

Corvinus University of Budapest

Putting a dot on the map:
Unrecognized nation- building in
Somaliland

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Introduction

May 18, 2011 marks the 20th anniversary of the declaration of independence in the Republic of Somaliland but it still remains the only country in the world without being recognized by any other state.¹ In the otherwise fairly stable and self-sufficient entity the question of recognition is an everyday problem causing severe hardships in a variety of fields the most important of which is that without international recognition the country is unable to receive funding, loans, aid and other forms of international assistance vital to its long-term development. Nevertheless, the fact that the country did not collapse in the past twenty years indicates that it did take some sort of root in the international system.

The analysis to determine whether the self-declared Republic of Somaliland is eligible for recognition requires an understanding of how states become legal in the modern international environment. As there is no existing clear-cut process in international law for the recognition of states it seems reasonable to start with defining what a state is and then to examine other necessary factors needed for the act of creating an accepted state. Probably, the most widely known attempt to define statehood was the treaty signed in Montevideo in 1933. The Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States set the four criteria of a permanent population, a defined territory, a government; and the capacity to enter into relations with the other states². This treaty, however, is neither legally binding nor signed by a decisive number of states and even this definition leaves just as much room for debate as any other attempts aiming to create a single definition for the complex phenomenon of statehood. There are, for instance, alternative non-legal factors which are also often mentioned in connection with the sense of statehood. These are, among many others, the claim of historical heritage, and an 'ethnic, religious and/or cultural sense of self-definition'.³

This essay does not elaborate the comprehensive discourse on the issue neither takes sides in the discussion, but to be able to answer if the de facto functioning state of Somaliland is ready to be recognized, it is necessary to presume that it corresponds to specific standards and thus, in case of secession, it would be able to function. That is why this paper follows

¹ The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic are recognized by each other and the, also only partially recognized, Republic of Abkhazia recognises both of them

² INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN STATES IN MONTEVIDEO [December 26, 1933], 'Convention on rights and duties of states' online: <http://www.cfr.org/sovereignty/montevideo-convention-rights-duties-states/p15897>, accessed: March 9, 2011.

³ BACHCHELI, T. – BARTMANN, B. – SREBRNIK, H (eds.) [2004], *De Facto States: The quest for sovereignty*, Routledge, Abingdon – New York, p.2.

through most of these criteria, starting from the nation-building efforts the country claims to have taken to build sufficient institutions to gain control of its territory, create democratic environment where it is possible maintain sufficient economic activity. It is also necessary to focus on the country's management of its international relations, considering that this is the only way for Somaliland to achieve its overall goal of recognition.

In an effort to create a relevant framework for analysis this article uses the findings of the branch of international relations theory that deals with small states. The experts of the small state discourse argue that the size of a state considerably determines its behavior in the international system and, thus, it has to follow a specific route of tackling its relations of diplomatic as well as economic nature. Theorists often define small states in comparison to what they are not, namely great powers, the usual subjects in the study of international relations.⁴ However, this simple method of classification creates a category with elements having immense disparities among them. Robert O. Keohane offers an alternative point of view that clarifies the definition by noting in his 1979 review 'Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics' that small powers are states 'whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in small groups, make a significant impact on the system'.⁵ As the article was written during the Cold War the author followed the standpoints of military cooperation and nuclear proliferation that were the key issues of the era. Later in the discussion of small powers economic perspectives gained highlight while not so long ago environmental issues were set as the leading themes.

It is interesting to see that the main scope of study has mostly focused on European small states. There is a vast amount of scientific literature on how these countries can represent themselves at the fora of the European Union. The other geographical block which is analyzed in details consists of the small island-states and microstates that were admitted to the United Nations General Assembly since 1945. It is clearly visible that the institutional point of observation has high importance as it is considered to be the scene where these countries can in fact reach their goals by standing together and gain protection from the 'disproportionate influence of great powers'.⁶ This is the second reason, besides being able to access financial aid, why small states value international organizations and international

⁴ GSTÖHL, S. – NEUMANN, I.B., *Lilliputians in Gulliver's World? Small States in International Relations*, Centre for Small State Studies, University of Iceland, Working Paper 1-2004, (2004) p. 6.

⁵ KEOHANE, Robert O., *Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics*, International Organization, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring, 1969), p. 297.

⁶ ABBOTT, K.W. – SNIDAL, D., *Why States Act through Formal International Organizations*, Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 42, No. 11. (February 1998).

norms so highly. However, even from an early stage of the discussion it was pointed out that examining capabilities are not enough when dealing with this specific category⁷ and that there needs to be paid special attention to the external relations of these countries both inside and outside international organizations.

Although most of the scholars believe that small states are heavily dependent on international assistance many experts argue that small states can in fact affect the international system by multiple means. For instance, Keohane and Nye note the existence of opportunities for small powers in specific 'issue areas.'⁸ This means that while great powers often dominate most of the international affairs, some small states can affect the international environment in issues that they are specified on, eg. Switzerland is a key actor when it comes to shaping the agenda of financial services.⁹

For some reason the scientific dialogue on small states does not mention unrecognized states, although these contested territories fit the classification whether they are examined by area, population or economic strength. They also share most of the characteristics of small states from the inability to protect themselves to the heavy dependence on international trade. The fact that these quasi-states face similar hardships as their recognized counterparts mostly explains why it is so vital for them to gain recognition. From the list of contested states Somaliland is probably the least dependent on the country it wishes to secede from as it is located in the failed state of Somalia, whose current Transitional Federal Government struggles with gaining control over more than just the capital and some other smaller territories. Thus, Somaliland is probably the best example of a *de facto* state that faces the same difficulties that other small countries can only solve by relying on international help.

This paper aims to test the assumption that it also has many of the same opportunities of affecting the international system. It argues that Somaliland is a small power (in the making) and that it possesses system-effectiveness on both system and sub-system level primarily as a result of its stable political and economic position in an intensely conflictual region and its potential to serve as a bulwark against the spread of extremist Islamist influence.

⁷ MORGENTHAU, Hans J. [1972] *Science: Servant or Master?*, New American Library, New York, USA. pp. 129-130.

⁸ KEOHANE, Robert O.– NYE, Joseph S. [1977]. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Little, Brown and Co., Toronto, Canada.

⁹ GSTÖHL, S. – NEUMANN, I.B. *op. cit.*

Nation-building

Evidently, the internal structures of states do not necessarily supply patterns in accordance with their size but as this feature contributes significantly to the level of effectiveness they may possess in their external relations it is necessary to assess their capabilities. In the case of Somaliland the most important internal features are the democratic consensus of the civil society, as opposed to the violent fragmentation in Somalia, and the development of the governmental and infrastructural landscape that advances the relative stability of the political and economic system.

As reflected in the notion 'nation-building', the undertaken efforts show a particularly direct and artificial intervention to the structure of the country that plays an exceptionally important role in post-conflict environments, for which Somaliland and Somalia offer good examples. However, the label of nation-building is often equal to international intervention¹⁰ like in the case of the numerous attempts to revive the 'quintessential case of state-failure'¹¹ in Somalia. On the other hand, in Somaliland the lack of recognition, that resulted in the inability to access external assistance, enabled the creation of a governmental system with 'more connectivity to its social base,'¹² which thus, was capable of integrating the traditional clan-based social factors of the area.

Another distinct feature that is strongly reflected in the nation-building efforts in the self-declared state is the series of ambiguous attempts to establish a multi-party democracy which, however, is not organic to the clan system. The main reasons behind this consideration are the double aim of trying to consolidate the conflicting clans and at the same to create an environment attractive to the western ideals of democracy in order to gain recognition, which is essential to the country.¹³

The concrete steps concluded in the last twenty years led the self-declared country from a failed state to an independent regional actor in the intensely conflictual place on the Horn of Africa.

¹⁰ BELLONI, R. *Rethinking Nation-Building: The Contradictions of the Neo-Wilsonian Approach to Democracy Promotion*, Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, Vol.8. No.1. (2007), p. 98.

¹¹ LANGFORD, T., *Things Fall Apart: State Failure and the Politics of Intervention*. International Studies Review, Vol 1. (Spring 1999) pp. 59–79.

¹² JHAZBHAY, I. *Somaliland: The Journey of Resistance, Reconciliation and Peace*, Department of Religious Studies and Arabic, University of South Africa, South Africa. (2006) p. 65.

¹³ HOEHNE, M.V. 'Mimesis and mimicry in dynamics of state and identity formation in northern Somalia' Africa. Vol. 79, (May, 2009) pp. 252-281.

Identity forming

It is often questioned, if it is possible to create a sentiment of nationality in Africa where people are primarily attached to their tribes or clans, that are often divided as a result of the arbitrary forming of borders by European colonizers. As the very core of nationhood lies in the overall consensus of the majority of its people, in a country like Somaliland, whose long-term existence depends on the international recognition of its separate borders, the creation of a common identity served as a vital step. In this case it was not only an act to develop a common conscience but also a major move towards the stabilization of the area. In Somaliland this level of commitment was partly organised by the leading elite and it significantly contributed to the survival in the contested state for twenty years.

Soon after the merger of the British Somaliland Protectorate and Italian Somaliland in 1960 the dreams of the Greater Somalia, the unification of all Somali-inhabited territories in one country, faded and the prominently existing clan rivalries escalated into a wide-scale oppression and total neglect of the northern territories from investment and capital under the leadership of Siad Barre.¹⁴

This atmosphere gave birth to numerous opposition movements as well as the sentiment of self-distinction from the capital in Mogadishu. The Isaaq-clan-based Somali National Movement played a protagonist role in overthrowing the Barre-regime after a four-year civil war in 1991. Its exceptional ability to survive derived from the democratic and non-exclusive structure of the organization, the fact that it did not want to conflict other clans and most importantly with the help of the popular support it gained by forming alliances with clan elders living on the territory.¹⁵

Probably, the clear sense of self-distinction can be traced back to the unilateral declaration of independence that was forced by public pressure¹⁶ against the will of the SNM right in the beginning of the consolidation talks held with the participation of the elders of all the clans. The civil war did not only leave the country in ruins but the lack of traditional democratic institutions necessitated the country leaders to start nation and state-building from the very ground. M.V. Hoehne argues that the 'state structures were established by local actors in a mimetic fashion, modelled after other states in the international system, in order to

¹⁴ BAHCHELI *et al.* – *op. cit.*

¹⁵ JHAZBHAY I – *op. cit.* p 54.

¹⁶ BRYDEN, M. 'Somalia and Somaliland. Envisioning a dialogue on the question of Somali unity', *African Security Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2. (2004) p. 24.

gain regional stability and prevent violent escalations as in the south.’¹⁷ The creation of such non-organic structures in a devastated post-conflict area required immense efforts not only from the leaders but also from the underdeveloped polity. The demobilization process, which is considered to be the most successful attempt of the newly-formed government, where the former militia joined the national army and police force,¹⁸ as well as the conducting of elections would not have been so successful without the national support.

As the identity of the people did not rest on solid ground, as they were all Somali people fighting against other Somali people, there were necessary steps after the declaration of independence. Identity formation, according to Hoehne was helped by several different factors. The bases of the national identity were the colonial heritage, the participation in the opposition against Barre and the recent history of creating a nation.¹⁹ The leadership’s steps to create a Somalilander identity²⁰ by implementing national symbols were further bolstered by the politicians raising support through relying heavily on the popular feelings of the civil war, as well as by the nationalist papers, the proof of time passed without a functioning Somali state and also the clashes with Puntland since 2002.²¹

The formation of a sense of nationality complementary to the primary clan-based identity has had particular effect on the establishment of external relations of the state. Besides the eternal importance of national support in the ability to function as a state, in the management of foreign relations some interests cannot be translated as clan commitments but only national interest. The most important one, again, is the aim of recognition but there are several others including the protection of growing insecurity, as a result of aggravating threat of radical Islamism, and other forms of non-regional relations. Besides, the sense of nationhood also serves as a strong claim for recognition as it is the basis for the irreversibility of the disintegration of the Somali state.

Democracy building

Creating a democratic environment in Somaliland has probably been one of the most difficult tasks of the Somaliland leadership. From the many aspects of the case this paper concentrates

¹⁷ HOEHNE, M.V. *op. cit.* p. 258.

¹⁸ SOMALILAND CENTRE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT, *A Self-Portrait of Somaliland: Rebuilding from the Ruins*, Hargeisa: Somaliland Centre for Peace and Development (1999). p 70.

¹⁹ HOEHNE, M. V. ‘*Political identity, emerging state structures and conflict in northern Somalia*’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3. (2006) pp. 401-5.

²⁰ originally they called themselves ‘Northerners’ source: HOEHNE, M.V. ‘*Mimesis and mimicry in dynamics of state and identity formation in northern Somalia*’ *Africa*. Volume 79, p. 264.

²¹ *Ibid.*

on those that are most relevant to the contribution to the effectiveness of the country. Namely, the relative stability as a result of the participative and inclusive approach to the civil society, the more or less viable protection of human rights, the firm opposition to the political Islam and the problematic but still attracting economic stability.

By the time of the declaration of independence in Somaliland, the 'Somali state effectively ceased to function as an administrative, ideological, juridical and territorial entity,'²² and the civil war had enormous social costs including famine, displacement and the destruction of public services.²³ Thus, the process of building both governmental and political institutions had to be started from the beginning in a traditionally clan-based society where the leadership activities were conducted by clan elders. The success of the consolidation efforts of the Somali National Movement lays in the inclusive manner of the conferences they organized in order to settle the disputes among clans and to draft the future structure of the government of Somaliland.

In the centre of the democratization process was the creation of a national-level 'guurti', traditionally the highest political council.²⁴ Other important achievements of the conferences were the supervision of power-transfer to a civilian government led by Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal, the re-establishment of the traditional trinity of Somali law (based on the secular law of British origin, the Somali traditional law, the 'xeer' and the Islamic sharia law) and the 'beel', the clan system of governance.²⁵ This bottom-up architecture of government incorporating the organic clan-base is considered to be the major achievement of the consolidation process after the secession.

After this phase, which ended with a referendum on the new constitution, the next step was the conducting of elections. During the first elections the total lack of precedent caused considerable problems. 'Given the lack of civic education, low level of literacy and an undeveloped civil society, some people were uncertain whether Somaliland was ready for multi-party democracy.'²⁶ Other problems continued to occur during the elections including the lack of experience of both the political organizations and the voters, the lack of resources and the instability in the Sool and eastern Sanaag regions.²⁷ These deficiencies still cause difficulties that have resulted in the several delays in later elections and other faults in the

²² BRADBURY, *et al – op. cit.*, p. 456.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 455-478

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ JHAZBHAY, I. *op. cit.*, p 60.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

process. Still, the democratization of the country is a considerable success, compared to the weaker and oppressive governments on the Horn of Africa.

Nonetheless, in this framework of the traditionally important role of clan elders we can understand the existing democratic deficits as well. As the patterns used in the structural parts of the system, however western they look, functionally still result in clan representation rather than 'a fully-fledged parliamentary system of governance.'²⁸ This may cause difficulties in the execution of governing tasks as the representatives tend to favour those clients who belong to their clans. And although this feature is slowly losing its importance it is still one of the major challenges of the democracy-building efforts of the country.

Besides, the political leadership still lacks the ability of long-reach governance and this has a series of consequences regarding the ability to function. The lack of financial and human resources make it difficult to implement reforms necessary for the maintenance of stability and order. In spite of the fact that the government possesses the monopoly of force, the fragility of the security on the border areas is obvious. There are also a few endeavors to regulate the economic sector but there are very few instruments in the regulators' hands. This also generates malfunctioning in the protection of the constitutional rights and freedoms of the people, including the securing of the judiciary's independence, civil rights, the protection of private property, as well as gender and human rights which may lead to a potential destabilization of the area.²⁹

The democratizing attempts have also brought the antipathy of radical Islamism which has manifested in a series of suicide bombings of the governing centres of Somaliland and is expected to escalate in the future. Al-Shabaab, the militant Islamist group that claims responsibility for most of the attacks announced that they are not willing to stop until their form of sharia law is implemented instead of what they assume as 'imitations of Christian and Jews.'³⁰

Capacity and security building

²⁸ JHAZBHAY, M.I.D.: '*Somaliland: Post-War Nation-Building and International Relations*', Department of Religious Studies and Arabic, University of South Africa, South Africa. p 122.

²⁹ BTI 2010 SOMALIA COUNTRY REPORT, accessed through: http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/ESA/Somalia.pdf, March 18, 2011.

³⁰ ZENN J. '*Al-Shabaab's Unavoidable Clash with Somaliland Democracy*', Publication: Terrorism Monitor Vol.: 8 Issue: 33, (August 19, 2010), accessed through: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36766&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=34a89a466d, March 18, 2011.

The building of capacities that support the democratic institutions of Somaliland are the most complicated task as they require the most time and investment. After a civil war with devastating consequences the capacities of a newly established leadership were very scarce. The internal conflicts after the secession meant further obstacles in the procedure, for example the fight for the revenues of the Berbera port (that with the airport of Hargeisha are the only state-owned enterprises in Somaliland³¹) that constitutes much to the government's income. The state-building efforts in the beginning primarily laid on the financial support of the Isaaq clan³² and other private donors but lately has found ways to access external assistance. However, this financial support is very limited and only enables the institutions to function to maintain order and it is only possible in the western regions.

The national revenues are still absorbed in 50%³³ by the attempts to maintain the relative stability of the territory, which demands more and more efforts amid the growing threat of the militant islamists. The national army and police force, which were created as part of the demobilization of the freelance militia during the reconciliation process after the secession, consume most of the income of the government, however, their development is now partially supported by the UN.³⁴

In order to maintain order, the development of administrative and governing infrastructure plays an immense role and it contributes to the country's effectiveness. In the landscape of sub-governmental governance levels there are huge capacity differences between the western and eastern regions. M. Iqbal D. Jhazbhay notes that 'In the western regions of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed and Saaxil, government administration was well established by the end of the 1990s. In the eastern areas that border Puntland, government authority had been slower to take root.'³⁵ Especially in the contested areas of Sool and eastern Santaag the Somaliland government has not succeeded in building sufficient municipal infrastructure. Although both of the regions lack even the basic functioning state institutions and are under the continuous threat of clashes, Somaliland has since 2007 had successes in driving out the Puntland forces of the region and even established basic administrative institutions in the town of Lasanod.³⁶

³¹ BTI 2010 SOMALIA COUNTRY REPORT. – *op. cit.*

³² BAHCHELI, *et al* –: *op. cit.* p.213.

³³ BTI 2010 SOMALIA COUNTRY REPORT – *op. cit.*

³⁴ THE UNITED NATIONS IN SOMALILAND: What Do We Do?, United Nations, 2011.

³⁵ JHAZBHAY, I. *Somaliland: The Journey of Resistance, Reconciliation and Peace*, *op. cit.* p. 121.

³⁶ BTI 2010 SOMALIA COUNTRY REPORT, *op. cit.*

The other dimension in the building of capabilities, besides the geographical differences, is the capacity gaps between the cities and the rural area. As cities attract more people, including the refugees who return to the country, this rapid urbanization puts grand pressure on the services in towns while the 'rural parts are essentially problematic as the clans have more visible claims to have their own districts.'³⁷

The situation is slowly improving thanks to the UNDP assistance in governance administration civil servants training. Developing the education (and training) sector is also an emergency priority that receives growing amount of support from international organizations. The establishment of a welfare system, even on a very basic level, that is controlled by the government, is particularly important given that after the fall of the Barre-regime (where non-governmental organizations were severely restricted) the lack of governmental organizations gave rise to Islamic charities, some of which are used as a means to spread radical political Islam.³⁸

While developing infrastructure, including water-supplies and road constructions, are also among the priorities of the UNDP assistance and are further supported by other NGOs and donor organizations, the map still shows great differences in the area and needs further aiding. Nonetheless, this contributes a lot to the economic attractiveness of the country, as compared to the neighboring territories, they are quite well-constructed. Additionally, the economic perspectives look even better given the relative security, the governments support of free trade and the democratic environment that make economic investment easier.

External Relations

The state of being unrecognized means that there is no country or major international organization that maintains official diplomatic connections with the leadership. This limbo status results in an obvious level of diplomatic isolation for the Republic of Somaliland that causes severe difficulties in accessing the satisfactory amount of international aid assistance to achieve long-term development. The dependence on foreign aid is not at all unusual in Africa, and it is particularly outstanding that Somaliland achieved such amount of development relying mostly on private donors and the limited donations of international

³⁷ JHAZBHAY, I. *Somaliland: The Journey of Resistance, Reconciliation and Peace*, op. cit p. 124.

³⁸ RABASA, A. *Radical Islam in East Africa*, RAND Corporation (2009), Santa Monica, CA, USA.

organizations. However, the involvement of private contributors, mostly the members of the Diaspora, on such a high level is not sustainable and there is an urgent necessity to substitute these with multilateral and bilateral support from alternative actors.

Nonetheless, the obvious amplification of the country increased its viability and visibility on first regional and finally on global scale. Nowadays, it is impossible to neglect the de facto presence of the self-declared state which has resulted in a considerable change in the relations towards the entity. This is especially true in the light of the failed attempts to revive Somalia and the growing security challenge that is brought with the situation. International recognition is, however, still off the agenda for most of the factors which leaves the Somaliland leadership the challenge of fathoming alternatives.

The reasons of non-recognition of this de facto state vary among political, economic, security and legal factors, although the role of the African Union is decisive on the matter. The AU inherited the exercise of adherence to the respect for territorial integrity and existing borders from the former Organisation for African Unity. However, the Union adheres to the 'borders existing on achievement of independence'³⁹, to which Somaliland claims to have a legal basis, namely its independence from Britain on June 26, 1960 that lasted for 5 days.⁴⁰ The reason why the African Union rejects this claim lies in the fear of a possible catalization of independent movements⁴¹ as well as the possibility of the escalation of the tensions with the former countries they have seceded from. Consequently, as long as the African Union abides by the non-recognition it is highly unlikely that anyone else⁴² would take the necessary steps.

Although in short of the international recognition, besides making outstanding achievement with a high level of self-sufficiency, the country did manage to build some forms of external relations. These relations mainly consist of bilateral de facto relations with regional countries and the main destinations of the Diaspora⁴³ with a massive diaspora lobby.⁴⁴ In addition to that, mainly in the form of economic activity, the non-governmental sector has also found ways to contact partners outside the country. This category includes

³⁹ CONSECUTIVE ACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION (2000), accessed through: http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/key_oau/au_act.htm, March 12, 2011.

⁴⁰ OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF MOHAMOUD ABDI DAAR, SOMALILAND REPRESENTATIVE IN BRUSSELS TO THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE OF UNPO AT THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS, accessed through: <http://www.unpo.org/downloads/154.pdf> March 8, 2011.

⁴¹ in this case will be interesting to examine the consequences of the partition of Southern Sudan from Sudan.

⁴² including the UN, the IMF and the World Bank and the Commonwealth whose cooperation would be most necessary

⁴³ mainly the US and the UK, who also have the biggest security concerns over the area

⁴⁴ that is also the main destination of anti-Somaliland diaspora

close ties with the diaspora, on whose investments and remittances Somaliland is highly dependent on, and also the regional (informal) economy, which is again an African regular phenomenon as a result of the existence of weak states.

Diplomatic Relations – governmental level

The most important guideline for the Somaliland diplomacy is to apply peaceful means. The norm of international law that does not allow unilateral declaration without the approval of the center⁴⁵ halted the partition of Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as South Sudan from Sudan and led to years of bloody fights between the parties.⁴⁶ Therefore, Hargeisa aims to find supporters for its cause and establish as many connections as possible by showing an independent profile. This behavior was strengthened by a new wave of political strategies following the inauguration of the new president in 2010. This new administration also follows another strategy to obtain an ‘interim status’ in international organization, a compromised temporary solution invented by former president Egal in 2000 until full recognition is achieved. The governments’ actions are supported by the growing irreversibility of their separation from Somalia that led their issue to be put on agenda.

The issue of Somaliland was first officially brought up at an African Union Summit in 2006⁴⁷ and since then there has been a sensible change in approach towards the country. Recently, thanks to the augmented efforts of the new leadership, the well-executed nation-building efforts and also the lucky interplay of external factors⁴⁸ helped the government in achieving more and more visible de facto presence. Hence, according to the most optimist theoretical possibility, that Somalia’s stabilization is completed with mammoth external interference in the future, there will be two parallel Somalias, possibly each with a distinct self-identity, army and separate interests as well as the common hatred for each other. It is not difficult to see the strong possibility of an escalating armed conflict. The international environments’ alternatives to prevent such situation vary between the acceptance of the secession and the conduction of peace talks with the aim of settling the situation.

⁴⁵ HOROWITZ, D. ‘Self-Determination: Politics, Philosophy and Law’, IN: Moore, M. (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession* Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, (1998), p. 189.

⁴⁶ JHAZBHAY, M.I.D. – *op. cit.* pp. 117-8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ like the war on terror and piracy

Regional 'allies'

Interplay of economic and political interests of the region sharply determine the position of Somaliland on the Horn of Africa, a region that has hosted the eternal possibility of military conflicts. In the framework of this given situation, the Hargeisa government has put tremendous efforts into positioning itself as an individual factor. In these efforts it was helped by its fortunate geographical location, mainly by possessing the deep-water port of Berbera on a transit route in the Gulf of Aden.

The closest ties link the country to Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya, the other countries with considerable Somali populations and a shared history of pastoralism and the export of livestock to the Middle East, mainly to Gulf countries.⁴⁹ Apart from Kenya, that traditionally used the southern Somali ports and was badly affected by the conflict,⁵⁰ these countries were long tied together by the movement of nomadic pastors. Ethiopia, which is the political hegemon of the region⁵¹ was the first to establish de facto diplomatic relations with the government of Somaliland and is up to date the most determining factor in Somaliland's external relations. Ethiopia's interest is often narrowed down to the economic interest in the country, more precisely the Berbera port, through which this land-locked country manages a considerable portion of its trade, and just as importantly, receives Western aid. The contribution Ethiopia gives the leadership is essential but also narrows Somaliland's opportunities in regional relations. Ethiopia is interested in a weak Somalia, as it means a bulwark against the Somali reunification movements. Although security considerations drive Addis Abeba to support Puntland and the TFG as well⁵² as their weakness means a haven for insurgent groups aiming to attack Ethiopia. The fragility of the situation and the sharp opposition of interests in the region can be understood through an incident that occurred in September, 2010. The Somaliland leadership announced that it drove 'rebels'⁵³ out of its territory. The armed group's (the Ogaden National Liberation Front)⁵⁴ members captured

⁴⁹ economics of the conflict chatham

⁵⁰ and also turned away from export as an answer

⁵¹ hosting the African Union

⁵² KAPLAN, S. D. [2004]: Fixing fragile states: a new paradigm for development, Praeger Security International Westport, CT. USA. p 127.

⁵³ <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Somaliland-Army-Drives-Out-Ethiopian-Rebels--102910114.html>, accessed: March 27, 2011.

⁵⁴ who consider themselves as 'both an advocate for and defender of the people is dedicated to restoring the rights of Somalis in Ogaden to self-determination, peace, development and democracy' source: <http://onlf.org/news.php> accessed: March 27, 2011.

were said to had been trained in Eritrea, the biggest enemy of Ethiopia. Eritrea is said to support and fund several other opposition and insurgents groups operating in the neighboring countries to Ethiopia. It is thus in Ethiopia's best interest to support all forms of effective territorial control on its border territories. Evidently, it is Somaliland's interest too to sufficiently counter extremist groups fighting against its government as well.⁵⁵ It is obvious that the relationship between Ethiopia and Somaliland is based on mutual interest. However, this brings with itself another phenomenon. Namely, that what makes Ethiopia stronger give many enemies to Somaliland, eg. Eritrea, Egypt the Arab League with the Gulf countries⁵⁶ as these countries are interested in a strong Somalia to counterweight the hegemony of Ethiopia.

Another partner of Somalilands' is Djibouti but this relationship is only a result of recent years. Given the physical closeness, and that the two countries generate a single organic territory in the means of livestock trade, the closing of borders in 1988 meant severe hardships for the North-Western Somali territories⁵⁷ and it was Somaliland's economic interest of improving the relations. The hostilities can be traced back to Siad Barre, who was an ally of Dibouti and thus an enemy of the SNM. The country also hosted a peace conference with the aim of reviving the Somali government and it also served 'as a proxy in its quest to influence Somali regional politics'.⁵⁸ The main reason for the reset of the relations was of economic nature. In 2001 a six-point agreement liberalized the trade between the two countries and since then the relations have developed and are today close to those with Ethiopia⁵⁹.

Other actors like Kenya, that also suffers a lot from religious extremism and interested in the stability of the region, have developed some sort of positive relations with Hargeisa. Even though it supports a united Somalia, as it is considered to be the most peaceful optimum, in the absence of that they support talks between Somalia and Somaliland. They also fear, just like Ethiopia, that the 'restoration of the central government will revive the Somali nationalism.'⁶⁰ It is important to mention, however, that even in the light of the improving relations with these countries it is none of their interest to see a de jure recognized Somaliland.

⁵⁵ ZENN J – *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ that are traditionally a main export destination of their livestock

⁵⁷ HULIARAS, Asteris: *The Viability of Somaliland: Internal Constraints and Regional Geopolitics*, Journal of Contemporary African Studies, Vol. 20, Nr. 2, 2002.

⁵⁸ JHAZBHAY, M.I.D.: *Somaliland: Post-War Nation-Building and International Relations, 1991-2006*,. pp. 267.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ HULIARAS, Asteris – *op. cit.*

The Arab League

There's a natural opposition to moving away from the status quo caused by the presence of Somaliland in regional politics. The Arabic nations are interested in the unity of Somalia, a member of the Arab League, as its weakness poses a challenge for them and it requires tremendous efforts to counterweight the hegemonic position of the non-Arabic Ethiopia. As they are also members of the African Union they considerably weaken the opportunities of Somaliland to effectively lobby for its recognition.

Egypt has led the opposition to the disintegration of Somalia that primarily derives from geopolitical necessity for the uninterrupted flow of Nile waters from Ethiopia.⁶¹ In the light of the partition of South Sudan, which has partially upset the status quo of the region, it is especially important not to lose another important ally. As a result the country continuously stresses its concerns about the US government's new approach towards Somaliland and Puntland and considers Yemen as a strategic partner in this quest.⁶² The country mainly secures its position as an important contributor to anti-piracy efforts and parallelly advocates the unified Somali approach.⁶³

Other Arabic states, including Yemen, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, mostly have very limited diplomatic connections to Somaliland. However, the economic relations are very important for the country. As an example, the repeated ban on livestock to Saudi Arabia caused many difficulties for most Somali countries whose economies depended heavily on the export of livestock. The ban was lifted only last year, although the testing of animals arriving from the Horn is still rigorously executed. That is partly the reason why the new Somaliland administration is seeking other opportunities to decrease its dependence on livestock export⁶⁴.

Finally, Eritrea can be mentioned as an important factor affecting the positions of Somaliland. After the country officially negated the existence of Somaliland, the Hargeisha

⁶¹ SWAIN, A. "*The Nile River Dispute: Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Egypt*", The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 35 Nr. 4 (1997) pp. 675-94.

⁶² DIPLOMATIC CABLE FROM THE CARIO EMBASSY TO WASHINGTON DC. accessed through: <http://somalilandpress.com/wikileaks-egypt-concern-about-somaliland-recognition-20144>, March 27, 2011.

⁶³ OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT: accessed through: http://www.sis.gov.eg/en/LastPage.aspx?Category_ID=92, March 23, 2011.

⁶⁴ TRANSCRIPT: SOMALILAND'S PROSPECTS, THE LECTURE OF HE AHMED MOHAMED MOHAMOUD SILANYO PRESIDENT OF SOMALILAND, November 26 2010, accessed through: http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/17940_261110silanyo.pdf, March 23, 2011.

⁶⁴ THE UNITED NATIONS IN SOMALILAND: What Do We Do?, United Nations, 2011.

government issued a press release in which it accused Eritrea of violating the territorial integrity of its neighbors and disrupting 'the peace and tranquillity of the region.'⁶⁵

African Union and the IGAD

The position of the African Union is known and is determining in the case of Somaliland. The case is even more severe considering that the major Anti-Somaliland actors are AU members. However, in the recent years significant and visible changes took place in the approach towards Somaliland. The reasons lie behind the continued failures in the revival of Somalia and the undeniable reality that Somaliland established a stable profile. The first steps to get in contact took place in 2006 when the Executive Council put the issue on its agenda. The relations have shown some improvement ever since and have many prospects but still without de jure recognition. Somaliland's development opportunities collide with the aim of the AU to form 'regional integration communities' as well as those of the IGAD. Both organizations have delegated special envoys and fact-finding missions to the area to detect the possible areas of cooperation. Theoretically, it puts forward the issue of a possible 'interim status' for Somaliland⁶⁶ but it is still important to see the majority of the opposing elements in this venture.

Non-African factors

Non-regional actors involved in the case of Somaliland are the major Diaspora destinations, namely the USA, Canada and most importantly the United Kingdom. With the latter the relations are particularly close to the extent that British relations with its former colony are 'handled through its embassy in Addis Ababa, whereas those with the former Italian Somalia are handled through the high commission in Nairobi.'⁶⁷ Commercial cooperation reached a new level in 2010 with the establishment of the first Anglo-Somaliland Chamber. Besides the bilateral relations, several precedents occurred when the British delegation advocated the issue of Somaliland in the European Union, a promising donor to the country's development.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE OF THE SOMALILAND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 14/04/2009 accessed through: <http://www.somalilandgov.com/Press%20Release%20SLR.pdf>, accessed, March 03, 2011.

⁶⁶ who, inside the AU is supported by South Africa

⁶⁷ HULIARAS, A – *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ TRANSCRIPT: SOMALILAND'S PROSPECTS, THE LECTURE OF HE AHMED MOHAMED MOHAMOUD SILANYO

The most important turn of events, however, was the drafting of a Somali policy by the Obama administration. In accordance with the dual-track policy, the US government intends to cooperate more with the autonomous governments of Somaliland and Puntland without completely abandoning the Mogadishu-based TFG. Besides widening the US approach to engage more in fighting the extremist radicals and piracy in the area, the cooperation could mean a huge opportunity for Somaliland to deepen its diplomatic relations with the country. It may as well open more opportunities with cooperation with the UN. The UN is currently involved in the area mostly through UNICEF, UNHCR and the UNDP⁶⁹. There's a change in this regard as well, as since 1999 UN agencies opened offices in Hargeisha and other bigger towns in Somaliland while before were mediated through Mogadishu and as relations progress, the amount of assistance increases.

Diaspora

The Somali Diaspora, more precisely the Somalilander Diaspora, is one of the most dynamic diaporas in the world. Migration from this area can be considered as traditional in the Somali society as bigger-scale and concentrated migration started in the 19th century.⁷⁰ What is even more important that the flow of migrants, albeit not steady, is continuous.⁷¹ Up to date, there are several Somali communities all around the globe living in neighboring countries, the Middle East as well as the UK, the USA, Canada and other western countries. They are not only 'a community with their minds turned towards their homeland,'⁷² supplying significant contribution to their homeland but are political and diplomatic factors both in their home countries and their countries of origin. Talking about the Diaspora's contribution to Somaliland's development separate from the government's efforts is, however, not all the time a separate category since members of the Diaspora are often heavily engaged in the government's activities through direct participation or financial contribution.⁷³ Nonetheless,

PRESIDENT OF SOMALILAND, November 26 2010, accessed through:

http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/17940_261110silanyo.pdf, March 23, 2011.

⁶⁹ THE UNITED NATIONS IN SOMALILAND: What Do We Do?, United Nations, 2011.

⁷⁰ KOSER, K (ed.) [2003] New African Diasporas, Routledge, London, UK. p 44.

⁷¹ many of them fleeing as refugees and/or to advance their economic situation

⁷² *Ibid.* 38.

⁷³ UNDP IN SOMALIA: Somalia's Missing Million The Somali Diaspora And Its Role In Development 2009 p. 14.

Diaspora engagement plays the most crucial part in nation-building in all levels of the society both in economic and political terms, as well as significantly contributing to the formation diplomatic relations of the state.

The developments, and all in all the survival of the country, can be linked to Somalilanders living outside the territory of the country. From the very beginning, the SNM being a movement organized in exile, they heavily depended on immigrants' support⁷⁴ and with the aggravation of the economic situation, e.g. the ban on livestock in Saudi Arabia, the remittances sent home became the biggest part in the country's income. Although, the effects of this inflow of money through remittance companies meant the only way to stabilize the region, which efforts claim immense success. The most frequent receivers of this contribution are the families (or clans) living in the 'homeland'. This steady income is essential for the survival of these families and, reflecting to the national level, it contributes to the stability of the area. It also means a potential risk factor as the receivers are not obliged to look for work. A study showed that up to 25% of the households in Hargeisa depend exclusively on the money received from abroad.⁷⁵ In case of a change in the influx from Diaspora members this dependence can result in the quick destabilization of the country, especially considering the unsatisfactory levels of the social distribution systems of the government. Other fields where Diaspora contributions are essential are the economic sector and the substitution of the government social assistance. Diaspora members are the main investors in the country dealing with a wide range of economic activities from small-scale industries to bigger investments like the establishment of the telecommunication sector, as well as their involvement in constructions, remittances and trade.⁷⁶ However, the government is constantly trying to attract FDI, given the insecurity and the lack of government control over business activities, the migrants are the only people willing to invest despite the high risks involved.

This asymmetrical dependence on foreign Diaspora contribution is a means to substitute for the lack of international assistance that results from the unrecognized status of the country. Although 'diaspora fatigue' is not evincible for the moment⁷⁷ it is presumed that with the passing of time the willingness of sending money home is set to decline. It is possible that second or third generation diasporas will be less willing to contribute to their parent's

⁷⁴ SIMONS, A., *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia undone*, Westview Press, Oxford, UK (1995)

⁷⁵ UNDP IN SOMALIA: Somalia's Missing Million The Somali Diaspora And Its Role In Development 2009 p. 14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid* 11.

home and see this obligation as a burden.⁷⁸ It is now only visible in the way that in their contributions are less direct to their family members or clans, as their motivation is changing to be something more connected to the easing of suffering in the whole 'homeland community.'⁷⁹ Given the high levels of dependence, the risks are in fact very high and this situation is not at all sustainable on the long run. The necessity of accessing foreign assistance is a continuous driving factor of the leadership to establish multilateral connections to the international environment. This is particularly important in the light of bilateral donor assistance⁸⁰, amid the lack of recognition, to which access is especially difficult. The only way to achieve this leads to that if multilateral organizations embrace the issue even more.

However, this picture is not in all aspects negative. The importance of it is rarely emphasized that this is the very field where the UN and its specialized agencies are in fact engaged in. The assistance is continuously growing and although it is difficult to support the theory of potential spill-overs to other fields of cooperation the increasing involvement in the nation-building efforts of the Somaliland government, especially in recent years is undeniable and will work in the future even without full-scale de jure recognition. Back to the role of the Diaspora, this explained cooperation involves several efforts of them. Diaspora funded NGOs are fond of cooperating with UN agencies in funding projects like building schools, hospitals and other development activities. Besides, in the delivering of assistance, namely the financial support, international remittance companies, also led by Diaspora members, play a very significant role.⁸¹

Besides the role of the Diaspora in the development of the area and in internal issues, it has a huge effect on Somaliland's external relations as well. Most obviously it effects the relations with its neighboring countries as a result of refugee movement to and from Somaliland territories. It is especially important in the respect that the relative stability compared to other parts of the Horn attracts many migrants from other territories and this puts considerable burden to the state's capabilities. The other factor is the visible lobbying activity of the Diaspora members in host countries. Although it is difficult to track the concrete process, the phenomenon undoubtedly exists and is manifested in the connections to other

⁷⁸ HOEHNE, M.V. – FEYISSA, D. – ABDILE, M. i – SCHMITZ-PRANGHE, Clara. Differentiating the Diaspora: reflections on diasporic engagement 'for peace' in the Horn of Africa, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers, Working Paper No. 124. (2010) p 2.

⁷⁹ ABDILE M.A. *Diasporas and their Role in the Homeland Conflicts and Peacebuilding*: The Case of Somali Diaspora, Diaspeace Working Paper (November 2010).

⁸⁰ which is much higher in other cases of international aid, eg. in Afghanistan than the input of multilateral organizations.

⁸¹ LINDLEY, A. Between 'dirty money' and 'development capital': Somali money transfer infrastructure under global scrutiny, *African Affairs*, Vol. 108. Nr. 433, (2009) pp. 519–53.

countries. A fine support for that is the existence of the proliferation of the ties to those countries where Diaspora lives. A good example is the establishment of the Anglo-Somaliland Chamber in 2010 just like the appearance of the political discussion of Somaliland on the US agenda. However, the biggest flaw of course is that the lobbying machine, including official Hargeisha connections and Diaspora activist as well, has so far not achieved recognition.

Small State analysis

In the case of the Republic of Somaliland smallness is obvious to all extents. It's estimated 3.5 million population abundantly fits into the category Vital set for the small states with a limit of 20-30 million in case of underdeveloped countries,⁸² while its estimated GDP of 15.7 billion USD makes it one of the poorest countries in the world. The state of non-recognition as well as the highly conflictual place it is located at on the Horn of Africa add up to its vulnerability even more shaping it to be an extreme case of fragility. In this respect it is especially striking that, at least to the extent of its most basic concept, it is not evidently a case of state failure. In the most widely known conceptualization of Zartman, failed states are those 'where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart.'⁸³ In Somaliland these features, albeit not in every respect, generally persist. Although, Zartman also adds to the definition of state failure that 'the basic functions of the state are no longer performed.'⁸⁴ There are of course areas where the Hargeisa leadership fails to function, for example by the failure to provide social services, tackle high-scale unemployment and fully secure the monopoly of the use of force. Nonetheless, the government, up to now, successfully handled these faults to the extent that it has not lost the support of the majority of the people and even managed to establish a steady profile in the foreign environment. This part of the paper follows through the factors of vulnerability the country is exposed to and the adaptive responses it has given to them.

(A) *State of dependence*

⁸² VITAL, D. [1967] *The Inequality of States*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 8.

⁸³ ZARTMAN, W. (ed.) [1995]. *The Collapsed State: The Disintegration and the Restoration of Legitimacy Authority*, London and Boudler, Lynne Reinner Publishers, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. p1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

The state of volatility of small countries derives from the general inability to affect the system. This concept was explained by Keohane in a way that “system-ineffectual” states’ foreign policy is adjustment to reality, not rearrangement of it.⁸⁵ One of the main reasons for this is the asymmetric dependence on external actors. This is exactly the case in point in connection with Somaliland, a state not only ‘small’ in size but a weak one considering the lack of important resources, appealing economic climate or unavoidable geopolitical location, that could be attractive to foreign actors. The close-to-complete inability to self-sufficiency lays enormous burden on the shoulders of the Diaspora, which contributes not only to the business investment sector but also substitutes most of the peace-building efforts, the complete social infrastructure, the maintenance of the welfare system as well as the direct financial support for the unemployed. Although it is specific to small countries to depend on remittances and aid more than their bigger counterparts⁸⁶ the fact is that Somaliland cannot access the major donors available to other small states. Many experts highlight that small states have to be more self-reliant in order to resist properly to shocks.⁸⁷ In Somaliland Diaspora remittances are the only means to tackle these shocks. As an example, when Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on Somaliland, the government immediately turned to the people living abroad to help. In this case, however, not only the smallness but the fact that it was a relatively new country building a nation out of a failed state, also plays a role.

This particular case also shows two other characteristics that frequently occur among small states. The first one is the tendency of economic specialization.⁸⁸ The whole Somali territory, including Somaliland was a traditional pastoral society that lived on the export of livestock to the Middle East for many years. However, after secession diplomatic relations suddenly changed and Saudi Arabia, the main destination of the export, became hostile to the newly formed entity and this very soon started to reflect in economic activity as well.⁸⁹ The other characteristic is the openness of the markets. In Somaliland, this characteristic could hardly be changed, even if it wasn’t good for the country, because of the weak governing institutions and the profound proliferation of the informal sector. In Somaliland’s case the existence of an import-driven economy is the consequence of the inability of self-reliance.

⁸⁵ KEOHANE, R. O., Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics, – *op. cit.* p. 296.

⁸⁶ COOPER, A.F. – SHAW, T. M.[2009] Diplomacies of Small States, Palgrave Macmillan, UK

⁸⁷ THE ECONOMIST. Little Countries: Small but perfectly formed, Jan 1, 1998, accessed through: <http://www.economist.com/node/109387>, October 14, 2010.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ However, the Saudi government referred to the River Valley Fever as a reason for the ban.

And here, just like in other cases this dependence on imports causes severe hardships and prevents growing industry sectors from advancing.

Besides economic challenges, smallness causes another deficiency, namely the inability of self-protection. This aspect of small states appeared in Keohane's review⁹⁰ and although the Cold war is over, cannot be still more accurate. The limited resources so true to small states result in the lack of capabilities. Although, usually small states don't even have armies and keep themselves to the clause of non-interference, Somaliland cannot afford itself this luxury. Huge amount of its limited income is spent on the maintenance of an army as is vital for its existence. And although its regional successes can be directly tied to its effectiveness to control most of its area by armed forces, it is still incapable of defending itself from the growing threat of militant islamists, piracy and terrorist organizations. The country in this respect is highly dependent on foreign assistance and that is why the new dual-track policy of the United States is so important to the country.

This draws the importance of diplomatic relations to the picture. Small states are particularly characterized by the fragility of their diplomatic relations.⁹¹ This phenomenon is said to be the consequence of the small diplomatic representation and the lack of available resources poured into the system. In Somaliland it is probably more characteristic than in any other nations given the fact of its unrecognized status, as it severely halts its bilateral as well as multilateral connections.

Outside the UN

There is a very specific characteristic that strikingly differentiates Somaliland from regular small states, that is the lack of recognition. Even given the difficulties mentioned above these are further hardened by the lack of recognition. Most of the small state study mentions how small powers prefer international organizations and how cooperation strengthens their effectiveness in their international relations and enables them to somehow affect the international system. In the case of Somaliland this feature is completely missing with all the advantages that come with the membership. The lack of multilateral relations generate further isolation because this way establishing bilateral connections become more difficult as well. This is an especially huge disadvantage of being unrecognized by the international

⁹⁰ KEOHANE, Robert O., Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics – *op. cit.* p. 296.

⁹¹ COOPER, Andrew F. – SHAW, Timothy M – *op. cit.* p. xii.

community in the case of Somaliland further escalates the problems in a desperate need for further aid and development. The same hold for security considerations as well. Most of the 21st centuries' security challenges⁹² cannot be solved without international cooperation.⁹³ In the case of Somaliland this vulnerability further strengthened by the fact that the country is located in the middle of a potential war zone as well as in the neighbor of the world's number one failed state,⁹⁴ Somalia, which is the undisturbed home to various terrorist organizations and other militant movements.⁹⁵ This case shows that the regular adaptive responses often used by small states are not enough and further methods are needed.

'Clevering up' the state

The challenges mentioned above pose multiple challenges for the Hargeisa leadership. Although there are several strategies that are used by small states to affect the system in their advance many of them are not available for Somaliland amid the lack of access to international organizations. However, there are two strategies that can be used by Somaliland, namely the invention of 'unconventional ideas'⁹⁶ and the specialization in 'specific issue areas'.⁹⁷ From one aspect, the heavy dependence on the Diaspora is not healthy but on the other hand it serves as a working instrument in the stabilization of the area. The contribution arriving from the people living abroad is an enormous advantage that they are trying to make the best use of, applying it to its full credentials. The other strategy applied by the leadership was the implementation of democracy. Although it has had great opportunity costs⁹⁸ the incorporation and demobilization of the freelance militia resulted in an attraction of people from the surrounding area and the increase in the international support. Finally, Somaliland continuously tries to exploit newer ways to contribute to its stabilization. One new way is that they are trying to offer concessions for the exploitation of possible fossils as well as gems int

⁹² like environmental problems, terrorist threats and internationally organized crime, the shrinking resources, etc.

⁹³ MARKUS, Jessica – SAMHALLE, Stat och: The Ambivalence of Being Small: Small States & Security, October 18, 2010. accessed through: <http://www.utrikesperspektiv.se/2010/10/18/stat-och-samhalle/future-insecurity-the-ambivalence-of-being-small-small-states-security-challenges/>, March 8, 2011.

⁹⁴ FAILED STATE INDEX, accessed through: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings, March 12, 2011.

⁹⁵ RABASA, A. – *op. cit*

⁹⁶ MARKUS, Jessica – SAMHALLE, Stat och – *op. cit*.

⁹⁷ KEOHANE, Robert O. – NYE, Joseph S. [1977]. Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition. Little, Brown and Co., Toronto, Canada.

⁹⁸ for example the attraction of terrorist threats

he area⁹⁹. And they continuously advocate that they are willing to assist with showing a model of reconciliation to Somalia.

The beauty of Lilliput

Originally, besides the hardships and the requirement of responding flexibly to the challenges, there are also natural advantages of being small. One of these is, generally, the homogeneity of these countries. In the respect of Somaliland this assumption hardly stands as most of the internal conflicts still derive from the fragmentation of the society. There is also a possibility of looking for loopholes in the international system and trading with what they got, namely their territory, their jurisdiction, etc.¹⁰⁰ In this respect Somaliland seems even less likely to succeed. However, the state of non-recognition holds several presumed advantages for the country. Among these, the most fragile assumption is that in an environment where government institutions are weak free trade can flourish. It is true that there is a significant measure of informal trade in Somaliland and it helps the people in some way. Although, the government, unable to properly tax these ventures falls from the subsidies. All in all, it is visible that Somaliland apparently suffers from most of the negative effects of being small but is unable to enjoy the advantages regular countries.

Conclusion

The Republic of Somaliland in the past twenty years has established a quasi stable de facto state with several governmental and non-governmental connections in international diplomacy. Considering that the country started from complete state failure and a war-torn unrecognized country with complete isolation from the outside world, the achievement is tremendous and tells a success story for Hargeisha. However, if we examine the situation more in details it is visible that the effectiveness and its ability to influence the outcomes that affect the entity's of economic, political and security state is far from sufficient.

It is generally accepted that the biggest achievement of the country, after its unilateral declaration of independence in 1991, was to stabilize the territory solely relying on their

⁹⁹ OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER AND MINERAL RESOURCES, April 10, 2008, accessed through: http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_MMWR_PR_100408.pdf, March 3, 2011.

¹⁰⁰ COOPER, A. – SHAW, T.M.[2009] *Diplomacies of Small States*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK p 10.

resources, while the collapse of the government in Mogadishu resulted in chaos and substantial state failure. The internationally supported TFG is unable to control most of its clan-ruled territory and this means an escalating security concern to the Somaliland government. In sharp contrast, the territory of Somaliland enjoys relative stability thanks to the integrative and democratic approach of crisis management and dispute resolution. The easing of clan aversions were achieved through several national-level conferences. Besides, the leadership's direct and indirect attempts to create a distinct national identity immensely contributed to the consolidation of the situation. It is impossible to put enough emphasis on the importance of a national consensus in such an extreme environment. By implementing western democratic institutions and building infrastructure the leadership managed to create a hospitable environment for the returning refugees, to Diaspora involvement and other migrants, mainly from the surrounding area as well as appealing to the western governments and, supported by heavy lobbying activity of the Diaspora, attracted their sympathy towards the country. The stable environment further bolsters Western engagements in the form of development assistance through international organizations, mainly the UNDP.

With regard to the external relations of the country, there is a visible improvement taken place in recent years, however, the *de jure* recognition is far from any country or international organization. Although, it would be a mistake to assess the effectiveness of Somaliland in the international environment with this one sentence. It is because, against all odds, the country did achieve some level of visibility on the map. It is worthwhile to separate the analysis of the impacts of Somaliland on the global system and on the regional subsystem level.

On the Horn, and in the wider context around the Persian Gulf, Somaliland has managed to fit into the regional diplomacy as a separate actor forming allies with some of the actors in the area, among which the most important its close relations to Ethiopia. The advance of their relations led to the generation of closer ties with the other Somali neighbors, namely Djibouti and Kenya. However this relation caused opposition from the profound believers of the 'one Somalia' concept, mainly the members of the Arab League. Considering these advancements it is understandable that Somaliland is able to affect regional politics, mostly through economic relations and, in a way, in fighting against the spread of the political Islam in the area, too. And although there are some factors that are especially against the formation of a separate state, the allies are interested in upkeeping the status quo.

On a non-regional or global level, relations are not that obvious. Although ties advance with prominent great powers of international politics, they are still strictly limited to

economic assistance and cooperation in fighting terror organizations. However, both the US and the United Kingdom concede, and even congratulate on the democratic development that took place in Somaliland, it is still highly unlikely that de jure recognition would occur any time soon. Even despite the fact that Somaliland loudly advocates its opposition to political Islam, it is only enough not to be treated as an enemy. In connection with international organizations, advancements are a bit faster but are as well restricted to supplying aid to the poor country. Other contributor factors are that despite all of the efforts of the Somaliland leadership and its extended lobbying machine, the Diaspora, given the lack of attractive assets there is an overall neglect towards the area.

There are some specific strategies that Somaliland follows, especially in the light that it does not really have an alternative path. Most importantly it is obvious that the country is extremely vulnerable to the external factors, and is set to serve as the most extreme example of a small country. It does not have resources and is highly dependent on its Diaspora, which is exposed to enormous obligation to support the homeland. Given this situation, that it is not at all sustainable in the long run, the new government has to carry out some sort of reform to create a social structure that is now almost entirely filled out by Diaspora support.

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