

## EDITORIAL

Once again, *Horn of Africa* thankfully salutes the contributors whose combined work results in this volume. Abdirahman Aynte debuts among *Horn* contributors with a singularly informed piece, by far the most exhaustive and best-researched study of Somalia's homegrown jihadist/terrorists, known as *al-Shabaab*. His research method is rigorous, his analysis meticulous and his probings penetrating. As such, his is the first of its kind to trace al-Shabaab's origins, its growth into an international jihadist body, in the process dissecting its organizational structure and inner workings and naming names as to its leadership. Clearly, this is a study that benefits from access to inside-track information. Altogether a welcome kick-off to the collection.

Hassan Mahadallah's "Continuity and Change in U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Horn of Africa," is a supremely competent primer for both students of politics and policy makers in the region. Meticulous in research, rigorous in method and bolstered by a wealth of documentation, it is a well-crafted account that probes the contours of U.S. involvement in the Horn over six decades. Since the Horn "does not possess known natural resources, skilled manpower, or large markets," what propelled the shifting U.S. interventions in this unpromising part of Africa, especially the intense superpower rivalry over its shores during the Cold War era? The answer, it appears, lies in a one-word accident: Geography.

Mahadallah reminds us:

Located at the eastern-most corner of the Continent, the Horn of Africa is a middle region that ...flanks the Middle East and the Persian Gulf to the south, commands access to the Red Sea through the strait of Bab al-Mandab and juts into the northwestern quadrant of the Indian Ocean, where the superpowers had deployed nuclear submarines. Its waterways...are some of the busiest in the world. Connecting the Mediterranean Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean, they constitute some of the main arteries of the world's great oceans.

One wonders whether this bizarrely constructed handiwork of a geography has been a source of blessing or a curse to the peoples of the Horn. To judge by Mahadallah's tale, the latter has been the case, more often than not.

Maimare Mennesamey's "The Dekike Estifanos: Towards an Ethiopian Critical Theory" is vintage Mennesamey: a razor-sharp conceptual tour de force rendered in elegant prose. Moreover in here as elsewhere, he remains the congenial intellectual iconoclast who delights in the slaughtering of sacred cows in the form of settled dogmas. His target this time around is what he refers to as "passive modernization, a process based on a template of 'development,' gleaned from the shelf of Western history. Which he

judiciously dismisses as a “**a clock without a spring**” (emphasis added). Springless, half-baked and half-understood, passive modernization has been applied in Ethiopia as a model for development by three successive regimes—Haile Selassie’s imperial tenure, Mengistu Haile-Mariam’s barbaric socialism and the current one of the present government obsessed with the divisive, retribalizing policy of “Ethnic Federalism.” The results have been disappointing: Mennesamey offers a crop of grim statistics:

More than 84% of the children have no access to basic medical care, each year, thousands of children die needlessly, and Ethiopia is one of the ten worst places for women. An increasing number of people are reduced to bare existence, as one could see from the periodic famine[s], the endemic poverty, and the life of street children living “in tunnels, sewers and drainage holes.” P. 35

Accordingly, he lambastes the imported Western development model as a “grave-digger.” Having exposed the propositions of the foreign development model as a sham, he plumbs the depths of Ethiopian history from which he sculpts the “Dekike Estiphanos,” a fifteenth century quasi-religious heretical movement that defied the orthodox tenets of the Ethiopian Church, and “argued with Ethiopia” i.e. challenged the injustices of Ethiopian emperors, especially that of the brutal Zera Yacob. Thus, the Dekike Estiphanos constitute the heart of his study, and it is from their profoundly radical ideas that he draws up an “immanent political theory” whose application in Ethiopia, he believes, could lead to the country’s emancipation—emancipation defined as “a life of freedom, equality, justice and prosperity.” All in all, a formidably deployed argument.

Sisay Asefa’s “Challenges to Peace and Sustainable Development in the Horn of Africa: the Case of Ethiopia” reveals the dejected reflections of a highly skilled economist crying in the wilderness—a scholar who wants reason, decency and fair play to prevail in the Horn of Africa, a region he truly loves and yearns passionately to have transformed: in governance, in sustainable economic development and in the resolution of conflicts through mutual respect and rational dialogue. And yet everywhere in the Horn of Africa’s private and public domain, he sees the triumph of unreason, indecency and the complete absence of fair play. Hence the “crying-in-the-wilderness” aspect of his piece, especially his plea to the peoples and governments of the region to employ sound policies and practices in order to lift the long-suffering citizens of the Horn out of abject poverty and perennial disease. His is a voice that deserves to be heeded.

Abdulkadir Egal’s “In Suspected Correlation between Cancer Incidence and Industrial and Nuclear Wastes Dumped in Somalia,” and Zainab Hassan’s “Dumping on Somalia: a Plea for Environmental Justice,” are of a piece. Egal, a Somali medical doctor, and Zainab Hassan, an independent researcher who is interested in environmental causes, tell a horror story, notably the wholesale poisoning of Somalia’s once pristine shores by foreign interlopers—Italian mafia?—through two-decades of indiscriminate dumping of nuclear waste and other hazardous industrial materials. Egal examines the catastrophe from a medical point of view, while Hassan does so from that of the environment. As well, Hassan takes a telescopic look at the recent global commotion over the issue of piracy in Somali waters.

On the Somali side, the pieces implicate a local warlord along with assorted shady characters in these

nefarious business transactions, resulting in the degradation of the Somali coast. Somalia was once reputed as having one of the world's richest tuna fish catches on its shores. From the combination of overfishing by alien poachers and the pollution of the coastline in this stateless, unprotected land, the fish population has all but crashed, wreaking havoc on the livelihood of fishers and on the life of the local fishing industry.

Worse still, two decades of sustained dumping has thoroughly contaminated large swathes of the Somali coast. The result? An outbreak of alarming, myriad forms of cancer and equally deadly diseases, hitherto unknown in Somalia, devastating people and livestock alike. Horrendous tales in these reports of fertility afflictions among Somali women proliferate, of large-scale abnormal births—miscarriages, stillborns and infants born with ghastly disfigured features. What is most shocking and unforgivable, apart from the criminal dumping, is the charge in Egal's piece of DU, or Depleted Uranium shells, a leftover from the fighting between Somali militias and the international intervention force--Operation Restore Hope--contributed to this unmitigated disaster. Talk about Biblical pestilences. As such in hindsight, the intervention should perhaps be re-christened Operation Restore Hopelessness.

Dr. Egal presents his initial work as a modest beginning. Which makes further research into the disaster urgent. Meanwhile, the pictures and diagrams in Hassan's piece, some of them horrifying to behold, redound to its good. She concludes her superbly researched and written effort with a dignified appeal to the international community to help restore health to hapless Somalia.

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