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Peace Operations: A Comparison of Somalia and Haiti

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Note:

Conclusions

About the Authors

Mandate and Advance Planning

UNOSOM II was officially established by UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 814 on March 26, 1993, four months after the U.S.-led multinational force (UNITAF) had begun, and less than six weeks before UNOSOM II was to take over. Both operations were authorized under Chapter VII of the UN charter, but UNOSOM II was explicitly authorized to employ coercive force for a much broader mandate, covering more territory. Little planning had been done by the UN, and U.S. planning on behalf of the UN was not effectively integrated. Despite strong urging by the United States, no UN planners were sent to Somalia before the arrival of the UNOSOM II Commander and Deputy Commander in late March, 1993.

Because of this lack of planning, the top UNOSOM II military commanders had no understanding of the transition; the number, capability, or concept of employment of their forces; or the rules of engagement (ROE). Their staff consisted only of that assembled hastily for them by UNITAF from its component units which would stay for UNOSOM II and they received only weak support from the inexperienced, undermanned, and overworked UN Secretariat staff. (At this time the Secretary General's military advisor had a staff of only two officers. Two years later, by the time planning began for UNMIH, this office had expanded to over one hundred experienced officers). Given this background, it is not surprising that UNOSOM II encountered the difficulties it did.

Preparations for Haiti were better. The U.S.-led Multi-National Force (MNF) and the follow-on UN-led UNMIH were established by UNSC Resolution 940 on July 31, 1994. The mandates were very similar. The UN Secretariat and the United States started planning for UNMIH shortly after its approval eight months before UNMIH was to take over. A 60-person UN planning team went to Haiti in October 1994 to work with the MNF, and experienced personnel of the UN Secretariat worked closely with U.S. planners from the U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) and the Joint Staff. There were numerous visits and interchanges of ideas between the U.S. and the UN, leading to a mutually approved transition plan and a subsequent plan for on-going UNMIH operations. This included an intensive two-week training

session in early March for UNMIH staff. Politically, the experienced U.S. Ambassador provided continuity for the UN in understanding and dealing with the Haitians, working closely with both the MNF and the UNMIH. Support from the UN Secretariat after the transition, supplemented by USACOM, has been satisfactory. Thus, there was a more reasonable mandate for Haiti with more experienced and numerous planners preparing for UNMIH well in advance.

Size and Composition of Forces; C3

For UNMIH, the force envisaged is 6,000 down from 20,000 in MNF including the 550-person U.S. Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in U.S. camouflage not UN white painted vehicles and helicopters. The retention of 550 U.S. Special Forces soldiers in Haiti's interior provides a significant stabilizing capability UNMIH would otherwise lack. Some 5,500 of the 6,000 personnel were present at the time of transition on March 31. The 12,000- person UNOSOM II force at the time of transition was too much reduced in size and capability (see table); the UNMIH force appears to be well-sized to the military requirements of Haiti.

In Somalia, the United States and the UN badly misunderstood the size and composition of military force which UNOSOM II would need to maintain security, even before the mandate was explicitly modified on June 5, 1993 to include bringing Aideed's Somali National Army (SNA) to justice. The psychological impact of the May 4, 1993 departure of U.S. combat forces from South Mogadishu with their tanks and helicopters, and their replacement by Pakistanis without tanks emboldened Aideed. The Pakistani unit in his territory was weaker and it stopped the night patrolling and other aggressive tactics the U.S. Marines had used so effectively to maintain dominance. It also stopped the daily dialogue with Aideed's commanders which had been used to reduce tensions. At the outset, UNOSOM II had serious command, control, and communications problems, stemming from inadequate planning, absence of clear doctrine, and inadequate communications and liaison between HQ and component units. There was confusion over the roles of the UN Secretary General, the Under Secretary for Peacekeeping, the Secretary General's Special Representative, the Turkish Force Commander, and the U.S. Deputy Commander. Politically, the U.S. Special Representative departed Somalia just before the UN Special Representative arrived, leaving a substantial gap in understanding and dealing with Somali factions.

FORCES	MANDATE	SIZE AND COMPOSITION
UNITAF (Somalia; U.S. Control)	UNSC Resolution 754 3 December 1992 Chapter VII of the UN Charter	40,000 including 28,000 U.S. Force included significant armored vehicles and helicopters. Reduced to 9,500 by March 93
UNOSOM II (Somalia; UN Control)	UNSC Resolution 814, 26 March 1993 Chapter VII of the UN Charter	20,000 planned, including 4,200 U.S. (1,200 Quick Reaction Force and 3,000 logistics personnel). At time of transfer of control, only 12,000 personnel available. Few armored vehicles or helicopters. Maximum size realized was 16,000 personnel
MNF (Haiti; U.S. Control)	UNSC Resolution 940 31 July 1994 Chapter VII of the UN Charter	20,000 mostly U.S. Reduced to 6,600 by March 95.
UNMIH (Haiti; UN Control)	UNSC Resolution 940, 31 July 1994 Chapter VII of the UN Charter	6,000 planned, including 2,400 U.S. (550 Quick Reaction Force and 550 Special Forces)

For Haiti, the United States and UN provided effective command, control and communications. There

was little difference perceptible in Haitian eyes between the MNF and UNMIH. The Special Representative of the Secretary General in Port Au Prince is a former Algerian Foreign Minister with extensive experience in peacekeeping operations and in personally negotiating civil conflicts (e.g., Lebanon's civil war). He was in Haiti as early as January 1995 to ensure a smooth transition. The UNMIH commander, a U.S. major general, commands U.S. and foreign units that were on the ground together for over a month before the transition. Patrolling in both the capitol and the interior has continued at previous MNF levels.

Use of Military Force

Neither the makeshift UNOSOM II HQ staff nor the weak UN Secretariat had experience organizing and commanding such a large, complex multinational operation, the first ever authorized to use military force under Chapter VII. There was no standard UN military doctrine for an operation so different from the usual Chapter VI UN peacekeeping. Nor did they understand the unusual Somali political/cultural context well enough to foresee that the more intrusive mandate of UNSC Resolution 814 and the Somali perception of UN weakness risked a major confrontation with armed Somali factions posing a real military threat (i.e., urban guerrilla warfare). UNITAF had achieved its mission without precipitating a conflict, more aware of the explosive potential of the situation on the ground and determined not to take sides or make permanent enemies. However, UNITAF was fully prepared, should a major confrontation come, by virtue of the powerful, experienced U.S. contingent and because other UNITAF component forces generally accepted and followed standard U.S. military doctrine.

In both Somalia and Haiti, the U.S. concept was to deploy overwhelming force; to use political dialogue to persuade potential adversaries to avoid conflict; and to be ready either to apply decisive force against opposition or to exercise maximum restraint when the mission could be successfully achieved without force. In both cases, this concept led to unopposed landings and deployments of forces. The isolated incidents of later resistance in both countries were dealt with swiftly, with minimal U.S. casualties, while political dialogue continued. The U.S. and coalition forces in both countries quickly established a dominating physical and psychological presence, even in Somalia where the militancy, xenophobia, and available weaponry of the potential opposition were far greater than in Haiti. At the time of transfer from the United States to the UN, the security situation in both countries was without significant, active armed threat (although armed banditry was present in both, it was much worse in Somalia). In Somalia, there was a potential for major armed opposition to UNOSOM II just below the surface. Security problems in Mogadishu began very soon after UNITAF withdrew. In Haiti, security problems did not increase during the first month of UNMIH.

Other Problems: Disarmament and Police

There was only a vague concept of disarmament for UNOSOM II, but it was broader and more provocative than that practiced by UNITAF. Additionally, there were neither plans nor resources for demobilization or job creation for the armed militias. In fact, there was almost no further disarmament. Moreover, heavy weapons moved to the interior or controlled during UNITAF were brought back into Mogadishu. For the MNF and UNMIH, there was a carefully thought-out common concept and plan, begun by the U.S., that had rounded up almost all heavy weapons and had started systematic, limited searches for caches of small arms identified by intelligence reports as threatening. UNMIH has continued, with the same U.S. forces, to disarm gradually and keep weapons under control. Neither the MNF nor UNMIH has undertaken house-to-house searches. UNMIH has significant, although not fully adequate plans and resources for demobilization and job creation.

UNITAF mobilized local resources and created an interim Somali security force of over 4,000 former police, who, although poorly trained, assumed a useful role in Mogadishu and other locations. UNOSOM II was much less supportive, saw the police as a long-term civilian function and removed the military backing provided by UNITAF, including contingents at each police station in Mogadishu. This left the police with little communications and logistics, and vulnerable to the much better armed faction militias. They melted away when combat began between the SNA and UNOSOM II.

For MNF and UNMIH there was full joint recognition of the urgent need for a Haitian police force. Detailed plans developed and implemented by the MNF included the transfer of responsibility and resources to UNMIH on March 31. The 600 international police monitors (900 under UNMIH) and the police training academy established by the United States, augmented by the 4,000-member Interim Public Security Force (IPSF), became the core of the UNMIH civilian police operation. The working relationship between the Haitian police and U.S. military units (Special Forces in the interior, MP's in the capitol) remains unchanged under UNMIH.

Long Term, Strategic Issues

One of the most serious vulnerabilities of UNOSOM II was the intrusive mandate in UNSC Resolution 814. As applied in practice, the mandate took on the label of "nation building" a determined effort backed by military force to bring into being new, formal Somali political and administrative structures at the local, regional, and national levels. It was assumed that Somalis needed outside direction and help to build new institutions rather than rebuild on the basis of Somali tradition. UNITAF avoided such an approach, instead encouraging Somalis find their own institutions. The UNOSOM II effort generated major cultural and political tensions in Somalia, including significant military opposition from certain groups (such as the SNA, who felt the UN was hostile). Any realistic hope of success would have required greater commitment of military and economic resources and political will over a longer period than was acceptable to the United States and other UN member states.

The existence of albeit weak, government institutions and a constitution makes Haiti different. Also, the Governor's Island agreement involving Aristide and his opponents further defined the political parameters for resolving conflicts. In practice these agreements have been uncertain and elections have been postponed several times. However, the United States, by means of an active bilateral assistance program of over \$200 million annually, plus outstanding work by some 200 U.S. Army Civil Affairs reservists and 1,200 Special Forces personnel, has provided adequate near term support to make the system work. Those efforts energized the moribund government ministries and ensured a modicum of administrative and social services in both Port Au Prince and the interior. Elections for Parliament and local officials are on track for early this summer.

The United States had the approval and cooperation of the UN, including UNMIH, which assumed formal responsibility on March 31, to work with the Aristide Government on elections, creation of a new security force, a reformed and retrained judicial system, and other issues. The United States and the UN are endeavoring to establish respect for human rights, democracy, honest administration, the rule of law, and at least peaceful coexistence between Aristide supporters and the former regime supporters. This is not consistent with Haiti's past and is complicated by largely subsurface tensions amongst various Haitian groups, and between them and the United States and UNMIH. However, in sharp contrast to Somalia, there are no well-armed, aggressive Haitian militias, and there is little likelihood of organized para-military conflict with UNMIH. There is much greater support for democratic values.

How long will it take to achieve an acceptable degree of reform in Haitian institutions and governance,

and will the United States and the international community sustain their involvement and investment until this has been achieved? Some of the best-informed, most experienced senior officials from the United States and other engaged governments estimate that the United States and international commitment could require roughly 10 years rather than the March 31, 1996 date set by UNSC Res. 940 for the termination of UNMIH.

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