

Somalia: An Operation Other Than War

Major General S. L. Arnold, US Army

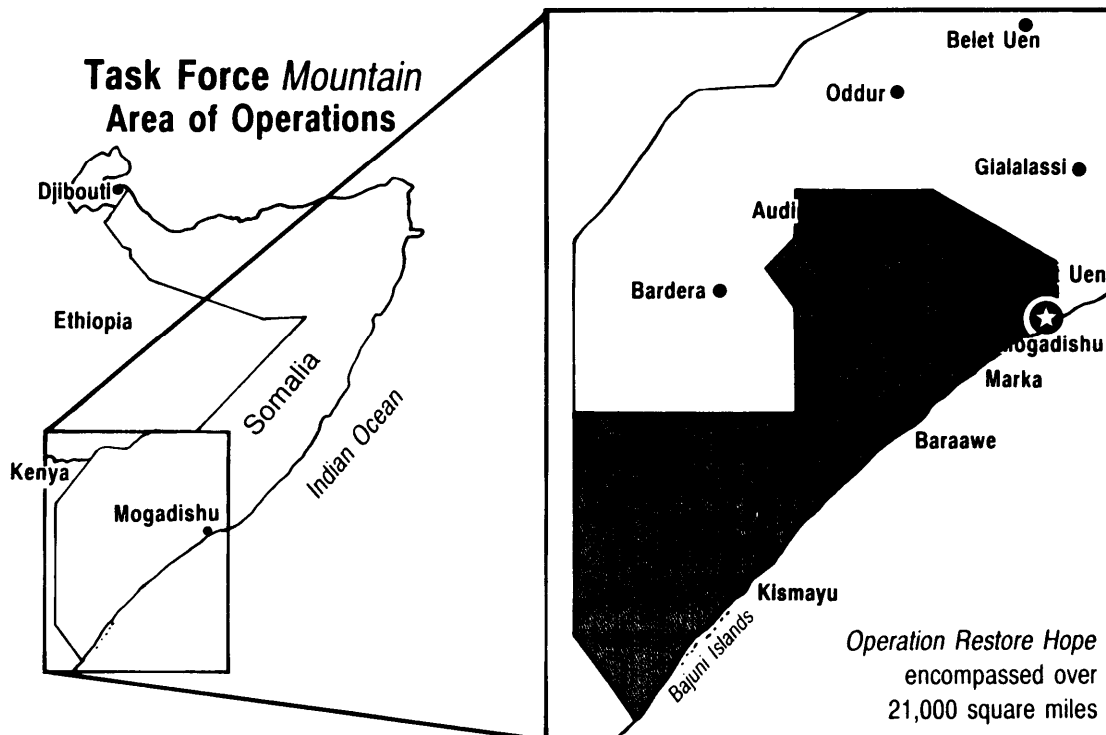
*It may not be war, but
it sure as hell ain't peace.*

— The author, describing Somalia to
visitors in Mogadishu, January 1993

IN JANUARY 1991, while sitting in my G3 office in 3d Army's (Army Forces US Central Command's) tactical operations center, Lucky Main, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Major General Pete Taylor, chief of staff, US Army Forces Command, called and asked if we could divert our attention from Operation *Desert Storm* preparations for a short time and help conduct a non-combatant evacuation order (NEO) in Mogadishu, Somalia. It seemed Mohamed Siad Barre's dictatorship of more than two decades had fallen, and it was being replaced by chaos in the streets of the Somali capital. Americans, Soviets and other third country nationals had gathered at the US Embassy for security. The NEO of the US Embassy was successfully accomplished in a joint operation led by Marines, supported by Air Force airlift and Army military police and communications provided from the Saudi theater of operations. I quickly turned my attention back to *Desert Storm* planning, with no inclination that in less than two years I would be conducting operations other than war as a resident in the trashed remains of that same US Embassy in Mogadishu.

Chaotic Situation

When we arrived in December 1992, the situation in Somalia had significantly deteriorated since our NEO mission two years earlier. Total anarchy had replaced the Barre regime. Warlords and factions had jostled for power, loosely controlling various portions of Somalia, with no progress toward establishing a viable government. Neither a national government nor regional governments existed; only self-appointed local leaders bent, for the most part, on extortion and abuse of power. Nonexistent were the police, justice system, schools, public water, public electricity and transportation system. Nearly all market activity had ceased. Almost one-seventh of the seven million Somalis had vanished—killed, starved or living as refugees. Anarchy and civil war prevailed, which led to the looting of an entire country. The only semblance of collective sanity had been the humanitarian relief organizations: some from the UN, some from the Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), but mostly nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, CARE, Save The Children, Doctors Without Borders, Irish Concern and many others. These were the only organizations in Somalia that were trying to feed the starving and care for the sick and dying.



Much of the food and relief supplies were stolen or taxed by everyone from the local warlords, to the owners of local airfields, to the free-lance thieves. It seemed like everyone was an entrepreneur in the business of wholesale thievery. The NGOs' food and supplies had become the coin of the realm. Even the security guards for the NGOs were part of a protection racket, extorting enormous fees as the only way to guarantee the safety of the NGO workers. Much of the population of Somalia had become wards of the international community, while many of the others participated in the last viable element of an economy, banditry of the international relief operations. It was my first introduction to total chaos, complete anarchy and the collapse of a society. The greed and bickering of the warlords had ground the relief operations to a halt. The plight of the starving Somalis was being seen around the world on CNN and the evening news. President George Bush and his advisers were convinced that the US government and the UN had to act.

Operation Restore Hope

Simply put, our mission was to secure relief operations in our assigned Humanitarian Relief Sectors (HRS) and break the cycle of starvation. After a quick mission analysis, the 10th Mountain Division headquarters knew there would be

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The number of C-141 sorties available per day [dropped by half] . . . as the division began to plan its deployment sequence for air and sea shipment. . . This forced a reallocation of high-priority items from deployment by air to deployment by sea [after] the routine items had already been loaded on the first ship.

numerous implied missions. The end state we envisioned was an environment where humanitarian agencies and UN peacekeepers could effectively conduct humanitarian relief efforts without our presence and support. Later, the Army ended up with responsibility for four of the nine HRSs: Kismayu, Baledogle, Baidoa and Marka. It was an area that exceeded 21,000 square miles and was marked with major conflicts between warlords and faction leaders.

In addition to the 10,325 Army troops, we were blessed with some very strong support

from our friends and allies: 779 Belgian troops working as part of Task Force (TF) *Kismayo* under Brigadier General Lawson Magruder, assistant division commander for Operations,

Operations tended to be complex, with numerous players (joint, combined, political and NGOs) involved and great uncertainty as to who the "good guys" were. UNITAF spent a great deal of time learning more about the clans, the sub-clans, the political factions, the warlords, the local clan elders, sultans and history. It became apparent that history was not on our side.

10th Mountain Division; 1,267 Royal Moroccan troops, initially working for Colonel Kip Ward, commander, 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, in Baledogle (later the Belgians and Moroccans assumed total control of these sectors and continued their missions under UN Operation *Somalia* [UNOSOM] II); the 1st Battalion/Royal Australian Regiment (1,141 strong) controlled HRS Baidoa, having assumed that mission from the Marines in mid-January 1993, and coming under command and control (C²) of TF *Mountain*, the Army Forces (ARFOR) headquarters (see figure).

Prior to deployment, planning was difficult due to the scarcity of both time and good information. We did not know a great deal about Somalia and knew even less about the intentions of the warlords. Would they fight us? Would they resist in less overt ways? How good were they as warriors? We received very little detailed, current intelligence preparation of the battlefield from national and higher-level sources, so we went out quickly to get some expertise. Andy Natsios from the OFDA gave us great insights on the country. Lieutenant Colonel John P. Abizaid, having worked the peace enforcement problem during Operation *Provide Comfort* in northern Iraq, helped us better understand operations other than war. Additionally, our recent experience in Florida during Hurricane Andrew relief operations had been a valuable learning experience. A further complication was that the data from the Russian 1:100,000 maps did not match the US 1:250,000 series that would be used by pilots—making it impossible to use grids for close air support or other calls for fire. The latitude/longitude system would have to suffice until updated maps could be printed.

Restore Hope was more complex than normal joint and combined operations. Not only did all services participate, but we were joined by more than 20 coalition countries. The headquarters for the operation was provided by I Marine Expeditionary Force from Camp Pendleton, California, augmented by additional staff from all

Task Force *Mountain*—*Restore Hope* Troop List

2d Brigade 10th Mountain Division

2d Battalion, 87th Infantry

Task Force *Kismayo* (10th Division Artillery)

3d Battalion, 14th Infantry

10th Aviation Brigade

Task Force 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation

Headquarters and Headquarters Co

B/3–25 Aviation (Assault)

C/7–158 Aviation (Assault)

3–17 Recon Squadron

7–159 Aviation Intermediate Maint Co (–)

E/25 Aviation Intermediate Maint Co (–)

10th Division Support Command

210 Forward Support Battalion

710 Main Support Battalion

200 Supply Detachment

59th Chemical Company (–)

Division Troops

10th Signal Battalion (+)

110th Military Intelligence Battalion (–)

3–62 Air Defense Battalion (–)

PSYOP Support Element/4th PSYOP Group

Civil Affairs Teams/96th Civil Affairs Battalion

41st Engineer Battalion

36th Engineer Group

430 Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy)

642 Combat Support Equipment Co

63 Combat Support Equipment Co

10th Military Police Company

511th Military Police Company

720th Military Police Battalion

571st Military Police Company

978th Military Police Company

280th Military Police Detachment (CID)

60th Military Police Detachment (CID)

711th Postal Company (–)

129th Postal Company (–)

10th Personnel Service Company

33d Finance Support Unit

27th Public Affairs Team

28th Public Affairs Team

10th Target Acquisition Detachment (–)

10th Liaison Detachment

Long-Range Surveillance Detachment

548th Supply and Services Battalion

**1st Battalion Royal Australian Regt
Royal Moroccan Forces**

1st Paratrooper Battalion (Belgium)

services to form United Task Force (UNITAF) Somalia. Additionally, 49 different humanitarian agencies—NGOs with worldwide commitments, were key players, creating requirements for liaison, coordination and cooperation. Each of these organizations had a different view toward the use of military forces; coordination would not be easy and cooperation would not be automatic.

Complexity was increased by the essential interaction with the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development and OFDA. Ambassador Robert Oakley played a major role in all operations. Even so, there were not adequate State Department or other diplomatic personnel in-theater to help in each HRS, so our leaders also became involved in negotiations and disarmament talks with warlords and faction leaders. The UN was also a major player in the operation, since they would eventually take over all operations under UNOSOM II.

These complexities were further multiplied by the extreme dangers that existed in Somalia. Weapons, from small arms to crew served, were everywhere. Our soldiers were in the line of fire on a daily basis and had to be ever vigilant against snipers and ambushes. Since the country had been at war for so long, minefields abounded in the country and most were unmarked. There was no way to identify friendly Somalis from those who would throw rocks or shoot weapons. There was a constant threat of terrorist-type attacks with hand grenades, rifles and indirect fire. The populace seemed easily excitable and could



Generals Arnold and Mohamed Said Hersi (more popularly known as "General Morgan") negotiating in Dhoolbey for the disarmament of Hersi's forces and peaceful coexistence in HRS Kismayu. General Hersi graduated from the Command and General Staff Officer Course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1983.

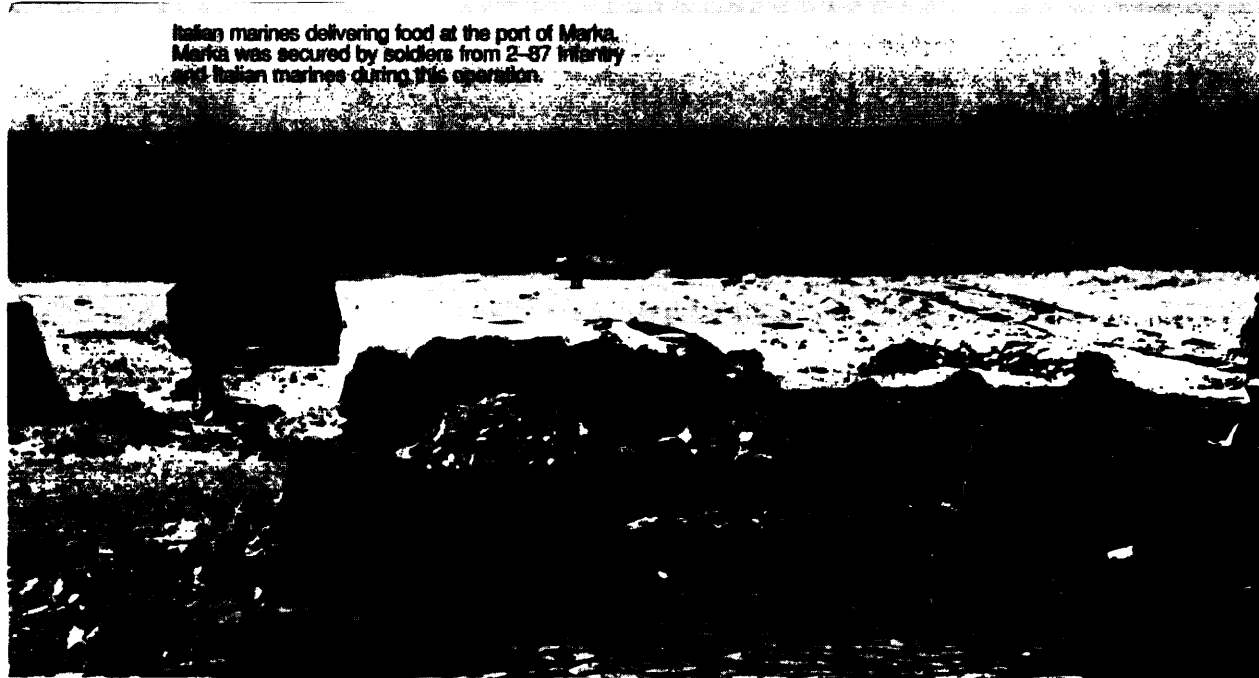
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be incited to participate in civil disturbances rather easily. Operations in crowded streets, villages, and in urban environments of all types made daily life even more dangerous. Other dangers included health and disease worries that caused soldiers to be extremely careful with sanitation and taking their mefloquine and anti-malaria pills. All of these dangers, coupled with the complexities of the operation, made *Restore Hope* a challenge for all our soldiers and leaders.

Deployment

Deploying 7,500 miles into the heavily damaged infrastructure in Somalia was also difficult. Airports were small and several were damaged, limiting strategic airlift primarily to Mogadishu, although some use of Baledogle and Kismayu airfields was possible. Seaports were a disaster and required major efforts to make them fully operational. Ports were not deep enough to

Italian marines delivering food at the port of Marka. Marka was secured by soldiers from 2-87 Infantry and Italian marines during this operation.



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accommodate the Army's pre-positioned ships that carried badly needed supplies, including classes I, IV, V and a deployable medical system hospital.² The number of C-141 sorties available per day to ARFOR changed as the division began to plan its deployment sequence for air and sea shipment. Initially, we had been told to plan on more than 20 sorties per day—we received less than 10 per day. This forced a reallocation of high-priority items from deployment by air to deployment by sea. Since the routine items had already been loaded on the first ship, the higher-priority equipment items that were bumped from the airflow ended up arriving last. The management of the time-phased force deployment data was a daily mission within our headquarters, and it required the full attention of five to seven people, 24 hours a day. Many of the maintenance problems of our air and sea fleets reminded me of our deployment problems during operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*. Clearly, our strategic lift needs revitalizing.

As the deployment began, missions were still unclear. We did not know which coalition part-

ners would participate and when they would arrive. As additional coalition partners' forces arrived and additional pressure was added to expand operations throughout the area of operations, missions changed rapidly. TF 3-14, an infantry battalion task force, was at Griffiss Air Force Base, New York, preparing to board aircraft to deploy to Baledogle airfield, when we gave them a fragmentary order that deployed them directly to Kismayu, approximately 250 miles south of Baledogle. Some of their aircraft had to be diverted while en route to Somalia. Our division artillery headquarters, commanded by Colonel Evan Gaddis, deployed to Kismayu and provided the headquarters for Magruder to direct TF 3-14 and the 1st Para (Belgian) conducting operations in HRS Kismayu.

During the deployment, since the situation was changing so rapidly, there was a constant need for mission analysis. As we conducted this mission analysis, our force was tailored to meet our expanding requirements and the situation on the ground in Somalia. This caused some equipment (such as artillery), that had been loaded on



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trains at Fort Drum, New York, more than 30 days prior to its arrival in Somalia, to be immediately back-loaded and returned to the United States. The challenge was to maintain the appropriate mix of forces and equipment in a rapidly changing, dangerous and complex environment.

Operations

As mentioned earlier, operations tended to be complex, with numerous players (joint, combined, political and NGOs) involved and great uncertainty as to who the "good guys" were. UNITAF spent a great deal of time learning more about the clans, the subclans, the political factions, the warlords, the local clan elders, sultans and history. It became apparent that history was not on our side. For centuries, the Somali warrior had been fiercely independent, uniting with extended family and other subclans only when challenged from external forces; showing some limited loyalties to the clan and demonstrating little, if any, sense of national unity. Even with a common language and religion, homogeneity in Somalia was a myth.

Our battalion commanders became quite knowledgeable on the history and the current political power structure of their assigned areas. We used this collective knowledge and lessons learned to help guide our daily operations. Part

of those daily operations was the requirement for better security throughout the area of operations. To achieve this more secure environment, we established four "NOs" (simple to translate, easy to remember): no bandits, no technicals,* no checkpoints and no visible weapons; such as individuals could not carry weapons in areas we controlled; crew-served weapons or technical vehicles had to be placed in authorized storage sites or be seized.³

Tactical operations were, for the most part, the UNITAF's mission-essential tasks and battle tasks. These included air assaults, cordon and searches, patrolling, tactical motor marches, military operations on urbanized terrain, security operations, road construction and repair, civil affairs operations, psychological operations (PSYOP) and many others. The operations were synchronized every day using our standard battlefield operating systems without air defense, since there was no air threat: C², intelligence, fire support, maneuver, mobility,

* The UN is not allowed to hire security forces for protection, which left their personnel in Somalia at great risk. The solution to this dilemma was to not hire security guards, but "technical assistants" (who happen to have machineguns mounted on vehicles) to escort food and personnel. This combined with the Somali word for bandit, which sounds similar to technical, branded the weapon-mounted vehicles as "technical vehicles."

countermobility and survivability and combat service support. We added three operating systems that were unique to our situation in Somalia: force protection—to deal with the many

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dangers in-country to include health challenges; external coordination—to help deal with all the various players impacting on each operation; and information dissemination—aimed at the people, the clans and factions. Information was scarce and tended to be politically charged propaganda disseminated by the factions. PSYOP teams, a newspaper, radio, leaflet drops, personal contacts and other means were key to countering wild claims by warlords.

Our operations ranged from brigade-size combat operations to squad-size patrols and convoy escorts. For example, on 28 December, we conducted a joint and combined operation to introduce forces in the Belet Uen area, over 150 miles from Baledogle. TF 2-87, an infantry battalion task force, and the 1st Canadian Airborne Battle Group under the C² of our Commando Brigade moved two battalions of soldiers more than 150 miles. On 26 December, 15 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from Europe were off-loaded in Mogadishu and within 48 hours, 13 aircraft flew this air assault operation. This operation was preceded by a visit to the area by Oakley and a leaflet drop to let the Somalis know the soldier's mission was to provide security for the distribution of relief supplies. This operation included the support of naval aircraft from the USS *Kitty Hawk*, additional lift helicopter (CH-53) support from the Marines, Canadian Air Force C-130s to fly troops and relief supplies, reconnaissance by

special operations forces (SOF) and imagery from the Navy. All of this was conducted in an area totally inaccessible by road and well outside the normal communications capability of our units. The operation was executed flawlessly. This is a great example of the joint, coalition and interagency operations that occurred throughout *Restore Hope*.

Our infantry and military police squads, platoons and companies conducted mission-essential tasks throughout the operation. They conducted mounted and dismounted patrolling. They engaged Somali bandits many times (sometimes at less than 25 meters), and most engagements were within an urban environment. These operations were driven by the intelligence collected through human intelligence (HUMINT) sources. Our counterintelligence teams, with linguists and SOF teams, provided excellent HUMINT sources. Our soldiers were required to shift rapidly from assisting the Somali people to conducting combat operations, sometimes within seconds. Extensive training, individual restraint and appropriate rules of engagement (ROE) made these operations successful.

Key to our operations were the ROEs. Our division staff judge advocate, working with experienced operators, drafted a great deal of the ROEs that were adopted by UNITAF for all forces. While there were necessary limitations in the ROEs, they were the most liberal I have ever seen for a UN-sponsored operation since the Korean conflict. ROEs of this type, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, are essential for peacemaking or peace enforcement operations.⁴

Other operations during *Restore Hope* included the extensive use of aviation assets, both lift and attack, throughout all phases of the operation. There were 32 UH-60s, 8 AH-1s and 10 OH-58 helicopters assigned to the 10th Aviation Brigade, which was commanded by Colonel Mike Dallas. These assets provided the ARFOR commander the versatility, mobility and firepower required to conduct operations.

The ARFOR combat service support operation was obviously a tremendously complex mission. With no infrastructure in Somalia, everything required by the ARFOR had to be brought into Somalia. The 10th Division Sup-

port Command (DISCOM), commanded by Colonel Michor Gentemann, devised and executed a masterful plan to support the force, including operations with the Marine support elements and with the Joint Task Force Support Command. DISCOM conducted initial arrival operations for all ARFOR soldiers and their equipment. The DISCOM was able to maintain services for all forces assigned to the ARFOR.

A good communications system is an essential component of any operation. The 10th Signal Battalion did a magnificent job in integrating the assets of 12 signal battalions and more than 600 personnel to provide an effective theater communications package.

Political negotiation was an area that required extensive coordination. The ARFOR was involved in negotiations with clan elders in each small town and village. Helping the elders establish a council, assisting in the organization of security forces and empowering the elders to take charge were all tasks that were required within each village or community. ARFOR personnel also conducted direct negotiations with warring faction leaders within each HRS and attempted to establish a dialogue between the factions, as well as establish a process for disarmament. Disarmament was one of those missions that was added to the plate as the Somalis began their own peace negotiation process with the Addis Ababa agreements in January.

A resurgent market economy. Most trade has ceased until the arrival of US and coalition forces.



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In my view, the center of gravity of the operation in Somalia is the erosion of the independent power of the warlords. This center of gravity was true in December and still holds true today as UNOSOM II conducts operations in Somalia. This can be accomplished voluntarily, as warlords join in a coalition, confederation or some form of national government, or it can be done involuntarily as military situations arise. Regardless, it must take place if Somalia is ever to return to some form of normalcy and attempt to rule itself. Obviously, it is not a simple task.

Today, the 10th Mountain Division is providing a quick reaction force, commanded by Colonel Jim Campbell, to support UNOSOM II.⁵ We are preparing to deploy a third rotation of forces to Somalia. The initial deployment included over half the division, and the next two rotations have provided the quick reaction force.



Weapons captured in daily operations by Belgian and US forces in Kismayu.

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Although not wearing blue berets, since they are still under the operational control of the US Central Command, this force has played a key role in UNOSOM II operations since the UN's assumption of the mission on 4 May 1993.

Lessons Learned⁶

- Operations other than war can be more complex than conventional operations. Be prepared for crash courses on the country, the people, and the political, economic and military situation.
- Operations at company level and below tend to be right out of tactical field and drill manuals, with some rules of engagement constraints. Battalion commanders and higher tend to be "stretched" a little beyond conventional operations due to the complexities and the many "players" involved in operations other than war.
- Clarity of mission and desired end state will not always be provided, requiring a careful analysis and restating the mission and establishing a draft end state and supporting military conditions for approval up the chain of command. Also, assessment criteria and a system for evaluating them must be instituted to evaluate the military conditions established to meet

the desired end states.

- Strategic air- and sealift need revitalization. The C-141 and C-5 fleet have been "ridden hard and put up wet" for the last several years. So has our sea transport fleet.
- Integration of SOF: ODAs, civil affairs and PSYOP are great combat multipliers—very effective in Somalia. By the way, when civil affairs teams are not available, fall back on the doctrinal manuals; they are excellent.
- Some "mission creep" is inevitable in operations other than war.⁷ Understanding intent and working toward an agreed end state is the key. Some nation assistance at the grass-roots level became necessary in Somalia, although it was not an assigned mission. As we look at Bosnia and other potential hot spots, some of this would be necessary regardless of desires to limit the commitment.
- A division-level headquarters can serve as an ARFOR headquarters with limited augmentation. The 10th Mountain Division has served as an ARFOR headquarters now for two operations and has been very successful. Our doctrine needs to begin to address this requirement for a division headquarters.

- Well-trained, combat-ready, disciplined soldiers can easily adapt to peacekeeping or peace enforcement missions. Train them for war; they adapt quickly and easily to Somalia-type situations.

- Versatile units with flexible leaders (especially battalion commanders and up) are able to adjust to the complexities faced in operations other than war—we are blessed with some great colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors in our army. I cannot say enough about them and the job they have done in Somalia.

What Did We Accomplish?

The cycle of starvation in Somalia has been broken. Except for isolated incidents, the food emergency is over. Factions have turned in many of their crew-served weapons, and disarmament talks are being conducted. Community elders, the traditional leaders of Somalia, have been re-empowered. Marketplaces have opened and are thriving, while many displaced people and refugees are moving back to their homes, villages and farms. Army engineers, primarily the 36th Engineer Group commanded by Colonel Phil Anderson, reopened more than 1,200 kilometers of roads, built or repaired three Bailey bridges and conducted countermining operations to make this resettlement possible. Additionally, the

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Somali agriculture system is reviving after major help from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, Save The Children and others, while the Army and other forces, such as our Australian, Moroccan and Belgian partners, provided security for irrigation canal repairs, tool and seed distribution.

We have come very close to establishing the right environment to enable the Somalis to arrive at a “*Somali solution*.” The majority of Somalis have welcomed coalition forces, under UNITAF and now under UNOSOM II, as their protectors and salvation while Somalia is on the road to recovery. The last stumbling block is the power of the warlords. They must join together, combining their power for the collective good of all, or individually, they must lose their power. Only then will Somalia be on the road to full recovery. **MR**

NOTES

1. UN Operation Somalia (UNOSOM) II followed UNOSOM I, which was present in Somalia as forces landed on D-day. UNOSOM I had a headquarters in Somalia, as well as a battalion of Pakistani soldiers on the airfield in Mogadishu.

2. Since the deployable medical system (DEPMEDS) could not be offloaded, additional airlift had to be assigned to deploy the entire 86th Evacuation Hospital from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, rather than just deploying its personnel.

3. The UN is not allowed to hire security forces for protection, which left UN personnel in Somalia at great risk. The solution to the security dilemma was to hire “technical assistants” who happened to have machineguns mounted on vehicles to escort food and personnel. This, combined with the Somali word for bandit, which sounds similar to technical, branded the weapon-mounted vehicles as technical vehicles.

4. The Charter of the UN, dated 26 June 1945, provides for several types of operations. Chapter VI provides for the “Pacific Settlement of Disputes,” which requires very restrictive rules of engagement (ROE) for forces assigned, usually limited to basic self-defense tenets and use of force to disengage from hostile acts. Chapter VII provides for UN “Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression,” and, as such, provides an ROE that allows offensive-type operations that give commanders flexibility to implement governing UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR). In Operation *Restore Hope*, for example, UNSCR 794 mandated coalition forces to use “all

necessary means to establish, as soon as possible, a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.”

5. The quick reaction force is composed of an infantry battalion, a composite aviation battalion (15 UH-60s, 8 AH-1s, 6 OH-58s and 2 OH-58Ds), a forward-support battalion, a brigade headquarters and other supporting assets for a total of approximately 1,175 personnel.

6. Mission creep is a phenomena we found in Florida during Hurricane Andrew relief and experienced again in Somalia. Our initial operation was to provide security. As the operation developed, we assisted in standing up councils and governments, rebuilt schools and orphanages, conducted disarmament of warring factions, taught English in schools, repaired and built roads and provided assistance in many other ways. Some of this mission creep was directed, some was self-initiated. We found that our soldiers needed to see the effects of what they were doing. Getting them to assist in orphanages, schools, feeding centers and in other projects was one way of helping them see the importance of their mission. Additionally, to have any credibility with local leaders, we needed the flexibility to address the problems of their respective communities.

7. Further information on lessons learned and after-action comments are contained in the US Army Forces, Somalia After-Action Review Summary, published 2 June 1993 by the 10th Mountain Division or contact the 10th Mountain Division G3 (Operations) for information on *Restore Hope*.

Major General S. L. Arnold is the assistant deputy chief of staff of Operations, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. He served as the Army Force's commander for Operation Restore Hope and also for relief operations conducted in Florida following Hurricane Andrew. He was the commander, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Fort Drum, New York, and has served in a variety of command and staff assignments and was the Army Forces US Central Command G3 during Operation Desert Storm. He is a graduate of the US Military Academy, the Air Force Command and Staff College and the US Army War College, and he holds master's degrees from Auburn University and the University of Southern California.