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SOMALIA POLICY: NEAR-TERM DECISIONS

This paper is intended to review the status of operation Restore Hope and ~~identify/near-term/decisions/which/are/required~~ to propose an integrated decision package for interagency approval prior to Secretary Christopher's meeting with UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali next Monday (1 February).

BACKGROUND

• Military Situation: Approximately 24,000 US and 13,000 non-US coalition troops (comprising the Unified Task Force or UNITAF) are on the ground in southern and central Somalia. UNITAF forces ~~have secured/nine/cities/and/are/providing/convoy security/so/when~~ are extending security step-by-step throughout the nine designated Humanitarian Relief Sectors. ~~Recently/they have/began/so/plan/so/so/so/so/so/so~~ UNITAF is well into its third phase, stabilization. Security operations are now reaching into the furthest corners of the countryside (see map Tab 1). Although the UNITAF forces have been the subject of frequent sniper fire and harassment, the opposition appears ~~not~~ to be primarily from ~~organized/political/so/so/so/so~~ bandits. Outside of the area of UNITAF control, some factional fighting continues. While stepped up disarming has ~~not~~ soured relations with some groups, the militant warlords and their followers have been largely neutralized and we have made considerable progress in reducing the number of major weapons threatening the Somali population. Intelligence reports of planned terrorist attacks are becoming more frequent, but are still unsubstantiated.

With assumption of control of Baidoa by Australian units, the US Marine battalion in that city was withdrawn from Somalia to California. Additional non-US forces will continue to arrive over the next month (see chart Tab 2) and US forces will continue to ~~do~~ conduct a de facto handover to forces that will eventually ~~be~~ comprise UNOSOM.

• Political Developments: All major clans and factions have welcomed the UNITAF deployment and are cooperating with us. UNITAF's presence in key areas of the country has greatly reduced the influence of those whose power is based exclusively on their heavy weapons. It has opened the way to meaningful political participation by leaders with more legitimacy. A UN sponsored conference in Ethiopia drew all major factions and resulted in a cease-fire and weapons cantonment agreement, which has not yet been implemented. The conference failed to agree on details for a follow-on meeting, but established a committee to continue preparations. The talks were most successful after UN representatives left and Ethiopian authorities began brokering agreements. UN Representative Kittani left Somalia due to his health. He has not yet returned and no successor has been identified by the UN.

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• Relief Operations: The arrival of UNITAF forces did not result in an immediate improvement in the starvation/death rate but the starvation is now improving. Relief organizations continue to be harassed and their workers killed, even in cities where UNITAF forces are present. The mass distribution of relief food has depressed prices for indigenous crops and may be providing a disincentive to plant crops in the upcoming harvest period. Refugees have generally not yet left camps in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya to return to villages. Significant infrastructure reconstruction has not begun. Six weeks after the arrival of UNITAF forces the vast majority of food is getting through relatively unmolested, from ports and airports to final destinations throughout southern and central Somalia. The presence of UNITAF forces has caused cities, towns, and villages to come alive once again. For example, in Baidoa a town council has been established, schools are reopening, refugees are returning, and fields are being planted. Major infrastructure improvements have been made to seaports, airports, and road systems (including installation of a bridge) that will provide the basis for further expanding their traffic-handling capacity. Access to all areas requiring relief operations is currently available within the UNITAF area of operations. Unfortunately, some relief workers continue to be victimized and the effects of months of starvation have not been totally eradicated, but by most accounts the overall conditions show dramatic improvement.

Ambassador Oakley's detailed situation report is at Tab 3.

NEAR-TERM DECISIONS

The cluster of decisions needed concern the negotiation with the UN of the hand-off of the peacekeeping enforcement operation to a UN led force. A key element of that negotiation is what the nature of the ongoing US role will be during and after the hand-off.

The Hand-off: The operational concept envisioned by the US at the time of the intervention was that American led forces would intervene, provide security for relief operations, and hand the situation back to UNOSOM (which, by then, would have been able to deploy to Somalia in large numbers). The US Representative, Ambassador Oakley, and the US Commander, LTC Johnston, believe the time has come to begin a sector-by-sector hand off to UN commanded forces. Many of the forces that will make up UNOSOM are already in place, as part of UNITAF, allowing a relatively seamless web between the two operations as the US forces drawdown.

What is needed for the hand-off to begin is a new UN Security Council resolution that would:

- expand UNOSOM from its current authorized ceiling of 4200 4219 to a force of 20,000;

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-- clarify that UNOSOM ~~may act aggressively~~ has the authority and flexibility to insure security, by stating that it ~~is operating under the~~ may use those means necessary to fulfill ~~enforcement power of Chapter VII of the UN Charter~~ its mandate;

-- authorize the UNOSOM commander immediately to start taking control of areas from UNITAF.

Negotiations with Boutros Ghali: The UN Secretary General has dragged his feet on a new resolution, saying at one point that if the Bush Administration introduced a resolution itself, he would oppose it. Boutros Ghali's reluctance had at least three origins. The Secretary General:

-- believed (correctly) that the UN is not staffed or equipped to manage the 14 peacekeeping forces it has around the world and could not successfully assume the logistical burden of a large force in Somalia;

-- did not think that the country was sufficiently pacified and would like UNITAF to do more to establish security before the UN assumes command;

-- wanted commitments of on-going support from the new US administration, not from a lame-duck. (Boutros Ghali believes that promises made to him as an Egyptian official by the Carter Administration were not implemented by Reagan.)

On going US role: In the past administration, the US had discussions with the UN about possible US roles in the follow-on UN force. Among the things discussed were:

-- a US planning team to help the UN ~~size the~~ identify force requirements ~~that is needed~~ and ~~identified other~~ determine what contributions countries may make to fill specific roles (that process is on-going);

-- provision by the US of support units to help deal with some of the short-fall between what is needed and what other countries can provide.

-- an on-call US quick reaction combat force, not necessarily stationed in Somalia, ~~which would initially be in Somalia and later as the situation calms down, could move outside of the country~~ for use in emergency situations when UNOSOM forces are unable to defend themselves.

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The discussions with the UN did not evolve to a point at which the US gave the UN a formal commitment of participation, but the UN clearly believes that there should be some ~~on-going~~ US role. Boutros Ghali ~~will now be~~ is looking for that specific commitment as he prepares to bring to the Security Council the resolution authorizing the hand-off to the UN. ~~GHAI~~ He will be looking for commitments during Secretary Christopher's meeting with him next Monday.

The following four issues need to be reviewed and decided as a package. Only after reviewing them all can we make the underlying decision of whether or not the US should participate in the follow-on UN force.

• Issue 1: What should be the exit criteria for UN military forces? If the US were to leave some forces in Somalia as part of the UN operation, what would be their US exit criteria?

The first element of a decision to include some US forces in the follow-on force is an understanding of the purpose of that force and its duration. The purpose of the UN force is primarily the same as that of UNITAF ~~the coalition force~~, i.e., to provide a secure environment for the delivery of relief. Secondly, it is to provide an atmosphere in which the political reconciliation process might work. For without some process, the warring factions would recreate anarchy as soon as the UN force left. However, we do not want to allow the UN force to be hostage to the peace of Somalia political process.

#### UN Exit Criteria

As much as one would like to have a finite and immutable deadline for withdrawal, in reality the issue must be reviewed as a target deadline approaches. That revisit would need to take into account what the Somalis are themselves doing to achieve stability. The US should:

~~The way in which we recommend addressing this problem is~~  
~~threefold~~

1. //support have a finite time frame for the mandate of the UN force (e.g. 24 months), recognizing that it can be renewed;

-- energize the UN to move vigorously on a political reconciliation process, but avoid having the UN resolution link the termination of the UN military force to the achievement of ideal goals for Somalia (democracy, national reconstruction, etc.);

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US Exit Criteria

US exit criteria should be based, primarily, on how quickly and effectively US military logistical, communications, intelligence and other special and technical functions can be assumed by other donor countries, international agencies, and/or civilian contractors. The US quick reaction force should be able to withdraw "over the horizon" as soon as the UNOSOM force is stabilized adequately. This should occur within 6 months.

The USG should issue a national statement that the US plans a contribution to insure that the new UN force gets well established with a smooth transition from UNITAF, and that the US roles will gradually diminish as others assume our roles; we do not believe that either we or the UN should stay indefinitely; the Somali people must take advantage of the time that we and UN are present to make their nation work again, because we cannot make their system work for them if they do not so themselves

Issue 2: If the US were to participate in the UN force, what should the size of the US contribution be, what roles should we assume?

Many nations can provide infantry forces. Indeed, about 20 nations have offered to do so. What the US brings to the UN force/which/is/relatively/unique are the/following/types/of specialized capabilities such as:

- command/control/communications;
- intelligence;
- supply system logistics;
- mobility/and strategic airlift.

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It is these types of services that the UN seeks from the US.

The/figures/used/below/are/not/intended/to/be/precise,/but to/provide/an/order/of/magnitude/which/could/be/reviewed/later as/planning/will/the/UN/progresses//Not/are/the/figures/below intended/to/be/used/will/the/UN/now,/but/rather/to/insure/US negotiators/in/what/they/decide/boycott/line/mix/be.

No precise figures on the number of US personnel that will remain to serve with UNOSOM are currently available nor has any precise commitment been made. Joint Staff and CENTCOM planners are currently working with UN planners to develop UNOSOM personnel requirements. These planners are evaluating offers and capabilities of potential UNOSOM contributors to meet these requirements. UN will ask US to fill shortfalls that cannot be met by other international donors and contractor personnel. Upon receipt of UN request, US will determine its specific contributions to UNOSOM II.



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To provide ~~those/kinds/of~~ the above services to a UN force of ~~13/000~~ 20,000 in Somalia in the nearterm, the US initially ~~could~~ may need to deploy in the range of ~~on/the/order/of~~ 2000 - 4000 support forces. ~~Some~~ As discussed above, most of those functions ~~could~~ would, over time, ~~however/~~ be ~~gradually~~ assumed by other nations, international agencies, and specialized US civilian contractors. Thus, the US support component could probably drop by roughly half ~~to/about/2000~~ within the year.

In addition to the support forces, the UN seeks a quick reaction, highly mobile combat force with high firepower to deter the Somalia factions which still have tanks and artillery. To provide such a capability, the US could maintain a reinforced infantry battalion with attack helicopter capability (~~800-1000/personnel~~) to provide emergency assistance. Again, as discussed above, as the UN force stabilizes ~~over/the/nex/six/months~~, we ~~could~~ would withdraw the unit and ~~conclude/it~~ thereafter perform the ~~reserve~~ reaction force by having units outside Somalia on an on-call basis.

~~Thus/after/the/buy/of/the/US/force/will/and/the/UN/force/over/the/US/military/establish/level/abound/8000/for/six/months//it/would/then/abound/2000/for/the/remaining/13/months/that/the/UN/force/will/assume~~

• Issue 3: What would the command relationship be for any US forces that we might leave behind after the UN assumes control?

Of the 60,000 UN forces around the world, about 600 are US forces in an Army medical unit in Croatia. The United States has historically resisted placing its troops under UN command. The notable exception, Korea, ~~is~~ has a ~~dual/military~~ US commander dual-hatted as UN commander. ~~The/buy/of/the/800/US/forces/should/over/the/US/military/and/UN/force/within/60days~~

The US has pledged its willingness to strengthen UN peacekeeping capability. Many nations and private Americans have urged us to begin placing US troops under UN command. Somalia may provide the first opportunity to do so in a ~~major~~ substantial way.

Legally, the UN Participation Act of 1945 places a limit of 1000 on the US forces that can be committed to the UN and all must be non-combat personnel (support forces), if the UN action is under Chapter VI (peacekeeping) (separate action is under consideration to increase this number through legislative change). There is no legal limit if the action is under Chapter VII (enforcement), as our current UNITAF force is operating under Chapter VII. ~~and/we/believe/the/following/UN/force/should/be~~

There is ~~an~~ general interagency ~~consensus~~ agreement that to strengthen our support of UN peacekeeping, we should offer to place the US logistics /support forces under UN command and should offer to provide a senior officer to serve as deputy or chief of staff of the UN force ~~and/under/Chapter/VII/of/the/UN/Charter~~.

~~X/question/remains/about/whether~~ As for the quick reaction US combat unit//~~the/residual/combat/force/could~~, we feel strongly that it should be maintained under US command, to insure our freedom of action with that unit and give us greater flexibility in determining when it could depart.

• Issue 4: What would the US ask of the UN in any negotiation about a US role in the UN force?

If the US were to make an additional expenditure for Somalia, it should do so only if it believed that we were part of a UN operation that had a reasonable chance of succeeding. To date, the UN's role in Somalia has shown every indication of failing. Thus, the US should extract commitments from the Secretary General on the following:

-- Military: An active role in recruiting a sufficiently large follow-on force. ~~and/pulling/a/competent/commander~~ ~~in/place/early/on~~. Assistance in proposing and passing a UN Security Council Resolution expanding the UNOSOM mandate and approving a larger force with more flexible rule of engagement than past UN peacekeeping operations. Support to designate top UNOSOM officials, including a competent commander, as soon as possible, and to begin building an appropriately-sized UNOSOM headquarters staff;

-- Diplomatic: The selection of a new, high level UN envoy to lead the national reconciliation negotiations (someone with the stature of former Australian Prime Minister Frasure) as soon as possible.

-- Humanitarian: The urgent staffing of the civilian relief and reconstruction component of UNOSOM with a large and highly qualified staff ~~in/this/area~~.

-- Police: The assumption of the role of establishing training, and supporting a non-partisan indigenous police immediately, with early hand-off of supervisory responsibilities to local/traditional Somali authorities.

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