

Paper One: Overcoming Diplomatic Isolation: Forging a New Somaliland Approach

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Abstract

This monograph examines the multidimensional challenges against Somaliland's quest for establishing foreign policy goals with an effective diplomacy to overcome the isolation state of affairs since its establishment. The study has identified the nexus between two interrelated key factors: '*diplomacy*' and '*foreign policy goals*', which are two valid perspectives in international relations. The study emphasizes that policy-making requires accurate, deep and timely knowledge of any situation that could influence the decision-making circles and may lead thinking twice. It makes clear the necessity for approaching '*diplomacy*' driven by concrete foreign policy objectives with professional, skilled, and influential diplomats those could play an important role in designing the nation's exit strategy from the political limbo it remains in since its inception, and sketch the survival strategy of the people's will. The study extensively draws from secondary sources including: relevant literatures written by both Somali and non-Somali scholars in the field. The conclusion suggests the need for re-making and re-conceptualizing the nation's foreign policy strategies to overcome the very weaknesses of its '*diplomacy*' whose success is based on integrated and collective approaches to sustain Somaliland's foreign strategy in the long-term.

Key Words: diplomacy, foreign policy, recognition, *de facto*, *de jure*, Somaliland, Somalia, diplomatic isolation, geopolitics, geostrategic

Introduction

Usually, when the international relations of Somaliland are studied, the focus does not extend beyond narrative diplomatic history and the careers of individual Somaliland statesmen. Indeed, *'Somaliland diplomacy'*, to many scholars, means no more than Somaliland foreign policy. However, though the state had a foreign policy right from the beginning, diplomacy developed very little until recently, and to the role of diplomacy as a domestic factor in the formulation of foreign policy remained of less significance or even missing.

From the very beginning to its recent history, Somaliland had interactions with both regional governments and the countries too far beyond the boundaries of the region that were unbroken and intensive. These interactions ranged from bilateral relations to multilateral cooperation and covered a range of issues including: economics, politics, culture, trade, and others (ICG 2006; Nasir 2011). But, a more pessimistic picture appears when we look at those who engage and deal with the external relations, who make and implement Somaliland foreign policy and say nice things about diplomacy, which can be described, in shorthand way, as reaching out directly to foreign countries to convince Somaliland's irrevocable right to exist, while it ignored in establishing long-lasting policies to bridge the gap between Somaliland and the outside world.

Against this background, as a small and newly emerging state, some may argue that public diplomacy could be the best approach that Somaliland can reach both the foreign publics and governments simultaneously. This could be true, if we go back to history of world nations, for instance, the U.S government carried out public diplomacy several times from 1965 to recent 9/11 attack to justify its *"war on terror"* aimed to inform or influence public opinion in other countries (Jan 2005; John 2005; David et al. 2007). This kind of engagement was a deliberate act designed to communicate with international actors, meaning not only states and governments, but also other subjects of international law such as: both inter/non-governmental organizations (IGOs/NGOs), and individuals (Rosen & Wolf, 2004; Seib, 2009).

So, it seems obvious that the President Silanyo has the opportunity to change and tackle all the weaknesses and gaps that existed within Somaliland foreign policies and its approaches. In fact, those of us who have contributed to this thought and analysis hope that it will prove useful to the regime by offering an array of approaches to diplomacy that are worthy of implementation. Therefore, as the Japanese experience illustrates, Somaliland's foreign affairs are also inseparable from domestic political legitimacy (R. Auslin 2004). This is, therefore, diplomacy needs a constituency both within the government and among members of the broader public who are willing to assert that this must be made a more integral part of Somaliland's interaction both with the regional and international community.

Regardless of the above critique, the overwhelming question regarding '*diplomacy*' is the extent to which Somaliland has been successful. However, there is an equally important, and for some, a far greater series of questions to consider: What is Somaliland's diplomats' role in managing their tasks, and what are the benefits and dilemmas associated with targeted countries? Answering these questions requires a commitment, not only from the Silanyo–Saylici regime's policies, but also from the individual figures including: Diasporas and other renowned Somaliland intellectuals across the globe.

The purpose of this study, then, aims to explore some aspects of Somaliland diplomacy from the viewpoint of how it formulated and conducted its foreign policy objectives linking with both geopolitics and geostrategic dimensions of the Horn region, in particular Somaliland. The study attempts to find valid answers to some critical issues which include: how Somaliland formulates its policies vis-à-vis other states or inter/non-governmental organizations, and how it carries out these policies, what sort of means and instruments were used to conduct diplomacy, and who were the agents carrying out those policies who have been widely neglected to research. The study aims

to suggest the interventions that need intentionally to be established by Somaliland policy-making circles to contribute and fuel its momentums to translate from *de facto* status to *de jure* statehood.

Methodology

The findings of this study primarily originated from an in-depth desk review of literature including: books, journals, published and unpublished research papers, and direct observation which reflect the author's experiences on the subject matter and the perceptions of the citizens. The literature contains many examples of diplomacy and foreign policy approaches that aimed to help the study, while Somaliland diplomacy has been and remained a rather under-researched area. Furthermore, though there has been well-established literature on the social, economical, political, and to some extent, cultural systems of the Somaliland State, studies dealing with its external relations are comparatively scarce and very few of these have been devoted to an analysis of diplomacy.

Conceptual Clarity

At first sight, the most important definition that needs to be understood is the term 'diplomacy', which is highly emotive in international relations. Thus, it is worth to define in this context what exactly we mean by diplomacy? According to the scholars, the term has been characterized as "*the master-institution*" or, more closely to the clause, as "*the engine room*" of international relations (Christer & Hall 2005). This notion is considered to be one of the principal institutions of the modern [world] states system as it emerged and developed together with sovereignty and territorial integrity aftermath of Westphalia Peace Accord in 1648¹. Against this argument, there are others who sound that diplomacy is far from being not only an invention of capitalism or of the

¹ Retrieved from a DVD, about a paper presented at Maansoor Hotel in an event organized by Hargeisa Readers' Club (HRC), Hargeisa, 7 January 2011; titled: "*In Search of an International Identity: A Comparative Analysis in the Case of Somaliland and South Sudan*".

modern nation state, or of classical antiquity either, but also is found in some of the most primitive communities and seems to have been evolved independently by peoples in all parts of the world (Collin, 2004; Miller, 2005). In either view, it received little attention among the contemporary policy-makers and practitioners due to the absence of active engagement of political scholars and researchers those specialized in international relations, particularly those from Africa.

In the proper sense of the word as we use it today, it may be described as ‘the fundamental means by which foreign relations are conducted and a foreign policy objectives implemented, and by which sovereign nations conduct affairs with one another and develop agreement on their respective positions ranging from war to peace, through alliances, boundaries, trade and others (Alan & Berridge, 2001; Yurdusey, 2004). It is important to note that diplomacy is the device of foreign policy that aimed to carry forward the formulated policies through representation, bargaining, negotiation, and other peaceful means, which are regarded as the chief functions of the term. In this situation, it deserves to mention that such arrangements may be conducted publicly or out of view, but once mutual interests and consensus are recognized, official policy formulation proceeds (Miller, 2005). Nevertheless, extreme flexibility and tact are commonly attributed to successful diplomatic efforts, which are regulated by law and custom. In this regard, this notion by its means and methods, involves mutual dependence, permanent relations, living together, the need for the other, plus some idea of equality and mutual recognition among world personalities.

In many regards, and among its many definitions, diplomacy may be summarized as ‘the persons, institutions, rules and concepts concerning the art and style of the implementation of foreign policy’. Therefore, the Foreign Ministry, as the institution related to diplomacy, is regarded also as a domestic factor in the formulation of foreign policy (James & Berridge, 2001). Nevertheless, one may observe that functions of the

two concepts are inseparable; this is, therefore, diplomacy can be likened to the constructor of a building who is also one of its architects.

In Somaliland, its foreign policy has been carried out under conditions of a changing geopolitical landscape, accompanied by the accumulation of many actors in domestic politics encircled by turmoil in many parties of the wider Horn region. These problems include: forms of statelessness, state fragility, resources scarcities, and environmental problems aggravated by external actors. Despite the growth of a state of confusion in international relations in the Horn region, for the past decade due to America's "*war on terror*" which has not been generally favorable to Somaliland, '*Somaliland diplomacy*' neither has acted proactively, responsibly, nor consistently and pragmatically².

This study is a first attempt aimed at lifting the veil on a range of approaches towards diplomacy and bridges the gap between the policy and practice. It is mentioning some essential dimensions of diplomacy with the Somaliland context that aims to be a starting point for exploring further Somaliland diplomacy that extends beyond narrative history of foreign policy. And finally, the study closes with a few ways forward policies that, if implemented, could ensure success for the nation's "*war on recognition*".

Background

According to history, Somaliland was certainly one of the British colonies in Africa, and its origin as a political entity from the establishment as the British Somaliland Protectorate dates back in 1884 (Douglas 1961; Michael 2004; Gorka, 2011). Except for a brief occupation of Italy (1940-1941) following the Second World War, the territory remained under British control until 26 June 1960, when it received its independence as the State of Somaliland. Notification of that independence was accurately registered

² Observed from the policies and practices of Somaliland's foreign policy and the general situation of the wider region

with the UN and over 34 governments including: the five veto powers of the UN Security Council (UNSC) reportedly recognized the new state (ICG 2006; Charles 2009). On 1 July 1960, the UN Trusteeship administered by Italy also achieved its independence.

In 1960, the two regions united to form Somali Republic as part of the realization of the Greater Somalia ambition. Although initially Somaliland people were enthusiastic about forming a union with its Italian counterpart; the euphoria quickly changed to disenchantment as many in Somaliland felt increasingly marginalized in government and other sectors of society (Mesfin 1977; Lewis 2002). Indeed, when the idea that Somaliland was a separate polity before 1960 is added to the argument that it was part of the Somali state system until its total collapse in 1991, it would seem impossible to avoid the conclusion that Somaliland was not only outside the social and political system of Somalia, but also ill-disposed towards creating a Somali state for all (Dualeh, 2002). In this situation, one may argue that the people of Somaliland were not only alien, but also hostile to Somalia rules, institutions, and ways of conducting state affairs.

In 1969, a military junta led by General Mohamed Siad Barre ousted one of the very few civilian governments in Africa in October 1969, led by Mohamed Ibrahim Egal³. The new military junta instituted a Marxist regime, and became a close ally of the Soviet Union (Bradbury, 2008). However, the military government has not only deposed the civil-elected administration, but also introduced the centralization strategy aimed to control the state authority under the leadership of the late General Mohamed Siad Barre. In many regards, one may say that Somalia's unending tragedy, agony, and state collapse are the product of a long-term abuse of power and state institutions.

³ Son of businessman, the first Prime Minister of the State of Somaliland when it gained its independence in 1960; the ousted and last civil-elected Prime Minister of Somalia in 1969, and the second President of Somaliland from 1993-2002

In 1977, the uneasy relations between Ethiopia and Somalia, which basically emanate from claiming people and land in the adjacent area (irredentism) led Somali military government to go to war against Ethiopia. This war is considered as one of the bloodiest wars ever witnessed in the Horn of Africa in the cold war era (Bereket 1980; Nasir, 2011). Nonetheless, Barre's expansionist ambitions ended with the Somalia's catastrophic defeat by Ethiopia and its allies in the 1977–1978 Ogaden War.

Therefore, following that military fiasco, the Siad Barre regime started to blame military officials for the national humiliation that created breaks among the inner circles of the ruling regime. This consequently led Somalis to go in establishing liberation movements along clan lines (Nasir, 2012). As part of that political and social dynamics that existed within the Somali state, then, Somaliland business and political elites living in the United Kingdom opted to form the Somali National Movement (SNM) in 1981. The SNM was one of a growing number of Somali groups that aimed to topple Siad Barre regime (Schoiswohl, 2004). At the beginning of 1980s, the Siad Barre regime became increasingly unstable, while the SNM expanded its operations in the North region. Therefore, the ruthless regime in Mogadishu responded by instituting harsh and brutal measures in the North aimed to humiliate the SNM supporters (Bulhan 2008; Gorka 2011).

As a result of Somalia's failure to purge the moral and material support of the SNM in the North, the military junta instantaneously and indiscriminately used its means and materials to launch raids and bombing campaigns to assert control over North Somalia (the current Somaliland). Therefore, by the end of the 1980s, it became apparent that SNM control was looming in all over the North, including the major towns of Hargeisa and Burao, and the regime was on the verge of collapse (HRW 2009; Hoehne 2011). As a consequence of these confrontations and crisis, the Somali regime finally collapsed in 1991. On 18 May, the same year, the SNM without prior notice declared Somaliland's independence within the borders it inherited from the British Government on 26 June

1960 as a State of Somaliland, leaving Somaliland and its people free to determine their own political direction and destiny.

Although SNM is perhaps the most prominent advocate of this account of the development of the Somaliland state from the Grand Conference in Buroa 1991, it has been shared by many. Basically, it is important to note that the principal institutions of the Somaliland state system began to emerge in 1993 from Borama National Conference (IRI 2005; ICG 2006; Eubank 2010). This Congress, then, adopted National Charter, with a Parliament consisting two chambers, the “*Lower and Upper Houses*”, plus the Executive organ. This structure was an amalgamation of both traditional and western-style form of governance (Medhane, 2002). From 1997 onwards, Somaliland became more institutionalized in the capital city and the administration gradually expanded into the other parts of the country.

It is quite remarkable that, on 31 May 2001, a public referendum was conducted with an overwhelming 97.7 per cent approving the interim Constitution adopted at the Hargeisa Conference in 1997. The Constitution was an advocate for multi-parties politics and democratic elections (IRI 2005; ICG 2006). Since then, Somaliland has held one of the freest series of elections in the region and has one of the most functioning constitutional democracies in the Muslim world. Yet, this new republic still has no international legal status, while Somalia has had no effective central authority since 1991, is still accorded *de jure* recognition.

Since then, the region’s self-declared independence remains unrecognized by any country or international organization and still it faces challenges which make it fragile economically, socially, politically and in terms of security due to the denial of *de jure* recognition by neighboring and distant states.

Somaliland Territory and Geopolitics

During the cold war, geopolitics was not more than the U.S–Soviet struggle for global primacy and domination. But what does geopolitics mean today for our “*unipolar world*”? Indeed, though the importance of territory has been disputed under globalization due to various factors including: growing transnational and multinational corporations, regional cooperation and mutual dependence, and others (Waters, 1995; Stiglitz, 2002). Today’s global politics demand a new look at the concept of territory and geopolitics together. Therefore, geopolitics remain a vanguard factor that sustains the connection between the states with territory.

In the more recent past, traditional geopolitical analysis is transformed into a critical device for interrogating hegemonic geopolitics after the cold war, and is employed in the service of reconsidering discourses of danger that include: *‘failed states’*, communal violence, small arms smuggling and proliferation, transnational crimes, such as terrorist networks, piracy, and drug trafficking (Gray, 2007; Judy 2007). As a point of illustration, these factors indicated earlier should be linked with a more peaceful and just international order which has not emerged following the demise of the USSR. Therefore, the development and application of a new paradigm of U.S foreign policy; the construction and demonization of the *‘rogue states’*, Arab uprising events in the Middle Eastern countries, the lingering conflict in Somalia, unilateral invasion of Iraq, the drone attacks in Pakistan; and the war continuing in Afghanistan as part of America’s “*war on terror*” should be attributed to geopolitics and geostrategic factors (Barry & Honey, 2000; Stern, 2003; Pervez 2006; Charles-Phillipe & Grondin 2006; Hobsbawn, 2007; Princeton 2009). Therefore, “*territory*” demonstrates how a critical geographical analysis, informed by political theory and history, can offer an urgently needed perspective on regional and global politics together.

Of all of these theses, when examining Somaliland’s attitude towards diplomacy one should, as already stated, take into consideration the geopolitics and geostrategic dimensions of the Horn of Africa due to various factors including: enormous natural

resources and arable land plus fresh water endowments, where the largest rivers such as the Nile, Wabe Shebelle, Genale-Dawa and others originate (Nasir, 2011). Contrary to these natural resources, it is one of the most diversified regions on the earth, in terms of culture, ethnicity, and religion. Apart from these natural resources endowed and diversity, the region also bridges the three ancient civilizations: Africa, Arabia, and India together. In this regard, the association between Asians in particular the Arabs and the Horn African region has been one of long standing. In fact, the origins of present-day Horn African–Arab relations are rooted in the early history of mankind and civilization. Arabs had settled in the Eastern and Northeastern Africa, establishing strong trading links with Arab peninsula, in particular Yemen and Oman, even before the emergence of Islam as a religion in 7th century (R. Demant, 2006; Deegan, 2009).

On the other side of the argument, the geopolitics of the Horn should be considered as one of the leading factors that made countries in the Horn of Africa to be the playing ground of the Superpowers and serve as cold war proxies who devastated the environment and endangered its citizens, and eventually led to their present destitution and abject living conditions (Zegeye & Maxted, 2001; Woodward, 2006; Berouk 2011). Whatever cold war effects are, after celebrating the end of the cold war, we have yet to positively identify the new political era that followed, except emergence of other contending actors. Nevertheless, more than two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the political hallmark of today's world remains defined by the past images, as a more peaceful and just international order has not emerged (Samuel 1996; Martha & Tom 2000).

Indeed, after the cold war has ended, political disorder and disintegration including: ethnic conflicts, civil wars, failing states, and others have following and should be characterize this era (Martha & Tom 2000; Deegan, 2009; William 2009). In the Horn of Africa, for instance, the cold war has made many countries as orphans of the cold war such as Somalia which remained without central effective authority, albeit several weak

internationally-backed governments including: the current fledgling Federal Government.

In many regards, Somaliland by virtue of its strategic location at the intersection of Africa and Asia, notably facing Yemen, plays a pivotal role in the post-cold war system of states in the Horn region (Rothberg, 2005; Atarodi 2010). It lies, one could say, at the epicenter of a series of conflicts, real and potential, in both continents. On contrary, it also has enjoyed noticeable growth in both economic prosperity and democracy since 2000s. This is telling us that things in many areas are improving (Menkhaus, 2005). And because Somaliland has been, and remains, a faithful Western ally, some scholars argue that Washington should take the lead in not only recognizing, but also actively supporting Somaliland, a brave small state in size whose people's commitment for peace and democracy building mirrors America's values as well as her strategic interests (ICG, 2006; Woodward, 2006).

Fundamentally, though Somaliland shares values and geostrategic dimensions with its neighbors, it also has relationships, which stand equally on a range of issues including: common national interests and collaborative action to advance those mutual interests. In this domain, there is more cooperation than conflict in Africa. Yet, as underlined by many scholars and studies, Somaliland intelligence agencies contribute to the regional security and stability ranging from intelligence sharing and counterterrorism cooperation to joint efforts in combating piracy (ICG 2006; Nasir 2012). Therefore, one may describe Somaliland as a neglected strategic asset for the international community that will increasingly strengthen to the benefit of the regional stability and security.

On contrary, while the international actors have an interest to establish close relations with Somaliland covering both bilateral and multilateral areas, Somaliland has failed to establish concrete external policies aimed at improving these relations and deepen cooperation with international actors to maximize the strategic benefits that Somaliland

can derive from these relationship. This could be attributed to the lack of committed, talented, and professional diplomats, plus absence of written foreign policy objectives with an effective diplomacy which is very underdeveloped and remained weak since the last two decades of its lifetime, to name a few.

In the final analysis, Somaliland remains part of the geostrategic Horn region. And as a matter of fact, Somaliland's strategic location may offer a new opportunity by using its diplomacy and redesign the component of its foreign policy to overcome structural weaknesses and meet the new challenges presented by a history of two decades of unsuccessful foreign policy plus incompetent diplomats. In many regards, these political dilemmas, gaps and weaknesses that exist within its policies and institutions, and left unchecked, could undermine the long-term success of Somaliland's existence as a state.

Identifying key foreign policy objectives

At first glance, foreign policy should be defined as a system and set of goals organized and coordinated by professional and skilled figures aimed to change or deal with the behaviour of other states under the coordination and auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Department of State, for instance, the U.S. (James & Berridge, 2001; David et al. 2007). Thus, foreign policy ranges from policies to practices, and from covering on establishing goals and objectives to launching diplomatic relations both in the form of bilateral and multilateral agreements. Indeed, contemporary foreign policy is increasingly perceived to be about values rather than interests as traditionally conceived, while ethics are today held to play a central role in foreign policy (Collin 2004; Chandler & Heins, 2007).

On the other side of the coin, foreign policy decision making is an important avenue of research because the way decisions are made can shape the eventual choice, as foreign policy decisions are shaped by many factors and many variables which deserve to be taken into account when decisions are made. The role of information processing, framing, and cognitive biases in decision-making, points to the need for a psychological

approach to foreign policy decision-making. It is worth to emphasize how factors such as the personality and beliefs of leaders, leadership style, emotions, images, cognitive consistency, and the use of analogies influence and shape foreign policy decision-making (Mintz & Derouen, 2010). Overall, these factors call into question the explanatory power of the rational model. Decision makers are not necessarily “*irrational*” but rather are limited in their ability to carry out all the steps of the rational model (Ibid). Therefore, most of what we read about international affairs concerns only the actions of states and their leaders, but it can be illuminating to understand what goes into the decisions that presage the actions and events.

In the Somaliland context, the moves of Somaliland and countermoves of the United Nations, and regional, inter/non-governmental organizations such as the Arab League and Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and other relief agencies, in reaction to Somaliland’s demand its right to exist should be attributed to the absence of clear and concrete foreign policy goals and objectives plus absence of policies and weaknesses within decision-making circles, to name a few. Therefore, one may observe that Somaliland’s main obstacle to acquire the *de jure* recognition it demands should be linked with the earlier mentioned actors those representing Somaliland both in regional and international forums⁴.

For these to happen, clear and concrete foreign policy objectives should be framed and recognized as way forward tools to tackle the long-standing isolation of Somaliland from the international community⁵. These factors should be included: a) recognizing the geostrategic considerations of Somaliland, b) political calculations which is one of the prime factors which determine foreign policy formulations. Apart from these factors, alternative factors should be established to use it, including: a) searching for

⁴ Ibid. 1.

⁵ Ibid. 1.

alternatives, b) identifying alternatives, c) choosing an alternative, and, d) executing the alternative.

On the other hand, the debate about the emergence of Somaliland as an independent state following Somalia's state collapse in 1991 has dominated the politics of the Somalis and those interested, involved or benefited from the Somalia's chaos and crisis situation including: countries in the region and those far beyond the borders of Somalia, such as some dominant Arab states in particular Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and other European countries most likely Italy (HRW, 2009).

As a continuation of Somaliland's public decision, Somaliland has adopted an orthodox version of foreign policy; these interpretations are based upon the assumption not only to determine the relations between Somalia, but also described to be in a state of continuous conflict with those who lead and advocate the unity of Somalia. Therefore, Somaliland did not take part officially any peace reconciliation since its inception with Somalia's warring factions. It is therefore concluded that Somaliland, which was not part of the Somali state since its total collapse in 1991, did not share its rules and institutions. And that is why it had, or is supposed to have had, a negative attitude toward negotiating Somalia⁶.

Against this background, some current endeavors, such as dialogue with the Federal Government of Somalia for the interests of the two nations need to be fine-tuned and expanded. In so doing, to an extent this contradicts the principles laid out in the Somaliland bylaws, London Conference on Somalia in 2012 was an important trigger for the present debate on Somaliland's new policy to engage negotiations with its

⁶ Observed from the practices in Somaliland political system since its inception, and the perceptions of the citizens towards Somalia unity

neighbor and former partner, the Somali Republic; but for many citizens it was not the right time to engage such negotiations⁷.

Nevertheless, one of the most distressing and debilitating features of Somaliland state, and one that has profoundly affected the policies and strategies of the state, has been the seemingly endless incompetent diplomats, institutions disorder, and countless foreign relations expenditure which have been characteristics of the Somaliland external relations for many years. Without this changing and absence of action in the range of areas identified above (written foreign policy, diplomatic service reform), the likely scenario for Somaliland to acquire the *de jure* recognition it demands since its inception will remain in limbo.

Forging Approaches: Making Diplomacy Work

Although the available literatures for the study of Somaliland history in general are so limited due to civil wars, when the matter of concern is '*Somaliland diplomacy*', the presence of sources of biographies, memoirs and letters cannot simply be obtained. Therefore, it is worth looking at diplomacy beyond the experiences of Somaliland⁸.

As far as the issue of diplomacy is concerned, some may argue that establishing concrete foreign policy with an effective diplomacy could help Somaliland to attain legal recognition and may end up Somaliland's diplomatic isolation from the international community.

⁷ Somaliland successive governments adopted defensive foreign policy approaches while its legislative bodies passed laws outlawing its citizens to attend such peace conferences

⁸ There are shortage of resources both human capital and affiliated materials in the Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs and liaison offices abroad

Besides establishing clear foreign policy objectives, the rules of the diplomacy may take the form of leading factor convincing international actors to answer Somaliland's long standing question for recognition, support moral rules, and respect established practice in international relations. Such rules include: those constitutional ones that identify the right to self-determination as a state and as sovereign people, plus the rules of coexistence such as that requiring respect for sovereignty and the will of the majority.

These initiatives seem to indicate a true and paradigm shift in commitment towards greater openness and engagement to international politics. The emerging process should not be an easy task; however, overcoming the usual efficiency constraints should be added with developing foreign policy objectives and institutionalizing diplomacy. Contrary to the general expectation that the 'diplomacy of a weak state is also weak', Somaliland faces a number of formidable challenges on its road both to regional and global integration. These are related to the lack of politically committed, professional and skilled diplomat, and the legacy of its in-ward looking politicians, which have not only hampered the internal political dynamics of this tiny unrecognized nation in the Horn of Africa, but also the *de jure* recognition it demands since its establishment in 1991⁹.

The fact remains, however, as a clear dividing-line, since the 1991 Somaliland had been content to receive permanent diplomatic missions from some regional and distant nations like Ethiopia and Denmark, and consular outstations¹⁰. But, the international community still fails to respond to Somaliland's quest for recognition. Apart from these ups and downs from the international community, this failure could be attributed

⁹ In Somaliland politics, there is a kind of 'tit-for-tat' policy or in a broader sense, 'in-ward looking' politics, between/ among politicians and political parties. This kind of politics not only hampers the nation's promising recovering, but also undermines the trauma healing and confidence-building among the citizens

¹⁰ Somaliland has entered into formal and informal cooperative arrangements with wide variety of states and intergovernmental organizations including: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Denmark, United Kingdom, the United States of America and the U.N. The Cooperation has covered a range of issues, including: security, trade, immigration and development assistance

partially to domestic politics in Somaliland including: absence of clear and concrete foreign policies that could carry forward the nation's ambition to be an independent state among world nations.

Of course diplomacy will not provide the answer to all – of even most – of these problems. It could help to encourage more efforts by local, regional, and international actors, but that has not always proven to be a good thing in Somaliland, delinking government from their elites and from the needs of the public. This crude critique, however, overshadows the image of the nation, and fundamentally, there is a need to open up space for the elites and public to participate the reconstruction of their country in terms of both politics and social sectors.

There is one telling instance. It is not excessive to say that, the rise of nations goes hand in hand with their ability to master diplomacy. Conversely, their decline is also accompanied by the loss of their ability to do so. In Somaliland, overcoming these challenges requires a number of sacrifices from the parties involved including: comprehensive domestic reform coupled with an effective strategy that could lead Somaliland to assert its image in international forums. Therefore, while Somaliland has pursued the later goal on several unilateral, regional and multilateral fronts, it appears that Somaliland has failed to reform its domestic policies which reflect its international image including: establishing clear foreign policy objectives while choosing diplomacy as the main vehicle in overcoming diplomatic isolation.

Conclusion

Though at present no comprehensive research on Somaliland's diplomacy is done, the purpose of this study is to illuminate some of the more essential aspects of Somaliland's strategy towards outside world to overcome the state of diplomatic isolation it remained since its establishment in early 1990s. The two basic and most central themes of the study were in proposition of the establishment of foreign relations strategy plus

interpretation and its implementation in accordance with the principles, provisions, policies, and practices enshrined in international law.

With the exception of the conceptual clarity of the study, it emphasized the benefits associated with the geopolitics of the region and strategic location of Somaliland in particular. Therefore, beyond its hoped-for usefulness in designing its foreign policy, to attract the interest of those who pay attention to Somaliland find it lacking. In this regard, the study connected this failure not only with the Somaliland incompetent decision-making circles, but also foreign policy officials those engage tours, which cost many and bleeds the nation's scarce resources. In this situation, the conclusion should be a way forward manifesto that could contribute Somaliland's endeavor to break the vicious circles of international politics, and the cycle of diplomatic isolation both in the region and distant world nations. Therefore, diplomacy should be regarded as the best way that Somaliland can protect its interests in the long-term.

It is important to acknowledge that diplomacy would not in itself resolve any of these problems, all of which require sustained and systematic action on the part of all of the interested parties. In some respects, indeed, diplomacy might place Somaliland more prominently in the limelight, and attract from those whose interests would be adversely affected by diplomatically isolated Somaliland.

To this end, one needs to rethink and reformulate issues that are creating positive public posture in the country and redesign new forms of cooperation with the international actors. Absent of that collective will, the Somaliland future can easily be mapped for a political limbo at least for one reason: failure to establish clear foreign policy objectives with professional and skilled diplomats. In many regards, written foreign policy objectives as a national policy and diplomacy as a practice are not "*deniable tools*" and also not different from education, health, environment, and other strategic policies. However, diplomacy is irreplaceable and cannot be denied apparently. It is a more vital

actor for state survival than military, and it carries a lot of emotion in times of crisis and isolation.

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