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No Quick Fixes:
Coming to Terms with Terrorism, Islam, and Statelessness in Somalia

by
Matt Bryden

INTRODUCTION

Few countries are eager to be associated with terrorism. Most profess to be opposed to it, and those who do practice it as a form of statecraft prefer to call it by another name. But Somalia seems to be different: since the September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Somali leaders have been queuing up to declare their country a potential haven for terrorists and a threat to international security.

Despite their transparently self-serving motives (the belief that the United States will offer handsome rewards for their anti-terrorist zeal), the message of the Somali faction leaders is unfortunately all too credible: Somalia's lack of central government, its political fragmentation, and protracted civil war tend to invite comparisons with Afghanistan. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US government identified Somalia as a potential base of operations for Osama bin Laden's *al-Qaeda* network. From a counter-terror perspective, "dealing" with failed states like Somalia became "central to any policy that seeks to 'drain the swamp' and thus deny terrorists their bases."[1]

This is not the first time that Somalia's disintegration has seized the world's attention. But the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 was perceived first and foremost as a threat to the citizens of that unfortunate country, not to the broader international community. The scale of the humanitarian catastrophe, broadcast around the world by the international media, prompted an international response, and in late 1992 the United Nations Security Council authorized an unprecedented "peace-enforcement" operation under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In December 1992, the first of over 30,000 troops disembarked to restore peace and government to Somalia.

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The withdrawal of international forces from Somalia in 1995, following bloody clashes between foreign troops and local militia, was neither a declaration of victory nor an admission of defeat: simply a judgment – rightly or wrongly – that imposing an external solution on Somalia was not worth the price. States were failing and civil wars erupting elsewhere around the world, and there was little international appetite left for military adventurism in the name of "nation-building." Somalia represented neither the vital interests of the great powers, nor a clear and present danger to international security.

With 9/11, all that changed. Somalia's misfortune could no longer be ignored: in the new conventional wisdom, failed states now represented a threat to international security (and to the United States in particular), and the war-torn Horn of Africa nation briefly moved to the head of the queue as "next up" after Afghanistan in the war on terror.[2] It did not take long to determine, however, that Somalia merited less dramatic measures than full-scale invasion. Aggressive intelligence gathering, surveillance of Somali airspace and territorial waters, and cooperation with the security forces of neighboring countries appeared sufficient to contain any incipient Somali terrorist threat, and a small US military anti-terrorism task force was dispatched to neighboring Djibouti. But the respite was short-lived: in November 2002, terrorist attacks on Israeli targets in Kenya left a trail back to Somalia, and in early 2003 *al-Qaeda* operatives were spotted in Mogadishu. Once again, Somalia seemed to be drifting uncomfortably close to the front lines of the war on terror.

Despite the dire warnings from Somali leaders, the relationship between Somalia and transnational terrorism is not what it seems. First of all, Somalia is a largely unsuitable base of operations for terrorist groups like *al-Qaeda*. Apart from the obvious parallels of civil war, state collapse, and a predominantly Muslim population, contemporary Somalia has little in common with Afghanistan under the rule of Taliban.

Second, domestic Somali terrorism is a relatively recent phenomenon with shallow roots in Somali society. Bin Laden's Somali affiliate, *al-Itixaad al-Islaami* ("The Islamic Union") acquired its military expertise from *al-Qaeda* and its ideological inspiration from the neo-Wahhabi school of Islamic thought known as Salafism, whose origins lie in Saudi Arabia. And like many other jihadist groups, *al-Itixaad* is heavily dependent upon financial support from wealthy patrons in the Arab peninsula. Inside Somalia, *al-Itixaad's* most persuasive feature is its financial clout: few Somalis are attracted by the movement's theological pedantry or its proclivity to violence.

Third, Somali terrorism has a local (or regional), rather than an international, focus. The guiding vision of Somalia's Islamist groups, militant or otherwise, is not the pan-Islamic rage of Osama bin Laden, but rather the establishment of an Islamic state in Somalia and the Somali-inhabited areas of neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya. So far, only a handful of Somali militants have been

seduced by the broader aims of global jihad.

Lastly, Somalia's Islamists share a crowded political arena with the many foreign and domestic forces competing to fill their failed state's political vacuum. Islamist politics and terrorism are relatively recent additions to the witches' brew of ethnic, religious, and geopolitical tensions that have long conspired to make the Horn of Africa one of the least stable regions of the world. Somalia poses a more concrete and immediate threat to international security as a cockpit for regional interests than as a link in the chain of transnational terrorism.

The obvious panacea for Somalia's ills is the restoration of national government. But as successive peacemakers have learned to their chagrin, that is a more complicated prospect than it sounds. Nor would it necessarily have the desired effect: a weak, irresponsible, or unrepresentative Somali government would aggravate both the terrorist threat and the likelihood of regional instability. Unfortunately, that is the most probable outcome of international peace-making efforts in Somalia unless they are approached with much greater seriousness and international commitment than in the past.

TERRORISM[3]

Somalia's lack of central government, its violent factional politics, and the presence of small groups of Islamic extremists tend to invite comparisons with Afghanistan, another failed state that between 1996 and 2001 served as *al-Qaeda's* base of operations. Following the overthrow of the Taliban regime by US forces and the destruction of *al-Qaeda's* Afghan bases, speculation naturally shifted to Somalia as an attractive destination for Osama bin Laden and his followers.

But attempts to equate Afghanistan and Somalia too closely are misleading. Unlike Afghanistan, Somalia's flat, semi-desert terrain offers few places to hide and is easily accessible to foreign military forces. Local Islamic militants might be willing to provide assistance to foreign jihadists, but they are by no means sufficiently powerful or well-established to offer the kind of protection once afforded to *al-Qaeda* by the Taliban. And intensive international monitoring of Somalia's telecommunications, airspace, and coastal waters, together with a fortified US military presence in neighboring countries, provides a formidable deterrent to any would-be terrorists eyeing the country as a possible destination. In other words, apart from protracted civil war and lack of functioning government, Somalia shares little else with Afghanistan that could prove attractive to potential terrorists.

This does not mean that the threat of terrorist activity in Somalia can be disregarded; simply that it is a lesser and more manageable menace than some have imagined. Indeed, Somali involvement in international terrorism since 1991 has been characterized by its low incidence, modest scale, and parochial objec-

tives. Another common characteristic of Somali militants is the extent to which their ideological roots and financial backing lie outside Somalia. Civil war and state collapse have rendered Somali society especially vulnerable to external influences, some of which have helped to nourish the growth of radical Islamic groups within Somalia, often as part of broader international networks.

It is this combination of statelessness, insecurity, and foreign sponsorship that has produced Somali terrorist behavior and which could yet produce "further unpleasant surprises."[4] But under present circumstances, Somalia ranks lower as a terrorist risk than many other countries.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda has maintained a longstanding interest in Somalia, but the attraction does not seem to have been mutual: few Somalis have joined *al-Qaeda*, and none of the organization's current leaders is a Somali.[5] Only a handful of Somalis have actually been apprehended on suspicion of being members of *al-Qaeda* or its affiliates.[6]

Al-Qaeda's links with Somalia date from the early 1990s, when bin Laden had taken up residence in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. In December 1992, *al-Qaeda*'s "fatwa committee" urged followers to cut off the "the head of the snake" by attacking US troops in Somalia, and by early 1993, *al-Qaeda* itself was providing training to Somali factional militia opposed to the US-led international intervention force. Bin Laden's deputy, Mohamed Atef, visited Somalia repeatedly in 1992-93, and in early 1993 *al-Qaeda*'s chief instructor, Ali Muhammed, arrived in Somalia to train local fighters.[7] Despite the fact that *al-Qaeda* and *al-Itixaad* had already established a working relationship by that time, *al-Qaeda*'s expertise seems to have been on offer to anyone prepared to fight US troops, notably the clan militia of Somali warlord General Mohammed Farah Aideed, who was by no means an Islamist leader.[8]

Bin Laden himself has encouraged the belief that *al-Qaeda* played a key role in Mogadishu street battles against US troops, claiming that "With Allah's grace, Muslims in Somalia co-operated with some Arab holy warriors who were in Afghanistan. Together they killed large numbers of American occupation troops."[9] But eyewitnesses dispute this version of events, suggesting that *al-Qaeda*'s participation in the fighting, like that of other foreign anti-American forces, was limited to provision of weaponry and training for Somali militia forces.[10] Certainly the overwhelming majority of Somali fighters were ordinary militiamen unaffiliated with either *al-Qaeda* or *al-Itixaad*, but in the absence of firm evidence one way or the other, it is not possible to state with authority what role *al-Qaeda* actually played – if any – in the Mogadishu street battles of 1993.[11]

When international forces withdrew from Somalia in 1995, *al-Qaeda* activity in Somalia also diminished. Although the organization does not appear

to have maintained a significant presence in the country since that time, it does appear to have retained useful links: *al-Qaeda*'s financial support for *al-Itixaad* is alleged to have continued without interruption, and in 1998 circumstantial evidence linked the *al-Qaeda* team responsible for the Nairobi embassy bombing with the Somali office of an international Islamic relief organization.

In 1999, speculation emerged suggesting that bin Laden was considering shifting his base to Somalia from Afghanistan.[12] This supposition rested chiefly on the assumption that the lack of government in Somalia would afford *al-Qaeda* advantages similar to those the organization had enjoyed in Afghanistan. Several considerations probably persuaded bin Laden otherwise: first, *al-Qaeda*'s security in Afghanistan depended not on a situation of "statelessness," but rather on the protection (limited though it was) provided by the Taliban-controlled "state." No comparable authority existed in Somalia at the time. Second, large groups of non-Somalis would have been awkwardly conspicuous, and training camps, such as those established by *al-Qaeda* in Afghanistan, would have been extremely difficult to keep secret. Third, most of Somalia is easily accessible from neighboring countries, placing *al-Qaeda* teams at risk from attack by foreign military forces. And fourth, Somali society is known for pragmatism, shifting loyalties and the speed at which news travels. Thus, *al-Qaeda* members would have been constantly at risk of exposure or betrayal (intentionally or otherwise) by their Somali associates. Senior *al-Qaeda* leaders would presumably have been aware of such considerations because of their involvement in Somalia in the early 1990s.

Somalia, therefore, was clearly an unsuitable headquarters for bin Laden. But it nevertheless offered *al-Qaeda* more modest opportunities as a logistics hub and "bolt hole."[13] A Mogadishu-based *al-Qaeda* operative, Fazul Abdallah Mohamed, is believed to have been involved in attacks on the Paradise Hotel near the Kenyan coastal town of Mombasa, a venue frequented by Israeli tourists, and Israeli charter airliners departing Mombasa airport in November 2002.[14] In March 2003, a Yemeni national and suspected *al-Qaeda* operative named Suleiman Abdallah was abducted from a Mogadishu hospital in a joint operation by US and Kenyan law enforcement officials, with the assistance of local Somali militia. Although intelligence officials have not publicly disclosed evidence linking Abdallah to any terrorist acts, he was found to be in possession of a list of former and serving US government officials, suggesting a planned attack on American targets.

Al-Itixaad Al-Islaami (AIAI)[15]

Whether or not the Somali militant group *al-Itixaad al-Islaami* counts as a transnational terrorist organization is partly a matter of perspective. All of its members are Somalis, and the organization's objectives are confined to the Somali-inhabited regions of the Horn of Africa. AIAI's operational reach has

extended only as far as Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in the Ethiopian heartland. And some observers claim that AIAI's Ethiopian operation is in fact independent of the organization's other branches, making it a domestic insurgency against Ethiopian rule rather than transnational terrorism. On the other hand, little else about *al-Itixaad* is actually Somali: its ideology and military know-how are imported and its activities are sustained by financial contributions from abroad.

Al-Itixaad's genesis dates from the mid-1970s, when General Mohamed Siad Barre's ostensibly "socialist" military regime launched a draconian crackdown on the country's religious establishment, executing 10 sheikhs and arresting 23 others in the process. Numerous Somali religious leaders and their followers fled into exile in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, where "jihad" against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was soon to become a popular cause. Although only small numbers of Somalis actually joined the Afghan *mujahidin*, many more became caught up in the strong ideological undercurrents then sweeping the Muslim world, and established lasting personal and organizational relationships. The experience of these years in exile produced a generation of radical Islamic Somali leaders and helps to explain both *al-Itixaad*'s Wahhabi theological creed and its "jihadist" rhetoric.[16]

Some Islamic leaders chose to remain in Somalia during this period, passively resisting the Barre government's religious policies and proselytizing their own brand of the Islamic faith. *Al-Jamaa'a al-Islamiyya*, one of the Wahhabi predecessors of *al-Itixaad*, was formed in 1978. In 1982, *al-Jamaa'a* changed its name to *al-Itixaad* and continued to work quietly until the collapse of the Somali government in 1991.[17]

In the months prior to the collapse of the Barre regime, Somali Islamists returning from the diaspora brought with them radical new ideas. Inspired by their experiences among foreign jihadists, and spurred by the example of the rebel factions already opposed to Siad Barre, they advocated the resort to arms as a means of deposing of an unjust regime and ensuring the subsequent establishment of an Islamic state. At some point toward the end of 1990, a group of adherents to the Wahhabi religious school declared the formation of a new organization, *al-Itixaad al-Islaami*.[18] Apart from a shared commitment to Wahhabi doctrine, the precise relationship between the modern *al-Itixaad* movement and its non-violent predecessor of the 1980s is not clear.

Al-Itixaad's members prefer to describe themselves as *Salafiyya* in order to distinguish themselves from the specifically Arabian connotations of Wahhabism.[19] But AIAI is alone among Somali Salafis in having adopted an avowedly militant agenda, which its spokesmen have described as a movement for "Da'wa and Jihad."[20] The movement's constitution calls for the establishment of an Islamic state in Somalia, including a justice system based on Islamic principles and Shari'a law; the rejection of secular politics; rejection of capitalism, communism, democracy, and clanism; the propagation of the Islamic faith

and the declaration of war against deviant beliefs or behavior; the formation of a strong Islamic army; and the organization of a well-planned economy administered by "honest leaders in the service of the people."[21]   *Al-Itixaad*'s founding members apparently believed that they qualified as the "honest leaders" best suited to lead this totalitarian utopia, and they swore an oath to defend one another to the death in pursuit of their common cause.

In January 1991, as the Barre regime disintegrated, some members of the group tried unsuccessfully to establish themselves as a military force in the southern port of Kismayo. They were defeated by militia loyal to General Mohammed Farah Aideed and the survivors then regrouped near Bosaaso, in northeast Somalia, where they established a training camp at Qaw. Within a year, other AIAI bases reportedly had been established at Las Anod, Bur'o, Borama, Marka, Dhobley, Luuq, Bulo Hawo, and Mogadishu;[22] some *al-Itixaad* members may also have received training at al-Qutanynah camp in Sudan.[23]   Armed AIAI militia, sporting American-style camouflage fatigues together with distinctive red and white *keffiyehs*, took control of the port of Bosaaso; and in June 1992 the movement felt strong enough to attempt a coup d'état against the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the de facto authority in the northeast. The takeover failed and hundreds of *al-Itixaad* militia, including several senior leaders, were killed. The survivors fled westwards to the port of Las Qoreh, then south across the border into Ethiopia's Ogaden region, where they were further decimated in battles with Ethiopian military forces.

Throughout this period, *al-Itixaad* entertained ties with both Osama bin Laden, then resident in Khartoum, and his Sudanese host, Hassan al-Turabi. It is not clear which relationship came first, but Turabi seems to have left the more enduring impression: AIAI's subsequent evolution as an organization has borrowed more heavily from Sudan's National Islamic Front than from *al-Qaeda*.

In late 1992, *al-Itixaad* turned its attention to the American forces recently arrived in Somalia. *Al-Itixaad* acknowledged its relationship with *al-Qaeda* at the time, and even seemed to take pride in it, affirming that "the team of Shaykh Usama Bin Laden […] participated in [the October 1993 battle against US forces] with some explosives and in launching attacks against the army of the alliance."[24]

AIAI threatened the US with a reenactment of the attacks on US Marines in Beirut in 1983.[25] The threat never materialized, but in March 1993 US forces announced the discovery of an arms cache at an *al-Itixaad* compound in Mogadishu[26] and some analysts also contend that *al-Qaeda* trained AIAI fighters were at the forefront of fighting between Somali militia and US servicemen in October 1993.[27]

Al-Itixaad's most significant military effort has been directed not against the United States or any other Western power, but against Ethiopian rule in the Somali-inhabited region of Ethiopia: a campaign it describes as "jihad" against a

Christian occupier. Since *al-Itixaad*'s objectives in Ethiopia coincide to a certain extent with those of the clan-based Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), the membership of the two organizations overlaps and they have occasionally coordinated their activities. *Al-Itixaad*'s military operations have generally taken the form of hit-and-run attacks against Ethiopian forces, although AIAI militia have also been known to target civilians (including members of international humanitarian organizations) whom they identify with the Ethiopian government. Videotapes of such attacks have reportedly been used in *al-Itixaad*'s fund-raising campaigns overseas.[28]

Al-Itixaad's allies within Ethiopia are not limited to the ONLF. The organization has long been suspected of having links with the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), and in 1997 AIAI hosted the launch in Mogadishu of a new Ethiopian rebel organization called the Oromo, Somali, and Afar Liberation Alliance (OSALA).[29] However, the true extent of this collaboration is difficult to assess and does not appear to have produced tangible benefits.

Opinion among Somalis and foreigners has long been divided as to whether or not AIAI is indeed a terrorist group. Whatever the present nature of the organization, its past involvement in terrorism is in no doubt: in both Ethiopia and Somalia, *al-Itixaad* has been associated with (or taken responsibility for) a number of acts of terror, which include the following:[30]

- January 1992: *al-Itixaad* militiamen assassinated a female doctor working for UNICEF in Bosaaso while she was drinking tea at an outdoor café;

- July 1992: *al-Itixaad* forces fired a rocket-propelled grenade into the offices of an international relief organization in Marka causing no casualties;

- August 1993: *al-Itixaad* militia launched a night-time raid on an international relief organization in Burao (Somaliland), firing through the windows at the occupants, but caused no casualties;

- May 1995: a grenade attack on a busy market in Dire Dawa (Ethiopia) killed 15 people. Eight men alleged to be members of *al-Itixaad* were later convicted of this and related terrorist offenses.

- January 1996: six people were killed and 20 injured when a bomb exploded in the Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa. *Al-Itixaad*'s spokesman in Mogadishu, Abdulqadir Mohamud Dhaqane, claimed responsibility on behalf of the organization.

- February 1996: a bomb exploded in the Ras Hotel, Dire Dawa, killing one person and seriously injuring three others. The AIAI spokesman in Mogadishu claimed responsibility.

- February 1996: General Hayelom Araya, head of Operations in the

> Ethiopian Ministry of Defence, was assassinated. *Al-Itixaad* claimed responsibility, but Ethiopia alleged that Eritrean agents were behind the attack.

- March 1996: Hermann F.M. Hardin, a Dutch national, was murdered in Taiwan market, Dire Dawa. Two alleged members of *al-Itixaad* were subsequently convicted.

- July 1996: the Ethiopian Minister of Transport and Communications, Abdulmejid Hussein (an ethnic Somali), was attacked by two gunmen while arriving at his office in Addis Ababa (he survived the attempt despite being shot 9 times). An *al-Itixaad* spokesman in Mogadishu claimed responsibility for the attack.

- 5 August 1996: a bomb exploded at the Wabe Shebelle Hotel in Addis killing two and injuring eleven. AIAI did not take responsibility, but Ethiopia claims that the organization was behind the attack.

- 11 August 1996: suspected *al-Itixaad* gunmen killed two Ethiopian businessmen in Beledweyne to avenge Ethiopia's two-day military incursion into Somalia earlier that month.

- March 1999: Deena Umbarger, an American consultant for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), was shot and killed as she was taking tea with town elders in a village near the Kenyan-Somali border. Witnesses accused members of *al-Itixaad* of the killing, and fighting subsequently broke out between AIAI and local clan militia who held them responsible.

In August/September 1996, Ethiopia responded to *al-Itixaad*'s provocations with military raids on the movement's bases in Somalia's Gedo region. The attacks succeeded in dispersing *al-Itixaad* and destroying much of its local infrastructure. Ethiopian forces were also able to confirm the involvement of non-Somali fighters of various nationalities with *al-Itixaad*, some 24 of whom were killed, sharpening American apprehensions about *al-Qaeda* involvement in Somalia.[31] The raids also turned up documents "detailing *al-Ittihad*'s external contacts, including Sudanese funding and training."[32]

Following the Ethiopian raids, an *al-Itixaad* leader in Mogadishu, Hassan Dahir Aweys,[33] recanted the movement's previous claims, denying that the Somali branch of *al-Itixaad* was in any way responsible for violent acts inside Ethiopia.

Since 1997, *al-Itixaad* has apparently learned from its military setbacks and devoted its efforts instead to proselytizing and social programs. In so doing, it may well be deliberately borrowing a chapter from its more influential counterpart, *al-Islaax*, of which more will be said below. In Mogadishu during the late 1990s, *al-Itixaad* leaders helped to establish the "Shari'a Implementation

Council" (chaired by Hassan Dahir Aweys) in an attempt to gain control over the city's various clan-based Islamic courts. In Puntland, *al-Itixaad* exchanged military action for patient consolidation of political, economic, and social capital. Since its military defeat, the movement has acquired control of numerous mosques, commercial enterprises, and much of the judiciary. Members of *al-Itixaad* played a visible role in the 2001 Garowe conference, backing Colonel Abdillahi Yusuf's rival, Jama Ali Jama, for Puntland's presidency.

Despite AIAI's change of tactics, on 23 September 2001, the United States government nevertheless inscribed the organization on its "Comprehensive List of Terrorists and Groups," alleging linkages with *al-Qaeda*. On 7 November 2001, Hassan Dahir Aweys was personally added to the list, although the charges against him have not been made public.

Al-Itixaad sympathizers and some foreign observers reject the terrorist label, asserting that the organization has abandoned violence and now confines its activities to social and religious welfare programs. Perhaps AIAI has decided that *al-Qaeda*'s methods are ill-suited to an organization seeking a leadership role in a future Somali government, or that its own limited, nationalist objectives have little in common with the implacable, ideological fury of the pan-Islamic jihadists.

For the time being, the notion that *al-Itixaad* has turned over a new leaf must be treated as speculation since any evidence of a new "non-violent" approach is purely circumstantial: AIAI's secretive culture means that little is known about its internal decision-making processes, and the organization has never publicly renounced violence or published a revised version of its original charter. Quite possibly, *al-Itixaad*'s new, pacific orientation is a response to Ethiopian military pressure and, more recently, hostile American attention. If so, then the suspension of its terror campaign may be purely tactical – and thus reversible.[34] The burden of proof is still on *al-Itixaad* to demonstrate that it has truly abandoned violence – and terrorist violence specifically – as a weapon.

Al-Barakaat Group of Companies (BGC)

The *al-Barakaat* Group of Companies (BGC) was a rare Somali success story. Following the collapse of formal banking services in Somalia in 1991, informal remittance companies known as *xawaala* stepped in to assist Somalis in moving their money around. Their main business involved facilitating the flow of funds from Somalis in the diaspora to their poorer and needier relatives back home. Toward the end of the 1990s, *al-Barakaat* emerged as the undisputed leader among the *xawaalad*, handling the largest volume of business and offering a wide range of services, including money transfer, local banking facilities, telecommunications, and internet access.

All that changed on 7 November 2001 when Executive Order 13224 of the

United States government identified the *al-Barakaat* Group of Companies as a principal source of funding, intelligence, and money transfers for both *al-Qaeda* and *al-Itixaad* and ordered the company's assets frozen. Several individuals working with the company, including its Dubai-based Chairman, Ahmed Nur Jim'aale, and the manager of its Mogadishu branch, were also named in the Executive Order. The BGC was obliged to suspend operations with immediate effect.

Al-Barakaat vigorously denied American allegations and the Mogadishu-based "Transitional National Government" (TNG), which used to depend heavily on *al-Barakaat* for financial backing, spoke out in defense of the company.[35] The United Nations, without taking a position on the American allegations, expressed its concern about the impact of BGC's closure on the lives of ordinary Somalis. However, a humanitarian crisis was averted by other *xawaala* agents rapidly moving to take up *al-Barakaat*'s market share.

Since no evidence linking BGC to *al-Qaeda* or *al-Itixaad* has been made publicly available, it has not been possible to assess the extent to which the company may have been involved in terrorism, nor the likely security payoff of the US government's temporary freeze of the company's assets. Several governments cooperating with the US in its war on terror eventually dropped charges against employees or representatives of *al-Barakaat* operating in their countries. But many Somalis remain convinced that *al-Barakaat* and *al-Itixaad*, if not *al-Qaeda*, were in fact related in an unspecified way.[36]

Islamic Charities

A number of Islamic charities active in Somalia have been accused of having linkages to terrorism. As early as 1992, the SSDF alleged that the Muslim World League, via the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), was involved in financing *al-Itixaad*.[37] In early 2002, the Somali branch of the *al-Haramayn* Islamic Foundation, a large, quasi-governmental Saudi charity, was designated as part of a terrorist financing network for having "employed AIAI members and provided them with salaries through *al-Barakaat* Bank."[38] *Al-Haramayn*'s Somali program consisted mainly of support for orphanages in different parts of the country. Specific information about the charges was not made publicly available and Somali authorities responded to the American decision in different ways. The TNG, whose principal donor is Saudi Arabia, permitted *al-Haramayn*'s Mogadishu office to continue to operate without interruption until the organization closed its doors in mid-2003; in Somaliland, however, the *al-Haramayn* office in Bur'o was initially forced to suspend its activities and its representative were declared *persona non grata* by the Somaliland government. This government's reaction reflected the administration's antipathy toward the Saudi government, which opposes Somaliland's ambitions for independent statehood, and its general unease with Wahabbi activity within its borders. Several

months after the closure, however, pressure from the Bur'o community led the government to review its decision; when the Somaliland authorities learned that *al-Haramayn* continued to operate in the United States, they granted permission for the Foundation's representative to return to Bur'o.

Saudi Arabia initially remained impassive in the face of US allegations, but in May 2003, multiple suicide bombings of Western targets in Riyadh appear to have spurred the Saudi government into action, ordering *al-Haramayn*'s Somali program to cease all operations and for all expatriate employees to return to Saudi Arabia. The organization's humanitarian activities were jettisoned without arrangements being made for their adoption by other donors. Although US officials reportedly presented the Saudi government with intelligence describing financial linkages between *al-Haramayn* and *al-Qaeda*,[39] the Saudis described the decision in terms of "redeployment" of Foundation resources rather than as a response to US terrorism charges.

Mercy International, a worldwide Islamic relief agency registered in Switzerland, has also been tainted by association with Somali terrorists. In 1996, when Ethiopian troops raided *al-Itixaad*'s bases in Luuq (Southwest Somalia), they retrieved large quantities of Mercy International's files, allegedly linking the two organizations. The same organization was banned in Kenya for its alleged links to the *al-Qaeda* cell responsible for the 1998 US Embassy bombing.[40]

Overall, suspicions of a Somali role in terrorist financing are essentially circumstantial; the clues are intriguing, even persuasive, but by no means conclusive. This may partly be due to the inevitable difficulties in tracking international financial transactions in loosely regulated (or unregulated) economies, such as the United Arab Emirates and Somalia, the desire of Western governments to protect their intelligence assets and methods, or the stringent rules most governments apply to the sharing of intelligence material for law enforcement purposes. But in the absence of a "smoking gun," a growing number of Somali and international observers are skeptical that such a linkage actually exists. Whatever the reason, the US government has so far been unable to build a public case to substantiate its allegations that Somali financial organizations have been linked to terrorism.

A Minor Threat, Under Control

Despite Somalia's apparent merits as a base for terrorists – the absence of immigration controls, law enforcement, or other regulatory mechanisms – these are largely outweighed by its disadvantages. Somali authorities lack sufficient juridical sovereignty to protect terrorists from external threats, such as attack by security forces based in neighboring countries. The only functional Somali "states" – Somaliland and, to a lesser extent, Puntland – are hostile to Islamic extremists and are prepared to cooperate with foreign security forces in eliminating threats that may originate within their respective jurisdictions. Somali

society is close-knit and non-Somalis have difficulty maintaining secrecy and anonymity. And Somali society at large is generally intolerant of extremism and violence in the name of Islam, further aggravating the risk of exposure.

Furthermore, international surveillance and containment measures seem to be taking effect. *Al-Qaeda* operatives have been put on notice that they are at risk of identification and arrest, even inside Somalia. Support and training of security establishments in neighboring countries will help to sustain the counter-terror effort over the long-term.

Another long-term constraint on the expansion of a Somali role in global terrorism is the decline in opportunities since September 2001 for training and networking with foreign militant groups. The dismantling of the *al-Qaeda* training camps in Afghanistan and increased cooperation between governments in counter-terror operations has limited the transnational cooperation that once bolstered jihadist groups worldwide. *Al-Itixaad*'s evolution as a movement is testimony to the importance of external linkages: an ideological platform in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, the encouragement and support (in terms of training and personnel) of other jihadists (including *al-Qaeda*), and the financial backing of private sponsors and Islamic charities. Without this network of international support, *al-Itixaad* would probably become indistinguishable from other armed factions in Somalia and the Ogaden.

Somalia nevertheless offers attractive opportunities for the transit of people and weapons, manufacture of forged identity documents, money laundering, and the maintenance of safe houses for small numbers of terrorist operatives. Less likely, but not impossible, are attacks inside Somalia on Western aid agency personnel, journalists, and visiting diplomats, or the hijacking of commercial aircraft: serious threats, certainly, but of a lesser order than terrorist threats in many other parts of the world.

ISLAM AND POLITICS IN SOMALIA

Al-Itixaad may be the only Somali Islamist group with terrorist credentials, but it is by no means the only one to seek the establishment of an Islamic state in Somalia (and, eventually, in the Somali-inhabited regions of neighboring countries as well). Nor is it alone among Somali Islamist groups in its single-minded pursuit of political power. But AIAI's aims, beliefs, and methods place the organization in an unpopular minority among Somali Muslims.

Nearly 100 percent of Somalis are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi'i school. Although devout, Somalis are also moderate in their practice of the faith, and since independence in 1960, successive Somali regimes have tended toward secularism. This trend continued into the post-Barre period, when patterns of political reconstruction across Somalia evolved toward essentially secular political arrangements with a nominal basis in Islamic principles and law. Somaliland,

Puntland, and the TNG, three of the principal polities to emerge since 1991, all fit this pattern. But numerous Islamist groups, aided by a religious revival borne of civil war and hardship, seek to establish a more explicitly Islamic style of leadership.

The ideas propagated by *al-Itixaad* (and their fellow travelers, *al-Barakaat* and *al-Haramayn*) are associated with a reformist trend in Somali Islam espoused by the religious school known as Salafism, an outgrowth of Saudi Wahhabism.[41] The Salafis are probably the smallest and most radical group among Somali reformists, but they are not alone. Since 1991, other neo-fundamentalists like the *Ikwaan Muslimiin* (Muslim Brotherhood) have also stepped in to fill the political and moral void left by the collapse of the Somali state and the civil war.

While some Somalis have welcomed these new players as refreshing alternatives to the country's warlords and clannish political elites, others deride them as religious charlatans with thinly veiled political ambitions. Across Somalia, the growing influence of Islamists has been met with varying degrees of resentment and resistance from traditional religious leaders, faction leaders, and conventional politicians.

Somalia's Islamists are united in their belief that a future Somali state should have an explicitly confessional character: the Constitution will almost certainly enshrine Islam as the state religion and stipulate the Shari'a as a basis of law. A national council of Islamic scholars, the '*uliima*, may well be mandated to ensure the government's adherence to Islamic values. Beyond these basic precepts, they agree on little else – least of all on the use of violence to achieve their religious and political ends.

Despite their differences, the influence of Somalia's Islamists has expanded sufficiently in recent years that they are certain to be courted by the leadership of a future Somali government – a prospect that worries Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as some of Somalia's more distant western partners. Attempts to preempt the Islamists' progress, or foreign reactions to their inclusion in a future Somali government could eventually become a new source of instability in Somalia, with repercussions for the region as a whole.

Tradition vs. Reform in Somali Islam

Traditionalists

Traditional Somali Islamic belief is infused with a powerful element of Sufism, which expresses itself in various ways, including the veneration of Somali saints, local pilgrimages, and the chewing of the stimulant *qaad* leaf for religious purposes. Among the most established Sufi sects in Somalia are the *Qaadiriyya, Seyli'iyya, Uwaysiyya, Axmediyya, Salixiyya*, and *Dandarawiyya*.[42]

Their interpretation of Islam has historically been characterized by moderation, toleration, and pragmatism.[43]

Traditional Somali religious orders tend to shun political activity.[44] However, since the civil war they have increasingly been drawn into confrontation with reformist Islamic movements. In southern Somalia, the organization *Ahlu-sunna wal Jama'a* has attempted to unite some Sufi sects (mainly the *Qaadiriyya* and *Axmediyya*) to counter the growing influence of reformists.[45] *Ahlu-Sunna* claims to represent "Somali traditional Islamic scholars" and deplores the activities of reformists educated in the Arab world who "started misinterpreting or preaching in the wrong way the religion while they had relation (sic) with the International Network of Terrorists."[46] In Puntland, rivalry between members of the *Timo-weyne* Sufi order[47] and *al-Itixaad* culminated in a grenade attack on a *al-Itixaad* mosque in the town of Burtinle in October 1999 that killed three people and wounded 18. More recently, the *Timo-weyne* in Puntland have associated themselves with the leadership of Abdillahi Yusuf, who is known to be profoundly hostile to *al-Itixaad*. In Somaliland, the death by stoning of several women in 1993 led to such a forceful reaction from traditional religious leaders that reformists have kept a low profile in the territory ever since.

Reformists

In Somalia, as elsewhere in the Islamic world, government attempts to bring religion under control of the state during the 1970s and 1980s backfired, contributing directly to the rise of Islamic radicalism. Many of today's Somali Islamist leaders were molded by their experiences of that period.

Islamic reformists in Somalia tend to follow one of two neo-fundamentalist paths: that of the *Salafiyya* or the *Ikhwaan Muslimiin* (Muslim Brotherhood).[48] The *Salafiyya* espouse a strictly conservative interpretation of Islam, reject modernity, and are typically obsessed by the corruption of Islam through the influence of other religions and cultures. They advocate the implementation of Shari'a law as the principal (if not only) criterion for an Islamic state and society, without a corresponding social or economic agenda. They proscribe music, the arts, and entertainment. Above all, they express their conservatism in their attitudes to women, who are denied a role in public life, are often forbidden to work, and must be fully veiled outside the home. Principal *Salafi* organizations in Somalia include *al-Itixaad, al-Falaax, Ansar al-Sunna, Harakaat Al-Tabliiq,* and *Takfir wal Hijra*.[49]

In contrast with the Salafists, groups inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood generally seek to establish a modern Islamic state through political action, underpinned by social and economic programs. Like other political parties, they accept a degree of political pluralism and are prepared to work within a parliamentary system. They promote the education of women and the selective participation of

women in professional – and in some cases political – life. The most prominent of these groups over the past decade include *al-Islaax, al-Waaxda,* and *Majma al-'Uliima al-Islamiya.*[50]

Al-Islaax, the largest and most influential of the Somali "*Ikhwaan*" affiliates, was initially established as a relief organization with close ties to international Islamic NGOs, but has evolved into a sophisticated political movement with a strong base of support among Mogadishu's youth, professionals, and business community.[51]   *Al-Islaax* has been particularly active in the field of education.[52]   Mogadishu University serves as a kind of brain trust for the organization, and several professional associations, including the influential teachers' umbrella, the Formal Private Education Network (FPEN), look to *al-Islaax* for both leadership and financial support. In May 2003, a "peace strike" organized by Mogadishu's professional associations brought the city to a standstill, offering a glimpse of *al-Islaax*'s potential political clout.

In early 2000, the Djibouti government's Arta conference became a showcase for *al-Islaax*, which threw its political and financial backing behind the peace process and the Transitional National Government that ultimately emerged (see below). In the three years since the establishment of the TNG, however, the *al-Islaax* leadership has apparently become disillusioned and is today openly critical of interim President Abdiqasim and his administration.

Although *al-Islaax* has not been directly associated with political violence,[53] the Ethiopian government and many Somalis believe the organization to be little more than a "front" for *al-Itixaad*.[54] Ethiopian scholar Medhane Tadesse asserts categorically that that, "They are not two independent rival movements,"[55] and uses their names virtually interchangeably. But conflating *al-Islaax* and *al-Itixaad* overlooks the divergent theological perspectives of the two organizations, their differences over the use of violence, and the political rivalry between their cadres.

Admittedly, the distinctions between Somalia's neo-fundamentalists are not always clear. Most of them refer to the teachings of the same Islamic scholars (Hassan al-Banna, Sayid Qutb, and Abul 'Ala Mawdudi) and their members (including senior leaders) regularly shift from one group to another. They distinguish themselves from one another mainly by reference to personal practices in worship, dress, and everyday behavior. As one close observer has noted, "Rituals more than ideology have been the bone of contention."[56]

Other distinctions between neo-fundamentalist groups relate to clan composition. Although Somali reformists decry clanism and claim to stand for a new social order, they have enjoyed only limited success in transcending clan dynamics. For example, *al-Itixaad* has historically attracted a greater following among the Darood than other clans, while *al-Islaax* is a largely Hawiye organization and *al-Waxda* has historically been identified with the Isaaq.

The most significant differences, however, are political: like more conventional political parties, Somalia's Islamist groups compete with one another for political influence. The tensions between them are mainly an expression of each group's belief that it is inherently superior to the others and thus best suited to moral and political leadership. As their membership grows in number and geographic scope, the friction between the Somalia's Islamists – and also with their more secular political rivals – will intensify.

The propagation of political Islam in post-Barre Somalia has so far remained the project of a small, middle-class "elite" and has yet to attain the dimensions of a broad-based social movement. The Islamists' unfamiliar teachings and assumed moral superiority have made them unpopular with many ordinary Somalis, some of whom accuse them of "cultural and religious imperialism."[57] Nevertheless, their collective sway over the Somali population continues to expand thanks to their contributions to the building of mosques, provision of social services, and investment in commercial enterprises. The Islamists' steady penetration of networks of clan elders, NGOs, professional associations, and embryonic "state" structures has served as a back door to public respectability, deflecting public criticism and obscuring the full extent of their influence. *Al-Itixaad*'s accomplishments within the Puntland judiciary and *al-Islaax*'s power within Mogadishu's civil society are instructive in this regard.

The diversity of Islamist organizations in Somalia, together with the tendency (among Somalis and non-Somalis alike) to sensationalize them, makes generalization risky. But it can be argued with some confidence that across the spectrum, Somalia's Islamists share at least two important traits: their ambition for political power through establishment of an Islamic state, and their reliance on external funding. Without the latter, their hopes of ever attaining the former would evaporate like a mirage.

It is not clear to what extent moderate Islamist groups may provide support and camouflage for extremists. While there is no proof that groups like *al-Islaax, al-Waaxda*, or *Tabliiq* collaborate with extremists, the infiltration of charitable organizations, such as *al-Haramayn*, IIRO, and Mercy International by sympathizers of *al-Itixaad* and *al-Qaeda*, suggests that militants are prepared to exploit ideological commonalities with their moderate counterparts. A more disturbing possibility is that the corporate culture of such charitable Islamic organizations renders them especially susceptible to infiltration by extremist elements.

The distinctions between moderates and militants may mean very little if Somalia's Islamists attain a role in government. Ethiopia and Kenya are uneasy at the prospect of an Islamist government in Somalia and few of Somalia's Western partners are indifferent to such an eventuality. As the next section explains, the emergence of an Islamist government in Somalia, whatever its orientation, would present the region with a thorny security dilemma.

FILLING THE VACUUM:
THE GEOPOLITICS OF SOMALI STATELESSNESS

The international state system abhors a geopolitical vacuum: when one emerges, as Somalia did in the early 1990s, the question is not whether it will be filled, but who will succeed in filling it. Predictably, Somalia's political void has evolved into a vortex of competing regional interests and occasionally into a theatre of proxy war.

Aims and Interests of the Principal Regional Powers

Somalia's neighbors are the countries most directly affected by the Somali crisis, and thus those with the most legitimate interests in its resolution. Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti have all accepted large influxes of Somali refugees, many of who have by now been residing in their host countries in excess of a decade. In all three countries, Somali refugees have been associated with smuggling and contraband (including small arms), forgery or trafficking of travel documents, and illicit radio and telecommunications networks. Although the refugees have also brought benefits to their host countries, such as entrepreneurship and investment, these typically receive less attention than the problems for which they are blamed.

Ethiopia, which looms largest on the Somali horizon, claims that it seeks a friendly, co-operative government for its Somali neighbor that would respect Ethiopia's security concerns, abandon irredentist Somali claims to the Ogaden region, and deny the use of Somali territory to Ethiopian rebel groups like the ONLF, OLF, and *al-Itixaad*. Ethiopia would also like to secure access to the sea via Somali ports and to regularize cross-border trade. Skeptics, however, believe that Ethiopia is determined to keep Somalia perpetually weak and divided in order to pre-empt the re-emergence of a strategic rival, an interpretation that vastly overestimates the potential threat to Ethiopia of a country with roughly one tenth its population and – in the absence of significant foreign assistance – exceedingly limited economic and military potential.

In geo-strategic terms, Addis Ababa hopes to bind Somalia more firmly within its own sphere of influence, as opposed to that of its principal rival in the region, Egypt. Ethiopia and Egypt harbor very different visions of a future Somali government: Egypt has trumpeted the cause of Somali unity and advocated a strong unitary government, while Ethiopia has worked toward a federal Somalia and entertained Somaliland's claims to separate statehood. To deflect Egyptian pressure, Ethiopia has turned increasingly toward the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (where Egypt is not a member), rather than the African Union (AU) or the Arab League, as a forum for resolving the Somali crisis.

Like Ethiopia, Kenya has paid a high price for Somalia's instability, as

both refugees and weapons have entered the country in large numbers, although it has also benefited to a certain extent from the influx of international aid agencies who use Kenya as a base for their operations in Somalia, contributing to Nairobi's unchallenged status as relief capital of East Africa. Kenya's interests would therefore be well served by the stabilization of the situation in Somalia, particularly in the Juba Valley, which lies adjacent to the long frontier between the two countries. Since the 1998 US Embassy bombing, Kenya has also acquired an interest in containing the terrorist threat from Somalia: Kenya participates actively in US counter-terror programs and since late 2001 has hosted foreign military units (British, German, and American) involved in surveillance of Somali airspace and coastal waters.

Despite having supported General Morgan during the early 1990s, and the business interests that some southern faction leaders retain in Kenya, the Kenyan government has preserved a degree of neutrality vis-à-vis the Somali conflict and is therefore better placed than either Djibouti or Ethiopia to play the role of honest broker. However, some observers question whether the Kenyan government possesses the requisite expertise to lead and sustain such an effort.

Djibouti's population is roughly half Somali, and an ethnic Somali head of state has ruled the country since independence. The country's close historical ties to Somalia have placed Djibouti under a special obligation to show leadership on Somali affairs, beginning in 1991 when Djibouti hosted two consecutive conferences aimed at restoring peace and government to Somalia. Having hosted and guided the Arta conference, the Djibouti government had no alternative but to offer recognition and support to the Transitional National Government, and the subsequent relationship between Djibouti and the TNG was underpinned by complex financial and commercial linkages. Djibouti's emphasis on the preservation of Somali unity also suggests a desire to prevent the emergence of Somaliland as a credible regional actor.

Although not a neighbor of Somalia, Egypt's continuing engagement in Somali affairs is a product of its long historical relationship with Somalia and its interest in maintaining a strong, united Somali state as a counterweight to Ethiopian influence in the region. Sudan shares a similar concern, with the more immediate goal of securing Ethiopia's non-interference in its own internal civil war. Egypt has proven remarkably adept at mobilizing support for its position on Somalia within the Arab League and, by extension, the United Nations.

Like Egypt, Eritrea's engagement in Somalia has been driven chiefly by the desire to constrain Ethiopian power in the region. During the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean conflict, Eritrea therefore provided arms to anti-Ethiopian Somali militia forces and provided logistical support for several hundred Oromo fighters to train and fight from Somali soil. The Ethiopian response, via its own Somali proxies, was robust, and the second-front hoped for by Eritrea never materialized. Eritrea's subsequent recognition of the TNG seemed calculated to

annoy Ethiopia rather than to signal Eritrean faith in the legitimacy or durability of the new Somali "government."

Saudi Arabia's newly acquired interest in Somalia resembles a fit of absent-mindedness: the Saudis have a very limited historical relationship with Somalia and have been relatively inactive on both the diplomatic and humanitarian fronts since the collapse of the Barre regime. The Saudi government was stirred into action, for reasons unknown, by the formation of the TNG, and soon became the phantom government's largest single donor. Most of the Saudi largesse appears to have been lost to corruption or spent on arms and ammunition, and it seems unlikely that Saudi enthusiasm for its Somali venture will endure.

Scenarios of Proxy Conflict

Over the years, regional and domestic interests have become increasingly interwoven, lending the Somali crisis the characteristics of a "proxy war" between foreign powers. Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, and United States have each backed Somali factions at one time or another. This geopolitical free-for-all has at times steered the Somali crisis in the direction of proxy conflict, a more mundane but no less real threat to regional security than terrorism.

Another Failed Peace Initiative

At the time of writing, a Kenyan-led peace conference (under the auspices of IGAD) at Mbagathi, a suburb of Nairobi, envisioned the formation of a new Somali government in mid-2003. In theory, this would have precluded the risk of a new and violent struggle for power upon expiry of the TNG's three-year mandate in July of that year.

If the Mbagathi conference were to collapse (a distinct possibility given the failure of more than a dozen previous peace initiatives), then Somalia's political fragmentation and intermittent, low-intensity conflict would persist for the foreseeable future. Foreign governments will continue to back various Somali elders and factions, producing occasional flare-ups of violence in different parts of Somalia, particularly in and around the city of Mogadishu.

This scenario does not necessarily imply an intensification of violence, but rather the prolongation of the status quo. Somalia's factions generally lack the resources or the public support to wage sustained, large-scale conflicts. It is not inconceivable, however, that the failure of the IGAD process would trigger renewed competition between regional powers to install their respective Somali clients in the seat of government, including new infusions of arms and cash.

Declaration of a New Government

The consequences of a "successful" peace conference could be even worse than its failure: the declaration of a new Somali government that lacks sufficient support inside the country could in fact lead to greater fragmentation, not consolidation. Most internationally sponsored peace accords in Somalia have been followed by more, not less, fighting:

> In 1991, the announcement of a new government at the 'Djibouti II' conference triggered the most vicious fighting Mogadishu has ever seen. The UN and the U.S. trumpeted the 1993 Addis Ababa accords as the first step in a bold international experiment in 'nation building,' only to find themselves at war with the late General Aydiid. UN Special Envoy Lansana Kouyate's breezy assertion after the May 1994 Nairobi talks that 'the warlords are now peacelords' was followed by new fighting in the Jubba Valley, Merka, Mogadishu, and Beled Weyne.[58]

The 2000 Arta conference, which established the TNG, was widely touted as a "success," despite setting the entire process of "nation-building" in Somalia back by several years. Between 1998 and 2000, the international community, led by IGAD, had adopted a piecemeal, bottom-up approach to reconstruction in Somalia, known as the "building blocks" approach. The approach recognized the emergence of functional and reasonably legitimate authorities across much of Somali territory: Somaliland, Puntland, the Rahanweyne Resistance Army (RRA) in Bay and Bakool, and the Hiiraan Regional Authority. By 1999, roughly two-thirds of Somalia was peaceful and under control of existing or incipient administrations. By encouraging these embryonic authorities with diplomatic engagement and foreign aid, the "building blocks approach" hoped to reinforce the notion of a "peace dividend," eventually bringing the various "blocks" together to negotiate the establishment of a new national government.

The Arta conference effectively denied the existence of these authorities, and aimed instead at the formation of a government by a large group of hand-picked individuals, invited by the Djiboutian government. Since the leaders of the "building blocks" declined to attend,[59] the conference attracted their political rivals instead, and awarded them legitimacy and recognition under the rubric of a new "Transitional National Government." The consequences were dramatic: the administrations of Puntland and Bay/Bakool soon collapsed as pro- and anti-TNG groups struggled for power. Gedo region, which had been peaceful for several years, also erupted into inter-factional violence, and an alliance of pro-TNG militia from central Somalia assaulted and occupied the southern port of Kismayo.

The declared "success" of the Mbagathi conference would therefore not necessarily spell the end of the Somali crisis. A new Somali government is likely to exercise very limited authority, the extent of which will be determined by

the level of genuine public support, the quality of the interim government's leadership, and the level of foreign assistance to which it has access. Realistically, a new government will have to contend with weak leadership, challenges to its authority (both foreign and domestic), a fractious support base, and tepid donor support. If so, then like the TNG, the life cycle of such an artificial regime is likely to be nasty, brutish, and short.

Ethiopian-Egyptian Rivalry

The polarization of the current peace process into TNG and SRRC (Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council) camps has little to do with internal Somali cleavages. There is little to distinguish between the groups in terms of ideology or clan composition, and both coalitions combine ex-officials of the Barre regime with former rebels. The real distinction is a question of sponsorship: the TNG has been dependent on the backing of Egypt and the Arab League, while the SRRC is an Ethiopian creation and client.

Egypt and Ethiopia have jostled for influence in the Somali peninsula since the mid-nineteenth century, when both powers established garrisons in Somali-inhabited areas: Ethiopia in the arid "Ogaden" region, and Egypt along the Red Sea coast. While Egypt was obliged to abandon its Somali ambitions in the 1880s, Ethiopia continued to press its claims and was finally rewarded with sovereignty over much of the Ogaden.

During the 1950s, Egypt's pan-Arab nationalist policy, personified by its charismatic president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, encouraged the unification of Somali territories under a single flag. Egyptian rhetoric fired the imaginations of the Somalis while antagonizing both Ethiopia and Kenya who were alarmed at the implications of Somali irredentism. In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of Arab governments, led by Egypt, threw their weight behind Siad Barre's military regime while Ethiopia played host to the Somali rebels dedicated to the overthrow of his government.

During the 1990s, Ethiopia and Egypt continued to vie for influence through successive Somali peace initiatives. Ethiopia's 1996 "Sodere" initiative was derailed when the Egyptian government invited the same participants to Cairo for a rival conference. In early 2000, Egypt enthusiastically threw its weight behind the Djibouti-led "Arta" process, abruptly aborting the Ethiopian-driven "building blocks" approach, which had been endorsed by the IGAD member states and their international "partners" (over Egyptian reservations) little more than a year earlier. Egypt and Arab League recognized the new Transitional National Government, while Ethiopia made no secret of its hostility to the new administration and moved swiftly to form the SRRC. When the TNG turned to the Arab League for political and financial support, Ethiopia's patronage of its adversaries on the Somali scene became increasingly overt.

Since the formation of the TNG, Ethio-Egyptian rivalry in Somalia has evolved into a lopsided stalemate with Ethiopia on one side and much of the Arab League on the other. Unable to count on the support of the AU, which is uncomfortable with Addis Ababa's promotion of Somali federalism and its flirtation with Somaliland, Ethiopia has been obliged to fight its corner alone. Unable to match the Arab League's financial support to the TNG, Addis Ababa trucked in arms and ammunition to its Somali proxies instead, attracting the opprobrium of the United Nations for its role as "a major source of weapons to a number of Somali groups."[60] Addis Ababa's attempts to justify its actions as a response to a Somali terrorist threat came to be viewed as little more than "an excuse for Ethiopian involvement in Somali internal affairs."[61] On balance, however, the "limited supplies of arms and ammunition"[62] Ethiopia provided to the SRRC were relatively modest in comparison with the funds provided by various Arab states to the TNG for the build up of its own military forces.

These contradictory forces have taken a heavy toll inside Somalia. The years following the formation of the TNG were among the bloodiest since the withdrawal of foreign forces in 1995. By late mid-2003, the situation had regressed several years in terms of peace-building and political development. With the exception of Somaliland, Somalia reverted in the space of a few years from administrative consolidation to factional rivalry.

Ethio-Egyptian rivalry could continue destabilize Somalia for the foreseeable future. For example, while Ethiopia backs the current IGAD peace process, Egypt and other Arab states might support a unilateral extension of the TNG's mandate. The stakes in such a conflict, which include the perks associated with the TNG's recognition by the UN, Arab League, and AU, are considerable and could potentially trigger serious violence.

Although the regional tensions over Somalia are real, the danger of serious military escalation is still remote. Neither Ethiopia nor Egypt possesses the requisite combination of political will and financial or military means to install an effective surrogate regime in Somalia. Nor are these two powers eager to antagonize one another over the Somali issue. Other aspects of their relationship are of far greater importance to both countries: the Nile Waters Agreement, the Sudanese civil war (or peace process), and their shared abhorrence of militant Islamic groups. The prospect of a proxy war in Somalia is thus not an attractive one to either party and, as far as possible, both are likely to choose accommodation over confrontation.

Resisting the Islamist Trend

Ethiopia in particular is concerned about the Islamist trend in Somalia. Although the Ethiopian government has demonstrated considerable pragmatism in its dealings with the Islamist leadership in Sudan, Addis Ababa appears to be convinced that an Islamist Somali government cannot be relied upon to respect

Ethiopia's legitimate interests in Somalia. The Ethiopian posture is informed by historical experience: AIAI's terrorist attacks in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa and its guerilla campaign in the Ogaden region serve not only to harden Ethiopian attitudes toward Somali Islamists, but also to drive home the dangers of tolerating extremist groups within Ethiopia's borders.

Addis Ababa fears that moderate Islamists could potentially provide a purchase for more militant groups and therefore chooses not to differentiate between them: the "terrorist" watch lists compiled by Ethiopian intelligence services include alleged members of *al-Itixaad, al-Islaax, Takfir wal Hijra, Majma al-'Uliima* and *Tabliiq*, among others. Any potential linkage between Islamists and a future Somali government is therefore perceived in terms of a direct threat to Ethiopia's national security.

Since 1997, Ethiopia's response to the perceived Islamist threat from Somalia has involved a multi-pronged policy of containment: an extensive intelligence network inside Somalia; maintenance of a security "buffer zone" on the Somali side of the border, controlled by Somali proxies; limited, direct intervention by Ethiopian forces if and when the need arises; and assertive international diplomacy intended to articulate Addis Ababa's concerns and solicit external support for counter-terror measures.

It is a strategy that has so far met with mixed results. The Ethiopian army's incursions into Gedo region resulted in the dismantling of much of *al-Itixaad*'s training infrastructure and brought to an end *al-Itixaad*'s terror spree inside Ethiopia. The establishment of a "buffer zone" along most of the Ethio-Somali frontier appears to have also dampened the operational effectiveness of *al-Itixaad* units in Ethiopia. But the Ethiopian military presence is unpopular with Somalis in many parts of the country and has not proven particularly effective in containing the spread of Islamist influence. In Puntland, for example, where Ethiopia has invested heavily in Colonel Abdillahi Yusuf's prolonged campaign against *al-Itixaad*, the organization is more socially and politically entrenched than ever. Even in Gedo, where Ethiopian forces have maintained a semi-permanent presence, *al-Itixaad* remains influential.

The formation of the Somali Transitional National Government at the Arta conference, where *al-Islaax* played a key role and managed to secure itself a significant share of seats in the Transitional National Assembly (TNA),[63] was viewed by Addis Ababa with some alarm. The TNA then elected as interim president a figure that Ethiopia also believes to be a leading member of *al-Islaax*. Addis Ababa's suspicions of collusion between moderate and militant Islamist groups were confirmed when the interim Somali president immediately named leading members of *al-Itixaad*, including Hassan Dahir Aweys, to a newly established "Security Committee" in Mogadishu.

Ethiopia responded to the TNG's formation both diplomatically and militarily, disputing the new authority's legitimacy while backing a rival coalition of

warlords, the SRRC, which was formed in March 2001 at Awassa (Ethiopia). By mid-2001, clashes had broken out between pro- and anti-TNG forces at Bal'ad (Middle Shabelle), Tiyeeglow (Bakool), Kismaayo (Lower Jubba), Bardheera, Bur Hakaba, and Wanle Weyne.[64] But the TNG's failure to obtain full diplomatic recognition from the international community kept the tensions to a manageable level, and helped to persuade Addis Ababa that it could contain the TNG through diplomatic rather than military means. With the TNG's mandate set to expire in July 2003, Ethiopia wields sufficient leverage within the IGAD peace process (which awards a lead role to the "frontline states" of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya), that it can be confident of dismantling the TNG and limiting Islamist influence in a future Somali government – or else scuttle the talks.

The TNG episode provides some valuable insights into the likely implications of a government with Islamist ties coming to power in Somalia. Ethiopia would be confronted by a thorny security dilemma: whether to seek an awkward *modus vivendi* with the new government (as with the current regime in Khartoum), to risk international isolation by actively subverting its authority – or a combination of the two. Since the current administration in Addis Ababa has demonstrated that, where it perceives a threat to its own national security it is prepared to risk international censure, the prospect of direct Ethiopian intervention could not be ruled out. But that would not necessarily solve Addis Ababa's problem: Ethiopian military action against a recognized Somali government would risk polarizing the region, boosting levels of financial support for Islamist groups in Somalia, and radicalizing Somali youth, political, and religious leaders. In short, it would transform Somalia into precisely the type of powder keg that Ethiopia seeks to avoid.

Somali Unity

Whatever kind of government finally emerges in Mogadishu, the question of Somali unity will continue to threaten a new chapter in the Somali civil war. There has been growing tension over the past decade between Somaliland's *de facto* sovereign status and the "the continuing fiction that Somalia was still a sovereign nation-state."[65] In contrast with the political entropy of the south, Somaliland's emergence as an increasingly stable and credible polity has won grudging international attention and praise. Western governments have been especially interested in Somaliland's determination to establish a constitutional democracy, evinced by a constitutional referendum in May 2001, local elections in December 2002, and a presidential election in April 2003.[66] Parliamentary elections are expected by 2005. A small but growing number of African governments have also begun to take an interest in Somaliland.

From an international perspective, discussion of Somaliland's claims to independence violates a diplomatic taboo. The United Nations, African Union, and Arab League all insist upon the unity and territorial integrity of the Somali

Democratic Republic: a diplomatic abstraction that takes into account neither Somaliland's history as a distinct colonial entity and independent state, nor the realistic prospects for a peaceful reunification of the two territories under a single government.

Conventional diplomatic wisdom currently holds that Somaliland will join the Somali peace process at a later stage: once a southern authority is established, dialogue between north and south should follow, presumably leading to autonomy for Somaliland within a united Somalia. This scenario overlooks both the determination of many Somalilanders to remain separate from Somalia[67] and the level of resistance among many southerners to awarding Somaliland the prestige or importance implied by bilateral negotiations.

The declaration (and recognition) of a Somali government based in Mogadishu would drastically diminish the prospects for peaceful resolution of the Somaliland issue. Claims by a southern Somali government to jurisdiction over Somaliland would all but eliminate the prospect of dialogue between Mogadishu and Hargeysa, since no southern government could afford to compromise Somalia's unity and territorial integrity, and no Somaliland government could risk making concessions on the question of sovereignty. On the contrary, both sides would be tempted to rally their supporters by adopting hard line positions.[68]

Since a newly formed authority in Mogadishu would lack the military means to impose its will on Somaliland, an armed confrontation between the two would be unlikely. Instead, a southern government would seek to exploit its early political momentum, newfound international legitimacy, and access to foreign financial and military assistance in order to co-opt opposition leaders within Somaliland. Given sufficient resources, such a strategy could conceivably split Somaliland's population along clan lines – just as Barre's divide and rule tactics brought civil war to northwest Somalia in the 1980s. The outcome would probably be a bitter and indecisive conflict.

International attitudes to such a conflict are largely predictable: the UN, League of Arab states, and African Union would certainly affirm their respect for Somalia's unity and territorial integrity. The Arab League would no doubt pledge financial and military support to a Somali government. Depending on its relationship with the Mogadishu government, Ethiopia might find itself either trying to negotiate a federal arrangement between Somaliland and Somalia, or offering tacit support (including use of its territory and diplomatic good offices) to pro-Somaliland forces.

All of the above

Alone, none of the scenarios described above poses a major threat to regional stability. The tensions they would create are probably manageable: for

example, an Arab-leaning government in Mogadishu could win Ethiopia's acceptance if it were to be essentially secular in orientation. An unrecognized Islamist Somali government might prompt Ethiopian intervention, but without danger of spillover to the region. And Somaliland is not yet an issue over which regional powers are prepared to risk a showdown.

A combination of these contingencies, however, could set in motion a process of regional polarization. The Arta process nearly achieved precisely that: the formation of an anti-Ethiopian, Arab-backed government with a potent Islamist constituency and an uncompromising attitude toward Somaliland. Had the TNG ever achieved full international recognition, including access to significant financial resources, a full-fledged proxy war in Somalia would have been all but inevitable. Only the TNG's failure to obtain unqualified recognition prevented degradation of the situation. In future, sensitivity to such possible outcomes will be critical if the Somali "peace process" is not simply to deliver a new round of conflict.

CONCLUSION

There is no question that a stateless, lawless Somalia poses a threat to international security: the problem lies in identifying the nature of the threat and the appropriate response. Transnational terrorism is only one of the problems posed by Somalia's prolonged statelessness, and, relative to armed conflict, forced migration and crushing poverty, it ranks as a secondary challenge to human security in the Horn. By attempting to tackle the Somali problem within the narrow context of counter-terrorism, the international community is asking the wrong questions and formulating the wrong responses.

First and foremost, the potential terrorist threat from Somalia has been overestimated. *Al-Qaeda*'s anticipated relocation to Somalia would probably have proven a blessing in disguise, exposing the organization to the kind of decisive military blow that the US has been unable to deliver in Afghanistan. Despite the notoriety it has achieved since 9/11, *al-Qaeda*'s sometime Somali collaborator, *al-Itixaad* is in fact one of the very "small potatoes" in "the pantheon of worldwide Islamic radicalism."[69] Lacking an ideology or a following of its own, AIAI amounted to little more than a transient shadow cast across the Horn by militant Wahhabism and Arab oil wealth. A much greater hazard is that while Western intelligence agencies focus on familiar but manageable threats, Somalia's toxic admixture of desolation, destitution, and despair will eventually give rise to a strain of truly indigenous extremists endowed with unforeseen aims, unexpected methods, and unprecedented legitimacy.

Responding to Somalia's security challenges requires the international community not only to "root out" terrorism, but to attack its "roots."[70] Attempting to do so by shoddily assembling an artificial authority for the coun-

try may actually aggravate the terrorist threat, since the conditions under which terrorism flourishes are to be found less in a "failed state" like present day Somalia than in a frail, quasi-state which, either through collusion (the Taliban regime in Afghanistan) or through inability to police its own territory (Yemen, Pakistan) offers a degree of protection for extremists. Stateless Somalia offers terrorists neither sovereign cover, nor state sponsorship, nor even an especially sympathetic public. A new government in Somalia will actually become part of the problem unless it enjoys sufficient stability and authority to cooperate with global counter-terror efforts.

Likewise, a putative Somali "government" that lacks sufficient internal legitimacy to govern and whose existence is instead dependent upon international assistance and external guarantees of its juridical sovereignty may well become a source of instability. The inevitable tension between such a government and its domestic opponents would threaten to polarize the politics of the region, just as the formation of the TNG has done. The abandonment of the "building blocks" approach since 2000 has unfortunately narrowed the international community's options, rendering this kind of scenario virtually inescapable. But engaging more direct public participation in the peace process could help to invest a future Somali authority with sufficient legitimacy for it to become a positive force for reconciliation, reconstruction, and regional affairs.[71]

International concern about the rise of Somali Islamist groups is legitimate to the extent that they may be sustained by foreign paymasters and represent offshore interests – some of whom may be linked to terrorism. But in other respects Islamists enjoy the same political rights as other Somalis and many of them have positive contributions to make to the rebuilding of their country; *al-Itixaad* aside, the Islamists have done nothing to indicate that they are any less "democratic" or "peace-loving" than the faction leaders who seem destined to dominate a future Somali government. Their exclusion from the political sphere, which some foreign governments apparently favor, will serve only to radicalize their membership and broaden their base of support – as repression has done for Islamists elsewhere in the Muslim world. Instead, closer monitoring and regulation of the financial relationship between Islamic sponsors in Saudi Arabia (and elsewhere) and their Somali clients would oblige the Islamists to compete with other Somali political groups on roughly equal terms, while corroding the sinister triangle linking Wahhabism, the international jihadist movement, and Somali militants in the Horn.

Although the United States and other Western governments seem convinced that Somalia should not be left stateless and adrift, they have opted for a narrow range of counter-terror measures, while leaving peace-making and peace-building in Somalia to an uneasy coalition of regional interests who have so far proven manifestly unequal to the task. If a new Somali government does eventually emerge from this snarl of mixed motives and diplomatic half-measures, it

will likely complicate both the global counter-terrorism effort and the long-term prospects for peace in the country. After more than 12 years of statelessness and civil war, innumerable peace initiatives and immeasurable human distress, it is time for the international community to accept that there are no quick fixes in Somalia.

Endnotes

1. International Crisis Group, *Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State* (Nairobi/Brussels, 23 May 2002), p. 2.

2. The term is borrowed from Ken Menkhaus, "Somalia: Next Up in the War on Terrorism?" *CSIS Africa Notes*, no. 6 (Washington, DC, January 2002), pp. 1-9.

3. Defining "terrorism" is a notoriously difficult task. This article applies the US government's statutory definition of terrorism: "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." For a more in-depth discussion of this definition, see Paul R. Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), p. 12ff. This standard definition would exclude, for example, attacks against US troops on peace enforcement operations in Somalia in 1993. The scope of this article is further limited to *international* terrorist activity: acts perpetrated by Somali groups against non-Somalis, or intended for a non-Somali audience. It therefore does not address such acts as the murder of General Yusuf Tallaan, a member of the "Transitional National Government," whose killing was clearly intended to "terrorize" other members of the new parliament and administration upon their return to Mogadishu from Djibouti in September 2000.

4. International Crisis Group, *Countering Terrorism in a Failed State*, p. 2

5. A Somali known only as Abdel Rahman was at one time a member of *al-Qaeda*'s senior cadre and closely associated with bin Laden during the early 1990s, when the organization was based in Khartoum. See Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 34.

6. Pakistani security forces arrested four Somalis suspected of links to *al-Qaeda* in Peshawar in July 2002; in April 2003, Italian police arrested a Somali man, Abdallah Isse, suspected of involvement in the November 2002 attacks on Israeli tourists in Kenya, for his alleged role in sending volunteers to fight alongside *al-Ansar al-Islam* against US forces in Iraq.

7. Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda*, pp. 154-55

8. Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), p. 110. Bowden claims that Aideed's men had been trained by "fundamentalist Islamic soldiers, smuggled in from Sudan, who had experience fighting Russian helicopters in Afghanistan."

9. Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc*. (London: Phoenix, 2001), p. 22. Bin Laden made the claim in a 1997 interview with Bergen and a 1996 interview with Abdel Bari Atwan of *al-Quds al-Arabi* newspaper.

10. For example, see Mark Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), pp. 40-41.

11. Interestingly, *al-Itixaad* seems to place greater emphasis on a heavy military engagement it claims took place on the Ethiopian order against a joint Ethiopian-Eritrean force backed by US airpower in June 1994. See Rashid Mohammad Husein, *The Progress of the Jihad Movement in "Ogadin," Nida'ul Islam*, no. 12 (March-April 1996).

12. See for example, John Prendergast and Matt Bryden, *War and Peace in Somalia and Somaliland* (Washington, DC: CSIC, July 1999).

13. For further exploration of possible scenarios involving Somalia as a platform for *al-Qaeda* activity, see Menkhaus, "Somalia," pp. 1-9.

14. Fazul's sighting in Kenya in May 2003, together with other pieces of intelligence, led several countries to issue a high-level security alert and the temporary suspension of British Airways and El Al flights between London and Nairobi.

15. At some point after 1991, according to an *al-Itixaad* spokesman, the movement officially changed its name to *Jama'at-ul I'tisam Bilkitab Wassuna*, but continues to be popularly known as *al-Itixaad*.

16. An additional explanation may be the dominance of the movement's intellectual leadership by graduates of Madina University – a Wahhabi institution that has hosted numerous other leaders of the jihadist movement. See "Nida'ul Islam Interviews the spokesman for the Islamic Union of the Mujahideen of Ogadin" (sic), *Nida'ul Islam*, no. 12 (March-April 1996). The interviewee in this article is himself a graduate of Madina.

17. Omar Khatiib, "The Islamic Factions in Somalia," in *Al-Mustaqbal*, no.3 (Toronto, 1994).

18. According to Mohamed Abdi Mohamed, *al-Itixaad* was officially formed on 22 September 1990 in London. Mohamed's treatment of *al-Itixaad* and other Somali Islamists groups is presented in his, *"Un multipartisme non-democratique: La montée des intégrismes musulmans en Somalie."* Yossef Bodansky, in his book *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*, claims instead that *al-Itixaad* was established by the Sudanese Islamist leader, Hassan al-Turabi, but factual errors relating to Somalia elsewhere in Bodansky's book suggest that his research of the subject has been incomplete.

19. The *Salafiyya* movement derives its name from *al-Salaf al-Salih* ("the venerable ancestors"): a reference to the Prophet Mohammed and his companions. Salafis seek to reform Islam by emulating the first generation of Muslims, who represent the "ideal" Muslim community.

20. Da'wa is the 'Call' to Islam. See Husein, *The Progress of the Jihad Movement*.

21. Cited in Mohamed, *"Un multipartisme non-democratique,"* p. 172.

22. In 1992, countries with active AIAI cells reportedly included Kenya, Djibouti, Great Britain, Italy, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates (Dubai), and Saudi Arabia (Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). See *A Brief Preliminary Report on the Activities and Objectives of the al-Ittihad al-Islam (Islamic Unity) in Somalia* (Bosaaso, 29 October 1992).

23. Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda*, p.158.

24. Abu Yasser denies, however, that bin Laden played any role in the formation of *al-Itixaad*. See *Nida'ul Islam*, no. 12 (March-April 1996).

25. David H. Shinn, "Ethiopia: Coping with Islamic Fundamentalism before and after September 11," *CSIS Africa Notes*, no. 7 (Washington, DC, February 2002), p. 4.

26. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

27. See for example, Bodansky, *Bin Laden*.

28. Matt Bryden, *Report on Mission to Haud Area* (Addis Ababa: United Nations Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia, November 1994), p. 4.

29. OSALA's membership was drawn from the United Oromo People's Liberation Front, Oromo Abbo Liberation Front, Somali People's Liberation Front, Oromo People's Liberation Organization, the Afar People's Liberation Army, and the Islamic Union of Western Somalia (the Ethiopian wing of *al-Itixaad*). However, the alliance – like most of its members – existed chiefly in name and never managed to mount a significant operation on Ethiopian soil.

30. In April 2002, an Ethiopian court found eight alleged members of a*l-Itixaad* guilty of a number for terrorist acts resulting in the death of a total of 36 civilians. Not all of the charges are included in this list. The timing of the trial, which took place in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, has bolstered Ethiopian attempts to highlight *al-Itixaad*'s ter-

rorist history and to justify its own military and political intervention in Somalia. It is unknown whether such considerations may have influenced the conduct of the trial.

31. Personal communication with an Ethiopian government official.

32. Human Rights Watch Arms Division, *Global Trade, Local Impact: Arms Transfers to All Sides in the Civil War in Sudan* (New York: Human Rights Watch, August 1998), cited in Ernst Jan Hogendoorn, Mohamed Abdoulaye M'Backe and Brynjulf Mugaas, *Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1425 (2002)* (United Nations Security Council, S/2003/223, 25 March 2003), p. 20.

33. Aweys, a former colonel, took part in the fighting against the SSDF in 1992 and assumed command of *al-Itixaad* forces after their defeat. His brother, a graduate of Medina Islamic University, is also believed to be an *al-Itixaad* member.

34. Ethiopian scholar Medhane Tadesse, for example, argues that AIAI has chosen to "de-emphasize" its military strategy but retains "independent military training camps in strategic areas." Tadesse's arguments are presented in full in, *Al-Ittihad: Political Islam and Black Economy in Somalia* (Addis Ababa: Meag Printing Enterprise, 2002).

35. It is noteworthy that, although *al-Barakaat* functioned throughout Somalia, no other Somali authority came to the defence of the company.

36. In interviews with the author, some informants have claimed knowledge of *al-Barakaat* contributions to AIAI in the form of *zakaat*, an obligatory Islamic tax.

37. The SSDF also allege that the Ugandan office of a Libyan charity, *Maktab al-Da'awa al-Islam Lil-Sharq Wal-Qarb wa Junub al-Ifriqiya*, provided military training to AIAI fighters in 1991-2. Since IIRO has also been linked to *al-Qaeda* networks in the Philippines, Tanzania, and Georgia (Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda, passim*) the allegation merits consideration.

38. US Department of the Treasury, *U.S., Saudi Arabia Act Jointly to Block Terror Funds* (Washington, DC: Treasury Department 'Fact Sheet,' 11 March 2002).

39. Mark Hosenball and Michael Isikoff, "Al Qaeda Strikes Again," *Newsweek* CXLI, no. 21 (26 May 2003), p. 24.

40. At the trial of four men implicated in the bomb attacks, evidence was presented suggesting that Mercy International assisted in smuggling weapons from Somalia into Kenya, and provided storage for the belongings of one of the bombing team. However, the evidence was insufficiently persuasive to justify criminal proceedings against Mercy International.

41. Globally speaking, Salafism borrows from (and inspires) a number of distinct religious traditions, including Wahhabism and Deobandism, but in Somalia it is a chiefly Wahhabi phenomenon.

42. The eldest of the sects is *Qaadiriyya*, which was founded in the twelfth century. The *Uwaysiyya* and *Seyli'iyya* are sub-sects of the *Qaadiriyya*, both founded in the nineteenth century. The *Salixiyya* and *Dandarawiyya* are sub-sects of the *Ahmediyya*, which was introduced to Somalia in the eighteenth century. For further discussion of differentiation among the Somali Suufi orders, see Maria Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State in Somalia* (Utrecht: International Books, 2001). pp. 96-7; and I.M. Lewis, *Saints and Somalis* (London: Haan, 1998).

43. In the early twentieth century the *Salixiyya* movement, led by Sayyid Mohamed Abdulle Hassan (the "Mad Mullah of Somaliland"), waged a long and violent campaign against British and Ethiopian rule. The Salixiyya dervishes propagated a puritanical, Wahhabi version of the faith that was violently opposed by adherents of the moderate *Qaadiriyya* order. Since that time, the *Salixiyya* has become part of the traditionalist "mainstream" and show no special inclination to radicalism or violence.

44. During the colonial period, certain *tariiqas* were actively involved in the politics of the anti-colonial struggle (Brons, *Society*, p. 141). However, since independence the *tariiqas* have generally steered clear of political activity.

45. *Ahlu-Sunna* was established in 1991 with the support of General Aideed, as a counterweight to emerging reformist groups. Aideed subsequently switched allegiances, associating himself with *al-Itixaad* in his confrontation with US forces, but *Ahlu-Sunna* has remained active.

46. Open letter from the "High Council of the Islamic Scholars of ahlu-Sunna wal-Jama'a of Somalia," *Introduction of Ahlu-sunna wal-Jama: Somali Traditional Islamic Scholars* (Mogadishu/Nairobi, 8 August 2002).

47. The *Timo-weyne* (literally "Big Hair") are a sub-group of the traditionalist *Qadiriyya* sect, led by Sheikh Mohamed Sabih.

48. This taxonomy of reformist organizations is based on Mohamed, "*Un miltipartisme non-democratique.*" Somali *Salafiyya* practices are an offshoot of Wahhabism, which was established in the eighteenth century by Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab and later became the official religion of Saudi Arabia: it preaches a literal interpretation of the Qu'ran and Hadith. The *Ikhwaan Muslimiin* (Muslim Brotherhood) was established in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. The Brotherhood's teachings emphasize the perfection and self-sufficiency of Islam, suggesting guidelines and principles for the establishment of an Islamic society that are comparatively more flexible than those of the *Salafiyya*. For a comprehensive description of the Brotherhood's origins and outlook, see John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984). Olivier Roy classifies the Muslim Brotherhood as "Islamist" rather than neo-fundamentalist in order to distinguish those movements with political, social, and economic agenda from those without. Although useful, his terminology is not employed in this article because of the use of the term" Islamist" in a more general sense elsewhere in the text.

49. *Takfir wal Hijra*, an extremist offshoot of the *Ikhwaan Muslimiin*, is known for its fanatically conservative *Salafiyya* orientation and appears to lack any other social, economic, or political program. It is therefore grouped here with other *Salafi* groups. Although the Somali chapter of *Takfir* has not been known to engage in violence, the global Takfiri movement has been closely identified with violence since its inception in the early 1970s, and there are indications that a number of the 11 September 2001 hijack team and their collaborators were members of *Takfir*.

50. Mohamed identifies *Harakaat al-Tabliiq* with the *Ikhwaan Muslimiin*. Because of the group's Deobandi origins and outlook, it is categorized in this article as a *Salafi* organization.

51. This version of *al-Islaax*'s origins is borrowed from Roland Marchal, *Islamic political dynamics in the Somali civil war*. Paper presented at the Conference on Islam in Africa, Binghamton University, 19-21 April 2001.

52. The leadership of *al-Islaax* in Mogadishu is virtually synonymous with the leadership of Mogadishu University. *Al-Itixaad* appears to have been impressed by *al-Islaax*'s commitment to education, associating itself with Mogadishu's Red Sea University and the University of Bosaaso, in Puntland.

53. The Mogadishu-based chairman of *al-Islaax*, Abdirahman Baadiyo, is also the Somali director of Mercy International, an Islamic NGO alleged to have links with both *al-Itixaad* and *al-Qaeda*. Medhane Tadesse, an Ethiopian observer of Somali Islamist movements, alleges that Baadiyo is also a colonel in *al-Itixaad*, but does not substantiate this claim. See Medhane Tadesse, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Somalia*, Somaliawatch.org, 1999.

54. For example, see Tadesse, *Al-Ittihad*.

55. Tadesse contends that *al-Itixaad* and *al-Islaax* are both members of a loose united front known as the "Supreme-Somali Islamic League" and are united mainly through their international connections and financial network. See Tadesse, *Al-Ittihad*.

56. Marchal, *Islamic Political Dynamics*, p. 15

57. Paul Salopek, "Somali religious schools make U.S. uneasy," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 February 2002.

58. ICG, *Negotiating a Blueprint for Peace in Somalia*, p. 17.

59. Only the RRA leadership took part, under intense pressure from Ethiopia, but soon renounced its acceptance of the accords.

60. Hogendoorn, et al., *Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia*, p. 20.

61. Ibid., p. 20.

62. Ibid., p. 22.

63. The French scholar Roland Marchal asserts that one quarter of the 245 members of the Transitional National Assembly are members of *al-Islaax*, and that another dozen represent *al-Itixaad*. Marchal, *Islamic Political Dynamics*, p. 15.

64. Matt Bryden, *Prospects for Peace in Somalia: Challenges and Choices in the Post-Arta Period.* Unpublished draft presented at a United Nations Department of Political Affairs Roundtable on Somalia, New York, June 2001, p. 4.

65. Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 258.

66. Somaliland is planning to hold its first elections for over 30 years: local elections are currently scheduled for December 2002, Presidential elections in the first quarter of 2003, and Parliamentary elections by May 2003.

67. In a referendum held on 31 May 2001, 97 percent of votes cast endorsed a new constitution that reaffirmed Somaliland's status as an independent state. According to the Initiative and Referendum Institute (IRI), which sent observers to the poll, this represented an estimated 65 percent of eligible voters. See IRI, *Somaliland National Referendum: Final Report of the Initiative & Referendum Institute's Election Monitoring Team* (Washington, DC: 27 July 2000.) Support for independence is considerably greater among members of the Isaaq clan – the largest single group in Somaliland – than among other clans. It is not yet clear whether the incumbency of the current president, who is from the Gadabursi clan, will evoke greater support for the Somaliland platform from among non-Isaaq clans.

68. For a detailed examination of the prospects for Somali reunification, see Matt Bryden, "A State Within a Failed State: Is Somaliland Headed for Recognition or Reunification?" forthcoming in Ian Spears and Paul Kingston, *States Within States* (Palgrave, 2003).

69. Menkhaus, *Somalia*.

70. The turn of phrase is borrowed from Karin von Hippel, "The Roots of Terrorism: Probing the Myths," *Political Quarterly* (2002), p. 25.

71. In any event, a new government's jurisdiction will be contested in Somaliland, suggesting that a separate and parallel diplomatic process will be required to address this issue. See Bryden, "A State within a Failed State," *passim*.