



SPECIAL REPORT II ON SOMALIA

February 25, 1993

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF SOMALIA

Starting in October 1992 the U.S. Institute of Peace organized a series of meetings to address the crisis in Somalia. Two of these meetings have been public conferences. Four additional meetings have brought together a small group of Somalis holding differing points of view and coming from different parts of Somalia. Although all of those participating in this Somali Study Group are resident in the U.S., they are in close contact with the situation in Somalia and some have visited Somalia recently. Many are in regular communication with the various factions and parties shaping events there. The group includes several former Somali ambassadors, a retired general of the Somali army, several professors, a physician, leaders of NGOs, and other professionals.

The purpose has been to enable this diverse group to develop consensus recommendations about how to promote peace and reconstruction in Somalia. The first report of the group's recommendations, issued in December, focused on the problems of political reconciliation and the delivery of relief supplies. The most recent meeting of the group, held on February 13, addressed issues of social, economic, and administrative reconstruction of Somalia. Given their divergent perspectives, the group has been able to achieve an impressive degree of consensus on key points. The purpose of this report is to summarize these points of consensus.

The participants in the February 13 meeting of the Study Group were:

Ms. Nura Ahmed Gureh
Ambassador A. M. Darman
Professor A. I. Samatar
Dr. Mohamud Jama
Mr. Abdullahi Koshin
General Abucar M. Liban
Ambassador Ali H. Hashi
Mr. Yussuf A. Ibrahim
Mr. Ahmed M. Bile

Ms. Filsan A. Darman
Mr. Abdi Awaleh Jama
Dr. Abdullahi H. Farah
Mr. Mahdi A. Abdi
Professor Ali Jimale Ahmed
Professor Mohamed H. Mukhtar
Mr. Suleiman E. Farah

From the U.S. Institute of Peace, Dr. David R. Smock served as moderator and recorder.

Recommendations of the Study Group:

Achievement of Adequate Security : A Prerequisite to all Progress

While very substantial progress has been made in the establishment of security, more needs to be done, and without adequate security there is no chance for economic and social reconstruction.

The strategy being employed in disarming the militias of protopolitical groups is not clear. The Group has the impression that some military groups are being singled out for

attention. There are two preferable approaches. The first would be to disarm comprehensively and not selectively. It is essential that any process of disarmament be undertaken in an even-handed fashion, and that the arms collected be put under UNOSOM control. When selective disarmament occurs, those factions which are disarmed become vulnerable to attack from other factions. If comprehensive disarmament is not possible, then the process of disarmament should be delayed until after there is a political settlement. Consultations with protopolitical groups is a more promising way to proceed. Agreement on a process of voluntary disarmament ought to be included in a political agreement among the groups possessing weapons. The only true guarantee of security will come in a political settlement. However, armed gangs and bandits should be disarmed unilaterally by UNOSOM without waiting for a political settlement.

The Group hopes that rapid progress can be made in the organization and deployment of a police force. Local security forces need to be well organized and prepared to handle the policing function prior to the withdrawal of international forces.

The international arms embargo needs to be enforced more vigorously. The flow of arms across Somalia's borders with surrounding countries seems to continue unabated, and this is a source of continuing instability and bloodshed.

Another critical component of any effort to improve security is the removal of mines. The presence of mines inhibits Somali pastoralists and farmers from returning to their herds and their plots.

Administrative Reconstruction

As recommended in the Group's initial report, it is essential that UNOSOM and international NGOs give attention to all parts of the country. Those portions of the country which are more stable do not seem to be receiving adequate attention. But the fragility of the stability there needs to be recognized, and appropriate kinds of assistance need to be offered to reinforce stability and to promote reconstruction. The prolonged political negotiations currently underway in the north at Borama need to be recognized and supported. This kind of regional reconciliation process is an essential prerequisite for the return to normalcy.

The principle of democratic rule needs to be the central organizing principle as governmental and administrative structures are put in place. Reconstruction can only take place on the basis of grassroots participatory democracy.

There will be no quick fix to return Somalia to normalcy. The U.S. and the UN should not withdraw prematurely. Early withdrawal would create another vacuum which was the source of the previous chaos. Democratic elections are essential for the establishment of a new political order, but appropriate conditions must prevail before elections can be held.

Administrative reconstruction needs to proceed in a decentralized fashion. Past government structures were excessively centralized and authoritarian, but that led to disaster.

Structures of authority need to be constituted at village, sub-region, regional, and national levels, with administrative services being provided at multiple levels.

Even without final determination of Somalia's political order, some central structures are required to permit the establishment of a central bank, the issuance of currency,

formulation of foreign policy, etc. Central institutions can be created without generating centralized government.

Planning for reconstruction should be spearheaded by expert committees composed of both local and international specialists focusing on particular sectors. Moreover, local committees of professionals are already being formed, and they can offer advice. For instance, associations of doctors and veterinarians and other professionals are meeting to analyze Somalia's needs. It is essential that qualified Somalis, and particularly those who are resident in Somalia, have an opportunity to play central roles in planning Somalia's reconstruction. This planning needs to be organized on a decentralized basis. A network of centers for planning and reconstruction might be established.

The Economy

The revival of the economy will come primarily through reviving the private sector. The state will need to provide the required infrastructure, but the economy should be predominantly under private rather than state control. State control in the past was a principal source of Somalia's poverty.

It is important that foreign aid and local economic initiatives create jobs. Preference in the awarding of contracts should go to Somali companies. NGOs and international organizations should hire Somalis whenever possible. The faster jobs are created the faster the young men who have terrorized Somalia can be absorbed into productive work.

Priority needs to be given to creating a climate of confidence to encourage Somali business people to invest in Somalia and to recharge the economy. Those Somalis living abroad need to be encouraged to return home and invest in the local economy. Improved security is an essential component of an improved business environment.

The most productive portions of the Somali economy have been the rural sectors, both agriculture and livestock. These rural sectors need to receive the greatest attention. The renovation of wells and water pumps is a key component of restarting the rural economy, as well as making an important contribution to public health. Herds of cattle and camels need to be restocked so that they are large enough to reproduce themselves.

Attention also needs to be given to the rehabilitation of industries. An inventory of factories and government investments needs to be prepared and used for planning purposes.

In planning for rehabilitation of existing assets and for new investments, attention needs to be given to regional balance. While recognizing that investments in some localities and regions are likely to generate more profitable returns, sensitivity also needs to be given to regional equity and balance.

Reconstruction needs to be built around investment in Somalia's human resources. The creative and productive energy of Somalis needs to be facilitated and encouraged. Empowerment must start at the local level by encouraging Somali NGOs, women's groups, and other local associations. Somalis want to avoid allowing their country to become a parasitic nation. International NGOs must strive to cooperate with and strengthen embryonic Somali NGOs.

Women should be given special attention, in part as a reflection of their economic productive potential. They should be provided training in income-generating activities and provided with credit to enable them to invest in such activities.

It would be helpful to undertake an inventory of Somali assets abroad, including those in foreign banks, properties owned, and diplomatic properties and bank accounts.

One of Somalia's major problems is the ecological crisis that it confronts. Grazing lands are deteriorating. The habitat is having grave difficulty supporting the Somali population, and reconstruction needs to take the environmental factor into account.

Other Sectors

Improvements in basic infrastructure for essential services can help stimulate the economy and put Somalia on the road to recovery. Education, health and veterinary are among the most critical sectors requiring rehabilitation. Very significant levels of international assistance are required to rehabilitate these sectors. Improvements in health and education can contribute directly to economic revival. For instance, measures to prevent disease are essential to rebuilding economic activity.

Revival of the mass media, and particularly radio broadcasting, is an essential feature of knitting the country back together again. Somalia's past experience with government control of the media was disastrous, and the media must not be used for propaganda purposes. The Somali media need to reflect a variety of viewpoints. Foreign controlled media is not an adequate substitute for local media outlets. Radio broadcasting needs to take full account of the dialectical diversity that characterizes Somalia. The rudimentary private press needs to be encouraged and aided.

The Group hopes that over the coming months and years Somalia will have its first real experience with true freedom of speech and press. This opportunity needs to be encouraged and protected.

Somali poets can make an important contribution to the national revival and to peace. They must be encouraged and given access to the mass media.

Account needs to be taken of the trauma that so many Somalis have experienced. There is need for human reconstruction and psychic rehabilitation.

The return and reintegration of Somali refugees deserves urgent attention. Their voluntary repatriation will only be possible once they are convinced that the country is stable and that security prevails.

Points added by Dr. Hussein Adam, who was not able to attend the meeting: Food aid needs to be provided in a strategic fashion. Food can be provided as food-for-work to strengthen the voluntary sector. The purchase of locally produced food can help monetize the economy and strengthen local markets. Food should be given to vulnerable groups through local health and maternity services. The international community should avoid putting Somalia on the dole; the country needs to be assisted to get on its own feet. Operation Restore Hope and the UN can play critical roles in rebuilding Somalia's infrastructure, including ports, airports, roads, and bridges.