Abstract

By 1990, Somalia had become a good example of what was becoming known as a “failed state” – a people without a government strong enough to govern the country or represent it in international organizations; a country whose poverty, disorganization, refugee flows, political instability, and random warfare had the potential to spread across borders and threaten the stability of other states and the peace of the region. At the end of the cold war there were several such failed states in Africa, any one of which could theoretically have been considered “a threat to international peace and security” and thus an appropriate object of concern of the UN Security Council and a potential candidate for international peacemaking or peacekeeping.

Key Words: Somalia, Failed State, Intervention, Peacekeeping Operations

Abstraksi


Kata Kunci : Somalia, Negara gagal, intervensi, operasi penjaga perdamaian

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1 Pengajar pada Jurusan Hubungan Internasional, Universitas Riau.
2 Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, “Saving Failed States,” Foreign Policy, no. 89 (Winter 1992) : 3-20
3 Defining an internal breakdown as a “threat to international peace and security” is how the Security Council claims jurisdiction over a situation such as that in Somalia. Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VII, article 39.
Introduction

The concept of the failed state came into prominence at about the same time as the crises in Somalia and Haiti and the arrival of the Clinton administration. In an influential article in Foreign Policy, Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner described the failed nation-state as a disturbing new phenomenon: an underdeveloped state characterized by “civil strife, government breakdown, and economic privation” and utterly incapable of sustaining itself a member of the international community. Refugee flows, political instability, and random warfare spread within these countries and across borders.

In a later Foreign Affairs article, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright identified four categories of countries: those that were “full members of international system; those in transition, seeking to participate more fully; those too weak, poor or mired in conflict to participate in meaningful way; and those that rejected the very rules and precepts upon which the system is based.” Somalia fell into the the third category. Its poverty, internal divisions, and chronic violence disrupted civil order so severely that it could barely survive, much less play a role in the international system.

To Somalia’s complicated problems, the American foreign policy establishment brought an optimistic perspective and very good intentions. The United States had no significant national interest, economic or strategic; in Somalia and no history of significant involvement. But in late 1991, American officials were moved by the Somalis’s urgent need for food, medicine, and order. Ultimately, the response to that need involved the United States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United States, and roughly twenty-nine other nations.

The History of Peacekeeping

The history of UN peacekeeping had been brief and limited in its scope. It had begun in June 1948, when 259 peacekeepers were deployed to oversee an armistice between Israel and the Arab states. Subsequently, Secretary- General Dag Hammarskjold drew up principles that shape peacekeeping efforts in the Suez Crisis in 1956 and long afterward. UN peacekeepers would:

1. oversee compliance with a cease-fire or armistice agreements that had already been negotiated.
2. patrol a border or serve as a buffer between parties to a conflict.
3. be deployed with a consent of the parties to the conflict.
4. be neutral.
5. operate under the supervision of the secretary-general.
6. be lightly armed and use force only sparingly.
7. not be drawn from the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Conventional peacekeeping under these principles was a useful tool for containing certain kinds of conflicts, though the mission did not solve problems and rarely, if ever ended. Nearly ever peacekeeping force dispatched in the postwar years is still serving to this day, fulfilling essentially the same function for which it was originally deployed. The forces deployed in 1948 to monitor the Arab-Israeli cease-fire were still there decades later; so were those deployed to the India-Pakistan border in 1949, to Cyprus in 1964, to the Golan

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5 Madeleine K. Albright,” The Testing of American Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs 77, no. 6 (November/December 1998) : 51
6 UN Department of Public Information, The Blue Helmets, A Review of United Nations’ Peacekeeping, 18 UN Doc. DPI/1065, Sales No. E.90I.18 (1990), Part 1, pp. 5-7
Damage Beyond Peacekeeping

Kurds had been assisted by the UN Secretary-General during the 1974-1978 period, when they were employed in UN peacekeeping missions. However, the concept and practice of peacekeeping was not well understood in the United States, though support for UN-based collective, nonviolent use of force had begun to grow in American foreign policy by the end of the Cold War.

Beyond The Hammerskjold Model

The Hammerskjold model assumed a conflict between states, a cease fire, or between the parties to the conflict, the consent of the warring parties to the peacekeeping mission, the neutrality of the peacekeepers, and minimum use of force by peacekeepers. The model postulated a multinational military action authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. But the Gulf War was assuredly not a peace operation; it was a war. The forces dispatched to enforce the resolution did not have Saddam’s consent. They did not rely on peacekeeping rules of engagement or on the principle of minimum force. Instead, U.S. leaders, applying the lessons of Vietnam and the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, operated on the principle of overwhelming force, congressional and popular support, decisive action, and victory as a goal.

Desert storm was carried out not under the command and control of the UN secretary-general, but under U.S. commanders collaborating with those of more than twenty countries, several of which were principal U.S. allies. It was a coalition of the willing under American leadership. Javier Perez de Cueller, the UN’s secretary-general at that time, interposed no obstacles; in fact, he helped as he was able. The Security Council passed the resolutions that authorized the war’s foundational policies. The secretariat assisted with coordination. The Gulf War was successful and efficient in achieving its limited objectives, though its slow start gave Saddam a prolonged opportunity to conflict damage on the people and resources of Kuwait.

Despite the dazzling demonstration of American military power and the professionalism of U.S. forces, the Gulf War displayed some of the characteristics of later, unsuccessful multinational operations. James Baker’s five-month-long effort to secure and preserve consensus and to elicit financial commitment came at very high price, especially considering that a consensus existed in the Security Council for condemning Saddam’s invasion from the day of the invasion, and that most of the money to wage the war was contributed by a mere five nations: The United States, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, France and Great Britain.

Although as a military operation Desert Storm had been a great success, it quickly became clear that the threat posed by Saddam to the region or to Iraq’s minorities had not been eliminated. By mid-March through early April 1991, Saddam’s forces drove fleeing Kurds from their homes toward the borders of Iran and Turkey, creating great human misery and threatening the always-tense relations in the area.

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7 UN Department of Public Information, *The Blue Helmets, A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping*, 18 UN Doc. DPI/1065, Sales No. E.90I.18 (1990), Part 1, pp. 5-7
The New Peacekeeping

Soon after the Gulf war ended, the United Nations choose a new secretary-general, the French-educated Egyptian Copt Boutros Boutros Ghali (with George Bush providing the necessary U.S. vote); the Americans choose a new American president, William Jefferson Clinton; and there followed a veritable explosion of UN activities involving the use of force. For the new-secretary-general and many governments, UN peacekeeping became the method of choice for dealing with conflict. The number, variety, and scope of peacekeeping operations grew an expanded. These operations involved the United States and others in unprecedented interventions in the internal affairs of member states, often undertaken in haste, and under new doctrines whose implications had barely been explored.

Some peacekeeping operations after the end of the cold war fit the conventional Hammerskjold model, but most did not. "Peacekeeping" operations were undertaken in conflicts within states as well as between them, in situations where there was no armistice or cease-fire, and in those in which there was only shaky consent to the mission on behalf of the conflicting parties. Some operations involved new activities; monitoring human rights practices, observing or overseeing elections, and repatriating refugees. So diverse have the concept and practices of peacekeeping become that the term may refer to any activity—diplomatic, military, humanitarian, political, or economic—whose purpose is to contribute to the peace, security, and well being of a group or people, and which is carried out by a multinational force under UN auspices.

The expansion of peacekeeping operations took place rapidly and haphazardly, in response to pressing, often unanticipated, problems and new, often unexamined, ideas about multinational action. Delivering humanitarian assittance to civilian populations of Kurds, Shiites, Somalis, Croatians, and Bosnian caught in bitter conflicts within or among nations became a principal occupation of UN peacekeepers. The instabilities of the post-cold war period, the Clinton administration enthusiasm for multinational activities and expansive bureaucratic appetite and elastic doctrine of peacekeeping encouraged a dramatic expansion of UN jurisdiction based on new views about the function appropriate to states, regional organizations, and the UN.

Somalia and U.S. Intervention

The independent state of Somalia was born in 1960 out of the remnants of colonial empires and indigenous clans. Somalia had the characteristics of many new African countries: a weak borders, a weak sense of national identity, a weak central government, and strong subnational clans. A decade of attempts at democratic self-governmeent ended in 1969 with a coup that brought General Siad Barre to power. Barre has governed for twenty years as a typical African strong man, but he had found it more and more difficult to maintain control of the country. At the end of the 1980s, disorder intensified and violence and repression spread. In May 1990, Barre arrested his leading opponents, and his personal guards fired into a crowd at a soccer match, killing sixty five people. He promised elections the following February, but before they could be held, rebel forces drove his

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8 Joel S. Migdal described the characteristics of such “states” in his book Strong Societies and Weak States: State Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988). Migdal’s model and description resemble the pattern of political development offered in Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics, a Development Approach (Boston: Little Brown, 1966), and other studies in that series. However, Migdal focused sharply on state/society boundaries, interactions, and development. In fact, such states were less “failed” than weak.
government from power. The United Somali Congress named Ali Mahdi Mohammed as interim president, while another group named Umar Arteh Ghalib as interim prime minister. Both were rejected by Mohammed Farah Aideed, the leader of a third faction. Fighting broke out among the factions, refugees multiplied, and famine developed. The International Red Cross was reporting a widespread danger of starvation in Somalia.

In March 1992, 250,000 to 300,000 Somalis had died of hunger and malnutrition. Most of the nation’s livestock had been lost, and half a million Somalis had taken refugee in neighboring countries mainly Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. Women and children were dying at the rate of roughly three thousand a day, and four and a half million people were in urgent need of food. The ICRC estimated that two million people were at risk of death from starvation. But the rivalry between Aideed and Ali Mahdi intensified, and the cease-fire did not hold. Somalia is today a country without central government, regional, or local administration and without services: no electricity, no communication, no transport, no school, no health services.

In the South, clan warfare and starvation were widespread, agricultural cycles were disrupted, and basic services had been devastated by bombardment and war. In the north, major cities were without electricity or running water, and violence was ubiquitous. The tools and equipment necessary to live were missing, broken, disrupted. Displaced people needed food, medical assistance, and security. UN personnel, NGOs, journalists, and others on the ground documented the breakdown of authority and order and the resulting anarchy, in which gangs engaged in extortion, profiteering, and intimidation. Faction leaders were unable to control armed youth and fighters. Chaos reigned.

On April 24, 1992, acting under Security Council Resolution 751, the UN launched an emergency humanitarian assistance program dubbed the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I), to expedite the delivery food and deploy fifty unarmed military observers to monitor the cease-fire. But this first effort fell far short of the mark; lawlessness and disorder only intensified through the month of May, making it nearly impossible for help to reach the Somalis. In early July, Aideed said he would permit the UN’s fifty unarmed observers to monitor cease-fire and speed the delivery of food. But UN flights to Mogadishu were suspended that month, and Boutros-Ghali announced plans to send five hundred UN military personnel instead. Boutros-Ghali did show a marked preference for a large multinational military operation, and he was eager to experiment with a new approaches to the problems of failed states of Africa. In mid August, President Bush announced that he was sending unarmed aircraft loaded with food to Somalia, and he followed up a month later with four U.S. ships. Eventually, Aideed agreed to allow the deployment of the additional troops to protect food supplies and to permit deliveries of foo, but the promise was kept only briefly.

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Peacekeeping in Bush’s mandate

The most pressing problem in Somalia was widespread hunger—a terrible humanitarian problem, but one that did not threaten to ignite an international conflict. Yet Boutros-Ghali insisted that the real problem in Somalia was the nation’s economic and political underdevelopment, and the violence, which at least a theoretical threat to the region. He cited the emergency theory of failed states and links among famine, break down of internal order, and international peace and security to justify the use of force.

In late November 1992, just two months before he left office, Bush decided to get involved in Somalia on a large scale. After Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger assured the President that the Somalia operation was ‘double’ Bush resolved to move, and Eagleburger informally assured the UN that the United States was ready to take the lead in organizing and ensuring the delivery of food to Somalia. The result was the U.S. led “peacekeeping” mission that began as “Operation Restore Hope” and became the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), which would take the United Stats and the UN alike into uncharted waters.

There were crucial differences in how the Bush and Clinton operations in Somalia were conceived and commanded. President Bush limited the mission to emergency humanitarian relief and steadfastly refused a larger military role in internal matters. He did not put U.S. forces into a conflict inadequately armed, commanded, and reinforced; in all the operations carried out under his presidency, U.S. forces were adequately trained and armed, and their numbers were sufficient. In his December 4 address, he said, “To the people of Somalis......We come to your country for one reason only: to enable the starving to be fed.” Bush announced that the United States would lead an international coalition, providing it included clear Chapter VII authorization enabling U.S. forces to defend themselves effectively, and with the understanding that the UN would take over as soon as possible.

He emphasized the limits of the undertaking, and its humanitarian purposes: *Our mission has a limited objective: to open the supply routes, to get the food moving, and to prepare the way for a UN peacekeeping force to keep it moving. This operation is not open-ended. We will not stay one day longer than is absolutely necessary.* Bush had made it clear that he had always envisioned Operation Restore Hope as a brief operation with a clear goal: the rapid delivery of food to starving Somalis. His intention was to make the port, the capital, and the surrounding areas safe enough to deliver food. He was not willing to take on the more complicated and dangerous tasks of disarming the clans, undertaking political reconciliation, and creating a civil administration. George Bush’s mission to deliver food and medicine to a starving Somalia, was successful.

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16 “The Somalia intervention was a unique geopolitical event......In sum, Bush’s intervention in Somalia contained the seeds of a new doctrine: that Americans would fight for human and moral values, in contrast to the cold war, when it was willing to fight only for its strategic interests.” In William G. Hyland, *Clinton’s World* (Wetsport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 54
Peacekeeping in Clinton’s mandate

After Bush’s departure from office, Bill Clinton quickly transformed the operation in Somalia from modest, conventional peacekeeping to a more expansive nation-building role. Clinton’s team had arrived in office with high hopes for peacekeeping. Yet soon after the inauguration the Clinton administration joined an accelerating worldwide trend toward using force more frequently in the form of multinational operations under UN auspices and command. Clinton upgraded U.S. troops commitments to a UN peacekeeping force in Somalia and promised forces to help implement any peace agreement achieved in Somalia. His policies quickly engaged the United States in more new conflicts than ever before.

Clinton was euphoric about the operation in Somalia. For the principals of the administration, peacekeeping provided a new solution to an old problem and a fig leaf for a president whose campaign had included charges of draft dodging.17 The Clinton team had arrived in office with a clear commitment to support the rapid expansion of multinational UN sponsored peacekeeping operations around the world, to upgrade the size and professionalism of the UN headquarters staff, and to provide troops for operations carried out under UN command and UN rules of engagement.

The Clinton administration would pursue a policy of global engagement and would not shrink from the use of force. “There is a growing realization” Morton Halperin and David Scheffer wrote in their influential book Self Determination in The New World Order, “That collective use of military force can be legitimate means to achieve legitimate ends”.18 UN peacekeeping was seen as the centerpiece of a sweeping change in the theory and practice of national security. The concept of “peacekeeping” was stretched to include the management of all phases of conflict- from diplomacy to war- carried out by multinational forces under UN command.

Halperin who became a Pentagon adviser in Clinton regime described the concept in a memo to Secretary of Defense Les Aspin: Peacekeeping may become the key to preventing virulent conflicts, from causing regional explosions, destroying hopes for democracy, and creating grave humanitarian crises...........The President is serious about exploiting new opportunities to bolster international peacekeeping efforts and organizations....................You should help Americans understand what is, in fact, a revolutionary policy, and what you are doing at DOD to make it happen.19 U.S. forces would be trained to participated in international peacekeeping without earmarking any particular units for this function. The U.S. military would be introduced to the new thinking and new practices, including the idea of serving as requested by the Security Council and under non- American commanders. The UN’s military capabilities would be reinforced by the United States, which would contribute intelligence, planning, communications, and other kinds of help.

Based on the new concept of peacekeeping, on July 1, 1993, Clinton wrote a letter to Senator John Warner, explained the planned command and control structure:

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17 In a speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, Clinton said, “We will stand up for our interests, but we will share burdens, where possible, through multilateral efforts to secure the peace, such as NATO, and a new voluntary UN rapid deployment force. In Bosnia, Somalia, Cambodia, and other torn areas of the world, multilateral action holds promise as never before, and the UN deserves full and appropriate contributions from all major powers”. In “The 1992 Campaign; Excerpts from Clinton’s Speech on Foreign Policy Leadership,” New York Times, August 4, 1994.
19 Ibid.
At the Height of the U.S. led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) operations, just over twenty-five thousand U.S. Armed Forces personnel were deployed to Somalia. Consistent with U.S. Policy objectives, the current smaller U.S. contribution of approximately forty-four hundred personnel reflects the increased participation by other UN Member States. The United States is participating in the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) with two basic types of forces: support forces for logistic purposes and a quick reaction force (QRF) of combat troops.²⁰

At its peak, UNITAF (the original force commanded by the United States, consisting mainly of Americans) had just over 25,000 troops distributed over 40 percent of Somalia.²¹

By August 17, 1993- The secretary general reported that UNOSOM II force included 20,207 troops from twenty-seven countries. The Primary contributors were Pakistan (4,973), The United States (2,703), Italy (2,538), Morocco (1,341), France (1,130), India (5,000). The U.S. Also contributed 1,167 troops for the Quick Reaction Force (QRF)-though these forces would prove neither well armed nor integrated.²²

Meanwhile the situation in Somalia had become more dangerous. Warfare among the clans had intensified, and attacks on UN troops had multiplied. The Changes in the composition of UN forces and in the command structure affected the relationship among Somali combatants, the UN, and various national groups.

In Somalia case, The Clinton Team and the UN secretary general seem to have underestimated the dangers of peacekeeping, assuming that peacekeepers would seldom face armed conflict or confront serious adversaries. This benign conception of the new peacekeeping explains why Clinton’s Department of Defense Leadership was casual about denying requests for additional armor in Somalia, and about intelligence and reinforcements. The President and his top advisers had not seriously considered the dangers involved in committing men to conflict under Chapter VII of the UN charter, under UN command, or under Boutros-Ghali’s rules of engagement. The Clinton administration failed to see the dangers of sending U.S. Forces into a war zone under an ambiguous command, without reinforcements, without adequate intelligence or weapons, and under peacekeeping rules of engagement (which are far more constraining than is generally understood).

**Peacekeeping in Boutros-Ghali’s mandate**

Somalia would be the first test of this new model of peacekeeping. Previously, peacekeeping operations had taken place under Chapter VI, which did not authorize the use of force. Security Council resolutions 688, which classified human rights within Iraq as a threat to international security, and 775, the resolution of Somalia, both authorized the use of force in interventions in the internal affairs of nations. Boutros-Ghali proposed to give the Secretariat jurisdiction over the conflict in Somalia, which required some unprecedented concept-stretching to cover intervention in internal affairs of a member state. The decision by the Security Council that “the magnitude of the human tragedy” constituted a threat to international peace and security (thus justifying the use of force under Chapter VII) was also new, though it had some precedent in Resolution 688.²³

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²⁰ Letter from President Clinton to Congressional Leaders, July 1, 1993.
²¹ Ibid
²³ The Reasoning resembled that in the somewhat similar decision that was made concerning Iraq’s repression of Kurds and Shiites after the Gulf War (Res., 688), where massive human rights violations
The new administration in Washington endorsed Security Council Resolution 814, which gave Boutros-Ghali most of what he wanted regarding the mission in Somalia. The Resolution, passed on March 26, 1993, substantially altered the UN mandate in Somalia, now called UNOSOM II. It gave UN forces expanded military goals including disarmament of the country. It vested command and control in the UN, and called for the “Secretary-General, through his Special Representative, to direct the Force Commander of UNOSOM II to assume responsibility for the consolidation, expansion, and maintenance of a secure environment throughout Somalia.”

Nation building became a primary goal, including the reestablishment of national and regional institutions and civil administration; the reestablishment of a Somali police force; and the removal of land mines.

At the time, Kofi Annan of Ghana held the top peacekeeping job at the Secretariat. Annan said,” This will be the first time the United Nations has had command and control of an enforcement action under Chapter VII”. It was also the UN’s first experience in nation building.

In An Agenda for Peace and a later essay, “Empowering the United Nations,” Boutros-Ghali made a concerted effort to expand the jurisdiction of the secretary general to include the resolution of disputes before they escalated into conflict. Under the rubric of preventive diplomacy, he grouped together the functions of peacemaking (as defined in Chapter VI); peacekeeping by military forces; peace-building that seeks to prevent disputes; preventive deployment for a wide range of purposes, including facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance; peace enforcement; and broader functions of fact finding, intelligence, and analysis. More heavily armed missions to respond to aggression would be available on call, under the command of the secretary general. Boutros-Ghali proposed a general shifting of authority, including financial authority, from the regional organizations to the secretary general, in spite of the Charter’s specific encouragement of regional arrangements to solve local disputes.

He also proposed offering “peacekeeping services” for the settlement of longstanding conflicts in regions including Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique, as well as the ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

**Conclusion**

It was clear from the beginning that peacekeepers’ mission in Somalia would be very different from any which the United States or its military had previously participated. Different from Operation Desert Storm, from UN police actions, and from typical peacekeeping, in which the peacekeepers work with separate parties who have signed a cease-fire. In Somalia, nothing was so clear. Here the problem was not international

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by the government of Iraq were said to constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

24 UN Security Council Resolution 814, paragraphs 7 and 14

25 Ibid., paragraph 14, 4(a)-(g). In her statement on the vote, Albright said, “Yet, we are certain of this: each element of the program for Somalia is necessary to its overall success and that country’s recuperation. Though his Special Representative the Secretary General must oversee the continued cease fire, disarmament, and maintenance security. . . ” Statement by Ambassador Madeleine K. Albright, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, in the Security Council, in explanation of the vote on the situation in Somalia, “USUN press release 37-(93), March 26, 1993.


28 Boutros Ghali, An Agenda for Peace, 13-38, 41-45.
aggression but the breakdown of internal order and authority, aggravated by the presence of several amed factions and a lack of food. The original goal of the United States was to save the Somalis from starvation by delivering food. But if the objective was simple, achieving it was not. The relief effort was hampered by war and anarchy, by the need to protect relief workers, by the lack of government in Somalia, and by Boutros Ghali’s desire to limit U.S. independence in the use of force and establish a central role for himself in this and other such international operations.

At first, the involvement of U.S. took the form of a judicious, humanitarian peacekeeping mission, begun during the administration of George H.W. Bush, which avoided the temptation to overreach. During the Clinton administration, however, the Somalia mission took a more ambitious-and arguably irresponsible-direction, toward what become known as “assertive multilateralism”. It was in Somalia that the United States first ventured onto the slippery slope between peacekeeping and nation building through the use of force, and learned a lesson about relying on ineffecient and insufficient UN forces to do dirty work that not equipped or assigned to.

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