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IN SOMALIA**

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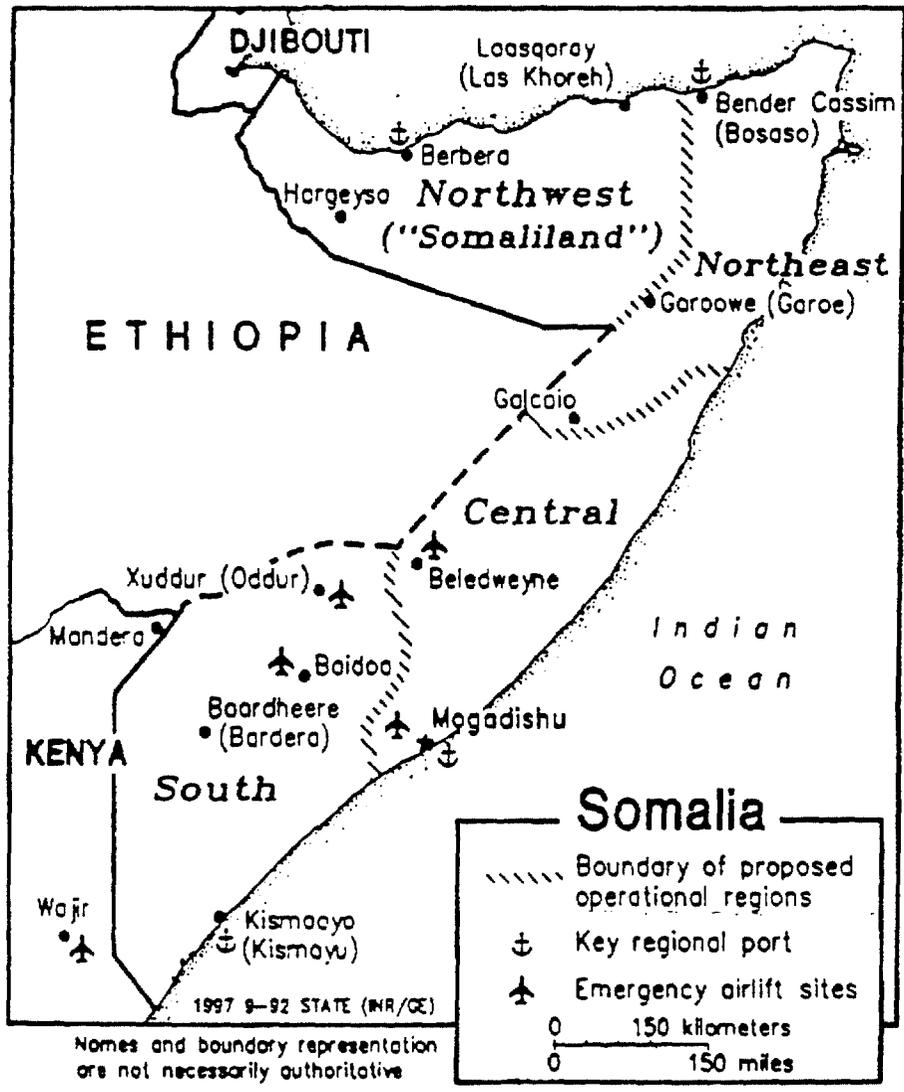
This study has benefitted from the support and guidance of hundreds of individuals in the United States, Europe, and Africa, ranging from top level government, United Nations, and NGO policy-makers to relief workers and victims of the crisis in Somalia -- literally, from the Somali in the displaced persons camp to the former president of the United States in Kennebunkport, Maine. Each has contributed time and energy, often impassioned, as well as the varying perspectives without which this complex story, and its lessons, could not be understood. They have done so not only by participating in personal interviews, but also by sharing written views and supporting documents, and by joining in group discussions to review and inform earlier drafts of the study.

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John G. Sommer
Director, Somalia Humanitarian Aid Study

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INTRODUCTION

Somalia in late 1990 became a harbinger of the "new world order": a country in chaos, torn by internal conflict, suffering from famine exacerbated by drought, and the site of tragic death on a massive scale. With the Cold War as history, the country had lost the strategic significance that had led first the Soviets, then the Americans to prop up the then-ruling dictator Siad Barre. As a result, aside from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and a valiant group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it was difficult to attract broader interest in helping to stop the starvation. Nor did the international community, admittedly distracted by momentous events elsewhere in the world, show much interest in decisive diplomatic efforts to help mediate a peace among the warring Somali factions. The United Nations eventually took modest steps, but these lacked strength and efficacy on the ground.

Finally, as the horror of the situation became overwhelming by mid-1992, and as a handful of individuals in the U.S. Administration and Congress spoke out, the U.S. gradually, then boldly acted. A U.S. military airlift was organized, followed by a historic ground force of over 30,000 U.S. and allied troops whose mandate was to ensure the security of food deliveries to the starving. These dramatic steps changed the dynamic of the previous approach which had been to painstakingly negotiate — and often pay extortion — for safe passage of relief supplies with Somali faction and militia leaders. In fact, it was in response to donor frustration and anger over the losses from extortion, looting, and general insecurity that the military intervention was ordered. Correctly or not, it seemed the only way to stop the starvation.

On the departure of most American combat troops once the immediate relief operation was completed, the U.N., reluctantly, re-assumed official leadership of the international community's obligations in Somalia, by then expanded to include assistance for nation-building. The U.S., however, maintained an influential role which unfortunately included complicity in four months of ensuing warfare between the U.N. and the Somali faction led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid. After 18 U.S. soldiers who had tried to capture General Aidid were killed by his forces, the U.S. Administration announced the withdrawal of virtually all its military in favor of an attempt at political negotiation. Although some political agreements were subsequently reached among the contending Somali factions, they, like earlier agreements, were largely observed in the breach. By mid-1994, the clan warfare and banditry were again in full swing, although the food situation was relatively normal, in part due to good intervening harvests.

The Somalia crisis illustrates the need for a delicately managed balance between humanitarian, political, and military approaches in situations where all three

are present. While the military response in Somalia clearly helped meet the short-term humanitarian needs, its very massiveness seemed to distract attention from the root political causes of the problem, without whose resolution the country would (and did) relapse into warfare.

The international response to the Somalia crisis can be partly described as a collision of realities. The U.S., the U.N., and the Somalis each had their own political, bureaucratic, and cultural realities which invariably conflicted with one another. The U.S., lacking domestic political support for a lengthy engagement, sought a "quick fix" that would permit it to withdraw. The U.N. knew it was insufficiently prepared to take on the task of Somalia and wanted to keep the U.S. involved longer. The Somalis benefitted from the influx of aid, and had a cultural style of prolonged discussion that far exceeded any donor's patience or resources. Indeed, the timeframes, too, were on a collision course.

In purely humanitarian terms, the Somalia relief operation enjoyed significant success. While recent estimates show that 154-240,000 lives were lost due to delays in undertaking earlier decisive action, 100-125,000 lives were saved by valiant relief workers, their supporting donors, and the U.S.-led military forces during the 1991-93 period.¹ Relief operations were conducted in conditions of extreme insecurity, requiring constant (indeed, excessive) compromises to get the aid through, and at considerable physical risk to relief personnel, some of whom were killed. Although more effort should have been given to earlier public health interventions in order to save lives lost to measles, diarrhea, and other diseases, innovative methods of food delivery were employed and a food monetization program was undertaken for the first time in an emergency situation with some promising results.

Somalia has become one of the seminal engagements in U.S. foreign policy. Along with Viet-Nam, it represents, to many, a failure of American power. Somalia did not turn the U.S. inside out, or result in over 50,000 American deaths, as did the Viet-Nam war. However, quite aside from its own suffering and internal dynamics, Somalia has played an important role in illuminating what may or may not be appropriate roles for the United States, and the international community as a whole, in a tumultuous post-Cold War era. This era is characterized by a breakdown of divisions between east and west and a consequent opportunity for broader global cooperation for purposes that include action to alleviate human suffering and promote human rights. Absent super-power competition for control of client states, strictures against violating national sovereignty have weakened, particularly where urgent humanitarian concerns are at stake. Yet the era is also characterized by an upsurge of nationalisms that have created ever more humanitarian crises, exhausting the capacity

or will of the international community to respond, and sufficiently complex that responses are fraught with both danger and the uncertainty of success.

Somalia inherited the worst of two worlds. It inherited the Cold War legacy of outside support for a harsh dictatorship and concomitant lack of democratic governing structures and discipline; when the dictatorship was overthrown, the country fell into anarchy. It also inherited a kind of post-Cold War void, in the sense that the international community had as yet no experience of coping with such crises in the "new world order" of the 1990s. To put it bluntly, Somalia became the guinea pig.

The crisis in Somalia came to world attention as a humanitarian crisis. People were starving due to drought and civil strife. But the problem was never at heart simply a humanitarian one; it was, and remains, political. Indeed, the central irony of recent Somali history is that a humanitarian manifestation (mass starvation) of an underlying political problem elicited a military response. This response, while helping to meet short-term humanitarian needs, further complicated the fundamental political problem — with potentially anti-humanitarian consequences. Such is the irony — and the basis for the lessons — of Somalia.

Conclusions and lessons are already being drawn — and applied — from Somalia experience, some of them the wrong ones. In this sense, the importance of Somalia is not Somalia alone.² As a concerned Somali professional put it, "The international community should not be prejudiced against [involvement in] a Haiti or Burundi because of mistakes made in Somalia."³

This study, conducted by the Refugee Policy Group for the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, covers the period September 1990 to mid-1994 and has the following objectives:

- ◆ to identify key phases, decision points, and policy options faced in the Somali crisis by U.S., U.N., and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and decisions made in reaction to them;
- ◆ to discuss the various operational approaches in responding to the famine and civil conflict;
- ◆ to examine the individual institutional roles of U.S., U.N., and other donor agencies and the interaction among them; and
- ◆ to suggest lessons learned for the future.

The study focusses on the major famine areas of southern and central Somalia, rather than on the less affected northwest and northeast. The section that follows highlights some key events to furnish the context for decisions taken, or not taken, by the international community. These are stated as factually as possible, discussion and analysis being saved for the second main section of the study. That section is followed, in turn, by conclusions and lessons learned.

ENDNOTES

1. 240,000 is the estimate for excess mortality due to fighting and famine, and 154,000 represents the numbers thereof who could have been most readily saved through timely and effective action. The range of 100-125,000 lives saved include 50,000 during January 1991-August 1992, another 40,000 during August-December 1992 (the U.S. military airlift period), and about 10-25,000 during the subsequent UNITAF intervention period. For an explanation of this data, see Steven Hansch et. al., *Excess Mortality and the Impact of Health Interventions in the Somalia Humanitarian Emergency*, Refugee Policy Group and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 12, 1994, in Annex B.
2. Conclusion of a discussion on Somalia at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1/14/94.
3. Interview with Hussein Mursal, 12/4/93, Mogadishu.

CRISIS AND RESPONSE: KEY EVENTS, TRENDS, AND DECISION POINTS

ROOTS OF THE CRISIS

Somalia's civil war emerged as a product of political, social, and economic repression under the Siad Barre regime that had seized government control in 1969. Barre's advent to power had at first been viewed positively, in light of the breakdown in the country's early post-independence democratic system. Indeed, in his early years in power Barre contributed to creating stability and initial steps toward modernization, declaring the traditional clanism to be backward and an impediment to progress. Subsequently, however, he used the government to impose policies that favored certain clans and sub-clan groups at the expense of others. These policies were deeply resented, but protests against them were harshly put down. Under this pressure, clans then assumed an important role in organizing resistance against the regime and its pattern of human rights abuses.¹

The international aid community became especially familiar with Somalia during the late 1970s, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and bilateral donors were asked to support Ogadeni (ethnic Somali) refugees from Ethiopia. This was a result of Barre's launching of the Ogaden war against Ethiopia in 1977 in an attempt to annex Somali-populated areas of that country. The war initially won wide support among Somalis and brought Barre considerable popularity, but this support eroded as Somalia suffered sizeable casualties, large refugee flows, and economic havoc — and ultimately lost the war. The Barre regime proved adept at finding ways to wrest maximum resources from refugee aid programs, claiming that 1.2 million refugees needed aid. UNHCR and other donors agreed to officially assist a still-inflated number of 700-800,000 refugees (or some 20 percent of Somalia's then-total population) throughout the 1980s, even though this generated more food imports than needed; the real refugee number was estimated at 300,000.² The siphoning off of aid to Barre's army and to enrich the small elite caused a lack of donor trust in Somalis that would color subsequent responses to crises in that country.³

Barre also proved adept at extracting military and economic aid from donors such as Italy and the two major Cold War protagonists. Italy, the largest overall donor to Somalia, contributed \$1 billion during 1981-90.⁴ The Soviet Union was Somalia's

principal super-power benefactor during 1969-77 until the United States, in an unusual trade of clients and aid "swap" with Ethiopia, took over that role from 1978 to 1988, with some aid continuing into 1989-90. U.S. assistance to Somalia was to ensure military access to the Berbera and Mogadishu ports and airports, located strategically close to Middle East oil supplies, and to counter the Soviet Union's presence in Ethiopia. The U.S. provided the Barre government with almost \$600 million in foreign bilateral economic aid — or 16.8 percent of its total of such aid — between 1979 and 1991; it also provided over \$200 million in foreign military aid from 1982 to 1990, for a total of over \$800 million.⁵

This international assistance had several effects which contributed over the long run to Somalia's later crisis. Military equipment was used against various Somali clans and groups opposed to the Barre government, further exposing his clan favoritism and undermining national unity. It also helped militarize conflict within Somali society, as groups seeking greater democracy and an end to human rights abuses themselves felt forced to use arms; this seemed the only way to oppose Barre's ever more despotic rule and clan nepotism.⁶

The military aid had a ballooning effect on the Somali economy which was further fueled by refugee and other food aid, as well as by direct economic aid, some of which was apparently illegally used to support Siad's armed forces as much as to generate economic development.⁷ Beyond this, foreign, and notably U.S., assistance fed an "aid habit" from which privileged Somalis benefitted excessively and on which they relied.⁸ A number of observers believe the looting of 1990s emergency aid is simply a variant, not a departure, from past Somali patterns of receiving assistance.⁹

Finally, international support of the Siad Barre regime caused Somalis in the opposition to suspect the motivations of outsiders. Outsiders' overall political embrace of Barre was as much a problem as the specific military and economic aid provided. This was true of the U.S., of Italy (where relations were further complicated by corrupt business dealings between the two),¹⁰ and of Egypt (whose former minister of state for foreign affairs would become secretary-general of the United Nations and a key player in the coming crisis).

Start of Civil War

The end of the Cold War effectively ended Somalia's role as a U.S. strategic asset, even as it left Somalia and other areas of the Horn awash with weapons from a variety of sources. The key catalyst for the outbreak of open warfare was Barre's 1988 decision to bomb Hargeisa and Burao, in northern Somalia. The bombing followed an

influx of anti-Barre dissidents from Ethiopia to Somalia following a deal he and Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam made to halt support for each other's dissidents in the other's country. The forced return of these dissidents to Hargeisa and Burao reinforced anti-Barre efforts by northern clan-affiliated political groups which had long felt excluded from government power. The brutality of Barre's attacks against them, the massive civilian casualties estimated at 15-60,000¹¹, the resultant refugee flows, and the outcries from human rights groups caused western donors to severely cut their Somali aid programs. While the Bush administration was loathe to reduce military aid to Somalia, Congressional outrage at Barre's human rights violations forced a cut-off in 1988. The bombing also generated bitter memories and culturally sanctioned demands for revenge among victimized Somali communities, further splintering an already tattered national social fabric, intensifying the unfolding civil war, and contributing to the break-up of the country as northwestern Somalia ultimately declared independence.

As war steadily spread southward across the country in 1989-90, it disrupted food production. Because of recurrent cyclical drought patterns, food production levels had been traditionally unreliable, even in the fertile southern region where most of Somalia's production is centered. Indeed, the country was never fully self-reliant in food, importing at least 30 to 50 percent of its requirements.¹² Land seizures had been common in the region bounded by the Juba and Shebelle rivers in the 1980s, the victims being minorities who were also the country's most skilled cultivators; those remaining were denied aid, credit, or services, making irrigation and efficient marketing impossible, not to mention adding to the political tensions.¹³ Following a period of drought in the mid-1980s, drought again spread across the country in the latter part of the decade, drawing down food reserves to dangerously low levels just as the civil war began to peak. By 1990, contending military forces displaced farmers and other civilians in the country's richest agricultural areas, the central and southern regions, further disrupting agriculture. Animal exports, the country's major revenue earner which traditionally supplied foreign exchange to purchase food abroad, also plummeted. And another important source of revenue — overseas remittances by Somalis working in the Persian Gulf countries — would soon dry up as a result of the Gulf crisis and war.¹⁴

International Community Fails to Respond

These events occurred as the major western powers and United Nations were heavily preoccupied with developments in Iraq and Kuwait, eastern and central Europe and the former Soviet Union, and Central America. In Africa, aid donors were more concerned with the unravelling of Ethiopia's repressive regime and with the economic

collapse and re-ignited civil war in southern Sudan (a new Islamic fundamentalist government had seized power in Khartoum in June 1989). Thus, neither the U.S. nor the U.N., nor any other group of nations, acted to head off the brewing Somali conflict as the harbinger of a humanitarian emergency to come. The U.S., as elsewhere embarrassed by its past support of a despot in a new era of emphasis on human rights and democracy, lent some support to Egyptian and Italian efforts to bring about negotiations between Siad Barre and his opponents, but failed to take any stronger action; its "heart was not in it."¹⁵ Likewise, the U.N. failed to actively pursue diplomatic or other initiatives.

ONSET OF CRISIS - 1990-1991

By the eve of the final battle to oust Siad Barre from Mogadishu in December 1990-January 1991, the capital was in a state of crisis. U.N. security officials in New York considered the situation so perilous that they required U.N. agencies to evacuate "non-essential" staff from Mogadishu as early as September 1990. By November and December 1990, reports of vehicle thefts and hijackings and shootings of expatriates had become a daily reality as anti-Barre fighters had begun infiltrating the capital, most of which was already off-limits for foreigners. In December, CARE asked to place its vehicles inside the U.S. Embassy compound, hoping to retrieve and use them once the security situation improved; they were later looted by Somalis storming the compound in January 1991.

Jan Westcott, a USAID contract employee who had arrived in Mogadishu in November 1990 to oversee a modest remaining AID NGO partnership project, found she had to spend most of her time monitoring NGO-related security incidents rather than helping them expand their programs.¹⁶ At this point, only a handful of NGOs and U.N. staff were operating in Mogadishu; others had been forced to relocate from rural areas and towns in central and southern Somalia to Nairobi, Kenya. By late 1990, violence was moving ever closer to the U.S. Embassy compound, AID and U.S. Embassy cars had been shot at, U.S. staff increasingly were asked to make blood donations for the injured, an armed attack on the offices of World Concern had thoroughly frightened the director's wife and children, and plans for a peace conference in Cairo fell through, diminishing hopes for a negotiated settlement. Based on a recommendation of Ambassador James Bishop, the U.S. State Department ordered the departure of American dependents and non-essential personnel by December 20, reducing the number of official Americans from 150 to 37 still in country.¹⁷

Intense street warfare in late December and early January forced the final evacuation of all U.N., diplomatic, and NGO staff. U.S. personnel, who with a few other expatriates, Somali-Americans, and Somali colleagues had fled to the Embassy compound for safety, were airlifted out on January 5 and 6 as looters scaled the walls and removed most items of value.¹⁸ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) temporarily evacuated its personnel a day later, and the French NGO Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) also left briefly. Only SOS-Kinderdorf's Dr. Willi Huber, who was unusually well integrated in the local community, stayed behind and heroically continued ministering to thousands of war-wounded Somalis. On the day Barre fled the capital, January 26, all government administration collapsed. The fact that a few civil servants and police tried to continue working voluntarily is noteworthy.

By late January the ICRC and MSF had returned to Mogadishu, and by early February ICRC returned to Kismayu. While situations varied throughout the country, the conditions they found in these two cities were appalling, especially in the capital where both looters and departing Barre forces had stripped and destroyed everything they could, including water pumps, pipes, copper wiring, the telephone system, blood bank, national bank, shops, and public buildings. With the police disbanded and prisoners released from jail, the breakdown of civil administration was virtually total.

The overthrow of Siad Barre led to two types of security problems: banditry by those who saw the gun as the easiest means to gain food, other resources, and/or prestige;¹⁹ and intensifying factional fighting among the groups that overthrew Barre, as they fought to gain political ascendancy as well as to ensure that Barre, now based in Gedo, did not return to power. Although the capital was relatively calm during much of 1991, over the course of the year the conflict between two rival United Somali Congress (USC) leaders in Mogadishu, General Mohamed Farah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Mohamed, began to emerge as the largest threat to peace in the country. By the latter part of the year, real warfare would erupt as forces allied to the two leaders lobbed mortar rounds at each other from their respective northern and southern zones of Mogadishu, causing, by some estimates, 30,000 deaths and as many as 300,000 people forced to flee the city.²⁰

Effects on Food Supplies and Hunger

Continued fighting in many parts of the countryside throughout 1991 combined with the accumulated effects of drought to doom much of Somalia's food production. Fighting that interfered with port operations significantly cut food imports and the livestock exports that helped to finance them. By September-October 1991, early warnings of famine were being sounded by the U.N. Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) and the ICRC — but evoked little response. An ICRC official, noting in October that in some areas "people have been dying for five months," called the Somali situation "catastrophic". Those displaced by fighting suffered particularly, the population movements themselves causing havoc in the countryside.²¹ While the Horn of Africa is known for its constant population movements, Somalia began to be especially characterized by uprootedness, migration, and armies on the move — at the same time that many of the most at-risk people were tragically, and fatally, *non-*mobile, and died because they did not become refugees.²²

Although virtually all statistics relating to Somalia are suspect, largely due to constant population movements, opportunistic distortions, and inherent technical difficulties in data collection, they give at least a crude sense of the magnitude of the problems. During 1991, for example, aid officials reported that up to 90 percent of the rural population were suffering from lack of food.²³ The FAO estimated that 4.5 million people, or 60 percent of its then-population estimate, were at risk of starvation, and that Somalia's food harvests through June 1992 would equal only 25 percent of normal because of disruptions to agriculture caused by clan fighting.²⁴ The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated food production would be at 40 percent of normal levels.²⁵

While relief ships were periodically unable or unwilling to dock during 1991 — for example, food shipments to Kismayu were suspended after three expatriate relief workers were robbed by bandits — some were able to dock in Mogadishu during August and September with supplies for ICRC and CARE. In addition, ICRC was regularly, albeit with difficulty, sending food in via smaller ports and beach landings. In December, SOS Kinderdorf and UNICEF began airlifting supplies into Mogadishu for use by NGOs working in the capital. Late in the month, outgoing U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar appealed to the factions to allow relief shipments to get through, calling the fighting "a nightmare of violence".²⁶

International Diplomatic Efforts

There were a number of diplomatic efforts to mediate the conflict during 1991, but they made little headway. These included efforts by Italy and Egypt to convene a July peace conference in Cairo; efforts by the presidents of Djibouti and Kenya to broker a peace accord at two successive meetings in Djibouti; and other efforts by the Islamic Conference Organization and by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni as chair of the Organization of African Unity. The second Djibouti meeting, in July 1991, was widely attended by foreign representatives as well as leading Somalis, and called for a ceasefire and formation of an interim government. Its short-term promise was

dispelled, however, after Ali Mahdi cited conference resolutions to justify being sworn in as president in mid-August and then appointed a government cabinet in October of which Aidid disapproved. This provided the political backdrop to the intense November 1991-January 1992 fighting in Mogadishu mentioned above.²⁷

U.S. Involvement After January 1991

The fall of Mogadishu to rebel forces and the international community's subsequent withdrawal severely limited the amount of information available to the outside world on what was going on in Somalia. ICRC and MSF provided some information to the NGO community based in Nairobi. John Fox, a U.S. Embassy political officer evacuated from Mogadishu via the U.S. to Nairobi, became the only U.S. official tracking Somali affairs full-time (Westcott being an AID contractor). He met with various factions visiting the Kenyan capital and kept as much of a watching brief on the abandoned Mogadishu embassy and its former Somali staff as possible from afar, working to get salaries to local employees remaining in Somalia or having sought refuge in neighboring countries.²⁸

On March 25, 1991, Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen declared Somalia a civil strife disaster, the official step needed to activate the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to respond. In February, OFDA had already appointed Jan Westcott as the U.S. emergency relief coordinator for Somalia, based in Nairobi, to coordinate U.S. aid to the ICRC, NGOs, and U.N. agencies. It was considered a major, and courageous, initiative when Westcott travelled to Mogadishu for an authorized maximum of 24 hours in April 1991 as the first U.S. Government visitor since the fall of Siad Barre. Fox had urged such a visit to demonstrate to the State Department that U.S. personnel could survive amidst the dangers of Mogadishu, a first step toward winning agreement to a more regular U.S. presence in Somalia. Westcott visited the remains of the U.S. Embassy (where she photographed the damage and rescued correspondence left behind in a blown-open safe) and checked on local staff. Security and logistical support provided by the president of Conoco-Somalia proved critical to her ability to make the visit. (Conoco's presence and support was later suggested by some — unconvincingly to most — as evidence of an underlying U.S. Government commercial rationale for aiding Somalia.)²⁹

Westcott's trip was a turning point for OFDA, which thereafter began to fund relief efforts in Somalia through ICRC and NGOs. This supplemented other U.S. Government aid through the Food for Peace and Refugee Program offices. During FY 1991, total U.S. Government emergency assistance to Somalia would total \$29.6 million, an amount that tripled the following year.³⁰

In May 1991, OFDA Director Andrew Natsios testified on Somalia before Senate and House foreign affairs committees, and on June 28 the Senate passed a bill introduced by Senators Nancy Kassebaum and Paul Simon calling on President George Bush to lead humanitarian efforts and help organize peace negotiations. Earlier, during the Siad Barre regime, Congress had pressed to reduce U.S. aid due to his human rights violations; later it continued to urge more pro-active U.S. leadership in international relief efforts. Indeed, Congress led the Administration in guiding U.S. policy in Somalia throughout the crisis.

In July 1991, Political Officer Fox made the first official post-Barre trip by a U.S. Government official to Mogadishu. Westcott followed again in August to monitor the first arrival of U.S.-donated food in the capital.

As the crisis in Mogadishu worsened with renewed fighting from September on, Natsios, after a meeting with an ICRC representative in Washington, warned in October of massive deaths unless vastly greater relief efforts were mounted. He urged the ICRC, resistant for financial reasons, to substantially increase its efforts, and assured it of U.S. financial support. In November, Assistant Secretary Cohen "re-declared" Somalia a civil strife disaster, and Natsios joined the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in a demarche to other donors urging expanded funding of ICRC activities. The ICRC was to become the international community's primary surrogate in Somalia during late 1991 and early 1992.³¹

Relief Efforts

Along with ICRC in mid-1991 were ten or so NGOs working on a smaller scale in Somalia; of these, the principal ones were SOS, MSF, CISP (an Italian NGO), and Save the Children/UK, working in Mogadishu. Functioning in the continued chaos of Somalia was very difficult for all of them. In October 1991, 45 ICRC vehicles were looted and workers repeatedly robbed. Despite these conditions, ICRC was then distributing about 2,000 tons of food per month in Mogadishu, about a third of what was needed in the city.³² In a precedent-setting step of extreme controversy — one that would cause moral anguish throughout the humanitarian intervention — ICRC felt it had to begin paying armed Somali militiamen for protection. (In the beginning they did so with food rather than cash which was at that point devalued.) This seemingly simple expedient proved to be a major decision, followed, albeit reluctantly, by virtually all relief agencies. Although pay-offs are not uncommon in famine situations, those in Somalia developed on a scale unprecedented in previous humanitarian aid history.³³

During the second half of 1991, MSF continued to provide medical care to the wounded during upsurges in street fighting in Mogadishu, as did the newly arrived International Medical Corps (IMC). SCF/UK was also much respected for its relief efforts, and CARE, too, returned at this time.

Other NGOs maintained operational bases in Nairobi, with staff making periodic trips into Somalia in support of relief efforts there. In February 1991, these groups had formed an Inter-NGO Committee on Somalia (INCS) to exchange information and attempt to coordinate efforts. Somali political faction representatives were invited to share their perspectives, until their political posturing and competition drove the NGOs to limit the time during which Somalis were welcome to attend.³⁴ This type of disjunction between expatriate NGOs and Somalis reflected an ambivalence about working with Somalis that would surface periodically throughout the intervention.

The U.N. and its Agencies

During most of 1991, the United Nations absented itself from Somalia due to an administrative decision based on insecurity. UNICEF fielded an assessment mission in February and later channelled some funding and seconded staff to NGOs pending U.N. permission to operate in the country; after strong appeals to the Secretary-General, this was finally received in December 1991. The World Food Program shipped 28,000 tons of food to Somalia in late 1991, much of which was looted. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), following the recommendation of Resident Representative Osman Hashim, determined the situation was hardly ripe for development activities and completely stayed out. Given its traditional role as representative of the U.N. family of agencies, and of the Secretary-General himself, this absence was a particularly unfortunate symbol of U.N. lack of engagement.

According to Under Secretary-General James Jonah, Lloyds, the U.N.'s insurer, had threatened to break its contract if U.N. staff returned to such dangerous conditions.³⁵ However, few observers believe this was the sole limiting cause of U.N. impotence at a time when ICRC, NGOs, and others were returning to Somalia. Representatives of these groups felt keenly disappointed, even angered, by the U.N.'s disengagement.³⁶ Furthermore, the lack of a U.N. "eyes and ears" capability would diminish its ability to function effectively in the country later on. U.N. absence left a vacuum and a skepticism among most NGOs and Somalis that would be hard to overcome. There was a "tragic delay", Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun would later say, "and now we are paying the price."³⁷

CRESCENDO OF CRISIS AND INITIAL RESPONSES: EARLY 1992

ICRC in the Lead

As the late 1991 Aidid-Ali Mahdi fighting generated new hardships in Mogadishu, ICRC spent much of its time talking with Somalis, trying to understand their situation, building relationships, and, as the unfolding severity of the situation became clearer, trying to mobilize other international actors to help. On December 23, 1991 ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga appealed to then-U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar for urgent efforts to respond to the "tragic situation of Somalia" and to "save these people from their agony." When a U.N. security team sent to Somalia from New York decided it was still too dangerous to authorize U.N. resident staff, ICRC was forced to take on even more responsibility on behalf of the international community. Indeed, by February 1992, facing the complete disintegration of all local structures, ICRC made an exception to its normal policy and decided to consider the entire Somali population as eligible for aid; ICRC then devoted an unprecedented one half of its worldwide budget to Somalia alone.³⁸ Even then, the needs continued to vastly outpace the response.

By February 1992, ICRC was distributing 4,000 tons of dry food per month to prevent starvation in the famine areas. In April, it shifted to large-scale wet feeding in Mogadishu (and later in other locations) when dry food looting became unmanageable. (Because it was subject to spoilage, prepared food was not particularly valuable to looters.) Unable to use the Mogadishu port due to the fighting and looting, ICRC brought its food in through smaller ports and beach landing sites, sometimes supplemented with helicopters; a side benefit of this was to allow closer access to needy rural areas and to avoid over-reliance on any particular local political faction (especially in Mogadishu). A further advantage was to somewhat lower the visibility of ICRC's aid so as not to suggest to other donors that more aid was not needed.³⁹ At the same time, ICRC arranged for numerous journalists to visit Somalia to see the extent of the need, in the hope that other donors, thus informed, would join in helping.

Efforts to Involve the U.N.

In December 1991, OFDA's Natsios, calling Somalia "the worst humanitarian crisis today", joined the ICRC and NGOs in criticizing the lack of a strong U.N. role. Jonah himself would later admit that "the United Nations can be criticized for not

promptly organizing itself to be effective on the political side, which it did not do until December of 1991."⁴⁰ Under outside pressure, the appointment of a new, more activist Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt, and rising awareness within the U.N. of the need to act, new efforts took shape in early 1992 to find a political solution and to coordinate greater flows of humanitarian assistance. The Security Council adopted several resolutions concerning Somalia, beginning with Resolution 733. Proposed by Cape Verde and passed on January 23, 1992, it sought to pave the way for a solution by urging the parties to cease hostilities, calling on other countries to maintain an arms embargo, and requesting the Secretary-General to boost reconciliation efforts and relief flows. Because some Security Council members were reluctant to intervene in a civil conflict situation without a host government invitation, a legal fiction was created in the form of a letter from the Somali charge d'affaires in New York, even though he clearly represented no one at that point. This, however, provided the "legal basis" for action under Resolution 733.⁴¹

Also in January, Jonah was sent to Somalia to meet with all parties on the Secretary-General's behalf. His trip demonstrated the dangers of attempting rapid diplomacy with little advance groundwork, which was inevitably minimal given the U.N.'s year-long absence from Somalia. While attempting to be even-handed, Jonah was initially seen as tilting toward Aidid thanks to the latter's careful orchestrating of his local travel. Jonah's later statements implying support for Ali Mahdi — perhaps intended to correct that perception — only served to sharpen tensions between the two Mogadishu leaders, while smaller clans, which had sought to play a mediating role and avoid siding with either Ali Mahdi or Aidid, felt ignored and alienated by his concentration on Mogadishu. Furthermore, many did not trust his non-transparent style of negotiating separately, rather than collectively, with local leaders.⁴² Notwithstanding all this, a ceasefire agreement was reached between the two Mogadishu leaders on March 3, 1992.

Following the agreement, Boutros-Ghali sent a technical team to Somalia to prepare plans for a ceasefire monitoring mechanism. The team obtained Aidid's and Ali Mahdi's agreement, leading to the formation in April 1992 of UNOSOM I, the appointment of Mohamed Sahnoun as the Secretary-General's special representative, plans for 50 unarmed ceasefire observers and 500 armed guards to protect food relief in Mogadishu, and the establishment of a 90-Day Plan of Action for emergency humanitarian assistance. Thus was born the U.N. mandate in Somalia.

Sahnoun has been widely credited for his culturally sensitive and effective negotiating style and breadth of consultations throughout the country. U.S. Ambassador Robert Oakley, who was later cast in a somewhat similar role, albeit as U.S. special envoy, suggests that the breadth and comprehensiveness of Sahnoun's

contacts have probably not been matched since.⁴³ Sahnoun gave reconciliation efforts a high priority. He launched intense efforts, from May up to the time of his dismissal in late October, to create greater understanding and consensus among the parties to the conflict, engaging in extensive and repeated negotiations with a large array of leaders at many levels.

Also in March 1992, UNICEF's country representative David Bassiouni was appointed as the first U.N. humanitarian coordinator to Somalia. The position would normally have gone to the new UNDP representative Brian Wannop, but the latter, notwithstanding a direct order of the Secretary-General, refused to be based in Mogadishu on the grounds that most other donors and diplomatic personnel were based in Nairobi. UNDP also failed to provide anticipated financial support for Bassiouni's efforts, with the result that UNICEF picked up some of the slack.⁴⁴

At the time of Bassiouni's appointment, ICRC and WFP had agreed to divide responsibility for food delivery in Somalia, with the latter responsible for Mogadishu and the former for a number of other locations. The problem was that Mogadishu's port had been closed since December 1991 and that Bassiouni felt ICRC's strategy of using smaller ports undercut his and WFP's efforts to open it. He was also concerned about a general pattern of ICRC not keeping the U.N. sufficiently informed of its activities.⁴⁵ ICRC, on the other hand, felt it necessary to maintain a clearly separate identity from that of the considerably less popular U.N. in Somali eyes. In the event, and as a result of the efforts of a joint committee for relief assistance composed of representatives of north and south Mogadishu and from the U.N. (including WFP Country Representative Holbrooke Arthur), the port was reopened in May 1992, and the delivery of additional emergency supplies became possible throughout both the Ali Mahdi- and Aidid-controlled parts of the city.

A promising operational development within the U.N. at this time was the establishment in March 1992 of the new Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) to coordinate U.N. and donor appeals and emergency responses worldwide. In April, Swedish envoy Jan Eliasson took up his appointment as its first "humanitarian aid czar", albeit a czar with few powers or resources. Given the gravity of the Somalia crisis, Eliasson was criticized by some for giving it insufficient priority and failing to visit Somalia during the first five months of his tenure. Others, however, criticized him for spending too much time on travel in general and not enough on effectively organizing his new department and attempting to make it a significant force within the U.N. system.

Escalating Starvation

Notwithstanding these initial international efforts, the U.N.-brokered ceasefire, and the abating of clan conflicts in early 1992, there was a horrifying spread of famine, especially in Somalia's historically most productive regions. The U.N. technical mission visiting in March estimated that 1.5 million Somalis were seriously threatened by lack of access to food and health care, and that a further 3.5 million urgently needed humanitarian assistance, out of a total estimated population of 6 million.⁴⁶ The most severely affected groups were those that had not been direct participants in the civil war, but had fallen victim to theft of food harvests and reserves and destruction wrought by Barre's and other militias in renewed fighting in this most fertile part of the country. Most farmers were unable to plant for the next harvest. Their livestock had often been killed, homes burned, and wells damaged. Looters springing up amidst the economic and social chaos also took their toll. Thus, food reserves and general assets that normally carried Somalis through periods of drought or other disturbances were no longer available to them. Studies suggest that if a serious humanitarian intervention had been conducted at this stage of early 1992 — and preferably in 1991 — many of Somalia's lost lives would have been saved.⁴⁷

Trying to face down the famine were a small number of NGOs, who, with ICRC, were still virtually the sole international observers of the unfolding holocaust. Up to a third of Somali children under five died of starvation and associated diseases in the famine zone.⁴⁸ Countless others died for lack of potable water, some of them, ironically, amidst sudden floods, which only added to the cumulative suffering wrought by war and drought decimating Somalia's food reserves and supplies. Often the only timely "relief" item to reach the hundreds who died each day at major feeding camps was the traditional white burial cloth used by Somalis to wrap their dead.⁴⁹

In May 1992, Jan Westcott returned to Mogadishu and was horrified: "The general population of the country is so desperate that death from a bullet or from starvation is of no consequence to a displaced Somali with no hope," she cabled to the OFDA office in Washington on May 13, 1992. At roughly the same time, mortality data from the Centers for Disease Control were sent to OFDA but seemed to take time to be acted upon. "The policy levels were relatively passive" till mid-1992, a CDC researcher felt.⁵⁰ During May, Medecins Sans Frontieres documented famine deaths in Merca, and in June, ICRC's Geoff Loane visited a new "epicenter of death" in Baidoa and recalls "hitting my limit. It was a slight on the international community to have let this happen," he felt as he reported the horror to his Geneva headquarters.⁵¹ ICRC followed up by launching its own airlift to Baidoa, as its normal preference for negotiating safe road access would have taken too long under the dire circumstances. A key element of ICRC's effort was to support its Somali Red Crescent partners, one

of whose most important responsibilities (given the danger of epidemics) was collecting dead bodies from the streets and conveying them to grave sites, a task for which relatives of the deceased were often too weak or too poor. At the height of the crisis, in Baidoa alone they picked up and buried 800-900 bodies per day, for a total of 16,000.⁵²

The U.S. Government Response — a House Divided

Information on the unprecedented scale of the unfolding Somali tragedy had begun flowing into the U.S. Department of State beginning in late 1991.⁵³ State's East Africa office, supported by the Human Rights Bureau, was working closely with OFDA to try to get the U.S. back in to help. Except for some ICRC and NGO grants, aid had been largely halted due to Barre's human rights violations and to Brooke Amendment provisions barring assistance to countries in arrears on their debts. Within the State bureaucracy, Assistant Secretary Cohen fought "tooth and nail" to help OFDA become operational inside Somalia.⁵⁴ Such efforts were opposed, however, by Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs John Bolton and by Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's national security advisor, who were against expending effort and scarce financial resources on an area peripheral to U.S. strategic interests. "Let's not try to right every wrong in the world," Bolton was reported as saying.⁵⁵ The State Department leadership had opposed Cape Verde's original draft Resolution 733 in the U.N. Security Council in January, and insisted on watering it down. Secretary of State James Baker reportedly reacted angrily upon learning of the decision to send 50 unarmed ceasefire observers; with the U.N. peacekeeping budget in arrears due to the Cambodian and other operations, he was concerned about the cost.⁵⁶ The U.S. found itself isolated within the Security Council during this period. The Security Council's president could not help asking, "Is Africa worth only a few crumbs of bread?"⁵⁷

Although OFDA had acted ahead of the rest of the U.S. Government in its response, both NGOs and new OFDA Director Jim Kunder, who came on board in December 1991, feel that Somalia was still of relatively low priority within that office.⁵⁸ OFDA was struggling to respond to multiple crises, with Somalia merely one among many, including Sudan, Bosnia, Ethiopia, and especially the former Soviet Union, where "much of the earth had suddenly opened up for the possibility of emergency intervention."⁵⁹ While OFDA was giving increasing grant support to NGOs, Kunder notes that his own newness on the job and State Department unwillingness to authorize sending an official assessment mission to the field slowed what might have been a faster, larger engagement. During a February-March trip to Ethiopia's border with Somalia, where Kunder personally saw large numbers of Somali

refugees in terrible condition, he began to understand the true magnitude of the crisis and to explore strategies to send aid inside Somalia from Ethiopia.

While the Bush Administration was divided on how to respond to Somalia, Members of Congress — notably Senators Simon and Kassebaum and Representative Tony Hall — had been pushing with renewed vigor in early 1992 for it to become more actively engaged in efforts to achieve a ceasefire and ensure food deliveries. Responding to their January 15 letter to Baker (signed by other Congressional colleagues as well), the State Department in mid-March said it was considering proposals to flood the combat zone with food — but no such action was yet being taken. Following several months of House and Senate hearings and meetings with OFDA, NGOs, and U.N. officials, legislators by the end of June were urging both the Administration and the U.N. to give Somalia the "highest priority".

CRESCENDO OF RESPONSE: MID-1992

I have just returned from Baidoa, Somalia, a town 100 miles west of the capital, Mogadishu. What I witnessed there will haunt me for the rest of my life. I decided to go against the advice of my friends in the Department of State.... The women of Baidoa and the children they revere are so weakened from the prolonged famine they have endured that without urgent medical attention, all the food in the world would not save them... relief workers told me that the death rate there was between 200 and 300 people a day.

— Cong. Mervyn Dymally⁶⁰

The U.S. Wakes Up

Everything began to change in June-July 1992. A combination of greater media and Congressional attention, slowly building NGO pressure, and the politicizing of Somalia as a U.S. presidential election issue created a "critical mass" of pressures that led to a sharply increased U.S. and international response. By June 1992 OFDA's phone was ringing off the hook as media, congressmen, and ordinary citizens called seeking more information. Staff could hardly work on anything except Somalia as demands for information escalated both inside and outside the State Department building.⁶¹

Although the British and other European press, and very occasionally the U.S. press, had made reference to the Somali crisis for some months, most observers credit *The New York Times'* July 19 front page story and photo with sparking greater media and policy-makers' attention, particularly as other editors soon followed *The Times'* lead and the "CNN factor" came into play. ICRC's Loane recalls having taken an initially hesitant Jane Perlez, *The Times'* correspondent, on his visit to Baidoa; before being exposed to the horror, she had asked "Why don't Somalis take more responsibility for themselves?"⁶²

Heightened U.S. Government attention was also generated by U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Smith Hempstone's "A Day in Hell" cable. Handed to President Bush by then-deputy National Security Adviser Jonathan Howe, it described his shock upon visiting feeding camps for Somali refugees along the Kenyan border. Hempstone, with impeccable conservative credentials, was considered no easily shaken bleeding heart. This was followed by Senator Kassebaum's July trip to Somalia with Jim Kunder, and subsequent congressional testimony by Andrew Natsios, then head of AID's Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, of which OFDA is a part. All of this added to the growing momentum for action. Furthermore, the U.S. presidential campaign was heating up, and candidate Bill Clinton began to sharply criticize President Bush's inaction on behalf of the starving in Somalia.

From Europe, French Government Minister Bernard Kouchner had visited Somalia in May 1992 and been persuasive in affecting government and public opinion in the European Community. Indeed, the French became so engaged in the issue that even in their famously shut-down vacation month of August they were able to conduct a nationwide food-collection campaign. The Irish Prime Minister visited Somalia in August, followed by an October visit by Irish President Mary Robinson. Meanwhile, in a July 22 Security Council meeting, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali referred angrily to "fighting a rich man's war in Yugoslavia while not lifting a finger to save Somalia from disintegration"; it was a sound-bite heard 'round the world.⁶³

On July 24, President Bush issued a statement committing the U.S. to provide air transport and fund the deployment of the long-delayed 500 U.N. Pakistani troops to guard relief shipments in Mogadishu. He also instructed Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to be "forward leaning" on Somalia.⁶⁴ A number of observers felt Bush's stance was in response to Clinton's campaign pressures. Many also believe that a similar desire to generate political support on the eve of the Republican Convention contributed to his August 14 announcement of Operation Provide Relief, in which he ordered the U.S. military to airlift food supplies into Somalia. Bush himself states that "it was the impossibility of continuing ground delivery which dictated resort to airlift to get supplies to distribution points. Political considerations in general, and the

Republican Convention in particular, were absolutely irrelevant to the substance and timing of that decision."⁶⁵

Operation Provide Relief, August 1992

The U.S. military airlift, dubbed Operation Provide Relief, grew out of internal U.S. Government discussions during the summer of 1992 about the possibility of a more extensive U.S. intervention. In June, the National Security Council (NSC) had begun convening inter-agency "Deputies' meetings" on Somalia,⁶⁶ and Secretary of State Eagleburger had set up a departmental Somalia Task Force in late July to review events and formulate the "forward leaning" policies requested by President Bush. At that point, U.S. officials despaired of gaining Somali acceptance for the 500 U.N. "food guards", and doubted that this level of effort to protect relief deliveries would be sufficient to save lives. At the same time, the financial drain caused by the Cambodia, Yugoslavia, and Desert Storm operations discouraged support for a truly major U.S. initiative. "As always happens," said Kunder, "the first way out that occurred to planners seeking to respond to public pressure without difficult policy changes was to look at airdrops and airlifts."⁶⁷

Natsios initially was opposed to the airlift, indeed would have preferred an earlier ground intervention.⁶⁸ In fact, this was not the first time airlifts had been considered or conducted: ICRC had been airlifting food to Belet Uen since March, Lutheran World Federation began its airlifts on May 14 — ultimately flying 1100 missions with 18,000 tons⁶⁹ — and the World Food Program began airlifts in August. The U.S. (through OFDA), E.C., Germany, and Belgium had all been running or paying for airlifts, as had Italy, the U.K., and France. U.S. Government-funded civilian aircraft alone carried a total of 19,435 metric tons to Somalia and 60,000 tons to Northern Kenya for Somali refugees.⁷⁰ But the U.S. military airlift idea proved attractive to State Department and NSC planners who wanted something relatively safe, that would "jump-start the relief effort",⁷¹ inspire other donors to assist, "get the job done", and from which it would be relatively easy to disengage. The decision was made and implemented quickly, reflecting the Administration's intent that it be dramatically symbolic of the U.S.'s response.

General Frank Libutti received orders at Central Command in Tampa the morning of August 15 to take off for Kenya to evaluate the possibilities that very afternoon. His plane, refueled twice in mid-air to save time, arrived in Mombasa before the Kenyan government could be properly informed, let alone clear the mission's presence, creating something of a diplomatic row. (Libutti and Ambassador Hempstone had to do some fast-talking with President Moi after Kenyan newspaper

headlines decried the "U.S. invasion".⁷²) Notwithstanding the initial haste, it took two weeks to arrange the required diplomatic clearances, arrival of OFDA Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) members, coordination with NGOs, preparation of the intended 4-5 Somali landing sites, and warehouse food releases. A Joint Task Force multi-service command under General Libutti then coordinated the fourteen U.S. military planes involved at the height of the operation. In addition, two planes were contributed by Germany and three by Canada.

OFDA's Expanding Commitment

OFDA's commitment in Somalia was quickly augmented by the deployment of Disaster Assistance Relief Teams (DARTs) to Nairobi and Mombasa to coordinate the airlift with the U.S. military. The DART arrived in Mombasa on August 21 and that same day organized the first of several relief food airlifts from Mombasa to a UNHCR-run Somali refugee camp in Wajir, Kenya. Within eleven days, the first military airlifts into Somalia itself began; they were to continue, at subsequently declining levels, until February 1993.

The DART sub-office in Mombasa, assisted by AID regional office staff, functioned as a logistics arm for the airlift and as an interface between the U.S. military and NGOs. Its role was to set priorities for relief flights, to "verify need and coordinate delivery." On a daily basis it communicated by radio with NGOs on the ground inside Somalia to ensure that security conditions allowed a safe landing and that receiving NGOs were ready to offload and take responsibility for the shipment being delivered.⁷³ U.S. military rules of engagement prohibited flying unless assured of safe landing conditions. Food movements were also coordinated through the World Food Program in Mogadishu, particularly since WFP supplied some of the food and paid NGOs' internal transport, storage, and handling.

The DART main office in Nairobi managed OFDA's overall relief response to the Somalia crisis, overseeing the Mombasa airlift, coordinating with Nairobi-based NGOs and U.N. agencies working in Somalia, and liaising with the Kenyan government and U.S. Embassy. It coordinated daily communication, via "SitRep" reports, from the Mombasa DART to OFDA headquarters in Washington.

The DART also served to facilitate the awarding of OFDA contracts and grants to agencies carrying out relief efforts in Somalia. A most appreciated feature was "to bring the mountain to Mohamed" — contract officers to the field — which speeded up aid delivery by a critical, often life-saving several weeks over the alternative of referring all proposals to its Washington bureaucracy. DART field staff

would do the work-up on NGO proposals; a grants officer would do the administration, including preparing the "PIOTs"⁷⁴, and deal with program issues; and the DART contract officer did the fiscal work.

Between August and November, with a staff of 600-800 people, Operation Provide Relief conducted 2,486 flights, carrying 28,000 metric tons of relief supplies, equal to 112 million meals, or enough to feed Richmond, Virginia for 180 days.⁷⁵ Because food prices were significantly lowered as a result of the airlift, Natsios, despite his initial opposition, subsequently concluded it had helped after all.⁷⁶ (A number of relief experts believed it important to flood the market with food in order to make it more accessible to more people and, theoretically at least, less attractive to looters.) The airlift succeeded, by all accounts, because of the exceedingly effective cooperation achieved among OFDA, the U.S. military, and relief agencies on the ground, along with judicious planning and, no doubt, a certain amount of luck. Perhaps equally important for the future, it created in Washington "an activist consensus [for aid to Somalia] in the national security bureaucracy where none had existed earlier."⁷⁷

There were difficulties, to be sure: overwhelmed relief infrastructures as large populations were enticed by the airlift to the new feeding centers; constant security problems, some of them exacerbated by the airlift; limited flexibility due to military requirements; inappropriate "airport use charges" (otherwise known as extortion); and a fueling of the war economy through the added influx of valuable commodities.⁷⁸ Mounting security problems meant that airlifted food could not be moved further than 30 km. or so beyond the receiving landing sites;⁷⁹ as a result (and also due to rain-damaged roads), OFDA was reluctantly forced to approve occasional airdrops. ICRC faced a particular problem: given its historical tradition of neutrality requiring that no arms be carried on its relief missions, a combination of sensitivity and obfuscation was required to meet ICRC institutional requirements and to protect the integrity of its red cross and red crescent symbols, while also protecting the U.S. military's need to ensure security for personnel and equipment. A major problem, and the ultimate reason for its perceived lack of sustainability, was the putative expense of the airlift and the resultant conclusion that any airlift was inherently incapable of responding to the full scale of the crisis as it further unfolded.⁸⁰

The New Aid Scene

The mid-1992 Somalia media publicity, followed by the airlift, set in motion a much broader change in the entire dynamic of the relief effort. From August onward, a whole new set of NGO actors came on the scene, with a diverse array of oft

competing relief strategies and approaches. Their diversity confused the Somalis and illuminated the need for greater collaboration among NGOs, U.N. agencies, and bilateral donors. In September-October, both new and old-timer NGOs in Mogadishu established a consortium to coordinate with U.N. and bilateral aid structures; it met weekly with the U.N.'s humanitarian coordinator. While this helped to some extent, the very number of NGO actors disrupted carefully crafted negotiating processes set up by earlier actors, notably ICRC. ICRC had tried to develop a transparent negotiating process with "any Somalis who wanted to be involved", for example, to negotiate safe road access for food delivery vehicles. This process fell apart with the airlift approach of "throwing a machine at the problem". Road negotiations were soon overtaken by events, leading, in turn, to increasing reliance on costly airlifts — and eventually to military intervention.⁸¹

Given the sudden influx of resources in the context of a non-functioning formal economy, historical patterns of enrichment through aid exploitation — a sense that aid belongs to no one, hence to everyone — and a tradition of weapons availability, it was perhaps not surprising that many Somalis took advantage of the situation and increasingly seized relief resources by force. In the context of rampant economic collapse, the influx of relief workers and their supplies became the newest (and often only) source of quick wealth to be exploited by anyone with a gun. The question would inevitably arise as to whether aid was exacerbating the larger problem of Somalia.

U.N. Efforts

While the U.N. in mid-1992 was working intensively through Ambassador Sahnoun to mediate a long-term peace agreement among the various Somali factions, progress was slow because of the need to negotiate not only with the main faction leaders, but also with the sub-clan leaders and elders who often provided their power bases. Added to this was a Somali sense of time quite different from the Western desire for a "quick fix". Somalis value lengthy discussions and "processing"; "they need endless time", noted one savvy observer.⁸² Indeed, this key cultural difference explains much of the problem encountered by international diplomacy in Somalia throughout the crisis. Sahnoun, who adapted his diplomatic style to Somali realities, is convinced he was making tangible progress toward isolating the more intractable warlords from their sub-clan supporters and moving toward a broader political agreement. He also felt that the 50 unarmed U.N. observers were playing an important and appreciated role in Mogadishu, and that the agreed 500 peacekeeping troops could have played an important role if their dispatch had not been delayed by three months due to a slow U.N. response, and if their eventual deployment had not been so sharply

limited by safety concerns.⁸³ In this latter feeling, he was in a virtual minority of one; most observers feel these numbers were woefully inadequate, enough, at best, for a symbolic message of international concern. Sahnoun publicly criticized the poor performance of the U.N. and its agencies, notably WFP in the first half of 1992.⁸⁴ He also felt his efforts were being sabotaged, first, by supply shipments to Ali Mahdi's forces in U.N.-marked airplanes (which added to Aidid's mistrust of the U.N.), and then by an announcement from United Nations headquarters — without advance consultation with him or with Somalis on the ground — that 3,000 additional troops (plus logistics support) would be sent to Somalia. His criticisms of U.N. management annoyed Boutros-Ghali who in late October, in effect, dismissed him.

Sahnoun was replaced on a short-term basis by veteran diplomat Ismat Kittani who, ironically, agreed with 90 percent of Sahnoun's criticisms of U.N. performance (albeit refraining from saying so publicly)⁸⁵, but was unable to achieve the level of trust that his predecessor had enjoyed with the Somalis. Some Sahnoun admirers wonder if even he could have succeeded in "plucking the feathers" of Aidid's support base, winning Aidid over to an agreement short of one giving him absolute power, and broadening opportunities of expression to representatives of civilian, unarmed society. Yet his removal seriously set back efforts to negotiate a halt to the rising tension between Aidid and Ali Mahdi in Mogadishu. It led to effective suspension of many carefully crafted relief shipment agreements concluded with diverse factions elsewhere, and marked, to many minds, the death knell for any near-term political solution.

On the relief side, the U.N. during the summer and fall of 1992 tried to expand its efforts on behalf of Somalia through additional Security Council resolutions and the October launch in Geneva of a DHA-organized 100-Day Plan of Action to more rapidly deploy UNOSOM personnel and boost relief flows. With OFDA funding, CARE President Philip Johnston was seconded to UNOSOM to carry out the plan; he ultimately replaced Bassiouni as the U.N.'s humanitarian coordinator, a move that gave temporary hope to NGO representatives who had lost considerable confidence in the wake of Sahnoun's removal. However, Johnston's subsequent illness and limited tenure (a problem with virtually all appointments in Somalia) inevitably limited his contribution. The 100-Day Plan itself was considered effective in food distribution, but not in other relief activities, partly due to security problems, but also to its nature as a relatively unprioritized list of different agencies' project ideas.⁸⁶ The predecessor 90-Day Plan had proved even less successful for much the same reasons.

THE THANKSGIVING DECISION AND UNITAF

By October-November 1992, mortality statistics began to indicate that the emergency was easing. Rains had returned, promising a good food crop to ease the shortages; indeed, ICRC had begun purchasing seeds produced in Lower Shabelle for its agricultural programs.⁸⁷ Death rates were falling, some say, because the most vulnerable and likely to die had already done so — a number now estimated, albeit with uncertainty, at 240,000.⁸⁸ A November *Washington Post* article graphically showed that death rates in Baidoa had declined from a high of 1,780 per week in early September to 306 two months later, although that was not true of all locales. Baidoa was also facing a severe water shortage, since Barre's troops had destroyed most of its wells.⁸⁹ Sources disagree on whether mortality rates were actually falling, or falling sufficiently quickly, or whether such a fall represented a permanent downward trend, indicating success, or a temporary one dependent on future security conditions. Some assumed, quite simply, that now the hardier were likely to die. In fact, insecurity — manifested via attacks on convoys and relief workers — continued and in places increased. In late October, clan warfare culminating in the capture of Bardera by General Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan", Siad Barre's son-in-law, exacerbated the security situation in that area. Yet food prices remained at their relatively low post-airlift level, suggesting that between the available food from previous relief deliveries and new crops coming on stream with the end of the drought, enough may have been accessible to the population to meet most of the basic needs of those with at least some resources. The extent to which this possibility, and not only the clearly distressing interruptions of relief deliveries, was taken into account is of considerable importance in judging the necessity of the massive military intervention that would follow.

Media and NGO Pressures

CNN and other TV media, now present in large numbers in Somalia following the influx of NGOs and beginning of the airlift, began showing dramatic footage of looting incidents and continuing starvation in the country. The rapid influx of NGO workers and journalists into Mogadishu and the region in mid-1992 had contributed to further attracting clan and freelance looters and various kinds of extortionists. News reporting was extensive on the extortion of NGOs and theft of food shipments by Somali clan militias. Kittani had been shocked at the situation he found on arriving in Mogadishu and had so informed the Secretary General and Security Council.⁹⁰ In November, he and Natsios (based on information received from CARE's Johnston) separately began asserting that 80 percent of food aid was being diverted or looted,

although the factual basis for this figure was hotly denied by most NGOs and ICRC who differed significantly over varying definitions of what constituted diversion. Some felt that food paid to meet the extortionate demands of security guards should not be viewed as diverted food, on the theory it was used in exchange for services performed. Similarly, others felt that since militia members and looters needed food, too, one could not count all forcibly taken commodities as looted in the sense of misappropriated; the term "spontaneous distribution" was coined, the point being made that collective obligations in Somalia oblige all, including warlords, to share resources, and that all food aid thus contributed to reactivating local markets.⁹¹

Recurrent incidents of armed robbery, shootings, and lootings sparked growing NGO debate on the ground and back at headquarters on whether or not to urge stronger U.N. security measures to protect relief staff and operations. Within the NGO community in the U.S. and Europe, there were mixed views on whether an enhanced U.N. military presence in Somalia would strengthen or undermine their security. Some, like ICRC and the American Friends Service Committee, publicly opposed any use of force in civil conflict as likely to lead to greater conflict with local forces. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was "concerned that increased unnegotiated international military presence...is likely to exacerbate the difficulties and undermine the process of long-term reconciliation," as well as result in "even greater insecurity and restriction of movement for...NGOs."⁹² Others believed a larger U.S. armed presence would deter looters and snipers and make relief operations more secure. CARE was perhaps the most forceful in making the case for intervention. CARE/U.S. President Johnston and CARE/International Chairman Malcolm Fraser had met with Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in September to urge a United Nations governing role in Somalia, following which Johnston repeated his call for strong action on Public Television's MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour — an unprecedented and not uncontroversial step for a U.S. NGO. The U.S. NGO consortium InterAction had been advocating greater support for Somalia for some months, including the need for greater U.N. troop support for relief agencies' security, but not outright for an additional military intervention.⁹³ In the end, the 80 percent figure — a fiction and a "shameful manipulation" to some — helped make the case for the major military deployment that followed.

U.S. Government Decision-Making Process

Almost from the beginning of Operation Provide Relief, Administration policy-makers felt that the airlift was inadequate to the need. Despite more food aid and humanitarian workers than ever before, they believed the vast majority of rural Somalis were not benefitting from aid because security limited food deliveries to a

small radius around the selected few airfields. They may have under-estimated the significant amounts of aid still reaching needy Somalis in less visible locations through other means, most notably by ICRC beach and land transport. For right or for wrong, many in Washington felt more frustrated than before the airlift.⁹⁴ Furthermore, given ongoing security problems, it was feared that the U.N.'s 500 Pakistani troops might need to be evacuated for their own security. Given the arduous process of gaining Aidid's and Ali Mahdi's approval for their assignment in the first place, this was hardly a welcome prospect. "UNOSOM I had failed in its mission," President Bush reported to Congress.⁹⁵ In the Senate, Paul Simon had already introduced in July a resolution urging the U.N. to deploy "security guards" with or without Somali faction approval, if necessary.⁹⁶ On a subsequent visit to Somalia, he and Congressman John Lewis called for more security for relief workers and supplies. Simon likened the situation to the Irish famine of the 1840s, saying "I have seen grim things around the world, but never like this, and I hope I never see anything like this again."⁹⁷

In high level Administration councils, widening support developed for military intervention, although there was a simultaneous reticence on the part of civilian members to appear too enthusiastic for fear the military would immediately object. Indeed, Central Command and Pentagon leadership initially opposed a U.S. operation, believing it to be, frankly, crazy in a setting like Somalia, particularly given the lack of clarity about achievable goals for such an operation and the difficulty of getting out again. If any major action was to be seriously considered, U.S. policy makers thought it should be a U.N. intervention. As summed up by the same Ambassador Hempstone who had earlier raised President Bush's awareness of the problem through his "Day in Hell" cable, "If you liked Beirut [where a U.S. military barracks was bombed, resulting in 241 Marine deaths], you'll love Mogadishu;" he went on to warn against U.S. involvement with the "Somalia tarbaby".

The climate in the Deputies Committee soon changed, however, in part due to somewhat greater openness to the idea of a U.S. intervention on the part of a substitute military representative, General McCaffrey; he noted that while the military didn't recommend an intervention, they also recognized that only the U.S., and not the U.N., would be able to pull together an operation quickly enough to be effective. This encouraged some previously reticent civilian members of the committee to be more open in favoring an intervention, and the momentum to intervene built up.⁹⁸ In a subsequent Deputies meeting, Admiral David Jeremiah, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced that "If you think U.S. forces are needed, we can do the job."⁹⁹ The turnaround had originated with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell who himself saw that the U.N. was "running into trouble...[and] getting nowhere", was well aware of political pressures to act, including those of members of the Black Caucus, and knew President Bush felt that "if we could do something, we

should."¹⁰⁰

While civilian sources indicate an intervention of a maximum of 8,000 troops was first contemplated, this seems to have applied only to early proposals for limited "zones [or points] of tranquility" where food aid might be distributed through safe corridors protected from armed gangs. Although some recommended this more decentralized option as most likely to avoid the special problems of Mogadishu, others felt it ignored the fact that the neediest areas were generally the least secure ones and the likelihood that Somali gangs "would not cooperate with peace-keepers who did not have superior strength."¹⁰¹ The zones of tranquility approach was apparently never seriously considered at the highest levels of policy-making. Powell, for one, felt it would have been no more than a "bandaid" and "wouldn't have intimidated the SNA."¹⁰²

Central Command officers report that their preliminary back-of-the-envelope estimates for an operation confined to Mogadishu, Kismayu, and Baidoa alone would have required 12-15,000 troops; this fell between the 1,500 needed to feed starving people in a benign environment such as a Hurricane Andrew situation, and, at the other extreme, an estimated 80-88,000 necessary to occupy all of Somalia.¹⁰³ Notwithstanding their reluctance, the military had been doing contingency planning, including simulation exercises during the previous year in anticipation of a possible Horn humanitarian intervention.¹⁰⁴ Encouragement for such advance planning may have been provided by President Bush's September 22 speech at the United Nations favoring multilateral peacekeeping and signaling to the military that they should prepare for U.S. participation as an important element of their post-Cold War *raison d'etre*.¹⁰⁵

The eventual decision to send in up to 28,000 U.S. troops matured over two-three weeks of intense deliberations in November 1992. It culminated in the President's decision the day before Thanksgiving to follow the "massive force" strategy advocated by Powell, implemented with success in the Gulf War, and recommended, by then, by all the President's top advisors.¹⁰⁶ The 28,000 would be divided on an approximately 1:3 ratio between troops and logistics back-up, some 7,000 of the latter comprising engineering forces to restore roads and bridges necessary for food transport. Roughly 9,000 of the total would remain off-shore. The overall number to secure the main part of the southern famine zone was extrapolated from the 12-15,000 calculated for the three cities, the high number reflecting in part a lesson learned in Lebanon: provide plenty of protection for your soldiers.¹⁰⁷

One incentive for the decision was that it was an "easy" alternative to intervening in Bosnia which policy-makers in general, and the military in particular,

were convinced could result in nothing but failure. As one official put it, "the best thing about Somalia was that it saved us from Bosnia".¹⁰⁸ Humanitarian action in Somalia would demonstrate both solidarity with Moslem and African nations and U.S. support of international peacekeeping in the "new world order". President Bush himself was reportedly motivated in large part by the simple Christian ethic that "if the U.S. can make a difference in saving lives, we should do it...No one should have to starve at Christmastime," he told Natsios and Johnston in December.¹⁰⁹ The degree to which Bush fully understood the ramifications of the decision, in particular the unlikelihood of being able to pull out by the end of his term of office the following month, has been questioned. Powell "said from the beginning we can't do this by January 20; we'll barely be in by then."¹¹⁰ Others question whether Bush would have made the decision to intervene had he been continuing in office beyond January 20, 1993. Bush himself says "I would have felt more free to make this decision had I been continuing as President because I would not have had the concern about the possibility of having to turn an incomplete operation over to my successor." He adds that "I did not believe that the operation could be completed and the troops withdrawn by January 20, but I did hope that the operation could by that time be in its final stages and that troop withdrawal could be underway. As it turned out, withdrawals had begun by January 20." A close White House aide believes Bush had procured President-elect Clinton's concurrence for the intervention beforehand.¹¹¹ With respect to withdrawal, Bush later stated that "I had no understanding of any sort with President Clinton. I simply told him the first time we met that I planned to begin withdrawals as soon as possible."¹¹²

On November 25, Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger carried the President's decision to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali who had shared in the deepening concern over developments in Somalia. Days before, the Secretary-General had received an anguished letter from WFP Director Catherine Bertini reporting a mortar attack on a WFP ship carrying 10,000 tons of food in Mogadishu port and the virtual impossibility of delivering food to the starving under the prevailing security conditions; the attack was the last straw. On November 29 Boutros-Ghali outlined five policy options for the Security Council on how to protect relief operations in Somalia, with pros and cons for each. The two considered most promising were:

- ◆ a countrywide enforcement by several member States acting under Security Council authorization (Boutros-Ghali noted the U.S. had offered to "take the lead in organizing and commanding such an operation"); and
- ◆ a countrywide enforcement carried out under U.N. command and control (although he also noted that the Secretariat lacked the organization and

resources to command an operation of the size and urgency required by the Somali crisis, and foresaw reluctance by national contingents to take orders from the U.N. rather than from their home commands).¹¹³

While he personally preferred the latter option, Boutros-Ghali pointed out that the former was the only practical alternative, given the urgency of the situation. On December 3 the Security Council agreed, unanimously adopting Resolution 794. Invoking for the first time Article 42 of Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, it approved the use of force to achieve a "secure environment for humanitarian relief operations". Other countries, urged by the U.S. and U.N., "volunteered in droves to send troops to UNITAF";¹¹⁴ indeed, there were so many offers that CENTCOM had to stop processing them after the end of December, suggesting instead that they defer their offers to the subsequent UNOSOM II phase. Central Command felt it especially important for political reasons to include in UNITAF troops from African and Arab countries. At its peak, UNITAF would have close to 37,000 troops (almost 26,000 of them American) from 24 countries deployed in the famine belt in southern and central Somalia, covering about 40 percent of the country.¹¹⁵ Japan contributed \$100 million to cover the costs of those contingents unable to pay their own way.

Operation Restore Hope Unfolds

On December 9, 1700 U.S. Marines of Operation Restore Hope landed on the beaches of Mogadishu, to be greeted by a phalanx of TV cameras, lights, and journalists and photographers of all stripes. The military had chosen this apparently incongruous mode of arrival as a precaution in case of a worst case scenario; "a single sniper shooting down a plane full of U.S. troops would have caused more grief than press reaction to the scene at the beach," explained one military officer.¹¹⁶ General Powell, confirming the political message intended by the large force, was happy to have the media presence. "I wanted the Somalis to see nasty, ugly-looking people coming ashore so they'd decide 'We'd better sit down and talk with Brother Oakley' [the U.S. special envoy and political negotiator]", he later said.¹¹⁷ The forces quickly secured the major airport, port, and road targets in Mogadishu.

Aside from the comical press scene at the beach, both international and Somali reaction to the landing was generally one of relief. James Grant, executive director of UNICEF, recalls his "exhilaration" over the event and the fact that such a decision for military intervention was made for humanitarian reasons and was also considered good politics.¹¹⁸ A long-time expatriate resident of Mogadishu and NGO director conveyed a more mixed reaction: "Troops needed to come because the leaders couldn't have

taken control. Anarchy reigned and no one short of military force could have stopped it. I cried over it. I love this country very much. I knew this would create an enormous pollution of society, but there was no other political or other solution."¹¹⁹

From Mogadishu, UNITAF commanders had initially scheduled a slower advance inland in order to consolidate logistical support of their troops. But increasing attacks on food convoys and feeding points by heavily armed Somali units pushed out of Mogadishu led NGOs and others to press for a more rapid deployment throughout southern Somalia. Under this pressure, and given the immediate availability of troops from nations such as France, Italy, Canada, and Belgium, and the virtual absence of resistance, the military speeded up their inland moves by about 2-3 weeks. Their progress was facilitated by the efforts of Oakley and others who travelled ahead of the troops and paved the way politically for their arrival through meetings with local elders and other Somali leaders. Where NGOs were not immediately available to distribute food, the military themselves brought it in to demonstrate that "troops were synonymous with relief."¹²⁰ In fact, by January 20, the Clinton inauguration date initially mooted for completion of the operation, the major transport corridors and feeding centers of the famine belt had been secured.

Despite a few incidents in which U.S. troops inadvertently seized Somalis working for U.S. and U.N. agencies, the intervention was welcomed enthusiastically by most Somalis. Relief convoys began getting through to areas where before they had been frequently attacked. The intervention sparked renewed attempts at accommodation between Aidid and Ali Mahdi, as well; having little choice under the circumstances, they signed a truce within days of the arrival of U.S. troops. In January 1993, and again more comprehensively in Addis Ababa in March, broader peace agreements were signed which included other factions, too.

Mission Creep or Mission Shrink?

The U.S. military was crystal clear that its task was limited to opening routes of communication for carrying relief supplies, and only such disarmament as was necessary to protect its troops in doing so. However, a feeling somehow persisted outside the military, including on the part of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, that significantly broader disarmament might be carried out. Indeed, disarmament had been included in the initial military mission statement until right before the executive order was issued; it was dropped then, however, at the absolute insistence of the top command who considered it both "inappropriate for a humanitarian operation" and, more importantly, "mission impossible".¹²¹ As Oakley explained, "We can't disarm

New York or Washington; how could we disarm Mogadishu?" (Others suggest that in all three cities disarmament may be more a matter of will than capability.) Some observers continue to believe that the failure to disarm was a fatal limitation of UNITAF that would haunt Somalia, and the international community, long into the future.

In other ways, a certain degree of quiet mission creep could be said to have occurred. Military engineers, to the extent that time and other duties permitted, repaired roads, bridges, schools, and clinics that were not within their strict original mandate. A 4,000 member Somali police force was established, albeit unarmed and with uncertain loyalties.¹²² Assistance was given for some refugee resettlement. A very limited amount of disarmament did in fact take place.¹²³ Reflecting the improved climate, in February 1993 a Somali-UNITAF soccer championship took place before a "happy, peaceful crowd of 30,000".¹²⁴

OFDA and the NGOs

OFDA's Disaster Response Director Bill Garvelink arrived in Mogadishu on the heels of the UNITAF landing to explore what OFDA's new role should be in the very new situation created in the country. Obviously the UNITAF intervention had changed the dynamics of OFDA work, previously focussed on coordinating the Mombasa-based airlift and relating to NGOs and U.N. agencies based in Nairobi. Suddenly it had to assume new tasks related to coordinating bilateral U.S. emergency relief efforts from Mogadishu, as well as helping NGO relations with UNITAF and filling the relative vacuum of U.N. capacity to coordinate humanitarian relief efforts on the ground.

In December, OFDA began to deploy DART staff in Mogadishu to assume these tasks. While adapting its Nairobi model of operation to the new situation, it also decided to work under the aegis of the U.N.'s Humanitarian Operations Center headed by Philip Johnston, with a view to strengthening the U.N.'s ability to take over relief coordination thereafter.¹²⁵ They also supported the U.N. with a field presence outside Mogadishu, doing so without bureaucracy or established offices or residences, but staying with NGOs wherever they travelled. By the end of UNITAF, a total of 66 DART members had been deployed in Mombasa, Nairobi, Mogadishu and in the field. Each staff member had to be flexible and self-directing in the style of a Peace Corps volunteer, an informality felt important by Ambassador Oakley as part of a larger plan to minimize the bureaucratic investment and maximize the possibility for ultimate takeover of their functions by others. OFDA staff were not expected to have Somalia expertise, the feeling being that knowledge of OFDA and U.S. Government

procedures, and a healthy dose of common sense, were more important.¹²⁶ In both Mogadishu and the field, OFDA staff thus played a coordination role among NGOs and between NGOs and UNITAF leadership, working closely in Mogadishu with Colonel McPherson on General Johnston's staff (Johnston was the UNITAF commander). They coordinated joint field project assessments and, by acting as a quasi-secretariat, attempted to strengthen UNOSOM's capacity for coordinating humanitarian aid. They also deployed DART staff to the regions to monitor conditions and relief activities and facilitate liaison between NGOs and the military.

In its role as a liaison between NGOs and UNITAF leadership, OFDA staff found themselves mediating a number of NGO complaints about UNITAF military actions. Most immediate and serious was NGO opposition to the military's insistence on disarming NGO security guards before the broader society had been disarmed (which was not in the cards); this left the NGOs feeling highly vulnerable. The policy arose partly from UNITAF's belief that its forces were now there to ensure NGO security and the view among UNITAF officers that it was the NGOs' own security guards who constituted the greatest threat to relief efforts and workers.¹²⁷

OFDA and UNITAF established a civilian-military operations center (CMOC) at UNOSOM's Humanitarian Operations Center to ensure direct communication between NGOs and the military on such issues. CMOC's daily briefings included weather and security reports and convoy announcements, with opportunities following for sub-group meetings, as needed. Most NGOs appreciated these briefings, and particularly the helpfulness of military liaison officer Colonel Kevin Kennedy, although some expressed regret that the briefings focussed only on short-term security issues to the exclusion of broader humanitarian concerns with the intervention. The dialog, many felt, was in fact a one-way monolog.¹²⁸

OFDA served in an important cross-cultural role between the very different institutional cultures, languages, assumptions, approaches, and motivations of NGOs and the military, which often led to frustration and misunderstanding. Kennedy himself was in a sensitive position, having to mediate between officers such as one general who said "I can't stand the [double expletive] NGOs" and NGOs who, by military standards, seemed unbelievably freewheeling and acquiescent to relief supply diversions, excessive Somali staff pay scales, and guard misbehavior (for example, unauthorized nighttime use of official vehicles).¹²⁹ The military also found it difficult to deal with the 585 relief agency installations they found in Mogadishu alone; they determined that protecting NGO homes and offices was not feasible and not part of their mission, a position that caused much anguish and discussion among NGOs. The military was further concerned over the NGO practice of following the same daily route to feeding sites which, themselves, may not have been located in the most secure

settings. In this case, the need for feeding site predictability conflicted directly with the military view that unpredictability provided greater security.¹³⁰

Older Somali NGOs, and the newer ones which began to develop during this period, were more critical of the CMOC structure, from which they felt largely excluded. Somali NGO representatives note that local groups were barred from access to the port, airport, or any U.N. buildings unless they had a yellow pass, granted only if their application was supported by two international NGOs funding them. This was seen as an indignity perpetrated by foreigners in their country, besides giving an edge to a relatively few more established local NGOs to the detriment of others. For most Somali NGOs, CMOC was thus a vehicle through which foreigners dealt with each other on security and relief matters, without Somalis being present.¹³¹ Indeed, some NGO expatriates felt the intervention would have risked less and gained more by having Somali participants who could provide local security information from their own sources.¹³²

Political Efforts Under UNITAF

Robert Oakley had been appointed to coordinate the overall U.S. effort, fortuitously, since he and General Johnston got along particularly well. Oakley's compound soon became the place where major decisions on UNITAF military actions, as well as reporting on the status of relief efforts, took place. His early efforts to pave the way with local leaders for the introduction of UNITAF forces into their areas gradually evolved in early 1993 into assisting in rebuilding a Somali civic structure through local and regional civilian councils, as approved in the January 1993 peace agreement signed by various Somali factions. In the process Oakley inevitably was involved in larger reconciliation discussions, pragmatically deciding to cultivate close relations with the "warlords" Aidid and Ali Mahdi, even though this "may have actually elevated their status and power at a time when their authority had been ebbing. Thereafter, any attempt by UNOSOM to broaden contact with non-factional social constituencies was viewed as a plot to marginalize the faction leaders."¹³³

In these discussions, Oakley was in a delicate situation because nominally, at least, they were supposed to be led by the U.N. Secretary-General's Special Representative Kittani. But Kittani's posture toward the faction leaders was "perceived as insulting"; he insisted, for example, that they come to him, rather than his reaching out to them.¹³⁴ Added to the fact that many Somalis were still suspicious of Boutros-Ghali for his past closeness to Siad Barre (and apparently ignoring past U.S. support for Barre), they were more inclined to turn to the United States than to the U.N. for mediation.

At the regional and local levels, Oakley urged Somali elders and NGOs to form their own groups and decide their most important community priorities. He and his staff then brokered international aid resources (mostly OFDA's) to carry out specific projects in an effort to demonstrate the potential for positive developments, to build support for UNITAF, and, even as he talked with the clan-based political faction leaders, to help construct a counterweight to them.¹³⁵ U.S. NGOs asked to collaborate in these efforts were sometimes reluctant, however, particularly when they felt them too blatantly political or unjustified in humanitarian terms.¹³⁶ They wanted to ensure their humanitarian roles were kept clearly separate from partisan politics.

Planning to Get Out

Almost as soon as the U.S. military arrived in December, they began planning how to get out. General Johnston had reported to Washington in late January that, in effect, "the war's over, we won, it's time to come home."¹³⁷ U.S. Government representatives regularly travelled to U.N. headquarters in New York to plan the transition. But the U.N. balked. Top staff cited their unpreparedness due to lack of resources, particularly given the intended vast expansion of the U.N. mandate that was to include disarmament, reconstruction, development, and nation-building activities — activities the U.S. had steadfastly refused to undertake itself. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali dragged his feet, hoping to force the U.S.-led UNITAF to accept his view of the need for large-scale disarming of Somali factions and civilians prior to UNOSOM II taking over. Some believe he actually thought the U.S. had committed to undertake more disarmament than was the case; President Bush's press spokesman denied this on December 14, 1992, but then said in a statement open to varying interpretation, "Our mission has always been that we would collect arms as they became available and as we encountered them."¹³⁸ While frustrated U.S. officials were eager to "get rid of Somalia," U.N. officials were sure the U.S. was setting up the U.N. for failure. Not until March 1993, when the Security Council passed Resolution 814, written by the U.S. and authorizing the date for UNITAF's handover to UNOSOM II, did the U.N. seriously begin joint planning. Even then, Admiral Howe, who had arrived in Mogadishu March 17, 1993 as the Secretary-General's new special representative, pleaded in both New York and Washington for a mid-June takeover date that would allow a few more weeks to organize UNOSOM II. But the U.S. refused. While Howe points out that the date of May 4 had been fixed only as a technical accounting date when the U.N. would start paying the operational costs, it quickly became also the date for transfer of military command, notwithstanding the lack of U.N. readiness. Tensions were high between the U.S. Government and the U.N.

The Handover

UNITAF was not simply handing over to a continuation of its own operation but rather to a substantially expanded new mandate, 180 degrees different in many respects. Security Council Resolution 814 authorized a U.N. Chapter VII/Article 42 operation to succeed UNITAF that allowed use of "all necessary means" to carry out a broad mandate ranging from disarmament to nation-building. To accomplish this extraordinarily ambitious task, rejected by the U.S. for its own forces, UNOSOM II began with less than 30 percent of its authorized 2,800 civilian staff in place — Somalia was hardly considered a choice assignment — and humanitarian staff were particularly lacking. UNOSOM II's planned military capability was significantly reduced from the UNITAF peak of nearly 37,000 troops to 28,000; in actuality, only 25,640 were deployed as of September 1993.¹³⁹ Only 2,900 of these were U.S. forces, the first time any U.S. forces had served under direct U.N. command, and they were for logistic support only. However, close to 14,000 other U.S. military personnel served in or near Somalia in support of UNOSOM II but under direct U.S. command and control, including a quick reaction force of 1,100 to protect U.S. troops and support UNOSOM II forces as needed.¹⁴⁰ The new UNOSOM commander, General Bir of Turkey, was in many ways an "orphan commander",¹⁴¹ faced, as he was, with the challenge of integrating a fighting force from among 28 national contingents, each reporting separately to its own home capital,¹⁴² and many so ill-equipped as to be severely endangered in the Somali context; the Pakistanis guarding the most difficult location, Mogadishu, initially lacked even flak jackets.

Some observers wondered whether Howe himself, a retired navy admiral, would prove to have the right qualifications and decisiveness for the delicate political and humanitarian tasks ahead; one official described his appointment as "the miscasting of the century."¹⁴³ There are conflicting reports as to whether Boutros-Ghali originally intended to appoint Ambassador Lansana Kouyate, a Guinean who later became Howe's deputy, but then was pressed by the U.S. to appoint an American in view of the preponderant continuing U.S. role, or whether he was himself the initiator of the American's appointment in order to "lock in U.S. participation even more."¹⁴⁴ In any case, the prospects for UNOSOM II could hardly be described as promising — even less so in the light of reports that it would soon be tested by antagonistic Somalis. What was originally hoped to have been a "seamless transition" was to become an "unseemly" one.¹⁴⁵

UNOSOM II

Within two days of the handover to UNOSOM II came what Howe thought was the anticipated "test". Kismayu, captured in March by General Aidid's nemesis, General Morgan, was recaptured by Aidid's ally Colonel Ahmed Omar Jess. As the responsible Belgian UNOSOM troops had failed to prevent the initial Morgan takeover, Aidid assumed UNOSOM complicity and thus lack of impartiality. Conflict arose between Aidid and UNOSOM later in May over a reconciliation conference to be held in Galcayo which each sought to prevent the other from controlling.¹⁴⁶ Aidid grew increasingly shrill in his anti-U.N. invective aired over Radio Mogadishu, the former government station which he now controlled. Under the rising verbal onslaught, both U.S. and U.N. officials, always distrustful of Aidid, came to the conclusion that, contrary to the wishes of most Somalis, he would settle for nothing less than absolute power and therefore had to be brought under control. The new U.S. special envoy, Robert Gosende, suggested to the State Department in the latter part of May that Aidid should be arrested for non-cooperation with the March 1993 Addis agreements which he and the other factional leaders had signed.¹⁴⁷

War

On June 3 General Montgomery sent a "letter of destiny"¹⁴⁸ to Admiral Howe which was to be delivered to Aidid's SNA announcing a weapons inspection, as agreed in the Addis accords, at Radio Mogadishu. Howe, told by the UNOSOM II military that his political staff had been consulted, double checked with April Glaspie, his chief political advisor at the time; (she had been seconded from the U.S. State Department to help tide him over a shortage of personnel during the transition from UNITAF).¹⁴⁹ The letter was then delivered to an SNA official who read it and said, "This means war."¹⁵⁰ Howe reports that Glaspie had approved the inspection, notes the expected routine-ness of it, but indicates he was not informed of the "This means war" response.¹⁵¹ While the inspection itself was carried out uneventfully on June 5, 24 Pakistani soldiers of UNOSOM were killed and many more injured by Somalis as they tried to leave the area, probably because of a strong belief that their real aim had been not to inspect for arms but to destroy the radio station. Although Howe declares this was not the purpose, it had apparently become known that the U.S. and U.N. were keen to put the station out of business in order to end the invectives.¹⁵² Oakley's interpretation is that the June 5 incident was a case of "spontaneous combustion" growing out of the high prevailing tensions in Mogadishu. Powell adds that it "caused spontaneous combustion in Washington to change the mission...but nobody sat back to say, 'Is this smart?'"¹⁵³

On the following day, the United Nations Security Council, vigorously supported by the U.S. Government, hastily passed Resolution 837 calling for the arrest of those responsible for killing the U.N. troops. U.N. officials were not only appalled by the carnage inflicted on the Pakistanis, but also believed that failure to react would damage U.N. credibility around the world, including in Bosnia.¹⁵⁴ The policy to go after Aidid, the presumed perpetrator, was in part, at least, to "send a message." Although three letters were sent by UNOSOM to Aidid following the June 5 events, they led nowhere, and the last was returned unopened.¹⁵⁵ On June 12, UNOSOM counter-attacked, and the war was engaged.

The war lasted four months. In the first week, UNOSOM moved to the vast but more readily fortified U.S. Embassy compound and conducted major cordon and search operations in the SNA enclave of the city, including a U.S. Quick Reaction Force attack on Radio Mogadishu. In mid-June, UNOSOM offered a \$25,000 reward for Aidid's capture. Aidid countered by offering a \$1 million reward for taking Howe. In July, SNA forces increasingly took the initiative, to the extent that UNOSOM began speaking of them as "enemy" rather than "hostile" forces as previously. In one of UNOSOM II's most controversial moves, on July 12 it bombed without warning an SNA command center where Somali elders, some of whom were not Aidid supporters, were meeting.¹⁵⁶ Anywhere from 20 to 73 Somalis were killed, depending on whether one accepts UNOSOM or SNA figures. The attack was harshly criticized by U.S. and U.N. legal experts and by many accounts was a crucial turning point in causing many Somalis to close ranks and support Aidid's side in the war, even if they had not been enthusiastic supporters before; now there was a clear external threat, facing which (if for little else) Somali culture calls for unity. By other accounts, notably that of the U.S. Liaison Office in Mogadishu, parts of Aidid's power base were eroding as the conflict dragged on.

Over the course of the summer, SNA ambushes and firings on helicopters escalated, as did the UNOSOM effort to arrest Aidid. After two months of Howe's and Boutros-Ghali's urging that the U.S. send a contingent of elite Rangers to assist in this task, President Clinton finally agreed to do so in August on the reluctant recommendations of CENTCOM's General Joseph Hoar and Joint Chiefs Chairman Powell; they didn't think it would work but felt they "had to support the commander on the ground."¹⁵⁷

The Rangers did not enjoy an auspicious beginning, mounting their first attack on buildings occupied by staff members of UNDP and the French aid group International Action Against Hunger; their second raid, on World Concern headquarters, started with a more gracious knock on the door. When MSF was also attacked, other NGOs became fearful of unannounced attacks on their compounds,

later to be somewhat reassured when CMOC and NGO representatives took Ranger commanders on an extensive tour of Mogadishu to point out all NGO residences and offices.¹⁵⁸ Subsequent Ranger forays were more successful as several leading Aidid supporters were found and jailed. But Aidid himself remained elusive to capture, at least without endangering innocent people around him in the process.

By mid-September, even the most hawkish U.S. policy-makers, including Gosende, were beginning to question the policy and wondering how to get off dead center. In Gosende's case, he realized following a brief visit to Mogadishu by Hoar that U.S. troops would not be allowed to play a leading role in Somalia, even though no one else could.¹⁵⁹ In Washington, a Senate resolution was passed requiring the President to receive Congressional authorization by November 15 if he wanted to continue deployment of U.S. forces in Somalia. The Italians overtly, and the French more quietly, had been opposed since July to the concentration on military as opposed to political approaches. The Ethiopian and Eritrean governments were also having their doubts. (Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi would soon become a significant actor in the late 1993 reconciliation negotiations between Aidid, Ali Mahdi, and other Somali factions.) Now American voices suggested restarting the political process — effectively suspended since March — while the Rangers, viewed with some concern by Aidid, were still in Mogadishu and could carry some deterrent clout. Some of these, and others, feared that by continuing the same level of military activity, something was bound to go wrong. And it did.

Shifting Policy

On October 3, the Rangers lost 18 men in battle after they attacked Mogadishu's Olympic Hotel in search of Aidid. Worldwide television showed a dead American being dragged through city streets and a captured American being held hostage by SNA forces. It was the Somali version of Viet-Nam's Tet offensive. The effect was electric, particularly in the U.S. where the public questioned the altered objectives of an intervention that seemed to have lost its humanitarian purpose.

On October 7, President Clinton addressed the nation and announced what appeared to be a 180-degree policy shift. In fact, Clinton had already endorsed a "two-fisted approach" that would have "opened the door" to political negotiations with Aidid while continuing the Ranger attacks to arrest him.¹⁶⁰ He had urged Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali to accept this approach during personal attempts by both Secretary of State Warren Christopher (making a special trip to U.N. headquarters) and by himself, but Boutros-Ghali had demurred.¹⁶¹ Political reaction in the U.S. now forced the President to act. According to Clinton's October 7 announcement, the U.S.

would withdraw from Somalia all but "a few hundred support personnel in non-combat roles" by March 31, 1994. During this "decent interval", Ambassador Oakley would be sent immediately to promote a renewed effort at political reconciliation, as would 5,300 additional troops to back up his initiatives and "let us finish leaving Somalia on our own terms and without destroying all that two Administrations have accomplished there." While this pleased the U.S. Congress and body politic, it caused a "manic depressive" reaction in the U.S. mission in Mogadishu, understanding as they might be of U.S. political realities. The idea that the hated Aidid would be allowed to reenter the political process led some to ask whether this meant that he had only to await the U.S. departure before he resumed looting and attempting to take over Somalia.¹⁶²

At the U.N., left with no choice but to follow the U.S. lead in retreat, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Kofi Annan later noted the irony that the U.S., with the most powerful and well-equipped military in the world, had become the weakest link in peacekeeping. "One has only to kill a few Americans and the U.S. leaves," he said.¹⁶³ The war, in any case, was over, and so was the experiment with Chapter VII peacemaking. In November, the Security Council passed a resolution dramatically narrowing the UNOSOM II mandate to the point of becoming "basically just to protect U.N. facilities and avoid any more casualties."¹⁶⁴ On November 16, despite efforts by Boutros-Ghali to maintain pressure on Aidid, the Security Council suspended the order authorizing his arrest and appointed a new Commission of Inquiry to investigate the June 5 incident and its aftermath. Two days later Aidid reappeared in public, and two weeks later he was flown to a peace conference in Addis Ababa in an American plane; by January 18 the last SNA detainees had been released. In February 1994, the Security Council further limited UNOSOM II's mandate and reduced its maximum troop strength to 22,000.

Oakley, meanwhile, returned to Mogadishu on October 10 in an effort to re-energize the political process that had been effectively suspended since he left Somalia the previous March. Since Aidid refused to talk to UNOSOM, there was not much that could be done by the U.N. The events of October 3, however, had been sufficiently traumatic to trigger a de facto ceasefire,¹⁶⁵ with U.S. troops instructed to "lie low" to avoid any further incidents. Consensus soon developed to extend a November 1993 humanitarian aid conference in Addis Ababa to enable political negotiations among key Somali groups from throughout the country.

The Broader Scene

The foregoing account reflects the overall international concern with Somalia during most of the period under review, particularly in mid-1993. The problem,

however, was that, more than ever, all eyes were focussed on Mogadishu as opposed to the country at large. While the situation elsewhere was characterized by varying degrees of insecurity, compared to the capital there was relative peace. An August 1993 U.S. Government inter-agency assessment team led by Ambassador David Shinn reported (over-optimistically, in the light of subsequent events) that the civil war was over, that the vast majority of Somalis either supported UNOSOM II or were ambivalent about its presence, that banditry had significantly decreased, and that emergency food programs could end due to a lack of continuing need. The team also endorsed a major outcome of the March 1993 Addis Conference, namely, the agreement to form local councils in an effort to restore political legitimacy and create a framework for both local administration and development and humanitarian programs. The team found this bottom-up approach to be sound, representing a more realistic first stage that could then be followed by efforts to establish a transitional national council.¹⁶⁶ While the latter was clearly a key objective, given the turmoil in Mogadishu and major differences between Aidid and the other, "Group of 12" factional leaders, it was equally clearly an elusive one. District and regional councils were thus a high priority for UNOSOM II. Notwithstanding woefully limited UNOSOM staffing available to assist in the formation of such councils, and serious questions over their representativeness and thus durability (some NGOs felt they could have advised on their composition, if asked),¹⁶⁷ 19 had reportedly been formed by August, 30 by September, and 52 by December.¹⁶⁸

Humanitarian Activities

By mid-1993, and except for a few needy areas, many NGOs were winding down their relief activities and shifting to rehabilitation or reconstruction activities. They had been extremely nervous about the implications of UNITAF's handover to UNOSOM II, fearing rightly, as it turned out, the consequences. Following the June 5 events and aftermath, most of them expressed considerable anger, indeed outrage, about U.N. policies and actions which crippled their humanitarian efforts and, in the eyes of many, violated human rights and the U.N.'s own principles. As one NGO worker reported, "The operation has lost its humanitarian goals; it is purely a military mission."¹⁶⁹ "Dialogue, dialogue and more dialogue," said another; "we believe there must be a process of dialogue."¹⁷⁰ Given the renewed insecurity following June 5, many NGOs cut back to skeleton expatriate staffs during this period or rotated staff between Nairobi and Somalia as the situation of the moment warranted. The U.S., meanwhile, had in March 1993 replaced OFDA in Somalia with an AID mission of fewer than five operating out of Nairobi; still heavily funded through OFDA, it continued to assist NGO projects. It also actively began to support UNOSOM II humanitarian activities and play a lead role in mobilizing the larger donor community

(ostensibly DHA's role) for supplementing remaining relief activities with new reconstruction and development initiatives.

By late 1993, the humanitarian situation was very mixed. On the one hand, 1.6 million refugees and internally displaced people, plus an additional one million "highly vulnerable persons" were said by the U.S. Mission to still need help. Crop failures had occurred in some areas and flooding in others, and Somalis continued to be victims of widespread banditry and vandalism.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, some areas produced surplus harvests, and in early October, in fact, malnutrition rates in Somalia were reported to be similar to those of other Third World countries. In an article entitled "The Real News from Somalia — and It's Good," *The Economist* reported that 1993 harvests were nearly 50 percent of normal, up from 5-10 percent in 1992.¹⁷² While the latter news was hardly cause for rejoicing, it did reflect a change from the dire levels of need that had originally drawn donors to the country. The result was a somewhat greater aversion to security risks and a greater questioning among the humanitarian relief community as to whether or why its members should remain involved in Somalia.

The U.S. Government's policy turnaround in October, the resultant return to seeking a political solution, and changes set in motion around the November-December Humanitarian Conference in Addis Ababa renewed among some, at least, a modicum of renewed hope for humanitarian assistance in Somalia, at least outside Mogadishu. Donors, led by the U.S., pursued at Addis a strategy that would return primary responsibility for future progress to Somalis themselves. At the political level, the Somalis were expected to reach consensus in their own way, with a continuing UNOSOM II shield to prevent any one faction from taking over militarily. At the humanitarian level, they would receive rehabilitation assistance only in those areas which were secure and able to make good use of aid; the political incentive to ensure security was clearly intended. Throughout the conference sessions and in private hallway conversations, the donors reiterated their impatience with the disarray of the Somali factions and their readiness to divert aid resources to other needy countries should the Somalis not "get their act together" very soon. Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, host of the Addis Conference, made the same point in no uncertain terms: "...make no mistake. There is a limit to what the international community is prepared to do to help you and for how long...We are prepared to help you if you get yourselves out of the quagmire you are in. If on the other hand you insist on wallowing in that quagmire we have no qualms about turning our backs on you."¹⁷³

Donor frustrations over the effects on humanitarian priorities of the summer's U.N.-sustained warfare also led to changes in the implementation of aid programs. Humanitarian responsibilities were essentially taken from UNOSOM II and, beginning

in early 1994, given to a new donor-run Somalia Aid Coordination Board (SACB) with a secretariat to be managed by UNDP.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the donors were not the only ones concerned. UNOSOM II's small humanitarian staff had itself been upset with the U.N.'s participation as a protagonist in Somali clan warfare. Hugh Cholomondeley, the humanitarian coordinator since March 1993, was removed from his post in December, filled with frustration. U.N. Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliasson was so thoroughly frustrated that he resigned in early 1994.¹⁷⁵ The experience had led many observers to question the viability of a combined humanitarian-political-military response to a humanitarian crisis.

The U.S. Prepares to Depart

By late 1993, U.S. Government planning was focussing on a second, and this time more complete, hand-over to the United Nations and, more importantly, to the Somalis themselves. After making the strong case that Somalis would have to resolve their own problems or risk future international support, Oakley left Addis as the political conference following the humanitarian conference was getting under way. Before doing so, he authorized a special U.S. Government airplane and security detail to bring General Aidid from Mogadishu to Addis to join the negotiations. This reinforced the dramatic nature (and irony and quirks) of the recent U.S. policy shift and seemed to rehabilitate Aidid in the public consciousness. But in a more positive interpretation, it merely conceded the reality that a viable political solution for Somalia would be impossible without his participation. In Addis, and later in Nairobi, the various faction leaders spent nearly four months negotiating their country's future leadership structures. During this period, the Imam of Hirab, a religious leader previously unknown outside Somalia, emerged as an extremely influential figure in rallying Hawiye elders and religious and clan leaders to the cause of peaceful reconciliation. The U.S. Government was involved in a less visible way than before, leaving the primary encouraging role to UNOSOM's Ambassador Kouyate who took over as acting special representative of the Secretary-General after Howe departed in February 1994.

With its usual efficiency, the U.S. military planned its phased reduction, as did other western governments which had decided to join in the departure by March 31, 1994. With Pakistani and Indian troops expected to form the majority of the post-March 31 UNOSOM force of 19,000, some wondered whether they alone could keep the peace, or at least that level of peace which had been known theretofore.¹⁷⁶ Concerns were raised over how to protect the remaining 27-member U.S. Liaison Office staff, who performed such embassy functions as were feasible in a Somali setting; ultimately, 54 F.A.S.T. (Fleet Antiterrorism Support Team) Marines and 4,000

offshore troops were assigned for a transitional period to protect the remaining 1,000 American diplomats, relief workers, U.S. UNOSOM II staff, and Somali-Americans.¹⁷⁷

Considerable effort was also devoted during late 1993 and early 1994 to expanding, training, and equipping a modest Somali police force recently reestablished by UNOSOM II and originally seen as "our ticket out of Somalia".¹⁷⁸ Reestablishment of a police force had been difficult, even though most Somalis and donors agreed on its importance for restoring order. Several expatriate advisers and consultants had drawn up plans for both a police force and the judicial framework within which it could operate, drawing heavily on highly regarded Somali leadership and legal precedents in the country. While many blamed the U.N. for foot dragging, funding appeared to be the main impediment; donor governments feared introducing more armed members into the society, had legal restrictions in this area (in the case of U.S. AID, growing out of Viet-Nam experience, until an exception was made for Somalia), or simply weren't prepared to provide the money needed. By January 1994, the U.S. had allotted \$25 million (plus excess equipment and transportation) for police and judicial reestablishment purposes, and Secretary of State Christopher personally wrote to other governments to urge their contributions, as well. By March 1994 twenty countries were involved, and the Somali force, though not fully armed, numbered some 8,000 nationwide.¹⁷⁹

Somalia After U.S. Withdrawal

As the last U.S. troops left on March 26, the big question was whether Somalia would revert to its previous state of anarchy or whether the negotiations would lead to a peaceful political settlement. The answer turned out to be some of each. At the very last minute, through the effective mediation of Ambassador Kouyate (reinforced by his refusal to continue paying the negotiators' hotel bills, allegedly costing \$150,000 per day¹⁸⁰), the factions agreed on March 24 to the formation by May of a national governing authority. In the event, the schedule was not met, and most observers expected slow progress in forming even a weak central government structure, with de facto regional autonomy along clan lines the most likely scenario for the near future.¹⁸¹

While fighting had essentially stopped during the long negotiating period (except for recurring problems in Kismayu), general lawlessness increased. The latter was directed especially against relief agencies, with particular attacks, allegedly by fundamentalist groups, against religious NGOs around Christmas 1993. These led NGOs, U.N. agencies, and other donors to increasingly fear for their own security and that of their activities, particularly after the U.S. and European withdrawal. Having

already felt that UNOSOM II troops were insufficiently responsive to their security needs, they felt an even greater need to hire armed Somali guards for protection. Yet, labor disputes continued to be a major cause of security incidents,¹⁸² leading, in turn, to the question of whether donors, notably the European Union (formerly the E.C.), would continue to fund the costs of such guards in the future.

In early 1994, NGOs continued to withdraw expatriate staff, relying more on local staff and on funding Somali NGOs; hundreds of the latter were establishing themselves and seeking international support (500 were registered with UNOSOM in Mogadishu alone). CARE reduced its expatriate staff from 60 at the height to 20 by April 1994; and IMC from 20 to 10; other NGOs pulled out altogether.¹⁸³ NGOs also found their resources stretched thin, with much less donor interest in Somalia and more competition from other crises in Africa and elsewhere. Meanwhile, donors continued to emphasize funding activities in secure regions, although it was not clear that they would be sufficiently disciplined to sustain this. A February 1994 attempt to put together a multi-donor team to focus aid on the agreed priority regions of Bakool and Nugal resulted in only minimal interest. It was also unclear whether aid to Mogadishu, presumably the lowest priority in terms of security but high given the thousands of displaced persons there, would be stopped. And new humanitarian problems emerged, notably a cholera outbreak that struck 5,300 people and killed an estimated 200 by early April.¹⁸⁴

As one observer analyzed the Somalia scene in March 1994, "Fifteen months ago when George Bush dispatched 25,000 U.S. Marines here, Somalia was a country with no government, no electricity, no telephones, only a few schools, and no security on the streets because of widespread banditry. Now, as the United States nears the end of its withdrawal, and after all the death and destruction by anti-tank missiles, Somalia is still a country with no government, no electricity, a few more schools, a few satellite telephones, but still no security because of widespread banditry in the streets."¹⁸⁵ As the last U.S. troops departed on March 26, looters were seen walking off with much of the equipment they had left behind. Many of them were reportedly former Somali employees of the U.S. who knew the layouts of the U.S. facilities. Remaining UNOSOM troops (from Egypt and Pakistan) chose not to intervene.

On the books as of mid-summer 1994 was a UNOSOM end-date of March 1995. "Despite the negative assessment of the political and security situations in Somalia," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali wanted to remain active at least through this period. "Deciding to phase out [earlier]," he stated in May 1994, "would signify abandonment of [the U.N.'s] vision and [run] the risk of the country sliding back into the abyss from which it was barely rescued less than two years ago."¹⁸⁶ He was not entirely alone in thinking this. "The troops should stay longer," said one

Somali; "I'm sorry, but I don't have another solution". But the pendulum of support for Somalia seemed to be swinging away. Also in May, another five UNOSOM soldiers were killed, and militia fighting heated up yet again. U.S. patience had finally worn thin, and on September 15, 1994 the flag was lowered at the U.S. Liaison Office and its last staff members departed. The U.S. was also pressing for the withdrawal of U.N. forces, even considering a brief U.S. troop deployment to protect the U.N.'s departure. No planning was underway for a renewed famine contingency.¹⁸⁷ Would it be "deja vu all over again?"

ENDNOTES

1. John Drysdale's *What Happened to Somalia?* (London: Haan Associates, 1994) provides an excellent account by a British consultant to UNOSOM with extensive knowledge of Somalia from colonial times in British Somaliland. Other useful historical sources include: *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 1992 (updated 1993)); Iain M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (rev. ed.), (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988); David D. Laiton and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987); and numerous articles by the British academic Iain M. Lewis and Somali scholars Ahmed I. Samatar, Said S. Samatar, and Hussein M. Adam.
2. Interview with Amy Nelson of the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs, Office of African Refugee Assistance, 6/3/94, Washington, DC.
3. See the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) study *Famine in Africa: Improving Emergency Food Relief Programs*, Report No. GAO/NSIAD-86-25 (Washington, DC: March 1986) for details of how U.S. PL480 emergency food aid was diverted to the Somali army or sold at below-market prices to public officials close to Barre; only an estimated 12 percent of the emergency food reached the most needy. See also Michael Maren, "Manna from Heaven? Somalia Pays the Price for Years of Aid," *Village Voice*, January 19, 1993, pp. 21 ff. Many NGO staff members and government officials interviewed for this study have commented on lack of donor trust of Somalis.
4. Geo. B.N. Ayittey, "The Somali Crisis: Time for an African Solution," *Policy Analysis*, No. 205, Mar.28, 1994 (Washington, DC: Cato Institute), per p.3. See also David Rawsom, "Dealing with Disintegration: Donors and the Somali State, 1980-90" pp.298-300 for a review of donors to the Barre government. OECD statistics indicate Italy provided almost 39 percent of all bilateral foreign aid to Somalia during 1979-1991, with the U.S. and E.C. second at almost 17 percent each, and Germany third at about 11.5 percent. See also tables from ODC Report on December 3, 1993 Conference, "Conflict Resolution, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development in Somalia: Lessons Learned," which uses data from *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries*. (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, various dates); also Peter J. Schraeder, "United States Foreign Policy toward Ethiopia and Somalia," in *United States Foreign Policy Toward*

Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 154-7, 161-2, 183, 186-7.

5. As late as spring 1989, the Defense Department was asking Congress for \$15 million in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) financing and \$1.2 million for International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds for Somalia; it also sought a total of \$34.5 million (including \$20 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) and \$10.5 million in PL480 food aid. (See DOD Congressional Presentation FY 1990 Security Assistance Programs, pp. 250-1. Also *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries*.)
6. See Charles L. Gesheker, "The Death of Somalia in Historical Perspective," draft chapter for *Unity vs. Separatism in the Middle East* (eds. Mary E. Morris and Emile Sahliyeh), November 12, 1993, pp. 22, 30.
7. See USGAO report *Famine in Africa, op. cit.*, documenting food aid diversions to the Somali military, calling it the worst in the history of the U.S. food aid program and a "scandal".
8. See Gesheker, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
9. Gesheker, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-3, 29-31 argues it was an exceptional departure; others argue it was a militarized extension of prior patterns of aid extraction.
10. Interview with relief contractor.
11. The higher end figure comes from *Africa Report*, Mar-Apr 1990, p.10 (cited in Geo. B.N. Ayittey, "The Somali Crisis: Time for an African Solution," *Policy Analysis*, No. 205, (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, Mar. 28, 1994)). Drysdale, *op.cit.*, uses a figure of 15-20,000 (p. 138). On Jan. 20, 1990, Africa Watch estimated between 50,000 and 60,000 Somali civilians had been killed in the North between May 1988 and January 1990 during government efforts to quell rebel movements. (Africa Watch, *A Government at War with Its Own People: Testimonies about the Killings and the Conflict in the North*. New York: Africa Watch, 1990.)
12. See AID/PRD draft on "Humanitarian Relief and National Reconstruction in Somalia," March 1, 1993, p. 2.
13. Alex de Waal and Rakiye Omaar, "Sowing the Seeds of War and Famine," GreenNet wire dispatch, February 25, 1994.

14. *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 1992; updated 1993) estimates that as much as \$330 million annually was being remitted by overseas Somali workers, representing 15 times all Somali-based yearly wages and nearly 40 percent of total GNP. (p. 141-2) Gesheker, *op. cit.*, cites Vali Jamal's estimate that such remittances equalled 13 times Somalia's annual wage bill. See also Alex de Waal, "The Shadow Economy," *Middle East Report*, March-April 1993, pp. 25 ff. Drysdale, *op. cit.*, cites a 1985 ILO study that annual remittances equalled \$370 million.
15. Interview with then-Italian Ambassador Mario Sica, 6/16/94, Vienna (by telephone).
16. See Jan Westcott's personal account, *The Somalia Saga, 1990-1993*, in Annex C.
17. Interview with Ambassador Bishop, 4/15/94, Washington, DC.
18. Ambassador Bishop suggests that "the looters probably were from Mogadishu's substantial criminal population and its otherwise respectable citizenry." Even before the evacuation, "we watched as our Somali neighbors carried past our gates goods looted from the homes of Americans still inside the compound." Bishop letter to RPG, p.5. Others reported an upsurge in traffic accidents caused by drivers, drunk on stolen diplomatic liquor supplies, trying to operate stolen vehicles they had never learned to drive. See Westcott, *op. cit.*
19. Some observers suggest that some of what has been called banditry and looting represents, in fact, either a socially acceptable form of resource acquisition in the context of traditional nomadic society, or voluntary donations to local militia for protecting the group or community.
20. Drysdale, *op. cit.*, who provides an excellent review and analysis of political events throughout this period, says as many as 30,000 were killed or wounded (p. 38); Reuters (Jan. 3, 1992 Nairobi dispatch) puts the number at 20,000. Africa Watch says 14,000 were killed and 27,000 wounded between November 1991 and February 1992, many by indiscriminate shelling.
21. Reuters 10/11/91 dispatch from Nairobi.
22. Steven Hansch notes of June 11/15, 1994 .
23. Reuters 10/11/91 dispatches from Nairobi and Mogadishu.

24. Reuters 10/21/91 dispatch from Mogadishu.
25. USDA, *African Food Needs Assessment: Situation and Outlook Report, November 1991*, p. 34, as cited by Africa Watch and Physicians for Social Responsibility study "Somalia: No Mercy in Mogadishu", July 1992, p. 18.
26. AP Nairobi dispatch, 12/28/91.
27. For an excellent chronology of political, diplomatic, and military developments in Somalia during this period, see Walter Clarke, "Somalia: Background Information for Operation Restore Hope 1992-93." *SSI Special Report*. Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Department of National Security and Strategy, US Army War College, December 1992. See Annex E-4 for a chronology of diplomatic initiatives and efforts to negotiate a peace agreement among warring Somali factions during this and later periods.
28. Interview with John Fox, 2/7/94, Brussels.
29. See Mark Fineman, "The Oil Stakes Factor in Somalia," *Los Angeles Times*, 1/18/93, pp. 1 ff, for an extensive discussion of this issue.
30. See this study's table on U.S. aid from 1990-94 (Annex F-1), drawn from various OFDA SITREPs. The \$29.6 million included \$4.38 million from OFDA, \$5.7 million from Food For Peace, and \$19.5 million from State's Bureau of Refugee Affairs.
31. In early September, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service had moved to grant "temporary protective status" to Somalis in the U.S. who feared going back to their homeland while the civil war still raged, the first time such status was extended to a group not explicitly named in Congressional legislation.
32. See Reuters October 1991 dispatches.
33. Interview with Bill Garvelink, 4/1/94, Washington, DC.
34. See Westcott personal account in annex.
35. Interview with James Jonah, 1/18/94, New York. Although NGOs were generally undeterred by insurance considerations, the difficulty of obtaining war risk insurance emerged as an issue for them in 1993-94. (See Stephen G. Greene, "In Africa's Horn, Plenty of Problems," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 4/19/94, pp. 6,8.) Pending their ability to make satisfactory arrangements, AID

in early 1994 launched a temporary indemnification program to bridge the coverage gap for NGOs working in seven high risk countries under OFDA grants.

36. Comments by MSF, SCF-UK, and UNHCR representatives at RPG's March 22, 1994 review session in Geneva, and reflected in other NGO interviews. A number noted that NGOs felt "abandoned" by the U.N.
37. "UN Envoy for Somalia Resigns Post, Blames Bureaucracy," *Washington Post*, 10/30/92, p.31.
38. See ICRC annual report for 1992.
39. Interview with Geoff Loane, 12/10/93, Nairobi
40. In "Humanitarian Intervention and Conflict Resolution," Humanitarianism Across Borders Conference, Brown University, December 10-11, 1992.
41. Jonah, *op.cit.* See Annex E-3 for a comprehensive listing of U.N. Security Council resolutions and actions pertaining to Somalia.
42. See *Somalia. A Fight to the Death? Leaving Civilians at the Mercy of Terror and Starvation*. Washington, DC: Africa Watch, 2/13/92, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 7-9, 17. Jeffrey Clark assessed Jonah's mission as a "debacle" in *Famine in Somalia and the International Response: Collective Failure*. Washington, DC: U.S. Committee for Refugees Issue Paper, November 1992.
43. Interview with Ambassador Robert Oakley, 12/17/93, Washington, DC.
44. Interviews with Brian Wannup, 4/15/94, New York (by telephone) and David Bassiouni, 12/21/93, New York.
45. Bassiouni interview, *op. cit.*
46. Different sources vary widely — from 4 million to 7 million — in estimating Somalia's population. Many estimates are based on extrapolations of birth and death rates from early 1980s Somalia government survey figures, themselves highly unreliable. See Annex B for a discussion of population and famine calculations.
47. Even Alex de Waal, co-director of the London-based African Rights and a vocal critic of the UNITAF intervention, argues that earlier UN intervention could have saved many lives. (Interview, 1/26/94, London (by telephone))

48. RPG/CDC estimate; see Annex B. The *Washington Post* (August 24, 1992) put the figure at about 20 percent.
49. Rebecca Katumba, "Horn of Africa: Crumbs from the aid pie," Women's Feature Service/Nairobi dispatch, 8/25/92.
50. Interview with Michael Toole, 1/4/94, Atlanta.
51. Loane interview, *op. cit.*
52. Interview with Hussain Dahir, 12/8/93, Baidoa.
53. Herman Cohen, "Intervention in Somalia," manuscript prepared for *Diplomatic Record*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, June 1994, p. 8.
54. Interviews with Ambassador Herman Cohen, 4/14/94, Washington, DC; and Ambassador Robert Houdek, 11/18/93, Washington, DC.
55. Houdek, *op. cit.*; also John R. Bolton, "Wrong Turn in Somalia," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 1, January-February 1994. Bolton's views were influential because he was State's principal official overseeing U.S. policies relating to the U.N., and the U.S. wanted to work closely with the U.N. on Somalia.
56. Interview with State Department official.
57. Cited by Elizabeth Lindenmayer at March 15, 1994 RPG review session in Washington, DC.
58. Interview with Jim Kunder, 2/23/94, Washington, D.C.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Quote from his opening remarks at September 16, 1992 hearing of House Africa subcommittee chaired by Dymally.
61. Interview with Dina Esposito, 1/13/94, Washington, DC.
62. Loane interview, *op. cit.*
63. At a June 23 hearing in the House Africa Subcommittee, Rep. Howard Wolpe had similarly challenged the double standard of U.S. response to the Bosnia and Somalia crises.

64. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
65. Comments to RPG, 7/28/94. See Annex A-4 for Bush's complete responses to five questions posed by RPG for this study.
66. The Deputies Committee was composed of officials one step below Cabinet rank.
67. Kunder, *op. cit.*
68. Interviews with Andrew Natsios, 12/13/93 and 7/26/94, Washington, D.C. In March 1992, he prepared a memorandum to the Secretary of State proposing a 5,000 troop U.N. force, but the memo was stopped at the Assistant Secretary level.
69. Lutheran World Federation, "Somalia Emergency Relief – LWF Airlift Operations (14 May through 01 November 1992)," *Somalia Update*, 11/2/92.
70. President William J. Clinton, *Report to the Congress on U.S. Policy in Somalia*, October 13, 1993, p. 11.
71. Natsios, *op. cit.*
72. Interview with Gen. Libutti, 2/14/94, Tampa.
73. OFDA staff members Ron Libby, Valerie Newsom, and Tom Frey provide detailed accounts of OFDA's on-the-ground contributions to the DOD airlift; see also various internal OFDA memoranda.
74. Project Implementation Order/Technical.
75. See Libutti briefing document. The military's initial plan had been to airdrop MREs ("meals ready to eat"), but because of dietary inappropriateness in the Somali context, OFDA Operations Director Bill Garvelink vetoed the idea.
76. Natsios believes that while the airlift actually substituted for other means of delivery, rather than adding net new food into the country, the psychological effect on traders who had been hoarding stocks was such as to cause them to release those stocks, thus causing the price decline. He argues that food prices are critically related to death rates. (Interview 8/1/94.)
77. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 12.
78. Garvelink memo to Kunder, September 21, 1992.

79. This is not to say that more distant areas failed to receive food, since ICRC and others' beach and land and cross-border distributions were still significant — indeed, contributed a majority of food deliveries. Even with airlifted commodities there were exceptions: for example, CRS was able to off-load food airlifted by Lutheran World Federation to Baidoa and distribute it the same day in villages more than 75 km. away. In such cases, the short transit time translated into fewer looting or warehouse losses. (Paul Miller letter to RPG, 7/25/94.)
80. In March 1994, however, the U.S. GAO, in its report *Peace Operations: Cost of DOD Operations in Somalia*, estimated the cost at only \$20 million in incremental charges beyond what the military would have spent normally for training and maintenance during the same period — an arguably small amount considering the number of lives saved and the cost of subsequent military operations in Somalia. (See Issues and Analysis section below.)
81. Loane interview, *op. cit.*
82. Drysdale, *op.cit.*, p. 109.
83. Interview with Ambassador Sahnoun, 3/3/94, Washington, DC.
84. See Ray Bonner, "Why We Went," *Mother Jones*, March-April 1993, pp. 44-6, 48,58, 60, which details specific criticisms of the U.N. made publicly by Sahnoun. During the October 12, 1992 donors' meeting in Geneva, Sahnoun said that "A whole year slipped by whilst the UN and the international community, save for the International Red Cross and a few nongovernmental humanitarian organizations, watched Somalia descend into this hell. The damage will not be repaired." (Quoted by Bonner, p. 58) Sahnoun later noted some positive contributions made by U.N. agencies.
85. Interview with U.N. official.
86. Interview with Philip Johnston, 4/8/94, Atlanta (by telephone) regarding food distribution success and security impediments.
87. Alex De Waal interview, 1/26/94, London (by telephone).
88. See Annex B.
89. Sam Toussie in March 15, 1994 RPG Washington review meeting.

90. Interview with Ambassador Ismat Kittani, 1/18/94, New York. See also his Report to the Secretary-General, November 1992.
91. For a discussion of these issues, see notes of March 1994 RPG Geneva review meeting.
92. Letter from MCC Co-Secretary for Africa Eric Olfert to InterAction President Peter Davies, 11/25/92.
93. Letter from InterAction President Peter Davies to General Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, 11/19/92.
94. Cohen interview, *op.cit.*
95. See William J. Clinton, *op.cit.*
96. Text of Senate Concurrent Resolution 132, 102d Congress, 2d Session, August 4, 1992. The resolution passed the Senate August 3, 1992.
97. Senator Paul Simon, "A Letter to President Bush", reprinted as press release in Washington, DC, May 16-22, 1993
98. Interview with Richard Clarke, 1/13/94, Washington, DC.
99. A relatively full account is given in Don Oberdorfer, "Anatomy of a Decision: How Bush Made Up His Mind to Send Troops to Somalia," *International Herald Tribune*, 12/7/92, p. 5
100. Interview with General Powell, 7/5/94, Washington, DC (by telephone).
101. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 12
102. Powell, *op.cit.* Also, interview with Under Secretary of Defense (previously of State) Frank Wisner, 4/20/94, Washington, DC (by telephone).
103. Figures provided by Central Command during 2/14/94 interviews, Tampa.
104. Powell interview, *op. cit.*
105. Cohen interview, *op. cit.*; also interview with Ambassador Robert Houdek, 11/18/93, Washington, D.C.

106. Interview with Admiral Jonathan Howe, 3/25/94, McLean, VA. Powell himself prefers the term "decisive force", noting its purpose to achieve "decisive results." Powell interview, *op.cit.*
107. Interview with Michelle Flournoy, 4/22/94, Washington, DC.
108. Interview with Pentagon official.
109. Natsios interview, 3/10/94, Washington, D.C.
110. Powell interview, *op. cit.*
111. Howe interview, *op.cit.*
112. Bush, *op. cit.*
113. Letter dated November 29, 1992 from the U.N. Secretary-General to President of the U.N. Security Council, reproduced as U.N. Document No. S/24868 dated November 30, 1992.
114. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p.17.
115. *United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations. Information Notes.* New York: Department of Public Information, Update No. 2 (November 1993), pp. 84-5. Also *The United Nations and the Situation in Somalia* (Reference Paper) New York: U.N. Department of Public Information, June 1993, p. 7, as quoted in Glenn McDonald, "Peace Enforcement in Somalia," 2 March 1994, p. 15. The U.S. GAO study *Peace Operations. Cost of DOD Operations in Somalia* (Washington, DC, March 1994, p. 2) puts the peak number of UNITAF troops at close to 38,000.
116. Interview with General Anthony Zinni, 2/28/94, Quantico, VA.
117. Powell interview, *op. cit.*
118. Interview with James Grant, 1/18/94, New York
119. Interview with Stefania Pace, 12/6/93, Mogadishu.
120. Zinni interview, *op. cit.*
121. Interviews with Central Command and Joint Staff, Tampa and Pentagon.
122. Comments by Ambassador David Shinn, 7/15/94

123. Heavy weapons within UNITAF's operational zones were isolated or in some cases destroyed, although many clan factions' "technical" were moved north or to rural areas to avoid this. (The term "technical", referring to gun-mounted vehicles often hired to protect relief workers, was shorthand for "technical assistance", the euphemism by which relief agencies justified their budget expenditures for security protection.) *The Economist*, in a 3/27/93 article, notes that "Since the American-led peacekeepers arrived in Somalia in December, they have confiscated more than 5,000 small arms, 90 heavy machine guns, and more than 1.3m rounds of ammunition plus tanks and armoured personnel carriers." Cited in Glenn McDonald, March 2, 1994, p. 15, fn. 71.
124. Robert Oakley, "Mission Accomplished in Somalia", *Washington Post*, March 1993.
125. OFDA placed its DART-Mogadishu coordinating functions under U.N. aegis to avoid creating parallel structures that would have further weakened an already weak U.N. humanitarian presence. See Garvelink and Elizabeth Lukasavich interviews.
126. Interview with Kate Farnsworth, 12/20/93, Washington, D.C.
127. Zinni interview, *op. cit.*
128. Comments by MSF's Patrick Vial at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.
129. Interview with Kevin Kennedy, 12/1/1993, Addis Ababa.
130. Zinni interview, *op. cit.*
131. Comments by various participants at 5th International Congress of Somali Studies workshop on NGO responses to the Somali crisis, December 3, 1994, especially by Abdirahman Osman Raghe.
132. Comments by MSF and SCF-UK representatives at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.
133. Ken Menkhaus, "Getting Out vs. Getting Through in Somalia," *Middle East Policy*, vol. III, no. I, 1994, p. 155.
134. Draft manuscript by Robert Oakley and John Hirsch, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (Washington,

DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, September 1994).

135. Garvelink comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session; see also Valerie Newsom interview.
136. Interviews with NGO representatives.
137. Paraphrase from message sent by Johnston to Washington, DC, 1/28/93. Johnston also indicated that major weapons systems had been destroyed or cantoned; as a percentage of the total available, however, it seems to have been minor indeed.
138. Marlin Fitzwater in Jane Perlez, "Must U.S. Strip a Land of Guns," *New York Times*, 12/15/92, p. 8, per Cohen, *op.cit.*
139. Glenn McDonald, "Casting Aside the White Man's Burden: Peace-Enforcement in Somalia." Draft paper. March 1994. p. 17, citing *UNOSOM II Weekly Review*, September 15, 1993.
140. USGAO. *Peace Operations. Cost of DOD Operations in Somalia*. March 1994. p. 2. Also, *Peace Operations. Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Somalia*, June 1994, p. 1.
141. Term used by Admiral Howe in interview.
142. The U.S. insisted on an American deputy commander for UNOSOM II, General Thomas Montgomery, who officially worked under General Bir but maintained direct command and control of U.S. Forces, most notably the Quick Reaction Force.
143. Howe's supporters in the Administration noted his previous diplomatic experience in the State Department, in NATO as a coalition leader, and his reputation as a good manager. "We didn't view Jon as only a military guy," said one former colleague, adding, however, that his military background was also useful for a Chapter VII operation that might be hard for a civilian to handle. (Interview, January 1994.)
144. John Drysdale, *op.cit.*, reports the former, p. 124-5, and Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 20, the latter.
145. Term used by CARE staff, 1/4/94 interview, Atlanta.

146. In the event, the Galcayo peace conference was one of only two Somali peace agreements in the last four years that achieved significant results that "held".
147. Interview with Ambassador Gosende, 11/18/93.
148. So described by Drysdale, *op.cit.*, p.180.
149. Drysdale, *op. cit.*, and others, but not Glaspie, indicate that she approved the mission. Glaspie interview, 4/15/94.
150. Drysdale, *op.cit.*, p. 181.
151. Admiral Howe interview, 4/21/94, McLean, VA (by telephone).
152. Drysdale, *op.cit.*, notes "powerful evidence that, in fact, the real focus was the radio station." (p. 183) Howe and Gosende agree that the U.S. was more concerned about Radio Mogadishu than was UNOSOM II. (Howe interview, 4/21/94; Gosende interview, 5/25/94.)
153. Powell interview, *op. cit.*
154. Interview with Elizabeth Lindenmayer, 1/19/94, New York.
155. Howe interview, 4/21/94. Aidid did, however, call for an impartial inquiry into the events. The U.N. Security Council called for one on June 6, which was subsequently conducted by American University Professor Tom Farer who found Aidid responsible.
156. Drysdale, *op. cit.*, p. 203
157. Powell interview, *op. cit.*
158. Kate Farnsworth memorandum to Bill Garvelink, "Mogadishu Revisited," September 7, 1993.
159. Interview with Ambassador Gosende, 5/25/1994, Washington, DC.
160. Clinton was reported by *The New Yorker* (10/25/93) to have been influenced to pursue a political track by former President Carter when the latter stayed at the White House for the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian accord. The "two-fisted approach" term was reportedly coined by Frank Wisner. (Richard Clarke interview, 7/28/94.)
161. Interview with Richard Clarke, 7/28/94.

162. Interviews with U.S. Liaison Office officials, December 1993, Mogadishu.
163. Interview with Kofi Annan, 1/19/94, New York.
164. Keith Richburg, *Washington Post*, "Somalia is poised for war or peace as troops plan exit," 1/27/94.
165. At the same time, according to U.S. officials, the Aidid forces were rearming, as indeed they had been ever since the UNITAF departure and resultant decline in street patrols – not to mention due to an overall sense that UNOSOM II, with its much diminished American presence, was commensurately less fearsome.
166. Shinn mission reports, August 1993.
167. Interview with Mario Rodriguez, 12/7/93, Baidoa.
168. U.S. Liaison Office reports to Washington.
169. Patrick Vial, MSF, quoted in AP dispatch 9/29/93 by Pauline Jelinek.
170. George Somerwill, CARE, same dispatch.
171. USLO reports to Washington, 11/4/93 and 12/25/93.
172. *The Economist*, 10/9/93, p.45, as cited by Glenn McDonald, March 2, 1994, p. 27.
173. Official conference transcript of speech, November 29, 1993.
174. Under donor and especially U.S. pressure, efforts were also made to induce the World Bank to coordinate and help prepare an October 1993 study on reconstruction and development. The World Bank, however, refused to chair a February 1994 donor's meeting on Somalia on the grounds that its by-laws barred lending to countries without a recognized central government. (Interview with Peter Miovic, 1/94, Washington, DC (by telephone); also with Shinn, 7/18/94, Washington, DC) However, the Bank had made an unprecedented one-time-only \$20 million grant for emergency assistance to Somalia (see World Bank News Release No. 93/524, 10/28/92), and by 1994 was expected to become more systematically involved in reconstruction if some form of central government emerged.

175. Interviews with Hugh Cholmondeley, 1/18/94, New York, and Jan Eliasson, 1/19/94, New York.
176. See Terry Leonard, "Somalia Losing Control," Associated Press, April 2, 1994 and Richard Dowden, "Western Troops Leave Somalia," *Horn of Africa Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 2, March-April 1994.
177. OFDA Sitrep 26, p. 2. Also USGAO, *Peace Operations: Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Somalia*, op. cit.
178. So described by Howe, 3/25/94 interview.
179. Keith Richburg, "With Economy Still Devastated, Somalia Could See New Chaos," *Washington Post*, 3/14/94. In a June 23, 1994 symposium sponsored by State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and other groups, General Hoar hinted that the immense sums being spent on Somali police trainer salaries and equipment were likely to become a major future scandal.
180. Both the negotiating process and the figure are reported in "Commentary: The Rise and Fall of a SRSG" in *Somalia News Update* from the Africa News and Information Service, May 18, 1994.
181. The June 3, 1994 *Africa Confidential* details recent U.S. Government initiatives to explore "federal" government options with various Somali clans and political factions and to de-emphasize the need for a central government.
182. Mark Wentling, "Aid Beyond the Front Lines in Somalia: An End-Of-Tour Wrap-Up." Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Department of State, April 26, 1994, p. 4.
183. Stephen Greene, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
184. OFDA Sitrep 26, p. 2.
185. Richburg, *op.cit.*
186. U.N. Security Council Press Release SC/5853, 3385th Meeting, 5/31/94.
187. Richard Clarke interview, 7/28/94. See also article by Julia Preston, "The U.S. Warns U.N. on Somalia. Mission Could Be Curtailed If Clans Don't Make Peace," *Washington Post*, 5/13/94, p. A40.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

Emerging from the foregoing summary of the Somalia humanitarian crisis and response, three broad areas demand analysis if appropriate conclusions are to be drawn and lessons learned; these areas relate to timeliness of response, balance between humanitarian, political, and military approaches, and overall effectiveness of actions taken.

ACTING IN TIME

Why did an estimated 240,000 Somalis have to die before the international community could adequately respond to the crisis? As countless observers have pointed out, the scale of death constitutes a searing indictment of the global conscience. The fact that similar, and even worse, disasters have been, and continue to be, taking place elsewhere in the world makes the need for an answer all the more urgent.

At one level, and in a possible Holocaust analogy, the answer is that the world did not want to know. Many individuals and organizations knew as early as mid-1991 that famine was on the horizon — the ICRC had been a voice crying in the wilderness for months — but the message was not acted upon. OFDA's Andrew Natsios and others held press conferences and gave congressional testimony in early 1992, but even OFDA action, absent political support, was slow in coming. The reason usually given is that the media didn't focus on it.¹ By increasingly common, if ashamed, consensus even at high levels of governments, it is nowadays the media and resultant public opinion that dictate policy and move governments to act. Emergencies take on urgency when bureaucrats receive calls from "upstairs" to "do something" if they are not to suffer embarrassment or repercussions. This is true not only of governments as they act individually, but also as they act collectively through the United Nations. And even then, as one State Department official put it, "it takes a while to crack a bureaucracy."²

While in principle it should not take media pressure — governments should have their own principles, say some, and then seek media support — American ambivalence about overseas involvements generates a reluctance to act without the certainty of public (via media) support. Thus, particularly where national security issues are not

immediately at stake, it is principally the media that determine whether Somalia, for example, or Sudan, or either one, will draw priority attention.

There are several reasons for the media's — and policy-makers' — lack of early attention to Somalia. One is that there were so many simultaneous events, crises, "distractions" in the world. The most obvious were the Gulf War and the Kurdish, Bosnian, Russian, and South African situations; less obvious but equally urgent crises included the severe drought in southern Africa and complex situations in Mozambique, Angola, and Liberia. The public and those few government decision-makers with authority to act can handle only so much at one time, while economic factors increasingly limit the media's capacity to cover the world adequately.

Another reason is editors' apparent belief that the public, to the extent interested in international issues at all, is not interested in political or civil wars, particularly since the Cold War ended. Famine evokes more interest and sympathy, and journalists have found that an actual famine — especially when accompanied by graphic photos of emaciated, fly-covered children — will more easily win editorial support for coverage than a predicted one. "Millions will die" is a less effective message than numbers already dead, and the greater the specificity and higher the number (whether accurate or not), the more effective in gaining coverage.³ "We want a famine," editors in essence tell their correspondents.⁴ Thus, until graphic photos of famine were available, there would be little or no media coverage. In Somalia, it was essentially the ICRC, NGOs, and then the airlift that provided on-the-ground access for the media, and most importantly for the cameramen, to capture and bring back the story.

That relief groups need to better understand how the media work and to better work with them is one of the key lessons cited by the ICRC in its analysis of the Somalia crisis. Similarly, NGOs appear to have come to a more sophisticated view that media relations must be a critical part of their mission, and that joining together in media efforts may be a more powerful way to be heard. The media have their own rhythms, cycles of coverage, and perceptions of public interests that are not always logical to understand. Reporters who take the initiative to cover a story are often frustrated when their editors, the ultimate gatekeepers, do not run it. As one NGO head put it, one's message either needs to hit a 1/16 inch bulls-eye opening, or carry so much clout that only a consortium effort, if that, has a chance to carry the weight to be heard.⁵

Media discovery of a story can cause almost as many problems as non-discovery. More than one aid agency reported significant difficulties caused by culturally inexperienced, insensitive, overly demanding, and even rude journalists who

prevented them at times from effectively carrying out their humanitarian roles. The journalist invasion which occurred beginning in the second half of 1992 also contributed to inflating local salaries and services, substantially increasing the cost of giving aid, and consequently enriching those in control of south Mogadishu (the Aidid forces) where most journalists (and other foreigners) were housed. This problem was further exacerbated by the later western military presence whose "high budget operations were a major boost to many of the commercial class much of [whose] profit was mediated through Aydeed's SNA." Their 1994 departure meant that "Aydeed's organisation is suffering from severe funding cuts."⁶

More important — and suggesting a mutual manipulation by both media and relief agencies — is the extent to which the sheer forcefulness and resultant impact of media coverage drove international policy in ways that were arguably counter-productive at times. For example, numbers of casualties and of people at risk were bandied about with little statistical basis or certainty. Some of these came from relief agencies with their own interests at heart. The question has been appropriately raised as to whether "journalists have allowed themselves to become dependent on food sources as news sources"⁷ and whether government policy-makers were sufficiently able to assert independence from media effects on public opinion. Furthermore, by mid-1993, the media were totally preoccupied with the "war story" in Mogadishu to the virtual exclusion of other, and sometimes more positive developments elsewhere in the country. Since the U.S. Government and United Nations were also heavily preoccupied with Mogadishu, this is not entirely surprising. Finally, no coherent attempt was made to explain to the American public the extent to which the U.S.-supported U.N. mission in Somalia had fundamentally changed from one of support for relief to support for political-military objectives (the defeat of Aidid). When eighteen American soldiers were killed on October 3, therefore, the role of the media and public opinion in precipitating U.S. departure from Somalia was just as dramatic as in shaping international entry into the country. Although President Clinton was able to argue with Congress for at least a six-month transition, from a United Nations perspective "the press helped the U.N. at the beginning, then did us in at the end."⁸

Adding to the problem of excessive media influence is the inevitable risk of distortion. This is partly exemplified by a CNN reporter who noted that his superiors had discouraged him from attending a major gathering of Somali political leaders and international donors in Addis Ababa at which progress toward a political solution was expected, for fear he might miss a skirmish in Mogadishu considered of more interest to CNN viewers.⁹ With the arrival of UNITAF, an American story — the "boys in uniform from home" — displaced the larger, African story of what was happening with respect to Somalia. As a result, the whole reason for the intervention, and the basic

issues involved, soon tended to be ignored or forgotten, thus undermining any basis for a responsible public input into public policy.

Preventive Diplomacy

If earlier media attention might have led to a reduced level of disaster in Somalia, is it also possible that preventive diplomacy could have brought a resolution of the fighting before mass starvation occurred? In more mundane economic terms, might a few hundred thousand dollars invested in skilled intensive diplomacy, perhaps along the lines of the U.S. role in Ethiopia at the time of the Mengistu regime's collapse, have saved some \$2 billion spent by the U.S. Government alone on the subsequent military response?¹⁰

Ambassador Oakley has suggested that if more attention had been paid to Somalia in 1991, "none of this would have happened...Of course it would be better to resolve the political issues at the outset — but our system isn't set up for that."¹¹ Others, notably Ambassador Sahnoun, feel there were missed opportunities even earlier: in 1988, at the time of the uprising in the northwest, and in mid-1990, when an opposition "Manifesto Group" sought changes in the Barre regime, and only a limited diplomatic demarche was made.¹² In late 1990, prior to Barre's forced departure from Mogadishu, the Italians and Egyptians, as well as U.S. Ambassador Bishop, had attempted to urge negotiations between Barre and the rebels, but the efforts came to naught. In the view of the chief Italian negotiator, Ambassador Mario Sica, "intensified efforts could have helped, particularly by reaching out to Somali leaders then abroad..., although in all honesty I cannot be sure it would have changed the result."¹³ As Bishop put it, it was hard to get Barre, like any dictator, to "cooperate in his own political demise."¹⁴ It should also be noted that with most aid having been cut off after the 1988 bombing of Hargeisa, the U.S. retained virtually no leverage in the situation. "Could President Bush have gotten on the 'phone and helped?", Bishop speculated later as to whether some stronger diplomatic action might have been tried; not likely, was the conclusion.¹⁵ In any case, there were other forces in the U.S. Government, notably Assistant Secretary of State John Bolton, arguing that with the end of the Cold War Somalia was of no strategic interest to the United States.¹⁶ While this observation was directed at opposing the proposal for aid intervention, it implicitly suggested that the U.S. should not expend undue effort on a humanitarian emergency when more "important" issues around the world demanded attention.

Given the overwhelming demands on policy-makers' time and foreign assistance resources, a certain amount of triage is understandable. But the almost inevitable future financial costs of a crisis "getting out of hand" — not to mention the

human costs, which led some to characterize Bolton's position as "criminal" — introduce a new calculus that was certainly insufficiently considered in the Somalia case.¹⁷

A related question is whether the U.S., or perhaps Italy — with its special (albeit controversial) historical and economic relationships with Somalia — could have retained a presence in Mogadishu to facilitate mediation efforts after Siad Barre's fall in January 1991. Some have argued that the U.S. Embassy compound could have been defended, or at least that, with effort, U.S. diplomats might have been able to engage the anti-Barre rebels in a constructive power-sharing discussion.¹⁸ Those there at the time, however, insist that the danger was so real, the chaos so complete, and the rebels so divided that it would have been impossible to negotiate. At least one Somali argues that, "prevention being better than cure," military force should have been deployed in early 1991. However, it must be recalled that this was the moment when the Gulf War was beginning, and "it was hardly the time, if there ever is a time, to insert American troops between the protagonists in one of Africa's many civil wars."¹⁹

While a number of both U.N. and U.S. officials were later involved to varying degrees in political discussions with Somalis — significantly more with warlords than with the elders and imams whose support was critical to sustaining them — the most significant were those undertaken by Ambassadors Sahnoun and Oakley and later Kouyate; these were the only three who seemed to have Somali respect. In a major error by Boutros-Ghali, Sahnoun was effectively fired for publicly speaking his mind about U.N. deficiencies (which, ironically, increased Somali respect for him). Oakley was effective as the U.S. President's representative; but he was unable to speak directly for the U.N., the officially responsible party in Somalia, yet distrusted by many Somalis, notably by General Aidid and his followers. Kouyate was effective in negotiating the March 1994 accords, which in some ways only reiterated what had been agreed to a year before — and might have been agreed to earlier had Sahnoun been retained.

In truth, a number of hard-reached Somali agreements proved of no greater value than the paper on which they were printed, as Somali leaders soon ignored them and fought for military advantage on the ground. Partly for this reason, the early UNITAF period, during which the international military presence was at its height, would seem to have been an ideal time for strong diplomatic action rooted in outside military strength. But the U.S. political commitment did not match even its limited, time-bound military commitment. With the haste to turn over the whole Somalia problem to the United Nations, the U.S. dropped the ball.

A QUESTION OF BALANCE

Role of the Military

What is most unique to the Somalia situation is the use of military assets for humanitarian objectives in a civil conflict. While military forces had been recently involved in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, the circumstances there, following a war in which the U.S. and its allies had been victorious, were completely different. In Somalia, the U.S. entered a situation of no governing authority, no identified enemies (Aidid was singled out only later), widespread chaos, and no realistic plan for creating a durable order.

The reason cited for mounting the first U.S. military involvement in Somalia, the Operation Provide Relief airlift, was essentially intended to jump-start the aid effort by demonstrating in dramatic fashion that the U.S. was actively engaged. In this sense, it had a kind of public relations purpose, to demonstrate U.S. resolve to the international community, thus spurring, perhaps even shaming, other donors to join in helping.²⁰ At the highest levels in government, the purpose was simply "to get the job done".²¹ There was apparently no consideration of the fact that military airlifts, and particularly those of the U.S., are often less efficient and less flexible than civilian ones. This is because of the military's strict operating rules allowing fewer trips per day and significantly smaller flight loads because of the need to accommodate the military's enhanced security technology and personnel. Southern Air Transport, the company from which OFDA leased its planes to assist ICRC and WFP efforts, could haul as much, or more, with five aircraft as the Department of Defense could with fourteen. Indeed, ICRC, at one stage was "achieving the same efficiency from one civilian [plane] as up to six military."²²

There is also a financial question, since at full cost the lower capacity military flights would clearly cost considerably more than their civilian counterparts. Since the Pentagon absorbed most of the costs, however, the airlift was seen as something of a "freebie", since OFDA and the foreign aid budget were not charged. Furthermore, according to Pentagon and GAO figures, the incremental cost of the military airlift was only \$20 million beyond what otherwise would have been spent by the Defense Department anyway. At this rate, calculations suggest that the total effective U.S. Government cost was not very different from that of the ongoing civilian airlifts.²³ The issue of cost is important, however, given the fact that the later, and extremely costly, land intervention was justified in part on what was believed to be the unsustainably high cost of the airlift (as well as on its inability to "solve the famine problem".)

While some suggest that the Defense Department derived useful training benefits from the airlift, CENTCOM officers note that only limited objectives were achieved and that their budgets, in fact, were adversely affected. Furthermore, some military officers question whether U.S. combat readiness could be impaired by such a diversion of resources from war preparedness to humanitarian missions.²⁴ Non-Defense Department observers suggest that other military leaders may welcome humanitarian assignments not only for altruistic reasons, but also for maintaining strength and justifying budgets in the post-Cold War era.

In general, the airlift is considered to have been successful in that it delivered significant amounts of food — 10-15 percent of total deliveries²⁵ — to people in desperate need. It succeeded thanks to judicious scheduling and flight patterns, sound management, and a measure of luck — nothing went badly wrong, as would happen later when the troops were sent. According to estimates by the Centers for Disease Control and Refugee Policy Group, some 40,000 lives were saved during August-December 1992, a significant majority presumably because of the airlift itself and its broader food price and psychological effects.²⁶ The airlift also successfully demonstrated U.S. concern and inspired at least some other donors to contribute as well.

What alternatives existed to the military airlift? Road transport was extremely difficult due to insecurity and looting. However, one could have continued to use this means, as ICRC and others did for some 80 percent of commodities delivered. They did so by negotiating security agreements with local elders, paying for protection, and/or consciously agreeing to accept higher delivery losses.²⁷ Whether an equivalent or greater amount of food would have reached those in need, the cost would presumably have been less than that of Operation Provide Relief. More cost-effective yet would have been an earlier intervention either by airlift or land. Indeed, CDC/RPG estimates suggest that while some 50,000 lives were probably saved by ICRC and NGO relief efforts during January 1991–August 1992, a majority of the 220,000 lives lost by December 1992 could have been prevented had stronger action been taken by April of that year. But this was not to be, as the tendency of policy-makers is to invest in incremental steps and hope they will work. To reiterate Oakley's words in a different context, "our system isn't set up for that."

By far the most dramatic step in "getting the job done" was Operation Restore Hope, undertaken largely out of desperation that nothing else would work to get food to those in need. Extortion at airlift landing sites was upsetting to the relief community. The fact that insecurity made it difficult to deliver airlifted food beyond an approximately 30 kilometer radius also caused concern over the fates of those living, and dying, beyond that distance. And the havoc at Mogadishu port was visible

to all. The resultant uproar from NGOs, U.N. agencies, and the media placed considerable pressure on the world community to take stronger action.

What may not have been fully assessed was the extent to which Somalia's need for outside food continued to be critical in the latter part of 1992, particularly inasmuch as mortality was declining, the outlook for local harvests was beginning to improve, and food prices were again relatively low and steady.²⁸ OFDA had "loud and clear" information to this effect from Westcott and from NGOs in Somalia, to the extent that Kunder "consciously remember[s] thinking, 'Let's consider: do we need to raise the flag of intervention higher?'"²⁹ The field reports were also discussed with at least some in the State Department, and Kunder, looking back, feels the issues got the right amount of consideration. The problem was that no precise and incontrovertible data were available and no-one could say there would be no ensuing deterioration. This lack of confidence that events were shifting, combined with the inexorable momentum for intervention based on the front page press coverage, determined subsequent events.

Absent a major increase in insecurity over the level existing just prior to the UNITAF intervention, CDC/RPG data suggest that some 10-25,000 lives may have been saved because of it.³⁰ This is a lower estimate than others advanced heretofore — certainly compared with President Clinton's astonishing one million estimate.³¹ It also raises the question of whether policy decisions were excessively guided by relief agencies acting, consciously or unconsciously, on assumptions rooted more in institutional preoccupations with relief movements than in an objective and up-to-date analysis of amounts of food currently or imminently to be available at the December-January harvest time. As at least two commentators have observed, "Relief agencies repeatedly confuse the efficiency of their own operations with the degree to which famine is being overcome."³²

If, in fact, the figure of 10-25,000 lives saved is a realistic approximation, one might question the decision to conduct Operation Restore Hope, an operation estimated to have an incremental cost of \$1.97 billion in U.S. Defense Department expenditures and assessments for subsequent U.N. military efforts.³³ What is even more alarming is the suggestion of nearly 10,000 Somali casualties (deaths *and* wounded) caused by the combined interventions — up to 100 killed due to UNITAF operations (against 18 UNITAF Americans who died), with an additional 1,500 killed and 6-8,000 wounded (against about 80 foreign troops, as of mid-October, 1993) under UNOSOM II.³⁴

How can one reconcile this information with the overwhelming (if not quite unanimous) initial support for the intervention?

First, the caveat about the reliability of all Somalia-related statistics should be reiterated;

Second, it must be noted that numbers of security-related casualties incurred without the international intervention are impossible to estimate;

Third, as a French NGO observer put it, the most important contribution of Operation Restore Hope was to change the *dynamique* of the situation more than to end the famine;³⁵ the operation made clear that interference with relief delivery would no longer be tolerated;

Fourth, the new psychology of the situation may have helped to spur Somalis' confidence in planting crops and other, longer-term recovery measures even beyond the areas of UNITAF troop presence. It also allowed more Somalis to stay at home rather than congregate in disease-prone feeding centers.³⁶

Whether similar results could have been obtained at lower cost, however, remains a valid question. At least one lower-cost option was considered, although not, as suggested above, very seriously. Assuming that additional action was needed, some observers favored the creation of zones of tranquility, where limited numbers of troops would ensure guns were kept out and food and seeds were distributed.³⁷ In one sense, Kenyan and Ethiopian refugee camps offered the equivalent of such zones for hundreds of thousands of Somalis. Zones within Somalia could have been serviced through smaller ports such as Kismayu and Merca, available airfields, including those still used for the airlift, and cross-border convoys. Although large U.S. military ships and equipment could not operate through these facilities, some felt other ways could have been found for a more decentralized approach. But by late 1992 the time for incrementalism was considered to have passed, and a strategy of massive intervention beginning with the toughest place in the country, Mogadishu, was chosen — "the sledge rather than the ball-peen approach".³⁸

It would be difficult to exaggerate the astonishment both in and outside the U.S. Government when the magnitude of the troop level approved by President Bush was announced. Virtually everyone involved with Somalia supported the intervention, although many reluctantly and simply because there seemed no other solution. Some in Somalia were shocked over the lack of consultation with knowledgeable people on the scene; realistically or not, they believed in the possibility of alternatives — for example, prior threat — that could have avoided the need for intervention, or a different mission that could have made the intervention more effective — for example, by placing more emphasis on the fledgling police program which could have multiplied the foreign troops' clout and continued after their departure.³⁹ Some also foresaw

seeds of disaster ahead, once such a level of militarization was introduced.⁴⁰ Many lamented — even despaired — at the limitations of the mission defined, particularly the failure to undertake any significant disarmament.

No element of the Somalia intervention seems to have raised as much passion, on both sides of the argument, as the issue of disarmament, or at least arms reduction. While few believed that small, hand-carried weapons could be significantly reduced in number (many of them were simply buried or removed by their owners from UNITAF troop areas), many felt that medium and certainly heavy weapons could be.⁴¹ Some of the latter were placed in cantonments during the UNITAF period, but most of these were subsequently removed as UNITAF "turned a blind eye". UNITAF's only concern was that such weapons not interfere with their own operations.⁴² Oakley later admitted that postponing disarmament created more difficulties for the subsequent UNOSOM II mission, and felt that more heavy weapons should have been rounded up during UNITAF.⁴³ He further suggests (contrary to other Defense and State Department policy-makers) that U.S. UNITAF forces "were prepared to help with additional disarmament during the transition [to UNOSOM II], had the U.N. commanders and staff arrived as expected in April. However, the U.N. Secretariat and Security Council were not working from the same timetable."⁴⁴ One option seriously considered was to encourage disarmament through the purchasing of weapons (a technique recently undertaken in the United States), if not with money, perhaps with food. While arms prices had plummeted at the time of UNITAF, the cost was still estimated as likely to "break the bank",⁴⁵ however, particularly given that replacements could only too easily flow across the borders.

U.S. military leaders are absolutely emphatic that forced (as opposed to voluntary) disarmament would have constituted a "mission impossible". They cite:

- ◆ the guerrilla warfare that would have ensued in the streets of Mogadishu and other cities "urban areas can suck up troops";⁴⁶
- ◆ the long, unpatrolled coastal and land borders through which fresh arms were constantly infiltrating;
- ◆ the people's cultural familiarity with guns (akin to Americans' reliance on cars);
- ◆ the belief that heavy weapons were no longer an issue by the time of UNITAF's departure anyway, having been rendered inoperative by lack of maintenance and parts;⁴⁷ and

- ◆ the fact that disarmament would have had to be carried out equally among all clans and factions, raising the likelihood that if, as suspected, Aidid's group was the most heavily armed, the burden would have appeared to fall overwhelmingly on him, thus undermining whatever cooperation he might have offered for political negotiations.

UNOSOM II's experience reinforces the strength of this line of reasoning, suggesting at least the possibility that an earlier U.S. disarmament effort might have caused war to break out earlier than June 1993. If disarmament were to be considered at all, the military estimated at least 45,000 troops would have been required for Mogadishu alone.⁴⁸

Against these not insubstantial considerations, the pro-disarmament group — which includes most (admittedly non-gun-toting) Somalis interviewed — argues the following:

- ◆ Somalis respect power and force and were so overwhelmed by the UNITAF arrival "the superpower U.S.!" "victor of the Gulf War!" that they were psychologically prepared and ready to hand over at least their big weapons;⁴⁹ when they were not asked to do so, they were confused, then further emboldened to challenge UNITAF and the U.N.;
- ◆ to defer this most difficult problem and then expect a weaker U.N. force to attempt it was unwise, at best, and doomed to failure, and thus cynical, at worst. U.N. officials feel they were led to believe the U.S. would undertake, without publicity, more disarmament than it did — the French military did more until they were "brought back into line" — and expressed disappointment that the U.S. seemed "obsessed" with the possibility of incurring casualties; a military intervention must be expected to take risks, they argued;
- ◆ resolving the root political problem of Somalia requires disarmament, and failure to undertake it, particularly at a time when military force could have provided an "inducement", only "froze" the situation until the foreign troops' departure, at which point the entire tragedy could be expected to repeat itself as it did, to some extent, after March 1994.

Even officials of relief agencies vehemently opposed to any form of military action found themselves privately distressed at the failure to address this key impediment to resolving the Somali problem. Impatient with the continuing festering of political and security problems following the UNITAF departure, one even

wondered off-the-record whether a more assertive and durable "Panama or Grenada solution" might not have been more effective than Operation Restore Hope in resolving the problems of Somalia. In fact, the U.S. goal in UNITAF was not to resolve the problems of Somalia but only to stop the starvation.⁵⁰ As one military observer put it, "General Johnston came in politely, just for a humanitarian solution, not at the level necessary for a political solution."⁵¹ In reality, however, UNITAF did not even bring a humanitarian solution, but only a short-term humanitarian "fix". As one observer analyzed the situation, "The only way to help Somalia at the humanitarian level is to rebuild the state."⁵² But as the U.S. mission turned into a U.N. one, that became an ever more distant hope.

Role of the U.N.

The U.S.-U.N. Handover: If much was done admirably, altruistically, and efficiently to respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs of the Somali people, the shocking counterpoint is that at the highest levels of the U.S. Government no significant attention was given to an enduring *political* solution. Without this, there would be no resolution of the humanitarian crisis. Most participants in the high level meetings say they knew the U.N. was incapable of assuming the overall task in Somalia, particularly after the task was substantially broadened by the Security Council (with U.S. support) to include nation-building. High Administration officials admit to naive and wishful thinking in this regard. "We closed our eyes to reality," said one military observer.⁵³ Operation Restore Hope was thus a noble mission of mercy that saved some 10-25,000 lives, but, as many participants asked, "for what?" In a choice between mission creep and U.N. failure, the U.S. chose the latter.⁵⁴ The haste to withdraw and turn over the problem to an unprepared U.N. was, in the minds of many, unconscionable.

And yet there were understandable reasons for the U.S. Government position. The newly inaugurated Clinton Administration was not only busy getting itself organized; it also had ambitious domestic policy initiatives that it could ill afford to have overshadowed by events in Somalia (although this proved unavoidable in the end anyway). The U.S. military leadership wielded enormous influence in the White House, and its objection to fuzzy, ill-defined goals such as disarmament and nation-building were made very clear; it had not favored intervention in the first place. As early as January 1993, General Johnston had sent his "war is over, we won, it's time to come home" message. A bizarre game of "chicken" ensued in New York, where State and Defense Department representatives attempted to hasten the U.N. leadership's willingness to take over from UNITAF. But Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and his deputies, knowing they were unprepared to take on a task of such unprecedented

dimensions, delayed as much as possible for self-protection. Here was a case where both the U.S. and the U.N. had good reasons for wanting to both withdraw and delay the withdrawal, respectively. What must be bluntly described as inexcusable is the failure to have foreseen this eventuality at the beginning. Whether such foresight would have dictated against the humanitarian intervention in the first place, and whether that would have been an appropriate decision given the level of suffering, is questionable. As the leaders of Medecins Sans Frontieres, one of the most highly respected NGOs working in Somalia, put it, "La complexite va mal avec l'urgence" ("Complexity and urgency don't go well together.")⁵⁵

To some extent, it was UNITAF's very success that proved problematic. UNITAF's overwhelming force caused both the international community and Somalis to believe that the solution to their problems was at hand. Within the country there was an initial awed euphoria. This directly contradicted the limited U.S. intent merely to secure major routes for moving relief supplies, never to address the fundamental problems of the situation. Around the world, among those involved as well as among the general public, expectations conflicted with reality.

UNOSOM II: Having invested so much, the U.S. did not want to see the U.N. fail. To this end, it contributed military logistics personnel, the quick response force, a number of mid- to high-level civilian staff, a significant part of the budget, the U.S. Embassy compound itself, and later the Rangers. The U.S. also pressed for the appointment of Americans both as the Secretary-General's special representative and as deputy force commander as a way of ensuring some control over both events and the deployment of U.S. personnel. This proved to have its advantages and disadvantages.⁵⁶ But while the U.S. was "there" in UNOSOM II, its influence was not always decisive. In Washington, the level of attention also shifted downward a notch in the hierarchy; since it was no longer an exclusively U.S. operation, top level policy-makers turned more of their attention elsewhere. As one participant analogized, "UNOSOM was like a garden hose that the U.S. turned on without holding the end."⁵⁷ In some ways, the U.S. Government had the worst of both worlds: incomplete control, yet a share of the blame when things went wrong, as indeed they did.

The key turning point came on June 5, 1993 when UNOSOM II forces were ambushed after inspecting SNA arms caches at Radio Mogadishu. The conflagration erupted out of a pattern of several months of non-communication, misunderstanding, and mutual mistrust. Certainly the U.N. had carried out no meaningful political dialogue with Aidid and his colleagues. The analysis of the U.N.-appointed independent Commission of Inquiry, reluctantly released by the U.N. in early 1994, seems well on target: There was a "lack of proper coordination" between the military and political parts of UNOSOM II, a lack of experienced civilian advisors, and a lack

of time, expertise, and requisite intelligence to evaluate the situation. In hindsight, Commission members felt the U.N. should have postponed its arms search, given the prevailing tensions. At the same time, "Although UNOSOM II apparently misjudged the general situation and made some ill-advised decisions, the Commission feels that this in no way justifies the viciousness of the SNA reaction on 5 June" (which the Commission concluded was, indeed, SNA-orchestrated).⁵⁸ While finding the UNOSOM response in some ways understandable, the members also noted that it seemed to "impose" more than "assist" political solutions; the Security Council, for all the ambitiousness of the UNOSOM II mandate, had been careful to authorize only the latter. "The insistence by UNOSOM II on enforcing political arrangements previously agreed [referring to the Addis accords] but no longer accepted by all the political movements would amount to an imposition" and thus be inconsistent with the Security Council's mandate. Yet in a further reflection of the ambiguities of the situation, the Commission also reported that, "With the outrage all over the world on the attacks the Security Council could do nothing less than to authorize the arrest and detention of the perpetrators."

While the U.N. took the major heat for allowing itself to get sucked into a local war — Admiral Howe was described by some as the third warlord of Mogadishu — the U.S. provided a major impetus, indeed leadership, for the policy. U.S. Special Envoy Gosende had pointed even before June 5 to the need to bring Aidid to justice for his disregard of the Addis accords. He and April Glaspie (albeit deputed to UNOSOM) were most upset by Aidid's verbal provocations on Radio Mogadishu.⁵⁹ While the situations were very different, no-one seems to have considered taking the approach to the SNA that the U.N. took toward the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia — that of holding the door open but, absent participation, proceeding without them. Like it or not, Aidid was, after all, the major liberator of Somalia from the detested Siad Barre and, as such, a major power who had to be dealt with. This seemed to be recognized more by U.S. military than by civilian leaders.⁶⁰

Aside from extreme irritation and the understandable emotional response, another reason for the U.S. taking a hard line was its interest in "aggressive multilateralism". If United Nations bowing to a local warlord was seen as already degrading for the major world body, the new Clinton Administration's idealistic hopes for the U.N. required all the stronger a response to protect the U.N.'s reputation and ability to lead in the cause of peace. The result, regrettably, was counterproductive, as many came to see the U.N. as incapable of playing such a leadership role. It should be recognized, however, that "had early attempts to capture Aideed succeeded, the entire course of the mission, and perhaps even the course of U.N. peacekeeping in the 1990s, might well have turned out differently."⁶¹

With the admitted benefit of hindsight, Admiral Howe has suggested that a more "sensitive" policy would have been preferable during the summer of 1993.⁶² Although he notes that three letters were sent to Aidid after June 5, others note that in Somali society letters normally connote either a lack of perceived importance of their subject or an intent to threaten;⁶³ Somalia is an oral society that requires "sitting carpet", which Howe was not known for doing. Several have suggested, again in hindsight, that a strong negotiating initiative should have been attempted after the first counter-strike against the SNA on June 12; at this point, force had been met with force and the climate was probably most conducive to compromise. Although the UNOSOM II leadership detected no SNA interest in negotiation until the arrival of the more threatening Rangers in August 1993⁶⁴ — Aidid continued to rabidly oppose the U.N., and was especially distrustful of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali — a more neutral intermediary might well have proven effective. In fact, Aidid would later approach former President Jimmy Carter, requesting he play that role with "the United States-led mission of the United Nations"; Carter declined, deferring to the Clinton Administration. In the end, it took a combination of mutual military pressure and resultant war fatigue on both sides, culminating in the October attack and subsequent policy turnaround, to bring the war phase to a close.

To better understand the balance, or rather imbalance, between humanitarian, political, and military emphases during the period of U.N. leadership, it is important to understand the U.N.'s functioning in Somalia. Whipping boy of many, the United Nations comprises, in fact, a large number of independent agencies, each of which reports to its own executive board and a secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General. The Secretariat is overseen by the Security Council which, in turn, is composed of 15 of the 184 U.N. member governments (excluding Somalia, of course, which currently has no government). Some feel that the Security Council has been over-reaching itself in assigning to the institution, especially to the Secretariat, overwhelming tasks not only in Somalia, but elsewhere in the world (there are currently 17 U.N. peacekeeping operations worldwide). As a result of all the crises, the organization has developed "indigestion" and needs to "learn not to go so fast, so deep, or so far without the resources" to do the job.⁶⁵ Furthermore, each situation is unique, and "Somalia is uniquely unique."⁶⁶

In the case of UNOSOM II, Chapter VII peace-making with Article 42 "teeth" was prescribed for the first time — and clearly without adequate provision for member support. In some respects, without either road maps to follow or sufficient fuel, it is hardly surprising that the road was so bumpy and that the vehicle broke down. Member support, in fact, has been an extremely difficult and constant problem. The U.S., among those most critical of U.N. shortcomings, contributed much for Somalia; yet it is also among the most egregious debtors to the U.N. as a whole.

If it was unconscionable for the U.S. to turn over its Somalia responsibilities to an ill-prepared U.N., it was also unfair to then blame the U.N. for its subsequent failures. The U.S. provided major staffing and resources for UNOSOM II and, while it could not control all of UNOSOM's activities and decisions, it provided the glue that kept the coalition together and ran the show.⁶⁷ Admiral Howe was known to make frequent late night calls to Washington. As one U.S. official put it, "There were many instances where you had something like the U.S. mission in Mogadishu lending the top American officials of UNOSOM its watch, so it could see what time of day it was and then, in turn, those officials asking their own Washington contacts if the time given them by the U.S. mission was correct."⁶⁸ The U.S. had also provided, and commanded, the Rangers in their aggressive missions to seek out Aidid and his followers. Although telling the U.N. in October 1993 it "must know when to say no",⁶⁹ President Clinton is said to have privately admitted to Congressional leaders that the U.S., too, had made mistakes.⁷⁰ In fact, the President reportedly told families of Rangers killed in the October 3 raid that "he was mystified that the raid had been tried...because Washington was shifting its policy;"⁷¹ White House officials, noting that continuing Ranger attacks were authorized by the President, suggested he had been misquoted.⁷²

The "bottom line" of the above discussion is that up to October 1993 the balance between humanitarian, political, and military approaches in Somalia became increasingly and counter-productively skewed toward the military, a phenomenon lamented as much by military as by civilian participants. Humanitarian activities continued much as before, with a number of U.S. officials being seconded to UNOSOM, but were completely overshadowed by the military emphasis. Of the roughly \$1.6 billion allocated for UNOSOM II, 90 percent was for military support. A "huge chunk" of this went to western contractors such as the American firm Brown and Root, said to earn \$200 million over two years, and to a New Zealand caterer "who supplies everything from beer to lobster for UN forces."⁷³ As *The Economist* pointed out, "For all the emphasis on security, little has been done to tackle the menace of the tens of thousands of young men with no legitimate jobs, little education, and less hope."⁷⁴ Given all this, the key question is clearly what level and type of military intervention can be usefully introduced in situations of need without its becoming counter-productive?

EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Knowing the Scene

In assessing the international community's effectiveness in Somalia, it is important to understand, first, the extent to which the major decision makers responsible for committing such massive resources understood Somali culture. Onlookers present in high level meetings indicate that the agendas of these sessions generally precluded any opportunity for working level people directly familiar with Somalia to interject their experience-based knowledge and more nuanced information and views.⁷⁵ This was particularly true when the Operation Restore Hope decision was made. While it is probably inevitable in a bureaucratic hierarchy that top decision makers cannot possibly have a close and direct understanding of every issue coming before them, and while the system is supposed to incorporate these views at earlier review levels, the effective transmission of such views is often imperfect, with resultant costs in policy making.

Somalis interviewed for this study are virtually unanimous that the international community failed to understand them and their country, failed to sufficiently consult with Somalis before making key decisions regarding their fate and well-being, and failed to draw sufficiently on the limited number of people familiar from previous experience with the country. "Americans don't understand what makes the Somalis tick," said a former Somali ambassador to the U.S.⁷⁶ U.N. officials were also seen as deficient in this regard. The independent Commission of Inquiry concluded that "many senior political advisors in UNOSOM II, especially on sensitive political issues,... were insensitive to the local culture's requirements."⁷⁷

Many non-Somalis interviewed concurred with this assessment to a greater or lesser extent. Although some effort was made by the U.S. Government to assign old Somalia hands like Oakley and Gosende, these were rare cases. Some Americans expressed frustration, for example, that fewer than a handful of the 435 returned Peace Corps volunteers who have served in Somalia have been involved in recent years in either policy or implementation. A State Department official evoked the U.S. experience in Viet-Nam, where failure to adequately understand the people and culture had tragic repercussions. In Somalia, he observed, this led to over-emphasis on dealing with the warlords — "the guys with guns" — to the detriment of working with other leaders; referring to General Aidid, he suggested "we thus created the monster we now deplore."⁷⁸ It also contributed to regrettable minor mistakes, such as UNITAF's dropping of leaflets which said "slave nations have come to help you";

while possibly a simple oversight, some believed the Americans involved in producing the leaflet simply didn't trust Somalis to verify the translation.

The trust factor was clearly a major, and justifiable, issue. As noted above, international donor experience with Somalia and Somalis had been quite negative since at least the 1980s.⁷⁹ Beginning with the Ogaden war period when international refugee assistance was flagrantly exploited by many Somalis, foreign aid workers reported tough, aggressive, corrupt, devious, and manipulative behavior. Indeed, as early as 1854, foreign observers described Somalis as "a people of susceptible character and withal uncommonly hard to please... Each tribe and clan wished to rank first. None would be even second."⁸⁰ Many Somalis accept these characterizations, attributing them to the larger socio-economic patterns of their culture. Nomadic Somalis, they say, have traditionally fought along clan lines over rights to grazing lands, access to which influenced their very survival; to this end, violence has been a not uncommon part of societal mores. Some go on to explain the looting of foreign aid as understandable in the context of a raiding society, made all the easier when against a target that didn't retaliate. Aidid, apparently assuming in this light that foreigners eagerly sought to assist, once said on the radio that "We gave you [Americans] a chance to aid us, but you didn't know how to use this chance."⁸¹ Such traits explain the international reluctance to rely very heavily, if at all, on Somali views.

Another key reason for ignoring Somali views is the international community's virtually unanimous perception that Somalis place individual clan interests above the larger common good; therefore, how can they be trusted? A number of Somalis interviewed, while not denying clan loyalties — indeed, noting these had intensified as a consequence of the crisis — also insisted that some members of the professional class were fully able to transcend clan politics in a larger national interest. They also suggested that if the international community sought broader input, one had only to gather a number of Somalis representing different groups in the same room and look for common ground. As one United Nations official commented, saying we can't trust Somali viewpoints for this reason is like saying we can't trust Republicans or Democrats in the U.S.⁸² On the other hand, it is also true that when opinions were, on occasion, solicited within a gathering of Somalis, there were almost always as many different viewpoints as persons to express them. "I met regularly with dozens of Somalis," said one State Department official. "They agreed on virtually nothing. It was very frustrating to listen to their advice."⁸³

There were, of course, exceptions, expatriates who believed strongly in the importance of Somali consultation and involvement. When Philip Johnston briefly headed UNOSOM I's Humanitarian Operations Center, he attempted to some extent to engage Somalis in determining humanitarian policies and priorities. His successor

Hugh Cholmondeley, citing Security Council language that the international community was in Somalia to assist its people to rebuild their country, believed it important "to take the position that people of the country know best." Cholmondeley favored channeling aid through local groups, on the assumption that even where these were weak or susceptible to diversions, such losses could not be greater than those already endured.⁸⁴

Arguably the most serious failure to understand the Somalis — or at least to translate an understanding into workable relationships with them — was at the level of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A Coptic patrician and former Egyptian minister of state with considerable previous experience with neighboring Somalia — along with many of his countrymen, he was known and resented for supporting the widely hated Siad Barre — Boutros-Ghali believed, according to confidantes, in wielding "the big stick". "I know the Somalis," he told a colleague, but whether for tactical or real reasons, he was never able to surmount their suspicions and negative feelings toward him.⁸⁵ These feelings transferred to the U.N. more broadly and caused special difficulty for UNOSOM II after the U.S.-U.N. handover. Had it been possible for a secretary-general to recuse himself from so large an issue before the U.N., this would have been an appropriate case in which to do so.

In the end, and especially during UNOSOM II, it became very difficult to communicate with Somalis simply because of security. U.S. and U.N. officials — the latter of whom were officially the enemy of the SNA — were largely confined to the Embassy compound and could only go out with security convoys bristling with armed guards, which were hardly conducive to spontaneous contacts or intimate chats. Somalis could meet them inside the U.S. compound, but the clearance procedure was laborious and perceived as humiliating, and those willing to meet under these circumstances were inevitably limited. A wall had literally grown up between helpers and their intended beneficiaries.

Effectiveness of Humanitarian Assistance

One of the several ironies of the Somalia crisis is that the various systems to provide early warning of food crop failures, put in place by FAO following the Ethiopian famine of 1984-85, all worked. A review of FAO reports, and of wire service accounts of these, reveals that information on the probable scale of the crisis was widely available.⁸⁶ The critical weakness was in the lack of reliable mechanisms within the foreign assistance agencies and at the United Nations to trigger earlier and more effective relief responses. Some NGOs were comparatively quicker to respond than were governmental and multinational agencies, presumably because they had more organizational mobility and fewer bureaucratic rigidities to overcome; one cannot

fail to be impressed by their dedication and efficacy. Some, however, depended on media attention and the promise of either governmental or individual donor funding to make the leap. All were distracted by the plethora of emergencies taking place in Sudan, Angola, the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.

The overwhelming issue facing humanitarian agencies in Somalia was security. The heroism of many of the people working with ICRC, NGOs, and U.N. agencies, as well as with bilateral aid programs, is striking. Their ability to help people and save lives in the face of no end of difficulties and threats to their own well-being is praiseworthy indeed. Some had guns put to their heads for extortion; some, indeed, were killed in the course of service to the Somali people. While expatriate humanitarian personnel were periodically withdrawn for short periods after a killing or other serious threat to security, they inevitably returned to take up the task. And their local Somali staff soldiered on despite many threats.

ICRC: ICRC was recommended by Andrew Natsios and nominated by Secretary of State Eagleburger for the Nobel Peace Prize. For the first 18 months of the crisis, it was by far the major organization helping in the country, operating on a more massive scale than at any time since World War II. Never before had ICRC attempted to feed a whole nation, nor to run a kitchens program, let alone one that served over a million people. Never before had it had to rely on a private army in order to be able to do its work. ICRC also went out of its way to bring journalists to Somalia to spread the story around the world and induce others to help. Although there is much contention around the total numbers of lives saved in Somalia, it is generally agreed that a significant proportion of the estimated 50,000 saved in 1991 and early 1992 were due to the early efforts of ICRC and its affiliate Red Crescent Societies. The latter consisted of some 500 staff plus volunteers who were responsible for about 70 percent of ICRC's efforts and constituted a unique resource available to no other international organization.⁸⁷ In total, ICRC employed some 25,000 Somalis directly, and many others indirectly.⁸⁸

The Red Cross-Red Crescent network developed ingenious methods to circumvent the variety of obstacles in its way. Its leaders and staff developed relatively low-key ways to deliver food where the U.S. Government and U.N. would later require large ports and more elaborate technical facilities. They invested in patient diplomacy where others would likely have lost all patience. Indeed, their whole mode of operation, of working in close cooperation with the Somali community, was in some contrast to that of the UNITAF-UNOSOM II period. When "the mechanical apparatus" took over, "the fragile network of relationships with elders, community leaders, local employees and faction leaders would be replaced by soldiers

of the strongest army in the world. In this respect, one can speak of a cultural gap between humanitarian and military action."⁸⁹

ICRC was criticized, however, for extensive compromising to get its food through. Although all relief agencies succumbed to extortion and paid for security, ICRC's doing so seemed more visible due to its scale of operation and more galling due to its high reputation. ICRC was also criticized for its policy of distributing high value rice, which it did because of rice's nutritional advantages and the fact it was the most widely acceptable commodity in a situation where multiple product lines of supply would have been too difficult to organize.⁹⁰ The problem was that the high value of rice made it particularly vulnerable to looting; other donors distributed primarily wheat and pulses. As one participant observed, "ICRC's choice of rice as the main staple virtually invited thievery since rice is a high value commodity in the country and normally only the wealthier 20 percent of the country consumes it. Sugar had tremendous value on the market in Kenya and was a particular target of the warlords."⁹¹

Some also criticized ICRC's policy of food kitchens which, in the words of one critic, "drew people out of the countryside and put them in camps and made them vulnerable to bandits who hung around the centers and preyed on the relief agencies."⁹² ICRC initiated the kitchens in April 1992, however, to discourage the looting so common with dry foods and as a response to the very existence of camps; where possible, it preferred to place kitchens in local communities away from camps so as not to reinforce the typical camp mentality of dependence.

NGOs: The NGOs paid a high price for saving lives in Somalia. Try as they might, they were unable to resist meeting inflated Somali demands for high house and vehicle rentals and staff salaries. The rampant insecurity forced them, in effect, to purchase security, spending considerable amounts of money on fortified houses and offices, armed guards, and rented as opposed to owned vehicles because the latter were subject to immediate theft. "The Somalis milked the humanitarian agencies for everything they could get out of them," is a comment heard over and over again, accompanied by extraordinary tales of compromises that NGOs were forced to make in the interests of continuing to help in Somalia. At the very beginning of 1991 free security had been provided to ICRC and MSF by local leaders out of hospitality for those who had come to help. By 1993, one NGO reported paying \$28,000 per month for security in Baidoa, and ICRC reportedly paid \$100,000 per week in Mogadishu.⁹³ In some cases, NGOs were faced with looting by their own Somali staff members, whether by economic necessity or otherwise. As the economic situation deteriorated, IMC and other NGOs thus found it necessary to pay "incentives" (a euphemism for salaries), although this raised the issue of sustainability. While salaries were no doubt

merited for work performed, without a government to take over the NGOs could hardly pay such recurring costs forever.⁹⁴

A more fundamental problem was the extent to which NGO efforts might, in fact, have been counterproductive. Like virtually all foreign and international organizations, NGOs based in Mogadishu established themselves almost entirely in the southern part of the city, which was Aidid territory. This was conveniently near the airport and where the most suitable housing, mostly rented out by Aidid supporters, was available. Many relief staff became close to and relied on Aidid personally for logistical and/or security assistance; he looked after them. The presumably unintentional yet easily visible result was to enrich Aidid's forces, an enrichment that was certainly channelled to at least some extent into armaments, thus exacerbating the problem the aid givers were trying to counteract.⁹⁵ MSF, which conducted a very thoughtful in-house analysis of its own role in Somalia, agonized no end over this dilemma, that is, the extent to which one should tolerate a negative by-product (strengthening a faction leader) in the interests of saving immediate lives. Others, too, noted that "the supply of weapons from one door and the supply of humanitarian aid from another, is [a] policy which saws through the branch on which we sit."⁹⁶

By late 1993 a number of NGOs had withdrawn from the country, partly because the famine had ended, but also because of the substantial costs of maintaining a minimally secure presence. Under the circumstances, it is frankly surprising that many others did not leave earlier, particularly once the famine was over, and given the likelihood that they could have used the same amount of money to help a larger number of equally needy people in other countries. Indeed, given the Somali reliance on external funding, a more coordinated donor response against looting, extortion, and insecurity might well have been effective from the very beginning. As one observer suggested, a radio announcement that relief agencies were pulling out due to uncooperative factional leaders would likely have pressured those leaders to protect the NGOs.⁹⁷ But whether because of headquarter pressures or staff proclivities, the NGOs seemed to act more from the heart than from the head. In the words of CARE's president, "If you're asking me if CARE believes in the sanctity of human life more than it fears its food being diverted, the answer is yes."⁹⁸ Or, as Oakley put it, "Stopping NGOs from helping is like stopping Newton's apple."⁹⁹ Yet indiscriminate insistence on helping is a weakness as well as a strength of the NGO community and at times had counter-productive effects in Somalia.

The lack of reliable data did not make the NGO task any easier. If there is reason to believe that the numbers of both famine deaths and lives saved were exaggerated, it is also important to re-emphasize the difficulty of collecting reliable statistics on famine consequences, especially in a country like Somalia where even the

base population figure ranged from 4 to 7 million; (based on CDC/RPG analysis, this study has assumed a population of 5 million). The difficulty is exacerbated by the extreme mobility of the population, both cross-border and internally, to seek food and safety. There is no reason to doubt that the ICRC, NGOs, and U.N. agencies were giving their best estimate of the at-risk population and extrapolating the numbers of dead and dying as best they could under the horrendous pressures of the moment. Absent more extensive data collection, however, the tendency to err on the high side can hardly be avoided by overwhelmed practitioners with a keen interest in procuring maximum resources to help the needy. Greater precision about the proximate causes of death is also needed to ensure appropriate responses. While it seems churlish to suggest an academic exercise in data collection amidst hundreds of thousands of starving people, the most effective allocation of inevitably limited resources — including, in this case, tens of thousands of military forces — points to its utility.¹⁰⁰

Another issue that deserves consideration is the efficacy of significant numbers of NGOs operating without prior experience or understanding of the country, and sometimes without the willingness to consult those with knowledge. The historic strength of the NGO community is its flexibility to respond quickly and appropriately in areas of need. The problem, however, is when so many come in at one time, and insist on waving their own flags (literally the case in Somalia, where flags are used for security identification) and "doing their own thing", that inefficiencies, duplications, or the introduction of ill-considered operational precedents result. Leaders of a Somali NGO in Baidoa, while highly appreciative of the expatriate NGO contribution, noted this phenomenon of "territoriality"; it was particularly marked in Baidoa which, given its "epicenter of death" publicity, was considered "the place to be" in order to attract home country donor contributions.¹⁰¹

By 1994, USAID's mission director believed "there may be too many international NGOs [over 50] working in Somalia... Yes, they are mostly there because of the well-advertised need, but they are also there because...[t]he large amount of donor funding available for Somalia was a major attraction for NGO headquarters which were out to cover their administration and overhead costs."¹⁰² Notwithstanding the hardships, there was another advantage to working in government-less Somalia in that "NGOs could set up operations as they pleased without having to deal with any official, central government entity. In such an environment, NGOs became in some areas fiefdoms unto themselves and brokers of non-negligible amounts of power."¹⁰³

The NGO "gold rush", "follow-the-funding" phenomenon can, indeed, be problematic, particularly in situations with limited absorptive capacity in the form of local management structures. One might ask whether it effectively serves the long-term needs of famine victims or whether there should be more willingness to build on

the experience and expertise of groups already established in the country — local, as well as international — and support their efforts. Although some observers suggest that "NGOs aren't made for coordination," a number of European groups, and some American ones as well, operated effectively in just this "combined forces" manner.¹⁰⁴

One option available to international NGOs, as well as to other donors, could have been to channel resources through local Somali groups. As critics have noted, "It can only be a lack of imagination or worse, an obtuseness that prevented UNOSOM [and other donors] from supporting actively these institutions."¹⁰⁵ The prevailing belief, however, was that "most present-day Somali NGOs are nothing more than 'businesses' and should be dealt with as such," in the words of one otherwise sympathetic long-time worker in Mogadishu.¹⁰⁶ An added reason for ignoring local NGOs was the belief that they could not be trusted to rise about clan politics, or at least would require more investigation in terms of their reliability than was possible given the urgency of the emergency. In the event, some Somali professionals continued to work on their own without salaries, living off their own savings or other indigenous resources.

A critical issue for NGOs in Somalia was how to relate to the military. It is indeed hard to imagine two more different cultures. Much has been said in the NGO community about the need to separate the humanitarian from the military (and political) in order not to compromise the integrity of the former. "We can't be seen as precursors to the Foreign Legion or the Rangers," one NGO leader insisted.¹⁰⁷ In fact, most NGOs wanted military protection but no identification with the military, a no doubt naive desire. The military, for their part, had scarcely any idea of what NGOs were, what they did, or how they did it. They were sent to Somalia exclusively to support the humanitarian effort, yet the introduction of such a large military element caused a degree of wider societal militarization that took on a counter-productive momentum of its own. Military intervention has its own logic: While troops may go in because relief agencies call for them, once there they follow commands from the military hierarchy, rather than from relief agencies. Such commands inevitably prioritize military concerns, notably protection of military personnel, over purely humanitarian objectives.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, humanitarian interventions require a different set of military skills. While some units and individuals seemed well trained to deal with Somali civilians — indeed, some assisted with important engineering projects, food distribution, and medical care — others, untrained for this type of role and no doubt under the heavy pressures of the situation, committed serious human rights violations. Some military observers question whether the same troops that are trained to "kill people and break things" can be expected to act as sensitive peacekeepers; others believe it is a matter

of additional training.¹⁰⁹ A European NGO observer¹¹⁰ felt that some Italian troops, for example, demonstrated an appropriate balance of politeness and firmness toward Somalis, in contrast to the Americans who swore at them but were inconsistent in their firmness — "missionary Rambos", as he called them. A Frenchman remarked on the massive "disproportionality of operationalizing UNITAF" compared with the humanitarian objective; "the synergy between the humanitarian and the military," he said, "finds its limit very quickly."¹¹¹

The fact that the NGOs and the military got along as well as they did in Somalia, at least during the airlift and UNITAF periods, is quite remarkable — and instructive. Much of the credit for this probably goes to the caliber of people involved on both sides, as well as to the necessity of cooperation for survival and for keeping the relief effort going. Efforts are currently underway to incorporate learnings from Somalia and other cooperative experiences into training handbooks and courses for military personnel involved in humanitarian interventions.¹¹²

If cooperation with the military places NGOs in ambiguous and potentially compromising situations, an area of activity barely touched on in Somalia was that of direct peacemaking or conflict resolution.¹¹³ Traditionally practised in a very low-key way by Quakers and Mennonites, and more visibly recently by the Atlanta-based Carter Center, this field of comparative advantage for NGOs could have been attempted. It is admittedly highly labor-intensive, requires enormous patience, dedication, and training, and might well have only localized effects, at best. It is certainly less dramatic than delivering food or medical care, and thus less immediately conducive to fund-raising. Still, NGO mediation and reconciliation initiatives would appear to have at least some potential in mitigating some types of localized violence.

U.N. Humanitarian Agencies: According to the executive director of Human Rights Watch, "the United Nations and its various organizations have been so monstrously negligent and incompetent that they have played almost no role at all in alleviating Somalia's misery."¹¹⁴ The same source quoted a U.N. official as saying, "Somalia is the greatest failure of the United Nations in our time." While these are among the most harshly phrased criticisms, they are hardly the only ones. Again, however, it is useful to distinguish between the U.N. Secretariat, which is most often criticized, and the specialized agencies, each of which has its own performance record. In fact, the key U.N. agencies engaged in the Somalia crisis were WFP, UNICEF, and, with a relatively greater outside- than inside-Somalia focus, UNHCR. United Nations Volunteers (UNV) were also active, filling a void when more senior personnel could not be recruited. FAO, aside from its crop forecasts, was not visible in Somalia, and WHO, while showing expenditures on behalf of Somalia, had a very low profile, especially during the early part of the crisis.

While many feel that UNDP should have been an actor, particularly given the resident representative's usual role as coordinator and senior in-country representative of the Secretary-General, it resisted involvement in so turbulent a setting, falling back on its primary development mandate for which circumstances were hardly conducive in Somalia. Although some staff regretted this stance, particularly noting the ill will it engendered, UNDP essentially forfeited playing a significant role from 1991 through 1993. If UNDP had, in fact, been active in a coordinating role, a clearcut division of labor and authority would have been needed vis-a-vis the head of UNOSOM's humanitarian division and the Secretary-General's special representative. When UNDP did begin operating a few projects in late 1992, it purposely took a low profile, partly, no doubt, from embarrassment, and partly to avoid the security problems encountered by UNICEF and WFP, thus "taking advantage of the disadvantage of being a new player on the block."¹¹⁵

UNICEF was the first U.N. agency to insist with headquarters security authorities that it be allowed to return to Somalia after Siad Barre's overthrow. It may have eventually won its plea partly because of UNICEF's unique character within the U.N. system (it is heavily funded by voluntary contributions) and partly because it is accustomed to working without exclusive reference to national (and in Somalia, non-existent) authorities. UNICEF was criticized in the early period of the crisis for weak leadership and audit problems, for sometimes taking credit for the achievements of others (albeit utilizing UNICEF resources), and for inadequate coordination (including a possibly apocryphal story of revaccinating the inhabitants of a community already vaccinated for the same disease by an NGO the day before¹¹⁶). Yet, UNICEF had the second biggest aid presence (after ICRC) for a period of eighteen months and lost three expatriate workers to violence, more than any other donor agency. UNICEF also distinguished itself for recognizing more than most relief agencies the importance of providing health, water, and sanitation assistance in addition to food aid. Like most efforts, these began regrettably late in 1992, following CDC studies showing that most deaths in Somalia were in fact attributable to measles and diarrhea (influenced by weakened resistance from malnutrition) rather than directly to starvation.

WFP was also criticized for taking credit, at times, for the achievements of others, such as declaring a major victory when "the first ship" was able to offload its cargo, whereas ICRC had been offloading food in Somalia for months previously. After a slow start, in any case, WFP was able to make considerable amounts of food available for distribution and seemed to have good working relations with its partners, notably CARE, in undertaking in-country distribution. To meet the requirements, WFP "begged, borrowed, and stole from any available donor source",¹¹⁷ including less traditional food donors such as Saudi Arabia, North African countries, Thailand, Greece, and Spain. Among the lessons WFP feels it learned (and needed to learn)

from its Somalia experience were the necessity to better train its staff in emergency programming (they have traditionally focussed more on development), to thus accelerate its procurement and transport of food, and to function in situations lacking security. In addition, noting the relative dearth of groups willing to handle large-scale food distribution in a situation as "hot" as Somalia, WFP learned it needs to enhance its own capacities to independently carry out relief activities.¹¹⁸ A first step, perhaps, in this direction was WFP's establishment of a rapid response team analogous to OFDA's DART; it was sent to Burundi in early 1994. In Somalia itself in 1994, WFP was still providing food for an estimated 300,000 internally displaced and 10,000 drought-affected Somalis, 90 percent of it, uniquely, through Somali NGOs.

The U.N.'s new Department of Humanitarian Affairs faced a special problem in that the Somalia crisis "broke" at the very moment it was born. Lacking any real budget of its own, DHA had to build up clout through moral suasion and the ability to raise funds from donors. Without this, its coordinating role would be seen as lacking teeth both among the agencies it was expected to coordinate and in the minds of the Secretariat staff and the Secretary-General himself; the latter's support was needed but not always available.¹¹⁹ DHA faced further problems in the bifurcation of its administration between New York and Geneva and its inheritance of former UNDRO (U.N. Disaster Relief Organization) staff, with little flexibility for bringing in substantial new talent from outside the system. As described by one official, DHA is "a box we put on the U.N. chart but without electricity to operate except through persuasion."¹²⁰ Its funding appeals were said by some to be "a joke", its 100-Day Plan largely an "unprioritized laundry list" of project ideas.¹²¹ As a result, no doubt, of these concerns, some in the U.N. system have expressed preference for assigning a bureaucratically more developed "lead agency" to do the major coordination (per UNHCR's role in the former Yugoslavia), leaving DHA essentially as a high level U.N.-wide emergency fund raiser. However, Under-Secretary-General Eliasson is "dead against" this idea, believing that DHA by early 1994 was overcoming some of its early growing pains and would be more capable of handling its functions in the future.¹²² Somewhat more time and effort are probably needed to fairly test his belief.

UNHCR, given its negative experience with Somali refugees in the 1970s and 1980s, was ill disposed to play a large role in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, it became a significant actor outside the country's borders where approximately 320,000 refugees in Kenya and 375,000 in Ethiopia (not to mention another 282,000 in the Middle East) constituted roughly one-fifth of the country's likely 5 million population. These people claiming across-the-border safe haven may have represented a large proportion of those who were most insecure and at risk of dying.¹²³ In this sense, UNHCR's assistance to the Kenyan and Ethiopian refugee camps contributed

significantly to the Somali humanitarian relief effort. Because its work was largely outside Somalia's borders, however, it has not been a focus of this study.

Taken together, the above-mentioned U.N. agencies constituted an important presence in Somalia, each (as with all donors) with its ups and downs, each reporting to its respective American or European headquarters and governing board (thus complicating local coordination), and, along with the U.N. Secretariat, constituting a complex bureaucratic maze. The maze was sufficiently intimidating that Philip Johnston, coming from CARE to UNOSOM, felt himself "a stranger in a system that's strange at best." When he was said to have a management style "not congruent with the U.N.'s", it was considered a compliment.¹²⁴ Under these circumstances, the U.N. agencies' accomplishments may be more surprising than the criticisms.

OFDA: OFDA's performance garners widespread praise for the quality, effectiveness, and dedication of its personnel. U.S. military observers admit to surprise that civilians were willing to work as long hours as they were. NGOs generally appreciated their supportive attitude and generally timely and efficient processing of grants, as well as their ability to serve as intermediaries with the military, a view reciprocated by the latter. ICRC leaders asserted that OFDA staff followed the Somalia situation more closely than any other donor and gave "lots of support, and no pressure". OFDA's DART model, successfully tested in northern Iraq, was considered exemplary to the extent that WFP adopted it and DHA recently used a variation of the model to do its initial needs assessment in Rwanda.

Notwithstanding the overall praise, some areas for improvement have been identified, however. One is OFDA's tendency (like other donors') to be reactive rather than proactive. While OFDA acted and advocated earlier than most, it generally tended, especially in 1991 and early 1992, to fund food delivery and health care projects presented to it rather than assessing and pressing NGOs to initiate projects responding to typical famine cycle needs such as immunizations, safe water supply, and sanitation — critical causes of death as the crisis intensified. OFDA's preoccupation with the Mombasa airlift has been criticized for reinforcing "the perception that the main approach was going to be delivering food to people rather than focusing on monetization and economic interventions", such as employment generating activities which could have been more effective in breaking out of the famine.¹²⁵ In fact, OFDA (along with ICRC) tried to persuade NGOs and WFP to undertake monetization programs. And particularly in the later stages, OFDA did fund a substantial number of development-oriented activities, such as seeds distribution, thus responding to concerns that relief interventions serve where possible to reinforce longer-term development success. At the same time, OFDA declined to directly fund Somali NGOs, which would have been desirable for local participation and

sustainability upon the departure of foreign organizations. This latter was due to a policy requiring prior registration of local NGOs with AID, and because of related accountability as well as clan neutrality concerns.¹²⁶ While the tendency to be reactive rather than proactive can be readily explained by the sheer pressure of the situation, prior thought to a broader approach could allow OFDA to innovate in new ways for even greater impact.

A major factor in OFDA's success was widely seen to be its capable and energetic staff, most of whom were contract personnel or individuals seconded from other U.S. Government departments, but whose early leadership came from two principal managers from Washington, D.C. headquarters. Deployment of the latter lent importance, competence, and experience to the effort, but was probably unwise given competing demands for their talents in Washington and elsewhere around the world; it also led to some feeling of downgraded priority when these top officials left Somalia.¹²⁷ The turnover of OFDA staff in Somalia was generally high (as it was for most donor organizations), and a higher priority was placed on understanding of U.S. Government procedures than on understanding of Somalia. Although these factors would seem inimical to optimal effectiveness, there was no obvious evidence of this in Somalia.

Probably because of the DART's success, some observers felt the team should have stayed longer — analogous to wishing the American military had stayed longer in order to have avoided the ensuing difficulties under UNOSOM II. But OFDA's mandate is for the "emergency room" phase of a crisis, just as UNITAF's was to secure immediate food delivery needs. The challenge, therefore, was to inspire the U.N. system with the ability to take on DART-like functions with similar dedication and efficiency. In this connection, it might be argued that OFDA should have worked more closely with the U.N. in the Mombasa airlift period, as it worked with UNOSOM's humanitarian office in Mogadishu. But the U.N. with one lone, ill-supported WFP staff member assigned to the Mombasa operation, was in no position to either learn or contribute at that stage.¹²⁸ Nor is it clear that UNOSOM in Mogadishu had sufficient institutional backing and leadership to absorb and carry forward much of the DART's dedication and efficiency.

OFDA cooperation with the European Community was strong, particularly before the airlift when Jan Westcott and E.C. Representative Trevor Walker worked extremely effectively together. This was critical in that both OFDA and the E.C. supported ICRC and the NGOs. Their cooperation minimized the possibility of significant gaps or duplications of aid. It also allowed each major donor to fund those activities most consistent with its operating preferences, rules, and regulations.

A noteworthy aspect of OFDA's involvement in Somalia is the extent to which staff became engaged in political issues. They, like ICRC, point out that "to be apolitical, one has to be political" — in other words, that without an understanding of the political dimensions of a situation, aid may be misused, as was certainly an ever-present danger in Somalia. During the early period in 1991, Westcott was constantly meeting with factional leaders, especially Aidid, to whom some felt she was too close, and Ali Mahdi, whose "presidential inauguration" she attended. Her knowledge served her well in at least one instance: observing a WFP representative about to sign a bill of lading for U.S.-donated food over to Ali Mahdi — who is also a businessman — she had the political savvy and presence of mind to prevent it from happening.¹²⁹ During Operation Restore Hope, OFDA's DART staff worked closely with Ambassador Oakley and were based, in fact, in his Mogadishu compound. While ICRC and NGO representatives felt this relationship important, some wondered how close OFDA should be to embassy politics.¹³⁰

OFDA's political role bears highlighting beyond the fact that NGOs looked to it for a comprehensive understanding of the local environment in which aid should be optimally provided — an understanding that could benefit both NGOs themselves and the U.S. and international donor community more broadly. The larger political importance of OFDA was its virtual functioning as an advance policy-setting entity for the U.S. Government. Indeed, OFDA's policy-making seemed at times contradictory to that of the State Department and National Security Council. Where the last two resisted, in the early stages, any involvement in Somalia, OFDA was not only providing approved aid but also speaking out in Congress and in public to urge more U.S. and international activity in the country. Another way of stating the role is to say that OFDA acted when the rest of the U.S. Government refused to act. While this may have been tantamount to a conscious decision to "throw OFDA at the problem" and spare the government as a whole, it also led to an inevitable escalation of activity and the potential for OFDA making U.S. policy. As Assistant Secretary Cohen put it, commenting on OFDA's "aggressive" advocacy, "whereas the flag used to follow trade, it now follows humanitarian intervention."¹³¹

This politicization of OFDA is probably not surprising, considering that from its origins in battling the effects of natural disasters, 92 percent of its 1992 budget was spent on responding to complex (that is, political) emergencies. As former Director Natsios points out, in addition to meeting direct humanitarian needs, "diplomats now use disaster response as a preventative measure to stave off chaos in an unraveling society, as a confidence-building measure during political negotiations, to protect democratic and economic reforms, to implement peace accords which the U.S. has mediated, to mitigate the effects of economic sanctions on the poor, where sanctions serve geopolitical ends, and to encourage a political settlement as a carrot to

contending factions."¹³² What Somalia clearly demonstrates is the need for this type of responsive, flexible capacity at a grass-roots level. As Natsios also notes, government diplomats typically communicate with other governments only in elite policy circles.¹³³ In a world where nations and governments are breaking apart, however, new institutions are needed that are sensitive to popular movements and trends and can thus complement more traditional, formal means of interaction. OFDA would appear to have the flexibility, experience, and personnel to contribute to such a broadened vision of diplomacy.

Quality of Personnel

A key question in assessing humanitarian policies and programs is the extent to which success or failure results from the policies themselves, the structures and decision-making processes of the implementing institutions, or the quality of the people doing the implementing. It is abundantly clear from the Somalia crisis (and no doubt others) that people are key. A high-level review of post-Cold War peacekeeping, including the case of Somalia, notes that "the U.N. needs an advance team that understands the local culture and the political, economic, and humanitarian dimensions of the problem at hand. It must be formed around a strong personality who may eventually command the U.N. mission. Local factions tend to respond to personalities, not processes, so having the right person in charge is absolutely vital."¹³⁴ "Individuals have responsibility", noted one Somalia participant; "they can't blame the system. People died because of this."¹³⁵ Most agree that the extraordinary challenges of Somalia demanded extraordinarily capable individuals at all levels of work. Yet such people were extremely difficult to attract to Somalia. Individuals with respectable development or military backgrounds, who had performed well in other settings, were often simply the wrong individuals for the particular demands of the unique Somali situation. Some should not have been appointed.

With notable exceptions, the United Nations had particular difficulties in this regard. As explained by one senior official, the U.N. personnel system has traditionally been more dependent on connections, national quotas, regional representation, and other political considerations than on qualifications for difficult jobs. Any bureaucratic system tends to deter the most creative type of personality, precisely what was needed in a place like Somalia in particular. The harder the assignment, the higher the quality of personnel required. Perhaps this is why the more free-wheeling NGOs were able to operate as well as they did. They and the ICRC, especially in the early phases of the crisis, fielded a number of people with dedication, commitment, and competence.

If people are critical, structures are also important. Without reference to the qualities of the various individuals concerned, the lack of authority given to the special representatives of the Secretary-General has been identified as a particular problem in Somalia; virtually all decisions had to be referred, often unnecessarily and inefficiently, to the Secretary-General or his deputies in New York.¹³⁶ Emblematic of another problem, one UNOSOM II official complained in early 1994, "I have no job description; I don't know who is my boss; I have no resources — don't know what I'm supposed to do; and I'm really wasting a lot of money here."

Three lessons do seem to have been learned by the United Nations: first, the U.N. has now modified its security regulations to permit essential personnel to remain in hazardous situations under certain circumstances, thus responding to one cause of their 1990-91 disengagement. Second, full operational responsibility is now housed in the peacekeeping department rather than split between it and the management side of the U.N., as before. (In Bosnia, the U.N. has developed an elaborate policy coordination mechanism to avoid "bureaucratic centrifuge, separating humanitarian issues from military, from political, from financial."¹³⁷) Third, thought is also said to being given to a unified peacekeeping budget and to improving the U.N.'s operations center and intelligence capacity.

Approaches to Aid

The tendency throughout the Somalia crisis was to assume that the major need was to provide food to hungry people. This drove the entire policy of the international community, most notably the military interventions to ensure safe air and land delivery routes. While food is obviously essential, the fact of the matter is that most people in famines actually die from diseases, thus making public health programs critically important.¹³⁸ The main causes of death in Somalia were diarrheal disease and measles, both of which are easily preventable at low cost and with high efficiency, the former through oral rehydration therapy and the latter through immunization. One report concludes that "much of the infant and child mortality could have been avoided if the vaccination programmes had received higher priority at normal times or even as the conflict began as a measure of preparedness towards an impending crisis. However, commonly known preparedness measures, even when a crisis seems inevitable, does [sic] not seem to enter the priorities of humanitarian agencies."¹³⁹ While UNICEF, MSF, the International Rescue Committee, and SCF/UK undertook some initiatives, little in the way of measles vaccinations was begun until late 1992, after the major epidemic had hit in late summer. "Relief aid in the form of timely immunizations, food safety nets, public health surveillance, could have averted 95 percent of severe malnutrition — and therefore starvation deaths, 70 percent of measles deaths, and 40

percent of other deaths. Thus 70 percent of all deaths could have been averted. 154,000 lives were lost that, from a public health viewpoint, could easily have been saved."¹⁴⁰

What seems clear in hindsight — although the knowledge existed, in fact, from previous emergencies — is that a broad famine intervention strategy was needed for Somalia, including not only food deliveries and emergency medical care, but also immunizations and vitamin distributions; greater mobilization of primary care workers to provide the oral rehydration and foods specifically needed by the thousands of displaced and rural malnourished; asset preservation strategies such as seeds, tools, and loans; rehabilitation and drilling of boreholes, establishment of water holding tanks at displaced camps for chlorinated water; sanitation efforts; and lab facilities that track infectious diseases and verify drug-resistant strains of infectious agents. As the Somali Red Crescent director in Baidoa put it most simply, "Why feed people if they will remain vulnerable due to inadequate water?"¹⁴¹

A rough guide to relative proportions of overall aid investments suggested by one expert is 50 percent food, 20 percent health, and 30 percent economic stabilization.¹⁴² The latter should emphasize food monetization and related employment generation initiatives, desirably including, in the case of Somalia, a mass hiring of teachers so that children could pursue education while also encouraging a greater semblance of societal normality and investment in peace. All of the above (except for the teacher initiative) were elements of the patchwork of relief agency assistance, but they were all too little, too late.

In terms of food aid itself, the relative advantages and disadvantages of different mixes and methods of delivery call for sound judgments in a setting such as Somalia's. The controversy over high value vs. lower value foods, delivered wet (prepared in feeding kitchens) vs. dry (uncooked in sacks or cans) has already been discussed as particularly relevant in encouraging or discouraging looting and making food aid more likely to reach intended beneficiaries. Food transported by ICRC trucks to feeding centers proved effective in eliminating incentives for looting, since cooked food could not be stored or usefully resold. Consumed under the eyes of Somali Red Crescent and sometimes ICRC workers, wet food distribution provided the most direct evidence that intended recipients were reached and food not diverted or resold. Differences exist, particularly between ICRC and WFP, over the types of food that should be distributed. The inclusion of high value rice was seen by many as fueling insecurity, but ICRC felt that "it was a cereal that was accepted by any Somali anywhere in the country, irrespective of area, culture or education" and that "the purpose was to simplify the operation by saving time and facilitating the dispatching of food."¹⁴³

Centralization vs. decentralization of delivery was another key concern. Dry food was more easily dispersed and more likely to allow populations to remain in their homes and on their lands. Displacement to seek food, whether to distribution centers for dry food or to the relatively fewer food kitchens which required continued presence for meals, meant drawing people off their own lands; these would thus remain untilled when the rains returned, thereby perpetuating dependency. To avoid displacement altogether, air-drops were occasionally conducted, principally by WFP, to inaccessible areas, rendered so particularly in the rainy season. They were rare, however, being both risky and costly due to higher bagging costs, lower flight capacities to accommodate pallets, and potential losses from mis-targeting. While some feel that looting of airdrop supplies was a lesser problem because there was often no advance indication of where the food would be dropped, the lack of advance notice also implied no on-the-ground donor presence for verification of appropriate receipt; in fact, more diversion was reported than was commonly believed to have occurred.¹⁴⁴ In terms of military-escorted supplies by land, even as these gave important security for food delivery beginning in December 1992, one of their limitations was lessened flexibility to deliver food to smaller, more remote pockets of famine victims which NGOs might have previously served with small vehicles on their own; under the military regime, this was no longer possible.¹⁴⁵

Flooding and Monetization: A fundamental crisis strategy was to sufficiently flood the market with food so that prices would decrease, making food more available and discouraging looting. The airlift achieved this to a large extent by visibly increasing supplies in critically affected areas and thus easing market shortages that drove prices up. As it turned out, however, more was looted to compensate for the lower value, even as the lower prices increased people's access to food. Emblematic of the flooding is the fact that by April 1993, in at least one location, over-supplies of rice and beans were being fed to livestock.¹⁴⁶

A creative solution to both maximize the benefits of food aid and minimize looting was monetization. Requiring essentially no donor distribution responsibility, it was intended to make food available in the marketplace to those with at least minimal means to purchase it, with the understanding that the destitute would continue to receive free handouts through more traditional distribution methods or, preferably, benefit from accompanying employment programs; the latter would generate broader economic activity of benefit to the larger society.¹⁴⁷ Under monetization, imported food was sold to Somali merchants who then became responsible for ensuring security to point of sale, in exchange for local currency used, in turn, to support other relief or reconstruction programs in the country. One problem was the availability of accurate information to determine the economically optimal moment to introduce the food without unduly distorting the market or discouraging local production (for which

reason the program was essentially limited to high value items not grown in Somalia, such as sugar, pasta, and wheat flour).

OFDA, under Natsios, strongly pushed monetization in Somalia, an effort that took some doing given the newness of the idea in an emergency setting, not to mention the distaste of many for selling food amidst famine. CARE, with WFP, were the principal organizations to participate, along with IRC on a smaller scale. A first effort conducted in the northwest in October 1992 failed due to theft of the proceeds generated. Other problems included traders' purchase and immediate resale of food in neighboring countries to avoid the costs and risks of transporting it back to Somalia; and inadequate knowledge of refugee food handouts in border areas which affected local food prices and commodity markets and required careful timing of monetization efforts to avoid excessive flooding of the market. Subsequent efforts, after too many delays due to a variety of reasons, were begun in early 1993. These succeeded, with proceeds used to fund a number of NGO and related relief and reconstruction activities.¹⁴⁸ While further in-depth study is needed, it appears that monetization could have had a more dramatic impact on market prices and the economy in general, as well as on security, if it had been implemented earlier and used for mass hiring of teachers, police, and agricultural or irrigation projects.¹⁴⁹

Excessive Focus on Mogadishu: A number of observers felt that too much of the relief effort was focussed on Mogadishu and not enough on the northwest and northeast of Somalia. In the case of the latter, this was because the case for desperate need could not really be made. However, local residents and expatriates who spent significant time in the north believe the relief effort lost an opportunity by failing to invest in this more peaceful area as an anchor for spreading economic recovery and stability to other regions.¹⁵⁰ In the case of Mogadishu, it was largely a question of whether the capital was over-emphasized at the expense of the rest of the country. Certainly, Mogadishu had a high symbolic value, which only increased, as in a vicious circle, with the continuing investment there. This applied as much to relief as to political and military emphases, with the Aidid faction growing stronger as a result. Having criticized this, however, and while also noting the chicken-and-egg nature of the problem, it should be recognized that a significant segment of the Somali population fled to the Mogadishu area to escape fighting and hunger elsewhere; perhaps one in four Somalis lived there during the crisis. Site of the nation's largest port and airport, Mogadishu was also seen as key to transporting the needed amounts of food to other parts of the south and to restarting the economy, especially through renewed livestock exports¹⁵¹ once conditions permitted. During Ambassador Sahnoun's time in Somalia, it had been suggested that UNOSOM move its headquarters to Bossasso, partly as a way to avoid being held hostage to Aidid or at least as a credible

threat to him. In the end, however, this intriguing possibility was dismissed as impracticable and too radical.¹⁵²

ENDNOTES

1. Shinn interview, 11/19/93, Washington, DC.
2. *Ibid.*
3. "Food news doesn't move people, but medical data does," according to Bill Garvelink comment at June 9, 1994 RPG Washington review session.
4. Comment by Edward Girardet at February 1994 Columbia University conference on Media and the Famine in Somalia.
5. Johnston interview, 1/4/94, Atlanta.
6. "Somalia: Aydeed's local difficulties," *Africa Confidential*, June 17, 1994. Menkhaus (*op.cit.*, p. 160) estimates that UNOSOM's presence in Mogadishu alone generated 11,000 jobs, the loss of which would plunge the city into serious financial difficulty.
7. Christopher Caldwell in "Somali Aidlords," *Mediacritic*, p.12.
8. Interview with U.N. official.
9. Interview with Jim Clancy, 11/30/93, Addis Ababa.
10. The U.S. GAO estimated in March 1994 that the Defense Department alone spent \$884.9 million in incremental costs for operations in Somalia between April 1992 and September 1993 (\$20.1 million on the DOD airlift; \$692.2 million for UNITAF; \$94.7 million for UNOSOM II; and \$77.9 million for DOD support to the UN or other countries involved in the Somalia operation). (*Peace Operations: Cost of DOD Operations in Somalia*, U.S. GAO, March 1994, p. 4.) By July 1994, Defense Department incremental costs were placed at \$1.5 billion and total U.N. assessments at \$470.2 million. ("Somalia: USG costs to date," Memorandum from U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO/PHO), July 28, 1994.)
11. Council on Foreign Relations review session, 1/14/94, and also Oakley interview, *op.cit.*
12. See Drysdale, *op.cit.*, and Walter Clarke, *op.cit.*
13. Sica interview, *op.cit.*

14. Bishop interview, *op.cit.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. A few observers later questioned whether this was indeed the U.S. Government position, noting that Somalia's geographic position close to strategic oil reserves had not changed and/or that "Washington had been worse than indifferent to Somali suffering for over a decade and was intervening to promote the Pentagon, not save Somali lives." (Stephen R. Shalom, "Reflections on Intervention," *Peace and Democracy News*, Winter 1993/4, p.5.)
17. The Bolton position was harshly criticized at a New York Council on Foreign Relations meeting 1/14/94.
18. One of those who so argued is John Marks, a former Somalia Peace Corps volunteer, a UNOSOM and then U.S. Government (OFDA) contractor, and a rare U.S. Somalia expert fluent in the language.
19. Bishop 4/13/94 letter to RPG, p. 9.
20. Natsios interview, 12/13/93.
21. Howe interview, 3/25/94.
22. Geoff Loane, "Operation Provide Relief", unpublished paper, Nairobi, 5/22/93, p. 3. Compared with other civilian alternatives, it should be noted that SAT, while known for its reliability and convenience, is an expensive carrier, charging significantly more than other companies, such as those used by Lutheran World Federation. WFP reports that SAT charges \$10,000 per day plus \$2,800 per flying hour, compared to companies flying large Russian transports for \$1,600 per flying hour and no daily charge.
23. OFDA sources place the cost of one SAT C-130 aircraft at approximately \$1 million per month; 5 planes thus cost \$5 million. Those 5 planes are said to have carried as much as 14 military planes. For purposes of this rough analysis, if the incremental cost of 14 military planes was \$20 million over approximately 6 months, tempered by the fact that the number of planes declined considerably after 4 of those months, it is estimated that, say, \$16 million of the \$20 million was attributed to the four months, or \$4 million per month. If this is a valid ballpark approximation, the military cost of \$4 million may be compared to the civilian \$5 million for equal tonnages carried.

24. CENTCOM interviews, *op.cit.* See also Eric Schmitt, "Military's Growing Role in Relief Missions Prompts Concerns," *New York Times*, 7/31/94, p. 3.
25. ICRC 8/3/94 letter to RPG, which also indicates that 70-80 percent of food aid went through sea ports and 10 percent across the Kenyan border.
26. Hansch et. al., *op. cit.*, in Annex B.
27. On the eve of the UNITAF intervention, UNOSOM's Charles Petri and John Marks of the U.S. had negotiated with local elders and religious leaders an arrangement whereby at a cost of one-third of each food delivery for "provision of security," two-thirds would be guaranteed to get to the intended beneficiaries. They saw this as a plausible example of a more widely workable arrangement.
28. From DeWaal and Omaar, "Can Military Intervention Be 'Humanitarian'?", *Middle East Report*, March-June 1994, p. 7, report on local harvests. Natsios is skeptical on the significance of the local harvest outlook, since at that time of year one could only foresee the lesser of the two annual crops. He also believes that food prices declined not because of any reality of additional airlift supplies — airlift food, he suggests, only substituted for that previously delivered by other means — but because of Somali merchants releasing their hoarded supplies, believing the airlift would glut the market. (Natsios interview, 8/1/94.)
29. Kunder interview, 7/29/94.
30. Hansch, et. al., *op. cit.*, in Annex B.
31. Clinton, *op. cit.* A State Department staff member involved in preparing the report believes the one million figure was a hasty composite of numbers of Somalis estimated to have been saved plus those at risk developed for speech-writing purposes.
32. DeWaal/Omaar, *op.cit.*
33. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO/PHO), *op. cit.*
34. Estimates by General Anthony Zinni, based in part on figures supplied by General Aidid and considered inflated by some. However, the *International Herald Tribune*, cited by McDonald, March 2, 1994, p. 25, gives a similar number of 6-10,000 Somalis dead or wounded between June 5 and October 3,

two thirds of them women and children and many from clan fighting as well as UNOSOM II operations. In fact, it is difficult to know. According to Oakley and Hirsch, *op.cit.*, UNITAF deaths were under 50. UNOSOM II casualties on October 14, 1993 stood at 81.

35. Patrick Vial at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.
36. Zinni interview, 5/27/94.
37. Fred Cuny interview, 4/19/94.
38. Interview with Colonel Perry Baltimore, 2/15/94, Washington, D.C.
39. Westcott, *op. cit.*, in Annex C.
40. See, for example, various articles by John Paul Lederach of Eastern Mennonite College, as well as various Mennonite Central Committee and American Friends Service Committee memos at the time of the intervention. Many felt the massive nature of the U.S. military presence would only feed the strand of militarism threaded through Somalia's clan conflicts.
41. This discussion thus defines disarmament in terms of medium and heavy weapons only.
42. Oakley and Hirsch, *op.cit.*
43. Oakley interview, *op. cit.*
44. Robert Oakley, "An Envoy's Perspective," *JFQ Forum* (Autumn 1993), p. 54.
45. Howe interview, 3/25/94.
46. Zinni interview, 2/28/94.
47. *Ibid.*
48. CENTCOM interviews; the number is derived from the number of streets, size of area, population, and need to maintain guard after clearing.
49. One supporter of this line of thinking is Admiral Howe who stated that, "In retrospect, UNITAF should have tried some disarmament at the outset; the psychological moment was there, and it could have made substantial inroads, at least in Mogadishu where the biggest problem was." General Powell agrees one could have done "a little more disarming", but immediately adds that the

exact meaning of "a little more" is very difficult to communicate to a 23-year-old soldier — and to his parents in case he's hurt. (Howe and Powell interviews, *op. cit.*)

50. President Bush states this position clearly: "I agreed to send in troops because there was a horrible famine and due to the political and military chaos food could not be delivered. The task of the U.S.-led coalition was to allow the food to be delivered. My understanding with the U.N. Security Council was that whatever was to be done to deal with the overall political and military situation in the country would be handled by the subsequent UN peacekeeping force and related diplomatic activities." (Bush, *op. cit.*)
51. Interview with military liaison officer, December 1993, Mogadishu.
52. Sica interview, *op. cit.*
53. Interview with U.S. official, Mogadishu, corroborated by State Department official, Washington, D.C.
54. One State Department official tempered this assessment by suggesting that U.S. Government policy-makers didn't think the U.N. was "foreordained to fail"; they were just "skeptical". Indeed, some perhaps did believe that the U.N. had a reasonable chance to succeed and therefore invested heavily in UNOSOM II. (Comments by Ambassador David Shinn to RPG, 7/18/94.)
55. Interview with MSF staff, Paris, 2/2/94.
56. Many felt it inadvisable to appoint Americans to these positions, noting that it blurred the respective U.N. and U.S. identities. These and/or others further thought it a mistake to appoint a military man as special representative and that this might have prefigured the military thrust of UNOSOM II rather than a preferably political and/or humanitarian one. President Bush, for one, considers it a mistake to have involved U.S. combat forces in UNOSOM II. (See Annex A-5)
57. Interview with UNOSOM official.
58. All citations are from the "Report of the Commission of Inquiry established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 885 (1993) to Investigate Armed Attacks on UNOSOM II Personnel which Led to Casualties Among Them," New York, February 24, 1994, pp. 32-36 (hereinafter referred to as "Commission of Inquiry").

59. Gosende interview, 11/18/93; also Drysdale, *op.cit.*, p. 174.
60. Zinni and Flournoy interviews, *op. cit.*
61. Menkhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
62. Howe interview, 3/25/94.
63. Flournoy and Sica interviews, *op.cit.*
64. Howe interview, 4/21/94.
65. Kittani, *op. cit.* Boutros-Ghali himself "agrees that the UN's reactive capacity needs thorough review. Yet he says the changes will have to take place while the UN keeps on trying to prevent and resolve conflicts. It is like flying a plane while redesigning and repairing it, he says." ("Global Report", *Christian Science Monitor*, 6/22/94, p. 14.)
66. Kittani, *op.cit.*
67. Various interviews and U.S. Government cables, including inter-agency assessment team report.
68. Mark Wentling, "Aid Beyond the Front Lines in Somalia: An End-Of-Tour Wrap-Up." Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Department of State, April 26, 1994. p. 16.
69. "Four Characters in Search of a Doctrine," *The Economist*, 10/2/93, p. 56, cited in McDonald, 3/2/94, p. 26, fn. 126 provides the full quote: "The United Nations cannot simply become engaged in every one of the world's conflicts. If the American people are to say 'yes' to peacekeeping, the UN must know when to say no."
70. Reported during Council on Foreign Relations meeting 1/14/94.
71. Michael Gordon, "U.S. Officers Were Divided on Somali Raid," *New York Times*, 5/13/94, p. A8.
72. Clarke interview, 7/28/94.
73. "The Muddle in Somalia," *The Economist*, 4/16/94.
74. *Ibid.*

75. State Department and AID interviews. The U.S. Defense Department's internal analysis of the Somalia crisis confirms inadequate understanding of Somali culture and society. (Flournoy, *op.cit.*)
76. Interview with former Somali Ambassador Mohamed Nur, 12/17/93, Washington, D.C.
77. Commission of Inquiry Report, p. 40.
78. Interview with State Department official, January 1994.
79. A U.S. State Department official overseeing Somali government assets in Washington, D.C. noted that, unlike any other diplomatic mission in the capital, Somali officials down to even the third secretary level drove only luxury Mercedes or BMW automobiles, raising questions about the origins of such apparent wealth.
80. Sir Richard Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, 1854.
81. Interview with Rony Brauman, 2/2/94, Paris.
82. Interview with Ed Tsui, 12/21/93, New York.
83. Ambassador Shinn in March 15, 1994 RPG Washington review meeting.
84. Interview with Hugh Cholmondeley, 12/21/93.
85. Interview with U.N. official. Aidid's animosity toward Boutros-Ghali and the U.N. is attributed by two observers — Italian Ambassador Mario Sica and then-Under-Secretary of State Frank Wisner (formerly U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, during which period he knew the Secretary-General) — to tactical reasons; their point was that Aidid needed to find a more "acceptable" reason for opposing the U.N.'s role in Somalia, which he saw as obstructing his own drive to power.
86. Early warnings are admittedly known to be of uncertain reliability and need to be closely tracked and analyzed. In the Somalia case, however, they turned out to be quite accurate.
87. Comments by the ICRC's Paul Grossrieder at March 22, 1994 Geneva review session.

88. Observations of the Netherlands Government's Operations Review Unit draft manuscript on "Humanitarian Aid to Somalia", 5/18/94, p. 34.
89. Letter from ICRC to RPG, 8/3/94, p. 11.
90. Loane interview, 7/94.
91. Cuny 4/13/94 letter to RPG.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Interview with NGO administrator, March 1994. This 1993 cost included 178 guards hired at \$160/month to guard 2 warehouses, 30 vehicles, 7 houses, and 2 offices. The ICRC figure is cited by Richard Dowden, "Western Troops Leave Somalia," *Horn of Africa Bulletin*, March-April 1994, vol. 6, no. 2. ICRC administrators say this figure is inaccurate, and that security expenses accounted for approximately 2 percent of their budget.
94. Interview with Dawn MacRae, 11/30/93, Addis Ababa .
95. Some of the enrichment was said to be channeled into purchases of qat, a narcotic widely used in Somalia and believed by many to have contributed to its users' tendency to erratic or violent action.
96. Debarati Sapir & Hedwig Deconinck, "Somalia: The Paradox of International Humanitarian Assistance and Military Intervention," draft chapter of forthcoming book *United Nations and Civil Conflicts* (Providence, RI: Brown University, Watson Institute for International Studies), p. 26.
97. Interview with Edward Girardet, 2/3/94, Paris
98. Johnston interview, 1/4/94.
99. Comment at Council on Foreign Relations review session, 1/14/94.
100. This point is reinforced by CDC officials who note the tendency of NGOs to seem anti-data, given a curative action-oriented preference over a preventive orientation. But data is needed to determine priorities within scarce resources, as well as to ensure reliable advocacy. Comparability of data was also an issue; despite efforts to encourage NGOs and UNICEF to adopt a standardized morbidity reporting format, most NGOs resisted changing their individual procedures. (Toole interview, *op. cit.*)

101. Interview with leaders of the Somali Urban-Rural Development Organization (SURDO), 12/8/93, Baidoa.
102. Wentling, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
103. *Ibid.*
104. Interview with Geoffrey May of CRS and ELCAS (Ecumenical Liaison Committee for Assistance to Somalia), 2/4/94, Geneva.
105. Sapir & Deconinck, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
106. Comments by Steven Rifkind to RPG, 7/19/94.
107. Brauman interview, *op. cit.*
108. De Waal and Omaar, *op.cit.*, p. 7.
109. Interviews with CENTCOM staff and General Zinni, respectively, *op.cit.*
110. Interview with Dr. Willi Huber of SOS-Kinderdorf, 12/10/93, Mogadishu.
111. Interview with Rene Roudaut, 2/2/94, Paris.
112. Interview with Liz Lukasavich, 2/9/94 and her comments at RPG June 9, 1994 Washington review session.
113. See Stephen Commins, "How Macro Trends Will Affect NGO Work in the Future," *Monday Developments*, InterAction, 6/20/94.
114. Aryeh Neier quoted in testimony before the U.S. House Select Committee on Hunger in Keith Richburg, "Relief Agencies in Africa: Corrupting and Corrupted", *International Herald Tribune*, 9/22/92, p. 1.
115. Interview with Peter Schumann, 4/15/94, who served as UNDP's officer in charge and resident representative during 1992-93.
116. Incident in Doynunay village, reported by an NGO representative in Baidoa.
117. Interview with Georgia Shaver, 2/8/94, Rome.
118. Tun Myat in March 1994 memo to RPG; see also Myat's comments at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.

119. Interviews with U.N. staff.
120. Interview with Melinda Kimble, 1/7/94, Washington, DC.
121. Cuny interview, 4/21/94, among others.
122. Eliasson interview, 1/19/94, New York.
123. Interview with Amy Nelson, 6/3/94, Washington, DC.
124. Johnston interview, 4/8/94.
125. Cuny 4/13/94 letter to RPG.
126. Kate Farnsworth interview, 1/11/94.
127. *Ibid.*
128. Garvelink in June 9, 1994 RPG Washington review session.
129. See Westcott, *op. cit.*, Annex C.
130. Comment by relief agency representative.
131. Cohen interview, *op.cit.*
132. Natsios, "The Politics of Disasters", unpublished paper, March 1993.
133. Natsios interview, 3/10/94.
134. *The United Nations, Peacekeeping, and U.S. Policy in the Post-Cold War Period*, Aspen Institute Conference Report, April 1994, p. 3.
135. Interview with a UNOSOM official.
136. *Restoring Hope: The Real Lessons of Somalia for the Future of Intervention*, U.S. Institute of Peace, July 1994, p. 16.
137. *Ibid.*
138. De Waal and Omaar, *op. cit.*, p. 7, cite public health programs as "the single most important factor in saving lives".
139. Sapir and Deconinck, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

140. See Annex B, p. 36.
141. Interview with Hussain Dahir, 12/8/93, Baidoa.
142. Cuny interview, 4/21/94.
143. Letter from ICRC to RPG, 8/3/94.
144. Comments from June 9, 1994 RPG Washington review session with OFDA staff members.
145. Patrick Vial at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.
146. Wentling interview 5/13/94, describing visit to Belet Uen in April 1993.
147. See Cuny interviews and also Lauren Landis' *Memorandum on Monetization*, Annex D.
148. Interviews with Susan Farnsworth, 12/1/93, Addis Ababa, and CARE staff in Mogadishu, 12/3/93.
149. Natsios interview, 12/13/93. See also the issues raised by U.S. AID consultant Satish Mishra in his March and July 1993 memos to REDSO.
150. See Westcott, *op. cit.*, Annex C.
151. Interview with Ron Libby, 3/16/94, Washington, D.C.
152. Both Ambassador Sahnoun and U.N. officials in New York say they supported the plan, but each says the other disapproved.

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

The situation and policy choices faced in Somalia were sufficiently complex, and road maps sufficiently lacking in the new post-Cold War context, that conclusions must be drawn with a modicum of humility. The extent to which judgment improves with hindsight must also be admitted, as must the fact that every case is unique and that Somalia's may be "uniquely unique".

Somalia represented a new paradigm on the international scene. As one observer summarized, the "famine had its origins in the collapse of the state and the general disintegration of law and order that contributed to an economy of sustained plunder."¹ How does one bring humanitarian assistance, not to mention a peacekeeping operation, into a war-torn country absent the consent (indeed, presence) of legitimate authorities? While some thought Somalia's absence of sovereignty an advantage for humanitarian intervention, in fact it was, by definition, a disadvantage for resolving the underlying political problem — at least as long as the international community was unprepared to establish a formal trusteeship. (UNOSOM II could be described as an informal one, but without sufficient "teeth" to be effective.) Somalia experience shows that "successful peacekeeping requires the consent or acquiescence of the local parties to the conflict... Operations with only partial local consent are bound to be more intrusive and more costly; to entail more responsibility for local affairs; and to be more difficult to complete successfully, especially if the initial commitment to intervene is only half hearted."²

A key conclusion from Somalia is that in the mix of humanitarian, political, and military initiatives, the one that lay at the heart of the problem — the political one — was given the shortest shrift. While the humanitarian problem is what drew international attention (finally) to the country, it was the result of political instability and civil war, without which the famine would have been more manageable or might not have even occurred. The United States Government alone spent some \$ 311 million on humanitarian aid to fight starvation and disease, and another \$ 1.97 billion

for the incremental costs of U.S. and U.N. military interventions judged necessary to ensure delivery of the humanitarian supplies (including the amount diverted to fight Aidid's forces during June-October 1993).³ By contrast, a negligible amount was invested in diplomatic efforts to solve the root political cause of the problem. This was tantamount to treating the symptom while downplaying the disease.

If the health analogy is pursued, the first response should have been to initiate preventive measures before the disease could develop or spread. Such efforts should have aimed to more actively dissuade Siad Barre from his excessive authoritarianism through extensive and early international diplomacy reinforced by a foreign assistance policy directly linked to human rights and development performance. Somalia has not been alone in reaping the consequences of inattention to development and human rights. On a worldwide basis, "between 1991 and 1993, U.N. peacekeeping expenditures grew nearly sevenfold, refugee costs rose by one-third, and development investment declined. The results are inexorable: the less spent on helping societies become healthy (politically as well as economically), the more will be needed for the violent ravages of disease."⁴

In today's post-Cold War world, more flexible opportunities exist for preventive diplomacy. While dictators such as Siad Barre rarely reform or cede power voluntarily, the Cold War competition that seemed to dictate their support is no longer a factor. Democracy is no longer automatically held hostage to geo-strategic interests at the same time it has gained in allure with the failure of the Soviet Union. In this sense, Somalia was caught in the time warp of history: its crisis was rooted in the old Cold War competitive system which, regardless of form of government and degree of concern for human rights, drew western aid as a counterweight to Soviet support of neighboring Ethiopia. By the time that aid began to be cut back in 1988, too much damage to the political and social fabric had been done by Barre's repression to stop the decline toward civil war and ultimate anarchy. Later, once Barre was overthrown, internal rivalries became so sharp, mechanisms for peaceful resolution of disputes so weak, and the incentive to negotiate thus so limited that the few agreements attempted soon fell victim to renewed fighting. While considerable feeling exists that more intensive diplomacy in 1990-91 might have limited the scale and deadliness of the crisis, it is fair to conclude that much earlier action, before or at least during 1988, would have been needed to have had any chance to prevent it.

It must be conceded that the international community cannot effectively focus on more than a handful of crises (if that) at any one time. A study concerned only with Somalia, particularly given the subsequent scale of suffering, might well be

expected to suggest that this was a most critical one deserving of pre-eminent attention. But in truth the cataclysmic changes in the ex-Soviet Union and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (a situation that could also have benefitted from more effective preventive diplomacy) were hardly less important, involving, as they did, U.S. strategic interests. Even serious humanitarian crises in countries such as Sudan, Angola, and Liberia, which received far less international attention, deserved far more. This only reinforces the necessity for "preventive care", not only to save lives earlier and at less cost, but to minimize the probabilities of too many simultaneous crises exhausting the world's ability to cope with them.

This is not to say that more aggressive international action should not have been undertaken in Somalia in 1991 and early 1992 to attempt to mitigate the early effects of violence once unleashed. Even though agreements lacked durability, the efforts of Sahnoun, Oakley, and Kouyate at least brought leaders together to talk, which reduced the levels of fighting during those periods. The international community demonstrably lacks the patience to invest heavily over long periods in a situation such as Somalia's. Yet it is possible that an intensified low-cost diplomatic investment could have been — and might still be — effective if sustained over typically long and drawn-out Somali negotiating timeframes, and if seriously linked to economic rewards and punishments in terms of aid given or withheld by the international community.

Although the international community should not assume excessive responsibility for everything that has gone wrong in Somalia — Somalis are the first to note that the problem was, and is, primarily a Somali one — it does bear some of the fault for supporting the Barre regime long after its deficiencies were glaringly obvious. In this sense, other countries, and the United Nations collectively representing them, had an obligation to help Somalis in their emergency. The obligation was moral and humanitarian, and also practical, given the refugee pressures that were in danger of overwhelming the region as a whole.

It is tragic, indeed unconscionable, that the United States, other governments, and the United Nations did not act sooner. It is also regrettable that African groups such as the Organization of African Unity were either unwilling or unable to help. Why did 1-2 million people have to leave their homes and nearly a quarter of a million have to die before an adequate response was mounted — and, even then, only incrementally? Certainly it was no secret to governments or to the public that failed rains and civil conflict had disrupted agricultural production and transport, putting millions of Somalis at risk. Dire pronouncements had been made as early as late 1991

by NGOs and OFDA. Not only could earlier action then have saved 154-240,000 Somali lives, but it could have helped to avert much of the larger tragedy that later enveloped the country. It could also have saved more than 100 international peacekeeper lives and most of the \$2 billion subsequently devoted to the international community's massive interventions.

The conclusion is inescapable that greater automaticity is needed in responding to early warnings with prompt preparation for a coordinated relief effort and aggressive diplomatic action to address underlying political problems. The need for this is not only humanitarian, but also political, given the dangers of instability spreading across national borders and infecting the larger area. In addition, experience has shown that international public opinion will tolerate media images of some suffering, but not of overwhelming suffering, with the result that a more costly intervention (in both human and financial terms) will ultimately be required anyway. Although experts point to the uncertain reliability of famine warnings, noting that for a complex variety of reasons situations can change, it is clear that in the Somali case action was delayed far beyond any period of uncertainty.

Once the international community became engaged, the problem in Somalia became an opposite one of sometimes ill-considered forms of response. One hesitates to criticize humanitarian organizations responding heroically to desperately needy people in urgent situations. However, sufficient international famine experience exists to suggest how to plan an optimally effective response going beyond the prevailing (and necessary) focus on emergency food and health care. The medical analogy is again relevant: preventive as well as curative care. This is particularly true in the health field, where added and earlier emphasis on measles vaccinations, oral rehydration therapy, clean water, and sanitation initiatives could have saved more lives.

Beyond this, earlier and more serious attention should have been given to an analog of the airlift's jump-starting the relief effort: an effort to jump-start the collapsed war-torn economy through employment generation activities financed with earlier food monetization and food-for-work and perhaps some cash payment activities. This could have provided gainful employment outlets for at least some of Somalia's gun-toting youths, creating an economic incentive for disarming while generating, in turn, spinoff economic effects. All this is much more complex to both conceptualize and organize, of course, than a straightforward relief effort, particularly in the chaotic conditions pertaining in Somalia. But it may well have helped to attenuate the

situation as it evolved, and thus suggests a need for training relief workers in broader development and economic policy issues as these interface with relief situations.

In some respects, the enormity of the relief response actually worsened the situation. UNOSOM II's presence, not to mention that of relief and media personnel, is said to have been responsible for generating 11,000 Somali jobs. This translated into considerable economic, and ultimately military, gains which accrued largely to Aidid and the SNA and its sub-clans in south Mogadishu alone.⁵ A related and further problem was that of the unending extortion at every level and over every aspect of the effort. While some expatriates attempted by hard bargaining to lower the costs of "doing business", the impulse to give aid dominated, without much thought to who ultimately reaped the benefits or to the ultimate effects on the broader political-military situation. The Somalis understandably took advantage of this. The more aid, the more looting and extortion, and the more resources for benefitting factions. The point is central, inasmuch as donors' ongoing assistance — however often cut-offs were threatened — effectively fueled the fighting, creating, in this sense, disincentives to peace. The humanitarian community should not have put up with it.

Should the international assistance agencies have left under these circumstances? Probably yes. It is hard, even callous, to walk away from a people one knows need help, especially where those most likely to suffer are not those principally responsible for the situation. Yet the "tough love" option may well have proved more effective in the larger scheme of things, in mitigating the degree and/or shortening the period of suffering. As it was, relief agencies tended to depart temporarily after a particularly egregious security violation, only to return again. This no doubt eased the frayed nerves of the valiant relief workers but did nothing to send a serious message to local factions that continued outside support would depend on a commitment to respect and protect relief efforts. Even into 1994, following a donor announcement at Addis Ababa that continued aid was dependent on security guarantees, some relief agencies continued to operate on the same basis as before. If the "ultimate card" of a more definitive departure had been played by the humanitarian community early on, and publicly announced as being due to uncooperative faction leaders, it would likely have led either to improved protection allowing the continuation of aid or to an opportunity, with departure from Somalia, to channel scarce aid resources to other countries' emergencies, with arguably greater impact.

At the risk of over-simplification, one way to view the problem in Somalia is in terms of the head vs. the heart. This manifests itself at several stages and levels. At the early warning stage, available data predicted a serious food deficit, but absent a

visible tug on the heartstrings of the international community, it was ignored. Even when ICRC and others began reporting actual deaths, the world did not respond until TV coverage became so horrifying and repetitious that it created an inescapable emotional impact requiring action. Seeing death as a result of food deficit, the logical impulse from the heart was to send food. But food was not enough; a broader response that included immunizations, oral rehydration therapy, clean water, sanitation, and employment generation was needed. The U.S. Government then initiated a dramatic military airlift. This was followed by an overwhelming land force urged by a number of overwrought relief agencies despite some indications that the worst of the famine was over and that a less overwhelming, less Mogadishu-focussed response might have been equally effective, caused less collateral damage, and been less prone to the politics and violence of Mogadishu.

Head dominated over heart in the U.S. decision not to try to solve all of Somalia's problems, but to disengage after the immediate emergency food needs were met. However, the head was not much engaged in insisting the U.N. take over and thinking it was up to the task of doing so — with an enormously expanded (and unmeasurable) mandate to assist in nation-building. A series of errors ensued, including the June 5, 1993 incident and subsequent war with General Aidid in which the U.S. was complicit. The U.N. reaped the predictable consequences and blame for these errors, increasing General Aidid's enmity which was further exacerbated by the constant tension of the military concentration in his part of Mogadishu. Notwithstanding the superior port, airport, communications advantages, and psychological importance of Mogadishu, it would have been wiser for the international community to devise flexible ways to by-pass the capital instead of implicitly emphasizing the political and military importance of the Mogadishu faction leaders.⁶ Declaring war on Aidid, while an appropriate response to a frontal attack on U.N. personnel and defense of peacekeeping principles, should certainly have given way to a much earlier pursuit of the "two-fisted approach" that included an offer of political negotiations with him.

It was not until October 1993 that an optimal mix of head and heart was enunciated, at least by the U.S. Government: the heart conceded to an outraged American public that U.S. military involvement in Somalia would end within six months, while the head insisted on a short-term increase in troop levels and a "decent interval" to allow a major negotiating effort to solve the fundamental political problem.

Calibrating international engagements is an art. The U.S. Government veered from under-engagement in Somalia to over-engagement. It is difficult to criticize

Operation Restore Hope, which was greeted with enormous relief by many observers sick of the ongoing turmoil and the suffering and insecurity it engendered. It did change the dynamic of the situation, and on its own terms it succeeded. President Bush, asked to cite any lessons from the Somalia engagement, said, "In terms of my responsibilities for the Somalia operation, I am proud of it, and the goals we set and our success in accomplishing them. I would behave the same if I had it to do over again."⁷ Yet, while the U.S. military was right to avoid being stuck with the "Somalia tarbaby", it forced a too-rigid U.S. policy that ignored the virtual certainty of further problems after its withdrawal. With the knowledge of hindsight, and given the situation at that point, the U.S.-led operation should have been supplemented with more intensive diplomacy and perhaps extended slightly longer to insist on at least some form of Somali negotiated solution that would have allowed the international community to "declare victory" and leave. Alternatively, the massive intervention should not have taken place at all; even if the result had been 10-25,000 additional deaths, it is unclear this would have been substantially greater than occurred anyway in the months that followed — and that are yet to follow. The hard truth may well be that "military forces... cannot be expected to solve a country's troubles; unless their deployment is connected with parallel political and humanitarian initiatives, when they withdraw the local situation will revert to what it was when they arrived."⁸

The worst of both worlds, in effect, was to turn over responsibility to the United Nations while maintaining U.S. troops at risk and involving U.S. policy-makers so intimately in the U.N. operation. Other nations look to the U.S. for leadership, yet sometimes resent its seeming to take over — a "Catch 22" situation. Indeed, UNOSOM II was the first case where the U.S. had committed combat troops under U.N. control (albeit not under U.N. command). Given the American public's distaste for overseas military engagements and particular unwillingness to sacrifice U.S. lives, the U.S. is not considered a very reliable participant in such ventures, a point made by top-ranking U.N. officials. It is better suited to a logistics support role, at least in situations where vital interests are not threatened. The paradox of U.N. peace enforcement is that it may only be possible "where the stakes are not so high that concerned states insist on taking direct control of the operation. But in these situations, where vital interests are not threatened, governments and citizens will be loath to accept real sacrifice."⁹ As the independent Commission of Inquiry pointed out, in Somalia the mandate was larger than the resources and the will to implement it.¹⁰

One observer argues that "UNOSOM could not possibly play a neutral mediating role. To demand that it do so, or to criticize it for having failed to stay

strictly neutral...is to misread the political dynamic inherent in peace enforcement under Chapter VII authority. Future U.N. forays into Chapter VII peace enforcement must take account of the potential incompatibility of mediating and peace-enforcement responsibilities."¹¹ The key decision that must be made is to "decide in advance whether they are going to accept and work with the local powers that be, even though these people may be the ones responsible for the trouble that triggered intervention."¹²

If there is any silver lining for the United Nations in the Somalia experience, it is that its difficulties and anguish provide ample and useful lessons for the future. Clearly, as it projected itself in Somalia, the U.N. Secretariat was ill-equipped to deal with an emergency requiring speedy action. There was also little precedent or terms of reference for operating in a *peacemaking* situation. In New York, the offices of the three under-secretaries-general for peacekeeping, political affairs, and humanitarian affairs had varying levels of influence, resources, and competence, "with only minimal unifying direction from the Secretary-General".¹³ The Secretary-General had the added liability of being held in personal contempt by many Somalis.

In Somalia itself, it was difficult to know who was in charge. "Somalia illustrates the weaknesses in the UN's system of mission management, which was, at one and the same time, overly centralized and diffuse."¹⁴ In principle, the Secretary-General's Special Representative was in charge, but the military was under separate controls — plural in the sense that each national contingent took at least some level of instruction from its home capital — and the U.N. agencies reported to their own governing boards, as did, of course, the NGOs. The Humanitarian Operations Center lacked teeth (and staff), and the only political initiatives between those of Sahnoun and Kouyate were undertaken by the U.S. (in the person of Ambassador Oakley). Funding for UNOSOM was divided between assessed contributions for peacekeeping and voluntary contributions for humanitarian activities, with no shifting permitted between the two accounts to respond to needs of the moment. In short, both unified structures and unified budgets were lacking, contributing to unclear lines of authority, bureaucratic chaos, and budgetary (and thus operational) inflexibility.

The blame should fall not only on the U.N. organization itself, but on the member states responsible for its direction. If the larger Somali political problem had many of its roots in the super-power competition of the Cold War era, so too did countless other emerging trouble spots around the world which competed for the U.N.'s attention, and so did the U.N. itself. Kept purposely weak by the super-powers, which sought to advance their own interests and their latitude for independent action, the U.N. could hardly be expected to be suddenly strong enough to take leadership for

Somalia (or anywhere else) in 1991. In the U.S. desire to pursue aggressive multilateralism, inadequate consideration was given to the need for extensive overhaul to meet the new expectations. The choices would seem to be either to substantially strengthen the U.N. with its own immediately deployable peace force, or to refrain from further engagement in internal conflicts absent the parties' agreement to actively supporting a U.N. role. In this sense, the United Nations faces the same "tough love" conundrum as the humanitarian agencies: to try to save lives in all situations, and risk failure if conditions are not propitious; or to practise, in effect, triage, devoting limited resources to those areas where success is most likely.

The Somalia humanitarian response led to both successes and failures. Popularly viewed as an unmitigated disaster, it saved, by current estimates, a total of some 100-125,000 lives during the 1990-93 period and created a psychological opening for broader improvement.¹⁵ On an important symbolic level it demonstrated more powerfully than before that the United States, and the international community as a whole, are willing to temporarily set aside sovereignty constraints (at least in a country without a government) if necessary to respond to overwhelming human suffering. On an operational level, the response developed effective methods of providing humanitarian relief, notably including use of the military. These are not small achievements.

The failures of the Somalia response are in some ways the flip side of the successes. If an estimated 100-125,000 lives were saved, some 154-240,000 were likely lost due to the lateness of relief efforts and lost opportunities or deficiencies in implementation. The daring to sidestep sovereignty and intervene to protect humanitarian principles was countered by excessive reliance on military force and by inadequate political efforts to resolve the root problem. What was needed was the wisdom to find the right balance — and to find it in time.

LESSONS LEARNED

Among the scores of possible policy and operational lessons of the Somalia humanitarian crisis, a few over-arching ones stand out and merit special emphasis for the future:

- ◆ **Timely action** is essential to minimize deaths, suffering, and destruction. It is also essential to minimize the overwhelming financial burdens that must ultimately — and, in this media age, inevitably will — be borne by the international community. Timely action includes not only earlier humanitarian responses, but still earlier preventive diplomacy to address underlying political stresses, as well as skillful development cooperation to help alleviate the most grievous forms of poverty which foster instability. Current systems for formulating policy and allocating budget resources — accustomed to responding only at the acute crisis stage when Congressional, media, and public pressure becomes overwhelming — are not set up for timely action. They must be.

- ◆ **Balanced humanitarian response** is essential. Famine situations require not only food distribution (with appropriate forms of delivery, commodity mixes, etc.), but also a more sophisticated multi-pronged relief approach that includes early attention to public health and broader economic policy interventions at appropriate times and in appropriate sequence. Sufficient literature and experience in famine relief — including the Somali experience reported in this study — exist to inform broader and more effective responses in the future. The key is to draw on them.

- ◆ **A clearly defined mission, appropriately balancing humanitarian, political, and military objectives**, is central to success. Adequate attention must be paid to the fundamental political problems that generally underlie humanitarian crises. While immediate famine may be halted with military means, root problems are rarely susceptible to a military (or other) "quick fix". If the U.S. and others in the international community are unable or unwilling to devote the necessary resources to complete the task, it is probably wiser not to intervene in the first place. Alternatively, intervention should be clearly and publicly limited to the "quick fix", with the discipline to enforce that limitation — even in the face of renewed suffering and public pressure — rather than slide into ineffective or even counterproductive halfway responses.

If the international community is prepared to stay the course, alternatives to the usual U.S. and U.N. options must be developed for political negotiations. At one level these should include the involvement of either specially constituted groups of nations as in

Liberia or regional entities such as a strengthened OAU. At another level, the capabilities of NGOs or respected non-official individuals should be drawn upon, benefitting from their flexibility compared to traditionally formal foreign ministry approaches.

Overwhelming force has highly limited, if any, applicability in political-humanitarian crises. By its sheer scale, it risks distracting attention from the political and humanitarian issues. It also seems fated to raise more hopes than its sponsors are prepared to meet, with the result that it amounts to only a momentary freezing of time, a brief respite after which the situation may too readily revert to its earlier chaos and resultant increased demoralization. Absent extraordinary transition efforts, the positive psychological effects of a change in the situation's "dynamique" may thus be undermined by negative effects upon the force's withdrawal.

- ◆ **Coordination and collaboration** are key to optimizing relief effectiveness. They are necessary both for improved and cost-effective coverage of at-risk populations and for ensuring acceptable and sustainable working conditions for relief organizations. Cooperation in negotiating and enforcing reasonable prices for rental of facilities and provision of services, including, where necessary, security arrangements, can avoid later problems. OFDA and other donors to relief agencies have an opportunity to encourage this type of cooperation through the power of the purse.

NGOs should also be more open to the possibility of collective withdrawal in situations where excessive advantage is being taken of them and their scarce humanitarian resources, not to mention where the level of physical risk is unacceptable. Concern for the welfare of the most vulnerable in the immediate local setting should not overwhelm consideration of the potentially greater humanitarian benefits of helping more people in equally needy settings elsewhere. Triage is not an unreasonable concept under such circumstances.

- ◆ **United Nations capability** is limited to the resources brought to bear by its members. The membership must thus come to grips with the U.N.'s post-Cold War opportunity to go beyond being a mere deliberating body and become a key actor for peace and development. Members must be

prepared to accompany demands for action with the requisite support to meet them, including not only financial resources, but also strong backing for streamlining cumbersome U.N. bureaucratic procedures and personnel recruitment. In short, don't demand more of the U.N. than it can deliver. And insist on what it takes to deliver.

- ◆ **Understanding of the situation** is critical before intervening and must be present at all decision-making levels. This includes understanding of both the country and its culture and of the particular famine situation. The former requires deployment of experienced and uniquely capable personnel, and the latter requires the generation and use of reliable famine data.

- ◆ **Success is achievable.** In light of the negative imagery now surrounding the very name of Somalia, it is important to stress that 100-125,000 lives were saved there through the efforts of many compassionate, effective, creative, indeed heroic individuals. Institutions — non-governmental, governmental, and multilateral alike — came to the rescue, devoting sizeable human and financial resources to assist needy Somalis. It is important not to lose sight of the positive in the haste to attribute blame or to escape from future responsibilities. One must learn from the positive as well as from the negative. And, to quote the prayer, one must have the wisdom to know the difference.

ENDNOTES

1. Menkhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
2. Aspen report, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
3. U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO/PHO), *op. cit.*
4. Jessica Mathews, "Policy vs. TV", *Washington Post*, March 8, 1994, p. A19.
5. Menkhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
6. Oakley points out that Mogadishu was over-emphasized by all categories of actors in Somalia: political, military, and NGOs. (Interview, 12/17/93)
7. Bush, *op. cit.*
8. Aspen report, *op.cit.*, p. 8.
9. McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
10. Commission of Inquiry, p. 41.
11. Menkhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
12. Aspen report, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
13. See Oakley and Hirsch, *op.cit.*
14. Aspen report, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
15. Hansch, et. al., *op. cit.*, Annex B.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

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| AFSC | American Friends Service Committee |
| AICF | International Action Against Hunger, a French NGO |
| AID | U.S. Agency for International Development (see USAID) |
| CARE | Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CENTCOM | Central Command, the U.S. military structure in charge of the overall Somalia operation |
| CISP | An Italian NGO |
| CMOC | Civilian-military operations center, point of interface between UNITAF military forces and the relief effort |
| DART | Disaster Assistance Response Team |
| DHA | United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, established in April 1992 |
| DOD | United States Department of Defense |
| EC | European Community |
| ECHO | European Community Humanitarian Office |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FHA | Bureau of Food and Humanitarian Aid, USAID |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| HOC | Humanitarian Operations Center of UNOSOM I, point of interface between U.N. and NGO efforts |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| IMC | International Medical Corps |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| JCS | Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| MCC | Mennonite Central Committee |
| MSF | Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization [a list of NGOs whose materials were used for this study is in the Bibliography] |
| NSC | National Security Council |
| OFDA | Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance |
| RP | Refugee Program, U.S. Department of State |
| RPG | Refugee Policy Group |
| SAT | Southern Air Transport, a major chartered air carrier involved in the Somalia relief effort |
| SCF-UK | Save the Children Fund-United Kingdom |
| SCF-US | Save the Children Federation-United States |

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| SNA | Somali National Alliance, group allied with Gen. Mohamed Farah Aidid |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNITAF | Unified Task Force, name for U.S.-led coalition which intervened in Somalia from Dec. 9, 1992 to May 4, 1993. |
| UNOSOM I | United Nations Operation in Somalia I (April 1992-May 4, 1993) |
| UNOSOM II | United Nations Operation in Somalia II (May 4, 1993-Present) |
| UNV | United Nations Volunteers |
| USC | United Somali Congress |
| USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |
| USG | United States Government |
| USGAO | U.S. Government Accounting Office |
| USLO | United States Liaison Office, operating in lieu of an official U.S. embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WVRD | World Vision Relief and Development |



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ADDENDUM

**HUMANITARIAN AID
IN SOMALIA
1990 - 1994**

**OFDA'S RESPONSE TO THE SOMALIA CRISIS
AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS**

SEPTEMBER 1994

Contract No. AOT-1032-C-00-3163-00

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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-UK, 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 RE: 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 US 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.⁴²

GENERAL ISSUES RE: 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.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ 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."⁵⁰ 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."⁵¹

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.⁵² 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.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴

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.⁵⁵ 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,⁵⁶ and are less effective in interpreting what they see, since disasters "usually look, sound and smell worse than they are."⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ 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."⁵⁹

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.)⁶⁰ An opposite example was when Ambassador Peter DeVos asked the DART to deliver food aid to Galcayo, even though there was not serious need.⁶¹

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.

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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.⁶² 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.⁶³ 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,⁶⁴ 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 intelligence⁶⁵) 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,⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸
- ◆ 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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰

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.⁷¹

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.⁷²

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 officers⁷³ and water and sanitation experts⁷⁴) 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.⁷⁵ OFDA has since developed a 2-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.⁷⁶ 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."⁷⁷

- ◆ Deploying simultaneously in Somalia two OFDA officials as high-level as Garvelink and Kunder created a management vacuum in the Washington, D.C. office⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

- ◆ 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.⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹

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.⁸² 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.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ 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,⁸⁶ too few resources⁸⁷ 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, understaffed, 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.⁸⁸

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.⁸⁹ 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).⁹⁰

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.⁹¹ 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.⁹² 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.⁹³ 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.⁹⁴
- ◆ **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.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷

◆ **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.⁹⁸ 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.)⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰ 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,¹⁰¹ a poor commodity mix,¹⁰² 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.¹⁰³ 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"¹⁰⁴ and longer-term economic recovery plan,¹⁰⁵ 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.¹⁰⁶

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.¹⁰⁷

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.¹⁰⁸

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.¹⁰⁹

- ◆ 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.¹¹⁰ 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 1993.¹¹¹ 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.¹¹²

- ◆ **Building Local Somali Capacity** and 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.¹¹³ 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,¹¹⁴ 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."¹¹⁵ OFDA's May 1993 Symposium noted a need to identify better ways to consult and include local/indigenous NGOs in both planning and implementation.¹¹⁶

- ◆ **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.¹¹⁷

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.¹¹⁸

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 Addendum are drawn from personal interviews, responses to two questionnaires sent to NGOs active in the Somalia relief effort, various UN 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 Study as Annex C.
2. During a July 22, 1992 House hearing on Somalia, legislators asked 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 UN 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. Andrew Natsios, written comments, 6/27/94.
6. Interview with Joseph Gettier, 5/18/94, Washington, DC.
7. Gold interview, *op. cit.*
8. Flournoy, *op. cit.*, notes 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 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. See Gold and Newsom interviews, *op. cit.*
11. Richard Cobb interview, 12/10/94, Washington, DC.
12. Dayton Maxwell interview, 1/28/94, Washington, DC.
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 Solon, 5/5/94, Washington, DC; Garvelink, 4/1/94 and 4/18/94. See also comments by Garvelink, Dolan, and Zinni from RPG-convened May 27, 1994 meeting on strengthening military-civilian collaboration in humanitarian intervention.
16. See comments by staff from MSF-France, as well as Visman, *op.cit.*
17. Interviews with Gold, 12/30/93 and Flournoy, 4/22/94, Washington, DC.
18. Kunder interview, *op. cit.*
19. See comments by Garvelink, Zinni, and others in May 27 meeting minutes.
20. Interview with Libby, 3/16/94, Washington, DC; also comments by MSF-France and SCF-UK representatives at March 22, 1994 RPG Geneva review session.
21. See interview with Gold, *op. cit.*, as well as others.
22. Interviews with Esposito, 1/10 and 2/2/94, Washington, DC.
23. Interview with Newsom, 3/11/94, Washington, DC.
24. Solon interview, *op. cit.*

25. Natsios' written comments, 6/27/94. 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, DC. (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 meeting on the need for OFDA and the military to devise better procedures for future crises. 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. (Interview, 12/17/93)
27. Interview with Toussie, 1/31/94, Washington, DC. 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 UN, 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 Kimble's comments at March 15 review session and Natsios' written comments, 6/28/94.
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 comment at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
35. Interview with Lois Richards, 1/11/94, Washington, DC.
36. Interview with Gettier, *op. cit.*, Washington, D.C.
37. Kimble comments in March 15, 1994 RPG review session.
38. Interviews with Tom Frey, 1/27/94 and 2/4/94 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, 6/3/94, Washington, DC.
42. Crane, *op. cit.*
43. May 1993 OFDA Symposium report, p. 3.
44. Interviews with Cuny and deWaal.
45. 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).
46. Garvelink at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
47. Interview with CRS staff, 1/19/94, 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.*)
48. Written comments by Natsios, 6/27/94.
49. Comments by Charles Teller and Scott Lillibridge of the Centers for Disease Control at RPG, May 1994; Sapir and 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.

50. 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)
51. Comments by Garvelink at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
52. Comments by Lillibridge at May 1994 discussion at RPG.
53. See draft article by Lillibridge, May 1994.
54. See Fred Cuny 4/13/94 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".
55. Esposito interview, *op.cit.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. Garvelink at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
58. 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.
59. Garvelink comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
60. Garvelink and Newsom comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
61. *Ibid.*
62. On the other hand, AID and Embassy presence brings in their wake bureaucratic requirements that relief workers prefer not to have. (Garvelink comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.)
63. 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 Annex C.
64. Newsom interview, *op cit.*

65. 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.
66. See OFDA May 1993 Symposium Report, p. 18.
67. This has since emerged as a major topic of numerous discussions on civilian-military collaboration in future humanitarian interventions (including one convened by RPG).
68. Newsom comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
69. Interview with Tom Dolan, 2/23/94, Washington, DC.
70. Interviews with Lukasavich, Garvelink, Newsom, *op. cit.*
71. Libby, *op. cit.*
72. 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.
73. Esposito interview, *op. cit.*
74. Libby interview, *op. cit.*
75. Interviews with Kim Maynard, 2/8 and 3/9/94, Washington, DC.
76. Garvelink, 4/1/94 interview, Washington, DC.
77. Comments by Concern Worldwide in response to this Study's NGO questionnaire, question no. 7.
78. Garvelink, Newsom, and Esposito all concur; several sources attribute their both going to their reluctance, as one noted, "to miss where the action was".
79. Garvelink interviews, *op. cit.*
80. Garvelink notes that "ideally you start planning how you'll leave almost from the day when you arrive." (Interview, 4/1/94)
81. Interviews with Libby, Esposito, Gold, Wentling, *op.cit.*

82. Interviews with Libby and Landis, *op. cit.* Landis indicates some DART members, lacking security clearance, officially could not read reports they had written once they submitted them to State.
83. Interview with Fred Cuny, 4/19/94. Also see Visman, *op.cit.*, for a discussion of this problem.
84. Comments by MSF-France's Vial at March 22, 1994 review session, and by Visman, *op. cit.*
85. See Vial comments, *op. cit.*
86. 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.
87. 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.
88. 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.
89. Garvelink interview; comments by Concern and SCF-UK at March 22, 1994 Geneva review session.
90. See Garvelink and Newsom interviews.
91. See Inspector General Herbert L. Beckington's September 3, 1992 memo to Andrew Natsios.
92. Cuny 4/13/94 letter, p. 2.
93. Gettier, *op. cit.*; Newsom's comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session; Natsios' written comments, 6/27/94.
94. Garvelink comment at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
95. See Hansch et al. article included in main study as Annex B.

96. Newsom's comments at June 9, 1994 RPG review session; see also Kunder, *op.cit.*
97. Garvelink at June 9, 1994 RPG review session.
98. See "USAID/OFDA Somalia Grants by Region, FY 1992 & 1993"
99. 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.
100. Natsios written comments, 6/27/94.
101. Newsom and Landis interviews, *op.cit.*
102. Lauren Landis memo, "Monetization," 6/23/94, p. 2.
103. Interview with Ken Menkhaus, 6/23/94, Washington, D.C. See also Landis memo, *op.cit.*
104. Cuny 4/13/94 letter to RPG.
105. 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.
106. Libby, *op. cit.*, and others have suggested this, although others doubt it can be fully done.
107. See Visman, *op. cit.*, for an excellent account of continuing NGO insecurity through UNITAF and UNOSOM II.
108. Visman, *op. cit.*, feels this is vital to prevent such problems in the future.
109. Libby, *op. cit.*, believes failing to do this encouraged the economy of theft in Somalia.
110. See Libby, *op. cit.*; also comments at March 22, 1994 Geneva RPG review session by MSF and SCF-UK representatives.
111. See Farnsworth interview, 12/20/93; also see OFDA list of projects funded in Somalia during this period.
112. Suggestion by Gold, *op. cit.*, by Wentling (5/13/94 interview).

113. Comments by Newsom at June 9, 1994 RPG review session. Also written comments by Natsios, 6/27/94.
114. Kate Farnsworth and Libby interviews, *op.cit.*
115. 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.
116. 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)
117. See University of Southern California Prof. Carol Thompson's study of regional responses to the southern Africa drought emergency done for UNICEF-Namibia, 1993.
118. Alex 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.