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1. **Introduction: State Collapse and Political Disintegration**

This paper begins with a brief introduction aiming at reflecting the current political landscape of the disintegrated former Democratic Republic of Somalia. This is followed by a brief examination of key reconstruction issues in the autonomous and relatively stable self-governing entities of Somaliland and Puntland, in the Northwest and Northeast respectively, using the findings of War-torn Societies Project (WSP) participatory action research conducted in Puntland in the years 1997-1999, and initiated in Somaliland in the beginning of 1999. The paper then addresses the resolution of the Somali conflict by first reviewing the "top-down" approach to show the dismal record of the externally sponsored and "war-lord"-centred factional reconciliation process that preceded the latest and more inclusive Somali National Peace Conference sponsored by neighbouring Djibouti at ‘Carta (Arta). The Carta peace initiative which progressed further than any of the preceding factional conferences has been given more attention compared to the discredited factional reconciliation process.

Two relatively stable *de facto* political entities in the northern part of the former Somali Democratic Republic have crystallized out of the ruins of the collapsed Somali state: 1) the ten year old breakaway Republic of Somaliland in the Northwest (the former British Somaliland Protectorate), and Puntland State of Somalia in the Northeast (Northeast regions of Bari, Nugaal and North Mudug plus Laascanood region and eastern parts of Sanaag). Somaliland declared itself independent from southern Somalia (the former Italian Trust Territory) in May 1991, while the latter formed the Puntland State of Somalia in August 1998, defining itself as an autonomous political entity that will eventually join an anticipated federal system of government for united Somalia. These two self-governing northern entities together constitute a significant proportion of the total population.

The southern part of the country lying outside Somaliland and Puntland has been plagued by low intensity sporadic conflicts in the last decade and therefore has a history of turmoil, shifting political alliances and political uncertainty. The capture of Baydhaba and Bakool regions, the homeland of the agro-pastoral Digil and Mirifle clans by the Hawiya - based United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) militia in 1995 had reversed embryonic but prospective regional administration emerging out of this area. The Ra'xanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) created in response to the occupation of USC/SNA had finally succeeded in liberating this region from the occupying forces originating from central Somalia in the middle of 1999. The consolidation of a regional administration in Bay and Bakool regions in South-west Somalia and probable emergence of other clan-based political entities in the remaining parts of Southern Somalia have been overtaken by the Djibouti sponsored peace process, that produced the Transitional National Government relocated to Mogadishu in October 2000.

Not unexpectedly, the Transitional National Government (TNG) intensified power struggle and escalated internal divisions in unstable areas in the southern part of the country as it also brought about realignment of the existing factional groupings. On 24 January 2001, political leaders of the RRA, Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), Somali National Front (SNF), and the Southern Somali National Movement (SSSNM) and representatives from the administration of Puntland declared a new faction named National Restoration Council (NRC) at a meeting held...
at 'Ceel Berde, Bakool region. This new alliance between southern based factions and Puntland administration support the 'building blocks' approach and intend to initiate a new national reconciliation process, in effect challenging TNG. Thus for NRC, most of its factional leaders have attended 'Carta and are elected members of the Transitional National Assembly. They have succeeded in disrupting rather violently representatives of TNG members touring Bakool and Gedo regions on official mission (aimed at) explaining the programme and vision of TNG to their contested constituencies. It is early to predict the impact of this new alliance, which declared to convene a national conference in Baydhaba within 45 days, vis à vis the survival of the TNG and its expansion outside Mogadishu and Benaadir region. The two sides are at present so polarised and therefore without a third party mediation the prospects for peaceful reconciliation are slim.

2. Political, Economic and Social Reconstruction in Puntland and Somaliland

Both Somaliland and Puntland have shown an encouraging degree of initiative with regard to reconstruction in the last 10 years, without the benefit of much international assistance as political reconstruction in particular has received insignificant international aid and had to be built on local efforts. Economic viability primarily depends on livestock-dominated trade with the Arabian Gulf countries via the regional ports of Berbera and Boosaso in Somaliland and Northeast Somalia respectively. Livestock exports generate the bulk of the hard currency exchanged for food imports and manufactured consumer goods traded in Somaliland, Puntland and other parts of Somalia as well as the economically and culturally linked regions in eastern Ethiopia, which is populated by 'trans-national' Somali clans. In both entities, earnings from livestock exports are supplemented by additional income in the form of remittances from the Diaspora and other local exports of frankincense and fish.

A limited quantity of sorghum and maize is produced in the settled farming districts of Boorama and Gabiley, in the wetter plains of the high north-west plateau (where cattle replace camels as the primary stock), giving Somaliland a more diversified economy than Puntland. Nevertheless, the bulk of the population in Somaliland and virtually the total population of Puntland depend on imported food. Both entities manage to feed their non-food-producing local populations with food imports financed from local exports in the post-military period.

During the period Woqooyi Bari Soomaaliya (Northeast Somalia) has existed as de facto independent entity, it confronted two major security events: the 1991-1993 defence of the frontier region of Mudug (Gaalka'cayo town and the surrounding area) against USC/SNA militia; and the violent suppression of the revolt by Al Itixaad to take over power in the Northeast in 1992. Both threats were successfully neutralized by mass mobilization under the leadership of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the traditional lineage leaders. Factional fighting over the control of the frontier region continued sporadically from the beginning of 1991 until the signing of the 1993 Mudug peace accord. Eventual realization by the two warring factions that they are militarily balanced and therefore no party could win an outright and convincing victory and common desire not to disrupt mutually beneficial regional trade network through the strategically located town of Gaalka'cayo, among others, explains the uneasy survival of the accord.

The partial Mudug peace accord had brought about cessation of hostilities that still survive, nonetheless this cease fire has not been pursued to its logical conclusion - sealing a lasting settlement and increasing interaction and cooperation across rival clan boundaries separating neighbouring hostile groups. In addition to traditional land disputes aggravated by property
rights resulting from the three year frontier war, the contending parties continue to be divided by political differences, notwithstanding further fragmentation experienced by the USC/SNA faction since the signing of the accord. In spite of its shortcomings, the accord could be described as the most important achievement of Somalia's faction leaders who have a dismal record with respect to reconciliation at local and national levels as well as building widespread functioning administrations. Late General 'Ceydiid of USC/SNA and Colonel 'Cabdiilaaahi Yuusuuf of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front SSDF (current President of Puntland State of Somalia) and their supporters brokered the Mudug Peace Accord.

Culturally, Woqooyi Bari Soomaaliya (Northeast Somalia) is clearly defined by clan exclusiveness and traditional territorial control of the large Majeererteen clan and allied Daarrood groups (Deshiishe, Leylkase, Awrtable and others). In this sense, Northeast Somalia differs from Somaliland, as it constitutes a more socially cohesive political entity. Somaliland, on the other hand, supports a population of mixed (and rival) clan origin belonging to three large clan-families (Dir, Isaaq and Harti/Daarood). This makes Somaliland socially and politically more complex than Northeast Somalia.

Underpinned by cultural and political harmony, remarkable peace and stability which have prevailed in Northeast Somalia since 1991 (outside the war-ravaged frontier region of Mudug) have created conditions favouring the development of working institutions of government. Nevertheless, key political actors there, such as SSDF and the Isimo (titled clan and sub-clan heads and lineage leaders) have achieved little progress in the area of political rebuilding since the military regime was ousted in 1991. Indeed, the process of building basic institutions of governance remained 'frozen' in a kind of "permanent" and uncertain transition prior to the declaration of Puntland State of Somalia on 1 August 1998.

Successive attempts to install working administrations at the regional level (North Mudug, Garoowe and Bari) have produced unstable and ineffective regional authorities, while the only initiative prior to the formation of Puntland State of Somalia to institute an overall inter-regional administration, in 1992, had faltered. In the absence of formal authority in Northeast Somalia, SSDF nevertheless informally administered the Boosaso port, and in conjunction with the Isimo, preserved law and order and governed matters of common interest.

Since 1991, parallel efforts seeking to establish effective centralised authority in the de facto political entities of Somaliland and Northeast Somalia have attained varying degrees of progress, but development of effective bureaucracy is far from being successfully accomplished thus far. This indicates the scope of political disintegration of traditional kinship-based Somali society and the decomposition of centralized public institutions of governance—the legacy of three decades of bad governance in the former Democratic Republic of Somalia.

The relatively more constructive experience of Somaliland in governance in the post-military period and its multi-ethnic composition makes it an interesting case to watch in the slow and difficult task of welding wider political structures from a patchwork of clan-fiefdoms. Somaliland is a product of colonial history, namely the 19th century partitioning of the Somali nation into five territories: British Somaliland Protectorate (now Somaliland), Italian Trust Territory (southern Somalia, including Puntland) Northern Frontier District (North-east Kenya), the 'Ogaden' region of eastern Ethiopia, and Afar and 'Ciisa Territory (now Republic of Djibouti). Unlike other entities emerging in Somalia, Somaliland represents a political unit whose borders coincide with those of the colonial administration.
Independence forms a unifying force and central political platform in Somaliland, while in Puntland autonomy and self-rule is considered as an interim arrangement and a springboard to anticipated future federal system of government for anticipated united Somalia. To justify secession, Somalilanders tend to regard independence as an act revoking their union with southern Somalia at independence in 1960, an arrangement they believe economically and politically marginalized them over a period of three decades. To distance itself from the turmoil that is still plaguing different parts of southern Somalia, Somaliland has, since the 1993 election of President Ma'xamad Ibraahim 'Cigaal, embarked on a relatively successful political rebuilding effort.

Since it declared independence, Somaliland has had two administrations headed by civilian presidents. The first president, `Cabdira'xmaan `Cali (``Tuur"), then-chairman of the Isaaq-based Somali National Movement (SNM) and an experienced former diplomat, ran the first two-year interim SNM administration from 1991 to 1993. This was followed by three successive administrations presided over by the current civilian president, `Cigaal, who was Prime Minister in the last civilian government (ousted by the military regime in 1969).

Somaliland adopted a system of governance that is anchored to the pervasive clan-based political culture of the predominantly nomadic northern Somali society. In this system, 'national' conferences attended by representatives of local clans, shir beeled, played a central role in political decision-making and in peacemaking. This inclusive and participatory approach to peace and governance allowed for the development of broad-based transitional administrations in Somaliland. Participation of non-Isaaq clans in these representative political forums, in which successive representative administrations were installed, had the affect of dispelling (only partially in some areas) the endemic fear of reprisals by the dominant Isaaqs against others who were associated with the fallen regime during the decade-long SNM struggle.

Three grand congresses (singular shir beeled, plural shir beeleedyo) have taken place in Somaliland since independence in 1991. The first congress in Burco in April and May 1991 declared independence and installed the first SNM administration presided over by `Tuur". The second and more broadly based shir beeled in Boorama, from January to May 1993, elected President `Cigaal to replace `Tuur" as the president of the second interim administration. `Cigaal's first term in office expired in 1995 in the middle of the second round of fighting (1994-1996), and therefore was extended by the parliamentary Council of Elders to forestall a political void. The third shir beeled in Hargeysa, from October 1996 to February 1997 achieved the following: a) cessation of hostilities (the "Ceel 'Xume" opposition group from Bur'co did not attend this conference but later joined the general peace settlement); b) a new constitutional document, to be validated during a further 3-year transition period; c) re-elected President `Cigaal, with a new Vice President, Daahir Riyaale Kaahin, for a term of 5 years; d) addressed some of the grievances of the opposition groups, by increasing their share in the two houses of Parliament. (Bradbury: 1997)

In the prolonged transitional period starting from 1991, there evolved in Somaliland a culture of locally-based reconciliation processes. The Somaliland Guurti (supreme council of lineage leaders) played a critical role in securing internal stability and in the development of institutions of governance. A series of peace conferences spontaneously organized by the Somaliland Guurti over a period of two years successfully resolved the first round of fighting in Somaliland (1992-1993) and led to the all-clan congress in Boorama.
Propelled to the centre stage of politics by decomposition of centralised rule and the inability of the current political elite to resurrect modern administration, traditional leaders in both Somaliland and in Puntland emerged as paramount political actors in the post-military period. In Somaliland, the Guurti have been politicized since 1993 when they were institutionalized as one of the two chambers of parliament in the new administration formed in Boorama. The Interim Charter for Puntland, however, failed to legislate a similar status for the Isimo who themselves have played a similar role in Northeast Somalia, securing internal stability and driving the grassroots political process that culminated in the Garoowe conference.

After eight years in office, President `Cigaal is far from achieving his mandate of effecting a transition to a more viable system of participatory democratic rule that could consolidate peace and stability underpinned by the transitional shir-beeleed system of government. There are increasing fears in Somaliland that the transitional shir-beeleed system of governance has become an end in itself and the process of building a "mini-state" is getting increasingly undermined by serious dysfunctions that ultimately brought about Siyaad Barre's regime-authoritarian one-man and rigid centralised rule, rampant corruption, injustice and economic mismanagement. If transition to a more stable, accountable and transparent democratic system of governance is not put in place soon, Somaliland could descend into disorder and anarchy.

Somaliland's experience in peacekeeping and governance has been relatively violent and marred by two rounds of violent yet constructive internal power struggles (1992-1993; 1994-1996). Northeast Somalia has witnessed domestic stability at the cost of political stagnation. Internal power struggles within SSDF have often been between prominent leaders in the official corps, who dominated the administration of this relatively militaristic organization in the period of armed insurrection and after the ousting of the military regime. Unlike in the Somali National Movement (SNM) of Somaliland, competition for control of the organization and local administration did not degenerate into internal conflict but it did split the organization into two rival factions, which had the effect of paralyzing political reconstruction in Northeast Somalia.

The first shir beeleed concluded in Garoowe on 1 August 1998 installed Col. `Cabdillaahi Yuusuf as the President of Puntland State of Somalia, dissolved political parties including SSDF, and formulated an Interim Charter that seeks a peaceful transition to a democratic system of rule. Whether this legal framework and the good will of the current transitional administration will be sufficient to deliver peaceful transition in Puntland is too early to contemplate. A peaceful and constitutional transition to democracy will certainly save the Puntland State from the devastating internal power struggle witnessed in Somaliland in the transitional period.

Established administrations in northern Somalia have certainly contributed to the prevailing favourable and secure climate for regional reconstruction, e.g. private sector driven economic development and delivery of basic social services. Nonetheless, these self-governing administrations have not been able to contribute directly and concretely to the modest economic progress and social reconstruction realized in these two entities over the last decade. Apart from endemic institutional weakness, tendency of centralization of power and reluctance to decentralize and devolve authority to local structures of governance, both entities have become militarized in the task of building regional administrations. Over 90 per cent of government revenue has to be spent on security and administration in form of salary for the large number of security forces created out of ex-combatants and clan militias (more than 15, 000 in Somaliland and over 5,000 in Puntland) and relatively large government
employees. These de facto administrations are so far denied bilateral aid that is desperately needed for building the capacity of the weak administrations and for demobilization and social integration of the large security forces.

Somalia's robust informal economy under Siyaad Barre's socialist regime in the 1980s provided the basis for the informal war-economy in the anarchic post-Barre period. The dissolution of state monopoly on key economic activities has on the positive side provided fertile ground for the private sector to establish itself as the engine driving reconstruction. Deregulation of trade and commerce has unleashed vigorous reconstruction efforts based on self-reliance and the expansion of investments, particularly in lucrative areas of the urban economy. On the negative side, efforts of the business class who are composed of fiercely competing, freewheeling, individual traders tied primarily to their kin groups for protection and business opportunities, does not compensate for the absence of public authorities; nor has the merchant class developed corporate interests and large-scale economy that is strong enough to make an impact at sectoral and inter-sectoral levels.

This extremely deregulated environment favoured the development of some kind of rudimentary and predatory capitalism that is too weak and fragmented to self-regulate trade and run a service-driven informal economy and therefore it can not provide a sound foundation for sustainable economic growth. The proliferation of companies involved with money transfer, communication, transport and construction have contributed to the ongoing process of economic rebuilding; however, the stature of such companies is still modest in terms of management standards and complexity of operations performed. Formulating and implementing regulations and comprehensive competition policies are difficult because of these individualistic interests. Sister telecommunication companies of Nation Link, Barakat and ASTEL, jointly launched the Somali Internet Company recently and established the national Telecommunication Network Company — positive sign and the right step towards the creation of large scale private enterprise in Somalia.

In addition to mass displacement of people and heavy death toll over the past decade, total collapse of state institutions, public service providers remain an enduring legacy of per cent Somalias' protracted civil strife. Over 90 per cent of the infrastructure for the delivery of health and educational services is estimated by the United Nations to have been fully or partially damaged. Qualified professionals have fled the country and those who have remained have found themselves without salaries, equipment and supplies. An entire generation — some say two — have grown up not knowing the benefits of education, health care or clean water.

But in spite of this seemingly apocalyptic scenario, Somalis in Puntland and Somaliland consider themselves better off than they were before the civil war. They believe that access to basic services has improved and that new opportunities for social development have emerged. The private sector has stepped in to partially fill the vacuum left by the collapse of state services. Education and health care are available for those who can afford to pay for them. Malnutrition has been held at bay by local production and commercial imports, and access to potable water is at a tolerable level, except in times of drought. The pool of qualified professionals has been enriched by an influx of displaced people from other regions.

The newly emerged social service agents, private sector and international organizations, have not yet managed to restore the level of services existing before the civil war and also lack the capacity to replace the function of public institutions of government. Private schools and
clinics have mushroomed since 1992, but the services they offer are generally poor, seeking profit rather than quality. Standards are non-existent, staff are often unqualified or unprofessional, and local authorities seem unwilling or unable to intervene in a constructive way. Furthermore, services rarely extend beyond the urban centres, where a profit could be made. School curricula differ widely, as do the languages of instruction, and few schools offer classes beyond the primary level.

Public services continue to function at a low level in some areas, usually with the support of aid agencies. Aid agencies offer support in some regions and to some institutions, but their interventions have appeared to be ad hoc, uncoordinated, and short term. Socio-economic activities taking place in the relatively stable entities in northern Somalia also transpire in the south, in an insecure environment and a situation of reduced rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance from international organizations. The work of international organizations and NGOs is hampered by insecurity prevailing in the south, which consists of zones that are either in conflict or in a transition from conflict to peace and therefore a target for international relief and humanitarian assistance rather than rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

3. **Externally Sponsored Factional Reconciliation Process**

The violent ousting of Ma'xamad Siyaad Barre's dictatorial military regime in January 1991 did not bring about anticipated end of the decade-long social upheaval in the former Democratic Republic of Somalia. Sudden and total collapse of centralized institutions of government created political void filled up by clan-based factions commandeered by unpredictable notorious "war-lords" who got entangled in protracted and so far inexorable violent power struggle and competition for control over the ruins of the fallen state.

The Somali case presented new opportunity, with potential to provide the international community first hand experience in peacemaking and "remaking" fallen states in the post-cold war period. Prior to the latest Djibouti hosted national peace process held at Carta, May-August 2000, 12 major factional reconciliation conferences sponsored by external actors (such as UN, regional governments and Somalis in the Diaspora) have taken place, producing neither a comprehensive peace accord nor a framework for political settlement in Somalia. In particular, the high-profile and relatively expensive "top-down" reconciliation conferences sponsored by UN (1992-1995) failed to produce positive results.

The humanitarian crises resulting from the combined effect of factional fighting and drought, induced famine in southern Somalia that had drawn the first observer mission to Somalia (UNOSOM) in May 1992, under the leadership of the Algerian diplomat, M'a'xamad Sahnuun. The initial force of 50 (later increased to 500) unarmed force observer mission failed to deter fighting as faction leaders became emboldened, and without fear of reprisal began to frustrate the initiative by creating incessant obstacles to the deployment of the small operation. Factional fighting continued unabated in the capital city and violence spread farther afield encompassing Baydhabo and Jubba regions containing prime agricultural land. The worsening humanitarian tragedy attracted international attention and interest which was sparked off by the world media that brought home the plight of famished images of war and famine affected civilian population.

On December 1992, following UN Security Council authorization under Charter VII of the UN Charter, the United Task Force (UNITAF or Operation Restore Hope) was launched with
the blessing of US President George Bush. The President was at the time relieved of political pressure in the wake of his defeat in the Presidential election and prodded by American public opinion agitating for action against Somalia's notorious war-lords at war against their own people.

In contrast to the relatively ambiguous first UN operation, UNITAF was given specific and clearly defined mandate that sought the establishment of a secure environment for the running and delivery of humanitarian relief. Some analysts attribute the relative success of this relief operation to the specific and practical mandate given to it, even though it was backed by the military might of the US army (30,000), which cowed belligerent faction leaders who cleared their deadly mobile battle wagons (known as technicals in Somalia) from relief corridors, thereby allowing relief goods to be delivered to thousands of lives threatened by mass starvation. To the disappointment of the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Ghali and Somalis, their hope of return to normality was resurrected by the humanitarian success of UNITAF, Operation Restore Hope sought cooperation of the faction leaders in the operation of humanitarian assistance. This approach served public relations at home in the US, as it reduced the possibility of violent confrontation with the faction leaders and possible casualties to US led UNITAF forces who had the might to disarm armed factions. This confrontation-shy approach reinforced the invincibility of the notorious faction leaders, boosted their sagging morale and image as political leaders of their respective clans and therefore gave them unwarranted legitimacy. It also set negative precedent as it impaired subsequent efforts seeking factional reconciliation and disarmament undertaken by the United Nations. 4

Describing the historical significance of UN intervention in stateless Somalia, Lewis wrote (1993:1):

> In responding, very belatedly, to the challenge of mass starvation and famine in a country torn apart by wars, whose statehood had lapsed, and whose economy and public services had collapsed, the UN now finds itself in the unexpected position of administering what is virtually an undeclared trusteeship (known as UNOSOM II). This astonishing development, bizarrely retracing Somalia's history as a UN trusteeship from 1950-60, has been largely triggered by the equally surprising initiative of the United States in mounting, with hasty UN legitimisation, the heavy armed 30,000 strong operation, Restore Hope, to force food supplies along roads regularly menaced by trigger-happy Somali militias.

As the humanitarian crisis elapsed, the United States prepared for a hand-over of its functions under UNITAF to UN. Accordingly, resolution 814 mandated UN (UNOSOM II) to undertake the following grandiose tasks: (a) assistance in the provision of relief and economic rehabilitation; (b) assistance in the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons; (c) assistance to promote and advance political reconciliation through broad participation by all sectors of Somali society, and the re-establishment of national and regional institutions and civil administrations in the entire country; (d) assistance in the re-establishment of Somali police; (e) assistance in development of a coherent program for demining; (f) development of public information activities in support of UN activities in Somalia; and, (g) creation of conditions for civil society participation in the political reconciliation process. 5

The broad mandate for UNOSOM II was designed so as to address the root causes that had created famine in Somalia in the first place and also sought laying the foundations that are
necessary for political, military, economic and social transformations required to restore longer-term peace and stability in Somalia. In response to the critique that condemned UN military intervention addressing the sensitive issue of "state-building" and "remaking" of the fallen Somali State, some analysts within and outside the United Nations have propounded a resource argument, which claimed that UNISOM II was not provided adequate resources that are commensurate with its broad objective, including adequately equipped military and civilian personnel, sufficient finances and time. In contrast to this view, the UN operation in Somalia was considered as the largest at the time and the most expensive in the world ($1.5 billion annually, more than twice Yugoslavia)\(^6\)

Without denying the validity of the resource argument, especially the limited time (1992-1995) the operation existed to achieve its grandiose scheme, UNISOM II had embarked on a flawed course from the start that was doomed to failure and was therefore seen as a recipe for disaster. Amen Jan suggested three fundamental flaws of UNOSOM II operation:

1. **UNOSOM II never translated its broad mandate for peace-building into a strategic plan of action**;
2. **Peace-building efforts by UNOSOM II were "product" rather than "process" oriented**;
3. **All civilian international efforts were subsumed by the military objectives of the U.S. and the UN; by the time these objectives changed, UNOSOM II had become too discredited to play an effective role in Somalia.** \(^7\)

Neighbouring countries in the Horn region, most importantly Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya have important political and security interests in the tragic developments in Somalia and have therefore hosted parallel reconciliation efforts in their respective capitals - Djibouti in 1991, Addis Ababa in 1993 and 1996 and Nairobi in 1994. None of these efforts by interested African countries helped restoration of peace and stability in Somalia and resurrection of the decomposed Somali State. Recently rejuvenated regional organizations like IGAD and OAU have started to play an increasing role in peacemaking in the region and accordingly supported Somali national reconciliation. Supported by IGAD and OAU, the Ethiopian-sponsored Sodere peace process which began in late 1996, was side-tracked and disrupted in late 1997 by an Egyptian-led parallel reconciliation initiative held in Cairo. The latter was anticipated to prepare the ground for a national reconciliation conference scheduled to be held in the southern town of Baydhabo in March 1998, which was later postponed indefinitely.

Ethiopia and Egypt have diametrically opposed interests over future Somali polity. The regional superpower, Ethiopia, which recently won the bloody border war with the newly formed independent Eritrea supports the "building blocks" approach and it seems to be wary of development of strong centralized Somali government that could threaten its political and security interests, particularly the use of chaotic Somalia as a base for hostile "external forces" or armed incursions by *Al Itixaad al Islam* across the porous border into Eastern Ethiopia which is populated by Ethnic Somalis. It therefore favours the "building blocks" approach and creation of weak "mini-states" controlled by "friendly forces" under the influence of Ethiopia. In contrast, Egypt adamantly opposes the "building blocks" approach, favours the unity of Somalia and formation of a strong centralized Somali government that could serve as an alliance against Ethiopia in the eternal fight between the two countries over control of the Nile water.

From the above overall review of the discredited factional reconciliation process undertaken in the last decade of statelessness in the former Democratic Republic of Somalia, let us now
turn to the actual role of the faction leaders found in the relatively stable northern part of Somalia. As the main political and military organization representing the inhabitants of Northeast regions of Somalia (now Puntland State of Somalia) together with allied local Daarood Organizations, SSDF had participated in all of the international and regional Somali peace conferences internally divided but united by a common political platform aiming at the resurrection of united Somalia. Protracted internal power struggle within SSDF and competition for control of the organization between two main rival factions, one led by the current President of Puntland State of Somalia and the other by General Abshir Musa, now a member of parliament of the newly established TNG, is acknowledged as the primary cause of political stagnation in Northeast Somalia in the post-war period.

Despite unrelenting power struggle, both leaders have invested greater energy and interest in the illusive quest for national reconciliation than in the development of effective leadership and viable governance structures for Northeast Somalia. Neither the political elite nor the population at large support secession. The main reasons for this unionist political dispensation are: (a) wider geographical dispersion of the Majeerteen clan and its interest outside the frontiers of Northeast Somalia; (b) the desire to remain united with the genealogically related Harti clans in Somaliland; and (c) pervading sense of nationalism among the Majeerteen and anticipation of this clan's return to prominence in national politics _ Majeerteens have played an important role during the period of civilian rule (1960-1969).

Sustained support to and participation in the failed factional reconciliation conferences neither brought about anticipated national government for Somalia nor an end to the internal discord and power struggle within SSDF. Nonetheless, the collapse of the Cairo conference in 1997 dealt a severe blow to the lingering hope of national reconciliation and this fostered widespread disillusion and acceptance in Northeast Somalia that restoration of peace and resurrection of the failed Somali State could not be realized in the near future. Under pressure from the masses who, from 1997 started to agitate for positive results in political rebuilding at home, the political platform among the Majeerteen and allied Daarood groups started to shift from emphasis on national reconciliation to an inward looking dispensation seeking development of viable governance structures at the homeland.

Somaliland formally boycotted factional reconciliation efforts as it considers itself as an independent state. Nonetheless, prominent opposition leaders from the breakaway Republic of Somalia had participated in some of the factional reconciliation conferences, e.g. the Addis Ababa reconciliation conferences in 1993 were attended by 'Cabdira'xmaan "Tuur" who opposes the secession agenda and advocates for a federal arrangement with southern Somalia. The mainstream political platform represented by Somaliland administration viewed, as it still does, that Somaliland has nothing to do with the lawlessness and disorder prevailing in southern Somalia. Once security is restored to insecure southern Somalia and representative administration is established there, then Somaliland will enter dialogue with the former Italian Trust Territory as an independent state so as to negotiate future political arrangement that is acceptable to both parties.

The dismal track record of factional reconciliation efforts reviewed in this section clearly illustrates the failure of Somalias' faction leaders in matters regarding national reconciliation and state building. Most of them seem to have a vested interest in the continuation of the crisis, lack national vision and are not committed to democratic resolution of the Somali crisis. Presumably, motivated by their own personal political interests, the leaders show a tendency to revive the failed centralized system of government by violent means. Somalia's
present faction leaders continue to frustrate the good will of the country's international benefactors as well as the legitimate aspirations of their own war-devastated people, who are yearning for the restoration of normalcy and good governance.

4. **Somali National Peace Conference in `Carta, Djibouti**

About the `Carta peace process

The latest Somali Peace Conference hosted by Djibouti at `Carta, resort town near the capital city, from May to August 2000, was the thirteenth national initiative and the second peace process sponsored by Djibouti after a decade of statelessness in the former Democratic Republic of Somalia. Several consultations with key political actors paved the way and prepared the ground for the `Carta peace conference. In August 1999, for example, leaders of Somali Patriotic Alliance (SPA), comprising Puntland, the Somali Consultative Body, RRA and Somali National Front (SNF) first visited Djibouti and later Addis Ababa to brief government officials in those two countries. In September 1999, another group of faction leaders, including 'Xuseen 'Ceydiid, 'Cusmaan 'Caato' were invited by Libyan Arab Jamahiriyar to resolve political differences. President Ma'xamad Xaaji Ibrahim 'Cigaal of Somaliland flew to Tripoli but hastily returned to Somaliland without having met the other faction leaders and claimed to have been misled. The President of Puntland State of Somalia also arrived in Tripoli several days later although he declined to meet the other leaders and returned to Somalia through Addis Ababa and Djibouti, where he met President Geelle. The 'Ceydiid group also travelled to Addis Ababa at the end of October 1999, and 'Ceydiid reportedly agreed to withdraw support from groups known to be a security threat to Ethiopia — the armed Al-Itixaad al Islam who allegedly carryout raids across the border in Ethiopia and the Oromo Liberation Front invited by 'Ceydiid to open a new front against Ethiopia during the Ethiopia-Eritrea border war. In line with this pledge, 'Ceydiid soon thereafter, declared that he had disarmed the Oromo Liberation Front present in Southern Somalia.

The `Carta peace initiative began with the holding of the Technical Consultative Symposium, hosted by the Government of Djibouti in March 2000. Attended by about 60 prominent Somalis who were invited on their individual capacities but for the purpose of inclusiveness selected from different parts of the country and the Diaspora, the symposium was meant to advice the host country with respect to the organization and implementation of the initiative. It was not at all intended to act as a decision-making body.

The symposium recommended: (a) that the process should be made as inclusive as possible by allowing the participation of faction leaders who desired peace and by enhancing the role of civil society within Somalia and in the Diaspora; (b) on the future structure of government, the symposium recommended a decentralized arrangement as well as consolidation of peace in areas in which peace had been restored; (c) the establishment of a human rights commission to monitor violations of the peace process; (d) the departure of Somalis occupying the lands and properties of others; (e) the reaffirmation of Mogadishu as the capital of Somalia, with the possibility of establishing a temporary capital for a future provisional government; (f) rehabilitation of militia members, with the conversion of some of them into a national army; (g) if necessary, the transitional government could call for an international force to assist in matters of security.

Participants also called for stringent enforcement of the Security Council arms embargo on Somalia, stressed the need for international support for a future agreement by Somalis and
called upon Djibouti to send delegations to Somalia to prepare for the Somali National Peace Conference.\textsuperscript{8}

Following further consultations held by Djibouti officials with representatives from different sectors of the Somali society, including the merchant community, who pledged financial support for the conference and Islamic courts, the first phase of the Somali National Peace Conference was inaugurated with a meeting of lineage and clan leaders at `Carta. In addition to informal reconciliation within and between clans, the meeting of clan elders produced lists of the official delegates representing clan constituencies and formulated the agenda for the second phase. The first phase was concluded on 13 June 2000 and President Geelle inaugurated the second phase on 15 June 2000. The total number of selected delegates was 810, made up of four delegations of 180, each including 20 women, representing the four main clan families (Dr, Hawaii, Dared and Ra'xanweyn), plus 90 minority alliance representatives, including 10 women. The elders who had participated in the first phase were allowed to attend as members of delegations, but without a vote. On 17 June, delegates and traditional leaders unanimously elected as co-chairmen a former mayor of Mogadishu (`Xassan Abshir) and the then Secretary-General of RRA (Shaati Guduud).

5. **Strengths and Weaknesses of the `Carta Peace Process**

The `Carta peace process came at an opportune time when support for faction leaders hit at its lowest ebb after years of eroding popularity. Moreover, the conflict in southern Somalia has matured to the degree that gullible clansmen supporting the faction leaders had become war-weary and reluctant to be mobilized for endless violence. The `Carta peace process was also launched in the absence of any other viable national peace process, more than three years of political uncertainty that followed the failure of the Sodere and Cairo factional peace processes of 1996 and 1997 respectively. Having secured the mandate from and support of IGAD member governments, President Ismaa'ciil Cumar Geelle embarked upon the difficult task of facilitating Somali National Reconciliation Conference at `Carta. The United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union also supported the Djibouti hosted peace initiative.

In spite of the popular support it received from Somalis living in war-ravaged southern part of the country, particularly in the capital city of Mogadishu, and the Diaspora, the Djibouti sponsored peace process polarized opinion and has engendered strong feelings for or against the initiative. Adversaries consist of a formidable front made up of supporters of the "building blocks approach", the two administrations in the \textit{de facto} political entities in northern Somalia, most of the faction leaders based in southern Somalia, prominent RRA military leaders, and stampeding Somali politicians who failed to secure positions in the Transitional National Government.

Critics of the `Carta peace process have failed to read anything new in the `Carta process, viewing it as a trivial exercise and repetition of the familiar political ritual observed over the last decade at which assembled Somali faction leaders seeking reconciliation elected national President and agreed to form a government that did not take off the ground. Faction leaders who assembled in Djibouti in 1991, for example, succeeded in electing one of Mogadishu's warlords, `Cali Mahdi, as President of Somalia. This had the disastrous effect of instigating factional fighting in Mogadishu, that split up the city into north and south, as his arch-rival, late general `Ceydiid, with an eye on the Presidency, violently challenged this outcome.
Pessimists also predicted that the government crowned in Djibouti will not survive after the completion of the proceedings at `Carta. Two scenarios were predicted to this effect. It will either remain a protege government doomed in exile and captive to the rather suspected sinister wishes and dictates of the host country and the sponsoring President Geelle; or else wither away and disappear into thin air once the Transitional National Authority is relocated to Mogadishu. The negative experience of factional reconciliation efforts undertaken since 1991 and the destructive power of the armed faction leaders lend credence to such pessimism. For example, warlord `Xuseen `Ceydiid issued unequivocal threats pledging to prevent relocation of the Transitional National Government to Mogadishu. Blatant threats of armed opposition and expected cooperation of the faction leaders so far failed to materialize and bring about anticipated premature death of the four months old weak Transitional National Government.

Adversaries also raised questions about the approach the process had followed. The Djibouti sponsored process was dismissed as a continuation of the discredited past "top-down" factional reconciliation efforts. The process was seen as another misplaced external effort intended to impose centralized national government that is not congruous with the clan-based localized political structures that crystallized out of the decomposition of Siyaad Barre's authoritarian military regime. Reintroduction of the failed centralized system of rule is claimed to rekindle ingrained fear of Somalia's discredited authoritarian past governments (civilian and military). It is also feared to undermine remarkable achievements realized so far by the autonomous de facto political entities in northern Somalia; and furthermore pre-empt or delay evolution of the "building blocks approach" and emerging political entities from insecure southern parts of the country. Thus, the `Carta process was judged to slow-down or sideline the "building blocks" approach to national reconciliation and it is feared to re-ignite a new cycle of war in Somalia.

In common with the preceding factional reconciliation efforts, the `Carta peace process has also been accused of placing emphasis on the development of a national government and power sharing among the elite, instead of first restoring peaceful relations between embattled clans and resolving existing political differences and property disputes. The process therefore neglected the business of building peace from the "bottom", in effect repeating past mistakes that contributed to the failure of previous initiatives. In addition, it was initially accused of adopting chronological time and rigid timetable for completion of a difficult process, an approach which is not suitable to the successful but sturdy clan-based traditional method of Somali reconciliation. Clan-based diplomacy needs anthropological time and it often defies rigid timetable since decisions are reached on consensus by a large gathering of representatives of the reconciling clans, as the `Carta process gathered momentum - it dragged on much longer than anticipated, forcing the deadline to be extended several times in order to accommodate the exigency of informal and lengthy discourse that underpin Somali diplomacy. This was essential in order to build consensus around difficult issues relating to restoring peace and power sharing among representatives of different clans attending the conference.

Sceptics also questioned critical issues relating to legitimacy, including representation and inclusiveness of the `Carta process. Deliberate and important departure of the `Carta process from faction-centred approach and its emphasis on the role of clan-based traditional authority and rather embryonic Somali civil society and the Diaspora have played into the hands of hostile warlords and their supporters who have voiced concern over the issue of representation and inclusiveness. Key missing actors, namely Somaliland and Puntland administrations
(local clans in these entities were represented to varying degrees) declined to accept invitations from the organizers of the conference and afterwards frustrated attempts aiming at drawing them to process at various stages. Among other demands, the administrations in northern Somalia have insisted on being recognized as a pre-condition for participation - the process could not grant recognition nor guarantee in advance political aspirations of Somaliland and Puntland leaders, who might have misread the process in advance as a failure.

With the exception of `Cali Mahdi, who contested for the Presidency and lost, but surprisingly showed statesmanship by cooperating with the winning President, most of the notorious war-lords based in unstable southern Somalia also excluded themselves from the `Carta process and frustrated efforts that sought their participation. With a vested interest in the continuation of the crisis, faction leaders might have been offended and deterred by being denied to stage-manage the process as in the past; like the leaders of Somaliland and Puntland might have concluded prematurely that nothing would come out of the `Carta hall. Some of them might have feared humiliation and political suicide as their support base had become eroded thereby reducing their chance of getting elected by their constituencies to the Transitional National Government. This actually happened to some of the faction leaders, an example being Cumar Jees of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) who attended `Carta but had to leave before the process closed down, once he failed to secure the support of his clan constituency to be elected to the National Transitional Assembly.

The fact that the `Carta peace initiative generated much controversy and polarized opinion attests to the power of the process, which could be considered as the first Somali-driven effort undertaken in the decade-long turbulent and protracted transition in the former Democratic Republic of Somalia. As already stated above, the process has proved critics wrong and perplexed them as it has dramatically progressed further than any of the previous attempts. The successful relocation of the Transitional National Assembly in October 2000 to the treacherous capital city of Mogadishu, in the face of stated threats by powerful war-lords, silenced sceptical voices predicting that the outcome will remain a protégé government in exile.

The `Carta peace process formulated a national transitional charter which mandates the TNG to prepare national constitution for the former Democratic Republic of Somalia and organize free and fair elections before its three-year transition period expires in 2003. In contrast to the inconsequential factional reconciliation process that even failed to produce a reasonable framework for comprehensive dialogue, the `Carta initiative addressed the thorny issue of political representation. Following the footsteps of northern administrations, the beel system (four clan-families) has been adopted as the basis for distribution of political resources with respect to structures of government created during the transitional period. Economically and politically marginalized allied smaller groups (allocated 24 parliamentary seats) and women were also generously represented for the first time in the Somali history (25 seats). The election of the 225-member assembly by delegates representing local clans proved to stand out as the most difficult and controversial stage of the `Carta process, for this generated rifts among clans over the distribution of the number of seats allocated to each clan. This was resolved by affording President Geelle the prerogative to use his own discretion to select 20 parliamentarians (considered by some as unconstitutional) in order to defuse tension and appease clans dissatisfied with the assembly seats allocated to them.

Peaceful relocation of the Transitional National Assembly to Mogadishu would not have happened first and foremost without popular support from the population living in the capital
city. This indicates the timeliness of the process which capitalized on the increasing popular disillusion with the faction leaders, who are rightly accused of hijacking well-intentioned peace efforts in the past. In practice, support from the armed militias of the Islamic courts and those of the business community based in Mogadishu, have certainly enabled the relocation. Cooperation of the Islamic courts fostered accusations against the TNG of harbouring fundamentalist leaning. First, Islamic court militias and those of the business class in Mogadishu are planned to form the nucleus of national security forces who should ultimately represent different clan constituents in Somalia. Second, Islamic court leaders apparently want the new government to accommodate political and legal components of Shari'ica courts as a price for their cooperation. Nonetheless, the important thing is whether the new government will accede to these demands and that still remains to be seen. Rather incidentally, the `Carta process weakened the Islamic movement by splitting it into two camps, supporters of the TNG and its opponents.

Third, the tendency of outsiders less familiar with the Somali culture to label all Shari'ica courts and their activities as fundamentalist is grossly erroneous as Shari'ica courts have always remained part and parcel of the judicial system practised in Somalia and will remain so in the future. Thus, there is a need to distinguish between armed fundamentalist groups with power ambition, who harbour a desire to impose rigid Islamic rule, and innocuous traditional Shari'ica courts that administer Islamic laws relating to conjugal matters, e.g. marriage and divorce, arbitration of domestic disputes, inheritance, and compensation of physical injury. Fourth, both innocuous traditional Shari'ica courts and radical political Islam that sometimes infiltrate and probably subvert traditional Shari'ica courts thrive in unstable areas in the south where there is a power vacuum and absence of modern administration to keep law and order. Once effective administrative structures that are able to deliver basic functions of the state, including law and order, are put in place in insecure areas, activities of Shari'ica courts will most probably become de-politicized and get reduced to traditional functions.

The material (bankrolling the new government) and military support of the business class in Mogadishu to the TNG appears to be appreciated rather than suspected as the major intention here is protection and consolidation of wealth accumulated by city merchants during the prolonged and profitable crisis. Concern over the continuation of the crisis, such as endemic lawlessness and generalized disorder in the capital city and other unstable areas in the south, led the business community to take matters into their own hands by creating their own armed militia that offers support to the newly established Transitional Government which is seen as an alternative way out of discredited "war-lordism". Cooperation with and thus far unwavering support of the business class to the TNG could be considered as a new development, an early indication of emerging 'trans-clan' corporate profit making interest group in contrast to the pervading political culture based on kinship ties. While the security function of the business militia should be considered as a stabilising factor, the overwhelming influence of the business class on the weak TNG certainly raises concern. The controversial and rather illicit unilateral move at which the business class in Mogadishu printed and imported loads of new currency that increased inflation justifies such concern.

Four months since its relocation to Mogadishu, it is too early to judge as to whether the TNG would take root and survive against all odds and carry out the daunting task of building from scratch a fractured country in ruins in the absence of financial and material base. It also remains to be seen whether the new national government formed at Djibouti would be able to neutralize the destructive powers of non-participating warlords; wrench control of vital public
infrastructure from hostile factions controlled by war-lords, and further the peace process by coming to a peaceful settlement with the opposing existing administrations in the northern part of the country.

6. **Faction Reconciliation Versus 'Carta Initiative**

In spite of its flaws (some of them, but not all, have been examined above), the 'Carta National Reconciliation Conference differs from past factional reconciliation efforts in several important ways. First, previous reconciliation initiatives allowed faction leaders to play a central role, while the 'Carta conference widened the peace process by engaging traditional authority, civil society, artists, business class, religious leaders, women's groups and the Diaspora. Without denying the fact that participation from the de facto political entities in northern Somalia was dominated by the opposition, and most of the notorious southern faction leaders have absented themselves, the process was certainly Somali-driven and more representative than preceding factional reconciliation efforts. Thus, the number of participants increased from an initial 1000 persons to about 3,000 at the end, comprising both official and unofficial delegates representing different clans and sectors of the Somali society.

The large number of participants attending the 'Carta peace process actually consisted of a good mixture of members of Somali clans, including high officials of Barre's dictatorial regime with dubious past and who are accused of serious crimes; legitimate representatives including titled lineage leaders, clan and sub-clan heads. Titled lineage leaders, of course in consultation with prominent clan elders participating in the conference held the prerogative to elect official delegates of their respective clans, who elected the Transitional National Assembly that in turn elected the President. In some cases, political leaders and titled lineage elders representing clans submitted diverse lists. In those contested cases, the lists submitted by titled lineage leaders were accepted as legitimate by the organizers of the conference to the chagrin of the educated elite.

Representatives of the Hawiya family of clans in particular attended the 'Carta peace process divided politically but united by a desire to establish a national government for Somalia and without a positive result to this end would have found it difficult to return to Mogadishu empty handed. Thus, the 'Carta peace process provided space for the Hawiya and other clans in southern Somalia to bury their political difference and play an active role in the development of national transitional government for Somalia. Similarly, the Digil and Mirifle (Ra'xanweyn clans) attended the conference without an agreed agenda in advance and in the course of the 'Carta conference had to assemble their elite in the Diaspora to seek guidance and advice. The seriously fragmented Daarood also attended 'Carta. It is important to mention that the clan-based local level political process that enabled Somaliland and Puntland maintain peace and run representative administrations failed to work in southern Somalia, because of differences between the relatively harmonious clan-based traditional structures prevailing in Somaliland and Puntland and the more complex political reality existing in the south. Moreover, the conflict in the south is more than a political strife as it also involves land conflict and competition between powerful clan families over control of prime agricultural land. This makes it more profound and complex than the political power struggles faced in Northwest and Northeast Somalia in the transition period.

Second, the 'Carta initiative brought national reconciliation closer to the homeland and Somalis participating in the process felt at ease and at home in the host country where the culture is familiar rather than in Addis Ababa, Cairo, or Nairobi. President Geelle had
invested a lot of time and effort as well as his credibility in the task of restoring peace and normality to Somalia. While his efforts are appreciated by Somalis and most of the regional and international actors, Djibouti can not be considered as disinterested party. Djibouti might be interested in resurrecting the Somali State for the strategic purpose of ensuring a regional ally. The hosting of an expensive process could also be considered as a gesture of reciprocating the considerable support Djibouti received from Somali Democratic Republic in the struggle for independence. President Geelles' international stature has also shined as a result. Also one can not rule out expectations on the part of Djibouti of cashing in on the unexpected success the conference had achieved and this could be translated into increased efforts soliciting donor and Arab aid. All these could be considered, I think, as side objectives of the host country and can not be said to derogate from the good-will shown by President Geelle and Djiboutians of helping Somalis restore peace and rebuild the Somali State.

Leaders of the sponsoring country have tried very hard to serve as a relatively neutral and honest broker and in line with this they have deliberately kept external influence in the `Cata process to the minimal. The interest held by Djibouti in reconciling Somalis appears to be limited and well-intentioned compared to those irreconcilable strategic and security interests held by the regional actors, Egypt and Ethiopia. Parallel regional and international interventions corresponding to difference of interest over Somali affairs and concomitant tendencies to influence the outcome, accounts as one of the major impediments to national reconciliation in the past. There is no guarantee that the process would have progressed better if the international community and regional actors were actively engaged in it from the start. Without a coordinated assistance and intervention of the international community any TNG for Somalia stands little chance of surviving.

Fourth, the `Carta conference followed the footsteps of the relatively successful de facto political entities in northern Somalia by adopting shir-beeleed, at the national level, as the main instrument in the process of reconciliation and `nation building'. Representative forums attended by clan leaders, civil society and the Diaspora allowed relatively peaceful entities in Somaliland and Puntland secure internal stability and form representative administrations in their respective domains. In spite of the fact that the Carta conference was held outside Somalia in the half-Somali neighbouring country of Djibouti and in many other ways it resembles externally sponsored past conferences, it is incorrect to reduce the process to an external exercise that imposed a solution from above. As has already been stated, the selection of the official delegates was the responsibility of titled lineage leaders of the local clans attending the conference - a situation that bears similarity, at the lower level, to the institution of shir, a gathering of adult men of the lineage to deliberate matters that are of common interest.

Fifth, mass communication had played a vital part of the whole process. Somalis living in different parts of the country and in the Horn region were provided with the opportunity to view and follow up regularly the proceedings of the `Carta conference, which received comprehensive media coverage. Djibouti radio and Television as well as television and radio stations based in Mogadishu relayed regular news and programmes regarding the progress of the `Carta National Conference to Somalia and the region. The website Somalia Rebirth provided Somalis in the Diaspora update information on the `Carta process. The flood of emails expressing support for the process and recommendations on the way forward indicate the support and sympathy of the Diaspora to the process. Together with the civil society, the media also covered the crucial role of preparing the public
living in war-ravaged Benaadir region in the elusive search for an alternative solution to the "warlords" and actually prepared the ground for the conduct of the "Carta peace conference. 

Even if the most gloomy scenario is taken into account and the outcome of the `Carta process falls apart as in the past, the author believes that the process may not die down without leaving some kind of an impact. The failure of the `Carta process to establish a functioning National Transitional Government may accelerate ongoing efforts seeking formation of a self-governing regional administration in RRA controlled area centred around Baydhaba. It may also propel the Hawiya in central and southern parts of the country to form their own regional administration with its capital at Mogadishu. In other words, it could promote rather than undermine the much touted "building blocks" approach to national reconciliation and state building in stateless Somalia. 

It is unlikely that the outcome of the Djibouti hosted Somali peace process will bring about collapse of Somaliland and Puntland in the near future, as the immediate concern of the newly formed TNG would be restoration of peace and stability to conflict areas in the south. This daunting task will take years and this provides political leaders in Somaliland and Puntland a space and sufficient time to address existing internal problems and consolidate the support and following of their constituencies to place them in a better bargaining position sometime in the future, if they so wish. 

Failure to consolidate fragile de facto political entities may probably intensify existing dissatisfaction and cause extensive desertion from existing administrations in northern Somalia and promote co-operation of disaffected elements in Somaliland and Puntland with the newly established TNG. This scenario has the potential to destabilize and dismantle weak administrations in Somaliland and Puntland. Nonetheless, the author believes potential threat to the survival and stability of the administrations in northern Somalia is not external, including creation of TNG in southern Somalia, but rather inability or inaction to resolve internal problems. In the case of Somaliland, there is a need to resolve the burning issue of power sharing within the dominant Isaaq family of clans; rapprochement of the Gar'xajis clans with the administration and its loyal clans, as the Gar'xajis think they have been ignominiously defeated in the second round of conflict in Somaliland (1994-1996) and have not formally reconciled with the administration and supporting clans; expansion of government control to the east of Somaliland and addressing the lingering fear of Dir and Harti clans of domination by divided dominant Isaaq family. In the case of Puntland, a significant number of representatives of the Harti clans who previously supported Puntland administration as well as representatives of Majeerteen sub-clans and allied Daarood groups have participated in the `Carta process. Threatening these participants with mass arrest, as the administration issued, is not enough to democratically resolve internal dissidence and the administration has to do better and come up with more intelligent response to the emergence of the TNG. 

TNG must initially be given a chance and moreover assisted to be able to lift troubled areas in southern Somalia from a state of generalized lawlessness and disorder; attain a level of peace and institutional development comparable to that prevailing in Somaliland and Puntland. The TNG must not, however, be allowed to undermine the achievements attained in Somaliland and Puntland using representatives from these entities as a "Trojan" horse for destabilization. 

Above all, the autonomous administrations in Somaliland and Puntland seem to have survived in the long absence of alternative arrangement for Somalis rather than firm support from their
constituencies based on delivery of basic functions of state and providing an enlightened leadership. The arrival of the TNG caught them before these administrations consolidated their constituencies and now feel threatened because they have to compete with it for external assistance and keep together their fragile entities containing disenchanted members who may cooperate with the newly established TNG.

To conclude, I quote Anyang'Nyong'o who propounded the lessons of the Somali National Reconciliation Conference at Carta, especially for the civil society and the essential building blocks for consolidating peace and development in societies in Africa that are emerging from conflict and embarking upon post-conflict reconstruction. In the words of the author:

- The first lesson is that internal conflicts in African countries cannot be settled purely from within; they need external intervention. But the external intervention that comes in purely military form, whether by multilateral arrangement or otherwise, is less likely to succeed unless accompanied by other forms of civilian initiative.
- The second lesson is that civilian initiatives, by themselves are unlikely to go far unless supported by governments that have some direct interest in an internal conflict.
- Third, when such governments join forces with civil society actors, they are unlikely to go far unless they involve all the forces engaged in conflict, including their representatives and surrogates.
- Fourth, the choice of such representatives and surrogates can itself lead to failure or success of a reconciliation process. In the case of Somalia, the basic point of reference was the "tribal lineage". Within this category, all social forces had to seek representation. It emerged in the end, however, that many people complained in retrospect that they were not represented because they were not in Djibouti.
- Fifth, a wide consensus of international actors is necessary for the success of a peacebuilding and reconciliation process. Quite often, internal actors have their external support systems that may even be more entrenched against any peace process being institutionalized. In the case of Somalia the total collapse of the state and extreme fragmentation of the internal forces reduced the stakes that external interests may have had in supporting any particular faction in using force to maintain supremacy. Moreover, Somalia is not DRC where control of territory coincides with control of certain resources that are of vital interest to external actors. On the contrary, the EU, USA and UNO have all been interested in the peaceful settlement of the Somali crisis after so many years of conflict and instability.
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1 This section on post-conflict rebuilding in Puntland and Somaliland heavily draws upon War-torn Society Project (WSP) participatory action research conducted in Puntland over a period of three years, 1997-1999, and initiated in Somaliland beginning of 1999.

2 The vulnerability of Somalia's vital livestock trade and its dependence on a single market, Saudi Arabia in particular, was brought to the fore by the livestock ban to Saudi Arabia between October 1998 and March 1999 due to fear of Rift Valley Fever. The ban was again imposed by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries for the same reason in September 2,000 (there has been a ban on cattle from the region since 1983 due to rinderpest).


6 Lewis (1993:1)

7 Ibid, p.3-5.

8 Report of the Secretary General on the Situation in Somalia to the Security Council (S/2000/1211)


10 http://somaliawatch.org/Archivmay/00054401.htm