

Inside-Out or Outside-In?

Building Peace and States in the Horn of Africa

Africa Security Dialogue

Hargeisa, Somaliland

3–5 June 2022



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Hargeisa, 3-5 June 2022

Friday 3 June

- 08h00 Breakfast for those already in Hargeisa for the pre-event programme (to follow).
12h30 Arrival and check-in at Assod Hotel in Hargeisa for new attendees
14h00 Lunch
17h30 Opening Session: Aims and Methodology
Greg Mills and David Kilcullen
19h00 Dinner

Saturday 4 June

- 07h00 Breakfast
09h00 Opening Address: H.E. The President of Somaliland. 'Lessons from our Journey to Statehood'
H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi
10h00 Tea Break
10h30 Session One: 'Somaliland vs Somalia: Comparing Negotiation Processes'
Matt Bryden
12h30 Lunch
14h00 Session Two: 'Lessons from the Role of Outsiders in Peace-Building: Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan'
Umberto Tavalato, Christopher Clapham and Kate Almquist Knopf
15h45 Tea Break
16h15-18h00 Session Three: 'Lessons in Defeating Radicalism: Comparative Perspectives'
John Githongo, Zitto Kabwe, Gordon Yekelo and Faisal Guhad
19h00 Dinner

Sunday 5 June

- 07h00 Breakfast
08h30 Session Four: 'Developing a New Interface for Outside Actors'
Discussion led by Nils Wörmer, Tendai Biti, Vassilis Gavalas, John Steenhuisen and Chipso Mwanawasa
10h00 Tea Break
10h30 Concluding Session: Report-Back to H.E. The President
12h00 Lunch and departure

Confirmed Participants

Abdiqani Aateye, **Ministry of Defence, Republic of Somaliland**, Somaliland

Mohamed Kahin Ahmed, **Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Somaliland**, Somaliland

Kate Almquist Knopf, **Independent Consultant**, USA

Tendai Biti, **Tendai Biti Law**, Zimbabwe

Matt Bryden, **SAHAN**, Canada

Cynthia Chigwenya, **Konrad Adenauer Stiftung**, Zimbabwe

Christopher Clapham, **University of Cambridge**, UK

Holger Dix, **Konrad Adenauer Stiftung**, Germany

Vassilis Gavalas, **DIKTIO – Network for Reform in Greece and Europe**, Greece

John Githongo, **Inuka Kenya**, Kenya

Faisal Guhad, **Somaliland National Intelligence Agency**, Somaliland

Richard Harper, **Harper Logistics**, South Africa

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Essa Kayd, **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Somaliland**, Somaliland

David Kilcullen, **Cordillera Applications Group**, Australia

Tom Mboya, **The Democratic Congress**, Kenya

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Umberto Tavalato, **European Council on Foreign Relations**, Italy

Bobi Wine, **National Unity Platform**, Uganda

Nils Wörmer, **Konrad Adenauer Stiftung**, Germany

Gordon Yekelo, **South African National Defence Force**, South Africa

MARGINS FOR MANOEUVRE: MANAGING AFRICAN SECURITY IN THE 2020S

Greg Mills and David Kilcullen*

‘I invite you to take part in this reconstruction. The work to be done is colossal. There are more than [\$500bn] in losses. Tens of thousands of buildings have been destroyed’.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Davos, 22 May 2022 ¹

The war in Ukraine has quickly consumed international attention, eclipsing even Covid-19 and quickly consigning the chaotic collapse of the international effort in Afghanistan to memory. Afghanistan’s redux reality of a Taliban hell only occasionally penetrated global attention amid the Ukrainian tumult; around the banning, for instance, of girls’ education, the reimposition of restrictive dress codes on Afghan women, and the likelihood of ‘97%’ of Afghans plunging into poverty by mid-2022 according to United Nations’ estimates.² It is remarkable how rapidly people have become used to the new reality of conventional war in Europe, even though—just three months into the war—we may only be at the equivalent of November 1939, with a long and dangerous road ahead. It is also notable how some commentators have offered ‘too bad, so sad’ analyses rooted in a combination of *self-referentialism* and self-interest: for instance, that a ‘bad peace is better than no peace at all’ and talk of ‘off-ramps’ for Vladimir Putin that compromise Ukraine’s international borders. (The territory being traded for peace in these scenarios is enormous: it amounts to nearly half of the size of the United Kingdom, in the expectation—without evidence—that somehow this will slake Moscow’s thirst for *lebensraum* and create a sustainable peace.) Another victim-blaming version of this ‘peace discourse’ is the notion that Ukraine is somehow prolonging its agony and destruction by resisting Russia. This was the tone, for instance, of an April 2022 letter by 30 German ‘intellectuals’ to Chancellor Olaf Scholz requesting that he not supply Kyiv with weapons.³ The argument that Ukraine must cede territory for peace—a *post hoc* version of 1930s appeasement—was proposed at Davos by Henry Kissinger in May 2022.⁴ The appeasers seem to forget that one of Vladimir Putin’s key aims is to

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¹ At ‘Volodymyr Zelensky calls for global plan to rebuild Ukraine after war,’ *Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/f625893a-4377-44f1-b100-47ee07b794ef>.

² See ‘97 percent of Afghans could plunge into poverty by mid 2022’ says UNDP | United Nations Development Programme, at <https://www.undp.org>.

³ At <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/russia-ukraine-crisis/in-germany-intellectuals-write-to-scholz-urging-not-to-supply-heavy-weapons-to-ukraine-articleshow.html>

⁴ See ‘Putin made ‘big strategic mistake,’ NATO chief says,’ *The Washington Post*, at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/24/russia-ukraine-war-news-live-updates/>

split the West in forcing concessions from Zelenskyy's Ukraine; not difficult to imagine with many of its citizens operating well below the apex of Maslow's pyramid. This would suit Putin's playbook very well.⁵ Likewise, the realisation that Russia's war against Ukraine targets not only Ukrainian territory but also the Western credibility (and hence the chance of deterring other conflicts) seems to have escaped many these safely-distant Putinverstehers. Leaders of frontline states in Scandinavia, the Baltic and eastern Europe know better. As Kaja Kallas, Estonia's prime minister, puts it, "what everybody has to understand is that peace is not an ultimate goal if it means that the aggression pays off...if Russia is not punished for what they are doing, then there will be a pause of one, two years, and then everything will continue: the atrocities, the human suffering, everything."⁶

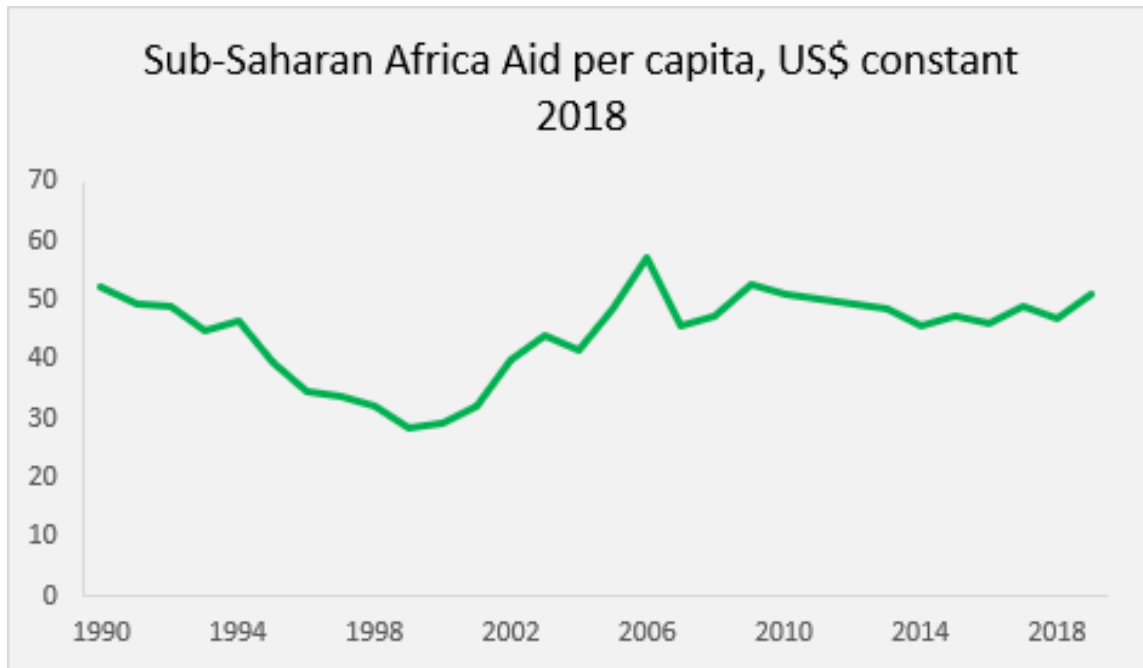
This parallel reality—that what is good enough for Kyiv is not good enough for Europe—did not start with Ukraine, however. It has been there a long while. It was there in Afghanistan, where the international community constructed a system of governance that was utterly dependent on external military and economic support, rather than helping craft a sustainable political deal between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. As a result, the moment that external support was removed, the entire unwieldy structure came crashing down under Taliban pressure. In Africa, international engagement has exhibited a similar dollop of wishful thinking, where incentives to pump out aid have trumped any rationale for reform through the application of stronger incentives and, inevitably, stricter conditions. The reflex of diplomats thus remains the maintenance of stability over prosperity. Key donors, for instance the World Bank, rhetorically refuse to be drawn into politics, even though aid giving is by its very nature political.

As a consequence, from Mali to Mozambique, outside actors are routinely (and knowingly) played by their internal counterparts who realise that the incentives for giving largely outweigh those for saying no. The cost of this African failure to match rhetorical obligations with reform is, however, not usually borne by the elites, but by the citizenry, largely disconnected from the flows of global finance and disregarded by decision-makers.

It is not difficult to see how this system will have to change over the next decade, through a combination of demographic pressures—especially in the pressure-cooker of African cities—and through African economies' historical inability to achieve growth rates fast enough to keep pace with people and expectations. These pressures will be exacerbated by climate change, the movement of more people to littoral areas, and a refocusing away from Africa by donors elsewhere, not least in Europe.

⁵ See William Hague at <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/e9982934-daac-11ec-bcbd-e35b52e0266c?shareToken=9d5ae51a01e8386261f74d255b2d26>.

⁶ Jeremy Cliffe, "Europe's new Iron Lady: Estonian prime minister Kaja Kallas" in *The New Statesman*, 11 May 2022 at <https://www.newstatesman.com/international-content/2022/05/europes-new-iron-lady-estonian-prime-minister-kaja-kallas>



Ironically, some of the change necessary may emerge from the conflict in Ukraine.

For one, there is likely to be a diversionary impact on global aid flows as a consequence of the war in Ukraine, despite the well-organised political economy of aid to Africa. This can only add to existing doubts about the global aid system, undermining donors’ assumptions that they can fast-forward development in a state-centric way that never worked their own territories, and the realisation that aid might merely be a safety valve: delaying the day of reckoning for elites, rather than improving governance.

The war in Ukraine emphasises, too, the need for regional actions to establish a clear and inclusive framework and a common set of principles for peace and post-conflict recovery. The preference for negotiations has long been a rhetorical African tool, even though the methodology for its effectiveness is under-studied and selectively applied. For example, on Ukraine, South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa has said repeatedly (most recently during the visit by the German Chancellor on 24 May) that ‘I don’t see any other way other than negotiating and dialogue’.⁷ But this view disregards South Africa’s own conflict-resolution methodology. Despite the predilection of South Africa’s contemporary politicians to rewrite their own history according to a mythology of defeat and victory, the country’s transition to democracy in the early 1990s offers three key lessons:

First, the solution must be political. Both sides must realise that there is more to be gained from negotiating than from continued fighting. Second, to achieve this, you need leadership. South Africa had Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk, both of whom realised they could not do it alone,

⁷ Cited at <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/olaf-scholz-lands-in-loadshedding-land>

that they needed both unity within their ranks and a common bond between them to bring about another country. Third, local actors cannot resolve these conflicts without international and regional support, and facilitating the benefits of closer integration. The world needs to be pushing parties to the negotiating table, not allowing them off the hook.

The failure to recognise these components, and thus to build enduring processes of peace, is not just a South African challenge. It is replicated elsewhere, including in Afghanistan (where an inclusive regional peace proved illusory) and in other African conflicts, including Ethiopia. The international community—led or, increasingly, lagged by the United States—has proven unwilling or inept at framing a regional security discussion, while in a Horn of Africa context ‘the African Union is mired in the mud, the UN is AWOL and IGAD exists only in name’ as Alex Rundos has put it.⁸

A further dimension of the search for peace—also highlighted by Ukraine—is the constant struggle for nationhood and the related, and unreconciled, aspect of decolonisation. It is sometimes forgotten (at least in Africa) that Europe, too, had a colonial history. It is also assumed that Africa’s colonial history started and ended with Europeans, even though the history of internal African conquest and subjugation has been much longer. The focus on outsiders tends to create, also, an externalist paradigm, where key leaders and thinkers tend to focus what was done to Africans rather than what they should be doing for themselves.

Finally, Ukraine highlights the need for leadership in managing crises as much as in instigating reforms and maintaining their course and focus. Zelenskyy has proven himself a brilliant communicator, able to get the country and the international community behind his leadership. Without these skills—and his staying power—he could easily have been another Ashraf Ghani and Ukraine another Afghanistan. Zelenskyy’s ability to communicate is not, by itself, enough, but it has helped him build trust, internally and externally, for his arguments and his plan. This type of leadership—possessing and pursuing plan, while being willing to make unpopular decisions in the national interest—is largely absent from contemporary African politics.

Ethiopia: Posers and Pointers

‘A civil war is not a war but a sickness,’ warned Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. ‘The enemy is within. One fights almost against oneself.’⁹ Antony Beevor cites the French writer and airman in his volume on the Spanish Civil War, a conflict which, when propelled by outside forces, congealed into a vehemently left- and right-wing struggle, in which the middle-ground—and democracy—was eclipsed by two competing and brutal forms of totalitarianism. The manner in which the two sides spun their own histories, during and after the conflict, made reconciliation that much more difficult, while the clash between ideologies and its bitter aftermath helps explain why the animus

⁸ Zoom call, 24 May 2022.

⁹ Cited in Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006.

continued until after Franco's death. The same dynamics exist today, though social media provides far greater opportunities to spin narratives in whatever direction desired.

Inter-state conflict in Africa is relatively uncommon. While considered domestic issues, the continent's intra-state battles usually also involve international contests for influence and power, involving regional actors. Thus, regional actors must also, by necessity, be involved in conflict resolution if sustainable solutions are to be found.

In Ethiopia's case, the journey to Debre Birhan in November 2021 illustrated the dangers and origins of civil conflict. At each of eleven checkpoints on the road north-west from Addis Ababa to the front we were stopped by a man with a gun, sometimes Oromo or Amhara militia, depending on whose territory the section of road crossed, sometimes local or federal police, and on a couple of occasions by a mixed group of Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) soldiers and plainclothes intelligence officers.

The presence of Oromo and Amhara forces highlights the changing fortunes and allegiances in this conflict. In November 2021, these were allies of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad against the Tigrayans, as were the forces of Ethiopia's arch-rival Eritrea; by May 2022 these patterns were shifting, as conflict in the north died down and that with the Oromia and Amharic militias increased. Ethiopia under Abiy has seen a growing warlordism or 'militiafication' of control.

At Debre Sina, 190 kilometres from Addis, the single-lane A2 climbs over 3,000 metres, through several small tunnels, to an escarpment that looks over the town of Shewa Robit, where fighting had erupted the morning of our journey. A larger concentration of military forces and militia barred our further progress, and despite our protests, we were ordered to turn around. Once we had done so, we were immediately stopped for questioning by a member of the National Intelligence Service and told to follow him and a hapless policeman to Debre Birhan where we were detained for further interrogation.

The war was at the time marching closer to Addis at a fair lick. Just ten days earlier, with the fall of the city of Dessie, the front was 300 kilometres from Addis. There was little evidence anywhere along our route of a government plan to stop the advance by the rebel Tigrayan Defence Force (TDF). All the signs were that the TDF had simply gone around most ENDF positions and continued virtually unabated on its mission to unseat the Abiy government.

It was difficult to predict the turning point in the conflict, in the government's favour, that was to follow in early December, the result apparently of an influx in new weaponry, especially Iranian and Turkish drones along with military advisers from the United Arab Emirates, Prime Minister Abiy's closet ally, and fighters from Eritrea. China is the largest foreign investor in Ethiopia, with a stake reputedly of \$12 billion;¹⁰ Turkey the second-largest with \$2.5 billion.¹¹

¹⁰ At <https://asiatimes.com/2021/12/us-hands-china-a-victory-in-ethiopia/>.

¹¹ This figure was confirmed by the Turkish Ambassador to Addis in November 2021.

The flow of modern arms from a NATO member and staunch US ally occurred even as the United States, European Union and African Union, among others, were working towards a ceasefire and peace talks, emphasizing the diminishing global influence of the United States in the wake of the humiliating Afghan debacle. But more broadly, the role of outsiders in Ethiopia, who have consistently supported a regime without democratic credentials for the sake of short-term stability and in furtherance of their own interests, has long been part of the problem.

Abiy was appointed Prime Minister in April 2018 following the resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn in the face of domestic protest and violence. At the time Abiy appeared a man on a mission to reshape regional relations and domestic politics, for which he quickly earned domestic sympathy and international support, being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for making peace with Isaias Afwerki's neighbouring Eritrea. Ethiopia's relationship with its one-time guerrilla ally had collapsed into bitter warfare in 1998, ostensibly over the border town of Badme, costing an estimated 100,000 lives during three years of fighting.

Abiy's rise also signalled the demotion of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as the major political power in Ethiopia. His vision for Ethiopia seems, if anything, to be based around not returning the country to the type of rule of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a Tigrayan, who died in 2012 after nearly 20 years in charge, during which the TPLF gained a disproportionate share of political power and economic opportunity.

This was formally represented by Abiy's dissolution of the TPLF-dominated ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition of four ethnically based parties formed in 1988 to fight the 'Derg' Marxist regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. The EPRDF was replaced by the 'Prosperity Party' in December 2019. When Abiy postponed national elections scheduled for August 2020 on the grounds of Covid-19, the TPLF upped the political ante by holding its own regional election the following month.

The government in Addis Ababa then launched a military operation into Tigray in November 2020, aiming to decapitate the leadership of the TPLF. The co-ordination of Eritrean and Ethiopian forces with Amharic irregulars suggests that plans for the invasion had been laid some time before. There is little doubt, too, that the TPLF played its part in instigating the conflict by attacking federal bases in Tigray in order to get their hands on the heavy weaponry they lacked. Their own line is that this was a pre-emptive measure, given that the government was about to attack them anyhow. But underlying the TPLF rebellion was a fundamental refusal to accept their loss of power in 2018 with the installation of the Abiy government, and more basically a deluded assessment of their ability to maintain the level of control over the national government that they had enjoyed until then. There was absolutely no way that most of Ethiopia, especially Oromo and Amhara, would accept a government run by a group whose support base never amounted to more than 6% of the population. On the government side, of course, resorting to an alliance with Eritrea in order to control Tigray was always going to be catastrophic, and resulted in the mess in which Abiy quickly became mired, both domestically—Eritrea is unsurprisingly not held in high regard by most Ethiopians—and internationally. The resort to war represented thus a massive leadership

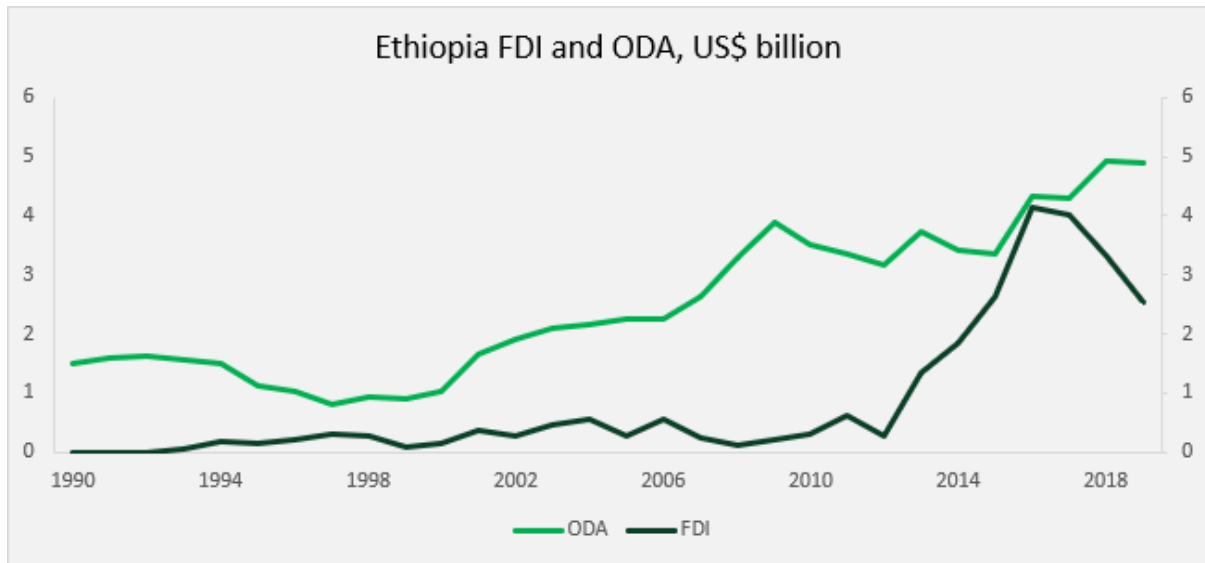
failure in Asmara, Addis and Mekelle, one compounded by a series of miscalculations about how quickly the war would end. Abiy, famous for his messianic certainty, promised the war would last only days at the outset, and declared victory in three weeks, while the TPLF apparently did not anticipate the Eritrean incursion.

The Tigrayan conflict also, however, came on the back of several years of ratcheting domestic political instability, mainly in the Oromo region, home to 35% of Ethiopia's 110 million people. While Abiy's military move against Tigray may have been aimed at reducing ethnic and political tensions by bringing the province's rebellious leadership back into line, it simultaneously unlocked a regional conflict involving Eritrea and Sudan, the former as backers of Abiy, the latter as the regional bedfellow of the TDF, incorporating elements of the TPLF.

But while Abiy had a plan for war, and a plan for turning Ethiopian politics away from Tigrayan domination to his own advantage, he had no plan for peace, in spite of the willingness and help of outsiders to establish conditions for conflict resolution. He managed to upset the Sudanese and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, then trumped it all by relying on Eritrea to slap the Tigrayans down militarily. He then rubbed salt into ethnic wounds by dispossessing and detaining Tigrayans in a bout of ethnic business-cleansing in Addis, all while locking up Oromo leadership. In fact, if anything, Abiy stepped into every imaginable pothole in the peace-making process – pursuing unrealistic objectives, resorting to belligerent rhetoric, running interference to ensure an intermittent rather than a constant peace process, forum-shopping for mediation, working against rather than with the grain of international actors, and failing to see his opponent's position, strengths and weaknesses and acting on them.

Despite all this, the international community continues to support Abiy for several reasons. While some—notably in the United States—have applied limited sanctions in the form of the removal of tariff-free access to U.S. markets for Ethiopian goods,¹² the donors' urge to continue with aid is greater than their political will. This has been an enduring feature of external donor behaviour toward Ethiopia, especially during the regime of Meles and since.

¹² Citing 'gross violations of internationally recognized human rights,' the United States suspended Ethiopia's duty-free access to the US market in November 2021. See <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-suspends-ethiopia-s-duty-free-access-over-tigray-violations/6296829.html>.

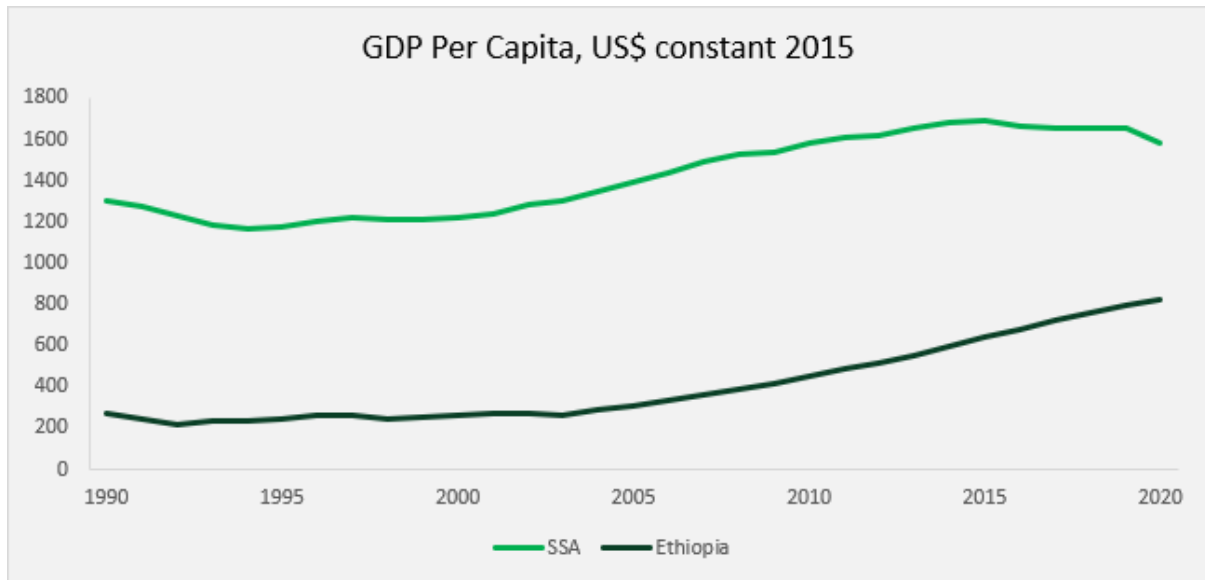


During the worst days of the Derg regime, as many as eight million Ethiopians required food aid, sparking the Band Aid and Live Aid concerts of the mid-1980s. The politicisation of access to food and aid largely explains Ethiopia’s history of famine, and continues to explain it today. According to UN reports, the at-risk population in the north of Ethiopia had risen to seven million by the end of 2021, with over 2.4 million people internally displaced. Yet Abiy’s regime continued to weaponise humanitarian access, manipulating access granted to relief agencies, including the UN.¹³

The constant tussle over land goes to the core of nationalist tensions in Ethiopia, with the constant settlement and re-settlement of ethnic groups, land being central to welfare in a country where only 15% live in urban areas. It reflects the imperative for Ethiopia to address its own decolonisation debate; not the usual African one about the obligation of Europeans on the grounds of historic dispossession, but rather an internal discussion about the forces of expansion and settlement that produced modern Ethiopia, whereby many Oromo, in particular, feel subjugated.

In this sense the Tigrayan conflict is not the disease in Ethiopia, but a symptom of more general political failure. Addis’ preferred method of dealing with Tigray, through annexation and ethnic dismemberment, has also sent a message to other regions. And making the war about the last 27 years of oppression by the TPLF has avoided an honest assessment of the role of the EPRDF in this period: ‘neither democratic nor revolutionary’ as one activist noted.

¹³ At <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-facts>.



Growth in the Ethiopian economy, which had become used to annual growth rates of more than 10% for the last quarter century, fell during 2021 to just 3.8% according to the IMF.¹⁴ Ethiopia's fiscal and forex positions quickly became strained, with inflation nearing 40% by May 2022, and the widening gap between official and black-market forex rates illustrating the shortage of hard currency as well as the slow rate of growth. This slowed an ambitious infrastructure development agenda, leaving little room for manoeuvre. Ethiopia's pivot toward manufacturing in its giant Special Economic Zones (SEZs), already slowed by Covid-19, began to go backwards, with manufacturing businesses complaining that they were not only negatively affected by forex shortages, but were being targeted by revenue authorities given the fiscal pinch. Together, these political and security problems could only divert resources and attention away from dealing with the crisis of development in Ethiopia, which lies at the heart of these difficulties in the first instance.

Thus, even though the military initiative shifted in Abiy's favour soon after our visit to the front line, military success will not, absent a plan for peace, bring stability. As a consequence, on 19 December 2021, Tigrayan forces announced a complete pullback to the constitutionally mandated borders of Tigray, a 'political decision' to withdraw in the interests of peace, says General Tsadkan Gebretensae, the leader of the TDF.¹⁵ He noted that this was necessary since 'when we marched to Addis Ababa, the political and diplomatic arrangements did not go in tandem with our military progress.' The rapid Tigrayan advance towards Addis was designed originally to 'finish the war as soon as possible' by pressing for an 'all-inclusive, negotiated political settlement ... the shortest path,' notes Tsadkan, 'to bring an end to the predicament which we are in'. Yet such a strategic retreat and Abiy's new-found battlefield prowess could, absent a peace process,

¹⁴ At <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ETH>.

¹⁵ See the interview with General Tsadkan on BBC World Service, 21 December 2021.

only bring stalemate, triggering an ethnic civil war that could be weaponised ‘irresponsibly’ by outside powers and those that invited them in.¹⁶

And yet, as highlighted above, the international community was absent throughout the crisis. Western powers lacked the interest, coherence and, post-Afghanistan, the credibility to establish terms for peace, while African initiatives lacked the sense of urgency, organisation and political will to plug the resultant gap. Moreover, in the presence of such inertia and dysfunction, Abiy successfully was able to con all sides into believing that he had a plan.

Assessing the Costs of Western Weakness

The unruly Western retreat from Afghanistan in August 2021 was, in the words of the former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan Crocker, ‘an enormous morale boost for Islamic radicals everywhere’.¹⁷ It also undermined American leadership and credibility to such an extent that it almost certainly contributed to, or indeed may have catalysed Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. The moral weakness exhibited by President Biden in his willingness to abandon Afghanistan did not, however, necessarily mean that Ukraine or Africa is strategically irrelevant.¹⁸ Rather than offering an example of how to stabilise and rebuild failed states, the self-inflicted debacle in Afghanistan, and the outrageously incompetent manner of the West’s exit, not only undermined the value of western partnership with erstwhile allies, but also boosted its geopolitical rivals and sent encouraging signals to rogue regimes and terrorist groups elsewhere. The failure of the Western model of state-building intervention is likely to increase the attractiveness of the Chinese alternative, which already has significant traction, sharpening its competitive edge, including in Africa.

At the least, western defeat in Afghanistan should pose important questions for Africa, where governments are fighting wars against Islamic extremists in the Sahel, the Horn and, more recently, in Mozambique.

Faced with an unprecedented wave of different but overlapping security crises, from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies, countries in these regions are kept together by increasingly thin layers of political glue, desperately seeking a coherent strategy for containing security threats and extending governance. Extremists in these countries have been encouraged by the Taliban’s victory in Afghanistan, just as their opponents were disheartened by America’s abandonment of its ally in Kabul. The jihadist centre of gravity, which has steadily been moving south from the Sahel through West Africa to Central Africa and more recently, down East Africa into Mozambique, is

¹⁶ See the interview with Alex Rondos, the former EU Special Envoy to the Region on the BBC World Service, 21 December 2021

¹⁷ At <https://www.defencweb.co.za/middle-east/middle-east-middle-east/analysis-islamic-state-attack-signals-west-least-bad-option-for-afghanistan-the-taliban/?referrer=newsletter>.

¹⁸ See Anatoli Lieven at <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/world/nemesis-why-the-west-was-doomed-to-lose-in-afghanistan-911-taliban>.

constantly expanding, fed by a diet of poverty, rapid population growth, youth alienation, global connectivity and careless government.

Somalia's Al-Shabab, for example, responded to the news: 'God is great'. Iyad Ag Ghaly, the leader of Al-Qaeda affiliate Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) said of the Taliban's victory, 'We are winning,' drawing comparisons with France's decision at the same time to downsize its eight-year mission in Mali.¹⁹ Whether such a moral and political fillip will significantly affect the activity of jihadist groups is moot: their trajectories are rooted in enduring local conflicts and circumstances.

By 2021, there were 60,000 UN peacekeepers with a budget of \$6.4 billion in 12 multinational operations around the world: Central African Republic, Mali, Abyei in South Sudan, Democratic of Congo, Western Sahara, Kosovo, India/Pakistan, Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus and Golan.²⁰ The largest peacekeeping mission in 2021 was AMISOM, which was, however, the responsibility of the African Union rather than the UN, with nearly 20,000 peacekeepers. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was the second-largest active peacekeeping mission with just over 17,000 military personnel, and MINURSM in Mali with 15,000 personnel.

Evaluating the requirements for effective peace missions is not uncommon. For instance, to assess the UN's role in ensuring international peace, a comprehensive review of UN Peace Operations was undertaken at the turn of this century. The resulting 2000 Brahimi Report (named after Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, Chair of the Panel, but formally labelled the 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations'), outlined the need to strengthen the UN's capacity for effective peacekeeping operations. Recommendations included the need for increased financial support, improved force readiness, a focus on intelligence, and the need for closer integration of military, political, development, and human rights expertise.²¹

In stating the problem, the Brahimi Report noted, 'Over the last decade, the United Nations has repeatedly failed to meet the challenge, and it can do no better today. Without renewed commitment on the part of Member States, significant institutional change and increased financial support, the United Nations will not be capable of executing the critical peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks that the Member States assign to it in coming months and years.' Noting then that the UN 'has bitterly and repeatedly discovered over the last decade [that] no amount of good intentions can substitute for the fundamental ability to project credible force if complex peacekeeping, in particular, is to succeed', the report concluded that 'force alone cannot create peace; it can only create the space in which peace may be built.'

Brahimi has subsequently questioned the sequencing of elections before ensuring the conditions for peace. 'Elections,' he reflects, 'do not unite you. They divide you. The same could be said for forcing a constitution; rather you should give the locals the time to develop their own model.'²² Or as President Muse Bihi Abdi says of Somaliland's approach, 'One of our advantages

¹⁹ At <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57418757>.

²⁰ At <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>.

²¹ See https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Brahimi_Report_Exec_Summary.pdf.

²² Zoom call, 16 October 2021.

was that we had a local constitution.’ The bottom-up success of Somaliland contrasts with the top-down failure of the international-led model in south-central Somalia. ‘Aid,’ he says, ‘can be a curse, depending on how you use it.’

Nicholas ‘Fink’ Haysom, who served as Nelson Mandela’s legal adviser before joining the UN system and serving across a variety of conflict settings, argues that the environment for mediation has become more complex given the proliferation of actors, government and non-governmental, the number of new agendas, the erosion of international consensus around a ‘liberal peace’ given, especially, the rise of authoritarianism, and the related shift in the balance of power from internal to external actors. ‘It’s difficult to find a formula to make peace when those around the table are not those making the decisions,’ he observes. To get back to the basics of making peace, he advises avoiding ‘timebound conditionalities which, in an asymmetrical conflict such as Iraq or Afghanistan, plays in favour of the insurgent’, and to ‘put peace upfront’ instead of a plethora of ‘new conditionalities’ from climate change to transitional justice which demand ‘prophets, not mediators’.²³

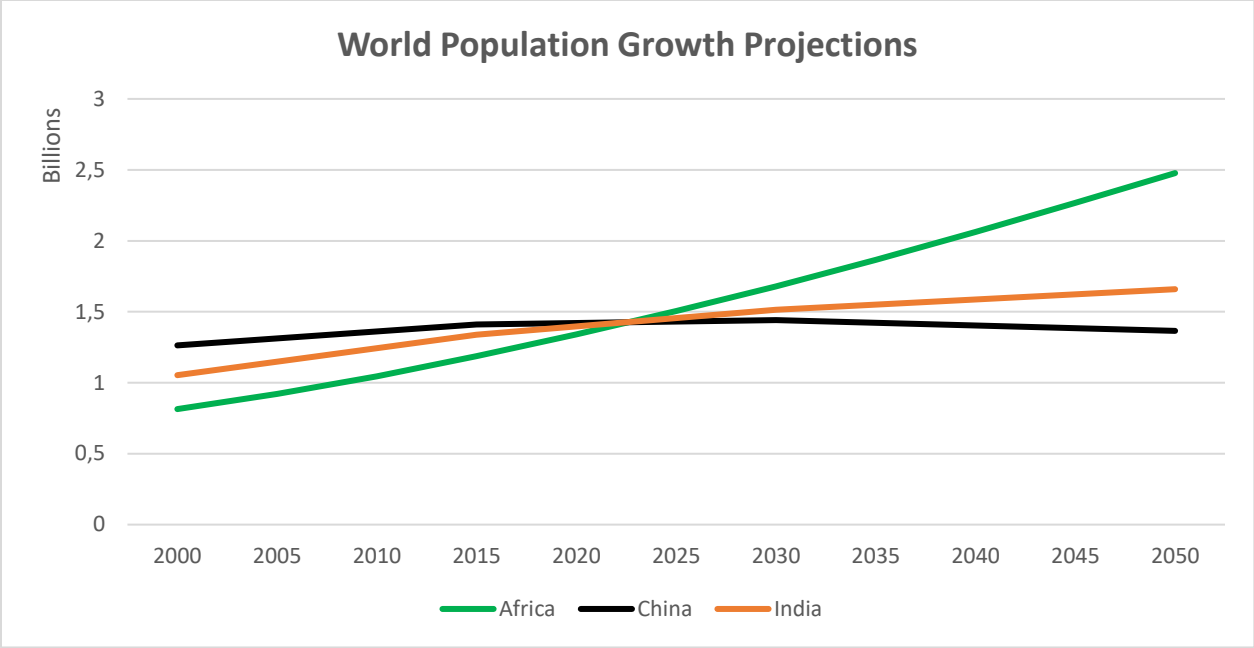
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There are no easy answers to these challenges, even with the benefit of hindsight. Yet the demand for external assistance for stabilisation and development is likely to continue. The strategic design of such international missions is of particular relevance to Africa. The continent, just 14 kilometres from Europe across the Gibraltar strait, is in the throes of a societal and demographic revolution which, without a shift from business-as-usual practices by both African leaders and outsiders, can only further stress its politics and stability. At the same time, some of the answers come from Africa.

The Common African Challenge

Over the next generation, Africa’s population is projected to double to 2.5 billion. The numbers are startling. At current rates of growth, Nigeria’s population will increase to over 400 million, while Tanzania’s, currently 53 million, will grow to the same size as that of Russia at 137 million. Kenya’s population will more than double to 95 million, while Uganda’s will balloon from 43 million to 106 million. Almost 60% of Africa’s population is under the age of 25, making Africa the youngest continent. The African median age was 19.8 in 2020, with Niger at just 15.1. By 2100, at current rates, Africa’s youth population will be double the entire population of Europe.

²³ Zoom discussion, 14 October 2021.



Most of this increase will take place in Africa’s cities, which will accommodate over half of African citizens by 2030. Sixty years ago, that figure was just 10%.

The resulting instability and threats to livelihood are already becoming apparent. According to the 2020 African Youth Survey, for example, nearly two-thirds of Africans aged 18-25 feel today their countries are moving in the wrong direction.²⁴ Only one in six is in stable wage employment,²⁵ and just 75% of them are literate – the lowest of any region globally.²⁶ According to the 2018 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, half the continent’s 55 countries registered a deterioration in education outcomes between 2013 and 2017.²⁷ Unemployment, social media connectivity, and radical ideologies could prove a potent and volatile security and political mix. Today’s policy decisions will help determine whether Africa’s youth will be an asset or burden to their societies.

Africa—especially sub-Saharan Africa—has not kept pace with the volume of people entering its job market. Investment and economic growth are too low, reflecting poor governance and political stability. Africa’s share of global foreign direct investment lingers around 3.5% of an annual amount of \$1.5 trillion; yet its share of the global population is almost 17%. Developing Asia received, by comparison, \$512 billion in 2018 FDI, nearly 40% of the total, closer to its global

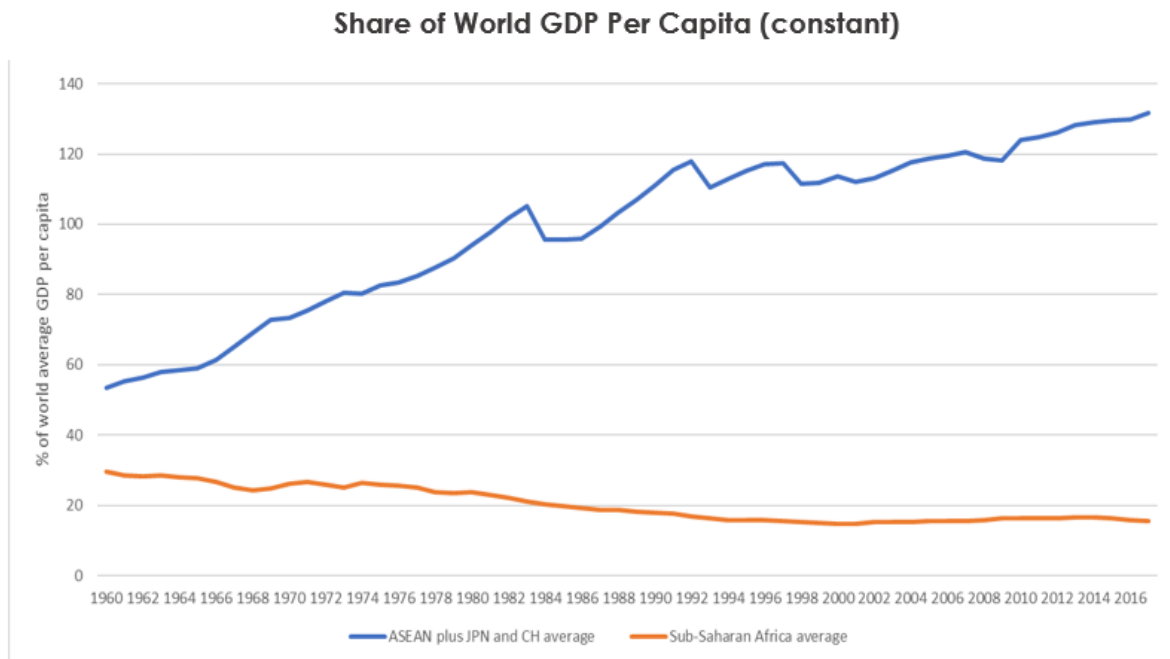
²⁴ Conducted across 14 African countries: Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. See *African Youth Survey 2020*. Johannesburg: Ichikowitz Family Foundation, 2020.

²⁵ African Development Bank: *Jobs for Youth in Africa*, at https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Images/high_5s/Job_youth_Africa_Job_youth_Africa.pdf.

²⁶ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, at World Bank Data Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.ZS?locations=ZG-8S-Z4-ZJ>.

²⁷ At <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2019/africas-first-challenge-youth-bulge-stuck-waithood>.

population share of 60%.²⁸ The divergence is starkly portrayed in the chart, below, which reflects the rise (and fall) of Africa's per capita income relative to East Asia, a region which acquired its independence at around the same time as Africa's.



The presence of more people in the job market can, in the current policy environment, only suppress wages and diminish work opportunities. If handled with a fresh approach, a rapidly increasing young workforce, in an ageing world, could offer a demographic dividend, as seen in East Asia over the last half century. But this will demand that African governments, and their partners, prepare adequately for the change. Such a governance response, fit for purpose and up to the challenge, has hitherto been lacking across much of Africa.

Africa's record of governance and reform is patchy at best. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance shows²⁹ that Africa's average overall governance score in 2017 (49.9 out of 100.0) is just one point higher than in 2008, showing that the continent is failing to keep up with population growth and, in particular, the changing youth demographic.³⁰ Thirty-four countries, home to 72% of Africans, improved their governance performance over the decade from 2008, while the remainder experienced a decline in governance in some 18 countries. The improvement is driven most notably by 15 countries, home to almost half of Africa's population, including Kenya,

²⁸ See https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2019_en.pdf.

²⁹ Sourced from <http://s.mo.ibrahim.foundation/u/2018/11/27173840/2018-Index-Report.pdf>.

³⁰ See <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2018/african-governance-progress-lagging-behind-demographic-growth-and-expectations-youth>.

Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire, which have shown particularly large moves in terms of ranking between 2008 and 2017.

The ability of outsiders to consolidate progress and counter decline has proven to be problematic in such circumstances. Take the case of Mali, which has suffered systemic instability over the last decade despite considerable international assistance. Mali's struggle against various jihadist groups in its northern and central regions has been assisted since 2013 by French troops and a UN peacekeeping mission. Their ability to provide support has been made much more difficult by a weak central government and the poorly trained and ill-equipped army.³¹

The Sahel transitioned to democracy in 1991 after a long period of military rule. It was a donor darling during this democratic phase. While the toppling of Muammar Ghaddafi in nearby Libya is commonly taken as the reason for Mali's subsequent collapse, the reasons are more complex. The depth of corruption was one reason why the Tuareg rebellion of 2012—which sought autonomy for the northern region—was badly mismanaged. Moreover, the country was essentially split, in terms of the focus of governance; 90% of Mali's population lives in the south, and people in these areas don't really care much about the north.

The Tuareg rebellion led to an 'accidental' coup in 2012. Soldiers marching on the presidential palace to demand more pay found that President Amadou Toumani Touré (known as 'ATT') had fled. As a result, the French armed forces launched *Opération Serval* in January 2013, helping to bring some order to the country, while being active elsewhere in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad, and Niger since that time. The French force in Mali was bolstered by not less than 15,000 uniformed UN personnel by 2020. Still, the challenges did not disappear with ATT, nor has the presence of so many foreign troops been able to prevent the collapse of governance and, in 2020 and 2021, government again.

Following the collapse of the government in April 2019, Mali's president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, was ousted in a military coup in August 2020 following mass protests over corruption, the mismanagement of the economy and a dispute over legislative elections.

A combination of criminality, the smuggling of people and contraband, tribal enmities and jihadist elements has made running Mali seemingly impossible. All this is exacerbated by the increase in population as well as climate change. Mali is projected to increase its population from 20 million in 2020 to 44 million by 2050.

It's not only about national numbers, but also where people will be living. The population of Mali's capital, Bamako, doubled in size to more than two million people in just seven years during the early part of the 21st Century as a result of rural political instability, and the city has been growing at a steady 4% annually. It is not alone. Niger, to Mali's east, will go from 24 million people in 2020 to more than 68 million by 2050, a 20-fold projected population increase since independence in 1960, while neighbouring Burkina Faso will increase from 21 million to 43 million people by 2050.

³¹ At <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58279439>.

This helps explain the answer by Malian and Nigerien politicians to the question: What is the greatest economic challenge you face? Their response: 'Security'.³²

An integrated solution that encompasses political power, economic opportunity, and social development is necessary. There has been very limited progress on the political aspect, as a result of which the state has been unable to re-establish its presence in the form of schools and police posts across large swathes of territory. There was very little government capacity to fill the governance vacuum. This failure has caused the government itself in Bamako to falter, leading to the collapses-cum-coups of 2012, 2020 and 2021: instability had become institutionalised.

In May 2021, following the second coup in nine months, the French President threatened that France would withdraw its troops from Mali if political instability there led to greater Islamist radicalisation. At the same time, jihadists were becoming increasingly active in the Sahel and neighbouring regions. If France were to leave out of pique over the military takeovers in Mali and Chad, there is a fear that Islamist militancy will become even more rampant.

'We can't do it for the Malian government' remarked a senior French diplomat at the *Quai d'Orsay* in 2019. 'We can't act on behalf of the Malian parliament.' And, so it has proven. Yet the international community continues to try and provide security in the hope that somehow peace—a political solution—can be manufactured and grafted onto the local scene.

Reinforcing Success, Rewarding Failure?

Set up in January 2007, the UN-mandated African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) superseded the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Peace Support Mission in Somalia. In March 2007, Ugandan troops arrived in Somalia, operationalising AMISOM. By July 2010, soon after deadly bombings by Al-Shabaab in Kampala, the African Union agreed to widen AMISOM's mandate from peacekeeping to peace enforcement in order to engage the radical Islamist movement.

The strategy was driven, it seemed, by several core assumptions: Mogadishu would eventually fill the political space created by international military gains; Al-Shabaab would be militarily defeated; the international community could be co-ordinated; AMISOM would hand over security to a Somali National Army that would ensure governance in the national interest; and, international, regional and Somali national interests could be aligned.

The mission grew quickly, as once more did foreign support.

UN Security Council Resolution 1964 of 22 December 2010 took AMISOM from 7,650 troops to 12,000, and Security Council Resolution 2035 of 22 February 2012 took it to 17,731. This made AMISOM the largest UN-mandated peacekeeping mission in the world. In addition, the UN Security Council extended the AMISOM mandate for a further nine months in May 2020, requiring a gradual hand-over of responsibility to Somali forces by 2021.

³² These answers were given in exchanges with both the Presidents and Prime Ministers of the two countries in July 2017.

The international aid regime, more or less, kept pace. Under the New Deal Compact for Somalia, signed in Brussels in September 2013, donors began to sing from the same peacebuilding hymn sheet. By the start of 2020, Somalia was receiving more than \$1 billion annually to keep the peace and build domestic security and other governance systems.³³

The assumption that, with time and ladles of international assistance, Somalia could be stabilised and international, regional and local interests constructively aligned, has not so far proved to be correct. Ultimately, the success of the AMISOM commitment will depend on the extent of local ownership of the reasons for failure and thus the solution.

Contemporary threats to Somali security can be grouped into three different but related clusters, all of which are internally generated: first, Al-Shabaab, the Al-Qaeda-inspired Islamist movement that was triggered by Ethiopia's 2006 invasion and overthrow of the Union of Islamic Courts and has since fed off a cocktail of opposition to infidel invaders, lawlessness, religious ideology and youth frustration. A second has been the absence of government and governance, allowing private militias to go relatively unchecked at the local level and creating a vicious cycle of security instability. Third, this situation is related to the most intractable problem in contemporary Somalia: the clan system. Once a basis of social stability and consensus, the clan system—suppressed under Siad Barre only to be reified and concretised under international intervention since 1992—is now a base of power and control outside of government.

In the assessment of one international official in 2020, the UN 'is not getting much dividend off \$4 billion in security assistance over the last 12 years. Instead, Al-Shabaab is deep in revenue collection countrywide, and even within the government in Mogadishu itself.'³⁴ Rather than aligning its interests with the people of Somalia, the principles of political survival around individuals and clan identities prevail, with a sedentary attitude towards governance. This has not been helped by increasing donor fragmentation, or regional factionalism: with Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea all privileging their own interests over those of Somalia. Some see the core assumption of a self-governing, economically viable and secure Somalia as a threat.

At the heart of the challenge is that Mogadishu is run 'by an elite, wealthy and in a position of authority, trying to govern a country where they don't have much reach or influence, and where they are not identified as Somalis. Moreover, these characters are often transient: they will extract as much money as they can for as long as possible and then go back to live their lives in Birmingham or Minnesota.' None of this should be particularly surprising as the key challenge for Somalis over the past 35 years has been physical survival, explaining why those with access to power are inclined to use it for their own ends.

Over time, foreign missions have provided endlessly squabbling Somali politicians with continuous payoffs, creating a class of conflict entrepreneurs (both political and military, and on

³³ Humanitarian assistance amounted to \$1 billion in 2011, for example, and development aid was estimated at \$200 million in 2013. By 2014, the European Union was alone spending €25 million per month, and over the previous seven years it had spent over \$2 billion. Annual UN security assistance alone amounted to \$550 million annually by 2020, of which \$200 million was supplied by the EU.

³⁴ Zoom interview with Dr Mills, 15 October 2020.

all sides of the conflict) and thereby disincentivising any effort to reach a lasting settlement. The denial of food to starving compatriots in order to gain cash and power for themselves, at the time of both Operation Restore Hope (a US-led, UN-sanctioned initiative to deliver humanitarian assistance in the south) and again during the 2012 famine, shows the depth to which some Somali community leaders have been prepared to sink.

Somali society is sufficiently resilient and endowed with support mechanisms outside the state (for example, through the remittance nexus offered by a remarkably effective mobile phone network and the large Somali diaspora) that enable people to survive without a state far better than many other peoples can manage with one. In fact, some have prospered precisely because of the state's absence, and corruption is part of that survival process.

Translating these areas of efficiency into national governance has so far proven elusive, in part because there are three sources of power and authority in Somalia: the international community through AMISOM, the clans, and the government. The problem with Somalia, says Muse Bihi Abdi, the leader of the breakaway country of Somaliland to the north (and himself a former officer in the Somali Air Force), is 'that no person has governed Somalia in thinking about their people. Rather they are thinking about their pocket'.³⁵

Changing Outside Strategy

General Sir Nick Carter, then chief of the UK's Defence Staff, argued that the success of any peacebuilding mission depends on a number of conditions: working with the germ of a local solution—the role of outsiders being to reinforce rather than to lead; avoiding short-term responses and thinking things through; building real understanding, underpinned by reliable relationships; building up local capacity; and viewing the solution as more than just money, which, incorrectly applied, can simply drive 'bad behaviour'.³⁶ As an outsider, it is next to impossible to work against the grain of a foreign country. But what does this mean in practice? Take the example of supporting Somaliland over trying to prop up Somalia.

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A dirty, white, bullet-pocked house, without electricity and running water, does not merit a second glance in the town of Burao, high in the east of Somaliland. Yet, this former colonial governor's residence, shaded by a giant acacia, was the site of the Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples in Burao, held over six weeks, which concluded with the declaration of Somaliland's independence from Somalia on 18 May 1991. Since then, Somalilanders have stuck with a winning formula, despite (or perhaps because of) the absence of international recognition and the tepid democratic enthusiasm across much of the Horn of Africa.

Only Somaliland among the Horn of African countries is not ranked as 'unfree' (with a score of 42/100, where 100 is the maximum 'freedom' achievable) on Freedom House's political rights and civil liberty rankings. Ethiopia (22), Djibouti (24) and Somalia (7) are all listed as 'unfree', as are

³⁵ Zoom call, 19 October 2021.

³⁶ Telephonic discussion with Dr Mills, 16 October 2020.

Uganda (34), Rwanda (21), Burundi (14), Egypt (18), Sudan (17), South Sudan (2) and Eritrea (2) in the next regional ring. Only Kenya (48) to the south enjoys 'partly free' status.³⁷

Democracy is a key aspect of Somaliland's efforts to keep its people together. The country's steady democratic performance and progress is a breath of fresh air in a continent which overall is an uphill struggle for democrats.

Only seven countries of 49 in sub-Saharan Africa were, by 2021, in the 'free' category. This was the lowest figure since 1991, with under 10% of the population of the continent as a result living in countries classified by Freedom House as 'free'. The reasons are simple. Incumbents have little interest in changing things, even though a vast majority of Africans regularly polled prefer democracy to other forms of government, despite the popularity among elites of the big-man thesis.

Somaliland also shows that you do not have to be rich to be democratic. Despite a tiny national budget of just \$250 million for its 3.5 million people and a tough geography and hostile climate, Somaliland is showing much richer countries how to do it.

'A place that has made something out of virtually nothing' is how the former Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, describes the progress made by Somaliland. His trip there in May 2019 was the first by an African president, current or past, since the territory re-declared its independence in May 1991.³⁸

In June 1960, Somaliland gained its initial independence from Britain before making an ill-fated decision to join the former Italian Somalia five days later in a union that was envisaged ultimately to include French Somalia (now Djibouti), the Somali-dominated Ogaden region of Ethiopia (now Region 5) and a chunk of northern Kenya—the regions denoted by the five-pointed star on the Somali flag.

In the centre of the capital, Hargeisa, is the independence memorial, comprising a MiG-17 fighter-bomber on a plinth. This commemorates the event when, having lost control of the province, Siad Barre ordered his air force, operating from the local airport, to bomb the city, which had been briefly captured by local Somali National Movement (SNM) liberation fighters in May 1988. Flown by Rhodesian mercenaries, among others, the airstrikes destroyed large parts of the city and resulted in many thousands of civilian casualties. By the time of Barre's fall three years later, the cities of Hargeisa and Burao had been razed to the ground. Not for nothing was Hargeisa known as the 'roofless city' after systematic looting by troops from Mogadishu had stripped it of roof sheeting and even doors and their frames. Somalilanders have since sought stability on the principle of maximum ownership and the reality of minimum resources.

Peace did not require vast external financing. There was none available anyway at the time. In fact, the absence of outsiders may be precisely the reason for Somaliland's success, at least compared to its southern neighbour, Somalia, which has lurched violently from peace conference

³⁷ See <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>.

³⁸ This chapter is based on several visits by Dr Mills to Somaliland, and meetings in person with presidents Silanyo and Muse, most recently in October 2019 and May 2021, and Zoom call on 19 October 2021.

to initiative, peacekeeping mission to external military intervention, and failing government to fragile coalition, seemingly with little discernible progress. In Somalia, as noted, 'conflict entrepreneurs' have fed off both the fighting and the talking in a top-down process financed by donors and mostly taking place outside the country.

Somaliland's peace conferences were, by contrast, managed and financed by locals, bringing their own food and shelter. The last conference in 1993 was held over five months under the trees in the western city of Boroma on the border of Ethiopia. Such dialogue, long a feature of Somaliland society, was organic, bottom-up rather than top-down. Somalilanders concentrated on achieving peace, not on acquiring comforts and financial rents for delegates from a peace process. Despite its obvious dysfunctionality, Somalia somehow refuses to countenance Somaliland's right to divorce, clinging chauvinistically to the notion that the marriage can be repaired. And Africa blindly stumbles on with hopes for reunion and fears of the wider impact of accepting the current two-state reality.

The recovery since has similarly demanded persistence and the principle of inclusion. The former British protectorate has developed a stable, democratic system of politics, merging modern and traditional elements. In 2002, Somaliland made the transition from a clan-based system to a multi-party democracy after a 2001 referendum, formalising the Guurti as an Upper House of Elders, which secures the support of traditional clan-based power structures.

There have since been regular elections and a frequent turnover of power between the main political parties. The 2003 presidential election was won by Dahir Riyale Kahin by just 80 votes in a poll of nearly half a million, defeating Ahmed Mohamoud Silanyo. The tables were turned in 2010, with Silanyo winning 49% of the vote to his opponent's 33%. Muse Bihi Abdi, a former SNM fighter, who had earlier served as a Soviet-trained fighter pilot in the Somali Air Force, was elected in November 2017, receiving 55% of the vote, becoming the country's fifth president, and cementing a tradition of peaceful handover of power that is rare in the region.

On 31 May 2021, around the 30th anniversary of Somaliland's independence and the 20th anniversary of its multi-party democracy, and despite Covid-19, the parliamentary and local district elections went off smoothly, with 1.1 million voters registered by the National Electoral Commission (NEC), and the establishment of 2,709 polling stations countrywide.

Unlike Somaliland's previous six elections, which were mostly funded by outsiders, 70% of the \$8 million budget was financed internally. And despite delays in the election, caused by a standoff between the presidency and opposition parties over nomination of members to the NEC, and challenges with the iris biometric voter registration system, this was the most competitive poll yet, with 246 candidates standing for 82 parliamentary seats and 966 for 249 district municipality posts across the six regions.

A lack of wealth does not mean instability. Somaliland is synonymous with grinding poverty and dirt-scrabble hardship. A high percentage of the population is illiterate, requiring assistance at the polls, many of which were run by university students. The slow pace of voting was accompanied by constant grumbling on a high Somali volume setting, but with no violence or obvious intimidation.

Regardless, the enthusiasm was palpable, not least among the very old and young. Preference was patiently given to disabled and women voters. A voting age of 15 might seem low, and a cynical way of vote-stealing, but it serves as a de-radicalising mechanism for the largest demographic: 70% of Somaliland's 3.5 million population is under the age of 30. The younger generation sees democracy as a means of diluting the impact of the clan system. The crowds were not voting just for political parties; they voted for nationhood and the pride of self-determination.

The Insider-Outsider Interface

Somaliland has relevance for outsiders seeking to get insiders to do their jobs better, and in recognising the imperative of local ownership and local peace processes to get things done. Somaliland's commitments to improving democratic norms and standards, and its regular change of leaders at the polls, have made it a regional democratic superpower. Rather than trying to manufacture success in Somalia, outsiders might be better off recognising Somaliland and reinforcing success where it already exists.

At the other end of the scale, Ukraine also teaches lessons. It illustrates that conventional war is not a thing of the past, whatever its hybridisation. It also reminds that, with the right mix of will and fighting spirit, outsiders can enable insiders with weapons, training and intelligence. As Clausewitz suggests, there is a difference between war on paper or 'ideal war' and 'war in reality' – numbers and kit are not an exact gauge of capability. Or, as Napoleon would have it, moral factors outweigh materiel three to one. Motivation remains crucial, as are the volumes and types of support. Washington's role has been crucial, as ever, supplying twice as much hardware as all other countries put together. And as Max Hastings put it, 'the EU, excepting Poland and the Baltic states, has failed miserably to support Ukraine as it deserves'.³⁹

The complexity of the contemporary security environment—from cyberwarfare to the rise of authoritarianism, the threat of populism and domestic extremism, disintegration of regional alliances, trade wars, collapse of confidence in institutions and elections, and the disruptive impact of pandemics and ill-judged or ill-timed energy transitions—makes the crisis of 2001 seem comparatively simple and certainly naïve by comparison.

This makes large-scale interventionism in pursuit of grand strategic objectives less likely; more probable is the type of carefully-calibrated response that characterised the fight against ISIS in northern Iraq and Syria. The focus is almost inescapably on prevention and proactive reform, rather than fixing failure.

The collapse in Afghanistan has reinforced the difference between counter-terrorism operations and attempts at nation-building. As Francois Hollande asked of the proposed intervention into Mali in January 2013, 'Why should we do it?', the same question arises with operations elsewhere, especially after Afghanistan. 'We can't build Denmark in Afghanistan,' notes

³⁹ See Max Hastings, 'Ukraine must seek peace talks to have any hope of revival.' *The Times*, at <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/5dc6d0c2-daa2-11ec-8de3-573a6521e09e?shareToken=c760a26a3034d28c745d0c942b826322>.

one French diplomat, ‘this has to be done by Afghans. That is,’ he adds, ‘only if they want to.’ As a consequence, the Quai d’Orsay went into a ‘frenzy of calls’ with possible African troop contributing nations, including Nigeria, South Africa and Cote d’Ivoire, concluding that ‘no-one was able, capable and willing to do it.’⁴⁰

The default notion of ‘African solutions for African problems’ has been hollowed out by consistent lack of results including the various initiatives of the African Union, which has not kept up with either military demands or the management of political shenanigans. The challenges include the growing jihadist threat as well as civil conflicts like that in Ethiopia, fed by internal divisions and regional interests. The complexity of the Ethiopian conflict, combined with great power competition and scarring over the Rwandan genocide among other international failures, makes any international intervention highly unlikely in Ethiopia.

To summarise, current developments from Afghanistan to Ukraine should encourage African governments to assume greater responsibility for their own security, while at the same time focusing external assistance on enablers: intelligence, air assets, medical and logistics support, and training. It should also encourage the will to pursue diplomatic solutions to similar crises, while highlighting several military and strategic lessons. These include the following:

Set realistic goals: The West’s strategy in Afghanistan was flawed and unachievable from the start. Carbon-copy attempts to emulate the democracy-plus-Western-style military operations formula for peacebuilding is doomed to fail. In practical terms, this requires not trying to defend everywhere, but rather consolidation. In governance terms, the country where stability is attempted should be placed on a realistic trajectory of representative government, not burdened with democratic forms without the substance of democracy. On the military front, rather than emulating the hugely expensive, high-tech way of war of great powers whose resources and technical assets are simply unavailable to African governments, there is a need to focus on giving existing forces an edge over adversaries while retaining locally appropriate technologies and ways of operating. In this context small, subtle changes—better health and welfare support, cheap but reliable radios, locally-sustainable logistics and maintenance—are likely to pay more dividends than copy-cattling allies. The result may be a military that looks and fights a lot like the adversary but operates just that little bit more effectively and ethically.

Avoid set-piece positions and grand slogans: This includes the avoidance of simplistic phrases such as ‘rebuild the state’ and ‘build democracy’. Rather there is a need for a clear idea of what is achievable, at what cost, and the risks involved.

⁴⁰ Telephonic interview, 12 October 2021.

Understand and deal with your enemy: War represents a failure of politics. Thus, defeating any internal adversary is only accomplished not by attempting to crush it outright, but rather by understanding one's foes and devising a political solution based on a search for common interests. The critical failure of many in Afghanistan was not to make a political settlement with the Taliban after their crushing defeat in 2001. As philosophers of war going back to Saint Augustine have pointed out, the object of war is not victory, but a better peace: a more stable, peaceful and enduring political settlement. In Afghanistan, as in Vietnam, US-led forces repeatedly achieved battlefield victories but repeatedly failed to translate those victories into enduring outcomes. This was not a military problem, but a national (and international) one for all the world's democracies. To be successful, African governments need to get into the heads of their opponents, becoming as well-informed as possible about with whom and what they are dealing, the objectives of the various players, and local and regional alliance structures.

Assume external assistance to be fleeting and probably corrosive: Aid programmes can fuel conflict, in part by undermining the accountability and rule of law on which the extension of government depends. The corruption and wastage in Afghanistan that the West now decries and blames on Afghans was not only permitted, but actively promoted and fuelled by the very nature of Western assistance. The idea behind was that a surge of expenditure would enable a rapid exit. Vast resources were squandered on projects that were peripheral to the core mission in-country, but critical to maintaining political buy-in and support in donor nations. Civilian and military programmes must be carefully knitted together, no doubt, but there must be triage: for instance, macro-economic fundamentals including currency stability and liquidity, healthcare and education systems, and the provision of water and electricity.

Appreciate that peace-making must be a regional undertaking. A supportive—or, at minimum, neutral—regional environment is critical for any peace-making initiative to be successful. The West's presence proved to be a liability in Afghanistan, since the coalition was unwilling (or unable) to pressure Pakistan, in particular, which historically supported the Taliban but had a chokehold over coalition supply routes. The same went for Iran, given wider political and security differences. In the aftermath of the withdrawal, China is likely to be a major player in Afghanistan, along with Iran, Russia and perhaps India.

Employ the right tools for the job: Sophisticated Western-built helicopters and other air assets which locals cannot maintain are more of a hindrance than a help. The rules for external actors and local recipients alike are to have a small foreign footprint, deliver enablers (including transport, logistics support), and let the locals do the fighting and take the lead. Increasingly crucial is the need to find practical means to help create suitable and sustainable indigenous armed forces. By the end, in Afghanistan, the police and much of the army were only useful for

distributing largesse; the fighting was done only about 10% of the total force. Building appropriate local armed forces is about more than numbers; it also demands attention to systems of healthcare, education and pensions – areas that are most likely to ensure loyalty.

Humility matters: The West may best assist those African countries threatened by internal or regional security threats by supporting their efforts at democratisation and institution-building, and not for example by portraying this assistance as part of a denial strategy aimed at China. Partnerships that are worthy of the name are founded on humility and a realistic assessment of African needs, rather than Western concerns and interests. Africans have tired of international political games and aid regimes that enable entrenched elites to retain power without scrutiny of past failings, yet have not delivered lasting development in their societies.⁴¹

Control your own fate: ‘Everyone,’ says Aebad Saleh, son of the deposed vice-president Amrullah, ‘knows that Afghanistan was sold out in the name of a US-Taliban deal.’⁴² Afghans are not blameless, yet the West bears huge responsibility, in large part for failing to understand the nature of Afghanistan and the region, and arrogantly assuming its ways were best. Military assets are important, but more so is the will to fight, built on a strong connection to society and a willingness to defend values. Solutions to such problems require thinking differently and must be based on reinforcing progress rather than trying to invest in success and, in so doing, simply providing a feast for local elites. These lessons are encapsulated in the table, below.

⁴¹ See, for example, Nic Cheeseman’s letter to *The Times* in response to William Hague’s ‘Africa will make Afghan crisis seem a sideshow’, at <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/africa-will-make-afghan-crisis-seem-a-sideshow-w0clxkm2h?fbclid=IwAR0P8WNz40sZkHd3INdqWv4Tb7uaS3kHYOFaWImM4j4-8IbXSfCd7NgSaxY>.

⁴² WhatsApp exchange, 22 October 2021.

THE INSIDE-OUTSIDE SECURITY INTERFACE

For Insiders	For Outsiders
Recognise the politics of conflict	Need to equip parties in a manner (diplomatically, militarily) that enables solutions. Isolate spoilers. Maintain constant pressure. Support peace methodology; but don't try to run the peace process
Ownership of problems and solutions	Led by internal problem setting; facilitate rather than deliver optimised external solutions. Can't want success more than the locals
Growth & Investment as Development Enabler	Support for long-term enablers: Education, Infrastructure, Global & Regional Integration
Ensure policies for inclusive growth	Understand the roots of the (economic) problem are political, not just technical: Who does what, when and why?
Recognise that the route to development and stability lies through opening up	Avoid reinforcement of oligarchic behaviour
Liberating modernity	Careful calibration of donor support based on values -- Make incentives and disincentives clear
Regional Economies of Scale and Peace – Someone has to be lead nation	Ensure regional donor alignment with capacities, and aim at unity of effort; regional inter-operability
Understand global fault-lines and red-lines	Make the red-lines clear to both friends and adversaries
Manage trade-off between equipment for aspirational goals and realistic uses	No ice-ploughs for Africa. Technology has to be supported
Follow the money to undo networks that undermine the state and development	Intelligence is a strategic multiplier – including on networks of corruption, rent extraction and extortion
Match objectives with resources	Do more than just enough (for security at home)
Key enabling skills	Don't build a military that looks like you; rather, it should look like the enemy your partner is confronting. Don't give your partner what you want to, but rather what they need
Building capacity along with capability.	Main effort should be training not fighting. Capability is not capacity; the latter demands management of personnel, equipment, spares and logistics
Narrative Setting and Proving	Imperative of getting African populations on board with a corresponding narrative
Prepare for being on your own	Plan for exit; make this clear
Don't take the outsiders for granted	Recognise and fill a constant credibility gap
Set metrics beyond transfer of resources	Base metrics on the threat being locally faced. Keep it small and cheap otherwise it won't work
Guard against dependency traps	Help partners help themselves
Take a holistic and strategic approach	Work with state and non-state actors
Don't be a cheap date	Doing nothing is an option

The quickest way to end a war, wrote George Orwell, is to lose it. Equally, the easiest way to solve state failure is not to allow it to happen. But winning wars, as with preventing failure, requires more than military means. It fundamentally demands an understanding of why economies and governance structures have performed so poorly, why opportunities are so few and so deeply contested, and how to achieve, fundamentally, a political solution.

James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu argue in *Why Nations Fail* that development success or failure is down to the difference between extractive and inclusive political economies.⁴³ In inclusive institutions there are, they note, secure property rights, law and order, freer markets and the correct type of state support, the upholding of contracts, and the right overall environment for business to prosper. In short, this creates incentives for investment and innovation across a level playing field.⁴⁴

By contrast, in the extractive model, politically connected elites hold preferential economic access to resources. The playing field is not level, and the checks and balances are not there, with weak and unbalanced political institutions. Overall, there is a lack of pluralism, and an unclear contract between the government and the governed. The difference between wealth and poverty, they argue, lies in the system characterised by a narrow concentration of power, which enables elites to rule for their own benefit at the expense of their populations. It follows that prosperity is more achievable where power is more broadly distributed, and where government is accountable and responsive to the needs of citizens.

These lessons for securing societies and ensuring the conditions for growth and prosperity hinge on the state establishing conditions for responsible governance, which includes the elimination of corruption, transparency and accountability of public funds, and public integrity. They also demand a recognition that development is intrinsically a team effort, which requires an effective civil service that underpins whatever is attempted by a political leadership. This includes the conditions that allow talent to rise, and ensure that administrators are properly paid for their efforts and do not need to seek 'extra-curricular income'. The civil service, too, requires a mix of thinkers and doers, since delivery demands more than simply conceptualising solutions for problems. There is a need in this to overcome the fixation on historical independence struggles, which has sustained two effects: a reflexive support for the Soviet Union and now Russia, without considering whether the Soviet model meets African circumstance; and an instinctive hostility towards the West, especially Europeans and the United States, even though these states will be primary sources of recovery and reform, and of goods and capital. Overcoming the negative legacy of colonialism also requires a move away from a statist philosophy, which in Africa traditionally happens at the expense of the private enterprise so essential for economic development. Finally, the critical role of leadership is to set a course with integrity and then convince followers that you

⁴³ Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. London: Profile, 2012.

⁴⁴ See Greg Mills, Olusegun Obasanjo, Hailemariam Desalegn and Emily van der Merwe, *The Asian Aspiration: Why and How Africa should follow Asia*. Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan, 2020.

are acting in their best interests. Smart leaders need to get together as challenges mature and multiply, conflicts metastasize, and the questions surrounding them change.

These are as much questions and lessons for Africa as farther afield.

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Participant Biographies

Hon. Abdiqani Aateye, Ministry of Defence, Republic of Somaliland Somaliland

Abdiqani Aateye is Somalilander politician, who is currently serving as the Defence Minister of Somaliland. He formerly served as the Minister of Justice of Somaliland.

Hon. Mohamed Kahin Ahmed, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Somaliland Somaliland

Mohamed Kahin Ahmed is a Somaliland politician and former military officer of the Somali National Movement. He is currently serving as the Minister of Interior of Somaliland since December 2017. He has been a prominent member of Kulmiye Party since its foundation, as he served the Deputy Chairman of the party from July 2010 to December 2017.

Mrs Kate Almquist Knopf, Independent Consultant United States of America

Kate Almquist Knopf is an independent consultant and former Director of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, an academic institution within the U.S. Department of Defense. As an independent consultant, Kate advises on organizational strategy and programmatic design, U.S. foreign assistance, conflict mediation and management, security sector reform, and African affairs.

Mr Tendai Biti, Tendai Biti Law Zimbabwe

Tendai Biti is Senior Partner at Tendai Biti Law. He spent 18 years at Zimbabwe's oldest law firm, Honey & Blanckenberg. He has represented many corporates including Standard Chartered Bank, Stanbic Bank, the Meikles Group and many others. He has appeared in any landmark cases in Zimbabwe. The Law Reports are littered with the many commercial and labour disputes that he has been involved with over the years.

Mr Matt Bryden, SAHAN Canada

Matt Bryden is a Director at Sahan Research, a think tank based in Nairobi. He is a Canadian political analyst active in the Horn of Africa. He worked for several aid and political organizations in Somalia after spending some time in the region during his leave from the Canadian military in 1987. He served as the Coordinator for the Monitoring Group Eritrea (EMG) from 2008-2012.

Ms Cynthia Chigwenya Zimbabwe

Cynthia Chigwenya currently serves as the African Union's Youth Ambassador for Southern Africa and a Programme Coordinator for Political Dialogue for Sub-Saharan Africa at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. She has previously held research positions in the South African Parliament and the National Genocide Commission in Rwanda.

Prof. Christopher Clapham, University of Cambridge

United Kingdom

Christopher Clapham is a retired professor from the University of Cambridge's Centre of African Studies and formerly served as the editor of *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. He is a specialist in the politics of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, and his books include *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia (1988)*, *Africa and the International System (1996)*, and *The Horn of Africa: State Formation and Decay (2017)*.

Dr Holger Dix, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Germany

Holger Dix is Head of the regional program Political Dialogue Sub-Saharan Africa and interim head of the South Africa office of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Germany. Formerly the Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung office for Tunisia and Algeria. He completed his doctoral thesis at the Westfälische-Wilhelms-University of Münster in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Mr Vasilis Gavalas, DIKTIO – Network for Reform in Greece and Europe

Greece

Basil Gavalas is Head of International Relations at DIKTIO, one of Greece's leading think tanks and Managing Partner of Milhous Associates, an Athens-based investment and public affairs advisory firm. Basil has served as Special Advisor with the Presidency and various Ministries of the Greek Government, worked with two former European Commissioners & advised foundations in Europe and the Middle East. He is member of the Leadership Council of the New York Times-affiliated Democracy and Culture Foundation.

Mr John Githongo, Inuka Kenya

Kenya

John Githongo is the CEO of Inuka, an NGO involved in governance issues in Kenya. He formerly served as Chairman of the Africa Institute for Governing with Integrity; Executive Vice Chair of the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), and Chair board member of the Africa Center for Open Governance (AFRICOG). He also previously served as a board member of the Kenya Human Rights Commission.

Brig. Gen. Faisal Guhad, Somaliland National Intelligence Agency

Somaliland

Faisal Guhad is the Deputy Commander of the Somaliland National Intelligence Agency

Mr Richard Harper, Harper Logistics

South Africa

Richard Harper is a photographer and videographer who has enjoyed 20 years in the logistics business in Africa.

Mr Ray Hartley, The Brenthurst Foundation

South Africa

Ray Hartley is Research Director at The Brenthurst Foundation. He Formerly served as editor of several South African newspapers and online publications, including the Sunday Times, The Times, Rand Daily Mail and BusinessLIVE. He was an anti-apartheid activist in the United Democratic Front while serving on the

executive of the National Union of South African Students. He previously worked as an administrator in the Codesa constitutional negotiations that ended apartheid.

Mr Zitto Kabwe, ACT Wazalendo

Tanzania

Zitto Kabwe is Tanzanian politician who serves as the leader of opposition party Alliance for Change and Transparency. He previously served as a two term Member of Parliament for the Kigoma North constituency from 2005 to 2015. He was also the Chairman of the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) as well as the chair of the parliamentary standing committee where he oversaw more than 250 State-Owned Companies.

Dr. Essa Kayd, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Somaliland

Essa Kayd is currently serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Somaliland. His focus is to build Somaliland's international case whilst showing the world the potential advantage that Somaliland's strategic location holds in the Horn of Africa for business, development and trade for landlocked countries in Africa.

Dr David Kilcullen, Cordillera Applications Group

Australia

David Kilcullen is the CEO of the research firm Cordillera Applications Group and Professor of International and Political Studies at the University of New South Wales. He founded and led the global consulting firm Caerus Associates and the technology firm First Mile Geo. Additionally, Dr Kicullen has served as a senior advisor to U.S. General David Petraeus and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He has over 25 years of operational experience with the Australian and U.S. governments as a light infantry officer, intelligence officer, policy adviser and diplomat.

Mr Tom Mboya

Kenya

Tom Mboya is the National Chairman of The Democratic Congress. He is a governance and anti-corruption practitioner, and parliamentary development expert. He has extensive experience in political affairs and consulting for Parliaments.

Dr Greg Mills, The Brenthurst Foundation

South Africa

Greg Mills is Director of the Brenthurst Foundation. Through the Brenthurst Foundation he has directed numerous reform projects with African heads of government, including Ghana, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Somaliland, and South Africa. He was appointed to the Advisory Panel of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 2022. Dr Mills is the author of many books, the latest being *Expensive Poverty* and *The Ledger: Accounting for Failure in Afghanistan*.

Mr Richard Morrow, The Brenthurst Foundation

South Africa

Richard Morrow is a Researcher at the Brenthurst Foundation. His work primarily focuses on public sector reform and policy strategy. He has represented South Africa at Chatham House's Common Futures Conversations platform, the European Forum Alpbach, and the Geneva Challenge. Richard holds a Master's degree in International Relations from Durham University, U.K.

Mr Nathan Mukoma, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Nathan Mukoma is KAS's Program Coordinator for Political Dialogue in Sub-Saharan Africa. The programme promotes democratic consciousness within political parties and the civil society in 48 African countries and also focusses on youth engagement in national, regional and global politics. Nathan is a youth activist, writer and Congolese citizen living in South Africa.

Ms Chipokota Mwanawasa, Office of the President

Zambia

Chipokota Mwanawasa is a Policy Adviser to the Office of the President. She was formerly a Legal Officer at Konkola Copper Mines. She studied law at the University of Kent and the University of Cape Town before receiving a Master's degree in Public Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Mr Baxolile Nodada

South Africa

Baxolile Babongile Nodada is a Democratic Alliance (DA) Member of Parliament that serves as the Shadow Minister of Basic Education and the Parliamentary Counsellor to the Leader of the Official Opposition in the National Assembly. He is the DA's Constituency Leader of the Alfred Nzo District in the Eastern Cape and serves on the DA's Federal Council. He previously served as the Shadow Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

Ms Marie-Noelle Nwokolo, The Brenthurst Foundation

Ghana

Marie-Noelle Nwokolo is a Researcher at the Brenthurst Foundation where she focuses on the political economy of African development. Before joining the Foundation, Marie-Noelle worked in different capacities with The Advisory Board Company in Washington D.C and Diamond6 Leadership & Strategy in Pennsylvania. She holds a Master's degree in Development Management from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Mr John Steenhuisen, Democratic Alliance

South Africa

John Steenhuisen has served as the leader of the official Opposition party in South Africa, the Democratic Alliance, since October 2019 and has been the federal leader of the party since November 2020, having served as the interim leader for one year from November 2019. He was chief whip of the party from May 2014 until October 2019.

Mr Umberto Tavalato, Med-Or Leonardo Foundation

Italy

Umberto Tavalato is the Head of the International Relations Unit of the Med-Or Leonardo Foundation. Previously, he was senior foreign policy expert in the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a political adviser to the Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs of the European External Action Service. He has also led EU Special Representatives' offices in Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia and served in the EU Delegation to the African Union.

Mr Bobi Wine

Uganda

Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, known by his stage name, Bobi Wine, is a Ugandan politician, activist, singer, actor, businessman and philanthropist. As of 11 July 2017, he serves as the member of parliament representing Kyadondo East constituency in Wakiso District, in Uganda's Central Region. He leads the People Power, Our Power movement.

Mr Nils Wörmer, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Germany

Nils Wörmer heads the International Politics and Security department in the Analysis and Consulting Department (AuB) of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) in Berlin. From 2013 to 2015 he was head of KAS's Afghanistan office and from 2015 to 2018 he headed of the Syria/Iraq office of KAS. Before joining KAS, he worked for three years as a research assistant at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin and served twelve years as a temporary soldier in the Bundeswehr.

Maj. Gen (ret.) Gordon Yekelo, South African National Defence Force

South Africa

Gordon Yekelo retired in 2017 as General Officer Commanding Training Command, SANDF. In early 1978 he left South Africa and underwent Political and Military Training in Angola and in the Soviet Union after which he served in various capacities. He integrated into the SANDF in 1995 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel after which he served as Senior Staff Officer Grade 1 and Senior Staff Officer at Joint Operations front 1999 to Aug 2005. In September 2005 he was promoted to Brigadier General and served as Director Doctrine Development at Joint Operations.