

Mission to Somalia



Joint Combat Camera Center

The deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to Somalia is a typical post-Cold War mission and a radical approach to peace-enforcement by the international community. The military undertook Operation Provide Relief to halt mass starvation in an anarchic state. Soon afterward international forces joined Americans in the United Nations Operation in Somalia or UNOSOM. By year's end, as the magnitude of the task became clear, the United Nations enlisted international support under U.S. leadership to mount Operation Restore Hope. Successful completion of that effort marked the beginning of the present phase of activity. To assess the overall situation in Somalia *JFQ* has sought contributions from four Americans with unique qualifications. In the first article a leading academic specialist on military affairs observes that Somalia may be a new contingency, but it is a well-worn role for our forces. He warns against using largely noncombat operations to determine military requirements. In the second article, a former Presidential envoy to Somalia reviews U.S. and U.N. decisionmaking, and assesses the mission thus far. Next, the CINC with responsibility for operations in Somalia provides a detailed survey of what U.S. forces have done in the past year and offers some thoughts on future humanitarian missions. And as a conclusion, the last American ambassador to Somalia praises Operations Provide Relief and Restore Hope while cautioning that assertive peace-enforcement may set a dangerous precedent.

These contributions were completed in September 1993 as events in Somalia grew more violent and doubts were raised in many quarters over the mission.