

Somali Reconciliation: Editorial Note

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I. Introduction

More than a decade after Mogadishu's implosion and the subsequent death of the national state, the Somali saga continues. All told, warlord politics have turned many parts of the country, particularly the southern regions, into a living hell. Consequently, life expectancy has declined as dramatically as in some of the AIDS-devastated countries on the continent, and literacy rates and educational enrollments have plummeted to the lowest in the world. While this general profile is rightly worrisome, we still need to disaggregate the reality. For the purpose of these notes, we offer three guises of the current Somali condition. We start with the most hopeful.

A. Northwest (Somaliland)

In this zone, an indigenously worked out peace prevails and a modicum of order has been restored. Moreover, incipient political structures are in place, constitutional politics is practiced (typified by recent and competitive party-based presidential elections), a small but growing proportion of children are in school, and the rhythm of daily material existence and minimum economic transactions are visible. Despite these commendable achievements, there are a number of acute challenges that vitiate the prospect: 1) an exodus of talent; 2) severe impoverishment; 3) return of the corrupt habits of the old and dead order, as well as the dominance of the capital, Hargeisa, and its commensurate sociopolitical class in all of the major decisions and privileges; 4) apostasy with regard to the sanctity of national unity; 5) political appointments that ignore the public need for a streamlined order, as the

recently formed over 40-member cabinet demonstrates; 6) failure, after a decade of claims, to convince any other state or international organization to recognize the declaration of secession and new sovereignty; and 7) subservience to Ethiopia that contradicts the ambition of self-direction and independence.

B. Northeast (Puntland)

In the initial self-definition, the people of this region reaffirmed their commitment to national unity, and continue to do so. In addition, before 1998, one could observe a degree of civic-mindedness that manifested itself in consultative politics, an orderly reinvigoration of trade, and a step towards a rehabilitation of basic social institutions. Disappointingly, what promise these initial developments had is now enervated by the onset of a ruthless, personalistic, and militaristic appetite for exclusive power. This Siyaad Barre syndrome thrives on a strategy of low intensity but premeditated coercion, sub-clanistic maneuvers, and disregard for the immediate development needs of the people of the zone. More distressing is the making of a client-patron relationship with Ethiopia — a source of military hardware, cash, and political patronage.

C. The Rest

These regions, a large swath and some of the most precious parts of Somalia, are in the grip of violent and chaotic contestation. Primarily driven by brigandish pursuit of spoils (particularly land and trade) and political power, the cost has been devastating to both local communities and to any hope of reviving national identity and institutions. The territories between Mogadishu, Baidoa, and Kismayo are most affected. Here, too, there seems to be a nasty convergence of self-aggrandizement through plunderous tactics and strategic manipulation by Ethiopia.

All in all, variable political geography notwithstanding, the dysfunctionality of the old regime, horrendous though it was, seems to pale in comparison with the debauchery of warlordism and the agony of the present.

II. Reconciliation Conferences

A. Arta: Betrayal of a Gift

Since 1991, thirteen reconciliation conferences to restore peace and national authority have been held. Warlords and factional leaders dominated eleven of these gatherings, all of which failed to produce consensus. Each self-appointed warlord was adamant on claiming the presidency of the country. As a result, most Somalis submitted to the prospect of not seeing a national state in their lifetime. The bleakness of the predicament proved so paralyzing that it would fall to the small, partially Somali-populated Republic of Djibouti and its leader to recharge hopes of saving Somalia from itself. Ismail Omar Gueh, with the zest that accompanies a new presidency, coupled with his own primordial affinity with the Somali people, made a personal assignment of the pressing necessities of reducing regional instability and Djibouti's immediate vulnerabilities.

With his surprise announcement at the UN General Assembly in 1999 to convene a different gathering to rebuild Somalia, President Gueh put the full energy of his administration behind the endeavor. So it was that this meeting of Somalis took place in Djibouti in March 2000. A series of workshops were conducted for a month. Traditional leaders, businessmen, women, intellectuals, and others were invited. Most significantly, warlords were also extended a welcome, but *not* as veto holders. All in all, nearly 5,000 delegates came from every region to deliberate the future of their country. Predictably, most of the more self-important warlords stayed away; they complained that they were devalued for not being treated as the preeminent leaders of their respective communities. In response, the Djibouti hosts reinstated their welcome as individual participants, equal to the rest, and, therefore, with no *a priori* privileged role. While the Government of Djibouti provided modest facilities and acted as a fair broker, the key actors were Somali "traditional" leaders and former politicians. One moment in the proceedings is etched in the memory of those who were present: negotiations came to a halt when sharp conflicting interests clashed. Fearful that the whole conference was in danger of collapse, Gueh intervened by appealing to the delegates to consider their collective interest. In an emotionally charged tone, he pleaded, "*Somaliyee ii hiiliya aan idiin hiiliye*" (O Somalis, help me so that I can help you). The appeal moved the delegates and broke the logjam. Afterwards, the key

obstacle proved to be the selection of the official delegates to the conference who ultimately were to choose a new parliament of 245 deputies. The formula for working out the distribution of the seats was set at dividing the nation into 4.5 communities. In the meantime, a national transitional charter was drafted which the delegates approved and the provisional parliament later adopted. Perhaps the most daunting task was how to equitably parcel out the parliamentary seats *within* each community. This milestone was reached after some acute wrangling and, subsequently, Somalia's first "democratically" *selected* chamber of deputies was put into place. Moreover, the chamber proceeded to elect an interim president from several competing candidates. These developments took place without notable interference from the Djibouti Government; and, critical to note, none of the defeated candidates expressed any doubt that the host government was anything but impartial. In short, the Arta reconciliation conference brought achievements that seemed farfetched only a few months earlier. The Somali public, on the whole, responded with a conspicuous sense of relief, elation, and anticipation. In short, though not immune to intrigues among the delegates and their hangers-on, Arta seemed, in the words of the ancient poet Horace, "not to draw smoke from the brightness of light," as others before it had done, "but to bring out light from smoky murk." What would result from this initial success depended on the caliber of the new leadership, its reception in Mogadishu and the rest of the country, and the attitude of the neighboring countries, particularly Ethiopia.

Interim President Abdiqasim Salad and his entourage made an unplanned visit to the ruined capital. Despite the chaos, hundreds of thousands came out to celebrate what they hoped to be the beginning of a peaceful era. But the promise soon tumbled as the Transitional National Government (TNG) was hobbled by a combination of Ethiopian-cum-warlord subversion and the inherent defects of the new team.

The first signal of trouble was the transparently unhappy presence of the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, among the dignitaries during the inaugural ceremony to congratulate Abdiqasim Salad. In retrospect, Zenawi's attendance belied his hidden agenda of what he desired to become of Somalia. Salad immediately dispatched an envoy to visit Addis Ababa to relay that the new Somali Government was intent on collaborating closely with its neighbors and strengthening positive relations between Somalia and Ethiopia. Later, several other

expeditions were sent to emphasize Somali perspectives, but every delegation met with Ethiopian skepticism. Within six months, the Ethiopian strategy became clear. It at once started to stress the incompleteness of the peace process since the warlords were absent, and also declared that Islamists of the *Al-Itihad* orientation dominated the interim government. In response, Salad and his cohorts made several attempts to demonstrate otherwise and to reassure the Ethiopian leadership. However, the situation deteriorated to a point of no return once Ethiopia accused Salad himself of being a member of *Al-Itihad*. From then on, Addis Ababa adopted a four-pronged strategy to destabilize and delegitimize the TNG. First, Ethiopia convened a meeting for the warlords and, in the process, helped establish an umbrella structure for them to be named the Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC). Second, Ethiopia intensified military supplies for members of the group. Third, Ethiopia actively lobbied at the Organization of African Unity (OAU, now AU, the African Union) and other international organizations to unseat the TNG. In this context, Ethiopia gave more encouragement to the self-proclaimed “Somaliland Republic” to enhance the latter’s search for recognition as an independent country¹ while simultaneously repeating platitudes about the unity and territorial integrity of the Somali Republic at public forums, such as the assembly of the Heads of State and Governments of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) in Eldoret and, more recently, at the AU meeting in Maputo. Finally, Ethiopia intensified its campaign at the IGAD forum to convene an IGAD-sponsored conference to “complete” the Arta process.

In the meantime, the weaknesses of the TNG leadership were exposed. First to come to the fore was the fact that both the interim President (Mr. Abdiqasim Salad) and the Prime Minister (Dr. Ali Kalif Galyedh), as well as many of the cabinet appointees, were remnants of the Siyaad era. Having failed to publicly atone for that association undermined any popular hope for the beginning of a new political history. Second, no broad vision, let alone a specific one, was articulated for a national mobilization fit for the challenge of the interregnum. Third, hardly any attention was paid to competence or integrity in the appointment of a new team, reviving memories of the vulgar and cheap horse-trading that crippled the old Somali national state. Fourth, no immediate tactics, never mind a strategy, were conceived to reach and win over the large and relatively talented Diaspora communities. Fifth, no quick advantage was taken of the international community,

which was admittedly tired of Somali insouciance toward their national well-being but which may have become genuinely responsive to a mature, collective, and intelligent plea from a new and legitimate Somali leadership. Sixth, Salad and Galyedh clashed and then turned on each other. Salad accused Galyedh of arrogance, a deficit of dexterity, and, most damaging, malfeasance, while the latter labeled the first as power hungry and dictatorial. With barely half of the three-year term of TNG gone, and after a parliamentary vote of no confidence, Galyedh was dismissed while abroad. As of this writing, the TNG has all but withered, and with it has vaporized the precious gift from the Djibouti people and Government, and the exceptional but fleeting promise of Arta.

B. Eldoret: Corruption and the Ethiopia-Warlord Axis

Ethiopia's lobby at OAU/AU failed, but its efforts at IGAD paid off. Members of the organization agreed to launch a Somali conference managed by what came to be dubbed "frontline states," comprised of Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya (the last country acting as Chair). Under enormous international pressure, the TNG and the Djibouti Government agreed to this proposal. Moreover, the TNG assumed the neutrality of Kenya. Sadly, this naïve presumption enabled Ethiopia and representatives of the international community to change the nature of the conference from one of reconciling the TNG and the warlords to a completely new one. The generation of lists representing three groups—the TNG, the warlords, and the civil society—and the appointment of a Kenyan, E. Mwangle, well known for his proclivities toward venality, set the stage for a disheveled and Ethiopia-dominated process. The earliest alert that this was not a neutral approach transpired when the names of individuals in the civil society group whom Ethiopia deemed unfriendly were expunged from the list of participants. Furthermore, when members of the international community suggested that the conference needed Somali resource persons, Chairman Mwangle (Kenya's special envoy) submitted the list to warlords for their approval. They rejected it, and, consequently, this act gave them the confidence to thwart conference deliberations that were not to their liking. The international representatives reintroduced the list to the IGAD Technical Committee. Once the Ethiopian delegation realized that the list could not be vetoed, they argued for an expansion by adding five names they felt were amenable to their agenda. As a result,

the list of resource persons grew to nearly twenty. This proved to be quantitatively too cumbersome. Therefore, it was agreed that both Ethiopia's and Djibouti's additions would be put aside. In spite of this consensus, however, Chairman Mwangi made no attempt to call in the resource persons to the conference. Moreover, he never convened a meeting for those among the group who were already in Eldoret.

As the conference commenced, non-Somalis started to make the agenda. In one instance, when one of the authors of this article was present, an American doctoral student presented the points, which comprised the key items in the rules of procedure and the declaration of the cessation of hostilities. Among them was the establishment of a *federal* system of governance, a crucial issue in which Somalis did not have any say. In addition, the "mediators," including the graduate student who held the title of "advisor" to the Chair, created warlord-dominated "leaders' committees" as the paramount decision-making organs of the conference. Again, there was no input from either the Somalis (outside of the warlords) or those who study Somali society. The upshot of all these compounded occurrences was that Ethiopia and its allies continued to try to gerrymander both the composition and quantity of the delegates. The final list of the participants in the plenary sessions was finalized as a newly elected government of Kenya appointed a new envoy (and Chair) to the conference. Furthermore, in January, the site was moved to Mbagathi, on the outskirts of Nairobi. At that stage, representatives of the international community and other observers confirmed that Ethiopia single-handedly controlled two-thirds of the list of conference participants.

C. Mbagathi: Incubation of Inept or Illegitimate Order

Previously serving in senior diplomatic posts as well as top civil servant positions in Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador B. Kiplagat came with a clean reputation; that is, a degree of professionalism in a postcolonial Kenya known for the opposite. This appointment injected a sense of hope into the proceedings and Somalis expected him to behave as an honest mediator, one who would correct past misdeeds. Ambassador Kiplagat moved quickly to restore propriety to the process by relocating the conference to a cheaper location housed in a college rather than in an expensive hotel in Eldoret.

The first real test came with a contest over the nature of the list of participants, and the differentiation between the pirates and the legiti-

mate individuals who represented civic communities. Unfortunately, Ambassador Kiplagat failed to take action, for he seemed barely knowledgeable of the Somali problem, his superb diplomatic skills notwithstanding. Such a shortcoming emboldened those whose project was to have their own instrumentally advantageous way. Most significantly, the warlords and their Ethiopian backers felt ensconced in their dominant role. But the issue of legitimacy could not be easily avoided, and Ambassador Kiplagat had to find a way to come to terms with it. Subsequently, he took the initiative of bringing forth a list of “traditional leaders” whom he intended to invite to the conference. This the warlords rejected, demonstrating three pivotal factors: 1) the Ambassador’s lack of knowledge about Somali culture and his unwillingness to seek counsel from informed Somalis (traditional leaders are not subjects of anyone in communal affairs, let alone warlords); 2) the degree of power ceded to the warlords since the inception of the conference; and 3) the significance of Ethiopian partisanship in distorting the negotiations. The puzzling question, then, was this: Why would a civic-minded and religious man acquiesce to the chicanery of people loyal only to their caprices (with criminal records to boot) and their patrons, allowing them to gain so much potency under his gaze? A plausible explanation was revealed when, on one occasion, the Ambassador confided in another diplomat that he “did not want to fight Ethiopia.” This sentiment was reinforced by another statement he shared with one of this article’s authors to the effect that the interests of Ethiopia and Kenya should be looked after during the conference.

Ethiopia and warlord dominance took a *slight dip* when Ambassador Kiplagat appointed an independent Somali group to harmonize the documents produced by the conference’s six functional committees. A necessity to symmetrize arose due to the paucity of professionals among the committee members who could compose an accurate and readable record of each committee’s proceedings. The Ethiopian envoy and his deputy were alarmed when the Chairperson (Professor Abdi Ismail Samatar) of the Harmonization Committee was introduced. The Ethiopian Ambassador claimed that Professor Samatar was “partisan,” and, therefore, ought to be excluded. This line of argument did not convince the rest of IGAD’s Technical Committee, which compelled Ethiopia to change its tactics. Ethiopia proposed that if Samatar was approved as Chair, Ethiopia should be given the opportunity to name Samatar’s deputy. This demand was turned down. It is important to note here that neither Kenya nor Djibouti demanded the same

privilege. From there on, Ethiopia and its clients focused their energy on how to derail the Harmonization Committee's work. Moreover, once the names of the Harmonization Committee became public, they disclosed that they would not accept the Committee's report. Ambassador Kiplagat found himself in a tight spot. He tried to mend fences with Ethiopia and the warlords by suggesting that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the six committees join the Harmonization team. But soon the Ambassador realized that the quality of the work would suffer, as these additions were bound to bring their disagreements into the task of harmonizing the documents.

The Harmonization Committee handed its report to the chairman of the IGAD Technical Committee, and, after two minor changes, he requested that the document be presented to a full gathering of the entire Technical Committee and official representatives from the international community. Immediately, the Ethiopian emissaries walked out of the meeting, before reading the report or hearing its verbal presentation. Nonetheless, the discussion proceeded and the remaining members of the Technical Committee and international partners commended the overall professional quality of the Harmonization Report and, more particularly, the draft charter that could cater to the common interest of the Somali people. Despite the news that, when it became public, Somalis inside and outside the country were enthusiastically receptive to the Harmonization Committee's document, Ethiopian representatives began to discredit the draft charter and egged on their clients to resist it. The Ethiopian ambassador accused Abdi Samatar of being a "traitor" and anti-Ethiopian. But he failed to articulate both the reasons behind the charges and the connection between the Harmonization Report and Ethiopia. After all, the peace process was for Somalia and not concerned, at least at this stage, with Somali-Ethiopian relations!

Later, the warlords attempted to produce their own version of the charter, but brought out a one-page document that addressed only three articles (the Harmonization Committee's draft charter had 120 articles). When this proposal did not convince anyone, they put forward a version of the draft charter favorable to their interests. Eighteen warlords signed a cover letter to Ambassador Kiplagat in which they openly stated that their version alone should be presented to the plenary of the conference. If not, they threatened, they would walk out of the peace process altogether. There were six issues that distinguished the perspective of the warlords and the draft charter forwarded by the

Harmonization Committee. First, the harmonization document had 120 articles while the warlords' contained 60 articles. Second, the warlords stipulated that the proposed interim parliament should have a total of 450 members; the Harmonization Committee suggested 171. Third, the warlords asked for an open-ended size of the executive portfolios of the new government; the other specified that cabinet appointments should not exceed thirteen. Fourth, the warlords demanded that a federal form of governance be adopted immediately; the other preferred that a national constitutional commission be given the responsibility of developing a federal constitution and determining what the constituent units should be. Fifth, and most critically, the warlords proposed that they themselves select members of the new parliament. The implications of such an idea meant that unelected delegates in the conference's plenary would automatically become deputies and, moreover, the warlords would nominate the remaining fifty-nine MPs. In contrast, the harmonized charter suggested that communities ought to select their representatives in the interim parliament. Sixth, the warlords asserted that the tenure of an interim government be a period of five years; the harmonized document designated three years. The two documents were electronically posted (Hirraan.com) for three weeks, and readers were able to vote online to register their preference. Eighty percent of the respondents favored the harmonization charter.

Whatever the relative merits of the two documents, it was flabbergasting to witness the audacity of Ethiopia and its clients to demand that their self-serving draft charter *alone* should be debated in the plenary session. Also enigmatic was the fact that Ambassador Kiplagat, as Chairman of IGAD's Technical Committee, succumbed to their demands despite the fact that a significant number of the civil society group and the official delegation of the TNG did not share the warlords' demands. Soon thereafter, the Chairman's task was made easier by a growing split within the ranks of the TNG. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hassan Abshir) and the Speaker of the TNG Parliament (Mr. Abdulla Deroow) decided, without prior consultation with the TNG's decision-making committee, to vote in favor of a warlord's proposal for a compromise on major issues. With full realization that this change of mind contradicted the TNG's official (written and on file) position, the Chairman took advantage of the split by rushing the "signed compromise" to the plenary. Even more bewildering, the plenary's function as the supreme locus of final debate and decisions (through consensus), duly stipulated by the conference's rules of pro-

cedure, was premeditatedly preempted. Ambassador Kiplagat side-stepped this protocol and relayed to the plenary that the “leaders” had agreed on four key issues: the size of the assembly at 351 members; immediate adoption of federalism; an interim period of four years; and warlords and faction leaders, in consultation with traditional leaders, selecting members of parliament. Many of the delegates supporting the warlord and Ethiopian agenda, having received early notification of what was to come, cheered as Ambassador Kiplagat made the announcement. Others who did not have forewarning objected to what they saw as a deceitful stampede. Subsequently, they requested that the issues be discussed. Ambassador Kiplagat responded that the decision was *final* and immediately adjourned the meeting. The Ambassador’s behavior contravened the letter and spirit of reconciliation, and fueled a growing suspicion that he was predisposed from the outset toward a warlord-Ethiopian pact. At such a late hour, unless he regained his role as an impartial mediator, the entire process was likely to become illegitimate, with Kenya’s accepted role as a neutral Somali neighbor fatally damaged and the peace conference doomed to the same fate as the many others that preceded it. For Ethiopia and its client warlords, their long-term project was clear: the warlords desired to either take total control of the country without the bother of the niceties of representation and democratic legitimacy or to remain in command of separate fiefdoms. For its part, Ethiopia seemed bent on helping establish either a weak client state in Somalia led by a favorite warlord or, perhaps better, fragmented and Bantustan-like territories in which Addis Ababa would call the shots more directly. In brief, the last scenario Ethiopia would welcome was a united and reinvigorated country, led by independent-minded and able Somali leaders.²

What, then, are the prospects for reconciliation and national redemption? The Eldoret-Mbagathi process will presumably produce a national dispensation but the germane question is whether that will serve the Somali people. The first thing a keen observer of the IGAD conference detects is that the process made minimal progress in reconciling Somalis.³ On the contrary, the entire operation had focused on power sharing and the number of delegates representing different factions and groups rather than the issues that brought Somalia to its dismal predicament. Neither the current envoy nor his predecessor had invested any meaningful effort in reconciliation. As a matter of fact, Ambassador Kiplagat’s action on July 5th violated the conference’s rules of procedure and exacerbated the rift within the TNG. Second,

the dominance of warlords and faction leaders (some illiterate and others known for exceptional incompetence) in the conference bodes ill for Somalia's post-conflict dispensation. For instance, one of the two power-sharing formulas calls for the warlords and faction leaders, in consultation with traditional leaders, to appoint parliamentarians. If this method prevails, it is certain that the merchants of violence and their supporters will constitute the majority of deputies in parliament as well as take up key positions in the new provisional administration. Alternatively, traditional leaders, in consultation with faction and political leaders, will select members of parliament. Such an assembly could have a broader representative base. However, it is implausible that the ability of the MPs will be significantly greater than those appointed through the other approach. In addition, the major rivals in Mbagathi are of the same mind that parliament should be composed of 315 deputies at the least, and that cabinet portfolios should be unnecessarily numerous, as in the case of the TNG or Northwest (Somaliland) administration. The cost of such an operation will not only be prohibitive, but underscores the total preoccupation with the politics of individual greed and civic disarray. In the end, whether warlords or traditional leaders appoint members of parliament, the fact remains that the likely confluence of an imprudently expansive assembly and government, and the propensity for low quality political leadership, is bound to cripple the promise.

III. Final Thoughts

As this issue of *Bildhaan* goes to press, we return to the large and essential question of the times: *transition*. By definition, transition is a historical period (longer than an interim or emergency) of both great danger and promise. The danger entails, minimally, the constant invasion of misery and cruelty. At its worst, transition normalizes bestial politics. The upside of this uncertain but potentially recuperative time is the possibility, if imaginatively and promptly acted upon, to turn contemporary history in a propulsive and positive direction. If the latter is to be the case for Somalia, we proffer several strategic issues that seem to be imperative. We comment on each briefly.

A. International Involvement

From our perspective, the broader international community looks unwilling to intervene to help *modify* the outcome of the conference, while IGAD's Technical Committee appears content with the proceedings. In the immediate range, then, only stringent external involvement could alter this seemingly foregone fate. For example, the European Community and the Arab League, who are prepared to significantly fund the new dispensation, can *insist* on the conditionality that, among others, the legislative and executive branches must *not* oversee the reestablishment of the administrative structures of the country for the first *two* years of the interim. Here, about 100 former senior civil servants, with a record of diligence and propriety, and younger but highly qualified professionals, mostly in the Diaspora, could be mobilized to undertake the assignment. Furthermore, an independent and seasoned body (no more than a dozen) of expatriates and Somalis could supervise the new bureaucracy. The government would assume its normal dominion once the country is disarmed and the fundamental structures are in place. The probability is high that the new arrangement will crash under its own dead weight, unless this design or another akin to it is put into place.

B. Constitutional Order

This involves the conception of a binding document that enshrines what most Somalis yearn for: the supremacy of law and fundamental but *examined* Somali moral values (including progressive and worldly Islamic ideas and experiences); guarantees of individual liberty and freedom of press and association; demarcation of the limits, separation, and distribution of institutional power; flexibility to accommodate amendments that future generations might need to enact; and legitimation through an endorsement by the majority (perhaps up to two-thirds) of the adult citizens. The mutual dependence of law and morals was underscored, long ago, by none other than Nicoló Machiavelli: "There is no law or constitution which can restrain... universal corruption, for as good morals need to be maintained by laws, so laws require good morals to be observed."

C. Leadership

This is perhaps the greatest of all the ills that bedevil Somali society. It is now common knowledge that even the most promising opportunities for reconciliation and recomposition (e.g., Arta) floundered largely as a result of hapless leadership—a leadership that failed to realize, at the very moment of its triumph, that the *appointed hour* had arrived. In the next round, then, the criteria for public leadership, particularly at the highest levels, must at least stress the following: visionary thinking, energy, competence, and, above all, a prior record of propriety. Combined and vigorously applied, such a composite should put to rest the widespread but repulsive and disastrous notion that anyone loud enough, clanistic enough, and corrupt enough can thrust himself (and it has been a *he* thus far) onto center stage. A transparent process of public viewing ought to be at the core of distinguishing among any aspirants. After all, state making and leadership are partly a reflection of the collective keenness of intelligence and character of a people.

After the hemorrhage it has taken, Somalia cannot reconstruct without enormous and long-term international attention and material support. While it is essential that a new dispensation demonstrates a mode of self-reliance so different from the beggarly attitudes that defined the dead epoch, Somalia's chronic poverty, compounded by the political catastrophe, compels solicitation of concrete financial and technical contributions from the rest of the world. However, extreme caution must be exercised here. To redirect some of the world's attention to Somalia's enduring needs will require that the transitional regime does its own homework. Such a task ought to include identification and articulation of the critical needs and their cost, as well as the persuasion of potential donors of the logic, transparency, and feasibility of these objectives.

Finally, if the transition's potential is realized, there is a great likelihood that most Somalis, including those who live within the confines of a separatist region (i.e., Somaliland), will rally behind a national reconstitution. The central challenge, then, is to demonstrate to everyone that something enabling, wise, and prefigurative of an ennobling future is, at last, taking shape in Somalia.

Notes

1. Ethiopia is the only country that accepts the Somaliland passport to be used in its territory. Ironically, some Somaliland Ministers use old Somali Republic or Djibouti passports to travel.
2. We are able to assert these conclusions as they run parallel to the ways in which the Tigray-dominated regime in Addis Ababa tightly manages regional affairs while pretentiously proclaiming the regional autonomy of the country's ethnic provinces. See Abdi Ismail Samatar, "Ethiopia's Federated or Forced Ethnic: A Somali Reality Check" (forthcoming).
3. In spite of the IGAD Technical Committee's poor performance, the Kenyan Envoy has convinced the UNDP office for Somalia (Nairobi) that the Technical Committee's tenure should be extended for at least six months after a Somali interim government is formed. The UNDP report estimates that the TC will need at least *one million dollars* for that duration. It seems to us that since the TC has been so dysfunctional and partisan in the reconciliation process, it does not deserve such a handsome reward. We are concerned that lengthening the life of the TC and giving it a platform will be counterproductive. Moreover, the million dollars could easily be put to a better use, as, for instance, supplying medicine to the children's hospital in Mogadishu.