt that it was humiliating to stay any longer after having been given notice to vacate the hotels. Dragging feet or moving to a lower class area of the Kenyan capital, would have given another blow to the already shattered prestige of the members of the Federal Parliament and Government.

In his latest report to the Security Council (S/2005/392) on Somalia, the Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed the efforts of the leaders in Mogadishu to restore peace and stability. He reiterated his appeal to the Transitional Government and the Parliament to seek an agreement from all factions and militia leaders to cease hostilities and enter into immediate negotiations for a comprehensive cease-fire.

He pointed out that although the interim government had been formed eight months ago, the differences between the President and the Speaker of the Parliament over the location of the Government within the country had stalled the move to either Mogadishu or nearby Jowhar. Moving the Government to Somalia was immensely important for the credibility with the people of Somalia and

international community. The Secretary-General acknowledged that there were enormous challenges involved in relocation including security, the choice of the capital city and the lack of infrastructure and resources. It was clear, noted Annan, that the relocation plan had become fraught with controversy and opposition which could aggravate the division along clan and regional lines.

He asked for urgent and serious dialogue in search of a consensus on the issue of relocation. He appealed to the international community to provide the necessary technical and material support that would improve the quality of efforts of the Somali leaders. These efforts must truly become national to give confidence to all Somalis. The United Nations was ready to support negotiations for such an agreement in collaboration with other partners. The Secretary-General wanted a national consensus on critical issues and then UN and the international community could help. The latter did not want to give the impression of playing favourites. The ball was in the court of the Somali leaders.

In East Africa, the Somali neighbours claim that they have a stake in its affairs and give themselves the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the country. According to the Chinese Website *Xinhuanet* (31 August 2005), "The United Nations expressed appreciation to Ethiopia for its significant role in maintaining peace and stability in the Horn of Africa nation." Francois Lounsensy Fall, the special representative of the UN Secretary-General for

Somalia, told journalists that Ethiopia's effort to bring about peace and stability in Somalia is part of its efforts to maintain peace in the region. He was in Addis Ababa "to seek more support from Ethiopia for the UN efforts in Somalia." The Xinhuanet said, "After talks with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Fall said the efforts being made by Meles shows his dedication, maturity and strength in his leadership. He said his visit was intended to exchange views with Meles in this regard and further enhance the efforts being made to bring about peace and stability in Somalia. Meles on his part said Ethiopia would further consolidate its effort toward maintaining peace in Somalia both independently and along with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Those who come to the region without any understanding of the reality are moved to tears when they listen to tales of sacrifices of certain neighbours to bring stability and peace to Somalia. The impression of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative in Somalia shows that he either did not do his home work properly on the situation in the area before taking up the post, or found it convenient to please the powerful, or was naïve, or was the type who cries on seeing the crocodile shedding tears and immediately comes to the conclusion that the tears are genuine. It is amazing to see how quickly he came to the judgment on the person's attitude. If the judge exonerates the guilty simply because he said with tears in his eyes that

he loved his victim, it means giving him opportunities for more crimes.

On 24 September 2005, the Website HOL (Hiraan On Line) reported that in a press conference held in Jowhar, the Chairman of the Political Committee of the Middle Shabelle, Mohamed Omar Habeeb (Mohamed Dheere) accused the UN Envoy to Somalia, Mr. Francois Fall of working with personalities who do not want peace and Government in Somalia and encouraging them to keep saying that Jowhar is an area of conflict. He also accused the United Nations of not being neutral in the Somali affairs and happy with the existing government. He further added that "the UN has been a hidden government in Somalia in the past 14 years and at the same time misused the assistance sent to Somalia through them."

The Somali people hoped that as the African Union was under Ethiopia's influence, at least the United Nations, the highest organization of the international community, whose Charter charged it with the obligations to protect the independence and sovereignty of states, would protect the territorial integrity of Somalia. The UN should be on the side of the justice.

Claiming Ethiopia, "would further consolidate its efforts towards maintaining peace in Somalia both independently and along with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)", the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, clearly assumes the power of the United Nations and acts

under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. And instead of criticizing him the Representatives of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia praised him. Contrary to the impression given by the UNOPOS (United Nations Political Office for Somalia) the fact remains that the difficulties and the conflicts prevailing in Somalia are due to Ethiopia's sinister attempt to destabilize the country. If only Ethiopia had refrained from meddling in the internal affairs of Somalia and left it alone, the country would have been peaceful, stable and prosperous.

It is unfortunate that the African Union fails to understand or deliberately ignores the position of the Somali people vis-à-vis Ethiopia. Somalis rejected the forces from the Frontline States not because of its name, but because of the inclusion of Ethiopian troops among the peacekeepers. Even if the name were "African Union forces", let alone "East African Peacekeepers" of which obviously Ethiopia is part, Somalis would certainly reject it. If the decision is a plot to open a back door for Ethiopia's entry into Somalia, then African Union is definitely fanning the fire in the Horn of Africa.

Martin Plaut, the BBC correspondent in Addis Ababa, interviewed Meles Zenawi on 7 December 2002, after the terrorist attack on Israeli hotel in Mombassa, Kenya. He reported that the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said that he had indications that a group operating out of Somalia might have been behind last month's attacks on the Israeli hotel. He told the BBC that the Somali group

with links to al-Qaeda—known as al-Ittihad—may have traveled to Kenya by boat to carry out their operation. “Our indications seem to suggest that the terrorists may have started from Rascomboni in Somalia and gone to Mombassa using boats that were launched from Rascomboni.” The correspondent said that the Prime Minister “offered no evidence to substantiate these views.” ....“But with senior US official due in Addis Ababa next week, Mr. Meles will have every opportunity to convince them that the group had a hand in the attacks. “The prime minister was speaking after his return to Addis Ababa from the United States, where he said he had discussed security matters with President George W. Bush.”

In an article, *“War Clouds Over Somalia”*, Dan Connell commented on Ethiopia/US relations as follows:

“The first US client state in sub-Saharan Africa was Ethiopia, whose armed forces served in US-led missions in Korea and the Congo in the 1950s and 1960s. For nearly a quarter-century, more than half of all US aid to Africa went to Ethiopia, which gave the US basing rights in the newly annexed territory of Eritrea in exchange.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising to hear in the twenty-first century the leaders of the present-day Ethiopia using language similar to their ancestors who, centuries ago, called on Christian Powers to assist them to

1. Global Policy Forum, March 22, 2002.

fight against Islam in the Horn of Africa. Meles Zenawi, the present leader of the Government in Ethiopia, like the past Kings of Abyssinia, successfully impressed the twenty-first century "Powers" of the fact that there are Muslims in the Horn of Africa and he is continuously seeking support to fight, what he calls, "islamists" in the region. The way Meles is using religion to secure the support of the Powers for his country is exactly the same as the nineteen centuries Kings John and Menelek used to do and sadly, as the "Powers" of the past, the present day ones are openly supporting his adventure and closing their eyes to the crimes he is committing against the Somalis and against his own people.

It is evident that Abyssinia had entertained aggressive designs against Somalia since the second half of the 19th century. One of the important reasons for its hostility was that Somalia has always been a Muslim country and Abyssinia's self-image is that of a Christian country among "the sea of pagans". This feeling of being the defender of the faith survives even in the 20th century. The time has changes and therefore the strategy has also to change. Meles Zenawi loses no opportunity to stick the stigma of terrorism on to Somalia and rushes to Washington to seek to turn the Americans against Somalia, without any evidence to connect Somalia with terrorism.

The problem that Ethiopia is facing is that the people whom it armed to the teeth to subvert the previous Governments in Somalia have turned their

guns against the Addis Ababa regime. Meles created and armed the groups to implement his sinister plan to occupy Somalia through them. Now the same have aborted his plan to become part of the so-called peacekeeping forces. Whatever political and economic capital he invested on these groups had been completely wasted.

During the past ten years, the so-called "Super Power" of the region successfully managed to bring certain regions of Somalia, through coercion or inducement, under its wings. The landing of the Ethiopia forces in Mogadishu would have been the final victory for Meles. The Almighty protected Somalia from his evil designs by simply making him preoccupied with his own problems.

A year has passed since the establishment of the new Somali government in Nairobi and so far the African Union has failed to provide the promised African peacekeeping forces to help the new government settle in the capital, Mogadishu. Of course, no one denies that the Government can have offices anywhere in the country but the only place that can give credibility to the government is the national capital. In many countries in Africa or Asia there are opposition groups that control certain areas or even regions, but that does not give them the right to claim that they are the government until they occupy the capital.

Immediately after the election of Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, US Department of State spokesman Richard Boucher said, "The reconciliation process is central



to the reestablishment of stability and effective government in Somalia. We urge the president and the assembly to focus on the immediate task at hand—the establishment of an effective government operating in Mogadishu.”

Unlike in other cases, where the government faces opposition, in Somalia the conflict is within the same state institutions. It is therefore only question of understanding each other's position so that long-lasting solution can be reached which will be in the best interest of the people and the country. Somalia's case is the worst of all political crises which had been recorded in the recent past either in Africa or elsewhere. Fifteen years have passed since collapse of the military regime in 1991. Greed and personal ambition, as well as rigidity, are the reasons that brought the country to this state of affairs.

Meanwhile the two sides exercise their normal international duties from their temporary headquarters. The President and the Prime Minister as well as the Ministers fulfilled their commitment as much as it is possible. The President, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, attended and addressed the 2005 United Nations General Assembly and participated in the meetings of the Arab League and African Union and the meetings of the other regional organizations on behalf of the Somali Government and people. The Prime Minister, Dr. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, visited the headquarters of the European Union and received economic and political support. The bad thing is that there is no unity among the two parts

of the Federal institutions, and the good thing is that none of them publicly discredits the legitimacy of the other. What is missing here is the coordination and consultation between the two most important organs of the State on programme which should be presented in these conferences. They should be briefing each other on what they achieved. The Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament attended the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments held from 7 to 9 September 2005 in the same UN General Assembly Hall where four days later the President of the Republic attended the United Nations General Assembly which opened on 13 September 2005. The two sides should put aside their differences and consult each other how best national interest can be served.

To demonstrate its support and solidarity to the TFG, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held for the first time its ministerial meeting in the town of Jowhar on 29 November 2005. After the meeting, the IGAD Ministerial Council issued a communiqué in which it reiterated the legitimacy of the Somali government. The communiqué added that the government has "a solemn right to establish, train and equip its law enforcement" institutions. It also recommended the deployment of a military observer mission and encouraged all members of the organization to establish diplomatic relations with the Transitional Federal Government. Recently the League of Arab States inaugurated its office in Jowhar.

If Mohamed Siad Barre's regime was removed in the national interest, as it was claimed, the actors should have given chance to anyone of them to lead the country in an orderly transition. But as it happened, after succeeding in ousting the government, those involved failed to make a difference and instead engaged themselves in a bloody conflict until the situation reached a disastrous state in which the country finds itself. Some are enjoying while many are suffering. I believe that it is high time that the Federal Government and all Parliamentarians who are today charged with the task of governing the country for a five years term should come together and help the people and country to achieve peace and stability, so that the vital infrastructure necessary for the eradication of ignorance, disease and poverty may be restored.

Someone's pain is someone's joy. I have no doubt that those who want Somali people's pain to continue are very happy to see continuation of the conflict. Like a mouse, the enemies of Somalia blow fresh air while they bite us, and we continue to regard them as our friends. Their plan is to keep the Somalis flying like birds that are chased when ever they landed on the trees until they die, tired and hungry. We must understand that all the odds are against us. Our very existence is in jeopardy. If we fail to understand what is going on in our surroundings and do not look after our own interest then our future and that of the coming generations would be bleak.

President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed has made up his mind that unless the African Union deployed forces to create secure environment he would not relocate the government in Mogadishu. He faces his erstwhile friends who now are bitterly opposing him. For the armed factions that are in the Government probably do not want to be part of the system as it would spell an end of their own private ambitions. The conflict is as the proverb says, "*Tra i due litiganti, il terzo gode*" i.e. (Between the two who quarrel, the third enjoys); the "third" being the enemies of Somalia. And, as far as the country is concerned, another proverb says, "When two elephants fight, the grass is trampled"; and in this case it is the people.

At present there are some hopeful signs that the present controversy may end. The Somali parliamentarians based in Mogadishu have resolved to hold talks with the rest of the Government in Jowhar to bridge the differences that have paralysed the new Government. According to the press report, this was a unanimous decision. Earlier, the group in Jowhar insisted that the meeting should be only in Somalia. In order to reach a compromise the Mogadishu group gave up its demand that the

meeting be held outside Somalia under international mediation. It now only asks the presence of international observers. The Government in Jowhar has welcomed the new development as a step in the right direction. "We welcome it with open arms," said Mohamed Abdi Hayer, TFG Information Minister.

The initiative for reconciliation has been welcomed by the United States. In a press statement in Washington, DC on 8 December 2005, the Deputy Spokesman of the State Department Adam Ereli declared:

"The United States welcomes the recent efforts of Members of Parliament in Mogadishu and Jowhar, backed by Somali civil society, to reinitiate dialogue across the divisions of the Somalia Transitional Federal Institutions. The November 15 and 29 resolutions of parliamentarians in Mogadishu and Prime Minister Gedi's efforts to convene the Council of Ministers are important vehicles through which Somali leaders might seek to resolve their differences.

"The United States supports the Transitional Federal Institutions and calls upon all Somali leaders to take concrete steps toward reaching agreement through inclusive dialogue. The United States looks forward to a meeting of the full Council of Ministers and a successful and representative session of the Transitional Federal Parliament as a means of resolving existing disagreements within the framework established by the Transitional Federal Charter."

### **Aden Declaration**

In addition to the announcement from Mogadishu, even a more encouraging and positive sign emerged from the Somali neighbour across the Red Sea, the Republic of Yemen. With the help of the President of Yemen, Ali Abdallah Salah, the Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the Speaker of the Somali Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sh. Adan held direct talks in the southern city of Aden from January 2 to 4, 2006.

At the end of their meeting the two sides issued a Declaration on 5 January, 2006, in which it was affirmed:

1. That both leaders have agreed [to] start a new page and end their differences, which have brought serious damage to the discharge of the duties and responsibilities of the institutions, in an spirit of cooperation on which the Somali people were spinning their highest hopes.
2. That both leaders have agreed to the necessity that inter active coordination should be based fully on the total respect of the principles and norms of the Transitional Federal charter, in accordance with normal state constitutional practices of permanent mutual consultations, so as not to allow any violation to the powers that the charter attributes to each of the Transitional Federal Institutions of the country

3. That the Transitional Federal Parliament should be convened within 30 days inside the country, with effect from today, to hold its official session in any place that may be agreed upon.
4. That both leaders jointly call upon the members of the Parliament and Government to put aside their fruitless squabbles and differences, urging them to come together and unite, placing the supreme interests of the nation above selfishness, while appealing to them, at the same time, for their full cooperation, in fulfilling the provisions of this declaration.
5. That the International Community, to fully support the efforts to convene all members of the Parliament to hold their first ordinary session, inside the country.

The Aden Declaration was signed by the President of the Republic and the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament. The third highest rank in the administration, the Prime Minister, Prof. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, was absent from the ceremony. In normal circumstances it could have been said that the President represented the government and the presence of the PM was not necessary. But knowing the situation that prevailed in Somalia, particularly during the period when each person represented a particular interest, the absence from such an important event by the Prime Minister has been interpreted as a peculiar case. The fact that the President and the Prime Minister were known to be

on the same boat, there must have been important reason as to why he was not taken on board on the way to Aden.

On the other hand, the relations between the Speaker and the Prime Minister were sour since the time of the confrontation between the government and parliament over the inclusion of Ethiopia in the peacekeeping force from the frontline states, but no one thought that the President and the PM were at odds. The Prime Minister felt that he was left out of the political game and somehow, let down by the President when the latter signed the Aden Declaration with the Speaker of the Parliament.

The President of the Somali Republic and the Speaker of the Parliament of the TFP, jointly addressed a vibrant appeal to the Somali people to contribute towards the implementation of self disarmament, ending their conflicts and differences, and use all peaceful means of mutual respect and dialogue.

The question is why the Speaker and his group based in Mogadishu had to waste so much valuable time by insisting that their decision or action was based on the provisions of the Charter, if in the end and after causing so much damage to the national interest, the Speaker would call upon his fellow parliamentarians and ministers, especially those he led or misled "to put aside their fruitless squabbles and differences."

If fact, those who claim to uphold the Charter, should have understood that the "Charter" is just a



provisional guide or agenda subject to all kinds of changes if and when need arises and not a permanent Constitution approved by the people in a general referendum. Even the Constitution can be amended if necessary. Besides this issue of the seat of the Government, which the Speaker insisted throughout the past fifteen months, the other bone of contention between the Speaker's team and that of the Government was over the participation in the Peacekeeping operation forces from the Frontline States.

To bring the Prime Minister on board, a meeting between the President, the Speaker and the Prime Minister was organized at the house of the President in Nairobi, Kenya, on 15 January 2006. The meeting was supposed to reconcile the Speaker and PM who were not on speaking terms for over a year and to unify the three leaders' position on the issue of the seat of the state institutions. Instead of bridging, the meeting witnessed widening of the differences when the Prime Minister suddenly decided to leave Kenya for the government's provisional headquarters in Jowhar, just before the announcement of the decision regarding the venue of the proposed session of the Federal Parliament. The session of the parliament had not been held for nearly a year and a half due to disagreement over where the seat of the State institutions should be.

In politics things can change even within an hour. The Prime Minister who had stormed out of the meeting which he attended with his other two

"partners" suddenly changed his mind. Something, or someone probably convinced him to go on board. On 22 January 2006, while speaking at a function in Jowhar organized in support of the Aden Declaration, he apologized to the people of Somalia everywhere for the differences which exist within the Federal Government which was expected to deliver good services after fifteen years of lack of government in Somalia. He declared that "now, those differences have been resolved and the Government will fulfill its duties in unison." A day earlier, on 21 January the Mogadishu based armed factions including cabinet ministers and MPs had expressed their support to the Aden agreement.

The Mogadishu based armed groups, including the cabinet ministers and MPs, accepted to put aside "their fruitless squabbles" and welcomed the Aden Declaration during their regular meeting held in Mogadishu on 21 January 2006, with nationalist songs and jubilation.

On Monday, 30 January 2006, the Speaker of the Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Shaikh Aden announced, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed that the extraordinary session of the Federal Parliament will be held at Baidoa town on 26 February 2006. The President who was present at the ceremony at which the announcement of the venue was made, said that he supported the decision and will attend the session to be held in Baidoa. Again the absentee from the ceremony was the Prime Minister, Prof. Ali

Mohamed Ghedi. It was said that during his meeting with the two top-most colleagues in Nairobi, the PM objected Baidoa to be the venue for the meeting and as result he chose not to attend the ceremony and instead went back to Jowhar, where the government has its seat. This was a vital shift in his position.

In a separate Press Statement, the Speaker of the Parliament said:

“The President and I have continued our discussions and consultations with the Prime Minister and members of the TFIs on the venue and preparations for the convening of the Parliament.

In accordance with Article 34 of the Transitional Federal Charter and article 5 of the Rules and procedures of the Parliament, and after consultations with the President and the Prime Minister and with members of the Transitional Federal Parliament, we have agreed that the TFP shall meet in Baidoa. All members of Parliament shall arrive at the venue on the 15th of February. The formal opening of the extra-ordinary session of the Parliament shall start on Sunday 26th February. Information on travel and logistics for travel and stay in Baidoa during the extra-ordinary session of the Parliament shall be communicated to members.

The article 34 of the Charter which the Speaker referred to states that:

1. The Parliament shall hold two (2) ordinary sessions annually.
2. The Parliament may be convened in

extraordinary sessions by the Speaker at the request of the President or upon requisition by one third of its members.

3. Meetings of Parliament or its committees shall be valid with the presence of half plus one of its members.

The problem was not with Article 34 as it does not deal with the venue where the parliament's meetings should be held. The controversy started when the President and the Prime Minister decided to avoid Mogadishu for reasons of security and instead made the town of Jowhar the seat of the Government. The Speaker and a part of the parliamentarians claimed that that was against the constitution and established themselves in the capital, Mogadishu.

The Speaker also referred to Article 5 of the Charter that states that "the capital of the Somali Republic shall be Mogadishu (Hamar-Xamar)." This too has nothing to do with the meetings of the Parliament.

The real bone of contention between the two camps was not the application or the disregard of the two articles. The reason was that some of the leading members of the "victorious team" in the Somali Reconciliation Conference in Kenya, decided not to be part of the government's plan which they saw as detrimental to their own interest, and turned their backs to their captain. The fact that many Somalis at the conference who were, for a long time fire and cotton to each other, were brought together in one camp, without first solving their internal conflict to heal the old wounds, must have contributed to the crack

in the newly born Federal Institutions.

Again the same method which caused the failure of the Federal institutions to hold their regular meetings has been used in the Aden reconciliation. Only two of the top-most leaders of the Somali Federal Institutions, the President and the Speaker of the Parliament, met while the Prime Minister was kept out of the negotiations. In Somali political games, each person represents a particular interest.

In a few days everything appeared to be normal and the cracks among the top leaders of the Somali highest authority have been sealed. Even those who were against Baidoa as the venue for the Extraordinary Session of the Parliament jumped on the band-wagon going to the capital of the Bay region.

All members of the Parliament were required to arrive at the Venue on the 15th of February. The formal opening of the session of the Parliament was scheduled to start on Sunday 26th February.

Implementing the "Aden Declaration" the Somali Federal Parliament met in Baidoa, in the Bay region on 26 March, 2006. Of course, the members, especially the followers of the Speaker, accepted the decision reached by their chief, without raising the controversial issues that caused the earlier disruption.

At the opening session on 26 February 2006, the Prime Minister asked the members to forgive each other for what happened between them in the past and start a new chapter. On his part, the President told the parliamentarians, "As we implement the Aden Declaration, which is historic, we request you not to

let us down. While we are burying the past conflict, do not create another. He said: "Before we appear like people who do not know their interest, we should forgive each other and in our meetings we should discuss how we can make Somalia how it used to be." The President also touched upon the thorny issue of the disarmament of the militias which was, in fact, one of the most sensitive issues which caused the scuffle in the parliament on 17 March 2005, when the Parliament rejected the deployment of peacekeepers from the neighbouring countries.

Of the 275 members of the Somali Transitional Parliament 211 attended the session in Baidoa, some 240 km from Mogadishu. Those who did not come to the opening session included Deputy Prime Minister Hussein Mohamed Farah Aydid, Commerce Minister Musse Sudi Yalahow, National Security Minister, Mohamed Qanyare Afrah, Public Works Minister Osman Ali Ato and Reconstruction, Resettlement Minister, Bare Hirale, Religious Affairs Minister, Mohamed Mohamud (Omar Filish) and Rural Development Minister, Mohamed Mohamud Guled (Ga'mo Dheere)

After hearing the speech of the President, some members were already murmuring that "he (the President) again mentioned the issue that had caused the friction"; the issue of disarmament of the militias, about which almost all the armed factions are allergic even now.

The point is that all those who waged armed war against the government in the past are now claiming

for share in power. The Federal Government, the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, the Puntland State and those who grabbed land possess arms and some still receive arms from foreign governments.

Unlike other parts in Africa or elsewhere where governments have been forced out of power by armed groups, Somalia's factions were united only on toppling the regime, but had no common post-victory plan if and when power fell into their hands. In other parts "the revolutionaries" had, in most cases, a pre-arranged government which took over power immediately after their victory over the regime putting aside their internal differences.

In Somalia things went the other way. Instead of working together each faction pursued its own separate road to gain power. The resultant rivalry became so intense that they were not even willing to sit in the same room. They were willing to fight their erstwhile comrades-in-arms with weapons provided to them by enemies of Somalia. Some factions banded together driven by shared interest. But there were no trust even between them. When the factions were included in the new government established in Kenya, the factions did not trust their "friends". All the factions are therefore uneasy with the idea of surrendering their arms and disbanding the militias they control to people who were themselves factions leaders like them.

The question is who has the right to tell the others to disarm? Some armed factions oppose the way it is put, because they think that while others can keep

their arms, the fishing net is just for them alone. Besides, the factions/militias referred to in the statements are afraid that once they give up their guns, they will be vulnerable to attacks from their rivals.

For the country and in the interest of the people, there must be a general disarmament to create an environment free of fear for all. Today we speak as if there is only one place or one group to disarm. The coalition of the factions that now form the government and those who are out of the government, but played a role in defeating the previous regime should all agree to throw their guns into incinerator or entrust them to neutral groups to be handed over to a democratically elected government when it will emerge.

After the opening speeches, the Speaker of the Somali Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Shaikh Aden, adjourned the session for a week. This was the first meeting held in the country since its establishment in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2004. The reason given for the adjournment was to give the members time to "solve any personal differences before going into discussions on policy issues."

What the well wishers pray for is that the country returns to normalcy and all that caused the division of the people and the dismemberment of the country eliminated. Whether they are elected or selected, the members of today's transitional parliament have the responsibility to have the interest of the nation uppermost in their mind and to reject the colonialists' long-



term design aimed at dividing Somalia. The responsibility of upholding the unity and the territorial integrity of the country lies upon the shoulders of the present law-makers. Let parliamentarians of today be remembered in history not as evil-doers but as great Somali nationalists who protected their motherland.

Somalia is the only country which does not have a government to take care of its people, because of the external interference in its internal affairs as well as the lack of honesty and sincerity among the key players. The Somalis must know that peace or solution imposed by others will not help cure the ills. What Somalia needs is that people, old and young and illiterate and literate, understand that clanism will not build a nation and tribal enclaves cannot be states. Despite all our differences, we should learn how to live together and create, "unity in diversity."

May the Almighty show us the right path and help us achieve an ever-lasting peace. Aamiin.

*Photos on the Opposite Page:*

Above: The signing of Aden Declaration by the President (L) and the Speaker of the Parliament (R) witnessed by the President of Yemen (C).

Below: The first meeting of the Somali Federal Parliament in Baidoa after Aden Declaration. The President (C), Speaker on his right and Prime Minister on his left with the Members of Parliament raising their hands.



## ~~Postscript~~

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At the end of the book and while making the final touches on the cover page, news that warlords have been defeated by the Militias of the Islamic Courts in Somalia, was broadcast by most of the international media. BBC World Television made it as the first headline item of the news on Monday, 5 June 2006.

The warlords controlled the country since the collapse of the military government of Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991 and for the following 15 years they divided the country into clan based enclaves; suppressing, killing and looting the weaker and the unarmed section of the society.

Few days back, the Prime Minister, Prof. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, sacked from the government those warlords who were cabinet Ministers and involved in the fighting. According to BBC report, "nine of the 11 Mogadishu-based warlords have now left the city."

The warlords, who were members of the newly established government, refused to collaborate with their own leadership and preferred to continue their militia activities. Recently the warlords formed what they called "Anti-Terrorism Alliance" to wage a proxy war against the Islamic Courts. There was allegation that meetings were taking place between officials of the United States and members of the "Alliance"

in Jowhar town in Somalia and in Nairobi, Kenya.

The majority of the Somalis wished the end of the warlords' blackmails and expected the foreign powers involved in the Somali affairs to help achieve that goal so that once and for all the people start a new life, free from road blocks and intimidation. Thousands gathered at the Mogadishu's Tribune square to protest alleged United States support for the warlords. However, this mass demonstration should not be interpreted as a rejection of the support of the United States to Somalia and its people, but as an appeal to the US to refrain from resuscitating those who have been denying the masses their right to live in peace and harmony and who reduced the country in the present dismal situation.

By Rob Crilly, Contributor to The Christian Science Monitor, wrote on June 4, 2006,

"Suleiman Baldo, Africa program director of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, says there is a growing mass of evidence to suggest US operations in the country. "The involvement of the US in counterterrorism in partnership with other warlords in Mogadishu is a factor that weakens unity in Somalia," says Mr. Baldo, adding that alleged US support for warlords "undermines the authority of the transitional federal government."

According to BBC, "Washington merely says it will support those trying to stop people it considers terrorists setting up in Somalia but stresses its commitment to the country's transitional

government, which functions from Baidoa, 250km (155 miles) north-west of the capital."

The United States is reported to have expressed its concern after the Militias of the Islamic Courts said that they have taken control of the Somali capital, Mogadishu. According to BBC report, dated June 6, 2006: A State Department spokesman did not comment directly but pointedly said: "We don't want to see Somalia turn into a safe haven for foreign terrorists."

The African Union Chairman, President Denis Sessou Nguesso of Congo, on a visit to Washington, US, has, according to BBC, indirectly criticised the US for its support of the warlords. "We think, and what we told President [George W] Bush, that most important is to establish a government that must help the Somali people to have a real government," he said.

Since independence in 1960, Somalia saw only crisis. Nearly one decade of corrupt civilian government that was toppled by the military regime in 1969; after more than two decades of military dictatorship, removed from power by factions that turned warlords and threw the country in deeper crisis for over a decade and a half now. And finally the people hope that the Islamic Courts that toppled the warlords would not themselves misuse their power and place blocks on the road to peace and reconciliation.

The people of Somalia have suffered enough, mentally, physically and politically. The road to

recovery is rocky, but being people who are tired of wars and lack of central government, the Somalis can easily surmount the difficulties ahead, provided that peace and stability are established in the country. The Somalis think that the elimination of the warlords from the scene will be the start of a new era of peace and harmony in the country, unless that the new "masters" of Mogadishu do not wear the same shoes of the warlords, as it is seen in the history of the country since the collapse of the government in 1991.

Since nationalism mentality or political ideology does not exist in Somalia, all those who have the power of the gun have so far been practicing policies based on clan interest and personal benefit. It will not be, therefore, a surprise, if the deposed groups attempt a come-back, no matter at what cost.

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MOHAMED OSMAN OMAR was born in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1937. He studied in Mogadishu as well as abroad. He began his career at a very young age during the UN Trusteeship as a Civil Servant at the General Post Office, reaching the post of Chief Controller of the main Cash Department. He was among the first Somalis who took up posts held by the Italians during the period of what was called "the Somalisation". After the Post Office, he worked at the Constituent Assembly during the preparation for the country's independence. In 1962, he worked as a journalist in the Ministry of Information. In 1967, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and served as a Diplomat at the Somali Embassies in London, Beijing, Teheran, Dar-Es-Salaam, Khartoum, Belgrade (former Yugoslavia) and New Delhi. The last three posts as his country's Ambassador. He still is Somalia's Ambassador to India and concurrently accredited to Sri Lanka and Singapore.

For six years, Ambassador Mohamed Osman Omar was Chief of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He speaks several languages, including Italian and Mandarin Chinese.