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Who Assassinated the Somali President in October 1969? The Cold War, the Clan Connection, or the Coup d'État

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ABSTRACT

The mystery of the assassination on October 15, 1969 of President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, the second civilian Somali leader in the postcolonial period, has been misunderstood. Soon after, on the October 21, 1969, at 3 o'clock in the morning, Radio Mogadishu announced that the military seized the power and overthrew the civilian government. It was also announced the prime minister and members of his government as well as former President Aden Abdulle Osman and other politicians were arrested. The parliament was abolished, the constitution suspended, and all political and social organizations banned. Based on newly unearthed primary sources—previously classified court documents, official government bulletins, intelligence sources, and oral interviews with key witnesses—this article assesses for the first time the circumstances surrounding the assassination. Who masterminded the assassination? Why and what was the motivation behind it still remains a puzzle to Somalis and non-Somalis. The assassination was among the high-profile murders in East Africa that year: including, the assassinations of Tom Mboya, a senior minister in Kenya on July 5, 1969, and of Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, the leader of Mozambique Liberation Front, on February 3, 1969. Most Somalis and non-Somalis assume that Abdirashid was “killed” due to an intractable clan rivalry over state power between contesting post-colonial elites. This article counters the conventional explanations of the assassination by contending that the Soviets and Siad Barre played a crucial role in Abdirashid's assassination: for the former, removing a pro-Western administration was paramount, for the latter, the aim was to seize power through the ideology of a Soviet-style socialism.

KEYWORDS

clan dynamics; Cold War; Somalia; the assassination of the Somali president

Introduction

On October 15, 1969, on a humid Wednesday around noontime at the front gate of the municipal headquarters of Laas Aanood in Northern Somalia, a 22-year-old assassin by the name of Said Yusuf Ismail, nicknamed “Said Orfano,” fired seven bullets into Somali President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke. The president suddenly fell down on a stone opposite the gate and died.¹ Elected to the office on June 10, 1967, assuming the presidency on

July 1, 1967, Abdirashid was the second civilian leader after President Aden Abdulle Osman “Aden Adde,” who had ruled Somalia since independence on July 1, 1960. When he was shot, Abdirashid was on his last leg in a visit to drought-stricken areas in the northeast where rain delays hit hard on pastoral nomads of the country populated by his clan.² The assassination was so swift and sudden that the question of complicity was attributed to clan grievances. He was killed at “the hand of one of his own subclan,” as John Drysdale put it, or by “one of his bodyguards,” as Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi maintained, or similarly “by one of his police guards,” as I. M. Lewis pointed out.³ His prime minister, Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal, while holidaying in the United States, had to cut his visit short and return to Mogadishu. Once he arrived at the capital city he appointed General Mohamed Farah Aidede (then a lieutenant colonel in the army) to lead the military commission tasked for the funeral proceedings.⁴

The assassination has been placed in brackets in Somali historiography.⁵ Scholars who touched on the murder have made transitory comments on how Abdirashid became a victim of a clan vendetta between his subclan and the subclan of his assassin. Political scientist David Laitin and historian Said Samatar highlighted that the assassin, who they thought was a “soldier,” had hailed from a subclan that was a rival of the president’s; Abdirashid’s assassination was seen as “a payment for the suffering of the soldier’s subclan.”⁶ Anthropologist Anna Simons also briefly discussed the political dimensions of clan dynamics of the assassination.⁷ The Somali scholar Amina Haji Adan was perhaps the only one who hinted in writing that the president was assassinated “allegedly by a soldier acting alone.”⁸ But she did not provide further mention about the conspiracy behind the assassination. Thus, crucial and critical questions remain unanswered as to why the president was assassinated. Was the murder purely about a clan vendetta, or something else such as a military coup connected to Cold War geopolitics? If clan predetermines Somali politics, why was the president killed by none other than one of his own clansman? The clan thesis may conceal more than it reveals.

The political mystery surrounding Abdirashid’s assassination has been ignored by scholars of Somalia who have based their work on broad surveys concerned with the consequences of contemporary conflicts while overlooking their causes. Taking into account the assassinations of Patrice Lumumba in January 1961, Alhaji Abubabakar Tafawa Balewa in January 1966, the Sardauna of Sokoto (the northern Nigerian prime minister) in January 1966, the Burundian Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe in January 1965, and Togolese President Sylvanus Olympio in January 1963, Africa in the 1960s was a place of political eliminations. The mysteries surrounding these assassinations are still unresolved. Few have noticed the decisive roles the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy

Bezopasnosti (KGB) might have played in the assassinations. Abdirashid's was the third political assassination in East Africa in 1969, and it was not fully investigated compared to the assassinations of Tom Mboya and of Chivambo Mondlane. Like these high-profile assassinations, Abdirashid's murder deserves a special investigation as a significant national issue.⁹ Critically, but crucially, his assassination speaks more to Cold War politics than to the regional dynamics or to local Somali clan politics. For many years, it has been unclear whether the assassination was "by chance" or by a "conscious plan."¹⁰ Whether it was planned or unplanned, the military coup d'état closely coincided with the assassination of an elected civilian president. Within less than a week, General Mohamed Siad Barre, the chief commandant of the army, was sitting in Abdirashid's seat.

Whereas other assassinations have been investigated, no research study has been conducted on Abdirashid's assassination. In line with other scholars, such as Susan Williams who investigated the assassination of Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN secretary-general who was killed in a plane crash September 18, 1961; Ludo de Witte, who studied Lumumba's assassination; and Luise White, who probed the assassination of Herbert Chitepo, this article provides the first research investigation into Abdirashid's assassination.¹¹ A plethora of studies have been written about the assassination of the U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Though there are heated debates over the Kennedy's assassination, not least whether the bullets fired by Lee Harvey Oswald hit right front or from the back, there is little dispute over where the bullets hit Abdirashid's body.

This article counters the conventional explanations over the aims of the assassination by considering the broader geopolitical dynamics, even as it does not ignore the political plunders of the last civilian government. The plot of the assassination and how it was carried out lie at the core of this article. In uncovering the hidden aspect of postcolonial Somali history, the article argues that the Soviets and Barre played a central role in Abdirashid's assassination: for the former, removing a pro-Western administration was important, and for the latter his aim was to project power through the ideology of a Soviet-style socialism.

The concept and the context

Discussing the work of Victor LeVine, Ali Mazrui proposed a new innovative way of tracing "the role of the killer rather than the status of the victim." LeVine lamented that the subtle distinction between an assassination and a political murder is "admittedly a tenuous one," suggesting that, when combined, they could expose the culprit in an enigmatic element of surprise.¹² Mazrui argued for an "alternative rendering" because every political murder cannot be termed an assassination.¹³ A murder becomes political when the action serves the political motive behind it. Political murderers have been plenty in Somalia

since 1969, and a study by a “historical detective”—to borrow from Williams—is necessary to uncover who killed whom, where, and why.¹⁴ Because Abdirashid’s assassination was directly related to the success of the subsequent military coup, it is vital to explore the political murder that made the coup possible. When the news of Abdirashid’s assassination reached the United States, *Time* magazine titled its front cover “Somalia: Death of a President.”¹⁵ Inside, the editors of one of the most famous American magazines avoided using the word “assassination” in their news coverage. They were probably following the official line of the U.S.-style Cold War diplomacy. On the evening of the day that Abdirashid assassinated, the then U.S. secretary of state wrote a memo to President Richard Nixon to inform him of the assassination:

Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, President of the Somali Republic, was assassinated October 15. President of the National Assembly, Sheikh Muktar, is next in line constitutionally and is taking charge. Somali Prime Minister Egal, third in line, is still in the United States. Egal and the Somali Ambassador, Azhari who is the son-in-law of President Shermarke have been informed. Egal is expected to leave immediately for Mogadiscio. President Shermarke fully supported Egal’s détente policy. Peace in the Horn of Africa during the past 2 years has been important to us because of our interests in Ethiopia. A new president, according to the constitution, is to be elected within 30 days. Likely candidates include former President Osman, a former Prime Minister [Abdullahi Iise], and Egal himself. All these possibilities are pro-West and likely to continue the détente. A Muslim country burial within a short period (twenty-four hours) is likely. Hence a request for high level representation at a state funeral is not expected.¹⁶

Though this briefing may suggest an attempt to capitalize on the status quo, the White House authorities argued that the assassination was aggravated by “tribal resentment” while leaving out the question of complicity.¹⁷ In the introduction to *Ethnicity Kills? The Politics of War, Peace and Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Einar Braathen, Morten Bøås, and Gjermund Soather question the salience of ethnicity (clan, in the Somali case) in the overall reconfiguration of African politics and conflicts.¹⁸ Subsumed into things clan and cloaked under clan vendetta, the Barre regime maintained for over two decades (1969–1990) that Abdirashid was killed in a “clan reprisal.” Equally, the accused political players in the murder referred to the clan as the culprit.

If the clan killed the president that does not mean clan killings merit no inquiry. Steve Fenton has argued that the Somali State despite its deep reliance on clan “cannot be relied upon to create conditions of security either for material survival or personal protection.”¹⁹ As they compete for state power and scarce resources, Somali political elites tend to pursue dangerous paths by checking and rechecking how many playing cards are on the desk prior to taking the political decision to act and react.

The available evidence reveals that Abdirashid’s assassination was a political murder. Embedded within the assassination were the politics of Cold

War, the local Somali clan politics, and the underground coup preparation. Abdirashid was assassinated after having implicated himself in several controversies pertaining to both internal and external relations. The internal ones were: (1) how his administration handled an election in which the fraud level was at an unprecedented scale and (2) the prevalence of clan nepotism and corruption.²⁰ The external were: (1) the abandonment of the Greater Somalia Policy by his administration and (2) the aggravation of relations with the Soviet Union. Even if the assassination of Abdirashid was solely a clan-motivated initiative, this cannot exclude broader political motives in the larger context of the Cold War.

It was such violent confusion in the wake of the assignation that Barre took advantage of to seize power.²¹ Yet a clan motivation was so intrinsic to the plot that it was difficult to reconsider that the assassin was not alone in the crime. Such suspicion was reinforced by the fact that the assassin pointed out during the initial trial that other individuals whose names he had exposed were involved in assisting him in the assassination.

Interwoven with internal policies but constrained by external pressures, the concept of the clan in Somali politics should be understood as only one among many cards. Which card to play has internally hinged on which card has been locally available. However, both cards can be externally pressed through what Jean-François Bayart has termed a “reciprocal assimilation” within international economic aid.²² While the importance and the exploitation of clan in the Somali case can hardly be overlooked, clan in any case has not been a machine programed to kill with impunity. True, clannism and corruption were characteristic in his administration, and Abdirashid was not immune. As for corruption, both Drysdale, the British adviser to his administration, and General Jama Mohamed Ghalib, a senior police officer who was later to become the Somali police Commissioner, gave testimony to how the president personally emboldened—at times even approved—corruption with his statements and speeches.²³ As per clannism, a former American Peace Corps volunteer also recounted an incident in which Abdirashid chauvinistically told him that he would appoint himself as the “sheikh of the Darood clan.”²⁴ Here was an elected national president who saw himself not as the representative of all clans but of his clan. It was such a clan mentality that his plotters exploited in eliminating him. This made it possible to murder the president with his own knife.

The clan concept and the assassination

It is difficult to determine the exact nature of the assassination. The dominant assumption is that President Abdirashid was “killed” due to an intractable clan rivalry over state power between contesting clan-based élites. The clan has always been the determinant element in explaining the assassination. Many an author who deliberated on the assassination has contended that the

clan was the reason and has concluded that the culprit was none other than the assassin who was assumed to have been a policeman—even a bodyguard by some accounts—dispatched to the president’s security.²⁵ Framed as a consequence of a Majeerteen clan power struggle, the traditional clan rivalry was apparently exploited to cover the assassination, so much so that the identity of the culprit and the actual crime were portrayed as a business as usual in the Somali world.²⁶ A group of interconnected politicians from the Mohamoud Saleebaan/Majeerteen clan, averse to the president’s policies of appeasing the Isaaq clan-group elites (who had felt marginalized in the previous Aden Adde administration), were also accused of orchestrating the assassination.

The fact that the assassin belonged to the Majeerteen, the president’s clan, though a different subclan (Ali Saleebaan), which was a rival of the Abdirashid’s Osman Mohamoud subclan, gives the assassination a clan flavor. The Ali Saleebaan, known for their entrepreneurial skills, had traditionally been marginalized by the Osman Mohamoud, for whom they held a deep-rooted hostility.²⁷ By killing Abdirashid, the assassin was reported to have avenged his subclan by getting rid of the most elder statesman of the rival clan. The murder was seen as a “payment” for the loss of the assassin’s subclan during the violence that sprang from the turbulent election of March 26, 1969, which saw the marginalization of Ali Saleebaan political players by their Osman Mohamoud counterparts. It was a well-known fact that the Ali Saleebaan political players complained about the result of the election, which the Osman Mohamoud politicians rigged by taking the two parliamentary seats that were supposed to be divided between the president’s and the assassin’s subclans. The Ali Saleebaan politicians, enraged at how Abdirashid and his administration handled the election, were expected to retaliate. The place in which the assassination was carried out also served as an excuse for those who had planned it. The town of Laas Aanood was the most violent voting center during the election, with the death of eleven civilians.²⁸

It is important to discuss clan as a theory and practice. The lexicon of clan agency that first attributed Abdirashid’s assassination to a particular clan and then to a subclan originated from an official state communication of the security authorities. Apparently shocked by the assassination, the security authorities resorted to the clan concept in their first conversation on the murder. To alert the assassination to more senior authorities, the regional police commissioner, Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Saqadhi Dubbad, an Isaaq (considering the hierarchical structure of the army and the police forces), called first the central police headquarters and second the central army headquarters in Hargeysa, responsible for the whole security situation of the northern part of the country. In his last contact with the army, Dubbad’s telegram was responded to by Lieutenant Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the deputy of the northern army

sector. Upon hearing the information that the president was “killed,” Abdullahi Yusuf, a Majeerteen/Mohamoud Saleebaan/Omar Mohamoud, hurriedly asked Dubbad to which clan the assassin belonged. Dubbad replied “Oh, a Majeerteen man.”²⁹ The crime was thus depicted as a business-as-usual traditional activity, a clan matter carried out by one clan member against another. Both Saqadhi and Yusuf—the respondent and the inquirer—propagated that premise, at least in the beginning. Convinced of the report he had received, Yusuf called his senior army officers and passed along the information. What both colonels left out was the crucial issue of whether or not the assassin was a government employee—in this case, a policeman.

The assassin, Said Orfano, contrary to popular claims, was neither a bodyguard nor a real policeman, even though he was given a uniform and had enlisted in the police force before the assassination. He joined the Dervish forces, a branch of the police named after the anticolonial Dervish movement of Sayid Mohamed Abdulle Hassan, known as the “Mad Mullah.” Orfano was registered in the police record as Abdulkadir Abdi Mohamed by General Mohamed Abshir Muuse, the former commissioner of the national police, who helped him as a fellow clansman to secure a government paycheck. But he was not included in the official police team assigned to the president’s security detail. However, the very fact that the assassin was trained in the police raises suspicion. Tellingly, General Abshir was among several fellow clansmen accused of the assassination.³⁰ In his memoir, even though he mentioned that Abshir was a suspect, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf insisted without offering any evidence that he was certain that Barre was the main culprit and conductor of the assassination.³¹ In describing the assassination as a “killing,” Colonel Yusuf did not consider the bigger picture by linking the murder to the contemporary realpolitik of the Cold War. In his analysis of the politics of murder in postcolonial Somalia, Somali psychiatrist Hussein Bulhan also charged Barre for orchestrating the assassination.³²

The sudden execution of the assassin by the subsequent Barre military regime closed the door on further investigation of the case.³³ Why was the whole investigation processed so quickly? By making his confessions confidential, the regime blocked the possibility of running the risk of linking the inner circle of Barre to the assassination. It was clear that there was a need for a guilty murderer in the form of clan. One crucial piece of evidence, though by no means the only one, that links Barre to the assassination can be found in the regime’s official bulletin. Upon coming to power, Barre selectively promoted the two policemen, Lieutenant Beddel Hersi Farah and Lieutenant Abdi Raabi Raage, who were accused by the assassin of participating in a hybrid assassination plot.³⁴ Beddel Hersi and Abdi Raabi were among five individuals—the other three being the assassin’s brother, Mohamed Yusuf Ismail, Sheikh Nuruddin Ali Olow, and Ainab Farah Maraf—with whom the assassin told the court he had plotted. All of

them were released on the account that the assassin had retracted his earlier statements.³⁵ However, the presidential decrees reveal that generous rewards by Barre for Hersi continued throughout the regime.³⁶ This stands as evidence of the special relationship between Barre and some of those accused of assisting the assassin. How those suspected of the assassination were allowed to live freely remains a mystery.

The trial and the truth

During the short, swift trial, a witness named Farah Warsame Ali told the court that one of the accused, Ainab Farah Maraf, promised the assassin in September 1969 “a substantial sum of money” if he carried out the assassination plot.³⁷ The defendant confessed to the court that he was promised a massive amount of money once he assassinated the president. Exactly 40,000 Somali shillings were deposited to the assassin’s brother, while another 50,000 would be supplied after the assassination. The plot, as previously planned, was to murder the president in Mogadishu, but the assassin told the court that the idea of the assassination itself came from Sheikh Nuruddin Ali Olow, his fellow subclansman, and other accused men.³⁸ Olow told Orfano that once he assassinated Abdirashid he would defend him in court. The court heard that while Beddel Hersi encouraged Orfano in carrying out the crime by assisting him in Bur’o, Abdi Raabi was tasked to spread antagonistic propaganda against the president. As the commander of the Bur’o police station, Raabi also transferred the assassin from Bur’o to Laas Aanood and recorded in the police book that he sent Orfano on a “special mission.”³⁹ Beddel encouraged the assassin to empty all his cartridges in the president’s body and be sure to exclaim that it was “an accident.”⁴⁰ The court heard that Beddel supervised the whole operation, directing the would-be assassin where to stand and from where to shoot. He also berated the assassin for missing a previous chance to kill the president at the municipal headquarters in Laas Aanood.

Wherever the president visited, Orfano followed him with the help of the local police authorities. Whether Orfano and collaborators acted on higher orders was a question they would have answered if they were called by the court, which they were not. The transfer of the court hearing to Mogadishu could also be part of the plot. The subsequent military rulers who took power five days after the assassination preferred the capital so to limit witnesses’ accounts. Even though the town of Bur’o had the legal jurisdiction for the case, the transfer of the court hearing to the capital Mogadishu “for security reasons” meant that justice had been compromised behind the scenes. One of the living judges of the court admitted that there was a political plot in the assassination.⁴¹ The fact that the head of the new politico-military court in Mogadishu was Colonel (later General) Mohamed Sheikh Osman, one of the

staunch loyalists of Barre, also reveals how the final judgment of the court was reached within the inner circle. Similarly, the prosecutor of the case, Mohamoud Mire Muuse, was a trusted member of the military junta.

To show that the president's murder was not a matter of national urgency but a clan issue, a small committee consisting exclusively of the Osman Mohamoud subclan represented by Abdi Farah Baashane and Hersi Osman Keenidiid was assigned days before the coup to investigate the assassination.⁴² This made the whole thing clanized and discouraged other witnesses to emerge. However, in pleading guilty the assassin mentioned no clan during the deliberation of the court. Nor did he utter a clan name in euphemistic terms, as was customary when clan terms were used in courts. When asked by the court judge for his motivations, Orfano articulated a geopolitical language laden with a Cold War politics. He confessed to the court that he shot Abdirashid because the president and his prime minister deceived "the nation" by signing a memorandum of understanding with Kenya, a truce that neutralized the hostilities over the territorial claims between the two countries in 1967.

From a legal point of view, it is clear that the criminal court did not consider the assassin's testimonies and decided not to call witnesses to hear other versions. Though he was not directly involved in the court proceedings, the president of the Supreme Court had to resign during the hearings due to the heavy interference of the Barre regime. One of the first official regime bulletins features his resignation, with Barre accepting it immediately. More revealingly, as is evident from the official bulletin, the Osman Mohamoud clan prosecutor who had been investigating the case was arrested and then suspended from the magistrate service.⁴³ By contrast, the court documents also show the assassin's lawyer, Abdiaziz Nur Hersi, a known Marxist and close friend of Abdirizak, arguing that his client deserved a prize—even a historical medal—for the murder he had committed. Despite such powerful political rhetoric, rather than a legal contention in defending the assassin, Abdiaziz was soon promoted to a member of the Barre's first cabinet on the very eve of the coup.

Outside the courtyard, the public pointed to Abdirizak Haji Hussein the prime minister of the preceding administration. Abdirizak, who had more than once agitated for the assassination of the president, was also accused of involvement. A contemporary political eyewitness, Ahmed Mohamed Siilaanyo, who was later to lead Somaliland, recalled that months before the assassination, Abdirizak declared at his party *Dabka* (fire) headquarters in Maka Al-Mukaramah Street in Mogadishu that Abdirashid should know that "the no. 1 car can be exploded."⁴⁴ The number one was the president's car number plates. Subsequently, after the coup, while others were immediately detained outside in Afgooye, Barre and his loyalists initially put Abdirizak under house arrest. When most of his fellow former political players and peers were languishing either in detention without trial or given minor posts in the regime, Abdirizak was awarded the most lucrative political position given to a politician of the old

civilian political establishment. Barre sent him to New York as his ambassador to the United Nations, a position he held until early 1980.⁴⁵ This indicates an earlier connection between Barre and Abdirizak, the main outspoken critic of Abdirashid and his administration.

Abdirizak freely admitted many years later that he was delighted on hearing that the military took over power five days after the assassination. In an interview with the Horn of Africa radio in Mogadishu, he contemplatively recalled how—after his housemaid passed the news of the coup to him—he became pleased that the widowed administration was overthrown.⁴⁶ In another interview he gave to Hiiraan Online shortly before his death, Abdirizak maintained that he had not been part of the plot.⁴⁷ Interestingly, he ascribed the assassination to a clan vendetta, insisting that the assassination was a clan-motivated act and that Orfano was acting on his own with respect to his subclan grievances. To exonerate himself from any involvement, Abdirizak remarked that the assassin gave a full confession, claiming that “when the man was brought to court, he insisted that no one else [except him] was a complicit.”⁴⁸ Contrary to Abdirizak’s claims, Orfano himself first confessed to the court that five individuals, who had mentioned to him the name of Abdirizak, helped him carry out the assassination. The assassin also told the court that Abdirizak’s name was raised several times by the accomplices, but he admitted that he neither saw nor heard of Abdirizak personally. Without sufficient evidence, the court did not call Abdirizak or charge him as a potential suspect in the first court hearing.

New evidence on a full light

The outcome of the criminal court proceedings, not to mention the violent means in which Abdirashid was murdered, reveals that Barre played a part in the plot.⁴⁹ The first moves and measures taken by Barre after the successful staging of his coup provide further evidence of who was responsible for the assassination plot. Within a few months upon coming to power, Barre issued a presidential decree ordering a special stipend for the late Captain Saadaq Mohamed Farah’s family.⁵⁰ The captain was a man who had attempted to assassinate the president before. Married to Abdirizak’s niece, the captain sought more than twice to blast the president’s car. Earlier, a bomb thrown into the Abdirashid’s car had failed to explode. The captain later, on March 30, 1968, accidentally blew himself up while testing explosive devices in the outskirts of Mogadishu. When he died, he was training a group of would-be assassins to murder the president. Upon their arrest, the trainees admitted that the captain was showing them how to detonate a bomb in the president’s car.⁵¹ Ambassador Mohamed Ahmed Aalim, the captain’s colleague in the army, recalled that no inquiry was appointed to investigate who accompanied the captain in the plot.⁵² According to Colonel Mohamed

Ismail Ibrahim “Sero Sero Sete,” Captain Saadaq had a close friendship with Barre.⁵³

Apart from what the official regime bulletin suggests, there were other confirmations that clearly link the assassination to the military coup. The testimony given by Shukri Aden Shire, the daughter of Aden Shire Jama, the then minister of justice in the civilian administration, weighs the evidence. On the night of the coup, the house of Aden Shire was raided by a group of army officers and soldiers led by Barre’s son-in-law Ahmed Saleebaan Dafle, who was then head of army intelligence. Shukri documented that they arrested her father and took the file of the initial investigations of the assassination.⁵⁴ Why her father kept the file at home rather than in his office is a question that she did not raise in her memoir. However, it appears that her father felt that due to the sensitive nature of the case the file would not have been safe in the cupboard of his office. The file taken by Barre’s son-in-law included the cassettes of the interviews conducted by the police with the assassin. No one has seen them since.

In light of all the evidence, there appears a clear link between the coup and the assassination. Accumulating all these facts adds evidence on who were the culprits and who were the accomplices. This also settles a matter that was obscure not only to the public but to the pundits as well. The assassination appears to be a covert plot orchestrated within the army headquarters with the supervision of Soviet surveillance.⁵⁵ The speed with which the military removed the remnants of the Abdirashid-Egaal administration, within a week of the assassination, also seems sufficient to demonstrate that the preparation behind the plot to murder the president and to seize the state had preceded the mission. In particular, the role and responsibility of Barre and his patrons played were clear, although after ascending to power he obviated any investigation of the assassination.⁵⁶

With this newly discovered evidence, Barre was clearly part of the plot that eliminated an incumbent civilian president whose tenure would have ended in 1973. Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf stressed in his memoir that Barre played “a lion’s share” in the assassination.⁵⁷ Though Yusuf’s emphasis can be driven by his clan genealogical affiliation with the president, Abdirashid himself was not a saint, considering his role in a Cold War realpolitik, a politics he barely understood.

Abdirashid steered the state from the West to the Soviets in 1962 and from the Soviets to the West in 1967, later flirting with the Arab world. Abdirashid put himself in real danger, as it was most likely that the Soviets infuriated by his decision were about to react very soon to prevent Somalia from reverting back to the Western fold.⁵⁸ Apart from the Cold War dynamics, the president domestically became a target of public grievances against how his administration handled the March 1969 parliamentary election, an outcome in which fraud and fabrication had reached on an unprecedented level.⁵⁹ The

untouchable elites in his inner circle were also undeterred by the state system, which allowed those who were at the top to embezzle public funds and compete for moneyed political positions.⁶⁰ The whole government was so abhorred by the public that it became a synonym for corruption, clan cronyism, and clientelism. Faduma Ahmed Alim, the first female civil servant in Somalia, noted that once the integrity of the administration was tarnished, the ordinary people began to pray “for the downfall of the parliamentary government.”⁶¹ This was one of the reasons why the military coup d’état was perceived from the outset—as the Somali scholar Ali Jemale Ahmed put it—a “divinely symbolic act” to the mysterious assassination of Abdirashid.⁶²

The Cold War and the clan dynamics

While preparations for burial were underway, a long-held traditional clan animosity came to the fore, which was the result of the revulsion and repulsion to Abdirashid and his administration. To the surprise of many, the assassinated president was denied burial in a national cemetery in Mogadishu by members of the Murusade clan of the Hawiye clan-group.⁶³ Even though he was a religious man adhering to Sufi Islam, Abdirashid was not a leader who could attract people’s hearts and minds. Many Somalis viewed the assassination as a way of extricating themselves from a corrupt administration. While Radio Mogadishu maintained calls for prayer for the assassinated president, the death of Abdirashid rarely generated sympathy.

To add insult to injury, the political brokers who shared the same subclan genealogical affiliation with the president argued, not without a sultanistic style, that they were the legitimate heirs to his position and suggested that his successor should be one of their own. They thus proposed Haji Muuse Boqor Osman, their clan leader in Mogadishu, as a substitute for Abdirashid. Muuse. Boqor himself contended that he was the “rightful heir to the presidency.”⁶⁴ Peoples’ rage was further aggravated when Egaal entertained the proposal put forward by several prominent Daarood elders, such as Omar Mo’allim Mohamed and Haji Yusuf Egaal—who suggested that the Osman Mohamoud clan chief had to replace Abdirashid. In effect, Somalia seemed to be turning into a clan property, when political players (Egaal among them), acting on behalf of such a clan recommendation, later nominated Muuse Boqor as the official government party (Somali Youth League, or SYL) candidate for the uncontested post of the presidency.

Apart from clan chieftaincy, Boqor was a political broker connected to the administration in several ways. Since Abdirashid usurped power, Boqor enjoyed a special favor for land properties and other profitable businesses and the administration would grant him a license to be the only trader to import gold to Somalia. The official bulletin shows that

his position was uninterrupted from 1960 until 1969.⁶⁵ A kind of a kingmaker, Boqor also shared a business enterprise with the then Interior Minister Yasin Nur Hassan Bidde. More tellingly, Boqor and his fellow political broker Omar Mo'allim, the former Somali ambassador to the United States, had close contact with Americans. This part political and part business connection was a serious concern to the Soviets. The Soviets apparently believed that Omar Mo'allim was an agent for the CIA.⁶⁶ Sheikh Mukhtar Mohamed Hussein, the president of the parliament, who assumed presidency of the republic upon Abdirashid's assassination, recounted that the Soviet ambassador to Mogadishu approached him once the preparation for the president's successor started and discussed with him the looming repercussions for Somalia under a Boqor government, whom the Soviets had considered an American puppet.⁶⁷

Concerns surrounding the suggestion of Boqor as president coincided with the controversies at the National Parliament over who should replace Abdirashid. Many Somalis "were disgusted by the self-serving posture of the political debate and by the very limited qualifications of the proposed successor."⁶⁸ It was in this spirit that a furious group of government party parliamentarians, such as Ismail Jimale Ossoble and Aadan Isaaq Axmed, two former ministers, one Hawiye, the other Dir, strongly rebuffed Boqor's nomination. Instead, Ismail Jimale recommended Abdullahi Iise Mohamoud, the former prime minister during decolonization, to be the government's candidate for president. Iise, a popular nationalist figure, albeit but with limited oratory skills, lacked a clan base. He departed and deserted his clan for a commitment to Somali nationalism. His subclan, Sa'ad of the Habar Gidir, blamed him—as did Aden Adde's Udeejeen clan—for not upholding their interests, unlike his peers from other rival clans. Due to the bickering over Abdirashid's successor, ordinary people were losing patience as Egaal showed a strong commitment to using whatever state resources at his disposal to get Boqor elected to the presidential post.⁶⁹

The new version of Mobutu Sese Seko

The competition and contestation of rival clans over who had the right to replace the assassinated president were bound to stir up armed clan conflict. The whole governmental system on which the state institutions were founded was on the verge of failure, and the country was heading toward economic and political breakdown.⁷⁰ The corrupted democracy led to what Mabel Berezin called "an empty symbolic space" wherein a tyrannical, totalitarian, and terroristic regime formed itself easily unchallenged to fill the void.⁷¹ Barre, acting behind the scenes, conversed with other army officers and used the same language of Abdirashid's assassin, stating that Egaal had sold out the cause of Somalis in Kenya by pursuing a new policy of détente.⁷² So Barre argued for a sudden and swift overthrow of the

government in 1968, a year before Abdirashiid's assassination. Barre's political maneuvering was unequivocal. A diehard supporter of the Abdirizak's government, he once threatened those who voted against its approval in the parliament in 1964 with dire consequences. When Abdirizak's government lost a first vote of confidence in the parliament, Barre warned Egaal, then an opposition leader, that the army would react if the bickering political players did not stop blocking the government in the parliament.⁷³

Barre's coup was also possibly precipitated by the fact that Abdirashid and Egaal were intending to reduce the military budget. When Egaal suggested in 1968 sending Barre to the Soviet Union for a military training, the plan was noticeably overshadowed by a contemporary clan advocacy. Barre deployed clan elders who convinced both Abdirashid and Egaal to leave their son alone. Before Egaal's proposal materialized, it was averted by the clanistic reasoning put forward by Majeerteen political players and brokers who insisted that since a Daarood commissioner of the police had previously been discharged, they would never tolerate another Daarood being humiliated under their authority. One of those political players was Daher Haji Osman "Dhagaweyne," Abdirashid's cousin. Mothered by a Mareehaan, Barre's clan, Dhagaweyne persuaded Abdirashid not to dismiss the army commandant.⁷⁴ Barre was also successful in convincing his clan leaders that, if he was to vacate the position, he would have to leave the army in the hands of rival clansmen, as his deputies, General Mohamed Aynaanshe Guuleed, an Isaaq/Habar Yoonis, and General Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed "Liiqliiqato," a Hawiye/Sheekhaal, came from rival clan-groups.

Barre had his own covert plans. He would become and prove to be a tiger who ate those who had groomed him. Upon the aftermath of the March 1969 election, he was promoted to major-general, following a recommendation from the interior minister. This allowed him to fish inside the army as well as party politics, which by this time were structured on either clan or personalist basis. Barre owed his accomplishment of waging the successful overthrow of the administration to the irregularities of the election. But the fraud and falsification of the election as well as the subsequent assassination of the president did not trigger the takeover. Rather, it provided the justification for carrying out the coup, because Barre found a unique public validation to complete his coup plot. The virtual demise of democratic rule at Abdirashiid and Egaal's hands led people to envisage a coup.⁷⁵ Rumors were prevalent in the capital that a military takeover was in the offing. Barre took advantage of such a chaotic situation and created politico-military networks. Utilizing his army position, he shrewdly built underground support for his plans, such as forming a military section for singers and traditional poets. Singers with folklore bands were mobilized from inside the army in order to voice the masses' grievances against the administration. One of the most well-known songs claimed that the army was the only institution safe from corruption and nepotism. The song, aired on Radio Mogadishu a few months before the coup, was sung by a male and a female singer.

The male singer:
 The refuter of [clan] genealogies
 Who knows no nepotism
 Who sees the nation as equal
 That being the soldier
 Who is oblivious of it?
 The female singer:
 The defender of the land
 The unbendable one as a force
 The never-defeated debater
 That being the soldier
 Who is oblivious of it?⁷⁶

If the male singer used abstract words, the female singer reinforced it with vigor and figurative language. Within a week of Abdirashid's assassination came the coup. Into the confusion stepped Barre and his soldiers. The democracy was scrapped and the civilian government was brought down, replaced by a autocratic kleptocracy. Before the civilian committee of president's assassination concluded their findings, the coup instigators took charge. The public and the press were silenced about the assassination case. Many Somalis welcomed the coup and saw it as a new beginning for Somalia. Whatever the case, the coup was far from bloodless as claimed by the military junta. On the contrary, the military regime came and ended with violence.

Many opposition political players, such as Abdulkadir Mohamed Aden "Zoppo" and Abdirizak Haji Hussein, were quick in supporting the coup. Zoppo, another close friend of Barre's and of Abdirizak's, later confided to the U.S. ambassador in Mogadishu that he financed the coup.⁷⁷ Standing accused of orchestrating a high-profile assassination together, the *rumeur publique* (public rumour)—as Daniel Compagnon put it—was established that linked Barre and Zoppo to the assassination of Kamaaluddiin Saalah in 1957.⁷⁸ No stranger to assassinations, Barre was the commander of the police in the Banaadir province of Mogadishu when the Egyptian diplomat was stabbed to death. Hours before his assassination, Saalah's police guard was withdrawn. While the traces of the assassination were cleared, the assassin Wiilow Sheikh Abdirahman Dheere was himself assassinated in prison during the night of Somali independence celebrations on July 1, 1960, as he was about to be released the following morning for a presidential pardon.

Conclusion

Who was behind the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke? This article has accumulated evidence that links the Barre coup and the Cold War politics to the assassination. The first published documents of the

military regime are both informative and instructive, as they feature a collaboration and connivance over who was behind the assassination. In this regard, this article should be seen as an exploration. A future Somali government—perhaps 50 years from now—will probably appoint a public inquiry (say) the National Commission of Inquiry into Abdirashid's assassination. The fact that the Somali National Archives and most regime documents were destroyed after the overthrow of the Barre regime in 1991 will make any investigation of the assassination very difficult. Without delving into the KGB official documents on Somalia as well as Italian intelligence reports from Mogadishu, nothing can be definitive. The release of these documents may clarify the extent to which Barre, as a Soviet collaborator, was involved in the assassination and what type of assistance he had received from the KGB.

The brief postcolonial civilian democratic administrations ended with mystery and mixture of political plots punctuated by domestic and external politics. Any call for an inquiry should consider the account given before his death on June 12, 2012, by Sheikh Mukhtar Mohamed Hussein, the then speaker of the parliament, who replaced Abdirashid as interim president. He said the assassination “was organized,” even though he did not specifically clarify who had organized it.⁷⁹ The KGB might not have involved itself in Abdirashid's assassination if he had not supported the 1967 memorandum of understanding with Kenya. It would have been reasonable to surmise, in this case, that the KGB might have targeted Egaal instead. But even if they had targeted Egaal, they would not have obtained a fruitful result. Assassinating the prime minister would not have altered the course of the administration; killing the president most certainly would.

One thing that cannot be easily proven is the external involvement in Barre's coup, especially the role of the KGB. Yet when the French intelligence authorities in Djibouti contacted the Soviets and inquired about what they were doing in the Mogadishu harbor in December 1969, they were told that the Soviet crew were guiding the fruits of “the revolution”—that is, Barre's new regime.⁸⁰

If Somalis are to understand what has become of Somalia since Barre usurped power, they will have to begin on October 15, 1969, the beginning of what Rudolph Rummel would call a “death by government”—which is to say, political violence waged in the name of the state.⁸¹ Ostensibly inspiring other violent political plots in the Eastern African region, Abdirashid's assassination had broader implications with links to the postcolonial African crises. Barely a year later in January 1970, Idi Amin Dada, Barre's counterpart in the Ugandan army, attempted to assassinate President Obote prior to overthrowing him.⁸² Illuminating the intricacies and mysteries surrounding Abdirashid's assassination is important for tracing the genealogies of the contemporary Somali political crisis. The circumstances surrounding his

assassination are still present in popular commentaries and public memory but have been kept at bay in academia by an overemphasis on clan agency.

The genealogies of the 1970s and 1980s political violence in Somalia can be connected to this political murder, which culminated in a “security where there is no security.”⁸³ Barre’s rise to power itself was the beginning of the current interminable armed conflicts.⁸⁴ The assassination provided him and his co-coup makers with the pretext to assert and impose their power in a political vacuum.

This article draws from some sections of Chapter 2 of my recent book, *The Suicidal State in Somalia: The Rise and Fall of the Siad Barre Regime, 1969–1991* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2016).

Notes

1. “President Shermarke Assassinated—Murderer in Custody—A 5-Day National Mourning,” *Somali News*, October 16, 1969, A1. Also “President of Somalia Slain; Gunman Held,” *Observer Reporter*, October 16, 1969; “Somalia’s President Assassinated by Gunman Wearing Police Uniform,” *Herald Journal*, October 16, 1969; “Somalia Prepares for New President,” *The Associated Press*, October 20, 1969; “Government of Somalia Overthrown,” *The Blade*, October 21, 1969.
2. Born in 1919 in Harardheere, a Hawiye territory in central Somalia, into the son of a Daarood/Majeerteen/Osman Mohamoud/Bah Ya’kuub father called Ali Sharmarke Yusuf and a Hawiye/Habar Gidir/Sa’ad/Reer Hilowle/Reer Dhegood mother called Faduma Elmi Aalim, Abdirashid was a proper reflection of what in Rwanda is known as “Batutsi,” which is to say the offspring of mixed marriages between the Tutsi and the Hutu. It was not uncommon for the *Somalia Italiana* he was born into to witness mixed marriages between the Hawiye and the Daarood clan-groups. In the early 1940s, Abdirashid worked as a clerk for the British Military Administration (BMA). In 1944, he joined the Somali Youth Club (SYC), a nationalist youth movement, which reformed in 1947 as the Somali Youth League (SYL). A photo taken in 1954 shows Abdirashid sitting with other contemporary prominent SYL members (see *Kasmo*, “Sawir xusuus Leh iyo Sannadkii 1953,” 3). From 1954–1958 he attended Università degli Studi di Roma, graduating with an undergraduate degree in political science, at a time any Somali who could go to Italian universities and return with such a degree was to demand to be called a “doctor” as if he had obtained a doctorate. It is because of this reason that I. M. Lewis erroneously wrote that Abdirashid held a doctorate from an Italian university. See I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, 4th ed. (Athens, Ohio: University Press, 2002), 161–164. For the SYL, see Cedric Barnes, “The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, c. 1946–48,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (2007): 277–291; and Ghazi Abuhakema and Tim Carmichael, “The Somali Youth League Constitution: A handwritten Arabic copy (c. 1947?) from the Ethiopian Security forces archives in Harar,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 4, no. 3 (2010): 450–466. For a seminal study, see Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

3. John Drysdale, *The Stoics without Pillows: A Way Forward for the Somalilands* (London, UK: Haan Associates, 2002), 83; Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 29; Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 206. It appears exception to the rule that Lewis, who was often blamed for clanizing things Somali, had skipped over the role of clan in the assassination. I. M. Lewis, "The Politics of the 1969 Somali Coup," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, no. 3 (1972): 383–408.
4. General Aideed was about to play a prominent role in Somalia during the early 1990s. For his reflections on the assassination and other incidents, see Satya Pal Ruhela, ed., *Mohammed Farah Aidid and His Vision of Somalia* (New Delhi, India: Vikas Publishing, 1994).
5. See, for example, Abdirahman Abdullahi Baadiyow, "Women, Islamists and the Military Regime in Somalia: The New Family Law and Its Implications," in *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society, and Politics: Essays in Honour of I. M. Lewis*, eds. Markus V. Hoehne and Virginia Luling (London, UK: C. Hurst, 2010), 137–159.
6. David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (London, UK: Gower, 1987), 78. In her otherwise excellent analysis on the clan politics in postcolonial Somalia as well as the politics of the military coup d'état, political scientist Alice Bettis Hashim completely omits to note this assassination. See Alice Bettis Hashim, *The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997).
7. Anna Simons, *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia Undone* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 46–47.
8. Amina H. Adan, "Somalia: An Illusory Political Nation-State," *South Asia Bulletin* 14, no. 1 (1994): 99–109 at 102.
9. "Abdi Rashid Shermarke: President of Somalia since 1967" (obituary), *The Times* (London), October 16, 1969, 14; "Somalia Buries President Shermarke," *Somali News*, Wednesday, October 22, 1969, A1; "Condolences from Sheikh Mukhtar and Yassin," *Somali News*, Wednesday, October 22, 1969, A1. Sheikh Mukhtar Mohamed Hussein was then president of the National Assembly, who assumed briefly the post of the assassinated president. "Wargeyska Kasmoo Wareysi dheer la yeeshay Sheekh Mukhtaar Maxamed Xuseen," *Kasmo*, June 2000, <http://kasmonewspaper.com/Warar/1451.html>, accessed May 31, 2014.
10. Gary D. Payton, "The Somali Coup of 1969: The Case for Soviet Complicity," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 3 (1980): 493–508 at 502.
11. Susan Williams argued that "it is most unlikely that the Albertina [the aircraft] crashed as a result of pilot error, as claimed by the Rhodesian public inquiry of 1961–62 and by a private inquiry for the Swedish government in 1993." Susan Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld? The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa* (London, UK: Hurst, 2011), 232. For other scholarly investigations on other assassinations, see Gerar Emmanuel and Bruce Kuklick, *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003); Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*, trans. Ann Wright and Renée Fenby (London, UK: Verso, 2001).
12. Quoted in Ali A. Mazrui, "Thoughts on Assassination in Africa," *Political Science Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (1968): 40–58 at 44.
13. *Ibid.*, 42.
14. Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?*
15. "Somalia: Death of a President," *Time*, October 24, 1969.

16. Memorandum from Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon, Washington, DC, October 15, 1969. National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 12, President's Daily Briefs, unclassified, <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve05p1/d277>, accessed May 1, 2014.
17. Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, Washington, DC, October 20, 1969. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box TS 64, Memoranda to the President, October 1969, Top Secret, Sensitive, sent for information, <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve05p1/d278>, accessed May 1, 2014.
18. Einar Braathen, Morten Bøås, Gjermund Saether, eds., *Ethnicity Kills? The Politics of War, Peace and Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).
19. Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), 154.
20. The fraud level during the election increased Abdirashid's unpopularity such that the secondary school students in Mogadishu showed their back to the president in the summer of that year during the day of the independence celebrations. Telephone interview with Mohamed Ali Kamoole, January 18, 2015.
21. Interview with Professor Omar Mohamed Addow, telephone, July 9, 2014; interview with General Elmi Sahal Ali, telephone, June 23, 2014; interview with General Osman Haji Omar "Falco," telephone, June 19, 2014; interview with General Mohamed Nuur Galaal, telephone, April 20, 2014, 18 June 2014; interview with Colonel Abdi Hussein Faahiye "Hoogsade," telephone, July 31, 2014; interview with Mohamed Ali Kamoole, telephone, April 5, 2014; interview with Ahmed Salaad Kulmiye, telephone, June 2, 2014; interview with Mohamed Ali Nuur, telephone, June 15, 2014; interview with Mohamed Isse Trunji, telephone, February 9, 2014. See also "Somalia: Of Barre's Making," *Africa Confidential* 23, no. 18 (September 1982): 1–4.
22. Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), 150.
23. Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 79; Jama Mohamed Ghalib, *The Cost of Dictatorship: The Somali Experience* (New York: Lillian Barber Press, 1995), 65.
24. Joe Darwin Palmer, "Sheikh Ali Hussein," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 10 (2010): 178.
25. Cabdulqaadir Aroma, *Sababihii Burburka Soomaaliya: Yaa Iska Leh Eedda Qaranjabka?*, 2nd ed. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Zafar, 2005); Axmed Jilao Caddow, *Somalia: Gelbiskii Geerida* (n.p., 2001); Aw Jaamac Cumar Ciise, *Qaranjabkii Soomaaliya* (Mombasa, Kenya: n.p., 1995); Ghalib, *The Cost of Dictatorship*; Mohamed Osman Omar, *The Road to Zero: Somalia's Self-Destruction* (London: Haan Associates, 1992). In April 2012, a group of Somali Diaspora debating over the case in an online chat room provided by a Somali website unanimously concurred that the murder was motivated by "clan feud," <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/somalia/TTF5V6678KK0U9TUK>, accessed December 13, 2014.
26. As General Ahmed Jili'ow Addow, one of the most senior Somali intelligence officers, implied in his memoir that the assassination was a cover-up for the coup. However, Addow asserted that the coup was not preorganized. Caddow, *Somalia*, 18–19. By contrast, one of the founders of the military regime revealed that the preparation for the coup was ongoing well before October 1969. Interview with Abdi Warsame Isaaq, http://www.voanews.com/MediaAssets2/somali/2009_10/40th-ANNIVERSARY-PART-1-18OCT09.mp3, accessed September 5, 2014.
27. Personal communication with Mohamed Siad Togane. In the 1800s, the Ali Saleebaan subclan had murdered nearly four clan Sultans of the Osman Mohamoud/Bah-Dir sub-clan. For details, see Giulio Baldacci, "The Promontory of Cape Guardafui," *Journal*

- of the *Royal African Society* 9, no. 33 (1909): 59–72; Lieutenant C. J. Cruttenden, “Report on the Mijjertheyn Tribe of Somallies, Inhabiting the District Forming the North-East point of Africa,” *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* 7 (1844–46): 111–126; Wayne K. Durrill, “Atrocious Misery: The African Origins of Famine in Northern Somalia, 1839–1884,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 2 (1986): 287–306.
28. Telephone interview with General Elmi Sahal Ali, June 23, 2014.
 29. For Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf’s inquiry, see Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, *Halgan iyo Hagardaamo: Taariikh Nololeed (Struggle and Conspiracy: A Memoir)* (Stockholm, Sweden: Scansom, 2012), 83–85. For an interview with Dubbad, see <http://www.radiohormuud.dk/news.php?id=6363>, accessed December 13, 2014.
 30. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-d2Nh50iJY> (min. 09:01–09:29, accessed April 20, 2014.<AQ>Please include video’s author and title.<AQ>
 31. Ahmed, *Halgan iyo Hagardaamo*, 85.
 32. Hussein A. Bulhan, *Politics of Cain: One Hundred Years of Crises in Somali Politics and Society* (Bethesda, MD: Tayosan International, 2008), 160.
 33. Repubblica Democratic Somala, Corte di Socurezza Nazionale, Sentenza, No. 37/70 Reg/ Sent., 8 Ottobre, 1970. Copy on file with the author. Also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfUvc4Ln3nQ> (part I), accessed December 21, 2014; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_oUnR5oV8E (part II), accessed December 21, 2014.<AQ>Please include videos’ authors and titles.<AQ>
 34. “Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio Rivoluzionario Supremo, 26 Aprile 1971, no. 121, Promozione Ufficiali della Polizia,” *Bollettino Ufficiale della Repubblica Democratica Somala*, Anno II., Mogadiscio, 11 Maggio 1971, Suppl. no. 2 al. n. 5: 492.
 35. According to the court documents, Said Yusuf Ismail was a 22-year-old, Mohamoud Yusuf Ismail a 42-year-old, Sheikh Nur Ali Olow a 42-year-old, Aynab Farah Miraf a 50-year-old, Beddel Hersi Farah a 40-year-old, and Abdi Raabi Raage a 49-year-old. See Repubblica Democratic Somala, Corte di Socurezza Nazionale, Sentenza, No. 37/70 Reg/ Sent., 8 Ottobre, 1970, 1.
 36. “Wasaaradda Howlaha Guud, 16,3,80, Naado Dhul Jaalle Beddel Xersi Faarax L. 618,” *Faafinta Rasmi Ah*, Sannadka 8aad, Muqdisho, 1da Okt. 1980, L. 10, 1067; “Dawladda H. Ee Muqdisho 29.7.84, Naado Dhul J. Bedel Xirsi Faarax, L. 309,” *Faafinta Rasmi Ah*, Sannadka 12aad, Muqdisho, 30 Seb. 1984, L. 2 r 9, 704; “Dawladda Hoose Muq. 19.1.85, Naado Dhul Jaalle Bedel Xirsi Faarax, L. 579,” *Faafinta Rasmi Ah*, Sannadka 14aad, Muqdisho, 1da September 1986, L. 9, 649. See also “Xeeri Madaxweynaha JDS L. 35 ee 23 Abriile 1981—Xeeri Tix Xog/A/5/128—Dallacaad Sarkaalnimo,” *Faafinta Rasmi Ah*, Sannadka 9aad, Muqdisho, 2 Luulyo 1981, L. 3 R. 5, 1005–1007.
 37. Repubblica Democratic Somala, Corte di Socurezza Nazionale, Sentenza, No. 37/70 Reg/ Sent., 8 Ottobre, 1970, 6–8.
 38. Personal communication with Mohamed Siad Togane.
 39. Repubblica Democratic Somala, Corte di Socurezza Nazionale, Sentenza, No. 37/70 Reg/ Sent., 8 Ottobre, 1970, 6.
 40. *Ibid.*, 10.
 41. Oral information from M. C. H, December 21, 2014. General Ahmed Mohamoud Adde “Qoorweyne” was first included in the court proceedings and then relieved from his position.
 42. Repubblica Democratic Somala, Corte di Socurezza Nazionale, Sentenza, No. 37/70 Reg/ Sent., 8 Ottobre, 1970, 6.
 43. “Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio Rivoluzionario Supremo, 23 Gennaio 1971, n. 36, Sospensione cautelare dal servizio del Magistrato Abdi Farah Basciane,” *Bollettino*

Ufficiale della Repubblica Democratica Somala, Anno II., Mogadiscio, 9 Febbraio 1971, Suppl. n. 1 al. no. 1: 174–175.

44. Author's notes from Somali STN TV interview (Somali) with Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud "Siilaanyo," November 2004. It seems that Abdirizak thought that he would return to power when Abdirashid and his associates were violently removed from power.
45. Abdirizak Haji Hussein, "Letter of Resignation to President Barre," *Horn of Africa* 9, no. 2 (1981): 52–55. For brief biography of Abdirizak, see Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 18–19.
46. Interview with Abdirizak Haji Hussein, October 2002. In contrast to Abdirizak, Aden Adde was reported to have shown distaste to the coming of the coup d'état. Oral information from A. A., December 14, 2014.
47. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-d2Nh50iJY> (min. 00:50–21:20), accessed April 20, 2014.
48. Ibid. (min. 08:20–08:50).
49. "President's Assassin Tried," *The Anglo-Somali Society Newsletter* 67 (September/October 1970): 1.
50. "Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio Rivoluzionario Supremo, 14 Giugno 1970, n. 162, Reconoscimento della morte del Capitano Sadik Mohamed Farah," *Bollettino Ufficiale della Repubblica Democratica Somala*, Anno I., Mogadiscio, 19 Luglio 1970, Suppl. n. 6 al. n. 7, 658. In a recent speech given in London and recorded on a visual tape, Abdulkadir Haji Masalle, a close clan confidante to Siad Barre throughout his regime, made mention that during his tenure as the army commandant, Siad Barre had a special relationship with Captain Saadaq. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cWCZssPFqk> (between min. 36:21–37:39), accessed August 4, 2014.
51. Telephone interview with Ishaq Nuur Hassan, July 13, 2014.
52. Telephone interview with Ambassador Mohamed Ahmed Aalim, May 23, 2014. Ambassador Aalim, a career army colonel before being transferred to the Foreign Ministry, was among the same army company enlisted in April 1960 with Captain Saadaq.
53. Oral information from Colonel Mohamed Ismail Ibrahim "Sero Sero Sete," June 28, 2014. Colonel Sero Sero Sete was also with the same army company as Ambassador Aalim and Captain Saadaq.
54. Shukri Aaden Shire, *Xabaddii Dunida Gilgishey: Aaden-Low & Dhacdadii Walwaal* (London, UK: Kasmu, 2013), 124–26. Also interview with A. O. J., telephone, December 15, 2015.
55. Personal communication with former army officers.
56. "Decree of the Revolutionary Council, No. 10 of 28 October 1969, Transfer of Judicial Case from Borao [sic] Regional Court to Benadir Mogadiscio," *Official Bulletin of the Somali Democratic Republic*, Year I, Mogadishu, October 29, 1969, Suppl. No. 2 10 No. 1, 29–30; "Decreto del Consiglio Rivoluzionario Supremo, 10 Gennaio, 1970, n. 9, Trasferimento procedimento penale concernente assassinio Dr. Abdirashid Ali Scermarche ex Presidente della Repubblica dalla competenza della giurisdizione ordinaria alla competenza della Corte della Sicurezza Nazionale," *Bollettino Ufficiale della Repubblica Democratica Somala*, Anno I., Mogadiscio, 12 Gennaio, 1970, Suppl. n. 2 al. n. 1, 36. For how the subsequent military junta quickened the trial of the assassin, see "President's Assassin Tried," 1.
57. Ahmed, *Halgan iyo Hagardaamo*, 85. My translation. With brief popularity after the takeover, Siad Barre leaped from autocrat to tyrant. For general overview with regard to African authoritarian military regimes, see Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg,

Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982).

58. "Somalia: How Much Soviet Influence," *Africa Confidential* 14, no. 14, (6 July 1973): 1–3; "President's Assassination Followed by Coup," *Africa Research Bulletin* 6, no. 10 (November 1969): 1548–1551, 1549–1551. For the political and cultural implications of the Cold War in the 1980s and 1990s Somalia, see Catherine Besteman, "The Cold War and Chaos in Somalia," in *The State, Identity and Violence: Political Disintegration in the Post-Cold War*, ed. Ferguson, R. Brian (London, UK: Routledge, 2003), 285–299. For the security issues of the postcolonial Somali State in Somalia, see Maria H. Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State: Somalia, From Statelessness to Statelessness?* (Utrecht, the Netherlands: International Books, 2001), 158.
59. Both Cabdulqaadir Aroma and Aw Jaamac Cumar Ciise used a same poem by a poet close to Abdirashid in which he had predicted after postelection period that the president would be killed. Aroma, *Sababihii Burburka Soomaaliya* 204; and Ciise, *Qaranjabkii Soomaaliya*, 126.
60. Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 19, 79; Ghalib, *The Cost of Dictatorship*, 65–69.
61. Faduma Ahmed Alim, *Saa Waxay Tiri: Maansadii iyo Waayihii Xaawa Jibriil* (Toronto: Jumbles Press, 2008), 94. Nur Ali Qabobe, who worked for the Siad Barre regime as an economist, also noted how Abdirashid and Egaal's administration was "humiliated" by their own clan constituencies by holding demonstrations in favour of "the nocturnal military takeover." Nur Ali Qabobe, *Somalia: From Nation-State to Tribal Mutiny* (New Delhi, India: Pharos Media, 2002), 88. Indeed, many Somalis expected those who were in this administration to be treated as "criminals." Bulhan, *Politics of Cain*, 169.
62. Ali Jimale Ahmed, *Daybreak is Near: Literature, Clans, and the Nation-State in Somalia* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1996), 101.
63. The Murusade dominate the Western periphery of the capital. However, they maintained to have taken this stance in retaliation to a previous decision by the president's clansmen who had earlier objected a deceased policeman from them to be buried in their hometown of Qardho. For more details, see Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, "Somalia: From Finest to Failed State" (part ii), *Africa Review* (September 22, 2010).
64. Ahmed, *Daybreak is Near*, 17. As shown by the official documents of the decolonization administration, Muuse Boqor was a salaried clan elder during the British Military Administration in Somalia (1941–1950) and in the early years of the UN trusteeship administration in Somalia. "Governo della Somalia—Decreto N. 105," *Bollettino Ufficiale Dell'Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia* (Pubblicazione Mensile), Anno I, Supplemento n. 1, al n. 8, Mogadiscio, 1950, 30.
65. "Decreto del Ministro dei Lavori Pubblici, 3 Ottobre 1966, n. 15. Concessione di area di terreno demaniale a favore del Sig. Hagi Mussa Bogor," *Bollettino Ufficiale della Repubblica Somala*, Anno VI, Mogadiscio, 1 Febbraio 1967, N. 2, 21; "Decreto del Ministro dei Lavori Pubblici, 5 Novembre 1966, 1967, n. 240—Concessione di area di terreno demaniale a favore del Sig. On. Hagi Mussa Bogor," *Bollettino Ufficiale della Repubblica Somala*, Anno VIII, Mogadiscio 25 Dicembre 1967, Suppl. n. 5 al n. 12, 11.
66. Interview with Omar Salaad Elmi, London, June 13, 2014.
67. "Wargeyska Kasmoo Wareysi dheer la yeeshay Sheekh Mukhtaar Maxamed Xuseen," *Kasmo*, June 2000. <http://kasmonewspaper.com/Warar/1451.html>, accessed May 31, 2014.
68. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*, 78. Though no one could confirm, psychiatrist Bulhan wrote that Muuse Boqor was mentally unfit for the post, for he was suffering from a "mental disorder." Bulhan, *Politics of Cain*, 70.

69. Telephone interview with Ishaq Nuur Hassan, July 13, 2014.
70. "Somalia: After the Coup," *Africa Confidential*, no. 21 (October 24, 1969): 78.
71. Mabel Berezin, "Emotions and Political Identity: Mobilizing Affection for the Polity," in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, eds. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 83–98 at 87.
72. Even those who tended to disagree with him on things political appear to be in line with Siad Barre on this accusation on Egaal. See Ahmed, *Halgan iyo Hagardaamo*, 59, 66, and 73. However, a close reading of the memorandum of understanding between Somalia and Kenya indicates the contrary to such assumptions. Egaal was instrumental in easing the stalemate between previous Somali authorities and the neighboring countries, especially Kenya. For Egaal's political initiatives, see I. M. Lewis, "Somalia Stops the Wars," *Venture* 20, no. 2 (February 1968): 14–17.
73. Ghalib, *The Cost of Dictatorship*, 67.
74. Ibid., 68. Yasin was also part of the political players and clan elders who convinced Egaal not to send away Siad Barre. Daniel Compagnon, "Ressources Politiques, Régulation Autoritaire et Domination Personnelle en Somalie: Le Régime Siyyad Barre (1969–1991)" (unpublished PhD dissertation, Université Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, 1995), Vol. I, 187. See also Ingiriis, "Somalia: From Finest to Failed State."
75. Telephone interview with Isaaq Nuur Hassan, July 13, 2014.
76. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqzo1Bz_47E (between min. 8:20 and 9:07), accessed March 9, 2014. My translation.
77. Cable from U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, "Leader of Somali Democratic Movement Explains Himself," http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/90MOGADISHU10384_a.html, accessed May 9, 2014.
78. Compagnon, *Ressources Politiques, Régulation Autoritaire*, Vol. 1, 181–181. Also interview with General Mohamed Nuur Galaal, telephone, June 18, 2014; interview with General Osman Haji Omar "Falco," telephone, June 19, 2014. Also see Cabdulqaadir Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda: Maxay ka Curteen Colaadaha Sokeeye?* 2nd ed. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Zafar, 2005), 72–73; Cabdulqaadir Shire Faarax, *Xeebtii Geerida* (Nairobi, Kenya: Snnipet View, 1990), 78; Ghalib, *The Cost of Dictatorship*, 65. Using confidential and oral sources, Cabdulqaadir Aroma also recorded that the first Minister of Justice under Siad Barre's regime stated that the file detailing the assassination of Kamaaludiin Saalah, the Egyptian Envoy killed in 1957 in Mogadishu, was also taken from his office to Siad Barre. Note that Siad Barre was accused during the court proceedings of complicity over the murder. Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda*, 73. Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf claimed that he was assigned for the investigation of Saalah's assassination, and his conclusion report was hidden by Siad Barre. For his reflections, see Ahmed, *Halgan iyo Hagardaamo*.
79. "Wargeyska Kasmoo Wareysi dheer la yeeshay Sheekh Mukhtaar Maxamed Xuseen."
80. For an earlier Soviet meddling and manoeuvres, see "Somali-USSR," *Africa Research Bulletin* 6, no. 12 (15 January 1970): 1621–1622. Yusuf Azhari, Abdirashid's son-in-law reported to have visited Siad Barre in exile in Lagos<AQ>Change correct?<AQ> after having been removed from power. According to Azhari, Siad Barre began to sob when he saw him and asked him for his forgiveness. Azhari failed to press on what this "forgiveness" was all about as it can be related it to Abdirashid's assassination. "Wareysi Yusuf Azhari," *Himilo*, March 2000.
81. Rudolph Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1994). For specific Somali case, see also Africa Watch, *Somalia: A Government at War with its*

Own People: Testimonies about the Killings and the Conflict in the North (London, UK: Africa Watch Committee, 1990).

82. Alicia C. Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), 37.
83. Richard Hill, Jonathan Temin, and Lisa Pacholek, "Building Security Where There Is No Security," *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 3, no. 2 (2007): 38–52.
84. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wE-RyPC7tQw> (between min. 04:23 and 04:33), accessed December 16, 2014. My translation.