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Test-firing the ‘new world order’ in Somalia: The US/UN military humanitarian intervention of 1992-1995¹

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Author bio blurb

Lidwien Kapteijns is Kendall/Hodder Professor of History at Wellesley College. Apart from publications about the late precolonial and early colonial history of the Sudan, where she lived and taught for five years, she authored *Women’s voices in a man’s world: women and tradition in northern Somali orature, 1899-1980* (with Maryan Omar Ali, 1999) and co-edited *Mediations of violence in Africa: fashioning new futures from contested pasts* (with A. Richters, 2010). Her most recent book is *Clan cleansing in Somalia: the ruinous legacy of 1991* (2013)

Abstract

The US/UN Military Humanitarian Intervention (MHI) in Somalia has given rise to a vast body of writing to which the MHI’s relationships with Somalis and its devastating political and moral impact *on them* have often remained incidental. This article focusses on how the MHI in Somalia, taken as a

whole, was unable to keep or enforce peace; failed to benefit the humanitarian wellbeing and human rights of ordinary Somalis, and itself caused the latter new violence. With the benefit of hindsight and drawing on recent political and military memoirs, this article analyzes how the US leadership of the MHI's first stage (UNITAF) used the discourse of a 'politics-free' humanitarianism to pursue policies that empowered Somali perpetrators of crimes against humanity, undermined the wellbeing of common Somalis and set the UN up for failure in the MHI's second stage (UNOSOM II). It further shows that, during this second stage, the MHI's military dimension came to overwhelm its humanitarian and peace-building focus so that even US/UN drawdown and troop withdrawal rewarded the very Somali perpetrators of crimes against humanity whose violence had provoked the MHI's military overreach and disaster. By evaluating the MHI's actions in, and impact on Somalia, and assessing it as a stage in increasingly militarized global approaches to 'First World' interventions into 'Third World' lives, this article cautions against uncritical support for MHIs as tools for preventing and containing the large-scale violence and human suffering that characterize complex emergencies.

Introduction

No chapter of Somali history has received more attention from international political analysts and scholars than the US/UN Military Humanitarian Intervention (MHI) in Somalia of 1992-1995, and few cases of MHI have given rise to a larger literature of 'lessons learned' than that about the MHI in Somalia. This body of writing is vast. It includes practical proposals to increase the success of future MHIs, as well as more philosophical questions about subjects such as just war theory, the meanings of sovereignty, and the nature and history of humanitarianism and its relationship to human rights. Most recently, the MHI in Somalia, together with other examples of interventions in the context of 'complex emergencies',² has informed analyses of the global political economy and the relationship between the 'developed' countries of the global North and the 'underdeveloped' countries of the global South.³ In

all these contexts, the story of the MHI in Somalia has been told, retold, and retold again in the service of larger arguments about the Post-Cold War world and the roles in it of the UN, US, humanitarian relief organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other powerful, national and international political institutions.

Very few of these studies trace the history of the MHI in relationship to political developments inside Somalia or consider the impact on Somalia and common Somalis. Moreover, many repeat US political spin about the first, US-led stage of the MHI, which simply blames the UN for overreach in the MHI's second, UN-led stage. This spin conceals important causes of failure, including how US political leadership, priding itself on its pragmatic attitude towards the politics of 'people like that', knowingly enabled the worst perpetrators of crimes against humanity and, in its hurry to get out of Somalia, set the UN up for failure.

It is the objective of this article is to present, twenty-one years after the launch of the MHI, an updated, concise and critical synthesis and evaluation of the MHI in Somalia that debunks this spin and tries to answer more fully three questions that matter to current debates about the role of MHIs in preventing or containing humanitarian disasters and occurrences of large-scale violence against civilians. First, how did the label of humanitarianism, from the beginning, make possible an anti-political,⁴ allegedly politics-free public stance that concealed an intensely political and unethical set of policies that have largely remained unacknowledged? Second, what was the relationship between the humanitarian and military dimensions of the MHI in Somalia and how did military actions come to overwhelm and undermine the humanitarian concerns for the wellbeing of common Somalis? Third, because the context in which the story of the Somali MHI must be understood has itself changed over time and thus has a history as well, what can we learn from examining the MHI in Somalia as a stage in, and measure of, changing approaches to global security and the increased militarisation and securitisation of humanitarian aid and crisis intervention since 2001?

This study will draw on analyses written by scholar-practitioners with Somali expertise at the time of the MHI⁵ but also on new sources (such as memoirs by participants and studies of human rights violations by the troops) and on insights into what transpired in southern Somali in the wake of the MHI. No other in-depth assessment of the Somali dimension of this MHI's overall history that incorporates such new knowledge currently exists.

The structure of this article will be as follows. After sketching the political background to regime and state collapse in Somalia, and the US and UN decisions to intervene, it will first analyze the consequences for Somalis and the UN of the narrow, anti-political interpretation of the humanitarian and military mandate by the US leadership of UNITAF or Operation Restore Hope (ORH), the first stage of the MHI in Somalia. It will then discuss how the broad and ambitious, political and peace-building goals of UNOSOM II, the MHI's second stage, fell by the wayside, as first the use disproportionate military force followed by unprincipled draw-down and troop withdrawal left the field to the very warlords whose violence had provoked that force. The failure of a UN peace-building mission to prevent ordinary Somalis from violation by its own soldiers, let alone Somali warlord violence, is part and parcel of the lessons to be learned from this demoralizing historical episode. This study will conclude with situating the Somali MHI in relation to the post-2001 history of 'First World' efforts to contain 'Third World' crises.

Background to the situation in Somalia

The military regime that ruled Somalia from 1969 to 1991 was oppressive, divisive and (from 1978 onwards) guilty of large-scale violence against civilians. Because military dictator M.S. Barre refused to step down and leave the capital when his regime lost control of the country, his expulsion from Mogadishu in January 1991 took the form of a popular uprising and the armed take-over of the city by the militias of the opposition front called USC (United Somali Congress). In the context of the general

violence that ensued, the USC under General M.F. Aidid, upon entering Mogadishu, implemented a key shift. Mobilizing its own supporters in the name of a particular clan construct (that of Hawiye-ness), it divided the popular movement against Barre by violently imposing a new, clan-based order. Through clan hate-propaganda that falsely painted all individuals of Barre's Daarood 'clan family' as regime supporters and beneficiaries, it mounted a large-scale campaign of clan cleansing against them, that is to say, enabled and incited ordinary Somalis to eliminate other civilians and terrorize them into abandoning the capital and large parts of the country. While it targeted these so-called 'Barre leftovers' for obliteration and expulsion, it welcomed into its midst those top leaders of the Barre regime who were of its own clan. The USC's targeted campaign of clan-based mass killings and expulsions of tens of thousands of individuals lasted more than two years and affected some of northwest and all of south-central and southern Somalia.⁶ Because international attention was focussed on the expulsion of the dictator and the inciters to clan cleansing controlled access to news from Somalia, the nature of this large-scale clan-based violence against civilians was at the time largely ignored.

Some of the survivors of this clan-cleansing campaign reorganized militarily and struck back at the USC and its allies, also committing atrocities. As the battle lines moved back and forth, clan-based militias in shifting alliances with either of these two sides, as well as gangs of free-booting thugs, killed, raped and looted whatever they could use or sell abroad, purposefully targeting civilian populations associated with enemy clans.⁷ This 'war of the militias', exacerbated by a region-wide drought, caused a devastating famine whose total number of victims is estimated at approximately 212,000–248,000.⁸ The humanitarian relief organizations (HROs) involved in delivering food aid to the starving found roads blocked, convoys attacked and food diverted. These circumstances continued even after they began to hire thousands of Somali armed guards from the very warlords whose clan-based militias were attacking their convoys.⁹ It was the famine that prompted first the food airlift from Kenya (Operation Provide Relief, August–December 1992), in which the US military participated, and then

the dispatch of a tiny UN peacekeeping mission (UNOSOM I, June 1991–February 1992). When the US offered to lead a much larger effort, the UN Security Council authorized the US-led military humanitarian intervention called Operation Restore Hope (ORS) or UNITAF (December 1992–May 1993), which was followed by the UN-led UNOSOM II (May 1993–February 1995). Only the latter two were *military* humanitarian interventions and under study here.

Background to the US and UN decisions to intervene

On 3 December 1992, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 794 that accepted the US offer to lead a MHI in famine-stricken Somalia and, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, authorized it to use ‘all necessary means’ to establish ‘as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations’.¹⁰ Once this was accomplished, it was understood that the US would hand the operation over to the UN to build on this achievement. Unusual about this resolution was not just the authorization of the use of all necessary force but also its disregard of Somali national sovereignty, justified, also under Chapter VII, in terms of the threat the Somali crisis posed to ‘international peace and security’.¹¹ In the absence of a functioning national Somali government, UNITAF, in the person of the Special Representative of President Bush to Somalia, Robert B. Oakley, nevertheless obtained the consent—rather arbitrarily, one might argue—of the two armed faction-leaders fighting over the control of Mogadishu.

What were the US government’s motives in taking this initiative? There is general agreement among analysts that President George Bush, a lame-duck president at the time of the decision, saw the intervention as a gesture towards his publicly articulated vision of a peaceful ‘new world order’, in which Cold War politics as usual had been suspended. Somalia was to be the poster child of this new order, as, in contrast to the recently won Gulf War (2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991), the US had no *obvious* national (strategic or energy-related) interest at stake here.¹² As national security advisor Brent

Scott put it, ‘So if you look at Somalia, it’s Third World, it’s black, it’s Muslim. It had everything going for it in terms of making a judgment’.¹³ UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali envisioned an expanded role for the UN in post-Cold War world affairs. Because the UN Department of Peacekeeping could not match the capabilities of the US army, he accepted US leadership.¹⁴

At the end of November 1992, the decision-making process in Washington, DC took a sudden and unexpected turn. During a meeting on 21 November 1992, it was the representative of General Colin Powell (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, initially *not* pro-intervention), who suddenly outdid State Department proponents in pushing for intervention.¹⁵ Moreover, when different scenarios were proposed to Bush himself, the option chosen was not just a US-led, UN approved military intervention but a military intervention that was twice as large as the largest option on the table. Menkhaus and Ortmyer have called it not just the ‘sledgehammer option’ but ‘a doubling in size of the sledgehammer option’.¹⁶

Analysts have pointed at a number of explanations for the US military’s unexpectedly strong support for the MHI in Somalia: the triumphant mood—some have called it hubris—that characterized the White House and the Pentagon after military success in the first Gulf War; the conviction that an operation in Somalia was militarily doable and would deflect political pressures to intervene in Bosnia, which General Powell believed was undoable;¹⁷ perhaps the desire to show the incoming Clinton administration, regarded as likely to cut the military budget, that the US military still had a significant role to play after the Cold War, and possibly the fact that the military had just completed a large-scale training exercise simulating famine intervention in Northeast Africa.¹⁸ No wonder that Blumenthal suggested that the MHI ‘was only incidentally about the Somalis’ and that Somalia was simply an arena to implement and try out larger agendas and experiments.¹⁹

There were other influences on the US’s decision to intervene. The role of the press—the so-called ‘CNN effect’—has been exaggerated as a causal factor of UNITAF,²⁰ but the intensive lobbying

for a US military intervention by HROs already working in Somalia, especially by the director of CARE, played an important and, in the eyes of some, unseemly role.²¹ The few humanitarian and human rights organizations that spoke out against the MHI in Somalia argued that more limited alternatives had not been exhausted and that the intervention was based on false information about the Somali situation and would not solve the political crisis in Somalia.²²

The core-principles of UNITAF, as articulated by Bush and Powell and repeated as mantra by UNITAF's leadership in Somalia, were its premise of overwhelming military force, its narrow interpretation of its mandate's humanitarian focus, and the brief time-span of the operation. Over time, analysts and scholars have come to see all these core-principles as liabilities to the operation's success as measured in humanitarian terms, that is to say by improvements in the lives of ordinary Somalis. The analysis that follows will highlight five aspects of the UNITAF stage of the MHI: the unsound politics behind the humanitarian façade; the disdain for Somali politics; the enabling of warlords, especially of the USC's General Aidid, and the refusal to seriously undertake disarmament and institution building, which undermined both the MHI and the UN.

UNITAF: flawed politics behind a humanitarian façade

The politics behind the humanitarian façade

Few analysts contest that UNITAF's 39,000 troops, especially the 28,000 US troops with their awesome logistical capacity, successfully opened up corridors for food convoys; built, repaired and upgraded port facilities, air strips and roads, and established nine Human Relief Sectors that covered the worst-affected parts of south and south-central Somalia. An estimated number of 10,000—15,000 individuals were saved from starvation during UNITAF's brief time-span, fewer than expected because the famine turned out to have peaked when the MHI began.²³ Six weeks after the 9 December 1992 landing, UNITAF's military commanders announced that their mission had been accomplished and that

they were ready to hand over to the UN.²⁴ However, while achieving this initial security for certain corridors of humanitarian relief distribution, UNITAF's presence and policies had a political impact that had immediately begun to undermine that security.

UNITAF leadership's constantly repeated public claims that the MHI would not influence the balance of power between the parties of the conflict in Somalia were of course unrealistic.²⁵ That large-scale food aid in the context of a 'complex emergency' such as Somalia inevitably had political consequences, even in the absence of a military dimension, had been well established by the time UNITAF was launched.²⁶ Given that the Somali famine was 'man-made', that is to say, was caused, in the context of drought, by warlords who used food and food aid to support their own war machine and prevented it from reaching civilians considered hostile or just insignificant to their cause, it was evident that UNITAF's military presence in Somalia would have a political impact on these warlords. The failure to admit this and publicly articulate an overarching political strategy and vision for Somalia created an arbitrary and murky space in which Oakley and his team took actions that were inherently and intentionally political and partial.

This was obvious even before the UNITAF troops landed on 9 December. Because Mogadishu was to be the major entry point of the troops, Oakley had brokered a fragile reconciliation between the two Mogadishu warlords, M. F. Aidid and Ali Mahdi. By giving them official recognition and even flying their representatives to the UN headquarters in New York, UNITAF raised their importance not only vis-à-vis the other leaders of armed, clan-based factions, but also in relation to ordinary civilians. Given that the port, airport, and the now reclaimed, huge US embassy compound, were located in South Mogadishu, Aidid's turf, UNITAF's decision to establish both the US and UN headquarters there made some practical sense but also had political implications. As the US military commanders bunked down in the ruins of the embassy compound, Oakley rented the so-called Conoco compound, located at a stone's throw of Aidid's own residence in a neighbourhood largely owned by Hasan Osman 'Aato,

Aidid's major financier and arms supplier.²⁷ Over the whole duration of the MHI, even when the US mounted the search-and-capture-Aidid mission in the summer of 1993, huge amounts of money—literally hundreds of thousands of dollars—poured into Aidid's faction's coffers for the rent of large villas, 'technicals' and their crews of armed guards, and other services that made up Aidid's protection racket. All of these decisions were political. Moreover, they not only favored Aidid but also flew in the face of the policy of regionalization initiated during UNOSOM I, which would have avoided making Mogadishu and its two leading armed-faction leaders the major focus.²⁸

That Oakley, and not Ismat Kittani (Boutros-Ghali's Special Representative), dominated the leadership of this UN mission is unanimously confirmed, even by Oakley himself.²⁹ Appointed by Bush, approved by Powell, reporting to Frank Wisner, Under-Secretary for International Security Affairs, Oakley 'had neither received lengthy briefings nor detailed instructions' and was 'given substantial free rein in the field'.³⁰ Moreover, UNITAF's military leaders, Lt.Gen. Robert Johnston, UNITAF Commander, and Brig.Gen. Anthony Zinni, UNITAF Deputy for Operations, took Oakley's direct lead from the very moment they landed in Mogadishu and immediately fell in with his approach to Somali politics and political players.³¹ Rejecting the UN's agenda and refusing to publicly articulate a political agenda to which UNITAF's military force could be harnessed, Oakley filled the political space UNITAF opened up with his own highly subjective, intensely political, often improvised, and ultimately inconsistent attitudes and policies.³²

A significant aspect of Oakley's political subjectivity was his attitude towards Somali politics. Oakley saw Somali sectarian politics through the lens of his experiences at the US embassy in Beirut. The lesson he had drawn from Hizbullah's massacre of 241 Marines there in October of 1983 was that the US should not become mired in this kind of politics and should avoid making permanent enemies or being perceived as partisan at all costs. Getting local politics wrong, being caught in the middle of other people's civil wars, imposing external values unsuitable to their culture, and anything that

smacked of ‘nation-building’ (as he called all forms of internationally-assisted institution-building) was anathema to him. He found Somalia and its ‘often violent struggles between clans’ exceptionally hard to understand and regarded it as an ‘unusually poor choice for’ an ‘experiment in “nation-building”’.³³ This attitude towards interventions in general and his view of Somalis as ‘others’ whose sectarian politics were unsolvable blinded Oakley to ethical issues that should have been relevant to a peacekeeping mission.³⁴ One such aspect was that General Aidid was guilty crimes against humanity that were still ongoing in December 1992.³⁵

Waltzing with warlords, building up Aidid, and undermining the UN

Given that the clan-cleansing campaign and the war of the militias had been the major cause of the famine that triggered the MHI, it came as a shock to many Somali and other observers that Oakley and UNITAF, immediately upon arrival, embraced Aidid and ‘waltzed with the warlords’ more generally. They wondered how large-scale crimes against humanity could be irrelevant to a humanitarian intervention³⁶ and why UNITAF would bring in 39,000 troops to simply rush to treat as legitimate authorities a set of warlords who deserved to be hauled in front of a criminal court.³⁷

Oakley’s claims to political neutrality and impartiality were further discredited when he favored some warlords over others. Oakley had been US ambassador to Somalia from 1982 to 1984, during a highly repressive stage of the military regime of Barre, who had forced him out. This may have influenced Oakley’s close relationship with Aidid, who had been instrumental in overthrowing Barre, and his refusal to have any dealings with General Mohamed Hersi ‘Morgan’, Barre’s die-hard defender and son-in-law, who had been in charge of the regime’s brutal repression of the 1988 uprising in the northwest.³⁸ Cutting off Morgan but embracing Aidid, the architect and engine of the clan-cleansing campaign that was still ongoing in December 1992, undermined Oakley’s and UNITAF’s claims to

impartiality. Africa Watch drew the justified conclusion that ‘political considerations, not their human rights records’, accounted for Oakley’s differential treatment of the Somali warlords.³⁹

Anthony Zinni, who served as Oakley’s official deputy in dealing with Aidid and Ali Mahdi, offers insights into the US team’s political attitude towards Aidid in his memoirs (Clancy 2004). He expresses no awareness of Aidid’s role in the USC clan-cleansing campaign of 1991-1992 or the brutal infighting with Ali Mahdi’s faction of the USC in Mogadishu from November 1991 onwards. Although he describes in some detail the unpredictable bipolarity of Aidid’s personality and behavior (his rational and reasonable versus his angry, dark moods), Zinni makes it clear that, in the eyes of the US team, Aidid was more eloquent, authoritative, statesman-like and powerful than Ali Mahdi and appeared to be the only one who had any chance of unifying Somalia under him. Zinni wrote, ‘For all the uncertainties of working with him, he was far and away the one person who might have led this country. His organization was actually a mini-government with all the bureaucratic trappings {including – improbably – a Minister of Tourism}’. Aidid handed out ballpoints with the logo of his faction and wrote letters on paper with an embossed seal. When Zinni asked about this, Aidid answered: ““You need administration, bureaucracy, and detail to run a country ... and only I have it””. ‘He was right’, Zinni commented. ‘None of the warlords had anything like it’.⁴⁰

In sum, Oakley and UNITAF’s favoring of Aidid appears to have been in part inadvertent, as the General controlled the most strategic part of Mogadishu; in part politically opportunistic, as Aidid appeared to be the strongman most likely to win; in part personal, as Oakley bore grudges against men formerly in the Barre camp who were now Aidid’s enemies, and in part a tactic and ruse to keep Aidid hopeful and cooperative.⁴¹ All of these attitudes and policies, however, had real and ultimately counter-productive political implications and consequences.

Oakley’s embrace of Aidid also played a role in UNITAF’s relationship with the UN. From even before UNITAF troops had arrived, Aidid had managed to play the US and UN off against each

other. Although UNITAF was a ‘unified mission’, in reality it was run by the US team, with Oakley encroaching on the UN’s authority to oversee relations with the Somalis and the UN’s Ismat Kittani, who was reportedly resentful, non-collaborative, and totally overshadowed and outclassed.⁴² However, the US team even appears to have taken pleasure in seeing the UN humbled. When President Bush’s visit to Mogadishu occurred without any discordant note, while that of UN Secretary-General two days later was so disturbed by Aidid-organized demonstrations that Boutros-Ghali could not even reach the UN’s Mogadishu headquarters, the US team appears to have regarded this with some self-satisfaction.⁴³ Making the environment secure for Boutros-Ghali was not part of the latter’s agenda, which appears to have tolerated (if not enabled) Aidid’s acting out against the UN in ways that empowered Aidid at UN expense.

There were two substantial policy areas in which UNITAF’s US team disregarded the agenda of Boutros-Ghali and directly leveraged Washington to impose its will on the UN. The first issue concerned the interpretation of the mandate to establish a secure environment. The US team insisted that their mandate clearly specified that this meant *only* securing corridors for the safe delivery of food aid. The UN, however, saw the mandate as ‘creating generally secure conditions in which the UN could freely operate’ and demanded that UNITAF undertake a large-scale campaign of disarmament.⁴⁴ The US team called this unfeasible and incompatible with its policy of preventing armed conflict with the warlords and the limited time-span of the operation. Boutros-Ghali, on the other hand, felt that a considerable degree of disarmament was part of the MHI’s *raison d’être* and that passing the MHI on to the UN without it meant handing it a poisoned apple. Ignoring the formal UN hierarchy and appealing directly to Washington and the capitals of other troop-contributing UN member states, Oakley’s US team got their way.⁴⁵ In response, Boutros-Ghali refused to commit to a date for the handover.⁴⁶

The second policy area in which the US team disregarded and even derided and ridiculed the UN was that of institution building. Shaped in part by his experience in Vietnam, where he had been

charged with building democratic institutions just before US military withdrawal and the capture of the South by communist North Vietnam, Oakley (as well as Johnston and Powell) repeatedly spoke out against chasing the chimera of institution- and ‘nation-building’.⁴⁷ They would later falsely attribute the failure of the UN-led, second stage of the MHI to the UN’s misguided ambition for ‘nation-building’.⁴⁸ As Powell disdainfully and caustically put it, ‘Boutros-Ghali reasoned that since the catastrophe had been provoked by feuding fourteenth-century-style warlords, the solution was a dose of twentieth-century-style democracy’.⁴⁹

However, the UNITAF plot thickens further for, in spite of all statements to the contrary, the opposites of the policies outlined above were also pursued. Thus, in the course of February 1993 and perhaps under pressure of the State Department, UNITAF *also* began to pursue grass-roots alternatives to warlord rule by holding town meetings, setting up district and regional councils, and establishing a small police force in four cities.⁵⁰ This was definitely institution building. Oakley and Zinni later somewhat minimized these efforts, Oakley by referring to them as minor ‘extra-curricular activities’ and Zinni by calling them ‘mission-creep’, explaining how one thing led to another.⁵¹ What is more, in spite of the adamant rejection of any suggestions that it undertake a campaign of disarmament, UNITAF’s troops *did* engage in such a process, although they did so intermittently, inconsistently, and sometimes arbitrarily, claiming it as an achievement and maintaining deniability at the same time.⁵²

In the context of what was announced as the impending handover of the MHI from the US to the UN, these policies alienated and angered Aidid, whose hopes of becoming president of Somalia under US auspices began to melt away. Accusing UNITAF of favoring Morgan in an incident in Kismaayo on 22 February 1993,⁵³ Aidid organized large and violent anti-American demonstrations in the streets of Mogadishu on 24-26 February 1993. Although UNITAF, after forcibly suppressing the violence, played it down, in his memoirs Zinni admits that it shattered public (including UN and HRO) confidence in the security of the environment.⁵⁴ It appears that this incident soured Oakley on Aidid.

Around this same time Oakley publicly characterized his policy towards the warlords as gradually plucking the feathers from a bird until the unsuspecting animal suddenly found it could no longer fly⁵⁵ and emphasized that ‘I haven’t seen anyone here who I would think of as a national figure’.⁵⁶ Thus Aidid had been alienated well before the transition to UNOSOM II on 4 May and UNITAF’s policy towards the general had already begun to collapse under its own contradictions.⁵⁷

Setting the UN up for failure

Any hope that a two-track policy of encouraging civilian grassroots leadership and marginalizing the warlords might succeed was cut short by UNITAF’s short time-span, insisted on by both the Pentagon and military authorities on the ground. Johnston had begun to withdraw some troops in mid-January and on 4 February 1993 had declared UNITAF’s mission accomplished.⁵⁸ However, the more time passed, the less stable the security environment proved to be. Desperate to get out, the UNITAF team turned up the positive political spin. The Washington Post of 3 March read: Oakley ‘was upbeat about the accomplishments of the US military mission here. Starvation has ended, feeding stations are being turned into schools, *and the days of clan warfare, “which has taken so many Somali lives, is virtually gone”*, he said’.⁵⁹ Oakley had added, somewhat cynically, ‘You can’t travel around Mogadishu in a car without being in great danger of robbery. But at least you can walk around with food’.⁶⁰

When Johnston and Zinni were finally able to leave Somalia, two months after Oakley’s departure, their confidence in the security situation in Mogadishu had plummeted further. As they were driving to the airport, immediately after the official handover ceremony, Johnston stopped the convoy. Zinni described the scene that followed: ‘He looked up at the bright sunny sky. “I give this place thirty days”, he said, “and then it’s all going to hell”’. ‘Thirty days later’, Zinni added, referring to Aidid’s 6 June attack on the Pakistani peacekeepers, ‘this prediction came true’.⁶¹ However, when the UN

officially asked Johnston about the worst case-scenario in Somalia, he had referred only to street riots such as the demonstrations organized by Aidid at the end of February 1993.⁶²

Within hours of the hand-over ceremony, the last US Marines were withdrawn from Mogadishu. Apparently only Powell was aware of this sudden departure, as not even the State Department, let alone the UN, had been informed. Richard Clarke of the National Security Council later described his surprise: 'UNITAF bolted out of Somalia', he said, 'and there was a security vacuum that UNOSOM was never able to fill'.⁶³ Admiral Jonathan Howe, the incoming UN Special Representative who was to head UNOSOM II, noted with bitterness that the 'UNITAF commanders defined victory by getting out, not getting the job done'.⁶⁴ Thus UNITAF, in early May 1993, 'bolted out of Somalia' with its military commanders explicitly denying in public what they acknowledged in private: that the security situation they were handing over to UNOSOM II was partial, fragile, and, especially in Mogadishu, only apparent.⁶⁵

The analysis that follows emphasizes UNOSOM II's humanitarian dimension as measured by its impact on Somali wellbeing and its military dimension as characterized by its increased dependence on the US military. Somali agency, especially the actions of Aidid, also forms a major theme.

UNOSOM II: A disastrous military end to a political and humanitarian program

UNOSOM II was established by Security Council Resolution 814 of 26 March 1993. If UNITAF had been almost exclusively a US operation and a UN one mostly in the sense of deriving its authority from the Security Council, the new mission was to be fully, operationally and otherwise, under UN command. UNOSOM II was an extension of UNITAF's 'humanitarian assistance operation',⁶⁶ now with the broad political goals of the rehabilitation of government institutions, infrastructure and the economy; continued humanitarian relief; the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced, and national reconciliation. It was also a new iteration of the traditional UN

peacekeeping mission, namely a *peace enforcement* operation with authority to use all necessary means.

Although UNOSOM II inherited from UNITAF a hazardous security situation, in its own right too it proved to be flawed in practically all its aspects.⁶⁷ These defects included, apart from the UN's own handling of the transition, its ambiguous approach to Somali sovereignty;⁶⁸ its convoluted and non-unified command structure; its weak and underdeveloped civilian support structure; the contradictory rules of engagement observed by the thirty-something different national troop contingents that made up the UNOSOM II coalition; its inconsistent observance of humanitarian law and disregard for human rights violations, and its unprincipled, cowardly, and wasteful relations with Somalis.

In combination with the continued insecurity of the overall environment, UNOSOM II's failure to translate its political goals into concrete policies and operational stages resulted in a stark contradiction and irony: in the very mission that set out to rectify UNITAF's narrow interpretation of its mandate, it was demands for security and thus a narrowly military dimension that came to dominate. This led to a second contradictory aspect of the operation, namely that authority came to be concentrated in US hands, US *military* hands. In theory and in contrast to UNITAF, UNOSOM II was a peace enforcement mission led by the UN, with overall authority invested in the Special Representative of the Secretary General. Nevertheless, given the command structure worked out between Washington and New York, it was US military men who dominated the top leadership and it was US military approaches and operations that came to overwhelm the still-born political agenda and—in circumstances in which Somali agency played a crucial role—caused failure.⁶⁹ In this process, as a third irony, UNOSOM II's avowed humanitarian concerns for Somali wellbeing were trampled under foot.

Military endgame: the war with Aidid

The story of UNOSOM II's slide into urban warfare against General Aidid is part of the oft-repeated story of 'Black-Hawk-down'. Before June 1993, a number of incidents, some of them perhaps poorly handled by UNOSOM II and exploited by Aidid, had intensified the latter's alienation, which pre-dated the handover. However, 6 June 1993 became a watershed. On that date, when a group of Pakistani peacekeepers received orders to inspect one of Aidid's authorized weapons storage sites that also housed his Somali-language radio station, the general's supporters attacked Pakistani soldiers in different parts of town, killing twenty-four (of whom some were mutilated) and wounding many more. Whether the way and context in which this inspection was carried out was provocative or not—it was—and whether the violence was planned and ordered by Aidid or not—it indeed was—letting this show of grisly violence simply pass without any response would have meant jeopardizing UNOSOM II's mission as a whole.⁷⁰ As Menkhaus put it, the question is not whether UNOSOM II should have responded but whether it did so effectively.⁷¹ As it happened, after a hasty Security Council Resolution charging it to apprehend those responsible for the killings, UNOSOM II went to war against Aidid. However, the fate of this war was ultimately determined by UNOSOM II's US military commanders, taking their orders from the US military and using US special forces and military hardware.

The campaign of air attacks on Mogadishu went on for three months. It terrified and humiliated Somali residents of the targeted neighbourhoods of the city with loud noise and rotor-wash and caused high levels of death and devastation.⁷² Some attacks, such as the air assault of 12 July on the house where faction leaders and clan elders had apparently gathered to call Aidid to account, killed scores of civilians and were clear violations of humanitarian law.⁷³ It was in this highly charged context, in which Aidid became both a hero and a terrible liability to his own supporters, that on 3 October 1993 US special forces unit Task Force Ranger mounted a 'surgical operation' that ran into trouble. When Aidid's militiamen shot down two Black Hawk helicopters above their neighbourhood, the remaining

US soldiers were pinned down. Only the next morning, after a firefight of sixteen hours, could they be rescued. The Somali fighters killed eighteen US soldiers, mutilated the bodies of several, and—staging savagery as a taunt and deterrent—dragged two half-naked bodies through the streets.⁷⁴

Sidestepping Boutros-Ghali and Admiral Howe, President Clinton recalled Oakley (with Zinni) to return to Mogadishu to obtain the release of the captured pilot, demand a cease-fire, and make a deal with Aidid. Oakley performed this reversal of policy with pomp. In early December, he sent Aidid to a new round of Somali reconciliation talks in Addis Ababa by military aircraft and guarded by US troops. In the US, where many saw this as disrespectful of the casualties of 3 October, a senator called it ‘one of the most schizophrenic acts in recent history’.⁷⁵ That rewarding the perpetration of ‘conspicuous atrocities’⁷⁶ did not serve the interests of common Somalis proved irrelevant. Although Clinton sent military reinforcements in an unsuccessful attempt to save face, he also announced the withdrawal of all US troops by March 1994. The new troops had no mission but self-protection and waiting for drawdown. The ‘bullet-proof nomad’, as some dubbed Aidid, had won the battle, if not the war.⁷⁷ As Maren put it, ‘Operation Restore Hope had become Operation Don’t Fuck up Again’.⁷⁸

After the final withdrawal of US troops in March 1994, UNOSOM II hung on for another year. By then it had become little more than ‘a self-licking ice cream’.⁷⁹ What of the daily expenditure of \$2.5 million dollars was not simply spent on sustaining the huge mission was largely paid out as protection moneys to the very warlords who made such protection indispensable, including very prominently General Aidid. For a while, around February 1994, there were reportedly even plans to try to constitute a national government headed by Aidid.⁸⁰ Unable to distinguish Somali friends and foes, UNOSOM II ended up mistrusting all and mistreating many. The remaining UN personnel, now almost exclusively drawn from developing countries, hunkered down behind the eighty-acre walled UN compound dubbed ‘MogaDisney’, in Hartley’s words, ‘a sort of theme park to the New World Order’.⁸¹ This further normalized views that the ‘Sammies’ and ‘Skinnies’ residing outside, in ‘Indian territory’,

were despised and savage racial others.⁸² By the time drawn-down ended on 15 March 1995, the Somali armed factions were simply holding UNOSOM II hostage.

Three anecdotes about the final military withdrawal illustrate the fate of the MHI's humanitarian concerns. At the end of February 1995, Brig.Gen. Anthony Zinni returned to Somalia once more, this time at the head of a US Marines' operation called United Shield that was to oversee and implement the UN's final withdrawal by sea. In his memoirs he describes the challenges of moving UN troops and personnel out as different Somali armed factions simultaneously tried to move into the evacuated sites. Although UNOSOM II reportedly paid the factions \$1 million a day for to *not* violently interfering with troop withdrawal,⁸³ such interference nevertheless occurred. As a result, Zinni had to invoke the help of warlord Hasan Osman 'Aato, formerly with Aidid 's but now heading his own faction, who "rolled out his super-technicals (big, military-type trucks armed with heavy crew-served weapons such as quad fifty antiaircraft guns)' to defeat the 'bad guys'.⁸⁴ Zinni had to stand by as Aidid, in violation of the agreements made, took over the airport,⁸⁵ and later felt compelled to order his snipers to 'take out' a number of 'rogue gunmen'. When news reporters later pressed him for the numbers killed, Zinni writes: 'My response got a lot of coverage. "I don't count bodies", I countered. "This isn't Vietnam"'.⁸⁶ This expression of military license is a measure of the fate of UNOSOM II's lofty goals. The section below will analyze UNOSOM II's impact on the wellbeing of common Somalis in more detail.

The failure to protect ordinary Somalis

Like UNITAF, UNOSOM II ended up empowering the very warlords who were undermining its success. It had opened in May 1993 with a commitment to developing Somali political institutions beyond the armed factions of the warlords and their clan-based militias. However, after its war with Aidid (6 June - 3 October) it adopted practically the same policy UNITAF had: bet on the warlords,

persuade some of them to collaborate with you, get them to sign some sort of agreement, and get out. By mid-March 1994 it had abandoned efforts to empower alternative, civilian Somali leadership.⁸⁷

Economically, too, the warlords, especially those in Mogadishu, gained enormously from UNOSOM II. In early 1994 the latter employed 11,000 Somalis in Mogadishu alone. An aid of Aidid controlled the currency exchange by which UNOSOM dollars were converted into Somali shillings; another headed the local staffing office, which hired armed guards, drivers, and other personnel for the UN, and yet other Aidid associates rented houses and vehicles to the UN. On top of this, ‘Aato, then still with Aidid, won large UN construction contracts that continued even during the war on Aidid, whose percentage on such contracts was estimated at 30-50%.⁸⁸

This increase in economic power directly led to a military strengthening of the warlords and, as the MHI entered its lame-duck phase, to serious infighting between and within armed factions about every important strategic resource, whether (formerly) national, public or private property.⁸⁹ In Mogadishu and its hinterland, this meant the Mogadishu airport, seaport, and road to the airport; the banana plantations and other rich agricultural lands; fisheries and fishermen’s labour, and so forth. Under the apparently unseeing eyes of UNOSOM II, the USC leaders and rank-and-file militia members expanded into the large Mogadishu - Beledweyne - Kismaayo triangle, where they controlled trade and transportation routes, as well as agricultural production and fishing, and either displaced the existing population or subjected it to forced labour.⁹⁰ A part of the Jubba Valley (from Jamaame to Jilib) came under the control of ‘Aato, who reportedly exploited local labour to grow bananas and marijuana for export. The local population suffered.⁹¹

In contrast to UNITAF, which had as a matter of principle steered clear from involvement in violence between Somalis, UNOSOM II’s failure to protect Somalis from warlord violence violated its explicit mandate ‘to assume responsibility for the consolidation, expansion and maintenance of a secure environment throughout Somalia’.⁹² UN/US forces did not protect Somali civilians from political

violence such as dispossession, displacement, occupation, and exploitation, and had no orders to provide such protection.⁹³ Throughout the twenty-seven months of UNITAF and UNOSOM II presence, perpetrators of crimes against humanity enjoyed impunity and in many cases consolidated their gains. In spite of references to holding perpetrators accountable and helping Somalis reconcile, both stages of the MHI normalized and reinforced the power of the perpetrators of large-scale human rights violations in Somali politics and society.

UNOSOM II also failed to protect ordinary Somalis from disproportional violence perpetrated by its own troops. During the four months of warfare against Aidid in 1993, US and UN forces used disproportionate force that was completely unsuitable to warfare in a dense, urban environment and did not distinguish sufficiently between combatants and non-combatants.⁹⁴ For example, on 12 July 1993 UNOSOM II combat helicopters discharged 16 anti-tank missiles and 2000 rounds of 20mm cannon fire on the gathering in the house of Abdi Qaybidid. Seventy-three people, including women and children, are believed to have been killed and scores of people wounded.⁹⁵ In the case of the 'Black-Hawk-down' incident of 3 October, the number of casualties is unknown but, throughout the sixteen hours of fighting, combat helicopters strafed the streets around the helicopter crash sites with gunfire. When General Montgomery testified before Congress on 12 May 1994, he noted, 'if we had put one more ounce of lead on South Mogadishu in the night of 3 and 4 October, I believe it would have sunk'.⁹⁶ What such fire was capable of doing on the ground is evident from the account of a US soldier who described what happened to a group of Somalis who had gathered close to his location: 'A Little Bird swooped in and threw a flaming wall of lead at it. Those who didn't fall, fled. One moment there was a crowd, and the next instant it was just a bleeding heap of dead and injured'.⁹⁷

A final failure of the MHI to protect Somalis concerned the serious human rights abuses perpetrated by UNITAF and UNOSOM II troops against Somali individuals outside of military operations. The most in-depth study of this widespread phenomenon is that by Sherene Razack about

abuses by Canadian troops in Beledweyne.⁹⁸ During the most notorious incident, that of 16 March 1993, a 16-year old youth called Shidane Abubakr Arone, who tried to cross the Canadian base's perimeter fence, was tortured to death during a gruesome four-hour session. In this time-period, the major perpetrator's superior and a good number of fellow soldiers entered the room, witnessed what was going on, and did not register the mistreatment as out of the ordinary. An estimated eighty soldiers heard the youth, scream, howl, yelp—their terms—but, while some commented about this to each other, all went to sleep without even thinking about intervening; they often heard screams at night.⁹⁹

Reports on cases of abuse by soldiers of the Italian and Belgian contingents that came into the open all similarly emphasized how normalized and routine the violent abuse of Somalis was. The Belgian authorities investigated first seven and then 268 cases, of which fifty-eight concerned death or serious injury.¹⁰⁰ During the Italian investigations, there was reference to 'an avalanche of murdered Somalis',¹⁰¹ while the Belgian cases suggested the conclusion that for the soldiers 'inflicting pain' on Somali civilians 'was part of their everyday life'.¹⁰² Razack found four commonalities in these widespread practices of abuse: soldiers committed them openly with others participating or present; soldiers recorded and documented them through video tapes, trophy photographs, and in diaries; the victims were often children and male youths and, finally, racism was a major and integral part of the motivation of the perpetrators.¹⁰³ That UNOSOM II was unable to protect ordinary Somali from political violence; lacked the interest and the will to do so, and itself added to the violence such Somalis were already suffering is a clear indication that military force overwhelmed its humanitarian dimension.

In the aftermath of the MHI in Somalia, the UN, US and most western countries turned their back on Somalia. Only after the terror attacks of September 2001 did the 'failed state' of Somalia gradually gain new international attention, mostly because of security concerns related to the increased prominence of Somali jihadist movements and the further internationalization of illegal economic

activities, especially piracy. In Somalia, the civil war continued. Aidid proclaimed himself president in June 1995, but, once the MHI was over, lost his advantage over other warlords. Wounded during fighting in Mogadishu, he died in July 1996.

Conclusion

For many years after 1991, the MHI in Somalia informed debates by scholars and scholar-practitioners about complex emergencies, ‘ethnic’ civil wars, humanitarianism, military intervention, US foreign policy, the proper role and potential of the UN, and so forth. However, especially since the terror attacks on the US in 2001 and the increased policy focus on global security that governments and inter-governmental organizations developed in its wake, scholars have begun to theorize the role of international interventions in new ways.¹⁰⁴

Four insights from this scholarship have a bearing on our hindsight understanding of the MHI in Somalia. The first is the insight, no longer new, that humanitarian aid ‘has never been, and will never be, neutral’, especially not in the context of complex and permanent emergencies, which most often involve civil wars in which the strong use illegal and violent means to gain power.¹⁰⁵ In such contexts, as was also true for the MHI in Somalia, humanitarian relief was both ‘among the means of conducting the war and part of the prize’.¹⁰⁶ Second, in the Post-Cold War period, international HROs came to function, as McFalls put it, ‘in close symbiosis with states and intergovernmental agencies’.¹⁰⁷ This intertwinement was both financial and organizational, as Western governments and intergovernmental organizations increasingly funneled development and humanitarian aid through HROs rather than directly to African governments. In the early 1990s, NGOs reportedly transferred more resources to Africa than the World Bank.¹⁰⁸ In the MHI in Somalia, this interconnection is also visible in the fact that UNITAF’s mandate was not to provide food aid to starving Somalis but to protect *the*

humanitarian agencies delivering that food, as well as in how HROs lobbied for the intervention and were incorporated into it.¹⁰⁹

Third, this scholarship has accused humanitarianism as a professional field and popular movement of using the morality of its motives and objectives to ignore the political contexts and dimensions of humanitarian interventions and MHIs. Such anti-political or ‘politics-free’ stances allow those implementing interventions, including HROs, to sidestep any serious form of accountability not only in terms of mandates, finances, human rights violations, and effectiveness but also with regard to the impact of political stances, actions, and their implications on the people interventions claim to assist. Such an anti-political stance, recently so evident in the approaches of human rights activists towards Darfur, was, as we saw above, also a central feature of UNITAF.¹¹⁰ In the MHI in Somalia, the humanitarian magnanimity of the dramatic decision to send in almost 30,000 US troops to feed starving Somalis made the suitability of the form of intervention, the political dimensions of that decision, and accountability for its implementation appear irrelevant. This has led to an impunity that is almost absolute for UN, US, and Somali actors alike. This subject requires further research.¹¹¹

Fourth, already at the time of the MHI in Somalia, scholars such as Duffield had pointed out that, in complex or permanent emergencies, humanitarian disaster and political conflict were inherently connected and could not be ‘treated’ separately. After 2001 governments and inter-governmental organizations adopted a new overarching strategic vision of human security to which both humanitarian and development aid agendas and policies were now subordinated. The concept of human security, which had initially served as a measure of how groups of people were meeting their basic needs, became militarized; it was now incorporated in security strategies that aimed at keeping people in crisis secure enough to prevent their refugee flows, disease, terrorism, piracy, international criminal networks and so forth from reaching those *not* in crisis. In this conceptualization of security, populations of the South are no longer in need of development assistance that would usher them into modernity and a

good life, as envisioned in the development paradigms of the 1970s and 1980s; they are, instead, in need of containment *in situ* within what are now considered ‘the zones and “black holes” of chaos’ of our interconnected world.¹¹² In this line of thinking, occasional humanitarian military interventions in catastrophic emergencies (such as that in Somalia in 1992 under study here) are an expected and accepted price to pay for this kind of global security; they are part of a mode of domination that, in the guise of an anti-political, humanitarian responsibility to protect, allows international institutions and HROs of the global North to uncritically assume towards the global South a contemporary version of the ‘White Man’s Burden’ whose (racist) violence remains largely unacknowledged.

One does not have to be in full agreement with this analysis of the contemporary global security paradigm to find it ‘good to think with’, especially about MHIs. It reminds us that the MHI in Somalia fitted into an older set of international templates of managing world (or ‘Third World’) conflict, that of the early Post-Cold War order. Seen in this context, the MHI in Somalia represented a distinct stage in the militarisation of humanitarian aid delivery, crisis intervention and peacekeeping, a stage characterized by three characteristics. First, in this MHI the military dimension completely overwhelmed and canceled out the humanitarian one and even led to the intensification of the violations of Somali people’s human rights. Second, the humanitarian label allowed the MHI’s initial leadership (Oakley) to hide highly subjective political choices that empowered Somalis guilty of human rights violation and crimes against humanity at the expense of the mass of other Somalis. Third, at this moment of Post-Cold War visions of a ‘new world order’, the MHI in Somalia was a tool of empire through which the US government, the analysis above suggests, undermined the UN, first by overwhelming and wresting control over the MHI away from it and then by largely abandoning it and setting it up for failure.¹¹³ This means that, in these three respects, the MHI in Somalia already fitted the modus operandi of what the scholar-practitioners cited above critically refer to as particular forms

of global governance or empire, namely ‘emancipatory’, ‘therapeutic’ or ‘so-called humanitarian’ domination.¹¹⁴

Not part of this stage was the narrow focus on global security that developed after 2001 with the ‘war on terror’. In the security paradigm of the time, Somalia was in the end not considered relevant enough to require the seeing through of any part of UNOSOM II’s agenda or even just containment. The notion of Somalia as an area of chaos endangering global security became prevalent after 2001 when the phenomena of radical Islamist movements in Somalia and piracy gained new significance.¹¹⁵

This essay does not suggest that MHIs can never prevent or relieve large-scale violence against civilians such as that perpetrated by the Somali warlords in 1992, or that the latter bear no responsibility for the Somali MHI’s outcome. However, it is significant that the MHI in Somalia shows that humanitarian concerns for the wellbeing of ordinary Somalis were never the central issue for those who initiated it or directed its implementation and that, as the MHI unfolded, its leaders failed to protect and even aggressively harmed Somali wellbeing. The high price ordinary Somalis paid for becoming ‘the test-firing-range of the New World Order’¹¹⁶ should make us skeptical of any military intervention into complex emergencies that calls itself humanitarian and of a system of international domination that presents itself as ‘therapeutic’ or ‘emancipatory’.

Endnotes

¹ In ‘The Somalia experiment: how will the US disarm the clients of the Cold War?’, *The Village Voice*, 28 September 1993, p. 35, Michael Maren wrote, ‘Somalia in effect became the test-firing range of the New World Order’.

² This is a term that was adopted widely in the 1980s and refers to emergencies emerging in and from civil war.

³ See for scholarly work on practical guidelines, Taylor B. Seybolt, *Humanitarian military interventions: the conditions for success and failure* (Oxford and Stockholm: Oxford University Press and SIPRI, 2007); Thomas G. Weiss, ‘Overcoming the Somalia syndrome—“Operation Rekindle

Hope?\"", *Global Governance*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, pp. 171-187; on philosophical questions, Adam Roberts, 'Humanitarian issues and agencies as triggers for international military action', *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 839 (30 September 2000), pp. 637-698, and Thomas G. Weiss and Cindy Collins, *Humanitarian challenges and interventions* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); on global political economy, Mark Duffield, *Development, security and unending war: governing the world of peoples* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), and Didier Fassin and Marissa Pandolfi, 'Introduction', in Didier Fassin and Marissa Pandolfi (eds.), *Contemporary states of emergency: the politics of military and humanitarian intervention* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), pp. 9-25.

⁴ 'Anti-political', that is, unwilling to acknowledge and articulate an action's or position's political nature.

⁵ Among analysts with Somali expertise, Alex de Waal, Ken Menkhaus, and John Prendergast, all cited below, stand out. The best studies of the transition between UNITAF and UNOSOM II are Jarat Chopra, Susan Rosegrant with Michael D. Watkins, and Kenneth Rutherford.

⁶ Lidwien Kapteijns, *Clan cleansing in Somalia: the ruinous legacy of 1991* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

⁷ Kapteijns, *Clan cleansing in Somalia*.

⁸ Steven Hansch *et al.*, *Lives lost, lives saved: excess mortality and the impact of health interventions in the Somalia emergency* (Washington, DC: Refugee Policy Group, November 1994), p. 94.

⁹ Some NGOs spent as much as \$100,000 dollars per month on security, with \$2,500 the monthly rent for one 'technical' (a Land Cruiser or pick-up truck turned into battle-wagon) with driver and armed crew. Kenneth H. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under fire: the U.S. and UN intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008), p. 94.

¹⁰ United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet.org) S/RES/794 (1992).

¹¹ UNBISnet.org S/RES/794 (1992)

¹² Sydney Blumenthal, 'Why are we in Somalia?', *New Yorker*, 25 October 1995, pp. 52-53..Somalia's potential for oil, its strategic geographical location, and a beginning concern about Islamic fundamentalism also receive mention.

¹³ Susan Rosegrant with Michael D. Watkins, *A 'seamless' transition: United States and United Nations operations in Somalia – 1992-1993* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, 1996), 10; Dan Oberdorfer, 'The path to intervention: a massive tragedy "we could do something about"', *Washington Post*, 6 December 1992.

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- ¹⁴ Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, pp. 12-13; Jarat Chopra *et al.*, *Fighting for hope in Somalia* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, 1995), p. 40.
- ¹⁵ Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p 13.
- ¹⁶ Ken Menkhaus with Louis Ortmayer, 'Key decisions in the Somalia intervention' (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 1995), p. 7, <http://data.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/lisd/>.
- ¹⁷ Menkhaus, 'Key decisions', p. 31; Alex de Waal, 'U.S. war crimes in Somalia,' *New Left Review*, No. 230, 1998, p. 144.
- ¹⁸ Joseph P. Hoar, 'The CINC's perspective,' *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1993, p. 56.
- ¹⁹ Blumenthal, 'Why are we in Somalia?', p. 51.
- ²⁰ Gregory Kent, *Framing war and genocide: British policy and news media reactions to the war in Bosnia* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2006), p. 213.
- ²¹ Alex de Waal, *Famine crimes: politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa* (London: African Rights, 1997), p. 181.
- ²² Alex de Waal, 'An emancipatory imperium? Power and principle in the Humanitarian International', in Fassin and Pandolfi, *Contemporary states of emergency*, p. 296. Save the Children, UK, the ICRC and the American Friends Service Committee also opposed the intervention.
- ²³ Hansch, *Lives lost*, p. 32. See African Rights, *Somalia: Operation Restore Hope: a preliminary assessment* (London: African Rights, May 1993) for a critique of even those humanitarian aspects.
- ²⁴ Lieut.Col. Christopher L. Baggott, *A leap in the dark: crisis action planning for Operation Restore Hope* (Fort Leavenworth: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1996), p. 12; Todd W. Lyons, 'Military intervention in identity group conflicts' (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2000), p. 36n48.
- ²⁵ Robert B. Oakley, 'Imposing values: the U.S. ambassador who negotiated temporary security among warring clans and starving refugees in 1993 in Somalia argues for caution in exporting our values to other countries', *World View*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1995, pp. 13-19.
- ²⁶ See de Waal, *Famine crimes*, p. 146; African Rights, *Humanitarianism unbound? Current dilemmas facing multi-mandate relief operations in political emergencies* (London: African Rights, December 1994), pp. 12-14.
- ²⁷ Walter Clarke, 'Testing the world's resolve in Somalia', *Parameters*, Vol. 23, No. 44, September 1993, p. 58.

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- ²⁸ Thomas G. Weiss, *Military-civilian interactions: intervening in humanitarian crises* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), p. 82; Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, p. 32.
- ²⁹ Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 34; Stuart Auerbach, 'Oakley calls mission in Somalia a success: U.S. envoy laments leaving before marines', *Washington Post*, 3 March 1993.
- ³⁰ Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, pp. 17, 19.
- ³¹ Tom Clancy with General Zinni and Tony Kolts, *Battle ready* (New York: G P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), pp. 243-247; Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under fire*, p. 90.
- ³² Menkhaus, 'Key decisions', p. 12.
- ³³ Oakley, 'Imposing values', pp. 16, 18.
- ³⁴ Lyons, 'Military intervention', p. 14. In *Losing Mogadishu: testing U.S. policy in Somalia* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995, p. 147), Jonathan Stevenson argues that Mohamed Sahnoun, UN Special Representative during UNOSOM I, did not disdain Somali politics
- ³⁵ Kapteijns, *Clan cleansing in Somalia*, pp. 187-191.
- ³⁶ Jennifer Parmelee, 'Waltzing with warlords', *Washington Post*, 25 June 1993.
- ³⁷ African Rights, *Somalia: Operation Restore Hope*, p. 30. Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, p. 44 and Ken Menkhaus, "'Getting out vs. getting through": U.S. and U.N. policies in Somalia,' *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1994, pp. 154-155. In 'An envoy's perspective', *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1993, p. 46, Robert B. Oakley cites the 4 December press conference during which Dick Cheney and Colin Powell asserted that the US would be able to 'impose a stable situation' even without faction leaders' cooperation.
- ³⁸ Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, p. 82; Africa Watch, *Beyond the warlords: the need for a verdict on human rights abuses* (Washington, DC: Africa Watch, Vol. 5, No. 2, 7 March 1993), p. 26.
- ³⁹ Africa Watch, *Beyond the warlords*, p. 26.
- ⁴⁰ Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 260; *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 21. Zinni goes as far as questioning Aidid's responsibility for the killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers on 6 June 1993 and disparaging the leadership of UNOSOM instead. See Clancy, *Battle ready*, pp. 274, 285.
- ⁴¹ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under fire*, p. 91.
- ⁴² Clancy, *Battle ready*, pp. 251-252; John Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), p. 50; Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 21.
- ⁴³ Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 28.
- ⁴⁴ Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, p. 42.

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- ⁴⁵ Oakley, 'Imposing values', p. 14.
- ⁴⁶ Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 253.
- ⁴⁷ Stuart Auerbach, 'U.N. assailed for delay in takeover in Somalia; envoy seeks to clear way to pare U.S. role': Auerbach, *The Washington Post*, 21 February 1993; Oakley, 'Imposing values', p. 14.
- ⁴⁸ Oakley, 'Imposing values', p. 14.
- ⁴⁹ Colin L. Powell with Joseph P. Persico, *My American journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 580.
- ⁵⁰ Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, p. 45; Clancy, *Battle ready*, pp. 262-263; Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, pp. 28-30.
- ⁵¹ Robert B. Oakley, 'Somalia: a case study', in Earl H. Tilford (ed.), *Two perspectives on intervention and humanitarian operations* (Carlisle, PA: US War College, 1997), p. 9; Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 28; Anthony C. Zinni, 'Perspectives on intervention: the case of Somalia: a response to Professor Lucas', in George Lucas, Jr. (ed.), *Perspectives on humanitarian intervention* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Public Policy Press, 2001), p. 57.
- ⁵² Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, p. 45; Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 263; Oakley, 'Imposing values', pp. 14-15.
- ⁵³ Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, p. 77; Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 264.
- ⁵⁴ Clancy, *Battle ready*, pp. 264-265; Oakley, 'Somalia: a case study', p. 8.
- ⁵⁵ Menkhaus, 'Key decisions', p. 9.
- ⁵⁶ Auerbach, 'U.N. assailed'.
- ⁵⁷ According to Zinni, Aidid never met with Oakley in person again before the latter's departure from Somalia on 3 March 1993 (Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 35).
- ⁵⁸ Oakley, 'Somalia: a case study', p. 8; Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under fire*, p.125.
- ⁵⁹ Stuart Auerbach, 'Oakley calls mission', my italics. For UN officials' dismay at Oakley's false claims about the situation in Somalia, see African Rights, *Somalia: Operation Restore Hope*, p. 40.
- ⁶⁰ Auerbach, 'Oakley calls mission'.
- ⁶¹ Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 269.
- ⁶² Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 41.
- ⁶³ Rosegrant, *A 'seamless' transition*, p. 41.
- ⁶⁴ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under fire*, p. 138n19.
- ⁶⁵ UN incompetence also played a role. Chopra, *Fighting for hope*.
- ⁶⁶ Term used by the US military.
- ⁶⁷ The following draws on Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, pp. 55 – 91.

⁶⁸ Chopra, *Fighting for hope*, pp. 59, 73, argues that the UN should have embraced a form of governorship to implement its ambitious agenda instead of emphasizing that it would only *assist* Somalis and not substitute itself for the Somali people or impose a particular form of governance on them.

⁶⁹ US representation in UNOSOM's top leadership was as follows: Retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, a former member of the National Security Council under President Bush, headed the mission. UN forces were under the command of General Çevik Bir, but Bir's deputy was US Maj.Gen. Thomas Montgomery, who also commanded the US troops in Somalia with the right to refuse UN orders. Another American was deputy commander of the US troops and head of the UN logistics unit. See D.P. Bolger, *Savage peace: Americans at war in the 1990s* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1995), pp. 308–310.

⁷⁰ Menkhaus, 'Getting out', 155; Oakley, 'An envoy's perspective,' p. 53; Jonathan Stevenson, 'Hope restored in Somalia', *Foreign Policy*, No. 91, summer 1993, p. 150. Tom Farer's report to the UN (UNBISnet.org S/26351 of 24 August 1993) insisted on Aidid's premeditated action, while that by M. Ngulube, produced after the policy reversal vis-à-vis Aidid, concluded that the violence was spontaneous (UNBISnet.org S/1994/653 of 24 February 1994).

⁷¹ Menkhaus, 'Getting out', p. 155.

⁷² No reliable estimates of Somali casualties exist, but see Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk down: a story of modern war* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2000), p. 310; E. Schmitt, 'Somali war casualties may be 10,000', *New York Times*, 8 December 1993,, and Aidid's letter included in S/1994/653 (p. 55), which claims 13,000 dead and 30,000 wounded.

⁷³ Bowden, *Black Hawk down*, pp. 71-74.

⁷⁴ Bowden, *Black Hawk down*; Lidwien Kapteijns, 'Black Hawk down: recasting U.S. military history at Somali expense', in Nigel Eltringham (ed.), *Framing Africa: portrayals of a continent in contemporary mainstream cinema* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), pp. 39-71.

⁷⁵ Menkhaus, 'Key decisions', p. 22; Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, pp. 139-140.

⁷⁶ Alex de Waal uses this term in another context: de Waal, 'Contemporary warfare in Africa', in Mary Kaldor and Basker Vashee (eds.), *Restructuring the global military sector* (London: Pinter. 1997), p. 314.

⁷⁷ Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, p. 72.

⁷⁸ Michael Maren, 'Yankee go home: In Somalia Operation Restore Hope becomes Operation Run for It', *The Village Voice*, 5 April 1994, p. 44.

⁷⁹ Michael Maren, 'Somalia: whose failure?', *Current History*, Vol. 95, No. 601, 1996, p. 202.

UNITAF reportedly cost \$1 billion, of which \$692.2 million were spent on US troops, while UNOSOM II cost \$1.64 billion, of which the US paid \$94.7 million. Estimates of the percentage actually spent on humanitarian aid range between 0.7 to 10 percent. See Weiss, 'Military-civilian interactions,' pp. 91, 93.

⁸⁰ Ken Menkhaus, 'International peacebuilding and the dynamics of local and national reconciliation in Somalia', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1996, pp. 48-56.

⁸¹ Aidan Hartley, *The Zanzibar chest: a story of life, love, and death in foreign lands* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2003), p. 336. See also Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, p. 67. For poignant descriptions of the 'World inside the walls' of the UN compound, see Rick Atkinson, 'Death and divisions afflict Mogadishu: U.S. enclave, city are worlds apart', *Washington Post*, 26 November 1993, and Helen Fogarassy, *Mission improbable: the world community on a UN compound in Somalia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999).

⁸² People inside the UN compound told Hartley: 'That's Skinnyland. Why the hell you want to live out there?': Hartley, *The Zanzibar chest*, p. 336.

⁸³ Keith B. Richburg, *Out of America: a black man confronts Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 58; Maren, 'Somalia: whose failure?' p. 201.

⁸⁴ Clancy, *Battle ready*, pp. 296-297.

⁸⁵ Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 298.

⁸⁶ Clancy, *Battle ready*, p. 299.

⁸⁷ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Somalia faces the future: human rights in a fragmented society* (Washington, DC: HRW, April 1995), pp. 2, 59; Menkhaus, 'International peacebuilding,' pp. 48, 56; Ken Menkhaus and John Prendergast, *The political economy of post-intervention Somalia* ([n.p.:] Horn of Africa Publications No. 3, April 1995), p. 4. For an analysis of how the district and regional councils often came to be dominated by warlords and formalized warlord military domination, and how the new judicial system and police in Mogadishu were co-opted by Aidid and Ali Mahdi, see HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, pp. 30-31, 43-44, 60 and Maren, 'Yankee go home', p. 44.

⁸⁸ HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, pp. 60-61.

⁸⁹ A Somali interviewed by John Prendergast estimated that, at that time (early 1994), Aidid and 'Aato had control over 160 'technicals', adding that '[i]n 1992 the whole country did not have that many', HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, pp. 60-61. See also Menkhaus and Prendergast, *The political economy*, pp. 5-6 and Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, p. 108.

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- ⁹⁰ Menkhaus and Prendergast, *The political economy*, pp. 9, 11. HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, pp. 20-21, 34-36.
- ⁹¹ HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, p. 36; Menkhaus and Prendergast, *The political economy*, p. 11. This occupation continued until the radical Islamist movement of al-Shabaab took over some of the areas. See Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia* (London: Hurst, 2013).
- ⁹² UNBISnet.org, S/RES/814 (1993), section B14. See also HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, p. 50.
- ⁹³ HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, p. 52.
- ⁹⁴ De Waal, 'U.S. war crimes', pp. 138-140.
- ⁹⁵ HRW, *Somalia faces the future*, p. 56.
- ⁹⁶ Capitol Hill hearing with Defense Department personnel, 'U.S. military operations in Mogadishu', chaired by Senator Sam Nunn.
- ⁹⁷ Mark Bowden, 'Helicopter provides support', *The Arizona Republic*, 24 December 1997.
- ⁹⁸ Sherene H. Razack, *Dark threats and white knights: the Somalia affair, peacekeeping, and the new imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
- ⁹⁹ Razack, *Dark threats*, ch. 3.
- ¹⁰⁰ De Waal, 'U.S. war crimes', p. 134.
- ¹⁰¹ Razack, *Dark threats*, p. 52.
- ¹⁰² De Waal, 'U.S. war crimes', p. 137.
- ¹⁰³ Razack, *Dark threats*, p. 53.
- ¹⁰⁴ These scholars are cited below.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mark Duffield, 'The political economy of internal war', in Joanna Macrae and Jonathan Zwi (eds.), *War and hunger: rethinking international responses to complex emergencies* (London: Zed Books), p. 64.
- ¹⁰⁶ De Waal, 'An emancipatory imperium?', p. 301.
- ¹⁰⁷ Laurence McFalls, 'Benevolent dictatorship: the formal logic of humanitarian government', in Fassin and Pandolfi, *Contemporary states*, p. 338.
- ¹⁰⁸ Duffield, 'The political economy of internal war', p. 38.
- ¹⁰⁹ De Waal, *Famine crimes*, p. 181.
- ¹¹⁰ African Rights, *Humanitarianism unbound?*; Didier Fassin, 'Heart of humaneness: the moral economy of humanitarian conventions', in Fassin and Pandolfi, *Contemporary states*, pp. 269-293; Fassin and Pandolfi, 'Introduction', p. 13; de Waal, 'An emancipatory imperium?', pp. 297, 301, 311;

Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and survivors: Darfur, politics, and the war on terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009).

¹¹¹ Exceptions include UN and US inquiries into, and investigations of the incidents of 6 June and 3 October 1993, and Canadian, Belgian and Italian legal process against UNOSOM II soldiers accused of abusing Somali civilians (referred to above). Within Somalia, civil war violence continues and this makes holding perpetrators accountable for any one episode of the war difficult. For impunity for crimes against humanity committed during the campaign of clan cleansing, see Kapteijns, *Clan cleansing in Somalia*, ch. 4.

¹¹² Chowra Makaremi, 'Utopias of power: from human security to the responsibility to protect', in Fassin and Pandolfi, *Contemporary states*, p. 121. Some scholars, including Duffield, use the term biopolitics to describe this containment. See Fassin and Pandolfi, 'Introduction,' p. 15.

¹¹³ A full analysis of whether any part of the government did so with intent or who was most responsible for blundering into this beyond the individuals mentioned here lies beyond the scope of this article.

¹¹⁴ For these terms, see McFalls, 'Benevolent dictatorship', and de Waal, 'An emancipatory imperium?'

¹¹⁵ In 'Black Hawk down', Kapteijns shows how the film itself favors a reading that the US should not go to war for 'people like that', while post-release comments by its producers emphasized that Clinton pushed should not have withdrawn from a zone of chaos in which al-Qaeda was already present.

¹¹⁶ See note 1.