

Syndicate 4: Somalia

Chronology and Historical Background

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By 1990 Somali dictator Syad [often spelled as Siad] Barre was fighting a desperate civil war to maintain power, including turning his troops and air force on the large northern city of Hargeisa (center of power of a large rival clan, the Isaqs) and devastating it, producing a large loss of civilian life. By January 1991 a coalition of clans, led by General Mohammed Aideed, succeeded in driving Barre out of the capital of Mogadishu and occupying it. In the aftermath of their victory the erstwhile allies began jockeying for power with Aideed opposing Ali Mahdi's claim to political leadership. At this point the Somali civil war resumed. In May 1991 the old British Somali Land secedes and tries to go its own way. By November 1991 intense fighting began again in Mogadishu. In response, international aid agencies and NGOs, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) withdrew and resumed limited operations from Nairobi.

In these conditions of extreme lawlessness, violence, and depredation, with cultivators displaced from their lands and transport and markets disrupted, famine once again appeared in Somalia. By March 1992, the military situation somewhat stabilized—Mogadishu being

divided into Aideed and Ali Mahdi-clan controlled sectors and military activities subsided. At this time aid agencies gradually returned to the country (although many kept their operational headquarters in Kenya). The Western media arrived and began transmitting images of the continuing famine, as well as the armed militias with their teenage gunmen and Mad Max “technicals,” into Western-based newspapers and TV reports. Pressure mounted on the UN and the West (especially the US) to take some action to alleviate the famine in Somalia. In April 1992, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 751, UNOSOM I which called for 50 Pakistani peacekeepers to be based in Mogadishu to oversee food aid delivery. At the time, General Aideed indicated he would attack this force. Partly in response to this threat, the Pakistani force was increased to 500. Despite this force increase, the Pakistani UN force still faced a hostile Aideed and thus remained in the easily protected port and airport areas. As a result, the delivery of food aid was largely ineffectual.

Slightly more successful in the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) was Special Representative Mohammed Sahnoun, an Algerian diplomat named to the post by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Sahnoun pursued a political agenda aimed at stabilizing the situation to better ensure aid delivery. In pursuit of this goal, he set out to meet with a wide spectrum of Somali society—elders, intellectuals and the former elite, as well as warlords. Unfortunately, conflict between Sahnoun and the UN bureaucracy in New York escalated which led to his resignation in October 1992. Following his resignation the situation continued to deteriorate.

In August of 1992 President Bush ordered US military forces to airlift food aid (Operation Provide Relief) into Somalia and Kenya in order to relieve the famine now being seen daily on the evening news. It is estimated that 25 percent of the food aid delivered via Operation Provide Relief was looted. This is because American troops did not accompany the aid beyond the airfields where the food was delivered. That summer and into the fall, the role of the US in Somalia famine relief became enmeshed in the presidential and congressional election campaigns. In November the US supported UN Resolution 794 authorizing the delivery “by all necessary means of food aid to Somalia.” In December 1992, in support of this UN resolution, US military forces led a Unified Task Force (UNITAF) that consisted of almost 30,000 multinational troops into Somalia. For the Americans this became known as Operation Restore Hope. It was the first post-Korean, peace enforcement mission launched by the Security Council under the authority of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

UNITAF succeeded in reducing the level of violence (e.g., most technicals and large weapons were taken off the streets) and guaranteed aid delivery to outlying areas (though not always in a timely way, as some NGOs claimed). But political moves to restore the peace and a functioning state moved slowly (if at all), despite conferences convened outside the country and attended by the various heads of Somalia’s “political parties”— in reality the heads of the various militias. The US was very anxious to hand the operation back to the UN, although the UN was much less anxious to assume command and control of the operation. Regardless, in May 1993 UNITAF (Restore Hope or UNOSOM I) became UNOSOM-II (Continue Hope) under UN SC Resolution 814. UNOSOM-II consisted of another multinational force numbering about 28,000 troops and almost 3,000 civilians. The number of American troops on the ground was greatly reduced, and overall the perception among all Somali parties was that this was nowhere near as tough a military force as that fielded under UNITAF.

Unable to sway the UN to his side, General Aideed turned increasingly hostile to it. The hostility originated when the UN took sides in the Somali conflict and attempting to confiscate weapons from the armed militias. Events came to a head on 5 June 1993 when Aideed's forces ambushed a contingent of Pakistani soldiers. The UN and the Americans then agreed that Aideed and his clan must be punished, and thus began a hunt for Aideed and other clan leaders through the summer and early fall of 1993. American Rangers, elite SEAL and Delta Force operators led the hunt. Their efforts were largely successful until 3 October 1993. On this date a deadly fire fight between an American force and Somali militiamen followed a bungled raid. Two US Blackhawk helicopters were shot down, 18 soldiers were killed, 75 wounded, and one captured. While Somali casualties (including civilians) were much higher, the American public was shocked to realize that what had began as a humanitarian mission had turned into a nasty shooting war complete with ghastly images.

The inexperienced Clinton Administration was unprepared to deal with the consequences of the poorly managed shift from humanitarianism to war and the harsh criticism that followed. President Clinton resolved to call off the hunt for Aideed, and withdrew US forces from Somalia by March 1994. US support for the UNOSOM II continued in the form of equipment and supplies as well as diplomatic support. However, by late 1994 the international community became completely disillusioned with the prospects for any progress in Somalia and the Security Council decided to draw down and terminate the mission which consisted of roughly 9,000 peacekeepers at that point. In February 1995, a multinational naval task force returned to Somalia and US and Italian marines went ashore to cover the final withdrawal of UN equipment and personnel. By early March 1995 UNOSOM-II completed its withdrawal. The Security Council officially ended UNOSOM II on 31 March 1995.

CONCLUSIONS/SUMMARY OF SITUATION

In Somalia, the international community was faced with the aftermath of a civil war; a collapsed state with widespread famine; and with well-armed opposing factions tied to a clan system whose complexity and segmented dynamics Western analysts did not understand. The security situation — never very good and deteriorating sharply after May, 1993 — made military-civil relations tense. Somalis often played UN military contingents off against each other at the tactical level, and played the UN off against the US in general. NGOs were caught between both the peacekeeping military and the indigenous Somali militias since they needed both to provide armed security for them as they conducted their aid activities. When militia and peacekeepers came into conflict, as increasingly they did, aid workers were caught in the middle. The military, and especially the US military, found themselves more and more concerned with guaranteeing their own force protection, as their role became largely focused on capturing Aideed.

In these circumstances — where a humanitarian relief operation turned into a combat operation — civil-military relations were unstable, complicated, and in the end unsatisfactory for almost everyone concerned.

Syndicate 4: Somalia Syndicate Discussions

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The Syndicate consisted of the following members:

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SOMALIA: A CASE STUDY IN CIVIL-MILITARY INTERACTIONS

The three phases of the Somalia Intervention included the following:

1. UNOSOM I/Provide Relief April 1992 - December 1992
2. UNITAF/UNSOM II/Restore Hope December 1992 - May 1993
3. UNOSOM II (Only)/Continue Hope May 1993 - March 1995

Overall Environment for Civil/Military Interaction: Famine and political problem with a gradually escalating military problem (warlords) which begins as hijacking of food aid and escalates into open conflict with intervening military forces. Ultimately, international military presence withdraws leaving the international humanitarian agencies to pick up the pieces.

UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA (UNOSOM I) APRIL 1992 TO DECEMBER 1992

- This was a very decentralized operation
- Not clear that all the lessons have been captured here.

SUCSESSES (CIVIL-MILITARY-INTERACTION)

- Food transport to Somalia by air—the food got there!
- As famine relief, the Media focus on famine—International consensus develops that something must be done. Media also correctly identified the civil/military interface as a critical problem in need of resolution.
- The US military's Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) demonstrated excellent coordination between the military and the Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).
- In UNOSOM I the objectives were clear and focused. Simplicity was violated later. In fact it is interesting to note that the Somalia intervention (1992-1995) begins focused, goes unfocused, and then refocuses for a successful draw down and withdrawal.

FAILURES (CIVIL-MILITARY-INTERACTION)

- Pakistan military stayed in their base camps. Other military delivered aid but did not convoy it from the airfields. Military hunkered down in their compounds while civilians operated in the field.
- Civil-Military Interaction lacking. Military and civilians did not appreciate nor respect each other's role. The interaction needed to increase over time but didn't thereby setting the stage for later problematic civilian/military interaction.
- Food not distributed to the population (Mogadishu was a choke point).

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- NGOs not able to dispense the aid throughout the country.
 - Eventually the military and civilian mandates began to clash with each other and internally. However, a notable exception was Sahnoun's efforts to resolve the political relationship between himself and the NGOs and the Somali clans.
 - This experience shows there is a requirement to know when to start coordination. Should it be ongoing (pre-crisis) or should it begin during the initial phases of the crisis.
 - The inability to access available information on Somalia was a critical failure during the operation's initial phase and demonstrated an inability to draw on "civilian" areas of expertise. The failure to respect the Somali power structure and culture was another critical failing.

UNIFIED TASK FORCE (UNITAF) DECEMBER 1992 - MARCH 1993

SUCCESSSES (CIVIL-MILITARY-INTERACTION)

- The UN sector or zone concept employed in Somalia during UNITAF worked well. The use of "military directors" to facilitate the delivery of aid was also useful.
- US logistics experience facilitated troop contributions by others and helped resolve other problems. US participation motivated other nations to participate.
- Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) concept developed here had problems but was initially a success.
- Distribution of food via convoys was highly successful.

FAILURES (CIVIL-MILITARY-INTERACTION)

- Civil-Military Coordination hampered because most NGOs remained in Kenya where they had fled after the first surge in violence.
- Although CMOCs were successful there were also problems. Since the CMOC was inside the wire of the US Compound, there was a problem with access. Its existence heightened expectations that were never met. This led to frustration. There were also problems with security, personal identification,

personal weapons, and inconsistent and rapidly changing rules of engagement and policies. Some of these issues led to the exclusion of local NGOs — this may have significantly affected mission accomplishment.

- There is a tension between CMOCs operating as a coordination element and as a control element. The CMOC concept probably did not take into account potentially conflicting institutional interests as well as it might. There can be cultural tensions over security and aid delivery that need to be dealt with better under the CMOC structure.
- There was a lack of coordination between the UN's Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) and the CMOC, which had at least the potential to degrade, overall mission effectiveness.
- Insufficient attention was paid to the concept of "Warrior Ethic" in Somalia and the great hatred and distrust of the Egyptian-born UN Secretary General B.B. Ghali. Thus the US Marines were welcomed both as warriors and as replacements for B.B. Ghali's meddling. This explains the resistance to UNOSOM II, which the Somalis saw as a return of the meddling B.B. Ghali and a departure of the Marines.
- During UNITAF NGOs found themselves forced to create links with the militias for protection. This problem was compounded by the unwillingness of the military to disarm the militias.

UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA II (UNOSOM II) MAY 1993 TO MARCH 1995

SUCCESSSES (CIVIL-MILITARY-INTERACTION)

- Relief efforts eliminated the famine.
- Supplies flowed to where they were needed.
- There was good coordination among civilian actors.
- With regards to military support of other military force, the US Quick Reaction Force (QRF) worked very well.
- The March 95 withdrawal was successful and saw good military/civilian planning and interaction. The withdrawal could have easily been a catastrophic blood bath. The clans were sorely tempted by the large amount of military equipment and ammunition leaving the country.
- Beyond the military withdrawal in March 1995, there were some successes.

FAILURES (CIVIL-MILITARY-INTERACTION)

- Mission creep occurred with the criminalization of Aideed. This became a problem for the continued successful delivery of food aid. Mission focus and identity shifted without a clear understanding of the reasons or dangers inherent in the shift. The UN lost its neutrality. The situation seemed to shift uncontrollably from humanitarian assistance to military operations.
- Humanitarian supplies ruined subsistence farmers and drove many of them out of business. The unintended consequences of humanitarian assistance is an area requiring further study.
- Cooperation between UN and US military forces was problematic at best. There was disunity in the military command. There was not a direct line of control between the UN staff and staffs of the fielded military contingents.
- Military units took over many NGO roles and responsibilities, though abruptly stopped these activities upon their departure. A smoother transition might have enhanced chances for recovery and stabilization in Somalia.
- The C2 structure seemed almost designed not to work; created major problems.
- PsyOps and public information capabilities were withdrawn with UNITAF. (Public information issues are still a problem in many UN missions.) There wasn't any public information for consumption by the Somalis.
- Media stayed in Mogadishu and did not get out to see some of the success stories in the countryside. There is a question as to how they could be better integrated into the effort.
- The proper management and understanding of national will and its affect on performance in such an operation is crucial to overall success. This became very clear in UNOSOM II.
- As the situation deteriorated, the civil military interface worsened as the local perception of the military worsens. Civilians found it impossible to work with the military anymore and still get their jobs done. This was especially evident during the hunt for Aideed.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

WHAT ARE TYPICAL OF SCENARIO (SOMALIA) SPECIFIC PROBLEMS
WITH CIVIL-MILITARY INTERACTION?

- Shift from humanitarian assistance to peace enforcement .
 - > undermines long-term work by civilian agencies.
 - > changes calculation of Civil-Military relationship in ways civilians may not be able to agree with or accept.
- Cultural knowledge and awareness and appropriate use of this information—
Critical determinate of mission success.
- Transition differences/problems of C2 structures between stages.
- Training/education for civilian and military personnel about each other and the separate roles.

LIST AREAS OF FOCUS

- Training of Civilian and Military about each others roles.
- Command arrangements.
- Response to escalation or changes to mission.

SCOPING AND STRUCTURING OF PROBLEMS FOR ANALYSIS

- A matrix of various operations in a Civilian/Military Context
 - > Insight to change in missions.
 - > Impact of withdrawal of either Civil or Military actors/forces.

WHAT TYPES OF ANALYSIS ARE REQUIRED?

- Historical Analysis.
 - > Review of applicable documents/interviews/reports, etc.
- Develop Models/techniques to Peace Operations .
- To understand the situation at hand without forgetting the lessons of the past and maintaining the analytic flexibility to deal with new situations.
- Identifying nontraditional sources of knowledge for use in these operations.

FUTURE RESEARCH?

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- Did “Coordination & Communication among Civilian Actors work during UNOSOM I & UNITAF”?
 - Did the UN’s HOC work? How well during each of the phases (UNOSOM I UNITAF, and UNOSOM II).
 - Were the HAST and OFDA surveys accurate? USG support to each?
 - Nature of Civil-Military & Media Interaction.
 - Analyze the unintended consequences of HA/PK/PE Operations.
 - Workshop with applicable players to analyze Somalia in detail.
 - Workshop to examine how to enhance and optimize a CMOC.