

THE EXPLOSIVE TRANSITION:  
AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE  
OF RADICAL ISLAM IN THE  
FAILED MISSION TO SOMALIA, 1992 - 1993

A Senior Honors Thesis

By

JONATHAN LEAMON JONES

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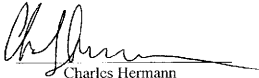
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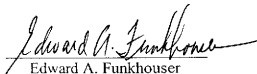
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Dedicated in loving memory to:

*Clyde David Jones*

I look forward to the reunion.

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## ABSTRACT

The Explosive Transition: An Examination of the Role of  
Radical Islam in the Failed Mission to Somalia, 1992 – 1993  
(April 2002)

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United States involvement in the international effort to prevent the mass starvation of the people of Somalia began during the Bush Administration in August of 1992, and continued after Bill Clinton defeated George Bush for the presidency. Political considerations, a strong Washington D.C. establishment aversion to casualties and horrific pictures from news agencies such as CNN influenced decisions to either assist or take the lead in distributing relief alongside the United Nations. Untold thousands of Somali lives were saved because of the intervention, but when compared to recent foreign policy triumphs the mission is largely viewed as a failure. Unfortunately, intense clan warfare and internal division still persist in Somalia, over a decade after many demanded action to avert genocidal disaster.

This chaos has implications for the United States and other countries intent on combating terrorism. An environment for Islamic extremism is created when either the

central government is sympathetic or has no means of control. Somalia is a prime example. The people of this strategic East African nation are overwhelmingly Muslim. This fact looms over the power struggles that have taken place since the deposition of long-time dictator Siad Barre in January of 1991. Islam, especially in such an area of lawlessness, is useful both in the physical power struggles of individuals seeking to rule over others and those who wish to export terror. Because of deeply rooted traditions and the specific directions of holy texts, religion and society are intricately interwoven in many Muslim-majority countries. At the same time, states such as Turkey might be regarded as exceptions.

The Somalia of the early 1990s dramatically illustrates the dilemmas of today in countries such as Afghanistan. It is necessary to build stable central governments to avoid internal chaos and prevent “hideouts” for terrorist groups beyond the reach of state authority. Unfortunately, the United Nations is likely too weak to accomplish this alone. Should United States troops become heavily involved as peacekeepers, the level of commitment and sacrifice necessary may be too much for American politicians, especially in a post-Cold War world. Yet what other country is willing or capable to become the occupying power when there are determined and divided nationalistic groups seek to advance an agenda of their own with no regard for building a responsible national government? Indeed, a potential danger of international inaction in such cases can create safe havens for international terrorism. In Muslim-majority countries, the motivations of extremist groups for violent terror against outsiders and one’s own countrymen are hardly ever solely religious.

Religion, however, remains a powerful and encompassing cultural influence. Religious law and practice can provide a centuries-long tradition and institution for the formation of a religiously centered society. Sometimes, as warring factions fight for power and resist foreign influences, appeals of religion can be tragically misused, and become a vehicle of those ambitious for even greater power. Such was the case in Somalia. Religion in Somalia is a powerful unifying force in a remarkably homogeneous society. Paradoxically, clan warfare and deep tribal divisions also persist. However, both are present and an integral part of the region's tragic recent history. As such, the power of Somali religious conviction must be understood and dealt with carefully and knowledgeably by the outside world.

Islam, not unlike other religions, can lend itself as a justification for violence. The results are predictably disastrous, especially in poorer countries. A strict and narrow interpretation of the Koran is a total and comprehensive way of life. It is indispensable in politics, law and society, and not easily compatible with the powerful currents of Western-style modernization and its steadily creeping cultural influence. As such, intervention by the United States or a coalition of Western nations might be viewed skeptically at best, and met with a tenacious, stealth resistance at worst. As this thesis contends, this is likely the case even if that contact is to avert mass human suffering on a devastating scale. The building of a civil society is necessary for the safety of citizens and the world at large. Without a government capable and willing to resist violent fundamentalist groups in Islamic countries, there exists a safe haven for international terrorism. Islam can be a central cultural factor in this process, either for good or evil.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Before the events of September 11, 2001, the larger world had forgotten Somalia. It must now be revisited. Partly fueled by responsive emotion to the powerful television images of mass starvation, the Bush administration came under increasing pressure from the public and Congress to intervene in Somalia shortly after the Gulf War victory.<sup>1</sup> Within the United Nations, action was taken to secure the safe distribution of humanitarian aid amid intense clan warfare. Unforeseen difficulties in achieving this mission arose immediately. The United States became more involved and the situation gradually deteriorated during the first term of President Bill Clinton, when the United States sought to turn the mission over to the United Nations. Eighteen American servicemen and hundreds of Somalis would lose their lives in one incident alone (the October 3, 1993 Battle of the Black Sea, made famous by Mark Bowden's book, and later a motion picture, *Black Hawk Down*) to capture two of the top aides to chief warlord Mohamed Aidid. He was a man, who in taking advantage of one disaster, was helping to create another. Like others fighting for power in this war-ravaged area of the African continent, Aidid has successfully invoked Islam as a vehicle for the advancement of a particular cause.

The political situation in Somalia in 1989, President Bush's first year of office, was already grave. The area was ravaged by years of civil war, and the central

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<sup>1</sup> The references of this thesis follow the style and format of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition.

government had collapsed. War destroyed crops and droughts depressed what little remained, leading to mass starvation. This was one of the first international disasters CNN covered in depth. Americans, like the rest of the world, saw this tragedy unfolding. Various international agencies tried to deliver food, but this led to riots as warlords seized shipments. Thousands were dying daily. President Bush and the United Nations felt morally obligated to take action. But the basic chaos of this situation, which would require more than food deliveries to correct, made Somalia fundamentally a lawless place, not unlike Afghanistan before the Taliban. As a result, surrounding areas became a safe and hospitable breeding ground for terrorist cells, a safe haven under the cover of an Islamic state. The American experience in Somalia a decade ago illustrates the dilemma the United States and the international community now face. And not unlike the present, politics played a role in the decisions made.

Television imagery evoked horror among Americans on October 1993 as Somalis triumphantly dragged the bodies of American soldiers through the streets of Mogadishu. Meanwhile, famine and civil war continued to tear Somalia apart, as had been happening at various levels of intensity for much of the latter Twentieth Century. The enduring aftermath of the interventions were continued misery for the Somali people and relatively minor domestic political fallout at home, most notably the resignation of Defense Secretary Les Aspin. Scandal and other foreign policy controversies facing the new administration, especially events in Kosovo and Bosnia, came to dominate the news. In the meantime, Somalia remained an important place of operation for Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist network, harboring training camps and schools and enjoying the

support of a substantial number of sympathizers.

The terrorist action that so devastated symbols of America's unprecedented cultural, economic and political hegemony serves as an unforgettable reminder that the United States is not immune from the horrors of Islamic fanaticism. The operations of mass terror now possible within these shores often have roots that run deep across the world. No longer are nations and ethnicities islands unto themselves. For religious purists of all religions, this can be intolerable.

The events surrounding both the initial United Nations mission to ensure the safe distribution of humanitarian aid and the American-led Operation Restore Hope in Somalia are among incidents of international intervention, viewed as unnecessary meddling in Muslim by extremists such as Osama bin Laden, who has used it to justify a campaign against the West. Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Somalia has been identified by Colin Powell and the State Department as a lawless place with strong affiliation to the harboring of terrorist activity. As such, the means of motivation of a religion, so intricately interwoven with Somali culture and society, must be explored.

While the Islam of Somali society is complex and often fractured, useful conclusions can be drawn from an examination of the history of these operations and the role of the religion (to which over 99 percent of Somalis adhere) in the political events of the surrounding region. This is especially true as American officials interrogate the former warlords of Afghanistan and President George W. Bush guides the effort to defeat the perpetrators of mass terror and those that lend their support. Indeed, terrible acts have

been committed and planned with the goal of purifying and advancing a particular vision of the Islamic faith, one that more than a few fundamentalist adherents believe is destined to take over the planet. Somalia, like all of East Africa, occupies a strategic position in the constant struggle of civilizations. This has been true since Persians and Arabs began to forge trade routes to India and the East. Only now the stakes are higher. Somalia straddles the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean; it is the doorway to some of the most populous places on earth. Oil rich lands and memories of a once dominant civilization loom across the landscape. For the Western world, Somalia is not just another mildly troublesome and historically tragic African nation. Since September 11, the entire Horn of Africa is center stage like never before.

A more uncertain and fractured world emerged from Cold War victory. There is no clear ominous enemy upon which the United States must focus diplomatic and military energy. The once obvious enemies, the Soviet Union and other Communist states, are vanquished. In their place are shadows. And so foreign relations have entered a period of profound change. The troubles of Somalia were the first headache to emerge from the ashes of three monumental triumphs for President George Bush: the collapse of the Soviet Union and promise of democratic reform in Russia, the reunification of a long divided Germany, and the formation of the Gulf War coalition and subsequent liberation of Kuwait. Heightened US involvement in Somalia began in December 1992 with the deployment of over 20,000 troops and initiation of Operation Restore Hope. Intervention really begins in notable fashion after Bush loses the election to Bill Clinton in November 1992, but before Bush left the presidency. The new president, Bill Clinton, continued the

program, yet the basic political situation had not changed – a central government needed to be rebuilt for long-term stability. Ideally, nation building after the Second World War is an coordinated international effort. But in Somalia, this did not prove effective.

The lesser trained and equipped United Nations forces were not up to the task once the United States began to pull out. The warlords become more assertive; terrorist cells were not uprooted because chaos remained. Thus, the events leading up to and including this humanitarian mission demonstrate the potential for unintended, yet enduring negative effects that stem from involvement in affairs of little or no apparent domestic strategic interest to the U.S., with no clear and unchanging goals set firmly in place and a lack of determination to use all means necessary to achieve those goals. Likely the religious extremists using the tragic confusion of Somalia as a safe haven from global scrutiny took notice of the lack of U.S. and international resolve, and the end result, in the humanitarian effort to avert genocide.

News reports indicate al Qaeda has operations in Somalia, but the same chaos that provides a cover for operations prevents Western journalists from finding the extent to which this is the case.<sup>2</sup> One aim of this project is to demonstrate the unusual uniformity of Somali society, brought together by agriculture, a proud shared history, and Islam. The role and practice of religion in Somali life is difficult for Americans to comprehend. There, many people are of an entirely different mindset. There is hardly any fear of dying; it is in God's service.<sup>3</sup> More often than not, this is an embraced and most

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<sup>2</sup> David B. Ottoway and Thomas E. Ricks. *The Washington Post*, 11/4/01, "Somalia Draws Anti-Terrorist Focus," Marc Lacey, *The New York Times*, 11/4/01, "Somali Leader Makes a Plea for America to Reengage," Marc Lacey, *The New York Times*, 11/11/01, "Somalia Wines as Its Chaos Attracts U.S. Attention," XSomalia News, 1/5/02, "Somalia's Multitude of Factions Hinders Antiterror Efforts," Bill Gertz, *The Washington Times*, 1/10/02, "Terrorists moving from Somalia." See the Bibliography for more information.

desirable honor. How then is a superpower to both manage political pressure back home and effectively counter a threatening enemy more than willing to die for a greater political or religious cause?

Indeed, an unofficial doctrine was exacerbated after Mogadishu and seized upon by the hijackers of September 11. Some military and political leaders held a view that the United States could not tolerate casualties in humanitarian or otherwise limited missions. Calls from leaders of both political parties for “no casualties” have influenced the Kosovo and Baghdad policy air strikes, among others. This mindset can be traced to the Vietnam War and the postmodern, other-directed currents of contemporary society. Unilateral military action is frowned upon in favor of coalition force. Especially since Vietnam, political considerations to military intervention must be seriously taken into account by those who would suffer the consequences of its unpopularity.

The delicate post-Cold War world has provided the opportunities for this to more fully develop. For example, Defense Secretary Les Aspin rejected the requests of commanders and General Colin Powell for tanks, armored vehicles and gunships to protect US troops partly for fear of a political backlash against administration handling of the humanitarian mission to Somalia.<sup>4</sup> Yet military officials considered such a move vital to the completion of their orders. The decision would eventually cost Aspin his job. This is an example of the rather rocky beginning in foreign affairs for Bill Clinton. Limited troop deployments would continue over the course of his administration. Clinton, like

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, verses can be interpreted in various ways among the faithful. For insight into those, in Somalia, Israel and elsewhere, willing to lay down their lives in “service to God,” a look at the following verses might be helpful: Surah 4:95, 4:74, 2:216, 8:65, 61:4, 8:39, 4:89, 9:14, 9:5. Please see Section IX, Selected Verses of the Koran.

<sup>4</sup> Military Biography of former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin.  
[http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/sccdef\\_histories/hugs/aspin.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/sccdef_histories/hugs/aspin.htm)

others before him, struggled to juggle a wariness toward large military deployments and the often unpleasant responsibilities of the world's only superpower as it struggled to stem the tide of various genocidal hotspots.

Determining the lingering effects of the mixed signals as a decade progressed is difficult. Gauging the popularity of certain decisions within the military establishment is not. President Clinton, days after the fatal October 3 raid in Mogadishu, decided to abandon the hunt for the warlord Aidid. He ordered all American troops home within six months. Bowden reports many of combat troops on the ground, who watched their fellow soldiers die either in person or on CNN, wanted to continue until the completion of their mission to dismantle the ability of Mogadishu's warlord to keep aid from reaching his people.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see, the Islamic fundamentalists of Somalia and the surrounding region have not forgotten this episode. One consequence of the United States' exit from Somalia without ending the mass chaos and reign of lawlessness has been to permit the establishment of a training ground for violent, extreme, anti-Western sentiment and action.

Shortly after Clinton took office in January of 1993, the United States turned the expanded humanitarian mandate which came to include rebuilding the nation of Somalia over to the United Nations. The obstacles were many. Pakistani peacekeepers, part of the new UN peacekeeping force, were killed in early June of that year. It begins to appear as if the international community might lose complete control of the relief effort. In the meantime, CNN's cameras continued to roll. The United Nations requested greater American involvement. The United States Military Rangers arrived, and soon asked for

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<sup>5</sup> Bowden, Mark, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), 331 – 346.

more equipment. Balancing the necessity to serve in a lead supportive role and the desire to avoid a big and expensive operation, Washington decided against it. This set the stage for the military embarrassment of October 3, 1993. After the of Battle of the Black Sea, described in detail in Bowden's book<sup>6</sup>, mission commanders were replaced and troop strength was cut. Also lost, it appears, were critical judgment capabilities, cultural knowledge and fragile relationships built up over a number of months.

The large pullout of American forces shortly after the failed mission to capture Mohamed Aidid's lieutenants, partially based on a fear of further casualties, first hampered the UN effort to establish a coalition government. Somalia fell further into chaos as the Americans left. This warlord's group, Habr Gidr, despite Aidid's death in 1996, still struggles against rival clans for control of Mogadishu and greater Somalia. Indeed, the dilemma of 2002 and beyond -- rooting out (overwhelmingly Islamist) terror activity and "nation building" in shattered countries where there is no real central government -- is intricately interwoven with the events of Somalia. The United Nations pulled its international staff out of the country in mid-September 2001 as flights to and from Mogadishu could no longer be insured.<sup>7</sup> The European Union also withdrew its expatriate staff the day after a large demonstration in the Somali capital in support of Osama bin Laden and against the United States. This is the context in which an environment for international terrorism is created and sustained. The Somali civil war was sufficient to generate a safe haven for the operation of Islamic extremism through its

<sup>6</sup> Where things began to go wrong, including the capture of American soldier Michael Durant, can be found in Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 135 – 197.

<sup>7</sup> BBC News, 24 September, 2001. "UN pulls out of Somalia." Quoted in the news report is Skeikh Nur Barud, an Islamic leader, who said at a rally supporting bin Laden, "It is the anger of Allah against America. Who can believe that one man in the mountains in Afghanistan could organize such a big blow to America?"



violent, oppressive and sympathetic operation.

The missions to Somalia, however, were not a complete failure. Thousands of lives were undoubtedly spared from famine because of the intervention. But extremists across the larger Muslim world, with a desire to strike the West and America in particular, were given clear signals in 1992 and 1993 concerning US resolve to establish a new world order after the fall of Soviet Communism. Local radical groups, some supported by bin Laden, often violently disagreed unless united against a greater power, a common enemy. The warlords demonstrated that a loosely united and heavily armed Somali people could bring the world's greatest military power to its knees for fear of political fallout and strong Congressional condemnation as the American body count increased and the news cameras rolled.

Such clever action by the warlords also increased the inability to resist a United Nation power-sharing plan and subsequent attempts toward peace. In the more than ten years since the overthrow of longtime dictator Siad Barre, Somalia has fallen victim to both clans fighting for greater power and, despite good intentions, the fallout of foreign mismanagement. Somalia remains one of the most lawless countries in the world. A test of wills against determined clan leaders and local militias turned into a recipe for failure. Lost in anarchy and civil war, with millions under the threat of starvation, something had to be done for the innocents of Somalia in the early 1990s. But time and again, the UN and the Americans faced trouble at every turn.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of radical Islam in the failed mission to Somalia. Radical Islam is defined as belief and thought parlayed into terrorist

action (partly or wholly fueled by a religious-based motivation or conviction) like the bombing of the USS Cole or the World Trade Center -- targeting a non-engaging military presence or innocent civilians. Nation building is necessary to support governments that resist extremist influences, but Somalia dramatically illustrates the difficulty of such an enterprise. It might be considered a failure for this reason, though unquestionably many lives were spared because of the intervention. The actions of Presidents Bush and Clinton only be considered a failure, however, by the most common post-Cold War measures when no clear victor emerges from a complex mess: the number of dead Americans and the television images that burn into the public conscious.

Had some matters been handled differently, with military and political decisions based more heavily on cultural knowledge and a military commitment to match the level of confidence, Somalia might have been hailed as another successful, efficient and quickly resolved US-led coalition enterprise. It is entirely plausible that mass starvation could have been avoided at minimal or even no human cost. That certainly was the prevailing view inside both the American administration and United Nations as the warring faction leaders signed a ceasefire agreement on March 3, 1992 allowing a UN monitoring mission.<sup>8</sup> A safe haven for Islamic radicals, of the type found in Somalia and (until recently) in Afghanistan, is best fostered among chaos with strong religious undercurrents -- where either the central government is sympathetic, as in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban, or has no real control, as in Somalia or Afghanistan before the Taliban. In either case, Islam is unquestionably a factor in Muslim-majority

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<sup>8</sup> *Somalia -- (United States Operation in Somalia) UNOSOM I* Prepared by the Department of Public Information, United Nations. 21 March 1997.

nations, either for peace or terror.

And so it is useful to scrutinize the religion of virtually all in Somalia, as it is the funnel through which culture and the political structure have long been filtered in the horn of Africa. Somalia has been a regional base for al Qaeda since at least 1993. The countryside has been used as a place to prepare and plan for the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as the USS Cole, a tragedy that elicited no formal U.S. military response. Furthermore, the Christian-majority government of Ethiopia has expressed a desire to work with Americans to eliminate the threat posed by the radical Somali Al-Itixaad al Islami (Islamic Unity).<sup>9</sup> Indifference or minimal popular support in Somalia is widespread toward such groups, but a powerful catalyst can certainly call the ordinary man off the street and into action with little difficulty. The means of the warlords indicate likely such a man would be defending Somali independence, his family, and to some extent, his faith.

In Muslim majority countries, with the exception of Turkey, Islam and the state are one, not to be separated. The prophet Muhammad, unlike the founders of other religions, founded and governed a polity. Somalis are overwhelmingly Islamist – approximately 99% of the population is Sunni Muslim. However, the vast majorities could not be classified as extreme fundamentalists and are no more sympathetic to al Qaeda than were the majority of Afghans to the unpopular Taliban. The Somali warlords, Aidid included, can be natural enemies of the religious extremists. Their attempts for authoritarian power at all costs and the ensuing lawlessness clash with visions of a strict Islamic state. Yet the latest government, created at a Djibouti peace

<sup>9</sup> David B. Ottoway and Thomas E. Ricks, *The Washington Post*, 11/4/01. "Somalia Draws Anti-Terrorist Focus."

conference in 2000, does not control all of the countryside or capital city. Here is the danger to America, as a strategically located and severely depressed Somalia is ripe for both the recruitment of terrorists and the harboring of sympathizers. Anti-American sentiment, especially pronounced as a reaction to some aspects of U.S. foreign policy, is already firmly established.

There are many complex and varied reasons why the humanitarian mission to Somalia is now viewed largely as a failure, though the United Nations and American food relief saved many Somali lives. Among the factors are questionable administration decisions, partially based on a strong aversion to casualties, and a misreading of the clan leaders' capability to cause trouble. A cultural misunderstanding and underestimation of Islam in this East African country must also be among them. For the reasons stated above, a better understanding of the various shades of the religion of Somalia, so deeply imbedded in the war-ravaged country, is vital to more fully understanding the remarkable events of 1992 and 1993. Although writing of the foreign policy implications of a major world religion in a complex and hopelessly fractured country is a huge task, useful general conclusions can be drawn from a limited study. Islam itself is favorable and most useful in the physical power struggles of individuals seeking to rule over others. This is most clearly indicated by a look into the central tenants and history of the religion.

The desperate Somali situation of a decade ago dramatically illustrates the predicament Americans face today, many months after the most devastating attack on the United States in over a generation. How can a central government be built and supported that will not serve as an ideal base for terrorism, either through governmental sympathy

and active support or lack of control and authority? And what exactly is the role of Islam, itself founded as and now widely functional as a polity? The history of the Twentieth Century, as testified to by the spectacular successes of Japan, Germany and South Korea among others, indicates seemingly impossible nation building can be successful. At present Muslims, Serbs and Croats are rebuilding a new Bosnia with international help, in a formally lawless corner of the world where those groups have been killing each other for centuries.

There is no reason why Somalia cannot be rebuilt and the threat of shadowy extremists using the land and resources to support their activities eliminated. First, a powerful and encompassing cultural, economic and political force in Somalia, Islam, must be quite clearly understood, in that country and elsewhere. Most Muslims are clearly peaceful, and desire peace for themselves and their families. But some are not, and news reports have indicated that some extremists are hiding and planning future attacks amid the chaos and human tragedy of Somalia. This lawless place is today an example of a larger problem concerning terrorism. It is a failed state, with dangerous implications. A dedication to Islam is among the excuses, the justifications, for exerting disastrous force with little or no regard for the safety of others. And after the horror of September 11, America should hope that what lie at the bottom of Ground Zero are her own illusions.

## Chapter 2

### The Region

#### A Homogeneous Society

Despite the chaos that has reigned in recent years, historically Somalia is uniquely uniform among the nations and kingdoms of Africa. Relatively small geographically, its people share a common tradition: the same language, literature, camel-dependent economy and worship. The beginning of traceable Somali society begins in 500 BCE with what African historians have termed the First Great Migration.<sup>10</sup> The ancestors of the Somali people most likely are Eastern Cushites from the lake region of Ethiopia, where the Omo-Tana group had split off from the mainstream Cushitic peoples centuries before. They came in search of better lands for what remain the major economic engines to this day, farming and pastoralism. The further splintering of nomadic groups would not dissolve their common ties. Islam, a product of what historians characterize as the Second Great Migration, would emerge as a powerful Somali bond. The new religion came to dominate the formation of the informal business conduct codes that were rapidly spreading from the coast to the inland as routes to the East were established.<sup>11</sup>

Trading opened up the long isolated tribes of the region to the larger world. Somalia straddles the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, and those wishing to embark on the dangerous but lucrative trek to India made the Eastern horn of Africa a main stopping point. In fact, Persian and Arab traders on their way to India were the major contributors

<sup>9</sup> Laitin & Samatar, *Somalia: A Nation in Search of a State* (Gower Press: London, 1987), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet*, (Westview Press: Colorado, 1999), 33.

to the spreading of the Islam. Regular contact began approximately three hundred after Muhammad's death in 632. One of the consequences of trade was that many violent clan divisions began to dissipate in the nomadic lowlands of East Africa, "as Islamic conversion spread throughout most of the valley in the early twentieth century."<sup>12</sup> What emerged is a more homogeneous cultural identity, bound by common traditions and subsistence, a single language, and the Islamic faith.

The monotheism of Muhammad found fertile ground in East Africa. By the fifteenth century, Islam was deeply rooted and enough of an organizational force to pose a serious threat to the Ethiopian-centered Abyssinian civilization. However, an early Somali tradition, based on supposed prophetic injunction, protected Abyssinian Christians from attack or attempts at the mass, forced conversion that would tarnish later centuries.<sup>13</sup> Islamization spread most quickly along the coast where trading was concentrated, specifically the growing communities of Zayla and Berbera in the north and Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe in the south. This can be considered the beginning of state formation in a long nomadic culture. Of those early towns, only Mogadishu still holds any significance to continental African affairs, as a capital and large coastal city of over a million people.<sup>14</sup>

Colonialism also brought extensive interaction with the outside world. This time, however, it was with the West. This began in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century with Portuguese traders, some of who settled in the region and came to dominate the politics of several coastal

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<sup>12</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 81. See also 146 - 150 for the importance of clan and family identity in Somali society.

<sup>13</sup> Laitin, *Somalia: A Nation in Search of a State*, 10 - 12.

<sup>14</sup> Wright (ed.) 2002 *The New York Times Almanac*, 660 - 661.

towns. In a harbinger of things to come, the sultans of Zanzibar were eventually successful in gaining control of the territories, recognizing the economic potential of the riverine areas of Somalia.<sup>15</sup> The way of life for many people since those times has changed little. It is still predominately pastoral. The importance of this societal base cannot be overstated. Like religion, agriculture and herding build a sense of common values and ethics that cut across class and regional differences, especially varying north-south pastoral and familial traditions. Such differences are pronounced in everyday life, but “notwithstanding these regional variations, for the Somali as a whole, it is not too much to say that in many important respects Islam has become one of the mainsprings of Somali culture; and to nomad and cultivator alike the profession of the faith has the force almost of an initiation rite into their society.”<sup>16</sup>

In the few years before the explosive upheavals that drove longtime dictator Siad Barre from power, agriculture was economically dominant and relatively prosperous: it accounted for nearly 65% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 95% of exports and 80% of employment. In addition, Somalis owned an impressive 43% of the camels, 2% of the cattle, 10% of the goats and 5% of the sheep of the entire continent of Africa.<sup>17</sup> The relatively compact geographic area, especially for an African nation (Somalia is slightly smaller than the state of Texas), and shared economic base has helped to prevent permanent fracture, especially along clan lines. Somalia remains a remarkably homogeneous society to this day; the vast majority of its 6 million people still share a

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<sup>15</sup> Cassanelli. *The Shaping of Somalia Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 175 - 176.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis. *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1980), 16. Such unity held up fairly well through colonialism and Cold War covert battles.

<sup>17</sup> Adam and Ford (ed), *Mending Rips in the Sky: Options for Somali Communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press, 1997), 275.



common language, religion, ethnic origin and pastoral, nomadic tradition.<sup>18</sup> This danger of fracture in support of one colonial power over another, or one nationalistic leader over another, was especially pronounced as new forms of potentially lucrative subsistence arose, namely trade with the Europeans. The price for that, however, was tolerance of a large foreign presence.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the Twentieth Century, extensive contact with the Western powers of Britain and Italy would be marked by violence. More trading meant an ever increasing European influence over government, and the British East India's Company's desire for unrestricted harbor facilities led to treaties with various Somali chiefs who were guaranteed British protection. This was always an uneasy alliance, made difficult by its unpopularity among some clan members who then organized oppositions.<sup>20</sup> The Italians were also heavily involved in trade, and offensives in Ethiopia in 1936 gave Italy a dominant position in the Horn of Africa, soon to be lost in a 1947 peace treaty as the Second World War drew to a close. A devotion to Islam was part of the continual resistance to the Christian colonists and would-be conquerors. In the first two decades of the century, for example, British rule was challenged through persistent attacks led by the Islamic nationalist leader Mohamed Abdullah, a man skilled in religious rhetoric.<sup>21</sup>

Somalia's own ethnic configuration is unique among the regions and nations of the African continent. Instead of independent states attempting to establish a common

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<sup>18</sup> *Somalia Brief*, Oxfam America, Volume 2, Number 19. Emira Woods, Program Coordinator for West Africa and the Horn of Africa. January 1997.

<sup>19</sup> Somalia in the post-colonial period has benefited directly from the presence of foreigners, especially as tragedy struck. In the two years before the mission, the U.S. Government sent \$85 million in direct relief supplies and 145,000 tons of food. Personal correspondence of U.S. Rep. Tony Hall and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft. Bush Library Archives.

<sup>20</sup> Adam and Ford, *Mending Rips in the Sky*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> United States Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs. Background Note: Somalia. July 1998.

national identity from a multitude of ethnic groups within a boundary, Somalia is a one-nationality state whose population shares an ethnic identity with three adjoining states. Religion is but one factor in the greater common identity of the region, but can become a powerful unifying force among the people when in opposition to foreigners.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, an aspiring ruler from outside the society would have much to overcome and account for. “What gives Somalis this strong sense of common identity, despite more than eighty years of political partition, is their long-time occupation of nearly four hundred thousand square miles of contiguous territory; a common language (albeit with regional dialect differences); a shared Islamic heritage, a widespread belief that all Somalis are ultimately descended from a small number of common ancestors; and a way of life that is overwhelmingly pastoral.”<sup>23</sup>

A homogeneous Somali society would emerge intact from the momentous changes of Cold War period. Independence from Britain and Italy was won in 1960, and the Somali Republic was formed. The European model of a democratic state was beginning to take shape, a welcome change from the far-reaching, direct Soviet influence and export of ideology in the area. Political unification and the promise of democracy, however, would only last for less than a decade. Siad Barre led a 1969 military coup that toppled Somalia’s fragile parliamentary rule and concentrated governmental power, economic activity and political control in Mogadishu, largely ignoring the rest of the country.<sup>24</sup> He took advantage of the inevitable post-independence conflicts.

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<sup>22</sup> Hashim, Alice Bettis, *The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 49.

<sup>23</sup> Cassanelli, Lee V, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600 – 1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Somalia Brief*, Oxfam America.

Interpretations of Islam had a hand in this as well. Political parties, reflecting clan loyalties, split because of regional interests in the former British-controlled north and Italian-controlled south. "Modernists" intent on economic and social development and pro-Arab, pan-Somali Islamic militants advancing unification with parts of Ethiopia and Kenya also caused conflict.<sup>25</sup> For the first time, both nomads and city-dwellers lived under the threat of prolonged clan warfare.

This did not last long once Barre settled most of the disputes with totalitarian violence. As a ruler, he possessed the advantage of being a native Somali. Discontent with his regime continued for over 30 years, culminating in a successful coup in January of 1991. Somali political unity has never approached the level of homogeneity that other areas of society enjoyed. The Cold War era meant political instability for many Third World countries in Africa, some of whom were caught up in the struggle between the United States and Soviet Union.<sup>26</sup> Money was an incentive for leaders to get their act together and keep power struggles behind closed doors. "Somali governments allowed the country to become a playground for Cold War maneuvers. The economic and military aid supplied by the Soviet Union and the US to buy Somali friendship was often squandered by unaccountable public sector officials who institutionalized corruption without moral discipline."<sup>27</sup> But Somalia's relative peace for most of this period could be partly attributed to its unusually high level of societal unity, as a Somali who shared many of his people's religious values, economic heritage and cultural characteristics was in power.

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<sup>25</sup> State Department Background Note. Here, and for footnote 16, please see Bibliography for details on these documents.

<sup>26</sup> See Paul Johnson's *Modern Times* and Martin Walker's *The Cold War: A History* for detailed accounts. Also footnote 33.

<sup>27</sup> Adams and Ford, *Mending Rips in the Sky*, 73.

Unlike the warlords who vied for power in the civil war that followed Barre's fleeing, the dictator made little more than ceremonial use of Islam. His long rule was more in the religious style of a brutal and likely apathetic Saddam Hussein than the strict explicitness of an Ayatollah Khomeini. Nevertheless, Barre did not impede or interrupt the practice of religion, except to keep out the influence of other faiths.<sup>28</sup> There was, of course, Somali resistance to Barre. The most notorious is the 1988 northern clan uprising that some international observers consider the beginning of the disintegration of the country.<sup>29</sup> When natural disaster hit in the form of famine in the early 1990s, opening the way for international aid and assistance, the relatively quiet radical elements of Somalia were ready to explode. In the face of famine and political instability, even the most homogeneous society would be headed for deep trouble.<sup>30</sup>

### **Radical Islam & The Horn of Africa**

The struggle against foreign influence, especially colonialism, has long used the strong, overt inclusion of religion and religious rhetoric. For example, preaching the doctrine of jihad against 'foreign infidels' and passionately opposed to 'pagan innovations,' Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hasan organized Somali clans and nomads against the British and Italian presence along the coastal regions of Somalia. His resistance lasted from 1899 to 1920, and was very successful during much of that time, though Hasan was eventually subdued by the superiority of British guns.<sup>31</sup> The post-

<sup>28</sup> *Operation World*, 21st Century Edition. Patrick Johnstone & Jason Mandryk. International Research Office, WEC International, 2001, 575.

<sup>29</sup> Sahnoun, Mohamed, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>30</sup> In a Dec. 12, 1991 letter to President Bush, the U.S. House Select Committee on Hunger wrote directly of this deadly combination. They warned of "potential genocide," and called Somalia "the most pressing humanitarian tragedy in the world." The letter closed with a call to action: "we strongly feel that we cannot just stand by and wash our hands of the horror of Somalia." Bush Library archives.

<sup>31</sup> Choucri, Youssef M, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 23.

colonial state was forged with two completely different colonial traditions: British administration in the north, which left many customs and traditional practices untouched, and the Italian fascist rule in the south, whose intense, authoritarian style left in its wake the near destruction of indigenous forms of social control.<sup>32</sup> The difficulty of creating a state in a Muslim nomadic society from two antagonistic European traditions, balanced with a strong Arab influence and a widespread Somali nationalism,<sup>33</sup> has opened the way for puritanical Islamicist movements such as Islamic Unity to gain support by promising law and order in the midst of seemingly inescapable poverty and disarray.

In more recent times, an emphasis on Islamic law (or shari'a) is seen by a some Somalis as the one form of governmental coercion that can pull the country out of lawlessness and despair. These voices are typically the strongest opponents of secular Western interaction and influence, in any form. Sometimes the reasons for this are more petty and selfish than religious, but the cloak of religious rhetoric is still in place.<sup>34</sup> And Islam lends itself to such misuse more than Christianity or Judaism because of the nature of the Koranic mandates and religious tradition. This places ordinary Somalis, still suffering from the effects of famine and civil war, against both clan leaders on a quest for greater power and radical Islamic fundamentalists. The ensuing chaos provides a breeding ground and hiding place for many dangerous agendas, from the power hungry to those willing to take up arms against any real or perceived threat to the goal of a pure Islamic state. First, it is useful to briefly examine Islam as a functional polity, and then

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<sup>32</sup> WRITENET Country Papers (UK). *Somalia: Civil War, Intervention and Withdrawal*, Gerald Prunier.

<sup>33</sup> This is impressively explored in Catherine Besteman's *Unraveling Somalia*, 70 - 109.

<sup>34</sup> Aidid was a prime example of this. *Warriors of the Prophet* by Mark Huband records him, fists raised before a large crowd on a Mogadishu terrace, shouting repeatedly "Allah Akbar" (God is great), p. 38.

the attempts to apply shari'a to Somalia. Both loom large over the humanitarian missions of the early 1990s. And only then will some of the unexpected difficulties encountered by the United Nations and the United States a decade ago be brought into sharper focus.

No central government has enjoyed any real power after the fall of Siad Barre, and despite international and internal attempts at nation building, this is largely still the case. As such, increasing the influence of a strict religious jurisprudence and governmental control is an attractive alternative. The Muslim faith is widely seen as the underpinning to a strong social structure among Somalis, a sustaining force through civil war bedlam.<sup>35</sup> There are, of course, many varied practices and divisions within this major world religion. "The Somalis are Sunnis, adhering to the Shafi'ite school of Islamic jurisprudence, and their Islam is characterized by saint veneration, enthusiastic belief in the mystical powers of charismatic roving holy men, and a tenuous measure of allegiance to Sufi brotherhoods."<sup>36</sup> In a later chapter, how these characteristics influenced the reactions to the humanitarian intervention will be more fully explored. Because a majority of Somalis considered European colonial law and administration alien and a form of oppression,<sup>37</sup> Islam, or more precisely the uniquely Somali practice of it, is widely used in the systems of justice and more informal forms of societal control. The personal practice of the Muslim religion spills over into the public life of Somalis because of the mandates of its holy text and the deeply rooted traditions that have developed from following it.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Fogarassy, Helen, *Mission Impossible: The World Community on a UN Compound in Somalia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999), 56.

<sup>36</sup> Laitin, *Somalia: A Nation in Search of a State*, 45.

<sup>37</sup> Adam and Ford, *Mending Rips in the Sky*, 71.

There are distinctive forms of interpretation, but a general, common ideological framework as it relates to government and society can be found. First, Islam is a total and comprehensive way of life, integral in politics, law and society. It is a Western misconception to believe it is a religion in their traditional sense of the word, personal and private. In fact, Islam is an all-embracing socio-politico-religious utopian ideology that encompasses every field of human endeavor.<sup>39</sup> An important part of Islamic revivalism is the belief that the failure of Muslim societies (in comparison to the hegemony of their Western counterparts) is due in large part to their departure from the straight path of Islam in favor of a more secular, materialistic path.<sup>40</sup> Thus, a renewed society requires a return to social reformation and revolution that draws inspiration from the Koran and the first great movement of Muhammad, approximately 1400 years ago.

For this to occur, Islamic law must replace Western-inspired civil codes. It is the only acceptable blueprint for a Muslim-majority society. The colonial legacy left a bitter taste in the mouth of many in the Arab and North African communities.<sup>41</sup> A poor Somali, despondent about what his future may hold, is an attractive candidate to radical groups. Such a situation is also fertile for the dissemination of false information regarding outsider intention. In a traditionally strong religious community where faith is taken seriously, the militant Islamic mindset is likely take stronger footing. A Sept. 24 BBC

<sup>38</sup> This also occurred as a response to the increasing emphasis on the persona of Barre in the years when the Somali socialist revolution was losing momentum, the mid-1970s. See *The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia* by Alice Bettis Hashim, 77 - 96.

<sup>39</sup> This section closely follows the writings of a prominent Muslim scholar, John L. Esposito. *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 163 - 167.

<sup>40</sup> Osama bin Laden and his sympathizers have repeatedly invoked this complaint, especially against the Saudi Arabian government, caretaker of Islam's holiest sites and a key U.S. ally.

<sup>41</sup> Salem, Paul, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology & World Politics in the Arab World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 118. See also Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, for more on why post-Cold War powers still hold an interest in the region: "Cold War geopolitics provoked U.S. interest in Somalia, which was seen as strategic because of its proximity to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf," 14 - 15.

news report from Mogadishu quoted Omar Abdi Olow, a schoolboy, on why he attended a mass rally against the United States: "I am out today to defend and support Islam and I wish victory for Osama bin Laden."<sup>42</sup>

Such sentiment is, of course, in the wake of efforts to avert mass starvation in Somalia, chiefly by countries in the West. For extreme Muslims looking to impose an Islamic state by any means necessary, this is unacceptable. Misinformation and propaganda, as one might expect, play an important role in the formation of such a mindset.<sup>43</sup> Terrorist networks take advantage of what the process of Islamization, or in some cases re-Islamization, requires: organizations and associations of dedicated and trained Muslims, who are willing to struggle (jihad) against corruption and injustice at home and those who would export unacceptable influences from abroad.<sup>44</sup> If shooting down Black Hawk helicopters could make the U.S. back down in less than a week, it is quite plausible that extremists gain legitimacy for positions and rhetoric that would encourage such activity, particularly in regard to the desirability of steadfastly standing against even the slightest perception of Western imperialism.

The distant history of colonialism is not so distant in the memories of many proud Somalis. Warlords such as Aidid could and did claim that he and his clan had driven off the world's mightiest military power, just as others before him had driven off the British and Italians.<sup>45</sup> The video of Somalis, including women and children, tearing apart the

<sup>42</sup> BBC News, 24 September, 2001. "UN pulls out of Somalia." See Bibliography for internet link.

<sup>43</sup> Bowden conducted extensive interviews with U.S. soldiers who served in Somalia. He reports of one Sheik Ali, a formidable Somali streetfighter: "Sheik Ali believed the radio broadcasts and flyers printed up by the Aidid's SNA. The Americans wanted to force all Somalis to be Christians, to give up Islam. They wanted to turn the Somalis into slaves," p. 180. See footnote 37.

<sup>44</sup> Esposito's work, *Islam in History* by Bernard Lewis, Choueiri's *Islamic Fundamentalism* and Akbar Ahmed's *Discovering Islam* are especially helpful in explaining the more radical Muslim belief system of a 'properly' functional Islamic government system and the ways in which one should conduct relations with the non-Muslim world community.

<sup>45</sup> Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 333.



helicopters and dragging the limp bodies of U.S. special forces through the streets is wrenching to watch, and not easily forgettable. This is an odd combination that will also be more fully explored in a later chapter: support, albeit some of it skeptical, from Somalis and Muslim communities worldwide for the effort to feed a starving people, and a satisfaction in violently impeding the U.S. and UN effort to stop warlords from stealing the food and relief aid deliveries. In those terrible efforts of the warlords, and among a substantial number of sympathetic Somalis, religion was continually invoked. Unfortunately, the chronic lawlessness of Somalia<sup>46</sup> makes it an ideal location for movements that promise peace and order through Islam, but are dangerous from the perspective of much of the world.

An Islamic-centered state is highly ideological, and is thus radically different from a national state. This poses many problems in attempts at nation building. Residents are divided, formally and informally, into Muslims who adhere to the ideology and non-Muslims who do not. Peace comes through submission<sup>47</sup> – to the concept and laws of Allah as found in the Koran, God’s direct communication to humanity. If the Koran is followed closely, jihad (a struggle based in spiritual piety) against unbelief and unbelievers is a religious obligation. All true believers are obliged to combat such governments and their supporters, both individuals and foreign institutions.<sup>48</sup> The political use of Islam has taken on a multitude of forms. The ideology of Islamic activists

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<sup>46</sup> “Somalia is the most lawless country in the world.” *Operation World*, 21st Century edition, 575.

<sup>47</sup> In other words, Islam. Esposito. *Islam: The Straight Path*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> *The Koran*: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits, for Allah does not love transgressors. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out, for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter.” (2:190 - 191) “And fight them on until there is no more oppression...” (2:193) NOTE: There is always the danger of taking verses out of context. The reader is encouraged to examine the Koran on their own. See also Selected Verses of the Koran.

is the product of individual faith and experience, interpreted and applied within the context of a specific region or country.<sup>49</sup> A good argument can be made that the Muslim concept of peace is actually a mandate for the worst kind of struggle, war. This too will be examined more closely, using the focus of the failed mission to Somalia, 1992 – 1993.

Radical Islam in Somalia is a force. A variety of Muslim governments, with little in common beyond religion and occasional hostilities between them, have turned to Islam to enhance their political legitimacy and authority, as well as mobilizing support for their programs and policies.<sup>50</sup> With the exception of Turkey and perhaps Jordan, this can be found throughout the Islamic world, including Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. Conclusively quantifying the extent of fundamentalist influence, however, is difficult in a country with no recognized government, dangerous travel and no U.S. diplomatic relations.<sup>51</sup> Reports from inside the country have been virtually nonexistent since the days after September 11, when the UN pulled its remaining monitors out of the country. News agencies and U.S. government officials have, on the other hand, indicated the presence of al Qaeda operations in the country (complete with unofficial approval from some leaders), though Somali government officials reject any link to Osama bin Laden.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, the measure of truth is difficult to determine. But in order for

<sup>49</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 164. Chapter 5 is especially helpful concerning this subject.

<sup>50</sup> Speaking out against a mix of religion and government in Islamic countries takes a certain amount of courage. Consider Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's comments, Feb. 15, 2002, stating that Muslim countries will remain backward unless they concentrate more on scientific and technological development, and engage in collective self-criticism: "Today we are the poorest, the most illiterate, the most backward, the most unhealthy, the most un-enlightened, the most deprived, and the weakest of all the human race." His support for the U.S. war on terrorism, and comments such as these have unleashed a fury of opposition in Pakistan. BBC News, Feb. 16, 2002, "Musharaff berates Muslim world," see Bibliography for internet link.

<sup>51</sup> State Department Background Note. See Bibliography for details on the document.

<sup>52</sup> BBC News, 1/10/02. "Somalia reject bin Laden link." See Bibliography for internet link.

extremists like bin Laden to disrupt the U.S. and UN humanitarian mission to Somalia,<sup>53</sup> as well as to continue his operations more than a decade later, the East African nation must be in such a state of disarray that no one can say with any degree of certainty the extent to which bin Laden and his supporters operate. But radical religious groups did contribute to the deaths of Americans in Somalia, as they did in the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole and American embassies: "Aidid's men received some expert guidance in shooting down helicopters from fundamentalist Islamic soldiers, smuggled in from Sudan, who had experience fighting Russian helicopters in Afghanistan."<sup>54</sup>

Chaos is a powerful cover. Sympathizes to the cause of radical Islam, a strategic location that offers easy access to the vast resources of the Middle East and lawlessness are ingredients for trouble. All were present as the mission to avert mass starvation began, and are probably still present in the country. And advancing the cause of Islam is a motivation of such individuals, perhaps the main but certainly not the only one. International terror has many motivations, from the nationalistic to the highly personal. But a pattern exists when it is exported from Muslim-majority countries, and that is action taken in the name of religion. The extent to which the activities of men such as bin Laden are outside the proper scope of Islam is for the reader to determine. But the role of a radicalized Islam, theologically sound or not, in the humanitarian mission offers sobering lessons for the current war on terror and the difficult and delicate rebuilding process that must be undertaken afterward. Somalia was, and likely still is, a safe house for terrorist operations.

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<sup>53</sup> As, according to Huband's *Warriors of the Prophet*, he has credibly claimed credit for. See pages 40 - 45.

<sup>54</sup> Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 110.

## Somalia as a Haven

Somalia devolved into a position of virtual anarchy nearly a decade ago. The fighting of warlords have kept it near the bottom of the United Nations index of human development, life expectancy is less than 50 years, and infant mortality is among the highest in Africa. Many men are aimless, jobless and armed. Crime is rampant.<sup>55</sup> The warlords prospered before the international intervention and for a few years beyond it. But the toll of constant fighting and unregulated economic activity has proven detrimental to the formation of a central, fully functional government. The closure of Mogadishu's main port and airport, the languishing banana trade, and a sharp drop in the export of livestock, all a direct result of civil war, has proven devastating to the people of Somalia.<sup>56</sup> Exasperated by the cost of lawlessness, Islamic courts and shari'a law are attempting to provide a means for the rule of law. And the courts, with the financial weight of many business owners, are an important part of the reason why Somalia might be an attractive base of operations for extremist groups. Much of the ideology that would ignite anti-American sentiment on the streets can be found in some of the courts as well.

Shari'a law is important to understanding Islamic ideology, government ideals and social institutions. Here, theology is brought to an adherent's everyday life. It is also the basis for Islamic fundamentalism's key disagreements with Western thought and practice. The law expresses the universal will of Allah for all of humankind and provides an underlying sense of identity and common code of behavior.<sup>57</sup> In previous centuries,

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<sup>55</sup> 2002 *The New York Times Almanac*, State Department Background Note, Hashim, *The Fallen State*, introduction.

<sup>56</sup> Situation report no. 13 of the Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, which concludes: "...virtually all infrastructure was destroyed, and the country's economy was severely crippled during the civil war." Bush Library archives.

<sup>57</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 75 – 76.

Islam was central in the slave trade to rationalize forced authority. It could be argued that some of the same techniques of persuasion are in use today. "Ideology, in the form of religious beliefs, was an active agent, as much a part of domination as whips or social dependence."<sup>58</sup> The most far removed from the courts are also the least susceptible to its hard-line stances. The religious practices of the isolated, nomadic clans in the centuries following conversion were mixed with a strong egalitarianism and devotion to local saints.<sup>59</sup> For a substantial number of Somalis, peacefully following the ways of their ancestors and trying to survive, this is still the case. In the late Twentieth Century, however, much of radical Islam would be filtered down from the courts in the cities, with the support of clan factions.

For nearly a millennium, Somalia has held fast to a tradition of Sunni religious moderation. Every brand and sect of Islam throughout the world has violent extremists, but the Sunnis historically have been the more peaceful of the two branches.<sup>60</sup> For the Sunni, God and humans have a direct relationship. Like Christianity, faith in action is more internal and personal than physical and worldly. The extraordinary circumstances of the Horn of East Africa, however, have opened the door to more drastic means of social control. This is not necessarily uncommon in the Muslim world, even among less dire circumstances where the call for reform is less urgent; it is also usually long awaited.<sup>61</sup> Recent examples include the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the rise of the

<sup>58</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 118. See also pages 164 - 169.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 12 - 17. Latun, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*, 44 - 47 is helpful as well. Elaborate genealogy fabrications and belief in the mystical powers of roving holy men also sets Somali Islam apart, from the Arabs especially.

<sup>60</sup> Iran and Iraq are majority Shi'a Muslim, arguably a factor in their long and bloody conflict. A useful guide to the Sunni/Shi'a comparison can be found in Esposito's *Islam: The Straight Path*, 109 - 113 and with Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History*, 232 - 235.

well-funded Taliban in the mid-1990s. There is also a traceable pattern among the movements themselves. "Islamic revivalist movements have always sought to revitalize and renew their faith through the application of fundamentalist doctrines; by drawing on local initiative, needs, forms and symbols; and by the importing of exogenous religious and structures. Young people may be particularly attracted to the revivalists because of their fervor and commitment to a radical vision of Islam."<sup>62</sup>

Those who wish for Somalia to evolve into a strict Islamic state, including the Islamic courts and Somalia's own fundamentalist group Al-Itixaad al Islami (Islamic Unity), receive active support from other countries and organizations.<sup>63</sup> Somalia, though, has a history of ingratitude and mismanagement. There might also be an instinctive resistance to the pull of fundamentalism, from a history not rotted in the sword but the soil. Of the five courts in operation in the late 1990's, for example, none would resort to a common punishment for stealing, amputation, because of its unpopularity with the people. The fundamentalist regime of the north Sudan sent thirty tons of arms to Aidid in 1992, which he accepted - but never did answer calls for reciprocation as southern rebels began to fight back. In addition, the Arab world (chiefly Liberia, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia) was giving his government more than \$60 million a year, but sharply reduced the assistance to less than \$12 million a year when it was determined Somalia was not properly promoting Islam.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Akbar Ahmed's *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Publishers, 1988) contains much on this subject. He also extends the ideal of a fundamentalist reform to women and those on the margins of their society, 172 – 199.

<sup>62</sup> Haynes, Jeff. *Religion and Politics in Africa* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd, 1996). 188.

<sup>63</sup> There has been much speculation concerning covert extremist activity and funding from Saudi Arabia, one of the richest Islamic countries. But Arab societies and government activities are not as transparent as the their Western counterparts.

<sup>64</sup> Report by Lara Santoro of *The Christian Science Monitor*. "Islamic clerics combat lawlessness in Somalia." July 13, 1999.

The task remains to conclusively connect a strict, fundamentalist and fairly widespread interpretation of Islam with intense anti-Western sentiment and a committed support for terrorist activity. The following is an attempt to convey the level of commitment of Somalia's Islamic radicals and outside influences to the larger cause of an Islamic state. This ongoing effort negatively impacted the events of 1992 – 1993. A fundamentalist, radical ideology was behind the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, which the statements of Osama bin Laden and others have made clear. How widespread such sentiment (and support for his activities) actually is throughout Muslim-majority countries is a matter of debate, one that is certain to continue well into the future. Regardless, the reader is strongly encouraged to examine on their own the verses of the Koran that have provided inspiration for struggle, or jihad, against the West and then draw their own conclusions.<sup>65</sup>

In August 1996, Osama bin Laden declared jihad on America. He was especially outraged by the American military presence in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden expressed anger that his homeland would permit the Americans to use the holy lands of Islam to launch attacks against another Muslim nation. His statement of jihad, fully invoking the faithful pursuit of religious obedience as a motivation to armed retaliation, mentioned of the U.S. and Somalia.<sup>66</sup>

Your greatest scandal was in Somalia where, after huge media propaganda over many months regarding American power in the light of the fall of the Cold War, and American leadership in the "New World Order," you deployed tens of thousands of troops in an international force, amongst them being 28,000 American troops, to Somalia.

Nevertheless, after a few small confrontations, where scores of your soldiers were killed and an American pilot was dragged in the streets of Mogadishu, you departed in defeat and

<sup>65</sup> A look at Arabic language newspapers and television programming, translated into English and widely available on the internet and elsewhere, is also recommended.

<sup>66</sup> Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet*, 40.

humiliation with your dead and injured troops...It became clear as to the extent of your inabilities and weaknesses. In fact, the image of your defeat in the three Muslim cities of Beirut, Aden and Mogadishu brought joy to a Muslim's heart and delight to those who believe.

Shortly after the United Nations intensified the hunt for Aidid in the summer of 1993, Osama bin Laden announced that some of the Afghan Mujahideen, who years earlier had helped to drive the Soviets out of Muslim Afghanistan, had left al Qaeda bases in Sudan and had arrived in Mogadishu to fight alongside Somalis and against the U.S.-led forces. Bin Laden said later, "The Americans knew perfectly well that we were fighting them, and announced that there were non-Somali extremist forces fighting – meaning us."<sup>67</sup> Senior U.S. officials have denied this claim. The full truth will probably never be known, but al Qaeda well into 2001 had operations in Somalia, shielded from scrutiny by a weak government that can hardly control even the capital city.

In the months after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Islamic extremist suspects were fleeing Somalia. "Warlords from Somalia and terrorists linked to the al Qaeda network have been spotted moving from the failed African state to nearby nations, as U.S. intelligence agencies continue to monitor terrorist activities outside Afghanistan. A group of Somali Muslim guerrillas was spotted recently as they fled to Yemen."<sup>68</sup> Somalia emerged as one of the likely havens for Osama bin Laden. *The Washington Post* reported a month after the attacks that preparations for Department of Defense and intelligence operations in East Africa are among the most advanced. The region has been an important area for al Qaeda operations since at least the early 1990s. Government

<sup>67</sup> This quote and more of the bin Laden connection, who was based in nearby Sudan in the early 1990s, as well as the organized Islamic denouncements of UNOSOM can be found in *Warriors of the Prophet*, 38 - 45 and *Mission Improbable*, 287 - 289. See also Selected Correspondence in the Additional Materials section.

<sup>68</sup> Bill Gertz, *The Washington Times*, 1/10/02, "Terrorists moving from Somalia." See Bibliography for internet link.



documents on the matter remain sealed,<sup>69</sup> but the lack of control in Somalia does not permit to anyone authority to officially dispel bin Laden like his native Saudi Arabia. "After the U.S. withdrawal, al Qaeda members continued to use Somalia as a regional base of operations, including preparations for the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, according to U.S. intelligence officials and court records."<sup>70</sup>

The refocused American attention on the region has set off accusations of ties to radical Islamic groups from within Somalia by those vying for power amid the chaos. One warlord claims he sent an urgent letter to President G.W. Bush after the Sept. 11 attacks to inform him that there remained terrorists and other warlords in Somalia sympathetic to and supportive of bin Laden.<sup>71</sup> The United States has cited Al Barakaat, the region's chief money-transfer and telecommunications company, as a trafficker of terrorist money and Somalia's Islamic Unity as a terrorist organization with ties to al Qaeda. Here, history could be repeating itself. As in the Cold War, faction leaders looking to increase their share of power play opposing sides off of each other; they also act publicly in ways that would seem to contradict prior behavior and statements but are in fact meant as a means of manipulation.

The warlord who claimed communication with an American president, Hussein Mohammad Aidid, has publicly said he would help the United States. Other faction leaders since the September 2001 attacks have urged Bush "to attack Islamic

<sup>69</sup> Material is being declassified yearly, but attempts to gain access to documents relevant here were unsuccessful. In any event, they are not to be found in the Bush Presidential Library archives, yet.

<sup>70</sup> David B. Ottoway and Thomas E. Ricks, *The Washington Post*, 11/04/01, "Somalia Draws Anti-Terrorist Focus."

<sup>71</sup> XSomalia news service, 1/5/02, "Somalia's Multitude of Factions Hinders Antiterror Efforts." See Bibliography for further details on these news reports. XSomalia, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* are excellent resources for firsthand news reports from the region.

fundamentalists in the country.” Aidid is the son of Mohammed Farah Aidid, the man the U.S. military hold responsible for the killing of 18 US Army troops in October 1993. Few claims by the multitude of leaders in Somalia are considered reliable, but U.S. officials acknowledge positioning ships in the waters off Somalia to prevent fleeing al Qaeda fighters from escaping along the long coastline of Africa. Due to these reports and other intelligence information, “Gen Tommy R. Franks, the commander of the allied operation in Afghanistan, said this week that surveillance flights off the coast of Somalia had been increased.”<sup>72</sup>

Is there anything about the religion of Islam itself that would justify the actions of Osama bin Laden and those who harbor and support his activities against America and the West? And can they truthfully invoke the defense and advancement of a religion under persecution? In the end, individuals must determine this complex question for themselves. The reader is again encouraged to examine Islam at its roots and common practice, not through the filter of adherents or those of opposing faiths.<sup>73</sup> Millions of Muslims around the world condemn bin Laden’s activities and rigid ideology, but many (including those Palestinians, Iranians and Egyptians among others who celebrated in the streets after the Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> attacks) do not. As a long isolated, largely nomadic, relatively homogeneous and nationalistic society, radical Somali religious activity obviously has its own unique character; but a brief summary concerning common traits of Islam and the practice and influence of Islamic law would be useful here.

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<sup>72</sup> Quotes are from the same news source as above, which corresponds closely to the *New York Times*, 1/11/02, “Somalia Wins as Its Chaos Attracts U.S. Attention,” and *The Washington Post*, 11/4/01, “Somalia Draws Anti-Terrorist Focus.”

<sup>73</sup> Please see selected verses of the Koran, section XI of this thesis, for a start.

Muslims believe the Koran<sup>74</sup> to be the literal words of God, unchanged through the centuries. Muhammad, through the angel Gabriel, received the text in Arabic exactly as Allah wishes them to be read and memorized by humans. Thus the best Christian comparison would not be to the Bible, with its large number of divinely-inspired individual authors, but to the Christian God's own living and unchanging revelation, Jesus Christ. Thus, the Koran "is the sourcebook of Islamic principles and values."<sup>75</sup> Yet Islamic law, highly or entirely influential among judicial institutions and official ideology in every Muslim-majority country except secular Turkey, is more than just what is found in Koran. The holy book does not contain a comprehensive and detailed code of laws, but a foundation of general moral directives. As with every religion, verses are open to interpretation, a principle that allows Turkey to move to one extreme.<sup>76</sup>

But Islam, founded as and mandated by its book to be a polity, begins on a different level than the principal of separation from the secular of Christianity or Judaism. A look at both shari'a law in practice around much of the Muslim world and many verses of the Koran makes clear the plausibility of a more strict, and from the Western perspective threatening, interpretation. In fact, a good argument can be made that the Islam of Osama bin Laden is sound theology.<sup>77</sup> According to the American Muslim writer Amir Taheri, "When pressed hard, some Muslim leaders admit that bin Laden is 'part of Islam,' but try to minimize his place. Dalil Boubakeur, a French Muslim leader,

<sup>74</sup> More commonly written as the Quran, the Americanized version is used here.

<sup>75</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 79.

<sup>76</sup> Sadly, Turkey paid a high human price for its more secular and democratic government, fighting fundamentalist forces and navigating the Western/Soviet global tug-of-war. See *Modern Times*, 439 – 446 and *The Cold War: A History*, p. 37.

<sup>77</sup> Surely, there can be legitimate disagreement with this statement. Although outside the scope of this thesis, this question is relevant to the role of radical Islam and the U.S./UN intervention. Again, the reader is encouraged to investigate the religion on their own. Especially research the Saudi Wahhabi version of Sunni Islam, exported from the Arabian Peninsula over one hundred years ago. In the 1970s, many Wahhabists became very wealthy due to oil, greatly increasing their political influence in the Arab world and beyond. Now, a great deal of Islamic print materials, among other things, originate from Saudi Arabia.

says that bin Laden does not represent more than 1% of Muslims. Some comfort. That 1% means almost 13 million people."<sup>78</sup>

Bin Laden's fundamentalist brand of spiritual devotion may bring the rule of law to Somalia, but the result from a terrorist perspective would be just as helpful: instead of operating under the cover of chaos, it would provide a central government sympathetic to their cause. Either way, the region is a haven for international terrorism. An individual living in a society where nothing seems to work, he and his family have no power, tomorrow is uncertain and there is no social mobility might very well see a way out in the stark theology and rigid morality of radical Islam. Instead of being God's gift to humanity, Islam is turned into a force of oppression, intolerance and violence. Such individuals are often the most vocal. They might also be the most likely to see blame others, and especially outsiders, for their problems. They, after all, are closely following the words and the will of the divine. Authoritative power from God flows to human beings in this way, and it can be intoxicating.<sup>79</sup> These explosive societal influences, waiting to be ignited, are among the most important roles of radical Islam in the failed mission to Somalia.

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<sup>78</sup> A somber, and rather revealing essay: Amir Taheri, 10/27/01. *The Wall Street Journal*. "Islam Can't Escape Blame: My Religion has Strayed Far Since Its Golden Age."

<sup>79</sup> A brief summation here of the writings of Khaled Abou El Fadl, an active Egyptian Muslim and currently a professor of law at UCLA. He has written extensively and with much insight on the dangers of Islam in the Wahhabist tradition. Professor Fadl's books and essays are banned in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Muslim world.

## Chapter 3

### The Mission

#### A Delicate Dilemma

The distant memories of many Americans concerning Somalia is likely one of savagery, of people running rampant amid anarchy, a catastrophic global blunder that included the unforgettable image of Somalis triumphantly dragging slain American soldiers through the streets of Mogadishu. As a result, the U.S. intervention is now largely viewed as a failure, a point of shame for the government and military.<sup>80</sup> It is certainly true that mistakes were made, with Congress acting quickly to assign blame and move on. This was one of the first international disasters CNN covered in depth from the beginning, and Americans saw this tragedy unfold literally from its inception. But global interest faded almost overnight. The intervention began around the time of many other major domestic and world events, including the major foreign policy triumphs of the German reunification, Gulf War victory and a peaceful end to the Soviet threat.<sup>81</sup> However, the U.S. war on terror has refocused attention on Somalia and the lessons of more than a decade ago.

The truth is that great progress was made by the interventions in terms of averting further starvation, and saving untold thousands of lives.<sup>82</sup> Yet Somalis are a proud

<sup>80</sup> Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 336–346.

<sup>81</sup> Domestically, the race riots in Los Angeles and economy were political problems for the Bush administration. For a more detailed account of this time in American history, see Bush, George & Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).

<sup>82</sup> The Chicago Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Protection, along with 14 immigration and minority groups, wrote in August of 1992 to the president, “The current disaster is worse than the great Ethiopian famine of 1984...according to the United Nations, 16 million people are on the brink of starvation.” Bush Library archives.

people, and might be prepared to make many long sacrifices against any suspicious action by foreigners, especially the West. The U.S. in particular had no desire to generate Islamic hostility.<sup>83</sup> The cultural, social and political considerations must be carefully weighed before any major decision. At the urging of President Bush, the intervention utilized a political counterpart to the military action to ensure success. Dialogue, including with the warlords, was established and maintained.<sup>84</sup> And Somalia was certainly a challenging place of operation for the United Nations: it required a fully secure compound, partly a result of the explosive mixing of a unique Somali character a global one. "In combination with the disorientation of the cultural density and henhouse politics, the monotony of unchanging routing numbed the mind, even as the external uncertainty confounded it and compound requirements added logic."<sup>85</sup>

The fall of an essentially artificial state after 30 years, propped up by a revolving door of benefactors, paralleled the rise of clan-based (or non-state) opposition and famine. The human rights challenges alone are staggering in a nation of nearly 8 million people. There was little disagreement over the idea of helping victims of starvation. Such action is, of course, proper and noble, and well within the criteria for UN intervention. Securing safety for the people and the larger area is another matter entirely. Notorious for violence, inefficiency and thanklessness, the peacekeeping effort was a massive undertaking, abandoned when the going got tough.<sup>86</sup> The United Nations,

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<sup>83</sup> There was criticism from some in the Islamic world concerning inaction toward the Serbian assault in Bosnia, a conflict in which President Clinton eventually intervened.

<sup>84</sup> Class interview and discussion with Ambassador Robert Oakley, President Bush's envoy to the region. He stated that among his main concerns as the principal U.S. envoy was that Somalis be treated with respect, and unnecessary confrontation and fights be avoided at all cost.

<sup>85</sup> Fogarassy, *Mission Improbable*, p. 19. See also pgs. 117 – 122.

<sup>86</sup> Fogarassy, *Mission Improbable*, introduction.

pushed by the highly influential U.S. government, did not have the level of training or quality in equipment of the Americans. As such, rooting out already hostile and potentially dangerous fundamentalist elements was hardly a consideration or factor in the intervention.<sup>87</sup> Such an effort would have been beyond the scope of the mission. As this section will contend, the logistics of feeding the people and the military effort to counter the violence of warlords was difficult enough for the UN, even with strong, proactive U.S. support.<sup>88</sup>

The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) was established to facilitate humanitarian aid those trapped by civil war and famine. The official function as the effort began was to monitor the tenuous ceasefire and "provide protection and security for United Nations personnel, equipment and supplies at the seaports and airways in Mogadishu and escort deliveries of humanitarian supplies from there to distribution centers in the city and its immediate environs."<sup>89</sup> Even in this seemingly simple goal, there was much hardship. Many of the reasons for the organization's existence, including diplomacy, peacekeeping and the building of stable governments (in effect, nation-building) were stretched to the limit in Somalia. The UN pulled out its international staff entirely in September 2001 in the face of massive demonstrations in support of Osama bin Laden and against the United States.<sup>90</sup>

The implications for the present U.S. effort against terrorism are large. It is

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<sup>87</sup> Ambassador Oakley. Stated that U.S. forces began morning radio broadcasts with verses from the Koran as part of an attempt to better adapt to the environment and not fan the flames of a present Islamic hostility.

<sup>88</sup> 42 countries supported Operation Restore Hope. The U.S. government classified 19 as Major Contributors - those who offered to send troops, transport and financial support. Document current as of Dec. 16, 1992. Bush Library archives.

<sup>89</sup> United Nations Operations in Somalia I. Mission Background. See Bibliography for details on the document.

<sup>90</sup> BBC News, 9/24/01. "UN pulls out of Somalia." See Bibliography for internet link.

necessary to build and actively encourage stable governments that resist fundamentalist extremism, but the UN likely cannot do so alone. If U.S. forces become peacekeepers, a long commitment will most likely become necessary. This means either a Washington, DC willingness to accept casualties as political pressure mounts or the risk of becoming the occupying power local groups will probably soon oppose. Here is the dilemma; with inaction, the danger exists of a safe haven for international terrorism. The experiences of the UN in Somalia more dramatically demonstrate this point.

Warring faction leaders signed a ceasefire agreement on March 3, 1992 which included a provision for the allowance of a UN monitoring mission to oversee arrangements for providing humanitarian assistance. UNOSOM I was established with the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 751. The immediate deployment of 50 unarmed military observers was to begin consultations with the clan leaders in Mogadishu toward a peaceful resolution.<sup>91</sup> This lasted approximately two months. As the summer began, the situation on the streets continued to deteriorate. The amount of foreign aid could not keep up with the demand, despite the lull in warfare.

Some of the relief was not reaching the people at all. The response to this was quick and decisive. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali urged “energetic and sustained” efforts on the part of the international community to end the cycle of violence and hunger. The American effort by this point had committed over \$63 million in relief including airlifts of food and medical supplies.<sup>92</sup> At an emergency meeting in late July,

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<sup>91</sup> The observers were from a carefully chosen mix of European and Islamic countries that excluded the U.S. altogether: Austria, Bangladesh, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Finland, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco and Zimbabwe. The Chief Military Observer was a Pakistani, Brigadier-General Intiaz Shaheen.

<sup>92</sup> White House Official Statement, July 27, 1992. Already monetarily committed to rebuilding the region, it read in part, “We urge the Security Council at its meeting today to take the actions needed to accelerate the delivery of food and medicine, and to promote a peaceful settlement to this dispute.” Bush Library Archives.



the Security Council approved the quick establishment of four operational zones, each with a military unit of 750 people. By the end of August, over 4,000 international soldiers would be in Somalia. The Secretary General emphatically stated that a better plan was essential for the planning and coordination of humanitarian action.<sup>93</sup>

Implementation of the UN programs proved difficult from the beginning. One early resolution<sup>94</sup> called for a humanitarian airlift but remained vague as to the specifics of involvement. Similar to the American government, the United Nations appeared to be hesitating on the verge of a full-scale involvement. It soon became apparent that infusions of aid and assistance would not be enough. Rapidly deteriorating security prevented the UN from delivering food pursuant to the summer resolutions. Flights were hijacked and looted upon landing; food convoys were barely able to approach their intended destinations. By the end of August, the UN began appealing to its members for military forces to assist in the operation. Within a few weeks, hundreds of international forces were in Somalia under UN command. September 1992, much like the rest of the year, was not a good month. Among other difficulties, insecurity along the roads (especially to and from Kenya and Djibouti) significantly impeded relief transport, resulting in some of the first casualties.<sup>95</sup>

Also from its inception, the UN relief effort faced cultural hurdles. This altered

<sup>93</sup> The *100-Day Action Program for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance* had eight main objectives: (1) massive infusion of food aid, (2) aggressive expansion of supplementary feeding, (3) basic health services and measles immunizations, (4) attention to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, (5) distribution of blankets and clothes, (6) delivery of seeds, tools and animal vaccines (7) prevention of refugee outflow and the promotion of return programs, (8) the rehabilitation of civil society.

<sup>94</sup> Resolution 775, August 28, 1992. Bush Library Archives. See also UN resolutions on the internet, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org). See also Selected Correspondence.

<sup>95</sup> "Now that the UN guards are beginning to arrive in Mogadishu, relief workers are hoping that security conditions will improve. A WTP shipment of food aid was recently looted while in the port, and tensions have generally been very high in the city." A U.S. official wrote in the margin, "A UN observer was fatally shot during the mission." Situation Report no. 13, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Sept. 16, 1992. Bush Library archives.

the direction and nature of the mission as Somali customs, religious background and suspicion became an important factor in the decision making process. "UNOSOM began like any other mission in that the international staff lived and freely mingled with the people of the host country. But in an image reminiscent of European settlers drawing into wagon-train circles against native Americans in the early US, Somali traditions drove the massive influx of foreigners into ever tightening enclaves."<sup>96</sup> The United Nation supported agencies hardly left Mogadishu, and this tendency to centralize became a feature of the UNOSOM operations. Delivery of emergency relief rarely strayed far from the capital, giving Aidid and his allies the advantage. This centralization also undermined the effort to organize grassroots structures in local communities, partly because moving around was so dangerous.<sup>97</sup>

### **A Victim of the Chaos & Confusion**

The violence was everywhere, and steadily getting out of hand. A reign of bullets was always a threat from warlords who confiscated and hoarded goods in an attempt to increase not only their own position, but also the dependence of the people upon them. By their desperate need, ordinary Somalis were forced to accept whatever portions the warlords felt like distributing.<sup>98</sup> There was also a grave misreading of Western allies concerning what awaited them. Bernard Kouchner, the French Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs, declared, "The international intervention will succeed very quickly

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<sup>96</sup> Fogarassy, *Mission Impossible*, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities*, 37.

<sup>98</sup> In an effort to combat this, secure compounds were established in the strategic cities of Bosasso, Kismayo, Galcaayo and Mogadishu (where there were several). UNOSOM supplies from the seaport compound of the capital, which was among the most open to attack. The largest, the Embassy compound, was about the size of a large American university campus and was the site of the Pakistani troops Aidid threatened. They ran a hospital that served both UNOSOM staff and Somalis.

because we are faced here only with young teenagers with machine guns who are just going to run away.”<sup>99</sup> It was, in fact, the very opposite that drove UN workers into the isolation of compounds. Generally, Somali youths are not at all passive toward perceived threats to themselves or their families; “the individual does not stand alone as he may appear to do in western society.”<sup>100</sup> A more unified front amid an ongoing civil war was emerging as warlords and their supporters positioned themselves to take advantage of the relief packages.

As part of the attempt to deflate tensions and get the mission as pursuant to the resolutions back on track, an Iraqi was assigned as Special Representative of the UN Secretary General. Ismat Kittani took over around the time Aidid declared that the Pakistani UNOSOM battalion was no longer to be tolerated in Mogadishu. He ordered the expulsion within two days of the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance. His forces permanently heightened tensions by shelling the airport and ships carrying food and medical supplies as they entered the ports.<sup>101</sup> In addition, Aidid made it clear that further UNOSOM deployments would be met with violence, and any further deployment of United Nations troops would be unacceptable. As the most powerful, and the most dangerous, warlord he quickly became the focus of both international workers and the television crews. Aidid was positioning himself to benefit from a potential popular sentiment among the Somali people. In a letter to President Bush, Secretary General Ghali wrote, “Another disturbing trend – which has evolved in recent weeks, apparently

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<sup>99</sup> *Agence France Presse*, 12/14/92.

<sup>100</sup> Hashim, *The Fallen State*, 31.

<sup>101</sup> On Nov. 13, under heavy machine gun and mortar fire, Pakistani troops guarding the airport returned fire in the fiercest fighting to date with the warlords and their supporters.

at the instigation of local faction leaders – is the widespread perception among Somalis that the United Nations has decided to abandon its policy of co-operation and is planning to ‘invade’ the country.”<sup>102</sup>

By early December, violence against the UN forces was such that the United States was compelled to respond. An appeal was made to member nations for help. The Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 794, welcoming the Bush Administration offer to help create a safe environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid.<sup>103</sup> With approximately a month left in his presidency, Bush responds to this request with a strong course of action. The U.S. led United Task Force (UNITAF) is established and soon dubbed “Operation Restore Hope” in a special presidential broadcast outlining the mission. President Bush announced plans to send over 20,000 U.S. troops into Somalia. By December 9, the first Marines had landed on the beaches outside the capital of Mogadishu.<sup>104</sup>

The United Nations had misjudged what awaited them. Culture complicated things dramatically. The extent to which local warlords would go to manipulate their way into power was unexpected. The confusion and chaos in the Horn of Africa was more than groups of teenage rogues who would vanish or surrender their automatic weapons as soon as Western troops and their vast firepower arrived.<sup>105</sup> Helen Fogarassy,

<sup>102</sup> Letter of Boutros Boutros Ghali to President George Bush, Dec 5, 1992. Bush Library archives.

<sup>103</sup> The resolution asked the Americans to provide military forces, and Chapter VII of the Charter authorized “all necessary means” to ensure a safe environment for delivery.

<sup>104</sup> Ambassador Robert Oakley stated that the State Department and Bush’s military advisors put forth several plans of action to the president. The strongest course of action was chosen, which Oakley says “dumbfounded” the State Dept. It is possible political considerations came into play, as intervention was decided upon shortly after the 1992 election was lost to Bill Clinton. Oakley rejects this; he states the issue was saving lives, spurred forward by a great deal of Congressional pressure to act. He says Bush had “a genuine response to a terrible humanitarian tragedy.” Class interview and discussion, BUSH 689 – 601, TAMU.

<sup>105</sup> A Report of the Secretary General, “The Situation in Somalia,” 8/24/92, stated: “...the problem in Somalia today is not the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies to ports and airports in the country (although on occasion this can be hazardous) but

who spent nine months with the UNOSOM Operation, later wrote, "But in Somalia, the homogeneous culture, religion and language among the people obviated the element of inter-group hatred. Even when Somalis talked hatefully about another clan, elimination of others was never expressed, an indication borne out by events, that the Somalis fought for constructive rather than destructive purposes, confirming the initial inter-national belief that Somalia's problems could be resolved rather quickly."<sup>106</sup> The food and aid intended for starving children was benefiting militias intent on resolving a civil war in their favor. And the roving clans of warring factions, for all their dislike of each other, disliked foreign intervention even more. The United States was coming to try and right these wrongs.

The United Nations found Somalia to be a lawless place. More than ten years after the initial intervention, the people of the region still live without political stability and the rule of law. What institutions of order that do exist practice extreme forms of punishment condemned by human rights organization worldwide. In that sense, they are reminiscent of the brutality and punishment of longtime dictator Barre and the warlords.<sup>107</sup> Islamic shair'a courts operate in many regions of the country, filling the void formed by the absence of a central government authority. The State Department human rights division has reported, "Shair'a courts traditionally ruled in cases of civil and family law, but extended their jurisdiction to criminal proceedings in some regions beginning in 1994. In north Mogadishu, parts of south Mogadishu, the Middle Shabelle, and parts of the Gedo and Hiran regions, these courts regularly sentenced convicted

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the protection of the convoys that transport supplies..." The report recommended increasing the UN armed forces to 3,500, and 500 immediately. Bush Library Archives.

<sup>106</sup> Fogarassy, *Mission Improbable*, p. 59.

<sup>107</sup> See Hashim's *The Fallen State*, 103–113.

thieves to public lashings, and far less frequently, to the amputation of their hands."<sup>108</sup>

Sadly, this is imposed against the more natural drift of Somali society, who in the moderate Sunni religious tradition and the long practice of indigenous customs are not accustomed to the severe forms of punishment more common among their Arab neighbors. "What Somalis seem to love most today is everything foreign, especially western values."<sup>109</sup> But for those who cannot escape the crisis of their homeland, the Islamic courts provide the only resemblance of organized justice and political order. Many in the Mogadishu business community, looking for long-term stability, finance Islamic courts and the rigidity that comes with them.<sup>110</sup> As such, the danger of Islamic extremists using this East African nation as a base of operations is still existent.

Terrorist activity might take place either informally under the cover of lawlessness and the lack of a central governing authority to rein them in, or formally in cooperation with the fundamentalist courts whose strict ideology may not be much different from bin Laden.<sup>111</sup> The question of validity for such a violent form of Islam is for the reader to determine in a study outside the scope of this one. Whatever the case, the number of Muslims who hold religious interpretative views similar to bin Laden or terrorists around the world is difficult to quantify. There is no doubt, however, of the influence of extremist forces in Somalia. Such groups are shadowy, secretive and shrewd. It has been credibly asserted that the al Qaeda network was vital to Aidid and

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<sup>108</sup> U.S. Department of State. Somalia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998. Prepared by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, February 26, 1999.

<sup>109</sup> Adam and Ford, *Mending Rips in the Sky*, 454.

<sup>110</sup> BBC News, 11/25/99, "Organization amid chaos in Somalia."

<sup>111</sup> For more on the fundamentalism of his native Saudi Arabia, a nation considered by some to be the principal financier of radical Islamic terrorist propaganda and activity around the world, see Choueiri's *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 76 - 79. Like Osama bin Laden, a majority of the Sept. 11 hijackers were originally from Saudi Arabia.

others who killed the Pakistani troops and eventually forced out the United States and international community.<sup>112</sup> Failures to establish a workable rule of law and other vital nation building measures have doomed a vast majority of the people to poverty and a daily struggle for survival.

It is perhaps ironic that the sizable number of Somalis who would most benefit from a humanitarian mission and the establishment of a functional state would then cheer the torture and death of those attempting to stop the men standing in the way.

Unfortunately, a prevailing and continual anarchy continues to erode the future basis of stability, including legal institutions and financial and social sector development.<sup>113</sup> The existence of such a situation more than a decade after the world's attention was first focused on Somalia does not bode well historically for the U.S. led effort that sought to bring calm to the region. The unrestrained violence, unconventional warfare and deep determination of Somali warlords spread enough among the people to permanently halt much needed aid to their families and neighbors. This would continue even as one of the mightiest military forces in world history stepped up its involvement.

### **Restoring Hope**

American troops landed in Somalia on December 9, 1992. President George Bush spoke to the American people in an evening telecast less than a month after his loss to Bill Clinton, introducing Operation Restore Hope.<sup>114</sup> The United Nations had finally grown weary of trying to keep the peace long enough to properly distribute aid. More

<sup>112</sup> In the ten years since the incidents, this has become generally accepted. See especially Huband's *Warriors of the Prophet and Bowden's Black Hawk Down*; this is further addressed in previous footnotes. Translations from Arabic of bin Laden's television interviews since his successes against the Russians in Afghanistan are also widely available online.

<sup>113</sup> Hussein, *Mending Rips in the Sky*, 293.

<sup>114</sup> In a Christmas visit to Somalia, the president said: "Our objective is limited, our mission defined: The United States, shoulder to shoulder with the coalition, will secure the peace so that help can get through. Operation Restore Hope will do just that." Bush Library Archives.

needed to be done. And so a resolution was adopted on December 3 authorizing member states to use "all possible means to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief."<sup>115</sup> The main preoccupation, however, seemed to be the assurance of a safe distribution of aid, packing up and going home as soon as possible. There were administration hints to the effect of a return from Somalia by the inauguration of Bill Clinton.<sup>116</sup> This meant a lot was to be done in a matter of weeks. Such signals, however, became more mixed and confused and as 1992 came to a close.

It has been speculated that the Bush Administration chose to use Somalia as a guinea pig for post Cold-War peacckeping. Some critics believed Operation Restore Hope an opportunity for easy military success to end Bush's career in public service with applause from the world stage and approval from every corner of the nation.<sup>117</sup> That the U.S. should somehow be supportive of the starving Somali people had been one of the few points of agreement among the three presidential candidates. But perhaps not enough time was used for political planning inside Somalia; improvisation seemed to be the rule from day one.<sup>118</sup> The U.S. government, by this point under increasing political pressure from Congress and citizen groups,<sup>119</sup> had taken less than a week to respond in force to the UN request. The troubles started almost as soon.

The United States was to assume the unified command of the mission. A division of labor was set up with the U.S. clearly in control of military and distributive operations.

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<sup>115</sup> UN Resolution 794.

<sup>116</sup> Genuine overconfidence, or perhaps politics - Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney: "U.S. troops should pull out by the end of January." *Agence France Presse*, Dec. 20, 1992.

<sup>117</sup> *The Economist* commented in Dec. 1992. "America, after all, is not exactly unilateralist: it likes the UN to bless what it is doing and other rich countries to cough up men or cash for its role of 'world cop.'"

<sup>118</sup> Ambassador Oakley, when reflecting on this, said, "There was lots of confidence the U.S. could adapt to Somalia."

<sup>119</sup> See Selected Correspondence for a sample of this. Operation Restore Hope was met with Congressional approval.



At the same time, the more long-term goal of bringing political and economic stability to Somalia was not abandoned. In a letter to President Bush, the Secretary General communicated the following terms: "The United States has undertaken to take the lead in creating a secure environment which is an inescapable condition for the United Nations to provide humanitarian relief and promote national reconciliation and economic reconstruction, objectives which have from the outset been included in the various Security Council resolutions on Somalia."<sup>120</sup> A United Task Force (UNITAF), following the lead of the heavily invested U.S., included approximately 17,000 troops from over 20 countries.<sup>121</sup> Even now, the effort still had an international feel. For its part, the United States was expected to contribute more than 28,000 personnel.

The shadowy characters of Mogadishu, however, were well prepared to cause trouble. The capital city was awash in arms; it still is not uncommon to see ten-year olds and teenagers walking the streets with machine guns or rocket launchers on their shoulders. Islamic fundamentalists, smuggled in from Sudan, had taught Somalis on the street how to engage in guerilla tactics against a far superior military power.<sup>122</sup> Not long after arrival, the U.S.-led military presence began to mobilize. Three months prior to the downing of the Black Hawk helicopters, the U.S. had decided to put pressure on Aidid by ambushing a meeting of his Habr Gidr clan in a house in southern Mogadishu. This incident in particular unified the clan behind the warlord and served his recruitment

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<sup>120</sup> Mission Background. United States Operations in Somalia I (UNOSOM I). United Nations Department of Public Information, 1997.

<sup>121</sup> Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe. Bush Library Archives. See also Selected Correspondence.

<sup>122</sup> Bowden records, "Their fundamentalist advisors taught them that the helicopter's tail rotor was its most venerable spot. So they learned to wait until it passed over, and to shoot up at it from behind." *Black Hawk Down*, p. 110.

efforts.<sup>123</sup> There were substantial Somali casualties. Four Western journalists, who had gone to the scene to investigate, were beaten to death by an angry mob. Many Somalis were upset by the actions of America's Cobra helicopters, and the peacekeepers were now at war with Aidid.

Only a few months later, the United States dramatically reduced its presence. The October incident, like raid months earlier, was a tentative half measure. Task Force Ranger was denied use of key weapons systems, and the political support for the missions were timid at best.<sup>124</sup> When American forces encountered serious resistance, they lacked the proper means to deal with it promptly and effectively. The Clinton administration almost immediately abandoned the mission as the situation heated up, much to the anger of many in the U.S. military serving in Somalia.<sup>125</sup> What drew the mission to a close, and back into the hands of the United Nations, was a small, lightly armed U.S. force trying to maneuver a dangerous capture operation in a heavily armed, hostile neighborhood. In the Battle of the Black Sea, warfare was conducted by men respectful of the rules, capable of individual initiative but fiercely committed to achieving the necessary goals without leaving a man behind. Lives were jeopardized not for a grand idea, but simply to save the wounded and recover the bodies of the dead. This all came to a rather abrupt end as the United Nations again assumed the thankless geopolitical task of trying to save and reconstruct the remnants of a shattered country. They too would leave as Somalis

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<sup>123</sup> "By contrast, General Aidid's image steadily emerged to the Somali people as one of a stable, reliable and charismatic demagogue, who perhaps would inhibit freedom but would pull the country together and enable it to regain viability in the global community," Fogarassy, *Mission Improbable*, 139.

<sup>124</sup> Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, forced into resignation, later expressed regret over the handling of the October incident in particular. Roughly 50 Somalis died for every American soldier killed on October 3rd, though accurate estimates are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain.

<sup>125</sup> Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 343 - 345.

violently took to the streets supporting Osama bin Laden shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Cable News Network (CNN), "Somalis cheer at Black Hawk Down screening," 22 Jan. 2002. See also: BBC News, 24 Sept. 2001. "UN pulls out of Somalia."

#### **IV. Conclusions**

Somalia is the classic illustration of a failed state. For over a decade, there has been no central government to exercise adequate control over society. This can be particularly dangerous to the United States and its allies. The Horn of Africa, an overwhelmingly Muslim region, occupies a strategic position in an area under intense scrutiny as the war on terrorism continues. Somalia and neighboring nations, namely Sudan, have been important bases of training and operation for Osama bin Laden and his extensive terrorist network. As past events have shown, foreign influence can quickly become deeply resented by fanatical individuals and even their weakest of sympathizers. Such religious extremists, not shy about using Islam as a rationalization for terrible acts of violence, are generally patient and deeply determined to succeed.

Despair and defiance are a dangerous and difficult combination for any world power to combat in an aspiring state without the rule of law. In the years since the overthrow of Siad Barre, neither the United Nations or the United States has succeeded in establishing order, either on a very temporary humanitarian basis or through long-term strategy and support. The deep roots of culture and religion, quite naturally, are among the reasons why. Perhaps a strict, fanatical, violent, Jewish and Western hating interpretation of Islam is valid; perhaps it is not. An individual must weigh the evidence and circumstance and then decide for themselves. Regardless, the East African Muslim will determine a path to follow, traditional Somali moderation and tolerance or extremism, in the midst of a seemingly hopeless situation. Of course, a great number of Somalis bear no ill will toward the U.S. or any other Western power. But the religion, by

its history, holy book and widespread practice, can clearly be a powerful and intoxicating justification for terrorist activity. Thus Somalia, should it now continue in the same ways of the decade following the humanitarian intervention, lends itself as both an active supporter and place of cover for the activities of individuals like Osama bin Laden.

Continual lawlessness means determined, extremist forces cannot be held in check. As such, both a breeding ground and a safe haven for terrorist activity can spring forth from failed states. Sadly, Somalia is a prime example. It has long been in need of nation building, not unlike the success story (thus far) of Afghanistan. Rebuilding, however, is a tricky enterprise. What is a global superpower, interested in friendly stability, to do? To resist terrorism, it is necessary to build stable governments. But the United Nations is probably too weak to do it alone; and should U.S. forces become active participants, a long and potentially unpopular commitment will most likely become necessary. Somalia also demonstrates the very real danger of becoming the occupying power local groups may soon oppose. Perhaps this is an obligatory risk for the future America's citizens and the global community.

If the United States does not promote nation building, no one will. Without action, especially in shattered Muslim majority countries, there exists a potential safe haven for international terrorism. And is the Islamic concept of peace really a mandate for war? The reader must decide. Unfortunately, there are extremists, in their mind validated by faith and looking toward an eternal reward, ready and willing to wage war against the West. But the nation building of Germany, Japan and South Korea are spectacular success stories, made possible by foreign aid and investment, in addition to

the stationing of armed forces. The Greeks and the Turks, the Serbs and Croats, the French and Germans are now rebuilding, cooperating, creating new civilizations.

The same can happen in Somalia and throughout the Muslim world. The terror hiding in Afghanistan was largely overcome and the country reorganized with astonishing speed. Anything is possible; but the United States must lead. Such a formidable task can be done. Indeed, the weight of defending the freedom of no small part of the world community was on the shoulders of America until the Cold War was won. And these lessons should not be forgotten as Somalia is remembered. The events of 1992 – 1993 demonstrate the difficulty and complexities of nation building. The tragedies of subsequent events between America's shores less than a decade later demonstrate its necessity.

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## VI.

## VITA

Jonathan Leamon Jones was born in Falfurrias, TX on December 17, 1979. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science, cum laude, in Political Science from Texas A&M University, graduating in May 2002 with University, Foundation, College of Liberal Arts and Research Fellow Honor Distinctions. At Texas A&M, he has tutored political science and history for the Texas A&M Athletic Department, served as a Supplemental Instruction Leader for the Center for Academic Enhancement, president of College Republicans and editor of the Opinion section of the student newspaper. He has studied abroad at Magdalen and New College, Oxford and interned for United States Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. In the Fall of 2002 he will begin graduate studies at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC.

*Additional Materials*

## VII.

## TIMELINE

- 1988** Long simmering conflicts among Somali elites and rival militias break out into civil war. The Russians scale back operations in Ethiopia, abandoning the country three years later. These factors help to weaken the position of longtime dictator Siad Barre.
- January 1991** Barre is forced to flee Mogadishu. Conflict between the Somali National Movement (SNM) of Aidid and other factions lead to intense fighting and eventually civil war.
- Combined with famine, the ensuing lawlessness throughout the region leads to the death of an estimated 300,000 Somalis before the United Nations becomes involved.
- March 1992** Faction leaders sign a ceasefire. Included are provisions to allow a monitoring mission into Somalia that oversees arrangements for international humanitarian assistance.
- April 1992** The United Nations Security Council approves an operation to Somalia pursuant to the ceasefire.
- July 1992** Fifty unarmed UN military observers arrive in Mogadishu.
- August 1992** Operation Provide Relief begins, the start of official UN humanitarian relief. UNOSOM I.
- Security concerns cause difficulty for the mission. The UN appeals to members for military assistance and aid workers.
- November 1992** George Bush loses to presidency to Bill Clinton.
- December 1992** Bush responds to the United Nations request. He proposes United States combat troops lead an international UN force to secure the environment for relief operations. The UN

accepts, and the president orders 25,000 United States troops into Somalia.

Bush assures the American people he plans for the troops to be home by the end of January, in time for his successor's inauguration. The operation (UNITAF) is commonly called "Operation Restore Hope."

**January 1993**

A new administration directs operations in Somalia.

**March 1993**

The UN organized Conference on National Reconciliation, held in Araba, Ethiopia, results in faction leaders, Aidid included, pledging to end the violence.

**May 1993**

The UN authorizes UNOSOM II. Included is greater enforcement power, as the goal is to take over from the U.S. led UNITAF. The first attempt at "nation building."

President Clinton supports the expanded UN mandate and simultaneously orders a reduction in U.S. troops.

**June 1993**

Only 1,200 U.S. combat soldiers remain in Somalia. In addition, 3,000 support troops operate in the area.

24 Pakistani soldiers are ambushed and killed. The United Nations Security Council issues an emergency resolution condemning the acts. Aidid is suspected and an order is placed for his arrest, with a \$25,000 reward.

UN and U.S. troops begin to attack various targets associated with Aidid in Mogadishu.

**July 1993**

The first major escalation in the effort against Aidid. American Cobra helicopters attack a house in southern Mogadishu where a group of clan leaders are holding a meeting. Four western journalists are beaten to death by an angry mob in retaliation. Aidid disappears.

- August 1993** Four American military officials are killed by a remote detonated land mine set by Somalis. Task Force Ranger is deployed shortly thereafter. 440 elite troops from Delta Force and the U.S. Rangers arrive. One mission is to stop the looting of some of the warlords, especially Aidid.
- September 1993** In a decision that is later heavily criticized, U.S. Defense Secretary Les Aspin denies requests from U.S. General Montgomery for armored reinforcements. Recognizing the mistake, he later says, "Had I known at the time what I knew after the events of Sunday, (October 3) I would have made a very different decision."
- October 1993** Task Force Ranger begins an assault on the Olympic Hotel in Mogadishu, where Aidid and his top aides are thought to be in hiding. A bloody, seventeen hour battle ensues. 18 U.S. soldiers are killed and over 70 are wounded.
- Clinton decided to cut losses and declares American troops are to be fully withdrawn from Somalia by March 31, 1994. The hunt for Aidid is abandoned, and negotiations with the warlord begin.
- In a letter to President Clinton, U.S. General Garrison accepts full responsibility for the Battle of the Black Sea. The incident is soon to be made famous by Mark Bowden's book *Black Hawk Down*.
- December 1993** U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin resigns.
- March 1994** The U.S. continues to withdraw troops and the level of humanitarian aid. Approximately 20,000 UN forces remain, primarily Asian and African contingents.
- April 1995** The United Nations has completed a withdrawal of troops and humanitarian relief to Somalia. Clan and warlord fighting remain intense.



**August 1995**

Aidid dies in a hospital from bullet wounds.

**September 2001**

Terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center turn the world's attention again to Somalia. The U.S. government considers this strategically located East African nation is susceptible to the harboring of Islamic extremism of the type that drove the perpetrators.

Extremist activity and the lack of a central governing authority have led to increased U.S. Department of State, among other government agencies, attention to the region.

## VIII.

## SOMALIA PROFILE

<i>Official Name:</i>	Somali Democratic Republic
<i>Government Type:</i>	n/a
<i>Independence:</i>	July 1, 1960. A merger of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland. No functioning government since the United Somali Congress (USC) ousted the regime of Maj. Gen. Mohamed Said Barre on January of 1991. The present situation is anarchy and lawlessness with some areas of peace and stability, mostly in the rural pastoral lands.
<i>Government Budget:</i>	\$380 million (1984).
<i>Foreign Aid:</i>	\$400 million. U.S. - \$110 million. (1985).
<i>Area:</i>	637,660 sq. km. Slightly smaller than Texas.
<i>Geography:</i>	The east coast of Africa, north of the Equator. With Ethiopia and Djibouti, commonly referred to as the Horn of Africa.
<i>Population:</i>	7,400,000 (est.)
<i>Capital:</i>	Mogadishu - 1,000,000 (est.)
<i>Terrain:</i>	Mostly flat with small plateaus rising to hills in the north.
<i>Climate:</i>	Principally desert, moderate climate. December to February has danger of northeast monsoon.
<i>Ethnic Groups:</i>	85% Somali, 15% Bantu and Arab
<i>Languages:</i>	Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English
<i>Religion:</i>	Muslim, over 99%. Vast Majority Sunni. Other -- an estimated 2,000 Christians
<i>Work Force:</i>	Pastoral nomad (70%), Agriculture, Government, Trading, Fishing, Handicrafts, Other (30%)
<i>People:</i>	Somali (97%) -- complex clan hierarchy based on paternal descent. Northern Somali (77%). Four major clan families -- Dir, Daarood, Hawiye, Iszaaq. Many sub-clans. Southern Somali (20.4%). Major clan families -- Digil, Rahanwiin, Garre, Jiddu, Tunni, Dabarre. Bantu (1.6%). Other (1%).

**sources:** U.S. Department of State. Background Note: Somalia.  
 2002 *The New York Times Almanac*  
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## IX. SELECTED VERSES OF THE KORAN

The answers to many questions concerning Islam can be found in the Koran. Muslims believe it to be the literal words of God as spoken directly to Muhammad via the angel Gabriel. As such, a serious adherent must take its words seriously. This holy book contains many directions for those who follow Islam, including codes of conduct for a rather wide array of human affairs and institutions. As with any religious text, the danger exists of misreading a passage because of context. Thus the reader of this thesis should also read the Koran.

These selections are presented in the hope of generating an interest and as an aid to the conclusions of this thesis. The translation is the one used by <http://www.answerislam.org.uk>, part of an important network of Muslim-Christian dialogue. Most of the selected quotes are from the site. Again, the reader is encouraged to examine and research this major world religion on their own.

*And slay them (infidels) wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out, for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter.* 2:191

*And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and Faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.* 2:193

*Fighting is prescribed to you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you do not.* 2:216

*O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he among you that turns to them for friendship is of them.* 5:51

*Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or gets victory shall soon we give a reward of great (value).* 4:74

*Seize them and slay them wherever you find them: and in any case take no friends or helpers from their ranks.* (concerning the unbelievers) 4:89

*Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit at home.* 4:95

*When in their insolence they transgressed all prohibitions, We said to them: 'Be you apes, despised and rejected.'* (concerning the Jews) 7:166

*Fight them and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you to victory over them, and heal the breasts of the Believers.* 9:14

*Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly.*  
8:60

*O Prophet! rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding.* 8:65

*As for those who are slain in the cause of God, He will not allow their works to perish ... He will admit them to the Paradise He has made known for them.* 47:8

*Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.* 9:29

*Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.* 61:4

*But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular Prayers and practice regular Charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.* 9:5

*Make war on them until idolatry shall cease and God's religion shall reign supreme.*  
8:39

Please see *Surah 47* for a description of the rewards that await those who fight in Allah's cause, those who "smite their necks till you have killed and wounded many of them" and "carry out jihad against the disbelievers till they embrace Islam and are saved from the punishment of the Hell-fire" because "those who are killed in the way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost." 47:4

## X. SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE

The following is a selection of primary documents concerning Somalia from the presidential archives of the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, TX. More materials are being declassified yearly. The documents reprinted here offer additional insight into the planning process and political difficulties of the humanitarian effort. It is hoped that the reader can better understand how their government and elected officials interact with other agencies, military officials and concerned civilians.