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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00 H-01 MSC-01 IO-19 NEA-06 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01 C-01 PRS-01 P-02 T-01 /069 W

O 171750Z JUN 88
FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISHU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5277
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMCONSUL JEDDAH
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2//CCJ5//
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

SECRET NOFORN SECTION 01 OF 03 MOGADISHU 07335

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: MOPS, PREL, PREP, PINS, SO
SUBJECT: FIGHTING IN SOMALIA'S NORTH: THE POLITICAL IMPACT

1. SECRET/NOFORN - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. AS INSURGENCY IN THE NORTH ENTERS ITS FOURTH WEEK, THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND APPEARS STALEMATED. SOMALI NATIONAL MOVEMENT (SNM) FORCES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONQUER ANY MAJOR URBAN CENTERS. THEY ARE NOW STRUGGLING TO HOLD PARTS OF HARGEISA. AT THE

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SAME TIME, SOMALI FORCES HAVE TWICE BEEN OVERRUN IN
MAJOR MILITARY STRONGHOLDS. THEY HAVE LOST THEIR SUPPLY
DEPOT AT AAWADLE, GIVEN UP CONTROL OF THE SHIIKH MOUN-
TAINS AND CANNOT USE ROADS CONNECTING THE NORTHWEST'S
URBAN AREAS. BERBERA IS THE ONLY CITY IN THE NORTH-
WEST WHICH THE SOMALI FORCES FIRMLY HOLD, AND THAT BY
DINT OF A CONTINUOUS AIR SHUTTLE WHICH IS DRAINING
FORCES FROM THE SOUTH AND STRETCHING COMMERCIAL AND
MILITARY TRANSPORT TO THE LIMIT.

3. WITH THE EVACUATION OF 260 EXPATRIATES (INCLUDING
INDIAN BUSINESSMEN FROM HARGEISA), SOCIAL SERVICES
AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IN THE REGIONAL CAPITAL HAVE
CEASED. ELU/CARE WAS ABLE TO GET ESCORTED CONVOYS OF
FOOD TO THREE REFUGEE CAMPS NEAR BERBERA, BUT MOST
CAMPS HAVE NOT HAD FOOD OR WATER FOR THREE WEEKS.
MANY REFUGEES HAVE REPORTEDLY CROSSED BACK OVER TO
ETHIOPIA. ALTHOUGH THE GENERAL POPULACE DID NOT RISE UP
IN SPOUTANEOUS SUPPORT OF THE SNM (AS HAD CONFIDENTLY
BEEN PREDICTED IN SNM PROPAGANDA), THE SOMALI ARMY
HAS TREATED THE LOCAL CIVILIAN POPULATION AS THOUGH
IT WERE THE ENEMY. THE CIVILIAN CENTER OF HARGEISA
HAS BEEN INDIFFERENTIALLY SHELD AND BOMBED.
HUNDREDS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND, IN THE BATTLE AREA,
MANY HAVE BEEN SUMMARILY SHOT.

4. THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THESE SAD EVENTS
DEPENDE ON THEIR EVENTUAL OUTCOME: WHETHER THE SNM
CAN WREST A LIBERATED AREA FROM SOMALI GRASP OR
WHETHER THE ARMY WILL EVENTUALLY BY FORCE OF NUMBERS,
FIREPOWER, AND LOGISTICS PREVAIL, AND LAUNCH THE
REPRESSION THAT WILL INEVITABLY ENSUE. ALREADY, WE

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CAN SEE SOME DIRECT EFFECTS OF THE STRUGGLE: THE
POLTICIZATION OF THE ARMY, A RE-WRITING OF SUCCESSION
SCENARIOS, A BREAKDOWN OF THE DAROD CONFEDERACY, THE
WEAKENING OF THE ECONOMY, AND A HURRYING TWILIGHT FOR
THE SIAD ERA. END SUMMARY.

5. THE ARMY. EVEN THOUGH KEY POSITIONS ALWAYS WENT
TO TRIBALLY-RELIABLE COMMANDERS, SIAD TRADITIONALLY
KEPT A SEMELANCE OF TRIBAL BALANCE IN THE SOMALI
ARMED SERVICES. HOWEVER, RECENT EFFORTS TO PUSH FOR-
WARD HIS SON MASLAH AND ENSURE MAREHAN CONTROL OF
INSTRUMENTS OF POWER IN MOGADISHU'S 77TH SECTOR HAD ALREADY DEEPLY POLITICIZED THE ARMY. THE CONFLICT IN THE NORTH HAS HAD TWO EFFECTS. IT HAS LOOSENED THE MAREHAN MILITARY GRIP BY BRINGING BACK INTO COMMAND POSITION SIAD'S OLD CONFEDERATES: PRIME MINISTER SAMANTAR (NON-TRIBAL), FIRST MINISTER FOR INTERIOR SULEIMAN (DOLBAHANTE), AND FIRST MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS KULMIE (HAWIYA). HOWEVER, AT LESSER COMMAND POSITIONS, ISSAKS LOYAL FOR TWENTY YEARS HAVE BEEN SIDELINED, SOME IMPRISONED. HAWIYA AND DOLBAHANTE COMMANDERS HAVE BEEN TAKEN OUT OF LINE POSITIONS.

6. THE SOMALI MILITARY, WHO SINCE THEIR DEFEAT AT THE HAND OF ETHIOPIA IN 1977 HAVE SPENT MORE EFFORT ON SELF AGGRANDIZEMENT THAN ON RESTORING FIGHTING POWER, ARE LEARNING THE COSTS OF BATTLE. THE DEAD AND WOUNDED AMONG CLOSE FRIENDS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS HAVE SICKENED MANY. SOME OFFICERS REFUSED TO GO NORTH AND WERE JAILED. OTHERS WERE REPORTEDLY SHOT IN HARGEISA FOR REFUSING TO FIGHT CIVILIAN ISSAKS. DESERTIONS HAVE BEEN HIGH. IN THESE THREE WEEKS, THE SOMALI ARMY HAS PROVED ITSELF TO BE AN UNDISCIPLINED,
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INEFFECTUAL FIGHTING FORCE AND IS NOW NO LONGER
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATION AT LARGE.

7. REWRITING SUCCESSION SCENARIOS. EVEN BEFORE THE
SNM ATTACK, WE HAD NOTICED AN INCREASING NATIONAL
ROLE FOR PRIME MINISTER SAMANTAR. WITH THE EVENTS,
HE QUICKLY ROSE TO HIS OLD PROMINENCE, TAKING CONTROL

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OF THE COMMAND CENTER IN MOGADISHU WHILE SIAD WAS STILL
IN ADDIS, BEING THE TOP INTERLOCUTOR WITH WESTERN
AMBASSADORS DURING THE EVACUATION CRISIS, AND THEN
MOVING UP TO HARGEISA AS SUPERVISORY COMMANDER. YET,
BY SIAD’S DESIGN, HE HAS BEEN PUT PROMINENTLY FORWARD
IN A NO-WIN SITUATION. WE HAVE ONE REPORT THAT
SAMANTAR LEFT HARGEISA LAST SUNDAY HAVING DECIDED THAT
THE BATTLE AT PRESENT COULD NOT BE WON THERE. SINCE
THEN, HE HAS NOT RETURNED. MINISTER OF DEFENSE NUR
HAS TAKEN OVER THE NORTHWEST COMMAND.

8. MEANWHILE, SIAD’S SON, GENERAL MASLAH, HAS NOT
DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS A WARTIME COMMANDER. WE
PREDICTED IN MOGADISHU 5856 THAT MASLAH WAS MOST
LIKELY TO SUCCEED SIAD, BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT BE
ABLE TO HOLD THE COUNTRY OR THE ARMY TOGETHER AND
THAT REVOLT IN THE NORTH AND CIVIL WAR WOULD ATTEND
HIS REIGN. MASLAH QUICKLY FORESHORTENED THE TIME-
FRAME OF THAT SCENARIO. IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THE
ATTACK ON BURAQ, HE PROVED SO OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE
REALITIES OF CRISIS COMMAND THAT HE WAS EASILY
SHUNTED ASIDE BY SAMANTAR. MASLAH HAS BEEN MORE
ACTIVE SINCE DADDY’S RETURN FROM ADDIS, AND SOME
DEFECTION OF RANKS AT THE MINISTRY HAS REVIVED,
BUT HE HAS BLOTTED HIS COPY BOOK AND WILL NOT LAST

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LONG IF DADDY LEAVES THE SCENE.

9. ANOTHER SHADOW SUCCESSOR, GENERAL GANNI, HAS APPEARED BACK IN UNIFORM BUT HAS SO FAR BEEN KEPT ON THE FRINGES OF ACTION. IN GENERAL, MARAHAN HAVE BEHAVED POORLY AND SOMETIMES COWARDLY IN THIS CRISIS. THERE SEEMS TO BE BUT ONE REAL LEADER AMONG THEM - SIAD. BY SEVERAL ACCOUNTS HE HAS GIVEN UP TRAINING

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A DAUPHIN AND INTENDS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL ALLAH CALLS HIM. HENCE, HIS REQUEST TO POSTPONE HIS WORKING TRIP TO WASHINGTON "FOR A YEAR".

10. POLITICAL BASE SHAKEN. POLITICAL EVENTS MAY OUTRUN THE GRIM REAPER... SIAD'S POLITICAL COALITION MAY NOT SEE HIM THROUGH. NORTHERN ELEMENTS OF THE DAROD CONFEDERACY HAVE NOT FULLY SUPPORTED THEIR SOUTHERN BROTHERS IN THIS CRISIS. THEY ARE HISTORIC ENEMIES OF ISSAK (THE ALMOST EXCLUSIVE ISSAK BASE OF SNM LEADERSHIP IS ITS MAJOR LIABILITY), BUT CLAN LEADERS ALSO SEE THEMSELVES AS DEPRIVED NORTHERNERS WHO HAVE NOT EQUITABLY SHARED IN THE BENEFITS OF POWER. THEY VIEW WITH DISMAY THE MARAHAN EFFORT TO PERPETUATE CONTROL. TOP DOLBAHANTE LEADERS, FIRST MINISTER SULEIMAN AND PERMANENT SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADAN, HAVE BEEN NORTH TO WIN OVER DOLBAHANTE ELDERS. BY MOST REPORTS, THE ELDERS ARE STILL ON THE FENCE.

11. A REPORT FROM GARDO HOLDS THAT WHEN SIAD'S EMISARISS (WE DO NOT KNOW WHICH ONES) CAME THROUGH, THE VILLAGERS LISTENED RESPECTFULLY BUT OPENLY MOCKED THEM AS SOON AS THEY LEFT TOWN. OGDADENS WERE ALREADY BEING WRITTEN OUT OF POLITICAL EQUATIONS BY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ETHIOPIA (MOGADISHU 5553). BIG TROUBLE WITH THE ISSAKS SHOULD PROVIDE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THEIR WORTH TO SIAD, BUT THEY NOW KNOW HE HAS ALREADY GIVEN UP WHAT THEY MOST WANT, SOME CONTROL IN THEIR OWN HOMELAND. WE UNDERSTAND THAT OGDADENS ARE DEBATING WHETHER THEY WOULD BE BETTER OFF THROWING THEIR LOT WITH THEIR TRADITIONAL ENEMIES, THE ISSAKS.
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12. ECONOMIC DETERIORATION. SOMALIA'S CUPBOARDS WERE
BARE BEFORE THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS IN THE NORTH BROKE
FORTH. HAVING TASTED BITTER RESULTS OF LAST SEPTEMBER'S
ECONOMIC MEASURES (NO HARD CURRENCY, NO EXPORTS, NO
SUPPLIES, LITTLE EXTERNAL AID), SOMALIA WAS RENEGOTIA-
TING A SHADOW PROGRAM WITH THE IMF. REMAINING RESOURCES

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HAVE NOW BEEN DRAINED TO BUY SUPPLIES AND RECRUITS FOR

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THE NORTHERN FRONT. INDISCRIMINATE FIRING HAS DEPLETED MUNITIONS; OTHER MATERIEL HAS SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES. THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR IS ALSO AFFECTED. AN AIR SOMALI 707 HAS HAD TO TAKE AN UNSCHEDULED REPAIR STOP IN GERMANY BECAUSE OF DAY-AND-NIGHT USE IN FERRYING TROOPS AND WOUNDED. THE REPAIR INCLUDES REUPHOLSTERING BLOOD-COVERED SEATS. PRESIDENT SIAD HAS APPEALED TO THE HAWIYA MERCHANTS OF THE MOGADISHU AREA TO OPEN THEIR WAREHOUSES AND ORDER MORE FOOD FROM ABROAD. THE HAWIYA ELDERS ARE REPORTEDLY DEMANDING A RETURN TO FREE MARKET PRINCIPLES AND ACCESS TO FOREIGN EXCHANGE. THE COMBINED EFFECT OF POLICY FLIP-FLOPS AND WAR DEMANDS IS BOUND TO BRING HIGH INFLATION AND FOOD SHORTAGES EVEN IF THE HAWIYA TRADERS FULLY COOPERATED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S REQUESTS. IN THE INTERIOR, SECONDARY RAINS HAVE NOT COME AS EXPECTED. SOMALIA'S TWO RIVERS ARE LOWER THAN USUAL. IT'S TOO EARLY TO TELL, BUT THE SPECTRE OF DROUGHT AGAIN RAISES ITS HEAD.

13. A DIMING TWILIGHT. FOR A LONG TIME, IT WAS COMMONLY HELD THAT SIAD BARRE WAS THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD HOLD SOMALIA TOGETHER. MOST SOUTHERNERS MAY STILL BELIEVE THAT; SIAD HOLDS THE LEGITIMACY OF AGE AND POSITION. BUT NOW IN THE NORTH, SOMALIA FINDS ITSELF TORN APART BY A REVOLT WHICH HAS AS ITS PRIME GOAL THE REMOVAL OF SIAD FROM OFFICE. IF THE SNM CAN HOLD ON IN THE NORTH (AND THEY HAVE FAR OUTLASTED ALL OUR EXPECTATIONS), THEY MAY EVENTUALLY FORCE SOMALI LEADERS TO THE BARGAINING TABLE. BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW SIAD COULD COMPROMISE WITH THE SNM. AS THE WOUNDED RETURN FROM THE NORTH, AS THE LIST

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OF DEAD GROWS, AS FOOD GETS SCARCE AND MONEY SHORT, THERE ARE BOUND TO BE A LOT OF PEOPLE ASKING THEMSELVES WHETHER SOMALIA WOULD NOT BE BETTER OFF UNDER OTHER LEADERSHIP. ANY CHANGE WOULD HAVE TO GET AROUND THE MAREHAN CONTROL OF FORCE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL. NONETHELESS, THE LARGE NUMBER OF PRESIDENTIAL DEPENDENTS NOW SEEKING VISAS FOR THE UNITED STATES SUGGESTS THAT EVEN THE FAMILY IS HEDGING ITS BETS. WE MAY BE DEEPER INTO THE TWILIGHT OF THE SIAD ERA THEN WE IMAGINED.

RAWSON