

Strategy Research Project

The Enduring Impact of United Nations Operations in Somalia

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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Since the end of the Cold War, the capacity of states to maintain legitimacy and control their populations has become increasingly important to international stability. In the globally connected world, this situation is increasingly important because failed or fragile states serve as a host for conditions which are favorable to trans-national organized crime, violent extremism, and insurgency, all of which are destabilizing. First experiences are always formative and the United States efforts with the United Nations in Somalia have profoundly shaped the humanitarian and peace operations of the future. When United States Marines hit the beaches of Mogadishu in 1992, it was not to destroy enemy forces ashore, but rather to defeat the effects of famine in the Horn of Africa. The decision to intervene by the United Nations in 1992 was a manifestation of the expanded scope and capacity of multi-lateral efforts to confront threats to international security and well-being.

The Enduring Impact of United Nations Operations in Somalia

Since the end of the Cold War, the capacity of states to maintain legitimacy and control their populations has become increasingly important to international stability. In the globally connected world, this situation is increasingly important because failed or fragile states serve as a host for conditions which are favorable to trans-national organized crime, violent extremism and insurgency, all of which are destabilizing. First experiences are always formative and the United States efforts with the United Nations in Somalia have profoundly shaped the humanitarian and peace operations of the future. When United States Marines hit the beaches of Mogadishu in 1992, it was not to destroy enemy forces ashore, but rather to defeat the effects of famine in the Horn of Africa. The decision to intervene by the United Nations in 1992 was a manifestation of the expanded scope and capacity of multi-lateral efforts to confront threats to international security and well-being. This paper will re-examine the United States and the United Nations contributions to this mission and the differing perceptions of measures of success. From this analysis it is clear that there is a critical correlation between the level of political involvement and the resources committed to accomplish the mission.

The analytical framework employed emphasizes the comparison of differing perceptions between the United Nations and United States during peace operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I, UNITAF, UNOSOM II). During this comparison five central questions direct the analysis and they are:

1. What were the overall perceptions of success versus failure of the peace operations (policy and operational) in Somalia between the United Nations and the United States?

2. What factors account for the perceptions of success or failure of the peace operation in Somalia?
3. What aspects of the application of military force contributed to mission accomplishment or its failure?
4. What are the tradeoffs for participating in peace operations?
5. What are the central lessons learned?

There are three reasons why the peace operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I, UNITAF, UNOSOM II) are a good single case study. The first is that the entire operation was precedent setting. UNOSOM I was the first application of a multi-lateral peacekeeping strategy for a humanitarian purpose. The organization was specifically designed for the dual purpose of delivering humanitarian supplies and protecting the indigenous population from violence. Because first impressions are lasting ones, the legacy of this precedent-setting operation have and will continue to influence policy decisions on whether to participate in future peace operations, even though operational conditions may be dissimilar. The second reason is that this operation was the first international effort to impact the growing problem of failed states and provides insight into the requirements to overcome this challenge. Finally, the results of the operation are counterintuitive when compared to other comparable peace operations, such as Bosnia. Somalia was thought to be a more resolvable situation but the final results did not reflect the initial estimate.

Peacekeeping Doctrine

Before one can fully delve into the history of Somalia, a discussion of the peacekeeping doctrine of the two leading actors, the United Nations and the United

States, is important to better understand how both understood the role of the military and how both actors envisioned contributing to the effort.

The development of multi-lateral peace operations after the Second World War was directly related to the founding of the United Nations. This organization's purpose was "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."¹ Within the United Nations charter, there are two chapters that member states leverage to "maintain international peace and security." Chapter VI is the first section that describes the peaceful resolution of international disputes, and from it "peacekeeping" operations have developed.² The second is Chapter VII, which describes military intervention authorized by the Security Council to enforce the peace.³ These activities include blockades, forceful disarmaments, and direct military action. These two chapters form the legal basis for peace operations. The central issue facing a proposed United Nations intervention is defining the operational context in either a Chapter VI or VII because this will determine the mandate of the mission and has consequences for the capabilities of the force.

During the Cold War, operations of this type rarely occurred due to competing U.S.-Soviet interests operative in the United Nations Security Council, but by 1992, there were three other large-scale peace operations being directed by the United Nations in Mozambique, Cambodia and Yugoslavia. Up to this point, there was little available institutional experience and doctrine possessed by either the United Nations or the U.S. Department of Defense to assist planners in preparing for this type of mission. Contemporaneous guidelines for United Nations peacekeeping emphasized the importance of a political settlement prior to the intervention, the neutrality of the

force keeping the peace between the warring parties, and the exclusion of neighboring states or other interested political actors from the process. Informed by the Somalia experience, the UN slowly shifted its doctrine to reflect the post-Cold War realities.

By 2008, the United Nations had developed considerable experience with peacekeeping operations, and it currently has almost 100,000 peacekeepers deployed in 16 missions worldwide.⁴ Its doctrine for this type of mission defines the operational context to be a broad and inclusive spectrum of peace and security activities, ranging from conflict prevention to peace building. However, the most common application is multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations. This type of operation intends to create secure conditions which enable the local political reconciliation of the parties in conflict. United Nations' doctrine also recognizes that peacekeeping operations are a component of an integrated multi-disciplinary response to a human security problem intended to support the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement.⁵ The basic principles are consent, impartiality and non-use of force, with success factors identified as legitimacy, credibility and the promotion of national and local ownership.⁶

Following the Cold War, the U.S. experience and doctrine concerning humanitarian missions was nearly non-existent. Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) was the United States Army doctrine employed in Somalia. It encompasses the application of military force in operations other than direct combat. This doctrine is centered on six principles of military operations in these situations: objective, unity of command, security, restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy. The cross cutting element among all the principles is that all the instruments of power (economic, diplomatic,

military, and information) are of equal importance and need to be integrated for the success of the operation.

There are 17 distinct forms of MOOTW, and at least ten have been conducted in Africa. The most common types of these operations are non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian relief, and peace operations. Typically, humanitarian relief operations are designed to manage natural or manmade disasters and are limited in scope and duration. Peace operations include peacekeeping and peace enforcement.⁷ American forces began peace operations in Somalia without the advantage of recent operational experience or well developed doctrine. This fact reinforces the importance of the doctrine that has been subsequently produced from the experience.⁸

This intellectual gap became acutely obvious during the transition to post conflict activities in Iraq, when the United States military did not have a fully developed doctrine for its operations. Current United States Army doctrine identifies this type mission as a Stability Operation. Stability Operations' doctrine proposes to leverage the coercive and constructive use of force to create conditions which facilitate political reconciliation, and the development of indigenous legal, social, and economic institutions.⁹ Current Army doctrine differs from previous because it recognizes that the application of military force in the land domain must be coordinated with the other elements of national power "on the ground" to impact a broader range of the causes of insecurity. There are six tasks which must be achieved in stability operations: establish civil security: establish civil control; restore essential services; support to governance; support to economic and infrastructure development; and information engagement tasks.¹⁰ These non-kinetic

functions highlight the multi-dimensional aspects of this type operation and the Special Operations community has significantly contributed to their institutionalization.

History of Peace Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I, UNITAF, UNOSOM II)

In 1969, after nine years of democratic civilian government, General Mohamed Siad Barre seized power in Somalia and began twenty-one years of military dictatorship. Shortly thereafter, Siad centralized authority and started a policy of militarization of the state. Siad ruthlessly oppressed certain Somali clans, while his own took over all ministerial positions. As a result, civil war erupted in 1988 and the state began to collapse. In January of 1991, Siad Barre was overthrown, and forced to retreat with his followers to his clan homeland near Bardera. For the next year and a half, General Mohamed Farah Aideed's forces fought repeated battles across south-central Somalia against troops loyal to Siad.¹¹

Beginning in 1989, severe drought conditions hit the region, this created food insecurity. The civil war exacerbated the famine because the majority of the fighting occurred in the primary grain-producing region in Somalia which forced farmers to flee, and because Siad's soldiers destroyed any food that was remaining through scorched earth tactics; thus food became a new weapon. Because Somalia was a failed state, international food aid intended to relieve suffering was used for local political purposes. Each rival Somali clan used food as a means to develop patronage, feeding only those that politically supported their clan and no one else. United Nations efforts to relieve the starvation were met with armed opposition and the supplies were frequently hijacked.¹² The final result was massive loss of life due to civil war and famine. Media coverage of the famine heightened the political pressure for more aggressive action by the international community.¹³

In May of 1992, Siad was forced to flee the country. As the collapse of the state progressed, there was an emergence of numerous clan-based political parties and insurgent groups. General Mohamed Farrah Hassan Aideed and the Hawiye clan saw themselves as the victor and dominant ethnic group. However, his clan was not monolithic and there was a major opposition figure, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, who had been proclaimed Interim President in early 1991. Control of the capital was viewed as the key to national power because it offered de facto legitimacy and access to international assistance. Mahdi took over northern Mogadishu, while Aideed's forces seized the south, and law and order deteriorated as armed militias from both factions exploited the residents of the city. Overall, this situation resulted in more human insecurity due to the challenges of aid delivery in these conditions.

The decision in 1992 to deploy United Nations forces to Somalia under Chapter VI authorities was considered to be a demonstration of the “new world order,” and its capacity to respond to global crises.¹⁴ By this time, the famine in Somalia had achieved levels where as many as 40 percent of the population in southern Somalia was severely malnourished while the rest were moderately malnourished.¹⁵ By July 1992, there were a series of United Nations resolutions, resulting in an airlift of food and a group of United Nations military observers to Mogadishu. They were followed by a 500 man Pakistani peacekeeper security force whose purpose was to secure the humanitarian supplies. Because of the level of violence in Mogadishu, the force was unable to fulfill its mission. United Nations leadership realized that the operational environment had deteriorated to beyond a Chapter VI mandate and efforts were made to organize a Chapter VII

intervention as a peace enforcement operation with a larger force and an expanded purpose.

By December 1992, the United Nations had expanded its mandate and the United States agreed to lead a peace enforcement operation to provide humanitarian relief. Unified Task Force (UNITAF), or Operation Restore Hope, was given the authority of Chapter VII of the UN Charter to use “all necessary means” to establish a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid.¹⁶ United States Marines went ashore and within a short period over 37,000 troops from a diverse group of troop contributing countries were in Somalia.¹⁷ The operation contained the effects of the famine, and by March 1993, the United States contingent of the UNITAF force was returning home. As the famine conditions subsided, the humanitarian effort shifted from aid primarily food to other nation building programs. This marked the divergence between the United States’ limited interpretation of the peace enforcement mandate and a more expansive United Nations approach which incorporated aspects of nation building.¹⁸

The United States understood UNITAF’s concept to be a limited scope peace enforcement operation. United States Central Command planned to transition authority to the United Nations once secure conditions for the delivery humanitarian aid existed. The UNITAF commander understood that part of his mandate was to disarm the clans, but he interpreted it to include only those factions or clans that represented a threat to the organization and delivery of humanitarian relief supplies.¹⁹ However, the Secretary General’s expectations were more inclusive. The resolution outlined two conditions which would which would trigger the transition to post conflict nation building. The first

was the concentration and control of heavy weapons, effectively taking them away from the combatants, and the second was the disarmament of the gangs within Mogadishu.²⁰ The different perceptions impacted not only how the mandate was operationalized but also whether the follow-on operation would be successful.²¹

By the middle of 1993, events in Somalia demonstrated that there was still a high level of violence and political instability, despite the increase of food security for the average Somali. As a result, the Security Council determined that the follow-on United Nations operation would require the same authority as UNITAF and subsequently created United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II) as the first peace enforcement operation by the United Nations.²² The inconsistency among the sequential operations developed from the perception that food security could not exist in the current political climate. Where UNITAF had disproportionately powerful resources compared to its food security mission, UNOSOM II had rather limited resources in relation to its expanded purpose of nation building.

By 4 May, UNOSOM II formally assumed responsibility for creating a secure environment in Somalia. Over the next several months the force expanded from 14,000 to over 20,000 peacekeepers, but the organization's design created problems with unity of command and purpose. The structure of the organization weakened it despite its relatively large force size. General Aideed exploited the command and control problems as well as other weaknesses later during the operation. Eventually, events transpired which heightened the animosity between UNOSOM II forces and Aideed's faction of the Somali National Alliance, and culminated in the death of 23 Pakistani soldiers.

After the Pakistani massacre, significant differences over the policy for the employment of United Nations forces developed among the contingents which composed UNOSOM II as well as within the United States government. Following United Nations Security Council Resolution 865, the United States reacted to the increasingly violent situation by deploying a special operations task force designed to capture General Aideed.²³ The divergent policy perceptions culminated when 18 United States soldiers were killed during an operation on 3 and 4 October. Following this event, the United States' contribution to the operation diminished and ended six months later in March with their withdrawal from Somalia. Security conditions continued to deteriorate after the United States and European forces departed.²⁴

As a result of the departure of the United States and others, the United Nations redefined the purpose of UNOSOM II from peace enforcement to peace keeping, and no longer engaged in the coercive disarmament of Somali factions. There was continued emphasis on a political settlement among the dominant Somali faction, which did not result in any substantive agreements despite initial indications that reconciliation was possible. Ultimately, the Security Council decided to terminate UNOSOM II's mandate, and the mission withdrew with the support United States military in March 1995.²⁵ The United Nations has continued its humanitarian effort in Somalia without military forces ever since. It is this background that sets the foundation for the subsequent analysis to better understand the impact of the first failed international effort at nation building.

Perceptions of Success vs. Failure of Peace Operations between the UN and U.S.

Overall, the United States considers the entire operation in Somalia as a failure. It is unclear what the United Nation thinks about its effort in Somalia, but most likely, the

United Nations simply considers it neither a victory nor a defeat, choosing instead to highlight the significant humanitarian accomplishments.²⁶ Generally, the United Nations emphasized policy lessons over operational, and the United States stressed operational over policy. This fundamental difference derives from whether the operation was considered a success or failure.

There are also contrasting views between the member states of the United Nations and the international organization itself regarding peacekeeping. Typically, the United States employs international organizations as a means to achieve national ends such as providing the resources required to achieve the ends, including troops, weapons systems, money, political will and time. This concept shapes perceptions because it distributes risk and cost and provides for a high leverage strategy. However, the United Nations is driven by the perception that peacekeeping is a way to achieve its ends, and its member states provide the resources (the means) to achieve it. This perception creates risks to the mission because member states are continuously calculating costs. Should the costs rise to the level where they are disproportionate to the ends, member states can independently withdraw their contingents and the United Nations does not have any other resources available to it.²⁷

When it came to policy lessons learned, the United States' was simple: do not get involved in peace operations in failed states as remote and disconnected from the national interest as Somalia. Because this policy lesson seemed clear, the focus shifted to discovering how the United States can conduct multi-national operations more effectively. Additionally, President Clinton initiated a process to reform how the United Nations conducted peace operations to improve its effectiveness and its efficiency.²⁸

The United Nations considered peace operations in Somalia as something other than a failure. It appeared that the United Nations focused on the individual humanitarian accomplishments rather than overall operational success. As a result, there was much more discussion about policy matters than the operational concerns. However, there was emphasis to reform the United Nations structurally. This effort was initiated as a result of internal discovery and President Clinton's Policy Decision Directive 25, that specifically required changes in order to receive funding for future peace operations.²⁹

Factors that Account for Perceptions of Success or Failure of Peace Operation in Somalia?

Because of the all-encompassing nature of stability operations, success is difficult to define because conventional measures do not necessarily apply. Knowing this, however, there are two interrelated measures of success for stability operations which are often utilized. The first criterion is whether the level of involvement matches the amount of resources dedicated to its accomplishment. The second criterion is whether the organization can flex to a changing environment and compel all parties to comply with decisions. These criteria are significant because they demonstrate not only whether overarching objectives are clear, but also whether the degree of political commitment is sufficient. The two criteria are interrelated because if the operation is insufficiently resourced then it may not be able to accomplish its purpose or adapt to events as they occur. If the political situation changes, and the consent of some parties must be forced, the operation needs to be well-resourced to enable it to be flexible enough to execute under these new circumstances.³⁰ The analysis of Question 2 follows

a chronological approach, comparing the parallel operations by the United Nation and the United States, using the two interrelated criteria.

The United States' component of UNOSOM I was Operation Provide Relief. It was primarily a logistical operation, composed of an assessment team along with military airlift. The range of activities tasked to a relatively small staff increased significantly over the duration of its six months, driven by unclear political objectives in Washington, DC and New York. The United Nations' plan was inadequately resourced because 500 peacekeepers were delayed due to bureaucratic friction and were insufficient for their intended purpose or providing famine relief once they arrived. Neither the effort by the United Nations as a whole nor the United States' contingent was sufficiently flexible to adapt to the changing operational context, and neither effort could compel the Somali factions to comply with international decisions.³¹ Both understood the internal political conditions of Somalia to be more stable than they were which caused the planners to emphasize the humanitarian relief effort and diminish the importance of the security requirements for the mission. Both the United Nations and the United States fundamentally mismatched the resources dedicated to the mission and the effort required to accomplish it. However, the relative lack of operational experience and the inadequacy of doctrinal guidelines increased the risk of mission failure and compounded the fundamental failure of national strategy in that there was not a balance between clearly defined objectives, sufficient resources and effective methods.

This imbalance between ends, effort and resources triggered the United States to execute the follow-on operation, UNITAF. Operation Restore Hope followed Operation

Provide Relief and began in December 1992. When compared to UNOSOM I, Operation Provide Relief was robustly resourced when compared to its relatively limited mandate. The United States was the executive agent for the entire operation, and contributed the majority of the overwhelming combat strength itself. There was a large and capable operational planning staff, which could manage the full range of contingencies. If the operation required flexibility and forcible consent, UNITAF was capable, with 28,000 United States soldiers and marines and an additional 9,000 of coalition forces at its peak.³² The semi-permissive and undeveloped environment along with a peace enforcement mandate drove the force structure. The Commander of UNITAF limited interpretation of “a secure environment” to only those elements which directly threatened the force protection of its contingents, thus avoiding any local challenge to its authority by foregoing the higher risk. The United States chose to disarm only those factions which posed a threat to operations. This was a less expansive approach than United Nations wanted to pursue, and the two organization’s purposes diverged.

The United Nations believed disarmament was a precondition for UNOSOM II. A major concern of Secretary General Boutros-Ghali was that UNITAF would withdraw before an enduring “secure climate” could be established. This would transfer the problem to a less capable UNOSOM II to manage.³³ The United Nations believed that UNITAF had the resources but lacked the political will to compel the Somali factions to submit. Somali factions realized UNITAF would not forcibly disarm them, and that they could wait for their departure before resuming significant operations. Somali’s also knew of the weaknesses of UNOSOM II and chose instead to wait rather than challenging the stronger UNITAF. As the correlation of forces shifted in favor of local combatants, the

Somalis increased their efforts to expand their control. As the UN Secretary General feared, the security situation deteriorated as United States forces withdrew.

As UNITAF transitioned to UNOSOM II, the United Nations recognized that the transition conditions were not achieved. When the Security Council adopted the resolution of 19 December 1992, the result expanded UNOSOM II's effort as the first peace enforcement operation directed by the United Nations.³⁴ The disconnect was that the force unlike in UNITAF was inadequately organized and insufficiently resourced for its responsibilities. No longer were there overwhelming combat forces or an effective staff to direct operations in country. The staff was ad hoc and had never worked together before arrival. There were fewer combat soldiers and they were from a diverse group of contributing states. The diversity had the effect of not only decreasing combat efficiency, because readiness was not standardized, but also lowering the overall risk tolerance because of varying levels of political commitment by contributing states. This friction exacerbated an already weak command and control system, which prevented the organization from effectively responding to events.

The United States component to UNOSOM II was USFORSOM, and it was to be used in a supporting effort rather than a combat role. UNFORSOM was to provide logistical support and sufficient combat forces to be a quick reaction force in the event of an emergency. Despite its diverse mission set, initially there was a match between the effort and the resources. As a result of an ambush where 24 Pakistani peacekeepers were killed, the Security Council expanded the mission for UNOSOM II and USFORSOM, calling for the capture of those who perpetrated the crime. The United States allocated a separate force, Task Force Ranger, to this expanded effort

but it was distinct from UNOSOM II and USFOR SOM. Instead of contributing to UNOSOM II's strength, this force highlighted its weakness. Because the mission of Task Force Ranger challenged UNOSOM II's neutrality, the result was not only increased tensions among the various contingents of UNOSOM II, but also between the United Nations and the Somali populace.

Table 1.

The following table sequentially outlines the evolution of United Nations' peace operations with the operations of the United States military in Somalia using the criteria examined in this section to facilitate understanding.

Stability Operations Criteria In Somali Peace Missions		
	Criteria for Success in Strategic Operations	
	MATCH between Efforts and Resources	FLEXIBILITY to Adapt and Compel Compliance
UNOSOM I	No – Limited peacekeeping forces (50/500) to mission requirement *1	No – Could not adjust to fluctuating political objectives
Operation Provide Relief	No – Inadequate Staff (too small for mission)	No – Unable to respond/compel because of inadequate resources
UNITAF	No – Excess resources for mandate*2	No – This was not a result of capability but policy
Operation Restore Hope	Yes – Resources equal to effort	Yes – Able to respond to diverse (never tested)
UNISOM II	No – Ineffective command and control *3	No - Unable to respond/compel due to composition*4
US Forces Somalia	Yes - Until SCR 837 then No – ineffective command and control	No - Unable to respond/compel due to composition *4

*Notes:

1. There were inadequate resources programmed for this operation (50 military observers and 500 Pakistani peacekeepers)
2. This was the UN's perception that the operation was over resourced and could have done more but the US would not accept the transition conditions of the SCR 794.
3. The mismatch was due to inadequate command and control at UNOSOM II, which was exacerbated by the composition and strength of the force.
4. The composition of the force affected whether it could react, which was exacerbated by inadequate command and control at UNOSOM II Headquarters.

Aspects of Military Force Application Contributed to Mission Accomplishment or Failure?

On the whole, the United Nations' effort in Somalia did not accomplish its mission; however, there were successes, and their nature provides insight into the balance between United States' involvement and success.

There is an obvious link between success and the degree of United States' involvement. UNITAF was directed and resourced primarily by the United States. It could be characterized as a successful peace enforcement mission if it is not evaluated in the context of the overall mission. However, the success of UNITAF might have been as contingent upon its limited duration as upon its overwhelming power. Knowing that the force would depart, Somali factions might have chosen to have temporarily complied with UNITAF rather than openly challenge its authority. A strategy of avoidance and patient compliance until UNITAF's departure seems to be reasonable given that UNITAF responded with overwhelmingly force to threats to its force protection.

The purpose of UNOSOM I was the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies. Less importance was placed on the creation of an enduring secure environment. United States Central Command contributed a staff element and airlift to the United Nation's aid delivery effort, coordinating the delivery of a total of 28,000 metric tons and more than 30 percent of monthly critical relief supplies in country.³⁵ This might have been decisive if the United Nations had not failed to appreciate the significance of the political environment on the delivery of aid.

There were two other factors that contributed to UNISOM I's failure. This first was that the United Nations was inexperienced at managing peace operations. Exacerbating this inexperience was the limited institutional capacity of the United Nations Department

of Peacekeeping to simultaneously manage several large scale peacekeeping operations globally. As a result, the deployment of troops and delivery of aid was delayed, undermining the organization's local credibility. The second factor was timing. Because of the delayed arrival of the peacekeepers, the security conditions degraded to the point where a larger military element was required than initially designed and requested.³⁶

UNOSOM II was distinct from UNITAF and UNOSOM I because its purpose was "nation building." The effects of famine had been overcome because of UNITAF's efforts, so the United Nations embarked upon achieving expanded political aims: the reconstruction of Somali society and governance. As a consequence of UNOSOM I, the United Nations and the United States allocated more resources to creating domestic stability. The United States allocated more than 4,000 soldiers to USFORSOM, but only 1,000 of them were combat troops. The remainder of the United States contingent was logistical troops and staff elements. This was considerably more effort by the United States than what was allocated for UNOSOM I but significantly less than UNITAF. As for the United Nations, it dedicated significantly more troops than UNOSOM I. The overall effect of those troops on the outcome was negligible, achieving the same result as the initial effort, but UNOSOM II had a different reason for its lack of success. In this case, it was because of the weakness of the command and control structure. There was enough combat power when forces were correlated but what that number does not take into account is whether there was the political will and a structure to employ it. Over time the various Somali factions became aware of the political limitations imposed on

national contingents and exploited this to effectively reduce the combat power of UNOSOM II to a level insufficient to impose a political settlement.³⁷

Tradeoffs for Participating in Peace Operations

Embedded within the Preamble to the United Nations Charter, the United Nations' purpose is "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security."³⁸ Because the gridlock on the Security Council was removed as a result of the end of the cold war, the United Nations was compelled by its values to intervene to provide humanitarian relief in Somalia or the magnitude of the disaster would have been politically unacceptable to the member states of this organization. However, before the mandate expanded, the Secretary General should have considered the risk of policy defection by significant international actors. Because the United Nations is dependent on individual state troop contributions to achieve the success of its operations, this makes it vulnerable to the fluctuations of an individual state's political will. . To mitigate this risk the Secretary General should have assessed whether the international community had the political will to sustain the effort over the duration. International resolve was initially at best unclear, but by March of 1993, the actions by the United States demonstrated that it did not want to remain significantly engaged enough in order to ensure the operation's overall success. For the Secretary General, this should have been a negative indicator highlighting the problems of sustaining the effort over the long term. Once this was realized, the Secretary General should have recommended an adjustment in the mandate, re-balancing ends, ways and means.

As for the United States, the tradeoffs to participation are primarily in two areas. The first is leadership and the other is capability. Both internationally and domestically, the United States was considered the world leader and without its leadership, success

was unlikely. When the United States decided to participate, its moral leadership and prestige were enhanced. The United States had just secured a victory in Desert Storm, which was a major success for multilateralism and the United Nations as a means to maintain international peace and security. Because of this context, there was a misconception within the international community, and the United States, that the military instrument had more utility than simply during inter-state conflict. Additionally, the overwhelming success of Desert Storm also downplayed the weaknesses inherent in coalition efforts, specifically that coalitions need an anchor state or leader; this was the U.S. position in Somalia by default. When the United States decided to unilaterally depart after the October 3-4 incident in Mogadishu, the effect was not only to undermine its leadership in the world, but also to question whether the United Nations was an effective mechanism of problem solving.

There was an opportunity cost to operations in Somalia, which impacted the military capability of the United States. A tradeoff to contributing military forces to international peace operations is the extent to which the participation of those forces degrades the ability of the military to accomplish its primary purpose; defend national interests of greater intensity. After Desert Storm, the military reduced the size of its force, and operations in Somalia were an unforeseen requirement. The consequence was a less capable force because units which were participating in Somalia could not be committed to other efforts elsewhere, such as in the Balkans or other potential contingencies.

The tipping point for military involvement in peace operations is when the participation of operational contingent effectively degrades the overall national military

capacity to accomplish its fundamental purpose. Because there is little crossover in tasks between peace operations and warfighting, the overall readiness of the force was degraded as a result of operations in Somalia. The impact of participating in peace operations is greater than simply the duration of the event or the amount of units directly involved.³⁹ For policy makers and those responsible for strategy development, the opportunity cost to other interests of greater priority must be considered, because there will be less resources available for those contingencies.

Lessons Learned

There are three central lessons learned from Somalia. The first lesson is that peace operations are much more complex than initially understood, the second is intervention is expensive and long-term, and the third is that conducting multi-lateral peace operations in a failed state is multidimensional. Within these three lessons, the perspective of the United Nations and the United States are compared.

When Ambassador Crigler spoke of international operations in Somalia country, he said, “a much more serious weakness – perhaps a fatal flaw – lies in the very concept that peace enforcement, the notion that peace can be imposed on a reluctant and notoriously proud people at gunpoint and that the social fabric can be reweven at the direction of outsiders.”⁴⁰ This statement emphasized a fundamental policy lesson identified by both the United Nations and United States with contemporary relevance to recent desires to become more active militarily on the continent. This lesson underscores the definite limits to what the international community can achieve through peace operations without the consent of indigenous political forces. Local populations must decide solutions for themselves, and international solutions cannot be force-fed.

Until operations in Somalia, there was limited institutional or operational experience with conducting this type of operation within the United Nations or the United States. To some, the issue in Somalia was considered to be simply a matter of food distribution, which disregarded the underlying political causes of the instability. To others, the problem was an issue of recreating the Somali state while disregarding the force required to do so. This divergence created UNOSOM I's failure and contributed to UNOSOM II fiasco. As stated by John Fox , an important lesson was that:

It was not necessary to restore a centralized Somali state in order to accomplish this, but it was essential to attain a level of stability and security at which some politics other than that of the gun would be possible. Achieving this in a country as troubled and unfamiliar to American as Somalia would amount to "nation building," but it would be ambitious.⁴¹

Both the United States and the United Nations believe that the institution of the United Nations can be an effective partner to resolve conflict when internal solutions are insufficient, but the prospect of intervention must be evaluated thoroughly, with serious consideration of the unique aspects of the environment.

This leads to the second significant policy lesson learned, which is to intervene only when the political goals are clear, matched with sufficient resource allocation to the operation and there is a reasonable way to achieve the aims of the effort, including ensuring that those political goals. The mandate must be clear, practical, and agreed upon before the intervention. In Somalia, operations oscillated between peace keeping to peace enforcement, which was a result of inexperience and incompetence. Today, the United Nations has conducted many peace operations and reformed itself in order to manage them more effectively. So too has the United States learned and grown from

peace operations, but the United States qualifies any intervention to require a “moral imperative, national interest, chance of success and public support.”⁴²

The next lesson learned is that conducting multi-lateral peace operations in a failed state is a complex, long-term and multi-dimensional challenge. These operations require a lasting commitment and significant resources that must be planned for and agreed upon in advance. The way the international community manages interventions in failed states requires political, economic and military considerations when creating a plan. The United Nations recommends that the international community develop a mechanism to engage the challenges of a failed state, possibly in the form of trusteeship.⁴³ This kind of change emphasizes the political ends for the mission, and therefore the required level of effort over the long-term. Creating a new political approach, such as a trusteeship for failed states would ensure the impartiality of the intervention force, which was a lesson of peace operations in Somalia. On the whole, the lesson learned by the United States concerning operations in failed states focused on avoidance because of the long-term costs and uncertainty of success. Despite the reduction of human suffering in the Horn of Africa, operations in Somalia highlighted to the United States that there is no such thing as a “humanitarian surgical strike.”⁴⁴

Conclusion

The enduring impacts of UN and U.S. operations in Somalia are glaringly apparent. In the immediate aftermath of operations in Somalia, the United States recoiled from international peace operations, and this had effects worldwide. Subsequent peace operations in Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo and elsewhere were affected; however, after the failure in Somalia, there have been observable successes in other follow-on efforts.⁴⁵ As the United Nations becomes more capable at managing

multiple peace operations, so too will the member states develop an appreciation for how military forces can contribute to political outcomes and operational methods will become codified processes. Since operations in Somalia, there has been significant development of peace operations doctrine and an increase of institutional experience and this has modestly contributed to subsequent peace operation successes.⁴⁶

Fundamentally, there was the recognition of the required political conditions prior to intervention and the scaling of political ends in order to align with resources. Command and control procedures have also been a major focus of reform.

The turning point during the operations in Somalia occurred when the United Nations and United States diverged in policy and operational approaches. The United Nations wanted to expand the mandate from peacekeeping to peace enforcement, and the United States resisted and would not pursue the disarmament conditions required to transition to UNOSOM II. The result might have been different if the divergence had been minimized. This could have taken as little effort as UNITAF postponing its redeployment for an additional 6 months in order to create a politically stable environment that could cultivate indigenous institutions.

An analysis of the peace operations in Somalia highlights the importance of the match between the level of involvement and the resources committed to its accomplishment. When this condition exists, a force can adapt to unforeseen circumstances, which might require the application of military force in order to compel certain actions. In addition, the analysis reveals that international peace operations need the United States' participation because of both the requisite leadership the US

brings to the table as well as the United States' unique military capabilities of command and control, intelligence, surveillance and logistics.

Endnotes

¹ Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1995), 3.

² United Nations Charter, "Chapter VI: Pacific Settlement of Disputes," <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter5.shtml> (accessed March 18, 2014).

³ United Nations Charter, "Chapter VII: Actions with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression," <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml> (accessed March 18, 2014).

⁴ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping, "Peacekeeping Fact Sheet," <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml> (accessed February 26, 2014).

⁵ United Nations Document Center, *Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York: United Nations), 22, http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/library/capstone_doctrine_eng.pdf (accessed February 26, 2014).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷ Dan Henk, *Uncharted Paths, Uncertain Vision, US Military Involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Wake of the Cold War* (Colorado Springs, CO: Institute for National Security studies, United States Air Force Academy, 1998) 5-12.

⁸ Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*, 6-9.

⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, Field Manual 3.07 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October 6, 2008), V.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-1 - 3-18.

¹¹ Solomon Dersso, *The Somalia Conflict: Implications for Peacemaking and Peacekeeping Efforts* (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2009) 6.

¹² John J. Sommer, *Hope Restored? Humanitarian Aid in Somalia* (Refugee Policy Group, Center for Policy Analysis and Research, 1994), 8, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABZ357.pdf (accessed March 22, 2014).

¹³ Jane Perlez, "U.N. Sees Danger of Somali Famine," *New York Times*, February 27, 1992.

¹⁴ The "New World Order" was a phrase from a speech given by President's Bush to both Houses of Congress on 11 September 1991. The phrase was intended to emphasize the importance of the leadership role of the United States during a transition from a bipolar to a

unipolar international system. The phrase or new conceptualization of the role of the United States also highlighted the intensity of the national interest for a stable rules based international system and national value of human rights.

¹⁵ *The United Nations and Somalia: 1992-1996* (New York: United Nations, Department of Public Information), 15.

¹⁶ UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/794 (1992), December 3, 1992, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Chap%20VII%20SRES%20794.pdf> (accessed March 4, 2014).

¹⁷ United Nations, Department of Public Information, "United Nations Operation in Somalia II," <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unosom2b.htm> (accessed March 24, 2014).

¹⁸ United States Army Center for Military History, *United States Forces, Somalia After Action Report and Historical Overview: The United States Army in Somalia, 1992–1994*, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/documents/somalia/SomaliaAAR.pdf> (accessed February 21, 2014).

¹⁹ Kevin Kennedy, "The Relationship between the Military and Humanitarian Organizations in Operation Restore Hope," in *Learning from Somalia: The Lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, eds. Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 100.

²⁰ John L. Hirsch and Robert B Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace Press, 1995), 104.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²² United Nations, Department of Public Information, "United Nations Operation in Somalia II."

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, 147.

²⁵ United Nations, Department of Public Information, "United Nations Operation in Somalia II."

²⁶ Sommer, *Hope Restored? Humanitarian Aid in Somalia*, 92.

²⁷ *United Nations Peacekeeping Home Page*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml> (accessed March 4, 2014).

²⁸ President Clinton first publically called for reform to the United Nations during his address to the General Assembly on 27 September 1993. This address generally coincided with the transfer of responsibility from UNITAF to UNOSOM II. As a consequence of the events of October 1994, President Clinton developed and promulgated Presidential Decision Directive 25

which established United States policy on Multi-lateral Peace Operations and set conditions for the employment of the United States military in these operations.

²⁹ *U.S. Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations*, Presidential Decision Directive 25, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd25.htm> (accessed March 14 2014).

³⁰ Christine Cervanek, "Lessons of the Past: Experiences in Peace Operations," in *Peace Operation: Developing an American Strategy*, eds. Antonia Jandler Chayes and George Raach (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1995), 39-40.

³¹ Mohamed Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994) 85.

³² United Nations, Department of Public Information, *The United Nations and Somalia: 1992-1996* (New York: United Nations Press, 1996), 35.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 228-229.

³⁵ I extrapolated based on two books *The United Nations and Somalia: 1992-1996*, and *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* to determine the percentage of total supplies delivered, which I extrapolated.

³⁶ Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities*, 37-39.

³⁷ Gerard Prunier, "The Experience of European Armies in Somalia," in *Learning from Somalia: The Lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, eds. Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 143.

³⁸ *United Nations Charter*, <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/preamble.shtml> (accessed on Feb 26, 2014).

³⁹ Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*, 79.

⁴⁰ Robert B. Oakley and David Tucker, *Two Perspectives on Interventions and Humanitarian Operations* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1997).

⁴¹ John Fox, "Approaching Humanitarian Intervention Strategically: The Case of Somalia," *SAIS Review*, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2001): 155.

⁴² Lester H. Brune, *United States and Cold War interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, 1992-1998* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1999), 34.

⁴³ United Nations Trusteeship Council was established under United Nations Charter, "International Trusteeship Council." This organ examines the administering authority responsible for managing the political economic and social development of the trust territories with the intention of achieving self-government or independence. By vote of the Security Council, this organ suspended operations on 1 November 1994, with the independence of Palau, the last

United Nations trust territory. For more information, see <http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/trusteeship/> (accessed March 22, 2014).

⁴⁴ Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention," *Foreign Affairs*, March / April 1996, 82.

⁴⁵ Since the withdrawal from Somalia with the termination of UNOSOM II, there have been several notable United Nations successes managing complex peace operations. These include the United Nation Transitional Assistance in East Timor (UNTAET), United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) as well as others.

⁴⁶ In 2000, the United Nations at direction of Secretary General Brahimi, began a significant reform of its policies, processes and organizations responsible for managing complex peace operations. This change was triggered by not only a growth in demand for UN peacekeepers, but also an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous operational environments. For more information, see <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/reform.shtm> (accessed March 22, 2014).