

**CONFLICTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND
FUTILE ATTEMPTS AT RESOLUTION**

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INTRODUCTION

The Horn of Africa is the continent's easternmost region and includes the countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. It also includes the northern part of Somalia, which declared independence from the rest of Somali Republic as the new Republic of 'Somaliland' in May 1991 following the collapse of the military regime in Mogadishu. However, up till now, no country has recognized the secessionist government in 'Somaliland'.

The Horn of Africa is inhabited by Nilo-Hamitic racial group, who look like Arabs, but have slightly darker pigmentation. Along with Egypt, the Horn of Africa was the site of some of African Continent's oldest civilizations, including Kush, in northern Sudan; Aksum in Ethiopia and Eritrea; and Punt, believed to have been in what is now Somalia. Today, the Horn of Africa is the setting of several long conflicts such as border clashes between Ethiopia and Eritrea on the one hand, and between Ethiopia and Somalia on the other; chronic instability in Somalia and clashes between Afars and Issas in Djibouti. The four countries of the Horn of Africa have an estimated combined population of 86.6 million (2005 estimates).

The conflicts in the Horn are endemic and pandemic. They are endemic because each of the states (perhaps apart from Eritrea) has serious internecine conflicts. They are also pandemic, because the conflicts have contagion effects in all countries of the sub-region, as a result of border clashes due to irredentism, and outright interference in each other's internal affairs, or instigation of rebellion in each other's territories. The conflicts in the Horn of Africa have attracted international interest and attempts at resolving the conflicts have gone beyond the African Union. Before the collapse of the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, (USSR), the Horn of Africa was a major zone of ideological conflict between the East and the West.

The strategic location of the Horn of Africa between two continents, especially as the gateway to the oil-rich Middle East, through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, makes it an area of importance to the international super-powers, particularly, the western industrialized nations under the leadership of the United States.

This paper will be divided into five parts. The second part after this Introduction will give the profile of each of the four countries, this will be followed by the analyses of

the international conflicts. The fourth part will analyze the Somalia conflicts and evaluate the numerous efforts that have been made at resolving the conflict and suggest prognosis on the way forward.

II PROFILE OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

There are four internationally recognized states in the Horn of Africa. These are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

There are common trends in the profile of the four countries. First, is the fact that all of them were former colonies of European powers although the period of Italian control of Ethiopia was short. Hence a major contributory factor in the perennial conflicts and crises in the sub region is the colonial antecedent. Djibouti was colonized by France, Eritrea was an Italian colony between 1890 and 1941, Somalia was colonized by both Britain and Italy – northern Somalia was a British colony while Italian Somaliland is now central and southern Somalia.

The second common trend is the fact that three of them are multi-nation states (multi-ethnic) with same ethnic groups in some of the countries. Somalis are found in Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia. Tigre are found in Ethiopia and Eritrea, while Afars are located in Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The third common trend is the large Muslim population in the four countries.

Fourthly, the four countries are members of both the United Nations Organization and African Union. Lastly, as a result of incessant conflicts, the countries operate war economies with high percentages of their annual budgets earmarked for defence. There is also proliferation of arms and ammunition in all the countries of the Horn – mostly in unauthorized hands.

(a) DJIBOUTI

Djibouti has a population of 476, 703 (2005 estimate). The two major ethnic groups are Somali, 60% and Afar 35% (World Almanac 2006: 773) and a total land area is 22, 980 sq. km. It is located on the east coast of Africa and separated from Arabian Peninsula by the strategically vital strait of Bab El-Mandeb. The neighbours of Djibouti are Ethiopia on the west and south west, Eritrea on the North West, and Somalia on the south

east. Even with its low population and weak economy, Djibouti spent \$25 million on defence in 2004, and has 10,000 troops. Djibouti is heavily dependent on livestock with 297,000 herd of cattle, 512,000 goats and 466,000 sheep. Fishing is also a major occupation. Average life expectancy is 42 years for male and 44 years for female.

Historically, France gained control of the territory in stages between 1862 and 1900 as French Somaliland. It became an overseas territory in 1945 and in 1967, it was renamed the French Territory of the Afars and Issas. Ethiopia and Somalia both laid claims to Djibouti, but later renounced their claims in early 1970s. There were clashes between Afars (ethnically related to Ethiopians) and Issas (related to Somalia) in 1976. Immigrants flocked into Djibouti from both Ethiopia and Somalia, until the country attained independence on June 27, 1977.

French aid is the mainstay of the economy, as well as assistance from Arab countries. A peace accord in December 1999, ended a 3-year uprising by Afar rebels, but there is now uneasy calm and occasional skirmishes.

There are currently (November 2007) about 2,700 French and 1,800 U.S. troops in Djibouti.

(b) ERITREA

The state of Eritrea has a population of 4,669,638 (2005) and the major ethnic groups are Tigrinya 50%, Tigre and Kumara 40%, Afar 4% and Saho 3%. With a total land area of 121,320 sq. km, Eritrea's neighbouring countries are Ethiopia to the South, Djibouti on the South-East, and Sudan on the West. The capital is Asmara. 80% of the population is engaged in agriculture, especially livestock. Life expectancy is 57 years for male and 60 years for female. Eritrea spent \$74 million on defence in 2004 and has 201,750 troops. It is a member of the United Nations and African Union.

Historically, Eritrea was part of the Ethiopian Kingdom of Aksum. It was an Italian colony from 1890 to 1941, when it was captured by the British. After a period of British and United Nations supervision, Eritrea was given to Ethiopia as part of a Federation in 1952. Ethiopia annexed Eritrea as a province in 1962. This led to a 31-year struggle for independence in form of liberation war. Eritrea formally declared itself an independent

nation on May 24, 1993. It fought a border war with Ethiopia between June 1998 and May 2000. The two countries still view each other with suspicion.

(c) ETHIOPIA (Federal Democratic Republic)

Ethiopia has a population of 73,053,286 (2005 estimates) (The World Almanac 2006, 777) and a land area is 1,119,683 sq. km. The major ethnic groups are Oromo 40%, Amhara and Tigre, 32%, Gidamo 9%, Shankella 6%, Somali 6%, Afar 4% and Gurage 2%. About 50% of the population are Muslims and 40% belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Ethiopia's neighbours are Sudan on the West, Kenya on the South, Somalia and Djibouti to the East, and Eritrea on the north. The defence budget of Ethiopia in 2004 was \$290 million with 182, 500 troops. The population is mostly involved in agriculture and animal husbandry. Ethiopia has a crude oil reserve of 400,000 barrels (2004) and is a member of the United Nations and the African Union.

Historically, Ethiopian culture was influenced by Egypt and Greece and until the end of the 19th century, it was rarely more than a loose confederation of Kingdoms. The boundaries of the empire were fluid. Italy wanted to extend its colonial rule from Eritrea to Ethiopia but was defeated in 1896 by the Ethiopian forces of Emperor Menelik in the battle of Adowa (Plant and Gilkes, 1999). Ethiopia maintained its independence until another Italian invasion that was ordered by Benito Mussoli in 1936. However, British forces freed the country as part of the operations in the Second World War in 1941, the last Emperor, Haile Selassie I, returned from exile and continued his rule.

A series of drought in the 1970s killed hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians. This drought, along with an army mutiny, strikes and student demonstrations led to the dethronement of Selassie in 1974, he died in 1975. The monarchy was abolished in 1975. The military regime was torn by bloody coups, and uprisings by ethnic and political groups that were aided in part by Sudan and Somalia. Diplomatic ties with the United States, once a major ally under the deposed Emperor deteriorated, while cooperation agreements were signed with the defunct USSR in 1977. In 1978, Soviet advisers and Cuban troops helped defeat Somalian forces and the military government became a Marxist-Communist regime.

In 1984, following another extended drought that threatened the country with famine, a huge international relief effort was mounted. Despite this, about a million Ethiopians died as a result of starvation and disease.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, (EPRDF) an umbrella group of rebel armies launched a major war against the government forces in 1991, forcing President Mengistu Haile Mariam to resign and flee the country.

Ethnic clashes are common, and the new Federal Constitution has not fully pacified restless ethnic groups.

(d) SOMALIA

Located on the Horn of Africa along the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean, Somalia is a largely homogenous society. The vast majority of its 8.6 million people share a common language. Somalia has a population of 8,591,629. The major ethnic group is Somali with 85% of the population.

It has a land area is 627,337 sq. km. The neighbouring countries are Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya to the West. It has not had a recognised political authority for over a decade. Only 2% of Somalia is arable, and the population is predominantly engaged in nomadic pastoralism. The natural resources include uranium, iron ore, tin, bauxite, copper and oil.

Life expectancy is 46 years for male and 50 years for female.

The land was known by the ancient Egyptians as Punt. From the 2nd to the 7th century AD, parts of the area belonged to the Ethiopian kingdom of Aksum. Arab tribes in the 7th century settled along the west of the Gulf of Aden and established the Sultanate of Adal, which centred around the port of Zeila.

The Somali people began to migrate into this region from Yemen in the 9th century A.D. The Sultanate disintegrated during the 16th century into small independent states, many of which were ruled by Somali Chiefs. Zeila became a dependency of Yemen and was then captured by the Ottoman Empire (Microsoft Encarta Premium 2006).

In 1990, the Somali Army had a force of some 60,000, the Navy, 1,200, and Air Force, 2,500. Since the overthrow of Mohammed Siad Barre in January 1991, there have been no national armed forces, although different clans maintained separate armies.

British Somaliland was formed in the late 19th century as was Italian Somaliland. Present day Somalia was colonized by Britain and Italy. Italy lost its African colonies in World War II, British Somaliland gained independence on June 26, 1960, and by pre-arrangement, merged on July 1, 1960 with the United Nations Trust Territory of Somalia to create the independent Somali Republic.

Somalia may be described as a failed State. A failed state refers to any country where the structure, authority (legitimate power) law and political order have fallen apart; leading to a possible disintegration of the country. A failed state lacks a central administration, workable economy and infrastructure. The state is also incapable of meeting the basic needs of the citizens, more especially, their security.

III ORIGINS AND CAUSES OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN STATES

Three major belligerents are involved in the international wars in the Horn of Africa between 1960 and now, namely Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. These wars are interwoven; the internecine war in Somalia has two other countries (Eritrea and Ethiopia) as indirect participants and sponsors. The two international wars are the Ethiopian – Somali conflict and the Ethiopian – Eritrea conflict.

(a) ETHIOPIAN – SOMALI CONFLICTS

The Ethiopian – Somali conflict and mutual distrust are attributable to territorial and political disputes. Animosity between Ethiopia and Somali dates back a few centuries with wars and conflicts (Wikipedia; the free Encyclopedia). Boundary disputes over the Ogaden region date back to the 1948 settlement when the land was granted to Ethiopia. Somali's disenchantment with this decision led to several attempts to invade Ethiopia with the hopes of taking control of the Ogaden to create a Greater Somalia. This plan would have reunited the Somali people of Ethiopian with those living in the Republic of Somalia.

Ethiopian – Somali conflicts 1960 – 2007

1. 1960 – 1964: Border Dispute
2. 1977 – 1978: Ogaden War
3. 1982: Border Clash

4. 1998 till date: Cross – border warfare in the chaotic era with Ethiopian involvement in the Somali crisis.

Conflicts between Ethiopia and Somalia actually predated the present times. Wars between Somalia, or its precursor Islamic States, and Ethiopia stretch back to the 16th century. Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi was a 16th century Islamic leader of Adal, popular in Somali culture for his jihad against the Ethiopians during the rise of the Adal Sultanate.

In the light of this painful living history, oral and cultural traditions, long standing ethnic divisions and sectarian differences have contributed to the perennial distrust, animosity and conflicts between the two neighbours.

Somalia had laid claim to Ogaden, the huge eastern region of Ethiopia, peopled by Somalis. Ethiopia and Somali rebels with the military support of Somali government started a debilitating war in 1977. Some 11,000 Cuban troops with Soviet arms defeated Somali army and ethnic Somali rebels in Ethiopia in 1978. The war led to huge refugee problems. More than 1.5 million refugees entered Somalia. Guerrilla warfare in Ogaden continued until 1988, when a peace agreement was reached between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Ethiopia has continued to intervene in Somalia since August 1996. In 1999, Ethiopian troops reportedly raided the Somali border town of Balanballe in pursuit of members of the Al-Ittihad – Al –Islamiya group which has been fighting to unite Ethiopia's eastern Ogaden region with Somalia.

In January 2001, Somalia's Transitional National Government accused Ethiopia of arming factions opposed to the government, occupying Somali districts and increasing its military presence in Somalia.

Ethiopia has been accused of supporting the following Somali factions/warlords.

- i. Somali Reconstruction and Restoration Council (SRRC).
- ii. Musi Sudi
- iii. General Mohammed Said Morgan
- iv. Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM)
- v. Rehanwein Resistance Army (RRA)

Most recently, in late 2006 and early 2007, the Ethiopians moved into Mogadishu, the capital of Somali, to protect the Transitional Federal Government against the onslaught of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). The Ethiopian presence in Somalia, is supported by the U.S., and this has provoked more resistance from some minor clans, business groups and Islamists, and has escalated the violence in Somalia.

(b) THE ETHIOPIA – ERITREA CONFLICT

In May 1991, the capital of Eritrea, Asmara fell to the liberation movement that had been fighting for the independence of the territory from Ethiopia for the past thirty years (Plant and Gilkes; 1999). At the same time, the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa was captured by forces led by northern rebels from the province of Tigray. It was then expected, although wrongly, that the long and bloody wars that had racked the region might be at an end. The dual victories were the result of a close cooperation between the two movements that had led the struggles – the Eritrea People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The two had cooperated to overcome authoritarian rule of Ethiopia. In May, 1993 Eritrea achieved formal independence, recognized by the new TPLF rulers in Ethiopia, the United Nations, and the Organization of African Unity.

However, the cooperation did not last long as there were cracks in the relationship even at the moment of victory. The EPLF expelled as many as 150,000 Ethiopians, including thousands of Eritrean wives and their children, and many Tigrayans from Eritrea, forcing them to leave property and belongings behind. However, the Ethiopian government did not retaliate, it allowed more than 500,000 Eritreans in Ethiopia to stay.

In 1997, Eritrea introduced her own currency, the nakfa, thereby jettisoning the Ethiopian birr, hitherto the legal tender.

The Eritrean – Ethiopian War took place from May 1998 to June 2000 becoming one of the conflicts in the Horn of Africa.

Ethiopia and Eritrea, two of the world’s poorest countries, spent millions of dollars on the war and lost tens of thousands of their citizens. In spite of this calamity, the war resulted in minor border changes.

Eritrean – Ethiopian Border War 1998 – 2000

Location: Eritrean – Ethiopian border

Combatants

Eritrea versus Ethiopia

Casualties

Eritrea

50,000 (estimate)

Ethiopia

80,000 (estimate)

Result

Ethiopian military victory.

Eritrean international court victory

Fighting broke out in May 1998 in an area known as the Badme triangle, a 400 sq. km triangle of land. The Ethiopians who administered it, said the Eritreans had invaded and demanded their withdrawal.

When the war broke out, United States and Rwanda came up with a four point peace plan that called for withdrawal of both forces to pre-June 1998 positions. The OAU also started a peace mediation effort. Eritrea refused the peace plan of US and Rwanda, and Ethiopia also failed to react to OAU peace plan in 1999.

There were three fronts in the war: Badme to the west, Zalemessa/Alitena in the centre, and Bure to the east. It was mostly trench warfare in all fronts.

By May 2000, Ethiopia occupied about a quarter of Eritrea's territory, displacing 650,000 people, and destroyed key components of Eritrea's infrastructure. The Eritrean made a tactical withdrawal and accepted the request of the OAU for a cease fire. On 25, May 2000, Ethiopia declared the war was over.

Both countries spent huge amounts of money on arms and other war material chiefly from China, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy and the states of the former Soviet Union. Russia supplied both sides with aircraft – MiG – 29s to Eritrea and Zuhor – 27s to Ethiopia. Eritrea also acquired surface – to – air missiles from Libya.

The effects of the war were not confined to the two countries involved as the fighting also spread to Somalia as both governments tried to outflank one another. The Eritrean government began supporting the Oromo Liberation Front, a rebel group seeking independence of Oromia from Ethiopia. Ethiopia retaliated by supporting groups in southern Somalia who were opposed to Mohammed Farrah Aidid, a Somali warlord and

strong ally of Eritrea. Ethiopia sent over 3,000 troops to south-west Somalia, with the aim of a setting up a buffer zone to prevent Oromo liberation Front's infiltration.

Following an agreement signed in Algiers, the two parties presented their cases at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. On 21, December, 2005, the Commission ruled that Eritrea broke international law when it attacked Ethiopia in 1998, triggering the border conflict. Ethiopia and Eritrea still have mobilized troops along the border. Meanwhile, the Commission ruled that Badme, the disputed border area belong to Eritrea. A UN Peace Keeping force, (UNMEE) with 1,700 troops is in the region to patrol a buffer zone.

It is obvious that the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea goes beyond border disputes, and that the historically rooted disagreement reflects clashes over politics, not land. For example, Ethiopia and Eritrea's Constitutions could each spur secessionist movements in the other. Other problems include economic interdependence between the two countries, and stability in the Horn of Africa. Thus, resolution of border disputes will not end hostility and mutual suspicion.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia is dissatisfied with the ruling of the independent Boundary Commission. By Resolution 1970 of April 13, 2006, the UN Security Council reiterated demands that Eritrea should lift restrictions imposed on UNMEE operations and that Ethiopia should accept the final binding decision of the Eritrea - Ethiopia Boundary Commission.

On November 6, 2007, Ethiopia said it had no plans to go to war with Eritrea over their disputed border. The International Crisis Group (ICG) had warned that the Horn of Africa nations could start the 1998 - 2000 clashes border war.

Ethiopia wanted Eritrea to pull its troops out of a 25km buffer zone on the Eritrean side and stop restriction it has placed on 1,700 Peace Keepers from UNMEE. Ethiopia has 100,000 troops the border and Eritrea has 4,000 inside the buffer zone with 120,000 nearby (The Nation November 7, 2007).

IV THE SOMALIA CONUNDRUM

In cotemporary times, many analysts view Somalia as an important symbol of United Nations peace keeping failure. Somalia also portrays the international community

as uncaring due to its inability to respond quickly to Somalia's mass famine and the internecine warfare in the early 1990s following the collapse of the U.S. backed military dictatorship. However, the situation in Somalia is far more complex and appears intractable.

In the recent past, Somalia was a victim of U.S.A. – U.S.S.R/cold war rivalry. The country was flooded with arms and its military dictatorship kept in power by both superpowers. A combination of power vacuum, droughts, and competition among rival clans and militias for scarce resources led to the intractable conflict which started in the early 1990s and continues to the present day.

Somalia, divided during colonialism between Britain and Italy, won independence as a unified nation in 1960. In 1969, a military coup, led by General Mohammed Siad Barre, toppled Somalia's nascent parliamentary democracy, banned political parties and dismantled the National Assembly. Over the next 20 years, Barre concentrated much of Somalia's economic activity and political control in Mogadishu, the capital, ignoring the rest of the country. This imbalance gave rise to fighting over increasingly scarce resources and to the creation of militias accountable to faction/clan leaders.

Between 1970 and 1990, the U.S. and the former Soviet Union helped to build up the military forces in both Somalia and Ethiopia, each switching sides in the mid-70s. During the 1980s, the U.S. supplied approximately 700 million dollars worth of weapons and food to the Siad Barre regime in Somalia. The objective of the U.S. was to maintain a regime subordinate to U.S. political and military interests in the volatile area of the Middle East and to counter the Soviet presence in Ethiopia.

(a) Social Structure.

Before colonialism, the Somalis had migrated into territories that were originally inhabited by other groups. Under the leadership of Ahmed Graa (1506 – 43) the numerous clans joined together to pursue common objectives. However, there was no distinct Somali national identity. The social and political structure was made up of clans which are sub-divided into sub - clans, primary lineage and dia (blood money) paying group. The dia paying group is the most stable unit, with a membership of groups of families ranging from a few hundreds to more than a thousand. Members of each group

have informal agreement to act together and support one another. Groups prefer councils of elders rather than single traditional leaders. Under colonialism, elders were appointed and paid to serve as representatives of their respective groups (Dunmoye 1994).

Several factors contribute to the rabid culture of conflicts that has characterized Somalia. The first is the problem of inclement and harsh geographical terrain, which means that there is dearth of habitable land and grazing fields for livestock. Secondly, apart from the economic problem of fighting for material survival, there is the psychological idiosyncrasies of an average Somali.

An average Somali is fiercely independent and suspicious of authority. Loyalty, friendship and cooperation between clans depend on military and political exigencies.

The socio-political system is highly volatile and unstable – as a result of the peculiarities of the Somali social structure that is epitomized by clannishness and individualism. The clans – comprise family aggregations that trace their relations back many generations and traditionally inhabit specific territories, with control of pasture lands and wells being especially important.

There are five major clan groups in Somalia. These are the (i) Darod, 35% of the population within Somalia – others are in Ogaden region close to the Kenya border. (ii) The Hawiye, 23% found in the central part of the country. (iii) the Isaaq 23% found in the north. (iv) the Dighil and Rahanwein, 11% found in the south between Ogaden and Mogadishu and (v) the Dir 7%, to be found in the north west near the Djibouti border. Each of these major clans are divided into sub-clans and even smaller bands.

Under this situation of lineage segmentation, one neither has a permanent enemy nor friend. Social relations are so arranged in Somalia as to institutionalize political instability and endemic anarchy.

The third factor is the colonial legacy which failed to promote pan-Somali nationalism. After independence and unification, the clans of the south gained ascendancy and had very cordial relations with Italy to the detriment of the North East. The clans and Italian support in propping of Siad Barre had ruined Somalia.

The fourth factor was the rivalry of the superpowers. General Siad Barre was first supported militarily and economically by the defunct Soviet Union when he espoused the doctrine of Marxism – Leninism and declared Somalia a Socialist Republic. This

cooperation collapsed in 1977 during the Ogaden war with Ethiopia when he abandoned socialism and ran into the waiting arms of the United States (Dunmoye 1994). The super powers saw Somalia as being strategic to the control of the Indian Ocean and the waters of the Gulf of Aden. U.S. and U.S.S.R. provided the weapons that created and sustained the Somali crisis.

One time Secretary General of the UN; Dr Boutros Ghali said,

There are more arms than food in Somalia. These arms were not fabricated by Somalia..... They were given by the outside world to serve outside interests. Those who provide arms are partners in crime (UN Africa Report 1990)

The situation has worsened as of 2007.

The fifth factor is the irredentist policy of the Somali leadership. The leadership lay claims to territories occupied by Somalis in other countries. These include Ogaden in Ethiopia which led to a suffer and costly war between the two countries.

The next factor is the repressive and undemocratic regime of the ousted dictator, Siad Barre. The one – party system that he introduced and the exclusion of other claims in the government created serious opposition which either developed in exile or took the form of armed insurgency.

There is also the “conspiracy of nature”, manifest in aridity, low rainfall and regular drought. In the light of these problems, an average Somali has an unenviable choice between two evils: one either accepts the dictate of nature by waiting to die of hunger, or chooses to join the warlords as a fighter and die from bullets. None of the two options is palatable. However, as a soldier or of a militia member, one might be lucky to feed, that is of one is alive.

Lastly, international organizations, particularly the UN and the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) were slow to react to the crisis until it was too late. Up till now, the crisis has continued from the war which broke out in 1988, when Barre started to massacre opponent.

Two rebel movements – the United Somali Congress and the Somali National Movement set out to overthrow Barre. In January 1991, the same month the Persian Gulf war erupted, they succeeded in driving Siad Barre from power. He fled to Nigeria where he later died. After his ouster, however, internecine rivalry erupted between the groups.

United Somali Congress, USC controlled the South, including Mogadishu, while the Somali National Movement ,SNM controlled the north. In March 1991, the north seceded to form the Republic of Somali-land. Then factionalism emerged within the ranks of the USC.

Fighting between rival factions caused 40,000 casualties in 1991 and 1992, and by mid – 1992, the civil war drought, and banditry combined to produce a famine that threatened some 1.5 million people with starvation.

In order to know the enormity of the confusion that has been caused by the proliferation of factions under individual warlords, 13 factions and 15 warlords attended a peace conference that was held under the auspices of the United Nations in Cairo in January 1993. These were:

1. Somali African Muki Organization (SAMO) under Mr. Mohammed Ramadan Arsor.
2. Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) – Mr. Mohammed Farah Abdullahi
3. Somali Democratic Movement (SDM) – Mr. Abdi Musa Mayow
4. Somali National Democratic Union (SNDU) – Mr. Ali Israel Abdi
5. Somali National Front (SNF) – General Omar Hagi Mohammed Horsfi
6. Somali National Movement (SNM) – Mr. Abdirahman Ahmed Ali.
7. Somali National Union (SNU) – Dr. Mohammed Ragis Mohammed.
8. Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) – General Aden Abdullahi Noor (First – Sub – faction)
9. Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) – Col. Ahmed Omar Jess.
10. Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) – General Mohammed Abshir Musse
11. Southern Somali National Movement (SSNM) – Col. Ahdi Warsane Isaaq.
12. United Somali Congress (USC) – General Mohammed Farah Aidid. (First – Sub – Faction)
13. United Somali Congress (USC) (Second Sub – faction) – Mr. Mohammed Ganyers Afrah.
14. United Somali Front (USF) – Mr. Abdulrahman Dualeh Ali
15. United Somali Party (USP) – Mr. Mohammed Abdi Hashi.

The number of factions and warlords attending subsequent peace conferences kept changing according to the military situation.

(b) Serial Abortive Conflict Resolution Efforts

Attempts that were made by international organizations to save Somalia can be divided into three facets. The first is the provision of food and medical supplies to feed

the Somalis who faced starvation. The second aspect is the formation of the peace keeping force by the United Nations known as UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM); the African Union has also provided troops. The Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference had also made futile attempts at conflict resolution.

Other international organizations that have been involved in humanitarian efforts are the World Programme (WEP), UNICEF, United Nations High Commission for Refugees which is in charge of more than a million refugees in neighbouring countries, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) e.t.c. However, the situation in Somalia is still not safe for international organizations to operate. Normal life for Somalis is also disrupted.

In December 1992, the UN accepted a U.S. offer of troops to safeguard food delivery to the starving hordes. The UN took control of the multinational relief effort from the U.S. on May 4, 1993. While the operation helped to alleviate the famine, there were significant U.S. and other casualties. In what was termed as "Operation Restore Hope" the U.S. foray into Somali met with disaster. The factions, particularly that of Mohammed Farah Aidid, distrusted the U.S. On October 3 and 4, 1993, 18 US soldiers and more than 500 Somalis were killed. The U.S. was forced to withdraw from its rather dubious Peace Keeping efforts in Somalia on March 25, 1994.

Nigeria was one of the 23 countries that contributed to UNOSOM in 1993. the figures of UN peace keeping troops were as follows: -

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| 1. Nigeria | 530 | 13. Belgium | 570 |
| 2. Canada | 900 | 14. Germany | 1,500 |
| 3. Sweden | 130 | 15. Italy | 3,900 |
| 4. Norway | 80 | 16. Turkey | 300 |
| 5. U.K. | 90 | 17. Kuwait | 230 |
| 6. Ireland | 60 | 18. Pakistan | 4,000 |
| 7. France | 2,500 | 19. India | 3,000 |
| 8. Tunisia | 130 | 20. Saudi Arabia | 700 |
| 9. Morocco | 1,250 | 21. Australia | 700 |
| 10. Egypt | 250 | 22. New Zealand | 60 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|
| 11. | Botswana | 300 | 23. | U.S.A. | 22,000 |
| 12. | Zimbabwe | 400 | | | |

Source: Africa Recovery, 1993.

When the last UN troops pulled out on March 3, 1995, Mogadishu had no functioning central government, and armed factions controlled different regions. After political and factional leaders signed a peace deal on January 29, 2004, a transitional Parliament, the first in 13 years, was inaugurated. At a meeting in Nairobi Kenya, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was chosen as President and sworn in on October 14, 2004. However, because Mogadishu was controlled by his rivals, President Yusuf established his capital at Johwar.

By 2005, a variety of Islamists reformist movements sprung up in Somalia. The largest groups, notably Jama'at al-Tabligh and the Selafiya Jadida practice missionary activism aimed at steering lax muslims back towards the true path of Islam. A much smaller proportion, including Harakaat al – Islah and Majma Ulimadda Islaamkaee Soomaaliya; are politically active, though not extremists. They are struggling to influence the future of the Somali state and its political system.

However, there are also Jihadists who want to introduce Sharia (Islamic Law) legal system. These Jihadists eventually became prominent with strong well armed militias who receive support from Eritrea.

In early 2006, attempts were made to unify and coordinate the court system by the various Islamist groups. These groups took over Mogadishu and southern Somalia and introduced Sharia Islamic Legal System (International Crisis Group. Working Papers 110 and 116, 2006). They formed the council of Islamic Courts or Union of Islamic Courts, and challenged the weak and ineffectual Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that was formed in late 2004. The UIC had managed to quell much of the lawlessness that blighted Somalia for the past 16 years and reunited the capital.

However, the U.S.A., as part of its war on international terrorism believed that the Islamic Courts and Jihadists would become allies of Al-Qaeda operatives. Furthermore, the U.S. seems determined no to allow Somalia to evolve into an African version of Taliban – ruled Afghanistan. In the light of this development, the U.S. supported the

Ethiopians and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to chase the Union of Islamic Courts out of Mogadishu. This is the current situation in Somalia today. Despite international recognition, the TFG has never enjoyed broad support or legitimacy within Somalia.

The Islamists and opposition groups have now formed the Somali Congress for Liberation and Reconstitution. They agreed to mount a two-pronged attack on the transitional government -- diplomatic negotiation alongside military action to force the Ethiopian troops to withdraw within months (BBC News, 14 September 2007).

V CONCLUSION: THE WAY OUT OF THE SOMALIA QUANDARY

Somalia's long civil conflict and lack of central governing institutions present an international security challenge. The entire Horn of Africa is enmeshed in the conflict. Ethiopia and Eritrea are both using Somalia to continue their war by proxy.

The vast majority of Somalis want a government that is democratic, broad based and responsive. They also want a government that reflects the Islamic faith as they have practised it for centuries. However, the future remains bleak as the international community seems to have abandoned Somalia to its condemned fate. For instance, in November 2007, the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon stated that the idea of deploying UN peacekeeping troops to Somalia is "neither realistic nor viable". He said that because of the security situation, it has not even been possible to send technical assessment team to Somalia (New Nigerian Weekly, 10 November 2007).

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon's comment reflects the exasperation of the international community with the conflict in Somalia. The Secretary General suggested that the international community could consider other options, including a multinational or what he called a "coalition of the willing". However, the number of 'willing' countries have reduced drastically from 23 of UNOSOM in 1993 to only about 3 in 2007.

In August 2007, the United Nations Security Council asked Mr. Ban Ki-Moon to look at the feasibility of sending UN peace keepers to Somalia. This is in the light of the abortive attempts to deploy a regional military force in support the TFG. Few governments have forgotten the images of dead U.S. troops being dragged through the streets in Mogadishu by Somali militiamen of Farah Aidid in 1993.

Some 1,700 Ugandan troops are in Mogadishu as the advance party of a planned 8,000 strong African Union Force. The expected 700 Strong Nigerian force, and 1,700 troops from Burundi, as well as Ghana are yet to join. Only half of the troops needed have been pledged, and the Ugandans have kept a low profile in Mogadishu so far. The AU peace keeping force in Somalia is the most talked about in the world, having been on the agenda since the interim government was formed in neighbouring Kenya in 2004. However, prospects of success are not high, as the AU peace keeping force in Darfur has failed to quell unrest and protect civilians there. Despite the financial backing from the United States and European Union, it has been difficult for the AU to get additional troops.

Recently, one of the insurgent leaders, Sheikh Aden Hashi Ayrow has ordered fighters to attack African Peace Keepers in Mogadishu who he accused of being "foreign forces". This will further dissuade other African Countries from sending their troops.

It is now obvious that the options that are open to resolve the conflict in Somali are reducing. The international community can now only support regional, African – based negotiating processes. The African Union on its part should employ diplomatic channels to bring the warring factions to the negotiating table, while encouraging Eritrea and Ethiopia to withdraw their troops and stop supporting the factions. The international community through the UN should enforce the embargo on arms and ammunition sales to Somalia and ensure effective implementation mechanisms.

The numerous factions and militias have now coalesced into two broad groups namely: the Union of Islamic Courts made up of pro-sharia militias and factions who are part of the secularist Transitional Federal Government (TFG). The new development creates an easier and less complex structures for representation in any new attempt to reach negotiated settlement acceptable to the warring factions.

The U.N. and A.U. recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) must be encouraged to negotiate on power sharing in the interim.

Lastly, the United Nations Security Council should give the necessary support for the regional peace process – since it is not willing to send a peace keeping force.

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