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"Let's utilize the talents of our ingenious people to rebuild our nation"

**A WORD OF WARNING TO THE
COLLABORATORS OF FARMAAJO,
THE COUP MAKER***

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The 'incumbent takeover' of the FGS by Mr Farmaajo has been described as a 'coup d'état' and the start of a new dictatorship, in the hands of the late dictator's nephew. The essence of the coup d'état has remained unchanged since the mid-twentieth century. It is a special form of politics that requires guns as an aid to persuasion. Farmaaja's 'power seizure' at the end of his term, whatever we might call it, will (if successful) mutate into a violent personal rule, not unlike the deposed regime of his uncle! Just remember what happened at Hotel Maa'ida in Mogadishu after midnight, 19 February 2021.

There would be no power grab and certainly no dictatorship by Farmaajo without significant corruption in foreign money. It is not in the mindset of a power-hungry individual like Farmaajo to earn the loyalty of others by having empathy for them, taking responsibility for their needs, or being generous to them. The only way he can secure their loyalty, however fleeting that loyalty might be, is by buying them off and dishonestly persuading them to act in his favour by a gift of money or other inducements. The more dictatorial a regime, the higher the level of corruption. Conversely, the more democratic and transparent a system is, the lower the level of corruption. Corruption, therefore, is actually generating the power grab because if successful the material rewards can be so huge for gullible followers and supporters alike.

But corruption through foreign money is unsustainable, as the late dictator suddenly realized at the beginning of the end of the Cold War when he could no longer count on automatic security backing from one or the other superpower. By then, much to his chagrin, the levels of finance available to his government meant that he simply could no

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longer sustain the basic functions of government, let alone continue buying off the large retinue of aides, collaborators and clan hangers-on. To those of us who can remember, the Somali state had already fallen apart as a functioning economic and political enterprise before the actual overthrow of the dictator himself at the end of January 1991, in part because of the collapse of the so-called 'political budget' [*miisaaniyadi siyaasadda*].

Present-day collaborators of Farmaajo must also be warned that they could suffer the same fate as those early collaborators of Siyad Barre, men like Salad Gabayre Kediye, Aynanshe Guuleed, Abdulqaadir Dhayle and all the others. The coup maker, Siyad Barre, either executed or imprisoned not only the anticonspirators who opposed his seizure of power but also some of his coconspirators who he feared would end up becoming as formidable an adversary as those in the ancien régime.

The form of government that Mr. Farmaajo envisions for Somalia is one in which absolute power is exercised by himself as a dictator. The late dictator's regime which, to all intents and purposes, he's trying to mimic, conducted a long reign of terror that was repressive to its own citizens with predatory rapaciousness resulting in interminable civil wars, gross human rights violations and the flight of millions. Is that something that you, as a collaborator with Farmaajo, would be happy to bring about again in your country?

Exactly as Mr. Farmaajo is doing now, Siyad Barre refused to leave power when given the option. He also refused to make sincere concessions—to the Manifesto group for example—until he was forced to flee by popular uprising and rebellion. Because Siyad Barre's dictatorship destroyed the state as well as the economy through his strategy of political survival, the subsequent two decades of anarchy are as much a product of that dictatorial regime as the consequences of the irresponsible behaviour of the rebels who ousted him from power. To promote an era of peace and reconciliation in our country, and to build a peaceful state and society, it is important that we not only acknowledge this history and its enduring legacy but that we act on it, and hence reject the new Farmaajo dictatorship.

The way ahead for Somalia is not a renewed clan dictatorship. We need to continue developing an effective national and local democratic governance on the basis of our Federal Constitution; we need to ensure the independence, effectiveness, and accountability of legislative and executive branches of government and the democratic oversight of military and security services; we need to continue developing our civil society, free trade unions, and interest group participation in the political process; we need to continue developing our independent media and press freedoms; we need to continue the development of human rights laws and protections, criminal code reforms, and judicial independence to guarantee equality of all citizens before the law; and we need to continue developing our electoral processes, multiparty systems, and the popular participation in the political process for executive and legislative elections. That is called democracy, the polar opposite of what Mr. Farmaajo and his henchmen are gaming for in this very day.

Last, but not least, let's fight against the corruption and the foreign money Mr. Farmaajo is utilizing to destroy our laws, our Constitution, and our government. What is good in any given society are the laws of the country. Because every law springs from a system of values and beliefs of a given society, every law is an instance of legislating morality. By destroying our laws and our Constitution, like his uncle the late dictator, Mr. Farmaajo is on course to destroying the morals of the Somali people. Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Why would any collaborator want to be part of a game that is intent on destroying the morals of his people? What private gain would you make from destroying the morals of your people? The answer is zilch.

In an earlier version of this piece, I opined that Mr. Farmaaja's coup d'état was coming to an end because his Prime Minister, Mr. Roble, was going to meet the opposition to chart a peaceful way forward to an inclusive and credible electoral process without delay. That should have been the case but, unfortunately, Mr. Roble chickened out. The no brainer part of this for me is that a politician, I mean Farmaajo, misusing public money to destroy the Constitution, the laws and the government of the Somali people should have no place in our society.

The question that is uppermost in people's minds now is this: Will Farmaaja's power grab with tooth and claw come to an end peacefully through elections? Or will he be violently cast out? I hope and pray that there will be no need for violence again to oust a dictator in Somalia. But you can be sure that people will be assessing their options carefully, taking into account whether they have the support and resources they need to mount a particular type of challenge successfully, as well as the risk and potential cost of failure.

There's absolutely no need to plan for a long-term liberation struggle against the new Farmaaja dictatorship in Somalia. I believe the combination of strong political defiance by democratic forces already at play across the country and Somalia's independent political institutions (primarily the FMSs and their leaders), supported by the international community's diplomatic pressure, will be sufficient to oust the wannabe dictator through free, fair, credible and inclusive elections in line with the 17 September agreement without further delay.

Stay tuned for my next article, 'Let's name and shame the collaborators of Farmaajo, the coup maker-cum-dictator.'

* The analysis remains the same but the conclusion in this article has changed to reflect the facts on the ground. The new conclusion is based on Farmaaja's tragic misunderstanding of life and politics. In the earlier version, I reported that the Prime Minister, Mr. Mohamed Hussein Roble, was going to meet the opposition Council of Presidential Candidates Union (CPCU) for a third time 'to chart a peaceful way forward to an inclusive and credible electoral process without delay'. That has not happened and the claim, as we now understand, was part of an official disinformation campaign by the dictator and his henchmen.