

The What-ifs on Somalia's Political Stalemate

I am not a fortune teller, but I will pretend to be one with a few what-if predictions leaving history to approve it or disapprove it and the Somali people to avert the situation or remain helpless silent spectators. These what-ifs will weigh the possible trends in the Somali political process.

The current Somali political progress is ebbing to its lowest. The doomsayers may come to the conclusion that the final nail is being driven into the coffin of what was called a Somali nation for a final seal. Others may rightly say that the Somali sovereignty is handed over to foreign organizations in an exchanged for *a little grease* of the mouths and palms of some indigenous peddlers. It needs no saying that these international organizations now have a say to decide which way to head in the parting ways. The latest meeting in Kampala on Somalia in early June this year disfranchised the already frivolous so-called Somali parliament. The hue and cry about the Accord among them seems to be subsiding.



1. What if the parliament turns the tables on the Kampala Accord and fails to cooperate in the remaining terms dictated in reaction to the disfranchisement of the Somali legislators?

- a. The international community may cease to pay their salaries forcing the disintegration of the un-elected MPs. Their illegitimate engagement and mandate in the TFIs will be taken over by the AMISOM troops who will be serve as the rightful Somali legislators, dictating every institution in Somalia including the Presidency and now hitherto redundant Parliament Speaker.
- b. Al-Shabab will get encouraged and consolidate their positions and will try to revive their lost glory when they went as the Islamic Courts in 2006 in the Somali political arena. They will try once again to rally the public behind the cause of ending the despicable foreign occupation.

- c. Mogadishu warlords will polish their “rusting swords” for a showdown that will partition Mogadishu once again into clan-based strongholds one of which will be controlled by AMISOM.
- d. Just like the Islamic Courts swept away the loathsome Mogadishu warlords, Al-shabab will nip the resurgence of the warlords in the bud before they peter out due to interference from the alarmed west.

2. What if the boisterous parliament is silenced by the crafty Speaker’s tact and the funds he allegedly embezzled from the public coffers or the proceeds his political belligerence earned him?

- a. That will put false dressing on the festering wounds and there will be a lull in the storm before tension flares up again as the deadline of August 2012 approaches and political rivalry is kicked off again.
- b. In the 2012 election, nothing much will change unless the question of the number and integrity of the parliamentarians and a well-drafted constitution are addressed and a clean less numerous, well-educated legislators with stronger sense of nationalism assume the reign on the basis of approved constitution.

3. What if Uganda loses hope and makes its threat of pulling out its troops from AMISOM real?

- a. Brundian troops will promptly follow suit, leaving the stage for the now-defanged warlords and Ahlul Sunna on one side and Al-Shabab on the other side. A protracted war may give edge to Ethiopian-backed Ahlul Sunna. Whatever group gets the upper hand will turn guns towards each other and start the cycle from square one.
- b. Those sporting the religious cloaks to conceal their political ambitions like Al-Shabab and Ahlul Sunna will disintegrate along clan lines and survival of the fittest war will ensue, plunging Somalia in an intricate political maze.
- c. The Kenya-backed Azania and the Ethiopia-backed Ahlul Sunna faction in Gedo Region will fight proxy war in the Lower Jubba region. Kismayo will be a bone of contention between *Azania* and *Gedozania*.

4. What if Al-Shabab takes over the South as a result of lack of progress in foreign-sponsored political development?

- a. The autonomous states like Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug will crumble like the house of cards. The sleeping cells in these regions will be activated. Sheikh Atom and other of his ilk will march out of rugged mountainous hideouts of Galgala-bora. The South Yemeni Al-Qaida sympathizers and Al-shabab will join ranks. The world will wake up to the threat it poses. The war-fatigued, cash-strafted NATO will perhaps draw its raison d'être from that upheaval and will talk of defending the commercial sea lanes in the Indian Ocean from the combined forces of Somali-Yemeni pirates. Socotra Island might be occupied and a base of restructured and re-mandated NATO forces.
- b. The international stakeholders may realize their folly in not being honest and sincere about the Somali stabilization and might join ranks in preventing Somalia from being a safe haven for international fugitives and extremists. This will demand a serious and sincere attempt to stabilize Somalia and end the prolonged political logjam through the indigenous tradition-based. Somalia might then meander along the thorny path of slow recovery.

5. What if the draft constitution is put to debate as schedule prior to August, 2012?

- a. The nay-saying Somaliland will say "we are not party to it". The fault-finding Puntland questions some articles or terms in the draft constitution not conforming to federal system. The wrangling on the draft constitution will drag on beyond the deadline for the proposed election.
 - b. The TFI's strongmen will get an excuse to apply for further one-year extension from the external stakeholders. Wary of fruitless infinite term extensions, a six-month extension might be allowed by the international donor organizations to finalize the draft constitution.
- 6.** Somalia has become the sixth battleground where American unmanned drone attacks stage sorties without the official consent or even the knowledge of the weak TFG. These drone attacks are now targeting the Al-Qaida-linked Al-Shabab.

Taken into account that the notorious history of the drone attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan, resulting in indiscriminate loss of lives and even internal strife, is a bad omen. The world newspapers have voluminous reports of innocent civilians lost, marriage processions mistakenly targeted, or innocent school children buried in the rubble of their school buildings. Pakistan, a nuclear nation with strong army has not only been embarrassed and humiliated by these drone attacks but subjected it to wanton killing and massacre. The present Somali cabinet members have expressed their satisfaction over the inception of the drone attacks and even the American boots hitting the Somali soil. ***What if Americans unilaterally carry out these drone attacks, breaching the Somali sovereignty without securing the consent and approval of the Somali TFG or even occupying Somali territories?***

- a. The fatigued Al-Shabab might be 'mercy-killed' by these drone attacks in piecemeal. Somalis might get reprieved of the masquerading assassins and temporarily celebrate their demise, but might wake up to stronger unchallengeable force illegally occupying their country.
 - b. This clandestine American military campaign might mortgage the sovereignty of a nation which has already been reeling from international interference and manipulations. Somalia might not be of its own. The short-sighted now supporting and rejoicing TFG members will realize their folly in the eleventh hour.
 - c. This will undermine the credibility of the TFIs and the new cabinet and the MPs most of whom hold foreign passports will be charged with conspiracy and disloyalty to their home country.
7. The Kampala Accord which disqualified the powers of the TFG seemed to have bridged the rift between the House speaker nicknamed "Sharif Sakeen" and the inept President, Sharif Ahmed. ***What if Sharif Sakeen's uses his "tetanus-tainted razor blade" against the President and encourages his sycophants in the parliament to counteract the Kampala Accord under the pretext that it was unconstitutional, undemocratic and unacceptable and a breach of Somali sovereignty?***

- a. That will be a hard political kick against the President. The only way forward will be an early election to be called on. Sharif Sakeen will ponder contesting for the presidency.
 - b. This may precipitate the political downfall of both the Sharifs in the end with no apparent heir.
8. According to the draft constitution, the president has the right to table a cabinet for two consecutive times. If his successive cabinets fail to win the approval of the parliament twice, the President himself will lose his tenure. What if Sharif Sakeen is just aiming that?
 - a. Sharif Sakeen may outlast the President but he will find it difficult to survive the crisis.
 - b. The international community will lose hope on their bets - their favorite local political jockeys and end their engagement reporting to the donor nations that the Somali case is a hopeless case. No donor money will trickle down the pipeline. The drones will reign the day, Al-Shabab will reign the night.
9. With the mandate of the Parliament suspended and the powers of the Sharifs curtailed by the Kampala Accord, *what if the new Premier takes advantage of the situation and gets free rein on the choice of his cabinet disregarding the instructions and demands of the two Sharifs in power-sharing?*
 - a. His approval rating will skyrocket, but his tenure may short live just like his predecessor and mentor.
 - b. The President might not mind that much as long as the appointees of his adversary are also dismissed. But these same disgraced appointees, some of whom are former warlords, will carry the law into their hands and will risk the historical demise of the Somali nation.

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