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The situation in Somalia and how the Somalis and international community can stabilize and feed its people.

The crisis in Somalia is multifaceted and complex. After the colonial powers Italy and Britain left in 1961, a brief, chaotic experiment at parliamentary democracy ended with the coup of Mohammad Ibrahim Egal by Mohammad Said Barre began a decades long dictatorship. This ended only to be replaced by a vacuum and the disappearance of Somalia, for all intents and purposes as a unified state. Into this poured clan warfare, disease, crop destruction, and the collapse of trade, vital in a country with arable land consisting of only 13% of the whole. These concurrent situations have unleashed anarchy and a vast civil war as many tribal militias and other militant groups, as well as the Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) have fought to achieve control over their portion of the lawless nation. The civil war that was unleashed has led to the deterioration of Somalia into anarchy, leaving the population to the hands of anyone with the means to seize and exercise power. The men who now hold power in Somalia either tend to hold philosophies that are a vivid danger to the Somali people, or care only for the expansion and maintenance of their power. The warlords have generally based their claims to power on tribal leadership, religion, nationalism, and control over the food supply. Many of these warlords are tremendously brutal and have exploited the scarcity of food to starve segments of the population into submission.

The geography of Somalia makes it nearly impossible for it to feed its people without trade, and a near fantasy to do so war torn, fragmented, and divided. In order to feed Somalia, it must be unified and pacified; the best candidate to attempt this is the democratic and internationally recognized TFG, with substantial assistance from the international community. The international community should provide the TFG because a lawless Somalia also poses international problems as well. Recent actions like rising piracy around the Horn, al Shaabab actions in Australia, and the refugee crisis in neighboring countries illustrate this point. Al Shaabab is an organization dedicated to the establishment of a radical Islamist state in Somalia. They gained power in the last decade as a powerful militia force and have strong ties to Al Qaeda, forming what is basically a Somali incarnation of Afghanistan's brutal Taliban. Recently a terrorist plot involving some members was foiled in Australia, indicating a possible new safe enclave for terrorist training and planning. A state without an effective method to police crimes is ideal for a terrorist group to use as a base to plan attacks against the Western World, and the longer Somalia remains fractured, the more likely a terrorist attack will occur. If Somalia remains divided and insecure, al Shaabab, or a group like it, will inflict another terrorist attack on the West.

This should be ample reason to gather international support to pacify Somalia. The war on terror has proven to be an effective standard to rally behind after September 11th, and should also prove to be able to support the West's support of the TFG. Robbing terrorists of a safe harbor and converting it into a democracy, based on the TFG, go hand in hand with feeding the Somali people, if only because stability is necessary to accomplish both.

The pirates actions are driven by desperation brought about by the civil war and endanger one of the most important trade routes in the world and imperil the oil supply of many countries, the United States included. Many pirates were fishermen who saw the wealth of passing ships contrasted against the poverty and absence of a better future in their own surroundings. Observing

the discrepancies, they armed themselves and opted to claim their piece of affluence floating off their shores.

If hope of a better future, without resorting to piracy, can be restored, these habits will start to diminish, and perhaps soon disappear altogether. Several things can be done to facilitate the restoration of hope to the coastal areas. Chief among these would be the TFG seizing and maintaining power, but other, more limited, options are available to pursue until this goal is realized. Already, a limited international naval task force is patrolling the seas around the Horn, confronting and engaging pirates wherever they are found. However, the large ransoms that are often rewarded for the safe return and capture of crew and cargo will still provide an attractive lure, especially when it is considered that very few pirates are found and subsequently destroyed. Because of the large area the pirates can infiltrate, faster vehicles, with a superior range are necessary to patrol the seas and respond swiftly to distress calls. Helicopters are ideal for this role, and even a lightly armed helicopter should prove sufficient to engage a hostile boat, pirates often using small fishing dinghies, with few men, on raids. These craft often sail below the radar, making it difficult for large craft to detect them. This advantage makes it necessary to actively patrol the Somali Coast and surrounding waters, which could possibly be a deterrent to piracy, and maybe interrupt ongoing raids.

Any distress call should be immediately responded to by the closest patrolling helicopter and the nearest naval vessel. If the ship's crew and cargo are secure, if it is possible, a well trained, well armed force could attempt to board the captured boat and engage the captors. This should only be attempted if the situation is deemed low risk to the lives of the crew aboard the captured ship and only if the cargo is not volatile. In any other situation the pirates should be negotiated with, and any reasonable demands ceded.

If any large ship is discovered being utilized by pirates to enable their raids, they should be promptly sunk. These "mother ships" have been used by large groups of Somalis to launch attacks from and the recent success of the Indian Navy in an engagement with one such vessel displays the ease they can be destroyed. These ships show a worrisome complexity and organization absent in smaller scale raids, and as such warrant a much harsher stand. Smaller craft should not be followed ashore, but the discovery of a "mother ship", even berthed, should be acted on swiftly and irretrievably. Any such craft's discovery on Somali shores should be revealed to the TFG. If the TFG is able and willing to capture or destroy the craft, they should be permitted and aided by naval force, if it is requested. If the TFG proves unable to strike, other powers should take steps to destroy the ship. Even if the ship is vacant at the time of the strike, its destruction should prove enough to disband the pirates.

Finally, rewards should be offered by the Transitional Government for information leading to the capture of pirates. The rewards could be funded by contributions for other nations and corporations that benefit from the results. The information should be verified by multiple sources, and only acted upon with extreme prejudice. The above measures should enable the TFG to gain some amount of legitimacy as a governing body, and encourage the coastal dwellers toward more legal methods of support, including, perhaps trade, which is essential in a desert country to feed the people. In a coastal country, the sea is usually the primary avenue of trade, and both are true of Somalia. A coast that is not teeming with pirates could very well lead to better trade relations, which could further decrease the levels of malnourishment, as well as increase the standard of living on the Somali coast.

The food the Somali merchants used to trade for has been partly supplanted by international aid from NGO's and the United Nations. However, many people still do not have

much to eat and struggle, day by day, to scrape together enough for their families to eat. This is evident in the 1992 famine where 300,000 died and led to UN intervention. The intervention failed, however, because the peacekeepers were unable to provide security for aid workers to distribute food in a meaningful, fair way. Many of the warlords would target food meant for civilians suffering from want. The warlords would then use the confiscated food and use it to feed their fighters and obtain cooperation from people under their power. In a place where food is scarce, often control of the supply for a segment of the population literally translates into complete control of that segment. Further evidence of this principle can be seen in North Korea, where Kim Jung Il uses power over the food supply to help reinforce his dominance over the nation. As aid food is pumped into Somalia, much of it is waylaid by these warlords and used to reinforce their power. The most powerful militias control the major ports of Mogadishu and Marka, where most aid comes in and where it has proven an issue to ensure their uncompromised delivery.

Though the Somalis are a nation, within it are many clans, tribes, and factions, all vying for control of the Horn of Africa. This struggle for control has triggered a food and security shortage in the country itself, as well as refugee problems in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, each of which also has a sizeable Somali resident population. These camps could act as sparking points in any future conflagration, in spite of the host governments' efforts to minimize such occurrences. These large displaced populations also provide a good recruiting ground for militias seeking young men to fight and continue the conflict; any attempt to either contain or stabilize Somalia's bloodshed should include screening and monitoring the camps, by either the host government, or by a strong, respected international body, such as NATO or the UN. These forces, however, should serve only as a police arm of the TFG, who should hold elections in these camps so the refugees have a stake and feel as if they still have chance at a better future. This should also help curtail any militia recruitments.

To further increase the power of the TFG in the camps, education should be provided. This education could be paid for by the UN, but credit for it, and curricular decisions should be given solely to the TFG. Education is the most important thing in providing a future, both for the young, individual Somali, and for the country as a whole. If ignorance is stripped away from the youth, they will grow less likely to throw away their future fighting, as well as less susceptible to the words of militia recruiters. As Somalia settles from its decades' long war, these educated refugees could very well provide a strong, stable working class to help rebuild the country. Educating the refugees provides for the long term health of Somalia.

A calmer, if not exactly tranquil, Somalia is necessary to feed the people and these tribal warlords stand as a challenge and obstacle to a stable country. Their power comes from two major factors that can be altered: the ease of obtaining powerful weaponry, and as mentioned above, the current food supply. The aid food is mostly dispensed at the discretion of each NGO and nation participating, and this is proving to be able to secure only a small portion of the population from hunger, and these only for a short period of time. In order to feed any substantial portion of the population for any significant duration of time, cold, harsh measures are necessary.

These actions involve the cutting off of all food aid to areas not under TFG control. The severance of this aid will effectively condemn many to a much harder existence that is already too brutal and tenuous. The food should then be redirected to the TFG, which is the official, recognized government of Somalia. They can then use the new supply of food to feed people under their control and participating in the establishment of a unified, democratic state. This redirection of aid will also rob the warlords of one their most powerful tools to ensure their rule: their control of food. The absence of this support should make the population harder to control, especially in areas where the shortage is more acute. As it weakens the warlords, it also

strengthens the TFG, making it possible that some warlords will make a peace with the TFG to gain access to food. In addition, people who are hungry are less likely to fight someone who feeds them after disposing of the warlords who were unable to. This principle of gratitude should help further a lasting peace in Somalia, which is essential to building a state, which is vital to a nation's ability to feed itself. Without someone organizing humanitarian efforts, they become diluted and tend to be short lived. In a war torn country, those efforts are often destroyed by war as soon as they are undertaken. Some level of stability is necessary to effectively manage any sort of humanitarian relief. Though these measures will cause a tremendous amount of short term human loss of life, perhaps precipitating another great famine, they are the perhaps the swiftest way to restore a stable government in Somalia, and save the Somali's from possible decades of brutal civil war and the slow starvation of the country.

As food aid is being shifted to the TFG, the militias' arms flow should be further restricted. Already, there is an international arms embargo on Somalia, but weapons still continue to find their way into the country. These arms enable the militias to seize food and suppress the populace, and restricting them to a greater extent will prove difficult, due to its large, porous border and massive coast. Instead, challenging the militias' arms equity with the TFG will prove easier. To accomplish this, a limited, temporary alliance could be entered into by NATO, or nations whose involvement will not damage the standing of the TFG in the eyes of the Somalis. If the TFG is seen as a puppet of some other power, its credibility will be damaged and make the road to a stable Somalia much longer. To tip the arms scales in the TFG's favor, the alliance should have the other power in a support role, providing missile strikes, transport, and intelligence when requested and possible. These advantages should prove massive in the civil war, making the TFG the closest entity to a modern power. Being able to find a hostile leader or column, and then being able to strike at them, regardless of where they are in the country will dishearten the militias and render their safe havens insecure and dangerous. Eventually, this military advantage should translate into the TFG increasing its influence in Somalia, and, in concert with the above actions, the country unifying behind the TFG.

As soon as security is provided, reconstruction works should be undertaken immediately. These works will employ the people in acts other than war, making it far less likely that they will return to their arms. These reconstruction projects will also strengthen Somalia's infrastructure, binding it closer together and narrowing distances, creating a more tangible sign of unity. It will also increase the ability of the government to provide security and improve trade within the country, as well as with foreign nations. These changes should increase the standard of living, making the country and people wealthier, and therefore more able to obtain food. Also, the refugees should be returned in a manageable fashion, so that they do not flood the job market. However, the infrastructure work should create a surplus of jobs, and the economy should also grow as a direct result of an improved infrastructure and a population with money to spend. The peace and stability brought about by the TFG and the wider world should prove more than sufficient to feed Somalia, perhaps even making it prosper.

After the TFG has united the country, or a significant portion of it, they should move toward the establishment of a true government, rather than a temporary one. Though the TFG has a mandate to form a united government by 2013, this has been passed by once in 2008 only to be extended. As long as they are making progress at unification, they should not be forced to prematurely form a weak, unstable constitution and government. This could completely unmake all the progress made, and render the death of any Somali's brought about by the above measures pointless. When the TFG has united most of Somalia, and brought the violence down to an easily tolerable level, they should begin to form a new constitution. This should be based upon their own, current temporary constitution, which in turn is based on democratic principles that should

provide stability to Somalia. After the drafting and adoption of the constitution, the new government will be recognized and should begin to perform the functions the TFG had previously held, as well as any additional duties given to it by the Somali people.

The new government should make trade a priority. Only three percent of Somalia's arable land is cultivated, and in the whole country only 13 percent of the land is arable. This forces it to rely on either aid or trade to support its people, and trade will enrich the people and further secure the country from another terrible civil war. Trade will also forge better relations with its neighbors and the international community, further making another slide into war and starvation unlikely. After the warlords and militias are defeated, the government's policies should all tend to the feeding of the Somali people. To aid the Somalis in their trading, foreign investors should be encouraged in to build factories to give the Somalis goods to sell. These goods could consist of anything, from their customary cattle products, to computer or car parts. Besides giving the Somalis products to sell, the new factories also provide employment to urban areas and possible revenue for the state to tax. All of these benefits come along with foreign investors, and they could be enticed by any of many things, included but not limited to: making the ports modern, lower taxes, lower wages, and a deeper and/or more skilled labor pool. While developing trade should be high on the government's list of priorities, so too should the cultivation of the land. This includes cultivating the arable southern areas, as well as trying to develop other areas for farming by irrigation, if such a course is followed, many possible new locations could be opened to grow food to feed the people. Also, new crops, able to grow and produce a higher yield, could be introduced into the country to further provide nourishment. All of these actions that could be brought about will greatly help to feed the Somali people, but none are possible without first gaining the stability of the country by reintroducing peace. Peace itself travels a long way towards providing an environment where the Somalis can feed themselves. Though some of the measures outlined above are cold hearted, if they are able to bring peace and stability to a country long held by a violent, brutal war, they may indeed prove to have been worth the sacrifice. Peace is not coming to Somalia by itself any time in the foreseeable future, and anything that hastens its progress spares future lives lost in the long conflict.

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