



SPECIAL REPORT

Restoring Hope: The Real Lessons of Somalia for the Future of Intervention

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

This Special Report is based on two upcoming books by the United States Institute of Peace Press by three distinguished diplomats who had critical roles in efforts by the United States and the United Nations to rescue Somalia from humanitarian tragedy and political chaos.

In *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (USIP Press: September 1994), Mohamed Sahnoun, who served as special representative for the UN Secretary General in 1992, considers the actions which might have prevented the escalation of the famine and the political unrest in Somalia into a humanitarian and political nightmare.

In *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (USIP Press: 1995), Robert Oakley and John Hirsch examine the U.S. intervention in Somalia and the knotty relationship between the U.S. and UN during the operation. Oakley was special envoy to Somalia for Presidents Clinton and Bush and Hirsch was political adviser to the United Task Force. The book contains a foreword by Chester A. Crocker, former assistant secretary of state for African affairs and chairman of the Institute's board of directors.

Somalia: The Missed Opportunities (\$8.95-paper) may be ordered by calling 800-537-9359. Sales information on the Oakley/Hirsch book will be available in the fall.

Key Points

Public reaction to U.S. intervention in Somalia has been overwhelmingly negative. "Somalia" has become a symbol for the unacceptable costs of humanitarian intervention and for the type of foreign involvement the United States should avoid in the future. In contrast, however, those who were involved directly with events conclude that substantial good was done, although there were problems and missteps. In their view, U.S. involvement meant that countless lives were saved; and violence and disorder were reduced to the extent that steps toward political reconciliation could begin. There are, in addition, positive lessons from Somalia that would make any such future humanitarian interventions more effective:

- **Preventive diplomacy.** Preventive diplomacy must come into wider and more expert use. Greater use of preventive diplomacy will require careful attention to threats of conflict, thoughtful analysis of political developments, and attentiveness to warnings and requests for help. It is important not only to notice such openings, but to imagine the shape of appropriate forms of early intervention—negotiation, mediation, formal or informal diplomacy, etc.—for each. Considerable thought needs to be given, as well, to the question of how to secure the services of the best qualified personnel to undertake preventive diplomacy missions.
- **Non-UN multilateral intervention.** Possibilities for non-UN multilateral action by regional and other coalitions, whether or not it entails actual intervention, should be developed. Fostering regional means of conflict resolution may also help avoid the echo of colonialism that some hear when large Western countries intervene.
- **Need for UN reform.** The UN's unwieldy bureaucracy must be streamlined and its efforts better organized if it is going to respond effectively to the swiftly changing, highly volatile situations created by the new spate of ethnic and regional conflicts. If its efforts continue to dissipate because of the bureaucratic separation of humanitarian, military, political, and financial activities, the UN will fail to become an effective instrument of humanitarian intervention.

The more isolationist [critics] cite the costs of the Somalia adventure as evidence against American involvement in almost any foreign conflict. . . . [Conversely,] proponents of the idea that the United States is morally required to come to the aid of the less fortunate, have contended that the intervention in Somalia might be regarded as the beginning of a new era of humanitarian service.

- **Approaching the undertaking as a whole.** From planning through implementation, coordination of all aspects of intervention operations is vital for success. This requires consultation and imagination at the planning stages, and energy and flexibility during the operation. Coordination must be maintained at the levels of the UN and national governments, all the way down through humanitarian operations.
- **Seeking policy and goal agreement and dealing with honest differences.** It is difficult to stress too much the primacy of policy and goal agreement among parties in an intervention coalition, including the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council, the United States, troop contributors, and other major actors. The most significant problem for future intervention efforts will be to recognize as early as possible where there are unreconcilable differences between parties to an intervention.
- **Unambiguous policy regarding force.** If an intervention is predicated on the willingness to use force, when necessary, to carry out its mandate, the parties to an intervention must be able to do so quickly and overwhelmingly. The rules of engagement for such operations must therefore be along classic military lines rather than taking the traditional UN approach of firing only in self-defense.
- **Staying power.** Intervention operations should not be undertaken without the reasonable expectation of firm political backing, stable field leadership, and accountability in the coordinating organization. In addition, if operations are to have full "staying power," they must be planned in advance from their initial moves to their exit strategies.
- **Acceptable results.** Dire situations, such as starvation, are less likely to recur if stable institutions are rebuilt. But "mission creep" often originates in good intentions, and the "doability" requirement can be completely overtaken by expanded objectives. Accordingly, a clear sense of acceptable results must be sustained throughout the contemplation of an intervention, its operation, and termination.
- **Adjustment.** Although it is important to avoid "mission creep," mandates and goals must be adjusted when the need arises. Careful adjustments are far less dangerous than drifting gradually off course because of rigidity or inattention. Adjustments must be carefully thought out and clearly articulated to the public in order to maintain domestic and international political support.
- **Political leadership.** There needs to be a single person, either civilian or military, in charge in the field, a person with clear authority and whose abilities, background, and style are suited to the mission. Mechanisms for reviewing and directing field decisions have to be clear, focused, and cooperative. It should be kept in mind that second-guessing and micromanagement from above could be devastating to the success of the mission.
- **Clarity of military command.** Successful military operations depend on clear lines of command and the corollary ability to respond rapidly to circumstances on the ground. Additionally, who is answerable to whom must be agreed to by the contributing countries on the political level.

- **Taking sides.** It is often extremely difficult to avoid at least the perception of an international operation taking sides. It is essential to avoid making martyrs and heroes, of slipping into the role of common enemy of those the intervention is designed to help. Politically, it requires keeping a clear distinction between the role of the intervening authority and the roles of the indigenous political actors. The alienation of one or another group seriously undermines the permanence of any achievement.
- **Delegate and localize.** Delegating authority and flexibility to people on the ground can exponentially increase the efficiency of operations and avoid costly mistakes. A local commander or political officer is usually the one most aware of circumstances that necessitate locally tailored responses.
- **Domestic political management.** U.S. participation in interventions can only be undertaken and maintained with strong domestic political support. But such support is difficult to maintain in the face of casualties, costs, and domestic issues. Substantial consultation between the executive and legislative branches, and clear and frequent public articulations of policy, are crucial to sustaining domestic political support.
- **Proportionality and “doability.”** An intervention must be limited in time and scope; must have specific, realistic goals based on the resources available to it; and be backed with more-than-sufficient military force to carry it out expeditiously. The military benefit of these requirements is obvious. The approach is also helpful politically, since clear, limited, practical goals can gain and maintain public support that abstractions cannot sustain.
- **Casualties.** A military intervention is certain to involve casualties. Hence, public consensus has to be strong enough to support the human costs of intervention. Government leaders must be willing to frankly inform the public about difficulties as well as objectives. Accurate accounting of casualties is also important. Communicating such information as it occurs is both more honest and more prudent than neglecting to disseminate it and suffering from a public opinion crisis later.
- **Creative responses to difficult realities.** Ultimately, each case of potential intervention will have to be decided on its own specific merits. The weight of the factors unique to the situation—including assessments of national interest—will also have to be taken into account. Decisions regarding interventions will never be easy, and there is every expectation that the United States will face an increasing number of such decisions. Such difficult realities call for greater use of preventive measures, the development of resources and capabilities prior to need, and more imaginative and efficient management of diplomatic, humanitarian, and military efforts.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate particular policies.

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Introduction

From Troy to Vietnam, history has seized hold of real soldiers and their missions and immortalized them as metaphor—sometimes a salutary phenomenon, as seen most recently with the D-Day commemoration. But metaphor runs the risk of transforming complicated matters into slogans, and of losing the important lessons—good and bad—found in a less comfortable understanding. This mistake has arisen most recently in transforming “Somalia” into a handy catch phrase for “debacle,” into a shorthand example of the type of foreign involvement that America must avoid in the future.

The end of American engagement in Somalia, in spring 1994, came at a juncture when the United States was reexamining its leadership role in the post-Cold War world, particularly regarding its various alliances and its relationship to the United Nations. Tensions between the competing claims of internationalism and isolationism regarding Somalia had been exacerbated by the bewilderingly rapid switch from dramatic television images of starving Somali children to grisly pictures of dead American soldiers in the streets of Mogadishu.

Some have argued that American involvement in humanitarian aid to Somalia during its recent famine was an excursion in misguided internationalism, no longer practical in an era of declining resources for international intervention. They raise a practical argument against the waste of assets—economic and human—when there is no immediately compelling national interest. The more isolationist among them cite the costs of the Somalia adventure as evidence against American involvement in almost any foreign conflict.

On the other side of the coin, the “exceptionalists,” proponents of the idea that the United States is morally required to come to the aid of the less fortunate, have contended that the intervention in Somalia might be regarded as the beginning of a new era of humanitarian service. But they are often very uneasy with the blurring of the line between humanitarian aid and military and political tasks in an undertaking like Operation Restore Hope. Still others worry that U.S. involvement in Somalia expended political capital and public will in a somehow trivial endeavor, leaving us less likely to take on “more important” future crises, in Bosnia, for example.

But these are greatly oversimplified perceptions, and “getting Somalia right” is crucial to getting future foreign policy choices right. Only a look at the three-year history of foreign intervention—both the UN operations, UNOSOM I and II, and the U.S.-led coalition called Operation Restore Hope—will put both the successes and the failures of the Somalia experience into perspective and allow it to have its proper effect on future decisions.

Two books forthcoming from the United States Institute of Peace, by prominent actors in all three phases of the intervention in Somalia, describe events during this complicated period, examining successes as well as shortcomings. In *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities*, longtime diplomat Mohamed Sahnoun describes his experiences as the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative in Somalia during UNOSOM I, examining in particular what Sahnoun considers the actions which might have prevented the escalation of the famine and the political unrest in Somalia into a humanitarian and political nightmare. American diplomats Robert B. Oakley and John L. Hirsch

served, respectively, as U.S. Special Envoy to Somalia and political adviser to UNITAF. In *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, they look at the U.S. experience in intervention, with its combination of relief and security concerns, and at the knotty relationship between the United States and the UN during and after the transition to the second and the much more ambitious UN operation, UNOSOM II.

This Special Report distills the work of Sahnoun, Oakley, and Hirsch into an overview of the lessons of Somalia for the future of humanitarian and political intervention. It does so in a length that this complicated subject deserves, telling what was actually done in Somalia—and how—and reminding us of the opportunities taken and missed, the kind and cruel turns of events and decisions. Moving beyond the narrative, the report offers analysis of the achievements of Somalia—this, in the spirit of “getting it right”—and lessons for meeting similar crises. Its title, “Restoring Hope,” is meant to suggest that the real lessons of Somalia create reasonable hope that can be built upon in making humanitarian intervention and assertive peacekeeping wise and steady tools in managing international crises.

Missed Opportunities for Preventive Diplomacy

By the time Somali dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was finally run out of the country in 1992, the struggle to improve the political situation had gone through a number of phases. Like other countries in the Horn of Africa, Somalia had played an important Cold War role in the delicate balance of power between the West and the Soviet Union. Barre, in power since 1969, was skilled at playing both ends against the middle, consolidating his own position at the same time. From the late 1970's, following the disastrous war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden and the shift of Soviet support from Somalia to the Mengistu regime, this meant casting his lot with the West. But in the late 1980's, as Siad relied more and more on repression to hold power and the Cold War began to thaw, the United States disengaged itself, cutting off foreign aid completely by 1989.

Inside Somalia, resistance to Barre's corrupt authoritarian regime, which relied on manipulation of traditional clan alliances to the advantage of his relatives and friends, was growing. After the Ogaden war, political resistance was frequently allied to clan-based insurgency as a number of factions arose, each with its armed militia. In Mogadishu, a group of more than one hundred intellectuals, businessmen and political activists issued a May 1990 manifesto calling for a national conference to find a political resolution to the crisis, seeking the support of the international community for the removal of Siad from office. It was not forthcoming. By the end of the year, what had been sporadic insurgent raids and resistance to the government had become a full-scale civil war, which eventually not only brought down the government but led to the anarchy and widespread violence that combined to bring about terrible famine and disease.

According to Mohamed Sahnoun, there was a fairly lengthy period in which preventive diplomacy and the focused attention of the international community could have headed off the catastrophe in Somalia. He identifies three crisis points at which diplomatic intervention might have made a difference, and points out that in each case unheeded signals were sent—by Somalis or

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their friends—to the international community, and taken up halfheartedly or not at all. In 1988, when the Somali National Movement (SNM) rose against Siad Barre in the northern cities of Hargeisa and Burao, their challenge was brutally repressed and political opposition stifled by jail sentences. Both Amnesty International and Africa Watch publicized the episode at the time, but there was no international response.

The political challenge of the Mogadishu-based “Manifesto Group” in 1990 afforded the second opportunity. The signers, at the risk of their lives, called for a change to a multiparty system, constitutional change, and a national reconciliation conference to form a caretaker government and prepare for elections. The timely suggestion of the Inter-African Group that the UN appoint a special envoy to conduct “shuttle diplomacy” in the Horn, on this and other issues, was not acted upon, and the attempts of Italy and Egypt to convene a conference were met with suspicion by some of the Somali groups. The idea was abandoned. Some action resulted—the United States gradually withdrew its financial support, for example. But, says Sahnoun, there was no concerted action on the part of the international community at a time when good offices and neutral convening power might have helped the situation dramatically.

The situation was extremely serious by the time Barre fled Mogadishu, in January 1991, and there was no national government in place. This was a last-ditch opportunity for preventive intervention, and though what Sahnoun calls “timid attempts” were made by some regional governments, the UN remained absent. Even when the government of Djibouti requested UN support to convene a meeting in July 1991, it was turned down. The meeting as conceived did not include Somali National Alliance leader Mohamed Aideed, who reacted very negatively to its support for Ali Mahdi Mohamed of the United Somali Congress. The civil war continued to escalate, and by the time the UN adopted its first resolution on Somalia in January 1992, “the situation had reached almost hopeless deterioration.”

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The UN Steps In: UNOSOM I

UN action on Somalia between January and March 1992 called for an arms embargo and increased humanitarian aid, and urged the parties to agree to a cease-fire, which they did through a UN-sponsored meeting in New York in February. A fact-finding mission in March reported to the Secretary General about the growing famine and refugee problem and the skyrocketing rate of deaths from hunger, and in April the Security Council voted to establish an operation in Somalia—UNOSOM.

This mission, intended to provide humanitarian help and facilitate the end of hostilities in Somalia, provided for the immediate dispatch of fifty unarmed UN observers to monitor the cease-fire and allowed the possibility that a five hundred man peacekeeping force might be deployed later if needed. UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali sent Mohamed Sahnoun to Mogadishu as his special representative, and Sahnoun began to meet with the faction leaders, and with such civic leaders as clan elders and women’s groups, to facilitate the reconciliation process. Negotiations to set up cease-fire monitoring hit numerous snags, though, as they encountered local political rivalries, particularly between Aideed and Ali Mahdi. Though the cease-fire monitoring eventually got underway, UNOSOM did not have sufficient resources to safeguard the deliv-

ery of food and other humanitarian aid. Looting and banditry went hand in hand with increased starvation and disease. Inability to guarantee the security of aid meant the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation during summer 1992, despite the initiation in August of Operation Provide Relief, a U.S. airlift to bring in supplies and transport the 500 peacekeepers.

Logistical, recruitment and financial difficulties had hobbled UNOSOM from the start, and the peacekeepers did not even begin to arrive in Mogadishu until September. Once it arrived in Somalia, the 500-man Pakistani peacekeeping battalion found itself hamstrung by the traditional UN rules of engagement, which allow for military action only in very rigidly defined cases of self-defense. There were additional problems because of rules regarding sovereignty and requiring that local authorities grant permission for troop movements. In anarchic Mogadishu, largely run at this point by armed gangs of bandits who were looting relief supplies and wrangling for turf, this effectively pinned the Pakistanis down at the airport.

Efforts at streamlining and innovation were only intermittently successful. Though Mohamed Sahnoun continued to meet with civic as well as factional leaders, and an alarmed UN fact-finding mission urged stepped-up relief to alleviate nationwide starvation and disease, the security situation remained paralyzed. A "Hundred-Day Plan" was drawn up to promote urgent assistance and an office set up to coordinate between elements of the relief community—UN agencies and nongovernmental relief organizations—for a multiplier effect. But implementation was still held up by the precarious security situation.

The UN's effectiveness was also badly compromised by difficulties in command and control issues between Mogadishu and New York, a matter which Mohamed Sahnoun goes into at length in his book and which remains a problem. The cumbersome reporting system meant that Sahnoun was answerable to three UN under secretaries, and unifying the various UN activities in the field was nearly impossible. His requests for greater autonomy and flexibility were not met, and after he publicly expressed dismay with bureaucratic infighting and inertia at the UN and its agencies, he resigned in late October 1992.

Sahnoun's departure left a vacuum of authority in Somalia. The progress he had made in political negotiations with a number of Somali leaders was interrupted, and what had been serious talk of a reconciliation conference ceased. His departure immediately after his resignation and with the Pakistani battalion still undeployed from the airport, and the continued friction between Ali Mahdi and Aideed, UNOSOM was simply unable to carry out its mandate. Despite the arrival of thousands of tons of relief supplies, food and medicine could not be distributed because of looting. In the interior, famine intensified as the civil war continued.

By November 1992 up to half a million Somalis had perished from war, famine, and disease. The town of Baidoa had lost 40 percent of its population, and 70 percent of the children under five. In the United States and in other nations, public distress with the situation mounted, and after careful planning and discussion, on December 4 President George Bush announced the initiation of Operation Restore Hope.

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Operation Restore Hope and UNITAF

The designers of Operation Restore Hope were able to take some of the UNOSOM experiences into account as they planned its structure. Careful consultation and contingency planning, particularly by the U.S. Central Command, had taken place before the operation was finalized and NGOs working in Somalia were consulted. The United Task Force (UNITAF) designated to carry out the operations would be a multinational coalition of military units under the command and control of the American military, organized along traditional military lines. Political consultation had taken place too, between the executive branch and congressional leaders as well as with the United Nations, which passed a resolution welcoming the American offer and supporting Operation Restore Hope on December 3. It should be noted that the UN rejected making the American undertaking into a peacekeeping operation under direct UN authority.

UNITAF's mission was carefully crafted to specify its goals and describe a limited, "doable" mandate of providing security in the service of humanitarian ends for a brief period. It would be followed by a conventional UN peacekeeping operation, in which the United States would participate. The necessity of defining a limited, finite operation and preventing "mission creep" was described by Joint Chiefs Chairman Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Dick Cheney in a detailed press conference that outlined plans for deploying troops and equipment so that food and relief could be distributed more efficiently and equitably in Somalia. UNITAF's mandate referred to provisions in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to allow more flexibility in the use of military force when necessary.

The need for coordination between the military and political aspects of UNITAF's mission had also been taken into account. Special Envoy Robert Oakley, appointed by Bush, was directed to act as overseer and coordinator of all U.S. civilian activities in Somalia, to provide political advice to UNITAF, to work as liaison with the UN's new Special Representative, Ismat Kittani, and to work with the NGOs to help get humanitarian operations moving again. An interagency Somalia task force back in Washington, and the U. S. Liaison Office (USLO) in Mogadishu, were intended to facilitate the necessary coordination, and Oakley, directing USLO, and Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston, commanding UNITAF, worked closely together.

Within two weeks of Bush's announcement UNITAF forces had begun to arrive in Mogadishu, and troops moved quickly to establish the beginnings of a security system. The plans for deployment to famine areas in southern and central Somalia were drawn up in detail and in less than half the planning period of six weeks. As an administrative framework, UNITAF command drew up nine geographically defined humanitarian relief sectors (HRSs) under the command of military units from participating countries. A great deal of authority and flexibility was delegated to the local commanders so that they could respond to the unique conditions in their sectors. At the same time, intensive liaison was used to ensure unity of purpose and action.

In Mogadishu, a new Civilian-Military Operations Center (CMOC), held daily meetings for NGOs, UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNITAF, and the national military commands responsible for the HRSs, helping them share information and coordinate their ef-

forts for maximum impact and efficiency. Coordination of the humanitarian and military aspects of the operation meant a decided multiplier effect, especially later in the operation when the atmosphere was less tense. The logistics capabilities of the military units helped build roads, dig wells, and rehabilitate civic centers like schools and clinics, as well as provide medical assistance, supplementing the work of the humanitarian agencies while protecting them. The personal contacts between military and political staff of UNITAF and USLO, and the staffs of the NGOs, also fostered an atmosphere in which off-duty military and other personnel donated their time and skills to help the purely humanitarian side of the operation.

At the same time, on the political front, Robert Oakley was meeting with faction leaders in advance of UNITAF deployment to each HRS. He conveyed to the many leaders with whom he met, most notably Aideed and Ali Mahdi, what UNITAF hoped to achieve and made clear what it required of them in controlling their militias, and in two UN-sponsored meetings (with Boutros Ghali presiding) held in Addis in January and March they agreed to a cease-fire and implementation language.

As UNITAF and NGO operations continued, both the humanitarian and security situation improved dramatically. However, policy divergence between the UN and UNITAF was evident early on and was not resolved. The most significant and far-reaching disagreement was over the nature and scope of appropriate disarmament efforts. Secretary General Boutros Ghali argued from the outset that comprehensive, nationwide disarmament was called for and should be effected by the United States through coercion if necessary. Citing the ubiquity of weapons, the nature of Somali culture, and the limitations of their mandate and resources, UNITAF declined. Instead it negotiated the cantonment of larger weapons such as the famous "technicals"—jeeps and landcruisers mounted with heavy weapons—and of some other weapons and pushed for the implementation of the agreed-upon cease-fire.

Another major difference between the UN and U.S. approaches throughout the Somalia experience lay in their views of the process of political reconciliation and reconstruction. The UN's approach was to reconstruct national institutions from the top down, effectively imposing a national structure and directing it to create local and regional institutions—even the police would be national before setting up local forces. U.S. experience, as well as culture, suggested that lasting political rebuilding was more likely to come from helping the Somalis to reestablish traditional and culturally acceptable local institutions as well as helping to build a more stable situation on which the national structure might rest. To this end, it encouraged the reestablishment of local and regional councils, and acted as a convener to foster dialogue between groups working for Somalia's future. Somali women's groups had been active in humanitarian and reconciliation efforts during the war; lawyers, religious leaders, and intellectuals also had a major role to play.

A preparatory conference on national reconciliation, convened under UN auspices, was held in Addis Ababa in January 1993, and conferees from 14 factions agreed to a cease-fire. UNITAF agreed to monitor and help implement the new agreement, but, because it was looking toward the end of its mission, wanted the UN to accept long-term responsibility. The UN military and civilian command, however, declined, arguing that the resolution creating

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UNITAF had transferred responsibility for all such initiatives to UNITAF. A Somali humanitarian conference was held in Addis in March. The event included far more Somalis than previous meetings, from a number of professional and civic backgrounds as well as different clans.

Though the political reconciliation conference which followed was disrupted by renewed factional warfare in Kismayo, once UNITAF had quelled it, the conference agreed upon plans for both wider disarmament and a transitional national council to be built upon a base of district and regional councils. The national council would be the bridge to a long-term political solution. These "Addis Accords" were a major step in the right direction, though to the Somalis they were a statement of intention rather than a concrete plan with implementation ideas and dates.

It had been the U.S. understanding from the outset, and its design for UNITAF was based on, the idea that the project was limited not only in scope but in time, and that when certain humanitarian and security goals had been met responsibility for Somalia would be turned back over to a "regular UN peacekeeping force." As conditions improved through early 1993, and signs were promising for progress on the political and civil front within Somalia, the United States began to ask the UN to participate in planning for a handover.

The UN was decidedly unenthusiastic about starting a new Somalia operation at this point. Boutros Ghali had always maintained that the UNITAF operation should be wider reaching, pushing this interpretation throughout the period though it met inevitably with U.S. refusal to change its plans. He wanted more time, wider deployment, more disarmament; he was nervous about UN capacity to maintain the security situation once UNITAF had departed. Boutros Ghali's hewing to his claim that the United States should perform these wider tasks meant also that the UN never undertook the type of planning for demobilization and reintegration of the military that it had done in such previous peacekeeping operations as in Namibia and El Salvador. The UN essentially refused—both through passivity (not doing planning when asked repeatedly) and overt rejection—to plan for a handoff, and, according to Oakley and Hirsch, there were some at the UN who didn't believe UNITAF would actually leave until literally the day of its departure.

The disconnects and disagreements between the United States and the UN translated into practical problems, large and small. For example, UNITAF clearly couldn't coordinate with countries that would be contributing troops to the new UN operation until they were identified. The United States had asked for planning for the transition to begin in January; the Secretariat wasn't given authorization to start planning in Somalia until March. And though Boutros Ghali had named commanders for the force to be known as UNOSOM II—Turkish Gen. Cevik Bir and American Gen. Thomas Montgomery—in February, they didn't arrive to stay until mid-March, and without an assigned command staff. They had to work with Johnston and other UNITAF leaders to pull together a command staff from people already serving in the field.

The United States did remain committed to participation in UNOSOM II, and when Boutros Ghali asked the United States to propose a special UN representative to replace Kittani, it seemed an opportunity to make clear the continuing relationship. American Admiral Jonathan Howe was named and accepted the appointment, arriving in mid-March. Robert Oakley had left

Somalia on March 3. UNOSOM II took over military responsibility from UNITAF on May 4.

The UN Takes Over Again: UNOSOM II

UNOSOM II was officially established by Security Council Resolution 814 on March 26, the first UN peacekeeping force authorized under the provisions of Chapter VII of the UN charter. Though UNITAF had been operating under these provisions, which allow for more military flexibility through allowing the use of force to impose and maintain a stable security situation, the UN was hesitant to depart from the traditional peacekeeping modes of Chapter VI and was uncertain as to how they should be applied on the ground. The resolution was also a departure from earlier UN practice because it explicitly embraced the objective of rehabilitating the political institutions and economy of a member state and establishing and maintaining a secure situation throughout the country, prescribing in some detail how this was to be carried out and calling for coercive action if needed.

The newly adopted goals of "nationbuilding" and "peace enforcement" were echoes of a viewpoint expressed in Boutros Ghali's 1992 "Agenda for Peace" which had made a forceful argument for the UN's positive intervention in international crises. They were enthusiastically seconded by the United States, which embraced the challenge of "rebuilding failed states" and saw Somalia as an opportunity to turn theory into practice.

The situation that faced the fledgling operation on the ground was an ironic actuality in light of the more assertive UN posture. The far-reaching goals of Resolution 814 would have required staffing and supplies far beyond those that were readily available or en route. Staffing was not up to full strength, and many UN civilians who had been serving in Somalia were tired and demoralized. The comprehensive disarmament envisioned would require much larger numbers of military, widely deployed. And confusion regarding overall policy and command and control responsibilities in a combat environment under Chapter VII for the first time meant unclear relations between the troop contributors and UNOSOM command. These and other problems reinforced the Somali perception that after most U.S. forces left UNOSOM II would be vulnerable, and that there was once again a tempting vacuum of power. Additionally, the more formal style of the new UNOSOM leaders and their propensity to express preferences for certain ideas and factions in the reconciliation process led to tension and then confrontation.

It wasn't long before SNA leader Mohamed Aideed, whose ambitions to become president were no secret, realized that if UNOSOM II succeeded in carrying out Resolution 814 he would be marginalized rather than recognized as a major force. He began to reassert himself militarily in Mogadishu, removing technicals from the cantonments established earlier and issuing direct challenges to the authority of UNOSOM II by broadcasting vituperative addresses on his radio station. As the military leader largely responsible for Siad Barre's defeat and member of a leading clan, he had widespread popular support and clear willingness to use force to achieve his ends.

On June 5, 1993, when a team of Pakistani soldiers attempted to inspect an SNA weapons cantonment site, an angry scene escalated and ultimately

SNA militia attacked peacekeepers, killing twenty-four Pakistanis and three Americans who had gone to their assistance. UN reaction was swift, and a resolution the following day approved the policy of holding Aideed personally responsible for the attack. He was to be arrested; a reward was offered for his capture. The new policy was agreed to by the United States, and over the next four months, the main driving force of both UN and U.S. policy in Somalia was the apprehension of Aideed.

Clashes between UNOSOM and SNA forces continued intermittently throughout the summer. A July raid by U.S. Quick Reaction Forces on a house thought to be an SNA command center resulted in a number of casualties of Somali elders and other leaders who had been meeting there, and further polarized Somali public opinion against the foreign operation. SNA attacks took the lives of several peacekeepers, and the hunt for Aideed was stepped up. At the same time both the humanitarian and political initiatives had dwindled significantly as Somali goodwill evaporated, the security situation worsened, and UNOSOM resources were turned to the manhunt.

As is well known, the escalation culminated on October 3 with the disastrous raid in which American Rangers were pinned down by SNA forces, an American and a Nigerian captured, and scores of UNOSOM casualties taken. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and seventy-eight wounded, in the bloodiest battle in any UN peacekeeping operation.

American political opinion had been growing more and more uneasy with the situation in Somalia, and by September President Clinton had begun to consider the potential need for a change of policy, although no action was taken to change the orders of the U.S. forces to capture Aideed if the opportunity presented itself. The October clash galvanized attention on the issue, and after consultation with political advisers and congressional leaders, the president announced a change in course away from the "personalization" of the conflict and toward renewed efforts for a political solution. He announced that American troops would leave no later than the end of March 1994, though they would remain for the interim to help stabilize security, and to help the UN deploy other forces. He distanced the United States from the hunt for Aideed, announcing that its forces would no longer participate and suggesting that the UN might also undertake a similar policy change. Clinton asked Robert Oakley to return temporarily as special envoy. Aideed subsequently declared a unilateral cease-fire and responded to Oakley by releasing his American hostage.

In November 1993, the UN Security Council passed a resolution on Somalia which included a suspension of the call for Aideed's arrest, in effect endorsing the American policy change. Though there were intermittent threats of renewed war, isolated clan clashes, armed banditry, and a great deal of posturing, the cease-fire continues to hold at the time of this writing. Part of the new approach to Somalia was to seek regional engagement in facilitating dialogue, and the interest taken by Ethiopia and Eritrea in particular proved helpful.

The humanitarian conference convened by the UN in Addis late in November 1993 reinforced the change in the international community's approach to Somalia. Ethiopia's President Meles Zenawi forcefully made the point that the future of Somalia was now up to its own people, and that they had the

The far-reaching goals of Resolution 814 would have required staffing and supplies far beyond those that were readily available or en route.

choice of reaching a political settlement or throwing away the possibility of a stable future by continuing to fight over power. Major aid donors concurred with this point, and future aid was firmly linked to Somali assurances of cooperation with one another and the international community. These realities were also backed up by the awareness that U.S. and some other troops would all have left the country by the end of March 1994. The Somalis would have to solve things for themselves—Aideed's political rivals, for example, could not rely on UNOSOM to keep him out of the equation. The major Somali political leaders, including Aideed, were persuaded to attend the conference, and a number of them remained in Addis after the conference ended for informal discussions.

There was great political activity among the Somali factions over the next month, as the pullout approached. And much of it was far from calm. The attempted establishment of local and regional councils remained particularly problematic as various faction leaders tried to stuff them with clan members or sympathizers, or argued about the constitution of existing councils. In January, the UN made it official that its policy would be on promoting indigenous Somali initiatives, quietly laying aside "assertive multilateralism" and "coercion" and emphasizing cooperation with the Somalis instead. In mid-March, 1994, key Somali leaders met for UN-mediated talks in Nairobi, and issued a joint statement recommitting them to forming a government. At the end of the month, the last American forces were withdrawn, leaving a UNOSOM II military contingent of 20,000 from other nations. And though dire worries had been voiced and sporadic clashes continue, civil war has not reasserted itself, and the UN-led political process continues, Somali-style, which is slow, hard to understand, and frustrating for the outside world.

Somalia: Achievements

As the narrative above attests, there were notable failures by the international community in Somalia. In a time so given to pessimism as ours, the weighing of these things against achievements is not characteristically undertaken: the cataloging of mistakes is where matters tend to be left. For this reason, it is important to attempt to gather the successes together to better assess their weight.

The bottom line of achievement in Somalia, particularly apparent during the UNITAF period, was the dramatic success in stopping the horrific ravages of famine. There is no doubt that much grave humanitarian disaster was averted. In autumn 1992, the death rate in the central city of Baidoa had been at more than 300 a day. One commentator observed mordantly that a slacking off in the death rate in Baidoa at a certain point was most adequately explained by the fact that people can only die once. By spring, however, the improved security situation had enabled the NGOs to reduce the death rate dramatically there and elsewhere, and get on track for restoring agricultural and other resources to help the Somalis begin to feed themselves.

Politically, Operation Restore Hope had functioned well in several manners. Through USLO, it delivered a clear message to the warring factions about what would be required of them during the military operation to help the Somalis, and also made clear that UNITAF would not take sides and would not employ coercion. It would only use force if it were attacked or, proactively, to

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assure the integrity of its basic mission. The combination of overwhelming force and the evident will and organization to use it, with restraint, produced the desired result. As a negotiator, Operation Restore Hope helped facilitate the circumstances under which the faction leaders might reach agreements on their own under a UN umbrella, and served as a convener to bring other Somalis into a relatively more peaceful era of political reconstruction, through local, regional, and national institutions of their own making.

The practical achievements of the UNITAF approach might be ascribed partly to the commonsense attitude that informed the operation as a whole. No formal guidelines defined the relationship between the UNITAF military command and the special envoy, which in this instance worked out quite well. The same kind of practical imagination and willingness to share turf and consult made possible the devolution of authority to the commanders in the humanitarian resource sectors (HRSs) and resulted in ability to respond quickly to local actualities. The two-way street of information between headquarters and the HRSs was also important for getting an overall political picture.

The flexibility and autonomy which Mohamed Sahnoun had created for a time under his own initiative and which Robert Oakley was accorded in large measure opened a number of avenues not possible in a more rigidly constructed enterprise. In Somalia, for example, personal contacts between the envoys and the faction leaders, and among the Somalis themselves, were essential in a society built on ongoing, informal contact. (The unceasing jockeying for political position, which continues, is in part a phenomenon of this culture as well as of the larger unresolved situation.) The work to involve as many Somalis as possible in planning for the future, seeking out religious and civic leaders, women's groups and intellectuals, was also indispensable if a lasting civic fabric were to be woven. This was only possible through energetic liaison and the use of the convening power of an entity like the U.S. Liaison Office.

There was also an absolute necessity in coordinating a humanitarian peacekeeping operation so as to combine effectively a military operation, demonstrably ready to use force when warranted, an attempt to save people's lives with food and medical aid, and efforts to assist the Somalis to develop a process of political reconciliation. This coordination was assured by the creation of the Civilian-Military Operations Center. Not only was vital information exchanged during Operation Restore Hope between people carrying out some very different tasks, there were times when they were able to discover previously unsuspected commonalties and put their efforts together for a greater return. Willingness to participate was an important factor—such groups as USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the International Red Cross, the UN agencies, and the NGOs found a way to work with the somewhat alien culture of the military forces.

The bottom-line assessment of what has been achieved in Somalia is that countless lives were saved and that violence and disorder was lessened to an extent that allowed the possibility of political reconciliation with the help of international assistance. Beyond this, and importantly, the achievements of intervention in Somalia lie in the positive lessons learned from those many instances, especially during Operation Restore Hope and UNITAF, in which

The UN's unwieldy bureaucracy must be streamlined and its efforts coordinated if it is going to take on the swiftly changing, highly volatile situations promised by the new spate of ethnic and regional conflicts.

force was used properly; political facilitation bore fruit; local conditions were responded to flexibly and effectively; and humanitarian, political, and military efforts were well coordinated.

Lessons for the Next Crisis

Not only did goals and policy change several times during the course of the Somalia intervention, but a number of different organizational and management approaches were tried. The results of these differences thus offer a unique spectrum of lessons, based not only on the undoubted missteps and failures, but on the real achievements of UNOSOM I, UNITAF, and UNOSOM II.

Preventive diplomacy. The best intervention may be the one that proves unnecessary. The saving of lives and human suffering is paramount, but the ability to reserve fiscal and other resources for other uses is also important. Greater use of preventive diplomacy will require careful attention to threatened conflicts, thoughtful analysis of political developments, and attentiveness to warnings and requests for help. Mohamed Sahnoun argues that there were at least three significant opportunities for prevention in Somalia; none, he says, was taken seriously enough.

Over time study of developing crises may identify “markers” for prevention opportunity. It will be important then not only to notice the openings, but to imagine the shape of the appropriate wedge—negotiation, mediation, formal or informal diplomacy, etc.—for each. In addition, considerable thought needs to be given to the question of how to secure the services of the best qualified personnel to undertake preventive diplomacy missions.

Non-UN multilateral intervention. Possibilities for non-UN multilateral action, whether or not it entails actual intervention, should be developed. Some of these will be regional, such as the response of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to Liberia’s problems. Other coalitions will be political or strategic, like NATO, or even stem from economic interests. Still other groups may coalesce because they identify a common interest, humanitarian or not, in helping to contain or control a conflict.

Mohamed Sahnoun points out at some length that the UN Charter encourages and prescribes regional remedies for conflict as far as possible; devolution to them may have some practical benefit of getting around the inevitable delay and bureaucracy of dealing with an entity as large as the UN, and as far away as New York from Mogadishu or Kigali. This requires awareness of history and politics—in many cases there are local rivalries and contests for resources which may color the impartiality, real or perceived, of a mediator. Fostering regional means of conflict resolution may also help avoid the echo of colonialism that some hear when large Western countries undertake an intervention.

Need for UN reform. Changes in power balances after the end of the Cold War, the outbreak of regional conflicts, the breakup of nation-states, the resurrection of ethno-religious conflicts, and a myriad of other developments are having a profound effect on the way the UN must approach international crises. In Somalia, at one point a failed state close to pure anarchy, there was no domestic political institution which could waive sovereignty

In Somalia, for example, personal contacts between the envoys and the faction leaders, and among the Somalis themselves, were essential in a society built on ongoing, informal contact.

and request the assistance of the UN. Thus, the UN could not respond. So a new approach had to be devised. Under Chapter VII provisions, unaccustomed and unmanageable command and control issues arose when the UN forces undertook a more directly forceful military stance in a failed state incapable of taking part in managing the international intervention.

The UN's unwieldy bureaucracy must be streamlined and its efforts coordinated if it is going to take on the swiftly changing, highly volatile situations promised by the new spate of ethnic and regional conflicts. If it continues to rely on bureaucratic centrifuge, separating humanitarian issues from military, from political, from financial, it will simply bog down irretrievably. There has been some progress on this front, with the development of an elaborate policy coordination mechanism in UNPROFOR in Bosnia, based on long-standing NATO structures. For the present, the UN must be backstopped logistically by the United States and/or large regional or other types of organizations, such as NATO.

Approach the undertaking as a whole. From planning through implementation, coordination of all aspects of intervention operations is vital for success. When an intervention has both humanitarian and military ends, involves multinational entities, and calls on governmental and nongovernmental organizations to carry out the mission, coordination is a *sine qua non*. This requires consultation and imagination at the planning stages, and energy and flexibility during the operation.

Coordination must be maintained at the level of the UN and national governments, all the way down through humanitarian operations. A strong liaison office, like the Civilian-Military Operations Center, can be established in keeping with the particulars of the case to keep information moving, avoid duplicative work, and aim for a "multiplier" effect. When CMOC was allowed to lapse after UNITAF withdrew, a number of flourishing projects withered, among them the reconstitution of the police, which had been supported by UNITAF forces but were left without backup on their departure.

Seeking policy and goal agreement and dealing with honest differences. It is difficult to say too much about the primacy of fundamental policy and goal agreement among parties in an intervention coalition, including the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council, the United States, troop contributors, and other major actors. Failure to acknowledge or come to terms with irreconcilable differences between the UN and United States over such issues as disarmament caused grave difficulties which affected the efficiency of the entire Somalia operation. (These were apparent even before UNITAF went in, but essentially the United States took a risk that they could be resolved.)

Disconnects and inadvertent misunderstandings between the UN and the United States certainly existed, as did perfectly honest and reasonable differences of opinion and policy. The more significant problem, however, for future efforts, will be to recognize where there are irresolvable differences as early as possible, and take them into account for planning.

Unambiguous policy regarding force. If an intervention is predicated on the willingness to use force, when necessary, to carry out its mandate, the parties to it must be able to do so quickly and overwhelmingly. The rules of engagement for such operations must therefore be along classic mili-

Coordination must be maintained at the level of the UN and national governments, all the way down through humanitarian operations.

tary lines rather than taking the traditional UN approach of firing only in self-defense.

Staying Power. Intervention operations should not be undertaken without the reasonable expectation of firm political will backing them, stable field leadership, and accountability in the coordinating organization. If operations are to be successful both at the beginning and in mid-course, it goes without saying that “staying power” rests on responsibly planned exit strategies.

Acceptable results. The transformation of an attempt to feed starving Somalis into a democratization project was not unnatural; there is wide agreement that the dire situation is less likely to recur if stable institutions are rebuilt. But “mission creep” often originates in good intentions, and the “doability” requirement can be completely overtaken. Considering that Somalia's economy was below the subsistence level even before the civil war, expectations regarding the ultimate benefits of intervention ought to have been and ought to remain modest. Restoring a country to something better than the status quo ante is unrealistic and unlikely. Accordingly, a clear sense of acceptable results must obtain throughout the contemplation of an intervention, its operation, and termination.

Adjustment. It is important to recognize the need for adjustment when it arises. If it is necessary to change the mandate or revise the goals, do so; Robert Oakley and John Hirsch observe that the UN operation in Cambodia did so, to its benefit. And the “course correction” in American policy toward Somalia helped end the dangerous stalemate of Autumn 1993. Though such changes must be undertaken advisedly, they are far less dangerous than drifting gradually off course through distraction or inattention. They must, however, be carefully thought out and articulated to maintain both domestic political and international support.

Leadership. There needs to be a single person, either civilian or military, in charge in the field, a person whose authority is made clear and backed strongly by the UN and whose abilities, background, and style match well with the particular case. While this leader must be answerable for his actions, second-guessing and micromanagement could be devastating. Mechanisms for reviewing and directing field decisions have to be clear, focused, and cooperative.

The Somalia experience provided a practical lesson in leadership difficulties when the well-intentioned choice of Americans (Howe and Montgomery) to lead in UNOSOM II resulted in significant confusion. Though the intention was to provide continuity between UNITAF and UNOSOM, and cement the UN-U.S. relationship, problems arose because of actual and perceived conflicts in the command hierarchy. And because it followed directly on the heels of the U.S.-led coalition, this made it difficult for some Somalis and other observers to keep clearly in mind the distinction between the two operations and to know whether the United States or the UN was in charge.

Clarity of command. Successful military operations depend on clear lines of command and the corollary ability to respond rapidly. A multilateral force, particularly in an untried type of operation, is at greater risk if the wires are crossed. The rules have to be clear going in, and straightforward methods for oversight and review available.

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Part of the new approach to Somalia was to seek regional engagement in facilitating dialogue, and the interest taken by Ethiopia and Eritrea in particular proved helpful.

Both of the UNOSOM operations encountered difficulty because their mandates far exceeded the resources available to them and because those mandates did not have the political acquiescence of the Somalis.

Additionally, who is answerable to whom must be clarified significantly and agreed to by the contributing countries on the political level. Possibly because of the different nature of the new Chapter VII operation, the relationship between UN command and national forces in Somalia was murky. Difficulties arose in UNOSOM II when the Italians and the French became dubious about UN military command and began to go to their national armed forces for direction. The United States, of course, had maintained direct command over all its forces, coordinating militarily with UNOSOM command, though President Clinton has recently indicated that there are some circumstances in which American troops might be suitably placed under the operational control of a foreign commander.

Taking sides. Though it sounds like a truism, it is often extremely difficult to avoid at least the perception of having taken sides. In a highly personalized society like Somalia it is especially difficult. Avoiding it requires constant effort and awareness of what you're dealing with. For example, some of the difficulty between the UN and Aideed stemmed from bad blood between him and Boutros Ghali, who had been Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs at a time when that country had supported Siad Barre. It is essential as well in the effort to avoid making martyrs and heroes, of slipping into the role of common enemy of those you began by trying to help.

Politically, it requires keeping clear the distinction between one's role as mediator or interlocutor and the roles of the indigenous political actors. The alienation of one or another group seriously undermines the permanence of any achievement.

Delegate and localize. UNITAF showed that delegating authority and flexibility to people on the ground can exponentially increase the efficiency of operations and avoid costly mistakes. A local commander or political officer may be aware of circumstances that necessitate locally tailored responses. Conversely, a bureaucratic structure that has orders given in Mogadishu reviewed in New York is a fertile field for missteps.

Lessons for the United States

Domestic political management. Domestic political issues should not be overlooked both in an analysis of U.S. involvement of Somalia and speculation about the future of intervention. Operation Restore Hope was announced by President George Bush only weeks after he had lost the 1992 election to Bill Clinton; while the two had consulted and obviously agreed about the fundamentals of the undertaking, the sheer confusion of a transition alone certainly affected the institutional memory and the steadiness of the attention paid to it. Undertakings such as Operation Restore Hope demand not only continuity and steadiness, but also sustained coordination by a single high-level official or office. Needless to say, such official or office must be especially suited to the operation by dint of ability and experience.

As importantly, U.S. participation in interventions can only be undertaken and maintained with strong domestic political consensus and support. This is not always difficult to generate at the beginning; Americans were appalled at the starvation in Somalia and wanted to help. But it is complicated to maintain in the face of casualties, cost, and domestic issues. Substantial consulta-

tion between the executive and legislative branches, and clear and frequent public articulations of policy, are crucial.

Proportionality and “doability”. The United States has recently relied on what is often called the “Weinberger-Powell doctrine” of determining whether and how to undertake intervention. It holds that, if undertaken, an intervention must be limited in time and scope; must have specific, realistic goals based on the resources available to it; and be backed with more than sufficient military force to carry it out expeditiously. The military benefit of these requirements is obvious. The approach is also helpful politically, since clear, limited, practical goals can get and maintain public support that abstractions cannot sustain. Thus “mission creep” and other difficulties encountered in such past interventions as Vietnam and Lebanon are more easily avoided.

Some of Weinberger-Powell’s other benefits became apparent in Somalia. There is a decided “economic” aspect—if its mandate is absolutely linked to the resources available, an operation is much less likely to make the mistake of taking on too great a task (complete disarmament of the populace, for example). Both of the UNOSOM operations encountered difficulty because their mandates far exceeded the resources available to them.

Casualties. This is a political as well as a military issue. A military intervention is certain to involve casualties, so, in a democracy, public consensus has to be that the intervention is worth it. And government leaders must be willing to say so, and to continue to say why. This is clearly a challenge in the satellite-feed era, when some of the grimmer realities of war show up instantly in the living room. An accurate picture of total casualties is also important. In Somalia, during the summer and fall of 1993, there were thousands of Somali casualties resulting from the UNOSOM-SNA conflict. Communicating such information as it occurs is both more honest and more prudent than neglecting to disseminate it and suffering from a public opinion crisis later.

The Abiding Difficulties of Intervention and Restoring Hope

Its applied lessons aside, the American experience in Somalia has brought to the fore some of the unchanging difficulties of peacekeeping intervention—from deciding on an intervention, to implementation, to disengagement. The latter is an issue the United States hasn’t really faced, since in Somalia, it relinquished operations to its successor.

Other problems are more far reaching, inasmuch as they involve the reconciliation of increasing demands for humanitarian, political, and military assistance with finite or diminishing human, financial, and material resources. Institutionalizing the international response to such demands may also create another difficulty, as the generic operational forms and procedures developed to handle intervention situations by the UN or other multilateral organizations may respond to the abilities, limitations, and preferences of those organizations and impede adaptation to local circumstances. This may also create what might be called the “proconsular pitfall” of becoming involved in structuring and potentially maintaining the workings of a country according to what international institutions can do or prefer — a peculiar, and almost certainly unintentional, echo of colonialism.

It is essential as well in the effort to avoid making martyrs and heroes, of slipping into the role of common enemy of those you began by trying to help.

Perhaps most difficult to resolve is the question of what is in the national interest now that the United States is no longer suspended in Cold War tension. Once we had a demonstrable strategic interest in Somalia—we supported Siad Barre in an attempt to balance Moscow's support of Mengistu in Ethiopia. Geostrategic and economic interests have also often been easier to identify than they are at present. Absent a direct military threat, many Americans oppose foreign intervention. Others agree that we must respond to clear breaches of international law, like Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Still others argue that American principles of generosity and compassion, and the international leadership position of the United States, demand continued engagement in catastrophic conflicts such as those in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, and Bosnia.

Ultimately, each case of potential intervention will have to be decided on its merits, and the weight of the factors—including understandings of national interest—to be taken into account will surely shift. The number of international involvements will change and priorities regarding them will differ from time to time. Resources may be adequate or limited or stretched too thin. Domestic political circumstances may qualify responses. Decisions regarding interventions will never be easy, and there is every promise that the frequency at which they must be made will not diminish. Such difficult realities beg greater exploration of preventive measures, the development of resources prior to need, and the creation of more imaginative and efficient management of diplomatic, humanitarian, and military efforts.

Because disorders like that in Somalia will not be resolved in time periods much shorter than a generation, it is difficult to draw proper conclusions regarding any one of their phases. Nonetheless, it is possible to keep the record clear on missteps and achievements. In the Somalia case, the U.S. public lost sight, in particular, of the achievements of Operation Restore Hope after the transition to UNOSOM II and the tragic events of October 3, 1993. Had it been better informed on all of these events by the U.S. government and the media, a more balanced view of the U.S. role in the Somalia interventions would obtain—a view that restores hope that humanitarian disaster can be averted and political disorder contained while leaving us properly reserved in our judgment of just when and how often the international community can undertake Somalia-style operations.

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