Testing the World's Resolve in Somalia

WALTER S. CLARKE

© 1993 Walter S. Clarke

In mid-1993 the American public wrestled with the spectacle of its forces engaged in seemingly continuous hostilities against insurgents in the southern part of the city of Mogadishu in Somalia. As Americans were killed and wounded, strong pressures developed in Congress and the public to withdraw from Operation Restore Hope.[1] One of the arguments made by critics was that somehow the original humanitarian focus of the intervention had been diverted to "nation-building." Complaints about a change in the mission are unjustified. By its very nature, Operation Restore Hope was always more than a simple humanitarian operation.

The introduction of a substantial international force into Mogadishu and southern Somalia in December 1992 directly affected the internal lines of communication and balance of political forces of local leaders who had been at war with one another for nearly two years. It was only a matter of time before a violent response developed to the intervention, unless, of course, the warlords could satisfy their political ambitions by working with the foreign forces. It is as true now as it was then that the only way to ensure Somalia does not revert to massive starvation is to find a means to divest the country's war chiefs of their pretensions to political legitimacy. From the outset, it was clear that the success of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) would be judged not by how many people it helped to feed, but by the political situation it left behind.[2]

Contrary to the assertions of certain Bush Administration officials indicating disbelief in the existence of legitimate political forces in Somalia,[3] US diplomats in Mogadishu continue to receive pleas for action against the warlords. UNITAF's seeming neutrality on issues of "Somali-on-Somali" violence, and prudence in the use of its substantial force, was a serious disappointment to those Somalis who wanted nothing more than a return to law and order and an opportunity to rebuild their lives after years of war.

Chronology of the United Nations Intervention in Somalia

As the consequences of the Somali civil war became inescapable, the United Nations decided early in 1992 to intervene on behalf of the Somali people. That intervention, identified as the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), was authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 751, dated 27 April 1992. UNOSOM (subsequently named UNOSOM I) represented UN authority in Somalia from that date until 4 May 1993, at which time its missions were taken over by UNOSOM II.

It was soon evident that UNOSOM I forces would not be able to establish the secure environment that the humanitarian relief organizations needed in order to provide food and medical assistance in Somalia. After a series of debates on the problem, the UN issued Security Council Resolution 794 on 3 December 1992. This resolution, developed as a number of nations decided to launch a powerful military intervention in Somalia to support humanitarian relief activities, was authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The coalition that was created to carry out the intervention, led by the United States, included the forces of 18 other nations. UNITAF coexisted with, but was independent of and equal to, UNOSOM I.

The fundamental difference between the philosophies and activities of UNOSOM I and UNITAF is comparable to the distinction that many fail to make between peacekeeping and operations variously called peacemaking or peace enforcement. The former assumes that sovereign nations, having agreed to end hostilities, agree also to the presence of a UN force on their territories to monitor compliance with the terms under which the nations had agreed to end their belligerency. Some have defined this type of operation as one that could be carried out by a civilian police force. UNOSOM I, as were most UN peace support operations prior to 1989, was intended to be this type of intervention, and was authorized under Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

Professor Walter S. Clarke is a Senior Foreign Service Officer in the US Department of State, with more than 25 years of experience in African affairs during a 35-year Foreign Service career. He now serves as Professor of International Relations in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the US Army War College. He was State Department Advisor to the President and Professor of International Relations at the US Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island, 1987-89. He opened the Embassy and served as Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., at the American Embassy in Djibouti from 1977 to 1980. Professor Clarke also served at diplomatic posts at Abidjan, Bogota, Bujumbura, Douala, Lagos, Madrid, and San José. He has authored several works on the Horn of Africa, including *A Developmental Bibliography for the Republic of Djibouti* in 1978, "The 'Esayi Dream: A Footnote to the Ogaden War," in *Northeast African Studies* (No. 1, 1991), and *Somalia: Background Information for Operation Restore Hope, 1992-1993*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, December 1992. From March to June 1993, Professor Clarke was detailed to the United States Liaison Office in Mogadishu, Somalia, where he served as Deputy Director. As with all *Parameters* articles, the opinions expressed are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Department of State, the US Army, or the US Army War College.

By contrast, operations authorized under Chapter VII of the Charter recognize that hostilities, even if suspended, remain a real threat to peace operations. By inference, forces sent to intervene under UN direction and control in a Chapter VII operation should be warfighters—organized, equipped, trained, and supported for combat operations. The nations that established the coalition made it a condition of their participation that UNITAF would be organized under the more robust and flexible terms of Chapter VII. The arrival of UNITAF in early December 1992, led by the forces of the United States and under the command of Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston, USMC, put the Somali warlords on notice that a new game with new rules had begun. UNITAF carried out its mandate within that part of Somalia to which it was assigned (approximately 40 percent of the country, primarily in the central and southern regions) until 4 May 1993, when it transferred its responsibilities to the forces assigned to UNOSOM II. Historians will have ample opportunity to debate the manner in which the coalition carried out its mission.

This article is concerned with the political aspects of the operation in Somalia. UN Security Council Resolution 794 stated that the Security Council was "DETERMINED FURTHER to restore peace, stability, and law and order with a view to facilitating the process of a political settlement [in Somalia] under the auspices of the United Nations." A careful reading of the resolution suggests that UNITAF was correct in determining that its mission statement was contained in paragraph 10 of the resolution: "Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, [the Security Council] AUTHORIZES the Secretary-General and member States cooperating to implement the offer referred to in paragraph 8 above to use all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia."[4] No one denies that UNITAF completed that mission, and did so ostensibly without disrupting the balance of power among the warlords who had spent the previous two years ravaging their country. However, simply by making it harder for some of the gangs of thugs to do business, UNITAF, and by extension the United Nations, earned the enmity of the warlords so affected.

It seems self-evident that conditions conducive to the desired political settlement might have followed the establishment of the secure environment needed for humanitarian activities. That they did not is no indication of failure on the part of the forces sent to Somalia to ensure that humanitarian aid could be distributed to the starving citizens and refugees in that country. Those forces did what they were asked to do. What was missing was a strategic vision for Somalia, one that could have integrated political goals with the missions assigned to the military. The failure of the United Nations to foster from the outset such an integrated strategy for Somalia may have reversed the gains made by the military in at least part of the country.

UNOSOM II, which assumed responsibility for operations in the country on 4 May 1993,[5] was also established under Chapter VII. In authorizing

UNOSOM II, UN Security Council Resolution 814 greatly expanded the number, variety, and specificity of the tasks assigned to UNOSOM II and its attached forces, creating what was in effect a mandate for an extended period of "nation-building" in Somalia. Both Security Council Resolutions—794 and 814—side-stepped the crucial issue of forcibly disarming the warring Somali factions. This default, combined with the lack of a clear political agenda for Somalia, greatly reduced the likelihood that UNOSOM II could ever have attained its political and nation-building objectives. The specific circumstances that contributed to the policy impasse, which enabled the warlord Aideed to seize the initiative from the UN, are the subject of this article.

Establishing the Unified Task Force in Somalia

The November 1992 decision to respond to the dramatic pictures of human desolation in Somalia by sending US troops at the head of an international coalition was an unexpected initiative from an Administration about to leave office. From a humanitarian point of view, the gesture was in the finest American tradition of responding to man-made and natural disasters around the world. This humanitarian effort was distinguished from previous instances of US military involvement in disasters—the floods in Bangladesh, earthquakes in Costa Rica—in that this was an armed intervention into a region without a central political structure, carried out under a UN Chapter VII mandate. The US-led intervention in Somalia also had a different quality from the decision to deploy forces to northern Iraq to protect the Kurds. In the latter case, the United States had been at war with Saddam Hussein, and there was hope that the humanitarian effort could contribute to his downfall. Although the United States had been a suitor of the fallen Somali dictator Siad Barre after he was abandoned by the Soviet Union in 1977, there was no apparent interest in securing a favorable relationship with Somalia as an outcome of our decision to intervene in that country.[6]

The decision to use military force to support food distribution in Somalia recognized that peace support operations might be contested. The warehouses of Mogadishu contained ample food stocks, and good rains in 1992 provided hope that domestic food producers would have some food to sell in the cities. Force, or a credible threat, was needed to break the stranglehold on food distribution exercised by the leadership of certain armed bands operating in the south-central part of the country. The starving of Somalia were primarily minority clans or refugees displaced during 18 months of civil war. Away from their home areas and rejected by the warlord leaders of opposing clans, hundreds of thousands had succumbed to starvation and disease, and thousands more were expected to die unless conditions changed. The mandate of the US-led UNITAF was to secure food storage sites and to open lines of communication through Mogadishu into the interior so that humanitarian relief organizations could distribute food to the needy and

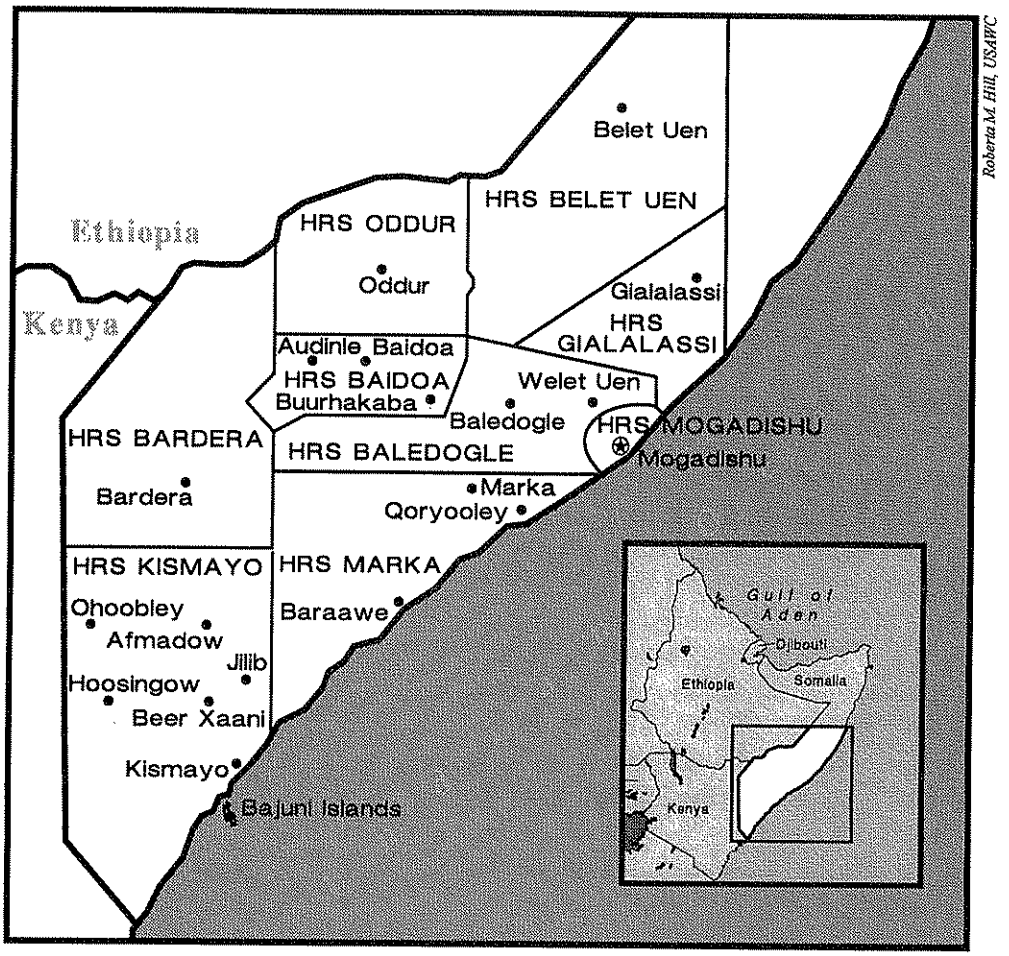

Figure 1. Humanitarian Relief Sectors in Somalia.

provide medical care to the sick. In the absence of an initiative from Europe or elsewhere, the United States led the way.

The area of Somalia covered by Operation Restore Hope was divided into nine humanitarian relief sectors (HRSs), and eventually accommodated military forces from 18 UN states, including a fair proportion from Africa and Western Europe. South central Somalia—the"triangle of death"—was selected as the UNITAF area of operations because it had the highest rates of death from starvation. It appears on the map as the area within the triangle formed by the cities of Mogadishu, Bardera, and Kismayo. By no coincidence, this area was largely under the control of General Mohamed Farah (hereafter referred to as Aideed) and his allies.

As straightforward as the UNITAF plan of operations appeared, it created conditions that would lead to confrontation. With its overwhelming military force, UNITAF gained the operational initiative and initially caused

the warlords to back off. The Bush Administration hoped to leave all political initiatives to the United Nations, and to "such participants as the French, the Italians and the Pakistanis," who were judged to have "political, economic and religious ties . . . far more substantive and longstanding than ours."[7] Despite this apparently clear indication of Administration desires, the first public hints of operational ambiguities in the UNITAF mission can be found in former President Bush's original announcement of Operation Restore Hope to the American people:

> This operation is not open-ended. We will not stay one day longer than is absolutely necessary. Let me be very clear: Our mission is humanitarian, but *we will not tolerate armed gangs ripping off their own people*, condemning them to death by starvation. [CENTCOM Commander] General Hoar and his troops have *the authority to take whatever military action* is necessary to safeguard the lives of our troops *and the lives of Somalia's people.*[8]

The dilemma for US policymakers developed from the different levels of authority granted to UNOSOM I and UNITAF. Under Chapter VI, UNOSOM I forces were limited to defensive military actions and were severely constrained in their political options. The Bush Administration formula meant that any decisions considered to be "political" were deferred to the entity that represented the UN directly—UNOSOM I—which lacked enforcement powers, while UNITAF held its much stronger Chapter VII mandate in reserve. UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali believed that the US commitment would inevitably lead to "nation-building," a prospect fully consonant with the enlarged role of the United Nations laid out in his 1992 report to the Security Council, *An Agenda for Peace*.[9] The United Nations was to encounter great difficulties in putting together a military force comparable to that of UNITAF.

UNITAF Achievements

Quite apart from its narrow political mandate, the UNITAF operation was a flawless military exercise. The number of US troops committed to UNITAF on the ground or afloat peaked at 25,426 on 15 January 1993. Total US and foreign forces deployed to UNITAF peaked at 38,301 on 23 January 1993. The logistical and social achievements of the UNITAF coalition in nearly five months on the ground in Somalia are truly impressive:

- the daily death rate in Bardera fell from more than 300 in November 1992 to five or less in April 1993;
- the number of daily gunshot victims admitted to Mogadishu hospitals fell from about 50 to five or less;
- the street price of an AK-47 rose from $50 to $1000, while the price of a 50-pound sack of wheat fell from $100 to about $10.

Demilitarization figures for confiscated weapons were in the thousands, and while this represented only a fraction of the number of light weapons available in the country, UNITAF succeeded in having a good portion of the heavier weapons stored in fixed cantonment sites. Little known to critics of the original decision to deploy troops to Somalia are the facts that UNITAF repaired more than 1800 kilometers of roads, restored two airfields (Mogadishu and Kismayo) to C-5 standards and seven others to C-130 standards, and reworked 14 water wells.[10] For a relatively brief deployment, these are truly impressive figures.

Some political initiatives did take place during the UNITAF period. Spurred by UNITAF and the US Liaison Office (USLO),[11] southern Mogadishu warlord Aideed and northern Mogadishu leader Ali Mahdi signed a cease-fire and a general truce on 11 December 1992. Their seven-point agreement called

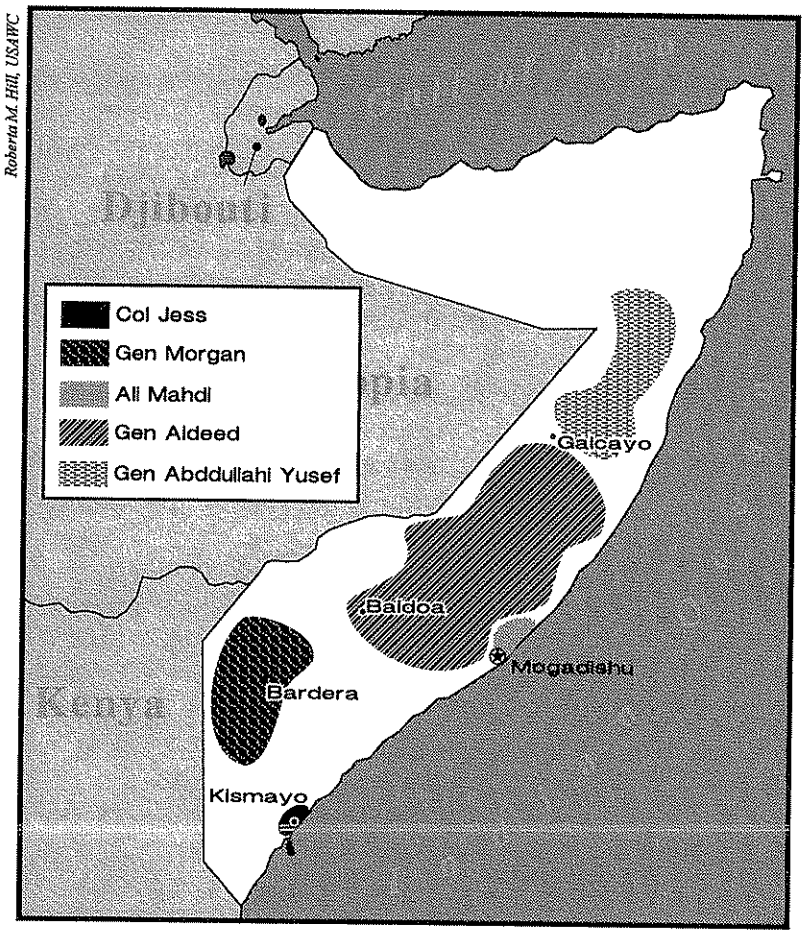

Figure 2. Principal warlords of southern Somalia, March 1993.

for reconstitution of their fractured political party, the United Somali Congress, disarmament of all irregulars, including the so-called "technicals," and the removal of all internal city barriers, including the "green line" separating the two forces. This political activity produced a number of joint committees, one of which, the political committee, met regularly at the USLO offices. For a while these committees served as effective fora for airing grievances and for peaceful settlement of disputes. The police committee almost single-handedly took on the responsibility of setting up a police constabulary in Mogadishu. It soon had enrolled 5000 former policemen, a group that had largely escaped the scandals of the Siad Barre era. A judicial committee also was formed, with an equal number of magistrates and judges named by the Aideed and Ali Mahdi factions. This group had a less-than-desirable effect on the legal system, however, because neither group would permit its own members to remain in jail.

In a larger sense, the policy of letting the appointees of Ali Mahdi and Aideed provide political, police, and judicial liaison with UNOSOM and UNITAF proved to be a very ineffective expedient. When a group of Aideed henchmen attempted to resume extortion operations against the largest humanitarian relief organizations (HROs) in early March, the task of protecting the Mogadishu offices of CARE and the World Food Programme was turned over to Pakistani forces in UNOSOM I.[12] No effort was made to arrest the offending thugs. UNITAF forces were always available in the event that UNOSOM I forces could not maintain control of any given situation. UNITAF, for operational reasons that can well be understood, declined to define the readiness of its forces. This ambiguity was felt strongly by the various HROs in Mogadishu, whose contract guards had been disarmed shortly after UNITAF arrived. So long as the international authorities (UNOSOM I and UNITAF) deferred to the warlords and their followers—or appeared to do so—there was little likelihood that effective political processes would be established by Somalis not associated with them.

Political Action Under UNOSOM I

A Chapter VI mandate implies that the UN force has the approval of all local authorities. Lacking such approval—there was no central government in Somalia—the United Nations decided to assist in the creation of a national authority. As a first step, a UN-sponsored planning meeting was held in Addis Ababa on 4 January 1993, with 14 Somali factions represented. It immediately ran into problems. Aideed refused to accept any delegation which had been associated with former dictator Siad Barre or which had not been involved in the fight against Siad Barre. This exclusion was primarily directed at Siad Barre's son-in-law, Mohamed Siad Hersi (Morgan). Morgan's forces were at the time threatening the vital southern port city of Kismayo, which had changed hands several times during the 1991-92 civil war. Only the personal intercession of Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi

"By its very nature, Operation Restore Hope was always more than a simple humanitarian operation."

prevented the UN-sponsored meeting from breaking down.[13] In the end, Aideed succeeded in establishing the principle that the warlords were to control the political agenda.

At the 15 January conference that followed these negotiations, the 14 Somali factions agreed to surrender all heavy weapons to the UNITAF/UN cease-fire monitoring group, to place the militias of all political movements in encampments, to disarm all bandits, and to return all properties unlawfully taken during the previous hostilities.[14] Contrary to their solemn agreements, there was very little disarmament, clashes occurred when one or another of the participants felt his interests were at stake, and travel remained possible only with armed UNITAF convoys. The principal achievement of the first reconciliation conference was an agreement by the warlords to meet again, with the option of selecting those with whom they would discuss the future of the country.

When the second national reconciliation conference convened in Addis Ababa on 15 March, a significant changeover in UNOSOM I civilian leadership had just been completed. Ambassador Kittani—the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and a career UN official of Iraqi nationality—was ailing. US Admiral (Ret.) Jonathan Howe, former deputy national security advisor in the Bush Administration, was named to take his place. Howe's deputy, the Guinean Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Lansana Kouyate, arrived in Mogadishu two weeks before the second Addis Ababa reconciliation conference, which he subsequently chaired.

The second conference was not easy to follow because much of it was held behind closed doors. Diplomats on the ground in Mogadishu believed that the goals of the conference should be modest and incremental, with local bodies to be established throughout the country before the creation of a central authority. There was also a general belief that individuals or groups excluded from any political process out of fear of the warlords (elders, women, humanitarian group representatives, intellectuals, and professional people) should be given a voice. It would not be the role of the United Nations or any outside authority to dictate the form of government for the Somalis. The UN could, however, sponsor and protect public gatherings, which the

Somalis call *guurti*. Somali cultural traditions and political attitudes place a high value on dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The results of the second Addis Ababa conference were quite different from the expectations of its sponsors. The warlords first agreed to a modest project to empower regional political organizations and to advance the peacemaking process. This was evidently not sufficiently strong for the United Nations, which rejected the agreement after it had been signed by the warlords. The first response of the warlords was to walk out in protest over this intervention. They were induced to return by an offer that effectively gave them the opportunity to dominate a national transitional body. To buy their approval, each warlord was provided a guaranteed seat in a Transitional National Council (TNC).

One encouraging outcome was entirely unanticipated. A conference of aid donors was in progress in Addis Ababa at the same time as the warlords were meeting. Upon its completion, the building in which the warlords were meeting was surrounded by a group of very vocal and insistent women who had been attending the aid donors meeting. Their intervention produced a guarantee that one-third of the seats in the TNC would be reserved for women.[15] The Addis Ababa agreement gave no hint how the remaining unencumbered seats were to be contested. This agreement, which guarantees a seat at the table for all warlords and other self-declared political leaders, remains at this writing the basic political planning text in Somalia. UNOSOM subsequently took the position that the international arrest warrant issued for Aideed made him ineligible to sit on the TNC.

Transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II

When UNITAF transferred its responsibilities to UNOSOM II on 4 May 1993, there were great expectations for improvement in the administration of law and justice in central-south Somalia. The Security Council Resolution that established UNOSOM II strengthened the UN mandate in Somalia and removed some of the ambiguities that had persisted throughout the UNITAF deployment.[16] With the assistance of USLO, which provided a US Agency for International Development study[17] outlining steps for reintroducing the pre-Siad Barre legal system, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Admiral Howe, declared the 1962-63 Somali penal code the law of the land.

During the first week of its new mandate, UNOSOM II took a series of decisive actions to demonstrate that it had the situations in Mogadishu and Kismayo under control. Show of force operations were initiated on 5 May in all areas of operations, including the city of Mogadishu. On the following day, a number of warning letters were delivered to various troublesome factional leaders, including General Morgan, whose confederates were at the time still causing trouble in Kismayo. Osman "Atto," Aideed's deputy, armorer, and principal financier, was also told to stay away from Kismayo.[18]

UNOSOM II thus sought to demonstrate an even-handed approach to solving political issues by putting General Morgan on notice at the same time in May 1993 that Aideed and his confederates received warning letters.

A period of rapidly rising tensions followed the turnover from the US-led UNITAF to UNOSOM II. The warlord-controlled radio station in Mogadishu immediately stepped up its anti-colonial diatribes. Additional US forces were deployed to Kismayo, the southern port city where most observers believed the first test between the UN and the frustrated warlords would take place. It seemed likely to those in Mogadishu that a confrontation between the international forces and the local "authorities" was inevitable, although no one could predict what form it would take.

The Split With Aideed

The turning point that eventually led to open conflict between Aideed and UN forces began innocently enough. On 13 May, only nine days after the United Nations assumed responsibility for all military operations in Somalia, Aideed sent a letter to UNOSOM II headquarters requesting UN support for a conference to disengage forces in the central region, immediately north of UNITAF's original area of operations. The conference was ostensibly to settle the political issues between Aideed's Habr Gedir clan, dominant in the south central zones of Somalia, and the Mijertain clan, which controls substantial parts of the northeast region of the country.

On its face, this was an attractive initiative. The three militia forces ranged around the town of Galcayo in the central region controlled the largest collection of heavy weapons remaining outside of UN cantonment sites.[19] Disarmament of Galcayo would permit UNOSOM II to extend its area of responsibility from the Kenya frontier through the central region to Bosaso, the capital of the northeast, nearly doubling the size of its area of responsibility. It would have opened land communications with the northeast, which for months had been clamoring for a UN military presence. Because it still pursued a policy of accommodating the warlords, reflecting its Chapter VI habits, UNOSOM II hastened to reply affirmatively to Aideed's offer.

Within a week, however, UNOSOM II and Aideed were quarreling openly about the rules for the conference. UN officials had assumed that the "Galcayo Conference" would take place under their leadership. Aideed insisted that because it was his idea, he should be in charge. At first, he would not even agree to a UN presence. His propaganda organs augmented their vituperative condemnations of UNOSOM II and of Admiral Howe. The UNOSOM II staff belatedly realized that it had been duped; in fact, the international organization had agreed to sponsor a conference designed to raise the political profile of Aideed, its primary antagonist, at the expense of its own authority.

In the end there were two conferences on Galcayo. Aideed's rump conference moved around town, from site to site, hoping to avoid any hint of

UN supervision. The UNOSOM II Conference on Galcayo never got off the ground; at one point, Aideed's supporters stole the tables and chairs from the UN site and frightened away most of UNOSOM II's Somali supporters. The Aideed-sponsored conference concluded on 4 June, the day before the attack on the Pakistanis that killed 24 peacekeepers and severely wounded another 50. Some observers believe that the whole Galcayo conference exercise represented an effort by Aideed to humiliate the UN and to mobilize potential allies for a military confrontation with UN forces.

Ambiguity in Handling Aideed Left Unresolved

It remains unclear whether the series of uncertain tactics and awkward missteps by UNOSOM II after it took over on 4 May were caused by micro-management from UN Headquarters in New York or were simply miscalculations based on faulty reading of Somali politics on the ground in Mogadishu. It is apparent, however, that in either case, the United Nations had no plan for handling the warlords. Aideed astutely held on to the political initiative and continually threw UNOSOM II off balance. Even after the public disagreement between Aideed's people and the UN had reached a fever pitch, Admiral Howe paid a well-publicized call on Aideed at his headquarters on 22 May. Howe evidently hoped to reach a last-minute accommodation with Aideed on the critical Galcayo meeting. For those Somalis who hoped that the United Nations would finally stand up to the warlords, the call by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Aideed was an acute disappointment. Aideed apparently believed that he had no particular reason to cooperate with the UN. He saw UN efforts to accommodate him as weakness; he hoped to strengthen waning support in his own faction and to draw followers from other clan groups by portraying UNOSOM II as anti-Islamic, and by emphasizing xenophobic and anti-colonial issues in his broadcasts. These remained his primary themes as he evaded UN efforts to arrest him.

Aideed demonstrated considerable skill in exploiting the weaknesses of Operation Restore Hope. He used both UNITAF and UNOSOM to gain stature and enhance his prospects for being declared the legitimate future leader of Somalia. Aideed did not attack American troops in UNITAF directly. He simply waited UNITAF out, preparing actions to be used against UNOSOM II in the event that his political position was not respected. He astutely kept himself in the center of any potential political settlement. He was keenly conscious of the importance of the media and staged attacks, sometimes gunning down his own Habr Gedir women and children in order to have bodies to show on US evening news broadcasts. Aideed has exploited command and control problems within UNOSOM II. With allies in that headquarters, he managed to keep abreast of tactical plans and to split UNOSOM II cohesion.

Aideed has weaknesses that UNOSOM II has shown little skill in exploiting. His center of gravity is his relations with the Hawiye/Habr Gedir sub-clan, which accepted him as its leader so long as he could defend them and maintain his credibility as the country's next leader. The Habr Gedir, who are one of the largest sub-clans in the country, perhaps 800,000 out of a pre-civil war national population of 7.5 million, have been political outsiders since before World War II. They were particularly mistreated by Siad Barre, who brutally suppressed them. It is easy to understand why, in the context of the times, the Habr Gedir wanted Aideed to be "their dictator," the next Siad Barre. If the Habr Gedir finally realize that he is a lost cause, a leader who would have no standing in the world, he probably would be eliminated by his own clansmen.[20]

Political Features of Chapter VII Peacemaking Operations

There are numerous examples, particularly in West Africa, in which the peoples of largely failed states held national conferences of reconciliation. Among the prime examples are the national conferences of Benin, Niger, Congo (Brazzaville), and Mali. In each of these cases, national authorities were established that were based on compromises among regional and ethnic groups. These conferences sometimes lasted for months. As noted, such gatherings are also part of the Somali cultural tradition. Meetings of elders and their communities became widespread after the defeat of Siad Barre; their very popularity caused these *guurti* to be largely suppressed when the warlords asserted control over regions in which clan groups other than their own predominated.

A four-month conference of elders in Boroma, in northwest Somalia, ended in early June 1993, having produced a provisional president and a national charter. Although this gathering resolved to seek recognition of national independence, largely as the result of genocidal atrocities of the Siad Barre administration in the north, it serves as a recent example of the Somali tradition of compromise and practicality. The optimal political goal for Somalia would be to create a body in which all Somalis could meet and decide what form their political future should take. At a neutral site, and protected by forces from UNOSOM II, such a gathering might also last for months. However, the process could be a lot less expensive in human lives and military hardware than what happened in Somalia between May and October 1993. The ability to provide the people of Somalia an opportunity to act politically without coercion would constitute a success for the various international groups in Somalia. Although few facts are available, the United Nations sponsored a successful reconciliation conference recently in Kismayo, confronting the same range of issues that would have arisen during the abortive Galcayo conference.

The organization of a national conference should become a fundamental component of every United Nations Chapter VII operation. If this were to become general practice—the price that national communities in distress would be obliged to pay for international peacemaking assistance—a model could be

developed for integrating political and military goals, objectives, and methods in Chapter VII operations. The model would facilitate the development of appropriate end states for military forces committed in support of such operations, and just might eliminate many hours of empty debate in the UN Security Council. If the New World Order is to continue to be such a messy affair, it should be the business of the world community to establish some elementary ground rules before attempting any more Chapter VII operations.

Issues Raised by Operation Restore Hope

One cannot deploy more than 26,000 troops to a country the size of Somalia without becoming a major force in the domestic political situation of the country where they are deployed. It is not realistic to plan a humanitarian operation that includes such an overwhelming force without a well-defined political agenda. Nearly all Somalis who were in contact with the US Liaison Office in Mogadishu, including Somalis not necessarily sympathetic to the UN deployment, were incredulous that the UN seemed to have such limited objectives.

When there is no central government, the occupying force in a Chapter VII operation can become the de facto government. The strongest criticism leveled at the UNITAF intervention in Somalia is not that it did so much, but that it did so little. UNITAF did not disarm the warlords or establish law and order.

The five-month UNITAF occupation of south-central Somalia created an appearance of normalcy. In retrospect, it appears that the warlords simply decided to wait for the coalition to leave. As soon as UNITAF left, the warlords sharply increased their bullying and extortion of fellow Somalis and international assistance agencies.

When UNOSOM II, armed with its strong Chapter VII mandate, began operations in early May 1993, much of the international coalition's credibility had dissipated. Experts in the field of international military operations claim that "the average UN mission has about six weeks from initial deployment to demonstrate its competence and win local trust. If that trust is lost, or never fully realized, an operation can be crippled and its personnel put in jeopardy."[21] The nonconfrontational approach taken by UNITAF during the five months that its forces operated in Somalia created a credibility gap that the United Nations has never been able to fill.

Command and control of UNOSOM II is very much more complicated than it was for UNITAF. For many UN military forces, the chain of command runs through their respective national capitals.

The United Nations must assure itself that all coalition partners agree with the basic purpose and the goals for which the coalition was created. This is as much a function of credible leadership in New York and national capitals as it is in the area where units are deployed.

It is as true today as it was in December 1992 that "victory" in Somalia will be defined by the political situation that the United Nations—and by direct implication the United States, because we dominated the original operation—leave behind.

Restore Hope was always more than a simple humanitarian operation. A narrow mandate can be pursued in future such operations, but in the end someone must pay the price of earlier short-term successes.

Conclusions

It is not too early to reach judgment on a situation which saw the UN engaged in combat against part of the population that its forces were committed to save. Serious policy miscalculations preceded the breakdown of Operation Restore Hope and led to the attacks by Aideed's forces on Pakistani peacekeepers on 5 June 1993.

The UN was unable to fill the political vacuum that existed in the UNITAF area of operations. Although there were points of open dispute with the warlords, particularly in keeping the peace in the southern port city of Kismayo, UNITAF forces generally followed a policy of nonconfrontation with them. In the end, this policy was interpreted by some of the warlords and their allies as weakness.

The UN appeared uncertain about the transition from the constraints of a Chapter VI operation to the greater freedom and authority of a Chapter VII mandate. Unable to look beyond the warlords, it failed to develop coherent political goals for the entire population of Somalia. Consequently, UN-sponsored conferences in Addis Ababa in January and March 1993 created a process which ultimately escaped UN control, creating significant impediments to peace enforcement.

Aideed's megalomanic ambitions were encouraged, inadvertently or by design, by both UNOSOM I and UNITAF. He was accorded virtual chief of state status by various diplomatic and business delegations. He was permitted by UNOSOM I to determine the membership of police and judicial committees, some of which became extensions of his broad-based criminal organization.

If the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) were to be ended precipitously, no one familiar with the political situation there doubts that the humanitarian crisis that sparked the original UNOSOM I and UNITAF operations would recur.

There must be common understanding among the partners of a coalition regarding its military and political goals and objectives, and the measures to be taken to attain the goals. There can be unity of purpose in an operation even as coalition partners maintain direct links with their ministries of defense.

In future peacemaking or peace enforcement operations, the United States and its coalition allies must develop a strategy for meeting the terms of their mandate that integrates military end states with effective political action. Failure to do so will invariably provide local Rambos the opportunities they seek to get inside UN and coalition decision processes and turn events to their own advantage.

Although it seems unnecessary to state it explicitly, never commit to a peace support operation within a political structure or a geographical region if the force is constrained by the UN to operate at different levels of authority. The entire structure or region must be under the same chapter of the UN charter to preclude the kinds of problems that all forces in Somalia have had to contend with since early 1993.

While important mistakes and omissions have occurred throughout the conduct of Operation Restore Hope, the purpose of this article has not been to assign blame, but to point out certain fundamental issues inherent in managing peacemaking operations. The crisis in Somalia may be a paradigm of the New World Order. There are many more Somalias out there, especially in Africa, where debt, drought, disease, and politics threaten states with political implosion. If the United Nations, in partnership with the United States and other peacemaking coalition partners, fails to learn from the lessons of Somalia how to manage those operations, and fails to develop the unity of purpose and coherent political strategy required to bring such operations to successful conclusions, the prospects for multilateral peacemaking in this troubled new era look very bleak indeed.

NOTES:

1. Operation Restore Hope was selected by President Bush as the name of the operation. Admiral Jonathan Howe, the retired American Admiral who assumed command of the UN peacemaking operation in Somalia on 4 May 1993, rechristened the exercise as Operation Continue Hope, which has not been broadly adopted. We will continue to refer to the Somalia humanitarian intervention as Operation Restore Hope. Other members of the UN coalition have their own designations for the Somali relief exercise (e.g., France: Operation Oryx; Italy: Operation Ibis)

2. Among the most perceptive, in the flood of press articles in December 1992: Paul Gigot, "Peace in Somalia May Require New Colonialism," ("The Somali warlords, ragtag but vicious, are denying aid to the starving.") *The Wall Street Journal,* 4 December 1992, p. A8; John Lancaster, "General Bars Disarming Somali Clans," ("Although Pentagon officials initially described the US operation in terms of providing security for humanitarian relief, there are a number of signs that the mission is expanding.") *The Washington Post,* 15 December 1992, p. 1.

3. See Alberto Coll, "For U.S., Hidden Risks in Somalia's Feudal Chaos," *The Wall Street Journal,* 7 September 1993, p. 12. Professor Coll was a senior official in Pentagon during the Bush Administration. This article provides a lucid glimpse into the thinking of the policymakers of the period.

4. UN Security Council Resolution 794, dated 3 December 1992. Capitalization as in original.

5. UN Security Council Resolution 814, dated 26 March 1993.

6. The United States invested something close to $200 million in improving the port and airfield of Berbera in the northwest. When the agreements to use these facilities came up for renewal in 1988, the United States declined to renew them. Siad Barre's genocidal depredations in the northwest made continuation of the agreements out of the question.

7. Coll.

8. George Bush, "Humanitarian Mission to Somalia: Address to the Nation, Washington, DC, December 4, 1992," *US Department of State Dispatch* (7 December 1992), pp. 865-66. Emphasis added.

9. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: United Nations, 1992), 53 pages. Also see Sidney Blumenthal, "Why Are We in Somalia?" *The New Yorker*, 25 October 1993, p. 58. Blumenthal's thesis is that President Clinton's "political authority is threatened by miscalculations that began when Somalia was made the proving ground of [President] Bush's New World Order."

10. All of these figures are derived from information provided by UNITAF in Mogadishu and are valid as of 3 April 1993.

11. The US Liaison Office (USLO) was established in early December 1992 by Special Presidential Envoy, Ambassador (Ret.) Robert Oakley. A "Liaison Office" is necessary when there are no diplomatic relations between the United States and the country in question. This was the situation in Somalia, where there was no government or anything resembling a central authority. Ambassador Oakley was replaced in early March by Robert Gosende, a career diplomat who, like Oakley, had previously served in Somalia. USLO was first located in a compound sub-leased from an American oil company. Because of its extreme vulnerability in the center of Aideed's neighborhood, it relocated to the devastated former American School property, next to the former US Embassy compound, in early June 1993. Aideed opened hostilities against UN forces on 5 June, and USLO moved on 7 June. The neighboring property, owned by Aideed deputy Osman Atto, was destroyed two weeks later by US AC-130 gunfire.

12. Several approaches were made to Aideed during this episode, which nearly caused the 3-6 March Addis Ababa Donors' Conference to run aground. It is significant that Aideed did not disavow the efforts of his henchmen at that time. From the author's point of view, this incident represented a turning point for Aideed: he chose not to demonstrate statesmanship but to continue to be an extortionist.

13. Jennifer Parlelee, "Somali Warlord Slows Progress Toward Peace: Parties to Reconciliation Conference at Stake," *The Washington Post*, 12 January 1993, p. A12.

14. Wording from UN Secretary General's Report of 3 March 1993. See United Nations, Security Council, *Further Report of the Secretary-General, Submitted in Pursuance of Paragraphs 18 and 19 of Resolution 794* (1992) (New York: S/25354, 3 March 1993), 22 pages. The dates in this and the preceding paragraph are from the author's personal chronology of Somali events.

15. There were 18 regions in Somalia when Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991. Each region was to have three representatives on the Transitional National Council (TNC), with Mogadishu accorded an additional five seats. Five regions are located in the self-declared "Republic of Somaliland," which declared its independence in March 1992. Although it was represented in Addis Ababa, everyone assumed that "Somaliland" would not participate in the TNC. With 15 seats so unencumbered, minus the 16 seats stipulated for the warlords and minor party leaders, only 43 seats remained for democratic contest. Aideed propagandists immediately claimed that he controlled ten regions. He hoped to have a comfortable majority of 37 seats in the council.

16. Including United Nations Security Council Resolution 837 of 6 June 1993, in which the Security Council condemns the "premeditated armed attacks" launched by Aideed's forces on 5 June, there have been to date eight UN Security Council resolutions on Somalia since Resolution 733 of 23 January 1992.

17. This April 1993 study, financed by the US Agency for International Development, was written by Martin Ganzglas, a Washington attorney, who served as advisor to the Somali Police while a Peace Corps Volunteer in the 1960s. He is the author of the only English-language study of the Somali penal code, *The Penal Code of the Somali Democratic Republic, With Cases, Commentary and Examples* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1971).

18. When the Ogadeni clan allies of Aideed were chased out of Kismayo in March 1993—an event that nearly caused the breakdown of the Addis Ababa National Reconciliation Conference—Aideed had accused the United Nations of bias in favor of General Morgan, his rival for dominance in Kismayo and the surrounding region. Aideed and his followers had demanded that the United Nations return Kismayo to the status quo that prevailed on 9 December 1992, the date when UNITAF forces began arriving.

19. There are three competing clans in the Mudug and Galgadug provinces of Somalia's central region. The Somali National Alliance represents the Hawiye/Habr Gedir and possesses a substantial inventory of arms, including a large portion of the heavy weapons which Aideed evacuated from Mogadishu before the arrival of UNITAF. The Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) is the faction representing the Majertain clan which dominates the northeast. The SSDF is led by Abshir Musa and Abdullahi Yusuf, the latter an ally of Aideed. The Marehan are represented in the Galcayo area by the Somali National Front led by a former Siad General, Mohamed Hashi Gani. UNITAF's decision not to deploy north of the Shabelle River left the Galcayo situation in limbo.

20. This observation was repeated several times to the author during his four months in Mogadishu, March-June 1993, by Somalis belonging to diverse clan families.

21. William J. Durch and Barry M. Blechman, *Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the Emerging World Order* (Washington: The Henry L. Stimson Center, March 1992), p. ii.