

CARE volunteer at a  
refugee camp in  
Baidoa.



# AN ENVOY'S PERSPECTIVE

By ROBERT B. OAKLEY

This article is adapted from a forthcoming book by Robert B. Oakley and John Hirsch entitled *Restore Hope*.

**B**y the fall of 1992, the combination of civil war, total governmental collapse, famine, and disease in Somalia had taken the lives of between 300,000 and 500,000 people, and more than twice that number were in urgent need of food and medicine to avoid additional deaths; and there were some 800,000 Somali refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia. In some places, more than 70 percent of children had died, despite heroic efforts by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other relief agencies, as well as a large-scale airlift of food spearheaded by the Air Force. Attempts by the United Nations at political reconciliation, delivering aid, and traditional peacekeeping failed. Public opinion and conviction led President George Bush to call for a more active U.S. role.

The deputies committee of the National Security Council, a group of senior officials who rank just below Cabinet level, convened four times during the week of November 20, 1992. The atmosphere at committee meetings changed dramatically. The humanitarian crisis in Somalia had come to be seen as a challenge in which the United States

could rapidly make a significant and tangible difference. The previous opposition by the Pentagon to use the Armed Forces had been replaced by quiet internal contingency planning to determine what realistically and effectively could be done. A definable, doable mission had emerged and no other country either could or would undertake it. The inability to do anything meaningful for Muslims in Bosnia, together with a perception that we could actually help in Muslim Somalia, added to the media-driven desire for a fresh look at the options. Thus the deputies committee developed three options: increase support of U.N. peacekeeping efforts; create a U.S.-organized

coalition without participation by American ground troops; or assemble a multinational military coalition in which U.S. troops would take the leading role, as in Operation Desert Storm.

At the start of the week, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had appealed to Under Secretary of State Frank Wisner for help, but had not raised the issue of ground forces. The Pentagon had for months expressed strong reservations about using ground forces, resisting such proposals from the Department of State and the NSC staff. Therefore most participants at the meeting on November 20 did not consider use of the Armed Forces to be a likely option. But the following day the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral David Jeremiah, startled the group by saying, "If you think U.S. forces are needed, we can do the job." His plan called for deploying two divisions. At the end of the deliberations an interagency options paper was sent to the President without a recommendation. It would be up to him to make the decision.

The President met with his senior advisors on the day before Thanksgiving, November 25. General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—who was certain in his own mind that the dispatch of a sizable ground force was necessary but wanted to be sure that the pitfalls were clearly identified—questioned whether conditions in Somalia would permit a smooth handoff to a U.N. peacekeeping force after a relatively brief deployment of U.S. troops. (His question was prescient: it became a key issue that later faced the United Nations and the Bush administration.) After a far-reaching discussion, the President decided that if the Security Council concurred and other nations agreed to join in the effort, the United States would lead an international force to stop death and famine in Somalia. He chose the strongest option and the United States embarked upon a major humanitarian intervention.

#### Consultations on Intervention

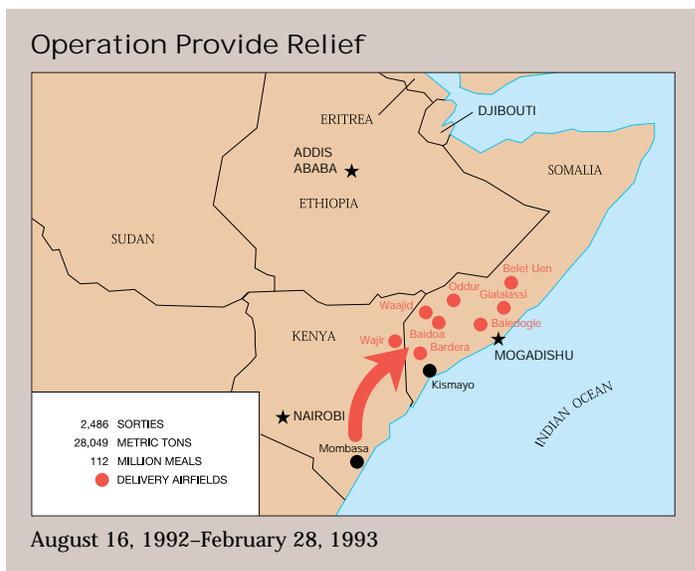
The President sent Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to New York that afternoon to inform the Secretary General. During the next week the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Edward Perkins, and

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his staff consulted intensely with the Secretary General, permanent members of the Security Council, and other parties, including delegates from African and NATO countries. They confirmed strong support for the U.S. proposal. President Bush made personal telephone calls to 13 heads of state asking for participation in or support for the United Task Force. All except the British Prime Minister, John Major, pledged to send troops or provide assistance.

On December 3 the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 794, endorsing the offer *by a member state* to constitute and lead an international force for the purpose of protecting humanitarian relief operations in Somalia. It would not be a U.N. force but rather one endorsed by the Security Council, much like the U.S.-led force for Korea in 1950 and the U.S.-led force for Kuwait in 1991. Neither Boutros-Ghali nor the Security Council was ready for an unprecedented humanitarian peace-enforcement mission.

U.S. forces were to be deployed on a finite mission: to end clan fighting and protect humanitarian operations in the famine belt of southern Somalia where the death toll and numbers of endangered people were the highest. There would be overwhelming force available at the outset. As Secretary of

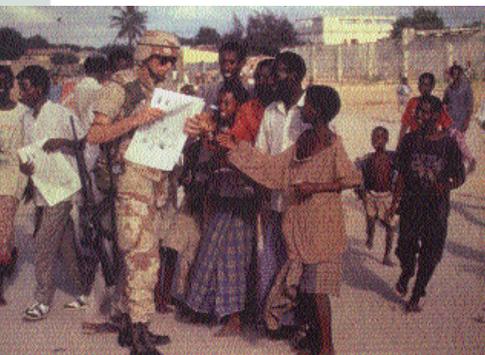
Defense Richard Cheney said at an important press conference with General Powell on December 4, “There will be no question in the mind of any of the faction leaders in Somalia that we would have the ability to impose a stable situation if it came to that, without their cooperation.” Cheney went on to say that the U.S.-led operation would be limited in duration as well as mission: “We believe it necessary to send in U.S. forces to provide U.S. leadership to get the situation stabilized and return it to a state where the normal U.N. peacekeeping forces can deal with the circumstances.”

American and allied forces were designated as United Task Force (UNITAF) and placed under Lieutenant General Robert Johnston, USMC, Commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, who in turn reported to General Joseph Hoar, USMC, Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). Johnston had served with distinction in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, and been chief of staff to General Norman Schwarzkopf during Operation Desert Storm. The President was also urged to name a senior political representative who would complement the military commander. That job fell to me.

#### Consultations in Mogadishu

On December 7 and 8, I met separately in Mogadishu with the two most powerful Somali faction leaders, Mohammed Farah Aided and Ali Mahdi, to enlist their cooperation in assuring the arrival of U.S. forces went unchallenged. Both promised to use radio stations and political-clan organizations to urge people to stay away from the port and airport. Aided also intervened with the Murasade, an allied Hawiye subclan, to move several hundred armed fighters away from the barracks adjacent to the airport.

I asked both leaders to meet with General Johnston, Ambassador Ismat Kittani (the Special Representative of the Secretary General), and me on December 11 at the U.S. Liaison Office to discuss the potentially disastrous results if their followers unintentionally clashed with U.S. forces. I reminded them of the massive firepower that had been used so effectively during Desert Storm. I remarked that it would be better if



Marine distributing information leaflets to civilians.

Joint Combat Camera Center

they discussed security problems with General Johnston—since separate meetings would not do. The American flag would fly over what had once been the CONOCO compound to ensure neutrality and security.

best means of obtaining much-needed international support for relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

Once the Somali leaders concluded an agreement on specific steps, our approach was to insist on implementation—if no action was taken after a decent interval. Should the leaders not act on their own, they should be ready to have UNITAF impose it on them, by force if necessary. Aideed and Ali Mahdi soon became rivals in projecting themselves as responsible leaders worthy of U.S. support (and therefore suited for national leadership). They wanted to avoid conflict with UNITAF and also save face at home. Therefore they could usually be persuaded, pressured, or cajoled into reaching agreements and cooperating for at least partial implementation, even if they did not meet their expectations.

In the case of the December 11 agreement, it was critical for UNITAF to obtain and hold the leaders and their militias to the cease-fire and to an explicit undertaking to move heavy weapons from the streets of Mogadishu into designated compounds. Other aspects of the agreement such as removing the green line could be implemented later when conditions were right. While the cease-fire in Mogadishu, which was already tentatively in effect, took firm hold, it was only on December 26 that both sides began putting their heavy weapons under control. They had finally accepted our proposal on this deadline for each side moving 30 technicals (vehicles armed with heavy weapons) out of Mogadishu to their respective designated cantonments as a first step.

In mid-February 1993 Ali Mahdi turned over all his technicals to UNITAF. This signalled his intent to play an essentially political game. But by this time technicals had disappeared from Aideed's designated compound: a warning, in retrospect, of the confrontation with the follow-on U.N. peacekeeping force (UNOSOM II) which erupted after Aideed moved his weapons back into the city. He moved them from Mogadishu toward Galacio for fear of confiscation. The key operative point for UNITAF, however, was not this violation of the December 11 agreement. Rather it was that the technicals were peacefully removed from Mogadishu



Joint Combat Camera Center (Marv Lynchard)

Kenyan workers shifting donated food.

Although Aideed initially objected to the presence of Ambassador Kittani, and Ali Mahdi claimed the venue was too dangerous because of its proximity to Aideed's headquarters, agreement was reached and the meeting took place as proposed. They listened to Johnston, Kittani, and me over lunch and then surprised us by having their delegations join them for a two-hour discussion with no foreigners present. Following that session they proudly called for the U.S. and U.N. representatives to witness the signing of an agreement (including a cease-fire) after which they held a joint press conference to announce it before the international and domestic Somali press corps.

This was the starting point for developing a strategy which General Johnston and I could use to create a benign security environment. As far as possible, our purpose would be achieved by dialogue and co-optation, using implicit threats of coercion to buttress requests for cooperation among the factions and with UNITAF. They could do this by taking specific steps: first, stop fighting and allow for humanitarian activities and, second, try and solidify an end to the civil war and begin the process of national reconciliation. This was explained as the

and the main supply routes, and that any technicals spotted after December 26 were vulnerable to immediate capture or destruction. The same principle was then applied up-country, and a number of technicals were captured or destroyed. Given the limited UNITAF mandate, which deliberately excluded general disarmament, there was no perceived need to confront Aideed over the disappearance of weapons as long as they posed no threat to UNITAF forces or humanitarian operations.

My staff and General Johnston's quickly established a pattern that became routine over the next three months, meeting regularly several times each week to coordinate planning and activities. I also convened a meeting each evening of my staff and key UNITAF representatives to review activities and generate suggestions for future military, political, and humanitarian activity. Similar combined but unstructured discussions took place over breakfast before 0800 daily. Ideas were then developed for use in dealing with UNITAF, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the Somalis. Such meetings—including those my deputy and I had with General Johnston, the UNITAF senior staff, and commanders of non-U.S. forces—were the basis for informal but remarkably close and creative collaboration among the military, political, and humanitarian components of Operation Restore Hope.

#### Humanitarian-Military Coordination

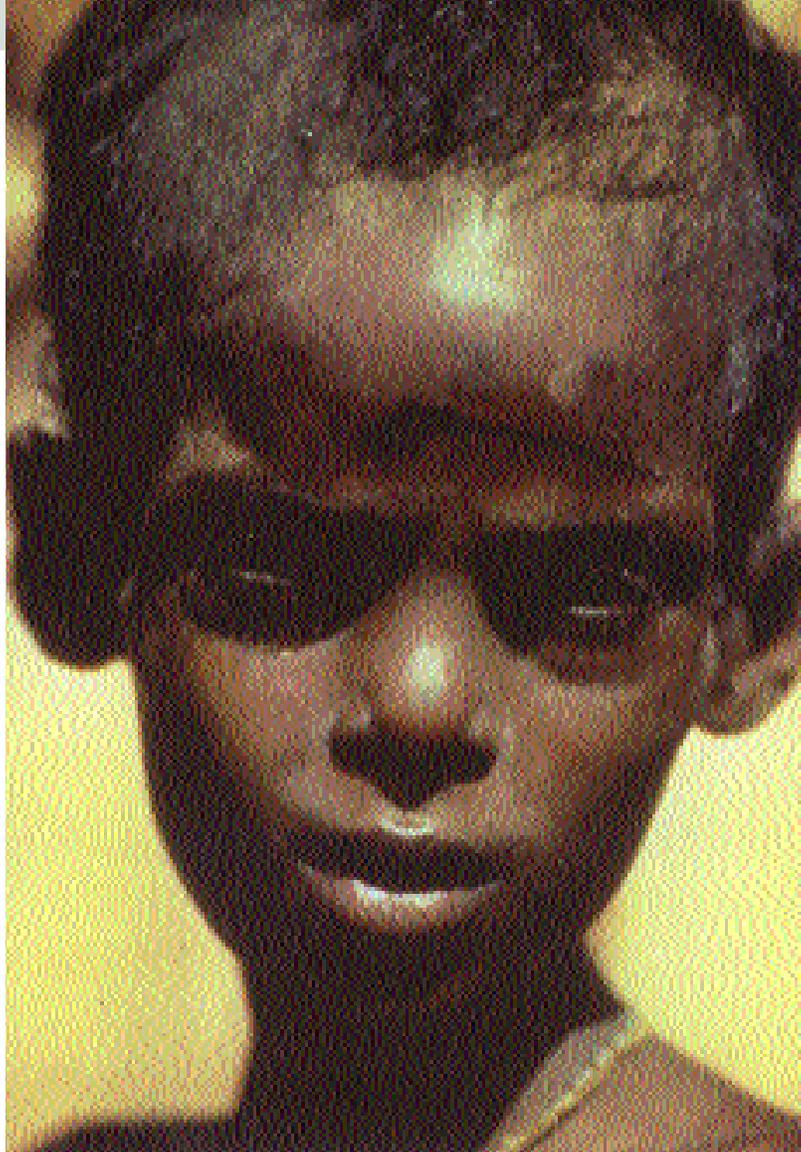
In order to develop relations of mutual confidence and understanding between the military and humanitarian relief community in a systematic way, and to maximize operational coordination, Johnston and I helped the Department of State's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance establish a Civilian-Military Operations Center at UNOSOM headquarters. The leadership of the center was entrusted to two Marine combat veterans with experience in relief activities and representatives of civilian agencies from Operation Provide Relief (the airlift to Somalia which preceded UNITAF) who were joined by members of the Office of Foreign Disaster Relief. The third player in this humanitarian leadership troika was the UNOSOM coordinator of humanitarian operations who was on loan from CARE where he served as president of that relief organization.

From December onwards the center held a daily morning briefing attended by close to 100 participants from the United Nations and relief agencies, as well as UNITAF headquarters and its major military components—that is, those who commanded the Humanitarian Relief Sectors (HRS)—into which the UNITAF area was divided. The threefold objective was to share information on security, explain UNITAF ground rules and plans, and coordinate protection and escorts for food convoys within Mogadishu, and subsequently for those moving into the interior. Together with my staff I gave periodic briefings on political developments. The center was an effective, innovative mechanism not only for operational coordination but to bridge the inevitable gaps between military and civilian perceptions. By developing good personal relationships the staffs were able to alleviate the concerns and anxieties of the relief community.

The only serious unresolved problem was the extremely complicated and dangerous one of protecting relief personnel and facilities, including the disposition of heavily-armed private guards hired at high prices by most relief organizations prior to the arrival of UNITAF. On the one hand, UNITAF believed it could not allow guards to brandish their weaponry—including "technicals" or heavily armed vehicles—in public, especially since most of them were actually members of one militia faction or another, and some also moonlighted as bandits. On the other hand, relief workers felt the guards provided extra protection, or were afraid to fire them because of reprisals, which was a common fear. Despite a lot of dialogue and much study, UNITAF and the relief agencies—and later UNOSOM II—were unable to come to terms with this problem.

#### Extending UNITAF's Reach

On December 15, I flew to Baidoa, the center of the famine belt, to meet with community leaders—including clan elders, religious figures, women, and local political leaders. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: to defuse potential resistance to the Marine helicopter landing the next day and to lay the groundwork for the revival of local political institutions. The people of Baidoa were assured that the Marines were coming



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in peace and as friends to help Somalia save itself, and not to impose any particular form of settlement. The United States respected Islam and would seek to honor local values and traditions. (In response to the fears of the senior Sheikh, I arranged for a marine of the Muslim faith to meet with him the next day as U.S. forces arrived; a few days later, the Catholic Relief Service was helping the Sheikh repair damaged mosques.) UNITAF intended to restore normalcy by banning technicals and confiscating arms belonging to local troublemakers. It was time for Baidoa's traditional community leaders, long suppressed, to take charge again.

Looking hard at the putative local authorities—representatives of Aideed's Somali

National Alliance (SNA)—who had been installed as governor, deputy governor, and police chief at gun point, I told everyone that leadership would no longer be imposed from outside but selected by the people themselves by local tradition. They were reminded that Siad Barre had imposed his will by force, which had caused people to rise up and organizations like the SNA to fight hard to oust him. Now that peace had been restored thanks to UNITAF, I said, surely Somalis would not like to see a return to imposed rule instead of making their own decisions and choosing their own leaders. The SNA representatives sheepishly said nothing while all the others enthusiastically agreed.

The Baidoa landing at dawn on December 16 went off without resistance, two weeks ahead of schedule in response to appeals from relief organizations which felt under increased threat once UNITAF arrived in Mogadishu. One of my political officers and a relief official worked with the military to involve local Somali leaders in security as well as other activities. Their efforts were coordinated by a combined civil-military Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC), and the people of Baidoa created a regional council with security and humanitarian committees as a counterpart to the center.

Within several weeks the situation in Baidoa turned around. Local hospitals were dealing with a few gunshot wounds from isolated incidents rather than large numbers of victims of civil war, mass starvation, and unchecked disease. Markets and streets, once deserted, again bustled with activity. The military as well as NGOs, U.N. agencies, and the Red Cross provided food, medicine, and health care, repaired clinics and schools, and built roads and dug wells. Planning began to provide farmers with seed and agricultural equipment and herders returned to their flocks.

Baidoa became a model for UNITAF deployments in the other humanitarian relief sectors: Kismayo, Bardera, Oddur, Jalalaqsi, Baledogle, Belet Uen, and Merka. In each case my advance team met a broad cross-section of the local population in advance to explain UNITAF objectives. The UNITAF commanders and our political officers encouraged local leadership to come forward. HOCs were established and local and regional councils sprang up. The vast majority

## MISSION TO SOMALIA

... President Clinton has directed that U.S. forces remain long enough to complete their mission and no longer. The completion of the mission chiefly concerns security in Somalia.

For U.S. combat troops, I think there are three items on the checklist. First, the security issue in south Mogadishu must be settled. Second we must make real progress toward taking the heavy weapons out of the hands of the warlords. Third, there must be credible police forces in major population centers. When these three conditions are met, I believe we can remove the U.S. Quick Reaction Force from Mogadishu.

We can reduce U.S. logistics troops support other UNISOM II forces when the security situation in Mogadishu permits larger scale hiring of civilian contract employees to provide the support functions. . . .

In the meantime, President Clinton has given us clear direction to stay the course with other nations to help Somalia once again provide for its people. This is what the new world asks of American leadership and American partnership.

—Secretary of Defense Les Aspin  
August 27, 1993

of local residents welcomed the coalition forces, the food situation improved, and child mortality rates dropped rapidly in all sectors. Relief workers welcomed the enhanced security, humanitarian help, and logistics support provided by UNITAF forces. Local cooperation was mixed; it was better in Baidoa and Merka than in Bardera and Kismayo where the residents feared retaliation from the still potent faction leaders. A common thread of concern by relief workers and Somalis alike, however, was that improvements would only be temporary; the departure of foreign forces would be followed by the return of intimidation and violence from the factions and militias.

### An International Force

Essential to UNITAF's effectiveness were the non-U.S. forces in the four critical sectors. In Kismayo, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division worked closely with the 850-member Belgian paratroop battalion. The 2,000 French troops did an outstanding job in Oddur, as did 2,500 Italians based first at Jalalaqsi and later at Jowhar and parts of north Mogadishu. (Initial differences over the location and role of Italian forces were quietly and quickly resolved by military-to-military talks in Mogadishu and among senior officers in Rome and Washington and at CENTCOM headquarters.) The 850-man Canadian unit operating from Belet Uen, and the 650-man Australian unit, which took over from American forces in Baidoa in mid-January, performed admirably. The Canadians, French, and Australians conducted extensive patrols in their respective sectors to control technicals and arms caches in remote locations as well as to protect relief activities. The Italian forces worked closely with the Marines in

Mogadishu and also in protecting relief convoys along supply routes to the interior. Belgian forces and the U.S. Army coordinated effectively in Kismayo but encountered ongoing problems with periodic violence between two Somali factions.

Non-U.S. forces were notably active, engaging in community development projects (such as building schools and roads and repairing irrigation canals and tube wells) which went beyond their official responsibilities to escort the food convoys. The Canadians, French, and Australians worked hard to revive broad community leadership, encouraging creation of, and then cooperating with, local councils on security and humanitarian matters and forming local Somali police units. Taking the lead from the Baidoa model, they called frequently upon our political officers and relief representatives for help. The Italians worked closely with Americans in encouraging the former Somali police to recreate an interim force for Mogadishu of some 3,500 men and 60 women. The Moroccan battalion was given responsibility for Bale-dogle, taking over from the U.S. Army, and for guarding installations in Mogadishu. The Moroccan hospital became a major asset, as did the Swedish. A new Pakistani battalion took over part of Mogadishu from the Marines and did very well. General Johnston also utilized smaller contingents in Mogadishu: forces from Botswana, Zimbabwe, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Nigeria, Egypt, and other nations which contributed troops provided security at selected locations or for specific operations such as feeding programs.

Overall, U.S. and foreign forces in Mogadishu and the interior conducted themselves with a high degree of discipline and dedication, exercising considerable restraint under arduous conditions. Johnston skillfully managed disparate national contingents that had joined UNITAF in response to President Bush's appeal, despite the fact that there had been no advance planning regarding the particular capabilities needed. There were added complications affecting several units which lacked a common language or training, or which were woefully under-equipped. Despite these obstacles, Johnston and his staff were able to develop a surprising degree of cohesion and common purpose, assigning permanent liaison officers to the various units who kept in

constant communication with his headquarters. He also had weekly meetings with the commanders of all national units at which strategy, plans, tactics, and problems were discussed. Johnston allowed the commanders of national units considerable discretion in how they carried out common mission objectives, taking into consideration differences in doctrine, training, and equipment, as well as the extent of territory in the humanitarian relief sectors and the degree of the threat.

#### UNITAF's Accomplishments

By late January there were almost no light weapons visible on the streets of Mogadishu, night helicopter patrols had stopped, and little shooting was heard in the night. Searches for arms caches in the city were gradually increased with Botswanan and Pakistani forces, who impressed U.S. officers with their proficiency and discipline, participating with Americans and Italian forces. A great deal of commercial activity had resumed; streets outside the green-zone no-man's land were crowded and schools began to re-open. By late February 35 dry feeding stations were providing two-kilogram rations to one million people a week, and neither starvation nor food theft were any longer problems. A UNITAF-Somali soccer championship attracted a crowd of more than 30,000 who ignored scores of graves outside the stadium. By April a uniformed Somali police force of more than 3,000 was on the streets with UNITAF liaison officers.

Except for a minor uprising by Aideed's supporters in late February the Oakley/Johnston strategy of seeking cooperation, avoiding direct confrontation if possible, and gradually increasing pressure on all factions was working. UNITAF suffered very few casualties in Mogadishu during its five-month deployment. Somali casualties caused by UNITAF cannot be accurately determined due to the customary practice of carrying away the dead, but they were probably fewer than fifty. Compared with the numerous incidents in which UNITAF forces encountered sporadic shooting or mass stone-throwing, the low casualty rate among Somalis shows how hard and how successfully UNITAF commanders worked to instill restraint and discipline into the behavior of troops from all nationalities and at all levels. Similar

progress took place in the countryside with the exception of Kismayo where an ongoing feud between the faction of Colonel Omar Jess (Aideed's ally) and the forces belonging to Colonel Hersi Morgan (Siad Barre's son-in-law) resulted in periodic, low-level skirmishes despite UNITAF's best efforts. But even here there was no return to major conflict, since most Somalis were eager for peace and the local leaders were struggling to assert themselves.

UNITAF focused on putting weapons out of circulation primarily to facilitate the movement of the relief convoys and to gradually weaken the power of the faction leaders by immobilizing their militias and precluding the use of force for political purposes. This approach to disarmament or arms control was deliberately planned to have a positive impact on the embryonic process of building governmental structures from the ground up, centered on the local and regional councils. Baidoa represented the most successful example of resurrecting a municipal council not under the thumb of a faction leader, but progress in this direction was also achieved in Merka, Belet Uen, Oddur, and to a lesser degree in Bardera.

By the time UNOSOM II assumed control and UNITAF was disbanded, large-scale famine and disease had been overcome in southern Somalia, there was virtually no clan warfare, and relief agencies were cutting back on feeding programs as local harvests returned to near-normalcy. This happened only because of international help with tools, seed, and irrigation—as well as protection so that farmers could go back to their fields. In several regions, councils with civilian leaders, including women and tribal elders and religious leaders, were operating. Some schools and clinics had reopened as had some businesses. Problems of banditry persisted, however, directed mainly against foreigners and those few Somalis with material wealth (such as cars, radios, watches, and cameras). Several major militias had not been demobilized, and hidden weapons were abundant. Personal and clan tensions remained high, but peace was only threatened in Kismayo.

### Lessons of the Past

American military and civilian leaders in Somalia benefitted from the experience in Vietnam and Lebanon. Having been involved in both, General Johnston and I were determined to avoid the mistakes of these earlier conflicts. A better political-military understanding of the local situation and U.S. objectives—including how best to combine political, military, and humanitarian actions—was needed.

In Vietnam the United States had tried to run everything and had progressively sidelined the Vietnamese, turning them essentially into passive onlookers in their own country. Washington had actively pressed a new form of government, elections, and a constitution on Saigon, very closely modeled on the American system. Institution-building had civilian and military advisors taking the lead in both planning and carrying out social and economic and development programs, creating local militia and police forces, and assuming responsibility for political reconstruction from village level up. U.S. military forces took over most combat operations, relegating the South Vietnamese military to pacification, thus killing the incentive of the best officers to fight for their own country. Although well-intentioned, the intrusive approach failed, leaving the South Vietnamese ever more demoralized and ineffectual. When the United States departed these programs collapsed overnight.

This general approach would not be repeated in Somalia. Even though the situations were not comparable, America would not take responsibility, unilaterally or through the United Nations, for running Somalia or imposing specific solutions on its profound social, political, and economic problems. To say that Somalia had to save itself could not be just a slogan. Our insistence that interim Somali police forces be established as soon as possible was derived directly from the basic approach to helping the Somalis and minimizing the U.S. and UNITAF roles whenever possible. It also had a very desirable secondary result of minimizing contact with the Somali population in situations that were

apt to create friction, thereby reducing both Somali political opposition and the risk of UNITAF casualties. Ultimately it would be up to Somalis at all levels to develop viable political and administrative institutions. UNITAF could help get this process off to a good start and provide long-term help.

In Lebanon during the early 1980s, American intervention was intended to act as a neutral agent to end fighting between Christians and Muslims in Beirut as part of a larger effort to broker an Arab-Israeli settlement. When Navy ships offshore were ordered to shell Syria and Lebanese Moslem targets in East Beirut, however, marines on shore suddenly became the target themselves. Flawed understanding and management of underlying political conditions had inadvertently turned U.S. intervention—in the eyes of Syria, Iran, most Palestinians, most Lebanese, and virtually the entire Arab world—from neutrality to partisanship in the Israeli occupation. Retribution was not long in coming and a suicide mission took the lives of 241 marines in barracks near Beirut airport. The United States then pulled out.

For the U.S. political and military leadership in Somalia, the lesson of Lebanon was loud and clear: don't take sides, and proceed carefully. If anything, the message was more pertinent in Somalia because of complex clan rivalries, struggles among a gaggle of faction leaders, and the great sense of pride and independence of the Somali people. Faction leaders at first vied with each other for U.S. support even though later the mood of the Aided faction soured. Americans would not pick a winner or designate a favorite, but rather would turn all factions away from using force and intimidation and toward joining together in the civil society to pursue a political remedy.

UNITAF decided to avoid direct confrontation in favor of the gradual disarmament of all the faction leaders, working whenever possible to implement agreements which the leaders had reached and holding out the promise of rehabilitation aid as well as relief. This, as well as a demonstrated readiness to respond with overwhelming force against those who broke the cease-fire or attempted to use force for political purposes, caused the faction leaders to avoid confronting UNITAF. It also put an end to clan conflict except for sporadic problems between

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Colonels Jess and Morgan centered on Kismayo. Combined with the rapid arrival of humanitarian assistance, this generated overwhelming popular support for UNITAF (except for Aideed's Habr Gedir subclan). The political-military-humanitarian strategy enabled us to achieve the objectives of facilitating humanitarian operations, stopping death and destruction, and not becoming the target of guerrilla warfare and terrorism.

#### Aideed's Challenge

It was probably inevitable that Aideed would confront and challenge UNOSOM II. By late February he had already recognized that international peacekeeping—whether U.S.- or U.N.-led—would not dovetail with his interests. Aideed was obsessed with what he fully believed to be his destiny to become Somalia's leader, a belief acquired by success in driving Siad Barre out of the country and enhanced by ruthlessness, cleverness, and leadership traits. His protestations about adhering to a political process were coupled with repeated attempts to subvert it whenever his SNA faction seemed to be losing out. However, UNITAF's close surveillance, firm hand, and reputation for decisive action kept him in check, except for a brief protest in late February. Following that short-lived action, we had a very private, very pointed talk with Aideed about what would happen to him if there were to be a repeat. Although seething, Aideed took no further anti-U.S. action at that time.

After May 4 and the departure of American combat forces (except for a 1,200-man quick reaction force), UNOSOM apparently concluded that its depleted strength and expanded missions—*inter alia* covering all Somalia—did not permit frequent patrols and tight control of Mogadishu. High-level dialogue with Aideed and his faction ceased. Aideed began to move men and weapons back into the city, and stepped up anti-U.N. vitriol over his radio. The challenge to U.N. authority exploded following the ambush of Pakistani troops on June 5 by Aideed supporters, the Security Council call for punishment of those responsible, and the UNOSOM decision to seek Aideed's arrest and destroy his command center.

A cycle of violence has ensued in which scores of Somalis, U.N. troops, journalists, and others have been killed or severely injured. U.N. relief agencies and NGOs moved their top staff out of south Mogadishu to



Somali woman waiting for food in Baidoa.

Joint Combat Camera Center (Dean Wagner)

Nairobi and UNOSOM II seems bogged down in south Mogadishu by fruitless attempts to capture Aideed and vicious urban warfare, including the deliberate use by the Aideed faction of women and children against UNOSOM forces. As the Department of State has acknowledged, Aideed was clearly winning the public relations battle abroad and casting doubt on UNOSOM among Somalis who in no way supported him. He began to deliberately target U.S. troops, thinking that he can energize public opinion in the United States against keeping Americans in Somalia as happened in both Vietnam and Lebanon. This challenges the UNOSOM mission—humanitarian relief or peace-enforcement—and also the competence of its command and control. It created new dilemmas for humanitarian relief, and raised the larger issue of how peacekeepers with a mandate to use force should function where there is a strong local challenge to their mission, and where casualties

are inevitable among the uninvolved indigenous population, opposing forces, and U.N. personnel.

Focusing on Aideed seems to have caused a temporary memory loss about what UNITAF, the United Nations, and international relief agencies accomplished in Somalia since last December. Death and destruction outside of south Mogadishu have virtually ended; there has been continued evolution toward peaceful resolution of disputes and a more normal agricultural and pastoral life. Even in Kismayo, traditional leaders have come to the fore and concluded a peace agreement after four weeks of talks and despite the opposition of Colonels Jess and Morgan.

It is clear that Somalia absent a national government remains split along clan and subclan lines and that there is a pressing need to move ahead with a political and economic agenda which addresses national reconciliation and reconstruction. Aideed has received no support from the other faction leaders except for his SNA ally, Omar Jess. Moreover, apart from confrontation in south Mogadishu, there is real interest and some progress elsewhere in advancing the framework for reconciliation laid down in the Addis Ababa accords.

#### Reflections

Some contend that the Aideed problem was caused by a refusal on the part of United States and UNITAF to carry out a comprehensive disarmament program and/or the premature withdrawal of U.S. forces before adequate replacements arrived to bring UNOSOM II up to its goal of 28,000 personnel. However, President Bush had taken an absolutely categorical position in early December against taking on this or any other long-term nation building responsibilities, and made it clear that U.S. forces and UNITAF should be replaced by a U.N. peacekeeping force in early 1993.

President Clinton endorsed this position with equal firmness and communicated it clearly to the United Nations. U.S. forces with UNITAF were prepared to help with additional disarmament during the transition, had the U.N. commanders and staff arrived as expected in April. However, the U.N. Secretariat and Security Council were not working from the same timetable.

While no one can confidently claim that another approach by UNITAF or UNOSOM II could have prevented a confrontation with Aideed, several observations can be made. First, the importance of UNOSOM II applying sustained pressure on other faction leaders, and maintaining momentum generated for concerted political-military-humanitarian action, cannot be overemphasized. This principle will also apply in other peacekeeping operations. Second, it was critical to have adequate forces, equipment, and command and control procedures agreed on by both the political and military authorities of troop contributors. The latter needs to be assured not only at the outset but also in the event of changing circumstances on the ground by a suitable consultative mechanism. And third, one must recognize the soundness of the traditional U.N. peacekeeping stance against taking sides or making permanent enemies, in contrast to an immediate response to attacks on U.N. forces or employing force when necessary to achieve the mission. Obviously individuals directly involved in armed, unprovoked attacks on U.N. forces are beyond the limits of dialogue. The most effective approach would seem to be that under consideration by the United Nations and explicitly called for by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin in late August: a renewed, broad-based approach to all clans and subclans, including Aideed's Habr Gedir, and to traditional as well as faction leaders; an effort to revitalize the process of reconciliation and rehabilitation agreed to by Somalis at the Addis Ababa conference; and the continued improvement of the security situation, including disarmament of heavy weapons and strengthening the fledgling, interim Somali police force.

#### Lessons for Peacekeeping

The traditional distinction between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement in largely internal conflicts (*humanitarian peacekeeping*) is being eroded. The concept of peacekeeping operations as minimal in terms of personnel and armament—requesting permission from local authorities before taking action pursuant to the mission, and using force only in response to direct threat

or attack—is coming to be recognized as often inviting failure, rather than always demonstrating peaceful intent. There is a growing recognition that in many situations, the United Nations must be perceived as having the military capability, the will to use it, and the decisiveness to win armed confrontations. There is also recognition that peacekeeping, theoretically conducted under chapter VI of the U.N. Charter, can quickly become peace-enforcement under chapter VII as events on the ground evolve.

The U.S. doctrine of overwhelming force from the outset is increasingly understood as the best means in certain situations of achieving a peacekeeping mission and minimizing confrontation and casualties on all sides. Comparing the results of the U.N. Pakistani peacekeeping contingent deployed to Somalia under UNOSOM I with the results of the U.S.-led coalition force deployed to Somalia as UNITAF, the Security Council decided to empower UNOSOM II with essentially the same military powers, rules of engagement, and command and control.

However, the experiences of UNOSOM II and other recent peacekeeping operations show the need for better, more detailed agreement by troop contributing nations on command and control procedures, advance planning, and ensuring adequate forces and

material are on the ground when operations begin. They also indicate the need for ongoing high-level consultation and flexibility—present for operations in Cambodia (UNTAC) but absent from UNOSOM II. And there is need to provide for ending U.N. involvement and shifting responsibility to local leaders and the people.

Peacekeeping operations often involve more than simply keeping the peace or promoting political settlements; they also involve extensive humanitarian relief and rehabilitation; repatriating refugees and displaced persons; developing infrastructure; building institutions (such as elections and political structures); demobilizing, disarming, and reintegrating local armed forces and militias; and creating effective, impartial police and indigenous security forces. Each of these elements is vitally important for the success or failure of the overall mission.

The political, military, and humanitarian elements of many peacekeeping operations cannot be logically disjoined. Peacekeeping operations are essentially political operations carried out by military means. Political preparation and continuing dialogue can reduce casualties and increase the chances of military success. The converse is also true. The leverage of political efforts to broker peace agreement is bolstered by sufficient military strength. (In Somalia, UNITAF had adequate strength; in Angola, the U.N. force—UNAVEM II—did not.) Humanitarian and economic thrusts complement and reinforce political-military thrusts if used in concert, or they can complicate them if not used properly. The United Nations, its member states, and NGOs should take the needs for this sort of coordination explicitly into account in their initial planning.

The U.N. Secretariat must be substantially strengthened to organize, manage, and support peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. Organization in the field must be able to coordinate and lead multifaceted, civil-military operations, not merely exhort. The right combination of command structure, personnel, and logistical support are needed for U.N. headquarters and the field. This means that member states must contribute more funds, people, and equipment as well as cooperate more closely with U.N. and non-governmental agencies. **JFQ**

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