

Part II

Operation Restore Hope



Chapter 2

The Widening Mission

Historic Decision to Intervene

The 1992 Thanksgiving holiday brought the usual round of family visiting and celebration to the American people. Yet, perhaps especially at this time, many in the United States reflected upon the poignant differences between their fortune and the plight of the Somali people. In Washington, D.C., the holidays were not to be a time of relaxation or conviviality for many in the government. President George H. W. Bush was conferring with advisers in the State Department and the Department of Defense about what could be done to alleviate the suffering in Somalia. As one official put it, “the number of deaths was going up, and the number of people we were reaching was going down.”³¹

The day before Thanksgiving, the President’s advisers provided him with three military options. The first was a simple reinforcement of 3,500 troops to the 500 Pakistanis already in Mogadishu as United Nations peacekeepers. The second was to provide both air and naval support to a United Nations force that would intervene in Somalia. The third option, and the one the President quickly chose, was for the United States to send in a division-sized unit under United Nations auspices.³²

On 25 November, President Bush announced to the United Nations that the United States was prepared to provide military forces to assist with the delivery of food and other supplies. The offer of military assistance at this point was of a “general nature,” one that required a specific request from the U.N. Security Council.³³ Without waiting for the Security Council to act, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent an alert order to the commander in chief of U.S. Central Command, Marine General Joseph P. Hoar. Within a week, the Joint Chiefs provided a formal planning order to Central Command, directing General Hoar to prepare a detailed operations plan.³⁴

The United Nations was not long in responding to the American offer. On 29 November, the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stated: “any forceful action should

preferably be under U.N. command, but if that was not feasible, a Council-authorized operation undertaken by Member States was to be considered.”³⁵ On 3 December, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 794, authorizing military intervention in Somalia. A multinational force led by the United States was allowed to use all necessary force to accomplish its humanitarian mission.³⁶ It was the first time in history the United Nations had elected to intervene in the internal affairs of a country without having received a request to do so from the country’s government. Of course, Somalia was unique



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Gen Joseph P. Hoar, the Marine Corps’ deputy for operations during the Gulf War, and before that, Gen Norman Schwartzkopf’s chief of staff at Central Command, in August 1991 assumed the post of Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command, the unified command that has planning and operational responsibilities for 19 countries of the Middle East, South Asia, and the Horn of Africa.

in that there was no legitimate government and the situation demanded swift action.

The agreement allowing the United States to lead the force satisfied one of the few demands placed by President Bush upon the offer of troops. The American government did concede the United Nations should have a supervisory role. However, it was anticipated the United Nations would send in a peacekeeping force to replace the U.S.-led force as soon as practical.³⁷ In these early days, there was even some discussion the turnover could take place as early as 20 January 1993, Inauguration Day.³⁸

Initial Planning

While political issues were being discussed, the military planning was already in progress. As early as 22 November 1992, Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston, commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) at Camp Pendleton, California, had received indications from Central Command he might have to form a joint task force.³⁹ On 27 November, by an oral order, General Hoar designated I MEF as the headquarters of Joint Task Force Somalia.⁴⁰



DoD Photo

LtGen Robert B. Johnston, a veteran of Vietnam, Lebanon, and the Gulf War during which he served as chief of staff of Central Command, commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force, the unit designated as the headquarters for the joint task force as it had trained for this type of operation.

Fortunately, I MEF did not have to start entirely from scratch in developing such a headquarters. During a recent exercise, CatEx 92-3, the expeditionary force had already organized and run the headquarters for a joint task force. In the exercise, the expeditionary force was tasked with acting as a "Humanitarian/Peacekeeping Joint Task Force ... simulating bare base conditions in a nonpermissive environment."⁴¹ While it was admittedly difficult to describe all the requirements of such an organization during an exercise, the work helped validate the concept and defined some of the needs of such a force.⁴²

The task force had an exceptionally capable and qualified commanding general in Lieutenant General Johnston. Distinguished and inspiring in appearance, he was also characterized by clarity of perception and speech rarely found in other individuals, regardless of rank. Trim and in excellent physical condition, he was able to meet the harsh demands of the equatorial desert and set a high standard for his command. These characteristics would serve both him and the joint task force well in the months ahead as he threaded his way through numerous political, humanitarian, and operational considerations. But for the initial planning stages, the general's greatest strength may have been his own experience as a Marine officer. He had led a battalion to Lebanon 10 years earlier and knew what it meant to be a peacekeeper in a land in the midst of civil war. More recently, he was on the staff of Central Command during the war in the Persian Gulf. He had served in Saudi Arabia as the Central Command Chief of Staff. Many of the principles for organizing a joint and combined staff, which he had seen used so successfully in the Persian Gulf conflict, would help him in creating his own joint task force.

First Steps

General Johnston had to first decide on the manner of organizing his new force. Since this was to be a joint task force, he would need to effectively integrate personnel and units from the other Armed Services. He had two choices by which he could accomplish this: organize along functional lines, as with a Marine air-ground task force, a concept familiar to all Marines; or organize the force as components, as had been done with the American forces during Desert Storm. General Johnston recognized the functional organization would require an integration of

forces at levels other than the task force headquarters. For instance, the ground forces of the Marine Corps and Army would have to be placed into a single ground combat element; the air assets of the Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Force into a single air combat element, and so on. But he saw no need for a single commander for such elements, and he knew each service component could be tasked to perform discrete missions. Besides, the experience of Desert Storm had proven it was reasonable to operate with such components, so this was the manner in which Joint Task Force Somalia would be organized.⁴³

In building the headquarters staff, General Johnston already had the I MEF staff to serve as a nucleus. Of course, these Marines had already served and worked together, and this familiarity would be an added strength for the newly forming staff. As General Hoar later wrote: "designating a component or element headquarters as the foundation of the mission ... allowed an established service staff to transition quickly to a [joint task force] with little need for start-up time."⁴⁴ However, the I MEF staff itself was not large enough for the greater responsibilities that acting as a joint task force would entail. It would require augmentation by other Marines and personnel from the other Services. For example, the need to expand the intelligence and operations sections was immediately recognized; although the mission would be essentially humanitarian, the task force would have to be prepared for an armed threat.

The Service components at Central Command, which would be providing the military units for the force, also selected individuals who would join the joint task force headquarters. General Johnston later said: "They sent their best players. ... I got key people."⁴⁵

By late November, military personnel across the nation were receiving orders to join the joint task force, or were preparing themselves for the possibility. At Fort Hood, Texas, Colonel Sam E. Hatton, USA, was serving as the deputy commander of the 13th Corps Support Command. On 1 December 1992, he received orders to proceed as quickly as possible to Camp Pendleton, California, for assignment as the task force logistics officer. He immediately handed over his responsibilities and closed out remaining tasks. He also placed some fast telephone calls to associates and acquaintances, many of which were now general officers and key personnel at the



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BGen Anthony C. Zinni, a veteran of Vietnam and several humanitarian operations, provided assistance and was selected to serve as chief of operations for the joint task force.

Department of the Army, to gauge the situation in Somalia. Proceeding to Camp Pendleton, Colonel Hatton's first task was to organize his own section. Building on I MEF's logistics section, he checked the existing table of organization and the talent available to ensure "the right people were in the right jobs."⁴⁶

Similarly, Colonel William M. Handley, Jr., USA, was serving at Headquarters, United States Army Forces Command, at Fort Stewart, Georgia, when he received a call notifying him that he had been selected to head the joint task force intelligence section. He quickly discussed the situation with the intelligence staff and received a briefing from the Third Army. After arriving at Camp Pendleton, he met with Colonel Michael V. Brock, the I MEF intelligence officer. Checking the organization of the section, he saw little to

change. After being apprised of the task force's mission, he realized one of his first requirements would be the production of area studies, which he had but a short time to prepare. In the meantime, I MEF intelligence section's organization was expanded with members from the other Services and augmented with personnel from national intelligence assets.⁴⁷

One other important member of the growing staff was Marine Brigadier General Anthony C. Zinni. His background and experience suited him for a responsible position within the joint task force staff; in recent years, General Zinni had served as operations officer for the United States European Command. In 1991, he was the Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander for Operation Provide Comfort, the Kurdish relief operation at the end of the Persian Gulf War. Shortly afterward, he served as the military coordinator for Operation Provide Hope in the Soviet Union. Now, in late 1992, he was the deputy commanding general of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Quantico, Virginia. He quickly volunteered to provide assistance to the joint task force. After reporting to both the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Carl E. Mundy, Jr., and Lieutenant General Johnston, he was selected to head the operations section. General Zinni joined the I MEF staff at Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida, where he received briefs on the situation in Somalia. From there he left for Camp Pendleton.⁴⁸

The Surgeon General of the Navy personally chose the force surgeon, Captain Michael L. Cowan, USN. Captain Cowan was the surgeon with Naval Surface Forces, Pacific, when he was told of his selection on 6 December. By the 9th, he reached Camp Pendleton, where he began to work on planning with a staff that "had just met." His first priority was setting the medical evacuation plan, which included establishing alternate routes to move the wounded out of the country.⁴⁹

The process continued until the entire staff of the MEF headquarters was transformed into the headquarters of a joint task force. Individuals of all ranks, be they officer or enlisted, who had any of the required knowledge or expertise, were selected from the various Services by the component commanders at Central Command. They were quickly integrated into the appropriate staff sections. Within a short time the task force headquarters staff had developed a decidedly purple



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A port bow view of the amphibious assault ship Tripoli (LPH 10) underway. The second ship to be named after the battle of Tripoli in 1804, she was a veteran of the Gulf War during which she was damaged by an Iraqi contact mine.

complexion.* Marines accounted only for 57 percent of the total.

Organizing Tasks

Even as the staff was coming together, the task organization of the force itself had to be configured. Since I MEF was providing the cornerstone of the task force headquarters, it would only be natural that the MEF subordinate elements (1st Marine Division; 3d Marine Aircraft Wing; 1st Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Intelligence Group; and 1st Force Service Support Group) should be heavily involved in the operation. However, there also were sound operational reasons for selecting the Marines for a large role in the mission. The Marine Corps provided its own special capabilities, not the least of which was its amphibious expertise. As in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, initial supplies and heavy equipment for Restore Hope would have to

arrive by ship. The joint task force could take advantage of the support provided by one of the Maritime Prepositioning Force squadrons. Also, one of the MEF's organic units, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), already was embarked and in the Western Pacific and could quickly arrive in the area of operations.⁵⁰

Commanded by Colonel Gregory S. Newbold, the 15th MEU had completed its special operations training, and was therefore officially a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), or MEU (SOC). An expeditionary unit is one of the smallest of the Marine air-ground task forces. Nonetheless, the 15th MEU carried enough personnel and equipment to make it a formidable force in most situations. The ground combat element was formed around 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, reinforced by a light armored infantry platoon, a combat engineer platoon, a platoon of amphibious assault vehicles, and a battery of artillery in direct support. The air combat element was Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (Composite) 164, nicknamed the "Knightriders." The squadron contained a formidable array of helicopters: Boeing CH-46E Sea Knights, Sikorsky CH-53E Sea Stallions, Bell AH-1W Super Cobras, and Bell UH-1N Iroquois "Hueys." The combat service support element was MEU Service Support Group 15.⁵¹

* After the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, with its requirements for the Services to work more closely together and its emphasis on joint operations, the term "purple" was unofficially adopted to signify the increasing cooperation of the Service components. The color denoted a separation from the roles of the individual Services by implying a blending of their traditional colors.



USS *Tripoli* WestPac Cruise, 1993-1994

Capt John W. Peterson, USN, commander of Amphibious Squadron 3, was a graduate of Dartmouth College and a naval aviator who had accumulated more than 4,000 hours in three generations of carrier-based attack aircraft.

The MEU was embarked on the three ships that comprised Amphibious Squadron 3, commanded by Captain John W. Peterson, USN. These ships were the USS *Tripoli* (LPH 10), USS *Juneau* (LPD 10), and the USS *Rushmore* (LSD 47). To provide more equipment and sustainability to the MEU, one of the ships of Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 3, the MV *1st Lt Jack Lummus* (T-AK 3011), was assigned to the amphibious squadron. The MEU and the amphibious squadron made up the *Tripoli* Amphibious Task Unit, which already was anticipating service in Somalia. In September, the Marines of the 11th MEU (SOC) had assisted the United Nations by providing security to the 500 soldiers of the Pakistani Army's 7th Battalion, Frontier Service Regiment. This regiment established the United Nations Organization Somalia (UNOSOM) in Mogadishu. The 11th MEU also provided security for United States Air Force personnel who flew the Pakistanis into Mogadishu International Airport. In November, it had appeared 11th MEU's successor, 15th MEU, might have to provide security for the arrival of UNOSOM reinforcements.⁵²

With the decision for a United States-led force, it made sense the *Tripoli* Amphibious Task Unit with the 15th MEU (SOC), already in the Pacific, would be a part of the plan. They would also be the first of the joint task force's components in place.

The structure of the Marine forces assigned to the operation had to be clearly defined. With Lieutenant General Johnston, the commanding general of I MEF, now designated as the commanding general of the joint task force, similar command changes would occur in I MEF's subordinate units. At first, it appeared General Johnston would act as both the commanding general of the joint task force and the commanding general of the Marine component, Marine Forces Somalia. But it was soon decided this component should be formed around the 1st Marine Division, commanded by Major General Charles E. Wilhelm. This in turn redefined General Wilhelm's relationships to the other subordinate units. The elements of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing and the 1st Force Service Support Group assigned to Marine Forces Somalia would now be subordinate to General Wilhelm in his role as the component commander. In effect, Marine Forces Somalia would work on the higher operational level of a Marine air-ground task force, with its own ground, air, and combat service support elements.⁵³ * This arrangement was unusual for a Marine division staff, but it did have the advantage of placing Marine Forces Somalia on a similar basis with Army Forces Somalia.

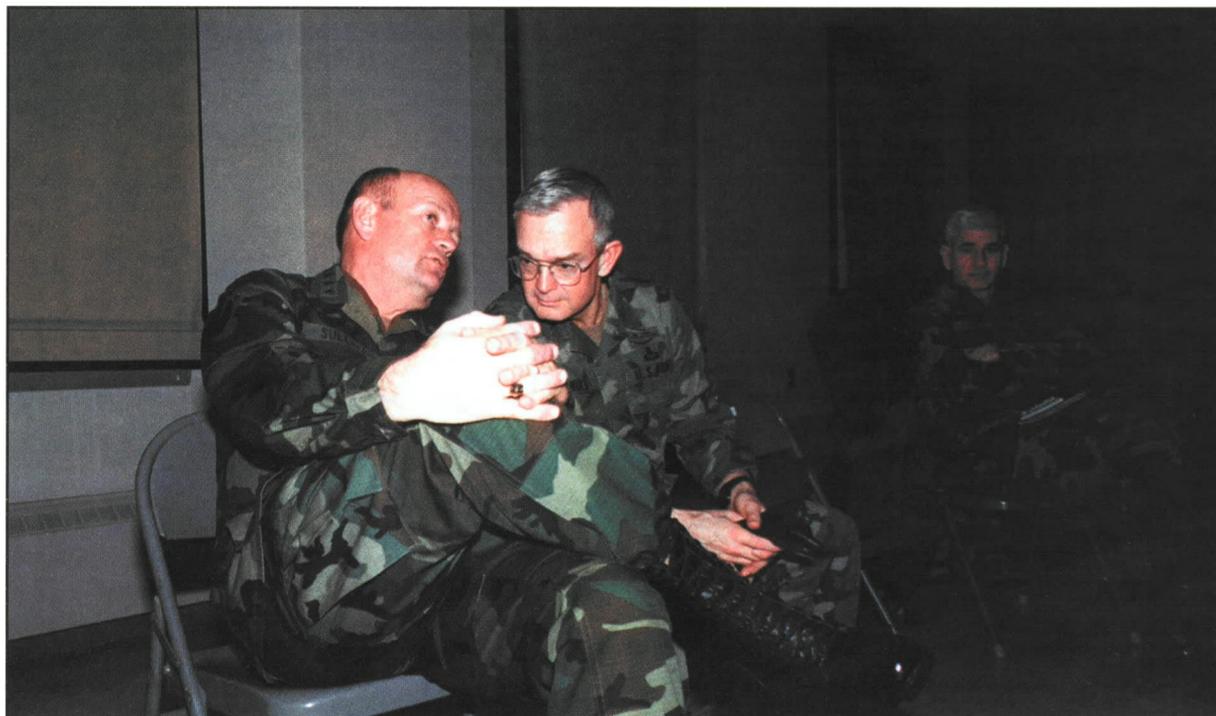
The unit chosen by Third Army's XVIII Airborne Corps to be the Army's component was

* At its height, Marine Forces Somalia consisted of 7th Marines (-) Reinforced, composed of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, 3d Battalion 11th Marines, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, and 3d Amphibious Assault Battalion; Marine Aircraft Group 16, composed of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 (HMLA-369), Marine Aerial Refueling Squadron 352 (VMGR-352), Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 (HMH-363), a detachment from HMH-466, Marine Wing Support Squadron 372 (MWSS-372), and a detachment from Marine Aircraft Group 38 (MAG-38); the 1st Force Service Support Group (Forward), composed of Combat Service Support Group 1 and Brigade Service Support Group 7; the 30th Naval Construction Regiment, composed of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40; and the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (-). At times, Marine Forces Somalia also had operational control of 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and some of the coalition forces.

the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), based at Fort Drum, New York. The division's commanding general, Major General Steven L. Arnold, USA, knew Lieutenant General Johnston from when he had served as the United States Army Central Command's operations officer during Desert Storm. On the operational side, the division had recent experience in humanitarian relief undertakings. Just a few months prior, in August 1992, the division had been sent to Florida to assist with the disaster caused by Hurricane Andrew. Also, the division was light infantry, and therefore more strategically deployable than heavier, armored units in the Army. This meant the division was able to rapidly "go from deployment to employment."⁵⁴ Their light equipment also made this division a good match to the Marine forces. As Brigadier General Zinni later said, they would complement the Marines, forming "an agile, flexible force."⁵⁵ Although designated light, such a division carries considerable firepower and capability. The division's normal table of distribution and allowances included attack and transport helicopters, artillery, and hardened high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (humvees) mounting antitank missiles, machine guns, or automatic grenade launchers.

Naval Forces Somalia was quickly mustered from task forces in the Central Command area of operations, or which could be ordered to the area. The Ranger carrier battle group consisted of the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger* (CV 61), the aircraft carrier USS *Valley Forge* (CG 50), and the destroyer USS *Kincaid* (DD 965). There also was the *Tripoli* Amphibious Task Unit, which carried the 15th MEU (SOC). The ships of Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 2, consisting of the MV *1st Lt Alex Bonnyman* (T-AK 3003), the MV *Pvt Franklin J. Phillips* (T-AK 3004), and the MV *PFC James Anderson Jr.* (T-AK 3002) would join these forces. Throughout the operation, other squadrons, groups and ships of the navies of the United States and coalition partners would move into the area of operations and become a part of Naval Forces Somalia. The position of Commander, Naval Forces Somalia was initially held by Rear Admiral William J. Hancock, USN, but would change hands five times during the operation.

The Air Force's contribution to the joint task force was highly important, but required fewer personnel than the other Services. Air transport would be of tremendous significance to the operation. While ships would carry the greatest por-



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MajGen Steven L. Arnold, USA, right, commander of the 10th Mountain Division, discusses the Somalia deployment of the division with U.S. Army Chief of Staff, Gen Gordon R. Sullivan, at Fort Drum, New York.



JCCC DD-SD-00-00662

BGen Thomas R. Mikolajcik, USAF, a squadron and wing commander with more than 4,000 flying hours, was chosen to command the Air Force component of the joint task force.

tion of the heavy equipment, most of the personnel and much of the lighter cargo would be flown directly into the theater. Control of all these movements was critical, and so Brigadier General Thomas R. Mikolajcik, USAF, was chosen as the commanding general of Air Force Forces Somalia. General Mikolajcik's background and experience suited him for the mission. His assignment at the time was as the commanding general of the 437th Airlift Wing, based at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina. This unit's mission was the loading and airdrop delivery of supplies, equipment, and troops. It was tasked to support special and humanitarian relief operations worldwide. Receiving a call on 26 November to prepare for deployment, General Mikolajcik quickly put together an initial team of 70 airmen to cover inter- and intra-theater air movements. On the 29th he was told to proceed to Camp Pendleton, to which he traveled after a quick stop at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois for briefings. After discussing mobility operations

with the operations and logistics sections of the U.S. Transportation Command, he arrived at the joint task force headquarters on 1 December and was designated as the commander of Air Force Forces Somalia and the mobility commander. Although there would be only 500 Air Force personnel eventually working within the theater itself, there would be literally thousands aiding the operation at numerous stations along the air bridge.⁵⁶

The smallest of all the components would be the Special Operations Forces. This component was initially under the command of Colonel Thomas D. Smith, USA. In late November, he was the director of operations for Central Command's Special Operations Command, where he had already received briefings on Somalia. He joined the joint task force by 4 December, when General Johnston briefed his concept of operations to all component commanders. As planning progressed, coalition warfare teams were formed to resolve any operational problems between the various Services and coalition countries. Teams of six men were established to coordinate close air support and medical evacuations, coordinate operational boundaries, and to train some of the allies in American operational techniques. Such teams were requested by the joint task force for various coalition forces, and eventually General Johnston approved eight teams; one each for the forces from Pakistan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, France, Botswana, Canada, and Italy. The teams were sent to link up with these allied forces as they deployed.⁵⁷

Support Command

There was only one exception to the component structure of the joint task force, but it was a very important exception. This special organization was Support Command for the joint task force, which was formed as a functional element rather than as a separate Service organization. General Johnston recognized that logistics for this operation would pose a critical challenge. Since literally everything would come in from outside the theater, the general had to create a robust logistics element to provide for this important function. In the initial planning, it was recognized that Marine Forces Somalia, which would arrive before the Army Forces Somalia, would have to sustain the force with the assets of 1st Force Service Support Group and the supplies and

equipment from the maritime prepositioning force ships.* The Army Forces Somalia, as they arrived, would carry their own logistics and support elements with them, and originally it was expected that Army Forces Somalia would assume the theater logistics role, with a specially task-organized unit. However, Central Command also was working on the logistics issue, and their planners had begun to build what would become Support Command of the task force.⁵⁸ At Fort Hood, Texas, the 13th Corps Support Command (CosCom) had already seen its deputy commander selected to head up the logistics section for the joint task force. When the 10th Mountain Division was selected as Army Forces Somalia shortly afterward, the 13th CosCom was notified that it, too, would have a role to play in the operation. It would provide command and control for logistics support in the theater. With the army planners at Central Command identifying requirements and resources available, the structure of Support Command was built around the 13th CosCom staff, commanded by Brigadier General Billy K. Solomon, USA. Appropriate units were selected from the continental United States and Europe. The major subordinate commands were the 593d Area Support Group, the 62d Medical Group, and the 7th Transportation Group.** These were augmented in a building block concept in which smaller units with specialties were selected and assigned to Support Command. As the groups prepared to deploy, General Solomon recognized that his presence on the ground in theater would be necessary early on, even before the majority of his command would be prepared to arrive. On 14 hours notice, he prepared to leave with a small advance party.⁵⁹ Support Command would provide tremendous capabilities to the force.

* It also was recognized this would greatly strain the capabilities of Marine Forces Somalia and the Maritime Prepositioning Force. A maritime prepositioning force squadron carries enough rations, supplies, and equipment to sustain a force of approximately 16,000 men for 30 days. However, these assets had to stretch to cover a force that would reach more than 23,000 by late December. For a detailed discussion of the logistical structures for the operation, see Katherine McGrady's *The Joint Task Force In Operation Restore Hope*, published by the Center For Naval Analyses.

** Although composed entirely of United States Army units, Support Command was not a part of Army Forces Somalia. It was a separate command on an equal basis with the Service components.

However, it was not expected to be capable of assuming the theater role until 50 days into the operation. Until then, Marine Forces Somalia would continue to carry the burden for this support, especially in the coordination of items common to all users. The commanding general of the Army Forces Somalia, Major General Arnold, recognized his force also needed to deploy some of its own logistics assets quickly into the theater.⁶⁰

Coalition Partners

The American elements of the force were coming together rapidly. But there remained one major portion that still had to be assembled. The United Nations had sanctioned a multinational force for Somalia, and so the countries that chose to be coalition partners with the United States now had to come forward and make their contributions. Central Command was the first line in determining which countries would be accepted into this coalition, relieving the commander of this administrative burden. Offers were screened



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BGen Billy K. Solomon, USA, commissioned in Quartermaster Corps in 1966, served in battalion and division support command positions before being assigned to lead III U.S. Army Corps' 13th Corps Support Command at Fort Hood, Texas.

to ensure potential partners had self-sufficiency, mobility, and a “willingness to adhere to American operational control and rules of engagement.”⁶¹

The creation of a cohesive coalition was to present General Johnston with what he called “a real challenge.” But he was aided in this task by the large contingents eventually sent by some of the United States’ traditional allies; countries such as France, Italy, Belgium, Canada, Australia, and Turkey were all to be key contributors around which the coalition could be built. These larger forces could also be counted on to be operationally capable and to bring some of their own support. Many other countries would soon join in, eventually raising the total number of nations in the coalition to 23. While the general did not have much latitude in the acceptance of any nation’s offer, he did recognize that even the smallest contingent could be put to effective use. In these early stages, it was thought that General Johnston would be the commander of the United Nations forces in Somalia, but the U.N. decided that its own UNOSOM commander would retain operational control over all U.N. forces. General Johnston would have operational control over all coalition forces assigned to him, and he had coor-

inating authority with the UNOSOM commander, Brigadier General Imtiaz Shaheen of the Pakistani Army.⁶²

As units across the United States were preparing for their share in Operation Restore Hope, the ministries of defense of many nations prepared to give support to the United States-led effort. Some nations, such as Canada, Australia, Belgium, Egypt, Nigeria, and Norway, already had made a commitment to join UNOSOM and were preparing to deploy forces as reinforcements.⁶³ Those who would be joining with the United States began to assemble forces and formulate plans, often with their own names. Eventually, there would be French Operation Oryx, Italian Operation Ibis, Australian Operation Solace, and Canadian Operation Deliverance.

How all of these allied forces could be worked effectively into the operation; how much logistic support they would need; their operational effectiveness; and when they would actually arrive were all questions on which General Johnston and his staff would have to give very serious consideration in the few days remaining before the start of Operation Restore Hope; and in that short time there was much other work to be done.

Chapter 3

Plans and Preparations

Working with Central Command

Training in amphibious warfare has taught Marines that planning for an operation is continuous and concurrent. In late November 1992, as the nascent joint task force staff met with the U.S. Central Command staff at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, there was a great amount of work to be done in a short period of time to prepare the plans that would guide the operation. Throughout the next several days, the two staffs would work in close cooperation to ensure the joint task force plan would complement the one issued by Central Command. Long hours and plenty of coffee were the order of the day.

Central Command issued its order on 5 December. While the two staffs had worked closely together in the development of the order, the Central Command document gave Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston formal authority to complete and issue the final joint task force order. One of the most important points to be taken from the Central Command order was the mission, to “conduct joint/combined military operations in Somalia to secure the major air and sea ports, key installations and food distribution points, to provide open and free passage of relief supplies, provide security for convoys and relief organization operations and to assist in providing humanitarian relief under U.N. auspices.” The “anticipated D-Day” was set for 9 December, just four days away.*

General Johnston described the Central Command order as “very broad,” and he was quite comfortable with it.⁶⁴ Even as it was being written, his staff had begged the United Nations to identify implied tasks that would assist in accomplishing the mission. The most obvious of these tasks was to establish some precise way to measure success. In other words, just how was the joint

task force to know when it had established a secure environment and accomplished its mission? During these early planning stages, the end state was defined as “creation of an environment where U.N. and relief organizations can assume responsibility for security and relief operations.”⁶⁵ Unfortunately, this was rather vague. The need to more precisely define the operation’s end state was to be an important but difficult question for much of the joint task force’s existence.

The Central Command order described four phases of the operation and set rules of engagement. It also formally ordered General Johnston, as commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), to assume duties as



Photo courtesy of the author

Gen Mohamed Farah Aideed rose to become the leader of the formerly political, but now militant, United Somali Congress. He favored a military solution to the problems the Barre government had brought about.

* The time for preparation was even shorter when the time zone differences are taken into account. There are eight hours difference between Somalia and the east coast of the United States. Thus, 0500 9 December in Mogadishu is 2100 8 December in Washington, D.C., or MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

commander of Joint Task Force Somalia (JTF Somalia) and to establish the joint task force. Johnston already had been doing precisely that for some days.

But that was not all General Johnston had been concerned with during this time of intense activity. His newly assembled headquarters and staff sections were busy identifying needed information, solving problems, and coordinating the preparation of the joint task force order. The final order was to contain myriad small, but important details, and there were some concerns that were of greater consequence than others that demanded a rapid understanding and resolution.

Somali Opposition

Sound military planning begins with a consideration of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available. With the mission specified in the Central Command order, General Johnston and his staff could now concentrate on the other elements. The question of the enemy was a challenging one, filled with political and diplomatic implications. The various armed Somali factions were regarded as a great threat to the task force and its mission, but their reactions could not be gauged in advance since internal Somali politics would undoubtedly be involved. It was possible that one faction could welcome the joint task force, while its rival would oppose the coalition. There was a possibility that the force might have to fight its way ashore.⁶⁶

The size of these factional, clan-based forces, in addition to the types, numbers, and condition of their weaponry were critical elements of information that had to be gathered. In a related matter, there was the existence of simple, but widespread, lawlessness. How was the joint task force to deal with that? In a commander's estimate of the situation dated 22 November 1992, General Joseph Hoar saw the threat as follows:

Over all, the security environment throughout Somalia is volatile. The situation may deteriorate further because there is no centralized governmental control of Somali factions.

Mogadishu. The security situation in Mogadishu remains uncertain. Large numbers of armed forces (estimated 5,000-10,000 aligned under General [Mohamed Farah Hassan] Aideed and estimated 5,000-6,000 aligned under interim President [Ali

Mahdi Mohamed]) roam the city with the two opposing leaders ... exercising little control over their activities. While Ali Mahdi appears to welcome U.N. presence and assistance in Somalia, General Aideed opposes such presence and has threatened the 500-man Pakistani force and impeded that unit from securing the port and airfield in Mogadishu. Further, General Aideed has publicly stated that he will oppose any further introduction of U.N. forces into Mogadishu.

Kismayo. The security situation in Kismayo is uncertain but less volatile than Mogadishu. Factional fighting occurs frequently and the general population is known to be armed. Random shootings and violent incidents are frequent. The two factions claiming this area have formed a loose alliance with about 3,000 troops, many of whom were former Somali National Army soldiers, reasonably well-trained and experienced with weapons. The apparent leader, Col [Ahmed Omar] Jess, appears to be minimizing his ties with General Aideed and has indicated a willingness to have a U.N. contingent deploy to Kismayo.

Key Assumptions. The primary threat to security will be armed lawlessness and armed looters.⁶⁷

Some of these difficulties were further expressed in a message regarding operations in Somalia sent from Central Command in early November:

There does not appear to be any particular center of gravity, no single leader or faction or army whose defeat will bring stability. Nor is there any geographical center of gravity, contrary to the politicians' views about Mogadishu. ... The most assailable center of gravity appears to be the warlords' control over the food distribution, both in terms of amount and location. Therefore, any effort on our part has to defeat their control over food distribution, and force the warlords, should they choose to fight, to fight us on our terms.⁶⁸

Both of these issues would be addressed in the final joint task force order.

The intelligence annex of the task force order further described the factions and their possible capabilities. The United Somali Congress (USC) Aideed faction was estimated to have approximately 20,000 fighters, and USC Ali Mahdi to



Photo courtesy of the Italian Armed Forces

Somali factional militiamen gather around a "technical," a pick-up truck with a modified anti-aircraft artillery or heavy machine gun mounted in the bed. Businesses, local officials, and foreign residents were forced to hire them for protection against extortion and kidnappings by freelance gunmen.

have between 15,000 and 30,000.* Both factions were known to possess artillery, tanks, and armored personnel carriers. Mohamed Said Hirsi, known as General Morgan, headed the Somali National Front (SNF) and was thought to have a large number of the soldiers from the old national army of the Muhammad Siad Barre regime, totaling about 9,000 troops. It was also known to have seven T-54/55 tanks and eighteen 122mm artillery pieces. The rival Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) faction under Colonel Jess was estimated to possess 15,000 fighters, of whom 2,000 were trained. While well armed, they were thought to be poorly disciplined.

There were strengths these factions were assessed to have. The first among these was their extreme unpredictability and their ability to

choose the time and place of any confrontation. Also of importance was the knowledge these fighters had of the terrain in their areas, and the fact that any aggressive militias or clans would be indistinguishable from the local inhabitants. A psychological factor that could provide another strength to the factions would lie in their ability to misrepresent the joint task force's mission and actions as an invasion, thereby increasing the aggressiveness and tenacity of their followers.

Such strengths, however, were countered by several weaknesses. The average Somali fighter was very young, often still in his teens, and described as "undisciplined, illiterate, and often under the influence of the narcotic, *khat*." In spite of the seemingly large array of small arms and heavy weapons and vehicles, there were indications of shortages of ammunition and spare parts. Their ability to operate and maintain sophisticated weaponry also was questionably, and the weapons systems of the Somalis were considered antiquated and outclassed by those of the joint task force.

* The estimates of faction strength used in this history vary greatly over time and place. This probably reflects both the difficulty of acquiring timely and accurate information and the actual changes that undoubtedly occurred within these loose organizations.

The factional leadership was known to be weak in many areas, especially in command and control.⁶⁹

Somali Terrain

The issue of terrain was equally important to define. Some pieces of information were readily available, but others were, as yet, unknown. The land features and climate were known quantities. The land was described as “undulating plains that are interrupted occasionally by areas of dissected terrain and isolated hills. The Webi Jubba and Webi Shebelle are the only streams that flow year-round along most of their lengths.” The climate can be characterized as tropical, semiarid to arid, with two short monsoon seasons. The southern plains are hot all year, with average temperatures ranging from 72 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season varies by region and by year with frequent droughts. The annual mean precipitation is almost 1,000 millimeters in Mogadishu, while it is much drier further inland. All of which is a way of stating that Somalia would present a hot, dry, bleak desert environment that would test the strength and endurance of both men and equipment.

But for a military planner, terrain encompasses far more than just the ground. Of equal importance are the man-made features that help to support a force in a hostile and unfamiliar environ-

ment. The term “infrastructure” is frequently used to refer to all of those buildings, structures, and systems that can be put to use. It was in this area especially that knowledge of terrain was critical. The joint task force would be very dependent upon a transportation network that would have to bring all personnel, equipment, food, water, and consumable supplies into the theater, and then be able to move them rapidly and effectively to where they were needed.

Intelligence gathering on this subject already had begun, but it did not present an optimistic picture of what the task force would face. An early study performed by the Defense Intelligence Agency described Somalia’s transportation infrastructure in the following terms:

Highways. Somalia’s road system, which has only a few high-capacity modern routes, has lapsed into disrepair. Of Somalia’s roughly 18,000 kilometers of roadway, about 3,000 are bituminous and another 3,000 crushed rock. The remaining 12,000 kilometers are dirt roads or tracks. ... Surface quality has deteriorated because of the lack of maintenance during two years of unrest. Conditions ... are so poor that parallel trails available along some stretches are frequently used instead of the road itself. ...

Air transportation. Somalia has 40 airfields with usable runways of more than



Photo courtesy of the author

The flat, featureless desert terrain to the west of Oddur, filled with scrub brush and thorn trees, is typical of the country's interior.

1,969 feet. C-130s can land at only 10 of them. Three other airfields have been opened to C-130s but with restrictions. Six of the 10 C-130-capable airfields can also accommodate C-141s. C-5 aircraft can land only at Berbera and Mogadishu. ... Airport infrastructure at Somali airfields is rudimentary at best. Few airfields have material-handling equipment or covered storage. Air traffic control is close to nonexistent. Although Mogadishu, [Bale Dogle], Hargeisa, and Kismayo have maintenance and service facilities, no airfields have the maintenance capability to fully support modern aircraft.

Seaports. The major ports of Mogadishu, Berbera, and Kismayo ... can handle general bulk and small container vessels. The operational status of petroleum offloading and storage equipment, mobile cranes, roll-on/roll-off facilities, and transit sheds at each is uncertain. Relief ship crews must be ready to use their ship's gear to unload supplies. ...

Railroads. Somalia has no railroads.⁷⁰

A final, but very important, effect the environment might have on the operation was in the area of health. The Horn of Africa presented medical planners with a wide variety of potential problems for which they would need to prepare the personnel of the joint task force. These included a high potential for infectious disease, heat-related injuries, and bites from several types of venomous snakes and insects. Diseases were vector-borne, such as malaria, or could be contracted from the unsanitary conditions prevalent in the country. As was noted in the *Soldier Handbook*: "the major infectious disease risks are from food and water-borne diseases ... related to ... poor sanitation, indiscriminate disposal of waste and decomposing corpses."⁷¹ The Central Command order was even more explicit:

Many of the deaths and much of the human suffering in Somalia is directly attributable to endemic disease, which is merely magnified and made more virulent by famine. Numerous diseases, some of which are carried by parasites (such as malaria), are present in Somalia. Among them are AIDS [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome], tuberculosis, hepatitis, pneumonia, and measles. Dysentery and gangrene are common and frequently lethal complications. Virtually all water is unsafe for drinking even when boiled due to the possible pres-

ence of spores, which the boiling may not kill. The potential for cholera and related problems from decaying cadavers is also present.⁷²

An effective preventive medicine program would be necessary to safeguard the health of the force.

Specified Tasks

Disarmament was another important issue relating to the mission of providing a secure environment.* This topic was addressed in great detail in the Marine Corps' old *Small Wars Manual*. Many members of the joint task force staff were familiar with this interesting volume. It conveys much of the extensive experience of the "Old Corps" in "operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation."⁷³ This experience had been gained in such places as Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. But, because the world had changed radically since the book was written, and much of it was no longer valid, except as a general guide.** Also, Somalia was a unique situation, and nothing could be accepted as a matter of form. It was determined by General Johnston and his staff that there could be no attempt to disarm Somalia.⁷⁴ Virtually every Somali male, to include teenagers, carried a weapon. The personnel working for the humanitarian relief organizations hired Somalis as guards, and many people kept arms for their own protection. Weapons would have to be controlled in some manner, but this was not the same as dis-

* Disarmament was initially assigned in general terms in the original 5 December Joint Chiefs of Staff execute order to Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command as: "provide a secure environment: disarm, as necessary, forces which interfere with humanitarian relief operations." This was deleted in a modification to the order, sent by a message from the Joint Staff to Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command on 6 December 1992.

** The *Small Wars Manual*, the last edition of which was published in 1940, addressed such matters as civil-military relations, the role of the State Department, creation of native police forces, disarmament of civilian populations, tactics, and logistics.



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The flood of military assistance during the Barre years meant an abundance of military hardware, weapons, and ammunition for the warring clans to use. Weapons ranged from World War II era .30-caliber machine guns and rocket launchers to Soviet-made AK-47 rifles and U.S.-made M16s.

armament. The task forces' operation order would have to address the problem clearly and effectively.

The joint task force's office of the Staff Judge Advocate was deeply involved in a related issue. In this operation, international law and operational law would feature prominently in how the force accomplished its mission:

As each I MEF section developed implied taskings in preparation for the development of the operation plan, it became clear that U.S. forces would be operating in an austere environment where the rule of law had been replaced by the law of the gun. Advice and innovative planning in a variety of nontraditional functions and activities would be needed as the ... commander entered uncharted waters. Clearly, specialized rules of engagement would have to be drafted to

cover the abundance of small arms in the hands of unstable persons and proliferation of technical vehicles. The ability to deal successfully with these and similar challenges would require a solid foundation under international law."⁷⁵

General Johnston and his Staff Judge Advocate, Marine Colonel Frederick M. Lorenz, worked with Central Command in developing rules of engagement so those promulgated in the Central Command order were ones that could be easily incorporated in the task force order.⁷⁶

The rules of engagement, as published, were broad and focused on the protection of the force and its mission. General Johnston later said these rules were ones that "every commander would want to have on such a mission."⁷⁷ Essentially, every member of the force had the right to protect himself not only against a hostile act, but also against the threat of such an act. Under such rules it was not necessary for task force personnel to be fired upon before taking action. A weapon aimed in a threatening manner was sufficient cause to fire on the individual holding it. Also, of particular interest in this operation, "technicals" and crew-served weapons were considered to be threats at any time, regardless of the actual intent of their crews at the time encountered.⁷⁸ * To ensure that everyone understood his rights and responsibilities, cards were printed with the rules and distributed, and classes were held in which they were explained. The cards carried the reminder that the United States was not at war, that all persons were to be treated with dignity, and that minimum force was to be used to carry out the mission.

Another important implied task for this operation came from Brigadier General Anthony C. Zinni's recent experience. He knew that an operation of this sort would require the military to work closely with numerous humanitarian relief organ-

* Technical vehicles, or "technicals," as they were more commonly known, were a bizarre form of homemade weapons platform unique to Somalia. They were generally formed from the body of a pick-up truck or similar vehicle, with the addition of a heavy machine gun, antiaircraft weapon, or some other crew-served weapon mounted in the bed. They were often encountered at roadblocks and were employed by all factions and many gangs. The term itself apparently derived from the euphemism used for hiring armed guards for protection, or "technical assistance."

izations.* The relief organizations were a significant part of the overall humanitarian effort. Such organizations were already working in Somalia, providing food, medical assistance, and relief services to the civilian population. But they would have requirements of their own which would have to be provided by the military. In addition, the work of both the military and these organizations required close coordination to ensure a unity of effort. In Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq, General Zinni had achieved this coordination through a civil-military operations center. A center definitely would be needed for Operation Restore Hope.⁷⁹

The Central Command order set a specific mission for the joint task force to conduct joint military operations in Somalia to secure the major air and sea ports, key installations, and food distribution points, and to assist in providing humanitarian operations and relief under U.N. auspices. The order described the conduct of the operation in four phases. It also formally ordered the commanding general of I MEF to assume the duties as commander of JTF Somalia and to establish the joint task force.⁸⁰

General Johnston had already begun this work. In addition, his staff was working on completing the task force's own order, which was issued the day after the Central Command order, 6 December. The mission of the joint task force remained basically the same as in the Central Command order, with some minor changes in the wording. The commander's intent made an important distinction: "JTF Somalia will focus on securing the lines of communication used for the ground movement of relief supplies by U.N. and [non-governmental organization] agencies to distribution sites. JTF Somalia will not be primarily involved in transporting supplies, but will assist relief organizations by securing their operating bases as well as the ground transportation routes to relief distribution sites." This statement clearly kept the task force out of the business of actually feeding the hungry and concentrated on the more appropriate military mission of providing the nec-

essary secure environment for the relief operations.⁸¹

Psychological Operations

Johnston was clear on the importance of psychological operations and civil affairs to the success of the operation. He intended to use them to assist in disarming technicals and bandits, and to create a "benevolent image" of coalition forces as they were engaged in their humanitarian, peace-making mission.⁸² In the task force order, psychological operations were intended to focus upon presenting the image of a "strong U.S./U.N./Coalition presence, capable and willing to use force to protect the international relief effort and to allay fears about U.S./U.N./Coalition intentions." The psychological operation's themes and objectives were to assure all factions and groups of the impartiality of the conduct of the relief operations, and to dissuade any groups or individuals from interfering with the relief. Major themes were credibility of the joint task force in its ability to carry out its goals and to meet force with force if necessary, and neutrality in its dealings with all groups in its humanitarian mission. The methods to be used to get the word out to the local populace were to be "face-to-face communications, radio and loudspeaker broadcasts, leaflets, posters, coloring books, and other printed products."⁸³ To perform this valuable work, a separate Joint Psychological Operations Task Force was formed within the joint task force.

Phases of the Operation

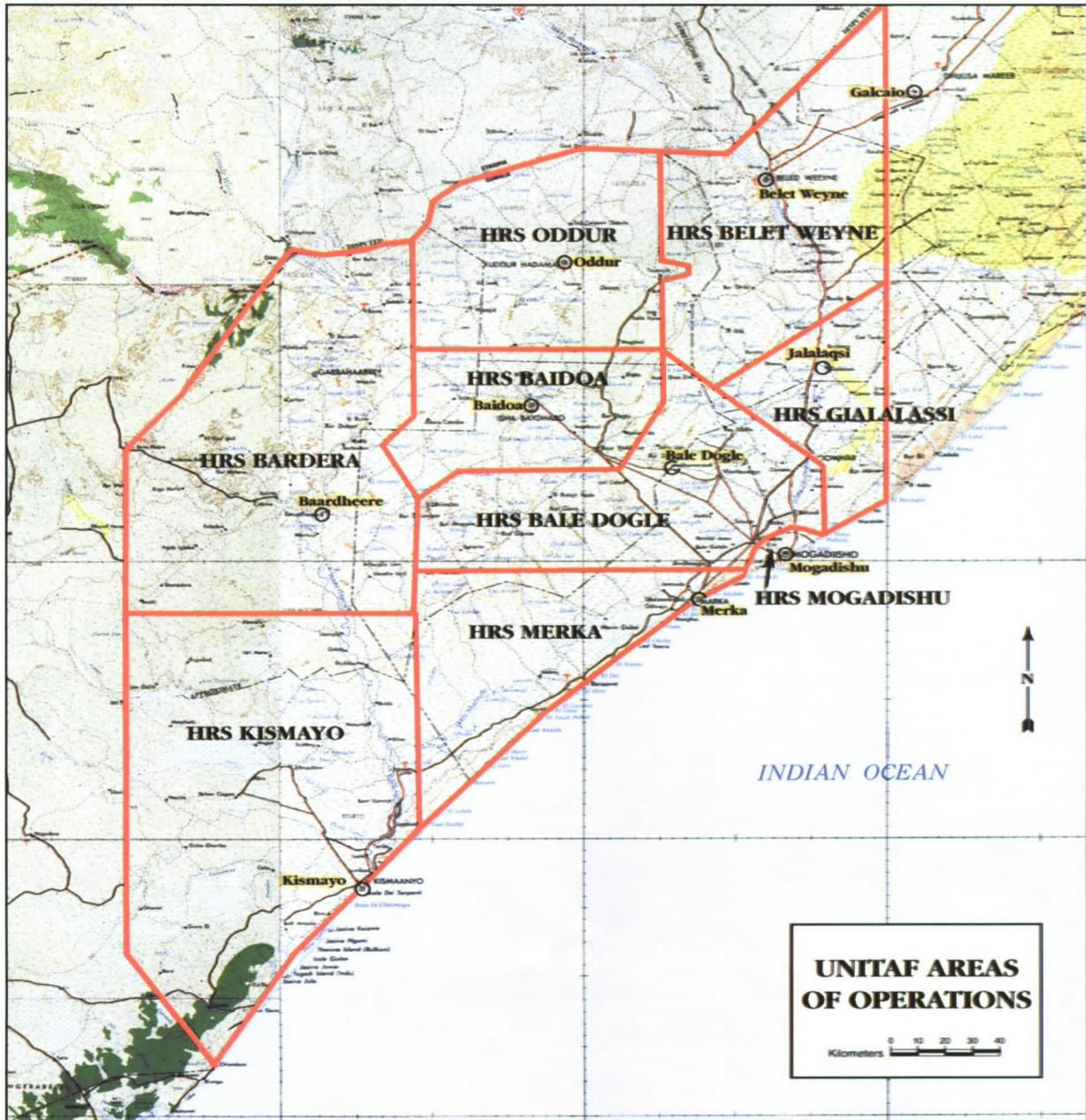
As in the Central Command order, the task force's concept of operations was set in four phases. As in any properly prepared campaign, each of these phases would lead to and set the conditions for the next. In Phase I, the forces were to "establish a base of operations and logistics in Mogadishu," to "gain control over the flow of humanitarian relief supplies through the city," and to introduce other U.N. forces throughout the country. Amphibious forces would secure the port and airfield at Mogadishu and establish a lodgment for follow-on troops. A maritime prepositioning force operation would follow. Once adequate security was established, additional forces would deploy into Mogadishu. A second airhead would be secured as soon as possible for the

* Humanitarian relief organizations is a comprehensive term that includes non-governmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, and agencies of the United Nations and the International Commission of the Red Cross. During the operation the term non-governmental organization usually was used when referring to any relief organization, but the more appropriate organization will be used when discussing the work of the Civil-Military Operations Center.

deployment of additional forces, and the town of Baidoa would also be secured. Phase II provided for the expansion of operations at the major interior relief distribution sites to include Gialalassi, Bardera, Belet Weyne, Oddur, and others as required. Additional forces would expand operations to these interior sites and establish sufficient security to allow unimpeded relief operations. In Phase III, operations would expand through the conduct of relief convoy security operations and to additional ports and airfields, to include the port of Kismayo. The crucial Phase IV would be a “transition from a U.S.-led to a U.N.-controlled

effort,” with a “gradual relief in place of JTF forces.”⁸⁴

The area of operations was divided into eight humanitarian relief sectors, so named in keeping with the nature of the mission.⁸⁵ Each sector was centered on a major city that could serve as a distribution center; in fact, many of them had been such centers during Operation Provide Relief. The other qualification for choosing these cities was that each was located on a main road and had an airfield capable of handling military cargo aircraft. The original humanitarian relief sectors were Mogadishu, Bale Dogle, Baidoa, Bardera,



Kismayo, Oddur, Gialalassi, and Belet Weyne.⁸⁶ The boundaries for the sectors were not set with regard to clan or tribal affiliation, but by simple grid coordinates.

Because of the close cooperation of Central Command and joint task force staffs during planning, General Johnston was able to sign and issue the task force's order on 6 December 1992; only one day after Central Command issued its order to the joint task force. The completed document was thorough and detailed and recognized that some key elements, such as the forces to be offered by the coalition partners, still had to be identified.* D-Day was now only three days away.

Another critical aspect, which joint task force planners had been hurriedly working on, was the development of the deployment timeline. With a known date for D-Day, planners were able to work backward in time to determine when other critical events would have to occur for the operation to begin as planned and continue in an orderly fashion. A timeline published on 1 December set the initial actions for 4 December, with the establishment of the joint task force headquarters, and worked forward 30 days, when the maritime prepositioning force offload was to be completed. The timeline called for the quick activation and deployment of many units and detachments that would have to be in place to support the impending operation. These included the naval support element and the offload preparation party of Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 2, which had to link up with those ships at Diego Garcia. The Marine air-ground task force had to take its position in the area of operations, and many other Marine Corps, Army, and Navy elements, and advance parties had to be alerted for movement within a few days.⁸⁷

The Flow of the Force

This work called for close cooperation with one of the specified commands, U.S. Transpor-

tation Command (TransCom), headquartered at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. A separate plan would have to be worked out to ensure the initial landings could be made on time, that the follow-on forces could be brought into theater as required, and that enough logistical support for the force would be started on its way from the United States to reach Somalia in an orderly sequence. The detailed planning for this deployment called for the movement of thousands of troops from their home bases to ports of embarkation for further transport halfway around the world. There would have to be a sequenced timetable, employing all the assets available for the movement by ship and airplane, of the cargo needed by the force. As a supporting command, TransCom had to tailor its plans to the requirements the joint task force provided through Central Command. These were made known in a formal document called a time-phased force deployment and development plan. Such a system works best when there is an ample amount of planning time available, so force structures and logistical requirements can be estimated in advance and contingency plans created. There was no such luxury with the preparations for this operation; TransCom would have to react quickly as the needs of the joint task force were determined and made known.⁸⁸

Since the majority of logistical support would be coming by ship, a subordinate organization of TransCom, the Military Sealift Command, would have the greatest capability to support the operation. Military Sealift Command divided its responsibilities into three phases, which it called a "Trident of Sea Power." First, it would employ the maritime prepositioning force ships that supported the Marine Corps and Army to bring in the unit equipment and supplies that would be immediately needed by the first troops coming ashore. Next, it would employ fast sealift ships and chartered vessels to fill the surge in shipping that would bring in the heavy equipment and critical supplies. Finally, a sustainment phase would provide a steady flow of logistical support. Because of the long transit times (even the fast sealift ships would take 14 days to reach Mogadishu from the east coast of the United States), these assets had to be identified and prepared as soon as possible.⁸⁹

Another TransCom subordinate was equally busy with its preparations to support the operation. The Air Mobility Command had to establish the air bridge by which it would fly in most of the

* Some countries had already offered forces as part of the reinforcements to the U.N. Organization Somalia. Early planning had prepared to use these units, but with the change to a United States-led force, some of these offers were withdrawn, while other countries came forward to assist. When the order came for the joint task force, it had not yet been determined when the various coalition forces would actually join the force. Some arrived concurrent with U.S. Forces, some within a few days, and some took several weeks.

U.S. forces, as well as those of many of the coalition countries. The command already had some experience in this area, having established the plan under which the aircraft carrying the relief supplies were being brought into Kenya for Operation Provide Relief. Now, however, it faced a larger and more time-critical task. With the long sailing times for the shipping, air transport would have to carry the considerable initial burden of the earliest portions of the deployment. The com-

mand's staff quickly provided for basing rights in nearby countries, notably Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and created a plan for aerial refueling. These factors would decrease the flying time for individual flights and minimize the wear on aircraft.⁹⁰

By 6 December, the forces were ready; the plan was prepared and issued; the physical requirements and equipment needed had been determined and identified. With a few days left before D-Day, it was time to set the operation in motion.