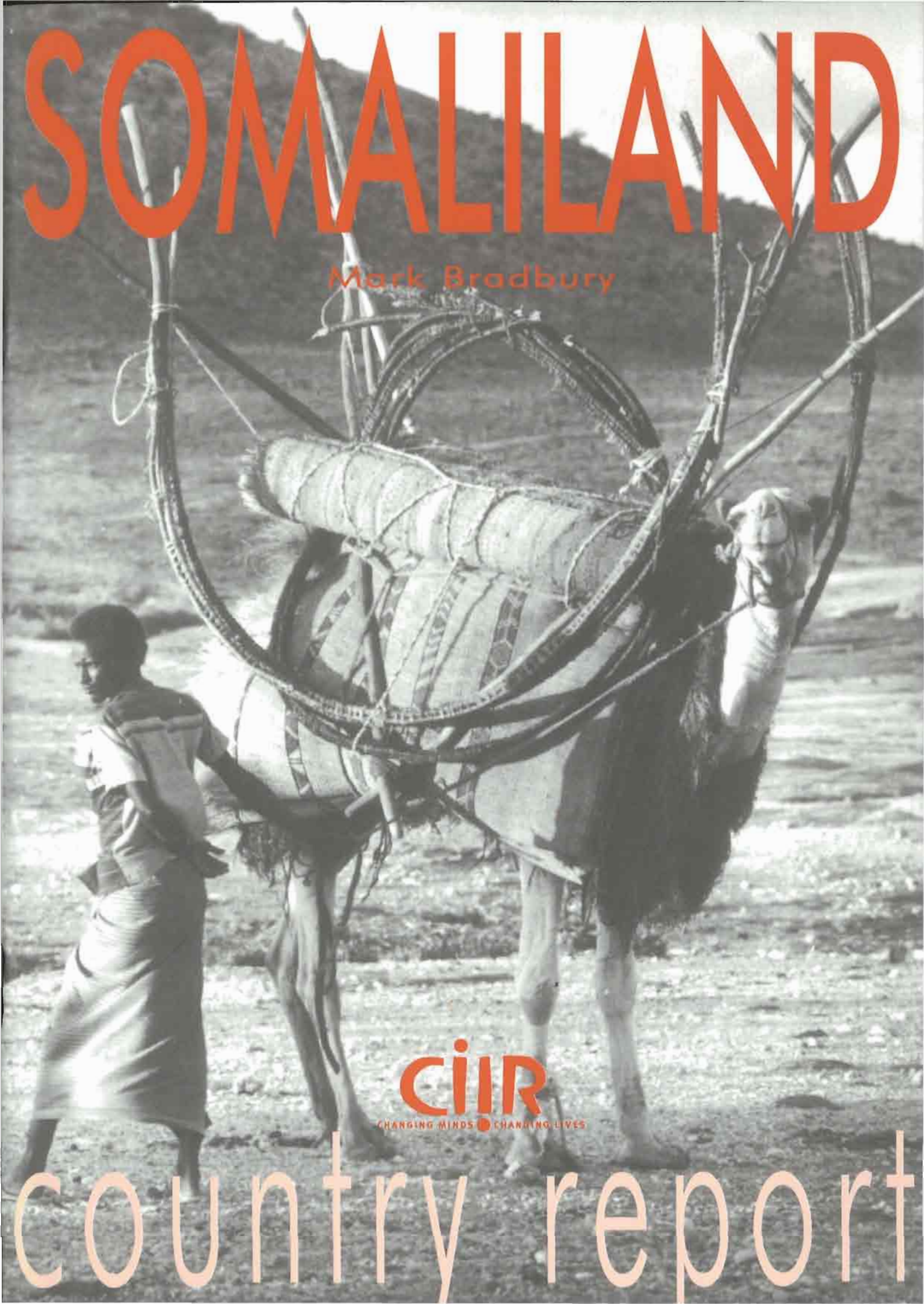


SOMALILAND

Mark Bradbury



CIIR

CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

country report

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Mark Bradbury

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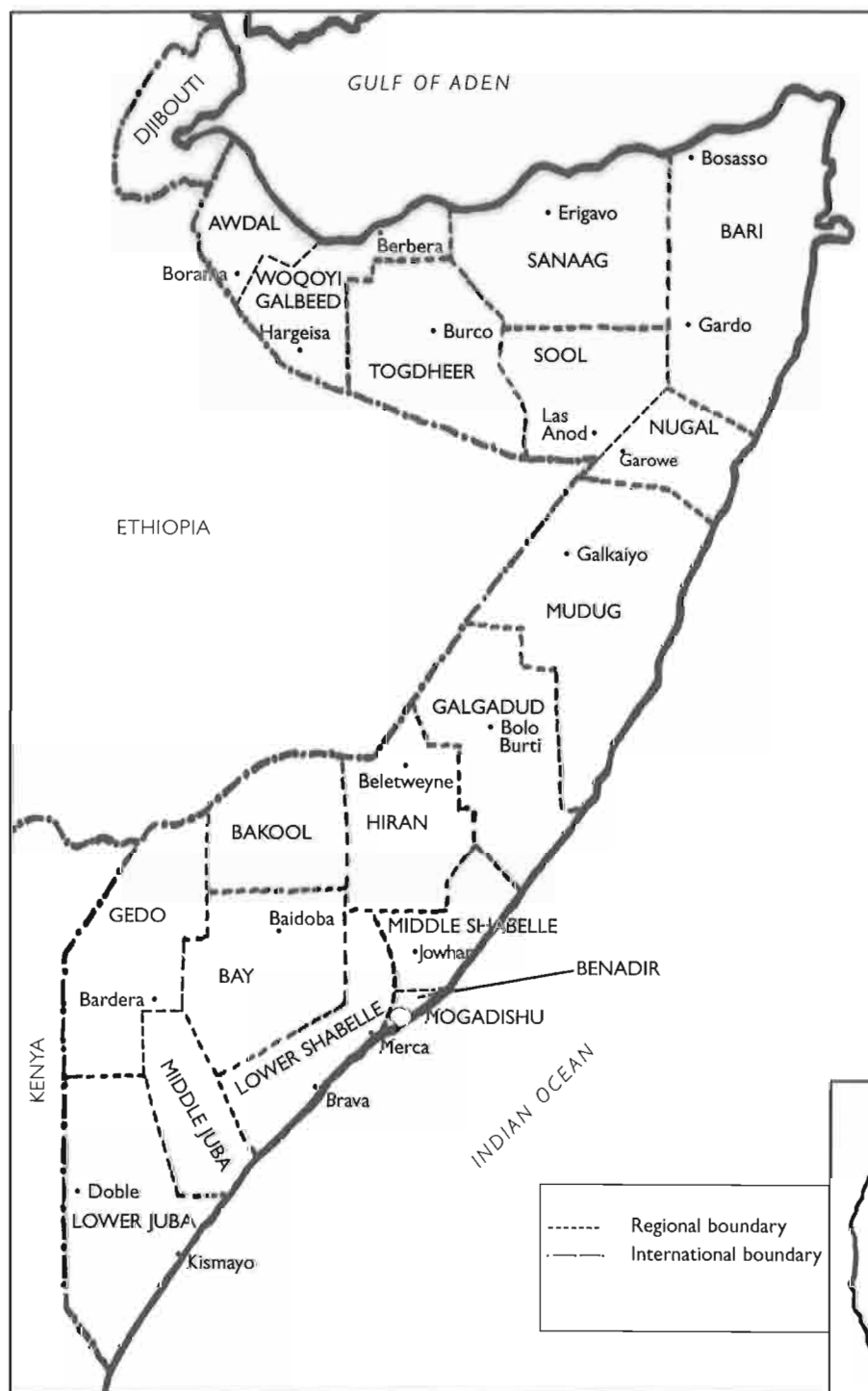
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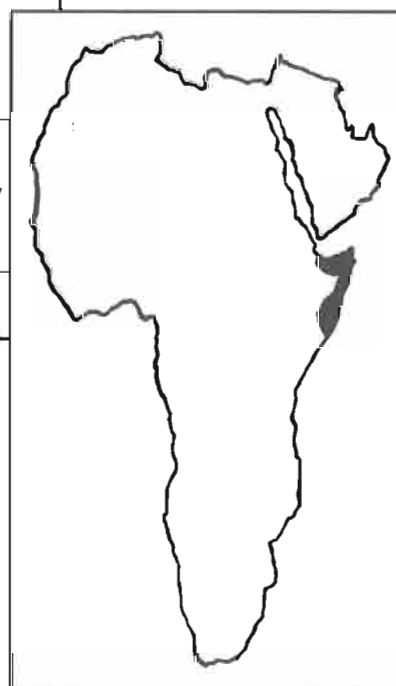
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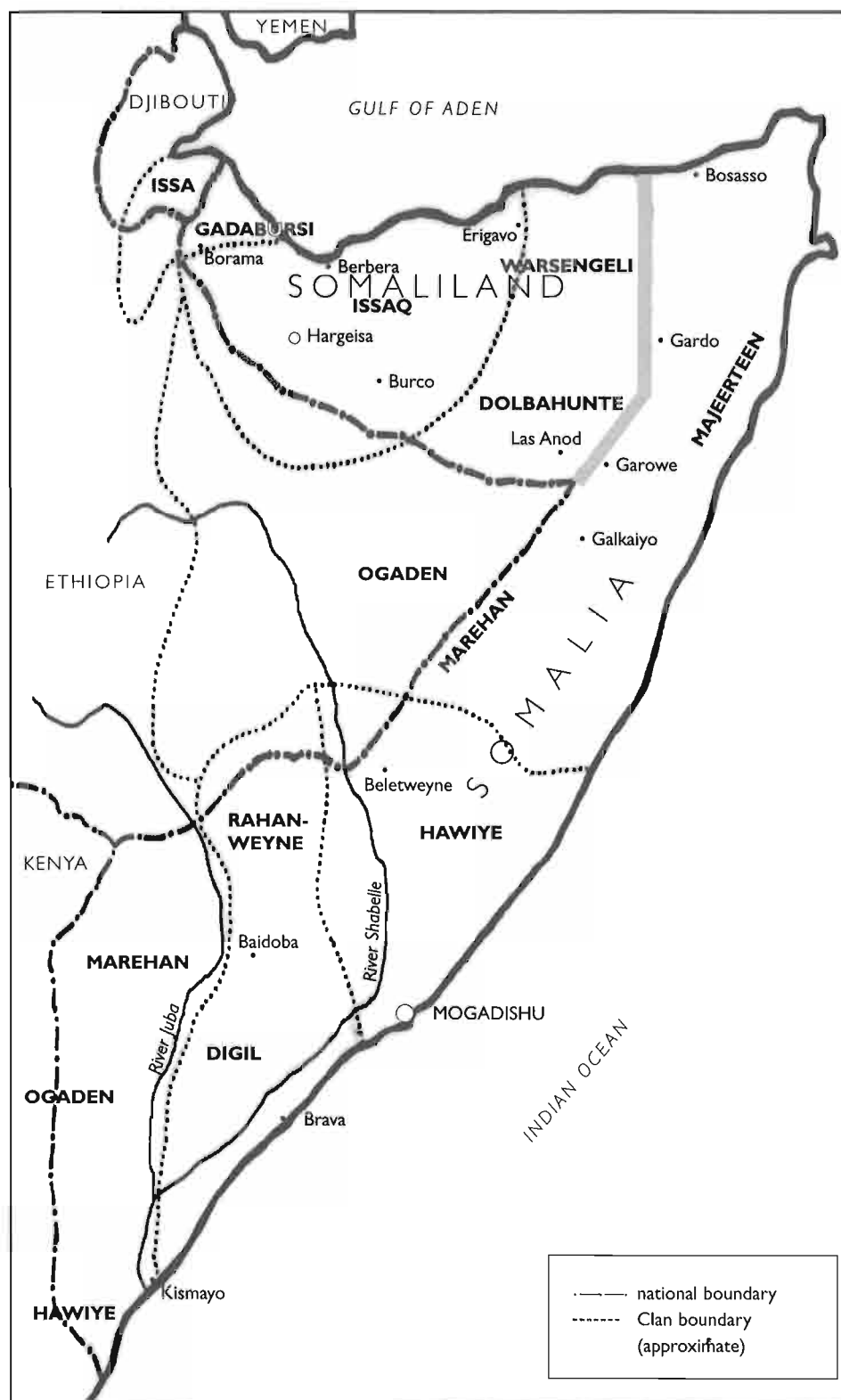
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SOMALIA





SOMALIA/SOMALILAND

International Cooperation for Development

International Cooperation for Development (ICD), the overseas programme of the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), first worked in Somalia in 1978/79 during the refugee crisis that followed Somalia's war with Ethiopia, in the Ogaden war. Between 1985 and 1990 ICD supported a country-wide technical assistance programme. In 1990 insecurity forced ICD to withdraw. Since 1991 ICD has supported a number of initiatives in Somaliland (north-west Somalia), and with Somali refugees in Kenya and in the UK. In 1995 ICD opened a technical assistance programme in Somaliland, placing a development worker in Hargeisa as a resource person for Somali non-governmental and community-based organisations.

This *Country Report* is based on a consultancy undertaken for ICD in Somaliland in September 1995, and was updated following a visit to Somaliland in December 1996.

The author

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Somalia/Somaliland

Unless stated otherwise, 'Somalia' refers to the territories of the Republic of Somalia, including the secessionist Somaliland, and 'Somaliland' refers to the region otherwise known as north-west Somalia.

Introduction

In 1991 the Somali state collapsed as civil war engulfed the capital Mogadishu and the military regime of Mohamed Siad Barre was forced from power. After more than a century in the making and 30 years of independence, Somalia has ceased to function as a unitary state. In May 1991 the north-west regions seceded from Somalia to form the independent 'Republic of Somaliland'. Here clan-based institutions of elders, combined with fledgling governmental and non-governmental organisations, have emerged to take responsibility for governance, security and reconstruction. Elsewhere, in the vacuum of state collapse, various bodies have emerged: politico-military organisations and fragile civil structures, including councils of elders, the remnants of UN sponsored administrative councils and, in places, religious authorities which have instituted Islamic law (*shari'a*).

In 1992 a US diplomat described the situation in Somalia as 'the worst humanitarian crisis faced by any people in the world'. At the end of 1992 it was estimated that more than 500,000 people had died in the war and famine in Somalia (Prendergast, 1997: 115). This included 300,000 children. Some 1.5 million Somalis had fled the country. Many more have since died. Even before the civil war Somalia was considered one of the poorest countries in Africa. The war destroyed housing, urban industry, communications, social services and agricultural infrastructure. Government and public buildings were ransacked. Basic needs are greater now than ever.

No single factor can explain the causes of the war. The legacies of European colonialism, the Somali kinship system, contradictions between a centralised state and a pastoral culture, Cold War politics, militarisation, marginalisation and uneven development, ecological decline, lack of power-sharing, corruption, oppression and the cumulative impact of decades of armed conflict have all contributed. The common use of 'anarchy', 'chaos' and 'madness' to describe the war and state of disintegration in Somalia, demonstrate an ignorance of Somali society and the nature of the civil war. This ignorance was evident in the massively expensive and controversial UN military intervention in Somalia.

To understand Somaliland's claim to independence

it is essential to recognise that Somaliland is a legacy of European colonialism: before the colonial partition of the Horn of Africa region, Somalia did not exist. The present-day borders of Somaliland follow the borders of the former British Somaliland Protectorate.

To understand political trends in Somaliland and Somalia, it is also vital to appreciate that the political constitution of Somali society lies not in the centralised institution of a European state model, but in a system where notions of a 'social contract' have more to do with regulating relationships between pastoral kinship groups than between a central polity and the individual citizen. Colonialism grafted a system of centralised governance onto a decentralised and egalitarian political system of a pastoral people.

The centralisation of governance reached its peak during the repressive military regime of Mohamed Siad Barre. The civil war that was unleashed in May 1988, when the Somali National Movement (SNM) attacked the northern cities of Burco and Hargeisa, was in part a struggle to overthrow a corrupt military dictatorship, and to assert greater self-determination. The most dramatic example of this assertion of self-determination was Somaliland's secession. In the context of general economic decline in the 1980s, and Somalia's marginalisation in the world economy, the Somali war has involved a violent struggle between factions for control of Somalia's internal resources, and externally provided aid.

This report seeks to promote a better understanding of the Somali civil war, and the context of future social, economic and political rehabilitation and development. The report falls into two parts: as a background to Somaliland's secession, the first traces the history of the Somali state, the descent into civil war and the impacts of international policies and interventions and the second part chronicles the brief history of Somaliland between 1991 and 1996. After six years Somaliland's claims for independence remain unrecognised internationally. Also largely unrecognised are the efforts made by people there to reconstruct their livelihoods and institutions after years of war. The report analyses the impact of the conflict, and the local and international efforts in reconstructing civil and governmental structures and institutions in Somaliland.

PART 1

The rise and fall of the Somali state

On 18 May 1991 the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the people of north-west Somalia seceded from Somalia and reclaimed their independent sovereignty as the 'Republic of Somaliland'. By revoking the 1960 Act of Union, which had united the colonial territories of the British Somaliland Protectorate and Italian Somalia, 'Somalilanders' signalled the demise of the Republic of Somalia.

The Somali state was the direct product of the division of the Horn of Africa and the lands of the Somali peoples by the 19th-century colonial powers of Britain, Italy and France, and the Abyssinian empire. Through colonisation the Somali people were territorially, politically and economically integrated into an international system constructed on a nation-state model.

The history of state formation in Somalia falls roughly into three periods. The first, and longest, 1827 to 1960, covers the colonisation of the Horn of Africa and the division of the Somali people into five states: the British Somaliland Protectorate, Italian Somalia, French Somaliland (now Djibouti), the Ethiopian Ogaden, and northern Kenya. The second period (1960-69) covers the first nine years of independence under civilian government as the Somali Republic. In the third period (1969-91) democratic government was replaced by a military dictatorship under General Mohamed Siad Barre. In 1991 the Somali state collapsed, as civil war engulfed the capital Mogadishu and the military regime of Mohamed Siad Barre was forced from power.

State formation in Somalia has not been a peaceful process: in 20 years of warfare (1900-20) between British and Italian colonialists and the Dervish armies of the religious nationalist leader Sayid Mohamed Abdulla Hassan a third of the population of the Somaliland Protectorate died (Ahmed I Samatar, 1988: 33); in the 1920s and 1930s

Somalia was subjected to Italian fascist rule; and during the Second World War Italy and Britain fought over the country. Since independence the colonial boundaries of the Somali state have been a source of conflict between Somalia and its neighbours. The nationalist effort to reunite the 'lost' Somali territories was a driving force in regional conflicts, with Kenya and Ethiopia in the 1960s, and with Ethiopia over the Ogaden in 1977 (see page 11). Between 1988 and 1991 Somalia, which had taken more than a century to form and which had enjoyed 30 years of independence, was dismantled in four years of internecine warfare. The country no longer functioned as a unitary state.

The Somali people

At independence Somalia was considered a unique state in Africa, being founded on a single ethnic group – the Somali – whose ethnicity was defined by a common language (*af-somali*), a pastoral economy, an adherence to Islam (*sunni*), and a clan-based political system. It is puzzling, therefore, why 30 years later an apparently homogeneous society should be wrecked by such internal strife. Explanations have been sought in the nature of the Somali kinship system, and in a previously neglected cultural diversity.

Somalia, in the north-eastern tip of the Horn of Africa, is in the main a semi-desert region, with an ecology best suited to a pastoral nomadic existence. The exception is in the southern Shabelle and Juba river valleys, where the environment can sustain agriculture and agro-pastoral production. Likewise the ecology of Somaliland is best suited to nomadic pastoralism, although there is some sedentary agriculture to the west of the capital Hargeisa and on the northern escarpment of the Gollis mountains.

The colonialists who entered the Somali region in the 19th century encountered two dominant cultures – an interior populated by dispersed pastoral groups, and a coastal city culture. In addition they found sedentary agriculturalists along the southern rivers. Although the colonial and post-colonial states incorporated a range of cultures, it is Somali pastoral culture that has been the dominant political culture and the basis of Somali nationalism. Before the 1990s war more than 60 per cent of Somalia's population engaged in some form of nomadic pastoralism.

The Somali-speaking people form one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, living dispersed throughout the Horn, from the Awash Valley, through the Ethiopian Ogaden and into northern Kenya as far as the Tana river.

Although Somalis are united through common descent, the Somali 'nation' did not constitute a unitary polity or state before colonialism. Political affiliation and identity was based on kinship. The Somali people

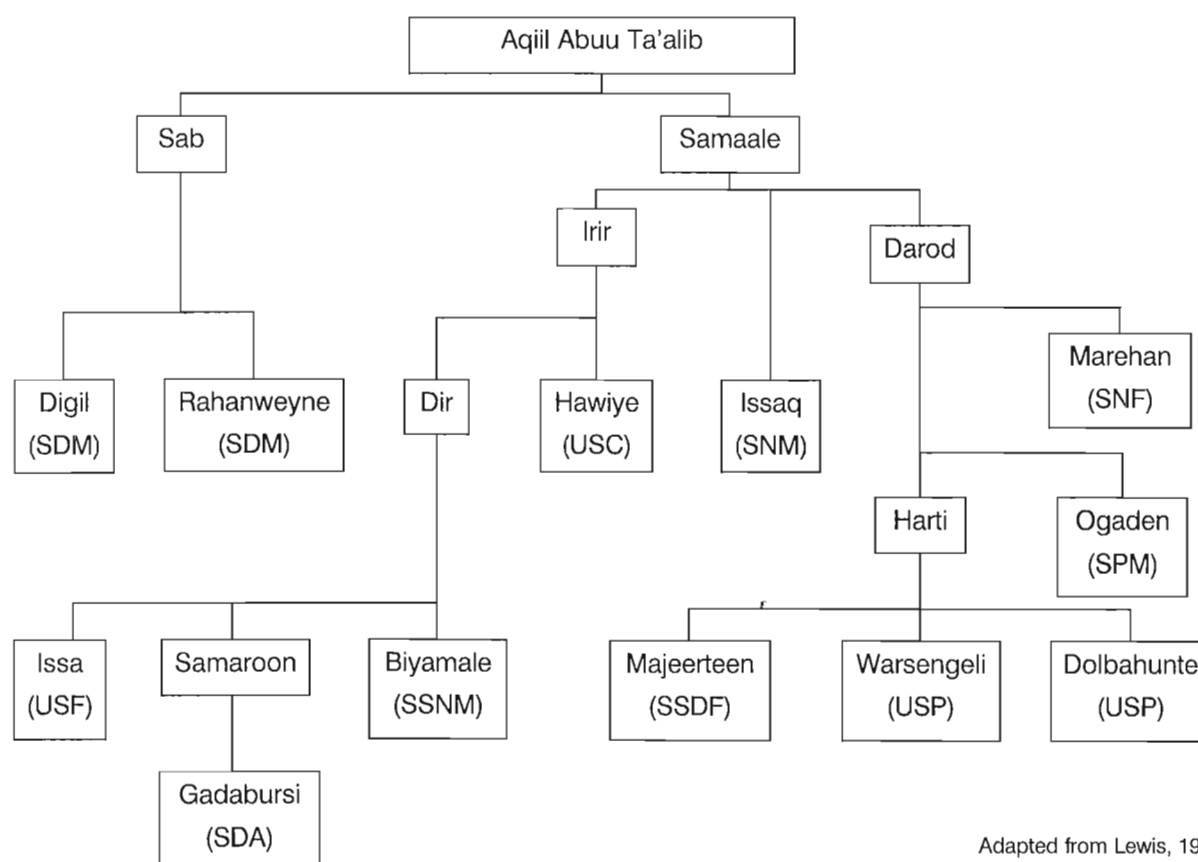
belong to one of six kin-based 'clan families', a confederation of genealogically related clans (Lewis, 1961). These are Dir, Issaq, Darod, Hawiye, Digil and Rahanweyne. These again divide along the male line into smaller kin-groups or sub-clans (see Box 1).

The Dir, Issaq, Darod, and Hawiye are predominantly nomadic pastoralists. The Digil and Rahanweyne (also known as Digil-Mirifle) are mainly agro-pastoralists. Occupying the relatively fertile zone between the Juba and Shabelle rivers, they have a political culture and language (*af-maymay*) distinct from nomadic Somalis. All the Somali clans straddle the borders with neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti.

Other ethnic groups in Somalia include Bantu agriculturalists settled along the banks of the southern rivers, and Arabs of Yemeni descent found in the coastal towns of Mogadishu, Merca, Brava and Kismayo. Specialised 'castes' of blacksmiths, leather workers and hunters are also closely integrated with the Somali.

SOMALI CLANS (AND MODERN POLITICO-MILITARY MOVEMENTS)

Box 1



Adapted from Lewis, 1961.
See page 48 for acronyms

Culture and conflict

The war has led some Somalis and specialists on Somalia to deconstruct Somali nationalism, and to recognise the plurality of cultures within Somalia's territories (Ali J Ahmed, 1995). This reinterpretation of the dominant political, cultural and academic discourse in Somalia raises questions about the composition of any

new Somali state. It is no coincidence that the Rahanweyne, Digil, Bantu and Arabs – the non-nomadic and the non-Somali groups who have always been politically marginalised – died in the greatest numbers in the war and famine of 1991-93 (Mohamed H Mukhtar, 1996). Any political solution in Somalia needs to recognise this. However, this interpretation risks reducing the Somali war to a simple clash of cultures. A more conventional analysis of the Somali war has focused on the seemingly schismatic and conflict-ridden nature of the Somali kinship system which is entrenched in the Somali people's culture.

In Somali pastoral society there is an essential link between the semi-subsistence economy and culture, political identity, rights, and economic security. Somali nomadic pastoralism entails transhumance between rainy season grasslands and dry season pastures and water points. The health, nutrition and productivity of livestock and, therefore, the livelihood and health of pastoralists is linked to the quality of pasture and water and access to them. Production is tied to the social organisation of pastoral groups. Social structure determines entitlement to resources, the division of labour and the exercise of authority. Social institutions and organisational strength determine a group's ability to cope with change and to secure a livelihood. Collective action through kinship provides physical, political and economic security. Well-being and vulnerability are thus not just a measure of relative economic wealth, but of socio-political organisation.

The Somali kinship system is a dynamic one in which kin group alliances form and divide in response to internal and external changes, such as a specific threat to security. The shifting alliances between military factions in the war are examples of this.

However, although the war in Somalia has been fought along the fault lines of clan identity, it has not been a traditional clan war, contrary to popular media depiction. Rather it has been a war where 'clanism' has been manipulated by powerful elites and backed by parties interested in more than grazing resources, and with modern weaponry. The war has undermined traditional institutions' effectiveness in providing security and managing conflict (see Box 2). Social institutions have adapted to these new political realities. The interaction of the specific nature of Somali society with the impact of the

Box 2

SECURITY, LAW AND ORDER

Clan-families represent the highest level of political solidarity in Somalia but are too large to act as political units. The most stable political unit among northern pastoralists is the *diya*-paying group, whose members are united through kinship and are collectively obliged to pay and receive *diya* ('blood compensation') for murder and other injuries (Lewis, 1961). The *diya*-paying group is the focal unit for cooperation, political action and collective security.

In Somali pastoral society rights and obligations are laid down in *xeer* 'contracts'. The *xeer*, which were traditionally transmitted orally, enshrine the basic values and norms of Somali society. They provide a system of sanctions and are the closest equivalent to the western notion of a 'social contract'. Traditionally, *xeer* are negotiated by elders meeting in councils (*shir*). Among the most important *xeer* are those which govern entitlements to water and pasture.

Somali pastoral society has no hierarchy of political units or political and administrative offices, but emphasises consensus decision-making. All adult males have an equal right to speak in council as elders. Elders are delegates of and for their clans, rather than leaders. Only at the level of the clan is there a post approximating to a leader or chief, known as the *suldaan* (sultan) among the Issaq and by other names among different clans.

The *suldaan* enjoys respect but not reverence. However, he functions as an arbiter and peacemaker with other clans and within his own. The *suldaan* are said to be able to see 'beyond the fight' (Bradbury, 1994a: 92). In a peace meeting the elders undertake the negotiations, while the *suldaan* approves the results as head of the clan.

Through these collective institutions and rule-bound behaviour social order is maintained and conflict managed. Warfare was traditionally bounded by rules which conditioned the scale of conflict and, although violent, disputes over grazing resources were characterised as much by negotiation and the formation of alliances as by warfare. The Somali civil war, sponsored by parties with interests in more than grazing resources, and with modern weaponry, has strained the traditional institutions' ability to provide security, law and order.

political and economic intrusions of colonialism and state policies this century provide some explanation of the Somali crisis.

The colonial legacy

Foreign strategic interest in Somalia has always been commercial, due to its location. In 1839 the British established a garrison in Aden to protect its trade with India. In the 1880s Britain, France and Italy signed numerous protection treaties with Somali clans in a scramble for influence in the region (Lewis, 1988). By 1900 the division of Somali territory had been consolidated in treaties between the European colonial powers and Abyssinia.

These colonial intrusions left a legacy of a system of centralised government grafted onto an uncentralised political system of a pastoral people. This involved bringing pastoralists and their resources under state control.

The political treaties which divided the land of the Somalis created borders which did not respect clan territories. Of particular importance were the Haud grazing lands¹ ceded to Ethiopia by Britain in 1954 (Lewis, 1988: 150). The demarcation of pastoral lands curbed the mobility of pastoralists, leaving them more vulnerable to the vagaries of climate. The allocation of pasture and water rights to certain lineages reinforced a notion of clan and territorial identity, and upset the political equilibrium between clans. State development thus altered the way people participated in the local management of resources.

In the absence of formal political institutions or offices, British rule in Somaliland was administered indirectly through the heads of *diya*-paying groups, known as *akil*, who received government stipends. In practice, administration remained in the hands of colonial district commissioners. In Italian Somalia a similar system of selected clan chiefs was introduced. These administrative structures and other developments, such as the introduction of a Western judicial system to replace *diya*, inevitably altered pastoral socio-political institutions.

As new forms of wealth accumulated in the state, the mandate of political leadership altered from regulating kin relations and entitlements to pastoral resources, to regulating access to the political and economic benefits of the state, thus sowing seeds of disunity and conflict. One response of the colonial government to such conflicts was to invest more in state security

forces, thus setting a trend for the future.

Finally, colonial state formation established an urban bias in development that marginalised the rural pastoral and agro-pastoral populations. As cities became centres of the political bureaucracy, the commercial sector and education, the cadres of the nationalist movements, such as the Somali Youth League and northern Somaliland National League, that led Somalia to independence, were largely drawn from the new urban elite.

Independence

On 26 June 1960 Britain granted independence to the Somaliland Protectorate. Four days later the Italian-administered UN Trusteeship Territory of Somalia achieved independence. On 1 July 1960 the two territories united to form the Somali Republic.

The task of integrating the territories' legal and administrative infrastructure took three years to complete and did not go smoothly. In December 1961 northern dissatisfaction with the process and the perceived bias towards the south led to an abortive coup by disaffected northern army officers.

During the first nine years of the new republic bureaucratic state structures were expanded and government further centralised through centrally orchestrated development programmes. Failure to invest in and develop a productive domestic economy led the state to become increasingly dependent on foreign aid.

The country officially adopted a non-aligned position at independence, but Cold War geopolitics began to intrude as Somalia sought foreign aid and support for its claims to the 'lost' Somali territories in Kenya and Ethiopia. In 1963, for example, it turned down military aid from the West in return for aid from the Soviet Union (Lewis, 1988: 201). A legacy of colonialism was the development of the social classes that controlled the state (Abdi I Samatar, 1989: 82).

Increasingly, the state and its resources, including foreign aid, became a focus for competition between those elite classes. As a result, parliamentary democracy became increasingly opaque and, in the absence of ideological differences between political parties, ever more 'clanist' in orientation. The increasingly venal struggle for state control by these elite, eventually led to the collapse of parliamentary democracy and a military coup.

Military rule

The centralisation of political and economic power in the Somali state reached its zenith under the military dictatorship of General Mohamed Siad Barre, who seized power in October 1969. Within a year the military coup was turned into a 'bloodless revolution'. 'Scientific Socialism' was adopted as the ideological framework for the country's future development. Weary of the debilitating effects of 'clanism', and grappling with the shift from a pastoral society to a modern nation state, the urban intelligentsia and technocrats initially backed this programme.

The first charter of the Somali revolution proclaimed the central role of the state in society, guaranteeing the right to work, social justice, 'popular participation' in national development and an end to 'tribalism'. Under the guidance first of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, and after 1976 the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP), the populace was mobilised for national programmes, such as a 1973-74 literacy campaign. In the campaign against tribalism, effigies were ceremonially burnt, *jaalle* ('comrade') replaced 'uncle' and 'cousin' as terms of address, the death sentence was introduced to replace *diya*, marriages were celebrated at orientation centres and stripped of clan significance, *akils* were replaced and renamed 'peace-seekers' and integrated into the state party, the country was reconstituted into new regions renamed to exclude reference to clans, and place of settlement replaced lineage as the means of personal identification.

The intention was to turn this 'nation of nomads' into a modern socialist state, to which people could look for leadership, security and welfare instead of to the clan. Embodying the nation was the president and 'father of the nation', Siad Barre.

Scientific Socialism's assault on the fabric of Somali society was coupled with state control of the economy. Although the government's declared policy was to decentralise state authority to enable grassroots participation in development, the structures through which development was instituted were subject to state control (Abdi I Samatar, 1985). Administration was decentralised, but power remained centralised. District and provincial officials were military or party functionaries appointed by the state. Mass participation was ordered from above rather than arising through

consensus from below. Far from being brought into the political process, the population was alienated from it. Press censorship partially negated the benefits of a standardised Somali spelling system, introduced in 1972, and mass literacy campaigns in 1973 and 1975. Non-governmental, civil forms of association were undermined by the banning of trades unions and the Party's manipulation of civil organisations such as the Somali women and youth associations.

Militarisation

Mohamed Siad Barre seized and maintained power through the armed forces. For the regime nation-building largely consisted of creating labyrinthine security structures to maintain political control, rather than investments in social or economic development. The army became the most powerful institution in the country. By the early 1980s security accounted for nearly three-quarters of government spending, and consumed more than half as much again as was earned from exports. (Ahmed I Samatar, 1985: 37)

Somalia's militarisation began in the 1960s during border disputes with Kenya and Ethiopia, and increased throughout the 1970s and into the late 1980s as a result of superpower interests in the Horn of Africa. Siad Barre was particularly adept at using Cold War tensions to solicit a vast array of armaments for his government, initially courting support from the Soviet Union and later the United States. With Soviet finance Somalia built one of the most powerful armies in sub-Saharan Africa. With this force, Barre took Somalia into a war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden. Defeated in the Ogaden when the Soviets switched their alliance to Ethiopia, Barre turned to the United States. He was able to secure US\$100 million a year in development and military aid, in return for US access to Soviet built facilities at Berbera port for use by its rapid deployment force, created to police the Persian Gulf. US policy towards Somalia, as summed up by President George Bush's administration, was based on wider geopolitical and economic concerns:

By virtue of Somalia's strategic location at the tip of the Horn of Africa, the United States has several security interests in the country. The US military has enjoyed access to Somali air and port facilities. Access is important to support our security policies in

the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and could prove vital as a support area for US forces responding to contingencies in the Persian Gulf. (Cited in Prendergast, 1991)

The United States and the Soviet Union were not the only suppliers of military equipment to Somalia. Italy, Romania, East Germany, Iraq, Iran, Libya, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and China all contributed at different times. The largesse of the superpowers during the Cold War is demonstrated in the arsenals of weapons bequeathed to Somali 'warlords' to fight the war.

The Ogaden War and its aftermath

Since colonial treaties had allotted the Somali-populated Ogaden to Ethiopia in 1948, the Ogaden had figured as one of Somalia's 'lost' territories, and a constant source of tension in Ethiopia-Somali relations. In 1974/75 Somalia endured one of the worst droughts in its history, known in Somali as *dabadheer* (meaning 'endless'). In Ethiopia the inadequate response of the Haile Selassie government to the drought led to its overthrow in September 1974. In 1977, taking advantage of a weakened Ethiopian state, Barre launched a war to reclaim the Somali Ogaden for Somalia. The war was a high point of Somali nationalism and Siad Barre's popularity. A year later the Somali army was defeated by the Soviet- and Cuban-backed Ethiopian army.

Defeat was a turning point for the Barre regime, and the beginning of the demise that led to the Somali civil war. Defeat ended any sense of national unity. Ethiopian Somalis who fled the fighting sought refuge in Somalia, making the country host to the largest refugee population in Africa. Estimated at 1.5 million, refugees amounted to some 40 per cent of Somalia's population. A deluge of international aid, aid workers and aid organisations followed.

Internal dissent and the formation of military insurgent groups began to threaten the regime. A failed coup attempt by Majeerteen officers in 1978 led to the creation of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), which launched a guerrilla campaign against Barre in the central regions of Somalia. In 1981 disaffected Issaq of the northern regions formed the Somali National Movement (SNM) and took up arms against the regime. Both the SSDF and the SNM sought sanctuary in Ethiopia, illustrating the disintegration within the Somali state.

As the political and economic crisis developed in the 1980s, and as Somalia became more indebted to military and financial assistance from the West, the regime's socialist rhetoric began to wear thin and the reality of political autocracy surfaced (Ahmed I Samatar, 1988). Initially drawn from the Darod 'clan family' and dubbed the 'MOD alliance' (Marehan, Ogaden, Dolbahunte), in the face of mounting insecurity it increasingly became dominated by Barre's Marehan clan.

The Barre government had an appalling human rights record (Amnesty International, 1988). In the regime's first seven years its targets were individual opponents of the regime. After 1978, however, whole clans and economic groups associated with the insurgencies were targeted. Those who suffered most were the Majeerteen from Mudug region, the Issaq in the north-west, and the riverine communities in the south. The armed opposition movements that emerged in the wake of the Ogaden war were a direct response to the lack of power sharing, corruption, human rights abuses, and what has been described as a serious disjuncture between the moral and coercive authority in the state (Said S Samatar, 1991). As the civil war became protracted, any ideological concerns of the political movements evaporated.

Economic transformation and underdevelopment²

Even before the war Somalia was considered one of the poorest countries in Africa. It was estimated that 70 per cent of the rural population lived below the absolute poverty level. The gross national product (GNP) per capita was only US\$280 a year, some 70 per cent of which was income remitted by Somalis working abroad. In 1990 Somalia's international debt stood at US\$2 billion and inflation was estimated to be running at 600 per cent a year.

To comprehend Somalia's descent into civil war and the battle for control of the Somali state, it is necessary to trace the broad economic transformations in Somalia since colonial times.

Transformations in the pastoral economy

Colonisation laid the basis for a mixed economy. At independence this entailed a 'traditional' agricultural sector consisting of pastoralism and peasant cultivation, and a

'modern' agricultural sector based on plantation agriculture of bananas and sugar cane.³ Other productive economic activities included fishing and frankincense (see Boxes 3 and 4). In addition there was an expanding entrepreneurial sector of shop owners and trading companies, and a public sector of salaried government officials and civil servants. Broadly, rural development policies since colonial times have sought to modernise the 'traditional' sector.

Since 1839, when Britain occupied Aden, and Somali sheep became the main source of meat for the garrison there, livestock production has underpinned Somalia's economy. Before the war more than 60 per cent of the population were said to be involved in some form of nomadic pastoralism. Stock-rearing was also an integral part of the economy for the 20 per cent of the population engaged in sedentary cultivation. Before the war the export of sheep, goats, cattle and camel accounted for up to 80 per cent of national exports.

The livestock trade expanded considerably between 1950 and 1980, stimulated by the oil boom in Saudi Arabia, to which Somalia supplied 90 per cent of meat imports. Between the late 1960s and 1980 the trade grew from 50 to 76 per cent of export earnings. (Laitin and Samatar, 1987)

Box 3

FRANKINCENSE

The northern Somali coast is thought by some scholars to be the mythical 'Land of Punt', from where ancient Egyptians obtained frankincense. Before the war Somalia claimed to be the world's main exporter of frankincense and myrrh. The trade was disrupted by the war, although some export has resumed on a lower scale than previously.

FISHING

With the longest coastline in eastern Africa, Somalia has rich fishing grounds. In the mid 1970s Somfish, a Somali-Soviet enterprise, embarked on production of industrial fisheries, but after the Soviet withdrawal in 1978 production was never sustained. After the 1974/75 drought many pastoralists were airlifted from their grazing lands to cooperative fishing settlements along the coast. However, Somalia's fishing industry never achieved its potential. In the 1970s and 1980s the Somali government sold fishing quotas to foreign companies and governments, and with the political turmoil in the country, Somalia's fishing grounds are now subject to piracy by foreign companies.

The commercialisation of the pastoral economy has had a profound impact on Somalia. It has affected the entire social, economic and political culture of pastoralists, their livelihood, security of food supplies and their relationship with the environment. For example, since the 1950s market demands have led to more cattle being herded (Mohamoud and Hashi, 1988). The sale of surplus stock to meet market demands and provide a livelihood affects pastoralists' ability to insure against crises and reduces the numbers of animals available for traditional loans and marriage transactions. This in turn leads to a loosening of traditional social and economic networks. (Swift, 1979)

The volatility of market demand and prices helps explain the vulnerability of pastoralists to the 1974/75 drought which caused a famine and the deaths of 20,000 pastoralists in northern Somalia (Simons, 1995:54). After 1984, when Saudi Arabia banned imports from Somalia on the grounds of alleged rinderpest, livestock exports declined substantially and forced pastoralists into illicit trade with Yemen and Kenya.

Commercialisation imposed a new trading structure and created new economic relationships between pastoralists, merchants and the state. With livestock trade the major source of revenue for the state, the socio-economic functions of pastoralism have had to shift from supporting producers to supporting the state and merchants. Commercialisation encouraged the growth of a wealthy urban mercantile class. Somali pastoral society, politically egalitarian, became economically divided. Governments' failure to re-invest in pastoral development led, in the 1980s, to pastoralism's declining capacity to support the needs of producers, merchants and the state; poverty among pastoralists increased.

Despite its contribution to the national economy, since colonial times pastoralism has been seen as an outmoded and unproductive economic activity. Under Scientific Socialism, cooperative production was the cornerstone of the government's modernisation programme for the rural sector. The Land Registration Act of 1975 brought Somalia's rangelands under the control of the state, and settling pastoralists and state ranching was emphasised. A sedentary population is easier to control and tax.

Although policies to settle pastoralists, promote agricultural production or state ranching were never fully realised – partly

because of the vitality of livestock exports and the strength of northern livestock traders – they had profound impacts on pastoralists. For example, the 1975 nationalisation of common lands officially nullified customary treaties between pastoralists over the use and management of rangelands. It removed customary property rights and led to the alienation of the people from their land. Rangeland enclosures spread rapidly in the 1980s, restricting pastoralists' movement and access to resources, and degrading the environment.

The commercialisation of pastoral production has not led to full-scale privatisation of Somalia's rangelands. However, the integration of pastoralism into a market economy created new inequalities of wealth within and between pastoral communities, merchants and the state. Revenues from the livestock trade were appropriated by a small number of trading families and the state. Range management lies at the centre of the pastoral political economy, and therefore clan politics. Competition between those pastoralists linked to the merchants and those linked to the government generated conflicts over rangelands. During the 1980s the government rewarded its supporters with investments in water supplies in their clan areas, thus disturbing the political balance between pastoralists (African Rights, 1994). Not surprisingly, water supplies were deliberately targeted during the civil war. (Bradbury and Davies, 1991)

The experiments of Barre's government in state farm cooperatives proved disastrous. State control over producer prices favoured urban consumers and meant that farmers received less than the global market price. Coupled with an overvalued currency which subsidised imports, there was no incentive for the farmers to produce. In the early years of military rule, while the service and industrial sectors grew to some extent, agricultural productivity declined, increasing poverty among smallholders, import dependency, inflation, and the country's external debt.

The 1980s — economic decline and war

The Somali civil war marked the end of the Cold War in the Horn of Africa. Changing superpower interests had a significant impact on the timing of the war. However, changing

CROP PRODUCTION

Box 4

Somalia has rarely been self-sufficient in crop production. At independence, crop cultivation was a small but expanding sector largely concentrated among peasant farmers in the riverine regions of the south and western Somaliland. Introduced as recently as the 19th century into Somaliland, agricultural production was limited to the relatively high rainfall highland areas in Awdal, Woqoyi Galbeed and Sanaag regions. However, until the war only 2 per cent of land in Awdal and Woqoyi Galbeed was farmed.

Attempts by successive governments to modernise and expand peasant crop production largely failed. Only 20 per cent of the population of Somalia before the 1990-94 war were said to be involved in crop production. Average yields for the rain-fed sector were among the lowest in Africa. The principal crops of sorghum and maize were grown almost entirely for home consumption and the urban markets.

Until banned in the mid 1980s, the narcotic plant *qaat* (*Catha edulis*), which is chewed widely in Somalia and other countries in the Horn, was the most profitable cash crop.

regional politics also obscured a growing economic and political crisis in Somalia during the 1980s.

In the 1970s Somalia was allied to the Soviet Union. Defeat in the Ogaden War brought Somalia into the fold of the United States in the 1980s. In coping with a massive influx of refugees from the Ogaden, Somalia reaped a windfall of humanitarian assistance from the West, estimated at some US\$120 million a year. This injection of aid helped to maintain the Barre regime in power. As the government and many thousands of Somalis became dependent on refugees for income, humanitarian aid became a major public source of corruption (Simons, 1995: 52). As armed insurgencies brought hostility to the regime into the open, the distribution of aid only exacerbated those tensions.

After the Soviets' departure the United States became Somalia's largest donor. By 1982 Somalia was the third largest recipient of United States aid in Africa (Simons, 1996: 76). By late 1985 it was reported by the World Bank that, per capita, Somalia was one of the highest recipients of official development assistance in Africa. US influence steered Somalia towards a liberalisation of economic policies – although little change in political practice – and in 1981 Somalia agreed to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural reform programme.

Deregulation of the economy, and the ending of mandatory deliveries to state marketing boards boosted agricultural production (Abdi I Samatar, 1994). This had a cost for the peasant producers. Land prices rocketed and a land rush ensued. Much of the irrigable land along the Shabelle valley was expropriated by wealthy urbanites for rice production.

Deregulation of the economy also stimulated the growth of an illicit parallel economy (Miller, 1981). In the mid 1980s low wages forced civil servants and others to seek incomes outside their official duties. For some the gap between wages and needs was filled by private remittances of Somalis working abroad (estimated to number 250,000 people in 1980), others resorted to illicit trade and corruption. Following the drop in oil prices in the 1980s and subsequent decrease in employment opportunities in the Persian Gulf, remittances began to decline. As the formal economy and banking system atrophied, an informal and illicit economy emerged.

Access to, and control over, the formal economy was through the state. As state power consolidated among Barre's immediate kin, clan identity, proscribed in the 1970s, re-emerged as the passport to political and economic security.

Clans allied with the regime received preferential disbursements in development aid or political positions. Those not allied came to depend, in part, on the informal or illegal economy. At the end of the 1980s, in the context of general economic decline, there was a struggle between the (largely urban) political and economic elite for control over economic resources in the formal and informal economy.

Disintegration of the Somali State

State formation in Somalia, from the colonial era to the Barre era, involved the transition from an uncentralised and egalitarian pastoral society to a centralised, oppressive and predatory state. Backed by a coercive military force, the Barre regime was able to manipulate the delicately balanced clan system.

State formation in Somalia also involved the development of a 'national' economy, which drew Somalia into an expanding global economic system. Somalia's external marginalisation in this world economy was matched by new internal inequalities of wealth. Poverty, inequity and chronic underdevelopment therefore form part of the

background to the war in Somalia. However, the links between poverty and conflict are complex. Somalia's infamous 'warlords' did not come from Somalia's poor. Underlying the Somali civil war has been competition between elites over a parallel economy and the diminishing resources of the state. This struggle became more violent, and was increasingly projected along the faultlines of 'clanism'. This, in part, is what emerges from the chronology of Somalia's civil war. It goes some way to explaining why the war has been so protracted, and the way in which humanitarian aid became an integral part of the conflict.

The Somali Civil War 1988-91

Since the Ogaden war Somalia and those areas of the Horn inhabited by the Somali people have been in a virtually continuous state of armed conflict. The 1988 peace accord between Somalia and Ethiopia that sought to end 10 years of hostility between those countries only precipitated another war. The peace accord, which signalled the end of pan-Somali unity by recognising Ethiopian control over the Haud, triggered an assault by the SNM on the northern cities of Burco and Hargeisa in May 1988. These proved to be the opening shots to the Somali civil war.

War with the Majeerteen

The first organised armed opposition to Barre was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) formed by Majeerteen officers who escaped arrest following an abortive coup of April 1978. Led by Colonel Abdillahi Yusuf, and backed by the Ethiopian army, the SSDF in the early 1980s managed to capture and control some border territory in Mudug region in Somalia's central rangelands, home of Abdillahi Yusuf's sub-clan. The response of the regime was savage. In May and June 1979 more than 2,000 Majeerteen were said to have died in

Mudug region as the result of the regime's scorched earth policy (Said S Samatar, 1991: 18). The SSDF, however, retained possession of their border territory, and launched intermittent cross-border raids until 1986, including joint operations with the SNM in 1983.

The SSDF insurgency collapsed in 1986 after Abdillahi Yusuf was arrested by the Ethiopian government, which was seeking a rapprochement with Somalia. Although reconstituted in 1989, as the civil war spread southwards and the north-east became cut off, the SSDF took no part in Barre's final overthrow. In 1990, however, the Manifesto Group that sought Barre's peaceful removal from power contained several prominent Majeerteen (see page 12).

War with the Issaq

In 1980 a second opposition front emerged to challenge the regime in the form of the Somali National Movement (SNM). Founded in London by intellectuals, businessmen and religious leaders, the SNM was primarily an Issaq-based organisation. Issaq disaffection with the regime arose from a number of sources: inadequate (and undemocratic) political representation, unequal distribution of development resources, and government regulation of business, particularly the livestock and *qaat* trade.

In British Somaliland the Issaq made up the majority of the population. Although that position changed when Somaliland united with Italian Somalia, the Issaq continued to have an influence in government. Somalia's last two civilian governments of 1967 and 1969 were headed by an Issaq premier, Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal. Under Barre several Issaqs held cabinet posts. Nevertheless, after Somalia's independence there was a feeling that political representation in Somalia's affairs favoured southerners.

Somalilanders' decision to unite with the south in 1960 had been controversial. At the time, however, Somali nationalism was vigorous. It was surmised that unity was the first step towards the realisation of 'Greater Somalia', combining all Somali territories, and re-establishing control over the Haud grazing lands in Ethiopia, a primary resource for Somaliland's pastoralists. The Issaq, along with other northerners, supported the war against Ethiopia to reclaim the Ogaden. Somalia's defeat, however, resulted in a mass influx of Ogadeni refugees into the north that posed a

threat to their own lands. Government arming of refugees fuelled this fear. The 1988 peace accord between Somalia and Ethiopia finally recognised Ethiopian control over the Ogaden and Haud.

Issaq merchants were prominent in the livestock trade, with the northern port of Berbera a major outlet to the Persian Gulf. The Issaq perceived government economic controls and attempts to regulate a parallel market as an attack on their businesses and judged the government's ban in 1983 on *qaat* cultivation, which flourished in the north-west, as further evidence of this. The Somali army's subsequent monopoly of the *qaat* trade was early evidence of an emerging economy controlled through violence.

Throughout the 1980s government policy towards the Issaq became increasingly repressive. A 'leaked' letter, allegedly from the military governor in the north to the head of state, raised fear among the Issaq that the government had embarked on a genocidal programme against them. In May 1988 the SNM, fearful of losing its bases in Ethiopia as a result of the peace accord, attacked and briefly captured the northern cities of Burco and Hargeisa. In response Somali government forces launched a savage assault on the Issaq population, forcing thousands to flee to Ethiopia. Between May 1988 and March 1989 some 50,000 people were estimated to have been killed (Africa Watch, 1990). Up to this point the SNM had not been widely supported by civilians. These brutal attacks finally united the Issaq behind the SNM for an all-out war against the regime.

War with the Ogaden

The Ogaden, a sub-lineage of the Darod, is the largest Somali clan confederacy. Its location in the Ogaden (Ethiopia) and in Kenya, coupled with the force of Somali irredentism, has given the clan a significant role in Somalia's politics. Under Barre the Ogadeni were prominent in the army and held key military posts. Ogaden refugees who entered Somalia after the war with Ethiopia by and large supported Barre. Many were armed to fight the SNM.

Barre's rapprochement with the Ethiopian regime, and the growing power of the Marehan within the military, caused disaffection among Ogadeni soldiers. In April 1989 Barre sacked his defence minister, an Ogadeni, sparking a mutiny among Ogadeni soldiers in the southern

port of Kismayo and leading to the formation of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM). The mutiny in Kismayo was also rooted in a protracted dispute between Marehan and Ogadeni pastoralists over the pastoral resources of the Juba region (Bradbury, 1994a: 54; African Rights, 1994). The emergence of an Ogadeni opposition movement signalled the break up of the 'MOD (Darod) alliance' that had dominated the ruling group in Somalia under Barre. A second Ogadeni front was formed in June 1989, when Colonel Omar Jess defected with soldiers from the Somali army in Hargeisa. For most of the war against Barre the SPM constituted a 'southern front', destabilising the regions south of the capital.

War with the Hawiye

Barre's downfall was finally precipitated by the emergence in 1989 of a Hawiye-based military force, the United Somali Congress (USC), in Somalia's central rangelands. As the largest clan in southern Somalia, stretching from the central rangelands to Kenya and Ethiopia, its size, geographical spread, and economic strength within the capital, Mogadishu, have made the Hawiye significant players in the country's politics. The first president of Somalia was Hawiye and throughout the 1960s Hawiye members held 20 per cent of cabinet posts in government.

During Barre's regime, although their political power was curtailed, they benefited from the concentration of development programmes in the south, and were not marginalised like the Issaq. An exception were the Hawiye pastoralists, such as the Habr Gedir, who came into dispute with the Marehan pastoralists favoured by Barre over resources in Somalia's central rangelands. (African Rights, 1994)

In October 1989 Hawiye soldiers mutinied in the town of Galkaiyo. Fighting quickly spread through the regions of Mudug, Galgaduud and Hiran. Government typically retaliated by bombing villages and massacring civilians. The USC was founded largely by individuals from the Habr Gedir sub-clan of the Hawiye, several of whom had been members of the SNM central committee. The USC's first leader, Mohamed Wardhigly, who died in June 1990, sought a negotiated settlement to Somalia's war. General Mohamed Farah Aideed, who succeeded him, favoured a military solution. The USC was supported in its campaign by the SNM. In

December 1990, having agreed a joint campaign with the SNM and SPM, the USC took the war to Mogadishu.

The Digil and Rahanweyne

The Digil and Rahanweyne, situated between the Juba and Shabelle rivers, belong to the Saab branch of the Somali people. As agriculturalists they are looked down on by pastoral Somalis. Their inferior status and smaller numbers have given them a marginal role in Somali national politics. In 1989 a Rahanweyne opposition movement was formed, the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), calling for the removal of Siad Barre. They played only a limited role in his overthrow. However, after he was deposed, the Rahanweyne and Digil were unable to withstand the rampaging armies of Barre and the USC. When their agriculture was devastated, the Rahanweyne and Digil became the main victims of the famine in the south.

The opposition proliferates

Anti-government groups proliferated as the war escalated. During 1989 a Dolbahunte-based Somali United Liberation Front and the Gadabursi-based Somali Democratic Alliance were formed. Neither took part in the military overthrow of Barre. Their proliferation presaged the fissures that would emerge after Barre was overthrown. They reflected the concern with self-preservation in the post-Barre era of mainly clan-based groups

The Manifesto Group

As the war escalated, several attempts at peaceful change were made internally by different groups. In May 1989, for example, some prominent Marehan gave Barre an ultimatum to change and reinstate democracy. However, it was the Manifesto Group which made the most impact.

Disaffection with the economic situation, a rising tide of the displaced in the capital and the government's handling of the conflict, eventually led to anti-government riots in Mogadishu in July 1989. The riots were sparked by the assassination of the Catholic bishop of Mogadishu, and the subsequent arrest of several prominent religious leaders. Some 450 people were killed during a day of rioting, followed by mass arrests and executions of civilians, many of them Issaq.

The ruthless suppression of the riots shattered any remaining loyalty to the regime. In May 1990 more than 100 prominent Somali citizens signed an open letter ('Manifesto No 1') condemning the regime's policies and calling on it to accept a process of discussion with opposition groups to bring about a solution to the political turmoil. Forty-five of the signatories were arrested and charged with treason. They were later released after mass demonstrations in Mogadishu and international diplomatic pressure.

The fall of Siad Barre

Under attack on several fronts, the regime lamely tried to introduce some political reforms. In September 1989 the central committee of the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRSP) approved a change in the constitution to allow for a return to a multi-party system. *Qaat* was legalised and the laws giving equal inheritance rights to women revoked. In September 1990 a new constitution was ratified, the national security laws were lifted and free elections were scheduled for February 1991. These moves towards liberalisation, coinciding with economic reforms, had the effect of dismantling many of the structures of state set up by the revolution, thus leaving the regime more exposed.

All offers of dialogue were rejected by the opposition groups, who saw the moves towards liberalisation as the last-ditch efforts of a dying administration to hold on to power. The constitutional changes, they insisted, were only cosmetic while power remained in the hands of the ruling family; to the end, eight of the president's sons and daughters held powerful positions within the administration.

On 6 August 1990, meeting in Ethiopia, the SNM, USC and SPM agreed to form a united front against the Barre regime. Belated offers by Italy and Egypt to mediate were rejected by the opposition. On 3 December the USC, under General Mohamed Farah Aideed, took the war to Mogadishu. The battle for Mogadishu lasted almost two months, during which time further mediation efforts by the Italians, Egyptians and the Manifesto Group failed.

Barre fled Mogadishu on 26 January 1991 to his home area in south-west Somalia. There he reconstituted his army under the banner of the Somali National Front (SNF), twice attempting to recapture Mogadishu. In April 1992 Barre fled Somalia to Kenya and eventually moved to Nigeria where he died in January 1995.

War and famine

Once Barre was deposed the loose coalition of forces that had defeated him collapsed. The Manifesto Group hurriedly appointed a businessman, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, as 'interim president' and a politician, Omar Arteh Ghalib, as prime minister, thus precipitating an irrecoverable split within the USC. Attempts by the Italian and regional governments to reconcile the factions at two conferences in Djibouti in May and June failed, and in November 1991 fighting again erupted in Mogadishu between General Aideed and Ali Mahdi.

The battle for Mogadishu lasted four months and cost the lives of as many as 25,000 civilians. Two power blocs emerged, based around General Aideed and Ali Mahdi, both from sub-clans of the Hawiye. The most powerful alliance, headed by Aideed, became known as the Somali National Alliance (SNA). Ali Mahdi had gathered around him the Manifesto Group of businessmen and politicians.

For some 16 months, from December 1991 to March 1992, when the United Nations eventually brokered a ceasefire, there was almost continuous warfare in the south. The coastal towns of Merca, Brava and Kismayo and the inland towns of Baidoba and Bardheere suffered waves of invasions by fighters of the USC, SPM, SNF and others. Rape of women, particularly among the coastal Hamr and Bravani populations, mass executions, destruction of agricultural land, looting of grain stores and livestock, and destruction of water supplies and homes led to the massive displacement of people into Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen, and mass starvation.

International intervention

International reaction to the war

The outbreak of the war in Somalia in 1988 coincided with the Cold War thaw and declining foreign interest in Somalia's strategic location, and so was allowed to develop unchecked. The United States continued to provide military assistance to the Siad Barre regime even after war broke out in the north. However, by late 1989 it had begun to distance itself from the regime. This followed a critical Amnesty International report in 1988 and a report by a consultant, Robert Gersony, to the US State Department on the status of Somali refugees (Gersony, 1989). After the riots in Mogadishu in July 1989 the US envoy for Africa declared that 'the people of Somalia were tired with military rule' and urged the regime to restore democratic government.

Before the war official development assistance to Somalia amounted to about one-third of its GNP. As a result of the international refugee support programme, up to half the population was said to have had some access to food aid. When war broke out in Hargeisa and Burco all foreign personnel were evacuated and relief and development work effectively stopped in the north. Some attempt was made to resume food distribution to refugees there during 1990, notably through a UN Extraordinary Interim Emergency Programme, but foreign assistance to the north was severely limited. Only the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), through its hospital in Berbera and a handful of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) running medical programmes on the SNM side of the lines worked in the north during this period.

In January 1990 the US Congress halted non-humanitarian aid to Somalia; bilateral aid was cut to US\$740,000 for 1990, compared with US\$30 million in 1988. The Germans, Dutch and Finns suspended their bilateral aid programmes. Italy too, following the arrest of 45 signatories of Manifesto 1, reduced its aid. Oil companies began to scale down their research operations.

A tripartite agreement on 'Durable Solutions for the Ethiopian Refugees in Somalia' was signed between the governments of Ethiopia, Somalia and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in August 1989. However, the programme had difficulties raising the US\$60 million needed for the operation. The phasing out of the UNHCR programme increased armed banditry as local inhabitants saw a major source of income begin to dry up. As the conflict spread through the country NGOs withdrew to Mogadishu. By December 1990 many international NGOs had drastically cut back their programmes.

The reduction in Western aid forced the Somali government to turn elsewhere for economic and military aid. Military shipments were obtained from Libya, China, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq. Libya sent military advisers and soldiers to Somalia in June 1990 after the two governments signed an accord on commercial cooperation; these three countries' embassies became targets of bombings.

While Western governments closed their aid programmes and embassies, little effort was made to prevent the impending catastrophe. This could be partly explained by the mounting crisis in the Persian Gulf. However, the lack of international will in Somalia contrasted markedly with the US mediation efforts in Ethiopia six months later. On 4 and 5 January 1992, while intense fighting in Mogadishu continued, a US aircraft carrier was diverted from its duties in the Persian Gulf to evacuate remaining foreign nationals, NGOs, diplomatic missions and UN agencies from the country. In the words of the US ambassador to Somalia, the US then 'turned out the light, closed the door and forgot about Somalia'.

Military intervention⁴

As Somalia disintegrated into factional fighting and famine, international NGOs and the ICRC formed the first international response to the crisis, establishing emergency medical and feeding programmes as early as January and February 1991. It took 18 months for the United Nations to respond in any meaningful way. By this time an estimated 300,000 people had died of starvation and hunger-related diseases. Some 500,000 people had fled to Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti, and as many as 3,000 people – mainly women, children and the old – were dying daily. (Mohamed Sahnoun, 1994)

In April 1992, having secured a ceasefire

agreement from Aideed and Ali Mahdi, the UN Security Council, under Resolution 751 (24 April 1992) authorised the establishment of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). An Algerian diplomat, ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, was appointed as the UN secretary-general's special envoy to Somalia. Conceived as an observer mission, UNOSOM initially comprised 50 unarmed military observers, later increased to 500. A six-month Plan of Action was concurrently mobilised by the United Nations to provide US\$23 million in humanitarian aid. By September the promised peacekeepers had not arrived. When the UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali accused the West of being more concerned with the 'rich man's war' in former Yugoslavia than with Somalia, the UN headquarters announced plans to deploy 3,500 armed troops. In October 1992 Sahnoun, frustrated with the UN's response and at odds with the secretary-general, publicly criticised the United Nations and resigned.

By this time inter-clan warfare had been replaced by the armed looting of food aid. The price agencies paid militia to protect relief supplies was equivalent to the cost of the food delivered. With the UN troops unable to control the ports and secure the aid deliveries, many NGOs advocated international military protection for the humanitarian operation. Others were more cautious. In December the UN Security Council endorsed Resolution 794 (1992), which authorised an offer by the outgoing US president George Bush to deploy 30,000 US troops in Somalia. Codenamed Operation Restore Hope, the limited objective of the US-led UN International Task Force (UNITAF) was to 'create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief' throughout the country. On 9 December 1992 US marines landed on Mogadishu's beaches.

At the time UNITAF intervened, Aideed and Ali Mahdi had fought each other to a standstill during the four-month battle for Mogadishu. Critics of Operation Restore Hope have argued that by the time the military intervened the famine had already peaked (African Rights, 1993). While delivery of food was improved, the underlying political conflict was just held in abeyance. No attempt was made to disarm the factions, and UNITAF, concerned for the security of its own forces, sought the cooperation of the warlords, thus conferring on them a measure of legitimacy. The 'quick fix' solution of military intervention thus left a

legacy of unresolved problems. The operation, initially welcomed by many Somalis, was to leave many feeling betrayed.

The Addis Ababa conference on national reconciliation

Military intervention was followed by two hastily arranged national reconciliation conferences, as precursors to handing over to a UN-led operation. In January 1993 leaders of the southern factions meeting in Addis Ababa agreed on a ceasefire and the procedures for disarmament. This was followed on 27 March 1993 by a 'Conference on National Reconciliation'. Again this was held in Addis Ababa, and again involved the 15 factional leaders.

The important agreements reached at Addis Ababa concerned the formation of a Transitional National Council (TNC) and other transitional political and administrative structures that would guide the country to elections in two years. However, the declaration that the TNC would be the 'sole repository' of Somali sovereignty angered the people of Somaliland, involved at that time in their own national reconciliation conference at Borama (see page 21 below). The Addis Ababa agreement proved to be so full of other ambiguities that there was nothing to prevent the signatories from repudiating it.

The UN's approach to reconciliation through the Addis Ababa conferences enhanced the prestige of the warlords, strengthened their political role, and left little room for other potential leaders to emerge. The United Nations made little attempt to broaden the representation in the reconciliation process, and efforts by other peace advocates to do so had little impact. The warlords, who derived their power from being military leaders, in fact had most to lose in resolving the war. As long as the United Nations was willing to continue to sponsor trips to conferences, there was little incentive for the factions to reconcile.

UNOSOM II

The March 1993 Addis Ababa conference was critical to the international intervention in Somalia. The conference was to provide a framework for tackling Somalia's political problems, and for the UN-led administration that would take over from UNITAF.

On 26 March the UN Security Council, by

Resolution 814 (1993), authorised the establishment of UNOSOM II. Under this resolution UNOSOM was reformulated as a broader civilian and military operation, with responsibilities for the political, economic and civil reconstruction of Somalia. With a two-year mandate to expire in February 1995, the objectives of UNOSOM II were to assist with providing relief and economic rehabilitation, and to promote political reconciliation, peace and stability through the re-establishment of national and regional political and civil administrations, no small task. The US permanent representative to the UN, Madeline Albright, remarked at the time:

With this resolution, we will embark on an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country as a proud, functioning and viable member of the community of nations. (Cited in Ameen Jan, 1996)

In line with the Addis Ababa agreement to re-establish national and regional governmental institutions, this was to involve the formation of district councils. The district council programme represented a second track, 'grassroots' process at nation building that was to complement the first track, 'top-down' approach pursued through the Addis Ababa conference and with the warlords.

The programme, however, was problematic. The councils' representativeness was a matter of concern, given the large population displacements, the lack of clarity and dialogue on the councils' functions and authority, the speed with which they were created, their relationship with indigenous councils of elders, their relationship with the warlords, the emphasis on developing constitutional mechanisms in the absence of revenue collection, and the lack of real financial backing from the United Nations. Finally, while placing some emphasis on decentralised political structures, the state-centric leanings of the United Nations meant that the ultimate aim of the programme was to rebuild a national body politic. This contradicted other tendencies in Somalia that thrived on statelessness.

The means by which UNOSOM sought to implement this programme were further at fault. Although Somalia was not made a UN trusteeship, UNOSOM II, and individuals and interested parties under the UN umbrella, were given *de facto* authority to make decisions for and on behalf of the Somali people. This

included expatriates, who often had little or no experience in Somalia or their particular job, being recruited as 'Zonal Directors', and paid large salaries and given powers to match those of regional governors. Not surprisingly, Somalis began to accuse the United Nations of imperialism, and foreigners of enriching themselves from Somalia's misery. Further, although UNOSOM II was supposed to be a civilian operation, it continued to be managed by the military. This meant that military matters took precedence over other UN and NGO relief and development interventions. (Ameen Jan, 1996)

The contradictions between these two approaches at nation building, together with the means of implementation, led the United Nations into a war with General Aideed, the most powerful of the faction leaders. In the process the UN lost its role as neutral arbiter in Somalia. Consequently the United States and the UN were forced into an ignominious withdrawal from Somalia.

The United Nations at war

To support UNOSOM II in its task, the UN Security Council approved the expansion of the multilateral peacekeeping force to 28,000 troops, plus 8,000 logistics personnel. In addition Resolution 814 invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter, giving UNOSOM II powers of 'peace-enforcement'. These powers, vastly superior to those assumed for UNITAF, permitted the UN to use force when 'international peace and security' were threatened, rather than normal rules of engagement which limited UN military action to self-defence.

With a six-month military budget of US\$1.5 billion and with military forces from 27 different countries, UNOSOM II was at the time the most expensive and largest multilateral force ever constituted for a peacekeeping operation. It was the first time that the United States had placed its troops under the UN flag and command, and the first time German soldiers operated outside NATO. At the end of the Cold War, and in the wake of the Gulf War, Somalia became a testing ground for the international community's response to conflict and humanitarian crisis in the 'new world order'. UNOSOM II's policies were thus driven more by international political concerns than by the situation in Somalia.

On 4 May 1993 UNITAF handed over to UNOSOM II. A month later, after 24 Pakistani

UN peacekeepers and 35 Somalis were killed during a weapons search of Radio Mogadishu, the United Nations found itself at war with General Aideed. Invoking Chapter VII, UNOSOM took an aggressive stance and ordered his arrest. By mid-September 1993 at least 56 UN soldiers and several hundred Somalis had died in clashes between the United Nations and Aideed's forces.

The UN's approach was widely condemned, and it was accused of human rights violations. In October two US helicopters were shot down in Mogadishu causing heavy US army casualties, which led the United States to announce its intention to withdraw from Somalia and the United Nations to call off its hunt for Aideed.

The US presence in Somalia came to an end in March 1994 and UNOSOM was handed over to a Pakistani force. In November 1994 the Security Council ordered the United Nations to withdraw from Somalia by 31 March 1995. US marines and Italians briefly returned to

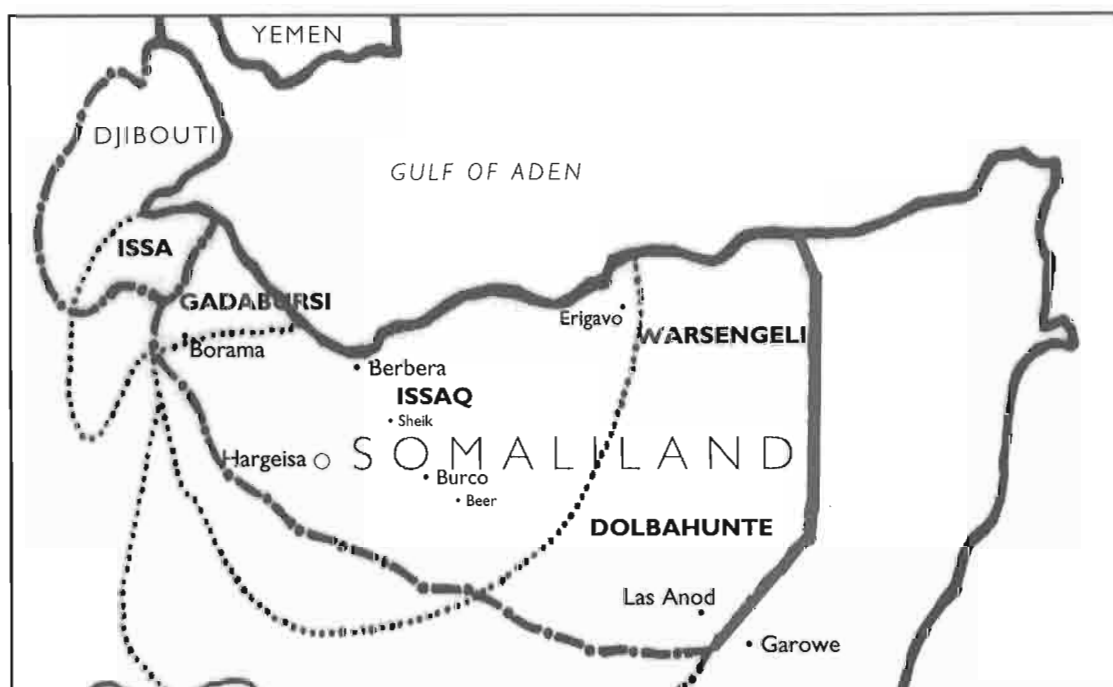
Mogadishu to protect the withdrawal of the remaining 1,500 Pakistani troops. By 2 March the evacuation was completed. In UNOSOM's three-year operation, an estimated 6,000 Somalis and 83 peacekeepers were killed in clashes between Somali military and the United Nations.

At the end of 1993, with the demise of UNOSOM imminent, donor governments established a new forum for coordinating rehabilitation assistance to Somalia. Known as the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB), this took over much of the policy coordination function that UNOSOM was intended to provide in Somalia.

UNOSOM was one of a number of international humanitarian interventions in internal wars that occurred at the beginning of the 1990s. As such it was critical in the development of international political and humanitarian policy. UNOSOM proved a costly and flawed experiment. Some of the reasons for its failure are discussed in Part II.

PART II

Somaliland 1991-96



The secession of Somaliland

When Mohamed Siad Barre was forced from power in 1991 the Somali state collapsed. In January that year, as the USC took control of Mogadishu, the SNM captured the northern cities of Berbera, Hargeisa and Burco. On 18 May 1991 the people of the north-west regions of Somalia revoked the 1960 Act of Union that joined the colonial territories of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia, and announced the secession of the 'Republic of Somaliland'. The declaration of independence was made without consulting Somalia's numerous other political factions and

consequently Somaliland remains unrecognised by the international community.

Secession had never been a stated aim of the SNM. The decision by the leaders of the SNM to reassert Somaliland's sovereignty was made under popular pressure during the 'Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples' in May 1991, held in the city of Burco (Drysdale, 1992). The formation in February 1991 of an interim government in Mogadishu by the USC went against a previous accord between the SNM, USC and the SPM. The people of the northwest, particularly the Issaq who formed the backbone of the SNM, feared that any further relationship with Mogadishu would lead to a repeat of the persecution they had suffered under military rule. Secession was also a pragmatic stance to distance the north from the factional fighting in the south, and a recognition that northerners, the Issaq in particular, had no territorial claims over the south. It was also believed that security and stability in the north would attract much-needed international aid.

The 1960 union with the south had been driven by nationalistic aspirations to unite the five Somali territories in a 'Greater Somalia'. In this the northerners stood to re-establish access to the Haud grazing areas ceded by the British to Ethiopia in 1954. Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden war of 1977 destroyed any pretence of achieving that goal through a united Somalia. Years of conducting a guerrilla campaign from within Ethiopia, and the mass movement of Issaqs into refugee camps in the Haud in 1988, healed relations with Ethiopia. It may also have persuaded northerners that pastoralists' needs for unhindered access to the Haud could be better achieved through cooperation with Ethiopia rather than unity with the south. It is perhaps relevant that, before Burco 1991, the previous 'Grand *Shir*' of the northern clans was in 1954, in response to the British decision to cede the Haud to Ethiopia.

In contrast to what happened in southern Somalia, the declaration of independence ushered in a period of relative stability in Somaliland. The SNM assumed a two-year mandate as the single party in Somaliland and Abdulrahman Ahmed Ali 'Tuur', then chairman of the SNM, was appointed interim president. The SNM resolved not to extend its military victory beyond Issaq territories, and the clans within the north established a high degree of cooperation. The first government had a relatively equitable balance of northern clans represented in cabinet posts.

The Tuur administration 1991-93

The 'Tuur' administration had the task of building a government from scratch, bereft of any resources. In two years it failed to develop a revenue base to support an effective administration. Nor did it attract effective external support. Banditry and looting by armed militia mobilised during the war disrupted government and inter-clan attempts at reconciliation, and international relief programmes.

The initial euphoria of independence was shattered by an outbreak of fighting in Burco in January 1992 and in Berbera in March 1992. The conflict was brought to an end in October 1992, through a political settlement and peace conference in the town of Sheik, brokered by the Somaliland elders. The Sheik 'Tawfiq' conference paved the way for a national reconciliation conference, held in the town of Borama, in which all Somaliland's clans participated, and which adopted a 'Peace Charter' and 'National Charter' as a framework for governance.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF SOMALILAND

The territory of the 'Republic of Somaliland', which covers approximately 117,500 square kilometres, corresponds to that of the former British Somaliland Protectorate. It incorporates the five former regions of north-west Somalia, Awdal, Woqoyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag and Sool, with its capital in Hargeisa. Its neighbours are Djibouti in the west, Ethiopia in the south and the North-East Region of Somalia to the east.

Inland from Somaliland's narrow coastal plain, known as the Guban (meaning 'scorched'), the land rises above 2,000 metres in the Gollis mountains before descending southward across the Ogo plateau to the west, the Saraar plain to east, and onto the wet season pastures of the Haud in Ethiopia.

The north-east and south-west monsoons bring two rainy seasons (May to July and November to January), and two lengthy dry seasons (January to April and August to October). Annual rainfall ranges between 200 and 800 mm, with temperatures ranging between 25 and 35°C. The area is subject to periodic drought.

Somaliland's economy is dependent on trade in livestock. Cultivation is limited to rainfed areas to the west of Hargeisa, and in the Gollis mountains. The economy is linked to those of neighbouring countries. Livestock, agricultural produce and *qaat* are exported from Eastern Harerghe in Ethiopia and Somaliland through Berbera and Djibouti in exchange for the import of food and manufactured goods. Somali refugee camps in Ethiopia, with their food aid, form an important part of the regional economy. Insecurity in any one of the countries can affect the neighbouring economies.

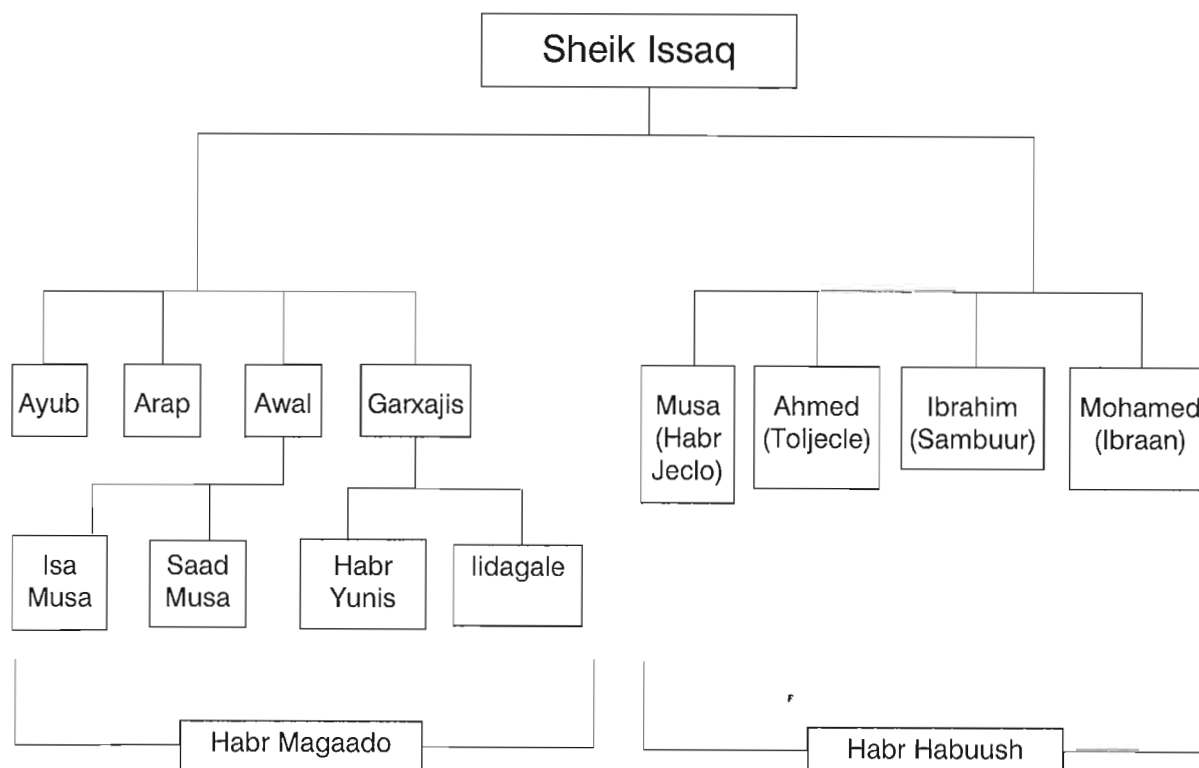
Box 5

THE PEOPLE OF SOMALILAND

The size and composition of Somaliland's population has altered considerably since 1988, when it was estimated at between 1.78 and 2.05 million, excluding Ethiopian refugees. Up to 600,000 people fled to Ethiopia when the war started in 1988. Others sought refuge in Djibouti or moved south. When the war ended in Somaliland, many refugees and displaced people returned. This included people who had never lived in Somaliland, but were forced out of the south to seek security within their own clan territory. In January 1992 Somaliland's population was estimated to be 1.35 million (Holt and Lawrence, 1992). When war broke out again in 1994 up to 150,000 people fled Hargeisa, many crossing to Ethiopia (Bryden, 1994). At the end of 1995 there were said to be 300,000 people from Somaliland still in Ethiopia (Bryden, 1995).

The people of the region divide into five main clan groups. The Issaq are by far the most populous clan-family. Their traditional lands fall within Woqoyi Galbeed, Togdheer and western Sanaag regions. The main sub-clans of the Issaq are the Habr Yunis and Iidagale (together the Garxajis), Habr Jeclo, Habr Awal (Isa Musa and Saad Musa), Arap and Ayub (Box 7).

PRIMARY ISSAQ LINEAGES



Adapted from Lewis, 1969.

The Gadabursi and Issa, sub-clans of the Dir, are found in Awdal region in the west. The Dolbahunte of Sool and the Warsengeli of eastern Sanaag are sub-clans of the Harti Darod, related to the Majeerteen of north-east Somalia. Habr Magaado and Habr Habuush were wives of Issaq.

THE SOMALI NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The SNM was founded in London in 1981. It drew its early support from the Somali diaspora in western Europe and the Persian Gulf states. It was primarily an Issaq movement, with its leaders coming from the urban elite. Several of them, such as Ahmed Mohamed 'Silaniyo' and Abdulrahman Ahmed Ali 'Tuur', both chairmen of the SNM, had held posts in Barre's government.

The SNM was the most organised of the armed movements. Compared with the recently created southern movements, the SNM had a clearer political manifesto (Compagnon, 1991). It also published its policies. The SNM argued that the clan system lay at the root of political stability, social cohesion and economic activity. Thus they proposed:

a new political system built upon Somali cultural values of co-operation rather than coercion; a system which elevated the Somali concept of *xeer* or inter-family social contract in which no man exercised political power over another except according to established law and custom, to the national level. (Ahmed I Samatar, 1988: 142)

Within the Somali traditions of social organisation, the SNM emphasised the role of the elders. Their proposal for government in post-Barre Somalia was to integrate 'traditional Somali egalitarianism and the requirements of good central

government' (ibid). The SNM constitution called for a two-chamber legislature, with an upper house of elders. A council of elders (*guurti*) was integral to the SNM's political and military strategy. Indeed, as early as February 1989 Issaq elders met to discuss the formation of a provisional government in the north (Simons, 1995: 75).

Like all political factions, the SNM relied on a coalition of allied clans – in this case within the Issaq – to provide fighters for the war. SNM guerrillas fought in small units drawn from the same clan, and generally fought within their own clan territory (Drysdale, 1992). While many fighters laid down their arms once the war was over, disarming and integrating these disparate units became a problem immediately after the war.

Although the SNM produced a political manifesto for government, like the other movements its struggle generally lacked a unifying ideology. Capitalism, clanism, democratic socialism, Islam, and regional separation had their various adherents within the SNM. Disputes arising from these internal differences weakened the movement. Primary among these was a clash between the civilian and military wings and the 'right' and 'left' leaning tendencies in the SNM. In 1983 the military wing ousted the civilian component of the leadership (Ahmed I Samatar, 1988: 155). A year later a new civilian group was

installed, with 'Silaniyo' as chairman.

The military wing was split between two factions – a more radical element nicknamed the *alan as* ('red flag'), comprising colonels who had been trained in the eastern bloc, and another known as the *shish* ('snipers'). These factions were roughly split along clan lines. Prominent personalities in the *alan as* mainly come from the Habr Awal (Issa Musa and Saad Musa) and Habr Jeclo; the *shish* from the Habr Yunis and lidagale. A dispute is said to have arisen between these wings over the 1988 attacks on Burco and Hargeisa. During the war, tensions also arose over perceptions that some clans were not contributing sufficiently, or that others were dominating the leadership. These latent tensions re-emerged in post-independence Somaliland.

In the first two years of independence the SNM was the sole official political party of Somaliland. However, internal weaknesses and the difficulty of integrating non-Issaq clans into the movement, meant that it did not play a significant role as a political party in post-independence Somaliland. After the 1993 Borama Conference the SNM became largely defunct, although an attempt was made to resuscitate it in 1994. SNM veterans, however, continue to celebrate 'SNM day' (marking the founding of the SNM, its victories and heroes), and continue to seek recognition for their role in the war.

The Borama Conference

The Borama 'Grand Conference on National Reconciliation' was described as a 'make or break event' in the creation of the Somaliland state. The conference agenda had two items: reconciliation and security; and state formation.

The conference opened on 24 January 1993 and lasted nearly four months. This gave time for issues to be exhaustively debated and for flashpoints to be dealt with so that consensus

could be achieved. A national committee of 150 Somaliland elders (the Somaliland National *Guurti*) comprised the official voting delegates at the conference. However, during the four months, an estimated 2,000 people attended and participated in some way in the meeting.⁵ The conference was mostly financed by Somalis, a major factor in its success. Although some foreign donors did provide funds, UNOSOM did not provide any support.

The Peace Charter

The outcome of deliberations on reconciliation and security was the 'Somaliland Communities Security and Peace Charter'. This sought to rectify mistakes that had led to insecurity and ineffectual government (Somaliland Peace Charter, 1993). It aimed to promote 'the strengthening of security and stability [and] peaceful co-existence among all the communities of Somaliland' that had been agreed at independence (ibid). The charter established a national security framework, detailing mechanisms for demobilisation, the formation of local police forces and judicial institutions and the securing of roads. The elders were given responsibility for ensuring that these security arrangements were put in place. The charter also defined the responsibilities of elders in mediating and settling outstanding disputes and future conflicts. It set out a code of conduct for the people of Somaliland, in accordance with their traditions and with the principles of Islam. In effect, the Peace Charter represented a national *xeer*.

The National Charter

Discussions on state formation produced a National Charter, which was to act as the constitution for Somaliland for two years. The incoming government was to be charged with drafting a national constitution to be ratified by referendum within two years. The National Charter established a government structure with a bicameral legislature. This comprises an Assembly of Elders (*guurti*) as a non-elected upper house, and an Assembly of Representatives as an elected lower house. Together these make up the parliament. The equivalent of a 'cabinet' is known as the Executive Council.

In addition the charter separated the judiciary, auditor-general, and central bank as agencies independent of the government. The charter institutionalised the elders as peacemakers, defining their role as 'to encourage and safeguard peace [and] creating new or enforcing existing Codes of Conduct [*xeer*] among the clans' (Bradbury, 1994a: 74). Their authority was confirmed by their right to appoint a president, vice-president and members of the Assembly of Representatives. Within both the National Charter and the Peace Charter formulated at Borama, there is a clear link to the SNM's original vision to reform radically systems of governance in the post-Barre era (see Box 8).

In June 1993 the National Guurti appointed Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal – Somaliland's

first prime minister in 1960 and Somalia's last civilian prime minister in 1969 – as the new president of Somaliland. Abdulrahman Aw Ali was appointed vice-president.

The Sanaag Peace Conference

The Borama conference was one of several peace processes under way in Somaliland at that time. Of the others, the most significant and successful was in Sanaag region, where elders of the region's four main clans – Habr Yunis, Habr Jeclo, Dolbahunte and Warsengeli – embarked on a lengthy process of reconciliation (Bradbury, 1994a; Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1993). This culminated in the 'Sanaag Grand Peace and Reconciliation Conference', which concluded in October 1993 with the adoption of a regional Peace Charter. The charter allowed for the free movement of trade, the return of fixed assets, in particular land, and the restoration of reciprocal access to grazing lands. In August 1995 the elders in Sanaag oversaw the resettlement and return of land to those who had been displaced during the war. This involved some 500 families. (Haroon Ahmed Yusuf, 1996)

The Egal administration 1993-95

The state of government

Egal took office on a wave of euphoria following the successful conclusion of the Borama conference. During his first two years in office, Egal's achievements in creating a functioning administration were considerable. Ministries were revitalised. Government offices were refurbished. Regular morning and afternoon work hours were instituted. A civil service commission was formed. Regular coordination meetings were established between the planning ministry and international

NGOs and UN agencies. The central bank was opened and a new Somaliland currency introduced. In Hargeisa, Borama and Berbera police forces were equipped and organised. Customs officers were appointed and offices established. A justice system of regional and district courts was re-established in places, utilising the 1960 penal code. In Hargeisa the mayor embarked on a programme of town planning and civil engineering, including repairs to government hotels. Ministerial and civil service staff (estimated at around 2,500 in 1995) were paid regular salaries, as were national assembly members, the police, and

army. The government even introduced a minimum wage. In November 1994 ministries received their own budgets. Some 50 per cent was allocated to the defence ministry and police, with education and health combined making up 17 per cent (Gilkes, 1995). All this was achieved with minimal external assistance. In the absence of such support, however, these achievements have not been sustained.

Although the government's writ was largely confined to Hargeisa, Berbera and Borama, it had a functional relationship with the regions, where none had existed under Tuur. For example, regional health plans in Sanaag were

DEMOBILISATION

Box 9

The militarisation of society is a constant threat to security and stability in Somaliland. Before May 1988 the SNM was said to comprise some 3,000 fighters. When the war escalated in 1988 there was a rapid militarisation of society as the Issaq population was mobilised for the war. At the end of the war many SNM fighters laid down their arms and returned to civilian life. Some remained together as military units. Some turned to banditry and were joined by others who had not fought in the war. In 1993 the Somaliland government estimated that there were 50,000 armed militia in Somaliland (Niyathi, 1995: 27). This was probably an over-estimation, but indicated the scale of the problem.

The first Somaliland government had proposed to unify the militia in a national army (Drysedale, 1992: 30). It failed to do this and the national Peace Charter sought to establish a framework in which the communities would take responsibility for security. Within four months of taking office Egal reached an agreement with some militia commanders and elders to collect militia in cantonment sites. Businessmen agreed to contribute food in the interests of keeping the roads safe. But events moved faster than anticipated. In September 1993, 3,000 militia were encamped in Mandera, south of Berbera. With

clans anxious not to forgo the benefits of retraining and employment in the new security forces envisaged, this had risen to 6,000 by October.

Substantial assistance was anticipated from UNOSOM, which had a mandate and a US\$18 million budget for demobilisation (Bradbury 1994a: 82). Despite several assessment missions and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) posting two consultants in Hargeisa to draw up demobilisation plans, the assistance was never forthcoming. The failure to support demobilisation in Somaliland is an indictment of UNOSOM. The German government through GTZ, with CARE, Oxfam and the Swiss Group, have since supported demobilisation, but for the most part international support has been meagre.

Somaliland has therefore largely been left to itself to orchestrate the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants. Formally two organisations exist to support this process: a parastatal National Demobilisation Commission (NDC) and SOOYAAL, a veterans association and NGO concerned with SNM veterans and their widows. In February 1994 the NDC claimed it had acquired three-quarters of the weapons from five brigades, primarily in the Hargeisa area and the west. No progress was

made in the east. Despite this, up to 5,000 militia were estimated to have been disarmed (Niyathi, 1995: 27). Their reintegration was more problematic. The reintegration programmes that existed were small and run by SOOYAAL. Several hundred of those encamped in 1993 were recruited into the police and customs forces. The remainder were sent home unemployed. An informed estimate in early 1995 suggested that some 10,000 militia remained to be dealt with. (Gilkes, 1995)

The outbreak of war in 1994 politicised and set back demobilisation. While the government stated its intention to continue with the programme, the NDC was unacceptable in opposition areas. In 1993 the government had pronounced that it did not intend to form an army. That policy changed when the National Army recruited militia into its ranks, giving rise to accusations that the government had gone against the spirit of the Peace Charter. The 1st brigade of the new National Army was operative by March 1994. By September 1995 estimates put the National Army as high as 15,000 soldiers uniformed and armed. Although the government has said it intends to demobilise them once the war is over, the positive environment that existed in 1993 has dissipated.

authorised by the central ministry, while regional health workers and some education officials received incentives through the government, although funded by international agencies.

The progress in establishing an administration was achieved by increasing the government's resource base. In September 1995 government revenue was estimated to be roughly US\$10 million, rising towards US\$15 million.⁶ Government revenue collection improved after effective customs and excise facilities were established in Berbera and on the Djibouti border at Zeila, and from taxing the *qaat* trade. In 1995 it was estimated that the annual value of *qaat* imported into Hargeisa was equivalent to US\$137 million a year; for Somaliland as a whole it was put at US\$250 million (Gilkes, 1995). Government finances were also helped by a windfall received when the Somaliland currency was introduced and exchanged at a preferential rate for the Somali shilling.

Underlying the government's economic fortunes was Somaliland's buoyant economic growth from mid 1993. The foundation of this was growth in the livestock export trade and the opening of new external trading links. Since 1993 the volume of Somaliland's trade has increased substantially. In particular, political changes in Ethiopia and the opening of the Somali-Ethiopian border has created a vast new market for Somali traders. Some 65 per cent of the trade through Berbera is said to be destined for Ethiopia. Along with Assab in Eritrea, Berbera is challenging Djibouti as the main port for eastern Ethiopia in terms of volume of trade. Berbera offers the benefits of lower customs dues than Djibouti. Some traders import their goods through Berbera and ship them overland to Djibouti to avoid taxes. In addition, Djibouti

port has suffered technical problems, while Berbera has developed a simple but well-run facility, although still in need of improvement. Berbera has also benefited from the closure of the southern ports of Kismayo and Mogadishu due to the conflict there. Livestock from as far south as Beletweyne are exported through Berbera. Expansion of the livestock trade has also been stimulated by the reopening of the Saudi Arabian market, which had been closed to Somali livestock since the 1980s. At least one Saudi port is open, unofficially, to receive Somali sheep and goats. In addition to trade, there has also been a gradual recovery of the rural economy in Somaliland; in September 1995, the main cause of food insecurity in Hargeisa was inflation. In June 1995 private companies re-established a functioning telecommunications system in Hargeisa, with international lines. This has since been extended to Berbera and Borama.

Underlying economic recovery was a greatly improved security situation. Banditry was widespread during the Tuur administration but after the Borama conference it diminished significantly. With the support of the clans the government was able to remove checkpoints from the main roads between Berbera, Hargeisa and Borama, thus facilitating the flow of trade and food. In the towns the establishment of police forces and a judicial system helped to restore some law and order. A short-lived demobilisation campaign contributed to the improved security situation (see Box 9). In Hargeisa the security situation improved to the extent that the United Nations began to import its own vehicles and international NGOs scaled down their investment in security.

Although considerable progress was achieved in establishing the institutions of government, the new state remained politically fragile, and vulnerable to a shift in power between the clans and politicians influencing the situation. The boundaries of the Somaliland state were unclear, as non-Issaqa clans particularly in the east remained ambiguous towards Somaliland. Egal's administration benefited from the port revenues from Berbera in a way that Tuur was never able to, because it lay within Egal's clan territory. Another head of state may not have found people willing to pass that revenue to the government. At the same time Egal's government was unable to secure and control Hargeisa airport, a strategic site on its doorstep which was held by Iidagale militia.

MINES — A LASTING LEGACY

Unexploded ordnance remains a major hazard throughout Somaliland, and Somalia. During the war with Siad Barre 1.5 million mines were thought to have been laid in Somaliland alone by the Somali Armed Forces and the SNM. Most were laid against civilian or economic targets, such as on farmland and records were not kept of their positions. The economic and social effects are long lasting. A two-year (1992-93) de-mining project by a British firm with a team of trained Somalis cleared an estimated 80,000 mines. Despite there being foreign troops in Somalia who could have done this, UNOSOM failed to institute a de-mining programme. When war broke out in 1994 new mines were laid, particularly around Burco.

Box 10

The fragility of the administration and security was exposed 18 months after Egal was made president, when war returned to Somaliland.

Return to war

After a year of heady progress which included a concerted attempt at demobilisation, and the strengthening of government institutions and revenue collection, fighting again broke out in November 1994 in Hargeisa, spreading to Burco in March 1995. The immediate reasons were twofold: a struggle for control of Hargeisa airport and its revenue between the government and a militia of the Iidagale (Issaq) clan within whose territory the airport lies, and an attempt by the government to impose its authority outside Hargeisa (Bryden, 1994). The roots of the conflict, however, are more complex. The prime catalyst was the manipulation of the airport confrontation and historical clan animosities by a political clique opposed to the Egal administration. Also important were unresolved issues of power sharing, historical divisions within the SNM, competition over Somaliland's resources (particularly trade and currency), and interventions by General Aideed from Mogadishu and the international community through the United Nations. Most of these have been threads throughout the previous bouts of fighting in Somaliland.⁷

At the time this report was written, hostilities were continuing. As in 1991 and 1992, the war has been largely confined within the Issaq clans, (although insecurity affected Awdal in 1995 when the Issaq, Gadabursi and Issa clashed on the Djibouti-Somaliland border over control of trade between Hargeisa and Djibouti, and over the port of Zeila). For non-Issaq the conflict is seen primarily as an Issaq problem. As with previous wars, fighting has concentrated around the major urban and commercial centres of Hargeisa and Burco in the north-west and Togdheer regions, giving credence to claims that this is largely a war among an urban political elite.

The war has involved the heaviest and most protracted fighting since the end of the conflict with Siad Barre in 1991. Tens of thousands of civilians fled Hargeisa and Burco, many going to Ethiopia from where they had returned in 1991. Some estimates put the number of people killed in Burco alone as high as 4,000. There has been widespread destruction of property rehabilitated since 1991. Hargeisa and Burco

became divided towns. New arms flowed into the region as the opposition received support from Aideed and the government acquired weapons from eastern Europe. The war harmed a rapidly expanding economy, causing currency devaluation, inflation in the west and a retraction in international assistance programmes. In the east trade was curtailed, hurting small businesses. Government budgets were also severely affected: the government allegedly spent US\$4.5 million re-equipping the army.

Perhaps the most immediate damage was the loss of confidence among Somalilanders who had believed that fighting was over. The war caused new social and political cleavages. There was a further rejection of central government and 'politicians', and the war threw Somaliland's viability into doubt. The different layers of the conflict are examined below.

Political factors

Despite the achievements in creating an administration, politically things did not begin well for the Egal administration. Egal's first government met with strong opposition from the Habr Yunis and Iidagale (collectively known as Garxajis). The Habr Yunis and Warsengeli refused offers of two ministerial posts. In July 1993 the Habr Yunis meeting in Burco (the 'Liiban Congress') declared that they would not take up their seats in the Upper and Lower Houses, nor be bound by laws passed by parliament.

The Habr Yunis's grievances were threefold. First, they argued that the election which selected Egal over Abdulrahman Tuur, a Habr Yunis, was unfair. Second, they asserted that seats in the upper and lower houses of parliament should be allotted according to region rather than clan, which would have given them a greater number. This dispute was supposed to be settled by a constitutional committee, but discussion on a new constitution did not start until 1995. Egal rejected calls for another national conference to resolve the issue.

Third, the Habr Yunis and Iidagale accused Egal of anti-Garxajis sentiments and of forming his government from a 'single political wing' (Bradbury, 1994a). This referred to Egal's first choice of cabinet ministers who included some of the most aggressive opponents of Tuur's administration and members of the *alan as* faction within the SNM who had opposed Tuur during the conflict in Berbera in 1992. The impression given was that those who fought

against the Tuur administration won the war and so undermined the spirit of reconciliation achieved at Sheik.

In November 1994, after protracted negotiations with the Iidagale militia broke down, the government took the Iidagale-held Hargeisa airport by force. The army then went on to attack the Iidagale town of Toon. This government act of aggression forced the Garxajis to unite against the Egal administration.

The dispute over the airport was largely manipulated by prominent politicians, including former President Tuur (Habr Yunis) and General Jama Mohamed Qalib 'Yare' (Iidagale). In April 1994 Tuur revived an acquaintance with General Aideed, formed when the SNM and USC agreed to coordinate operations against Barre, and announced his conversion to a united federal Somalia. In 1995 he joined Aideed's self-proclaimed government in Mogadishu as a vice-president. Jama Yare has consistently opposed Somaliland's independence. However, it was not until 1995 that he joined Aideed's government as foreign minister. Tuur's change of heart occurred in part under inducements from UNOSOM, which was desperate to conclude a peace deal before leaving Somalia in March 1994 and invited him to participate in a UN reconciliation conference. (Bryden, 1994)

Once fighting broke out, the government and 'opposition' disagreed about whether the conflict was about political or clan issues. The government sought to portray the war as being between proponents and opponents of independence, and thus claimed the moral high ground. These claims were reinforced by General Aideed's material support for the Garxajis and public claims that his forces were fighting the Egal administration. The government initially rejected overtures for inter-clan negotiations from elders, on the grounds that this was a 'political' rather than clan struggle. There was some legitimacy in this, as the government could claim to represent a broad coalition of clans. At the same time, Egal's aggressive stance was not conducive to negotiations.

For the opposition, the 'federalist' position was limited to the clique of political figures such and Tuur and Yare. The Habr Yunis 'Liiban Congress' in July 1993 and again in December 1994 reaffirmed their commitment to Somaliland. It was not until July 1994, at 'Liiban Congress II', that Tuur received any support for his position from Habr Yunis elders.

Rejection of federalism and Tuur, however, did not translate into support for Egal. In Somaliland the Garxajis were concerned with their under-representation in government, the predominance of Habr Awal political and commercial interests in government, the inclusion in the government of *alan as* officers, and alleged violations of the National Charter. (The last refers to the formation of a national army and government attempts to control Hargeisa airport.) On these grounds the Garxajis elders and leadership portrayed the conflict as being clan-based.

The Burco factor

In January 1995, with a newly equipped army, the government re-asserted control over Hargeisa airport. Once the capital was secured, the government's policy was to establish its authority in the east. In March 1995 the war spread to Burco after the national army tried to take over checkpoints in the city.

The conflict in Burco is different from that of Hargeisa. The core of the conflict here is a historical struggle between elements of the Habr Yunis and the Habr Jeclo for control of the town, a major commercial centre. After the fighting in January 1992 between the Habr Yunis and Habr Jeclo militia, the town was divided and only a fragile peace existed. With the renewal of conflict the population of Burco evacuated the town, the Habr Yunis moving to Oodweyne and Ethiopia or east to Sanaag region. However, elders in neighbouring Sanaag region managed to prevent the fighting spreading to that area.

The SNM factor

In renouncing Somaliland's independence, Tuur made an unsuccessful attempt to resurrect the SNM as a political force in order to broaden his legitimacy within Somaliland.

Economic dimensions of the war

The 1991-92 war over Berbera was dubbed the 'sheep war'. While directly referring to a specific clash over a convoy of livestock destined for export through Berbera, the name highlighted the economic dimensions of that conflict. Economic growth since 1993 has been a critical factor in Somaliland's survival and Egal's success in re-establishing government institutions. The clash over Hargeisa airport was

one element in a complex economic environment which involves shifting monopolies on the livestock and *qaat* trade, and control of the Somaliland currency.

There were claims by both sides that the other was profiting from continued instability. In 1995 Egal asked the vice-president to investigate allegations that individuals had used money meant for the war effort to enrich themselves.

Economic tensions have a clan dimension. The Habr Awal have traditionally controlled the wealth in the urban centres of Hargeisa and Berbera, with a strong foothold in Djibouti. They were important financiers of the SNM. Their wealth is based on commodity trade. The Habr Yunis have been prominent in the civil service since colonial times, while the Garxajis and Habr Jeclo have been prominent in the livestock trade.

On taking office Egal's priorities were to restore law and order and create a strong revenue. The latter involved affirming government authority over the ports and airports, including Hargeisa. Egal, from the Isa Musa sub-clan of the Habr Awal from Berbera, has been able to raise taxes on the port's revenue. As it lies within their territory the Iidagale claim Hargeisa airport as their asset, as Berbera is for the Isa Musa/Habr Awal. Opposition leaders further justified this position with the National Charter, which provides for local security arrangements. By taxing and harassing passengers of commercial and aid flights, the Iidagale militia affected Hargeisa's economy. Habr Awal businessmen in Hargeisa were particularly aggrieved. The airport was thus a focus for a range of competing economic interests.

The government's relationship with prominent merchants was crucial to the progress Egal made in re-establishing government institutions. Egal's main financial backers were a group of Habr Awal importers and wholesalers based in Djibouti who held a monopoly on the trade between Berbera, Hargeisa, Ethiopia and Djibouti. When government revenue was insufficient to feed the National Army, the merchants assisted with food for the army and police. They also financed the printing of Somaliland's new currency, introduced on the eve of war in October 1994 (see Box 11).

Before the war Hargeisa market was booming. Much of the early fighting in Hargeisa was around the central market, an area

where the Garxajis own many buildings. As part of the Hargeisa municipality's rehabilitation programme the central market was divided into smaller markets around the city, supposedly to spread the benefits of trade. The effect, in fact, was to undermine the economy of the Garxajis in Hargeisa. The city's livestock market, traditionally located in a Garxajis area, was also moved by the municipality, signalling to the Garxajis a change in the monopoly in livestock trade. In the east the livestock trade has become dominated by a single Habr Jeclo trader, while the Habr Awal have become dominant in the *qaat* trade to western Somaliland.

These changes in trade monopolies since 1994 tend to support Garxajis grievances that the Egal administration has strengthened the

THE NEW SOMALILAND SHILLING

Box 11

Control of currency has become integral to the war in Somaliland.⁸ A new currency was introduced in October 1994 at the rate of 54 Somaliland shillings to the US dollar, a rate greatly preferential to the Somali shilling. When the government bought old Somali shillings with Somaliland shillings at this rate it was accused of 'the greatest robbery in Africa'.⁹ The government certainly made big profits from changing the currency. Two years later, in October 1996, the market rate was 4,500 Somaliland shillings to one US dollar. The immediate cause of the devaluation was a shortage of US dollars in Somaliland. Behind this lay the central bank's failure to control the market, the strength of the Somaliland traders compared to the bank, and the cost of the war. Failure to establish a banking system throughout Somaliland meant the new currency was only introduced in Hargeisa and the west. The war prevented its circulation to eastern regions. Indeed, money sent from Hargeisa to the army in Burco had to be sent in US dollars or converted into old Somali shillings. Throughout 1995 and 1996, the government introduced increasingly draconian policies to prevent the circulation of old Somali shillings in the west and to control the exchange rate. These failed to stem the devaluation. By the end of 1996, in Borama, the Ethiopian *bir* became the favoured currency.

Frequent devaluations coupled with spiralling inflation created insecurity about being able to afford food, particularly among Hargeisa's poor. The devaluation also eroded government salaries. In September 1995, for example, the price of 50 kg of sugar rose from 6,600 to 9,000 Somaliland shillings in one day. Despite this, it became politically impossible for the government to re-introduce the old Somali shilling as legal tender or to withdraw the Somaliland shilling. At the end of 1996 the government was continuing to print new Somaliland notes.

role of the Habr Awal business community. Hargeisa, which traditionally lies in Habr Awal territory, has prospered during Egal's tenure. The Habr Awal consequently fear the impact that a non-Habr Awal presidency would have. At the same time opposition areas have suffered greater economic hardship as a result of the war.

The informal economy in Somaliland is extremely strong, stimulated by lack of government regulation. However, there is little evidence of economic growth reaching the poor. While the merchants have been prepared to make political investments in support of the

government, they do not appear to be interested in investing in infrastructure or social services. One exception is the telecommunications companies that have established themselves since 1995. The only private investment in social welfare services is being made by international agencies. Where the state is unable to regulate the market, redistribution of wealth depends entirely on the clan system. Exclusion from the market, or other means of accumulation such as through government or even aid agencies, is a source of ongoing tension. Any settlement of the conflict will have to address wealth distribution and the economic imbalances created by the war in which not only have the 'opposition' areas lost out to the administration's, but also rural to urban areas, and the poor to the wealthy.

THE LIMITS OF GOVERNMENT

Box 12

The case of Sanaag region raises interesting questions about the reconstruction of the state in post-war Somaliland. Since the war against Siad Barre ended in 1991 Sanaag has had no functioning government administration. A regional *guurti* consisting of 36 elders, an NGO committee delegated by the *guurti* to liaise with international and local NGOs, and an education committee and regional health team, represent the only form of local administration. No tax revenue is collected. Based in the regional centre, Erigavo, the remit of these committees at a local district or village level is highly limited. Badhan district in western Sanaag, for example, does not recognise the authority of the regional *guurti*.

The region has consistently rejected central government appointment of regional governmental officials, or the establishment of a national police force. Some sections of the community feel that there is an opportunity to develop new, more appropriate forms of governance that will mix the traditional with the 'modern'; the modern is seen to have failed. However, had Somaliland achieved international recognition, allowing bilateral funds to be channelled to government, it might have provided sufficient incentive for Sanaag to form a local administration. It might also have created new conflicts and supported the formation of unfair structures.

Allegations of 'corruption' within government have been made by both the opposition and Egal himself, and are further constraints to creating government structures in Somaliland. Corruption and abuse of government resources were major grievances against the regime of Siad Barre. As new government structures emerge there is a danger that, without checks and balances, the mutual dependence of politicians and their clan constituencies will become institutionalised and corruption and nepotism will flourish. This requires a change in attitude towards government as a means of wealth distribution rather than a source of enrichment. Without this there is a risk that the same flawed state that people fought to overthrow will be recreated in Somaliland.

Decentralisation and governance

The future political constitution of Somaliland – and in particular decentralisation – has been central to the war. Article 21 of the Somaliland National Charter promotes the principle of decentralisation through the creation of regional and district councils. However, their precise authority was not defined, nor implementation covered. For example, no guidelines were established on the fiscal power of local councils, an issue at the heart of the conflict over Hargeisa airport.

Decentralisation was one issue on which the opposition could count for broad support. It is about more than clanism or territoriality: it is a political issue about governance. It was expected that councils would be created within the government's two-year mandate, yet it was only in the later part of 1994 that the government began to tackle the issue seriously, spurred on partly by the opposition's activities.

UNOSOM's support for the formation of district and regional councils in Somalia was based on establishing the constitutional technicalities of decentralisation. The rationale was to support grassroots representation in a regional and central government. In Somaliland the Egal administration placed more emphasis on developing functioning local government structures, with responsibilities for revenue collection and municipal administration; political representation was a secondary issue. Hargeisa municipality was an example of this.

In early 1995 the government attempted to redraft Article 21 of the National Charter, to establish the legal basis for a relationship between the centre and the regions. However, negotiations with parliament broke down.¹⁰ The government agreed to provide some finance for local councils, but local representatives did not agree to generate their own sources of revenue. For example, because the regions were unable or unwilling to raise revenue to support local police, it was agreed that a national police force would continue under government authority. This, however, was seen as an infringement of local autonomy. Further, while the parliament accepted centrally-appointed executive chairmen of regional and district councils, it stipulated that they had to be agreed by the National *Guurti*, the Lower house, *akils* and elders. In the end, Egal chose the same route as Tuur by making appointments centrally.

Egal was required by the National Charter to draft a constitution for Somaliland, for approval by referendum. This turned out to be a controversial process. A constitution may help clarify some of the issues of decentralisation, but it cannot resolve them without resources and structures in place, and political consensus.

The role of the National *Guurti*

The issue of governance is related to the role of elders, in particular the National *Guurti* (Assembly of Elders). The 1993 Borama conference was an impressive example of an indigenous Somali reconciliation process, in which the role of lineage elders as mediators in the internal affairs of the communities were clearly displayed. It provided an alternative model to the reconciliation process promoted by the United Nations in Somalia after the resignation of Ambassador Sahnoun.

The authority of the Somaliland elders arose from the failure of the first SNM government and a country paralysed by the conflict in Berbera. The capacity of grassroots political structures to provide a mechanism for conflict resolution was demonstrated when elders interceded to end the war and restore stability through the Borama Conference. In the absence of credible government, committees of elders became active in all regions of the country in response to particular crises. The origins of these committees are thus rooted in conflict management. The question arises as to whether they can have any other role in government.

The Somaliland National *Guurti* has its

origins in the war against Siad Barre, and the SNM's policy to integrate traditional and modern systems of governance (see Box 8). The National *Guurti* was written into the first constitution of Somaliland – the National Charter – with a specific role to safeguard peace and uphold the *xeer* among people. The division of the elders and politicians into two houses sought to separate domestic clan politics from national (and international) politics. It identified 'clanism' as a potential source of conflict, and the need for a mechanism to manage it. The chairman of the National *Guurti*, Sheik Ibrahim, remarked in 1993: 'Our task is to ensure security and reconciliation. The government's responsibility is management, administration and development.' (Rakiya Omaar, 1993).

The war brought to light the difficulties in creating a council of elders as a permanent institution, and of integrating so-called traditional and modern forms of government. An immediate result of the war was that the National *Guurti* split. Members who remained in Hargeisa were seen to be allied to the government. Members of the *Guurti* receive salaries and accommodation costs, which has indebted them to the administration and is seen to have compromised their neutrality.

The view of the *Guurti* as a neutral body, and no more than a mechanism for conflict resolution, misjudges the role of elders. Elders are not above day-to-day happenings and intrigues. Indeed, their knowledge is drawn from their daily involvement in matters of the clan. It is also misleading to view the institution of elders as static. Since colonial times, when *akils* were incorporated into the colonial administration, the role of elders has been changing. During the Barre era their role was politicised. The failure of the National *Guurti* to intervene in the war raised doubts about whether to integrate the institution of elders into modern government, as it left little alternative space for inter-clan dialogue.

International relations

A further element in Somaliland's internal crisis has been the international policy environment. The United Nations and the international community have refused to recognise Somaliland's independence. In this, regional governments and the Organisation for African Unity would have to take the lead, and none to date have done so. Somaliland today is of little strategic interest to Northern or regional powers. Some Somalis

believe there are commercial quantities of oil in Somaliland, but no company has been prepared to invest in exploration while political instability continues. Ethiopia has an interest in Somaliland remaining stable, as events in its eastern neighbour can affect Somali Region Five in Ethiopia. The continuation of trade through Berbera, and prevention of any Islamic fundamentalist threat, are of particular interest to Ethiopia.

Independence did not bring the anticipated international assistance to Somaliland. The concentration of humanitarian efforts in southern Somalia, and the UN's refusal to acknowledge and underpin the achievements of the Borama peace process and demobilisation efforts, have left a legacy of mistrust towards the United Nations. UNOSOM was asked to leave Somaliland soon after Egal assumed office, when assistance for the police and demobilisation failed to materialise. While encouraging the formation of stable administrations elsewhere in Somalia, the UN has consistently failed to accept the validity of the authorities in Somaliland. The view in Somaliland that the United Nations has sought to destabilise Somaliland has some validity. At times UNOSOM openly supported other political parties in Somaliland and encouraged certain regions to look to Somalia rather than Somaliland for political alliances. Perhaps most damaging was UNOSOM's support for the federalist positions of Tuur and Jama Yare, which raised doubts in the international community over Somaliland's future status.

Since the demise of UNOSOM, policy makers such as the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB) have continued to refuse to engage constructively with Somaliland and to reinforce principles of good governance and disarmament. Egal's relations with the European Union and the SACB have been fraught. One donor representative summarised the international community's attitude towards Somaliland as follows:

The image of Somalia as a place in a perpetual state of anarchy does not apply to North West Somalia. This is the thinking that donor interventions from Nairobi are based on. Since UNOSOM was thrown out of the area, no-one is looking to see North West Somalia succeed. In a sense, people are just waiting for the collapse of the North West Somalia state. (Cited in Boyden and Goodhand, 1995: 15)

Yet lack of recognition has forced the government to develop its own capacity. Although this has not brought recognition, it achieved a certain 'acceptance' (Gilkes, 1995). The British and German governments have sent high-level delegations to Somaliland and are supporting aid programmes, although the German aid programme withdrew in 1996 following the kidnapping of its field director.

Relationships with regional states have been more problematic. Since 1991, Somaliland's relationship with Djibouti has been fragile. Since the war against Barre, Djibouti has hosted a significant number of refugees from Somaliland. Commercial links between the two countries are intricate, with Somaliland's wealthiest businessmen operating out of Djibouti. The Somaliland-Djibouti border dissects the land of the Isa clan of the ruling family in Djibouti. The Djibouti government has been nervous about the possible impact of an independent Somaliland on Djibouti's internal politics. Since 1991 there have been intermittent clashes along the border area over commerce and territory.

The current Ethiopian government came to power as the Somali state collapsed. In contrast to Somalia, the transfer of power in Ethiopia was smooth, brokered and supported by the international community, in particular the United States. The presence of refugee populations in Ethiopia from Somaliland, and the political regionalisation process in Ethiopia that has created Somali Region Five, has left the Somaliland-Ethiopian border almost redundant. Somaliland and Region Five form part of a single cultural and economic zone. People move daily between Hargeisa and Hartisheik in Ethiopia, and many Somalis hold Ethiopian passports. Ethiopian traded goods pass through Berbera, and Hargeisa and Borama are important commercial centres for eastern Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian government has become increasingly concerned about the activities of Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa, and the growth of fundamentalism in Somalia. This was demonstrated by Ethiopian attacks on Islamic communities in southern Somalia in 1996, and threats to Somaliland. Ethiopia has an interest in maintaining good relations with the Somaliland government in order to curtail any potential threats from Islamic groups. However, recognition has not been forthcoming.

Somaliland 1996: Make or break

Somaliland consolidates independence

It was generally assumed that the emergence of a 'federalist' opposition from within Somaliland signalled the end of Somaliland's ambitions for independence. Ironically, the effect was, if anything, to strengthen people's resolve for independence. After 18 months of war the federalists had not succeeded in convincing their clansmen to reunite with the south. Nor had they won the support of non-Issaq clans who have less allegiance to Somaliland. The major cost of the war to Somaliland was in human lives and in setting back recovery. Those who suffered most were the opposition, and their people who were scattered throughout Somaliland and across the Ethiopian border.

The Harshin conference and first moves towards reconciliation

The fact that a sizeable number of Garxajis remained in Hargeisa and opposed the opposition illustrated that this was not just a clan war, but a struggle between politicians. This impeded early prospects of reconciliation through inter-clan dialogue. The government rejected another Borama-style national conference of clans. Mechanisms for inter-clan dialogue were limited because members of the *Guurti* were divided.

In June 1995 a reconciliation conference took place in the village of Harshin on the border with Ethiopia. Initiated by concerned individuals within Hargeisa, it involved Iidagale elders and members of the National *Guurti*. Iidagale elders were under pressure to negotiate, as 80,000 of their people were displaced to Ethiopia, and UNHCR had refused to register them. Although the meeting concluded optimistically with future talks scheduled to take place in Hargeisa, these were pre-empted in August when the Garxajis militia attacked Hargeisa airport.

In September 1995 there were some signs of compromise on both sides. Ministerial reshuffles in that month were seen as an attempt by Egal to reduce the influence of the *alan as* within the government. Within the Garxajis there were also changes in the military leadership.

A progressive peace process

By December 1995 the war appeared to have reached a stalemate, but in the absence of dialogue or a ceasefire the situation was fragile. It was this situation that concerned 'Somalilanders' from the Somali emigrant diaspora and from within Somaliland sought to rectify through the intervention of the 'Peace Committee for Somaliland' (see Box 13).

From May 1996 a peace process began to unfold in Somaliland through a number of intra- and inter-clan peace meetings. The process evolved along two fronts: one in the west between the Iidagale and the Hargeisa clans to resolve the Hargeisa conflict, the other in the east involving Habr Jeclo and Habr Yunis to resolve the Burco conflict.

In July 1996 representatives of the Iidagale and Hargeisa clans met in Camp Abokor in Ethiopia and reached an agreement on 'peaceful coexistence' (Ahmed Farah Yusuf, 1996b). The Camp Abokor conference – *Geedi-Socadka Nabadda ee Beelaha Hargeisa* ('Progressive Peace Process Initiated by the Clans in Hargeisa') – was considered by many as a breakthrough, being the first substantive talks between the Iidagale and representatives of the Hargeisa clans, in particular the Saad Musa/Habr Awal. The Peace Committee for Somaliland played a significant role in the organisation and facilitation of this conference. It also garnered the support of the Ethiopian authorities of Somali Region Five (Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1996a). The Camp Abokor meeting resolved (ibid):

- that local groups in Hargeisa area should live together 'harmoniously' and collaborate in restoring stability and peaceful coexistence
- to conduct a follow-up meeting to continue the peace dialogue, and to hold a second conference in Somaliland on 15 August.

The Camp Abokor conference was to be followed by a meeting in Baali Gubadle in Somaliland between elders of the Hargeisa clans and the Iidagale. However, the government opposed the meeting and it was cancelled. Consequently, the Peace Committee did not manage to turn the Abokor meeting into

a wider peace process between the Garxajis and the government. Egal's attitude towards the Peace Committee had been ambivalent from the beginning. Rumour and speculation suggested that he was suspicious of its motives, and that he viewed the Camp Abokor meeting's success as a threat to his own authority and influence over forthcoming presidential elections (see below).

The peace process in the east proved more successful. Since 1991 Burco has suffered two major wars. A peace settlement here would be of great significance for Somaliland. The reconciliation process in Burco primarily involved the Habr Yunis and Habr Jeclo who are predominant in Burco, with the Arap and Isa Musa/Habr Awal who live in the area also participating. The peace process here in fact evolved faster than that in the west. Its success

helped to check the war, and provided an impetus for the Camp Abokor meeting.

The first meeting between the Habr Jeclo and Habr Yunis came under pressure from the Ethiopian authorities after fighting between the clans over a water tank on the Ethiopian side of the border threatened to spread. The two clans met three times from May 1996. This, coupled with a withdrawal of Somaliland government soldiers from around Burco, appears to have created the opening for reconciliation. A peace agreement was finalised in the town of Beer in October 1996. While the Peace Committee was able to provide some financial support to this peace process, it was the clans in the area who made the largest investments.

Tensions between the Habr Yunis and Habr Jeclo in Burco stretch back to colonial times.

THE PEACE COMMITTEE FOR SOMALILAND

The Peace Committee for Somaliland has its origins in a series of consultations within the Somaliland diaspora during early 1995. In the absence of any genuine moves towards reconciliation between the government and opposition, and the apparent failure of the Somaliland elders to intervene, these consultations concluded that there was a need to convene an independent mission to try to broker dialogue between the warring parties.

The Peace Committee defined itself as a committee of 'intellectuals', and received its mandate from a conference of Somaliland intellectuals held in London in April 1995 (Peace Committee for Somaliland, 1995). The committee relied heavily on funding from the diaspora and its members' individual efforts and commitment, although some external resources were raised. The membership has changed since 1995. This has enabled the committee to remain adaptable and maintain its independence. The Peace Committee was first convened in Addis Ababa in September 1995. The initial goals

of the committee were (ibid):

- to achieve an immediate ceasefire wherever armed conflict prevails
- to prepare a framework and venue for dialogue and negotiation
- to prepare a report on lessons learned that could be useful in preventing similar conflicts in the region.

In addition, the committee stated that it would disband once a ceasefire had been achieved, and an agreement reached by the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue.

Those objectives later widened to promote substantive discussions that would address some of the causes of the conflict. These included discussions on what would constitute a 'viable government' in Somaliland and the relevance of 'traditional systems of governance'.¹¹

The strategy of the Peace Committee was twofold. First, to treat the Burco and Hargeisa conflicts separately and encourage dialogue between clans with vested interests in those areas. Second, to encourage dialogue at the level of the grassroots political structures of the clan, rather than 'government'

and 'opposition'. This strategy involved promoting parallel dialogue between the Habr Yunis and Habr Jeclo to resolve the war in the east, and between the Iidagale and Hargeisa over fighting in the west. Depending on the outcome, the next step was to facilitate dialogue between the government and Garxajis opposition in Hargeisa, followed by a constitutional conference (Peace Committee for Somaliland, 1996).

The Committee had to contend with suspicion about its 'agenda' and the ambitions of its members. However, given that the traditional mechanisms appeared not to be working, the intransigence of the government and opposition, and the failure of those within the country to break the deadlock, the need for a 'third party' was accepted by many people. The Peace Committee managed to put the issue of peace back on the agenda in Somaliland (Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1996a). In the words of one Somali:

The Peace Committee for Somaliland introduced the word 'peace' at a time when non-one was talking about peace. That helped.¹²

Box 13

The current rapprochement between these protagonists and other eastern clans at Beer was interpreted by some Somalis as an alliance of convenience to challenge Egal's government.¹³ It was particularly significant that the Habr Yunis agreed to negotiate at Beer within the framework of Somaliland, thus repudiating the federalist position they once held. However, while united in Beer, both the Habr Yunis and the Habr Jeclo were themselves divided along sub-clan lines, with some allied to the government. A concerted effort will be needed from all sides to ensure the long-term security and peace of Togdheer.

It had been envisaged by the Peace Committee that a successful process in the east and west would pave the way to a constitutional conference, similar to the Borama conference of 1993 (Peace Committee for Somaliland, 1996; Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1996b). Plans to widen the discourse, however, were interrupted by the cancellation of the Baali Gubadle conference and the National *Guurti*'s announcement of its intention to call a national congress.

Shir Beeleedka

When President Egal's term of office was extended by 18 months he was required to bring the war to an end, introduce a constitution and prepare elections. By mid 1996 the government, parliament and National *Guurti* were perceived by many Somalis to have failed on all these counts.

Two draft constitutions were produced, one by a Sudanese lawyer contracted by the president, and a second by a parliamentary committee. In May 1996 heated discussions over these constitutions led to a vote of no confidence in the chair of the parliament, and the boycott of parliament by some thirty parliamentarians and *Guurti* members claiming interference from the president.¹⁴

The 18-month extension of Egal's term of office was due to end on 4 November 1996. In the absence of an agreed constitution multi-party elections could not be held. In this situation, it was understood that four months before the expiry of the government's mandate the *Guurti* would announce the date for a national conference to select a new president and vice-president. In September the *Guurti* announced the date for a national congress (the *Shir Beeleedka* or Congress of Clans).

The announcement, and subsequent opening of the *Shir Beeleedka* in Hargeisa on 15 October

1996, raised political tensions in Somaliland. Concerns were raised about the timing, location, legitimacy and organisation of the Congress.

First, it was argued that the Congress could not proceed without a cessation of hostilities and a peace agreement; reconciliation was a prerequisite for a meaningful Congress. The fact that the Congress in Hargeisa opened before the conference in Beer was concluded raised the possibility of there being two conferences, leading to the selection of two presidents. Given the precedent of southern Somalia, this was seen as extremely dangerous. Egal's supporters were more positive, arguing that there would be room within the conference for reconciliation. Participants at Beer decided to send a delegation to the Hargeisa Congress rather than holding a separate conference. However, when the Congress opened there was little indication that those Iidagale outside Hargeisa would participate.

Second, the appropriateness of making Hargeisa the venue for the congress was questioned. The eastern clans wanted the conference to take place in Sheik. This was rejected by the *Guurti*.

Third, the legitimacy of the Congress was questioned. Many Somalis argued that procedures set out in National Charter were being ignored. People objected to the the *Guurti* giving only 10 days' notice for the start of the Congress. The government and *Guurti* were accused of influencing the selection of delegates, rather than them being chosen by their clans. Furthermore, the legality of the existing members of the *Guurti* and parliament having voting rights in the Congress was questioned. The Congress was to comprise 300 voting delegates, to include 150 from the *Guurti* and parliament and 150 new delegates. There would also be 100 invited observers. Those opposed to the Congress argued that the current *Guurti* should not automatically have voting rights unless chosen by their clans. The opposition in particular viewed the *Guurti* as impartial.

Finally, it was argued that it was unclear whether the Congress's main purpose was to bring about reconciliation, to appoint a new president or decide on a constitution. In the opinion of some Somalis, time was required to discuss the failures and successes of the past two administrations before a new administration was selected or constitution introduced.

The government, however, gave little space for debate on these issues. Before the opening a

petition signed by 79 Somaliland 'intellectuals' called on the *Guurti* to rethink its approach and to establish 'an independent neutral *Guurti* and preparatory committee in order to have a national conference based on free, equitable representation of the whole population'.¹⁵ However, all informal approaches and formal petitions to the government and *Guurti* regarding the Congress were rejected, the activities of the Peace Committee were proscribed and ministers suspected of questioning the government's actions were dismissed. The *Guurti* and government's refusal to countenance any debate on the Congress alarmed many people.

Fission and fusion

Despite announcing earlier that he would not stand for re-election in November 1996, Egal announced his candidacy. Several factors favoured his re-election. One was a fear among people in western Somaliland of losing the benefits accrued during his administration if a new president was selected. A second reason had to do with the influence Egal was able to assert over the Congress. A major difference between the 1996 Congress and the 1993 Borama Conference was that in 1993 there was no functioning government with any resources to guide the process.

As the opening of the Congress of Clans approached, Somaliland appeared to be more divided and fragmented than at any time since secession. Clan unity was no longer a given, with many divided in their attitude towards the Egal administration. For example, in October, the paramount *suldaan* of the Habr Yunis decided to join the Congress, which was a major coup for the government. A second Habr Yunis *suldaan*, however, remained in Beer. Similarly, among the Iidagale, the *suldaan* remained critical of the government, while a leading Iidagale *akil* joined the Congress. Divisions existed within the Gadabursi who put forward five candidates for vice-president. Even Egal's own sub-clan was divided. This fragmentation was in part precipitated by the government's appointment of new *akils* and *suldaans*.

Fragmentation among the clans, while possibly precipitating a move away from clan-based politics, was happening for the wrong reasons. The financial benefits of being in government or allied to government was creating competition within clans to fill the 150 seats for delegates at the Congress. This

competition caused one Somali observer to comment: 'The clans do not work collectively together any more.'¹⁶

By December, 12 people had announced their candidature for president. The criteria set by the *Guurti* for the president immediately ruled out several of them. The Congress also agreed on a constitution and adopted a new flag. Given that all these decisions went in Egal's favour – though not without some opposition – there was every indication at the end of 1996 that he would be re-selected (see note 19).

Reconsidering the role of elders and the National *Guurti*

A knowledgeable observer on Somaliland suggested that the series of inter-clan peace conferences in Somaliland in 1996 was proof that 'the traditional method of resolving conflict and political uncertainty in Somaliland now offer the best solution' for the country's problems (Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1996b). In 1993 the elders of Somaliland won plaudits from many quarters for the way in which they intervened to restore some semblance of peace. The 1993 Borama conference was described by one commentator as 'a triumph of discourse over armed conflict' (Rakiya Omaar, 1993).

The National Charter adopted at Borama defined the role of the elders as safeguarding peace. However, in the euphoria of Borama the role of the National *Guurti* was only superficially specified. The mechanism for selecting the *Guurti* was poorly defined. Those who became the National *Guurti* in 1993 were active individuals, but were largely self-selected rather than selected by their clans.

In the light of the war, the subsequent peace processes, and the organisation of the *shir beeledka*, some Somalis were concerned that the *Guurti* had failed to follow the National Charter which they were responsible for introducing. Elders were 'traditionally' expected to intervene in a conflict. According to one Somali the National *Guurti* had not performed that role:

They will not go to an area of conflict because they fear for their lives. They first ask permission from the government. They ask for a *per diem* to go anywhere.¹⁷

The perceived failure of the elders led to the intervention of the Peace Committee for Somaliland.

Councils or committees of elders are traditionally ad hoc institutions concerned with managing pastoral resources or local clan disputes. They form in response to a crisis and dissolve once it is resolved. Given the perceived failings of the *Guurti*, there is some doubt as to whether it should be a permanent institution rather than functioning as an independent ad hoc, task-focused committee that responds to particular crisis.

While much of the discussion around the *Shir Beeleedka* focused on the presidential election, there was only limited discussion about what would happen to the current members of the *Guurti* and parliament. The assumption of voting rights by the *Guurti* was seen by some Somalis as an attempt by its members to sustain their positions. People pointed to Egal's statement that 'those who extended my period of office also extended their own'.

Somali social institutions are far from static. The traditional role of the *suldaan* is perceived to have changed. The office once held only symbolic power (Lewis, 1961): the *suldaan* were said to stand above the fight to maintain an impartial role that enabled them to intervene in a conflict, but now they appear to be assuming a political role. The *lidagale suldaan* who led his people to war in Hargeisa brandishing a Kalashnikov goes against the traditional image. The *suldaan* in Somaliland are also increasing in number: there were twice as many in 1993 as there had been at independence (Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1993). In 1995 the *Dolbahunte* were said to have six *garaad* (ie *suldaan*) compared with two before the war.

The role of religious leaders is also perceived to have changed. One Somali commented: 'If you see a Sheik entering the office of the government, suspect his religion.'¹⁸ There is a sense that the activities of some of the elders, sultans and religious leaders have contributed to a perceived decline in values.

Future prospects

In mid 1996 the Peace Committee and other commentators concluded that the opportunities for restoring peace in Somaliland had 'never been better' (Ahmed Yusuf Farah, 1996a; Peace Committee for Somaliland, 1996). This was based on a view that the Egal administration's term of office was ending. There was an opportunity for the transfer of power to a new administration, in such a way as to avoid demolishing of Egal's achievements. In addition, the opposition appeared to have softened their position on negotiations with the government and had clarified their position on Somaliland. The influence of the federalist politicians had for the moment been marginalised. The possibility of negotiations within a single political framework therefore existed. However, by the end of 1996 this optimistic view was fading. Egal's ambivalence towards the peace process, a public feeling that he was intent on retaining power, and concerns over the Congress did not augur well for the future.

The Congress, however, offered the opportunity for compromise, and time to address some of the issues that could consolidate peace and stability in Somaliland. Having opened on 15 October 1996, formal business was immediately suspended while negotiations were held with a delegation from the Beer conference. The concerted effort to avoid having two congresses resulting in two presidential elections was a sign that Somalilanders were tired of war. At the end of 1996 Somaliland stood at a critical juncture. The outcome of the *Shir Beeleedka* will shape the future of Somaliland and peace in the region.¹⁹

International assistance in Somaliland

Even before the civil war Somalia was considered one of the poorest countries in Africa. Somaliland's development needs are greater now than before. In 1991, immediately after the war, there were no functioning town water supplies, no sanitation infrastructure, only basic emergency health services and no functioning schools throughout Somaliland. Basic infrastructure – banking, roads, communications, transport – required extensive rehabilitation. Urban unemployment was high. In 1996, despite strides in rehabilitating education and health systems, basic welfare services remained minimal, particularly for rural populations. Urban problems of sanitation, employment, home construction, and civic amenities are likely to rise as the urban populations grow. Environmental issues of range management and changes in land ownership are also likely to increase in importance. The welfare of refugees and the displaced remains a critical issue, as does demobilisation and the clearing of land mines. Access to information, both historical and contemporary, for government and NGOs in all these areas is lacking. Indeed, needs exist in every sector.

One informed observer described the international response to humanitarian needs in Somaliland as 'too little, too late, too slow, too bureaucratic' (Gilkes, 1993). Certainly compared with southern Somalia, Somaliland has received minimal assistance. The lack of international recognition of Somaliland means that it does not qualify for bilateral aid and has been eligible only for humanitarian assistance. Although some of this help includes medium-term funding (of one to two years) it is disbursed solely through UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations. The numbers of international NGOs and UN agencies have fluctuated greatly depending on the policy environment and funding. Fragile security and the lack of substantial funding for long-term assistance have meant that emergency preparedness and response have remained a significant part of international assistance programmes.

The progress in rehabilitating basic social services is all the more impressive given the small amount spent by the international community in Somaliland. The largest proportion of external assistance has been in health, education, water and sanitation. Some limited investment has been made in the agricultural and veterinary sectors. With the exception of water supplies there has been little investment in essential infrastructure, although the European Union plans to invest in road maintenance and the rehabilitation of port facilities at Berbera, and the United Nations plans to upgrade the airfields. Overall, there is a bias in international assistance programmes towards the major urban centres such as Hargeisa. Evidence of increased poverty in rural areas (Ahmed Mohamed Hashi, 1996) suggests that this bias needs to be rectified.

The war in Somalia and Somaliland has not only devastated the physical and economic base of the country, but also the human and institutional – government and civic – structures. Little international assistance has been channelled through government institutions or has been directed at strengthening them. In contrast, several agencies, have supported 'capacity building' for local Somali non-governmental organisations (see Boxes 14 and 15).

After UNOSOM withdrew from Somalia, the UN Coordination Team for Somalia (UNCT) headed by the UNDP resident representative, and senior UN staff, established bases in Nairobi along with the donors' forum, SACB, chaired by the European Union. Based in Nairobi, their perspectives are influenced more closely by events in Somalia, to the detriment of informed decision-making on Somaliland.

Both the Tuur and Egal administrations have sought to regulate and exert some control over international assistance programmes, arguing that international agencies often confuse the role of 'guidance' and 'assistance'. At different times and through various means they have sought to tax the aid programmes, often when the government is in financial straits. In March 1995 the government drafted new agreements for international agencies and issued a paper with eight 'ground rules' for cooperation.²⁰ The significant rules were:

- acceptance of the 'reality of the existence of the Republic of Somaliland, and the authority of its government'
- the integration of assistance programmes into a national development plan
- a requirement that agencies bring all their

hard currency into the country and open accounts with the National Bank

- a requirement that agencies inform the Ministry of the Interior of all movements, in return for which the government guarantees security
- the acceptance by agencies of 'accountability and transparency for funds allocated to Somaliland'
- the recruitment of Somaliland nationals, unless required qualifications are locally unavailable.

These ground rules would be minimal requirements for international agencies working in most countries. In Somaliland most international agencies, bar the United Nations owing to political constraints, had little objection to the demands. However, agencies objected to using the National Bank, given the fragility of governmental institutions. In 1992 one agency lost all the funds raised from food monetisation that were deposited in the bank when war broke out in Berbera. There were no guarantees, and indeed much suspicion, that funds deposited in the bank would be used to support the government's war effort. Furthermore, agencies were concerned that agreeing to these ground rules in a politically divided country could be interpreted as an overtly political act.

Although the Tuur and Egal administrations' motives for wanting to regulate international assistance more closely may be suspect, they identified the need for coordination and coherence in assistance programmes. In different regions of Somaliland international agencies with varied philosophies and interests implement very different kinds of development programmes, and there is little attempt to coordinate or learn from each other, let alone involve local communities and authorities. The result is fragmentation and competition rather than consensus. (Bradbury, 1996)

After UNOSOM withdrew, international funding for Somalia and Somaliland declined. The six-month US\$70 million, UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia in December 1994 raised only US\$13 million in five months (UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 1995). The reduction in emergency funding for Somalia and Somaliland resulted in several agencies scaling down their operations. Since 1996, possibly as a result of declining resources, there has been a shift in donors' policy towards supporting areas of stability, rather than instability. Consequently, there has

Box 14

LOCAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (LNGOs)

The indigenous NGO sector in Somalia goes back to the early 1980s and the Ethiopian refugee crisis (Mohamed Sheikh Abdillahi, 1996: 39). World Bank structural adjustment programmes in the late 1980s further stimulated the sector's growth. However, as a consequence of war, the collapse of government, and the international intervention in Somalia, there has been a proliferation of local NGOs throughout Somalia and Somaliland.

In Somaliland most were founded by Somali professionals displaced by the war and living in communities of their kin. Limited job opportunities and a genuine concern to meet urgent rehabilitation needs has led to the creation of local NGOs as a means of gaining access to resources for their communities. The lack of an internationally recognised government has meant that international assistance agencies have also sought out local NGOs as indigenous partners to work through. In 1996, in Hargeisa alone, the government had registered 80 local NGOs (Bradbury, 1997). In Somaliland the rapid proliferation of local NGOs has led to fragmentation, competition and conflict, and done little to support reconciliation, consensus building or the reconstruction of accountable community based structures or government.

The local NGO sector, however, is extremely fluid, reflecting the opportunistic nature of many of the organisations. As government structures have grown in Hargeisa, employment opportunities for professionals have improved, and the numbers of local NGOs declined. A number of local NGOs were also displaced and some divided by the war.

The rich variety of LNGOs meets different local needs. Many represent particular sub-clans and the locality that they work in. However, it is possible to distinguish between those with a genuine social concern and those which are ineffectual or purely interested in getting access to resources. Since 1995 efforts among a number of local NGOs at self-definition and self-regulation have begun to bear fruit with the emergence of a more professional and coherent local NGO community (Mohamed Sheikh Abdillahi, 1997). Indeed, efforts at self-regulation and coordination are in many ways in advance of international agencies.

The growth of NGOs and donor support for NGOs over the past decade parallels the dismantling of the state welfare institutions in favour of privatised welfare (Riddell, 1992; Duffield, 1994). International NGOs should reflect on the implications of this in approaching capacity building or institutional strengthening in Somaliland. Openness to these issues will mean that international NGOs are better able to evaluate whether or not they are helping to strengthen local institutions and contribute to a more stable, just and equitable environment.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN SOMALILAND

In politically stable environments development agencies have come to see institutional development as an important 'empowering' strategy. Humanitarian interventions in war-related disasters, such as in Somalia, however, have tended to neglect the institutional or structural causes of the crisis in favour of delivering commodities and basic services. Civic and civil structures are often neglected and allowed to erode. (Bradbury, 1996)

A community's vulnerability arises as much from organisational, institutional or political weakness, as from lack of material or physical well-being. Likewise, individual vulnerability arises as much from the breakdown of social structures and groups (the family, community, village) as from lack of material resources. During wars it is necessary to support and maintain civil and civic structures before they break down completely. 'Capacity building' to maintain or strengthen such structures should be an essential part of the humanitarian response to war-related disasters.

In civil wars where the state has collapsed, it can be difficult to identify 'legitimate' political and civic structures to support and work with, and by what criteria. Programmes to build or strengthen institutional capacity are often premised on external agencies' definitions of what is legitimate. UNOSOM's attempts to create civil administrations in southern Somalia foundered when communities failed to accept their legitimacy. In many places clan-based councils of elders proved more acceptable. In Somaliland the failure of international donors and UN agencies to recognise the legitimacy of indigenous councils or their right to appoint their choice of government has undermined recovery.

In war-related emergencies efforts should be made to support

indigenous forms of social organisation that offer alternatives to predatory military structures (Prendergast, 1995). Local authorities – whether indigenous community structures, civic or governmental structures – must be encouraged away from predatory relations with vulnerable populations, to relationships built on reciprocity. However, under the rubric of strengthening civil society this frequently involves international agencies, often ignorant of other structures to work with, encouraging the growth of indigenous NGOs. Capacity building here often consists of little more than strengthening organisations of professionals to implement projects designed by international agencies.

In Somaliland, capacity building programmes supported by international agencies to date have been primarily concerned with the 'organisational development' of local NGOs. Training has focused on management skills, strategic planning, administration, and approaches to participatory development. The impact of this may be seen in the strength and durability of some local groups that have received this kind of support. However, it says little about their impact. The net effect may be the development of local organisations in the image of international NGOs, but dependent on external support. In Somaliland many local organisations have adopted the label of NGO when in fact some are more like businesses and should be recognised and supported as such.

Support to local NGOs and civil society is considered a non-political activity, and therefore easy to justify in a politically charged environment. However, international agencies need to question the extent to which building the capacity of such organisations actually helps to strengthen communities' ability to

cope with disaster and recovery.

In Somaliland the government expressed concern that assistance programmes through local NGOs are not reaching the most vulnerable or marginalised groups – such as the Gabooya ('outcastes').²² Building the capacity of public voluntary organisations to provide welfare safety nets, or to undertake the roles previously carried out by government, does not have a particularly successful history in the West or elsewhere in Africa. There is no reason why it should be any more effective in Somaliland.

To date, capacity building of local NGOs in Somaliland, has involved little more than strengthening sub-contracting relations. If other rationales exist – such as strengthening civic institutions as a balance to government, improving the effectiveness and sustainability of development interventions, strengthening livelihood security systems, or enabling communities to cope with disasters – then they are poorly articulated.

While some forms of capacity building may enable communities to deal with the 'shocks' of a natural disaster, there is little understanding of how to build people's capacities to deal with the shocks of political instability and conflict. War may be fought to increase the material and political capacity of one group at the expense of another. Indeed, while the government of Somaliland has welcomed capacity building programmes for local NGOs, there has been apprehension that the net effect may be to build the capacity of those constituencies which the NGOs are associated with. At the same time, the government is interested in building the capacity of its own institutions. In a politically charged environment, involvement in capacity building is thus fraught with dangers.

been new interest in Somaliland, and with it a move from relief to developmental programming.²² The shift, however, begs many questions. Not least of these are: What kind of development? And which institutions on the ground are appropriate to implement development? One observer on Somalia noted:

Many of today's 'reconstruction' and 'rehabilitation' programmes are designed to do little more than to repair, piecemeal, the ruins of the former system; UN agencies and NGOs rarely consider to what extent their programmes may replicate the profoundly flawed and dysfunctional expansion of the old unsustainable, largely artificial, and aid-dependent Somali state. (Bryden, 1995)

Given a largely unsatisfactory history of aid programmes in Somalia, some observers have argued for a reduction of external assistance as the best way forward (de Waal, 1995). The 'aid-dependent' state will no longer be something to fight over. Foreign aid will no longer destabilise the political process and fuel fighting in the way that it has done in the south. It will also require people to rely on their own resources.

It could be argued that the lack of international intervention in Somaliland has indeed provided a space for people to re-establish 'social contracts' without the distractions of aid. However, it has also delayed the process of recovery. A policy of abandonment has left the region isolated and marginalised, and its population vulnerable to the machinations of political elites and regional and international forces. The alternative to abandonment is to identify appropriate forms of assistance that strengthen internal efforts to rebuild a more stable social, political and economic order.

Here one might take the lead from Somalis whose efforts through forums such as the Borama conference, if not totally successful, have focused on addressing the institutional dimensions of the crisis. The Borama conference was a missed opportunity for the international community in Somaliland. Timely and appropriate international support to back up the resolutions of that conference might have helped to avert the crisis that erupted in 1994.

At the end of 1996 most donors and aid agencies had adopted a 'wait and see' position on the National Congress. Given that this was a critical juncture in Somaliland, this was potentially a very negative response.

Box 16

WOMEN IN SOMALILAND

During the war against Siad Barre women were an invisible front for the SNM, working as nurses and medics. They were also a lifeline for the family, taking relatives out of the country. As refugees in Europe they remitted money back to the country. Able to travel in Somalia more freely than men, women maintained channels of communication and were extremely important as traders. In the Ethiopian refugee camps Issaq women established trading networks that ran between the Persian Gulf, Djibouti and Mogadishu.

During the Barre era women were politically active in the north demonstrating against the regime. Many of the most active Somaliland NGOs are headed by women, and many women are active in the new Islamic movements. In 1992 and 1993 women played a significant role in supporting peace and reconciliation. This included exerting pressure on the elders to mediate in the Berbera conflict, organising demonstrations in Hargeisa in support of peace, petitioning Tuur's administration to sue for peace, and providing some logistics and financial support. This critical role was finally acknowledged by the *Guurti* at the Borama conference of 1993. Women were given greater opportunity than usual to recite poems at the conference.

In post-war Somaliland women are often the sole providers of family income as petty traders. Among pastoralist communities women have taken on increased responsibilities for family livelihoods. While men acknowledge this, it has not translated into increased decision-making powers for women (Ahmed Mohamed Hashi, 1996). The roles and rights of women have not been recognised in the distribution of employment opportunities. Men have had first priority in all jobs in government institutions and welfare services. Although there was a woman in Egal's first cabinet in 1993, the post proved temporary.

After the outbreak of war in November 1994 the activities of NGOs headed by women declined. Like the male organisations they were subject to the political divisions in society. Many women leaders were displaced. By 1996 some women's NGOs had been revitalised, and women again began to be active in peace and reconciliation. For the first time women's organisations were invited to attend National Conference as observers in 1996. (Bradbury, 1997)

War and humanitarian intervention

The impact of the Somali Civil War

In 1992, at the height of the conflict and famine, the situation in Somalia was described by one US diplomat as 'the worst humanitarian crisis faced by any people in the world'. By the end of that year more than 500,000 people had died (twice the number that perished in Bosnia), and 1.5 million people, including the majority of the non-Somali population, had sought refuge outside the country. Many more Somalis have since died.

The war has affected all parts of Somalia and Somaliland. Only the north-eastern regions of Somalia and Sool and Awdal regions of Somaliland escaped the worst of the violence. However, as the state collapsed, these areas, like others, were affected by the pressures of destitute and traumatised people displaced by the war. Whole communities were uprooted. The majority of the non-Somali population left the country. The war destroyed housing, urban industry, communications, social services and agricultural infrastructure. In Hargeisa alone 60,000 houses were destroyed. From Hargeisa and Galkaiyo to the Kenyan border, government and public buildings were ransacked.

Since 1990 there have been extensive movements of people within the country. In 1992 an estimated 2 million Somalis were internally displaced. Most population movements involved people fleeing from the violence, although agricultural and other economic opportunities in the south, including those provided by aid agencies, attracted aggressive clan expansion. In places this involved 'clan cleansing' (Lewis and Mayall, 1995: xvi). Traditionally in Somali pastoral society there are no fixed land rights. One consequence of the war has been that clans have tended to assert territorial rights more generally, based on traditional or recently conquered spheres of interest.

Within the broad political alliances that

developed during the war (see Box 17), Somalia, and to an extent Somaliland, has been left with a maze of localised polities. These include councils of elders, the remnants of UNOSOM initiated district councils, and in places religious authorities which have instituted Islamic law (*shari'a*).

These varied polities represent new forms of adaptation to the collapse of the state. In the absence of state institutions they perform some of the essential functions of governance. In some areas councils of clan elders have established local security systems in cooperation with militia. These councils are involved in negotiating external relations with aid agencies, and provide the main source of local authority and nascent administrations. In north Mogadishu, Islamic courts fill a vacuum in social control and security, although the emergence of Islamic fundamentalists is a source of concern for many Somalis. These varied polities have become the first point of contact for international agencies. Their legitimacy and authority should be measured on the basis of their local support, their performance and their standards of good governance, rather than the bureaucratic needs of foreign donors and NGOs (Menkhaus and Prendergast, 1995).

Many Somali intellectuals, politicians, and the international community generally, have argued that regulation and security can be provided only by re-establishing a strong state authority. However, doing so would have to contest with political, social and economic forces that continue to promote statelessness. These include interests that profit from the economy of plunder, militia leaders whose power base rests on mobilisation and fear, and entire clans that benefit from the occupation of valuable real estate in Mogadishu and the riverine valleys. It is acknowledged that there can be no military victory for any Somali faction. The reasons for the continuation of the conflict must therefore lie elsewhere. In Somaliland the incentive for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence must contest with, in the words of Egal, the 'project' of war.

The UN's lost agenda

In 1993 UNOSOM II, with a budget of US\$1.5 billion, was at the time the most expensive UN peacekeeping operation in the world; the next was Bosnia at US\$222 million. Somalia was host to the greatest number of UN

troops ever deployed in a peacekeeping operation. It was the first time the United Nations invoked powers of peace enforcement under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. UNOSOM in Somalia was therefore an experiment for the UN in which the stakes were high (Bradbury, 1994a; Slim and Visman, 1994).

Coming at the end of the Cold War, the Somali civil war became a testing ground for the international community's response to violent conflict and humanitarian crises in a 'new world order'. In particular it became a trial for the United Nations's envisaged role as the international arbiter of conflicts (Boutros Ghali, 1992). UNOSOM was one of a growing number of humanitarian operations in the early 1990s that sought to assist war-affected civilians during an on-going conflict (Karim et al, 1996). It thus had international significance for the evolution of humanitarian policy and conflict management. The United States, following its success leading the allies in the Gulf War was also exercising its authority as the world's remaining superpower. There was also suspicion that US military intervention in Somalia was a move to protect US oil investments (Parenti, 1996: 437).²³

UNOSOM's policies and actions in Somalia were thus dominated more by the political agendas of the United Nations and United States than those of the Somali people. The vested interests of parties within UNOSOM impeded its ability to respond adequately to the situation. Although humanitarian assistance undoubtedly helped to save thousands of lives in the south and restored some public services, the political and military sides of the operation were ignominious failures, which have had far-reaching implications for UN missions in Bosnia and Rwanda. Despite six internationally sponsored peace conferences, the United Nations failed to restore stability in the south.

Two schools of thought have dominated approaches to reconciliation and peacebuilding in Somalia. One advocates engaging with the warlords, as the *de facto* political leaders in the south. The other advocates engaging with a 'grassroots' constituency through localised, indigenous and democratic peacemaking processes in which the warlords are marginalised. UNOSOM pursued both tracks, engaging with the warlords and their factions through internationally brokered peace conferences, and a wider constituency through the formation of district councils. Both approaches were problematic. The warlords' participation in the political process

through peace conferences helped legitimise them and restrict the emergence of alternative leaders. In some areas the district councils did provide a vehicle for improved inter-clan

POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION

Box 17

In the course of the war the Somali state has fractured into semi-autonomous regions, controlled by clan-based military organisations and varied fragile forms of local administration. In 1995 the main political factions and alliances consisted of the following (Menkhaus and Prendergast, 1995):

Somali Patriotic Movement/Somali National Alliance: An alliance of Ogaden clans occupying the west bank of the river Juba and Middle Juba region, and allied to Aideed.

Somali Patriotic Movement: Primarily based on the Majeerteen clan in Kismayo, headed by Siad Barre's son-in-law General Morgan.

Somali Salvation Democratic Front: Primarily based on the Majeerteen in north-east Somalia, although they also have wider interests in the south, particularly Kismayo. Although the north-east became virtually autonomous, the political elite still prefer a federal structure.

United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance

(USC/SNA): Headed by General Aideed and based in south Mogadishu, this is dominated by a fragile alliance of Habr Gedir Hawiye clans. The alliance was weakened by divisions between Aideed and his former financier Osman Ato. In March 1995 Aideed attempted to form a new interim government, which included former Somaliland president Abdulrahman Tuur as vice-president and Jama Yare as foreign minister. Aideed's failure to win support for his government led most analysts to assume that his power was waning. In September 1995, however, he captured Baidoba. Initially, this united most of the other factions against him. General Aideed was killed in fighting in August 1996. His son Hussein Aideed has since taken his place as head of the SNA.

United Somali Congress (USC): Headed by Ali Mahdi Mohamed, based in north Mogadishu, and consisting of a fragile alliance of Ali Mahdi's Hawiye Abgal and other Hawiye clans.

Somali Democratic Movement: Based on a Digil-Merifle alliance in Baidoba and the inter-riverine region, with some Dir groups around Brava. Its aspiration for local autonomy within Somalia was upset by Aideed's capture of Baidoba and splits within the SDM.

Minority groups: Other alliances representing the interests of minor groups in Somalia, and to some extent in Somaliland, have asserted their separate identities. In Hargeisa, for example, a party representing the 'Gabooya' (outcasts) has emerged to put its case of discrimination to the government. Through the court they reclaimed some of the property they lost during the war. Many who had sought refuge in Djibouti have since returned to Hargeisa.

relations, and intersected with traditional authority structures (Human Rights Watch, April 1995). However, they failed to provide the building blocks for a restored Somali government. UNOSOM concurrently failed to recognise and build on localised peace processes that brought a measure of stability to some areas. These included the Galkaiyo peace conference in May 1993 which restored some stability to the central regions and opened trade routes between Mudug, Galgadud and Mogadishu, the August 1993 Jubaland conference which brought six months of peace to Kismayo, and the June 1993 Borama conference in Somaliland. (Bradbury, 1994a)

UN efforts at mediating the Somali conflict contrast starkly with local peace initiatives in Somaliland in 1992 and 1993. The locally sponsored peace conferences in Sheikh and Borama were fundamentally different from the UN sponsored conferences in Addis Ababa. The peace process that has been unfolding in Somaliland since, while partially the result of the intercession of Somalilanders from the diaspora, has again sought to harness the lineage-based grassroots political structures. And yet neither the so-called 'top-down' approach to conflict resolution characterised by the UN in Somalia, nor the 'bottom-up' approach adopted by elders in Somaliland has secured lasting peace and stability.

The reasons for the failure of the UN approach are clear. Among other things, the conferences were externally driven and sponsored. There was little incentive for military leaders and their militias, who were profiting from an economy of plunder and extortion, to implement any peace accord. With the peace conferences held outside Somalia there was little pressure on the factional leaders to adhere to the agreements. UNOSOM was a bureaucratic state-centric body. Constituted by governments, its mandate was to re-establish a centralised government, albeit with decentralised regional and district structures. Here the United Nations failed to acknowledge government as a source of conflict. The inept attempts to cobble together a government set back opportunities for national reconciliation.

At the same time, local level reconciliation and grassroots peace accords, to date, have not provided the foundations for lasting resolution to conflict in Somaliland. The inherent difficulties of melding customary institutions, concerned with managing pastoral resources or local clan disputes, with a modern

administration were exposed when the Somaliland National *Guurti* failed to avert or intercede to end the conflict in 1994.

While massive humanitarian aid helped stem the tide of famine in Somalia, the UN intervention failed to comprehend the economic dimensions of the war. Estimates of the cost of the UNOSOM mission since 1992 run between US\$2 billion and US\$3 billion; UNOSOM's headquarters alone cost US\$160 million to build. By early 1994 UNOSOM was paying more than US\$40 million in salaries and contracts, and was employing as many as 17,000 Somalis, 11,000 in Mogadishu alone (Prendergast, 1997: 113). The concentration of UN operations in Mogadishu meant that other areas missed out on assistance. Humanitarian aid also helped perpetuate Mogadishu as a focus of conflict. The financial payments made directly and indirectly to faction leaders helped fund their political and military machines. Aideed, who controlled southern Mogadishu, where the largest part of the UN operation was based, probably benefited most. International NGOs, through the hiring of armed guards to protect their staff and operations, also bear some responsibility. At one time the International Committee of the Red Cross was said to be spending US\$100,000 weekly on protection in Mogadishu (ibid: 113). But it was not just Somalis who benefited. International staff of agencies had their salaries augmented with hardship post bonuses. It is said that two Western contractors to UNOSOM in two years earned the equivalent of more than one-third of annual US development assistance to Africa (ibid: 113).

Following the withdrawal of UNOSOM, most factions' power bases eroded and the internal struggle moved to other resources. In March 1995, for example, fighting broke out between clients of rival Italian and US fruit companies over the Somali banana trade (Menkhaus and Prendergast, 1995). Economic decline in Somalia in the 1980s, as noted, hastened the end of the Barre regime, as a violent struggle emerged between elites for control over Somalia's formal and informal economies, and southern Somalia's productive resources. This struggle was later transferred to humanitarian aid brought by international agencies. The UN humanitarian and military intervention and efforts at peacebuilding in Somalia did not begin to address the economic crisis underlying the conflict.

EPILOGUE

Understanding the Somali conflict

The Somali state has collapsed. However, terms like 'anarchy', 'chaos' and 'madness' to describe the disintegration and condition of statelessness in Somalia, indicate an inadequate understanding of Somali society and the dynamics of the conflict. They also serve to portray the conflict as intractable, beyond understanding and therefore resolution.

The legacies of European colonialism, a schismatic kinship system, the contradictions between a centralised state and a pastoral culture, Cold War geopolitics, militarisation, underdevelopment and inequitable development, ecological degradation, the abuse of power, corruption and human rights violations, all provide some explanation for the crisis in Somalia. In addition one must look at the cumulative effects of decades of protracted conflict within Somalia and between it and its neighbours on the development of the Somali state and the lives of the Somali people.

At independence Somalia was considered unique in Africa, being a state founded on a single ethnic group (Somali Government, 1962). Why a seemingly ethnically homogeneous society should be wrecked by such internal conflict is difficult for outsiders to comprehend. To understand current and future political trends in Somalia and Somaliland it is important to revise Eurocentric notions of political formations. The political constitution of Somali society lies not in the centralised political institutions of a European model, but in a particular social system where the notion of a 'social contract' has more to do with regulating political and economic relationships between pastoral kinship groups, than with delegating responsibility to a central polity. Until the colonial period the Somali nation did not form a unitary state. Colonialism grafted a system of centralised governance onto a decentralised and egalitarian political system of a pastoral people.

Subsequent civilian and military governments attempted to create a unitary Somali state, by turning corporate responsibility away from sectional kinship loyalties towards the state. The development of a centralised state reached its peak, and nadir, in the repressive regime of Siad Barre. From this perspective the civil war may be seen as a conflict about governance, a struggle to overthrow a corrupt and oppressive state in pursuit of greater self-determination and democracy. The most dramatic example of this re-assertion of self-determination was the declaration of Somaliland's independence.

The most conspicuous feature of the Somali conflict has been a reaffirmation of lineage identity and territoriality over national concerns. The civil war in Somalia, while the direct legacy of the lack of power sharing, corruption, and human rights violations by the Barre regime, has manifestly been fought along clan lines. The 'anarchy' today must, therefore, partly be understood in relation to the segmentary nature of clans and their shifting alliances. For the majority of Somalis, however, the reaffirmation of lineage identity has been predicated on the pursuit of security; and for others the pursuit of economic and political gain. A singular focus on the internal, functional dynamics of 'clanism' overlooks the external economic, political and environmental factors that lie behind the war. A simple recitation of historic anthropological analysis disregards the contemporary political and economic changes.

The Somali civil war erupted as the Horn of Africa was undergoing social, political and economic transformations directly related to global political and economic changes at the end of the Cold War. Globally, and in the Horn, traditional definitions of sovereignty are under pressure to adapt (Boutros Ghali, 1992). Decades of civil war and natural catastrophe have left the region economically bankrupt. The arming of governments by foreign powers over decades has left the Horn awash with weapons.

While superpower geopolitics no longer dominate the region, the Somali war is more than an 'internal war'. This is not a traditional war between pastoral clans, but one where 'clanism' has been manipulated by powerful elites struggling to control diminishing resources in a context of declining aid flows and Somalia's (and Africa's) marginalisation in the world economy. It is, therefore, the specific nature of Somali society and its interaction with global processes that account for the Somali civil war.

For the future, an essential question is the extent to which fundamental social values, such as expressed in the Somali *xeer*, have been lost during years of military rule and war. Evidence suggests that Barre's assault on the fabric of Somali society ultimately did not manage to eliminate the traditional or historical Somali value systems. There is a strong sense in Somaliland of people looking to their culture, their religion and their politics, both for explanations as to why Somalia has reached the state it is in, and to the future. There is a conviction among many Somalis that future peace and stability can grow only as people rebuild trust, consensus and political and economic cooperation from the grassroots. To this end people in Somaliland and some areas in Somalia have put their faith in traditional institutions and means of political conflict management. The Borama Conference and the Sanaag and Togdheer peace processes all attest to the strength of these. However, as noted, these 'grassroots' processes have yet to bear fruit in long-term stability. The war has had an impact on the lineage-based political structures of Somali society. The internal and external environment with which they must cope is volatile.

The civil war's effect on the political economy of Somali society has scarcely been analysed. The current political formations in Somaliland and Somalia are a response and adaptation to an 'internal' political crisis – historical political regimes and the civil war – and 'external' political changes taking place in the region and globally. The appearance of satellite television in Somaliland, where none existed before the war, is a simple example of

those external changes. Telecommunications that make informal money transfers possible between London and any part of Somaliland within 24 hours is another. The proliferation of Somali non-governmental organisations, the growth of international NGOs and the responsibilities delegated to them by donors to act in the Somali crisis is yet another.

The political constitution of Somali society is intricately linked to the pastoral economy. That economy is changing in response to internal and external factors. The commercialisation of the livestock sector in the past three decades has affected the social, economic and political relations in Somali society. Since 1991 numbers of livestock exported from Somaliland have increased substantially. Growth in livestock numbers puts pressure on rangeland resources. The amount of commercial feed being grown is increasing. Cultivation is becoming more widespread. Changes in the composition of livestock herds affect the division of labour and social relations. A monetary economy encourages urban migration. The breakdown of traditional pastoralism affects authority structures. Privatisation of land is increasing. The expansion of enclosures on rangelands has, in places, led to armed clashes. The war has also caused a considerable movement in population.

Transformations in the Somali political economy in the 1980s, linked to global changes, helped to precipitate the Somali war. External interventions by aid organisations in Somalia and Somaliland need to be aware of both the nature of these internal changes, and the impact of the external environment on the Somali peoples.

Notes

1. The 'Haud and Reserved Area' are the principal wet-season grazing grounds for Somaliland livestock. By the 1897 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, clans of the Somaliland Protectorate had rights of access to the Haud. A second Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty in 1954 saw British military administration withdraw from the Haud and Reserved Area. Somalilanders' rights were reaffirmed, but abrogated at Somaliland's independence in 1960.
2. This section draws on Bradbury, 1994b.
3. Italian commercial interest in Somalia's banana trade continues today.
4. This section draws on Bradbury, 1994a.
5. Dr Aden Yousef Abokor, personal communication.
6. John Drysdale, personal communication, September 1995.
7. According to some observers, the recruitment of Gadabursi militia into the 'national army' created deep resentment among the Garxajis, and a sense of grievance which will colour future clan relationships in Somaliland.
8. Control of currency has also been a significant factor in southern Somalia.
9. Interview by author, Hargeisa, October 1996.
10. John Drysdale, personal communication, October 1995.
11. Draft agenda for a 'Forum of Somaliland Intellectuals' (October 1996).

12. Interviewed in Hargeisa, October 1996.
13. Interviews in Hargeisa, October 1996.
14. Interview with parliamentarian, October 1996.
15. Notice of the 'Forum for Peace and National Reconciliation', August 1996.
16. Interviewed in Hargeisa, December 1996.
17. Interviewed in Hargeisa, October 1996.
18. Interviewed in Hargeisa, October 1996.
19. On 23 February 1997 Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal was elected by 223 votes in the *Shir Beeleedka* as President of Somaliland for a further five years. His closest rival received 90 votes. Early indications were that the decision of the Congress has been widely accepted and that Somaliland's war has come to an end. The Iidagale have returned to Hargeisa.
20. Council of Ministers Policy Statement, 15 March 1995.
21. Interview with government minister, September 1995. The name 'Gabooya' refers to the 'outcastes', Tumaale, Midgan and Yibr.
22. See, for example, 'From Relief to Development in Somalia: Situation Report for the Period 19 December 1995 – 15 January 1996'. Office of the United Nations Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for Somalia, Nairobi.
23. The US oil companies Conoco, Amoco, Chevron, and Phillips owned concessions in Somalia. Osman Atto, General Aideed's financier, was a Conoco representative in Somalia.

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Abbreviations and glossary

ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
GNP	gross national product
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LNGO	local non-governmental organisation
NDC	National Demobilisation Commission
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ORH	Operation Restore Hope
SACB	Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SDA	Somali Democratic Alliance
SDM	Somali Democratic Movement
SNA	Somali National Alliance
SNF	Somali National Front
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SRSP	Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SSNM	Southern Somali National Movement
TNC	Transitional National Council
UNCT	United Nations Coordination Team for Somalia
UNDHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNITAF	United Nations International Task Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USC	United Somali Congress
USF	United Somali Front
USP	United Somali Party

GLOSSARY

af-somali	the Somali language	qaat	mild narcotic (<i>catha edulis</i>)
akil	headman of diya-paying groups, a position formalised by the British	shari'a	Islamic law
alan as	red flag (SNM faction)	shir	council of elders
dabadheer	drought (specifically of 1974/75 – means 'endless')	shir beeleedka	congress of clans
diya	blood compensation	shish	snipers (SNM faction)
garaad	leader or chief	suldaan	leader or chief in Issaq clan; often but not always hereditary; also known in different parts of Somalia as boqar, garaad (among the Dolbahunte) and ugas.
guurti	committee of elders		
jaalle	comrade, as form of address under Scientific Socialism; no longer acceptable usage	sunni	sect of Islam
maymay	language of Digil and Rahanweyne clans	xeer	contracts

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