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Somalia: Tribal Challenge to Siad



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An Intelligence Assessment

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Somalia: Tribal Challenge to Siad

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [Redacted]
Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It
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Operations. [Redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
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**Somalia:
Tribal Challenge to Siad**

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Key Judgments*Information available
as of 21 May 1984
was used in this report.*

Tribalism and intertribal violence, both chronic attributes of Somali life, are putting pressure on President Siad's regime and could eventually undermine his political and military control. Resentment of Siad's own role in perpetuating tribalism is focusing criticism on his regime and is costing him the backing of some traditional supporters.

Fighting among Somali tribal groups, who have recently gained increased access to weapons, is weakening security and opening avenues for external meddling. Somali dissident groups backed by Ethiopia and Libya encourage and participate in intertribal clashes to cause trouble for the regime and to gain new recruits. Army and police units are having increasing difficulty halting the fighting, which is eroding their ability to perform their normal duties.

Siad's strategy for dealing with numerous competing clan interests—rewarding supporters with political and economic favors while generally repressing and dividing disloyal clans—is beginning to show signs of strain. Siad so far has been reluctant to make significant political concessions to clans that oppose his regime. We believe he recognizes that such a move could damage the privileged positions enjoyed by his Marehan and Ogadeni backers and could cost him their support. If Siad's relations with the Issak and other opponents deteriorate further, we believe it likely that he will resort to increasingly repressive tactics.

Over the near term, intertribal distrust will help thwart efforts to form effective coalitions that could seriously threaten Siad. Over the longer term, however, we expect that tribal clashes, resentment of Siad, and external meddling will continue to feed on each other and to undercut Siad's control. Any successful move against Siad would most likely be led by the military, where dissatisfaction with tribal favoritism is aggravating frustration with dissidents and Ethiopia and with the perceived paucity of aid from Western donors.

The United States, as Siad's major foreign ally, runs some risk of being accused by his opponents of condoning his tribal policies. Increased repression of the clans by Siad, for instance, could focus criticism on Washington for failing to restrain him. If Siad were overthrown, hostility toward his association with the United States could lead to some unease in bilateral relations, although a successor regime would be concerned, at least initially, with maintaining the flow of US military and economic assistance. In any event, tribal violence and related dissident activities could endanger US personnel involved in military assistance and rural development programs in Somalia.

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We believe that Libya and the Soviet Union, as well as Ethiopia, both welcome and encourage signs of increasing resentment of Siad's tribal policies. Libya and Ethiopia will continue their direct support of dissident activity that exploits tribal tensions in order to create problems for Siad. If Siad were overthrown, Libya and the Soviet Union would have new opportunities to forge closer ties with his successor.



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Figure 1



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Somalia: Tribal Challenge to Siad

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Introduction

Clan loyalty and interclan violence are basic and accepted ingredients of Somali sociopolitical life. Although Somalia is unusual in Africa because of its ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious homogeneity, endemic feuding among its six major clan families and numerous subclans has been characterized by the same intensity as conflict among ethnically heterogeneous tribes elsewhere on the continent.¹ These conflicts and occasionally shifting alliances are extremely complex, and, in many cases, their causes are shrouded in long-forgotten historical events.

Among Somalia's many troublesome problems—including severe underdevelopment, unpredictable food supplies, draining border warfare, and a massive refugee population—tribalism stands out as the most pervasive and persistent threat to the country's stability. Since coming to power in 1969, President Siad Barre has publicly decried tribalism and commented privately that such rivalries are Somalia's greatest danger. Nonetheless, Siad's favoritism toward his own Marehan clan and other supportive groups has fueled both tribal strife and resentment toward his regime. This paper examines the state of clan-related problems in Somalia and the role of the regime in manipulating tension. It also assesses the likely impact of tribal discord on the regime's stability and on the considerable US interests in Somalia.

Rising Intertribal Violence

Tribal fighting, long a feature of Somali life, is becoming more violent and difficult to control. Feuds among Somali clans—almost all of which have private militias—continue to be provoked by such traditional issues of contention as water and grazing rights. In recent years, however, these regional, age-old, internecine feuds increasingly have taken on national political overtones as the major dissident groups—the

¹ This paper—as do most Western observers of the Somali domestic scene—uses the terms *clan* and *tribe* interchangeably.

The Politics of Clan Rivalries

Genealogical divisions among Somalis have proved to be more important for the social and political order than has cultural unity. Clan affiliation has long been the cornerstone of sociopolitical relations in Somalia, with lineage playing a significant role in determining political loyalties. During the period immediately following independence in 1960, the clan families served as rallying points for the formation of national political parties.

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Although Somalia has long had the trappings of a modern political system, power at the national level has been established and maintained through a web of shifting intertribal alliances, and political events have often reflected intertribal feuding and warfare. The anthropologist I. M. Lewis has noted that the beliefs that "might makes right" and that political ascendancy derives from superior fighting ability are paramount in Somali politics. The notion that rights can only be defended by force of arms has led to the persistent and widespread acceptance of tribal feuding as a political institution.

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Tribalism contributed to the decline of the multiparty system in Somali in the 1960s. Party conflicts generated by competing clan interests undermined the operation of the government and the parliament and distracted them from their ability to deal with the country's general problems, thereby contributing both to widespread disillusionment with the democratic process and to the military coup of 1969 that brought Siad Barre to power.

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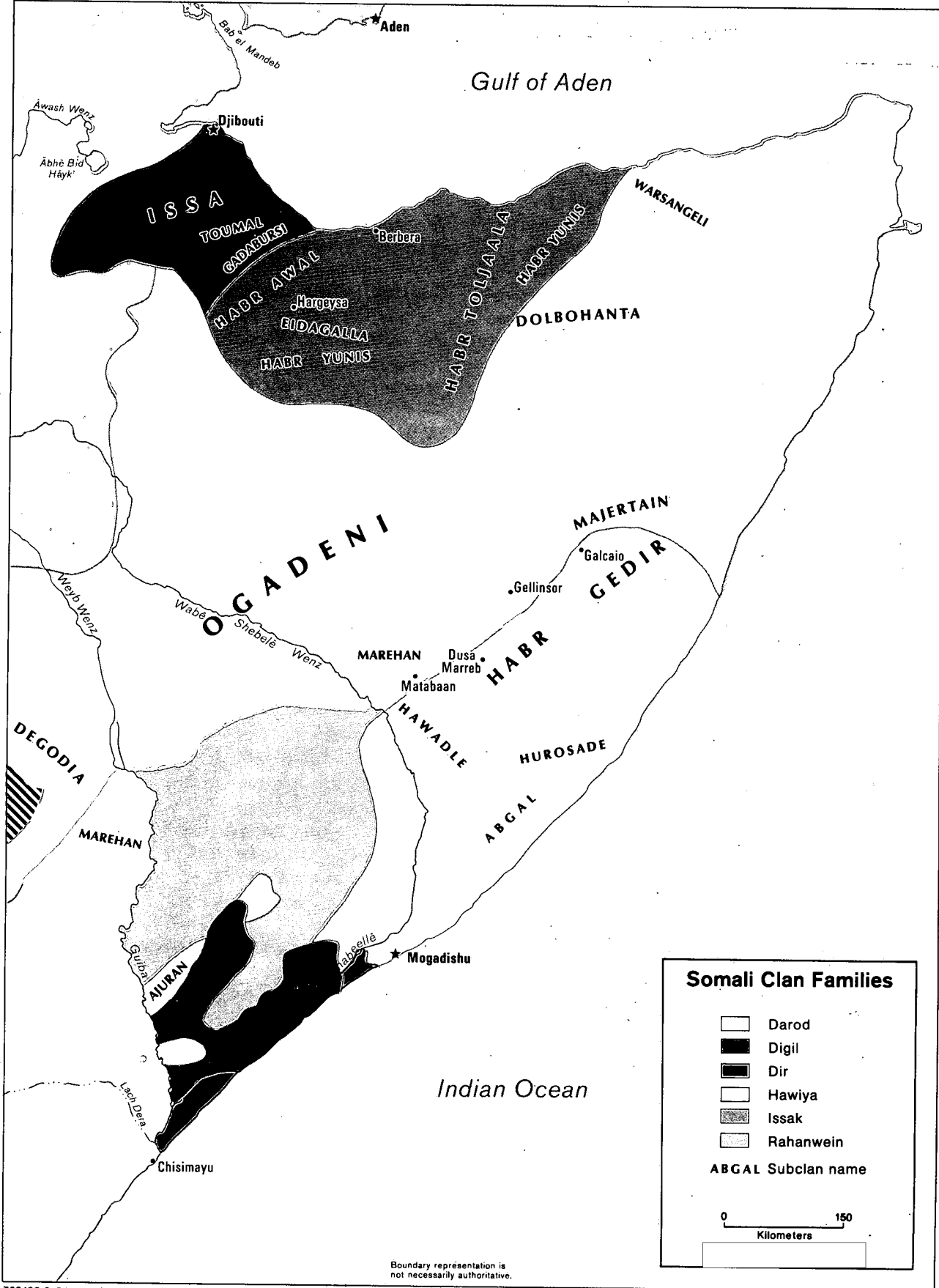
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Somali Democratic Salvation Front (SDSF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM)—and the Somali Army have entered the fray.

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Figure 2



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**Distribution of the Population,
by Kinship and Ethnic Groups**

Somali Clan Families and Major Subclans	Percent of Population ^a
Darod	20
Dolbohanta	
Majertain	
Marehan	
Ogadeni	
Warsangeli	
Digil	3
Dir	7
Gadabursi	
Issa	
Hawiya	25
Abgal	
Ajuran	
Degodia	
Habr Gedir	
Hawadle	
Murosade	
Issak	22
Eidagalla	
Habr Awal	
Habr Toljaala	
Habr Yunis	
Rahanwein	17
Ethnic minorities	
Negroid	4
Other	2

^a These estimates were made in 1966 and are based on the population within Somalia's borders. More recent and reliable data are not available. Inclusion of ethnic Somalis outside the borders would increase the percentage of Darod substantially.

The recent upward spiral of tribal violences has been marked by several major clashes:

- A protracted tribal dispute began in February 1983 when a group of Dolbohanta tribesmen raided the Issak tribe's settlements and seized a number of weapons. In May, the episode blossomed into a full-scale battle pitting Dolbohanta militia and the Somali Army against Issak-supported guerrillas of the dissident SNM. Fighting continued through June, leaving some 150 persons dead.

• Fighting between Marehan and Hawiya clans began over water rights in the central sector border area in February 1983 and continued sporadically through the rest of the year. The SDSF and the SNM armed and trained the Hawiya, while Marehan sympathizers in the Army provided fellow clansmen with some arms [redacted] Deaths reportedly averaged 40 to 50 per month late in the year.

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- Clashes between Hawiya subclans in the Kenyan-Somali border area occurred throughout 1983, involving an unknown number of dead and the theft of more than 1,000 camels.

Less serious but significant fighting in 1983 involved the Ogadeni, the Majertain, and other Hawiya subclans. In 1984, clashes have been reported among the Hawiya and between the Ogadeni and the Marehan.

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Increasing Access to Arms. Many Somali tribes are increasingly well armed, having obtained weapons through purchase, theft, or as gifts from the Somali Army, Somali dissidents, and the Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF), a group created and backed by the Somali Government to contest Ethiopian control of the Ogaden. Ethiopia also has been a source of arms for Somali tribes.

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[redacted] arms move freely across the Ethiopian border because the police do not have the manpower to halt this trafficking. Tribal arms inventories consist mainly of rifles, such as AK-47s, but also include machineguns, bazookas, and antitank rockets.

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Siad contributed to this general availability of weapons by arming border tribes in an attempt to bolster border security in the late 1970s. This move spurred a tribal arms race as tribes in the interior—including groups hostile to Siad and his clan—sought more weapons for their own defense. Border tribes such as the Issak, Hawiya Degodia, Ogadeni, and Dolbohanta apparently are especially well armed.

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[redacted] the Hawiya near Mogadishu are also now acquiring weapons.

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In an effort to contain the spread of arms and its significant contribution to the increasingly violent nature of tribal fighting, Siad ordered the Army and the police in June 1983 to disarm disloyal tribes, beginning with the Hawiya Abgal near Mogadishu. Using such techniques as cutting off food and water from recalcitrant tribes, the security forces have recovered large amounts of arms.

In our judgment, however, the disarmament campaigns will have little long-term impact on intertribal tensions as the clans will have no difficulty obtaining replacement arms.

Dissident Involvement.

both of the major organized dissident groups, the SDSF and the SNM, have attempted to exploit clan feuds to gain new recruits and to expand their tribal bases beyond their traditional supporters—the SDSF with the Majertain and the SNM with the Issak.

both groups are struggling to gain the allegiance of the Hawiya—one of the country's largest clan families—which is strategically located in central Somalia and constitutes the majority of the population of the capital. The Hawiya in recent years have increasingly resented the regime's favoritism toward the Marehan, a relatively small Darod clan that has enjoyed greatly increased political and economic power under Siad. The SDSF has supported various Hawiya subclans with arms, funds, and training since 1981,

the SNM's recruitment efforts began more recently.

In our judgment, Hawiya receptivity to the dissidents' approaches stems more from resentment of the Marehan and a desire to obtain arms than from an ideological affinity with the dissident cause. Over the long run, chronic intertribal mistrust will undermine any alliance between the Hawiya and either the SNM or the SDSF. Nonetheless, the Hawiya's increased access to arms, supplied by the dissidents, and hostility toward the regime have resulted in attacks on government forces and ultimately could spread the violence to the Hawiya-dominated capital.

Ethiopia funnels arms, training, and logistic support to antiregime tribes via the dissident groups. In mid-1983, for example, the SDSF and the Ethiopian Army

Anti-Siad Dissident Groups

Two Somali guerrilla groups, both formed in 1981, seek Siad's overthrow: the 3,000-man Somali Democratic Salvation Front (SDSF); and the Somali National Movement (SNM), which commands only a few hundred armed adherents. Ethiopia and Libya provide training and financial and military assistance to both groups. Military operations by the dissidents are largely confined to small-scale harassing raids in border areas.

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The SDSF operates in the Majertain-inhabited central sector. Most Somalis view it as a Majertain vehicle for regaining the power lost when Siad seized control in 1969; many Somalis are alienated by its close ties with Ethiopia and its Marxist rhetoric. The SDSF's military momentum has not fully recovered from a serious defeat suffered in mid-1982 while trying to capture the town of Galcaio.

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The northern-based SNM draws its support largely from the Issak, who feel they have faced considerable political and economic discrimination by the central government. Although it enjoys considerable sympathy in the north, the SNM has not been able to exploit Issak unrest, and it lacks an effective military arm. The SNM has resisted Libyan pressure to merge with the SDSF.

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were training some 200 Hawiya in military operations,

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the Ethiopian military has not been directly involved in Somalia's internal tribal fighting, presumably to avoid being drawn into a confrontation with the Somali military, which would tarnish its carefully crafted image as "victim" of Somali irredentism.

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Meddling by the WSLF. The Western Somali Liberation Front, composed largely of Ogadeni tribesmen and organized to pursue longstanding Somali claims to Ethiopia's Somali-inhabited Ogaden region, has become increasingly involved in the internecine fighting,

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[redacted] the National Security Service has unearthed growing resentment among some non-Ogadeni members of the Army and the government over the regime's financial assistance to the WSLF, which they claim is being used to fight other Somali clans rather than the Ethiopians. [redacted]

control tribal fighting. Many paramilitary police who would normally be used to curb tribal feuding are used instead to supplement regular Army units guarding the border, while regular police lack the necessary training to control tribal clashes. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

Siad has often stated privately that he derives little benefit from WSLF actions in the Ogaden against Ethiopia. [redacted] We believe he recognizes that government assistance to the Front is contributing more to internal unrest than to organizing the irredentist fight against Ethiopia. Nonetheless, Siad counts the Ogadeni among his strongest supporters and is firmly committed to their cause. We believe he is convinced that he must continue to support them in order to retain the clan's backing. [redacted]

Siad has done little that is specifically aimed at strengthening the military's efforts to deal with tribal unrest. However, measures he has taken to enhance the military's ability to counter the Ethiopian threat, such as trying to obtain additional equipment from the United States and other allies, will also have an impact on its capacity to contain tribal fighting. Moreover, we believe that Siad hopes that the security forces' recent campaign to disarm the tribal militias will lower the incidence of violence. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

Increasing Tribal Resentment of Siad 25X1

Security Forces Strained. Evidence indicates that both the paramilitary police and Army units are frequently shifted back and forth between border guard and civil control duties because of the increase in tribal fighting:

Siad's favoritism fuels intertribal tensions, particularly the resentment of the Marehan and the Ogadeni by less favored clans. In our judgment, Siad's favoritism toward selected groups has worsened tribal rivalries and thus has helped foster violence among clans. [redacted] 25X1

- In mid-March 1984, two companies of paramilitary police usually assigned to border duty were moved into a town near Burao in the north to contain fighting between the Dolbohanta and the Issak Habr Tojalo.
- An Army brigade tried to control a clash between the Marehan and the Hawiya in central Somalia in February 1983. In April, an infantry company and two platoons of paramilitary police tried to separate the tribes and guard water wells in the area. In September, Siad was forced to send in the 6th Commando Brigade to restore order.
- Two Army battalions were assigned to patrol the highway between Belet Weyn and Dusa Marreb following attacks by the Hawiya on private and government vehicles in early 1983. [redacted]

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] Siad grants disproportionate political and economic favors to the Marehan and the Ogadeni and to groups whose allegiance he is trying to gain. These indulgences include appointments to lucrative government posts, military promotions and choice assignments, financial support, and opportunities to participate in profitable business deals. He discriminates most actively against the Issak—a northern clan he has long considered especially disloyal. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

This shifting of units to deal with tribal problems is straining military capabilities. [redacted]

The Issak have long been unhappy with Siad, but in recent years, their disaffection has increased. A variety of repressive measures directed against the Issak, including the arrest and trial of Issak dissidents, the confiscation of Issak businessmen's property, and the execution of an Issak colonel for disloyalty, resulted in riots in Hargeysa in early 1982 that were only quieted by the use of military force. Northern Army commander Ganni's tough handling of the demonstrators [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] the Army lacked resources to [redacted]

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Siad's Tribal Strategy

Siad's tactics for dealing with tribal problems have varied widely and have included accommodation, co-optation, and coercion. He relies on his own considerable political cunning to devise ways of manipulating and balancing clan interests in order to strengthen his support base while dividing his opposition.

Over the past year or so, Siad has used senior government officials or tribal elders as emissaries to try to negotiate intertribal disputes and to resolve differences between the tribes and his government.

these agents sometimes carry offers of bribes or promises of regional development projects.

the Majertain now in government are being given expanded authority to offer economic and political favors to fellow tribesmen as a way of increasing support for the regime.

Siad traveled to the north twice in 1983 to meet with Issak elders but did little to redress their grievances. We believe that his failure to follow through on major Issak demands, particularly the release of political prisoners, has increased the clan's disaffection from the central government.

in Hargeisa and his imposition of stricter security controls following an SNM raid on a northern prison in early 1983 have created new grievances. The Issak also are disgruntled by Siad's abolition of a trade system that had allowed Issak traders to reap large profits on imports and by his failure to fulfill a promise in December 1983 to release northern political prisoners.

Some Hawiya clans are angry with Siad because of the Army's support of the Marehan in clashes between the two clans. The Embassy reports, for example, that fighting over a waterhole in mid-1983 escalated when a Marehan military commander tried to disarm the Hawiya but not the Marehan, killing several Hawiya in the process. The Hawiya—as well as the Issak—also resent Siad's attempt in mid-1983

In mid-1983, Siad approved a series of meetings among the Darod for the purpose of organizing an alliance aimed at cementing their control of the government. The talks were abandoned because of concerns that exclusion of the Issak and the Hawiya would escalate tribal tensions.

Shortly after, Siad established a reconciliation council of elders from all of the major clan families, but the council languished after several fruitless meetings.

the organization was only a ploy by the central government to motivate tribal leaders to encourage support for the regime among their own peoples.

Siad has not been reluctant to use coercion in tackling the tribal problems. Even as he experimented with the reconciliation council, Siad urged security officials to take a firm approach toward the Issak,

[Redacted]

to establish an alliance of Darod clans aimed, at squeezing the Hawiya and the Issak out of positions of power in the government and the military.

The Gadabursi, a small subgroup of the Dir in the northwest, may also be moving away from the regime, in the Embassy's judgment, because of the government's recent policies toward the clan. One of the clan's main sources of income—smuggling goods from Djibouti—has been hampered by the government's refusal to pave a major trade route in the Gadabursi

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region and by police efforts in mid-1983 to crack down on the clan's heretofore ignored contraband operations. [redacted]

In our judgment, the increasing disaffection of the Issak and other tribes makes them more susceptible to recruitment by organized dissident groups and increases their willingness to resist government security forces. [redacted]

Reaction of the Military

Blatant favoritism toward the Marehan and the Ogadeni in the military has contributed to declining morale, increasing anti-Marehan and anti-Ogadeni sentiment, and criticism of the regime's role in Somalia's tribal problems, according to reports from the US defense attache.² [redacted] this resentment was especially high following the embarrassing defeat of a Marehan-led battalion at a border outpost by Ethiopian-supported dissidents in July 1983 and the government's failure to punish the responsible Marehan officers. More recently, a reliable source of the defense attache reports that morale among junior and midlevel officers has been further weakened by the Defense Ministry's continued practice of basing promotions on tribal connections despite the introduction of a merit system in September 1983. [redacted]

Siad uses his control over military personnel actions not only to retain loyal officers, especially Ogadeni and Marehan, in key positions but also to weaken the power of officers from less favored tribes. [redacted]

[redacted] the Ogadeni are the largest single tribal group in the military, in disproportion to their representation in the whole population, and that Siad considers the Ogadeni to be among his most loyal troops. Siad relies on highly trusted subordinates to control both the military and security organizations and has placed members of his own family and clan in

² Estimates of the tribal composition of both the military and the general population are largely impressionistic, as census reports do not record tribal affiliation. [redacted] some 30 percent of the military is Ogadeni, 30 percent Hawiya, 15 percent Issak, 8 percent Majertain, and 8 percent Marehan. (The remaining 9 percent may belong to unspecified minor tribes.) [redacted] students at the officers' academy in Mogadishu included 200 Ogadeni, 50 Hawiya, 50 Issak, and 50 Marehan [redacted]

key command posts.³ On the other hand, most Issak officers have been transferred from their restive northern homeland to prevent any antiregime collusion with fellow tribesmen. Moreover, the Issak receive fewer promotions and perquisites, such as training in the United States. We agree with senior US military observers who believe that these practices have eroded morale and have allowed the promotion of less qualified persons, thus contributing to incompetency in the officer corps. [redacted]

Although we do not know how widespread the resentment of Siad's tribal favoritism is within the military, we believe that it is strongest among non-Marehan and non-Ogadeni, who see their opportunities for career advancement stifled. However, discontent is also evident among the Ogadeni. [redacted]

Outlook

We believe that tribalism and tribal violence, both firmly rooted in the Somali culture, will remain key attributes of Somali sociopolitical life. We have observed events in recent years that, in our analysis, will ensure that intertribal tensions remain high:

- Feuding clans will continue to have relatively easy access to weapons—from dissidents, Ethiopia, and the Somali military—despite occasional disarmament efforts by the central government.
- The dissident SNM and SDSF will try to stir up tribal fights in order to create problems for the regime.

³ The commandant of the National Security Service, Jabril, is a Majertain but is married to a member of Siad's Marehan clan, while the commandant of the National Police is an Ogadeni—the tribe of Siad's mother. Hashi Ganni, a Marehan, is now commander of the 26th Army Corps in the north. Siad's son-in-law, Morgan Hersi, is head of the 21st Army Corps at Dusa Marreb. Marehan clan members head other key Army commands as well as filling a disproportionate number of slots in the Mogadishu area and in the Ministry of Defense. Ogadeni members command the 4th Division at Galcaio and the Mogadishu garrison. Minister of Defense Samantar belongs to a minor clan with no power base and thus, in our judgment, is not viewed by Siad as a threat. [redacted]

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- Siad's favoritism toward the Marehan and the Ogadeni will foster growing resentment among important clans such as the Issak and the Hawiya.

[redacted]

our view. Siad almost certainly will face increasing disaffection from Issak and Hawiya officers who resent the favoritism in promotions and assignments shown to Marehan and Ogadeni officers.

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Tribal problems are putting pressure on Siad's regime by:

- Decreasing security in the countryside.
- Creating opportunities for exploitation by Ethiopian-backed dissidents.
- Eroding Siad's base of support.
- Weakening military morale.
- Generating demands by less favored clans for more equitable treatment.
- Triggering disputes over the government's backing of the WSLF, as it meddles in clan fighting.

Over the long term, this sentiment will exacerbate other sources of frustration in the armed forces and could touch off a coup. According to US military observers, these sources of frustration include the military's inability to gain the upper hand over both the dissidents and Ethiopia, as well as persistent unhappiness with the amount and type of military equipment supplied by the United States and other allies.

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Considering the seemingly intractable nature of Somalia's tribal problems, perhaps the best that Siad—or any Somali leader—can hope for is to deflect criticism from himself, to weaken the dissidents' ability to exploit the tribal problems, and to maintain the strong backing of the military. Siad attempts to balance competing clan interests to ensure his own political survival, and in this he is aided by intertribal distrust that helps prevent the formation of opposition coalitions.

While disaffected Issak or Hawiya officers appear to have the strongest motivation to attempt a coup, they also have relatively weak power bases within the military, and their capacity to engineer a successful coup seems doubtful. Paradoxically, Ogadeni or Marehan officers might feel compelled to move against Siad themselves if they judged that a coup were essential to preempt a strike by a disaffected tribe and thus to ensure their continued domination of the Somali military.

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Reaching lasting accommodation with disaffected tribes such as the Issak would require concessions that Siad so far has been unwilling to make, including the release of political prisoners, a return to a trade system favorable to Issak businessmen, less repressive treatment of the Issak by security forces, and less discrimination against Issak in the military. A more equitable allocation of political and economic favors among all clans would threaten the privileged position of Siad's key supporters and could cost him their backing.

We have no evidence now of coup plotting by any military faction in Somalia. Although a number of Siad's supporters have warned him of disloyal members in the military or in government in the past and could be expected to do so again, they often are motivated primarily by the desire to undercut personal rivals, and the alleged threats to Siad are not necessarily real. Thus, Siad's informants cannot be counted on for accurate early warning of impending danger.

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If, as seems likely, Siad's relations with openly antiregime tribes worsen, his past behavior suggests that he would turn to increasingly repressive measures rather than to conciliation. Such tactics, in our view, would generate even more antiregime sentiment among opposition tribes and could lead to a tribally inspired military move against his government. Even without more repressive government measures, military dissatisfaction with tribal favoritism is likely to mount, in

If the tribal situation becomes a more serious problem for Siad, a number of indicators should provide early warning:

- Dissatisfaction of Marehan or Ogadeni military officers or tribal leaders with Siad.
- Increasing tribal violence near or within Mogadishu.
- Urban riots protesting Siad's tribal policies.
- Significant deterioration of the security forces' capacity to quell or contain tribal violence.

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- Formation of political or military alliances among antiregime tribes.
- Growing support of SDSF and SNM among tribes traditionally backing the movements.
- Successful recruitment by dissidents among other tribes.
- Increasing participation by WSLF in tribal clashes.
- Direct participation by Ethiopia in tribal fighting within Somalia.
- Libyan or Soviet meddling in tribal disputes. [redacted]

Implications for the United States

Siad's hold on power depends on the continued support of the armed forces. His influence within the military, in turn, is heavily dependent on the family and clan ties he has established with top commanders.

[redacted] some of Siad's Marehan supporters are concerned that US recommendations for improving the leadership and training of the armed forces will increase the self-sufficiency of the officer corps and weaken Siad's personal control over the military. This aspect of US military counsel is likely to come increasingly under criticism from Marehan and Ogadeni officers who see a threat to their privileged positions. [redacted]

As Siad's major foreign ally, the United States risks accusations by Siad's tribal opponents that Washington condones the worst aspects of his tribal policies. As a result, increased repression by Siad could sharpen anti-US sentiment among the tribally based dissidents groups. Both the SDSF and the SNM threaten periodically to attack US personnel in Somalia, although neither group has yet done so. US military facilities in the north and US personnel stationed at these facilities or the Embassy would be the most likely targets for insurgent attacks. We believe that Somali security forces would have difficulty defending US personnel and property against a major dissident attack. US personnel engaged in development projects or other work in rural Somalia could be caught in the crossfire of intertribal fighting at any time. [redacted]

If Siad's tribal opponents topple him, the new regime may be less favorably disposed toward the United States, and a period of some stress in bilateral relations could ensue. Because Siad's successor would almost certainly come from the military or have strong military backing, any strong anti-US sentiment in the new regime would be tempered at least initially by the realization that Somalia is dependent on a continuing flow of Western military and economic aid. We believe this would also dampen any sentiment to turn back to the Soviets in a major way. Moreover, so long as Moscow remains deeply involved in Ethiopia, any conceivable Somali Government would find it difficult to reestablish close ties with the Soviets.

[redacted]

Siad's mounting tribal problems also present renewed opportunities for Soviet or Libyan meddling in Somalia that would be inimical to US interests in the area.

[redacted]

[redacted] we believe that Libya almost certainly condones the dissidents' involvement in the tribal fighting. Although we have no evidence of direct Soviet sponsorship of anti-Siad dissidents, the Soviets have made no secret of their dislike for Siad and that they would welcome the disintegration of his regime. [redacted]

If Siad were overthrown, we believe that Libya and the Soviet Union would both try to ingratiate themselves with a new regime, perhaps with offers of aid, in order to undermine US influence in Somalia. In our view, they would be particularly eager to end US-Somali military cooperation. [redacted]

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