

## **THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE IN SOMALIA, 1992-1995 (revised)**

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(U) The end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union at the beginning of the decade of the 1990s did not end the demands for a robust Defense Department. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which destabilized the region and threatened to centralize the control of much of the world's oil supply, convinced President George H. W. Bush to lead an international coalition to enforce United Nations resolutions against Iraq and to liberate Kuwait. The United States played the leading role in the effort, demonstrating the effectiveness of its armed forces, particularly of its Air Force. But even after the liberation of Kuwait, there were other trouble spots around the world in which President Bush chose to employ United States military forces for humanitarian purposes. In 1992 alone, America's armed forces took part in no less than twelve major humanitarian operations across the globe.<sup>1</sup>

(U) Drought and famine in Somalia in the early 1990s contributed to social instability in the horn of Africa region that resulted in a humanitarian and political crisis serious enough to demand an American military response. The increasingly restive population turned against Mohammed Siad Barre, who had ruled as dictator since 1969, and forced him to flee the country in 1991. The central government collapsed, and fourteen rival clans and factions, with armed militias, fought among themselves for control of Somalia, or at least portions of it. Among clan leaders were Mohammed Farah Aideed of the Habr Gidr subclan, who headed the Somali National Alliance (SNA), and Ali Mahdi Mohamed of the Abgal subclan. Some of the northern clans sought secession from southern Somalia, where the drought was worse, and where corruption prevailed in the capital of Mogadishu. Anarchy and civil war contributed to hunger

and malnutrition, as rival factions fought over dwindling food supplies. By 1992, up to 350,000 Somalis had starved, including an estimated fourth of all children under five. As many as 80,000 people fled to neighboring countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia. Press reports dramatized the food shortages, persuading more economically advanced countries to ship food to Mogadishu.<sup>2</sup>

(U) On April 24, 1992, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 751, creating the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and sponsoring large food deliveries to the country. However the international humanitarian response did not solve the problem because rival gangs fought among themselves for the humanitarian cargo as it arrived, and prevented the safe docking and unloading of ships. Gangs knew that if they controlled food supplies, they also controlled the people dependent on those supplies. To assure the safe delivery of their supplies, relief organizations sometimes resorted to hiring local tribesmen as “technical assistants” who in effect were armed bodyguards who often used pickup trucks armed with mounted automatic weapons. For that reason, the vehicles themselves came to be known as “technical.”<sup>3</sup>

(U) In response to the crisis, President Bush authorized American military forces to deliver additional food and other relief supplies to Somalia, launching Operation Provide Relief on August 15, 1992. United States Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Frank Lubutti commanded a Central Command Joint Task Force that included forces from all the U.S. armed services. Food ships arrived at the port of Mombasa in Kenya, bordering southwest Somalia. Lubutti also relied on airlift, not only because Somalia lacked a good highway system to transport the food from Mombasa to the countryside, but also because transport aircraft could deliver the food more quickly, although not in the same quantity per day. Another consideration is that rival gangs threatened food distribution at the port. Initially the Air Force deployed four large four-engine

jet C-141 Starlifter cargo airplanes. U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) accompanied some of those flights, many of which lasted 24 hours. Some of the Starlifters also unloaded food at Wajir, where trees along the runway were cut down to make room for them. The C-141s continued flights from the United States to Kenya via Egypt, both to deliver food and to resupply deployed troops.<sup>4</sup>

(U) Geographic considerations demanded that the Air Force use more than a single form of transport for the humanitarian airlift to Somalia. The C-141 Starlifters could not land easily on the smaller airfields in Somalia, and the Mogadishu airport was still under the threat of gunfire. The United States used smaller C-130 Hercules turboprop transports to airlift the food from Kenya into Somalia, landing at places such as Belen Huen, Baidoa, Bardera, Oddur, and Beladweyne. Those Hercules flights thus allowed the food to bypass the armed clan militias in Mogadishu. During the course of the operation, the number of C-130s committed to the operation increased from eight to fourteen. Each C-130 carried from ten to fifteen tons of cargo per flight, which included rice, sorghum, wheat, flour, cooking oil, bottled water, beans, peas, and salt. Many of the Somali airfields lacked paved runways, and the gravel destroyed many an airplane tire. Further, sporadic fighting in the vicinity of some of the airfields persuaded many pilots to keep their engine running while their aircraft were unloaded in order to allow quick take offs should ground fire erupt. Between August 14 and December 4, 1992, USAF C-130s transported almost thirty-six million pounds of basic food rations from Mombasa, Kenya, to various airfields in Somalia, where it could be distributed to the people who needed it most. By the end of 1992, Provide Relief flights had delivered more than thirty-eight million pounds of food to Kenya and Somalia.<sup>5</sup>

(U) Despite the enormous amounts of food arriving, the most vulnerable famine victims remained hungry because marauding armed gangs from rival clans raided warehouses and convoys, stealing food for themselves and fellow fighters. At times, the gangs demanded “protection payments” from relief workers. Clearly troops were needed to guard the food and to make certain it went to the people who needed it most. Planners relied on United Nations-sponsored Pakistani troops because they were predominantly Muslim, as were the majority of Somalis, and would therefore arouse less resistance than troops from the United States or Europe.<sup>6</sup> Between September 13 and 29, 1992, aircraft of the Air Mobility Command flew 94 missions that airlifted 974 United Nations peacekeeping troops from Pakistan to Somalia in an operation called Impressive Lift. The operation also moved 1,168 tons of related cargo. Despite the arrival of the Pakistani troops, violence and theft of food in Mogadishu and surrounding areas persisted.<sup>7</sup>

(U) To stop or at least reduce continued theft of food delivered to Somalia, the UN Security Council on December 3, 1992 passed resolution 794, authorizing member states to “use all necessary means” to establish “a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.”<sup>8</sup> The United States was in a better position than most to accomplish the mission. Although not reelected in November of 1992, President Bush launched a new military operation in Somalia called Restore Hope to insure a more fair distribution of the food delivered by the continuing Operation Provide Relief. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, following former Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger’s advice on foreign involvement, urged President Bush to employ overwhelming force to establish security, with a clearly stated purpose and exit strategy. The President authorized a United Task Force (UNITAF) under United States rather than UN control, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force

as its nucleus. United States Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Robert B. Johnston commanded Operation Restore Hope, which included forces from a coalition of 23 nations, ultimately approximately 32,000 troops in the multi-national UNITAF.<sup>9</sup>

(U) Operation Restore Hope's clearly defined tactical objectives included securing the airport and port at Mogadishu; occupying Baidoa and Baledogle, including the latter's airfield; and protecting relief centers at Belet Uen (Baladweyne), Oddur, and Gialalassi. The U.S. forces were also to occupy the port and airfield at Kismayo and the overland route between Baidoa and Bardera. Personnel and equipment from the Air Force's 823d RED HORSE Civil Engineering Squadron deployed to Somalia to prepare the airfields. The United States intended to then transfer responsibilities for these locations to a follow-on United Nations peacekeeping force in early 1993.<sup>10</sup>

(U) Concurrently, Ambassador Robert B. Oakley, President Bush's special envoy to Somalia, negotiated the acquiescence of rival clan leaders to allow the peaceful deployment of American and coalition forces in the country. On December 9, 1992, roughly 1,300 U.S. Marines landed unopposed at the Mogadishu airport. When U.S. Navy SEALs landed on the beaches near Somalia in the pre-dawn hours of the same day, they were greeted by an army of press photographers, and did not encounter any hostile fire. At the same time, U.S. Marines and Army troops, including engineers and elements of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry Division (Light ), landed at the former Soviet air base at Baledogle, seventy miles northwest of Mogadishu, and prepared for a landing of transports. Coalition troops such as French Foreign Legion members also encountered no significant resistance, even when they seized weapons from Somali factions and secured key intersections.<sup>11</sup>

(U) Important reorganization within the Air Force in 1992 affected both of the United States military operations in Somalia that commenced that same year. On June 1, Tactical Air Command, Strategic Air Command, and Military Airlift Command were all inactivated, while two new commands, Air Combat Command and Air Mobility Command, were activated to assume their missions. Air Combat Command inherited the fighters of Tactical Air Command and the bombers of Strategic Air Command. At the same time, Air Mobility Command inherited the tankers of Strategic Air Command and the transports of Military Airlift Command. Operations Provide Relief and Restore Hope were the first major operations of Air Mobility Command. Using prepositioned tanker task forces, huge C-5 Galaxy and C-141 transports moved most of the initial 32,000 tons of cargo of Operation Restore Hope, flying from the United States to the horn of Africa. The transports refueled in flight over the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Red Sea, and staged at bases in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Yemen, and Djibouti, including Cairo West Air Base (AB) in Egypt and Jeddah New and Taif air bases in Saudi Arabia. KC-10 aircraft, normally used as tankers, also transported significant amounts of Restore Hope cargo. The military transports landed at Mogadishu, Baledogle, and Kusmayu, while most troops arrived in Mogadishu on U.S.-contracted commercial airliners. Eventually sealift delivered more cargo than airlift to Somalia during Restore Hope. By late December 1992, a combination of the two methods had moved 6,668 vehicles and 96 helicopters into Somalia for UNITAF and assured deliver of over 40,000 tons of grain.<sup>12</sup>

(U) Provide Relief and Restore Hope proceeded simultaneously from early December 1992 into the first two months of 1993, the first operation delivering food, and the second attempting to distribute it fairly. President George H. W. Bush originally hoped that Operation Restore Hope would be completed by January 20, 1993, when he left office, since the newly

elected William J. Clinton would replace him as chief executive. By then, forty-two days into the operation, Air Mobility Command had completed 779 airlift and 1,054 air refueling missions into Somalia, using C-5 Galaxies, C-141 Starlifters, KC-10 Extenders, KC-135 Stratotankers, and commercial aircraft. By January 20, those aircraft had moved more than 24,000 troops and delivered 25,409 tons of equipment and supplies and tankers had transferred almost 74 million pounds of fuel for the Operation Restore Hope airlift missions. Concurrently, C-130 Hercules aircraft assigned to Task Force Mombasa of Operation Provide Relief had completed 2,440 missions and transported 25,534 metric tons of relief supplies.<sup>13</sup>

(U) Diplomatic efforts to preserve internal order accompanied the humanitarian and military operations, and the United States anticipated success. On January 8, 1993, leaders of fourteen Somali factions called for a ceasefire and agree to hold a national reconciliation conference at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Although a U.S. Marine, Private First Class Domingo Arroyo, was killed in a firefight near the Mogadishu airport, the operations appeared to be succeeding. When President Clinton took office on January 20, United Nations troops in Somalia totaled some 37,500, including 24,500 U.S. troops. Operation Provide Relief ended on February 28, having delivered 34,400 tons of cargo on more than 3,100 C-130 and C-141 missions. Operation Restore Hope ended in May, after having transported more than 38,000 troops from twenty coalition nations to Somalia, including 28,000 troops from the United States. By May 10, Air Mobility Command aircraft and crews had flown 1,182 airlift missions for the latter operation, transporting more than 51,400 passengers and over 41,000 short tons of cargo. More than 1,100 air refueling missions had transferred in excess of 82 million pounds of fuel.<sup>14</sup>

(U) By mid-May, the crisis in Somalia seemed to have ended. Food had reached the people who needed it most, mass starvation had subsided, and relative peace reigned in

Mogadishu. The major weapons of the warlords were confined to cantonments. Marauding gangs no longer threatened the population. President Clinton withdrew most U.S. troops and transferred responsibility for food deliveries in Somalia to the United Nations. Fewer than 5,000 U.S. troops remained in Somalia after May.<sup>15</sup>

(U) On March 26, 1993, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 814, which charted the course of the operation that would follow Restore Hope. It invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which called not for more peacekeeping, but for peace enforcement. The United Nations rather than the United States assumed the leading role in the subsequent operation, Continue Hope. UNITAF was replaced by another United Nations operation in Somalia called UNOSOM II, under the leadership of a foreign general. With Operation Continue Hope, the United Nations experimented with peace enforcement. As a result, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a native of Egypt, steered a new course toward “nation building” in Somalia and challenged the authority of the five warlords whose fighting had generated many of the food shortages of the recent past.<sup>16</sup>

(U) Eventually, as the UN in Somalia shifted away from humanitarian relief toward the formation of a new government, its forces became involved in the disarmament of clan militias, and the attempted arrest of warlords. At the same time that the number of U.S. troops declined by 80 percent, those troops were expected to assume a more active role in determining the legitimate government of the country. After the end of Operation Restore Hope, U.S. forces remaining to support the newer UN operation included approximately 2,600 logistics personnel and 1,100 members of a quick reaction force and a small special operations element. Although there were also many coalition troops in Somalia, they still did not equal the number of foreign

troops at the peak of Operation Restore Hope. In this case, doing more with less proved disastrous.<sup>17</sup>

(U) The transition from Restore Hope to Continue Hope ended on May 4, 1993. The United Nations appointed Turkish Lt. Gen. Cevik Bir to command UNOSOM II forces in Somalia and implement Boutros-Ghali's new policy. U. S. Army Maj. Gen. Thomas M. Montgomery, commander of remaining U.S. forces in Somalia, served as Bir's deputy commander. The bulk of U.S. forces in Somalia thus came under the tactical control of the United Nations, partly because they constituted a minority of the total force. Eventually UNOSOM II included approximately 16,000 peacekeepers from 21 nations. The U.S. forces in Somalia in the Quick Reaction Force remained under U.S. rather than UN command.<sup>18</sup>

(U) Intense fighting between UN forces and those of clan leader Mohammad Farah Aideed and his Somalia National Alliance (SNA) militia broke out in June 1993. On June 5, UN troops inspected weapon storage sites the SNA maintained in Mogadishu. During that mission, the SNA ambushed a Pakistani convoy, killing twenty-four soldiers and wounding another forty-four. The next day, the United Nations passed Resolution 837, which called on member nations to "use all necessary measures" to arrest and detain those responsible for the attack. Although the resolution did not specifically target Aideed, it was largely interpreted as a declaration of war on him and UN forces subsequently launched a five-month military campaign against the warlord.<sup>19</sup>

(U) President Clinton endorsed the war on Aideed. He sent gunships, armored personnel carriers, and attack helicopters to Somalia, as General Montgomery requested, but no U.S. tanks or A-10 aircraft, because Secretary of Defense Les Aspin did not think they were necessary. Between June 7 and July 14, 1993, the U.S. Air Force deployed four AC-130 gunships from the

Air Force Special Operations Command's 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron to Djibouti, just north of Somalia. During their deployment, the gunship crews flew thirty-two interdiction, reconnaissance, and psychological warfare missions over Somalia. Between June 11 and 17, they flew eight combat sorties over Mogadishu. On June 11 and 12, three AC-130s used their 105 mm and 40 mm cannons to demolish two suspected SNA weapons storage facilities and destroy Aideed's radio station transmitter at Radio Mogadishu. On June 13, 14, and 17, additional AC-130 raids destroyed weapons storage areas and vehicle compounds of the Aideed militia. During their deployment, the AC-130s expended 600 and 1,000 rounds, respectively, of 105 and 40 mm ammunition. Gunship attacks accompanied broader ground offensives. On June 12, U.S. airplanes and ground forces assaulted five targets in Mogadishu and on June 17, UN troops captured Aideed's headquarters, but he escaped. Retired U.S. Admiral Jonathan Howe, who had replaced Ambassador Oakley as the U.S. special envoy to Somalia, called for the capture of Aideed, and offered a \$25,000 (U.S.) reward for information leading to his arrest. Aideed went into hiding.<sup>20</sup>

(U) The conflict intensified during the summer and early autumn of 1993. Somali fighters ambushed Italian troops in the service of the UN on July 2, leaving three dead and twenty-one wounded. On July 12, U.S. helicopters attacked a destroyed a major Aideed command and control center, this time without warning the population in advance, but the operation failed to capture or kill the warlord. By mid-July, daily firefights were common between UNOSOM II troops and Aideed's militia on the streets of Mogadishu. On August 8, a mine exploded under a U.S. military vehicle, killing four U.S. military policemen. Additional mines on August 19 and 22 killed four and wounded six U.S. soldiers respectively.<sup>21</sup>

(U) On August 22, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin ordered the deployment to Somalia of a joint special operations task force (JSOTF) called Task Force Ranger. Led by Maj. Gen. William F. Garrison, U.S. Army, the task force operated outside the operational control of UNOSOM II. The task force's 440 members included U.S. Army Rangers from the 3d Battalion, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment; elements of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division; a battalion of the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment; and special operations personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The Air Force was represented by the 24<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron in the form of an 11-man element comprised of three pararescuemen and eight combat controllers. The task force arrived in Somalia by the end of August, 1993. Its mission was to capture Aideed and his key subordinates, force faction leaders to surrender their heavy weapons, and facilitate the development of a national police force.<sup>22</sup>

(U) Task Force Ranger launched six raids in August and September, during one of which the U.S. forces captured Osman Atto, one of Aideed's closest advisors and chief financial aide. On September 5, a Somali ambush killed seven Nigerian troops serving the UN force. On September 9, some 1,000 Somalis attacked U.S. and Pakistani troops in Mogadishu, killing one Pakistani and wounding two Americans and three Pakistanis. In response, U.S. helicopters fired into the crowd, which included women and children. Additional skirmishes between UN and Aideed forces occurred on September 8, 16, and 21. The September 21 battle involved, for the first time, massed firing of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) from Somalis on the ground, who were seeking to stop the American helicopters. On September 25, RPG ground fire brought down a U.S. Black Hawk helicopter, killing three U.S. soldiers.<sup>23</sup>

(U) By the end of September, President Clinton reconsidered his Somalia policy because General Colin Powell, who was stepping down as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, advised

Clinton to cease the hunt for Aideed and bring the U.S. troops home. In late September, when General Montgomery in Somalia asked for M-1 tanks, Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs), 105 mm howitzers, and AC-130s to support the continued UN raids against Aideed, Secretary of Defense Aspin refused. He also chose not to redeploy the AC-130s that had been so effective earlier. The Black Hawk and smaller attack helicopters appeared to him to meet existing requirements, and other UN members already possessed armored vehicles at the Mogadishu airport. Moreover, President Clinton was reconsidering U.S. military involvement in Somalia established by his predecessor, and Aspin opposed sending more forces if those already in the country would soon be reduced or withdrawn.<sup>24</sup>

(U) The largest battle in Mogadishu erupted on the afternoon of October 3. Task Force Ranger launched a raid from the airport into the urban center of Mogadishu in an effort to capture two of Aideed's key lieutenants, who were reported to be in a building near the Olympic Hotel. MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters dropped Rangers and special operations forces by rope into the target area. At first the mission went well. The raiders captured twenty-four of Aideed's close associates in the building. An armored convoy of eleven or twelve vehicles, including Humvees and trucks, arrived from the airport to pick up the raiders and their prisoners.<sup>25</sup>

(U) The Black Hawk helicopter that had inserted the assault team, call sign Super 61, hovered in the vicinity of the assault team, attracting ground fire that forced it to crash in a narrow alley three or four blocks to the northeast. The pilot was killed, but both the assault team and the convoy immediately moved toward the crash site to attempt to rescue the other crew members. Another Black Hawk helicopter, call sign Super 68, dropped a combat search and rescue (CSAR) team over the wreckage of Super 61, but during the drop, it was hit by an RPG

fired from the ground, and limped back to the airport, narrowly avoiding the fate of the first Black Hawk.<sup>26</sup>

(U) A third Black Hawk helicopter, call sign Super 64, on the way to the scene from the airport, was also hit by an RPG fired from the ground. It crashed about a mile to the south of the first crash. Increasing numbers of heavily armed Somali militia gathered around both crash sites.

(U) Poor radio communication, because of close radio frequencies, puzzled the convoy leaders, who at first confused the two crash sites. The narrow streets of Mogadishu, filled with militias armed with RPGs and machine guns, forced the convoy to give up reaching either of the crash sites, and it proceeded back to the airport.<sup>27</sup>

(U) Among those rescuers who dropped from Super 68 to the first crash site were USAF pararescuemen MSgt. Scott Fales, the team leader, and TSgt. Tim Wilkinson, both from the 24<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron. After the dust of the helicopter faded away, they and their fellow special operations members went to work finding the Super 61 crash victims, covering them against enemy fire, moving them out of the wreckage to safer locations, and treating their wounds. While some of the dropped team members set up a defensive perimeter around the crash site and countered enemy fire, others attempted to save the lives of the crash victims. What followed were many hours of harrowing struggles in the night, if not to survive enemy fire, to prevent others from dying from it or from their wounds. Wilkinson braved enemy fire while moving between personnel and supplies. Two other USAF personnel from the 24<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron took part in the firefight: combat controllers SSgt. Jeff Bray and Sgt. Pat Rogers. Bray, who was the only USAF member in the main original assault force, called in air strikes from AH-6 “Little Bird” helicopter gunships when needed. At one point, a summoned AH-6 destroyed a threatening enemy machine gun position. The USAF and Army personnel on

the ground used technology to multiply their chances for survival, using beacon devices to guide the gunships in the darkness, and night vision goggles from the crashed helicopter to see better than their Somali militia enemies, but they wished they had taken more ammunition and water.<sup>28</sup>

(U) Seven 24<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron earned heroism awards for their part in that Mogadishu firefight. Wilkinson eventually received the Air Force Cross for risking his life running through a hail of bullets to provide medical treatment for the wounded, covering them, and pulling them to safety. Wounded in the action, which included a perilous night under fire, Wilkinson ultimately saved at least three lives.<sup>29</sup> MSgt. Fales, the pararescue team leader, received the Silver Star for covering the wounded and treating them, despite his own serious injury. Fales' expert trauma care of the wounded soldiers undoubtedly saved lives, including that of Sgt. Pat Rogers.<sup>30</sup> SSgt. Bray, who had participated in the initial capture of enemy leaders, undoubtedly saved lives by calling in air strikes, and for his heroic action, was also awarded the Silver Star. Three other combat controllers, MSgt. Jack McMullen, SSgt. Dan Schilling, and Rogers, also of the 24th Special Tactics Squadron of the USAF, each earned a Bronze Star with Valor.<sup>31</sup> Lt. Col. James L. Oeser, commander of the 24<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron to which Wilkinson and Fales belonged, led the rescue effort and suppressed enemy fire, for which he was awarded the Bronze Star. His testimony contributed to the honors awarded to fellow members of his unit.<sup>32</sup>

(U) Originating from the airport, an armored column of several score of vehicles including UN tanks, armored personnel carriers, and Humvees eventually reached the vicinity of the Super 61 crash site and rescued the survivors of the firefight in the early morning of October 4. At that point the survivors had endured nearly ten hours under enemy fire, but they still had four or five more hours before reaching relative safety. The October 3-4 battle killed sixteen

Task Force Ranger soldiers and two U.S. soldiers in the relief column, for a total of eighteen U.S. soldiers killed. As many as eighty-four U.S. military personnel were wounded, including seventy-five from Task Force Ranger. Two other UN soldiers were killed and nine were wounded. Somali casualties are estimated to have been between 500 and 1,500 wounded.<sup>33</sup>

(U) But what happened to the second Black Hawk helicopter that had crashed, Super 64? A Somali mob overran the second crash site, killed MSgt. Gary L. Gordon and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Randall D. Shughart, and seized the pilot, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant. Both Gordon and Shughart were awarded the Medal of Honor (posthumous) the following year for their attempt to prevent Durant's capture.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately the crew of Super 64 were killed and captured before a special operations helicopter or convoy could reach them. Somali militia dragged some of the bodies through the Mogadishu streets, and Aideed remained at large. Eventually Aideed himself released Durant, ten days later.<sup>35</sup> A week after that, Task Force Ranger redeployed from Somalia back to the United States.

(U) Observers offered many reasons for the failed Mogadishu raid. Some moaned the loss of surprise or the lack of an effective reserve. Others claimed a breakdown of effective command and control. There were some who claimed that Secretary of Defense Aspin was partly to blame, because he had not furnished certain weapons that had been requested before the battle. Still others looked beyond the immediate event and criticized the overall American policy in Somalia, noting that the operation had grown beyond its original intent and lacked clear strategic guidance or an exit strategy.<sup>36</sup>

(U) The battle persuaded President Clinton to accept General Powell's advice and withdraw U.S. troops from Somalia. Humanitarian airlifts and enforcement of no-fly zones in other regions contributed to the administration's decision. Air operations in the former

Yugoslavia during 1992-1993 and in Iraq in support of Kurdish and Shiite minorities between 1992 and 1994 convinced President Clinton to pull American troops out of Somalia so that he could concentrate more on those other areas that seemed at the time to be more relevant to the national security interests of the United States.<sup>37</sup>

(U) Despite the withdrawal decision, Clinton also authorized a temporary increase of U.S. forces and weapons in Somalia to assure a safe withdrawal by the end of March 1994. Further, he called off the hunt for Aideed. The resultant operation, Restore Hope II, sought to protect U.S. bases and keep roads, ports, and communication lines open to assure the continued distribution of food to the hungry, but more importantly to insure the safety of U.S. personnel until they were withdrawn. President Clinton wanted to prevent anarchy in Somalia and make it possible for the Somali people to reach agreement among themselves on a future government. In mid-October, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution in support of the new policy, and suggested ending funding for operations in Somalia after March 31. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, who refused to send the tanks and AC-130s General Montgomery requested before the October battle, took the blame and resigned before the end of the year. President Clinton appointed Bill Perry to replace Aspin.<sup>38</sup>

(U) To implement the new policy, the President authorized a new Joint Task Force Somalia Operation Restore Hope II, with Maj Gen Carl F. Ernst in command. On October 7, Clinton announced that he was ordering an additional 5,300 U.S. troops to Somalia: 3,600 Marines and 1,700 U.S. Army soldiers. He also authorized the deployment of 104 armored vehicles, including heavy tanks, and ordered the USS *Abraham Lincoln*, one of the newest U.S. aircraft carriers, to the coast of Somalia. Ambassador Robert Oakley, who had been successful in securing the cooperation of the warlords for the first Restore Hope, returned as U.S. envoy to

Somalia, replacing Jonathan Howe. The policy change produced immediate results: Aideed declared a unilateral cease-fire on October 9, and on October 14, agreed to release the U.S. helicopter pilot his militia had seized on October 3. On November 16, 1993, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 886 which established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the June 5 attack on Pakistani troops in Somalia. The combination of factors effectively ended the manhunt for Aideed.<sup>39</sup>

(U) President Clinton ordered the airlift of the additional forces to Somalia to accomplish the rapid projection. Between October 5 and 13, 1993, 56 C-5 and C-141 missions moved 1,300 troops, 18 M1 heavy tanks, and 44 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles from Hunter Army Air Field near Fort Stewart, Georgia, and from Griffiss Air Force Base (AFB) near Fort Drum, New York, to Somalia. The transports carried approximately 3,000 short tons of cargo, but only the wide-bodied C-5s could accommodate the heavy tanks. The Air Force restricted the C-141 Starlifter loads to 55,000 pounds because wing cracks had been detected in the venerable transports earlier in 1993. Although Air Mobility Command had already accepted delivery of the first operational C-17 at Charleston AFB, South Carolina, in June, the new transport was not yet ready for the Somalia operation. The non-stop C-5 and C-141 flights from the United States to eastern Africa took approximately 18 hours, with four refuelings from KC-135 and KC-10 tankers over the western Atlantic, the eastern Atlantic, the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and the Red Sea. Air Mobility Command flew a total of 169 air refueling missions, transferring more than 13 million pounds of fuel. Operation Restore Hope II also transported United Nations forces: during the last week in October, three C-5s from the 60<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing home based at Travis AFB, California, airlifted 350 United Nations peacekeeping troops and 250 tons of

equipment from Katmandu, Nepal, to Mogadishu. As the operation continued, commercial airlift and sealift supplemented the initial deployments to Somalia.<sup>40</sup>

(U) USAF AC-130 crews and their gunships that had already established a lethal reputation in Somalia during their previous deployment in June and July redeployed to the theater between October 7 and 9. Two came from Brindisi, Italy, and two from Hurlburt Field, Florida, headquarters of Air Force Special Operations Command. Based at Mombasa, Kenya, not far from the Somalian border, they stood ready to launch missions into Somalia if need to protect U.S. and UN forces there. Sadly, one of the AC-130s, a 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron gunship, suffered a mysterious in-flight explosion while flying off the coast of Kenya, killing eight of its fourteen crew members.<sup>41</sup>

(U) Air Mobility Command supported the final withdrawal of United States forces from Somalia between January 7 and March 24, 1994, which included both airlift and sealift. Aerial refueling by KC-135 tankers allowed direct flights from Somalia to the United States, although some of the U.S. troops went first to Nairobi, Kenya, before departing from there. Air Mobility Command transports and contracted commercial carriers conducted 59 flights, moving more than 1,400 passengers and 1,400 short tons of cargo.<sup>42</sup>

(U) Airlift and sealift each had its own advantages during the successive operations in Somalia between 1992 and 1994. Sealift delivered more cargo, but airlift moved it more swiftly, and transported far more personnel. Transports could not have performed their missions without tankers, and the numbers of sorties by both types of aircraft were comparable during similar time periods. Use of the Airborne Command, Control, and Communications System (ABCCC aircraft) facilitated the Somalia operations, as did the employment of the AC-130 gunships.<sup>43</sup>

(U) Operation Restore Hope II succeeded in its goal of safe withdrawal of U.S. forces from Somalia. The last USAF personnel left Mogadishu on an Air Mobility Command C-5 that arrived at Dover AFB, Delaware, on March 26, 1994.<sup>44</sup>

(U) The withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Somalia in March 1994 emboldened the Somali warlords. On April 3, Somali gunmen raided and looted all the warehouses in the Mogadishu port area, despite the presence of UN forces in the city. Four days later, Mohammed Farah Aideded appeared at a Pan-African Congress at Kampala, Uganda and declared victory in the war. He even demanded that the United Nations pay him reparations. On May 20, after a trip to Kenya, he returned triumphantly to Mogadishu and thanked thousands of cheering supporters for defending Somalia against what he called “foreign aggressors.”<sup>45</sup>

(U) Not long after the United States withdrew its military forces from Somalia, the United Nations followed suit. When the last U.S. combat forces left Somalia, about 20,000 UN troops remained, but they did not stay long. On September 1, 1994, the last few U.S. diplomatic personnel left Somalia, evacuating the U.S. Embassy there. Afterward, the UN Security Council voted to withdraw all remaining UN forces from Somalia. In Operation United Shield, UN forces withdrew from Somalia, completing that mission in early 1995. The United States committed some Air Mobility Command (AMC) airlift resources to support the UN withdrawal. During the first quarter of the year, AMC transports and contracted commercial carriers flew fifty-nine missions to carry personnel and cargo to and from Africa. The command also supported the movement of UN forces out of Somalia by transporting U.S. forces to Mombasa and Nariobi in Kenya, through which many of the withdrawal flights transited, and then airlifted those forces back from Kenya to the United States. Moron AB in Spain served as a staging and refueling base for the operation. Tankers deployed to Nairobi to refuel transports and AC-130s

deployed in case they were needed. One might conclude that without the United States providing the nucleus of the effort in Somalia, the United Nations lacked the will or capacity to continue the ambitious nation-building mission it had set for itself.<sup>46</sup>

(U) What lessons did the United States learn from its involvement in Somalia? Changes in political conditions often require changes in national policy, which in turn demand military adjustments. United States and United Nations policy toward Somalia shifted considerably between 1992 and 1995, and the commitment of military forces had to shift accordingly. Humanitarian airlift, for example, required different types and quantities of military resources than nation-building did. Sometimes the number of troops or weapons was insufficient to achieve the objective. Either the objective, or the resources and strategy devoted to achieve it, had to be modified. Operations Restore Hope and Restore Hope II were more successful than Operations Provide Relief and Continue Hope. The Restore Hope operations worked better in part because the objectives were more limited than the military forces deployed to achieve them. Continue Hope failed because the resources deployed were less than the greater political objectives they were expected to accomplish. The more disappointing operations in Somalia at least taught American military and political leaders something about what to avoid. After the successive operations in Somalia between 1992 and 1994, the Department of Defense began to use a new tool: the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System, which the Pentagon integrated into a system of joint planning for future operations.<sup>47</sup>

(U) In the final analysis, U. S. military intervention in Somalia must be rated a qualified failure. U.S. forces withdrew from Somalia, as they had from Vietnam, without a victory. The United States and United Nations left Somalia as an unstable country and looked to other areas where its interests were more clearly at stake. The cumulative experience of the USAF in

Somalia influenced planners and participants involved in similar conflicts in other places at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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