

The Horn Tribune

Vol III/ Issue 1543

Sunday 24 March 2024

Ramadan 14/ 1445 AH

An Independent Weekly Newspaper of Dawan Media Group, Tel: 0634414181/0634424590/0634615145

President hosts clergy for Iftar dinner buffet, As he urges them be wary of attacks on nationhood and to stand up in defense of the country



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic of Somaliland, His Excellency Musa Bihi Abdi, held an Iftar buffet dinner for the religious clerics at the Presidency on Thursday evening. Iftar is the breaking of the fast at dusk during the Holy Month of Ramadan. He challenged them to be wary of attacks on nationhood and coaxed

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McCaul, Smith Lead Bipartisan Letter on Increased Engagement with Somaliland



House Foreign Affairs Committee Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX), Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights Subcommittee Lead Republican Chris Smith (R-NJ), and other

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President Bihi receives former President Rayale and WADDANI party leaders in bid to chart cohesively united and harmonious future for the nation in wake of elections



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic of H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi convened at the Presidency a crucial meeting of national interest that was facilitated and graced by respected former Head of State

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A conference on the translation of regulations for oil production held in Hargeisa

By M.A. Egge

Somaliland's Ministry of Mines and Energy, held a



KULANKA DIB UGAYDHA IYO TURJUMAADA XEERNIDAAMIYAHAA BAADHISTA IYO SOO SAARINTA WADADA (UPSTREAM REGULATIONS).

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There is strong and unwavering commitment from both Somaliland and Ethiopia to put into effect this deal

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The National Elections Committee pledge holding elections as scheduled



By M.A. Egge

The Somaliland National Elections Committee (NEC) has said that it is ready to hold the election in time and that it

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President hosts clergy for Iftar dinner buffet, As he urges them be wary of attacks on nationhood and to stand up in defense of the country



them to be there for the defense of the nation.

The dinner was graced by the top clergies in the country, the VP, several members of the cabinet, parliamentarians, politicians, and various scholars amongst other esteemed guests.

While speaking at the function, Sheikh Abdilahi Sheikh Ali Jawhar urged the members of the society to consult each other and to be strict in the practice of religion, while standing up by their government and adhering to social contracts put in place.

Other top clergies that included Abdirashid Mohamed Baheer, Sheikh Almis Haji Yahye, Sheikh Abdirahman Sheikh Yassin and Sheikh Abdullahi Abdi Ali (Makawi),

expounded extensively the onerous duties incumbent upon the clerics in molding the social fabrics of the society, building the nation and standing p for righteousness apart from imparting the religious knowledge, norms and tenets expected of them, thereof.

The Minister of Religion and Endowment of the Republic of Somaliland, Hon. Mohamed Haji Aden Elmi, on his part thanked the President for the importance he gives to meet the clergy of the country, and listen to their suggestions and views.

The Head of State H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi, welcomed the various members of the clergy who participated in the meeting, and thanked them for their resilience in

the cumbersome and difficult circumstances entailed in the nature of their duties all throughout history and the country and the people have gone through and how they persevered in the difficult times to spread the science.

He noted that the government would always consider the advisories given duly by the clerics.

The President however challenged them to be wary of attacks on nationhood and coaxed them to be there for the defense of the nation by intervening timely as per cue.

Such meetings between the president and the country's clergy is held once a year, and various advices and recommendations are exchanged that are important and in the interests of the country and the people.

President Bihi receives former President Rayale and WADDANI party leaders in bid to chart cohesively united and harmonious future for the nation in wake of elections

Dahir Rayale Kahin who was the 3rd President of the nation that initiated rapports for cohesion.

The meeting which is unprecedented in the nation's history that imperatively brought together the top political parties, the ruling KULMIYE and the opposition WADDANI, at a round-table, is meant to instill cohesive and harmonious setting across the country and has at its core national interests preceding and superseding all others hence avoid polarization.

Resolutions adopted at the meeting are meant to chart the way forward for bre-threnship and conducive atmosphere in the political landscape to be imparted at its core for a solidly united front with the nation's interests at heart.

The meeting discussed the general situation in the country and it was agreed that everything against the nationhood of Somaliland should be addressed.

Also in the itinerary of the discussions was need in cooperation on the issues of elections, maintenance of peaceful stability and initiating continuous rapports and sustainability of meetings between the national parties and the President.

A press release from the Presidential Palace during on Wednesday reads as follows.

"The meeting was organized by the third President of the Republic of Somaliland H.E. Dahir Rayale Kahin, whose purpose was to forge cooperation in the interests of the nation and the elections, and engage the government headed by President Muse Bihi Abdi and the senior leadership of the Waddani party led by presidential aspiring

candidate Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi (Irro).

In this meeting, various issues of interest to the nation were discussed which was led by the former President of Somaliland H.E. Dahir Rayale Kahin was focused on:-

1. To be wary of Somaliland's enemies and solidly work together as a united front on National Defense.

2. Election issues;

a) To participate in the election campaign in a harmonious and free manner.

b) That the result of the election contest be adhered to and accepted by the National Parties.

c) That the national parties subsequently hold meetings in the next three days, to further review and analyze the implementation of these provisions.

Finally, the President of the Republic of Somaliland H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi, thanked the former President of Somaliland, H.E. Dahir Rayale Kahin for organizing this meeting and working for the common interests of the Nation.

The president was flanked at the meeting by the chairman of the Kulmiye Party and the Minister of Interior, Hon. Mohamed Kahin Ahmed, Kulmiye vice presidential candidate and the Minister of Trade and Tourism, Hon. Mohamud Hassan Saad (Saajin) and the Minister of Animal Husbandry and Rural Development, Mr. Said Sulub Mohamed.

On the part of WADDANI, its presidential candidate Abdirahman Irro, he was accompanied at the meeting by his deputy, Mr. Mohamed Ali Aw Abdi, Mr. Abdiqadir Haji Ismail Jirde who is one of the party leaders and Secretary Abdiqadir Salah Idle.

McCaul, Smith Lead Bipartisan Letter on Increased Engagement with Somaliland

bipartisan House members sent a letter to Secretary Blinken calling for increased engagement with Somaliland.

The letter was signed by: Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX), Rep. Chris (R-NJ), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ), Rep. Peter Meijer (R-MI), Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA), Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX), Rep. Young Kim (R-CA), and Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH)

"We write to urge the Biden Administration to consider increasing and deepening engagement with Somaliland on issues of mutual diplomatic, economic, and security interests," the lawmakers wrote. "Somaliland's geo-strategic location on the Gulf of Aden, consistent support for democracy, cooperation on countering terrorism, piracy, and other security threats in the region, relations with Taiwan, and growing economic potential warrants that the United States explore additional opportunities to partner with Somaliland."

The full text of the letter can be found here and below.

Dear Secretary Blinken



We write to urge the Biden Administration to consider increasing and deepening engagement with Somaliland on issues of mutual diplomatic, economic, and security interests. Somaliland's geo-strategic location on the Gulf of Aden, consistent support for democracy, cooperation on countering terrorism, piracy, and other security threats in the region, relations with Taiwan, and growing economic potential warrants that the United States explore additional opportunities to partner with Somaliland.

Recent events in the Horn of Africa have upended feeble stability in the region and further jeopardized prospects for a peaceful resolution to multiple regional and domestic issues. With civil war embroiling

Ethiopia, with Eritrean involvement; return to military rule in Sudan; delayed elections and political infighting fueling increasing instability in Somalia, amidst unabated terrorist activity by Al-Shabaab; and the worst drought the region has seen in over forty years, the U.S. must rethink our current strategy of engagement to address these immense challenges and the threats posed to U.S. national security interests.

Somaliland has functioned autonomously for three decades—it maintains its own security, its own financial system, and its own trade relations. Several countries in the region, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, maintain diplomatic relations and trade with Somaliland,

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The Technical MoU Committee engaged in discussion with the National Parties, Parliament and Civil Society

The Technical Committee tasked with overseeing the agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia reached a significant milestone today as it engaged in discussions with key figures from the opposition parties WADDANI, UCID, KULMIYE, the parliament standing committee and civil society. In a series of meetings, the committee, along with the candidates and leaders of the opposition parties, elucidated their stance on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Somaliland and the Federal Government of Ethiopia.

There is strong and unwavering commitment from both Somaliland and Ethiopia to effectuate this deal. In addition to these pivotal engagements, the Technical Committee has been actively soliciting input from various sectors



of Somaliland's society and stakeholders. By incorporating diverse perspectives, the committee aims to ensure that the forthcoming agreement reflects the interests and concerns of all parties involved.

The MoU agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia is now approaching its final stages of negotiation. With discussions progressing steadily, stakeholders anticipate that the agreement will be formally concluded in the coming weeks, marking a significant stride in bilateral relations between the two nations.

The National Elections Committee pledge holding elections as scheduled



is geared towards the holding of free and fair elections'

The country is expected to go to polls for both the presidential and official top three political party elections in November.

The chairman of the National Electoral Commission, Mr. Musa

Hassan Yusuf, said that the elections will be held on time and that they are working round the clock to see to it that they duly uphold their tasks as slated and expected.

He said. "The internal affairs and defense committee of the Somaliland House of Representatives, which is the committee that we come under, sought our brief on our preparedness and we talked about the areas where we are going to work together.

He said that the elections body was informing the people that the "preparations of the election processes was in high gear and it would duly be held as slated on the 13th of November 2024".

He further said that they were at the final stages of technical touches such as the publication of the official voter list, issues that they were plunged into round the clock.

The NEC chair was giving the facts after meeting the parliamentary committee for internal affairs and defense.

Somaliland Reaffirms Resolve to Effectuate Sea Access Deal

Somaliland is committed to implementing the sea access MoU agreement it signed with Ethiopia recently, according to Mohamed Hussien Jama Rambo, a member of Somaliland's parliament.

During an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, the MP criticized external intervention and stated that Hargeisa would not give in to any pressure.

"We have faced pressure from entities that do not appreciate our development. Nevertheless, we resist these pressures and

demonstrate our resilience. We honor agreements and Somaliland will not succumb to any pressure," he added.

Regarding the Arab League's comments on the agreement, he said that the agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia does not concern the Arab League and they should not waste their time on such matters. He also mentioned that although Somalia had objected to Somaliland's agreements with DP World and the U.S., their objections did not work and did not affect the

implementation of these deals.

When asked about the reaction of the Somaliland public, he stated that the people of Somaliland are pleased with the agreement. They welcomed it and expressed their happiness. Somalilanders are prepared for business and are committed to working closely with their neighbors to ensure integration, as stated in the constitution.

McCaul, Smith Lead Bipartisan Letter on Increased Engagement with Somaliland

even though they don't formally recognize its independence. Some appear to have increased their engagement in the past year: Ethiopia, for example, recently upgraded its diplomatic representation by promoting its representative in Hargeisa to the rank of ambassador, and Kenya opened a Liaison Office in Somaliland last year. The United Kingdom, European Union, United Arab Emirates and Turkey also have representation in Hargeisa.

Strategic engagement with Somaliland would be a critical counterweight to China's increasing investment in the Horn of Africa. Djibouti, which has long served as the U.S.'s staging ground for U.S. military operations in the region, has become vulnerable since China operationalized their own naval base just eight miles from Camp Lemonnier in 2017. One year later, two U.S. pilots suffered injuries from Chinese-deployed lasers, underscoring the significant threat presented to U.S. operations and regional access going forward. With Djibouti's debt to China reportedly increasing to more than 70 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), China has ample leverage to gain a further foothold in the country and could conceivably pressure Djibouti for other political and strategic advantages that further undermine U.S. military operations. It is critical

that the U.S. government pursues other strategic opportunities, like access to Berbera's renovated airport and port, to safeguard our economic and security objectives in the Horn of Africa against further Chinese investment in Djibouti. Somaliland presents against further Chinese investment in Djibouti. Somaliland presents a democratic alternative, which has consistently resisted China's encroachment, and could ensure a continued U.S. presence on the Gulf of Aden.

Somaliland also established bilateral relations with Taiwan in September 2020 and exchanged representation shortly after. Somaliland and Taiwan have maintained close engagement, and during the COVID-19 pandemic Taiwan provided Somaliland with donated COVID-19 vaccines. The U.S. should take steps to support a deepening relationship between the Somaliland and Taiwan, as required by the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act of 2019, (P.L. 116-135), which calls on the U.S. government to consider additional engagement with nations that have strengthened, enhanced, or upgraded relations with Taiwan. The federal government of Somalia, meanwhile, does not maintain relations with Taiwan.

This Administration has stated that strengthening democracy and

elevating democratic partners is a top global priority. Somaliland has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to hold peaceful, credible, and competitive elections and has shown a commitment to democracy and representative government for decades. USAID has partnered with the International Republican Institute and other civil society partners to support election preparations, increased transparency and voter education and deploy election observers, in fact Somaliland's 2021 elections were the first in the world to be secured by biometric iris scans. Hargeisa has made important progress to advance democracy and effective governance and the Administration should seek to consolidate and reward this, particularly amidst further democratic backsliding elsewhere in the region.

With these political, economic, and security imperatives in mind, we urge the Administration to increase diplomatic engagement with Somaliland officials, senior leadership travel, and consider a permanent presence in Hargeisa. Increased partnership with Somaliland should be a priority and will mutually benefit U.S. and Somaliland interests. We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

A conference on the translation of regulations for oil production held in Hargeisa



conference on the translation of the basic five regulations of fuel production that is expected to last for six months.

Regulatory rules such as, National Subject Fuel Regulations, Information Resource Management Regulations, HSE Fuel Regulations, Fuel Measurement Regulations and General Regulations for Fuel Upgrades are the basics concerned.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Saeed Ahmed Jibril, the technical adviser for the Oil Affairs, Saeed M. Dama', Eng. Mahmoud Jamac (Jabali), the director of the Ministry of Planning, Muna Abdillahi, the director of the Oil Department, Yusuf Muse, and several engineers from the Oil Department.

The meeting was opened by the

Director of the Petroleum Department, who informed about the importance of the reformation and the translations of the said regulations, which contributes to the attraction of investment in natural resources such as oil exploration and production, as well as the accountability of companies in agreements with the government.

Eng Saeed Dama' and Eng Mahamud Jabali, also gave suggestions and added how important it is to establish the laws and regulations of the country's fuel. At the end, the meeting was closed by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry Saeed Ahmed Jibril who spoke in depth about the importance of the country having the rules and regulations complete, and its importance in investiture. He urged the engineers and experts concerned complete the tasks in focus timely.

Minister of Water meets with heads of the country's water agencies



By M.A. Egge

The Minister of Water Resources Hon. Suleiman Yusuf Ali Koore, held a crucial meeting with all the managers of the country's water agencies.

The Minister was flanked at the meeting with the ministry's DG Miss. Nafisa Mohamud Shirwa', in which they discussed how to strengthen the cooperation between the ministry and the country's water agencies.

The work activities that the agencies are responsible for and how to find solutions to the challenges faced by

the agencies were analyzed at the meeting.

The Country Agency Managers also briefed on their respective activities and plans.

The focus was mainly on how to improve the work activities of the water agencies for their communities and their country, and important information related to the work of the agencies and how to help the Ministry of Water Resources in their work was shared.

The consensus of the meeting was mutual agreement that efforts to bolster the services be redoubled and bolstered.

President presents awards to winners of annual national Quran Recitation Competition

By M.A. Egge

The President H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi, presented various prizes to the top three competitors who excelled in the annual national Quran competition always held during the holy month of Ramadan.

Amongst the audience who graced the occasion were the VP, members of the cabinet, the clergy, MPs, politicians and eminent personalities.

Initially, the Director General of the Ministry of Religion and Endowments of the Republic of Somaliland, Mr. Adan Abdullahi Abdille, elaborated on the different stages of the competition and the role of the ministry in it.

The Minister of Religion and Endowment Hon. Mohamed Haji

Aden Ilmi, praised the participants who won the annual competition of the Holy Quran, and thanked the president of the nation for funding the competition at the national level. The President on his part congratulated all the participants in the competition, especially the top-most trio.

The President awarded a motor car to the overall winner, Suhayb Ase Abdilahi from the Marodi-jeh region, while the first runner-up Suhayb Mohamud Adan from the Togdeer region presented a laptop computer, a mobile phone and \$2,000 (two thousand) dollars. The second runner-up Abdirahman Abshir from Awdal region was presented with a Laptop, a Mobile phone and an amount of \$1,500.



Hargeisa civic officials in "Smart Cities Summit and Expo" international conference in Taiwan



By M.A. Egge

A delegation of Hargeisa local government has represented the nation Taiwan in an international exhibition conference.

The international conference known as "Smart Cities Summit and Expo" was officially opened in Taipei, Taiwan, which was attended

by officials from the local government of Hargeisa, which included the Director of the Planning and Development Department of the local government, Khadar Yusuf Ali, civic Cllr. Yasin Omar Abdi and Cllr. Jamal Osman Abdillahi.

The international exhibition, which

is important for the exchange of knowledge and experiences on the development of cities, was attended by representatives from different cities of the world, international companies engaged in the creation of modern technology, specialized experts and various urban officials from all over the world.

It focuses on collaboration, sharing of innovations, and accelerating the implementation of high-tech solutions to address the challenges of the world's cities, climate change, reducing air pollution, greening and modernizing global urban towns.

In conclusion, Taiwan is a country with which Somaliland has a healthy cooperative relationship, both educational and economic, in which they cooperate on cultural and economic issues on both sides.

Various awards were also presented at the forum to some of the scholars who participated in the competition.

Five young scholars who were presented at the forum are to be facilitated by the religion ministry to have their voices recorded in

production of complete Holy Quran recitations that would be aired by the radios.

The competition of the Holy Quran in the holy month of Ramadan is held every year in the month of Ramadan, with its epitome being the Head of State presenting the winners with awards.

Mumbai police take custody of 35 Somali pirates arrested by Indian navy off Somalia's coast



Mogadishu (HOL) —The Indian Navy has transported at least 35 Somali pirates, apprehended off the coast of Somalia, to Mumbai aboard the warship INS Kolkata, officials announced on Saturday. Upon arrival, the captured individuals were handed over to Mumbai police.

The pirates were arrested during a strategic interception of the hijacked Malta-flagged cargo ship MV Ruen, which pirates repurposed as a mother ship for launching further attacks. According to the Indian Navy, the pirates engaged their warship with gunfire. The navy responded, neutralizing the threat and ensuring the pirates' capture after a 40-hour standoff.

The operation began on March 15, when INS Kolkata, guided by intelligence from the UK Maritime Trade Operations and the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre, tracked and intercepted the pirate vessel, formerly known as MV Ruen. The mission is part of Operation

Sankalp and comes amid a heightened focus on maritime security, with Indian naval forces deployed in strategic waterways since December to counter threats from pirates and Houthi militants disrupting shipping routes in the Red Sea.

With piracy incidents off the Somali coast on the rise, the international community, including regional governments and the UN's International Maritime Organization, has called for enhanced maritime security measures to deter further attacks.

Although the Puntland regional government has expressed interest in deporting the captured pirates for local prosecution, it does not appear that this will be likely now that the Somali suspects have been transported to India for prosecution. Following their capture, the suspected pirates now face legal proceedings under India's 2022 Maritime Anti-Piracy Act.

Senior FAO and the European Union officials inspect agricultural lands in Togdeer region

By M.A. Egge

A delegation from FAO and the European Union went on a working trip to Togdeer Region and inspected the farmers in Beer and Kabadeere.

The Co-ordinator of the Ministry of Agricultural Development in Togdeer region, Abdirisaaq Abdillahi Ibrahim who led the delegation, gave a report to the officials of the FAO and the European Union on the agricultural production of the areas they inspected and also gave briefs on the plans to increase agricultural production in the region.

The coordinator of the CadRE project that the Ministry is conducting in Togdeer, Mohamud Jama, also explained the mode of the activities of the project carried out in Togdeer.

Some of the farmers in Beer and Kabo-deere areas expressed their appreciation for how the Ministry of



Agriculture Development and its partner organizations are standing by the farmers, praising the efforts of the Coordinator of the Ministry of Agriculture in Togdeer.

On the other hand, the head of the FAO organization in Somaliland and Somalia, the head in charge of the

European Union (EU) in Somaliland pointed out the importance of increasing agricultural production, such as the projects of the Ministry of Agriculture development saying that they will carry out agricultural projects in Togdeer region, based on the needs of farmers in Togdeer region.

An East African Port Deal the World Should Applaud

While the proposed port deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland is still at the aspirational Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stage with many details to be defined, the general framework will benefit both. Ethiopia will lease a twelve-mile strip of Somaliland's coast for fifty years while Somaliland will gain formal diplomatic recognition from Ethiopia and a stake in Ethiopia's national air carrier. Somaliland has a modern port at Berbera, recently upgraded through a major investment by the UAE's DP World, but the location for Ethiopia's concession is still uncertain. In addition to a port for

Ethiopian imports and exports, Ethiopia will establish a base—for a navy that hasn't floated a ship since 1991. While Ethiopian recognition of Somaliland is significant, it will also likely open the door to other countries to follow suit since several have stated discretely that while they could not be the first to offer recognition, they could be second. If the project is realized, it would have far-reaching benefits. The return of a professional Ethiopian navy to the Red Sea would improve stability in a critically important waterway menaced by piracy and other disruptions. Even Egypt, bitterly opposed to the deal, would benefit

economically if more shipping transits the Suez Canal. Adding another port and an efficient transit corridor would be a significant economic boost to the region and offer additional ways to bring relief supplies into countries that frequently suffer from humanitarian disasters.

The deal could also release some pressure building in East Africa ever since Abiy declared that sea access was an existential issue last year. Many believed his remarks were a prelude to war with Eritrea, a catastrophic scenario. Given that Ethiopia could secure strictly commercial maritime access



through other means, Abiy appears to believe that a naval base is indispensable to his cherished ambition of being the leader who restored Ethiopia's status as an unassailable great African power. If the MoU with Somaliland fails, Abiy will likely continue his quest in a far more destabilizing way.

Possibilities of Choppy Water

There are complications, to be sure. Despite its great potential and high economic growth, Ethiopia faces a difficult financial situation thanks in part to the recent devastating war in Tigray and ongoing insecurity in other regions. Addis Ababa must be creative in funding an expensive project like building a base and navy. Furthermore, Mogadishu may stop cooperating with Ethiopia on countering al-Shabaab in response to what it views as Ethiopia's violations of its sovereignty (notwithstanding al-Shabaab's long control of chunks of Somalia about which Somalia's governing elites have often demonstrated a curious lack of focus). It may also try to stir clan trouble in areas of Ethiopia inhabited by ethnic Somalis or try to inflame an ongoing clan insurgency in Somaliland's east.

Nonetheless, provoking clan trouble elsewhere risks exacerbating Somalia's profound and often violent rivalries. The countries that provide the most funding for Somalia's armed forces and government would also disapprove of such a campaign. There would be more evidence that Mogadishu is not sufficiently serious about fighting al-Shabaab to merit strong international support.

Similarly, there is little reason to believe that the Somaliland-Ethiopia deal will empower al-Shabaab. The terror group rose to prominence as an anti-Ethiopian insurgency and has always fused irredentist and nationalist sentiment with radical Salafism. It is propagandizing about the deal and vowing to resist Ethiopia. Yet thousands of troops, including many Ethiopians, have been inside Somalia for well over a decade. It is unlikely that an agreement implemented far to the north of where most Somalis live would

boost al-Shabaab recruitment more than that reality.

Regional powers opposed to Ethiopia, such as Egypt and, increasingly, Eritrea, may seize the opportunity to work with Somalia to undermine Ethiopia. However, while Eritrea may not cherish the prospect of an eventual Ethiopian navy operating in the neighborhood, the port deal would resolve Ethiopia's landlocked status and, therefore, remove a perennial source of friction in the Ethiopia-Eritrea relationship. Egypt is strongly motivated to oppose Ethiopia but still has the same problem that has stymied its efforts to stop Ethiopia's Blue Nile dam, namely its incapacity to do much about it.

Finally, a recently signed economic and military agreement between Somalia and Turkey has stirred hopes among Somalian partisans that Turkiye will confront Ethiopia on Somalia's behalf. However, there is little to fear that the agreement portends such a destabilizing development. In addition to Somalia's president acknowledging that the deal is unrelated to Ethiopia, Ankara has no reason to involve itself in the dispute, not least because of its strong military and economic ties with Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa is an increasingly strategic region, yet the United States's ability to defend its interests there continues to wane. Washington is partly hampered by incorporating the fiction that Somaliland is functionally part of Somalia into its policies. It is time for a pragmatic American approach that correctly calculates U.S. interests, starting with working to ease the tensions around the proposed Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal. If cooler heads prevail, the port deal's economic and security benefits will be well worth applause. Although many are skeptical of the newly announced deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland, it has the potential to benefit the entire region of the Horn of Africa, Egypt, and the Red Sea.

Tibor Nagy was the previous Assistant Secretary of State for Africa and is currently Professor Emeritus at Texas Tech University.

EU maritime force deploys warship near hijacked Bulk Carrier as part of anti-piracy mission



A warship of the European Union Naval Force or EUNAVFOR has been sent to keep a close watch on the MV Abdullah, a Bangladeshi-flagged bulk carrier which was hijacked by Somali Pirates and whose crew was taken hostage.

The deployment is part of EUNAVFOR's anti-piracy mission, Operation Atalanta. The news of the warship deployment was announced on X at 12:30 am on Friday.

A video posted on EUNAVFOR's official X handle showed the warship near the MV Abdullah, and a helicopter could also be seen hovering close to the hijacked vessel.

EUNAVFOR, which strives to protect ships off the East African coast from Pirates, added that it has been keeping a close watch on the Bulk Carrier MV Abdullah since its hijacking on March 12. European Union Naval Force mentioned in another post that many incidents of piracy on cargo ships have been reported since the end of 2023. Among three commercial vessels which were hijacked by pirates recently, MV Abdullah remains under the control of the Somali pirates.

Around 24 ships have been the target of hijacking in the waters of Somali and the Gulf of Aden since November 24, 2023, per sources.

Owned by Kabir Group's SR Shipping, MV Abdullah was hijacked with its 23-member crew while it was in the Indian Ocean on its way to the UAE from Mozambique. The pirates took the crew as hostages and contacted the ship owners on March 20.

Per Reuters, Puntland Police of Somalia and the International Navy were about to conduct an operation to free the vessel and its kidnapped crew; however, Kabir Group's spokesperson Mizanul Islam said that they did not want military intervention as it could threaten the safety of the seafarers.

References: bdnews24, views bangladesh

THT Puzzle

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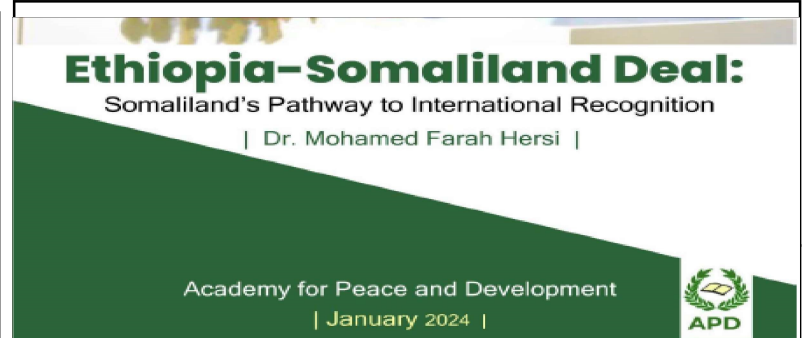
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- 3 Obtain
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- 6 Reach your destination.
- 7 Myself
- 12 Rooftop
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ACROSS

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- 4 Hello
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- 10 Tutor
- 13 Individual
- 14 Manuscript
- 17 Evening before
- 19 Adequate
- 22 Request
- 23 Position
- 26 Panic or afraid
- 27 Client
- 29 Colleagues
- 31 Accordingly
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- 33 Europe in short form
- 35 Be present
- 37 Guided
- 38 Low down
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Previous Answer

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O		I		G 16	O		O		F 17	E	E
M 18	E	N			P 19	E 20	N		E		D
E			W 21	H 22	E	N		I 23	C	E	
	G 24	O 25		I		G 26	O		T		
M 27		C 28	A	N	A	L		S 29		A 30	
O		E		G		I		E 31	N	D	S 32
R 33	E	A	D	E	R	S		E		D 34	O
E		N		S		H 35	I	D	E		N



(Part 08)

6. Possible Scenarios

Three potential scenarios follow from the analysis presented in this report, each of which is feasible depending upon the direction each actor takes in attempting to achieve their policy objectives, with each side seeking to outmaneuver the others. Ethiopia seeks access to the sea, Somaliland aims for international recognition and a mutually beneficial commercial maritime agreement, while Somalia endeavors to impede both of these key objectives for Somaliland and Ethiopia. Can Somalia, with its current domestic challenges, effectively obstruct and prevail over Ethiopia and Somaliland? This paper examines each scenario and assesses its consequences.

6.1 Scenario I: Ethiopia and Somaliland Succeed through Diplomacy

In this situation, Ethiopia and Somaliland make the case for their deal via diplomatic efforts, both through bilateral engagement as well as at multilateral forums, including IGAD and the AU. The objective will be to overcome the diplomatic crisis between Somalia and Ethiopia, which stems from Somalia's opposition to both Ethiopian access to Somali territory and the issue of Somaliland's recognition. Here, Somalia continues to appeal to de jure recognition of Somalia's authority over Somaliland territory. However, this case is undermined by several factors, such as

(1) Somalia's inability to enact its claimed sovereign control over Somaliland by virtue of its lack of state capacity; (2) Somaliland's strong legal case for independence based on the historic dissolving of a failed union (for which there is much legal precedent); and (3) the extreme dependence of Somalia on outsourcing its sovereign power to foreign militaries and governments since the establishment of the federal government in 2012, of which the current Ethio-Somaliland MoU pales in comparison.

Furthermore, despite Somalia's protests to the AU and IGAD, both organizations remain heavily influenced by Ethiopia and Kenya, reducing Somalia's influence within these bodies. Ethiopia holds particularly strong influence in the AU, given its location in Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's political and economic weight. Consequently, it is unlikely that AU organs and most of its member states, excluding certain outliers such as Egypt, will condemn and protest against the recently signed MoU.

It is equally unlikely that the United Nations Security Council would intervene in the issue, but would rather leave it up to regional diplomatic decision-making both of Africa and the Gulf. If these assumptions prove correct, implementation of the MoU between the government of Somaliland and Ethiopia should not face any significant obstacles, paving the way for Somaliland's path to international recognition and potentially inspiring other states to follow suit. The stance of Saudi Arabia, however, one of the key players in the region, remains something of an open question, and its direction could prove pivotal. Despite its support for the territorial integrity of

Somalia, Saudi Arabia has not expressed any objections to the content of the MoU. Therefore, if both Saudi Arabia and the UAE do not object to the MoU, it is likely that the agreement will be successfully implemented.

If the diplomatic crisis between Ethiopia and Somalia deepens, or if the prospect of armed confrontation or instability becomes more likely, the AU may have to step in and attempt to address the situation. This may have to positive consequence of finally placing Somaliland's case on the agenda of the AU, as a matter of great concern. Given the failure of the bilateral talks between Somalia and Somaliland that were sponsored in 2012, and which continue to be weakly appealed to by the international community today, placing responsibility in the hands of the AU to finally address the issue of Somaliland's status, alongside the backing of Ethiopia for this initiative, could finally provide an African solution to the Somaliland question.

At the regional level, alliances may realign, with Somaliland, Ethiopia, and the UAE forming a bloc against a possible alliance between Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Egypt. Within such a regional formation, Somaliland's role as a viable, credible and important geopolitical actor will become more visible, providing it with an opportunity to be granted a voice at certain regional organizations, both in the Arab world and Africa. It is possible that Somaliland may be granted an observer status at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the AU, allowing

To be continue next week

Far from a benefactor, the Turkish government is exploiting Somalia's fragility

Training and indoctrination

Since its opening, the Turkish embassy in Somalia has graduated five battalions of SNA troops, 2,500 in total. As part of its training, the Somali troops are treated to a heavy dose of Turkish indoctrination that includes singing the Turkish national anthem with a background video showing Turkish army propaganda commemorating the Ottoman Empire.

The Somali Ministry of Defense does not exercise any oversight, is not part of the training, and is oblivious to what the troops are learning. Worse still, it does not seem to understand the challenges of integrating the Turkish-trained units with the larger SNA. There are further concerns over the role played by SADAT, a notorious Turkish private military contractor, which has been confirmed to be involved in training Somali troops. Founded by an Erdoğan ally, SADAT has been heavily involved in conflicts in Syria and Libya and has been accused of providing training and weapons to the al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front.

(Dis)integration with the SNA

Turkey is equipping the SNA units it trains with Turkish-made weapons such as the MPT-76 and other HK G3 variants made by MKEK with 7.62x51 NATO ammunition. This creates a dangerous incompatibility that prevents these units from being integrated into the larger SNA. In addition, there are also signs of a disconnect from command and control that may stem from Turkish-provided communications equipment, according to members of the SNA. By contrast, the U.S. and the U.K., which have trained and equipped effective units, opt to retrofit Kalashnikovs and other weapons widely available in Somalia to outfit the units they train, instead of the M4s or Enfields used by their armies. Turkey is thereby creating a market for its weapons manufacturers such as MKEK at the expense of building a cohesive army that is capable of carrying out joint operations between various branches and units.

Politicization of the SNA

On Feb. 19, 2021, the Turkish-trained Somali special forces known as Gorgor ("Eagle") used live ammunition on unarmed civilians peacefully protesting the extension of Farmaajo's term in office as president, which had expired on Feb. 8 2021. On April 27, the Turkish-trained Haramcad ("Cheetah") special police unit was implicated in the illegal arrest of journalists and an attack on a former Somali president. Despite repeated pleas by the Somali Opposition Council to the Turkish government to avoid sending weapons and military hardware during Somalia's



election dispute, Turkey continued to supply weapons to a president intent on staying in power at all costs.

This was a turning point that changed how many Somalis perceived Turkey, especially the residents of Mogadishu. Having welcomed Turkey with open arms in 2011 as a peacemaker and state builder, they were now shocked by its indifference to their plight, as Turkey openly took Farmaajo's side and the troops it trained turned their guns on local residents instead of fighting al-Shabab. The U.N. Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SMEG) has repeatedly warned Turkey for violating the U.N. arms embargo by equipping Somali police forces without notifying and getting approval from SMEG.

Erdoğan's "neo-Ottoman" threat to Somalia

Erdoğan's visit to Somalia in 2011 and the provision of assistance by multiple Turkish aid agencies at the height of the famine made Turkey a godsend in the eyes of many Somalis, who were yearning for an alternative to the failed Western-backed Somalia government. These overtures served as a litmus test of Erdoğan's soft power, putting Turkey on the map as a humanitarian actor and an emerging donor.

In reality, however, the Turkish model has been a form of humanitarian enterprise diplomacy aimed at winning destitute Somali hearts and the backing of corrupt political elites who benefit from aid dependency on the West. However, the branding of Turkish aid has had a damaging impact on public perception, creating high expectations that the Turkish government would invest in state-building and provide protection. This perception is predictable when political elites have oversold expectations of the Turkish government and its economic strength. These elites are not happy with the EU and U.S.; even though they provide the majority of Somalia's budget support and

developmental aid, this comes with rules, regulations, and bureaucratic accountability, while the Turkish government has a different approach that meets their long-standing principal demand of "what's in it for me."

Erdoğan has said he believes Turkey's involvement in Somalia was a good omen for the African country, writing in a piece published in *Foreign Policy* in October 2011, "In Turkish culture, it is believed that something good will come out of all bad experiences." A decade later the only thing Somalia has gained from the Turkish model is costly bad experience stemming from imported autocracy, democratic backsliding, and a development trap.

Turkish state-sponsored private companies Albayrak and Favori resemble the Italian colonial enterprise Benadir Company, and over the past 10 years they have benefitted from illegal long-term concessions and political impunity that has cost Somalia's government and investors as much as \$5 billion in lost revenue due to trade barriers and exploitation of state resources, according to estimates from the author confirmed by former government finance officials. Turkey's bilateral trade relationship with Somalia has put its economy in a stranglehold, turning Somalia's assets into dead capital that has weakened the government and private sector's financial footing and ability to attract foreign direct investment, limiting its sovereignty, and creating an addiction to Turkey's artificial aid and its development trap.

Turkey has used Somalia to incubate its private sector companies and build a portfolio and track record it can pitch to other African or low-income countries with the deceptive marketing that "if it works in Somalia, it can work in your country too." An African country that cannot access stringent World Bank loans or Chinese soft loans could easily be tempted to accept

such an offer and risk falling into a development trap. This is especially true for countries with authoritarian regimes, fragile states, and weak government institutions, like Somalia, Afghanistan, and Libya. Rather than reforming and strengthening Somalia's weak government institutions to reduce corruption, the Turkish government chose to corrupt Somalia government ministries to reap the benefits of lucrative concessions in an effort to maintain its prestige at home and polish its credentials as an international actor abroad, all at the expense of Mogadishu's taxpayers.

If future Somalia leaders do not hedge against Erdoğan's irredentism and neo-Ottoman expansionism by taking a page from Tunisia, which imposed a 27% tariff on Turkish goods to reduce the trade deficit, in the next 10 years Turkey may expand its hold on the

economy and take over Somalia's agricultural sector as well, just like the Italian colonialists did when they realized that the Benadir coastal ports and towns depend on a hinterland (Shabelle River belt) supply chain.

Turkey is using its military base in Somalia to expand its influence and gain a foothold in the Horn of Africa, all without paying a cent in rent, and it has become clear that the government's goal is not to protect Somalia from the scourge of al-Shabab or provide any meaningful security assistance.

Perhaps Erdoğan has no interest in seeing a secure and peaceful Somalia and the units that Turkey is training, whose record in combat against al-Shabab is dismal compared to the other units like the Danab ("Lightning Brigade"), may instead be a backstop to ensure that any future occupant of Villa Somalia does not go against Ankara's interests. If so, Erdoğan could be providing the kindling for future conflicts in Somalia.

Erdoğan has exploited Somalia's fragility to pursue his ambition of making Turkey an international power and furthering his "neo-Ottoman" aspirations. Erdoğan's new empire is a thinly veiled feudal system that depends on militarism and economic exploitation for its survival. It is a threat to Somalia's stability and prosperity, and if replicated elsewhere, it could destabilize other countries too.

Guled Ahmed is a non-resident scholar at MEI, a renewable energy and water infrastructure expert, and an entrepreneur. The views expressed in this piece are his own.

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