

EDITOR'S NOTE

As *Bildhaan* ends its ninth year of existence, Somali society in the Horn of Africa enters yet another phase of its endless descent into violent contest over an already pestilent present. Nearly half of the Somali population in the country are now designated as malnourished and, thus, increasingly dependent upon international food assistance. This fact and others make Somalia the worst country in the whole world in terms of the Quality of Life Index.

The future is very likely to be more of the same, if not worse. Both the Transitional Federal Government of National Unity and the opposition have shown that they are set on bringing their respective liabilities to the context: The Sharif Ahmed regime is the closest to a Weberian ideal type of incompetence buttressed by the odious and unworkable clanist formula of 4.5; the armed opposition, no less, is at once hell-bent on forcing the Somali people to surrender to an arid and suffocating savagery under a theocratic dictatorship and is no less inept than its adversaries. The two relatively stable regions (i.e., Somaliland and Puntland) are still faring better. Yet, neither has made major progress on the seminal development issues that face their respective communities nor have they undertaken any significant effort to contribute to the difficult search for a spirit of national reawakening. In short, regional political classes are still unable to realize, let alone act upon, the basic principle that their welfare must, in the end, be commensurate with that of the rest of the denizens of Somalia. As for the far-flung diaspora, constituting much of Somali educated talent and practical skills, they continue to pursue their own private welfare, with little concentrated thinking about the grave predicament of their society beyond coffee-time supine lamentations. One commendable effort, however, is that they keep remitting to family members left behind. All in all, inside and outside, there is little evidence of genuine atonement and, in contradistinction, the lemmings, as it were, keep mechanically following each other over the cliff.

If the Somali people might snap out of this deadly and humiliating syndrome, these questions, among others, will have to be posed and successfully answered:

- What is/are the most essential element(s) of the syndrome? This is Analysis.

- How might it/they be addressed and to what purpose? This is Vision.
- Who is to carry out the historic project? This is Leadership.

A note on the International Advisory Board of *Bildhaan*. We are pleased to welcome to the membership three new colleagues: Dr. Hussein A. Mahmoud of Egerton University (Kenya); Dr. Martin Orwin of the University of London; and Dr. Hussein A. Warsame of the University of Calgary (Canada). Mahmoud received his doctorate from the University of Kentucky in Anthropology, with a Masters in Geography. He is currently a Lecturer, Department of Geography, in Egerton. He has published articles in such journals as *Africa*, *Practicing Anthropology*, and *Climate Research*. His research and teaching interests are in the areas of pastoral livelihoods and resource management.

Orwin's degrees, including the doctorate, are from the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Currently, he is a Lecturer in Somali and Amharic in the Department of Languages and Cultures of Africa at SOAS. His monograph, *Colloquial Somali*, was published in 1995, with numerous other articles, book chapters, and reviews to follow. On the side, Martin has been studying how to play the *oud* with the master, Hodeide. We envy him!

Hussein Warsame is at present Associate Professor at the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary, where he also received his doctorate in 1995. Besides being the Chair of the Accounting Area, he has published in such journals as *Accounting Perspectives*, *Journal of Applied Accounting*, *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, and *Bildhaan*.

2010 will be the tenth anniversary of *Bildhaan*. We think it is a notable achievement worthy of a modest celebration. Some preliminary ideas are circulating as to what form of recognition this institutional milestone might take. We look forward to such a convivial occasion. Let us know if you have any ideas.