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**HUMANITARIAN AID
IN SOMALIA:
THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE
OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER
ASSISTANCE (OFDA)
1990-1994**

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
FHA/OFDA POLICY ROLE DURING THE SOMALIA CRISIS	2
♦ FHA/OFDA Leadership in Moving USG Toward Major Response	2
♦ FHA/OFDA Role in USG Inter-Agency Policy-Making	4
♦ FHA/OFDA Policy Role Regarding U.N. and Multilateral Agencies	7
♦ Food for Peace Program	8
♦ Other USG Agencies Involved in Somalia	9
GENERAL ISSUES: OFDA's RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS	11
♦ Balancing Competing Emergencies	11
♦ Balancing Relief Responses	12
♦ Ensuring Adequate Data	13
♦ OFDA Information and Advocacy Roles	14
♦ OFDA Political Roles	14
OFDA FIELD ROLE AND FUNCTIONING IN SOMALIA	16
♦ Special OFDA Relief Coordinator	16
♦ Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)	17
♦ Funding Relief Activities	22

CONTENTS

(Continued)

OFDA's STANCE ON APPROACHES TO RELIEF	23
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ENDNOTES	29
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ANNEXES

SOURCES

- A-1 Brief Chronology of Somalia Crisis and International Responses, 1990-1994**
- A-2 List of People Interviewed**
- A-3 U.S. Congressional Action on Somalia, 1990-1994**

STATISTICAL TABLES

- B-1 U.S. Government Assistance to Somalia (Non-Military)-FY 1991-1994**
- B-2 U.S. AID/OFDA In-Kind Grants for Somalia Emergency FY 1991-94**
- B-3 U.S. Food Commodities Going to Somalia FY 1991-1994**
- B-4 U.S. Department of Defense Expenditures in Somalia FY 1992-1994**
- B-5 Summary of Total USG Expenditures in Somalia, April 1992 to July 1994**
- B-6 Total Funding Through U.N. Agencies for Somalia, 1992-1993**
- B-7 U.N. Somalia Operations: Financial Components**
- B-8 Contributions by Member States to U.N. Operations in Somalia**
- B-9 Select Relief Agency Spending and Activities in Somalia**

INTRODUCTION

In analyzing how the Bureau of Food and Humanitarian Aid (FHA), recently renamed the Bureau of Humanitarian Response (BHR), responded to and helped shape U.S. Government (USG) policy toward the Somalia crisis, the following focuses almost exclusively on OFDA, as it was the primary USG agency responding to all phases of the humanitarian emergency. Given that AID's Africa Bureau replaced OFDA with a Somalia mission in March 1993, this discussion essentially focuses on the period prior to that date. OFDA did continue to provide funding for continuing emergency as well as rehabilitation and recovery activities after March 1993, but policy and operational responsibilities significantly decreased.

This addendum, supplementing the broader examination of international humanitarian response in Somalia presented earlier, reviews specifically how OFDA (and, more briefly, Food for Peace)(FFP) functioned both in the policy and operational spheres, and suggests recommendations to be drawn from that experience.¹

FHA/OFDA POLICY ROLE DURING THE SOMALIA CRISIS

FHA/OFDA Leadership in Moving USG Toward Major Response

Despite clear warning signs during 1990-91 of a famine emergency to come, Somalia fell victim to U.S. Government (USG) diplomatic neglect. This was due to several factors: multiple post-Cold War crises competing for government attention and resources (especially the Gulf War and humanitarian emergencies in the former USSR); lack of a clear national interest in Somalia; and a Presidential election campaign dominated by domestic priorities. A major problem for OFDA proved to be focusing the attention of State Department and National Security Council (NSC) leadership on Somalia.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Herman Cohen first declared Somalia a civil strife disaster in March 1991, two months after fighting forced the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu to close. Other than State's Political Officer John Fox, who continued to monitor Somalia developments from Nairobi following the January Embassy evacuation, OFDA was the sole U.S. Government agency to maintain ongoing if limited direct contact. This was done through Special Relief Coordinator Jan Westcott who tracked on-the-ground events and relief efforts there during 1991 and most of 1992. Travelling into Somalia at some personal risk, Westcott became a primary USG source of information on the unfolding crisis. Her ongoing monitoring of political developments, humanitarian needs, and NGO activities provided the basis for OFDA's directing early relief aid in 1991 and early 1992 to the few agencies operational there: principally ICRC, SCF-U.K., MSF-France, CARE, UNICEF and WFP.

Other than OFDA and FFP -- and on a limited basis State's Bureau for Refugee Programs -- the USG largely did not react to the rising tide of Somali deaths, and even OFDA and other international responses during 1991 and early 1992 were too little, too late. From early 1992 on, some Members of Congress -- led by Senators Simon and Kassebaum and Congressman Tony Hall -- had repeatedly urged the Administration to lead a major international effort to reverse the deteriorating situation in Somalia. In the end, it was hard data on health conditions and mortality rates, NGO advocacy, and major

media coverage of the crisis as a moral and electoral issue that convinced the Administration to commit significantly more attention and resources to the effort.

Despite a largely disinterested AID Administrator during 1991-92², OFDA and FHA provided strong, articulate, activist leadership that was key in moving a distracted White House toward greater involvement. One can largely define FHA's response to the Somalia crisis in the person of Andrew Natsios who became its head in December 1991, having earlier directed OFDA. Natsios became a highly visible *animateur* of USG response to Somalia's suffering. He and his OFDA successor James Kunder actively reached out to media and NGOs and frequently testified before Congress and briefed Members and their staffs.³ Their efforts -- combined with an ever-worsening situation in Somalia, pleas by ICRC, and growing public pressure -- moved State to set up a Somalia Working Group in late July 1992 and President Bush to designate Natsios on August 14 as his special emergency coordinator for Somalia. This gave FHA greater scope to forcefully advocate increased relief assistance.

Still, the USG's and other donors' response was too slow to prevent the majority of deaths, most of which occurred between late 1991 and September 1992. The irony is that FAO/WFP early warning systems, devised in response to the terrible famine in Ethiopia in 1984-85, worked for Somalia. Africa-based wire services regularly reported imminent food crop failures and growing starvation in Somalia as these developed in 1991-92. But the U.S., U.N., and European Community's responses were inexcusably slow when matched against the urgency of need and upward trajectory of death rates during that period.⁴

Several observers note that Natsios, who had actively sought a greater ICRC presence in Somalia immediately following an October 1991 meeting with an ICRC representative, shortly became preoccupied with humanitarian efforts in the former USSR, with the result that Somalia slipped in priority. In November 1991, OFDA agreed to second staff member Joseph Gettier to be the U.N.'s field operations director in Somalia through the U.N. Disaster and Relief Organization, but the U.N. security officer vetoed the proposal, suggesting the situation on the ground was too fragile.⁵ Gettier, recalling subsequent efforts to urge deployment of a DART and CDC health experts in early 1992, feels the U.S. "should have gone in five or six months before we did."⁶

Ultimately, in mid-August 1992, the White House dramatically boosted the U.S. response by initiating a Department of Defense (DOD) food airlift, *Operation Provide Relief*. The President's decision reflected in some part the success of OFDA inter-agency "lobbying", as well as its advocacy on Capital Hill and with the media.

A recommendation emerging from the above is that AID and the State Department should explore the implementation of a "trip-wire" mechanism whereby reliable early warnings of humanitarian crises would trigger earlier U.S. -- as well as U.N. -- efforts to pre-empt or avert a full-blown crisis. Particularly in complex emergencies, such pre-emptive efforts should include both collaborative multilateral relief responses as well as active diplomacy in politically-charged situations where civil conflict is a key threat to food availability.

FHA/OFDA Role in USG Inter-Agency Policy-Making

OFDA/AID Relations

The institutional cultures of OFDA and the rest of AID occasionally clashed over Somalia, although to a relatively limited extent. Ironically, one source noted that as a "humanitarian RDF [Rapid Deployment Force]", OFDA -- with an interventionist, expatriate-based "quick response" mandate similar to the military's -- often sided with the military and NSC in early inter-agency meetings on Somalia.⁷ An American "quick fix" mentality seemed to pervade both the military and, to a lesser extent, OFDA, too.⁸ Only later did OFDA seem to become more sensitive to AID's perceived need to use and strengthen local capacity to ensure sustainability of early recovery.⁹ That said, OFDA, non-OFDA AID staff, and NGOs alike all emphasized their generally good working relations with one another.¹⁰

OFDA's role as a financing mechanism for post-March 1993 AID activities demonstrates one way in which OFDA's greater organizational flexibility and readier budget availability were harnessed creatively to overcome AID's bureaucratic constraints. One source noted that confusion remains over which agency bears primary responsibility for rehabilitation, midway between OFDA's emergency role and AID's development focus.¹¹ With complex emergencies continuing far longer than natural disasters traditionally addressed by OFDA, and with increasing budget limits in other parts of AID, OFDA is being drawn into longer-term involvement in what might seem an oxymoron, "chronic emergencies." OFDA has recently engaged in trying to better define the steps and timing for shifting from its relief activities to AID rehabilitation and development initiatives within such emergencies.¹²

Still, OFDA and AID need to define in more precise, clear, and operational terms what array of "relief", "recovery" and "rehabilitation" activities will be fundable by

OFDA and in what timeframes. The newly-created Office of Transitional Issues (OTI) within BHR -- designed, it appears, to be the OFDA of political crises and transitions -- has highlighted the need to clarify how to define emergency program parameters in both their humanitarian and political dimensions, and the implications thereof for the respective AID offices.

OFDA/Military Relations

U.S. military involvement with Somalia, combined with the August 27, 1992 appointment of a special diplomatic envoy there, upgraded DOD and State Department stakes in the inter-agency policy dialogue. Combined with the President's new engagement, it moved the NSC, in turn, to assume a larger role in coordinating policy discussions.¹³ As contingency planning for greater direct USG intervention in Somalia advanced during October and early November, the primary locus of policy dialogue shifted even more to the NSC-JCS-dominated Deputies Committee. All this diluted OFDA's efforts to ensure that humanitarian objectives retained their priority amidst political and military concerns; security requirements soon came to dominate the overall international relief strategy as well as OFDA's strategy. As one AID staffer noted: "The DOD is sort of king. Once they go in, forget it."¹⁴ To cite a few examples of the difficulties encountered:

- ◆ The DOD tended to exclude civilian agencies, including OFDA, from planning.¹⁵
- ◆ DOD's command over massive resources -- unlike the limited ones on which OFDA or relief NGOs could expect to draw -- reinforced its preference for a "massive response" approach to Somalia, which in turn led to an over-emphasis on the need to "secure" Mogadishu.
- ◆ DOD became inevitably preoccupied with protecting its troops, which some NGOs felt made concern for security an end in itself and deflected attention from the humanitarian priorities that were the original rationale for the intervention.¹⁶
- ◆ The military view of Somalia as an "easier" intervention site than Bosnia was rooted in an overly narrow focus on military factors such as logistics and terrain and an underestimation of the equal complexity of Somali social and cultural factors. An AID observer, noting some military

planners' limited understanding of third world realities and impatience with AID analyses, recalls seeing DOD planning charts that omitted Somali responses to the UNITAF intervention in identifying those factors crucial to UNITAF's success.¹⁷

Natsios' and Kunder's military backgrounds helped somewhat to bridge the military-civilian gap at the top.¹⁸ But the gap became more acutely visible in the field. Some noted that problems arose when OFDA staff were not present when UNITAF made decisions affecting relief operations.¹⁹ Others recalled the military's penchant for doing "everything in secret", which sometimes contributed to long security clearance delays that impeded NGO relief work (e.g. by excluding some NGO staff from access to the port or airport).²⁰

As the NSC began actively coordinating the launch of UNITAF beginning in mid-October, tension grew between the State Department, which sought a higher profile policy role, and OFDA, which had assisted significantly in coordinating the DOD airlift and, absent an embassy, effectively run the overall U.S. presence in Somalia. This was played out both in Washington -- in disagreements over who should chair task force meetings, Natsios or Ambassador Brandon Grove²¹ -- and in the field, where DART members recall being pressured to route all reports through more 'secure' diplomatic channels rather than directly back to OFDA.²² One staffer noted that OFDA was increasingly excluded "from the loop" of State/NSC/JCS decision-making once UNITAF went in.²³ State's Office of Political-Military Affairs (PM), which played a key role in interfacing between State (including FHA/OFDA) and DOD, and which had played a key role in pushing the NSC to act in early November, was apparently also denied access to information on early military contingency planning.²⁴ OFDA's increasingly marginal role in decision-making circles was related not only to the quite different institutional cultures of OFDA and DOD, but also to the massive disparity in staff size. OFDA did not, and still does not, have sufficient core staff to more fully participate in broader policy and operations discussions with DOD and NSC.²⁵ Placing an OFDA representative permanently at the Pentagon, and at the relevant U.S. military command in advance of and during a humanitarian intervention by U.S. troops, could greatly improve communication and help ensure the primacy of humanitarian goals.

Advance Planning of Crisis Response

FHA/OFDA, the U.S. military and the State Department have all identified the need for more advance planning in order to improve NGO-military coordination and

reduce the type of misunderstandings that occurred in Somalia.²⁶ Defining agencies' varying objectives, roles and mandates, scopes of activity and authorities with respect to each other, as well as reaching agreement on ground rules for collaboration and information sharing, are key to improving the effectiveness of relief efforts. This is especially so for crises like Somalia which are chronic in nature, apt to pass through several phases where political and military initiatives may fluctuate in intensity, and where the U.S. has significant political constraints (e.g. lack of vital national interest or generalized domestic opposition to major overseas commitments).

At an operational level, various military services and commands have begun to revise existing, or develop new, training manuals and programs for humanitarian intervention to reflect greater focus on relief priorities and support for NGO activities.²⁷ In addition, inter-agency review and definitions of operating principles, realistic short- to long-term objectives, and criteria of success are needed to guide future relief agency-military collaboration. To ensure adequate coordination and advance planning at both policy and operational levels, OFDA needs to be represented at every major military and political "decision point" prior to, as well as during the launching of a humanitarian intervention.²⁸

FHA/OFDA Policy Role: U.N. and Multilateral Agencies

While the State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) and U.S. Mission to the U.N. (USUN) were the routine channels for USG policy interaction with the U.N. on Somalia, as on other issues, FHA/OFDA increasingly became involved, as well. When factional fighting in Mogadishu worsened significantly in mid-November 1991 following months of inconclusive but escalating conflict, Natsios led the USUN in a demarche to other donors to back expanding ICRC activities in Somalia. From December 1991 through the spring of 1992, Natsios criticized U.N. inaction and argued for expanding its role in Somalia -- even as the State Department simultaneously sought at the Security Council to limit the scale of U.N. action for budgetary reasons (and also because Somalia was not considered important to U.S. national interests).²⁹ Noting the lack of coordination between OFDA and the political decision-makers in State at the time, Garvelink later observed that "we [OFDA] were going off in one direction, and didn't realize the political folks were going in another."³⁰ Since then, OFDA has been allowed more access to USUN cable traffic and IO now insists that political, humanitarian, and military agencies of the USG jointly attend meetings at the U.N. on humanitarian intervention.³¹

During the Mombasa DOD airlift, OFDA found itself unable to collaborate meaningfully with the U.N. because of a lack of U.N. ground staff in Mombasa. The advent of UNITAF, however, brought OFDA into direct, ongoing collaboration with UNOSOM/Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) structures in Somalia itself. Because of bureaucratic delays in recruiting, funding, and deploying U.N. personnel on the ground, OFDA's DART soon assumed the task of liaising between NGOs, the U.N., international organizations, and UNITAF military structures in Mogadishu (where it participated in daily meetings with relief agencies and UNITAF on security and other issues) and in the famine areas of central and southern Somalia (where DART members interceded with local elders and UNITAF contingent commanders on behalf of relief NGOs). OFDA/DART placed these efforts under U.N. auspices -- holding the daily briefings at U.N. premises -- in order to help build up the visibility of UNOSOM's humanitarian component. Other contributions to this objective were to partially fund U.N.-convened donors' conferences in Addis Ababa, to offer to upgrade the equipment of the U.N. Special Relief Coordinator's Nairobi office (an offer that was rejected), and in spring 1992 to help draft job specifications for recruiting UNOSOM II humanitarian personnel.³²

Food for Peace Program (FFP)

While not a major focus of this study, FFP's Emergency Office (FFP/E) -- usually overshadowed by OFDA -- was in fact an essential source of food aid for relief agencies working in Somalia. By some estimates, it channeled to WFP 50-60 percent of the food aid which the latter distributed in Somalia.³³ OFDA's role was often to fund distribution costs as well as supplementary food when other food aid ran out.³⁴

In general FFP did not play a major role in determining policies of the overall U.S. humanitarian response to Somalia. Yet if it had not been able to supply USDA stocks of food grains under PL 480, WFP, ICRC, and NGO food distributors could have made little impact on the famine. As Natsios' interim successor at FHA noted, "FFP didn't get much credit [for what they did in Somalia] compared to OFDA, but they should have".³⁵ FFP/E is responsible for distributing almost \$400 million in annual food aid with a staff of only four (plus one seconded from the U.S. Agriculture Department (USDA)).³⁶

In past emergencies like Somalia, FFP provided surplus U.S. food stocks, available through Agriculture Department crop subsidy programs, to U.N. and other

international organizations, as well as to NGOs. This may be less possible in the future, however, as new global trade treaties require the USG to reduce or end current crop subsidies to U.S. farmers which help pay for such stocks.³⁷ Combined with a poor U.S. grain crop in 1993, it means that OFDA and food relief agencies may have to rely on open market purchase of food for emergency use. While this will likely boost efficiency and effectiveness by enabling more regional and local food purchases than previously allowed under FFP regulations, the need to purchase in cash for foreign aid allocations will likely result in a significantly lower level of food available to the relief community and may affect non-food resources as well. FFP should consider a detailed study of the projected impact on emergency responses of such changes in the U.S. food subsidy structure, with special attention as to effects on response time and pipeline difficulties.

Other USG Agencies Involved in Somalia

Without attempting to analyze in any depth other USG agencies' contributions to the Somalia relief effort, it is important to briefly note which ones directly assisted or significantly complemented OFDA's efforts:

- ◆ The Disaster Assistance Support Program of the U.S. Forest Service's Office of International Forestry has played a vital role in OFDA functioning through its seconding of staff on a more or less permanent basis since 1985.³⁸ Their role has been to develop emergency management skills and procedures within OFDA, host countries, and international organizations. Forest Service staff introduced OFDA to the concept of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), based originally on the system established for rapid response to forest fires in the U.S. Nine Forest Service staff served on DARTs deployed in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Mogadishu to provide rapid coordination of U.S. food aid and other relief efforts to Somalia.³⁹
- ◆ As noted earlier, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been the primary source of all U.S. surplus food aid. While FFP/E (under Title II) allocates the bulk of such aid going to emergencies, USDA -- under Section 416 -- also allocates some directly. During 1993, USDA Section 416 food accounted for 43% of all U.S. food aid allocated to Somalia.⁴⁰

- ◆ The State Department's Bureau of Refugee Programs (RP) was a major funder, to the tune of \$68.5 million during FY 1991-94, for the almost 1 million Somalis who fled to Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, and other countries.⁴¹

- ◆ Since August 1992 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) assisted OFDA and UNICEF by deploying 4-man teams to Somalia on a rotating basis. Two, funded by OFDA, were assigned to DART and two to UNICEF to conduct public health assessments and track the spread of disease in order to pinpoint areas where health resources should be focused.

GENERAL ISSUES: OFDA'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

A major player in the international community's response to the Somalia crisis, OFDA won high marks from many NGOs, U.N. agencies and other donors both for its prompt funding of relief activities, especially from mid-1992 on, and for its technical assistance via DART operations in the field. But it still encountered difficulties in accurately calibrating the scale and scope of Somalia's emergency in time to ensure appropriate and timely responses. Overwhelmed by the severity of Somalia's needs, OFDA found it difficult to ensure that other serious emergencies received sufficient USG attention, raising the question of how it sets priorities for response among emerging crises around the world.

In fact, OFDA operates on a "pull" system, whereby relief aid is based largely on actual needs as determined by field assessments.⁴² However, because assessments usually lag behind actual need levels, such a system can delay aid in crises where the needs are so great that only rapid flooding of a country with food is likely to undercut incentives to hold relief supplies hostage to commercial, political, or security concerns.⁴³ Absent NGOs or other groups capable of conducting needs assessments, OFDA has deployed DART members in the field to carry them out, as well as to assist with food delivery and local relief coordination, as needed.

Balancing Competing Emergencies

OFDA's focus on Somalia became increasingly intense, especially during 1992 and early 1993, when the country became the beneficiary of OFDA's largest program since the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s. From 1991 through mid-April 1994, OFDA spent almost \$84 million on Somalia relief efforts. Added to almost \$150 million in food aid from Food For Peace, \$68.5 million from Refugee Programs and \$14 million from AID/Africa Bureau during that same period, the overall USG funds spent on humanitarian relief totalled more than \$317 million.⁴⁴ Over 66 OFDA direct hire and contract employee staff working for one of the DART offices, as well as several top OFDA administrators, spent time in the field in Somalia.⁴⁵

This very intensity of focus on Somalia after June 1992, however well-grounded in urgent needs, carried certain costs, especially for victims of other complex emergencies who failed to win equivalent OFDA attention. Because OFDA staff were so preoccupied with Somalia, one NGO noted, the NGO in late 1992 was unable to get OFDA to fully process its approved funding request for southern Sudan -- where more people have died from the compounded effects of civil conflict and drought over several years than in Somalia, Angola, and Bosnia combined.⁴⁶

OFDA has developed a set of criteria -- among them how many lives are imminently at risk -- for deciding to which crises to respond. In the first half of 1992, for example, much staff time was focused on southern Africa where over 22 million people were at risk of starvation due to drought.⁴⁷ But as complex emergencies multiply, OFDA may need to further refine its basis for deciding which competing claims merit most response. In this process, OFDA should look critically at whether politically-based rather than humanitarian needs-based, criteria have caused substantial staff time and resources to be unfairly over-committed to some countries at the expense of others (e.g. to the former USSR over Africa). While OFDA's Somalia program received a specific additional allocation of funds, in emergencies elsewhere OFDA has had to shift monies from other relief programs to enable it to respond, in effect robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Balancing Relief Responses

The overall Somalia relief effort over-emphasized till too late the provision of food over public health assistance. Earlier health assistance would have prevented much of the death toll among Somalis during that same period, as diseases spread due to lack of potable water, vaccinations, and adequate sanitation and health services for those gathered at feeding points and elsewhere.⁴⁸ Indeed, health problems, especially where large population movements and concentrations are generated by insecurity and centralized food delivery, seem to be a standard part of almost all emergencies, yet the relief community rarely seems prepared to deal pre-emptively with them. Part of this imbalance in the mix of relief responses is due to the greater ease and lower government cost of providing food aid, at least when it is an in-kind contribution from surplus national stocks.

While OFDA's funding of health-related programs was larger than that of many other donors, OFDA could have played a greater pro-active role in pressing the international community to respond faster to early signs of health problems in the

inevitable "famine cycle."⁴⁹ In the case of Somalia, civil strife compounded the effects of drought as warring militias destroyed water pumps (or stole them for resale) on a massive scale. OFDA's urging grantees to pay earlier attention to water and health needs could have reduced the loss of life of those who survived famine only to succumb to poor sanitation or lack of potable water. OFDA did fund trauma treatment in Somalia for the first time, but only because "people kept shooting people, so we had to keep doing curative medical care."⁵⁰

Ensuring Adequate Data

While DART members conducted assessments to match available resources to the most urgent *actual* needs, more reliable and accurate methods of extrapolating *future* need levels are needed to compensate for the lag time in aid deployment. Many NGOs in Somalia did not incorporate needs and delivery assessments nor develop mechanisms for timely processing and distribution of resulting data to relevant relief coordinators and donors, as part of their ongoing relief work.⁵¹ Doing so could have helped identify early statistical signs of vulnerability. Such needs monitoring mechanisms, if sufficiently institutionalized, could move donors to expedite speedier shifts in program allocations to better meet a changing needs profile for a famine-affected population.⁵² OFDA should encourage NGOs and the U.N. to implement more effective ongoing needs monitoring capabilities in civil war situations.

OFDA regularly relies on NGOs for most of its information on relief requirements. In the case of Somalia, lack of a constant U.N. or U.S. Embassy presence on the ground as the famine developed further reduced data availability. However, some NGOs' needs estimates may have been exaggerated when given to the media, in order to mobilize or maintain public or donor support, thus providing a poor basis for linking vulnerability levels to appropriate relief responses. OFDA needs to collaborate with relief NGOs, CDC, WFP, ICRC, and other relevant agencies to develop a shared protocol on providing and interpreting reliable and accurate measures of projected need, and better coordinating, sharing, and distributing data from assessments as they are conducted.⁵³

OFDA Information and Advocacy Roles

Particularly as public focus on Somalia grew from May 1992 on, OFDA tended to become the focal point for information within the U.S. government.⁵⁴ Its invaluable "sitreps" provided information on political developments as well as on humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities, for both advocacy and relief delivery purposes. In the media, however, reporters often lack training in disaster relief and military matters,⁵⁵ and are less effective in interpreting what they see, since disasters "usually look, sound and smell worse than they are."⁵⁶ OFDA has used press briefings in Washington to provide information on an emerging crisis to editors and reporters. To increase media responsiveness to early famine warnings, OFDA could initiate measures to sensitize editors to cover complex humanitarian emergencies in their early stages.⁵⁷ OFDA might also want to consider whether, in collaboration with other key emergency relief actors (DHA and NGOs), it could provide reporters and editors with more basic orientation on the genesis and key dilemmas of complex emergencies, on what mortality and other statistics do and do not reveal about the status and likely trajectory of an unfolding crisis, and on how to cover the crisis in the field with minimal disruption of relief work.

OFDA Political Roles

OFDA has played political roles at three levels, two of which have enhanced its humanitarian efforts but one of which may have undermined them. First, OFDA's DARTs had to have sufficient political knowledge to make decisions about what to appropriately fund and to effectively coordinate relief delivery efforts. As Garvelink has noted, "You can't get more political than a civil conflict; everything you do has political ramifications."⁵⁸

OFDA played a second political role, not abnormal in countries where the USG has a functioning embassy, of cooperating with the Ambassador -- in this case Ambassador Oakley -- and giving or withholding aid in ways that buttressed political objectives or sought to make a political point. An example of where this undermined immediate humanitarian objectives was during the airlift where the USG initially refused to fly food aid to Bardera because Aidid had stationed troops there; as part of U.S. efforts to marginalize leaders of armed factions, the USG did not want food aid to bolster his influence. (In the end, when conditions seriously deteriorated, the DART did begin

delivering food to Bardera.)⁵⁹ An opposite example was when Ambassador Peter DeVos asked the DART to deliver food aid to Galcayo, even though there was not serious need.⁶⁰

The third political role played by OFDA was that of advocate both outside and within the USG on relief issues and priorities. As noted above, OFDA's "politics of relief" within the State Department, the U.N., and the relief community was vital to generating support for crisis response efforts in Somalia.

OFDA FIELD ROLE AND FUNCTIONING IN SOMALIA

Special OFDA Relief Coordinator

Effective USG response to an emergency can become much more difficult in situations like Somalia's where insecurity has caused the resident U.S. Embassy and/or AID mission to be closed.⁶¹ Normally, such missions provide important logistical and informational back-up -- as AID's Regional Economic Development Service Office (REDSO) in Nairobi did for OFDA's Somalia efforts -- as well as ongoing monitoring of the local political and relief situation. FHA/OFDA successfully worked around this difficulty by appointing -- to its credit as early as February 1991 -- a competent, highly praised Nairobi-based special relief coordinator, Jan Westcott, to assess relief needs and monitor NGO grants inside Somalia.⁶² Usually appointed to cover an entire region, Somalia represented the first time such a coordinator had been asked to cover only a single country (OFDA has since appointed similar coordinators for Angola, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Zaire).

Deploying Westcott allowed the USG to monitor emergency needs despite the absence of a U.S. diplomatic presence. Her position required substantial Washington backstopping,⁶³ not least to navigate the strong security restrictions on travel into Somalia and to provide ongoing communication, feedback and support so essential to a Personal Service Contractor (PSC) working in a stressful, high-risk area. Indeed, OFDA needs to win more running room from the State Department on such matters as security clearances in order to reduce time lost to bureaucratic procedures, while still maintaining cognizance of legitimate security concerns.

While a PSC is normally less likely than a direct hire to directly influence policy-making, the respect in which Westcott was held won her significant influence in program decision-making (although she failed to persuade OFDA to direct significant relief efforts toward the more peaceful northeast and northwest regions, which had fewer people and less urgent relief needs). She was also asked to do some political reporting beyond that needed to assess humanitarian needs and facilitate operations. This was useful to the USG (which in 1991 lacked continuous on-site intelligence⁶⁴) but risks making OFDA an involuntary adjunct of political priorities.

Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)

The DART model, shaping the functions of team members to the nature of the emergency, has served as a uniquely flexible vehicle enabling OFDA to respond to quite diverse disasters, natural as well as manmade. In Somalia, the DART underwent new challenges, particularly in Mogadishu, regarding its relationship to UNOSOM I and UNITAF. It was called on to undertake several non-traditional DART functions, notably to act (as it did in Iraq) as both buffer and liaison between relief NGOs and the U.S. military, as well as between the former and Somali local leaders, and to fill in for a weak and under-staffed U.N. in both Mogadishu and in the field. The latter role stretched its resources and posed new questions regarding effective collaboration with the U.N. in emergency situations.

DARTs took up different functions in different locations:

- ◆ **The Mombasa DART** provided logistical coordination for the DOD airlift. It interfaced between the two major relief agencies (WFP and ICRC), NGOs, and the U.S. and other military airlifts to prioritize and coordinate relief cargo, and to direct food aid on a daily basis to sufficiently secure locales where there were on-the-ground NGOs able to distribute it. Military and civilian participants noted several problems experienced during the airlift that OFDA and the military need to address,⁶⁵ including confusion between OFDA and military roles, and the military's lack of understanding of U.N., NGO, and ICRC mandates and of the food distribution system.⁶⁶ Unlike in Mogadishu, the DART in Mombasa was a U.S. operation which did not attempt to fit into, and largely bypassed, the U.N. system, in large part due to inadequate U.N. staffing there.⁶⁷
- ◆ **The Nairobi DART** provided overall coordination of the Somalia relief effort, including coordination of communications between the Mombasa airlift and Washington; expediting assessment, review, and funding of relief grant proposals; and liaising with multilateral, bilateral, and NGO donors and relief agencies as well as the U.S. Embassy in Kenya.⁶⁸ AID's Nairobi-based REDSO provided key logistical back-up to the DART's work.

- ◆ **The Mogadishu DART**, set up in December in the wake of UNITAF's arrival, went beyond the traditional, more typical functions of a DART -- logistical coordination of U.S. aid, needs assessment and funding, liaising with other donors -- to effectively fill a vacuum caused by a weak U.N. humanitarian presence. Maintaining a purposely flexible, small, but high-energy presence, the DART moved beyond its bilateral aid donor role to provide a number of multilateral functions, such as acting as liaison between NGOs, UNITAF, and UNOSOM I's newly-created Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) in the capital, and interceding on behalf of NGOs in disputes with local UNITAF military commanders and Somali elders.⁶⁹

Bilaterally, the Mogadishu DART acted as an extension of Ambassador Oakley's staff from the earliest days of the UNITAF action until March 1993. OFDA Director Jim Kunder (and subsequently the new DART leader Kate Farnsworth) acted as Oakley's advisor. DART members reported back to Oakley at the end of each day for extensive logistical and political debriefings and accompanied him on visits across Somalia to prepare local communities for the arrival of UNITAF troops. In the absence of U.S. and U.N. political staff, they also adopted a more unusual role: engaging local or clan leaders in negotiations over security or operational relief activities on behalf of relief NGOs, especially in rural feeding centers, in order to make NGOs a lesser target of political or economic conflicts.⁷⁰

Multilaterally, Mogadishu DART members acted as de facto UNOSOM humanitarian section staff, especially during the first few months. The DART head participated (with UNITAF's Kevin Kennedy) in the daily Civilian-Military Operations Center (CMOC) security briefings for relief agencies at the U.N.'s Humanitarian Operations Center at UNOSOM headquarters in south Mogadishu. These brought relief NGOs together with UNOSOM, ICRC, and UNITAF military staff on a daily basis to identify common problems, share information, and facilitate coordination on a range of issues, not just security. Similar meetings were also held in north Mogadishu for those NGOs and agencies which could not attend meetings at UNOSOM headquarters for security reasons. The Mogadishu DART also assigned three members to key affected regions -- Kismayo, Belet Wayne, and Baidoa and Bardera -- as informal coordinators of local HOCs, to do on-going needs assessment in these areas most affected by the famine, as well as to help coordinate local relief efforts as needed. The efforts of OFDA's DART staff generally won high praise from NGOs.⁷¹

General Field Problems

OFDA encountered several problems in deploying DART in Somalia, but seemed to quickly absorb and act on the lessons learned:

- ◆ Several kinds of specialists needed for the relief effort (e.g. contract officers⁷² and water and sanitation experts⁷³) were in short supply and unable to be quickly tapped. The staff demands posed by Somalia moved OFDA to develop a computerized data bank of potential PSCs (listing their specializations) on which it can draw in the future, although finding appropriately skilled and tested PSCs able to represent OFDA in the field remains a problem.
- ◆ One DART member felt the orientation was perfunctory or inadequate to Somalia's specific situation and reduced her early effectiveness.⁷⁴ OFDA has since developed a two-week module, adapted and shortened for those with prior experience with OFDA, DART, and/or the country to which they might be assigned.
- ◆ Staff tended to be rotated rapidly in and out of the DART teams in Somalia, which was both expensive and resulted in the loss of experience, contacts, and continuity. One OFDA source suggests that the continuity of DART management staff (i.e. DART heads or deputy heads) was more crucial to effective relief efforts than continuity of specialized technical experts, many of whom could only be freed of other work obligations for short periods and were reluctant to undertake a long assignment under stressful and dangerous conditions.⁷⁵ Examining how European and other government and international relief agencies have handled staff turnover, and how differing rotation strategies affect relief efforts and levels of trust among aid recipients and local NGOs, might be helpful. At least one NGO has noted the importance of continuity of experienced staff as a key element of success in Somalia; noting problems encountered in rotating local Somali staff, it concluded that "the mobility accepted in the west cannot automatically be transferred to Somali-like situations."⁷⁶
- ◆ Deploying simultaneously in Somalia two OFDA officials as high-level as Garvelink and Kunder created a management vacuum in the Washington, D.C. office⁷⁷ as well as sensitivities over status when a relatively lower ranking individual was appointed to replace them as DART leader in Mogadishu. OFDA is currently trying to reduce the number of direct

hires, as opposed to PSCs, it needs to send into the field, through the above-mentioned personnel data bank and better training. It hopes an eventual cadre of 8-10 direct hires and long-term PSCs well trained in DART management will prevent its Washington operations from becoming so heavily stressed by having to respond simultaneously to severe or multiple crises.⁷⁸

- ◆ Early planning by OFDA -- and by relief NGOs, as well -- on how to ensure a smooth transition to post-emergency reconstruction is essential if the gains from relief efforts are not to be lost because of a delay in building on them.⁷⁹ While OFDA began planning its exit as early as January 1993, one means of ensuring a smoother transition would be to assign an AID Mission staffer to each DART, so that planning of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development efforts can begin then with a likelihood of continuity.⁸⁰

OFDA-Military Interface in the Field

As a civilian operation, DART/Mogadishu often found itself excluded from key military meetings in which decisions vitally affecting relief delivery were made. While Somalia's volatile security conditions no doubt required some degree of confidentiality in operational decision-making councils, some feel the exclusion was excessive.⁸¹ Some UNITAF decisions negatively affected relief activities. UNITAF concentration on protecting a few major food transport corridors while simultaneously disarming NGOs served to limit NGO activities and concentrate food aid in a few major centers (which had become food distribution centers or havens for Somalis displaced by the fighting). This both attracted looters and added to health and water problems associated with large population concentrations.⁸² It also impeded NGO outreach to more distant rural areas not secured by UNITAF, success in which could have facilitated people's ability to remain in their home areas.⁸³ Failing to engage relief agencies in advance discussion of the operational implications of UNITAF security decisions created a number of difficulties for relief operations, even as UNITAF's role was helpful in many other ways.

While concerned about lack of engagement in military planning, relief NGOs in the field also complained about the one-way nature of what information was shared by the military.⁸⁴ While military officers at the daily HOC meetings frequently solicited NGOs for information on security conditions, they refused to fully reciprocate, generating

some resentment and distrust. OFDA is currently exploring with DOD and other appropriate military agencies how and under what conditions security-related and other information can be more widely shared with NGOs for mutual benefit.

OFDA-U.N. Interface in the Field

OFDA also encountered difficulties in coordinating its work with that of the U.N., specifically with DHA and with UNOSOM I and II's humanitarian coordinator and section:

- ◆ The problem of weak U.N. presence in Mombasa has already been noted; the airlift was clearly considered by all as a U.S. effort. In Mogadishu, UNOSOM had serious organizational weaknesses and provided, with a few exceptions,⁸⁵ too few resources⁸⁶ and weak leadership on the ground. UNOSOM and DHA were slow to deploy technical personnel with the requisite skills for effective coordination of emergency responses, largely because of slow member funding and a U.N. personnel system ill suited to appropriate and flexible appointments for humanitarian crises. It was these weaknesses, in large part, that thrust OFDA into playing a coordinating role under U.N. aegis, in both Mogadishu and in major relief centers across the country, even as it carried out its bilateral USG responsibilities. But as one observer notes, DART's very strength became a problem, when in April 1993 it tried to 'hand over' its coordination role to a still weak, under-staffed, and under-resourced U.N. humanitarian section. FHA/OFDA and the USG need to explore how they could best strengthen DHA's capacities for prompt recruitment of appropriately skilled technical personnel and for coordinating the efforts of a diverse set of relief actors.

- ◆ In inland and rural areas, lack of an on-the-ground U.N. "neutral" political and negotiating presence at major relief centers made relief efforts more vulnerable to local political manipulation and extortion pressures. OFDA team members deployed as regional HOC coordinators to do monitoring and needs assessments and coordinate local relief efforts often ended up filling this role during the UNITAF period, acting as a buffer between relief providers, local UNITAF military contingents, and local Somali

elders or leaders, some allied to contending political factions. Most agree the U.N. -- in principle, if not in actual capability -- is a more appropriate entity to perform this function than a USG agency; UNOSOM II has since deployed some political officers, although of varying quality and not in all regions.⁸⁷

Funding Relief Activities

Whenever a major humanitarian emergency develops, rapid disbursement of funds and other resources can make the difference between life and death, or between rapid and slow recovery. Yet U.S. Government reporting and accountability requirements can slow disbursement and impose onerous reporting requirements on fund recipients.

Somalia broke new ground in OFDA's efforts to expedite quick disbursement for NGO relief funds. Two key innovations -- granting allocation authority to the DART team leader in August 1992 and bringing contract officers to the field to process grant applications in 3-5 days -- cut weeks off the time normally needed to process a grant, and won broad praise from most NGOs.⁸⁸ The downside of these innovations is in the reduced flexibility of OFDA/Washington to transfer funds between crises if requirements change (since funds transferred to the field cannot quickly be deployed back to Washington headquarters). OFDA is likely to repeat this model only in the most dire of emergencies (as in the subsequent case of Rwanda).⁸⁹

Early in the emergency, Natsios met with AID's Inspector-General who agreed to not expect recipients of OFDA grants to meet all accounting requirements.⁹⁰ This was done out of a recognition that the urgency of the situation required faster action than would have been possible under the normally stringent and time-consuming reporting requirements. OFDA's "notwithstanding" privilege exempts it from a variety of Congressional restrictions in order to speed emergency relief spending. The fact that the Congress and public appear more willing to fund emergency relief than development aid played a key role in allowing flexibility in the Somalia case. This flexibility not only allowed OFDA to respond quickly to the Somalia crisis, but also to serve as a vehicle to continue AID funding of post-acute emergency recovery and rehabilitation. This, in turn, raises the issue of whether the rules should be altered to allow AID beyond OFDA such flexibility, given the likelihood of more longer-lasting emergencies, extending potentially beyond OFDA's staff and management capacities, in the future.

OFDA's STANCE ON APPROACHES TO RELIEF

To a large extent, OFDA seems to have been more reactive than proactive in funding relief activities, particularly in 1991-early 1992, when virtually everything was needed, speedy support was critical, and the requesting NGOs were long-established and experienced in Somalia. OFDA was more pro-active in suggesting relief needs to newly-arrived NGOs. Toward the end of 1992, however, they found themselves less able to spend much time directing groups to specific activities, though Natsios' September 18, 1992 trip to Somalia with six NGO leaders was a high-profile effort to suggest areas where NGOs could focus their efforts.

A number of operational issues and debates arose during the course of the Somalia relief operation on which OFDA explicitly or implicitly found itself having to take a stand. A few of the most important follow:

Types of food provided

There was disagreement in Somalia over what food to distribute. ICRC distributed rice, a high value grain which proved attractive to looters, yet the only one that was acceptable everywhere, thus simplifying delivery logistics. Research funded by OFDA or FFP might have demonstrated whether foods not typically eaten in a local community would be as readily consumed or sold/bartered by the hungry, and the extent to which "high-value" food commodities invite thievery.⁹¹ In general, FFP/E (in line with the thinking of many NGOs) favored supplying the lowest-cost staple in Somalia. In August 1992, OFDA and FFP pressured ICRC to switch from rice to maize and sorghum. ICRC reluctantly agreed to compromise on bulgur wheat, but the discussion was tense and difficult and ICRC resented OFDA-FFP interference.⁹² Despite reluctance to force starving people to eat an unpopular food like bulgur, an advantage of its unpopularity has been noted to be the incentive it generates for people to get off the food aid rolls as soon as feasible.⁹³

Effectiveness of Airlifts/Convoys/Airdrops

OFDA was pro-active in urging the USG to initiate Operation Provide Relief, during which period some 40,000 lives are estimated to have been saved.⁹⁴ While OFDA preferred convoys as more cost-effective, airlifts were needed to move food quickly in the insecure conditions prevailing in August-December 1992 -- and to draw public attention to the crisis.⁹⁵ OFDA generally resisted endorsing airdrops -- except where absolutely necessary, e.g. due to inaccessibility over rain-rutted roads -- because of higher costs, but even more because there was no way to ensure that the airdropped food actually reached its intended beneficiaries.⁹⁶

Geographic Distribution of Aid

- ◆ **Over-centrality of Mogadishu.** Unlike many NGOs and the U.S. military during UNITAF, OFDA never focused the bulk of its relief efforts in Mogadishu.⁹⁷ However, better analysis of the trade-offs between focussing efforts in Somalia's capital vs. rural areas prior to and early in the intervention could have given OFDA evidence to present to DOD as it contemplated its "massive response" strategy; the latter, with all the over-concentration in Mogadishu, reinforced the importance of the two major Somali political factions at the expense of other social groups, thus arguably extending the political (and therefore humanitarian) crisis. Such analysis could have better informed OFDA's policy advice to higher level U.S. policy-makers (who admittedly may or may not have followed it).

- ◆ **Exclusion of Somaliland/Northeast from Major Relief Effort.** These two areas were given relatively little OFDA assistance because relief needs were seen to be limited compared with the southern part of the country. ("Somaliland's" secession was not a factor in OFDA's decision, though it was initially for some U.N. agencies reluctant to imply diplomatic recognition by working there.)⁹⁸ Although the question is probably more related to post-emergency assistance, the question might be considered by OFDA as to whether some relief efforts in relatively better-off areas could be worthwhile to provide anchors for spreading economic recovery; or would more aid simply have made them magnets for further looting and instability?

Food Monetization

Somalia was virtually the first case where food monetization was attempted amidst a civil conflict, and as part of an effort to increase food supplies and bring down prices in deficit areas. Natsios notes that he spent more time after August 1992 encouraging monetization than any other policy.⁹⁹ While OFDA-funded monetization efforts (with FFP-supplied food) met some success in generating project funds and job creation, they were undercut by a slow start, a few poor personnel choices,¹⁰⁰ a poor commodity mix,¹⁰¹ and Somali traders' resistance to buying monetized food at the minimal prices sought. After UNITAF began, the market situation for which the monetization programs had originally been designed changed dramatically. Cross-border food monetization efforts were generally unsuccessful, largely due to failure to sufficiently take into account that Somalia was part of a regional food market that would affect prices and ultimately the recipients of monetized food.¹⁰² Monetization efforts in Mogadishu were generally more successful, as were those by the International Rescue Committee in the Gedo area; both gave special attention to the issues of commodity mix and monitoring of commodity flow destinations. One difficulty in assessing the effectiveness and conditions necessary for success of monetization has been a lack of documentation and analysis. OFDA should consider funding studies on concrete effects of monetization on local food availability and prices as part of future monetization efforts. Natsios notes that OFDA did try to insist that monetization be implemented as part of a "comprehensive counter-famine program"¹⁰³ and longer-term economic recovery plan,¹⁰⁴ as several observers have recommended; this was resisted, however, by ICRC which turned to the E.C. for food when OFDA pressured too hard. WFP resisted at first, but later participated actively.

Extortion

The problem of local clan factions and bandits holding food relief hostage through looting or extortion has plagued the Somalia relief effort from beginning to end. In a period where relief aid is often the only functioning industry, a political economy based on extortion of aid resources (through exorbitant rent levels and coerced payment for "security services", as well as outright looting) became dominant in Mogadishu and elsewhere. OFDA and other donors were repeatedly challenged to find ways to reduce the higher costs of providing relief and the inflationary effects flowing from these practices. Among possible initiatives:

- ◆ OFDA should encourage NGOs and U.N. and other relief agencies to set a range of acceptable costs for rent and other local services which all agree to follow from the beginning of an emergency. Efforts to do this were made, but much too late to prevent militia factions from playing off one relief agency against another.¹⁰⁵
- ◆ OFDA might consider following the E.C. lead in limiting "protection" as a fundable line item in their grants. While this risks leaving NGOs unprotected, given the lack of sustained security protection provided by either UNITAF or UNOSOM, careful implementation should buttress NGOs' efforts to curb extortion or force them to withdraw. The latter would admittedly leave needy populations vulnerable, but such a "tough love" policy might well have proved constructive in the long run.¹⁰⁶
- ◆ OFDA should act as a catalyst to bring NGOs and the military together to define guidelines for allowing NGOs their own security capability, especially where security cannot be consistently assured by intervention forces. Intervention forces should then be pressed to uniformly abide by such guidelines, accept NGO security arrangements, and avoid imposing unilateral arrangements (e.g. UNITAF disarming of NGO guards by force) without advance consultation; this was a particular problem with newly arriving or rotated troops.¹⁰⁷
- ◆ OFDA should also seek advance NGO and U.N. consensus on adopting a policy of not repurchasing stolen goods from local markets (as the U.N. did with water pumps clearly stolen from central/south Somalia), and explore other means of reducing the incentives to looting.¹⁰⁸

Maintaining Humanitarian Priorities Within an Armed Action

Following from the above discussion, OFDA should work to ensure that in any future interventions an equal-status U.N. or OFDA mechanism for liaising between relief agencies and the relevant military structure is put in place from the beginning to avoid communication problems and sacrifice of humanitarian objectives to military and political priorities. Many feel the daily HOC meetings ended up being dominated by military, not humanitarian priorities.¹⁰⁹ OFDA should also work to ease the military's adherence to overly-rigid security clearance and information classification requirements that impede effective and timely relief work.

Dealing with Relief "Newcomers"

Part of the cycle of response to the Somalia crisis was a dramatic rise in new NGOs seeking to become involved, despite little or no prior knowledge or experience with Somalia and, in some cases, with foreign aid. OFDA should take the lead in pressing the NGO and relief community to design a process to a) encourage newcomers' collaboration with more experienced groups, or at least b) ensure that new relief players are quickly oriented to the local scene, structures, needs and policy issues in order to maximize their effectiveness and not jeopardize existing programs.

Ensuring "Development-Friendly" Relief Strategies

OFDA generally received high marks for this. Farnsworth estimates 50% of its funded projects had a development component, and a review of projects indicates a significant number focused on water rehabilitation, seed distribution, monetization (and funding local Somali rehabilitation projects with the proceeds), community health, and livestock distribution and vaccination even before the AID Mission took over programming in March 1993.¹¹⁰ As noted earlier, including an AID staff member in all DART teams when first deployed could help identify how relief efforts can best fit into a coordinated strategy for recovery and long-term development.¹¹¹

Building Local Somali Capacity

A sense of "ownership" is essential to sustaining those improvements won through OFDA's and other relief agencies' relief efforts. OFDA did not fund Somali NGOs directly because virtually none met AID registration requirements and because of questions about the viability, accountability, and clan neutrality of many proposed projects.¹¹² As one of the few resources in a plundered economy, aid grants generated a 'boom' in Somali NGOs, many of them allied to competing clan factions, which further complicated efforts to identify reliable local relief partners. However, OFDA did talk informally with many as part of its larger DART liaison role during UNITAF,¹¹³ and Garvelink notes OFDA channelled funds from monetization via relief agencies to projects involving people previously excluded from power in Somalia, such as women and minority clans, "to build a sense of empowerment, of participation by Somalis in the relief effort."¹¹⁴ OFDA's May 1993 Symposium noted a need to identify better ways to consult and include local/indigenous NGOs in both planning and implementation.¹¹⁵

Increasing Multilateral Consensus on Lessons of the Somalia Effort

The last year has seen several U.S. -- but no real multilateral or international -- efforts to assess the lessons to be learned from the Somalia relief effort. Many of the issues explored in this study -- poor coordination, conflicting definitions of mission and objectives -- cannot be resolved within one relief agency or national donor context alone. In southern Africa, local governments have undertaken their own "national inquiries" and assessments, which have provided information for region-wide meetings of governments, aid donors, and relevant U.N. agencies in order to improve the disaster preparedness capacities of all actors.¹¹⁶ OFDA might use this study as a basis for a broader multinational examination of the policy and operational issues raised by the Somali crisis, striving for consensus on lessons to be learned for the future.¹¹⁷ Such an examination could involve comparative analysis of a number of recent humanitarian interventions in Northern Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda, focusing on the effectiveness of humanitarian relief efforts within the context of political disintegration and military intervention.

ENDNOTES

1. Findings of this report are drawn from personal interviews, responses to two questionnaires sent to NGOs active in the Somalia relief effort, various U.N. and NGO reports, four review sessions involving OFDA and other relief workers, and *The Somalia Saga, 1991-1993*, an extensive first-person account of OFDA's involvement written for this study by Jan Westcott, OFDA Special Relief Coordinator for Somalia between February 1991 and January 1994, and included in this series as *The Somalia Saga, 1991-1993*.
2. During a July 22, 1992 House hearing on Somalia, legislators asked Andrew Natsios why he rather than AID Administrator Roskens was requesting more aid for Somalia.
3. OFDA and AID chronologies of Somalia assistance during this period detail extensive Hill briefings and testimony by OFDA and FHA staff. As early as October 1991, Natsios warned of "massive deaths" if there was not a massive relief response, and in December 1991 he joined ICRC in publicly criticizing U.N. inaction in Somalia. During a January 30, 1992 House Select Committee on Hunger hearing, he called Somalia "the worst humanitarian crisis in the world."
4. OFDA's Bill Garvelink explains the delay by noting that consensus-building takes time and that one needs convincing data to make a persuasive argument for a strong response.
5. Natsios, written comments, June 27, 1994.
6. Interview with Joseph Gettier, May 18, 1994, Washington, D.C.
7. Interview with Ricki Gold, December 30, 1994.
8. Interview with Michelle Flournoy on March 22, 1994, she notes that the U.S. military, engaged for the short-term, lacked a sense of the long-term, especially after Oakley's March 1993 departure. Some feel the lack of long-term perspective also pervaded UNITAF political initiatives. (See Emma Visman, "Military 'Humanitarian' Intervention in Somalia." London: SCF-UK, December 3, 1993.) Another source, noting some OFDA staff's overly high expectations of how quickly retraining Somali police would alter local security situations, feels OFDA shares the military's "quick fix" approach. (Interview with AID official)

Garvelink, however, argues that such an approach is inherent in OFDA's emergency mandate, while Valerie Newsom feels sustainability is less important in emergency situations where averting death is the immediate imperative. (Comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.)

9. Interview with AID official.
10. Interview with Gold, *op.cit.*, and Newsom, on March 11, 1994.
11. Richard Cobb interview, December 10, 1994, Washington, D.C.
12. Dayton Maxwell interview, January 28, 1994, Washington, D.C.
13. Herman Cohen, "Intervention in Somalia", manuscript prepared for *Diplomatic Record*. Washington, D.C: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, June 1994.
14. Interview with AID staffer.
15. Interviews with Kate Solon, May 5, 1994, Washington, D.C; and with Bill Garvelink, April 1, and April 18, 1994.
16. See comments by staff from MSF-France, as well as Visman, *op.cit.*
17. Interviews with Gold, *op.cit.* and Michelle Flournoy, April 22, 1994, Washington, D.C.
18. Interview with James Kunder, February 23, 1994.
19. Comments by Garvelink, Major-General Anthony Zinni, and others, in meeting convened by RPG, May 27, 1994.
20. Interview with Ron Libby, March 16, 1994, Washington, D.C.; also comments by MSF-France and SCF-U.K. representatives at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.
21. See interview with Gold, *op.cit.*, as well as others.
22. Interviews with Dina Esposito, January 10, and February 2, 1994, Washington, D.C.
23. Interview with Newsom, 3/11/94, *op.cit*

24. Solon interview, *op.cit.*
25. Natsios' written comments, *op.cit.* Current OFDA staff noted that Natsios' early 1992 decision to merge OFDA into FHA initially caused OFDA to lose staff: it dropped from 26 to 21 full-time staff members but has increased since due to the easing of previous restrictions on hiring PSCs for work in Washington, D.C. (June 9, 1994 RPG review session)
26. See Garvelink and Newsom interviews; also, Maxwell, OFDA Symposium, May 1993, p. 6; and Zinni comments at May 27, 1993 meeting on the need for OFDA and the military to devise better procedures for future crises. In December 17, 1993 interview, Ambassador Robert Oakley noted the need for a more systematic OFDA mechanism for coordinating with NGOs and the military to avoid having to re-invent it during each future emergency.
27. Interview with Sam Toussie, January 31, 1994, Washington, D.C. See also the draft training manual produced by the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Combat Air Force and Navy, *Humanitarian Assistance: Multi-Service Procedures for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance Operations*, October 1993. An informal June 15, 1994 memo from OFDA lists 11 recent military conferences or simulation exercises where they joined representatives of the military, other USG agencies, the U.N., and NGO staff in efforts to improve civilian-military collaboration.
28. Interviews with Garvelink, Zinni, Libby. This point was re-stressed by several speakers at the June 23, 1994 Meridian House conference on Improving Coordination of Humanitarian and Military Operations.
29. See Melinda Kimble's comments at March 15, 1994 review session and Natsios' written comments, of June 28, 1994.
30. Garvelink comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
31. Comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
32. Garvelink and Kunder interviews, *op.cit.*
33. In addition to PL480 Title II food stocks disbursed by AID's FFP/E, emergency food aid is also available directly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture under Section 416. Section 416 food aid used in Somalia went solely to WFP. USDA and FFP/E try to jointly coordinate allocating food assistance to each emergency, so no one emergency receives excessive amounts. But FFP/E found at least one instance where it had disbursed food aid for Somalia to WFP without knowing

WFP had submitted a separate request to USDA. (Gettier interview, *op.cit.*) FFP Title II food aid used in Somalia went to WFP, ICRC, SCF-UK, CRS (for cross-border operations), and WVRD. (FFP documents)

34. Garvelink, 6/9/94, *op.cit.*
35. Interview with Lois Richards, January 11, 1994, Washington, D.C.
36. Interview with Gettier, *op.cit.*, Washington, D.C.
37. Kimble comments in March 15, 1994, RPG review session.
38. Interviews with Tom Frey, January 27, and February 4, 1994, and Libby, *op.cit.*
39. Frey and Libby interviews, *op.cit.*; also Robert Crane, "The Civilian Role in Restoring Hope", *Government Executive*, February 1993, p. 33.
40. Gettier interview, *op.cit.*
41. Comment by Kunder in OFDA May 1993 Symposium Report, p. 3; interview with Amy Nelson, June 3, 1994, Washington, D.C.
42. May 1993 OFDA Symposium report, p. 3.
43. Interviews with Cuny, November 4, 1993, and Alex deWaal, January 26, 1994.
44. Figures are from various OFDA SitReps as well as its annual report. The Department of State figure is \$311 million (Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO/PHO), 7/28/94).
45. Garvelink, 6/9/94, *op.cit.*
46. Interview with CRS staff, 1/19/January 19, 1994, Baltimore. OFDA's Esposito also noted that Somalia-related informational demands from the State Department and other government agencies, NGOs, and the public and press came to occupy virtually all her time, although she was responsible for working on the entire Horn of Africa. (Interview, *op.cit.*)
47. Natsios, written comments, *op.cit.*

48. Comments by Charles Teller and Scott Lillibridge of the Centers for Disease Control at RPG, May 1994; Debarati Sapir and Hedweg DeConinck, "Somalia: The Paradox of International Humanitarian Assistance and Military Intervention", May 1994 (draft), p. 12. Visman, *op.cit.*, uses this fact to question whether UNITAF's focus on land convoys and disarming NGO guards reinforced population concentrations, fueling public health dangers.
49. An OFDA staffer at the time recalls urging deployment of CDC personnel to assess health needs as early as January-February 1992, to no avail. In September 1992, Rep. Mervyn Dymally noted that even with sufficient food, many Somalis would die because of lack of appropriate health care. (Comments at beginning of Sept. 16, 1992 U.S. House Africa Subcommittee hearing)
50. Comments by Garvelink, 6/9/94, *op.cit.*
51. Comments by Lillibridge, *op.cit.*
52. See draft article by Lillibridge, May 1994.
53. See Fred Cuny April 13, 1994 letter to RPG; OXFAM-America, in its response to this study's NGO questionnaire, urged more realistic on-the-ground assessments to replace reliance on "distorted media reporting".
54. Esposito interview, *op.cit.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Garvelink, 6/9/94, *op.cit.*
57. Comments by Ted Clark of National Public Radio cited in OFDA May 1993 Symposium Report, p. 17. This point was also made by several speakers at the February 16, 1994 Columbia University-sponsored symposium on Famine and the Media in Somalia.
58. Garvelink, 6/9/94, *op.cit.*
59. Garvelink, *op.cit.* and Newsom, at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
60. *Ibid.*
61. On the other hand, AID and Embassy presence brings in their wake bureaucratic requirements that relief workers prefer not to have. (Garvelink 6/9/94, *op.cit.*)

62. Westcott maintained the most sustained focus on Somalia during 1990-1994 of all OFDA employees. Her personal account and analysis of these events can be found in *The Somalia Saga, 1991-1993*.
63. Newsom interview, *op cit*.
64. Esposito recalls intensifying requests of OFDA made by various higher political levels of State for all sorts of detailed information on Somalia, which OFDA had to spend a substantial amount of staff time satisfying.
65. See OFDA May 1993 Symposium Report, p. 18.
66. This has since emerged as a major topic of numerous discussions on civilian-military collaboration in future humanitarian interventions (including one convened by RPG).
67. Newsom comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
68. Interview with Tom Dolan, February 23, 1994, Washington, D.C.
69. Interviews with Garvelink and Newsom, *op.cit.*, and with Liz Lukasavich, February 9, 1994.
70. Libby, *op.cit*.
71. By way of example, the International NGO Consortium coordinator in Somalia credits DART/CMOC coordination with linking up national NGOs with UNITAF civil military engineers in March 1993 in a joint venture to repair a critical dam and reservoir in the Shabelle region. Visman, *op.cit.*, p. 36.
72. Esposito interview, *op.cit*.
73. Libby interview, *op.cit*.
74. Interviews with Kim Maynard, February 8, and March 9, 1994 Washington, D.C.
75. Garvelink, April 1, 1994, interview, Washington, D.C.
76. Comments by Concern Worldwide in response to this Study's NGO questionnaire, question no. 7.
77. Garvelink, Newsom, and Esposito all concur; several sources attribute their both going to their reluctance, as one noted, "to miss where the action was".

78. Garvelink interviews, *op.cit.*
79. Garvelink notes that "ideally you start planning how you'll leave almost from the day when you arrive." (Interview, 4/1/94)
80. Interviews with Libby, Esposito, and Gold, *op.cit.*, and interview with Wentling, May 13, 1994.
81. Interviews with Libby, *op.cit.* and with Lauren Landis, November 11, 1993. Landis indicates some DART members, lacking security clearance, officially could not read reports they had written once they submitted them to State.
82. Interview with Fred Cuny, April 19, 1994. Also see Visman, *op.cit.*, for a discussion of this problem.
83. Comments by MSF-France's Patrick Vial at March 22, 1994 review session, and by Visman, *op.cit.*
84. See Vial comments, *op.cit.*
85. Garvelink and others feel Charles Petrie, John Marks and a few other U.N. staff did excellent work, but lacked adequate support from U.N. headquarters.
86. OFDA had to provide the U.N. office in Mogadishu with personal computers, because it would have taken excessively long to procure them through usual U.N. channels.
87. Libby and Vial interviews, *op.cit.* Libby argues that U.N. political advisors attached to military contingents would have been far better at buffering relief agencies from local extortion pressures. But he and others noted that where the U.N. was present, it only exacerbated the situation, paying higher prices for housing and other services, despite NGO protests, and further inflating security and local logistical costs.
88. Garvelink interview; comments by Concern and SCF-U.K. at March 22, 1994 Geneva review session.
89. See Garvelink and Newsom interviews.
90. See Inspector General Herbert L. Beckington's September 3, 1992 memo to Natsios.

91. Cuny April 13, 1994, letter, p. 2.
92. Gettier, *op. cit.*; Newsom's comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session; Natsios' written comments, 6/27/94.
93. Garvelink 6/9/94, *op. cit.*
94. Steve Hansch et al., *Lives Lost, Lives Saved: Excess Mortality and the Impact of Health Interventions in the Somalia Humanitarian Emergency*, RPG, November 1994.
95. Newsom, 6/9/94, *op. cit.*; see also Kunder, *op. cit.*
96. Garvelink, at 6/9/94, *op. cit.*
97. See "USAID/OFDA Somalia Grants by Region, FY 1992 & 1993"
98. NGOs are more able to operate regardless of such diplomatic technicalities. This study's review and questionnaire on NGO activities in Somalia revealed a remarkable number of NGOs working in Somaliland and the northeast.
99. Natsios, 6/27/94, *op. cit.*
100. Newsom and Landis interviews, *op. cit.*
101. Landis memo, "Monetization," June 23, 1994, p. 2.
102. Interview with Ken Menkhaus, 6/23/94, Washington, D.C. See also Landis memo, *op. cit.*
103. Cuny 4/13/94 letter, *op. cit.*
104. Satish Mishra May 3, 1993 memo to REDSO, p. 1. Mishra warned against implementing food monetization in the absence of a medium- to long-term recovery plan.
105. Libby, *op. cit.*, and others have suggested this, although others doubt it can be fully done.
106. See Visman, *op. cit.*, for an excellent account of continuing NGO insecurity through UNITAF and UNOSOM II.
107. Visman, *op. cit.*, feels this is vital to prevent such problems in the future.

108. Libby, *op.cit.*, believes failing to do this encouraged the economy of theft in Somalia
109. See Libby, *op.cit.*; also comments by MSF and SCF-U.K. representatives, 3/22/94.
110. See Kate Farnsworth interview, December 20, 1993; also see OFDA list of projects funded in Somalia during this period.
111. Suggestion by Gold and Wentling, *op.cit.*
112. Comments by Newsom, 6/9/94. *op.cit.* and by Natsios, 6/27/94, *op.cit.*
113. Farnsworth and Libby interviews, *op.cit.*
114. Garvelink interview, 4/1/94. By using funds from food monetization for such projects, OFDA also contributed to rehabilitation efforts as well as job creation.
115. Garvelink, however, notes that in as severe and conflictual a crisis as Somalia's, time constraints preclude "unnecessary" efforts; that including Somalis is not OFDA's job; and that many Somali NGOs are clan-based extensions of clan politics whose involvement may generate other problems. (Interview, 4/1/94)
116. See University of Southern California Prof. Carol Thompson's study of regional responses to the southern Africa drought emergency done for UNICEF-Namibia, 1993.
117. de Waal, of African Rights, in a parallel suggestion, urges that, similarly to what both India and Botswana have conducted on a national level following past famines, there be a formal international inquiry into how well various actors in the Somalia relief effort performed in order to identify ways to improve response effectiveness in the future. Visman echoes the need for international accountability in humanitarian interventions like Somalia's.