THE SQUARE MOGADISHU PEG, THE ROUND SOMALIA HOLE

Mogadishu, Somalia. Who would ever guess that you can have a fantastic lobster dinner here, in what is billed as "the most dangerous city in the world"? And that there's a first-class restaurant that serves it?

Ahmed Jama managed to escape the bloody horror of warlord anarchy that enveloped Mogadishu in the early 90s. As a refugee in London, he borrowed money from relatives and opened a restaurant that did well - but he always dreamed of returning to his country when the time was right.

His friends though he was crazy when he said the time was 2008. The hyper-terrorist lunatics of Al-Shabaab still controlled most of the city. Ahmed went back anyway - and his restaurants promptly became a terrorist target. The latest attack was last September, when two Al-Shabaab suicide bombers killed 18 people at his The Village restaurant.

Ahmed rebuilt and reopened it in less than a month. Here is Ahmed in front of it today:

Ahmed Jama epitomizes the indomitable courage of so many Somalis now who are dedicated to rebuilding their shattered city. They are pouring in from the Somali Diaspora, especially those living in Canada and the US, to invest in businesses. They are emerging from the rubble to set up small shops and stores by the thousands.

There is a breathtaking amount of rubble to emerge from. Most of the city is in utter ruins, countless blocks of buildings blown up and demolished by militias of rival clans, warlords, and Islamic crazies. The destruction is almost beyond belief. This was once a seafront shopping center:

This was once a luxury hotel on the fishing harbor:

This was the Catholic Cathedral built by the Italians:

The city was finally liberated from Al-Shabaab by several thousand troops of the Africa Union (from Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, etc., collectively called AMISOM - Africa Union Mission in Somalia) in August, 2011. Since then, it's been slowly recovering, albeit with the occasional suicide bomb and gunfight.

Thus the place is still dangerous - so much so that you live in a heavily fortified walled compound, and can't go anywhere outside it without at least a half-dozen heavily armed guards with AKs. Here's a trio of them.

To walk anywhere, you must walk within the moving perimeter they set up around you.

Even going to the beach.

Yes, they were friendly - and so was everyone else on the beach. People were laughing, playing, having fun just like anywhere else.

Of course, Mogadishu isn't just like anywhere else. The US and Britain have granted diplomatic recognition to the "Federal Republic of Somalia" which barely controls downtown Mogadishu - and so tenuously the Brits are building their embassy within the AMISOM locked-down security perimeter of the airport.

In January, Hillary held a ceremony announcing recognition to this phony government - which has no courts, no police, no tax collection, hasn't been elected, and everyone despises for being in bed with *Iqwan*, the Moslem Brotherhood. Iqwan-owned companies control the city's power supply and most of the cell phones.

Money is pouring in from dozens of countries' aid agencies, generating a "Mogadishu Boom," with shops, stores and new buildings cropping up out of the ruins. Yet there is no cement plant so they're constructed with blocks of low-grade crumply cement and thin cheap rebar - anything higher than three stories may be a death trap.

The only buildings people really trust are those built by the Turks, who bring in all their own construction materials. They have a huge operation run by a Turkish aid agency called Tika - which is an arm of Turkish intelligence, MIT (*Milli Ä°stihbarat TeÅŸkilati*). They trust the buildings and projects, but not what the Turks are up to.

Meanwhile, an average of 15 flights a day connect Mogadishu with Nairobi, Dubai, Khartoum, and

Ankara. So many Somalis are returning there are small hotels for them all over town. The streets are bustling:

And food is plentiful. Somali watermelons are delicious:

Also plentiful, tragically so, are refugees - Somalis who have fled the depredations of the clan militias and Al Shabaab outside Mogadishu, and live in utter squalor in camps in the city. Here's a small part of just one:

Of Mogadishu's 2 million or more population, at least a third of them are refugees. Not from a foreign country, but refugees from within their own. It's such a revolting example of Hillary's recognition farce last month, of the entire world diplomatic effort to pretend Somalia is a real country and this ridiculous "Federal Government" exercises control over it.

The man Hillary effused over, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, as the "President" of Somalia is no more than the Mayor of Mogadishu - and tenuously at that, as he needs 10,000 AMISOM soldiers to be only that. Here's the reality, courtesy of the *Economist* magazine:

The "Federal Republic of Somalia" exists only in that tiny dab of bright blue around Mogadishu and the nearby town of Marka. That's what Mr. Mohamud is President of. He has no control over anywhere else. That teal-green area on the border with Kenya with the town of Kismayo is owned and operated now by the Kenya military. Just as that pale blue area along the Ethiopian border is the property of the Ethiopian military.

The huge region of eastern Ethiopia called the Ogaden - draw a line from the Djibouti-Somaliland border straight down to the Juba River, east of that is the Ogaden - is populated mostly by ethnic Somalis. Rebellions of the Ogadenis against Ethiopia have been sponsored by a number of Somali governments and movements. The Ethiopian military is putting an end to this by seizing and holding a buffer area with traditional Somalia proper.

The same with Kenya. The entire Northeastern Province along Kenya's border with Somalia of 50,000 square miles is ethnic Somali. To secure their border, the Kenyans have now de facto shifted that border deep into Somalia.

The giant pink area shows that Al Shabaab is not dead, just hiding, running and gunning in what is now Somali Apache Country. The pirates are still in control of the coast from Eyl to Haradheere. Puntland has de facto seceded from Somalia, although it claims it only wants "autonomy," not outright independence. Below Puntland is yet another breakaway region, Galmudug (South Mudug).

Somaliland seceded from Somalia in 1991 and is fiercely determined to be free from control by Mogadishu. The "Disputed Territory" between Somaliland and Puntland is the sparsely-populated regions of Sanaag and Sool, which are effectively controlled by Somaliland.

What the map does not show is how much cooperation and trade there is between these separate regions and de facto states. The entire area now has one currency: the US dollar. (Even for the pirates. They won't accept euros or anything else but greenbacks for their ransom payments.)

Trade is booming. The bananas you have in Hargeisa came from Mogadishu, and the camel steak you had in Mogadishu came from Hargeisa.

In other words, private enterprise is flourishing in any area of the region free of Islamic nutballs. What the region also needs, desperately needs to be free of is the insistence of the world diplomatic community to force the square peg of Mogadishu into the round hole of Somalia.

The people of Bossaso and Garowe and Hargeisa and Berbera do not want their lives run by politicians in Mogadishu. What is it about this that the UN and the US State Department can't understand? The amount of money and effort being spent on Mogadishu is amazing. You'd think it would be focused on fixing the most dangerous and most shattered city on the planet.

But the pinstripe set seem intent on feeding the obsession of creating a "Greater Somalia" - Mogadishu conquering and ruling the entire fractured map above plus the Ogaden and Northeastern Kenya - that has possessed Mogadishan rabble-rousers for generations.

There's never going to be a Greater Somalia. Somalia itself is Humpty-Dumpty, broken apart and won't be put back together again. But Mogadishu may yet flourish, thanks to Ahmed Jama and others like him. Less than two weeks ago (2/16), an Al-Shabaab suicide bomber blew himself and his car up trying to get into the Lido restaurant on Mogadishu's Lido Beach. It was back in business last week.

There's no city like Mogadishu anywhere. Where else can you have a meal overlooking a beach on the Indian Ocean that has a sign at the door warning you that no AK-47s or hand grenades are allowed inside?

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