Perennial Journal of History (PJH) *ISSN: 2707-6709(print) ISSN: 2788-693X*

Vol.VI No.1(jan-june2025)PP1-29 *(online)https:// 10.52700/pjh.v6i1.227*

U.S. Intervention in Somalia: The Strategic Miscalculations, Political Motives and the Limitations to External state building

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Abstract

This study traces the historical development, the intentions and the effects of United States intervention in Somalia against the background of overarching trends of American military and political intervention in other countries. During the period of 1898 and 1994, the United States intervened at least four times to change the foreign government and it always offered the reasons of national security, humanitarian interests and the promotion of democracy as justifications, yet there is little empirical data to back these arguments. Somalia became a point of critical test in the post-Cold War world where the fall of the Siad Barre government in 1991 resulted in famine and mass displacement and fragmentation of the state. The participation of the U.S. in the counterterrorism-focused approaches, including the operation Restore Hope, and subsequent interventionist approaches demonstrate that the domestic political forces, overstated sense of threats, media pressure, and the bureaucratic processes, guided the policy choice more effectively than the long-term goals. The study examines U.S. aid to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the Ethiopian invasion of the country in 2006, the emergence of the Islamic Courts Union and the following empowerment of the al-Shabaab. It states that humanitarian goals slowly morphed into nation-building requirements which lacked political plan, operational focus and insight into Somalia clan systems. As the mission creep rose, U.S. and UN activities weakened the legality of the local government and contributed to the creation of more extremist discourses. Using a wide range of literature, policy documents and historical narratives, the study assesses three of the largest U.S. policy agendas, which are counterterrorism, human rights, and

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025

Available Online: 30 June 2025

promotion of democracy, and how are they inconsistent in their application in Somalia. The study finds that to create a sustainable state of stability a balance must be shifted to constructive disengagement, decentralized assistance in governance,regionally coordinated diplomacy and selectively focused counterterrorism operations that minimize damage to civilians. The results will help to discuss the general issues of intervention in weak states and the boundaries of external state-building.

Keywords: intervention, humanitarian, Ethiopian invasion, U.S. policy agendas, promotion of democracy, state-building

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Available Online: 30 June 2025

1. Introduction

The United States has at least 41 times intervened in the governments of Latin American countries between 1898 and 1994 that is about once every 28 months (Kinzer, 2007). Among these instances, 17 were the direct interventions that were conducted by the U.S. military forces, intelligence agencies or local agents who were acting on behalf of the U.S directives and 24 were indirect interventions where the local actors relied very much on the American support (Grandin, 2006). Cases that most probably would have survived without hostility by the U.S. were accepted only. The most notable ones are the 1963 U.S.-supported coup against the Guatemalan President Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes and the 1973 military coup in Chile against the President, Salvador Allende; historians believe that without the U.S. prompting it, Allende would have probably just served his term effectively until the next election (Kornbluh, 2019). The count did not include failed operations like the one carried out in the Bay of Pigs and situations when the U.S. intervened to stop a coup (Schlesinger & Kinzer, 2020).

Though toppling of governments was never a stated or publicly set U.S policy, American presidents have frequently used this choice during the twentieth century (LaFeber, 1989). The frequency of intervention reduced at a tremendous rate following the Cold War. The US intentions have been debated among scholars and policymakers. The issue of national security was practically mentioned in every public speech, yet Latin America did not represent any serious military danger to the United States, even in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (Gaddis, 2007). Economic reasons, including the need to protect American business or to safeguard international capitalism, provide some understanding, but are not an explanation of the majority of interventions. The case of 1954 coup against the elected government of Guatemala qualifies the corporate-interest model because of the role of the United Fruit Company but such prerequisites did not always lead to interventions elsewhere (Immerman, 1982).

Neither does democracy promotion justify the U.S. actions since, more frequently, the United States backed coups by democratically elected leaders (Carothers, 2011). A more compelling one is a blend of home-based political forces and international strategic rationale. In some cases, the actions of presidents were related to a desire not to seem weak to the political opposition at home; thus, when Lyndon Johnson decided to deploy the military forces to Dominican Republic in 1965, his motives were more about the fear of being weakened by the political critics than by any external menace (Brands, 1997). Meanwhile, the Cold War strategic anxieties also created

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the paranoia of the risk in the future, despite the real-time reports by the intelligence agencies that Latin American insurgencies were by no means a serious threat in the near future (CIA, 1968/1997). This panic was exacerbated following the Cuban Revolution, which was one reason as to why American-backed coups were unusually high in the 1960s.

In general, the majority of U.S. interventions in Latin America in the course of the twentieth century were motivated by domestic political processes, inflated visions of threats in the far future, and the relativity of low costs of interfering with the region, as the failure, in most cases, did not negatively impact the U.S. national interests (Smith, 1996). Such interventions frequently caused unwarranted tensions within the region, as well as diminishing the credibility of the United States as a supporter of democracy and the rule of law advocate. The fact that such interventions are reduced significantly in the past fifteen years is a positive and welcoming change (Grandin, 2011).

Chronicling Interventions

U.S. Direct Interventions

Government-changing military/CIA activity.

COUNTRY	YEAR	EVENT SUMMARY
Cuba	1898-1902	Spanish-American War
	1906-09	Ousts elected Pres. Palma; occupation regime
	1917-23	U.S. reoccupation, gradual withdrawal
Dominican Rep	1916-24	U.S. occupation
	1961	Assassination of Pres. Trujillo
	1965	U.S. Armed Forces occupy Sto Domingo

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Grenada	1983	U.S. Armed Forces occupy island; oust government
Guatemala	1954	C.I.A.-organized armed force ousts Pres. Arbenz
Haiti	1915-34	U.S. occupation
	1994	U.S. troops restore constitutional government
Mexico	1914	Veracuz occupied; US allows rebels to buy arms
Nicaragua	1910	Troops to Corinto, Bluefields during revolt
	1912-25	U.S. occupation
	1926-33	U.S. occupation
	1981-90	Contra war; then support for opposition in election
Panama	1903-14	U.S. Troops secure protectorate, canal
	1989	U.S. Armed Forces occupy nation

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U.S. INDIRECT Intervention **Government/regime changes in which U.S. is decisive**

COUNTRY	**YEAR**	**EVENT SUMMARY**
Bolivia	1944	Coup uprising overthrow Pres. Villaroel
	1963	Military coup ousts elected Pres. Paz Estenssoro
	1971	Military coup ousts Gen. Torres
Brazil	1964	Military coup ousts elected Pres. Goulart
Chile	1973	Coup ousts elected Pres. Allende.
	1989-90	Aid to anti-Pinochet opposition
Cuba	1933	U.S. abandons support for Pres. Machado
	1934	U.S. sponsors coup by Col. Batista to oust Pres. Grau
Dominican Rep.	1914	U.S. secures ouster of Gen. José Bordas
	1963	Coup ousts elected Pres. Bosch
El Salvador	1961	Coup ousts reformist civil-military junta
	1979	Coup ousts Gen. Humberto Romero
	1980	U.S. creates and aids new Christian Demo junta

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Guatemala	1963	U.S. supports coup vs elected Pres. Ydígoras
	1982	U.S. supports coup vs Gen. Lucas García
	1983	U.S. supports coup vs Gen. Rios Montt
Guyana	1953	CIA aids strikes; Govt. is ousted
Honduras	1963	Military coups ousts elected Pres. Morales
Mexico	1913	U.S. Amb. H. L. Wilson organizes coup v Madero
Nicaragua	1909	Support for rebels vs Zelaya govt
	1979	U.S. pressures Pres. Somoza to leave
Panama	1941	U.S supports coup ousting elected Pres. Arias
	1949	U.S. supports coup ousting constitutional govt of VP Chanís
	1969	U.S. supports coup by Gen. Torrijos

1.1 US Military Intervention and Its Foreign Policy Agenda -Summary.

The U.S. intervention in military affairs is a highly discussed issue, but there is no systematic analysis of why the United States militarizes other states. The majority of available research is descriptive and historical as opposed to theoretical (George and Bennett, 2005). This is the gap that Kaarbo et al. (2013) emphasizes and examines the available literature, stating that empirical studies on U.S. intervention decisions are very few. A study carried out by Sola (2005) indicates that first-order intervention choices are consistent with realist anxieties, regarding external threats, and final choices are consistent with domestic liberal pressures, including congressional

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preferences. Rosenberg (2002) concludes that the long-term economic interest influences the U.S. involvement in conflicts indirectly, however alliances and rival behavior are more immediate. The discussion of 153 nations (Choi & James, 2013) shows that humanitarian interventions tend to be consistent with liberal principles of safeguarding human rights.

U.S. military aid studies are also informative. In the 1980s, Washington cut military assistance to those states, where human rights violations were high (Choi & James, 2016; Omelicheva et al., 2017). According to Falkenberg (1973), during the reign of Reagan, the decisions of aid to be made by the Congress were highly influenced. Blanton (2000) discovers that U.S arms transfers are positively correlated with democracy, U.S troop presence, and trade as well as negatively related with human rights violations particularly after the Cold War.

Kaarbo et al. (2013) finds that there are regular trends in the application of forces not at war: intervention is more likely in cases involving geographic proximity of countries, their economic integration, or political instability. However, the relative weight of the three core objectives of U.S. foreign policy, which are counterterrorism, human rights and democracy promotion, is not yet being compared in the existing literature. These objectives correspond to three theoretical expectations, including realism predicts interventions with high levels of terrorism; liberalism predicts intervention with serious human rights abuses; and hybrid theory predicts intervention in less democratic states.

Somalia demonstrates the functioning of this motive of foreign policy. Without central authority, Somalia has been experiencing chronic violence during almost twenty years. Following the 9/11, U.S. policymakers felt that Somalia may turn into an al-Qaeda haven. Efforts to establish an effective government kept failing and, in most cases, were fueling internal disparities. The U.S. support to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was diplomatic and covert military aid, yet the TFG did not possess much ground to control and had to rely on the Transitional Federal Government forces that were supported by the African Union. The U.S. support unintentionally enhanced extremist unity by paradigmally outlining the TFG as foreign imposed.

Nation-building in Somalia at a large scale cannot be realized because of the U.S. military engagements in other countries and high anti-Westernism. The narrow-minded approach to counterterrorism, wherein drones, missiles, and special forces are employed, only escalate the hostility and compromise the humanitarian aid. Consequently, analysts suggest a way of constructive disengagement: less personal participation and letting Somalia politics figure out on its own. Shabaab itself is divided and foreign pressure can further weaken it leading to its

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divisions. Neutrality should be employed by the U.S. to any local Islamist government that denies the global jihad, not aggressive in the region and allowing humanitarian access.

Eventually Somalia can go back to the decentralized clan government. Once the anti-Western sentiment declines, the U.S. can re-enter the game by supporting the local economic growth, regional collaboration, and anti-piracy efforts. Although disengagement is hazardous, the lack of proper intervention is more harmful and more likely to lead to the eventual attainment of safe haven that the U.S. attempts to avoid by extremist groups.

1.2 Background

Since the downfall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991, Somalia has not had a central government and this has left the nation in shattered pieces that are now clan territories and the remaining state apparatus has been destroyed (Ahmed, 1999). However, despite the popular belief of permanent anarchy, small and feeble democratic formations were formed in the north, like Somalialand and Puntland, and in some parts of the south. Yet, successive efforts at an international level to restore cohesive national government were unsuccessful because of deeply rooted clan tensions, incomplete quarrels on the division of the resources and tendering of political authority (Loubser, 2012). Nevertheless, some of the private sectors such as the livestock exports and telecom industries expanded at a high rate, even surpassing the economic signs of their neighbors by the beginning of the 2000s (Mahad, 2010).

After the 1993 incident of Black Hawk Down, the United States became almost silent in Somalia over a period of ten years. This has changed following the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassies in both Kenya and Tanzania and more particularly following the 9/11 attack, wherein the fear was that Somalia may serve as the al-Qaeda haven of refuge (Mohamed, 2009). Washington was also driven by the issue of counterterrorism and the international process resulted in the formation of Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004. The TFG on the other hand was illegitimate initially working outside the country and was unable to establish its control within Somalia (Ahmed, 1999).

With the failing TFG, the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) was born in Mogadishu and with the aid of grassroots Islamic tribunals, they brought sanity back to the city; a factor that had not been anticipated by both the regional governments or the U.S. policymakers (Ibrahim, 2018). The emergence of the militant wing of the UIC, Shabaab, increased U.S. anxieties. At the end of 2006, when the United States was implicitly supporting Ethiopia, the country invaded Somalia

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ousting the UIC, which caused a massive insurgency that gave strength to the Shabaab, radicalized the members of the population, and created more anti-American feelings (Mohamed, 2009).

Abuses against civilians by Ethiopian, AMISOM and TFG forces such as shelling of civilian locations, rape, kidnapping as well as extrajudicial murders were widespread during the occupation of Ethiopia (2006,2009) which aggravated public animosity (Human Rights Watch, 2008). The war also allowed the entry of foreign-based jihadists and promoted the radicalization of the diaspora youth, including the Somalia-Americans, who had come to join the Shabaab (Mulligan, 2009).

Following the withdrawal of Ethiopia in 2009, U.S. began to lean towards a diplomatic approach by assisting AMISOM and a unity government under the leadership of the former UIC leader, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. Although the world supported them, the TFG was denied by major Islamist groupings as a western backed outfit. The insurgency became more powerful because such groups as Shabaab and Hizbul Islam established pragmatic alliances, and ideological and clan-centered disparities continued to exist within the calls (Hansen, 2013).

In the meantime, internal disintegration undermined Shabaab. Others like Muktar Robow (Abu Mansoor) were against stringent Salafi-Wahhabi policies and other more local-based approaches in accordance with the Somalia traditions (Hansen, 2013). Some followed foreign jihadist ideologies with a close and this led to the backlash with the society particularly after the suicide bombing of a medical graduation ceremony in December 2009 (International Crisis Group, 2010).

Efforts to establish a national army with the TFG did not work out because of corruption, desertion, and infiltration by insurgents. The weapons provided by the U.S. regularly spilled into the black markets, or ended up in the hands of the Shabaab fighters (UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, 2008). Communications involving international funds did not largely translate to a disciplined or effective military force.

U.S. strategic interests in Somalia are based on the need to ensure that the country is not turned into al-Qaeda haven, curb the threat of instability in the region, and safeguard maritime trade against piracy in the Gulf of Aden (Mohamed, 2009). As the number of foreign jihadists increased, there is no clear evidence that the Shabaab engaged in external operations outside of

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Somalia. The group is still limited by the ability of the clans to resist foreign jihadist ideology to pursue their transnational agendas (Hansen, 2013).

The issue of instability in the region is still a concern. The Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict that has not been resolved is a major cause of proxy war in Somalia and problems between Somalialand and Puntland are other hot spots (International Crisis Group, 2008). The humanitarian situation is still disastrous as millions of people are threatened with food insecurity and aid delivery by violence, drought and piracy (UN OCHA, 2009). The extent of piracy has increased drastically and multinational naval force is deployed, yet piracy attacks prevail despite the increased patrols (International Maritime Bureau, 2009).

There are three broad policy choices that the United States can adopt, including continuing with the status quo of unsuccessful aid to the TFG, increasing military intervention, and implementing an offshore counterterrorism containment policy. Both possibilities have extreme restrictions such as political infeasibility, risk of collateral damage, weak intelligence and the possibility of aggravation of the humanitarian crisis (Ahmed, 1999). These issues highlight the case of the alternative approach, which is constructive disengagement, which seeks to minimize the U.S. participation, but in the process, cope with security threats in a more realistic manner.

1.3 Research Objectives

- Compare and contrast the various interventionist strategies that the U.S. has used in Somalia (e.g. humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, nation-building).
- Determine how geopolitics issues and strategic aims influenced the U.S. foreign policy towards Somalia.
- Explore how U.S interventions affect Somalia society and some effects include people displacement, weapons proliferation and extremists.
- Discuss the difficulties and constraints of U.S. policymakers concerning the resolution of the complicated political and security situation in Somalia.
- Assess the success of U.S. peace, security and human rights promotion activities in Somalia.
- Evaluate the U.S. interventions in Somalia and consider the implications of the lessons the United States has learned concerning the future foreign decisions.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

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The Somalia conflict has a long history of decades of state failure, factional violence, humanitarian disasters, and changes of political dominance. Although the U.S. has been actively engaged in Somalia since the early 1990s, the country still lacks stability making the questions of the U.S. involvement motivation, consequences, and success extremely significant (Ahmed, 1999; Loubser, 2012). Regardless of the fact that humanitarian protection, counterterrorism, and state-building have been used as justifications, the long-term consequences of U.S. activities are not obvious. Available literature provides a detailed case analysis and history, but not a thorough assessment of the role of American policies in defining peace, governance, social stability, and development trajectory of Somalia (Mohamed, 2009; Mohamed, 2009).

The major concerns are not being sufficiently examined such as how the U.S. policies changed with time, whether interventions accepted the structural causes of the conflict and how the Somalia civilians viewed the intervention- a factor that is crucial in determining legitimacy and acceptance among the locals (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Ethical and legal aspects should also be further explored, particularly in terms of sovereignty, the problem of human rights, and the international law (International Crisis Group, 2010). Besides, the role of regional powers like Ethiopia, Kenya, and African Union, along with world Powers dictating U.S. policy, is unexplored.

There is a remarkable gap that relates to the long-term socioeconomic impacts of interventions by the U.S. Although the literature talks of security and humanitarian features, there is limited research that is methodically evaluated to examine the way in which American intervention influenced economic growth, institutional stability and social cohesion in Somalia (Mahad, 2010). The current literature is therefore an incomplete explanation of the overall implications of the U.S. intervention in Somalia.

The proposed study addresses this gap by undertaking an in-depth examination of the U.S. interventionist strategies in Somalia. It considers history, change in foreign policies, how operations have worked, civilian attitudes, ethics, and the socioeconomic consequences over the long term. The idea is to produce knowledge that can be used to develop more effective, context-dependent policies that would advance peace, stability, and sustainable development in Somalia and to lead to larger discussions about external intervention in fragile states (Ahmed, 1999; International Crisis Group, 2010).

2. Literature Review

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The case of the U.S. intervention in Somalia can be understood by looking at the historical, social, and political processes in the country and the development of the American foreign policy leading to, throughout, and after the crisis. The Somalia and U.S. intervention literature includes government policy reports, military reports, scholarly discussions, interviews and first-hand accounts. Taken together, this literature gives the picture of the situation in Somalia, the decision-making process in the U.S. and U.N., the issue of operation, and the process of reshaping American policy of peacekeeping in 1993.

The most common scholarly analyses are based on the historical and sociopolitical background of Somalia. The Federal research division provides a detailed review of the Somalia society, clan affiliations, colonial history, and economic system and geographical characteristics in Somalia: A Country Study (Federal Research Division, 1993). This publication highlights the importance of clan identity to the political life of Somalia, a factor that is paramount in the realization of why outsiders were mostly unable to enforce centralized authority. The analysis of the pre-crisis history of Somalia also helps to emphasize the impact that the colonial demarcations, Cold war intervention, and dictatorial leadership of Siad Barre had on transforming the nation into such a fragile state that the global community would see in the early nineties (Kapteijns, 2003).

To realize the motive behind the United States intervention in Somalia in 1992, there is need to consider the U.S. foreign policy before the crisis. The major documents like the 1993 National Security Strategy indicate how the Bush administration focused on early intervention of the unstable regions to avoid human disaster and regional spillover (United States. President. 1995). The 1993 and 1994 approaches emphasized the enhancement of the United Nations and promotion of the regional solutions, whose concepts defined the U.S. move to support the collapsing UN mission in Somalia (Mingst & Karns, 2019). These policy papers show that Somalia became a guinea pig of humanitarian interventionism after the Cold War.

There is a lot of literature on U.S. military and diplomatic activities in Somalia. The most authoritative are the two works, Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned by Kenneth Allard (1995) and The Effort to Save Somalia by Mohamed, (2009). Allard offers a functional review of the efforts of military planners in the U.S. to connect the tactical missions and the national goal and identifies the challenges that the forces had to encounter in a contingent and factional environment (Allard, 1995). Basing his work on Joint Staff archives and interviews, Mohamed (2009) is able to recreate the decision-making practices in the Bush/Clinton administrations and provides an understanding of the discourse of national security, which varies throughout the time (Mohamed, 2009).

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The other important contribution is the Somalia and Operation Restore Hope by Hirsch and Oakley (1995). The book has a special insider opinion as it was the U.S. Special Envoy, Ambassador Robert Oakley, who was present at the most critical periods of the intervention. Hirsch and Oakley examine the political and diplomatic blunders that made the cooperation between UNITAF and UNOSOM II difficult, particularly the strained handover that changed the course to humanitarian assistance to the enforcement of a peace (Hirsch and Oakley, 1995).

My Clan Against the World by Baumann and Yates (2003) offers a chronological account of military actions, providing the way in which tactical choices like the infamous Abdi House raid influenced the attitude of Somalia civilians and the further rise in the war. Their contribution is that the collateral damage weakened the legitimacy of the UNOSOM II and this created hostility towards foreign forces (Baumann & Yates, 2003).

The greater background of UN interventionism is discussed in the book United Nations Interventionism 19912004 which finds that Somalia has shown structural constraints in UN command, mandate precision, and domestic political knowledge (Berdal and Economides, 2007). Equally, the development of policy during the Clinton years has been greatly explored in UN Peacekeeping, American Policy, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s (1996) by Durch that reports the reevaluation of the role of peacekeeping by the Presidential Review Directive 13 and the ultimate creation of PDD-25 that limited the future participation of the U.S. in riot management by the UN.

Another significant literature area is the peacekeeping doctrine. The U.S. Joint Publication 3-07.3 (Peace Operations) and U.S. Army Field Manual 100-23 (Legitimacy, impartiality, and local ownership) express the principles of legitimacy, impartiality, and local ownership, which are the criteria in evaluating Somalia mission (U.S. Department of Defense, 2012; U.S. Army, 1994). These manuals brought into codification the lessons of Somalia, and the value of the support of the common people, of the local legitimacy, and of the understanding of the extent of the mission. Similarly, the Peacekeeping Fiascoes of the 1990s by Joes (2003) criticizes the same element on the fact that the UNOSOM failed in its doctrinal and structural mutations, which took place in the 1990s and then influenced a more restrained U.S. posture towards peacekeeping in Somalia.

Specifically, political aspects of the crisis are addressed by such works as Somalia: The Clan-Based Conflict and Prospects for Peace Mohamed Osman (2012) that examines the process of social fragmentation and failed reconciliation efforts. Brad Loubser (2012) bury illuminates that

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humanitarian intervention failed without the concomitant political strategies of dealing with clan rivalry and local politics. A number of research studies and first-hand documents contribute to this literature basis. The article by Menkhaus and Ortmayer, Key Decisions in the Somalia Intervention (1995) traces out the decision points that influenced U.S. interventions, between the reaction to famine and the response to killings of Pakistani peacekeepers and the passing of U.S. helicopters. The reports of the UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in the early 1991 are an invaluable account of the talks of the UN, ceasefire efforts, and the shifting of the UNITAF to the UNOSOM II (Bariagaber, 1996). In the article of Joint Force Quarterly written by General Joseph Hoar, the author explains the concept of coalition management and the necessity to adjust the force composition to humanitarian goals (Hoar, 1993). The article by Walter Clarke (1993), Testing the Worlds resolve in Somalia (1994), condemns the lack of connection between military victory and a coherent political approach by stating that, the success of UNITAF brought about expectations that the UN could not fulfill.

Wrong Turn in SomaliaHesse (2016) opposes the Bush exclusive humanitarian agenda with a Clinton one endorsing a broader nation building role of the UN, arguing that UN operations can hardly succeed without a solid U.S. hand in direction. A Harvard study written by Gasbarri (2018) gives a profound insight into the way the NSC deliberated the PDD-25 development, how Somalia was able to remake U.S. policy on multilateral operation (Gasbarri, 2018). The literature on public opinion is also a significant section of the review. The polling data in the U.S. Public Opinion and Intervention in Somalia by Logan (1996) lists the increasing decline in support as the numbers of casualties and expanded mission scope went up. Her study shows that the lack of legitimacy at home was declining concurrently with increased risks of operation in foreign countries.

Lastly, Boutros-Ghali, in his influential Empowering the United Nations (1991) puts Somalia into the larger perspective of post-Cold War peacekeeping in which an augmented United Nations capacity is necessary which was initially endorsed by the U.S. before subsequent political blowback (Boutros-Ghali, 1991). Collectively, the literature demonstrates that Somalia turned into a point of contention in the U.S. foreign policy that demonstrated a discrepancy between its political ambitions, military capacity, UN coordination, and the reality on the ground. All these pieces highlight how mission creep, lack of proper political strategy, and the lack of understanding of the local dynamics helped to bring about the tragic conclusion of the intervention and reformed American policy over decades.

3. Operation restore hope

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
Available Online: 30 June 2025

Operation restore hope is one of the most significant humanitarian interventions of the United States in the post-cold war era. The move to intervene militarily in Somalia in December 1992 did not happen overnight; it was the result of a complicated balance between humanitarian concerns, the bureaucratic tension, media pressure, changes in strategic interests, and individual interests of the elites in the U.S. government. The book starts in July 2000 where Lieutenant Colonel Rick Stevens had just been appointed to the National Security Council office of Africa Affairs. When his superior asked Stevens to do a thorough review of the Somalia intervention of 1992, Stevens waded through ancient NSC papers and went through his own experience of providing humanitarian airlift to Kenya and Somalia during operation Provide Relief. His assignment is reflective of the extent to which Operation restore hope had been ingrained in institutional memory, as an epitome of both what humanitarian intervention can accomplish and what it can do.

In order to see the rationale behind the intervention, one would have to refer to the unfortunate breakdown of the state apparatus in Somalia, as a result of the overthrow of President Siad Barre in January 1991. The overthrow of Barre resulted in a flood of competition between the remnants of government in the form of clan-based militias. Competing groups took over ports, airfields and food supply routes and used hunger as an instrument of political leverage. As a result of the absence of a central government, Somalia was reduced to a mosaic of violent strongholds controlled by warlord leaders who would regularly raid humanitarian convoys. The international relief agencies like the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders tried to work but the violence paralyzed them. Towards the end of 1991, the famine in Somalia was one of the worst in recent history: almost a million Somalias fled to their neighboring states, and another million had flocked around towns and relief points in search of food. When the U.S embassy in Mogadish was evacuated early in 1991 it left the U.S with virtually no diplomatic strength or intelligence on the ground and came up with a severely inaccurate forecast of the magnitude of the crisis.

The USAID was the first to issue warnings within the United States government, and it kept referring to Somalia as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. In early 1992, Assistant Administrator Andrew Natsios simply told Congress that mass starvation was taking place with a catastrophic scale and that 90 percent of children under five years old in Somalia were severely malnourished. However, USAID did not have a significant role in the bureaucratic apparatus of the foreign policy of Washington; its warnings did not have the necessary political force to move senior leaders. The State Department, with its focus on the wars in the former Yugoslavia and domestic political issues was not keen on suggesting intervention in a forceful manner. One of the key personalities in the Bush administration, Secretary of State James Baker was heavily

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
Available Online: 30 June 2025

consumed with the reelection campaign of President Bush and he was only marginally interested in East Africa. Moreover, since the embassy was closed, there was no longer the traditional source of diplomatic pressure, foreign service officers who handed in their daily reports with reality on the ground.

As Washington was indecisive, the world was growing more and more outspoken. This alarmed Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1991), the new Secretary-General of the UN. Based on the reports of the Egyptian embassy that remained active in Somalia, he advocated hard to take action at an international level. UN Security Council decisions at the start of 1992 permitted minimal humanitarian operations (UNSCR 733 and 751), however UNOSOM lightly armed military was no opposition to warlords with well-equipped armies who systematically plundered food deliveries. As death due to famine continued to increase, NGOs, OAU, Arab League, and the international civil society continued mounting pressure on the Western powers and above all the United States, to come in.

The turning point is registered during the summer of 1992 when the American media drastically raised the coverage of the famine. Images of emaciated Somalia children were broadcasted on television, and people were outraged at it. This CNN effect changed the political landscape in an extremely dramatic way. Ambassador Smith Hempstone in Washington sent a cable in which he wrote A Day in Hell and a USAID evaluation mission headed by Jim Kunder warned President Bush that up to a quarter of Somalia kids under five had already been killed. Senators Nancy Kassenbaum and Paul Simon in the Congress orchestrated urgent action and Congressional investigations on Somalia propagated. Though congressional resolutions were not binding they caused a symbolic pressure at a critical moment.

President Bush in turn responded to the mounting public outcry by sanctioning Operation Provide Relief in August 1992, a humanitarian airlift that would avoid using ground routes that were being looted by Somalia militias and deliver food directly into Somalia via Kenyan bases. The airlift was however not enough to alleviate famine conditions since distribution points were still controlled by local militias. The food had to be transferred over the battle lines, even when in the air, since relief flights had to carry cargo. In October and November, 1992, intelligence estimations and reports prepared by the UN indicated that famine could not be declined without a sound military presence.

In Pentagon, there remained distrust on a mission as a result of the 1983 Beirut bombing and the Powell Doctrine which demanded clear goals, overwhelming force and exit strategy of any

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
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mission. Numerous defense officials were terrified as Somalia might become a guerrilla war in which there was no distinct enemy. The visit by General Colin Powell in Somalia made him believe that a huge American led force would be able to stabilize the situation within a short time. The plain Somalia country and the obvious humanitarian goals appeared to be easier to handle than the mountainous Bosnia and the ethnic warfare.

By mid-November, the deliberations at the NSC had been narrowed down to three policy alternatives. The former of these, to preserve the status quo, was not tolerated at all. The second one suggested an UN-led coalition which would be logistically backed by the United States but without the American ground troops. The third most ambitious was the one that demanded that the U.S. led a multinational military force that would ensure key humanitarian corridors and distribution of safe food. The Bush administration was tempted toward the third option as the humanitarian crisis increased and the UN cried out to assist.

The individual factors were also undoubtedly influential. President Bush, who just lost his reelection, hoped to pass a moral leadership legacy in office. It brought back memories about the famine that he had seen in 1985 on a visit to Sudan and the images of starving children aired in media during the thanksgiving season hit him hard. At the same time, the international legitimacy of the intervention was provided by the urgent request of Boutros-Ghali to the Security Council to take the necessary measures.

Bush invited a definitive NSC meeting on 25 November 1992, shortly before the Thanksgiving. The majority of advisers had come to endorse an intervention by the U.S. The current Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger was on his way to New York to hold talks with the UN and Boutros-Ghali was quick to rally Security Council behind the operation. The Council voted on 3 December to approve Resolution 794 that authorized a U.S.-led multinational force. The following day, President Bush spoke to the country and made the mission look like a purely humanitarian affair. U.S. Marines were deployed to the beaches of Mogadishu on 9 December 1992, thus starting Operation Restore Hope.

When Lt. Col. Rick Stevens carried out his research years later, the interviews with the former officials brought to attention the questions that stayed indefinitely: how much the bureaucratic process influenced the intervention, whether the media pressure played the decisive role, whether Somalia was a new step in the history of strong multilateral humanitarian intervention in the post-Cold War world. Operation Restore Hope therefore continues to be a study of humanitarian

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determination and a warning on how unpredictable military intervention is in complicated civil wars.

4. Recommendations

The policy proposals outlined on the U.S. policy towards Somalia underline that the Obama administration has to grapple with the fact that the challenges of counterterrorism issues, namely, the fear of al-Qaeda seeking refuge on Somalia soil still looms over all other policy deliberations. It limits creativity and does not allow generating long-term political solutions, which is a narrow focus. The deep-rooted animosity of different Islamist groups to international intervention aggravates the U.S. endeavors even more. At the same time, there is scanty indication that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) can transform into a legitimate government as it lacks the political support, internal disintegration, and internal incompetence in its administration. It has failed to protect AMISOM against blame and this has discredited the peacekeepers as an aggressor but not a neutral party. Under this condition, the TFG and AMISOM not able to realistically stop the proliferation of al-Shabaab or stop the formation of al-Qaeda cells within Somalia.

There no quick turnaround to U.S. support of the TFG, especially following the high-commitment promises made to the people by the Secretary Clinton. In addition, the dumping of the TFG might deconstruct the UN mediation structures. Nonetheless, any further assistance should be strictly conditional on any improvement that can be measured. In the event that this progress does not take place, the United States needs to organize with the African Union and the UN to reorganize the TFG into a more inclusive form of governance. The existing presidential system which is based on the old 4.5 clan-quota system is inherently undemocratic and has created a cumbersome parliamentary system of 550 members that is filled with diaspora leaders. A technocratic prime minister with a much smaller council of leaders, such as Sheikh Sharif, would make a more viable power structure. Another solution in the long run involves local communities elected representatives of their own, however, in the short run, the TFG needs to be re-packaged as a space of political discourse rather than as a would-be territorial government. This implies that all foreign military assistance aimed at growing control of TFG must be stopped.

By letting the radical and fundamentalist actors engage in political talks on the same level as the TFG, the move may help in achieving a political solution. This can also contribute to the isolation of transnational jihadists who are integrated in al-Shabaab. But there are drawbacks to

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
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success such as the core fundamentalists may take over a reconstructed government or Ethiopia and other regional powers unwilling to have an Islamist-based leadership. These are indeed serious issues but these problems are inevitable in any realistic course that would be taken by Somalia.

The U.S. must also be ready in case of the probable breakup of the TFG and possible retreat of the AMISOM troops. As opposed to anticipations, this might not significantly empower al-Shabaab since the group has already taken control of key southern ports that it can be used to bring in fighters, money and weapons. The first issue linked to a Shabaab conquest of Mogadishu is symbolic, an international humiliation, and logistical, since the takeover of the port make al-Shabaab more accessible to external resources. The global society may have to think about options like a naval blockade to reduce the import of foreign products. Humanitarian access would then be based on negotiations with the Shabaab commanders as well as the influential clan-business networks. However, taking control of the remaining blocks in Mogadishu would not make much difference in al-Qaeda ability to develop deeper roots in Somalia, particularly with the internal wrangles between the radical and moderate branches of Shabaab.

Considering the weaknesses of the structural capacities of the TFG and the lack of global enthusiasm in major new undertakings, the United States ought to be guided by a policy of constructive disengagement. This strategy is similar to modified containment because it involves both limited, focused counterterrorism actions and more aggressive measures of reducing external assistance to al-Shabaab and enabling internal options to extremist governance.

The counterterrorism operations should be based on a population-centered approach that reduces the number of civilian casualties. The Bush administration has been accused of using past U.S airstrikes which caused extensive collateral damage contributing to anti-American feelings. The 2009 precision strike on al-Qaeda leader Saleh Ali Nabhan by the Obama administration is discussed as a model, thoroughly planned, accurate, and carried out in a remote location, which minimized the number of civilian casualties. Other operations like these can be conducted at the cost of weakening transnational terrorist capabilities without compromising on the larger political and humanitarian goals.

The other recommendation that necessary is the U.S to take a neutral position which promote fragmentation in al-Shabaab. The American strategies and policies such as over-generalization of terrorism groups have unwillingly given Shabaab a hold over various Islamist groups. Also, the

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
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U.S. laws against terror financing have curtailed humanitarian aid to areas controlled by Shabaab escalating the suffering and increasing resentment. Another more realistic course of action would be to open the negotiations with the nationalist or opportunistic Shabaab elements that are ready to abandon transnational jihadist ambitions, accept humanitarian interventions, and avoid attacking the region. Another precedent is the experience of reintegrating low and middle level Taliban members in Afghanistan. Even a selective operation of the U.S. terror lists to take away some Somalia Islamist leaders would serve as leverage to make political participation.

In the long run, the opportunities arise to provide solutions to the deeper structural problems of Somalia as soon as the anti-Western mood end. It is important to note that Somalia is sharply polarized regarding what its future state unitary, federal or confederal and considerability of the Islamic law. International schemes, ethnic quota designs or external designed reconciliation conferences have failed time and again. Political stability requires real power-sharing amongst clans. Thus, the activities of the international community must change the focus on top-down governmental prescriptions to promoting decentralized development initiatives.

The models of local development that are regionally based like the USAID and UNDP supported Local Development Councils (LDCs) which consist of clan elders and religious leaders should be extended. The workability of community consultations can be evidenced by local women organizations such as the SAACID that have been able to implement such programs in Mogadishu successfully. These decentralized channels may be used in developing infrastructure projects, health systems and schools which later incorporated into regional economic networks. As can be established, economic development has already established informal governance structures; enhancement of such networks may eventually establish the groundwork to national institutions.

The diplomatic involvement is also required to be fortified. The U.S. ought to liaise better with Europe, Middle East, and the UN in order to ensure that conflicting efforts do not disqualify each other. Despite the tradition of the European Union in assisting in state-building, its assistance to the TFG has declined, leaving a loophole in terms of diplomatic repositioning. The Middle East states, especially Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have to be reached out to eliminate the perception that the U.S. policy is unfriendly to Islam. Nevertheless, the intervention of Yemen must be viewed with some caution because of its domestic instability and the possibility of escalating tensions.

Ethiopia is still a heart of things: any government that comes up in Somalia and is perceived as unfriendly by Ethiopia threatened militarily. Washington has to strive in discouraging unilateral

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
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Ethiopian interventions and in addition, urge Addis Ababa to deal with human rights abuses and seek democratic reforms.

The U.S. must also be prepared to respond to the activity of the Shabaab in the states of Somalialand and Puntland by increasing the presence of diplomats and development in these states. Notably, Washington should avoid the urge to militarize the problem of piracy, which may cause the networks of pirates to join forces with extremist groups. Rather, strengthening the local awareness campaigns, youth employment programs, and business -community plans in Puntland can help to undermine pirate power.

Lastly, it is also a source of diplomatic advantage through piracy. The U.S. would resolve grievance, centuries-old grievances used by the pirate organizations against it, and such an action would abate localism in favor of piracy and enhance international legitimacy by pushing a UN Security Council resolution to protect Somalia waters against the illegal act of fishing and dumping toxic wastes. On the whole, the policy suggestions include a realistic, decentralized, and politically adaptable approach of the United States policy one that puts Somalia agency first, keeps the harm to the minimal and recognizes the constraints of the American influence on a highly fragmented environment.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion insists on the point that the initial U.S. mission in Somalia initiated by President George H. W. Bush had rather limited humanitarian objectives: provide food and go. These were objectives that were broadly believed to have been attained. At the time of Clinton administration however, the mission became lost. Clinton only deployed a limited number of U.S troops to UNOSOM II not out of strategic need but to show political allegiance to the United Nations. The U.S. Quick Reaction Force (QRF), whose purpose is to be strictly an emergency backup force, slowly became involved in bigger UN missions.

When the policy of Clinton changed to support the ideas of nation-building in the UN as stated in Resolutions 814 and 837, military and political officials began to rumble in discoordination. Whereas the military-diplomatic partnership of Operation Restore Hope was effective, UNOSOM II did not have cohesive strategy. The U.S diplomats were not able to re-energize negotiations with Somalia groupings, and senior military officials were taken by surprise at the abrupt political transformations. Military action was still insistent as the Secretary of Defense stressed it at the same time when the State Department tried fresh diplomacy. This is the

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
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fragmented strategy that led to U.S. expansion towards the priorities of the UN without a logical political strategy.

Mission creep was increased when the QRF was continually deployed way out of its brief. Raids of disarmament, which were made without any clear goals or end states, prompted increased aggression, and not security. The organization of the QRF had not been reshaped to match its increased responsibilities and its activities had little relation to the greater political ambitions of reconciliation. The more the UN and the U.S. regarded General Aideed and the Somalia National Alliance as the enemy, the less credibility and the neutrality needed in maintaining a peaceful situation in the country the United States had.

The use of Task Force Ranger also demonstrated the lack of relations between the political objectives and the military strategy. Even when military leaders questioned the benefit of targeting Aideed, the Clinton administration gave a go-ahead on the mission. It would not have solved the deep clan divisions of Somalia or build the institutions of a nation even had TF Ranger been successful in capturing Aideed. Military activities did not come to a pause even though the threat level was rising such as an increasing usage of RPGs by the Somalia fighters, and the assaults on American helicopters. Importantly, Secretary Aspin did not even get the armored support request that would have enhanced the security of the Rangers. The catastrophic battle of October 3, 1993, which became known as the Black Hawk Down, was the catalyst of the fast departure of the U.S. and the breakdown of American political determination.

The Somalia experience demonstrates that the UN mandates are not able to replace effective planning politically, precise purposes, and feasible end states. Operational commanders are unable to construct consistent strategies in cases where political ambitions are ambiguous or unrealistic, hence the failure of missions and their further intensification. The U.S. could be very successful in terms of the battles but lose the political war in general as General Garrison has predicted. The UN also showed that it was incapable of peacekeeping in the place where there is no real peace or political agreement.

The conclusion also cautions that peace operations as such jeopardize the U.S. legitimacy when they strive to enforce external forms of governance. Sustainable peace cannot be an outcome of military initiatives, but of culturally minded political participation. The lessons are not limited to Somalia, but to the activities of the U.S. in other states like Bosnia, where political interests, military power, and local acceptability are hard to unite. In the future, the text recognizes that al-Shabaab has a severe internal and social opposition, which will be difficult to conquer over

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Date of Acceptance: 27 june 2025
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Somalia in the long term. However, it is still years away before meaningful political settlement and national governance is realized. Although the U.S. needs to proceed with the realistic evaluation of terrorism threats, it must also be ready to assist with rebuilding under the Somalia leadership in cases where the opportunity arises. In the end, the wish of the Somalia society towards peace will find its way back, providing opportunities of reconciliation and building in the future.

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