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OPERATIONAL CONCEPT PLAN 2  
MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA

BY

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OPSCON 2 (Preliminary)  
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1. Operational concept: A US-led international force would enter the heart of the famine zone, establish either a series of *safe havens* in which the relief agencies and UN could operate safely without escorts and a larger *exclusion zone* from which armed vehicles would be prohibited. The zone would be monitored by JSTARS and TARPS and patrolled by armed helicopters. Rapid response teams would be based in the forward areas to respond to any threats to personnel, military or civil relief workers, in the safe haven. The safe havens would be supplied by air and from the sea. While the actual operating area for ground forces would be relatively small, using a combination of the exclusion zone and demarches to the faction leaders not to interfere with allied or UN operations would permit us to influence events beyond the haven and exclusion zone. The allies would make it clear that operation would be strictly humanitarian and that as long as the factions did not interfere, they would not be harmed. The duration of the mission would be short term, no longer than the beginning of the next rainy season (mid-March) and an approximate withdrawal date would be announced in advance. Turnover would be to a UN force.
2. The objectives:
  - a) Provide security so that relief agencies can do their job.
  - b) Break the back of the famine and stop the deaths.
  - c) Create an environment conducive to drawing the people back to the land.
  - d) Create sufficient security that refugees in Kenya are drawn back to Somalia.

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3. Force Structure:

Amphibious Force:

The operation would be spearheaded by a Marine Expeditionary Unit operating off the coast. The Marines would land from an LHA supported by AV-8Bs and AH-1Js. They would secure bases ashore including a primary port and one or more airports inland in the heart of the famine zone. The operation should be structured so that terminals at each end of two MSRs are secured.

Main security force:

Once the air and beachheads are secure, the main security force would be landed by ship and plane. A force of brigade to possibly division strength would be drawn from US Army light infantry or airborne forces: (101st AirMobile, 82nd Airborne, 325 Inf. or 7th Inf.) and if necessary supported offshore by a MEB. If the city of Mogadishu is included in the security zone, elements of an armored division will also be needed (2nd ACR) with tanks, IFVs, and APCs.

Supporting elements:

Army support elements should include:

- 2 MP Battalions;
- 2 CA companies
- 1 engineering battalion (with tracks);
- 1 transportation company;
- Associated supply and logistics units.

Liaison Units:

- 1 HQ support unit;
- One ANGLICA

Air Support:

Rotary wing:

In addition to the 24 helicopters attached to the MEU:

- 2 US Army helicopter companies of UH-60s,
- 1 helicopter company of CH-47s,

-- 1 detachment of USAF CH-53D Pave Coins

-- 1 company of AH-6 Apaches

Fixed wing:

-- 5 C-5s or 12 C-141s

-- 15 C-130s

Naval task force:

A naval task force assembled around the PhibRons supporting the MEU and MEB would be reinforced from the Naval Transport Command and would supply the force ashore and deliver replenishments.

Depending on the security situation, it may be advisable to station a CV with supporting elements over the horizon.

Special missions:

The SOCCENT SF HRT should remain on station ex Mombasa. In addition, 1 Marine HRT/Recon Unit should remain off-shore ex Mogadishu throughout the operation.

4. Security zones: The intervention should establish a series of airtight safe zones in which the relief agencies can work freely and an interlocking exclusion zone where they can travel with minimal risk. Unescorted convoys should be able to transit the exclusion zone without risk. The zones should encompass sufficient area that relief agencies can deliver seeds and agricultural inputs without risk and Somali herdsman should be able to move their livestock without fear of attack.

The heart of the famine area is the area around Baidoa. At a minimum, the zone should include: Baidoa, Houddur, Wajit, Belet Weyne and the areas surrounding them plus a seaport.

The area should not include the areas west of the Juba River. That area can be reached via cross-border operations from Kenya and once the zone is established, effective control can be established via a limited exclusion zone.

5. Exclusion zones: All attacks on food convoys, warehouses, and relief agency compounds have been carried out by men using "technicals" (four-wheel drive vehicles or pick-up trucks mounted with machine guns or recoilless rifles). This is the key to their mobility. Restrict them from the area and it would be very difficult for the bandits or

factions to operate. In the rural areas, there aren't that many vehicles moving about. Furthermore, the technicals have heat and acoustical signatures that would be easy to fingerprint with JSTARS.

6. Ports: The operation will need at least one port. Unfortunately, the best harbors are at Mogadishu and Kismayo, both of which should be avoided. Brava and Marca are being used by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) using lighters and a barge and cable arrangement to ferry the supplies ashore. However, amphibious landing craft of the type carried by a Marine Expeditionary Unit's (MEU) PhibRon would have no problems in either port. Brava is first choice.
  
7. International composition of the force: The US must have participation from some allies. This makes it easier for the UN and relief agencies to work with the military force, gives the operation more legitimacy internationally, and facilitates the hand-over to a UN peacekeeping force. It may be possible to ask the countries that have agreed to commit troops to the UN but have not yet sent them to join the allied force.

A resolution from the UN Security Council similar to the one for northern Iraq will be required.

8. Total force: The total force should be large enough to do the job but small enough to demonstrate that it is a humanitarian operation defending the NGOs and making it possible for them to operate. As in northern Iraq, the area that we can influence will extend beyond the area that is actually secured.

A force composed of a MEU (1800-2100 Marines), two infantry brigades (7,500 soldiers), and armored regiment (4,500), support elements (3,500), aviation units (2,500) plus associated allied troops<sup>2</sup> could accomplish the task. Total on-the-ground US troop commitment would be approximately 20,000 soldiers and Marines.

9. Security for relief agencies prior to execution: Since the US forces will be seeking a resolution of the Security Council to intervene in Somalia, armed factions and bandits will have prior notice of the operation. Some faction leaders may try to oppose the intervention and independent

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<sup>2</sup> If Mogadishu is included in the plans, we should encourage the British to commit an experienced force ex Northern Ireland to manage the irregular urban warfare threat.

bandit groups will certainly try to steal as much as they can before the troops land. Thus, it will be necessary to guarantee safety for relief personnel in Mogadishu and outlying towns in advance of the landing. This can be accomplished in two ways: 1) a *demarche* to the faction leaders ordering them to protect the agencies and holding them responsible for any harm, and 2) deployment of UN peacekeeping forces around relief agency compounds 48 hours before execution. In addition, the SF HRT and the USMC Recon/HRT should be deployed close to the main operating areas of Mogadishu and Baidoa.

10. Timing: If this concept is adopted, CENTCOM could initiate detailed planning for a deployment within two weeks. Assuming that 1) a decision can be made by the national command authority before Thanksgiving and 2) that the UN will act within one week of a presidential offer if forces, and 3) that there will be no significant opposition from Security Council members, and 4) that Congressional leaders can be notified and briefed during the UN SC debates; deployment according to this concept could begin as soon as December 7.
11. Threat Analysis: As with any irregular force, the threat is difficult to predict. Faction leaders do not have absolute control over the elements within their AOs and many bandits operate independently. The key to controlling both the factions and the bandits is by restricting their mobility: eliminate the "technicals" and they cannot steal large quantities of relief supplies.

The most troublesome element is the likelihood of sniping. There will undoubtedly be some individuals and possibly groups who will find cause to fire upon US or allied troops. The terrain outside the city is not suitable for ambushes nor sniping; it is flat and open. The most likely place for sniping will be Mogadishu since it alone offers concealment and escape possibilities. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that US and allied forces stay out of the city (the reasoning was explained earlier in OpsCon 1).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See also the after action report on the Indian Peace-Keeping Force's experience in Jaffna, Sri Lanka in 1987.