

## WHEN TWO DOGS FIGHT OVER A BONE ...

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From the Somalia's current contentious political trend and its troubled past history - the bad blood history it had with its immediate neighbors, and the unjust and cruel way that the European powers had dealt it with - arises a question of whether Somalia will stay any longer on the map of the world or not?

Preposterously, always, few days after a prime minister (who usually has no previous political office experiences) is appointed by the President of Somalia, there comes out the word of their disputes over, mostly, the appointment of the ministers - the first step of the prime minister's job. Instead of working together to come up with a plan to rescue Somalia from extinction, they get busy on knocking each other down - as if they are professional prize fighters thrown in a ring - while their ministers take sides with them along their tribal lines or personal material advantages; they stay at loggerheads for over a year, until one of them - usually the President - buys off the parliament to get rid of the other.



The continuous civil strife in the Somalis, specifically the squabbling of the Somali politicians in both legislative and executive government branches - while the judicial branch is complete dysfunctional - compounded with foreign interferences, rendered the average lifetime of any "Somali Government" to be less than 1½ years - just little over a year for the last one. Consequently, since 2001, Somalia has had four "Presidents" and ten "Prime Ministers".

On the surface, Somalia's problem looks like purely indigenous, but underneath, there are multitudes of foreign meddling and conflicting interests. It is undeniable that the Somalis had destroyed their country, but often they were simply an instrumental in destructive foreign schemes. It is, however, true that the very existence of Somalia is in real danger today and its survival is in question, if not avoided prudently by the Somalis themselves.

A future of a nation depends a lot - as the wise man once said: "a nation that has no history; has no future"- on how that nation learns from its past. It is also said that, "a nation that forgets its past, functions no better than an individual who is suffering from amnesia"; Somalia, without a doubt, suffers that mental disease since it forgot its history. However, in order for us to clearly understand the Somalia's conundrum, we ought to glimpse back where the root of it lies: the history of the country.

In the late nineteenth century, in the scramble for Africa, Somalia had been carved up into five parts by the European colonialists: the Britain, France, and Italy. The Britain carved out two parts for itself: the British Somaliland (now Northwestern Region of Somalia) and the NFD (now Northeastern Region of Kenya). Italy snatched the Italian Somaliland (now South and Northeastern of Somalia); and France ran away with the French Somali Coast (now Djibouti). And the biggest portion - Ogaden (now Somali Region) and Reserve Area - was immediately given to their founding newly invented Ethiopian kingdom as an *ex gratia*.

After the second world war (circa April 1946), when the foreign ministers and secretaries of the winners of the war - known as the Four Powers: Britain, France, Russia, and USA - were selected to dispose the territories which the losers of the war- Germany and Italy - had lost in Africa, Secretary Bevin of Britain proposed that to let all the Somali lands be united under Britain, to later be led to independence by British Government. This proposal - known as Bevin proposal - was rejected by all other three powers for the same reason that Somalis were divided from the beginning. That may have been a ploy in disguise, for nobody knows what agendas were hidden for the Britain -the Perfidious Albion- whose sincerity was always in doubt. Two years after, on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1948, the Britain that was purporting to be the Somalis' benefactor handed over Ogaden to Ethiopia. Again after six years, on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1954, another piece of Somali land - known as Haud and Reserve Area - was handed over to Ethiopia by Britain. It was also the same Britain that, later in 1963, gave another piece of Somali land known as NFD to Kenya.

When (circa 1957), the dream of the reunification of two of the four parts - the Italian Somaliland and the British Somaliland which united and formed The Republic of Somalia in 1960 - came out, the Ethiopian emperor Tafari Makonnen - known for his moniker Haile Selassie which means the power of the trinity but *né* Tafari Makonnen; a product of loot; born in Harar, five years after his father stole from the Somalis - had knocked every door that he could to forestall their reunion; he even took his complaints to the both Popes of the Catholic and the Orthodox. He saw Somalia as an existential threat to his newly European molded kingdom and sought its eradication. He argued that Christian Ethiopia and Muslim Somalia couldn't co-exist peacefully whatsoever - he declared that, not with any prescience, but simply from the ill-will that he had for Somalia. However, from his endeavors he achieved, inter alia, these assurances: a) that reunification of any other part of Somalia will never happen. b) That Somalia will be kept under arms embargo and economically weak - in other words, weak Somalia and strong Ethiopia. Those promises are upheld to this day. That tells a lot.



Later on in 1963, the British colonialist government, to fulfill its promise for Tafari Makonnen, had ignored the will of the people of NFD; and handed it over to Kenya, while ignoring a plebiscite result of 98% for reunification with Somalia, and thus deprived them their self determination rights that are enshrined in the UN charter. Kenya has thanked Ethiopia for that gratis land but still asked her to give a hand in case of its legitimate owner come for it and promise her the same in return. There they signed a defense treaty, which stands to this day, between them.

Also the French had clung to the French Somali Coast (now Djibouti), until it was famed as the last French colony in Africa, simply to stop it from rejoining with Somalia. It had tropped over the self determination rights of the people of Djibouti while complying with its promise for Tafari Makonnen. When the people of Djibouti (then French Somali Coast), who desired to reunite with Somalia, demanded their freedom and staged demonstrations at his presence, De Gaulle- then the French President - consulted with Tafari Makonnen about the issue and together they, in order to destroy the Somali nationalism spirit and detach the territory permanently from Somalia, embarked on a long de-Somalization process: a) to demographically change the territory's population, all the Somalis who had any blood relation with the tribes/clans in Somalia, except,

Essa clan, were deported in masses, including Mohamud Harbi, the Prime Minister at the time; b) mass immigration of ethnically Afar people from Ethiopia were arranged and encouraged ; c) to avoid any sign of Somaliness, the name of the territory was change to Essa and Afar Territory; d) and at last, through rigged election ethnically Afar prime minister, Ali Arif, was put to the power.

However, after the Somalia - with USSR on its side - had threatened invading it, the French begrudgingly gave Djibouti its nominal independence separately in 1977; handed the power over to PRP party - Ethiopia-friendly\_ pro-French \_Somali-skeptic party- with one condition: not to reunite with Somalia. And after a long de-Somalization process change its name to Djibouti - Afar dialect which means pot - to make it an Afar heritage



Somalia and Ethiopia, over thousand years, fought many wars: both religious and territorial. The most famous of those wars is the war known as "The Fall of Abyssinia", in early 1540s, led by Imam Ahmed Gurey. In this war, the Abyssinian was badly defeated in such a way that they will never forget. It is said that Abyssinians took refuge into caves, and for fear unable to light a fire, survived on row carrion; they were also allegedly forced to apostasy, until Portuguese came to their rescue. Two sons of the famous Dutch explorer Vasco de Gama - Christopher and Stephen de Gama - were sent to save the Christians in war with the Muslims; Christopher de Gama was later killed in battle, near Gondor. Somalis long forgot this war but Ethiopians still commemorate it; they held it where the holocaust is for Jews, for two reasons: they use it as a cautionary tale for the animosity between them and the Somalis; and it is also their credit for the defense of the Christendom and they always cash in as such.

However, the latest of these wars - before the current one of which a lot of people believe is a continuum of 1977 war - were the wars of 1964 and 1977. In 1964, Ethiopia, desiring to nip its enemy in the bud, had attacked a nascent Somalia, unprovoked; however, Somalis had fervently repulsed the aggressor and defended their country with whatever scant military materiel they could manage. In 1977, again, Ethiopia and Somalia clashed on Ogaden - a vast swath of the Somali lands that was given to Ethiopia by the British colonist. This time, Somalia have armed itself and the Somali National Army (SNA) chased the Ethiopian Defense Army (EDA) to Addis-ababa at ease; until a mélange of armies from both NATO and WARSO alliances - including USSR which was with Somalia before it did a volte face on war - came to the Ethiopia's rescue, and defeated SNA at great loss. This war against Somalia was one of rare things of which the cold war rivalries had the same view.

A group of disenchanted officers in the defeated army, sought a regime change, and staged unsuccessful coup d'état in 1978. Most of the perpetrators and any body who was smelt out of any sympathy for them - same as innocent as lamb - were condemned to death by the Siyad Barre's regime. There started the bloodshed and fratricide that continues to this day.

The coup leader had survived and escaped across the border to Kenya, and thence to Ethiopia, where he formed - of course, with the help of Ethiopia - the first armed struggle against the Siyad Barre régime. The regime had panicked and resorted to coercive scorched-earth policy - death, prison, rape, well-poisoning, confiscation and destruction of properties - against the clans affiliated with the rebel leaders. The regime's heavy handed policy proved to be counterproductive; it only helped to strengthen the rebels as it forced many innocent, peace loving, both civilians and army officers, who hail from the same clans of the rebel leaders but would not prefer violence, to take the arms. The Dergist regime in Addis-ababa, quickly took this opportunity of using these Somalis citizens alienated by their government for its proxy war of attrition against their motherland; it's widely known among the Somalis that Mengistu Haile Mariam - the Ethiopian President till 1991 - boasted off how he utterly destroyed Somalia: the archenemy of Ethiopia, with minimum Ethiopian blood spilt, while using Somalis against each other. From 1978 to 1991, Ethiopia harbored three different armed fronts - albeit different times - that waged incessant wars, till they brought the Siyad Barre's régime on its knees in 1991.

After the fall of Barre's government, dozens of tribal militias, led by warlords, sprung out of the power vacuum. Ethiopian leaders again started playing both ends against the middle with those tribal warlords; continuously arming them and discreetly pitting one against the other, until they competed for them.

After 16years of fratricide (in 2006), the warlords were subverted by Islamist militias - the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) - whose sponsor is not clearly known but many suspect to be the Ethiopia or its cats' paw. Even though the UIC returned relative peace in Mogadishu, it were apparently created to forestall the TFG (Transitional Federal Government) - the Somali government newly constituted in Nairobi - to relocate itself in Mogadishu. The UIC gave Ethiopia a pretext to invade Somalia by issuing a contemptible verbal threat of attacking Addis Ababa. The same UIC have later on transmuted into Al-Shabaab, from whose works - based on *Cui bono* : to whose advantage?, investigatory principle - its intention clearly is to either kill or chase any worthy Somali from Somalia, and invite Somalia's enemies into it. It is obvious that Al-Shabaab works for Ethiopia and Kenya, and most likely not inadvertently. In accordance with the famous saying: "give a dog a bad name and hang it", Al-Shabaab gives Somalia bad name so it can be hung; they deprive Somalis from their right for fair trial, they, *per contra*, give plausibility to the Kenya's and Ethiopia's pretentious insecurity claims against Somalia. They act as false flag operations for Ethiopia and Kenya to get an excuse to put now overripe-Somalia under their collective occupation for their pretentious security reasons.

It is often said that "the appetite grows with the eating". Ethiopia and Kenya - the predators of Somalia - who had tested the blood, after easily swallowing two big chunks of Somali lands (Ogaden and NFD respectively), now at the sight of their prey bleeding profusely, couldn't resist to come back. They came back ostentatiously shedding the proverbial crocodile tears, although inside they are salivating to gobble their victim down. While sinking their teeth deeply into their kill - Somalia- they claim that they are but benevolently attending and dressing on their beloved-neighbor's self-inflicted wounds.



The Somalis who, long ago, lost their senses to the ignorance; hunger; and tribalism, didn't even feel the pain. They naively took these mellifluous altruistic claims at face value, and continued digging themselves into a hole: their mass grave.

The Ethiopian and Kenyan Armies, immediately threw themselves on the AMISOM's green-beret (African Mission in Somalia), rushed into the Somalia's territory, occupying Somali soil without approval of its government. If the camel once gets his nose in the tent his body will follow; their military interventions fit for the definition of **mission creep**: a gradual shift in objectives during the course of military campaign. They on one hand state that they are, under the mantle of AMISOM, to help Somalia to stand itself on its feet, while on the other hand, they claim they are there to establish a buffer zone from Al-Shabaab, to safeguard their national security and economic interest. These conflicting statements are proof for their ulterior motives.

While being under the illusion that the UN and the international community are their ultimate saviors - some Somalis wrongly but naively believe that a nation which is or once was a member of UN cannot be annexed by another member of UN - Somalis continue to be too busy on their political infighting and internecine warfare. In the meantime, their enemy - Ethiopia and Kenya - had divided their country proportionally, and begun slowly occupying it militarily at their leisure; they just wait for the Somalis to finish themselves with the help of their undercover intelligent and commando units operating inside, and their levied terrorist locals: Al-shabaab.

Somalis certainly misunderstood the UN - an instrument of oppression to keep the weak nations in subservience, as it widely known - as the world's savior. Ironically, they are waiting for the UN to rescue, but they are forgetting that the perpetrators of the real cause of their sufferings today, are the same ones who call the tune that the UN dances with. Verily, the country that Richard Barton once envied for teeming with poets, is populated today with myopic gluttons; bulimics; and ghouls, and couldn't afford of a single one-eyed king.

If the Somalis should learn a bit from their past history, they would know one thing for sure: neither Europeans, nor Ethiopia and Kenya will be their succors. If they should use their history as the guide to their future - as the universal proverb: "history is the guide to the future" illustrates - they would have the solution for their problem: their unity - united, they stand; divided, they perish. Unfortunately, Somalis didn't learn a bit from their history; therefore, as a wise man once said: "a nation that forgets its past, functions no better than an individual who is suffering from amnesia", they function as if they suffer from mental disease. He who doesn't know where he is coming from doesn't know where he is going to.

Somalia has been sinking down for close to half of century, and apparently it didn't bottom out yet. It is at very critical juncture, at the moment; it is on the brink of its death. If Somalia stays on its current political course *-la politique du ventre* (the politics of the belly) in addition to the tribal antagonism - the chance is very high that there will be a time, when the living Somali will prefer death over the life and envy the dead one. Somalis will weep a lot over their great loss, while their enemy will wipe off the tears of joy for achieving their craved millennia-old goal of obliterating Somalia. Everyone gets their just deserts thusly.

As for the Somali politicians, they are the proverbial fools, who were fiddling in the burning house. Like the proverbial two dogs that while fighting over a bone, the third one ran away with it, while Somali politicians fighting over trivial things, they lost more significant one; they let Somalia slip through their fingers. Like the proverbial Juhaa - the Arab legend fool, who cut the tree that he was sitting - the winner of those fools will inevitably fall with the nation he is sitting

on: Somalia. They are all losers, for loser over loser is still a loser. The winner in their disagreement is the enemy of Somalia viz. Ethiopia and Kenya.

WHEN TWO DOGS FIGHT OVER A BONE, A THIRD ONE RUNS AWAY WITH IT!

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