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# The Successes and Failures of the Battle of Mogadishu and Its Effects on U.S. Foreign Policy

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# The Successes and Failures of the Battle of Mogadishu and Its Effects on U.S. Foreign Policy

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## Abstract

The Battle of Mogadishu, more commonly referred to as “Black Hawk Down,” was one of the most controversial conflicts in the second half of the twentieth century. It left a lingering question in people’s minds: was it a success or a failure? While certainly there were many failures and casualties throughout the mission, based on a military definition, it was a clear cut success; Task Force Ranger (TFR) accomplished the objective of the mission, despite significant losses, by retrieving the two targets assigned them. Both the failures and successes of the mission, as well as the overarching Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, however, have impacted U.S. foreign policy and strategies for three presidential administrations. The question is not whether the events throughout the battle impacted foreign policy and strategy. Rather, the question is how significantly they were affected. Arguably one of the largest American special operations missions in recent history, the events of the battle have been thoroughly examined by the United States government and military in order to effect change in both realms. Examples found in places such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur point to a refusal by the United States to commit ground troops in an unstable situation, providing air support at a maximum. Following the foreign policy failure within Somalia in the early 1990s, except for the situation in Iraq/Afghanistan, the United States has refused to act as the global police force it was so well known to be in the 20th century. This paper will attempt to prove that both the successes and failures of Operation Restore Hope and Operation Gothic Serpent directly caused this change in foreign policy.

## Keywords

Battle of Mogadishu, Operation Restore Hope, Operation Gothic Serpent, Special Operations, Somalia, 1993, Mogadishu, Bosnia, Darfur, Rwanda, genocide, foreign policy, Clinton, Bush

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# The Successes and Failures of the Battle of Mogadishu and Its Effects on U.S. Foreign Policy

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## Introduction

In the early 1990s, the United States dealt with an international incident that altered its foreign policy for the next two decades. The political disaster in 1993 Somalia so drastically affected the United States government that American involvement in future crises such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur was all but nonexistent. Not only did Operation Restore Hope (the United States' code name for the peacekeeping project in Somalia) directly impact the response to these three disasters, but these events impacted each other as well. This shift in policy was in stark contrast to the previous half-century worth of American peacekeepers and military personnel's involvement abroad. In the fifty years previous to Somalia, the United States involved itself in numerous East Asian countries to combat communism. It unwaveringly entered locations such as Lebanon, Grenada, and the Persian Gulf in the form of humanitarian relief and anti-government forces.

However, after the Somali incident, the world watched the United States government avoid involvement in nearly every international incident that arose, including the United Nations (UN) classified genocide in Rwanda in early 1994. The only exception to this was the drastically different War on Terror, which the United States entered in late 2001 as the result of an attack on American soil, not an initial effort of military or humanitarian assistance. Many scholars have argued that the war was an anomaly on both the national and international policy stages due to the shift from solely humanitarian and peacekeeping intervention to military action.<sup>1</sup> Excluding the War on Terror, this trend of non-intervention still controls U.S. foreign policy in the present day, made clearly evident by the

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Kaldor, "10 Years After September 11," Social Science Research Council, September 11, 2011, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/a-decade-of-the-%E2%80%9Cwar-on-terror-%E2%80%9D-and-the-%E2%80%9Cresponsibility-to-protect%E2%80%9D-the-global-debate-about-military-intervention-2/>.

lack of adequate military support in Syria since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2012.

The world suffered unimaginable losses through the events in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. These events were much more catastrophic than the multitude of engagements the United States had interfered in throughout the previous forty years, all of which were under the guise of global peacekeeping. The world quickly questioned why the United States shifted from constant intervention in small conflicts to all but ignoring blatant genocide.

When the conflict in Rwanda occurred in 1994, scholars began searching for the causation between the events of Somalia and American non-intervention. Publications such as the *Foreign Policy Journal* and *Foreign Affairs* almost immediately linked the two together, and since then, numerous articles and works have been written on the subject.<sup>2</sup> The most notable work written on the battle (after the battle's declassification in the late 1990s) was *Black Hawk Down* by Mark Bowden, a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The historical community generally agrees that the incident in Somalia drastically impacted the Clinton administration to adjust its foreign policy. Their opinion only differs on the degree to which it was impacted. Regardless of the stance authors take, however, almost every scholarly work on the subject tends to address Presidential Decision Directive 25, which President Bill Clinton issued in 1994. Following the Battle of Mogadishu, the mission in Somalia's turning point, the Clinton administration initiated the plan for a six-month withdrawal of all troops. It also published a presidential directive dictating the immediate change in foreign policy doctrine in March of 1994, one month prior to the genocide in Rwanda. This directive has been the foundation for United States foreign policy in the past twenty years, and the two presidents that have served since then have yet to change this foundation.

## Somalia

In order to paint an adequate picture as to why this shift in policy occurred, researchers must first examine Somalia and the events that transpired there. Following the death in 1991 of General Siad Barre, the warlord who united and controlled most of Somalia for nearly twenty-two years, the remaining warlords began a contest for power. This contest terrorized Somalia until 1993, when one leader began to rise over the rest. This leader was General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who had been starving the populous. According to an article in *Air Power History*, "an estimated 300,000 Somalis died from starvation."<sup>3</sup> Aidid's

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1996), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/somalia/1996-03-01/somalia-and-future-humanitarian-intervention>.

<sup>3</sup> F Marion, *'Heroic things': Air Force Special Tactics Personnel at Mogadishu October 3-4, 1993* (September 2013),

militia was capturing food crates that the United Nations had been dropping on the coast, and he used starvation to gain power over the populous. To control the problem, the United States originally sent in twenty thousand Marines who quelled the situation temporarily, restored order, and then pulled out of Somalia.

As soon as the Marines left, however, General Aidid declared war on the remaining UN peacekeepers. This continuous unrest led to the Clinton administration's decision to insert Task Force Ranger under General William Garrison's Operation Restore Hope in late August 1993. The American response force, however, was only part of the larger United Nations operation (code name UNSOM), which initially saw success. "In those [first] five months, it worked pretty well. People forget the early successes of Operation Restore Hope to feed the hungry and break the famine," said John L. Hirsch, an adviser to the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia (Robert Oakley) as well as the U.S. commander of the mission (Lieutenant General Robert Johnston).<sup>4</sup> The operation in Somalia had created an early hope for the UN that peacekeeping could be taken to a new level; they believed that "a matrix could be crafted [in Somalia] for future operations in other global hotspots."<sup>5</sup> Following the Battle of Mogadishu, however, the blueprint for saving the world's weakest links was shredded and "American policy changed virtually overnight."<sup>6</sup>

The Battle of Mogadishu, more commonly referred to as "Black Hawk Down," was one of the most controversial conflicts in the second half of the twentieth century. However, Task Force Ranger (TFR) accomplished the objective of the mission, despite significant losses, by retrieving the two targets assigned to them. Task Force Ranger (TFR) was a mix of several American special operations units. Rangers, Delta Force operators, Para-Rescue operators, Combat Controllers, Navy SEALs, and Night Stalkers were all part of the one hundred-sixty man unit assigned to Mogadishu, Somalia in August 1993. Every unit sent to Mogadishu had one thing in common; they all had "the skills required to handle any terrorist incident."<sup>7</sup> They were assigned to Mogadishu, or the "Mog," in response to the growing unrest and starvation in the city. The situation was not resolved, however, and in just under two weeks "American ground troops were fighting with militias close to the main United Nations

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<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/'Heroic+things'+air+force+special+tactics+personnel+at+Mogadishu...-a0369914461>

<sup>4</sup> Paul Alexander, *Fallout from Somalia Still Haunts Us Policy 20 Years Later*, *Stars and Stripes*, October 03, 2013, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.stripes.com/news/fallout-from-somalia-still-haunts-us-policy-20-years-later-1.244957>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> C Beckwith, *Delta Force: The Army's Elite Counterterrorist Unit* (New York: Avon Books, 1983) p.158

compound,” according to a September 13<sup>th</sup> *New York Times* article.<sup>8</sup> Not only had fighting erupted between TFR and the militias almost immediately upon their arrival, but the Battle of Mogadishu was also not the first time a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter had been shot down by the rebel groups. Stated in a second September *New York Times* article, “three Americans were killed early [September 25<sup>th</sup>] when Somali gunmen hit an American Blackhawk helicopter with a rocket-propelled grenade.”<sup>9</sup> This event marked the first UH-60 to actually go down over Somali airspace.

Three major issues existed that, despite the mission still being a success, plagued it before it even started. First, Somali morale was at a high leading up to the Battle of Mogadishu because of the repeated barrages against American and UN operations, chiefly the destruction of the Blackhawk. This made the daunting task of the battle painfully obvious. Second, the greatest hindrance came from the task force’s own government. Leading up to the battle in the summer months of 1993, the Somalis had greatly exaggerated the number of civilian casualties in the failed attempts to capture General Aidid. This, along with pressure from foreign political forces, had caused the Clinton Administration to cave in on their support for using mass casualty producing weapons in a reduction of the rules of engagement (ROE), something that TFR desperately needed. General Garrison had requested AC-130 gunships and M1 tanks from the administration due to the seriousness of the mission, but they were both denied him based on this new ROE. When the thirty-minute mission turned into an overnight fiasco, these weapons could have been the difference between life and death. The third and final issue came from General Garrison himself. General Garrison had posted a twenty-five thousand dollar reward for information on the location of General Aidid. Instead of helping Garrison, however, the reward ended up working against him. The painfully small amount of reward money led many people in Mogadishu to believe that the Americans were saying Aidid and the entire Somali populace were not worth anything. Major Roger Sangvic, an analyst for the United States Army, remarked about the reward in his paper, saying, “In retrospect, the reward had the opposite effect to that which it was intended to have. SNA members considered the UN reward an insult because it was so small. The reward reinforced what Aidid told his clan members: the UN was interfering in Somalia’s internal struggle. Instead of weakening Aidid, the small reward further unified support for Aidid.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite the issues plaguing the mission before it even began, TFR was still given the green light to conduct a raid under the codename Operation Gothic Serpent. The object was to

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<sup>8</sup> “Militias and U.N. Troops Fight in Mogadishu,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/13/world/militias-and-un-troops-fight-in-mogadishu.html>

<sup>9</sup> “3 Killed as U.S. Chopper Is Shot Down in Somalia,” *New York Times*, September 25, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/25/world/3-killed-as-us-chopper-is-shot-down-in-somalia.html>

<sup>10</sup> R Sangvic, *The Battle of Mogadishu: Anatomy of a Failure* (Fort Leavenworth, 1998) p.9.

apprehend General Aidid's top two lieutenants. High priority members of Aidid's militia, including the two lieutenants, were supposed to be meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at three o' clock. The meeting was to be held in the Olympic Hotel, which was in the center of Bakaara Market, the most hostile district in the entire city. 1<sup>st</sup> SFOD-D, more commonly referred to as Delta Force, operators were to be dropped both on and around the building by four AH-6 "Little Birds," small helicopters that carried four operators apiece. They were to go into the Olympic Hotel, clear it out, and detain the approximately twenty prisoners inside. Coinciding with the Delta operators, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment personnel were to fast rope into the objective from Black Hawk helicopters to provide outer security on all four corners of the building. The four "chalks" were under the control of Captain Steele, who would stay on the ground with the men during the entire fight. Once the Delta Force operators had secured the hotel, Lt. Colonel Danny McKnight, in charge of the whole operation from the ground, would come in with his HMMWVs (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles) and flat-bed cargo trucks to load up the men and prisoners and ex-fill from the objective back to the base. The entire operation was supposed to take less than an hour. Instead of only an hour, however, the mission turned into a nightmare, taking almost fifteen hours to complete; some would call it "the bloodiest single combat episode involving U.S. casualties since Vietnam."<sup>11</sup> After only "20 minutes, the Somali leaders had been captured,"<sup>12</sup> but the fight was nowhere near over.

Two primary mishaps occurred throughout the battle that contributed to the lengthy execution. The first of which was communication, specifically with the aircraft. Aircraft played a huge part in this mission, both good and bad. One of the aircraft involved was the Orion spy plane, which flew above the battlefield throughout the duration of the mission, relaying directions through a team of forward observers to the men on the ground. Garrison's biggest tactical error in the entire mission was deciding that the Orion spy plane should give directions to the convoy. The problem was that the plane gave directions to the pair of forward observers who then relayed the information to the drivers on the ground. Because of the delay, the information took a substantial amount of time to get to the convoy leaders, causing the convoy to pass their turn before they even got the directions. TFR sustained most of its casualties while in the HMMWVs, which could have been minimized if they had not kept making wrong turns. Howard Wasdin, remembering the mission, remarked, "The Orion spy plane could see what was happening but could [not] speak directly to McKnight. So it relayed information to the commander at the Joint Operations Center (JOC). Next, the JOC commander called the command helicopter. Finally, the command helicopter radioed McKnight. By the time McKnight received directions to turn,

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<sup>11</sup> J Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu: Testing U.S. Policy in Somalia* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998) p.xiv

<sup>12</sup> S Southworth and S Tanner, *U.S. Special Forces* (Cambridge: De Capo Press, 2002) p.49



he'd already passed the road.”<sup>13</sup> Despite the aircrafts' failings, they provided much needed fire support throughout the entire mission. For instance, late at night when one group was pinned down in the city, the “Little Birds” performed strafing runs, saving the entire element from destruction. Aircrafts as a whole, however, were more detrimental to this mission than beneficial.

General Garrison's second tactical error was the timing of the mission. No one, however, can truly be blamed for the timing of the mission; the command staff could not change it because the militia members they wanted to capture were meeting at a set time. There were four major problems with this timing. First, since it was during the middle of the day, Bakaara Market was full of hostile civilians. Second, instead of the militia being asleep or disbanded, they would be high on khat, a hyperactive Somali drug that made them even more combat effective. The third and the most obvious problem was that they did not have the cover of night to their advantage. Since the TFR men had night vision goggles (NVGs) and the enemy did not, a night mission would have been ideal in order to provide TFR with a much-needed technological advantage. The real tactical error, however, came from the men not bringing their NVGs at all. Since the mission was only supposed to take thirty minutes during the height of the day, the men thought they were non-essential. Once the mission continued into the night, however, the men desperately needed NVGs to provide a tactical advantage over the enemy. The fourth and final issue with the daytime raid came from Aidid's force's ability to provide an early warning of the impending attack. Rather than being an extremely covert mission, it turned into a citywide ordeal as soon as the helicopters departed the UN base. When asked if his forces knew about the attack beforehand, Captain Haad, one of Aidid's militia leaders, said, “as soon as the aircrafts took off from the air bases we immediately knew.”<sup>14</sup> The timing of the raid blocked complete success from the mission, but it was something that could not have been avoided.

Despite all the tactical and political failures that occurred throughout the two blood-filled days, the mission was still a success in military terms: the objective was completed. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines success as “the correct or desired result of an attempt.”<sup>15</sup> In TFR's case, the “correct” result was the capture of Aidid's two high-profile lieutenants, which, despite all the friendly casualties, actually happened. A *New York Times* article from the day of the attack clearly defined the outcome of the battle: “About 20 members of a faction led by a fugitive Somali fighter, Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid, were

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<sup>13</sup> H Wasdin and Stephen Templin, *Seal Team Six: Memoirs of an Elite Navy Seal Sniper* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011) CH. 13

<sup>14</sup> “Interview Captain Haad,” *Frontline* (PBS, 1998)  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ambush/interviews/haad.html>

<sup>15</sup> “success,” *Merriam-Webster.com* (2014) <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/success>



taken into custody during the United Nations operation.”<sup>16</sup> Ignoring the statistics proving that the actual objective of the mission was completed, many military and historical figures have still argued the battle as a failure, almost always based on moral and ethical repercussions as opposed to the actual military outcome. The loss of life, especially the amount lost in a short sixteen-hour battle, could never be perceived as a victory. When analyzing a military feat, however, the success must also be analyzed in militaristic terms, something the critics of the battle failed to do. One of the more outspoken critics of the battle, United States Army Major Sangvic, in his paper *Battle of Mogadishu: Anatomy of a Failure*, based his entire thesis on describing the battle as “the failed U.S.-led effort to capture the Somali warlord, Mohammed Farah Aidid, on 3-4 October 1993.” In reality, however, he could not have been farther from the truth; he completely misrepresented the facts. Although Operation Restore Hope, the overarching operation for the UN forces in Somalia, was primarily focused on stopping General Aidid, Operation Gothic Serpent, the Battle of Mogadishu, was only focused on capturing Aidid’s lieutenants and was never directly about capturing him. Mark Bowden, author of *Black Hawk Down* and the largest public compilation of data on the battle, said this about it: “In strictly military terms, Mogadishu was a success.”<sup>17</sup> This directly focused on TFR’s completion of the actual mission, something that Major Sangvic failed to grasp: TFR captured the two key leaders of the militia.

After the fifteen-hour fight between TFR and the whole of Mogadishu, TFR still managed to capture both of Aidid’s lieutenants despite brandishing an over fifty-percent casualty rate. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, including the two Delta Force members who “gave their lives saving the injured pilot”<sup>18</sup> of *Super Six Four*, and another seventy-three were wounded. There were, however, several negative political repercussions. After the disastrous attack, President Clinton, in his address on Somalia, stated that “all American troops [would] be out of Somalia no later than March the 31st.”<sup>19</sup> As a result, American forces were pulled out of Somalia. The chaos and starvation resumed almost immediately because, “following the failure of Operation Restore Hope, the whole country, including Mogadishu, came under the authority of competing warlords.”<sup>20</sup> After the U.S. troop’s withdrawal, the remaining UN troops were too small to handle the vast challenges that

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<sup>16</sup> J Cushman Jr., “5 G.I.’s are Killed as Somalis Down 2 U.S. Helicopters,” *New York Times*, October 4, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/04/world/5-gi-s-are-killed-as-somalis-down-2-us-helicopters.html>

<sup>17</sup> M Bowden, “A Defining Battle,” *Inquirer*, November 16, 1997, <http://inquirer.philly.com/packages/somalia/nov16/rang16.asp>

<sup>18</sup> P Collier, *Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty* (New York: Artisan, October 1, 2003) p. xviii

<sup>19</sup> Bill Clinton, *Address On Somalia (October 7, 1993)*, in the Miller Center, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/speech-4566>.

<sup>20</sup> F Grunewald, “Aid in a City at War: The Case of Mogadishu, Somalia,” *Disasters* 36 (July, 2012): S111

Somalia's failed state had created. Pakistani troops continued to be killed in shocking numbers as they tried to maintain peace. Soon, they too completed their own withdrawal, leaving Somalia to fend for itself. The battle also resulted in an official investigation by the Department of Defense. The investigation displaced almost all of the leadership of Task Force Ranger and placed on General Garrison, the commander of TFR, complete fault for the incident. He accepted full responsibility for the outcome of the mission and retired from the Armed Forces three years later in 1996, the day after Aidid was killed.

The most significant repercussions of the battle were not the investigations or the troop withdrawals but rather the policy changes and aftereffects. One of the most important results of the battle was Presidential Decision Directive 25. Eric Heinze, in his article on U.S. foreign policy changes resulting from the incident in Somalia said, "PDD-25 was the doctrinal lynchpin [against involvement in Rwanda and Darfur]. Developed against the backdrop of the Somalia meltdown, it severely circumscribed the conditions under which the United States would participate in peacekeeping. Among other things, PDD-25 required that U.S. participation in any UN operation must 'advance US interests.'"<sup>21</sup> The directive also limited U.S. participation in UN missions and support for other nations carrying out those UN-sanctioned missions. In order for the United States to engage in peace enforcement operations under the new directive, "the threat to international peace and security [must be] considered significant; US participation is necessary for... success;" and "the role of US forces [must be] tied to clear objectives and an endpoint for US participation can be identified."<sup>22</sup> This directive, under these new guidelines, marked the policy restraints for non-involvement in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

The United States' demeanor changed following the catastrophic loss of life in Mogadishu. "The punch in the nose that we got — the loss of 18 soldiers in Somalia — basically set us back on our heels as a country. It contributed to a reluctance to engage for purely humanitarian reasons where there was a reasonable risk of combat," said retired Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, who served in Somalia and on later humanitarian missions. This reluctance to engage in military action took hold of the Clinton administration almost immediately. Only a week following the battle, the USS Harlan County was ordered to withdraw from the Haitian harbor of Port-au-Prince due to a riot of fewer than two hundred lightly armed demonstrators in which there were no American injuries.<sup>23</sup> The fight also revealed another significant truth: Americans had still not recovered from the Vietnam complex. In an al-

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<sup>21</sup> E Heinze, "The Rhetoric of Genocide in U.S. Foreign Policy: Rwanda and Darfur Compared," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (Fall, 2007): p. 363.

<sup>22</sup> Donald Daniel, "Us Perspectives On Peacekeeping: Putting PDD 25 in Context" (Naval War College Report, August 01, 1994), 2, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a288845.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Roberto Fabricio, Key Moment For U.S. In Haiti Was In 1993, *Sun Sentinel*, September 18, 1994, accessed March 23, 2016, [http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1994-09-18/news/9409170327\\_1\\_haitian-dock-mood](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1994-09-18/news/9409170327_1_haitian-dock-mood).

Qa'ida document captured in Afghanistan in 2001, a correspondent had written that "[America] fears getting bogged down in a real war that would reveal its psychological collapse at the level of personnel and leadership. Since Vietnam, America has been seeking easy battles that are completely guaranteed."<sup>24</sup> For a century, the United States had been the premier global military power, yet in both Vietnam and Somalia, leadership failings and psychological losses caused the nation's leaders to develop a fear of any significant involvement. The United States wanted to view the events in Somalia as a short ordeal, refusing to commit a large enough force to accomplish the mission and failing to examine it as the time-consuming, nation-building project it was. This eventually resulted in the failed state the world sees today. Even worse, this change in policy and the American mindset remained when the last U.S. troops pulled out of Somalia, and it continued to affect involvement decisions for years, most significantly in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

## Rwanda

Rwanda was the site of an ethnic cleansing: the largest U.N. defined genocide since the massacre of the Jews in WWII. The Rwandan Genocide was a mass slaughter of Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda by members of the Hutu majority. From April 7 through mid-July 1994, an estimated eight-hundred thousand to one million Rwandans were killed, constituting as much as seventy percent of the Tutsi and twenty percent of Rwanda's total population.<sup>25</sup> Members of the political elite within the country planned the genocide. They received strong support from the Rwandan army, the National Police (gendarmierie), government-backed militias including the Interahamwe, the Impuzamugambi, and the Hutu civilian population, all from which they garnered their combatants.

The genocide occurred during the ongoing Rwandan Civil War, a conflict beginning in 1990 between the Hutu-led government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The RPF was mainly composed of Tutsi refugees whose families had fled to Uganda following earlier waves of Hutu violence. Pressure from the international community, however, resulted in a ceasefire in 1993 while the groups planned the Arusha Accords: an agreement that would create a power-sharing government with the RPF. Many Hutu, including several of the political elites within the country, viewed it as conceding to enemy demands. The RPF military campaign also intensified support for the "Hutu Power" ideology. This portrayed the RPF, mainly comprised of Tutsi, as an alien force intent on reinstating the Tutsi monarchy and enslaving Hutus, a prospect met with extreme opposition. Genocidal killings

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<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Runkle, "The Lost Lessons of 'Black Hawk Down'," War on the Rocks, 2013, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://warontherocks.com/2013/10/the-lost-lessons-of-black-hawk-down/>.

<sup>25</sup> "Genocide In Rwanda," United Human Rights Council, accessed March 23, 2016, [http://www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide\\_in\\_rwanda.htm](http://www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide_in_rwanda.htm).

began soon after. Soldiers, police, and militia quickly executed key Tutsi and moderate Hutu leaders then established checkpoints and funnels around the country, using Rwandans' national identity cards to systematically kill the Tutsi. The soldiers recruited and pressured Hutu civilians to arm themselves with anything they could find in order to slaughter their Tutsi neighbors, destroying or stealing their property as they went. The breach of the peace agreement led the RPF to restart its offensive and rapidly seize control of the northern part of the country before capturing Kigali in mid-July, bringing an end to the genocide.

During these events and in their aftermath, the United Nations and countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Belgium were criticized for their inaction; this included their failure to strengthen the force of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) peacekeepers. In fact, rather than bolstering the amount of troops in the country once the killings began, “the UN Security Council voted to reduce the number of peacekeepers in UNAMIR from 2,100 to 270, making their principal task negotiating a ceasefire between the belligerents.”<sup>26</sup> U.S. officials reasoned that continuing with the UN operation would invite a disaster similar to the kind witnessed in Somalia just a few months prior; they believed a lack of security interests was equivalent to a lack of interest.<sup>27</sup> If only a testament to this fact, the White House was the first to advocate a pullout of UN troops from Rwanda during the genocide, not a beleaguered Belgian government that had just suffered the brutal murder of ten of its soldiers. These UN troops served as a last line of defense for tens of thousands of terrified Tutsi civilians.<sup>28</sup> The Clinton Administration even went so far as to refuse to call it genocide officially; they believed officially labeling the conflict as genocide required the United States to take action. According to an article in *The Guardian*, “senior officials privately used the word genocide within sixteen days of the start of the killings, but chose not to do so publicly because the president had already decided not to intervene.”<sup>29</sup> The official U.S. line was that the killings in Rwanda were not genocide but were part of the resumption of hostilities in the civil war, a situation that by its very definition precludes the use of peacekeeping troops.

In an effort to explain why the United States did not intervene, a writer for *Stars and Stripes* said, “when Rwanda’s genocide began days after the last U.S. troops left Somalia, the U.S. and U.N., stung by the recent failures and unwilling to undertake such a massive operation

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<sup>26</sup> Eric Heinze, “The Rhetoric of Genocide in U.S. Foreign Policy: Rwanda and Darfur Compared,” *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 3 (Fall, 2007): 364.

<sup>27</sup> Colum Lynch, “Genocide under Our Watch,” *Foreign Policy* (April 16, 2015), accessed January 21, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/genocide-under-our-watch-rwanda-susan-rice-richard-clarke/>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Rory Carroll, “Us Chose to Ignore Rwandan Genocide,” *Guardian*, March 31, 2004, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/mar/31/usa.rwanda>.

again so soon, hesitated to intervene in tribe-on-tribe slaughter.”<sup>30</sup> The eighteen deaths in Mogadishu, less than six months before the genocide began, only hardened the administration’s resolve to oppose an ambitious new peacekeeping operation in a country with few historical links to the United States. The American death toll in Somalia and PDD-25 that came as a result of those deaths secured the fate of the Rwandan populace. “It was effectively a straitjacket for U.S. decision-making, vis-a-vis various kinds of peacekeeping operations,” said John Shattuck, the Assistant Secretary of State at the time. “PDD-25 was the U.S. equivalent of the withdrawal of Belgian forces after the killing of the peacekeepers, in the sense that it gave a ‘green light’ to the genocide planners.”<sup>31</sup> The situation in Rwanda remained relatively contained in its geographical region, the Rwandan Civil War offered no endpoint for American forces, and American forces were not necessary for success. Therefore, the situation in Rwanda contradicted every guideline for United States involvement in the genocide. The United States continued to hesitate while the death toll continued to rise. Even after the killing began, the White House was more focused on getting Americans and the U.N. out of Rwanda than coming to the aid of Rwanda’s victims, as evident by the massive reduction in force by the UN. White House documents, secured through Freedom of Information Act requests, confirm accounts that portray the Clinton administration as reluctant to play the role of global police force following the recent failures in Somalia.<sup>32</sup> While President Clinton never stated that American inaction in Rwanda directly resulted from the incident in Somalia, all evidence points towards that being the case. PDD-25 came as a result of the incident in Somalia; numerous reports from within his administration stated that the fight in Mogadishu altered the outcome in Rwanda. UNSOM marked the critical turning point in a half-century of global involvement that ended with the United States refusing to commit significant troop numbers to any humanitarian mission for two decades.

## Bosnia

Somalia’s impact on United States foreign policy also became evident in the Balkans following the collapse of the USSR. As part of the dissolution of the USSR in the early 1990s, the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina (a Yugoslav republic) declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Over the next several years, Bosnian Serb forces, with the backing of the

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<sup>30</sup> Paul Alexander, *Fallout from Somalia Still Haunts Us Policy 20 Years Later*, *Stars and Stripes*, October 03, 2013, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.stripes.com/news/fallout-from-somalia-still-haunts-us-policy-20-years-later-1.244957>.

<sup>31</sup> Colum Lynch, “Rwanda Revisited,” *Foreign Policy* (April 05, 2015), accessed January 21, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/genocide-under-our-watch-rwanda-susan-rice-richard-clarke/>.

<sup>32</sup> Colum Lynch, “Genocide under Our Watch,” *Foreign Policy* (April 16, 2015), accessed January 21, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/genocide-under-our-watch-rwanda-susan-rice-richard-clarke/>.

Serb-dominated Yugoslav army, targeted both Bosniak and Croatian civilians. This resulted in the deaths of roughly 100,000 people by 1995, of which eighty percent were Bosniak.<sup>33</sup> Far from seeking independence for Bosnia, Bosnian Serbs wanted to create a dominant Serbian state in the Balkans known as the “Greater Serbia” that Serbian separatists had long envisioned. In early 1992, the United States and the European Community recognized Bosnia’s independence. Only two days later, a Serb-dominated Yugoslav army, along with Bosnian Serb forces, bombarded Bosnia’s capital, Sarajevo. The army attacked Muslim-dominated towns in eastern Bosnia, including Zvornik, Foca, and Visegrad, effectively removing Bosniak civilians from the region in a brutal process that later was identified as “ethnic cleansing.” Ethnic cleansing differs from genocide in that its primary goal is the expulsion of a people from a geographical area and not the actual physical destruction of that group, even though the same methods, including murder, rape, torture and forcible displacement, may be used. Despite the Bosnian government forces’ valiant effort to defend the territory, Bosnian Serb forces controlled nearly three-quarters of the country by the end of 1993 and set up their own Republika Srpska in the East.

The United Nations refused to intervene in the Bosnian conflict, but its High Commissioner for Refugees spearheaded a campaign providing humanitarian aid to many victims. Two years later, in the summer of 1995, three towns in eastern Bosnia—Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde—remained under control of the Bosnian government. The UN had established safe havens in these cities in 1993. They would be disarmed and protected by international peacekeeping forces. On July 11, however, Bosnian Serb forces advanced on Srebrenica, overwhelming the battalion of Dutch peacekeeping forces stationed there. Serbian forces subsequently separated the Bosniak civilians at Srebrenica, putting the women and girls on buses and sending them to Bosnian-held territory while the men and boys were killed immediately or bussed to mass killing sites. Serb forces killed what is estimated to be 7,000 to more than 8,000 Bosniaks at Srebrenica.<sup>34</sup> Only a month later, Bosnian Serb forces captured Zepa and bombed a market within Sarajevo. Soon after, the international community began to respond more forcefully to the ongoing conflict and its ever-growing civilian death toll. After the Serbs refused to comply with a UN ultimatum that same month, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joined with Bosnian and Croatian forces to bomb Bosnian Serb positions and a ground offensive for three weeks. Serbia was unable to sustain three years of warfare because of UN placed trade sanctions and assaults on its military forces in Bosnia. Because of this, Serbia agreed to enter negotiations in October. In November 1995, the U.S.-sponsored peace talks in Dayton, Ohio resulted in the creation of a federalized Bosnia divided between a Croat-Bosniak federation and a Serb republic.

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<sup>33</sup> “Bosnian Genocide,” World Without Genocide, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/bosnian-genocide>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



The world once again questioned why the U.S. failed to intervene following the events in both Somalia and Rwanda. America continued to hesitate as Bosnia's civil war raged on, serving only in a support capacity to the UN's peacekeeping force that was all but powerless to stop the ethnic cleansing. America did not send ground troops to Bosnia until the end of the struggle, and even then they were kept far away from combat locations. *Stars and Stripes*, in an article recollecting the situation, said, "some American peacekeepers took part in the UN contingent after the Dayton peace agreement was signed, but they were in Tuzla, away from the hotter spots."<sup>35</sup> The forces placed in Tuzla were used only as a token force to feign support and intervention in the conflict, all while keeping American troops out of any imperative roles or ground fighting. With this tactic, it would be easy to withdraw troops in the event of a bogged down conflict like what was experienced in Somalia. For the troops that were left as the token force, the Rules of Engagement (ROE) were even altered following the debacle in Somalia. Lieutenant General Michael Rose, the former commander of the UN force in Bosnia, remarked, "peacekeepers under fire from or taken prisoner by Serb forces over the last two years [post-Somalia] were expected to turn the other cheek for fear of 'crossing the Mogadishu line.'"<sup>36</sup> Even when the United States attempted to take a leading role in the region, it was still without significant ground troops; air power was used to dominate the enemy forces, a tactic the United States has favored using in recent conflicts, such as in Syria.<sup>37</sup>

The incident in Somalia resulted in both attitude and official policy changes that shifted the way the United States handled Bosnia. Mogadishu so significantly affected the attitude towards operations in Bosnia that a senior State Department official remarked, "Bosnia was already almost dead in terms of United States participation in peacekeeping, but Mogadishu put the last nail in the coffin."<sup>38</sup> Both Congress and the Senate had constantly argued against involvement in the early months of the war prior to the Battle of Mogadishu. By late 1993 when the Battle of Mogadishu occurred, the Balkans peacekeeping project had already lost any of the support it had in the United States' administrative bodies. "[The

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Alexander, *Fallout from Somalia Still Haunts US Policy 20 Years Later*, *Stars and Stripes*, October 03, 2013, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.stripes.com/news/fallout-from-somalia-still-haunts-us-policy-20-years-later-1.244957>.

<sup>36</sup> Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1996).

<sup>37</sup> Dustin Walker, "Black Hawk Down: 20 Years Later," *Real Clear Defense*, October 03, 2013, accessed March 23, 2016, [http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2013/10/03/black\\_hawk\\_down\\_20\\_years\\_later\\_106897.html](http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2013/10/03/black_hawk_down_20_years_later_106897.html).

<sup>38</sup> Michael Gordon and Thomas Friedman, "Details of U.S. Raid in Somalia: Success so Near, a Loss so Deep," *New York Times*, October 25, 1993.



Battle of Mogadishu] also forced the administration to rethink and possibly scrap plans to use American troops for United Nations peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Haiti, and other trouble spots; plans that were central to its whole conception of foreign policy.”<sup>39</sup> Despite this early change in the American attitude, official policy changes did not come until later when Presidential Decision Directive 25 was created, which put severe restraints on the United States’ participation in UN peacekeeping missions. Following the creation of these documents, a senior State Department official remarked on the changes to American involvement with the UN missions by saying that, “hopefully some sort of concept of collaborative action with the United Nations will emerge, but it is not going to be what it was.”<sup>40</sup> When examining the situation under the lens of PDD-25, Bosnia remained similar to Rwanda; U.S. participation was not necessary to complete the mission and it did not offer an end goal, especially since troops were not inserted until after the Dayton Peace Accords. It was different, however, in that the ethnic cleansing within the Balkans posed significant international security risks due to the nations involved. This matched only one of the involvement criteria outlined by PDD-25. For this reason, the United States only sent a token amount of troops to Tuzla. Regardless, even if the presidential papers had never been created, the images of a dead American soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu after the raid changed the attitude within the American political system. This alone would have been more than enough to adjust the foreign policy of the Clinton administration. The damage had not only been done in Rwanda, but by 1995, in Bosnia as well.

## Darfur

Somalia affected a third humanitarian mission in those two decades: Darfur. Despite occurring under a new presidential administration and displaying minor differences from Rwanda, it was still a victim of the weight the incident in Somalia had placed on American politicians. During the conflict in Darfur, the Bush administration failed to take strong action, though it did react differently than the Clinton administration had in both Bosnia and Rwanda. The War in Darfur (a region of Sudan) began in February 2003 when the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel groups began fighting the government of Sudan, which they accused of oppressing Darfur's non-Arab population. The government responded to these attacks by carrying out an ethnic cleansing campaign against Darfur's non-Arabs. This campaign brutally killed hundreds of thousands of civilians and resulted in the International Criminal Court indicting Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir, for genocide and crimes against humanity. Although the Sudanese government publicly denies that it supported the Janjaweed (a militia group that

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

helped carry out the cleansing) evidence supports claims that it provided financial assistance, supplied weapons, and coordinated joint attacks, many against civilians. Mass displacements and coercive migrations forced millions into refugee camps or across the border, creating a humanitarian crisis. The Sudanese government and the JEM signed a ceasefire agreement in February 2010 with a tentative agreement to pursue peace. Following more attacks, however, a peace agreement has still not been signed.

In recent years, talks have begun between the Sudanese government and an umbrella organization for rebel forces, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM). On July 14, 2011, Sudan and the LJM signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). The Agreement proposed power sharing, a more equal distribution of wealth, and it committed to the work of the Darfur Regional Authority. At the third meeting of the DDPD in February 2014, further discussions were held on the integration of LJM battalions into the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and police. Little progress was made, however, in implementing the deal. The main rebel groups, which refused to sign, joined the People's Liberation Movement and formed a loose alliance known as the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), created in November 2011 with a national agenda. This made it difficult to engage parties on the DDPD, which only focused on Darfur. In April of 2013, the JEM-Sudan/JEM-Bashar (splinter groups of JEM) signed the DDPD, and after a brief freeze in implementation, they resumed the process in January of 2014. More rebel groups signed the DDPD, which was the peace processes' main achievement. However, the Darfur Regional Authority wound up in 2015 with modest accomplishments, giving the remaining rebels little incentive to invest in it. This has caused fighting in the region to continue, as evidenced by the surge in violence in 2013 and recent years. Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell described the situation as genocide, a view that the UN did not share.<sup>41</sup> Estimates of human casualties range up to several hundred thousand dead from either combat or starvation and disease.

Ten years after the events that transpired in Rwanda, the tragedy in Darfur was still facing the aftershock that the Battle of Mogadishu created. The Bush administration also treated it entirely differently. In Rwanda, Clinton and his staff refused to publicly address the killings as genocide (despite the region facing almost one million casualties) for fear of being forced into action as a result of the Genocide Convention. By Darfur, however, President Bush had a much better understanding of the convention and realized that labeling the events that transpired in Darfur as genocide did not necessarily require the United States to act militarily.<sup>42</sup> An article comparing the two tragedies noted that Darfur

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<sup>41</sup> E Heinze, "The Rhetoric of Genocide in U.S. Foreign Policy: Rwanda and Darfur Compared," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (Fall, 2007): p. 361.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

was called genocide much faster than Rwanda had been a decade prior. This was despite the fact that Rwanda was much more openly genocide and that very few ambiguous facts were known about Darfur.<sup>43</sup> President Bush took this newfound knowledge and used it to his advantage. Bush and his staff used publically declaring Darfur as genocide, even when the United Nations did not, as a means of escape from intervention. Officially using the term genocide was the United States' attempt at doing its part, and that was as much as it was willing to assist in the conflict.

Despite the lack of evidence pointing directly towards Mogadishu as the reason for America's inaction in Darfur, very little had changed in terms of foreign policy since Rwanda. Both the conflict in Bosnia and the Rwandan genocide had ended without the United States playing any significant role. The United States even refused to chase world-renown terrorist Osama Bin Laden in the late 1990s. In a Pentagon study on why America did not seriously pursue Osama Bin Laden prior to 9/11, Professor Richard Schultz concluded that "the Mogadishu disaster [had] spooked the Clinton administration."<sup>44</sup> Excepting the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan in the early 2000s, nothing had changed since the post-Somalia policy shift in 1993; PDD-25 was still in full effect. Examining this document's primary criteria for U.S. intervention displays that PDD-25 continued to restrict American forces. First, the genocide and civil war in Darfur remained contained within Sudan and posed no significant threat to the outside community. Additionally, Darfur had fewer casualties than both Rwanda and Bosnia. Second, American troops were not necessary in the effort to resolve the conflict, and the UN did not define a clear end-goal. Therefore, the United States continued to practice non-intervention, and Darfur was just as much a casualty of this method as the Rwandan genocide. This is clearly found when examining the similarities in the United States' response to these three situations.

Darfur marked the third time in only a decade that the United States' new foreign policy doctrine was clearly displayed to the world. The old foreign policy model had been the same for almost half a century: America played the role of global peacekeeper. Anytime a situation popped up in the world, no matter the size or significance, the United States government viewed it as its role to intervene. Initially, Somalia was just another case of humanitarian intervention for President Bush in 1992. This was during the battle for power after General Barre's death that resulted in the Somali civil war. Both the United States and the United Nations viewed the incident in Somalia as a chance to create the perfect blueprint for dealing with nation-building and peacekeeping operations. By 1993, however, the Battle of Mogadishu had shattered both the United Nations' blueprint and the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Benjamin Runkle, "The Lost Lessons of 'Black Hawk Down'," *War on the Rocks*, 2013, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://warontherocks.com/2013/10/the-lost-lessons-of-black-hawk-down/>.

United States' mold for foreign policy. Bill Clinton and his staff were quickly tasked with creating a new template for international and United Nations involvement following a political outcry. This outcry came after the United States suffered over ninety casualties and the capture of Chief Warrant Officer (WO4) Michael Durant, the pilot of one of the downed UH-60 Helicopters in Mogadishu.<sup>45</sup> Out of this mold came the policy that the United States has used to present day.

## Conclusion

Post Somali incident, the American response method remained the same in all three instances. Following this atrocity, the United States administration only provided a token form of support and then largely shied away from intervention in any significant manner. In Rwanda, the token support was the 270 man contingent left there. In Bosnia, it was the troops located out of harm's way and the air support for the UN. In Darfur, it was publically addressing the situation as genocide, contrary to the opinion of nearly every other international actor. Following the Battle of Mogadishu, America established a new rhythm when dealing with international incidents; Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur all fit the mold perfectly. Even without documentation linking President Bush's inaction in Darfur to events in Somalia, this was clearly the result of the firmly established foreign policy change in 1993, from which the United States has yet to stray. While many would argue that non-intervention in Darfur was a result of the American military already being spread thin in both Iraq and Afghanistan,<sup>46</sup> President Bush himself argued that non-intervention in Darfur was a result of lessons learned in Rwanda, which in turn was affected directly by events in Somalia.<sup>47</sup> The policy change resulting from PDD-25 had become firmly ingrained in the American political decision making process.

As the United States continues to face foreign policy decisions in locations such as Libya, Syria, and ISIS-controlled Iraq, the global community will watch to see if the United States adheres to its policy of non-intervention. To this point, the United States has still refused to intervene in both Libya and Syria, offering only token airstrikes and small surgical-strike

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<sup>45</sup> J Cushman Jr., "5 G.I.'s are Killed as Somalis Down 2 U.S. Helicopters," *New York Times*, October 4, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/04/world/5-gi-s-are-killed-as-somalis-down-2-us-helicopters.html>

<sup>46</sup> Sohan Japa, "Crisis in Darfur: A Framework for Assessing the Possibility of US intervention" (diss., Stanford), accessed March 23, 2016, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwilpqmtdjLAhUGsIMKHSyLBUoQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fweb.stanford.edu%2Fclass%2Fe297a%2FCrisis%2520in%2520Darfur%2520-%2520A%2520Framework%2520for%2520Assess>.

<sup>47</sup> Satyam Khanna, "Bush: 'Outside forces tend to divide people up,'" *Think Progress*, February 20, 2008, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2008/02/20/19695/bush-outside-forces-tend-to-divide-people-up/>.

teams in Syria and next to nothing in Libya.<sup>48</sup> Even the small presence in Syria would adhere to the current policy of non-intervention as the involvement is only occurring because the nation poses a significant security risk for the United States; both Russia and the United States are grasping for power in the country. The true test, however, will be in Iraq as the United States has already begun re-inserting troops to combat the Islamic State's push to retake the country. This will mark a decision point for United States foreign policy doctrine due to the drastic change the conflict has seen since the initial invasion of Baghdad in 2003. From 2003 until the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2011, the War in Iraq had been a direct result of national security interests following the attack on September 11, 2001. With ISIS on the rise in recent years, however, the United States has begun re-inserting troops to quell this uprising. If the U.S. does choose to reinsert mass amounts of troops, it will no longer be under the guise of retaliation for an attack like the war was from 2003-2011. Whether the decision comes because the American people have already invested interest in the rebuilding of Iraq over the past decade or because the U.S. is going through yet another morph of its foreign policy doctrine, ISIS-controlled Iraq will continue to be America's battleground both militarily and politically.

The political disaster in 1993 Somalia so drastically affected the United States government that American involvement in other crises such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur was all but nonexistent. No longer did the American people view themselves as invincible on the world stage; Somalia showed them they were vulnerable. The battle also marked the change in an era. 19th Century America was viewed as expansionist. The 20th century saw America take the role of global peacekeeper, and the 1993 incident in Somali marked the beginning of an era of non-intervention for the United States. Whether Iraq will truly be the end of the current foreign policy doctrine or not, the Battle of Mogadishu has left its permanent mark on America both in terms of the American attitude and the nation's policy making. With almost three million casualties combined in the tragedies in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur alone, the consequences of the Battle of Mogadishu and American non-intervention will not be soon forgotten.

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<sup>48</sup> U.S. troops in Syria, but is it enough to beat ISIS?, *CBS News*, December 15, 2015, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-troops-special-operations-forces-obama-syria-isis/>.

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