UNBALANCED IMAGES AND INAPPROPRIATE RESPONSES : HOW THREE WESTERN NEWSPAPERS MISREPRESENTED THE 1992-3 SOMALIAN FAMINE

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ABSTRACT

There is widespread agreement among media analysts that the media in capitalist societies, such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom, present "news" in particular ways which favour certain readings of events over others. Whether this is an explicit or implicit act is open to debate. Regardless, the portrayal of events in the developing world, such as the tragic famine in Somalia in 1992-3, are not quarantined from this process. Consequently, the images of the developing world created in the West by the mainstream media are often highly distorted.

This situation has serious ramifications as it is influential in determining the type and extent of development considered appropriate by the West for the developing world, and the assistance and aid provided. If Western understanding of the events and issues in the developing world is based on the one-sided images transmitted by the media, then this knowledge is incomplete and decisions taken on the basis of this knowledge will not meet the needs of the societies concerned. Therefore, it is not surprising that the history of Western aid for the developing world has been one of incompetence, errors and inappropriate responses.

This thesis provides a critical insight into how and why the Western media works explicitly to shape the "news" we see by analysing how three newspapers, two from the United Kingdom and one from the United States, presented their coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. This analysis, it is hoped, will deepen the reader's understanding of the role of the media in development matters, will alert the reader to the need to adopt a critical approach to media treatment of these matters and will provide the reader with knowledge and resources to assist in the development of such an approach. The adoption of a critical approach to media stereotyping and manipulation will be beneficial in that it will lead to a better understanding of developing world societies and more meaningful interaction between these societies and the West.

PREFACE

In 1986, after completing a BA degree in my home town of Sydney, Australia, I obtained a journalism cadetship on a daily newspaper, the now-defunct *Sun.* I entered journalism with ideals which I presumed would be held by all reporters, namely a commitment to accurately reflect and report on the events and issues in society. Shortly after I commenced work, however, an incident occurred which shocked me.

I had been posted to the finance desk of the *Sun,* and mainly reported on financial matters, my work including interviews with many representatives of industry and commerce. After two months, I decided to write an article about foreign ownership of Australian companies. An important component of my story was an interview with a professor of economics, Ted Wheelwright, of the University of Sydney. I submitted my finished copy to the finance editor for checking, as per the norm in daily reporting. Imagine my consternation, then, when the editor shortly afterwards began raging about the "commie" quoted in my story. Unlike all my other stories, this one did not appear in the *Sun.* While it was acceptable to quote representatives of industry and commerce, including many from the far right of the political spectrum, it was not acceptable to quote anyone left of centre, even those such as Professor Wheelwright with impeccable credentials. I soon learned that it was pointless to write stories which detoured from what was an obviously pre-set editorial line.

From that day, I have had a fascination for the intricate workings of the media in capitalist societies. My entire working life in the media, including reporting and sub-editing on newspapers and magazines in Australia, New Zealand and the UK, has confirmed my view that the media do not present a "balanced" picture of society but, instead, through the explicit choice of stories, by style, placement, emphasis, omission and exaggeration, actively distort the "real". Nowhere, I believe, is this distortion more blatant than in reporting about the developing world.

I base my argument as to this final point on a unique experience that I was fortunate enough to undertake. In May, 1987, I quit the *Sun* and set out on a personal journey of discovery that would last until December, 1993, and take me to many of the world's "developing" areas, including Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. I also travelled and worked in North America and Europe. During this time, I was socially and politically awakened to the vibrant and resourceful nature of the people of the developing world, as well as to the issues of colonialism, neo-colonialism and multinational penetration, which I concluded served actively to depress development in these areas. Accordingly, I became concerned at the contribution of Western media coverage to the poor and negative perception of most Westerners regarding the issues and events of the developing world. A particularly compelling catalyst in awakening me to the media's distortions was the coverage of the 1990-1 Gulf War. I had spent two weeks travelling around Iraq in May-June, 1990, six weeks before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and thus had some experience of Iraq and its people. The subsequent media misrepresentation of the affair, particular the marginalisation and treatment of the Iraqi people, appalled me. The systematic bias in reporting of the Gulf War, coupled with my readings of works by Noam Chomsky, Edward S. Herman and John Pilger, convinced me of the importance of raising awareness of Western media distortions so as to counterbalance the negative portrayals of the developing world contained in their presentations.

Hopefully, then, this thesis will provide readers in the West and elsewhere with the knowledge and tools to approach their interpretations of Western media coverage of the developing world with a much more cynical and critical eye. In doing so, Western attitudes to the developing world, including the nature and structure of global economic, social and political relationships, can be challenged - a significant step towards eradicating global inequality and underdevelopment.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

It is reasonable to assume, I believe, that at least some, if not much, of the knowledge of events and issues in the so-called "developing" world has been conveyed to people in the so-called "developed" world via the mainstream print and broadcasting media.[1] Many studies[2] have shown, however, that in countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), the media has given little coverage to issues in the developing world. Furthermore, what coverage there has been has tended to project a one-sided and, therefore, distorted view of events by concentrating on chaos, dissension and ineptitude.

Media coverage of developing world "disasters," such as famines, was particularly prone to such treatment. Many of the studies referred to above and cited in footnote 2 provide evidence of overtly negative and weak analysis of issues in the developing world. The "Images of Africa" (IFDA Dossier 1988) study, for example, which examined Western media coverage of the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine, concluded that most of it was superficial, predominantly consisting of descriptive accounts with no discussion of underlying causes. Thus, thorough investigation by the developed world's media of the underlying causes of African disasters, (such as famines), has been rare, replaced by cliched images and misrepresentations of the historical, social and political context of the events.

Why Does the Media Cover the Developing World so Badly?

Many indications as to the reasons for this distortion and bias can be found in the ideas of social theorists such as Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. These theorists analysed the structure of developed, capitalist societies and postulated that underlying

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[1] The terms "developed" world and "developing" world are used throughout this thesis, although their exact meanings are not strictly defined and are often controversial. Indeed, describing the world's nations increasingly involves using a number of interchangeable terms, such as "First/West" and "Third", "rich" and "poor", "centre" and "periphery", or "north" and "south". In choosing "developed" or "the West", I refer to the industrialised, high-income nations, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, but in this thesis I refer specifically to the US and UK. In using "developing", I refer to not only most of sub-Saharan Africa, including Somalia and Ethiopia, but also most of Latin America, including Nicaragua and Guatemala, and parts of Asia, including India and Pakistan. I do not refer to the so-called "newly industrialised countries", such as South Korea and Singapore, nor to the so-called "middle-income countries", such as Argentina. For more detail on how the world's nations are classified, see Third World Guide (1992).

[2] Including Dorman 1986; Brett 1988; IFDA Dossier 1988; de Waal 1990; Benthall 1993; Parenti 1993; *et al.*

forces of "ideology" and "hegemony" existed which dominated all aspects of life and culture. These ideas were elaborated and developed by media theorists, including Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988), Michael Parenti (1993), John Pilger (1989, 1992), Ben Bagdikian (1992), Douglas Kellner (1993) and Stuart Hall (1977, 1980, 1989), who analysed the media in capitalist societies and found that the press was not "free" but instead constrained by certain factors. These included the nature of media ownership and structure, in particular the increasing concentration of ownership and the vested interest of media companies in the status quo, and the underlying influence of hegemonic power.

Herman and Chomsky (1988), for example, claimed that the media in the US did not search for the "facts" in reporting but instead, via an underlying elite consensus which largely structured all facets of the news, presented gross misrepresentations of the "truth". Importantly, these misrepresentations did not exclude the US media coverage given to the events and issues of the developing world. Other media theorists, including those cited above, provided support for and qualifications to these claims, concluding that economic, political and ideological forces, observable through analysis of the media's political economy, caused Western news coverage of the developing world to be one-sided, patronising and ethnocentric.

One-Sided Images and Inappropriate Development

The media, then, in capitalist countries such as the US and the UK, often constructed modes of representation that portrayed disasters in the developing world, such as famines, as the "fault" of people in the developing world, and conveyed the impression that these people lacked the practicality, intelligence and organisational ability adequately to cope with these phenomena. At the same time, such media gave the impression that it was only the developed world, either through direct government assistance or, increasingly, through assistance given by non-government organisations (NGOs), which was capable of dealing with disaster situations. The result has been the creation of the myth that these developed world governments and organisations triumphantly enter disaster areas and "save" the local people from the mess they have created.

At the same time, the fact that many of these disasters were the direct or indirect result of deliberate policies enacted by developed world governments has been largely ignored by the media, as has any acknowledgement that local people in disaster areas have the organisational ability to initiate, direct and manage relief work themselves. As Seabrook (1991: 22) observed:

> *The people of the Third World rarely speak for themselves in the Western media. Never is there a celebration of the survival, the resourcefulness and humanity of those who live in the city slums; nowhere is there mention of the generosity of the poorest, of the capacity for altruism of those who have nothing, of the wisdom, endurance and tenacity of people displaced from forests, hills or pastures by Western-inspired patterns of development.*

This is an important issue in Development Studies because it relates to the idea, inherent in modernisation development theories, that the poor "Third World" is way behind the "First World" in the "race" to develop.[3] In these theories, people in the developing world are portrayed as poor because they lack the knowledge that only Western, and Western-educated, people can give them. In other words, they are unable to help themselves; thus, the West must show them the way to a better, more desirable future. Furthermore, modernisation theories dictate that it has not been colonialism and, more recently, neo-colonialism which have caused poverty, cultural and environmental devastation, and global inequality; rather, it has been the inability to compete at a "First World" level which has held the "Third World" back. Since the early 1980s, these ideas have made a comeback,[4] with the modernisation theories of development dressed up in the wrapping and rhetoric of the "New Right"[5] and known as "neo-liberalism".[6] In relating neo-liberal attitudes to Western media coverage of the developing world, Pilger (1994: 71) noted:

> *The majority of humanity are not news, merely mute and incompetent stick figures that flit across the television screen. They do not argue or fight back. They are not brave. They do not have a vision. They do not conceive models of development that suit them. They do not form community and other grass-roots organisations that seek to surmount the obstacles to a better life.*

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[3] Modernisation theories were propounded in the West in the 1950s and early 1960s and, against a background of the emerging Cold War, offered a blatantly pro-Western, pro-capitalist and pro-industrialist path for development. As such, modernisation theories were nothing less than the imposition of the established world order on the newly independent periphery (Adams 1990: 5). Not surprisingly, much of the modernisation "development" imposed was completely inappropriate for the developing world and was increasingly criticised and discredited, particularly after most modernisationist development projects failed dismally. For more detail, see Adams (1990), Webster (1990), Harrison (1989) and Taylor (1979).

[4] For a detailed discussion on the attitude that the developing world was incapable of running its own affairs unless it turned to the West for "help" in development, see Seabrook (1991).

[5] As Midgley (1991: 8) outlined, the three central themes of the New Right were: economic individualism, (associated with free-market capitalism), cultural traditionalism, (such as "family" values), and authoritarian populism, (strong political leadership and an emphasis on "law and order").

[6] The neo-liberal approach to development has been predominantly in the form of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which have emphasised free-market capitalism, deregulated economies opened to [predominantly Western] foreign investment, privatisation of state assets and export-oriented primary and secondary industry. As Leslie (1996: 21) summarised, neo-liberal SAPs were promoted by the two major world lending institutions, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), as a pre-condition for development finance, and, as such, the SAPs were often received favourably by the power-base of world development: governments of developing countries, development banks and the international business and financial community. As Brohman (cited in Leslie 1996: 21) observed, however, both the modernisation and neo-liberal approaches employed universalistic and eurocentric constructs based on assumptions that were often unrealistic and which showed total disregard for culture and the heterogeneous nature of developing world social formations.

At the same time, an era of "information imperialism" has emerged, with less and less serious media coverage of the developing world appearing in the developed world's media. With such minute coverage, there has been scant attention given to the serious problems occurring in Africa, such as the effects of Western-imposed Structural Adjustment Programs, or the economic or social rape of African nations by superpower-backed dictators. The few times an African event has become "newsworthy", the "news" has been overwhelmingly depressing, for example the 1992-3 Somalian famine.[7]

Such negative events have then been "news" for only a short time. After the initial "shock" of the story, coverage of the event has tapered off. Thus, the Western mainstream media, by predominantly presenting the developing world as floundering in misery and strife and constantly appealing to the developed world for help, has contributed to the neo-colonial/neo-liberal view that the developing world must "develop" in a Western[8] sense of the word if it is to avoid such shocking calamities in the future. Piza *et al* (1987: 3) neatly summarised this attitude:

> *The emphasis [in the developed world's media] is always on chaos. Coverage of disasters, coups, famine, corruption [and] terrorism all serve to reaffirm the view that ... Third World people ... are helpless victims, violent, uncivilised and corrupt. Third World poverty and underdevelopment is therefore presented as an internal problem of those countries - a problem to be solved by White people "civilised" enough to help them out of their misery and set them on the path to "development".*

This is not to say that such chaos does not happen in the developing world. The Western media, however, has generally failed to "balance" this coverage with stories about positive events, so that, on the few occasions when the developing world has broken into the developed world's consciousness, it has usually been because of a very bleak and negative event. In addition, as Baird (1994a: 6) observed:

> *Positive stories ... tend to show people quietly getting on with development. But the mainstream Western media is hooked on narratives about its own people going out and saving the world. It's a form of collective narcissism that actually obstructs vision: you cannot see through mirrors. It's also inherently racist.*

In considering such poor media performance, it is necessary, then, for many people in the West to question their assumptions about developing world societies before demanding and formulating policies of development. While development encompasses a wide range of ideas and activities, the core values of Westerners have a significant influence in shaping those policies. As Fountain (1991: 18) described, the developing world fight "for

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[7] These themes are covered in more detail in Chapter Three.

[8] That is, through free-market industrial capitalism.

its own diverse views to be seen and heard globally is intricately bound up with its capacity to elude economic subjugation". This alone justifies an examination of how the Western media portrays the developing world.

Towards a New Knowledge of the Developing World?

Following the Western media coverage of the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine, the "Images of Africa" report deduced that the prevailing image of Africa did not differ from the one constantly put out by the media - that is, of an Africa "dying of hunger, [and] a primitive and dangerous" continent (IFDA Dossier 1988: 17). It is fair to assume, then, that the image produced by the Western media has made a significant impression not only on Western politicians and the people within Western development agencies but also on the general public in the West. These are the people who have demanded certain action from those same politicians and who have donated most of the funds to those same development agencies.

At the same time, Western media misrepresentation of the developing world has, as Seabrook (1991: 21-22) described, masked the reality that the West, with its unsustainable economy and lifestyle, has much to learn from the developing world, and has prevented people in the West from gaining a detailed knowledge of the unequal nature of the relationships between the developed and the developing worlds. Thus, the distorted image of the developing world in the Western media has affected and influenced the role governments, business and people in the developed world have played in creating and maintaining underdevelopment.

The objective of this thesis, then, is to examine if any inherent bias exists in the reporting of a developing world "disaster," in this case the 1992-3 Somalian famine, and to offer the reader an alternative viewpoint to that presented by certain media sources. At the same time, this thesis seeks to explain if, why and how only a narrow and one-sided version of the famine is presented. Thus, this thesis not only investigates to what extent certain media distorted the events and issues surrounding the famine, but also demonstrates and examines the possible factors behind such a distortion.

An in-depth study of media distortion in relation to the Somalian famine will, it is hoped, provide the reader with the knowledge to critically evaluate future media representations of issues and events in the developing world. In this regard, I believe readers, by becoming more critical, will be able to develop a deeper understanding of the events and issues in the developing world. This can only contribute to demands for changes in governmental and non-governmental development policy, and changes in developed

world-developing world political, economic and social relationships. These changes, hopefully, will be for the better.

Outline of Thesis

As this thesis aims to analyse media representation of an event in the developing world, Chapter Two deals with the political economy of the media and provides a general overview of theory pertaining to how the media in capitalist countries such as the US and the UK are structured. In essence, the chapter looks at some general Marxist and neo-Marxist criticisms of the media in capitalist countries. The chapter also begins to develop the theoretical approach I will take in my analysis, which is based predominantly, but not completely, on the propaganda model developed by Herman and Chomsky (1988).

Chapter Three narrows this analysis into a discussion about how and why the media in capitalist countries represents the developing world in a generally negative way. Studies outlining the quality and quantity of Western reporting of developing world issues and events, particularly disasters such as famines, are considered. This chapter also notes how that reporting has severely distorted reality by perpetuating an overwhelmingly "negative" image of the developing world, particularly Africa.

Chapter Four and Five are essentially background chapters presenting an in-depth historical overview of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. This is necessary to compare and contrast what the media did or did not report in the articles gathered for this study. Chapter Four sets out to present a historical, social and political background to the famine by examining its complex causes. This includes an analysis of the effects of colonialism, neo-colonialism and post-colonialist foreign interference on Somali society. Analysis of post-colonialist foreign interference concentrates on the role of the USSR and US in backing the Somali dictator Siad Barre; importantly, it analyses the fact that the US withdrawal of support for Barre caused the dictator to flee Somalia in January 1991, an event which triggered the chaos that led to the famine. The structure of Somali society, how the Somali society maintained food self-sufficiency in a drought-prone part of the world, and how this was irreversibly changed by foreign interference, is also examined.

Chapter Five provides further background information for the thesis by discussing how the world community, in particular the United Nations (UN), the US and NGOs, responded to the famine. The chapter also offers alternative explanations as to why the major international response, the so-called "Operation Restore Hope" was initiated, its effects with regard to the famine and other Somalian problems, and why it was certain to fail.

Chapter Six concerns the methodology and general theoretical framework I employ in my analysis of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. My examination basically involves a predominantly qualitative textual analysis of the coverage of the famine given by three of the Western world's best known and most respected "quality" English-language newspapers, the *Guardian* and *The Times* in the UK, and the *New York Times* in the US. I also discuss why I chose the particular time frame of my analysis, (the three newspapers' reports on the famine in the calendar year from June 1, 1992 to May 31, 1993), and present a detailed discussion and comparison of the ownership structures of the three newspapers.

Chapters Seven and Eight are the most significant chapters as they present the findings of my work. Considering the theoretical framework of my research discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Six, my analysis involves a critical appraisal of how three newspapers reported the 1992-3 Somalian famine. I critically appraise the extent to which the three media sources examined the famine's historical and political context, and the extent to which they critically examined and questioned how the world responded. I also analyse the extent to which the media sources ignored or acknowledged the desires and abilities of the Somali people. In doing so, I detail how my findings concur with, or differ from, the hypothesis of my thesis.

Chapter Nine concludes the thesis with a general summation of the implications of my findings for people involved with, or interested in, the wide range of issues surrounding the study and practice of development. As this thesis aims to demonstrate the negative effect of Western media misrepresentations of the developing world on development, I discuss how a critical and cynical approach to media misrepresentations is a useful and necessary starting point to a better understanding of the historical, social, political and economic context of events and issues in the developing world. This understanding is vital, I believe, in reducing or eliminating the large number of inappropriate projects that have been launched in the developing world by the West in the name of "development".

CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MEDIA

Introduction

Before examining how the media[1] in capitalist societies such as the US and UK covered the 1992-3 Somalian famine, it is essential to consider critical theories on the nature and structure of privately-owned media in these societies.[2] These views are vital in determining whether the media simply operates to "mirror" what occurs in society, or whether it actively works to distort reality and represent the world from a definite political and social perspective. Such ideas can then be used to examine if, how and why the US and UK media reported the Somalian famine in a particular way.

In this chapter, I examine some critical approaches to analysing the media in capitalist societies. First, I outline some general orthodox Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches. I also discuss the notions of ideology, hegemony, discourse and semiotics, and how these are useful concepts in analysing the media. I then discuss how media theorists and analysts have applied these concepts to undertake a critical appraisal of how the media "works" in capitalist societies. The works of Herman, Chomsky, Bagdikian, Kellner and Hall, among others, are discussed and considered, and their shortcomings evaluated. I also highlight problems with such critical approaches to media analysis, such as the effects of the media message on the audience. Finally, I set up the beginnings of a theoretical framework for this thesis, which describes and outlines the approach I take in my examination of the media coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine.

The Media in Capitalist Society - Some General Orthodox Marxist and Neo-Marxist Approaches

According to classical liberal theories, the media in capitalist societies is "free", allowing the publication of a wide and divergent range of views by anyone, without interference or

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[1] When referring to the "media" in this thesis, I mean the so-called "mainstream" media, such as the large-circulation newspapers and magazines, and the large television and radio networks. I do not mean the so-called "alternative" media, such as the small-circulation newsletters and specialist magazines, and community radio and television stations, which have a relatively small audience reach of mainly like-minded persons.

[2] A "critical" approach involves, as Downing *et al* (1995: xx-xxi) note, not merely taking the media at face value, but asking how and why the media has the shape and organisation it has, how it works and for whose benefit. In respect of media content, which this thesis analyses as part of its general working hypothesis, a critical approach raises questions about the extent to which ideology exists in media output, as a function of established power. For a general discussion on critical approaches to the media, see Downing *et al* (1995: xx-xxvi) and McQuail (1994: 235-237).

censorship.[3] These theories, however, have been attacked by radical critics for obscuring "the fact that the [media] tends to report and interpret the world in ways which are consonant with the interests of the dominant class" (Curran and Seaton 1988: 247).[4] Many such critical theories of capitalist media have their intellectual origin in the works of the nineteenth-century German social scientist, Karl Marx (1818-1883).

Marx studied the character of 1800s European industrial society and concluded that production (of goods and services) was the building block of human history, but this production depended on reproduction. In doing so, he argued that, for capitalist society to maintain itself, it needed to reproduce the social and organisational framework of production. Thus, as well as the means of production (or economic base, such as land, labour, capital and technology) there also existed a superstructure, whose essential function was to legitimate the power of the social class which owned the means of production (Eagleton 1976: 5). Central to this thesis was the concept of the State - the armed forces, judiciary, police forces, courts and prisons - which collectively maintained order in favour of the capitalist class (Downing *et al* 1995: 491).[5]

It did this through ideology - definite political, religious, ethical and/or aesthetic forms of social consciousness - which legitimised the power of the ruling class in society. Thus, the dominant ideas of a class society are those of the ruling class. These create people's sense of identity and affect their notion of subjectivity, which is dependent on material circumstance. Consciousness does not determine life; life determines consciousness (Eagleton 1976: 4-5).

Utilising these perspectives, orthodox Marxists believe that the role of the media in capitalist societies is to be a conduit through which relationships and identities between classes and production are outlined and established. The media, as part of the superstructure, are determined by the imperatives of the economic base, therefore they reflect the imperatives and ideologies of the ruling classes, who own and control the

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[3] For a discussion of classical liberal theory and the media, see Curran and Seaton (1988: 246-261).

[4] In addition, as Herman and Chomsky (1988: 332) observed, neoconservative critiques of the media often portrayed the media as bastions of anti-establishment liberalism, ignoring the fact that the mainstream media are large business corporations controlled by wealthy and powerful people, and that the so-called "liberal" media workers are their hired employees. For this reason, this thesis does not consider these critiques but concentrates on theories concerning why the media portrays the world in a certain, predominantly neoconservative, way. For an analysis of the neoconservative nature of the media, see Herman and Brodhead (1986), Herman and Chomsky (1988) and Herman (1995).

[5] As Marx (cited in Miliband 1969: 5) described, the State "is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". In other words, the state was the coercive instrument of the ruling class, itself defined in terms of its ownership and control of the means of production (Miliband 1969: 5). In later Marxism, known as neo-Marxism, the concept of the State was reworked, and will be discussed later in this chapter.

economic base. Thus, ideology works as a "false consciousness", with the media in the superstructure creating meaning by presenting the ideas and existing structures of the ruling class as ideal and beneficial for all. In other words, capitalism only enriches the privileged few, but the media, through their active misrepresentation of the real world, present the false "ideal" that particular interests, such as capitalist relations of production, religion and the nuclear family, are in the general interest. By doing this, the media acts as both the expression of a system of domination, and a means of reinforcing it (Miliband 1969: 221). People are taught to think and act in terms that continue to support not only the rule of the dominant classes but their own oppression.[6]

Critical theories on capitalism and the media also have origins in the ideas of the German intellectuals who founded the Frankfurt School of critical thought, so-called because the intellectuals concerned were originally based at Frankfurt University, where they studied the role of the media in helping bring Adolf Hitler and the Nazis to power in Germany in 1933.[7] The Frankfurt School scholars, including Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, blended Freudian and Marxist perspectives into a critical analysis of 1930s capitalism, especially its tendency to encourage conformist, bland communication and thinking (Downing *et al* 1995: 482). An important focus of the Frankfurt School was the concept of mass culture, which they defined as being the cultural expressions generated by big business, through the media, simply and solely to increase profit (O'Connor and Downing 1995: 13-14).[8]

Importantly, Frankfurt School intellectuals such as Adorno and Horkheimer argued that society and culture were manipulated by a mass media predominantly concerned with providing entertainment which dulled critical thought and encouraged ignorance and docility.[9] As Curran and Seaton (1988: 227) stressed:

> *... the Frankfurt School saw the function of the media, whether in the long run or more directly, as controlling the public in the interests of capital.*

Thus, the ideas of the Frankfurt School, as well as those of orthodox Marxism, were influential in encouraging critical thought on the media's impact on society and culture.

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6 For a more detailed orthodox Marxist examination of the legitimising role of the media, see Miliband (1969: 221-239) and Eagleton (1976).

7 As a consequence of these studies, however, they were eventually forced by the Nazis into exile, mainly to the US, where they continued their work. For more discussion, see Downing *et al* (1995: 329) and Curran and Seaton (1988: 221-227).

8 Thus, it was different to popular culture, which included, for example, music such as jazz and blues which developed over several centuries. For more discussion on this topic, see O'Connor and Downing (1995: 3-14).

9 For more detail and analysis on this view, see Adorno and Horkheimer (1995) and Miliband (1969: 225).

According to classical democratic theory, the media is supposedly "free" in capitalist societies such as the US and UK. Through a critical, Marxist approach, however, it is possible to question this omnipresent myth by analysing how the economic relationships which structure capitalist societies have a direct impact on what the media in capitalist societies can or cannot say. It allows questioning of whether the media presents objective and balanced news, or whether it actively produces propaganda reflecting the interests of the ruling classes.

The orthodox Marxist view of society has, however, been criticised by a number of neo-Marxists, who have taken different approaches in interpreting the works of Marx. The French theorist, Louis Althusser, for example, attacked the assumption that there was a simple and direct one-way relationship between the superstructure and the economic base. This theory, he argued, did not allow for change through educational, cultural, biological or psychological factors. As a result, Althusser took a different approach in examining how ideology was used to reproduce the means of production within a capitalist state.

Althusser (1971) stated that the forms of the superstructure could alter the base and thus affect the way people saw their identity. The superstructure, then, was important in constructing forms of identity necessary to capitalism. In other words, the economic base was necessary, but not sufficient, in forming identity. Consequently, the superstructure was central to people's identity, and the ideology within it existed as a material power to create identity and therefore reproduce the means of production. Althusser (1971: 136) argued that this was because there were two forms of State apparatus, repressive and ideological, within the superstructure.[10] The former included the executive, police and army, but the latter, which included the media, as well as education, the family and religion, was vital in determining people's economic objectives and was the key to social control and "consensus". In other words, the media was one of many apparatuses the State could use in order to "manage the consent of society" (Inglis 1991: 84).[11]

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[10] Much of Althusser's argument was also developed by another French theorist, Nicos Poulantzas, who also described the role of the media as an adjacent ideological partner to other apparatuses of the State (Poulantzas 1972: 251). For further discussion on the contribution of Althusser and Poulantzas to Marxist thought, see Smart (1983: 16-20, 26-28, 96-107).

[11] Ideology, then, had a material power and existence. Identity was tied up with materialism, and it was through ideology that people understood the real conditions of their existence. People's perceptions of reality were always formed via, by and in ideology, which "interpellated" individuals, even before birth, through the fixed system of language into "always already subjects" (Althusser 1992: 55). In other words, there was a reciprocal relationship between ideology and subjectivity. As Fiske (1987: 53) noted, interpellation "refers to the way any use of discourse `hails' the addressee. In responding ... we implicitly accept the discourse's definition of `us', or ... we adopt the subject position proposed for us by the discourse". In this regard, Althusser's notion of "interpellation" signalled an implicit realisation that there was also a more micro form of power within a "discourse". This idea was developed by Foucault and is discussed later in this chapter. For more discussion, see Fiske (1987) and McQuail (1994: 242).

Significantly, what unified the function of all the ideological State apparatuses, including the media, was the ideology of the ruling class (Althusser 1971: 139).

Both the orthodox Marxist approach and Althusser's neo-Marxist approach, then, were pessimistic and relatively rigid views on the media and the position of humans within society. The mechanisms of structural domination were so powerfully entrenched in these approaches, and the possibility of human resistance so remote, that the message conveyed contained virtually no hope for social action and reconstruction of society (Giroux 1981: 15-16). The works of the Italian communist and neo-Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, however, provided the basis for a different approach in critical analysis of the media in capitalist societies.

The Influence of Gramsci and his Notion of Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci was a union official in Turin and a leader of the Italian Communist Party in the 1920s, during which time he examined the great economic and social upheavals in Italy, such as the rise of fascism (Giroux 1981: 22; Inglis 1991: 81). Before, during and after his arrest and imprisonment by Italy's fascist ruler, Benito Mussolini, in 1926,[12] Gramsci worked and reworked basic Marxist theory and argued that the domination of capital could not be explained by the rule of force and coercion exercised by the capitalist state (Giroux 1981: 22). Instead, his neo-Marxist approach emphasised the notion of hegemony - the idea that the dominant ideology was not fixed but fluid and "competing" with other, often non-dominant, ideologies.[13] It was not just the superstructure which exerted influence on the economic base but also "culture". Hegemony[14] was "the heavy, saturating omnipresence of the way things are", dominated, as always, by the dominating classes, but produced by absolutely everybody (Inglis 1991: 81).

To Gramsci, ideology had a material power generated through systems of ideologies potentially in conflict. There was a relative domination of one in economic, moral and intellectual terms (Bennett *et al* 1981: 199), and its dominance was maintained through an

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[12] For more detail on Gramsci's life, works and ideas, see Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1986: xvii-xcvi), Hall (1977: 332-338), Smart (1983: 38-42) and O'Connor and Downing (1995: 14-19).

[13] Importantly, following analysis of Gramsci's works, neo-Marxists widened the orthodox Marxist concept of the State to include communications institutions, such as the mass media, and government intervention in the economy, blurring the distinction between public and private capital (Downing *et al* 1995: 491). In this model, the State was a site of continual struggle and reverberating power relations, reflecting the struggle for hegemony. For further discussion, see Miliband (1969) and Smart (1983).

[14] The Oxford Dictionary states the word hegemony is derived from the Greek word, *egemonia,* meaning leadership and predominance. The adjective, hegemonic, means ruling and supreme.

ability to recognise counter-hegemonic trends and absorb them on its own terms. Thus, to Gramsci, ideology was not fixed but was a material force (Bennett *et al* 1981: 209) and cultural domination was exercised as the result of much more dynamic struggle than was envisaged by Althusser (Turner 1990: 57). Hegemony, then, pointed to the relationship between the dominant and dominated classes. Giroux (1981: 23) observed that hegemony,

> *... refers to the successful attempt of a dominant class to utilise its control over the resources of state and civil society, particularly through the use of the mass media, ... to establish its view of the world as all inclusive and universal. Through the dual use of force and consent, with consent prevailing, the dominant class uses its political, moral, and intellectual leadership to shape and incorporate the `taken-for-granted' views, needs and concerns of subordinate groups.*

In other words, hegemony did not mean total cultural dominance and the obliteration of alternatives; it meant "ascendancy achieved within a balance of forces ... a state of play" (Connell 1987: 184). Other patterns and groups were subordinated rather than eliminated and, importantly, historical changes in definitions of power and identity could be taken into account. Media theorists, then, could criticise and deconstruct the media without, as Inglis (1991: 81) noted, "just saying it was all terrible". Instead, Gramsci's notion of hegemony provided:

> *... an explanation of the power of culture in general, and the mass media in particular, to disarm criticism and prevent change (Inglis 1991: 82).*

Thus, hegemony provided media theorists with a more fluid concept than did the orthodox Marxist approach in studying the media's effects on society; it allowed the hypothesis that the media worked via a process of persuasion rather than domination. According to this theory, the media sought to make people understand the world in certain ways but not others, as the media was dominated by sectors of society that wielded economic and political power (O'Connor and Downing 1995: 16). Thus,

> *What normally gets communicated through mainstream media will rarely challenge the foundations of that economic and political power, even though the media may voice criticism of some particular policies or issues (O'Connor and Downing 1995: 16).*

Moreover, the notion of hegemony provided theorists with a macro examination of the exercise of power by the media, including distorted communication and false constructions of social reality (Codd 1990: 139). One of the main instruments of this pervasive and unrecognised expression of power was language, an important concept in analysing the media. Before examining how this micro expression of power is exercised by the media, it is essential to consider the influence of Michel Foucault.

The Notion of Discourse

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French social theorist[15] who developed a non-economic analysis of power and power relations (Smart 1983).[16] Foucault emphasised that power was not *possessed* but rather was *exercised* through discourse. A discourse was a group of statements which provided a language for talking about - in other words, a way of representing - a particular kind of knowledge about a topic.[17] Importantly:

> *When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed (Hall and Gieben 1992: 291).*

Discourse, then, was not one statement but several statements, which worked together to shape a "discursive formation" (Foucault 1972: 38). Discourses were not rigid or reducible to class-interests; they could overlap, struggle with each other and draw on elements of other discourses, but they had to be regular and systematic. Importantly, however, discourse produced knowledge and *meaning* through language.[18] In this regard, it referred not only to the meaning of language but also to the real effects of its use, to the materiality of language (Codd 1988: 242). Thus, all social practices were influenced by discourse, and this was where power was exercised. As Foucault (1980: 93) stated:

> *... in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association.*

Such "discourses of truth" could be a set of statements which, whether "true" or not, became effective in practice - they became the "truth". The "facts" about an event did not

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[15] It must be stressed that Foucault, a post-Modernist, was neither a Marxist nor a neo-Marxist, and he rejected the (macro) view that power was connected to ideology (Hollinger 1994: 128). His ideas about the (micro) power of discourse, however, were used at the macro level by many of the Marxist and neo-Marxist theorists referred to in this chapter. It is this, somewhat controversial, interpretation, which has been rejected by many post-modernists, which is used when referring to discourse in this thesis. See also footnote 17, below.

[16] For a detailed discussion on the implications of Foucault's work for Marxist theory and politics, see Smart (1983: 73-137).

[17] A more general Marxist view, adopted by many theorists considered in this thesis, would interpret discourse as a "socially and institutionally originating ideology, encoded in language" (Fowler 1994: 42).

[18] Language was also the model for determining ideas about, for example, gender, bodies and architecture. For more discussion on how Foucault used the concept of discourse, see McHoul and Grace (1993: 26-56).

enable humans to decide about the "truth" or otherwise of an event, because facts could be interpreted differently, depending on language. These ideas, while developed by Foucault from a post-Modernist perspective, have, however, been used as part of the critical Marxist and neo-Marxist approach to media theory.

Discourse and the Media

In examining the media, a discursive text, (such as a newspaper article), could be analysed as a construct of social formations, communities and individuals' social identities. For example, a leader of a Somali militia fighting against UN soldiers in Mogadishu might be described in a US press report as a "warlord" but in a Somali press report as a "patriot". The fact that he/she was fighting was of less significance than the language used by the media to describe the individual, and it was this language which provided the statement with meaning. Moreover, as Hall and Gieben (1992: 293) observed:

> *Certain descriptions, even if they appear false ..., can be made `true' because people act on them believing that they are true, and so their actions have real consequences ... The language (discourse) has real effects in practice: the description becomes `true.'*[19]

The "fact" of the fighting was "real", but the discourse used in the press reports imbued the story with meaning and produced a text with an ideological dimension. The "dominant" discourse has helped shape the article's slant.[20] The power of the discourse to shape the news was stressed by Jempson (1987: 23-26), who noted how the 1980s rightward shift in political discourse in the UK was reflected in the UK media's reluctance to give credence to any views that ran counter to the "consensus" of the time:

> *Thus, arguing [in the media] for unilateral nuclear disarmament, defending trades unions rights [or] opposing privatisation ... are no longer presented as legitimate views but as evidence of allegiance to an outmoded ideology ... [This] leads to a fundamental distortion in the way people and events are perceived and reported (Jempson 1987: 24).*

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19 As such, this was an extension of the much older idea of the "self-fulfilling prophecy". For more discussion, see Merton (1967).

20 In this regard, the idea of a discourse is strongly related to the dominant political discourse existing in a society. For example, in the US and UK, as well as New Zealand, Australia and most of the rest of the developed, industrial world, the political discourse today (beginning in the early 1980s) is predominantly neo-conservative, reflected in economic and social policy which emphasises the market over State intervention. In the 1960s, however, the political discourse was one of social change and reform, while in the 1950s the political discourse was dominated by the anti-communist ideology of the wider Cold War. Discourses, then, can and do change over time. For more discussion on political discourse, see Shapiro and Der Derian (1989). See also Said (1993), for an examination on the power of discourse to create attitudes and, therefore, meaning, and Watson (1993), for an analysis on the power of the media to reshape human memory and influence meaning.

Thus, it was the power of the discourse, rather than any "facts", which produced knowledge and made things "true". As such, it is related to the idea of semiotics, which also has an important bearing on how power and meaning are exercised through the media.

Semiotics and the Construction of Meaning

Semiotics stated humans could only ever function through the realm of the sign, which could be thought of as the smallest unit of communication within a language system (Turner 1990: 17). Hence, semiotics was concerned with the representation, rather than presentation, of "reality". By dividing the process of signification into two parts, the signifier, (anything with a material entity, such as newspaper text), and the signified, (the mental meaning humans attach to that material object), and by analysing how meaning was generated by their relationship, semiotics demonstrated that meaning was not fixed but was instead a socio-cultural construction.[21]

It did this by showing how different codes, (iconic, symbolic and index, all arbitrary and dependent on culture),[22] and different discourses, (meanings to a signified determined by where one is situated within a culture and society), allowed humans to attach different signification to the "same" signifier. At the same time, semiotics stated that within cultures certain discursive codes became more common and available over time; thus the range of meanings that could be attached to a signifier was constrained by the cultural limits of the discourses available in a society.[23]

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[21] Originally, noted O'Connor and Downing (1995: 20), the founders of semiology, such as Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), and C. S. Peirce (1839-1914), thought they were mapping solely the "underlying structure of the human mind". Saussure concentrated on the relationship between the sign and other signs, while Peirce examined the relationship between the sign and the user. This ignored, however, the specifics of human values and history, an issue taken up by the French semiologist Roland Barthes in 1957. His seminal work, (translated into English in 1972), changed the emphasis of semiotics. As Masterman (1986: 3) described, Barthes "demonstrated ... the centrality of power relationships - of patterns of dominance, oppression and subordination - to the process of signification". As a result, more importance is now concentrated on placing signs within their cultural context, as I discuss further. For a detailed examination of this new emphasis on semiotics, see Barthes (1973), Masterman (1986: 1-6), Fowler (1994: 25-90), McHoul and Grace (1993: 12-14) and O'Sullivan *et al* (1994: 281-288).

[22] In other words, codes were the structures which organised signs into a meaningful message. Or, as Dyer (1982: 135) stated: "Codes organise our understanding of the world in terms of `dominant media patterns' ... patterns which ... we largely take for granted and which are uppermost in our minds when we interpret things or think about them".

[23] In other words, the "meaning" of a sign could occur at different levels, the two main levels of which were denotative and connotative. As Dyer (1982: 128) noted, "denotation and connotation refer to first and second level meaning in a sign. The term denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign: to what is `objectively' present and easily recognised or identified. Connotation is a term used to refer to meanings which lie beyond denotation but are introduced by an audience/viewer/reader beyond the

This was the social construction of meaning. Humans could not arbitrarily attach any meaning at all to a particular signifier in society, since a certain number of people had to "agree" over time on the meanings attached to specific signifiers. In other words, humans selected a signified in relation to the codes and conventions established within a culture, which both determined and limited the range of possible meanings it was able to generate (Turner 1990: 17).[24] These social constructions of meaning might not necessarily be "real", but if they were reinforced by discourses within a culture often enough they became "real". In other words, the relationship between the signifier and the signified could become so powerful an "objective" meaning could be created.[25]

Semiotics also demonstrated the "fluid" nature of ideological power, by showing how a signifier (such as a news story in the media) could acquire a different signified through the emphasising and/or withholding of particular facts within the signifier. The story might reflect a physical and material fact during an event, but show only one version of the event without showing others; the story might represent the "part" as the "whole" and one perspective as "the" perspective. In other words, the slant given to a news story by controlling access to, and availability of, signifiers (so-called "facts"), reflected the story's ideological meaning.[26]

Thus, ideological power was not a fixed material reality (what did or didn't happen, although this was important) but was achieved through what a story "meant" (formed through the selection and/or withholding of facts, which emphasised a particular side of the story). Two versions of a news story could be connected to the same event, even though they were different both from each other and from the same event. The strength of semiotics, then, was in demonstrating how ideological power comes from an ability to create a particular set of associations around an event, through an ability to control the signifiers/discourses, so that it can appear that there is an objective relationship between signifier and signified.

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literal meaning of a sign and are activated by the means of conventions or codes". In other words, connotative readings were very subjective and influenced by ideology and culture.

24 Similarly, Hall (1995: 358) stated meaning was not determined by the structure of reality itself but, instead, was conditional on the work of signification being successfully conducted through a social practice. Signification, therefore, involved a "determinate" form of labour; a specific "work" of meaning production. For more discussion, see Hall (1995).

25 Of course, such an argument means this thesis, and its author and readers, are part of this process and open to the same criticisms.

26 A central investigation of this thesis relates to the exercise of control and is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse, Semiotics, and the Media

The entire semiotic process, which plays such a central role in creating and shaping "truth" and "taken-for-granted" views in the media, is therefore related to notions of discourse, ideology and hegemony, all vital tools in undertaking a critical review of the media in capitalist societies. Dominant hegemonies, (such as the owners of media), for example, could place limits on oppositional discourse and, by doing so, influence the needs and interests of subordinate groups (Giroux 1981: 23). Or, as Kellner (1978: 58-60) observed:

> *Hegemonic ideologies attempt to define the limits of discourse, by setting the political agenda, by defining the issues and terms of debate, and by excluding oppositional ideas.*

In other words, certain media promoted certain discourses. Journalists, for example, when writing a story, selected a shape/style of discourse which was communicatively appropriate to the particular setting. This gave expression to the values and meaning of the newspaper, and answered the economic and institutional requirements of the newspaper and its owners (Fowler 1994: 42). In other words, the journalist was constituted by the newspaper's discourse (Fowler 1994: 42).

Thus, by using the ideas of power, ideology, hegemony, semiotics, the construction of meaning and the more Marxist interpretation of discourse, it is possible to undertake an inherently critical analysis of the media that deconstructs discursive "realities" and the apparatuses behind their formation. As Inglis (1991: 82) observed:

> *We all tend naturally to believe that we are free individuals, and cheerfully overlook the circumstance that we have little choice but to think along the lines organised for us, above all, by the massive information institutions, [such as the media] ... These are the agencies of power, and therefore of ideology. Any version of the truth, we should remember, is necessarily attached to its power to win a hearing. Truth can't win by its purity as we'd like to think; it must have muscle.*

In other words, from the media there emerge dominant media discourses which favour certain "truths" over others. To examine how and why this situation occurs, I will consider how selected media theorists have applied critical Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches to the media in capitalist societies.[27]

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[27] This thesis concentrates on analyses of the effects of political economy on media production, not on ideas of media content from the point of view of its reception. However, such views are important in outlining the limitations of the political economy approach and are considered later in this chapter.

Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

Analysis of the media in capitalist societies reveals that it is predominantly owned and controlled by large, monolithic corporations and industrial conglomerates. These institutions, in theory, can't interfere with or influence the independence of workers within the media. Herman and Chomsky (1988), however, argued that the size and nature of such corporations, particularly in the US, was the first of a number of "filters" affecting the media and journalists' "freedom" to present the "facts". Such corporations, Herman and Chomsky argued, also owned many other industries in capitalist societies, and this convergence of capital and media meant that news negatively affecting the aims and objectives of these industries would not be presented. In addition, the cost of owning and maintaining media, the importance of advertising, the reliance of the media on information from government and business, and the national (US) ideologies of "anticommunism" and "pro-capitalism" all served to filter what was deemed "newsworthy" (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 2).[28] In other words, these "filters", (summarised as their "propaganda model"),[29] were the determining processes which consciously and subconsciously affected what journalists, sub-editors and editors could and couldn't report in the media.[30]

In other words, the media in capitalist societies such as the US, served merely to mobilise support for the special interests of the elite who dominated the State and private activity (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xi). Thus, the media was not neutral and objective but, instead, served to reproduce the relationships of production, which reinforced capitalism and the dominant ideology of capitalist societies.[31] For Herman and Chomsky, this was

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[28] Herman and Chomsky (1988) noted, for example, that "newsworthy" stories included, *ad nauseam*, the alleged shortcomings of communist and anti-US states, such as Cuba and Poland, while atrocities committed by the governments of pro-US states, such as El Salvador, were excluded from notions of "newsworthiness".

[29] For more detail of these "filter" processes and methods of news misrepresentation, see the propaganda model outlined in Herman and Chomsky (1988: 1-35)

[30] A vital point here is that the owners and controllers of media can explicitly shape news through their control and appointment of the senior staff who manage and edit individual media outlets (Ward 1995: 142). In other words, media owners can influence the news produced without direct intervention. Media owners, however, have also employed direct methods in intervening in the editorial process. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

[31] Importantly, Herman and Chomsky's theory about the media, based on the idea that the media explicitly produces news which favours a certain reading of events over others, and summarised in the propaganda model, was the product of a school of critical thought about the propagandist nature of the media which had its roots in the 1920s and 1930s. Important works in this regard were by Lippmann (1921), Bernays (1928) and Lasswell (1933). These ideas re-emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, as in the works of Schiller (1971), Murdock and Golding (1973), Crozier *et al* (1975), Carey (1976), Smythe (1981) Chomsky (1982) and Herman (1982). During this period the rediscovery of critical traditions, (including those of the Frankfurt School), and the influence of radical economics, led to the introduction of the concept of "political economy" to media study (Boyd-Barrett 1995: 187). This concept stressed the interaction of political factors and economic institutions in determining communications (Downing *et al* 1995: 488). As such, Herman and Chomsky's basic ideas, which they

the false consciousness - the functioning of news to take real issues and invert them, so the audience saw everything opposite to what was real, perpetuating the dominant ideology. Language was not passive but instead the medium through which people discovered "reality" and, as such, the basis of culture.

This was a more macro and Marxist re-working, then, of Foucault's post-modernist ideas that power was achieved through language, and that power could limit discourse. As Herman and Chomsky (1988: xi) observed:

> *... the democratic postulate is that the media are independent and committed to discovering and reporting the truth, and that they do not merely reflect the world as powerful groups wish it to be perceived. Leaders of the media claim that their news choices rest on unbiased professional and objective criteria ... If, however, the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear, and think about, and to "manage" public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns, the standard view of how the system works is at serious odds with reality.*

Through exhaustive analysis of US media coverage of many issues, such as the Vietnam War and elections in US-backed and non-US-backed regimes, Herman and Chomsky (1988: xiv-xv) concluded that, through the context given to "facts" - their placement, tone, repetition, omission, framework of analysis within which they were presented, and the related "facts" which accompanied them and gave them meaning - issues and "news" were distorted and often false.[32] Importantly,

> *... the observable pattern of indignant campaigns and suppressions, of shading and emphasis, and the selection of context, premises, and general agenda, is highly functional for established power and responsive to the needs of the government and major power groups [such as media corporations, and businesses which advertise in the media] ... the media's interpretation of the world reflect[s] the interests and concerns of the sellers, the buyers, and the governmental and private institutions dominated by those groups (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xv, 303).*

Herman and Chomsky (1988: 306) concluded their analysis by stating that the US media were "effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces, internalised assumptions, and self-

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had developed throughout the 1980s, had already been well-critiqued by the time they published their 1988 work "Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media", which contained the propaganda model. Many of these critiques are considered in this thesis as part of a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the model and their work. For more discussion on the historical development of theories of explicit media bias, see Inglis (1991: 74-91), Downing *et al* (1995: xv-xxix) and Boyd-Barrett (1995).

32 Studies taking this approach to media and news analysis are numerous and provide considerable evidence to back Herman and Chomsky's hypothesis. Apart from those referred to in footnote 31, and those to be discussed in more detail in this chapter, others include Aronson (1970), Chomsky (1989) and Mowlana *et al* (1992).

censorship, and without significant overt coercion". In other words, the media served as a system for communicating messages to a general populace, in so doing "brainwashing" them to integrate into the institutional structures of the larger society (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 1). Importantly, much of Herman and Chomsky's hypothesis has been backed up by evidence gathered by other media theorists and analysts, such as Michael Parenti, Ben Bagdikian, John Pilger and Douglas Kellner.

Explicit Bias in the Media: Other Approaches and Analyses

Herman and Chomsky's basic conclusion, that the media in capitalist societies explicitly "manufactured consent", was similar to that reached by Parenti (1993). Parenti examined the overt and covert political nature of the media in the US and found similar "filtering" effects to those outlined by Herman and Chomsky. These included, among others, the concentrated and interlocking pattern of media ownership (Parenti 1993: 26-32), and the influence of media owners and media advertisers (Parenti 1993: 33-40), who combined to "call the tune" on editorial content and emphasis. This led to explicit methods of misrepresentation being incorporated into the news production process, including selectivity and deliberate omission, the face-value transmission of lies and disinformation, and the framing, labelling and placement of stories.[33] Consequently, journalists and the US media were not "free" to write and publish whatever they wanted but instead were compelled by active class power relationships to explicitly suppress certain news items while promoting others. As Parenti (1993: 50) concluded:

> *There is nothing mysterious about who controls the ideological direction and political content of the news. As with any profit-making corporation, the chain of command in the media runs from the top down, with final authority in the hands of the owners or those who represent the ownership interest of the company.*

Herman and Chomsky's argument that the US media produced a "skewed" version of reality was also the conclusion reached by Bagdikian (1992), who studied the adverse effects of the tightening concentration of media ownership in the US. Bagdikian (1992: 21-22) noted that in 1981, 46 corporations controlled the bulk of the US media but that by 1990 this had contracted to 23 and there was no indication that the rate of contraction was slowing.[34] Moreover, in 1945, 80 per cent of the daily newspapers in the US were

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[33] For more details of these and other methods of misrepresentation, see Parenti (1993: 191-210).

[34] Indeed, as Williams (1996: 84) stressed, in the [northern] summer of 1995, "all of the large media corporations in the USA [sic] went through a period of unprecedented mergers, which made those of the mid-eighties under the Reagan era of deregulation puny by comparison". The most notable of these was the merger of Time Warner Inc. with Ted Turner's Turner Broadcasting Systems (TBS) to create the world's largest media conglomerate. For more details of this and the other mergers, see Williams (1996: 82-87). Moreover, the trend of increasing concentrations of media ownership has also been noticeable in New Zealand, where the daily newspaper industry is now almost completely owned and

independently owned, but by 1989 80 per cent were owned by the corporate chains (Bagdikian 1992: 4).

Bagdikian (1992: 4-9) noted that while many of the 23 corporations had different structures and diverse interests they still shared certain values, such as political and economic goals, which "were reflected in the emphasis of their news and popular culture". Many of the corporations also had interests in other vital and profitable economic sectors, such as defence, manufacturing and agriculture. As a result, these corporations, controlled exclusively by economic conservatives, increasingly used the media, particularly when their corporate interests were at stake, to promote their corporate values to the exclusion of others. They did this "in their selection of news, and in the private lobbying power peculiar to those who control the media image - or non-image - of politicians".

Bagdikian (1992: 118-133) also noted that, as the corporations became bigger and expanded their financial reach over different types of media, including "alternative" media,[35] the output of different media became more and more alike. Or, as Bagdikian (1992: 244) described:

> *The greater the dominance of a few [media] firms, the more uniformity in what each of them produces.*

To support his argument, Bagdikian (1992: xxiii, 27-43, 46-66), detailed hundreds of instances where corporate intervention into the editorial process affected the coverage and reporting of stories. This resulted in news which emphasised the self-serving censorship of anti-capitalist political and social ideas, the preferential treatment given to "sacred cows",[36] and the "creation" and promotion of self-serving movements and ideas, such as the ultra-conservative, evangelism of preacher Billy Graham, or the anti-communist demagoguery of Joseph McCarthy.[37] In other words, the result of increasingly concentrated corporate ownership and control, Bagdikian (1992: 16) concluded, was that the total US news picture was increasingly skewed in favour of corporate interests.

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controlled by two companies. This situation has come about as a result of mergers and/or acquisitions by larger companies of smaller entities. As Molineaux (1995: 5-6) noted, one of the two presently dominating companies, Wilson and Horton, (W & H), had 41.9% of total circulation by 1995, while the other, Independent Newspapers Ltd, (INL, controlled by Rupert Murdoch), had 46.5%. The difference was made up by independent titles. Yet in 1971, W & H had only 21.4% of circulation, INL had 0% and independents had 31.2%, with the difference being shared between five small media companies.

35 In this case, cable television, syndicated programming and videocassettes.

36 Such as the interests of the owner, his/her/its family and friends, major advertisers and the owner's political causes.

37 The power of the media to initiate "propaganda" and other campaigns was also detailed by Herman (1995: 89-93).

Furthermore, such institutional bias "does not merely protect the corporate system. It robs the public of a chance to understand the real world ... [as their] view of the social-political world is deficient" (Bagdikian 1992: xxiv). Importantly, dominant discourses were increasingly in the hands of the dominant media corporations, which had,

> *... ever greater freedom to shift the balance of news and popular culture away from reflecting what exists in American political, economic and social culture, and toward creating what they would prefer to exist (Bagdikian 1992: xviii).*

Murdock and Golding (1977) also focused upon the relationship between ownership and control of the media and the power structure in society, and its effects in reproducing society, in particular class relations. Murdock and Golding (1977: 20) argued that economics and the structure of media ownership was not the sole determinant of media output. They emphasised, however, that control over media resources and their distribution in the economic base "are ultimately the most powerful of the many levers operating in cultural production" (Murdock and Golding 1977: 20).

Like Bagdikian, Murdock and Goulding (1977: 23-25) noted how the ownership of the means of production in the UK, including media ownership, had become increasingly concentrated in ever-larger corporations over the past century.[38] Moreover, they found that the giant media corporations had increasingly inter-locking and reciprocal levels of shareholdings and directorships with other industrial sectors. This growing link, Murdock and Golding argued (1977: 31-33), strengthened the relationships between the owners of capital, who "continued to constitute an identifiable capitalist class with recognisable interests in common" (Murdock and Golding 1977: 33). As a result, Murdock and Golding (1977: 34) concluded, the media played an important and explicit role in legitimising an inegalitarian social order. Or, as the *New Internationalist* (June 1994: 19) observed:

> ***Political and corporate links [in the media] mean less autonomy for journalists and editors. Business interests either openly or covertly set the agenda of what should be reported and how.***

The media analysts referred to above provided strong evidence to support Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. Theorists applying a more Althusserian approach to the function of the media within capitalist societies also reinforced these views. The Althusserian hypothesis that the media worked as an apparatus of the State to reproduce society was examined and developed by the Glasgow University Media Group (1976;

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38 For more details on the increasing concentration of UK media ownership, see Curran and Seaton (1988: 84-93, 247-252), and Chapter Six.

1980; 1982; see also Masterman 1986), who studied the main news programmes of the UK television stations.[39] The emphasis of these studies was on analysing not only what was shown but also what was not shown, which events were disregarded, and the perspectives which were never considered (Masterman 1986: 99).

The Glasgow group's most notable study was on the media coverage of the 1984-5 miners' strike in Britain.[40] They demonstrated that the UK TV news programmes were presented "as the State itself would naturally prefer", that is, from an anti-miner perspective (Inglis 1991: 85). The misrepresentation of the miners' strike was, as Masterman (1986: 108) stressed,

> *... a reminder that what is omitted from television's agenda cannot easily enter the general consciousness and that the control of information, whether it takes a brutal or sophisticated form, is the very cornerstone of political power.*

Pilger (1989; 1992), too, attacked UK media techniques employed to "control" the way humans viewed the world (Pilger 1992: 2).[41] To support his argument, Pilger examined the coverage by the British media of issues such as the 1982 Falklands War, the 1984-5 British miners' strike, and, in particular, the 1991 Gulf War. In all cases, Pilger (1989: 551-557; 1992: 1-10, 65, 85-150) concluded, the UK media oligarchies,[42] with few exceptions, collaborated with the State to present one (the State's) version of events. The media did this through what Pilger (1992: 85) described as the "sins of omission" - in the case of the Gulf War, by ignoring certain facts about the war, such as the very high number of Iraqi civilian and military casualties, and by not questioning many assumptions, such as the alleged "astounding accuracy" of the so-called "smart" bombs.[43] When considering the Gulf War coverage, Pilger (1992: 93) observed:

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[39] Although the Glasgow University studies concentrated on television, and this thesis will concentrate on the press, the studies are useful in demonstrating the link between a compliant media and the State - a link, as Herman and Chomsky (1988) have demonstrated, not confined solely to broadcast journalism. See also Mowlana *et al* (1992).

[40] See Masterman (1986) for a detailed analysis of the overt pro-State bias in the BBC reporting of this strike.

[41] Pilger (1992: 61) also described how the public relations and advertising industries worked with a compliant media to develop as a "powerful instrument of government propaganda". For a detailed study on the power of the public relations industry as a force within, and for, every area of government and business, see Nelson (1989). Rather than presenting an accurate picture of society, Nelson (1989: 19) argued that the mainstream media acted as "conduits" for corporate and governmental misinformation and disinformation. See also Williams (1996: 4).

[42] Pilger (1992: 65) described the UK press as being owned and controlled by "oligarchies in the making": Rupert Murdoch, Robert Maxwell (since deceased), Lord Stevens, Viscounts Rothermere and Blakenham, and "Tiny" Rowland.

[43] This argument was also the basis for Lobe's (1991) discussion on the media coverage of the Gulf War. Lobe (1991: 26) observed that, during the war, the US media was "cheerleading" the actions of the US military. For example, one US television network reporter referred to the bombing of Iraq as "a marvel", while another referred to the opening raids by US aircraft on Baghdad as "two days of almost picture-perfect assaults" (Lobe 1991: 26).

> *... so zealously have the London-based "media response teams" spread the authorised word [about the war] that the controllers of information in Whitehall have had to rein them in, rather like the sorcerer and his apprentice. George Bush has wagged his finger. Come on guys, let's not be "overly euphoric". John Major's autocue has said as much.*

Thus, the media theorists and analysts considered up to this point have articulated a strong critique of the alleged "freedom" of the media in capitalist societies. Their arguments, I believe, provide ample support to the basic strengths of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, and it is this critical approach that I employ in my analysis. I use the model, however, with some qualifications and modifications. This is because, while the evidence presented to back up the arguments of the theorists/analysts discussed thus far is considerable and concise, I believe their approach has a number of shortcomings, related to the general criticisms of orthodox Marxism outlined earlier.

First, the theorists (from orthodox Marxist to Althusserian neo-Marxist) accept the orthodox Marxist assumption that there is in capitalist societies a single, fixed and all-empowering dominant ideology, or what Giroux (1981: 14) described as "a one-sided determinism", imposed by a homogeneous ruling elite, and which precludes views challenging the status quo from appearing in capitalist media. By doing so, they do not explain why there exists in the media challenges, albeit few, to the dominant ideological assumptions existing in a society. These challenges exist, and the theorists acknowledge them, but at the same time they do not present a concise argument as to why they appear.

In addition, the theorists ignore the effects on the superstructure of human and cultural factors which can and do resist and contest the dominant ideologies as part of the interaction between the base and the superstructure within society. Other media theorists, however, have applied Gramsci's notions of hegemony to incorporate the changing and contradictory flows of culture and information in their analysis of the media in capitalist societies. By doing so, these theorists modify some of the shortcomings in the orthodox Marxist and Althusserian approaches.

Hegemonic Approaches to Media Analysis

Gramsci's notion of hegemony provided media theorists with some interesting perspectives from which to explain the phenomena of so-called non-dominant views that occasionally appeared in the media. Kellner (1992), for example, when analysing US media coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, found that most of the coverage favoured the US Government's positions. Yet some critical discourses attacking the Bush Administration's

policies during the crisis did appear in the mainstream US media (Kellner 1992: 61). Kellner noted that these oppositional voices were predominantly from established political figures and leaders of certain industries, such as tourism and automobiles, all of whom were alarmed at the political and economic consequences of involvement in the crisis; in short, they were concerned that a war in the Gulf "would harm their interests" (Kellner 1992: 57). By contrast, antiwar, antinuclear, environmental, feminist and other social groups who opposed the war were almost completely ignored by the US mainstream media (Kellner 1992: 58).

Such "selective" reporting of oppositional voices reflected Gramsci's notion that dominant forces within society were not static but competing with each other, as well as with other non-hegemonic forces. In the Gulf War, different groups and social forces in the US, many of them powerful and influential, were competing to control the conduct and outcome of the war, and therefore influence US society. This struggle, and the ultimate victory of a certain hegemonic discourse, was reflected in the US mainstream media. As Kellner (1992: 62-80) noted, the US media, through the process of exaggerating US Government propaganda about the war, (such as the constructions of Iraqi troops as "monsters" pulling babies from their incubators and Saddam Hussein as a "new Hitler" who had to be "destroyed"), by concentrating on the logistics of the war rather than its possible consequences, and by ignoring critical voices, framed their coverage to support the ideology of the US Government and the US military. In turn, this helped mobilise public opinion in support of the war. In other words, as Kellner (1992: 62) concluded, "although there was opposition to Bush Administration policies, this opposition was marginalised in the mainstream media and ultimately silenced".

Thus, Kellner rejected the view that the media imposed a single, dominant ideology. Instead:

> *US society itself is divided into competing groups, ideologies, and political agendas which play themselves out in the media. Hegemony is constructed when a coalition of social groups imposes its agenda on the public and it attains dominance ... The [US] media aided in the construction of Bush administration and Pentagon hegemony through transmitting its positions and discourses and through omission of what issues it did not discuss and what alternatives to the war policy it did not pose (Kellner 1992: 61-62).*

Piza *et al* (1987) also utilised notions of competing struggles for hegemonic discourse within society to explain seemingly "critical discourses" appearing in mainstream media in capitalist societies. Taking a similar approach to Bagdikian (1992), they described how the nature of the media industry, especially changing demand patterns and rising costs, had led to the concentration of media outlets into a few large corporations. Piza *et al*

(1987: 2) observed that this had the effect of severely limiting the range of media discourse available to the audience, as alternative or radical media had little chance of long-term survival in the face of the media conglomerates.

Their approach differed to that of Bagdikian, however, in that they emphasised that "dissident" voices could appear in the mainstream media, as long as they did not articulate views that broke the barriers of "normal behaviour" (Piza *et al* 1987: 2). In other words, oppositional voices could be conveyed in the media if they stayed within the competing hegemonic discourses, the articuation of their views being a reflection of the fact that dominant groups did not share a unified viewpoint but were competing for hegemonic power and control.

Slightly reworking this theme, Cohen and Solomon (1993: 72-86) observed that non-dominant discourses ("investigative journalism") often appeared in the US mainstream media many years after the event they were analysing had actually occurred. Furthermore, at the time of the event, the mainstream media had duly reported the dominant version of the "facts" as the unquestioned truth,[44] even as non-mainstream media presented non-dominant discourses. As Cohen and Solomon (1993: 71, 74) concluded:

> *Too much of today's "investigative journalism" is belated reporting of scandalous facts that were never publicised in time to make a difference ... [Thus], when the next foreign war or invasion comes, most mainstream journalists can be counted on to swallow official deceptions. Months or years later, these news outlets may report the truth [sic]. But by then, the blood has been shed.*

In other words, the media created the impression that it was impartial and "objective" by occasionally investigating and deconstructing an important event, while ignoring serious analysis of issues at the most vital time, the time of their occurrence.[45] What this and the other studies showed, then, was how the media, through the process of selective publication of seemingly widely-divergent points of view, gave the false impression that it reflected real and diverse differences in opinion in society. In reality, as Piza *et al* (1987: 2) concluded:

> *... it is only a reflection of differences existing between the elites and/or the State. In this way, the media legitimise the system and the media themselves are given an image of "objective impartiality" and of being independent institutions acting as neutral observers which serve the public interest. As the most important holder of*

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44 For example, in 1992, US journalist Ted Koppel produced a story attacking the Reagan Administration's version of the events surrounding the shooting down of an Iranian civilian plane over the Persian Gulf in 1988. Yet, as Cohen and Solomon (1993: 72-74) observed, in 1988 Koppel faithfully disseminated the Reagan Administration's "party line" without question.

45 The myth of the "objective" media and its role in legitimising news was discussed in more detail by Parenti (1993: 51-69).

> *social information, the media also ... [sets] the agenda of the public debate. They highlight what is important and what is not, what is known and what remains unknown.*

Theories regarding the role of hegemonic conflict in determining the nature and production of "news" are useful, then, in explaining the appearance of non-dominant "facts" in dominant media discourses. As hegemonic struggle exists within and between hegemonic and non-hegemonic forces, a definite but limited range of competing hegemonic and non-hegemonic views can be published in the mainstream media in capitalist societies, despite the "filtering" effects on news production caused by the political economies of such media. This provides a satisfactory basis for a modified application of Herman and Chomsky's general argument, which stated that ideology worked explicitly in news production by overtly selecting certain associations around news stories that would mobilise support for the special interests of the elite in a society (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xi). The work of Kellner, Piza *et al* and Cohen and Solomon, then, like that of Herman and Chomsky, recognised the overt ideological influences on the media. Other media theorists, however, have emphasised the effect of other, more implicit, ideological influences - an approach which emphasises that the media *inadvertently* reproduces dominant ideologies. This poses a significant challenge to Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model.

Theories on Implicit Bias in the Media

Hall *et al* (1978) challenged the theories of explicit ideology affecting news by stating that ideological bias was more implicit, and that the particular associations around news stories were the result of structural restrictions and the processes of news form and production. According to Hall *et al*, news had to conform to journalistic expectations of what was considered "newsworthy", and these were a reflection of the realities of news production rather than the news event itself. One such reality was the deadline; news media outlets had only a certain amount of time, space and resources to devote to the activities and events of the day. As a result, journalists gravitated towards institutions which generated a useful volume of reportable activity at regular intervals (Hall *et al* 1978: 57). In addition, the professional ethic of "objective" and "impartial" reporting meant journalists tended towards sourcing information from "accredited" sources, such as politicians, large organised interest groups and other social elites.

Hall *et al* (1978: 58) observed that these two aspects of news production combined to produce,

> *... a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged social positions. The media thus tend, faithfully and impartially, to reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order.*

Newspaper production practices, then, carried a specific set of social values which unintentionally reinforced and reflected dominant definitions of social reality. Such conclusions were also reached by the American sociologist Mark Fishman (1980). Fishman examined news gathering methods and found it was these routine work practices, rather than any hidden manipulators, which determined the ideological character of the media. Fishman (1980: 27-30), like Hall *et al*, noted the tendency for journalists, as a result of the constraints of time and of the nature of newspaper production, to gravitate toward certain sources as part of a regular news "beat". This led to news production bias towards "bureaucratically organised" structures such as the police, the government and other elites and/or agents of the State (Fishman 1980: 51). Consequently, ideological bias was more the result of the manipulation of these news production processes than of any explicit media agenda. Thus:

> *[The ability of elites to manipulate the media] depended on the routine practices of journalists - practices which tied newsworkers to these [elite] sources and which led newsworkers to treat their sources' accounts not as versions of reality but as "the facts" (Fishman 1980: 15).*

As Fishman (1980) concluded, were journalists and editors to employ different methods of news gathering, a different version of "news" would emerge in the press, one which might challenge the legitimacy of the status quo.

The consequence of such sourcing on newspaper discourse was also noted by Fowler (1994: 23):

> *Specific powerful institutions, frequently accessed, ... provide the newspapers with modes of discourse which already encode the attitudes of a powerful elite. Newspapers in part adopt this language for their own and, in deploying it, reproduce the attitudes of the powerful. This reproduction ... takes place automatically, given the economic position and working practices of the Press.*

Taking a different angle, Gans (1980) studied the news produced in the US media and concluded that, while the media was demonstrably pro-establishment, journalists were predominantly objective and unbiased in their selection and consideration of what was "news", and that journalists worked to reach "subjective reactions" from "objectively gathered facts" (Gans 1980: 183). Gans (1980: 42-64, 182-6) noted, however, that their objectivity was limited within the boundaries of certain "values", such as "individualism", "moderatism" [sic] and "responsible capitalism". As a result,

> *Journalists shy away from news that could hurt their own firms, themselves, or their ability to obtain the news; nor do they want, if at all possible, to endanger the national interest or well-being (Gans 1980: 189).*

Hall *et al* (1978: 66) also noted the role of ideology in news production, by stating that news was also shaped by being set in relation to a specific conception of society as a "consensus". In other words, an event could only "make sense" through a news story if it could be located through a range of known social and cultural considerations (Hall *et al* 1978: 54), but "consensus" could only be defined by social elites. Thus, the social and political definitions of those in dominant positions tended to become objectified in the major institutional orders, so providing the moral framework for the entire social system (Hall *et al* 1978: 59). As Hall *et al* (1978: 65) concluded:

> *It seems undeniable that the prevailing tendency in the media is towards the reproduction, amidst all their contradictions, of the definitions of the powerful, of the dominant ideology ... This tendency is inscribed in the very structures and processes of news-making itself, and cannot be ascribed to the wickedness of journalists or their employers.*[46]

Thus, the theories of Hall *et al*, Fowler, Fishman and Gans described the implicit ideological role in news production. I believe, however, that their work, though useful in offering a modification to the explicit ideological processes of news production outlined by Herman and Chomsky (1988) *et al*, has a number of major flaws. The theories assume the journalist's personality and experiences are irrelevant - no matter who covers a story, the specific news production processes will ensure the result will be the same, and any ideological bias will be implicit in those processes. The journalist, however, is an important and vital part of that process. He/she, along with the editors, sub-editors and other personnel involved in news production, have an ideological bias gained through their own existence.[47] This affects what is reported, irrespective of news production processes and structural restrictions.[48]

To what extent they can utilise that bias is dependent, however, on the nature of that bias and its relationship to the nature of the media organisation they work for. A key element

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[46] These ideas were discussed in more detail by Hall (1977).

[47] In this regard, there is a catch-22 situation as journalists' own bias gained through "lived experience" is greatly affected by their own exposure to the (elite ideology dominated) mass media. This is related to the work of Raymond Williams and his notion of "lived experience", which will be discussed later in this chapter.

[48] Cohen and Solomon (1993: 92-98) detailed an interesting example of this. They described how the explicit anti-Arab, pro-Israeli bias of US journalist Dan Rather was reflected in his reporting and discussion of events in the Middle East. In addition, they noted how Rather's non-objectivity was of no concern to his employers, CBS News, and that the CBS Board Chair was a "staunch Israel supporter".

in news production processes, then, is the perception the journalist has of his/her employers and of the audience. This is discounted by the implicit bias theories which ignore the insurmountable evidence of explicit corporate and other outside interference in the editorial process, including interference by owners and editors in journalists' stories,[49] the manipulation of what is considered "newsworthy" to favour certain media discourses,[50] the deliberate omission and/or exaggeration of certain "facts", and the blatant reporting of lies and disinformation as unquestioned "facts".[51] When covering an event, journalists can, despite working within the same news production processes and restrictions, produce completely different versions of the same news event.[52] For example, it is physically possible for journalists to use information and ideas from alternative, non-mainstream sources. That they don't, or are prevented from doing so, is, I believe, an explicit act.[53] In other words, their "freedom" to do so is limited by factors outside the news production process.

Gans' model (stating that journalists were objective but that such objectivity was limited within certain values) is particularly weak in this regard. These values were so narrow and one-sided, and therefore *subjective,* they made an argument supporting journalistic "objectivity" totally irrelevant and illogical. Furthermore, the model ignored, or grossly understated, the powerful and explicit forces, such as overt interference in the editorial

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[49] Instances of overt interference in the editorial process are numerous and provide strong and amble evidence to back theories of explicit media bias. For some specific examples, see Bagdikian (1992), Parenti (1993), Rosenblum (1993: 116-161, 194-222), Rodriguez (1995: 139, 144), Miller (1987: 18-19), Cohen and Solomon (1993: 41-47, 177-180), Pilger (1989: 510-542, 550-569), Dorman (1986), Lobe (1991), Curran and Seaton (1988: 79-84), Williams (1996: 4, 41-43, 65-68) and the Preface. Briefly, Williams (1996: 42) provided a succinct example, citing a report in the *Observer* newspaper which noted how the editor of the ultra-conservative *Daily Mail,* Sir David English, who had been knighted in 1982 by Margaret Thatcher, "excelled himself [in the 1992 UK general election], by merging fact with comment in a seamless robe of bias. For example, a straight(-ish) report on John Smith's tax plans 'to help the poor' was swiftly air-brushed for the second edition to read 'to savage higher earners' ".

[50] For example, see Cohen and Solomon (1993: 139-141) for a description of the heavy treatment Democrat Bill Clinton's evasions about draft-dodging received in the US mass media, as compared to the light treatment Republican George Bush's evasions about his involvement in the Iran-Contra affair received, even though the latter event was, by all considerations, far more "newsworthy". See also Cohen and Solomon (1993: 186-188).

[51] See Herman and Chomsky (1988), Kellner (1992) and Cohen and Solomon (1993: 182-184).

[52] An excellent example of how two different news organisations could produce very different stories about the same event was detailed by Masterman (1986).

[53] In defence of the journalist, self-censorship is a powerful force. Drawing on my own experience, I would assert that if a journalist uncovered a story which he/she knew would anger/upset management, he/she would *probably* not even bother to try and pursue it. Self-censorship could also, however, result from an explicit decision by a journalist, especially if he/she was happy with the status quo or he/she had career ambitions. Gans (1980: 184) also noted the power of self-censorship to force those journalists who could not come to terms with such a concept to seek work outside the mainstream media, thus eliminating most of the journalists willing to question the status quo in a society. For more discussion on self-censorship, see Parenti (1993: 45-50) and Rodriguez (1995: 128-136).

process, in shaping and framing these values.[54] In this regard, UK journalist Anthony Bevins, when asked about the effect on journalists of the constraints and pressures imposed by proprietors and editors, noted that reporters "burrowing away at the bottom of the heap" approached the task of reporting with cynicism (cited in Williams 1996: 67). Bevins added:

> *Having worked on [The Sun, Sunday Express, Daily Mail, The Times and the Independent], I can say that such attitudes permeate much front-line journalism. The very notion of a free press is a joke ... Journalists cannot ignore the pre-set "taste" of their newspapers, use their own news sense in reporting the truth of any event, and survive. They are ridden by news desks and backbench executives, they have their stories spiked on a systematic basis, [and] they face the worst sort of newspaper punishment - by-line deprivation (cited in Williams 1996: 67-68 and Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom Media Manifesto 1996: 2).*[55]

Furthermore, as the *New Internationalist* (June 1994: 13) stresses, the models fail to explain why factual information from official or government sources is given excessive respect, particularly when it is often wrong or an outright lie, or can easily provide a distorted or incomplete picture depending on which facts are chosen. In this regard, the models fail to explain why journalists are constantly attacked when they question "official" assumptions, even though the role of the journalist should be, in a truly "free" media, one which questions the status quo. As Pilger (1992: 86) observed:

> *It is as if the very notion of the journalist as a teller of truths unpalatable to ruling elites, as whistle blower in the public interest, has been fatally eroded.*[56]

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[54] The Glasgow University Media Group (1976: 18) observed that journalists insisted that their professional integrity was based on getting "hard facts". Interestingly, they added that newsroom definitions of what constituted such facts were elusive, and noted that "facts" were given more authenticity if they came from "reliable sources", such as the Government. Such flawed thinking meant, of course, that marginalised voices were not "reliable" and were ignored, an obvious catch-22 situation which any genuine journalist, I believe, could avoid if they wanted to/were allowed to.

[55] Even conservative newspaper editors, such as the UK *Daily Telegraph's* Max Hastings, have recognised the explicit constraints on journalistic "freedom". As Hastings (cited in Williams 1996: 67) stressed: "I've never really believed in the notion of editorial independence ... I would never imagine saying to Conrad [Black, the owner of the *Daily Telegraph*], 'You've no right to ask me to do this. I must observe my independence', because Conrad is, it seems to me, richly entitled to take a view when he owns the newspaper".

[56] Critics of this view often point to the US media uncovering of the Watergate affair in 1972-74 as a concrete example of the independence, and adversarial nature, of the media. As Herman and Chomsky (1988: 299-300) and Chomsky (1991: 27-30) stressed, however, the Watergate burglary of the Democratic Party headquarters was an attack against a party representing half of the corporate system. In other words, it was an attack against real power. Conversely, there was, at the very same time as the Watergate exposures, another set of far more serious exposures, which revealed that the national political police, (the FBI), *routinely* engaged in political assassination, burglaries, harassment, violence, disruption and attacks on legal political parties and groups. These included the Socialist Workers Party, as well as popular grassroots organisations. Furthermore, the operations, codenamed COINTELPRO, began with the Kennedy Administration and extended right through to the Nixon Administration. Yet the US media ignored this programme of major government violation of democracy, while elevating the minor crookedness of the Watergate caper to a scandal of national proportions. As Chomsky (1991: 28) noted: "That tells you exactly what was involved in Watergate: people with power can defend themselves, and the media will support people with power. Nothing else

The models also fail to address the explicit "filtering" effects of advertising and the nature of ownership on the media. Thus, they do not explain how a newspaper, such as, in the UK, *Today*, which supported the Social Democratic Party under owner Eddie Shah, could change its support to the Conservative Party under a different owner, Rupert Murdoch, even though it was produced by the same people, in the same building, using the same news structures (Hart 1991: 94).[57] In short, structural restrictions and processes, such as routine journalistic news practices, may implicitly shape news, but those very restrictions and processes can be easily used to produce completely different stories by a journalist, if he/she is truly "free" to do so. My personal experience in the media has demonstrated to me on numerous occasions that journalists are not. Thus, I believe ideology works explicitly in shaping the news.

Theories of explicit bias in news production, however, assume that the production of dominant ideologies by the media occurs without the knowledge of the subjects it oppresses. Yet, as Fowler (1994: 42-43) stressed, there is no guarantee that the receivers of the ideological message - the audience - will passively absorb the socially-constructed, ideology-laden discourses[58] imposed on it by the text. Furthermore, one can never view meaning as being absolutely fixed, as more than one reading can be applied to a

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is involved". Similarly, the US Government's role in the Cambodian genocide entered the Watergate proceedings not because of the major war crimes perpetrated, but because the US Congress was not properly notified (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 300).

57 Murdoch, as Williams (1996: 66-67) observed, imposed this political redirection in *Today,* (and a number of his other newspapers), through his own personal intervention. Furthermore, it was done regardless of the views of these newspapers' readers, thereby debunking the "myth" that newspapers pander to their readers' desires and tastes. Indeed, Rupert Murdoch, like many UK newspaper proprietors, has made a number of statements over the years which provide concrete evidence of the explicit nature of media bias. For example, Murdoch, when defending his particular style of intrusive press management at one of his other UK newspapers, *News of the World*, stated: "I did not come all this way not to interfere" (cited in Curran and Seaton 1988: 81). An editor at the paper, Barry Askew, recalled that Murdoch "would come into the office and literally rewrite leaders [editorials] which were not supporting the hard Thatcherite line" (cited in Curran and Seaton 1988: 81). Williams (1996: 67) noted that Murdoch "reoriented" his newspapers through "direct interventions, calculated humiliations, scathing views on particular journalists ('that man's a commie') or [by] forcing editors and journalists to resign as a result of intolerable pressure". Other UK newspaper proprietors were little different. When Victor Matthews became head of the Express Group of newspapers in 1977, he said: "By and large editors will have complete freedom, as long as they agree with the policy I have laid down" (cited in Curran and Seaton 1988: 82). Similarly, Robert Maxwell, owner of the Mirror Group of newspapers before his death in 1991, once stated: "I certainly have a major say in the political line of the paper" (cited in Curran and Seaton 1988: 83). Lord Stevens of Ludgate, chairman of United Newspapers and Express Newspapers, said in an interview: "I do interfere and say enough and enough. I don't ram my views in but I'm quite far out to the right" (cited in Williams 1996: 67). For more details of "press baron" intrusion in the UK media, see Curran and Seaton (1988: 78-84) and Williams (1996: 65-68).

58 It must be stressed, yet again, that the structuralist perspectives used in this thesis have argued that ideology is imprinted in the available discourse. Thus, it has reworked Foucault's post-structuralist ideas of discourse. For more discussion, see Fowler (1994: 25-45).

discursive text to create a different set of associations and therefore a different meaning.[59]

Such concepts were not considered by Herman and Chomsky (1988), nor by any of the other explicit bias media theorists. Significantly, however, what influences the audience in their reading of the text is what Raymond Williams described as "lived experience". Thus, it is essential to consider Williams' work and its influence on the concept of the audience before undertaking a textual analysis.

Raymond Williams, the Text and the Problem of the Audience

Williams, a Welsh neo-Marxist, agreed with the basic tenets of Gramsci's notion of hegemony, by saying identity was never given or fixed. Williams (1961, 1977) argued, however, that gender, race and ethnicity had to be placed on an equal footing with class, and this lived social experience was just as important in determining who we were. Via his views of culture as a "way of life" (Williams 1961: 43), which continually moved, changed and mutated (Williams 1977: 128-135), Williams reworked Gramsci's ideas that theorised power and domination in society was not a permanently achieved state but a process of conflicting cultural forces (Turner 1990: 67).

Society, then, was a complex totality of elements, and subjectivity was constructed not simply through the power of the dominant culture but also through the dominant culture's relationship to the human agency of other social phenomena. The State was not a single dominant institution which resisted historical and social change initiated by the wider population. Perceptions of the State changed through lived experience. Therefore, it was necessary for the state to be "fluid" and change in relation to developments in the wider culture to retain power.

Williams' ideas, then, were a "bottom-up" approach to theorising power which emphasised gender, race and ethnicity. The "lived experience" of being a Somalian, for example, could create ways of thinking to resist a dominant ideology and discourse in the media which said famines in the Horn of Africa were inevitably the result of local mismanagement. It was this constant interaction between structures and cultures which produced a particular history and constructed subjectivity.

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[59] As such, this was related to ideas of polysemy, whereby media texts, (in the first or "programme" sense), had many potential alternative meanings which could result in different readings being made by the audience. This general idea, and how it relates to the audience, is discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

These ideas are important when considering textual analysis because they advance the notion that the ultimate meaning of the text lies in the text-audience interaction.[60] As such, the "encoding/ decoding" model of Stuart Hall (1980)[61] provides a useful tool in examining this two-way relationship.[62] Hall stated that producers of text could favour one meaning over others but such power was relative and not absolute - the text could only do so much to affect interpretations by the audience. Hall's model, however, allowed for an examination of the relative power of the text, (how relative was that power in deciding meaning), and the relative autonomy of the audience, (how powerful was the audience to resist the power of the text). It showed that the audience were not merely passive consumers of text/culture - in other words, dominant meanings were not irresistibly imposed (Turner 1990: 91) - but that the audience were active in deconstructing the text.[63]

As a result, it was possible for an audience to draw different meanings from the same raw material - the text was very powerful but it could never absolutely determine what the audience would read from it. At the same time, the ability of the audience to derive different meanings from the text depended on the number and type of discourses available to it. The more diffuse the discourses available, the less certain that meaning would be absolute or guaranteed. Nevertheless, the audience could not make any meaning it wanted

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60 In other words, the reader of the text played a role in his/her interpretation and understanding of a message.

61 Stuart Hall has been one of the fiercest critics of the political economy approach to the media, particularly the idea that the media place limits upon the cultural and symbolic content of mass communication, a concept which Hall (1989) regards as inadequate. As Ward (1995: 152) outlined, critics such as Hall have highlighted many shortcomings in the political economy approach, including the fact that the "meaning" of the text was not directly or indirectly fixed by media producers, and that the audience were not simply passive consumers but instead had a wide conception of the "struggle for meaning" and actively engaged in this struggle. Thus, as Ward (1995: 152) neatly differentiated, there is a fundamental divide between those within the political economy approach who view the media as commercially driven "consciousness industries", and those within the cultural studies approach who hold that audience members generate their own "meanings" from media output. While I recognise and accept this fundamental limitation on the political economy approach, (that "meaning" in media output cannot be determined by media producers alone), it is beyond the scope of this thesis to move into either an audience analysis, or an analysis of the producer's intentions, to "prove" any conclusions I make. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, I also recognise the ability of outside groups, such as public relations firms, to influence the production of news. I believe, however, that an appreciation of the effects of the political economy of the media on media texts is a vital, and unrecognised, factor in our formation of understanding about events and issues in the developing world. As Ward (1995: 152) stated, the media "clearly play a major part in generating and circulating the images and symbols which are the stuff of popular culture ... [T]he news ... provide[s] a ... variety of explanations which [the audience] can use as they choose to make sense of the world around them". This view, which I believe extends to our knowledge and conception of the developing world, is discussed in more detail further on in this chapter, in Chapter Six and in the concluding chapter, Chapter Nine.

62 Hall's basic model was further developed and refined by a number of other media analysts. For more detail, see Cunningham and Turner (1993: 265).

63 Furthermore, the reader could also combine other media experiences, including books, film, television and radio, to their "reading" of the text. This is the concept of intertextuality. For more detail, see Hall (1980), Fiske (1987) and McQuail (1994: 238-239).

from the text because texts were structured merely to favour certain "preferred meanings" over others.

Hall's model went further (Hall 1980: 136-138) in explaining the relationship between the text and the audience by outlining the three different ways an audience could react to a text. It might either: a) accept the preferred meaning of the text; b) negotiate with the text (accept parts of the text but not all) or; c) reject the text outright. Different ideologies formed by different lived experiences allowed an audience to react in a different way to the text.[64] Thus, the social and ideological impact of a text could only be found in the audience.

I believe the encoding/decoding model, however, fails to take all of the lessons of semiotics into account, as it assumes all texts have a clear and unambiguous meaning. In addition, it assumes the audience will always construct the first meaning as preferred. This disagrees with much of semiotic theory, which argues that meaning is not fixed. The encoding/decoding model argues the audience can react in three different ways to a precise meaning, but it is also possible for an audience to construct their own "preferred" meaning. Fiske's (1993: 3-33) notion of resistive reading, however, allows a more semiotic approach to the text, which counters this flaw in the encoding/decoding model.[65] It does this by stating text is not fixed - it is possible to argue what text "means". In the encoding/decoding model, the preferred meaning was solely the property of the text; in the resistive reading model, the preferred meaning is never absolutely fixed but is in the audience and the general ideologies of the culture within which the audience is located.[66]

An audience, then, can bring a different set of experiences to the same text and form a different "preferred" meaning. This approach has, however, been criticised by other media analysts, such as Morley (1992) and Silverstone (1994), as being far too dependent on the audience's ability to adopt a "resistive" reading. This was because the model assumed an equivalent power between the producer and consumer of messages. In other words, as Morley (1992: 31) observed, the model ignored,

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64 The audience's ability to remain free from the preferred meaning of the text is related to the range (and difference) of discourses available (through lived experience) to the audience.

65 Fiske's qualifications of the encoding/decoding model were supported by a number of other media analysts. For more detail, see Cunningham and Turner (1993: 265-266).

66 For example, a news story may show a Maori, protesting over land rights, being beaten up by a policeman, with the preferred meaning (as determined by the journalist and producer) being police brutality. Some in the audience may read that meaning and accept/negotiate/reject it, but others may construct a different meaning (that Maoris have been complaining too long over exaggerated grievances and deserve to be beaten) and accept/negotiate/ reject that. Thus, the audience does not reject the text but works with it to create different "preferred" meanings.

> *...the difference between having power over a text and having power over the agenda within which that text is constructed and presented. The power of [media consumers] to reinterpret meanings is hardly equivalent to the discursive power of centralised media institutions to construct the texts which the viewer then interprets; to imagine otherwise is simply foolish.*

This was not to say that such critics believed in the Marxist/Althusserian concept of simplistic textual determinacy (Morley 1992: 31). As Silverstone (1994: 153, 158) observed:

> *The key issue is not so much whether an audience is active but whether that activity is significant ... Activity can, and does, mean too many different things to too many people ... For buried beneath the manifestations of audience activity ... are the conflicting and contradictory constraints of different forms of ... social, economic and political determinations.*

The point here is that a "resistive reading" of the texts is necessary in order to theorise on intended meanings and, therefore, to test the hypothesis of this thesis, and is conducted by the author to the best of my critical ability. To determine to what extent, if, indeed, at all, the audiences of the three newspapers utilised their own "resistive reading" of the texts about the Somalian famine is, however, problematical, as a wide-ranging audience analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis.[67] Nevertheless, *my* interpretation of the texts through a "resistive reading" forms a vital part of the theoretical framework for this thesis.

Towards A Theoretical Framework Appropriate to a Textual Analysis of the Coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian Famine

Throughout this chapter, I have considered various structuralist Marxist and neo-Marxist models on the construction and presentation of news. That the media represents the world from a particular point of view is not, I believe, in doubt. What is controversial, however, is the extent to which this viewpoint, and the resulting dominant media discourses, is explicit or implicit. I have argued that there is ample evidence to suggest that this bias is explicit, through the deliberate methods of "filtering" the news production processes as outlined by Herman and Chomsky (1988: 1-35). Nevertheless, the existence of the various forces competing for hegemony within society also means that the range of discourse in the media is not totally one-sided, as Herman and Chomsky have argued, although it is limited within a narrow range.

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[67] For a more detailed discussion on media effects on the audience, see McLeod *et al* (1991), Morley (1992) and Silverstone (1994: 132-158).

It is this approach which I will be taking in my analysis of the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times*, as I examine their coverage of the Somalian famine of 1992-3. Through a predominantly qualitative textual analysis, I hope to identify the physical structures in these media sources which favour particular sets of meanings and discourses about the famine over others. In Chapters Four and Five, I present a concise and thorough examination and analysis of the causes of the Somalian famine, the famine itself, and the response from the world community to the disaster. A basic understanding of this series of events is a necessary prerequisite when comparing and contrasting the coverage in the three media sources. Through my neo-Marxist approach, applying the explicit hypothesis of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model at a macro level with an appreciation and acknowledgement of the breadth of hegemonic discourse which appears in the media at the micro level, I hope to show how these three newspapers, through a combination of omissions, exaggerations and outright distortions, actively misrepresented the "facts" surrounding the Somali famine.

By doing so, I hope to describe a dominant media discourse emerging in the three newspapers which would favour a certain reading. This reading will, I believe, be more in line with US and UK State policy towards the famine situation, generally non-critical of the role of the capitalist world in generating the conditions for famine, and generally non-critical of the major US response to the famine, Operation Restore Hope. In other words, these three newspapers, I believe, will construct a version of events that is more in keeping with the views and opinions of the State and the ruling elites in the US and UK, although the extent to which this distortion is carried out will not be equal in all three newspapers and non-dominant "facts" will appear. This distortion will fit into my re-interpretation of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, with critical discourses appearing within the context outlined by Kellner (1992) *et al*, described above.

My analysis has a major limitation, however. There is no guarantee that my qualitative textual analysis will bear any relationship to wider audience perceptions about the same material. This topic is outside the scope of this thesis.[68] My "resistive reading" of the text will produce my interpretation of the texts' intended "meaning". The meaning intended by the texts' producers, and the interpretations of the texts by the wider audience, may or may not coincide with my interpretations. Furthermore, whether a wider audience will or

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[68] As such, my investigation of ideology in the texts will be reached via an analysis and description of the language. In other words, as Kress (1983: 124-125) described, I will examine the words in the text as representations of the world from a point of view, existing within systems organised by ideological systems. For a more in-depth linguistic analysis of the role of discourse and semiotics in newspaper representation, see Fowler (1994) and Kress (1983).

will not engage in a resistive reading, let alone one similar to mine, is unknown. Therefore, it is up to the reader of this thesis to concur or disagree with my findings.

I believe, however, that my interpretations of what the producers of the texts intended to convey and US and UK audience acceptance of this message would be accurate, taking into account a number of assumptions. Most audiences in the US and UK, for example, could bring little "lived experience" to their reading of an African famine and the particular responses this famine generated. In this regard, most people have little personal knowledge of Africa apart from what they have already received from the media and, as I show in Chapter Three, the media in capitalist societies actively distorts the perception of Africa. Of those in the US or the UK who did have "lived experience" of Africa, it is fair to assume that most experienced Africa only from a tourist perspective. Very few would have had actual "lived experience" of African life and society, even fewer of a famine, even fewer still of a famine in Somalia, and even fewer again of the famine in Somalia of 1992-3.

This was not to say that having this type of "lived experience" would *necessarily* change a reading of the famine to one which was more critical of Western media misrepresentations. A person could have visited Somalia during the famine and formed an opinion about Somalis that was racist and patronising - in other words, an opinion more in line with "dominant" media misrepresentations. Conversely, an audience member who had no "lived experience" of Africa could "resist" the texts about events in Somalia through the "lived experience" of recognising the inaccuracy of the media. My point here is that Western audiences' general lack of "lived experience" in the developing world means that there is a reduced possibility of critical or resistive reading by these audiences of texts about the developing world. Consequently, it is the coverage of foreign news events, such as the 1992-3 Somalian famine, which is, I believe, most vulnerable to overt manipulation in the US and UK media.

Of course, my reading and interpretation of the news coverage of the famine is constrained by my own lack of "lived experience" in these situations. As already mentioned, however, I compensate this through my knowledge about the Somalian famine, and through my critical approach to Western news coverage of the developing world, gained through the wide-ranging reading and study that was necessary in preparing and writing this thesis.[69] Furthermore, I bring the lived experience of six-and-a-half years of travelling to my general understanding of events and issues in the

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[69] Again, however, this knowledge has been explicitly affected by my choice and interpretations of the sources, books and articles cited by me for this thesis.

developing world. I also bring the lived experience of how the media works, derived from the many years spent as a journalist and sub-editor, to my personal understanding of how the US and UK media distorted the "facts" to favour one version of the events and issues surrounding the famine over others.

Thus, I will bring my well-researched understanding about the famine and the media to my reading of the text. In other words, I will bring a certain discourse to the same text and will form a certain meaning. As discussed above, however, it is up to the reader of this thesis to concur or disagree with my interpretations and analysis

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined some theoretical approaches to the media in capitalist countries, and have discussed why the media presents and favours a certain "image" of reality over others. Certain theories, particularly those which emphasise the role of an explicit ideology in shaping "news" are, I believe, more effective in explaining the inherent bias in the US and UK media. In Chapter Three, I will discuss how this systematic bias is reflected in US and UK media coverage of the developed world, a bias which distorts the events and issues occurring there and results in a narrow and one-sided representation of the nature of the peoples and societies of the developing world.

CHAPTER THREE

MEDIA AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two, the media in the US and UK do not present an even-handed and balanced picture of the economic and social relationships in capitalist society. Instead, the nature of such relationships is distorted through the explicit ideology inherent in capitalist media. Importantly, this distortion is not limited to news coverage of events and issues in the US and the UK, but extends to news coverage of the entire developing world, whether it be Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, the Caribbean, the Middle East or Latin America.

In this chapter, I describe how Western media treatment of the countries of the developing world has resulted in the emergence of an overwhelmingly negative image of these societies. I discuss how this dominant image has evolved through an analysis of the unequal nature of global news flows and the systematically biased reporting of the little news about the developing world, and in particular Africa, which has appeared in the Western media. I describe not only the meagre quantity of Western news reports about the developing world but also the poor quality of the reports. In doing so, I illustrate the emphasis on disaster and misery in the reports which precludes serious analysis and discussion of issues and events. I also review some studies on how the media in Western countries such as the US and the UK have misrepresented the events surrounding wars and famines in Africa. This general overview and analysis provides a significant base for considering how the US and UK media approached the 1992-3 Somalian famine.

The Propaganda Model and the Developing World

Before analysing US and UK media coverage of the famine, it is essential to consider how the theoretical hypothesis developed in Chapter Two relates to Western media coverage of the developing world. With respect to the developing world, Herman and Chomsky (1988) argued that, through the premised "filters" of the propaganda model, one of the main functions of the US media was to mobilise support for US foreign policy. In their study of US media attitudes during the 1980s towards the pro-US regimes in Guatemala and El Salvador, and the (non pro-US) Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, Herman and Chomsky (1988: 87-142) claimed to uncover a systematic reporting bias. They found that the US media portrayed the Guatemalan and El Salvadorian regimes,

with their appalling human rights record encompassing tens of thousands of civilians slain by government death squads, as "moderate" and as "friendly democracies", while the Sandinista regime, with its policies to create a more equitable state following the overthrow of the brutal Somoza dictatorship in 1979, was portrayed in the US media as a "Marxist-Leninist dictatorship" (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 141-142).

Similarly, the people of the developing world, particularly in non-US client states, were not regarded as "worthy" victims if they were murdered when trying to demand basic human rights (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 37-86). For example, activists and political prisoners tortured in pro-US states such as El Salvador, Indonesia or Cambodia, (before the communist takeover), were "unworthy" victims and did not command significant US media attention, while attacks on trade union activists and the imprisonment of political prisoners in Poland, a communist state, or Cambodia, (after the communist takeover), were "worthy" victims and attracted massive and indignant media attention.[1]

Thus the quantity and quality of reporting of events and issues in the developing world in the US media was totally dependent on its relevance to furthering the interests of elites. Thus,

> *If the government or corporate community and the media feel that a story [about an event in a foreign country] is useful as well as dramatic, they focus on it intensively and use it to enlighten the public ... Conversely, [media attention] will not be mobilised where victimisation, even though massive, sustained and dramatic, fails to meet the test of utility to elite interests (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 33).*

Furthering this hypothesis, the Western media have not presented a balanced picture of the events and issues in the developing world. Instead, through the promotion and portrayal of the events in a particular way, which emphasised some "facts" and issues while ignoring others, the Western media have displayed a systematically biased reporting method, which worked to distort the image of the developing world in the West.[2] Before considering the implication of this hypothesis on US and UK media coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine, however, it is essential to first explore some wider perspectives of developed world images of the developing world.

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[1] As Herman (1995: 91) stressed, these split standards had great ideological significance, with the continued emphasis on the real and alleged misdeeds of non-US client states helping to convince the (US) public that these states represented a "threat". Thus, the public were convinced of the need for the strengthening of the US military through the development of newer and even more powerful weapons.

[2] This distortion and its effects have been examined by a number of other media analysts, such as Dorman, de Waal, Kassam and Brett, whose studies are examined later in this chapter.

The Image of the Other

Since the 1980s, there has been much discussion on the question of images of "the other" - the colonised or formerly colonised peoples of the developing world.[3] Much of this image has emerged from a "long-standing tendency to represent such people either as exaggeratedly romantic, glamorous and `exotic,' or alternatively as inferior in some way" (Benthall 1993: 186). Through not only the media but also advertising brochures, commercial films and other forms of Western popular culture, romantic images of "other" people have been constructed in the general Western psyche.[4] As Benthall (1993: 187) observed, however:

> *The dominant imagery, especially in ... [the media], is of helplessness and negativity.*[5]

Such conclusions were reflected in studies which demonstrated that Western perceptions of Africans were gravely inaccurate.[6] One Danish study (cited in IFDA Dossier 1988: 17), which asked respondents to articulate words and ideas that sprung to mind in connection with the word "Africa", found that 85 per cent answered "hunger" and "famine". Other studies (cited in IFDA Dossier 1988: 17) found that people in Denmark, France and the UK accepted pictures of a mother with a sick child, aid arriving for needy people, and a white nurse among black refugees, as "most typical" of African reality while images reflecting the cultural and political life of African countries, such as political rallies and street scenes in a town, were accepted as "least typical". Similarly, regular questionnaires to 16 and 17-year-old British schoolchildren and their teachers which asked what percentage of the world's children was "visibly malnourished" elicited

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[3] For a detailed examination of how representations of the "other" are defined in the media and other forms of popular culture, see Naficy and Gabriel (1993).

[4] It must be stressed that concepts of the subordinate "other" emerged as a post-modernist concept. This thesis is "borrowing" this concept and using it as a useful background reference before my far more structuralist examination on how the Western media has contributed to this image. For more discussion on post-modernist views of the "other", see Lyon (1994: 76-78), Said (1993) and Hollinger (1994).

[5] It should be noted that the profoundly negative image of the developing world in the developed world has also been influenced by institutions outside the media. For a detailed analysis of the role of Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and charity advertising in creating this image, see Kelly (1994) and Holland (1981); of the role of tourist brochures in creating this image, see Kern-Foxworth (1985); of the role of Hollywood movies in creating this image, see Jeffords (1994); and of the role of Western popular culture in creating this image, see Peiterse (1992).

[6] The same was true of Western perceptions of other peoples of the developing world. A survey (cited in O'Sullivan 1991: 19) of London schoolchildren asked for images of the "Third World". The answers included the following generalisations: poverty, babies dying, monsoons, war, devastated crops, starvation, disease, drought, refugees, flies, death, Oxfam, dirty war, beggars, malnutrition, bald children, large families, insects, stealing, poor clothing and kids with pot bellies. The media, O'Sullivan (1991: 32) concluded, was primarily responsible for creating these images. Not surprisingly, then, when analysing US media portrayal of Arabs, Shaheen (1991: 32) found that it continually produced stereotypical myths of Arabs as "uncultured", "sex maniacs" and "terrorists".

responses of between 50 and 75 per cent, whereas the correct answer was 1-2 per cent (Benthall 1993: 188).[7] To investigate why such powerfully negative images of Africa and its people exist, it is useful to examine the quality and quantity of international news about the continent which have appeared in the US and UK media.

The Unequal Distribution of International News Flows

Only a very small proportion of the "news" reported in the US and UK media concerns the developing world, and an even smaller proportion still concerns Africa. This is because 90 per cent of the international news published by the world's press comes from four Western news agencies: the US-based Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), the UK-based Reuters and the French-based Agence France Presse (AFP) (Mpondah 1991: 18). A 1980s survey (cited in Rojas 1991: 16) of the biggest agency, UPI, found that 71 per cent of its output was devoted to the US, 9.6 per cent to Europe, 5.9 per cent to Asia, 3.2 per cent to Latin America, 3 per cent to the Middle East and a mere 1.8 per cent to Africa.[8] Furthermore, of the US television companies, only the cable network CNN has a bureau in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa), and between 1988 and 1990 only 5.6 per cent of international news on the three major US broadcast networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) was about Africa (*New Internationalist* June 1994: 18).[9] At the same time, the aforementioned four news agencies also accounted for 67 per cent of international news appearing in the press in the developing world (Kassam: 1991: 20).

Such figures form the basis of what many commentators in the developing world, such as Grenadain writer Don Rojas, have termed as "information imperialism", a situation where, for example, agency news about the US took 40 times more space than that for the entire African continent (Rojas 1991: 16).[10] In this regard, Indian journalist Dipankar Sinha (1991: 33-35) argued that the unbalanced images of the developing world created by the global control of information by the West were vital in allowing the West to

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[7] Other questions included what percentage of the world's families were living in such absolute poverty that their most basic needs were not met? Estimate: 75 per cent, correct answer 20-25 per cent. Another question asked what percentage of 6 to 12-year-olds started school? Estimate: 10-20 per cent, correct answer 90 per cent (Benthall 1993: 188). For more discussion, see Benthall (1993) and Baird (1994a).

[8] UPI has since merged with the UK television news agency ITN to form an even larger press and broadcasting news agency conglomerate, Worldwide Television News (Harrison and Palmer 1986: 73).

[9] If news about South Africa, Ethiopia and Libya was excluded, the figure fell to less than 1 per cent (*New Internationalist* June 1994: 18). For a more detailed examination of the unequal nature of global news flows, see Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (1992).

[10] Indeed, the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, once stated sarcastically that the people of developing countries should be allowed to vote in US Presidential elections because they were bombarded with as much information about the candidates as were US citizens (cited in Rojas 1991: 16). For further discussion on the concept of "information imperialism" and its effect as an agent of Western control, see Time (June 1977), Smith (1980), Meyer (1989) and Sinha (1991).

continue its domination over world politics and economics. Furthermore, as Kassam (1991: 20) observed:

> *The near-total monopoly of the Western agencies on the distribution of news distorts even the Third World's view of itself.*

Of even more concern than just the meagre quantity of coverage in the US and UK media, however, is the actual quality of the coverage. As Rojas (1991: 16) stressed, the information put out by the Western press on life in developing countries was not only small in volume but largely unobjective, concentrating on the "sensationalistic and scandalous". It is this lack of quality reporting[11] which has had a major influence in shaping the overwhelmingly negative image of the developing world.

The Quality of Media Reporting of the Developing World

The poor quality of print media reporting of the developing world was highlighted by Kassam (1991: 20), who cited a Canadian study of seven major Canadian newspapers which found that only 1 per cent of their stories on the developing world involved "serious writing" while much of the rest espoused "ready-made clichés". Another study (cited by Kassam: 1991: 20) backed this argument, revealing that a "coups and earthquake syndrome" dominated reporting on the developing world, with only stories focusing on the dramatic, the emotional and the amusing being printed. Kassam (1991: 20) concluded:

> *... the shallowness of the coverage ... works to reinforce [Western] stereotypes [of the developing world] rather than to bring any understanding of complex issues.*

Similarly, Dorman (1986) observed the systematically biased nature of US media reporting of the developing world. Dorman noted that this was due to the subtle interplay of ideology, ethnocentrism, dubious professional practices and economic forces, all of which combined to "shortchange" the people and issues in the developing world (Dorman 1986: 419-421). Dorman made particular mention of the extent to which the US media sourced from, and heeded the interpretations of, Washington officials,[12] when covering news events in the developing world.[13] As a result, in the US media,

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[11] That is, reporting which did not concentrate on clichés and assumptions about people in the developing world, reporting that did not concentrate on disasters and scandals in the developing world, and reporting which actively worked to integrate developing world perspectives rather than repeating Western views.

[12] Such as representatives of the US Government and US military.

[13] This was never more amply demonstrated than by the US media's sourcing during the Gulf War. A study (cited by Lobe 1991: 12) by the New York-based organisation, "Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting" (FAIR), found that, of 878 sources used in the first two weeks of the war, 47 per cent

> *... the labels, stereotypes and characterisations applied to events and personalities in the Third World tend to be handed down by the [US Government] ... rather than formulated by journalists ... Such facile labelling, however, tends to radically oversimplify complex economic, social and political realities in the Third World, and furthermore to cast the geopolitical drama into Washington's choice of heroes and villains (Dorman 1993: 425).*[14]

Dorman (1986: 427-430) also recognised the power of ideology[15] in affecting the so-called "objectivity" of journalists when reporting on issues in the developing world.[16] In this regard, the US media were constrained to report on international events within the narrow limits of dominant paradigms. In the final analysis, Dorman (1986: 430-431) observed:

> *[There is] very little authentic questioning [by the US media] of the State's strategic goals of US dominance in the Third World ... This results in severe distortion of events in developing countries ... The [US] news media frequently ignore, underestimate or denigrate the political aspirations of Third World people ... [while, at the same time], convincing the American public that Third World peoples are incapable of self-governance, [and] that the best they can hope for is life under a Westernised ruler.*

Parenti (1993) also observed the narrow range of discourse in US media coverage of events in the developing world, particularly when countries, such as Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Indonesia in 1965 and Chile in 1973, attempted to initiate economic reforms which challenged class and power relationships. Parenti (1993: 137-8) described US foreign policy goals in these situations as centred on maintaining multinational corporate exploitation, goals reflected in the reporting of the events by the US corporate-owned news media.

Furthermore, in considering US media treatment of events in developing world nations, including Vietnam, Cuba, Zaire, Nicaragua, Panama, Grenada, East Timor, Iraq and the

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represented either US or Allied governments, while only 1 per cent represented Iraqi government or neutral (the governments of Iran and Jordan) sources. Furthermore, of the "unofficial" sources used, 37 per cent were from the US, of which only 4 per cent were independent scholars. The rest, FAIR concluded, were "generally uncritical experts", such as national security analysts and economists. In addition, most of the "experts" sourced to provide analytical coverage were military consultants, virtually all of whom, FAIR found, were retired military or Pentagon officials. See also Kellner (1992), Mowlana *et al* (1992) and Chomsky (1994b).

14 Much of Dorman's argument - that the US media's main role was to mobilise support for US foreign policy - was a central theme of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988).

15 In this case, a "well-ordered worldview [consisting] of broad assumptions about America's place in the world vis-a-vis other nations and ... certain prejudices and biases about Third World peoples" (Dorman 1986: 428).

16 The effect of ideology on international news was also examined by Kassam. He noted (1991: 20) how "re-designing the facts of [world] history in the interests of established power" was achieved in the US media by the portrayal of "friendly" governments as "peaceful", and "hostile" governments as "terrorists" and "oppressors", irrespective of the historical context.

entire Arab world, Parenti (1993: 137-171) noted patterns of omission and distortion which led to major misrepresentations of the events. Significantly, most of the sourcing for the stories was from institutional authorities, such as the US Government. Consequently, the stories about these countries in the US media were almost always a reflection of "the premises and self-serving claims of US foreign policy", which served to "accept the White House perspective at face value, [and confined] critical commentary to operational matters" (Parenti 1993: 151).[17] In addition, the US media acted to,

> *reduce Third World struggles to an encounter between a virtuous United States and demonic adversaries ...[Thus] the news media transform[ed] pro-US autocrats into "tough leaders" and popular insurgencies into "totalitarian aggressions" (Parenti 1993: 151-152).*

In this regard, the language used by the media reinforced the biased nature of the reporting. The name of a nationalist leader, such as Salvador Allende in Chile, was always prefixed with the words "leftist" or "Marxist", but the name of a pro-Western dictator such as General Pinochet in Chile or President Moputu of Zaire was never prefixed with "rightist" or "fascist" (Mpondah 1991: 18).[18] Consequently, stereotypes and generalisations were constructed which, over time, became neutral "facts" about issues and events in the developing world.

Thus, US media coverage on political events in the developing world was particularly prone to unbalanced reporting, created by constructing and favouring one interpretation of the events over others. This theme was also explored by Pfaff (1989), who studied foreign news in the US media and noted the effect of editorial insistence and pressure to "report the American angle" on the quality of international news production. Pfaff (1989: 87) observed that this served to severely limit what the foreign correspondents could report, which resulted in coverage restricted to "what was recognisable in America". At the same time, serious and unfamiliar matters were ignored, and this "institutionalised ignorance" was reinforced by the practice of regularly moving foreign correspondents, or sending them to countries only after an "event" had already occurred. Pfaff (1989: 87) concluded that these practices served to:

> *... guarantee superficiality and perpetuate stereotypes ... [Furthermore], if he [sic - the foreign correspondent] takes up new things he has discovered, which challenge stereotypes or the conventional wisdom, or what the newspaper's people in Washington are being told by officials, he is likely to be advised that what he is writing is "counterintuitive".*

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[17] Many studies, cited by Parenti (1993: 52), found that US media coverage of foreign affairs offered views that rarely, if ever, differed from those propagated by US foreign policy elites and the US Government.

[18] For further discussion on this theme, see Mpondah (1991).

Harrison and Palmer (1986) came to similar conclusions when analysing the effects of the reduction by the UK media of foreign correspondents in Africa, and the subsequent increased reliance on news agency reports on Africa. They noted (1986: 77) that, as a result of these changes, journalists no longer built up a proper "feel" for what was happening in the developing country or region in which they were based. Furthermore, this reduction in journalistic specialisation was replaced by what was known in media parlance as the "gangbang", a situation where foreign journalists poured *en masse* into a developing country on the rare occasions when a story there had become big international news.[19] The result, Harrison and Palmer (1986: 77) concluded, was "a sad decline in the quality of newspaper ... journalism in the serious coverage of foreign news".

Importantly, international news was, by the 1980s, increasingly regarded by many media proprietors as secondary to domestic news and sport. As the UK journalist Colin Legum (cited in Harrison and Palmer 1986: 77) noted, Rupert Murdoch "once said that the Third World sells no newspapers".[20] When considering UK media coverage of the developing world, another UK journalist, Jonathan Dimbleby, (cited in Harrison and Palmer 1986: 78), observed that:

> *... you discover what's happening in the rest of the world only if there has been a major disaster, a megadeath of some type, the overthrow of the government, or a visit by the British royal family. [There is] very little considered news.*

The decline in numbers of foreign correspondents specialising in the developing world has also resulted in the virtual disappearance of regular and routine political and economic news about Africa from the UK media (Harrison and Palmer 1986: 82). As a result:

> *...only [African news stories emphasising] the spectacular, the bizarre or the truly horrific ... [are reported], thus reinforcing our stereotypes of Africa and Africans (Harrison and Palmer 1986: 82).*

The misrepresentation of events in the developing world through systematically biased media reporting in the developed world was also stressed by Pilger (1994). Pilger (1994: 69-71) noted that the news space offered to report on the death of one person in the UK, (the UK newspaper proprietor Robert Maxwell), far exceeded the news space available to report on the deaths of 6,000 people in a typhoon in the Philippines.[21] In this regard,

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[19] See Harrison and Palmer (1986: 77), Baird (1994a) and Rosenblum (1993: 24-38) for examples and description of "gangbang" journalism. As Rosenblum (1993: 24) summarised, "gangbang" journalism usually led to "too many reporters on one story".

[20] In other words, the decision to withdraw foreign correspondents was related to Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model "filter" of the influence of the profit-making imperative on news selection.

[21] For a further examination of this phenomenon in the Australian media, see O'Keeffe (1989: 51-60).

Holland (1981: 89) observed that the more geographically "distant" a news "event" was from the West, the bigger it had to be to get reported. Hence most of the international news reports from the developing world concerned disasters which "appear to be of cataclysmic proportions" (Holland 1981: 89).[22] In other words, negative images of war, misery, disaster and chaos predominated in Western media reporting from the developing world.

Importantly, much of this disaster reporting focused on events rather than causes and processes, and was divorced from any historical and social context (Banerjee 1981: 8). In addition, the context of the events was reported in relation to its negative effects on the people and politics of the developed world. Thus, much of the reporting was framed in terms of "threats" to the West, such as terrorist attacks and the taking of hostages (Van Dijk 1988: 45). As Pilger (1994: 70) stressed, it was the subtext of the negative reporting which was vital:

> *It is the manner of the reporting ... that helps to secure for the majority of humanity the marginal place allotted them by the world's media managers.*

This must be put into focus. Many negative images emerged from reporting of events and issues in countries such as the US and UK, but these were offset by the images which emerged from other types of reporting, such as on governmental, sociological and economical issues and development. These types of reports were largely absent in international news coverage of the developing world. Furthermore, there was very little coverage of developing world cultural phenomena such as arts, science, education and language (Van Dijk 1988: 45). In the words of Banerjee (1981: 8):

> *Day-to-day events of Senegal are hardly covered [in the UK media]. A famine or civil war suddenly brings it into focus and can gravely distort the country's image.*

Furthermore, as Pilger (1994: 69-70) described:

> *[In the Philippines, when] half their national budget [is] committed to paying the interest on debt owed to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Western commercial banks, [which leads to Filipinos] ... raping their beautiful country in order to export anything that brings in dollars and yen, ... this is not news ... [But] a typhoon, an earthquake, a war: [then people in developing countries] are news of a fleeting kind, from which they emerge as victims,*

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[22] Indeed, Holland (1981) studied how pictures of children from the developing world were used in the UK media and found that the children were predominantly represented as helpless victims of disasters, which served to justify "a paternalistic racism rooted in colonialism" (Holland 1981: 97). In addition, Holland observed that these disasters were rarely presented as having "a historical process with human causes" (Holland 1981: 92).

> *accepting passively their predicament as a precondition for Western acknowledgement and charity.*[23]

In total, then, not only was there very little reportage of developing world issues in the developed world's media, what coverage there was ignored historical and socio-political relationships and instead tended to focus on disaster and misery. As Banerjee (1981: 7) described, it was "as if nothing else happens in that part of the world". This prevented the catastrophes from being perceived "against a background of healthy normality" by audiences in the US and the UK, and grossly distorted the image of the developing world towards the negative (Benthall 1993: 188).

Thus, there was little media commitment to serious analysis or understanding of the issues of the developing world, or of the complex causes and processes of disasters.[24] Both of these themes are central concepts of this thesis. To further examine these issues, it is vital to consider other studies of Western media coverage of disasters, such as war and famine, in Africa. This is particularly important because the two concepts are often inter-connected, as they were in Somalia before and during the 1992-3 famine.

Media Treatment of War in Africa

War provides the media with classic stories of conflict and destruction which make dramatic news and perfect copy for use to "sell" newspapers. Consequently, media coverage has tended to focus on the actual acts and results of war, rather than attempts to create peace (*New Internationalist* June 1994: 8). As a result, there has been,

> *... [a strong] tendency for media to take sides; ... it's as if the public needs to know "who are the good guys and who are the bad". Meanwhile, people [on both sides] ... trying to lead a peaceful resistance against warmongering rarely make the headlines (New Internationalist June 1994: 8).*

This simplification of warfare was reflected in the way the media treated the issues and events behind conflicts. In this regard, some recent analyses of the 1994 civil war in Rwanda provide a useful starting point in considering media misrepresentation of Africa.

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[23] In other words, the reporting was a highly selective process. The importance of this process, and its relationship to the theories of explicit media bias outlined by Herman and Chomsky *et al*, is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

[24] In other words, as Herman and Chomsky (1988) argued, and I discussed in Chapter Two, the media reported on the events by including and favouring some "facts" and interpretations while excluding others. Moreover, as also alluded to in Chapter Two, the lack of media commitment to serious understanding and analysis of events and issues has been a factor common to almost all "news", and not just of events and issues in the developing world. For a detailed study of this phenomena with regard to "news" events in the UK, see Glasgow University Media Group (1976; 1980; 1982). See also Fiske and Hartley (1990).

Southey (1995) investigated the New Zealand (NZ) media treatment of the Rwandan conflict and cited a NZ television documentary which purported to offer background understanding of the issues by stating: "This is a Hutu. This is a Tutsi". Such observations, however, were patently false. Instead,

> *This distinction was far more a construction of Rwanda's colonial powers [Germany and Belgium], than a reality of everyday Rwandan life ... [Thus, the] documentary was misleading and inaccurate in its simplicity and instead fed into the stereotypes and racism of New Zealanders about Africa (Southey 1995: 1).*

Southey also observed (1995: 3) that there was very little coverage of the "tremendous" role played in the tragedy by Africans, such as the Rwandans who sheltered and fed fleeing refugees despite their own poverty, and the contributions of neighbouring African governments and peoples. There were also no African reporters presenting an African point of view of the conflict. Thus, the entire African effort at analysing and coping with the civil war was completely ignored by the NZ media, resulting in the emergence of a distorted image.

Similarly, *Action* newsletter (1995), citing a group of communicators from Rwanda and Southern Africa meeting in Zambia, noted that much of the foreign (non-Rwandan) media coverage of the Rwandan civil war "failed to look beyond the immediate suffering to the roots of the conflict" (cited in *Action* 1995: 1). While the group praised the efforts of Rwandan journalists in attempting to present a fair and balanced picture of the crisis, they attacked the "dozens" of foreign journalists who had "fallen into the trap of stereotyped, sensationalised reporting" (cited in *Action* 1995: 1). Furthermore,

> *... there were foreign journalists who never left Kigali [the Rwandan capital], preferring to churn out atrocity stories from their hotel rooms (Action 1995: 1).*

Mulami (1994) also observed the marginalisation by the Western media of African efforts to resolve the crisis in Rwanda. Mulami (1994: 4) contrasted the large amount of media coverage given to the non-African NGOs, such as Oxfam and CARE, with the minute amount of news space given to the fact that many Rwandans were sharing their homes and food with refugees, despite the risk of catching disease from the sick people they had taken in. As Mulami (1994: 4) observed:

> ***This genuine and spontaneous solidarity which does not come from government surpluses but from the already precarious endowment of African peasants is not mentioned by the [Western] media, ... [which displayed] a certain subliminal need to portray Africa as the continent of disaster and dehumanisation.***

Of course, the tragedy of the 1994 Rwandan civil war was not a creation of the Western media. What these analyses demonstrated, however, was how the shallow and weak media reporting of the disaster's causes and effects served to grossly distort the image of Africa in Western countries in a predominantly negative way.[25] Such subjective distortion of events through omission and exaggeration of certain "facts" was also found in Western media coverage of African famines.

Media Treatment of Famine in Africa

The 1982-5 famine in Ethiopia,[26] situated in the Horn of Africa, produced a massive surge of Western media attention on Africa and has since been the focus of a number of studies. One of the most exhausting and conclusive was the 1988 "Image of Africa" project, (IFDA Dossier 1988), which examined the news information produced by European media during the famine.[27] Research concentrated on how the media presented the famine, through an analysis of the causes advanced, the space allotted to African efforts to resolve the crisis, and the space allotted to the African point of view (IFDA Dossier 1988: 12). In addition, the report focused on European perceptions of Africa in relation to the images and thoughts projected by the media and those aspects of Africa and the famine which the media ignored.

The report examined the press and television coverage of the famine in Belgium, Denmark, (West) Germany, Ireland, Italy and the UK, and found that, while there was a marked increase in the quantity of news relating to the famine, there was no similar increase in the quality of the reporting about the famine or Africa in general. Instead, 63-74 per cent of the news reports about the famine were descriptive, with no analysis of the deep-rooted and underlying causes, or the historical and social background, of the disaster, (IFDA Dossier 1988: 12). Furthermore, the report found the media emphasised the delivery of (Western) aid for the famine's victims, the internal political tensions in African countries and exchanges between African and European officials while downplaying the efforts made by Africans themselves to deal with the situation. The media also failed to report on the fact that Africans were able to articulate valid indicators

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25 As discussed in the introduction, this has important effects, in that the distortions adversely influence the Western responses and solutions which, as a result, are often inappropriate.

26 It is often mistakenly believed that the famine occurred only between 1984 and 1985. This in itself reflected the politics of information and the power of the media to distort reality. As de Waal (1990: 99) noted, people in northern Ethiopia estimated that the famine began in 1982. People in Western nations such as the US and UK, however, generally assumed it began in October 1984, when it was first reported by the BBC before being taken up and becoming a global news story. This was also despite the fact that many Western governments had been alerted to the threat of famine at least by 1981. Severe famines had also occurred in Ethiopia in 1958 and 1966 with almost no Western media attention (de Waal 1990: 99).

27 In addition, the project also looked at information about the famine produced by European NGOs.

of impending food crises,[28] and that only 10-30 per cent of the food aid was provided from outside Ethiopia (IFDA Dossier 1988: 6,12).

Not surprisingly, the report deduced (IFDA Dossier 1988: 13, 14) that the prevailing images of Africa transmitted by the media were those of,

> *... an apathetic Africa, full of problems and crises, ... of a hungry and thirsty Africa, without hope ... [and] of a continent in permanent need of assistance, of salvation from outside.*

The report concluded:

> *... that the true image of the [African] people affected by the food crisis is in diametric opposition to the passive and fatalist picture diffused by the European mass media (IFDA Dossier 1988: 9-10).*

In other words, the media in the countries cited by the report covered Africa and the crisis of the Ethiopian famine through a representation of ethnic stereotypes, such as the apathetic and helpless African forever waiting for help and assistance from generous Western nations and peoples. There was little in-depth coverage or analysis of the complex historical, social, political and economic causes and issues surrounding the famine. These conclusions were similar to those reached by a number of other studies looking at Western media coverage of famines in Africa.

Alvarado *et al* (1987) examined the UK media coverage of the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine during 1985. They acknowledged that there had been a significant increase in the quantity of reportage emerging from Africa, which had led "to a much greater [UK] public awareness of the problems ... experienced by the peoples of [Ethiopia]" (Alvarado *et al* 1987: 220). This increased coverage, however, had not focused on causes beyond "natural" factors, such as drought, and occasional references to corrupt and incompetent African governments. At the same time, there was no historical analysis of how the famine evolved, nor of the role the UK played in its creation. Thus,

> ***Having plundered, expropriated and enslaved the African continent, the "Western" world now observes the results - famine and devastation - and pities the sufferers. The media thus present us with images of swollen-bellied babies and pitifully thin adults but rarely offer an account of the virtual holocaust that led to this state of affairs (Alvarado et al 1987: 218-219).***

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28 This was important, the authors of the report (IFDA Dossier 1988: 6) concluded, because it contradicted popular Western media images of peasants as poor, helpless people caught by surprise by a drastic food shortage.

Alvarado *et al* (1987: 222) also highlighted the UK media ignorance of African efforts to alleviate the crisis, and the effects of relations of dependence between the West and the developing world, such as Western-sponsored repression and destabilisation. Thus, the UK media coverage of the famine was predominantly one-sided and systematically biased, leading to a misrepresentation of many of the events and issues that occurred in Ethiopia from 1982-5.

De Waal (1990) examined UK and US media coverage of not only the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine but also the 1983-5 and 1986-9 famines in Sudan and the 1987 famine in Ethiopia. In discussing the 1982-5 famine in Ethiopia, de Waal (1990: 3-5, 100) observed that Western governments and NGOs knew about the impending disaster in 1981-2, well before the majority of deaths occurred, but suppressed and ignored warnings because of the Marxist and pro-USSR nature of the Ethiopian Government. It was only after the belated surge in (shallow and one-sided) coverage in the UK, and then the US, media in October 1984 that the international community was compelled to do something to alleviate the crisis (de Waal 1990: 98). Importantly, however, the UK media had, like the UK and other Western governments, virtually dismissed all warnings about the famine until this date.[29] A particularly desperate appeal by the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission in late March 1984 was ignored by the UK media because,

> *Television producers in the UK in 1984 regarded famine as not a "nice news item". They did not want to risk their ratings by transmitting "boring" stories, and so British media coverage of the famine was delayed for three months in mid-1984 (de Waal 1990: 103).*[30]

It must be noted that there was some coverage about the impending disaster in the early months of 1983 in the UK press, particularly in *The Times*. In the twelve months following May 1983, however, media interest in the famine evaporated, primarily because "massive death from starvation had not yet occurred" (de Waal 1990: 107). In other words, it "did not fit in with Western perceptions of famine", particularly "the curious [Western] phenomenon that people will not believe a famine until they see it" (de Waal 1990: 108). When massive media coverage of the famine did finally begin on October 23, 1984,[31] de Waal (1990: 109-111, 116) observed that the reports generally

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29 The Ethiopian authorities issued at least 20 famine warnings to Western governments, NGOs and donors between March 1981 and October 1984, warnings which were generally ignored by the media (de Waal 1990: 101).

30 The full statement from British ITN news read: "Sorry, Africa isn't really an easy story to tell, the public feel it's too far from them and a famine isn't really a nice news item" (cited in Harrison and Palmer 1986: 2). For a more detailed analysis of the failed attempts to get film footage of the developing Ethiopian famine on British television in 1984, see Harrison and Palmer (1986: 1-4).

31 For a examination of how the Ethiopian famine finally hit the headlines on this date after many previous attempts to publicise the impending disaster, see Harrison and Palmer (1986: 93-134) and Stalker (1991: 8-9).

concealed the true causes of the famine, particularly those which were non-natural, such as war and international politics. Similarly, the man-made aspects of the 1987 Ethiopian famine were also not publicised by the UK media.[32]

This massive though superficial media coverage in 1984 and 1987 contrasted sharply with the lack of coverage given to the famine in western Sudan in 1986-9. During that time, de Waal (1990: 130) noted, the government of Sudan was a "friendly and pro-Western" US ally and, consequently, Western governments ignored the famine but continued providing diplomatic support to the government. This attitude was reflected in the media coverage, which was generally oblivious of the famine until June 1988. While de Waal did not postulate that there was a connection between the lack of media coverage and the fact that Sudan at the time was a US client state, the co-incidence serves as a good example of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model outlined in Chapter Two, (particularly the hypothesis that the media served merely as an agent for US Government foreign policy propaganda), since there was considerable coverage of the famine in neighbouring Marxist Ethiopia even though that famine was not as severe as the one occurring in Sudan. De Waal (1990: 139) concluded:

> *The [UK] press tends to misrepresent famines and the misrepresentation grows as the media coverage increases.*

Brett (1988) also examined Western media coverage of the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine. She detailed some of the causes of the famine, including the marginalisation of women, (who do between 60 to 80 per cent of all agricultural work in Africa), in agricultural development programmes and policies dictated by urban African elites and international lending agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF (Brett 1988: 8-9). These policies, which have encouraged export-oriented agriculture in order to raise foreign currency to pay off debt incurred through the lending policies of the major Western banks since the 1970s, have resulted in a fall in African food production.[33] These and other historical and socio-economic facts, Brett (1988: 10) stressed:

> *... are central to an understanding of a food crisis which reached epidemic proportions during the Ethiopian famine. And yet the media did not even begin to grapple with these structural causes.*

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[32] De Waal (1990: 117) suggested that this was probably because it was still embarrassed by its lack of action in dealing with the 1982-5 famine.

[33] The links between export-oriented agriculture, falling food production and poverty and famine in Africa were also explored by Dinham and Hines (cited in Alvarado *et al* 1987: 219-220). Dinham and Hines noted, for example, that Africa was once self-sufficient in food but that most African countries at the time of writing faced food shortages.

In other words, what could be regarded as the fundamental causes of the famine were ignored by the media, which placed emphasis instead on "fate", (the drought), and Ethiopian Government incompetence. Furthermore, the media compounded the misrepresentation through its one-sided portrayal of African women as helpless and passive. As a result, the media presented a distorted picture of the Ethiopian tragedy. Thus,

> *Instead [of the media] focusing on ... [an African woman's] role as the agricultural backbone of her country, it focused on her as a victim of natural disaster. Instead of asking why she had no land to grow food, it asked why she had so many children. Instead of asking her why she had no agricultural technology, it asked how much longer she would depend on the West for charity (Brett 1988: 8).*

Furthermore, as Brett (1988: 8) concluded, the news coverage removed all notion of Western responsibility and replaced it with charity and emotional manipulation. Importantly, therefore, this study, and the other studies cited above, found that what counted as "news" in the Western media coverage of African famines was highly selective.

News Selection and the Developing World

News selection, then, as outlined in the studies referred to and discussed above, (such as Brett, de Waal, Alvarado *et al,* Dorman, IFDA Dossier, *et al*), was an important factor in influencing the type and quality of reporting on developing world disasters, such as famines. In this regard, before analysing the US and UK media coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine, it is worthwhile to consider Pilger's (1994: 70) analysis of what was and wasn't regarded as "news" and "newsworthy" during the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine:

> *The fact that Africa's recurring famines and extreme poverty - a poverty whose rapid increase is a feature of the `new age' - have political causes rooted in the West is not regarded as news. How many of us were aware during 1985 - the year of the Ethiopian famine and of `Live Aid' - that the hungriest countries in Africa gave twice as much money [through interest payments] to us in the West than we gave to them ... [The media told us] of children dying and we were not told of the part our financial institutions had played in their deaths. This also was not news.*

Thus, what was and wasn't "news" in US and UK media coverage of African famines was related, as Herman and Chomsky *et al* have argued, to the economic and political structures within which the US and UK media operated. As discussed above, the unequal distribution of global news flows has served to severely limit the voices and opinions of those in developing countries. Instead, the media in the US and UK has operated within this vacuum to present a picture of Africa and African famines that does not challenge the present dominant global social, economic and political "realities", such as the free market

and the free trade in international goods and services, which are heavily stacked in favour of the developed world and, in particular, the US.

This has never been better demonstrated than in a study (Nugent and Cros, cited in Brett 1988: 10) of the news coverage of world hunger in three leading US newspapers, the *New York Times, Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*. The authors demonstrated that all three media attributed the problem of world hunger to the same causes and proposed the same solutions, all of which were related to ideas of developing world incompetence and Western superiority. Nugent and Cros provided ample evidence to challenge this perspective through arguments relating to the dependency theory of development.[34] That such systematically biased perspectives were encouraged in the Western media was completely consistent with Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. As Brett (1988: 10) stressed;

> *This emphasis [of blaming the developing world for world hunger and proposing the only solution lies in Western technology and know-how] ... ensures that explanations [in the media] of global inequality and the unequal distribution of the world's resources remain internal to the countries inflicted.*

The Western media, then, as all the studies considered thus far have argued, presented their coverage of disasters in Africa in a particular way, which favoured one reading of the events over others. During the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine, for example, the media were more concerned with covering the tragedy as an event, rather than a process (Brett 1988: 11). This self-generated and imposed definition of what was "newsworthy", along with other general misrepresentations of the issues and context behind disasters in Africa through the exaggeration and omission of certain "facts", was, of course, related to the wider issues of explicit media bias that were referred to in Chapter Two.

Conclusion

Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, along with other models of explicit media bias, stressed that the media in countries such as the US and the UK actively distorted notions of reality by presenting one version of an event while ignoring others. As this chapter has outlined, however, this media not only distorted events in their own countries but also distorted events in the developing world. This served to produce for the readers

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34 As Brett (1988: 10) outlined, dependency theory argued that underdevelopment was "a direct and necessary consequence of industrial development in the First World". Through this theory, world hunger could be explained through an analysis of the impact of global capitalism and the concentration of developing world productive land in the hands of external multinational companies and a tiny local elite, and the resultant replacement of domestic food production with export-oriented cash crops.

and consumers of Western media a markedly negative image of the developing world, and of Africa in particular, through a combination of unequal global news flows and the selection/omission of certain "facts" that emphasised one side of a story over others. Much of the reporting on Africa was unfairly concentrated on disasters, with the systematically biased coverage ignoring African efforts at finding solutions to the problem and highlighting Western solutions, (even though the actions of Western nations were, it could be argued, usually the predominant cause of the disasters). The result was that an image of African helplessness and despair was created in the West. A further misrepresentation, that the alleviation of African poverty could only lie in Western political and economic structures, was also created.

To discover whether the media examined in this study actively distorted coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine, it is vital to consider the historical and social context of the famine. In the next chapter a concise and thorough study of the causes of the famine is undertaken, while in Chapter Five the world's response to the famine is examined. The themes and issues discussed in these chapters will contribute to an evaluation of the extent, if it all, to which the US and UK media actively distorted the events and issues surrounding the famine by a process of selective reporting.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CAUSES OF THE FAMINE

Introduction

In order to examine media coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the many complex causes of this tragic event.[1] The 1992-3 famine was not the first experienced in this arid region of Africa and will not be the last. Prior to the influx in the mid-nineteenth century of large numbers of foreigners, however, the nomads and other indigenous inhabitants of this region managed to survive well in their fragile environment. By utilising the knowledge obtained through centuries of careful experimentation and social adaptation, they had established a way of life that balanced the needs of humans and animals for food and water with the conservation imperatives of a land with a scarce water supply (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 68).

In this chapter, I illustrate the root causes of the 1992-3 Somali famine by showing how this careful balance has been disturbed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. First, I investigate some of the changes imposed on Somali society and people during the era of European colonialism and imperialism from 1860 to 1960. I then discuss how the coming of Somalian independence, and in particular the imposition of a centralised state, (first established during the colonial era), on a decentralised society, further affected Somali society and exacerbated the imbalance between the Somali people and the environment.

The next part of this chapter considers the effects on Somali life and society of the 21-year rule of the Somalian dictator, Siad Barre, and his overthrow in 1991. I place special emphasis in this section on the role of foreign powers, and particularly the superpowers, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States (US), in changing forever the traditional Somalian lifestyles. Attention is also focused on how this external influence directly determined the course of Somalian history to its nadir in the anarchy which engulfed parts of the country in late 1991 and early 1992. Finally, I describe the consequences of this anarchy, the climax being a needless, human-made famine that killed more than 150,000 people.

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[1] It is important to remember that this analysis, and that of Chapter Five, is skewed by my position as a person of a developed country, and is essentially an academic overview. To compensate this somewhat, particularly in my discussions on Somali society and politics, I attempt as much as possible to source information from Somali scholars and professionals, such as Said S. Samatar and Rakiya Omaar, and from people with considerable experience and knowledge of Somalia, such as the British academics Alex de Waal and Ioan Lewis, among others. As much emphasis as possible is also placed on the voices and opinions of Somali people, including aid workers.

Somalia - Geographical and Sociological

To begin, it is essential to give a general geographical and sociological overview of Somalia. Somalia (including Somaliland) is a country of 637,657 square kilometres situated in the Horn of Africa, bordered by Kenya to the south, Ethiopia to the north-west and Djibouti to the north, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. To its east and north-east lie the waters of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden respectively, the latter separating Somalia from the Arabian world. The country is predominantly hot and arid grassland, with a barren northern coastal plain almost devoid of vegetation and rainfall and known locally as the *Guban* (land burnt from gruelling heat) (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 2). For most of the year, no rain falls; what little rainfall there is occurs between March and May and between September and December. There is also, however, in southern Somalia, a well-watered area between the Juba and Shabelle rivers, which is regarded as the bread-basket of the country. In this fertile area the country's staple foodstuffs, (maize, millet and rice), are grown and the predominantly foreign-controlled plantations, (mainly banana and oil seed), are located. Indeed, the land is so rich a UN team has estimated it could support 50 million peasants (Samatar 1991: 8).

The population of 7,555,000 is predominantly Sunni Muslim, although there is a small Christian minority.[2] The belief in, if not the practice of, the Islamic faith is widespread in Somalia, tempered only by the exigencies of a harsh pastoral ecology (Samatar 1991: 10).[3] There are also a further two million ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, 240,000 in northern Kenya and 100,000 in Djibouti (Samatar 1991: 6). Uniquely for Africa, the people of Somalia have linguistic and cultural unity, and most claim to be descended from a common founding father, the mythical *Samaale* (Samatar 1991: 12).[4] Nevertheless, Somali society is split into different groups of "families", or clans, which play an integral part in the national life.

A clan is a large group of people who trace their descent from the same ancestors. Each clan grouping is subdivided into smaller clans, subclans and families, which are identified with the land their people have occupied for generations (Ricciuti 1995: 7). Social mobility and rank are determined primarily by clan affiliation rather than natural talents or

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[2] The population statistic is a 1990 figure (Third World Guide 1992: 530). Reliable and up-to-date figures are difficult to obtain for Somalia. The Christians are mainly Catholic, and almost all are in Mogadishu.

[3] For example, the veil is not common, and women are not confined indoors. Somali society is still dominated by men, however (Samatar 1991: 10). For a more detailed analysis of the role of Islam in Somali society, see Laitin and Samatar (1987: 44-47).

[4] Most other African nations, (apart from Botswana), are made up of numerous tribal, cultural and linguistic groups because the artificial colonial borders, which split many ethnic groups, have remained intact since independence.

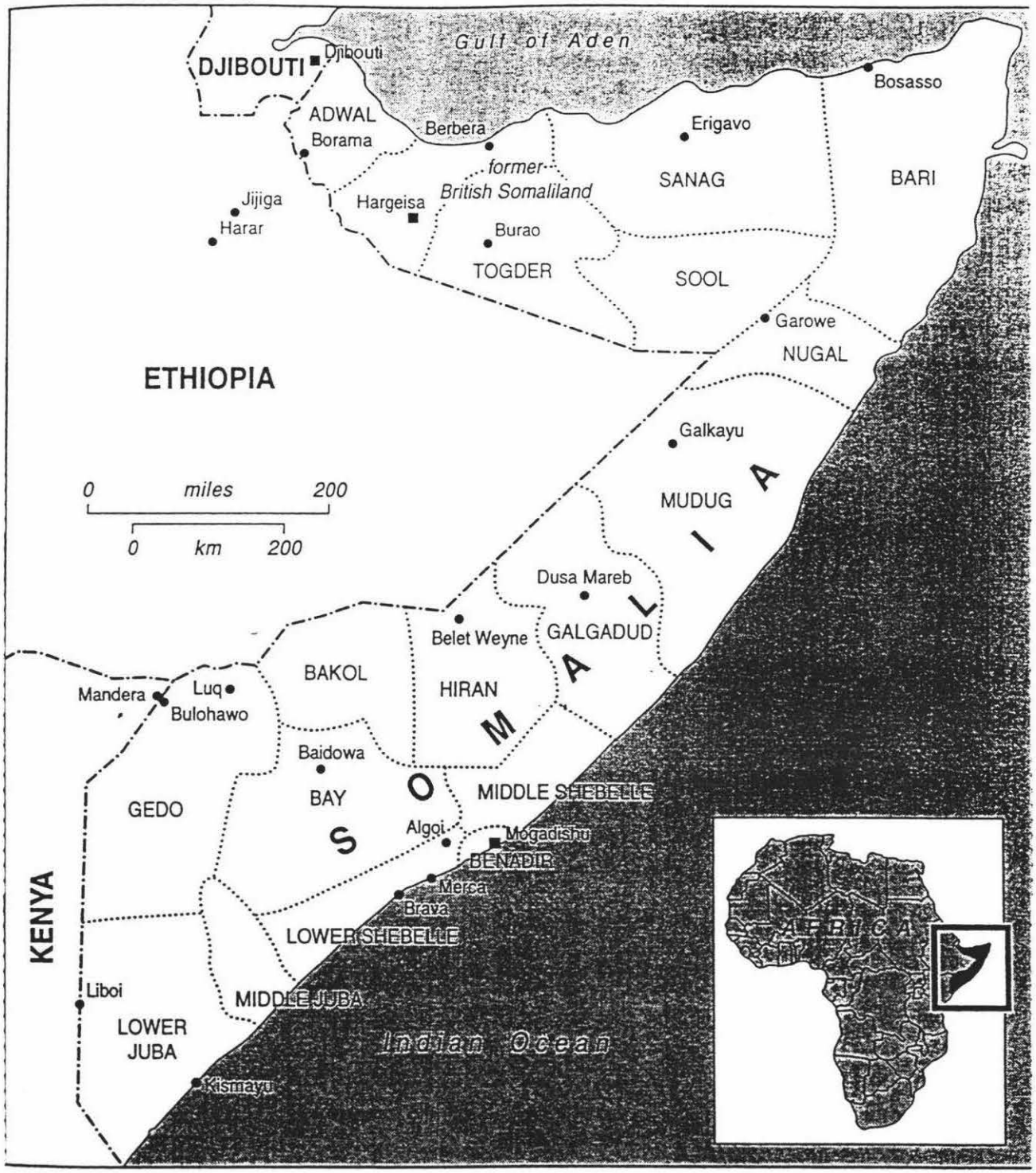

Figure 4.1
Somalia - political boundaries

merits (Barkely and Peterson 1993: 20). The clan groupings are fluid, however, and their shifting nature has meant that Somali people, throughout history, have constantly changed allegiances to ensure the welfare of their own particular family. As a result, power and politics are exercised through temporary coalitions and ephemeral alliances of lineages, with a given alliance fragmenting into competitive units as soon as the situation which necessitated it in the first place ceases to exist (Samatar 1991: 13). Furthermore, such alliances and segmentation dictate that, should an individual of clan A kill a member of clan B, all members of clan A are guilty of the crime in the eyes of clan B. Revenge for the murder can be taken upon another (entirely innocent) member of clan A, with the original murderer escaping unpunished.

Such political and structural genealogical segmentation is, and has been, open to manipulation, a fact which will be explored later in this chapter. As Laitin and Samatar (1987: 30-31) described, Somali segmentation,

> *... is centripetal and centrifugal, at once drawing the Somalis into a powerful social fabric of kinship affinity and cultural solidarity while setting them against one another in a complicated maze of antagonistic clan interests.*

Yet, as Samatar (1991: 12) noted, genealogy,

> *... constitutes the heart of the Somali social system and is the basis of ... the unity of thought and action among Somalis - a unity that borders on xenophobia.*

Complicating the situation is the fact that Somalia is divided into six major clans. Four, the Darod, the Hawiye, (predominant in Mogadishu), the Isaaq, (predominant in the north, in particular in Somaliland), and the Dir, (who subdivide into two branches, the Gadabuursi and 'Ise, and predominate in the extreme north), are mainly pastoralists, while two, the Digil and Rahanweyn, (both of whom predominate in the inter-riverine lands), are mainly cultivators.

Economically, crop agriculture and light industry are important production activities but it is pastoralism which provides the economic base of the country. More than two-thirds of the population, most via nomadic lifestyles, are involved in animal husbandry, (the raising of animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and, in particular, camels), and related activities, such as the export trade in livestock. The pastoral attitude and outlook is a pervasive influence in national life, affecting all categories of social interaction (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 22) and resulting in urbanised nomads predominating in the military, commercial and rural elites.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Somali people had built up a unique, efficient and complex society based on pastoralism, Islam and allegiance to clan families.[5] There were no "elites" or central government, however, as political identity and loyalty was determined by genealogical proximity or remoteness (Lewis 1993: 2). In addition, there was no Somali "State", and the land populated by Somali people included what is now Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Importantly, methods had emerged to deal with environmental crises, and particularly with drought, inevitable in an area of such little rainfall. These methods included minimising risks rather than maximising returns, growing drought-resistant crops, selling livestock or migrating for short periods. Grain surpluses would be stored communally to guard against lean years, and goods were bartered to avoid price fluctuation and merchant speculation. In addition, a co-operative system between nomads and farmers helped provide a varied diet and sustain the fragile eco-system (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 24). With the advent of the era of European colonialism in the nineteenth century, however, the lifestyle of the Somali people was to undergo momentous changes.

The Impact of Colonialism

The "scramble for Africa"[6] marked the end of indigenous Somali authority and the careful relationship nurtured with the environment. The geographical position of the lands of the Somali people, near the outlet of the Red Sea, increased in strategic importance for the European powers after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1839. From the 1860s onwards, Britain, France and Italy, together with Ethiopia, (a mainly Christian state which, at the time, was ruled by a resourceful and shrewd emperor, Menelik II), began to jostle for influence in the Horn of Africa. As a result, through a mixture of money, guile and treaty, the Somali lands had, by the turn of the century, been partitioned into five separate imperial and administrative entities: Italian Somaliland (which included the eastern portion of the Somali lands and the major town, Mogadishu), British Somaliland Protectorate (northern portion), French Somaliland[7] (in the extreme north-west), Ethiopia (the central region known as the Ogaden[8]) and the British Northern Frontier District (which would

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[5] For a full description and analysis of pre-colonial indigenous Somali society, art, communications and culture, see Laitin and Samatar (1987: 1-47). See also Lewis (1993: 2-3) and Appendix A.

[6] Embodied in the Munich Conference of 1884-5, when the European powers (including Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Belgium and Italy) met to discuss, plan and implement the total partition of the African continent among themselves.

[7] Later to become known as the French Territory of the 'Afars and 'Ises, and, after 1977, the independent nation of Djibouti.

[8] Disputes over this region caused a number of armed conflicts between Somalia and Ethiopia, most notably that of 1977-8. This was a significant contributory factor in the disintegration of Somalia and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

later become part of Kenya). A British official involved in the partition observed decades later:

> *We were not sensible enough (to keep the Somalis under one administration) ... and so the only part of Africa which is radically homogenous has been split into such parts as made Caesar's Gaul the problem and cockpit of Europe for the last 2,000 years. And Somaliland [sic] will probably become the cockpit of East Africa (cited in Samatar 1991: 17-18).*

These imperial entities, and the extent to which they ignored Somali ethnic boundaries, are illustrated in Figure 4.2 (Colonial Somalia 1889-1940) and Figure 4.3 (Somali Ethnic Limits). The impact of partition on the Somali people was catastrophic. In the Ogaden, 90 years of feudal anarchy followed, with Menelik II allowing his warlords to seize livestock indiscriminately.[9] In Italian Somaliland, large areas of the best farmland in the Lower Juba and Lower Shabelle areas were confiscated for Italian-owned banana plantations. British Somaliland was ignored by British colonial officials who favoured the greater "prizes" of Kenya and Uganda, and consequently it fell into neglect and despair, useful for the British only as a supplier of meat for the garrison at Aden (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 60). Throughout the peninsula, any resistance to colonial rule - in particular, from 1900, the 20-year revolt led by Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hasan - was met with brutal resistance and repression. The result was massive poverty.[10]

Sayyid's resistance movement was significant, however, in that it launched the new and powerful idea of Somali unity. The colonial powers, acutely aware of the effect such an idea could have on their ability to maintain their occupation of the Somali lands, responded by implementing "divide and rule" tactics among the Somali clans. Colonial rule began to unnaturally deepen clan divisions, by favouring some clans over others and promoting elitism among certain Somalis. In Italian Somaliland, for example, the beneficiaries of land alienation had widened, by the 1950s, to include Somali entrepreneurs (de Waal and Omaar 1993d: 4-5).

Clan divisions were also exacerbated as a result of the imposition of colonial boundaries and the establishment of nation states with centralised administrations where previously the society had been decentralised and pastoral in nature. As Laitin and Samatar (1987: 61) noted:

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[9] Laitin and Samatar (1987: 55) quoted indigenous testimony as putting the number of livestock seized from the Ogaden Somalis at 100,000 cattle, 200,000 camels and 600,000 sheep and goats. This was an intolerable burden on a nomadic people.

[10] For more detail, see Davidson (1994: 24-25), Lewis (1993: 3) and Laitin and Samatar (1987: 53-59).

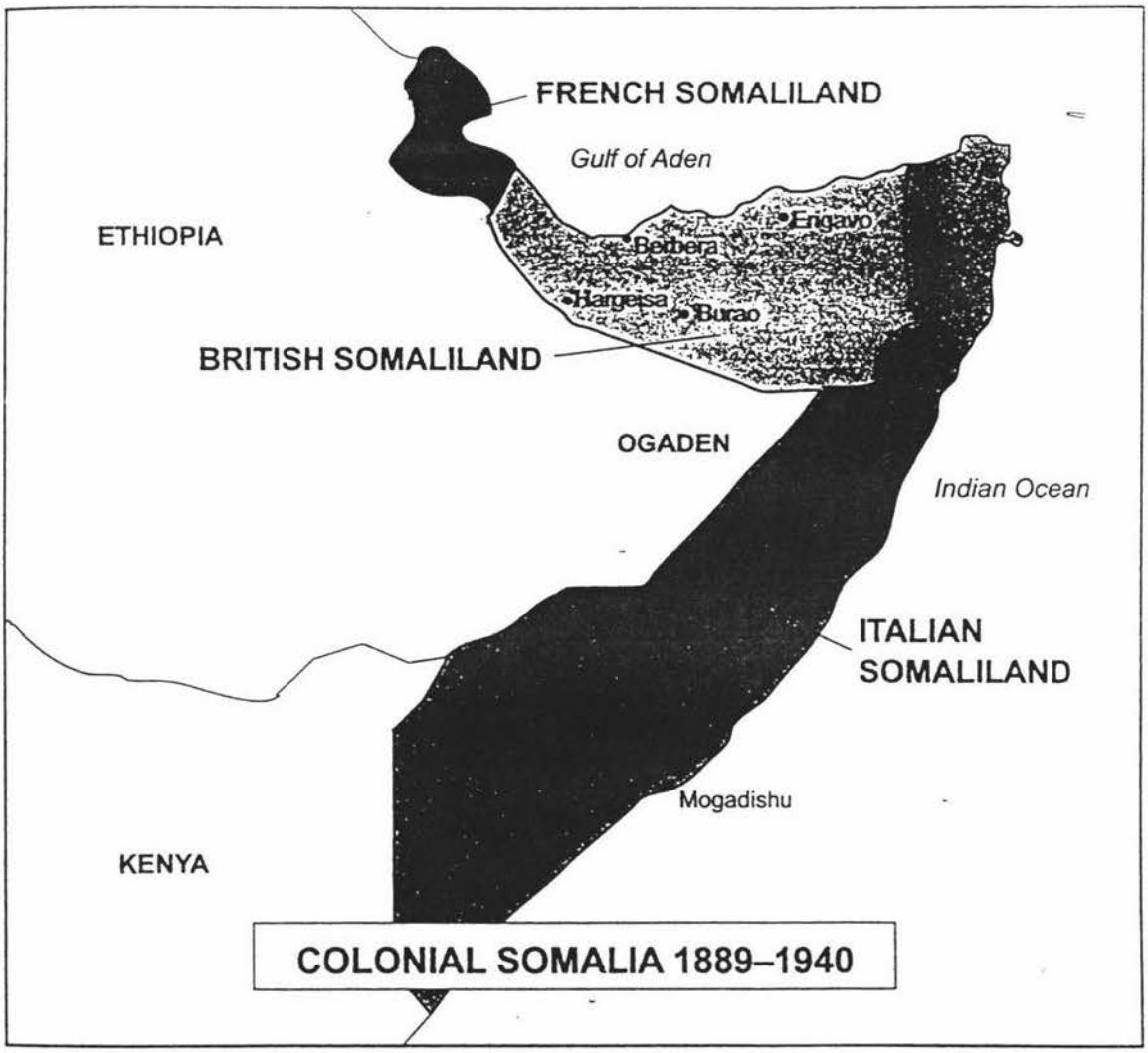

Figure 4.2
Colonial Somalia 1889-1940

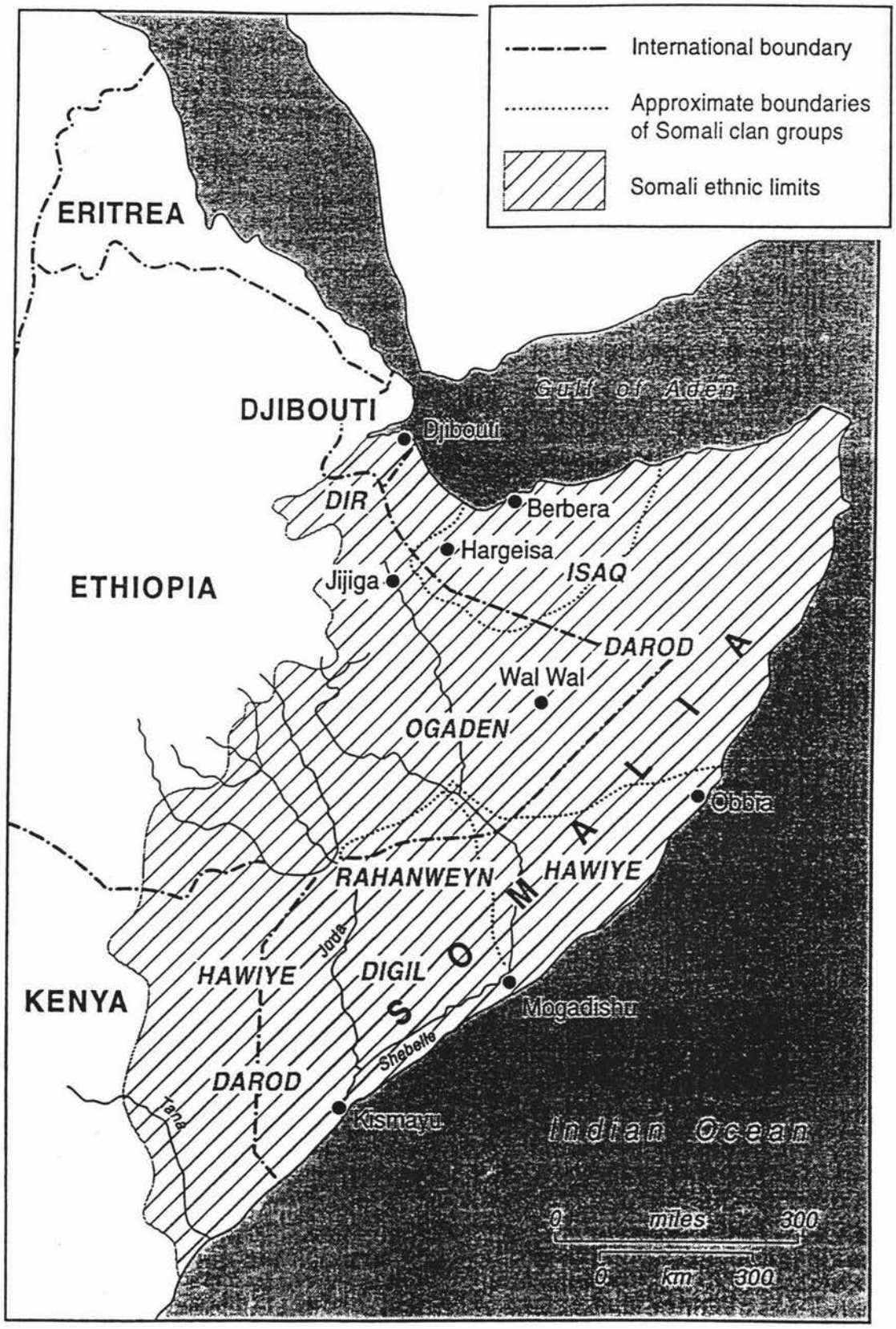

Figure 4.3
Somali Ethnic Limits

> *In establishing their respective frontiers, the colonial powers tended to ignore the economic necessity underlying the pastoral clans' cyclical migration between water wells and pasturelands. Consequently, the colonising countries drew up boundary lines that mutilated kinship units into bewildered fragments.*

Colonial rule also created large, regional inequalities among the Somali people. British neglect of British Somaliland was contrasted with Italian efforts to develop Italian Somaliland.[11] This development imbalance was to have a profoundly negative influence during the first ten years of Somalian independence, a point which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Hopes for Somali unity briefly surged between 1935 and 1941 when Mussolini's armies invaded Ethiopia, (including the Ogaden), and British Somaliland, and formed a unified government of Italian East Africa, which also included Eritrea (Crowder 1984: 460). Italy's entry into World War II and her defeat by allied forces in North Africa in December 1940, however, isolated and weakened the forces defending Italian East Africa, so that, by November 1941, the British were easily able to overrun the unified colony. The new British administration restored to Ethiopia its pre-war sovereignty but, significantly, did not restore to Ethiopian rule the Somali-inhabited Ogaden. Britain, then, for the first time, ruled the vast majority of the Somali people.[12] By the late 1940s certain British administrators, in particular Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, began to float ideas of a "greater Somalia" under joint UN trusteeship in preparation for independence (Wilson 1994: 118).

But diplomatic wrangling between Ethiopia and the other great powers (France, Russia and the US) saw the plan abandoned. The Cold War had begun, and the Western allies, wanting to court post-fascist Italy and give legitimacy to its new (anti-communist) government, and also objecting to Soviet participation in the trusteeship, supported a brief revival of Italian colonialism to guide Italian Somaliland to independence under a UN mandate (Wilson 1994: 121).[13] British Somaliland remained under British control (and continued neglect), and the Ogaden was, once again, "given back" to Ethiopia.[14]

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[11] These developments were not initiated to improve the lot of Somalis but to help Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, realise his plans to turn Italian Somaliland into a "place in the sun" as either a holiday or emigration destination for Italians.

[12] Only the Somalis in French Somaliland remained outside British orbit.

[13] This was despite the fact that the new government was dominated by the old fascist order, in particular by industrialists (Chomsky 1994a: 89-91).

[14] Pre-war surveys indicated the possibility of oil in the Ogaden, and the Ethiopians, in secret negotiations, granted a US-owned oil company sole prospecting rights in return for US efforts to have the Ogaden returned to Ethiopia. Furthermore, the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie, was a skilled, shrewd and, above all, pro-western politician, and Ethiopia had gained international recognition and

The Italian trustees set about their task of preparing Italian Somaliland for independence with vigour and imagination and held nation-wide elections for part self-government in 1956. Despite their efforts, however, the divisions of the colonial years were beginning to re-emerge. As Clapham (1995: 75) stressed:

> *The new political parties formed during the 1950s mirrored clan divisions and - in a political structure marked by considerable openness and the absence of any dominant leader - led to the progressive degradation of Somali politics into a petty clan-based factionalism which undermined the ideal of unity.*

Much of the problem came from the new (to the Somalis) political process the Italians introduced. The Italians set up a system of proportional representation, but this only had the effect of encouraging tribalism and clan divisions. Each big clan, as well as each small clan or sub-clan, used the system to form its own "party" and send its own people to parliament (Davidson 1994: 205).

Nevertheless, political parties did emerge - such as the Somali Youth League (SYL) in Italian Somaliland, and the Isaaq-based Somali National League (SNL) and the Darod/Dir-based National United Front (NUF) in British Somaliland - with sufficient unity to win pre-independence elections in 1960. The three parties coordinated efforts to achieve unification between the two colonies, which was granted suddenly in April 1960 - a decision which won popular support. Again, however, the parties were based on colonial political ideals, and the euphoria engendered by their unification manoeuvrings only served to cover the deep divisions which had emerged among Somali people during the eight decades of colonialism.

As British and Italian Somaliland had been governed by two different colonial powers, when they joined to form the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960, significant problems emerged. The new nation found it often had systems at odds with each other. There were dual judicial, education, taxation and customs systems, and a different organisation, conditions and powers for the army, police and other governmental institutions (cited in Laitin and Samatar 1987: 67). The north also lagged behind the south in economic and educational development, a situation that was not addressed after independence and would retard many attempts at national unity and development. Certain people - mainly male, urban-based, European-educated, Southern entrepreneurs and landowners, many from the Majeerteen clan, a sub-clan of the Darod - had become part of a Somali ruling elite, and this predominance and the imposition of a centralised state had deepened clan divisions. Thus the political process was inherently flawed and this, as Davidson (1994:

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prominence as a symbol of black achievement and anti-fascism. For more detail, see Wilson (1994: 119-124).

205) summarised, would ensure that a reckless competition for the fruits of power and privilege would soon be under way.

Most importantly, the Somalis were still a divided people, with many still under French, Ethiopian and (by now) Kenyan rule. Furthermore, the era of colonialism had left Somalia a legacy of poverty and civil strife, problems which would cause extreme difficulties for the Somalian nation and would later lead to the emergence of even greater problems in the first years of independence. It was a legacy which, during the Cold War, was ruthlessly exploited, at first by the USSR, and later by the US. The roots were forming of the Somalian chaos, and the disastrous 1992-3 famine.

Somalian Independence from 1960 to 1969

The achievement of independence proved a mixed blessing for the Somali people. In 1960, Somalia was one of the poorest countries in the world, with an estimated per capita annual income of only US$50, and the country soon began to rely almost entirely on foreign assistance for development (Carter and O'Meara 1985 : 258). Yet, though Somalia was one of the largest recipients of foreign aid from 1964-69, the first decade of independence closed with little demonstrable progress in development, and with living standards lower at the close of the decade than at the beginning (Carter and O'Meara 1985: 259).

This was because many of the problems which had begun to emerge during the colonial period worsened during the opening decade of Somalian independence. Much of the country's meagre budget was used to finance a "patronage" system that kept key clans, such as the Majeerteen and other Darod clans, committed to participation in the government (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 1). There were also immediate difficulties in integrating the two regions. In the north which, as the smaller and poorer region, had the most to lose, discontent grew, resulting in a failed military coup in 1961.[15] Furthermore, southern bureaucrats and clans gradually came to dominate the new republic - obtaining the best jobs and other privileges - and this domination fostered further resentment and tension.

Somalia's colonial experience also left Somalis with a strong sentiment that the colonial borders it inherited were "unjust" (*Africa Events* February 1991: 29). The uniqueness of the Somali character meant that, although Somali society had deep internal divisions, the

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[15] Political integration was facilitated due to the fact that the principal clan families straddled the north-south division (Crowder 1984: 474).

reunification of all Somali people became a national obsession, and led the Somalian Government to waste precious time, effort and resources in what would become fruitless military efforts to occupy Somali-inhabited lands in Kenya, Ethiopia and the French Territory of the 'Afars and 'Ises.[16] The need to forge international alliances to facilitate the dream of "Great Somalia" would become the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy in the 1960s and 1970s (*Africa Events* February 1991: 29).

The USSR encouraged this policy by giving military aid to Somalia, the first US$35 million of which arrived in 1963. Not that the superpower cared for "Great Somalia" - the USSR was, as Calvocoressi (1985: 73) observed, manipulating Somalia for its own purposes. Somalia's strategic position on the Horn of Africa, near the oil fields of the Middle East, and with ports capable of providing access to the Arabian Gulf's oil tanker lanes (Ricciuti 1995: 21), meant it was a "prize catch". At the same time, funds for desperately-needed projects of national social and economic development were diverted by the government for the achievement of this futile agenda. This included arming Somali guerrillas in Kenya where, between 1963 and 1967, 2,000 rebels were killed (Ricciuti 1995: 17).

In addition, in the decade after independence the ruling elites continued to expropriate land in the most fertile and accessible areas. Occasionally they bought the land cheaply, while at other times they used coercion, backed up by the police force (de Waal and Omaar 1993d: 5). As a result of these developments, there was little expenditure on infrastructure and the Somali state stagnated economically throughout the 1960s.

Politically, although there was a vigorous parliamentary democracy with free elections, along with a free press and established civil liberties, serious flaws in the system were beginning to emerge.[17] The structure of proportional representation saw a polarisation of political parties on clan-based lines. Five parties had contested the 1960 general election but, by 1964, there were 21 parties and, by 1969, 64.[18] Increasingly frantic factional crises in Mogadishu rocked the country, and they appeared to reflect less the major issues

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16 Ethiopia and Somalia engaged in brief but intense fighting over the Ogaden in 1960, 1963 and 1964, futile wars which Somalia had no hope of winning. But a later effort to capture the Ogaden, in 1977-78, was to have much more serious implications for Somalia, and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

17 Somalia was regarded as a model of democracy in Africa (Samatar 1991: 16) and, after the 1967 elections, achieved a relatively peaceful change of power. It remains one of the few African countries to accomplish this.

18 The 64 parties represented the 64 important lineages and sub-lineages in the genealogical system (Samatar 1991: 17)

facing the country than the manoeuvres of individuals anxious to maintain their hold on office (Crowder 1984: 475).[19]

The small political elite also maintained their grip on power in the early years of independence through their knowledge of English and Italian.[20] As a result, the great majority of Somalis had no chance of any share in the responsibilities of public life and government (Davidson 1994: 205). Instead, the elites used the power of political privilege to fight personal battles for their own interests, as Davidson (1994: 205) described:

> *Whenever elections came, they went back to their clans, whether big or small, and drummed up support against their rivals. Once back in power again, they returned to their dogfights and squabbles over sharing the spoils of office. This disunity and personal rivalry led directly to bad government and corruption.*

In 1967, with the election of an Isaaq northerner, Mohammed H. 'Igaal, as Prime Minister, clan patronage increased markedly. 'Igaal tried to reverse what was perceived in the north as seven years of "unfair" representation in government by appointing a disproportionately high number of northerners to important government positions. As a result, inequities and public cynicism grew.

Matters came to a head at the time of the 1969 elections, when there was serious violence with 25 people killed. The SYL won 73 seats and its opponents 51 seats, and all but two of the opposition immediately crossed to the governing party in a search for posts (Crowder 1984: 475). There was a widespread belief that the elections, won by 'Igaal and his political partner from the south, President Shermaarke, were rigged and that public funds had been misused. The national mood was one of cynicism, bitterness and despair:

> *Somali farmers and cattle folk began to hate their rulers. They began to say that independence had brought them nothing but dishonesty, lies and broken promises. Yet nothing got better. ... [By 1969] the gap between these rulers and the majority of ordinary people was now wide and filled with anger. People longed for a change (Davidson 1994: 205).*

This change came soon after the election. On October 15, 1969, President Shermaarke was shot dead by a soldier of a Majeerteen sub-clan, in revenge for the harrying of the soldier's sub-clan in the pre-election killings. In the political squabble that followed:

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19 For more details of these crises, see Crowder (1984: 475).

20 These languages were necessary to govern Somalia because the Somali language was, at that time, unwritten.

> *Citizens got "sickened to their stomach" by the self-serving unscrupulousness that characterised the political debate to meet the crisis and by the mediocrity of the proposed candidates to succeed Shermaarke (Samatar 1991: 17).*

General Mohammed Siad Barre, the country's military commander, saw a chance for the army to take over and, on October 21, 1969, he initiated a bloodless military *coup d'état* which won great popular support. The era of democratic civilian administrations in Somalia was over.

While not all of the failings of the civilian administrations could be laid at the feet of colonialism, much of the blame must rest with the type of political and social structures the European occupiers of the Somali lands created in their 80-year rule. The foreign systems and ideals which the Somalis inherited from the Italians and British were generally alien to Somali cultures and beliefs, invited the formation of clan-based factions and exacerbated the anarchic tendencies already present. That a military coup could engender such excitement and relief was a telling indication of the inappropriate style of government and society that had been imposed upon the Somali people. The military takeover would, however, lead to an even greater problem: the autocratic 21-year rule of Siad Barre. The total demise of Somalia was now on the horizon.

The Early Years of Barre's Regime - Somalia 1969 to 1977

Siad Barre had joined the Somali National Army in 1960 after a career in the Police, and had risen through the ranks to become the Army's Commander-in-Chief in 1965 (Green 1991: 26). By the time Siad Barre came to political power, he commanded one of the largest and most powerful armies in sub-Saharan Africa. This was the consequence of the policies of previous Somalian governments; in pursuing the unrealisable objective of liberating Somali-inhabited lands in Ethiopia, they had dragged Somalia and the Somalian army into Cold War *realpolitik* and created an army that far exceeded Somalia's needs. The USSR saw Somalia not only as geographically important but as a useful counter-influence to the pro-US regime in Ethiopia, and armed Somalia to the teeth.[21] Barre would later use the powerful armed force at his disposal to inflict horrendous repression and terror on his nation's people.

Shortly after the coup, with the suspension of the democratic constitution and the formation of a Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), chaired by Barre, of 25 military

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[21] The massive Soviet aid included T-34 tanks, MiG-15 and MiG-17 aircraft, and the training in Moscow of Somali personnel. Soviet influence in Somalia only increased after the coup - indeed, some commentators have suggested Soviet advisers may have engineered the coup itself (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 78).

and police officers to run the country, it became clear the new government would not be temporary. The SRC renamed the country the "Somali Democratic Republic" and declared it a socialist state. As a result, the new regime received even more military and non-military aid from the USSR and, in 1974, Somalia became the first sub-Saharan African government to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union (Lamb 1990: 204).

At first, the SRC achieved some notable goals - in particular, the adoption of a script (Latin) for a written version of the Somali language, the launching of a literacy campaign and a campaign for improving women's rights. It also introduced populist policies, including a campaign of *hisaabi hil male* - literally, an accounting (of theft by government servants) of shame - and a virulent anti-Americanism. The latter was sure to be popular as the US was widely seen as anti-Muslim and against the unification of Somalia's dismembered nation (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 79). With continued aid from the Soviet Union, Barre's regime had, by 1975, made some notable advances in reducing some of the social inequalities which were a product of colonialist and post-colonialist rule.[22] Barre took care to cultivate a consensus for successive changes but the path towards dictatorship was soon to become manifest (Green 1991: 26).

This occurred in the mid-1970s, when Barre became more corrupt, ruthless and autocratic. In 1975, after Barre had given women equal inheritance rights with men, 23 Islamic clergymen protested at the new law. Barre had them arrested and ten were publicly executed (Ricciuti 1995: 21). His troops also killed an estimated 40,000 people from the Majeerteen clan in central Somalia (Guleid 1991: 11). Then, in 1976, the SRC was dissolved and replaced by the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP). Power was now in the hands of the five members of a small SRSP committee - headed, as always, by Barre.

At the same time, Barre initiated a National Security Service (NSS), formed with the help of the USSR and East Germany. The main purpose of the NSS was to spy on critics of the government, which meant Somali citizens lost all rights to free speech and expression (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 88). To help achieve its aims, the NSS built high-security prisons, established an informer-ridden security network and encouraged legislation that outlawed political dissent (*Africa Events* February 1991: 30).

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22 For example, the literacy rate improved from 5 per cent to 55 per cent, which improved social mobility and reduced north-south tensions, while more money was invested in rural, rather than urban, development programs. For further examples and discussion, see Laitin and Samatar (1987: 81-88), Menkhaus and Lyons (1993: 2) and Clapham (1995: 79).

By 1977, with the economy stagnating, Barre began to turn his attention to a cause he knew would be popular with almost all Somalis - the reunification of all the Somali lands and people. Like his democratic predecessors, Barre embarked on a futile attempt to liberate the Ogaden. This time, however, the results for Somalia would be particularly disastrous.

The 1977-78 Ogaden War

Throughout the early to mid-1970s, Somalia, with the help of the USSR, had continued to build up its army. In return for arming the country, the USSR was granted access to develop a strategically located naval and air base at Berbera and a communications centre at Kismayu, and took most of the meat and fish Somalia produced (Calvocoressi 1985: 76; *Africa Events* February 1991: 29). Meanwhile, in 1974, the pro-US regime of Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia was overthrown by a group of young army officers. Political turmoil ensued in that country in the following years, giving Barre's Soviet-backed country and army a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to strike. Somalia, however, was about to become the victim of one of the most cynical powerplays of the entire Cold War.

By early 1977, the internal power struggle in Ethiopia was over. An anti-American faction within the military, headed by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, had taken power. Although the US had given massive military support to Emperor Selassie's regime, the new regime started courting Moscow, while the US began to distance itself from Ethiopia and began secret talks with Barre.[23] Soon afterwards, Barre was given the green light by the US to proceed with an invasion of the Ogaden.[24] Barre immediately threw his country's support behind the 15,000 Somali guerrillas of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). Then, in June 1977, with hostilities heating up, 35,000 Somali regular troops invaded the Ogaden to back up the guerrillas (Samatar 1991: 18). As a result:

> *The Ethiopian defences crumbled. Within two months Somalia had captured 90 per cent of the [Ogaden] region, and Barre's dream of reuniting all his people under a single flag seemed within his reach (Lamb 1990: 206).*

At the same time, the USSR had responded to Ethiopian President Mengistu's overtures by sharply increasing arms aid to that country. Moscow was now in the situation of supplying two nations which were at war with each other. But Ethiopia, twice the size of

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[23] Jimmy Carter, the US President at the time, believed Somalia was one of six countries in which the USSR appeared "vulnerable" (Crawford 1993: 17).

[24] For an analysis on why the US supported the invasion, see Shalom (1993a: 16-17) and (Crawford 1993: 17).

and with four times the population of Somalia, and with two major ports on the Red Sea, was judged a greater "prize" than Somalia (Lamb 1990: 204; Shalom 1993a: 16). In November 1977 the USSR suddenly withdrew support for Barre and immediately began a massive airlift of military equipment to Ethiopia, while Russian advisers were transferred from Mogadishu to Addis Ababa, taking with them details and maps of the Somalia advance and the structure and ordinance of the Somali armed forces (Calvocoressi 1985: 77; Lewis 1993: 4). It was, as de Waal (1992: 27) noted:

> *One of the most dramatic volte-faces of the Cold War - an episode that revealed the ideological shallowness of both superpowers ... Somalia was unceremoniously ditched by its former patron.*

By 1978 the Somalian forces had suffered a massive military defeat in the Ogaden, sparking an economic collapse made worse by a huge refugee crisis. As hundreds of thousands of Ogaden Somalis crossed from Ethiopia into Somalia, Barre, as Somalia's military commander, could not escape responsibility for the debacle, and his position as dictator of the country was seriously threatened by coup attempts and regional insurrections (de Waal 1992: 27). His response was to turn desperately to the US for help, claiming suddenly that he was bravely confronting the menace of communism in the Horn of Africa and dangling the bait of the former Soviet air and naval facilities at Berbera (Lewis 1993: 4). The US responded, and for the next decade massive US aid armed and supported what would become one of Africa's most brutal dictatorships.

Barre's Reign of Terror 1978-1991

The US was unenthusiastic at first about Barre's pleas for aid, still hoping to win over the more valuable Ethiopia (Shalom 1993a: 17). But the fall of the pro-US Shah of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980 once again changed the *realpolitik* of the situation for the US, which now considered access to the Berbera facilities as vital to the rapid deployment force safeguarding US interests in the Arabian Gulf (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 2). Barre was now part of US Cold War strategy and, consequently, the US initiated a massive aid program that would total US$600 million by 1985 (Hunter 1992-3: 54). In sub-Saharan Africa, Somalia was the fourth highest recipient of US military funds for the years 1980-85 and was first in 1986 (Shalom 1993a: 17). Thus, throughout the 1980s,

> ***... the USA under Ronald Reagan and George Bush funded and armed Barre's increasingly corrupt dictatorship ... Through Barre, the Americans manipulated and intensified ethnic divisions in Somalia. He used US dollars to buy allies, and US arms to keep down his enemies (Crawford 1993: 17).***

Lardner Jnr (1992: 448), too, noted the effect of superpower interference and manipulation in Somalia:

> *Barre astutely manipulated East-West ideological tensions, while brutally oppressing his own people to guarantee his own political survival. And for as long as Somalia and the Horn of Africa were of strategic importance to Cold War warriors, the erstwhile USSR and US were by turns willing to militarily prop up his dictatorship, by jointly supplying him with billions of dollars worth of arms.*

Along with the US money, however, came demands that Barre implement World Bank/International Monetary Fund-designed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), neo-liberal economic policies which, at their core, discouraged traditional agriculture for the domestic market and encouraged plantation agricultural exports, much of which was grown on prime land seized by government and other elites. Chossudovsky (1993: 11) observed that this had the effect of increasing Somalia's reliance on imported grain (predominantly wheat and rice) from surplus stocks in the West by undercutting and displacing domestic producers, as well as by shifting food consumption patterns from traditional crops, such as maize and sorghum. In addition, SAP prerequisites that the Somali currency be devalued and government spending be reduced led to a fall in urban purchasing power, the abolition of government extension programmes, the collapse of agricultural infrastructure and increases in the prices of fuel, fertiliser and farm inputs, all of which combined to further impoverish the agricultural community (Chossudovsky 1993: 11).

At the same time, the SAPs led to severe cutbacks in social spending, particularly in health, education and welfare. Between 1974 and 1988, Barre cut social spending by 75 per cent (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 18). This included a reduction in expenditure on health of 78 per cent between 1975 and 1989, while expenditure on education per primary school student fell from US$82 per annum in 1982 to US$4 in 1989 (Chossudovsky 1993: 12). Moreover, arms imports increased and accounted for 49 per cent of all imports between 1977 and 1986 (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 18). The SAPs brought unprecedented poverty and social dislocation, with the destruction of the entire pastoralist economy, a collapse in foreign exchange earnings and a crisis in the Somali State's balance of payments and public finances leading to a breakdown of the government's economic and social programmes (Chossudovsky 1991: 12). By 1990 70 per cent of the population was living below the poverty line (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 19). Such results meant that, in times of food shortages, the people of Somalia, in particular the generally poor farmers of the Digil and Rahanweyn clans, would not be able to afford to pay for food.

The massive US support for Barre helped prop up his repressive government which might otherwise have been compelled to respond to popular demands or been forced from office, perhaps well before the end of the 1980s (de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 10-11). Barre used the US aid in two interrelated ways: militarily, by crushing all resistance with brutal force, and socially/economically, by bribing, arming and generally playing-off friendly clans against the clans of his opponents, with the purpose of quelling the increasing resentment against his regime. In other words, by exploiting clan rivalries, Barre followed a pattern of divide-and-rule initiated by the colonial powers (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 2).

Torture and repression became features of the Barre regime during the 1980s,[25] as the government, fully supported by the US and other interested parties,[26] spent a massive 20 per cent of its budget on the military (Shalom 1993a: 17). The extent of the terror was noted by Abdulkarim Ahmed Guleid (1991: 11), a prominent Somali relief worker:

> *His [Barre's] government killed 12 per cent of its citizens, drove a quarter of its population into exile, and drove another 20 per cent of its people from their homes and villages to hide in the bush.*

Official criticism of Barre in the US was muted. Hunter (1992-3: 54) noted that, in the right-wing litany issuing from the Reagan/Bush Administrations in their prosecution of the Cold War, the Soviet-backed President of Ethiopia, Mengistu, was a "monster" who came to exemplify the imaginary evils exclusive to Marxism. As long as Somalia had strategic value to the US, Barre, whose regime was as bloody and cruel as Mengistu's, was exempt from such criticism.[27]

The Majeerteen, Isaaq and Hawiye clans bore the brunt of Barre's terror during the 1980s, and each responded by establishing opposition movements, as illustrated in Figure 4.4.[28] The Majeerteen, based in the east, formed the Somalia Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the Isaaq, based in the north, formed the Somalia National

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[25] For a detailed list of some of Barre's more heinous crimes during the 1980s and early 1990s, see Guleid (1991: 11-12), Samatar (1991: 18-20) and Amnesty International Reports (1990: 210-213; 1991: 201-204; and 1992: 231-233).

[26] Barre's regime also received large amounts of military aid from Italy, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Libya and, possibly, Israel. See Calvocoressi (1985: 79-80); Hunter (1992-3: 54) and Shalom (1993a: 17).

[27] Indeed, in 1986, when Barre was seriously injured in a car accident, the US, along with Saudi Arabia and Italy, frantically tried to arrange a backstage transfer of Barre's power to keep the corrupt but pro-US regime from collapsing (Wright 1986: 19). In the end, however, Barre recovered and the plan was not needed. Furthermore, after Barre was finally overthrown in 1991, the US Government ran a "rat line" for war criminals of Barre's regime, to help them enter the US and Canada as "refugees". For more details, see Hunter (1992-3: 55) and Pilger (1994: 221).

[28] For a detailed description of Barre's persecution of these clans, see Samatar (1991: 18-20).

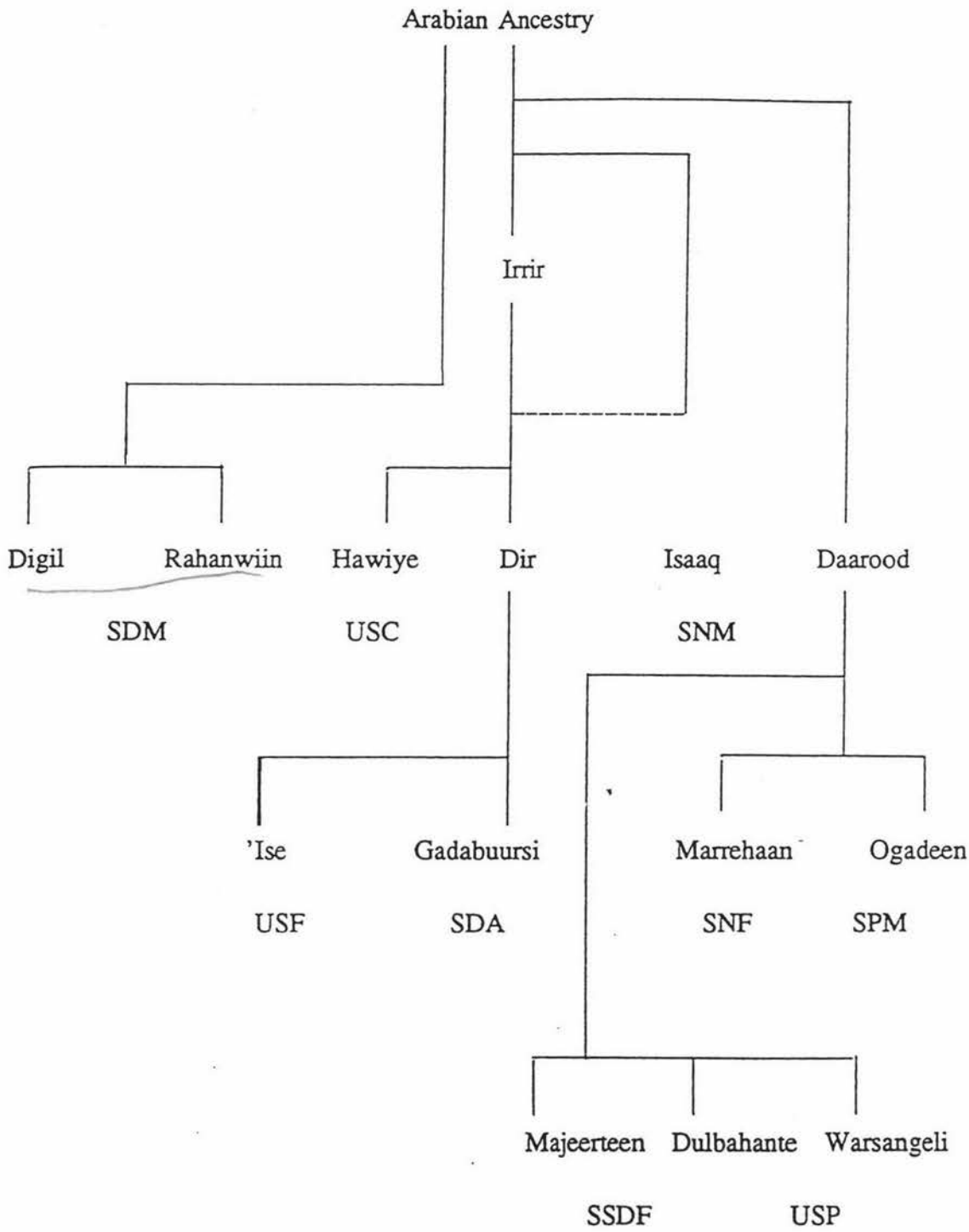

Figure 4.4
Somali Clans and Movements 1988-1993

Movement (SNM), and the Hawiye, based in the south, formed the United Somalia Congress (USC). Thus, resistance to Barre began to form on strict clan-based lines. The SNM also provided a forum for addressing the question of the deprivation in the north since independence due to the domination of power by Barre's southern clan.

It is important to realise that Barre belonged to the economically weak and relatively small Marehan clan, a sub-clan of the Darod group which represented about 1 per cent of the population. This tiny group was the power base of his dictatorship which was essentially a family affair. Consequently, as Barkely and Peterson (1993: 20), noted:

> *... this inadvertently increased the public's awareness of clan identity ... It generated resentment and contempt because it left many of Somalia's prominent clan families politically impotent. [As a result] the very cancer Barre hoped to remove from Somali society eventually consumed it.*

The turning point came in 1988, when Ethiopian President Mengistu and Barre signed a peace agreement where each agreed to stop aiding the other's dissident groups. But, as Clapham (1995: 80) noted, when SNM fighters were expelled from Ethiopia, they duly launched attacks on government-held towns in the north. Barre responded with brute force and, in the government counter-attack, the Isaaq-dominated northern cities of Hargeisa and Burao were obliterated. A UN team estimated that 70 per cent of the residential part of Hargeisa was destroyed while Barre's Minister of the Interior proudly boasted that 63 per cent of private and public buildings in Hargeisa had been destroyed (Guleid 1991: 12). The death toll, including the murder of unarmed civilians, was put at 60,000 (*New African* February 1991: 10). Yet the Bush Administration continued to support Barre in his murderous endeavours and to defend the regime against an increasingly critical Congress (*Africa Events* February 1991: 30). Shalom (1993a: 18) quoted an interesting rationale for this support from a US official:

> *What is the sense of having this (military aid) program if we're not going to give them [Barre's government] military support when it counts most?*

Though the SNM offensive eventually failed, it helped trigger off civil war in the rest of the country. The USC and SSDF was joined by new opposition groups, the Darod-based Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), the Gadabuursi-based Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) and the 'Ise-based United Somali Front (USF), as illustrated in Figure 4.4. Importantly, the coalescing of Somalia's opposition forces coincided with momentous changes in other parts of the world. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Eastern European communist governments meant the old Cold War was nearing an end. In addition, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent massive US military build-

up in Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf demonstrated to the US that the military base at Berbera was superfluous to the protection of US interests in the Gulf.

Thus, Somalia's value as strategic real estate had evaporated and, after the US evacuated its embassy in early 1991, a US diplomat remarked that Somalia "might as well be made into a parking lot" (de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 5). By now, the US,

> *... couldn't be bothered by what was going on [in Somalia]. Barre was a US ally, but so too were the various guerrilla groups fighting against him. It was, as one US official put it, "a kind of win-win situation" for the US ... all Washington did was evacuate its embassy personnel and wash its hands of the whole situation (Shalom 1993a: 18).*

With US support for Barre finally withdrawn, the combined forces of the SNM, the SSDF, the SPM and, in particular around Mogadishu, the USC, were able to close on Barre's regime, as Somalia slid into chaos and civil war. On January 27, 1991, after intense fighting between government forces and the USC, Siad Barre and his loyalist forces fled to his clan base around Garbhaarey, north-west of Kismayu, taking what remained of the nation's gold and cash reserves with him in a tank. It was not, however, the last Somalia would see of the dictator.

Somali joy and euphoria at Barre's overthrow was short-lived. The various opposition groups, having achieved their shared objective of removing the hated Barre, quickly splintered into warring factions. As Clapham (1995: 80) described:

> *Each opposition movement was little more than a cover for a disaffected clan grouping, every bit as wary of other such movements as it was of the government in Mogadishu ... [as a result], there was little foundation for the formation of a viable successor government.*

Similarly, Menkhaus and Lyons (1993: 2) noted:

> *Siad Barre's regime [was] responsible for fostering deep divisions within clans, creating scores of vendettas and a level of mistrust that subsequently made it impossible to create a post-Siad Barre coalition government.*

Thus, the different factions, armed with the leftovers of huge arsenals accumulated from the superpowers and other foreign suppliers in the Horn of Africa, and with a deep mutual distrust as a result of the divisions encouraged and abetted during the 21 years of Barre's USSR/US-backed dictatorship, set on one another. Importantly, this was against a background of massive social dislocation and economic collapse, the result of the corrupt and inefficient regime of Barre and, as Chossudovsky (1991: 12) described, the "straight jacket" of the SAPs imposed at the behest of the US and its financial allies, the

World Bank and the IMF. The result, not surprisingly, was chaos and anarchy in certain parts of the country.

Somalia's Descent Into Hell - January 1991 to May 1992

When Barre fled, control of the capital, Mogadishu, fell into the hands of the Hawiye-based USC, the group which had liberated the city. But the USC split almost immediately after taking the capital. The leader of the USC was a wealthy hotelier, Mohammed Ali Mahdi, from the Abgal clan, a sub-clan of the Hawiye. Mahdi had bankrolled the USC from the time when it was first formed in Rome and later when bases were set up in Ethiopia (Lycett 1992: 37) and, because of this, the USC proclaimed him Somalia's new President. But the chairman and military leader of the USC, General Mohammed Farah Aidid, from another Hawiye sub-clan, the Habir Gedir, challenged the appointment (Makinda 1993: 31).[29] Within weeks the two factions were at war with each other in Mogadishu, which was split in two. As the clan sub-groups turned their respective parts of the city - Mahdi's north, Aidid's south - into armed fortresses, Mogadishu descended into chaos with destruction of appalling proportions. Shalom (1993a: 18) described the anarchy:

> *With weapons plentiful and no other means of livelihood, looting became the order of the day. Much of what was left of the capital's infrastructure ... was looted by gunmen hired by local merchants ... No points of principle divided [Mahdi and Aidid]; each just wanted to control the state, which Barre had shown could be very lucrative indeed.*

The incredibly high level of destruction they wreaked was only possible because of the presence of arms that had flooded into the Horn of Africa since the 1960s. From 1980 to 1990 Barre had spent five times as much on the military as on health and education combined - the highest ratio in the world (Baird 1994b: 5). Much of the deadly and sophisticated heavy weaponry that formed the arsenals of the warring militias was either the leftovers from the billions of dollars worth of US arms shipments to Barre's regime or else had been obtained on the black market from the now disbanded Soviet-backed military regime of Ethiopia's Mengistu, who had also been overthrown in 1991 (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 11, 24 and 26-27; Hunter 1992-3: 54; Lewis 1993: 5).[30] Thus,

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[29] Aidid, noted Bonner (1993: 54), was a professional soldier who had been trained in the USSR.

[30] Black market arms were also supplied by a number of other regimes. For an analysis of the booming worldwide trade in second-hand arms to developing nations, see Baird (1994b: 4-7).

> *Arms sales, military aid and support for military dictators [in the Horn of Africa] have contributed to a culture of violence [in Somalia] far more deadly than any traditional rivalry (New Internationalist December 1992: 11).*

The horror in Mogadishu was compounded when gangs of well-armed youths, known as *mooryaan*,[31] began travelling around the city in "technicals", jeeps and utility trucks fitted with guns, rocket launchers and other heavy weaponry, obtained from the same sources as listed above. Often high after chewing on *qat*, a leaf containing a benzedrine-type compound stimulant,[32] the youths looted and killed randomly in Mogadishu, albeit on a smaller-scale than the clan-based militias (Lewis 1993: 6). An old man in Mogadishu described the *mooryaan* thus:

> *Most of these guys are from the bush. Two years ago they were herding camels. Now they're riding around in technicals chewing qat, looting and raping as they please. You think they just want to hand in their guns and go back? (cited in Caputo 1993: 102).*

From November 1991 to March 1992 fighting intensified and during that time 25,000 people, mainly civilians, were killed and another 20,000 injured in Mogadishu alone (Lycett 1992: 37; Keesing's January 1992: 38710-38711; Keesing's February 1992: 38755). In the chaos, there was little note taken of the fact that the divisions fostered by Barre had helped split Somalia in two; the northern half of the country had, in May 1991, seceded, an act that received no international recognition (Baker and Chapman 1992: 116; Crawford 1993: 17). The split occurred because the northern, Isaaq-based SNM, which instigated the secession, was unhappy that the southern, Hawiye-based USC had appointed a Hawiye man, Ali Mahdi, as Somalia's Interim President without consulting them (Makinda 1993: 27). It was, however, in the inter-riverine area where the most serious fighting occurred and where warfare and destruction would be the direct trigger for the famine.

When Barre was overthrown in January 1991, he and his supporters - members of his Marehan clan and members of their larger Darod clan family, such as the Ogaden and Dulbahante - re-grouped in Garbhaarey and in traditional Darod territory in southern Somalia. This group soon split into several factions, (as illustrated in Figure 4.4), the most important being the Somali National Front (SNF), controlled by Barre and Barre's son-in-law and former defence minister, Mohammed Said Hersi (also known as General Morgan). The SNF, re-armed with weapons illegally obtained from Kenya and other

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31 Literally, the "lost generation", many of whom, noted Menkhaus and Lyons (1993: 8), were forcibly conscripted into Barre's armies in the late 1980s and possess no skills except soldiering.

32 *Qat* was traditionally chewed only on religious or social occasions, when a group of men met to talk in the evening (Lewis 1993: 6).

nations (Samatar 1991: 21), then took advantage of the chaos in Mogadishu and the absence of any central authority in Somalia to launch attacks on territories adjacent to its southern bases as Barre sought a "comeback" in Somalia.[33]

Land alienation and expropriation in the inter-riverine areas had continued throughout Barre's regime, with the beneficiaries, as always, being elites and clans connected with Barre's government (de Waal and Omaar 1993d: 5). More than half of the fertile inter-riverine land farmed by one subclan of the Rahanweyn was forcibly seized, making these victims and many others vulnerable and destitute (de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 54). Much of the land taken, however, was for nothing more than speculation and was grossly under-utilised, reducing Somalia's agricultural productivity and output.[34] This antagonised members of other clans, especially the Habir Gedir and Hawiye who wanted their share of the spoils, and was a major motivation for the USC to step up its fight against Barre and the SNF (de Waal 1993d: 6).[35]

As a result, after the USC faction under Aidid repulsed the SNF's first attacks, the conflict widened. Aidid gained the help of the Hawiye sub-clan, Habir Gedir-based, militia of Colonel Mohammed Omar Jess, who ruled the southern city of Kismayu. Their opponents, Barre and Morgan, in turn joined forces with the militia of General Adan Gabio. The battlefield now covered almost all the fertile and valuable inter-riverine lands and, as Roles (1992: 20) and Davies and Guleid (1993: 10) described, many farmers, particularly of the relatively under-armed Rahanweyn clan, deserted their farms in droves, generating the conditions for famine. Lewis (1993: 6) noted:

> *Each side laid waste the agricultural region between the rivers which is Somalia's bread-basket, killing and terrorising the local cultivators who are less bellicose than the pastoralist Somali ... The main leaders [of each faction], the so-called "warlords", were all dubious figures from the Siad regime ... With agricultural production devastated and livestock herding also severely affected, famine spread, particularly amongst those who could not protect themselves against the ravages of the warlord's attacks.*

Many of the farmers fled to Baidoa, to join the thousands who had already fled the fighting in Mogadishu. NGOs began to warn of the high levels of starvation in and around the town, assuming it was caused by an exceptionally severe drought (Davies and Guleid 1993: 10). The truth, of course, was far different. For the Rahanweyn,

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[33] For more details of Barre's destructive campaign to retake power, see Greenfield (1992: 18), Lycett (1992: 37) and Davies and Guleid (1993: 9-11).

[34] Somalia went from food self-sufficiency in the early 1970s to being one of the most food-dependent countries in Africa by the mid-1980s (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 9).

[35] In addition, noted de Waal and Omaar (1993a: 54), the Hawiye had traditionally regarded the Rahanweyn as second- class citizens.

> *... the only change caused by the departure [of Barre] was that precisely the same officials, soldiers and merchants, deprived of looting opportunities in the cities, were even more desperate to strip assets from the rural areas ... The result of these depredations was ... famine (de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 54).*

Amnesty International later listed hundreds of gross human rights abuses by the SNF and the USC, both of which militias killed, tortured and mutilated countless civilians of opposing clans (Amnesty International Report 1993: 258-259; Amnesty International 1993b: 5). A young Somali nomad from southern Somalia described one scene of torture:

> *Barre's clansmen came and took all our animals. They even made us slaughter and cook one so they could eat it right in front of us. They beat me. They raped my mother and sister. They took our clothes, our shoes - everything (cited in Caputo 1993: 100).*

Barre was finally driven from Somalia in May 1992 and died in exile in Nigeria in early January 1995, his dream of returning to power in Somalia unfulfilled.[36] But his legacy in the countryside of southern Somalia was horrendous. A visiting Oxfam aid worker described the scene:

> *... villagers told us how they had been forced to dig out their food stocks under threat of death, and even their smallest possessions had been systematically looted. Practically all their animals had been taken and killed ... Whole villages were left in the dry season with no food at all ... [but] throughout the war gunmen have protected the big plantations and the luxury houses of the capital ... It was a vicious rich man's war totally dominated by the power of guns and those who could afford to control them ... [When Barre finally fled] hundreds of thousands had perished and whole villages were populated mostly by the dying (Vaux 1992: 8-9).*

Ordinary people were unable to cope with the food scarcities caused by the war. Their traditional ways of surviving had been upset by the colonial partition of their lands, and they were prevented from cultivating their farms by the clan-based militias which took over the country. As Swift (1992: 7) noted, any return to some pre-colonial state of harmony with nature was, by now, impossible. Somalia's agricultural capacities had already been diminished even before the start of the war, as a result of Barre's lavish military spending, the imposition of the SAPs, land expropriation and bloated bureaucracy (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 9). The lack of any form of government and authority and the destruction of market centres, transport links and other infrastructure only exacerbated the poverty and misery of the population. As Makinda (1993: 11) observed:

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[36] For details of the final battles Barre fought in Somalia, see Keesing's (April 1992: 38855).

> *[Somalia's] public institutions were undermined during the 21-year rule of Siad Barre ... [under whom] corruption was rampant and public institutions were abused and weakened ... power and authority [was now] in the hands of clan-based chiefs and their marauding gunmen.*

By May 1992, with the farmers driven from their lands and vital infrastructure destroyed, agricultural production ceased (Roles: 1992: 20). The result, a famine of unprecedented proportions, was underway.

Conclusion

The famine in Somalia was not the result of adverse weather conditions affecting crops but rather of a long and complex process in which the sovereignty and well-being of the Somali people had been sacrificed to the needs of European colonialism, superpower Cold War manoeuvring and Western economic restructuring. Colonialism had left a legacy of division and civil strife which was built upon at first, by the USSR and then, by the US, as they meddled in the affairs of the imposed and centralised state that was Somalia after 1960.

With the overthrow of democracy in 1969, the superpowers continued to use the new regime in Somalia as a pawn in their Cold War games. They helped fund, support and arm Barre, who then became one of Africa's most despised and murderous dictators. Barre had no broad-based support yet his rule survived the 13 years between the Ogaden debacle in 1977-78 and his final overthrow in 1991 despite his bloody record and his compliance in implementing the severe measures incorporated in the SAPs. With the superpowers propping up his regime, however, Barre was able to take advantage of clan antagonisms and divide clan opposition.

Another significant point was the fact that Somalia had become expendable with the end of the Cold War. As Crawford (1993: 17) noted, the US by 1991 no longer needed a proxy power to counter Soviet influence in the Horn of Africa and, consequently, had no further interest in what happened to the Somalis. Thus, Barre's overthrow was an act only achieved following the withdrawal of US support for his regime in the late 1980s, and the serious conflict which engulfed Somalia afterwards was inevitable considering the deep divisions encouraged in the Somali people during his 21-year rule. The resulting war-mongering among the clan-based militias led to unprecedented terror and murder, and the accompanying agricultural, economic and social disintegration of Somalia sparked off the country's food shortages and misery. In short, the Somalian famine - labelled by one NGO as "the single worst humanitarian crisis in the world" (Keesing's July 1992: 38992) - was totally human-made, with its roots in the poverty, civil strife and

authoritarianism which were a legacy of more than a hundred years of foreign interference in the affairs of the Somali people. In other words, the famine's causes lay in the particular way the world was structured, both politically and economically.

There were, however, two areas of Somalia which provided rays of hope. In the north, the SNM, upset at not having been consulted or included in the new government, claimed independence for the area which had been British Somaliland in colonial times. Although most groups in the remainder of Somalia were against the Somaliland secession, the prevailing anarchy meant it was achieved with relatively no opposition, and clan elders and civic organisations were able quickly to establish peace, despite some initial fighting among warlords (Shalom 1993a: 18). In the north-east, too, the SSDF blended traditional clan structures with modern political leadership to produce effective and peaceful local government.[37] As Lewis (1993: 7) noted, this showed the positive side of clan politics, all the more striking in the absence of significant UN or other external intervention.

The success of the SNM and the SSDF in creating peace indicated the ability of Somalis to find solutions to their problems and the benefits to be gained by allowing them to help themselves. These positive steps were not recognised by the world community. In fact, the world remained largely indifferent to the tragedy as it unfolded in Somalia throughout 1991 and 1992. This indifference will be further examined in Chapter Five, where the famine and the world's response to it will be discussed.

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[37] For more discussion of the relative peaceful and stable situation in other parts of Somalia, see Lewis (1993: 12-13), Omaar (1994), Ali Mohammed Nor (1995) and Appendix A.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FAMINE AND THE WORLD'S RESPONSE

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Four, the anarchy and chaos which gripped parts of Somalia from January 1991 to mid-1992 created the conditions for a calamitous human-made famine. The famine peaked in July, August and September of 1992, by which time the news media in the US and UK had "discovered" the "story" and the plight of the Somalis was given world-wide focus. Even more media attention, however, was focused on the western response to the famine, in particular the US-initiated and, in theory at least, UN-led "rescue mission" known as Operation Restore Hope, (ORH), which began in December 1992.

In this chapter, I examine how the international community dealt with the deteriorating situation in Somalia following the overthrow of Siad Barre in early 1991. First, I discuss how the UN, the US and the rest of the world community were, during 1991, uninterested in the plight of the Somali people and, as a result, largely ignored the unfolding tragedy in Somalia. I then describe how the world community was suddenly galvanised into action around mid-1992, when saturation mass media coverage conveyed the extent and severity of the famine. Following this, I examine how and why this interest in Somalia's plight was only half-hearted until, in November 1992, the US suddenly announced a huge "humanitarian" mission to "Restore Hope" to Somalia.

Once these issues have been discussed I then introduce a number of alternative views which reject the notion that the sole purpose and motivation for ORH was "humanitarian" - a rationale which, I feel, was not believable, considering the record of US involvement in international affairs. I also introduce alternative explanations and ideas on why ORH, even if the humanitarian discourse was accepted, was an inappropriate and unnecessary response to the situation in Somalia at that time. Finally, I describe some of the effects of ORH on Somalia, and show why this latest example of foreign involvement in the affairs of the Somali people has exacerbated a terrible situation - a situation which, ironically, foreign powers were predominantly responsible for causing. The identification of these issues will be followed, in later chapters, by an analysis of selected Western media news coverage to determine the extent to which the issues were investigated and assesed.

The Famine Crisis Worsens - Somalia in early 1992

The first warnings of an impending famine in Somalia had come in mid-1991, with satellite photographs indicating an oncoming drought (Hunter 1992-3: 53; Pilger 1994: 221). As described in Chapter Four, however, poor rainfall was only a small factor in creating the conditions for famine.[1] With parts of the country in upheaval, and all traditional methods of coping with food shortages long since destroyed by the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the country, Somalia's people had little chance of successfully negotiating any reduction in food production. By January 1992 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that hundreds of thousands of refugees from the conflict, interned in camps to the south of the capital, were on the brink of starvation (Keesing's January 1992: 38711). In February the UN, in a leaked "confidential" report, described the plight of 100,000 Somali refugees in a UN camp on the Kenya-Somalia border as "appalling" and noted that "tens of people were dying each week" (Keesing's February 1992: 38755). By April the Save the Children Fund (SCF) was warning that the country was on the brink of famine and was about to "plummet into large-scale death from malnutrition" (Keesing's April 1992: 38855).

At the same time, humanitarian aid, organised and delivered by the few NGOs that had not fled the country,[2] began to increase in volume. As Lewis (1993: 7) highlighted, however, this exacerbated the growing problem of looting. Those responsible for the looting were the warring factions, especially those in major ports such as Mogadishu, which was controlled by Aidid. The factions took a direct cut of 10-20 per cent of the relief food supplies, which were also sold outside Somalia[3] or exorbitantly taxed (Lewis 1993: 7-8).

The agencies, in particular the ICRC, responded by employing what they termed "local relief committees", organised by the clans and sub-clans, to guard food relief against looting. The committees were paid with a small amount of the food aid (Keesings May 1992: 38902). The ICRC also avoided the worst of the looting at the ports in Mogadishu and Kismayu (this port controlled by Aidid's ally, Colonel Jess) by distributing much of

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[1] From my research for Chapter Four, I believe it is fair to argue that the weather may have had nothing to do with the famine. Of all the literature examined, only Roles (1992: 20) made note of poor rains. Even he, however, considered it to be a minor factor in the famine compared to the effects of war.

[2] These NGOs included ICRC, SCF, the French agency *Medicines Sans Frontiers* (MSF - in English, Doctors Without Borders), the International Medical Corps and the Lutheran World Federation.

[3] Interestingly, while travelling around Africa between February and June 1993 I observed that many of the markets and shops in the countries I visited were stocked high with Japanese tinned fish, EC tinned beef and Australian and US rice, all of which were labelled "Donated food - not to be sold"! Of course, whether this food aid had been diverted from Somalia is impossible to determine, but it is still highly likely given the time frame.

its food through the many other smaller ports on Somalia's coast.[4] In addition the ICRC had a policy of ensuring some food was cooked as soon as it arrived at a feeding centre to deter looting. Crucially, much of the organisation and many of the ideas for the ICRC initiatives came from the Somali people themselves, as one aid worker noted:

> *While self-seeking armed men have shown the worst of human nature, the many [Somalian] Red Crescent volunteers which support ICRC have shown the very best. The current relief operation is, in reality, run entirely by Somalis. Expatriates may stick out in the streets of Mogadishu or in the feeding centres, but the ability of voluntary organisations to even operate can be credited to their experienced Somali staff (Vaux 1992: 9).*

De Waal and Omaar (1993b: 41-44) also noted the fine work of both the ICRC and the SCF when operating in close co-operation and consultation with both Somalis and the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRC), and how this meant they worked to promote long-term solutions to the problems in Somalia. Not surprisingly, the ICRC was responsible for feeding more Somalis throughout the crisis than any other relief group (Shalom 1993a: 20). Hassan Farah Ahmed, the Somalian relief co-ordinator for the SRC, summed up why:

> *The ICRC - maybe first their people have graduated from college with a degree in understanding the Somali character [sic] (cited in de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 44).*

Despite the best efforts of the SRC, the ICRC, the SCF and some of the other NGOs, there was only so much these small-scale humanitarian organisations could achieve. When the food situation began to worsen considerably, particularly after the intensification of fighting around Kismayu and the inter-riverine areas in April 1992, the NGO agencies issued warnings that 4.5 million Somalians were facing starvation, and called on the worldwide community to assist them in their efforts (Lycett 1992: 37; Keesing's May 1992: 38902).

The UN in Somalia - January 1991 to April 1992

The agencies' claim that 4.5 million Somalis faced starvation was, in retrospect, an exaggeration, probably made to increase credibility and to further claims that the UN was not doing enough to prevent suffering in Somalia. In fact the UN had done virtually nothing substantial in Somalia to this point, a situation which would ensure that the severity of the famine was far greater than it should have been. Indeed, Mohammed Sahnoun, appointed by the UN as special envoy to Somalia in April 1992, acknowledged that the UN delay in acting in Somalia cost as many as 300,000 lives (Rake 1993b: 14).

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[4] At 3,000 kilometres in length, Somalia's coastline is the second longest in Africa.

At the time of Barre's overthrow in January 1991 the UN evacuated all personnel from Somalia and did not return for a year. Bonner (1993: 54) noted that during this critical period there were many (failed) attempts to unite the warring factions in Somalia, and that this was a time when UN mediation and UN agencies were desperately needed for peace negotiations and to help rebuild infrastructure destroyed by two years of civil war. Instead, as one UN official noted, "the UN sat on the fence" (cited in Bonner 1993: 54).

The reason the UN gave for its 12-month absence at such a crucial stage in Somalia's history, and for the decision not to load a UN plane in Nairobi with the plentiful UN food stored there, was that the situation in the country was too dangerous (Ricciuti 1995: 32; Bonner 1993: 55-56). Yet, as Bonner (1993: 56) observed, the UN had worked in equally dangerous situations in northern Iraq during the Gulf War and in the former Yugoslavia. Their apathy throughout 1991 meant the NGOs had to hire and organise their own relief flights, straining their already limited budgets.

It was left to neighbouring Djibouti to organise two "National Reconciliation Conferences" for Somalia in June and July 1991.[5] Despite a request to them for support and participation, however, the UN sent only observers (*Africa Confidential* August 1991: 7). Later efforts, in October 1991, to put Somalia on the agenda of the Security Council and of a special session of the General Assembly, were also rejected by the UN (Bonner 1993: 54-55; Shalom 1993b: 6).[6] Within days, the full-scale war between Aidid and Mahdi in Mogadishu exploded. As Sahnoun (1994: 10) noted, however, there was no serious fighting in the country in the nine months before this warring began - nine months when Somalia's people were waiting and hoping for mediation. Yet in all that time the UN did not move.

The UN belatedly began to make a concerted effort in early 1992, following the appointment of an African, the Egyptian diplomat Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as the new UN Secretary-General on January 1, 1992. Humanitarian aid was promised, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), returned to Mogadishu and, after much international criticism over its inaction, the UN finally sent a senior representative, Assistant Secretary-General James Jonah, to Somalia in January 1992. The visit was, however, an unmitigated disaster as Jonah made an inept attempt at mediation, dealing only with the

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5 For a detailed analysis of the Djibouti conferences, and why they failed to achieve any concrete agreements, see *Africa Confidential* (August 1991: 6-7) and Biles (1991: 36).

6 Bonner (1993: 55) offered some reasons for the UN's inaction during 1991, claiming that the UN was loath to act because of "institutional, bureaucratic caution and personal ambition. The odds of achieving a political settlement in Somalia were formidable, so ... UN officials were reluctant to try for fear of being associated with failure."

warlords and ignoring elders of neutral clans.[7] "Far from achieving progress towards a cease-fire", reported the human rights organisation Africa Watch, Jonah's visit "only made conditions in Mogadishu appreciably worse" (cited in Bonner 1993: 56). In addition, UNICEF, along with some of the NGOs which had returned to Somalia, such as CARE, followed practices that resulted in the "marginalisation and humiliation" of Somalis, and this fostered and fuelled anti-western resentment (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 44).[8]

De Waal and Omaar (1993a: 6) summed up this initial UN response:

> *[In the past, UN agencies] mandated to deal with humanitarian emergencies showed indifference, bureaucratic infighting, greed, sloth and outright incompetence. When the UN agencies finally did establish a belated presence [in Somalia] in the first half of 1992, they were unwilling to consult with voluntary agencies that had much more on-the-ground experience - let alone with Somalis. Unable to make informed decisions, and still semi-paralysed by institutional sclerosis, the UN did not deliver most of the promised aid.*

The UN did negotiate a cease-fire between Aidid and Mahdi in February 1992 but by March the fighting had begun again, particularly over the slow but steady increase in emergency food supplies arriving in the country. A UN team recommended a 500-member peacekeeping force be sent to protect the relief supplies but UN Security Council infighting and stalling[9] meant only 50 unarmed observers were sent (Shalom 1993a: 19). Finally, as the fighting intensified in the inter-riverine areas in April, Boutros-Ghali sent Mohammed Sahnoun to Somalia to assess what kind of action the UN should take.

Sahnoun and the UN - Somalia April 1992 to October 1992

Mohammed Sahnoun was an inspired choice as the UN's Special Envoy to Somalia. An Algerian who had been his country's ambassador to Germany, France, the US and the UN, Sahnoun had wide knowledge and experience of the peoples and problems of the Horn of Africa, having spent ten years as a Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation

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[7] In addition, Jonah gave particular attention to Mahdi, and this antagonised Aidid as well as other, more recognised, political leaders. As Drysdale (1994: 40) observed, Jonah's mission and plans were consequently unacceptable to Aidid. For a more detailed analysis of why Jonah's visit failed, see Drysdale (1994: 39-42), Lewis (1993: 8); *West Africa* (16-22 March 1992: 445); Keesing's (January 1992: 38710-38711) and Bonner (1993: 56).

[8] These practices, noted de Waal and Omaar (1993b: 44), included numerous incidents of discrimination, such as the refusal of entry of Somalis into the compounds of certain aid organisations.

[9] De Waal and Omaar (1993a: 5) noted that, during the UN Security Council debate over this issue in April, it was the US which, ironically, balked at the first-time deployment of UN troops for humanitarian reasons alone, citing high costs. This disagreement delayed for six months the arrival of the 500 peacekeepers in Somalia. As it was, noted Keesing's (July 1992: 38992; August 1992: 39034), the 50 unarmed observers did not arrive in Somalia until late July, and by August 6 they had still not left their compound due to transport problems!

of African Unity (OAU).[10] Shalom (1993a: 20) noted that Sahnoun quickly established a reputation as an effective and impartial negotiator. Importantly, too, he was hard-working and sincere in his efforts to contact and listen to all segments of Somali society - not just the warlords. Hussein Mursan, a Somali doctor, observed:

> *He was trying to understand the situation before acting. By talking to everybody - not only the man with the gun, but with the schoolboys, with the intellectuals - he was winning the confidence of the warring factions (cited in Bonner 1993: 56).*

Sahnoun recommended a massive and immediate humanitarian intervention. Instead, the UN sent a trickle of food, arguing that the security situation was too bad (Sahnoun 1994: 10). Increasingly, UN internal politics were entering into and interfering with the debate over UN policy towards Somalia.[11] By mid-1992, a journalist observed that Sahnoun had,

> *... discovered that the world was largely indifferent [to Somalia] and ... the UN had been scared into lethargy, frightened both by the danger and the lack of rules and precedent (cited in Makinda 1993: 63).*

Annoyed at the UN procrastination, Sahnoun in July 1992 began to add his voice to the warnings and appeals coming from the NGOs and repeated their claim that 4.5 million Somalis were nearing starvation (Keesing's July 1992: 38992). Sahnoun also organised the first print media coverage of the disaster as he felt "it was the only way to make things happen" (Sahnoun 1994: 10). At the same time, Boutros-Ghali made a stinging public attack on the UN Security Council,[12] claiming its members were more concerned with the "rich man's war" in the former Yugoslavia than with the "poor man's war" in Somalia. As a result, the UN Security Council finally voted, on July 27 1992, for an urgent airlift of food to Somalia as well as for the deployment of peacekeepers and security personnel (Keesing's July 1992: 38992; Makinda 1993: 63). Sahnoun (1994: 10) pointed to the irony:

> *Once media coverage became overwhelming and people could see on their TV screens what a tragedy it was, donor countries finally began airlifting supplies.*

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[10] The OAU is based in Addis Ababa, capital of neighbouring Ethiopia.

[11] From the beginning, UN policy in Somalia was hampered by differences in opinion between UN officials in New York and those in Somalia. This reflected the wide divergence in views on the approaches the UN should take towards alleviating the situation in Somalia, from outright intervention (supported by Jonah and Boutros Ghali) to patient and careful diplomacy (supported by Sahnoun). Drysdale (1994: 53) observed that Boutros-Ghali, in particular, was impatient with Sahnoun's methods and wanted quicker results, achieved through coercive peacekeeping. Policy was also hampered by the slow pace of UN bureaucratic decision-making and UN "inability to understand cause and effect" (Drysdale 1994: 55). For more details, see Drysdale (1994: 39-66).

[12] The US, the USSR/Russia, the UK, France and China are the only five permanent members of the Security Council (*Third World Guide* 1992: 78).

Then, all of a sudden, after months of delay and distance, the urgent priority of the UN in New York was to send forces.

A dismal tale of UN ineptitude followed. After intense negotiations with Mahdi and Aidid,[13] Sahnoun received the green light to deploy the 500 armed peacekeepers - first sought in March - to guard food supplies. Yet, before they arrived, the UN Security Council on August 28 approved the deployment of an additional 3,000 troops - without consulting anyone in Somalia or even informing Sahnoun, who heard about it on BBC radio (Sahnoun 1994: 10; Bonner 1993: 56).

Not surprisingly, Sahnoun found the fine rapport he had built with the Somalis destroyed, and he began to publicly criticise the UN's record over Somalia, saying the UN was "one-and-a-half years too late to act" and that UN agencies "were spending too much and aiding too little" (Hunter 1993: 57; Ricciuti 1995: 32). Sahnoun also attacked the lack of support he received from the UN in New York (Shalom 1993a: 20). In October, when Boutros-Ghali, a personal friend, failed to support him, Sahnoun resigned.[14] He was replaced by Ismat Kittani, an Iraqi Kurd and career diplomat, with little knowledge or experience about the situation in Somalia.

The 500 armed UN peacekeepers - all from Pakistan - finally arrived in Mogadishu on September 21, with the limited objective of assisting the humanitarian food aid effort. But, with only half-hearted support from the UN in New York, and with the trust broken between the Somalis and the UN, they were, as Rake (1993b: 14) described, underarmed, understaffed, underfinanced and totally ineffective.[15] However, bad as the UN response was to the growing tragedy in Somalia, the record of the US was worse.

The US Response to the Famine - January 1991 to October 1992

The UN's lack of urgency in Somalia from early 1991 to mid-1992 was mirrored in US policy. As discussed in Chapter Four, the end of the Cold War had meant Somalia's

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[13] De Waal and Omaar (1993a: 53), *World Press Review* (October 1992: 11) and Shalom (1993: 7) all stated how self interest motivated both Mahdi and Aidid and complicated an already difficult situation. They noted how Mahdi, whose "Interim Government of Somalia" had been temporarily (for two years) confirmed in the Djibouti conferences and in the February ceasefire, wanted UN troops because he believed they would help legitimise his position - even though he was in effective control of little more than northern Mogadishu. For the same reason, Aidid opposed the troops.

[14] This was mainly because the UN Secretariat, as Drysdale (1994: 55, 57) observed, not only underestimated the problems Sahnoun encountered in his work in Somalia but also failed to understand and appreciate the situation in Somalia. For a more detailed analysis on the differences in opinion between Sahnoun and Boutros-Ghali re UN policy on Somalia, see Drysdale (1994: 53-66) and Makinda (1993: 68-69).

[15] To make matters worse, they did not assume their duties until the end of November (Lewis 1993: 8).

strategic value to the superpowers had been greatly reduced. This, coupled with the fact that, since the Gulf War, the US military had access to bases in Saudi Arabia, ensured that Somalia was superfluous to US needs. Shalom (1993a: 18) noted that the Berbera base was abandoned by the US in December 1990, and all US development assistance was cut off shortly afterwards. In addition, it was US Government concern over raising the profile of expensive and risky foreign policy issues in an election year which led to the decision - made by the Security Council during the debate on Somalia in April 1992 - that the dispatch of the 500 peacekeepers be deferred (P. Lewis 1992: 9).

De Waal and Omaar (1993a: 5) observed that the US mounted few relief efforts of significance throughout 1991 and the first half of 1992,[16] but argued that the rising volume of media coverage of the situation in Somalia in July 1992 was the catalyst for a stunning change in US policy:

> *Suddenly in late July 1992, although the situation (certainly severe) was not particularly worse, the Bush Administration was galvanised by new-found compassion. It was the eve of the Republican Party convention, Bill Clinton was apparently planning to mention US neglect of Somalia, and Senator Nancy Kassebaum had just visited Mogadishu, with news cameras in her wake. As an election loomed, the fact that blacks were suffering in "the world's worst humanitarian disaster" took on special significance.*

Similarly, Hunter (1992-3: 55) argued that the sudden US aid effort was not timed to the rhythm of Somali tragedy but to George Bush's presidential ambitions.[17] On August 12, two days before the Republican Party Convention, the US Government announced plans for an airlift of food. No US officials in Africa had prior knowledge of the initiative which they, like Sahnoun before them, heard of on the BBC (Hunter 1992-3: 55). It was a week before the first flight took off but, shortly afterwards, when one US plane was struck by a bullet, the flights were cancelled (Pilger 1994: 222; Hunter 1992-3: 55). By that time, however, as Shalom (1993a: 20) observed, Bush had been advised to take a lower profile on foreign policy issues. Somalia, once again, was put on the back burner.

Other Responses to the Famine

The lack of commitment by the UN and US to Somalia throughout 1991 and the first half of 1992 was paralleled by that of other international organisations and some NGOs.

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[16] The main exception was the US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), which gave US$85 million to NGOs operating in Somalia, and also supplied funds through UNICEF (de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 5).

[17] Indeed, as Pilger (1994: 221) observed, the Bush Administration had withheld US food aid for the two months prior to the Republican Party Convention, and had "vigorously discouraged donors from helping Somalia, regardless of reports that up to 2,000 Somalis were dying every day."

Hunter (1992-3: 57) noted the dismal and petty efforts of Ireland, Italy, Germany, Russia and Britain, which all made only "perfunctory attempts" at assistance from August 1992. The OAU also contributed little, preferring, as Lardner Jnr (1992: 448) described, "to hide behind the tiny fig leaf of its jaded principle of `non-interference'".[18] The Islamic Conference and the Arab League also made only "feeble gestures" (*World Press Review* October 1992: 11; Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 10).

The international community's ineptitude in Somalia was matched by that of some of the NGOs, particularly those which had fled the country in the period of Barre's overthrow but had returned to Somalia in early 1992. The performance of the US NGO CARE was especially inept. The agency had been contracted by the US Government in July to implement a plan involving the "monetising"[19] of food to deal with the famine, and had also been contracted by the UN to transport food from Mogadishu port. In both jobs, CARE failed miserably, and the problem of food looting was not alleviated (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 4). Afterwards, as de Waal and Omaar (1993a: 6) observed:

> *... the Somali business community sharply criticised [CARE] for failing to coordinate well with diplomatic initiatives, or to consult with experienced Somalis ... [The monetisation program], if implemented early ... could have prevented many famine deaths. That it was still not underway by November illustrates how low a priority Somalia remained for [CARE].*

The combined result of the inaction, indifference and ineptitude of the UN, the US, some NGOs and much of the rest of the world community towards Somalia was an intensification of the famine which reached its peak in the three months from July 1992 (Shalom 1993a: 20). By then, stung into action by the increased media coverage, these groups paid closer attention to the crisis (Sahnoun 1994: 10; de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 5) but their initiatives were generally half-hearted, did not consider long-term objectives and were undertaken without consulting Somalis. The consequence of this attitude was further mistakes.

CARE and some of the newer NGOs, for example, alarmed at the continued looting of their food supplies, compounded their errors by demanding foreign intervention in Somalia to address the looting problem. The head of CARE, Philip Johnston, asked in

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[18] Indeed, Boutros-Ghali claimed the reason why there was so little attention paid to Somalia was because, unlike Europeans who called him often over Yugoslavia, Africans called him not at all (*World Press Review* October 1992: 11)

[19] As Menkhaus and Lyons (1993: 4) and de Waal and Omaar (1993a: 6) described, monetising involved the auctioning of food aid to local merchants at reduced prices, and recognised that famine was caused not by lack of food but rather by impoverishment caused by inflated food prices. NGOs could then concentrate on feeding the totally destitute who still could not afford to buy food. Monetising also encouraged farmers to return to their land by re-establishing the local commercial market for food, and removed many of the incentives for looting and hoarding.

Washington in September that "UN troops ... move in and run Somalia" (Huband 1992: 9), a call backed by prominent politicians in Europe (Lewis 1993: 8). As de Waal and Omaar (1993b: 3) discovered, however, the high rate of food losses experienced by CARE and the UN agencies was due to their poor operating practices. By contrast, a Somali SRC worker said food from the ICRC was usually delivered without problems, due to good planning and coordination with community leaders. De Waal and Omaar (1993b: 2) concluded:

> *When officials in the relief agencies were familiar with the recipient communities, and knew whom to trust, extremely efficient distributions could be organised. When they operated hastily and without local knowledge, high losses were the rule.*

Similarly, the difference in attitude towards food distribution between some of the newer NGOs in Somalia and the ICRC was noted by Shalom (1993a: 20):

> *The Red Cross worked methodically with clan leaders to get food distributed, while some other agencies tried heavy-handed or hasty approaches. Some of the newer relief organisations found that the guards they hired to protect their food shipments were themselves looting; the Red Cross, on the other hand, had built up relationships of trust with its guards over many months.*

Not surprisingly, the ICRC reported that only 20 per cent of their food was looted, and correspondingly low loss rates, (in some cases, as low as two per cent), were also experienced by SCF, *Medicines Sans Frontiers* and the SRC (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 2-4; Malik 1993: 17). These NGOs differentiated themselves from other segments of the relief program by employing careful and considerate methods and, by October 1992, their heroic efforts meant the worst of the famine looked to be over.

The Famine Wanes - Somalia October 1992 to November 1992

By October/November 1992, the aid effort was finally having a positive effect, with death rates falling from a peak of 300 per day in September to 70 per day by early December, while in some towns the death rate by starvation had fallen to zero (Poh and Rosset 1995: 5; Akol 1992: 20).[20] The local price of food in October 1992 had also reached a desirable level; it was sufficiently low that most people could afford to buy, but sufficiently high that local farmers could sell at a reasonable profit (Poh and Rosset 1995: 5; de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 9-11). This was important because the cultivators of the inter-riverine areas had begun to return to their lands by mid-1992, following Barre's final defeat, and local commercial food markets had been re-established. Thus, the first problem in Somalia -

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[20] For more details on the successful ICRC initiatives to alleviate starvation during September, see Akol (1992: 20-21).

the large-scale availability of basic food - had been solved, by a *combination* of food aid and internal peace. A Somali village elder summed up the situation:

> *The [food aid] assistance has only contributed. The improvement started with the prevailing semi-peace ... Once there was peace, people started some production and began to become self supporting ... So, things began to improve then (in September 1992), after the harvest of the first season, coupled with the [food aid] (cited in de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 11).*

It was for these reasons that many experts in Somalia, headed by Mohammed Sahnoun, called in October 1992 for the immediate curtailment of free food aid. The famine was not over, but what Sahnoun and NGOs such as ICRC, SCF and Oxfam, among others, emphasised was that the aid effort needed fine tuning - the targeting of the poorest and most vulnerable Somalis, and the initiation of public health and rehabilitation programs (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 11-20). More people were now at risk from disease than starvation (Malik 1993: 16).

Furthermore, the famine situation was confined to the south-west corner of Somalia. As discussed in Chapter Four, the north ("independent" Somaliland) and the north-west of Somalia had established effective local government and did not experience famine.[21] As Malik (1993: 16) summarised, Somalia in late 1992 was not in the grip of total anarchy and most of the country was relatively peaceful and stable. Similarly Omaar (1992: 20), herself a Somali, noted that in late September 1992 Somalia had not collapsed, as there were important social, political and economic structures in place, and that calls for UN troop intervention in Somalia were misplaced. Crucially, Aidid, whose Somali National Alliance (SNA)[22] now controlled two-thirds of Mogadishu and most of Southern Somalia, continued to reject calls for a larger UN presence, arguing it would undermine Somali sovereignty (Keesing's October 1992: 39132).

Nevertheless, throughout October and November 1992, US NGOs continued to call for a military intervention in Somalia to facilitate food delivery (Poh and Rosset 1995: 5).[23] As

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[21] This is not to say conditions in Somaliland were perfect - far from it. Amnesty International (1993b: 3) reported that the area had also experienced political tensions and inter-clan wars, but the latter had been contained by late 1992 and the region did not experience a famine. Indeed, if there had been unnatural deaths in the north, they had been caused by the hundreds of thousands of landmines planted in 1988 by Barre's army and supplied by the US and other foreign powers (de Waal 1992: 27; Amnesty International 1993b: 3). As de Waal (1992: 27) noted, the Cold War would still be killing Somalis well into the 21st century. Importantly, however, Somaliland demonstrated that peace could be achieved through the traditional authority of elders without inappropriate foreign mediation. For a more extensive description of the generally peaceful and orderly situation in Somaliland in mid to late-1992, and of the peace initiatives which brought this about, see Omaar (1994: 8-10).

[22] As the combined forces under his command were now known.

[23] For discussion on why many of the American NGOs were not neutral observers in Somalia, why they called for intervention and how they would benefit from it, see Furedi (1994: 20-21), Poh and Rosset (1995: 5), de Waal (1995) and de Waal and Omaar (1993a: 7-9). As Furedi (1994: 21) observed, NGOs

previously argued, however, the situation in Somalia in late November 1992 was improving, and the last thing the country needed was more free food aid. Yet, on November 27, outgoing US President George Bush made an offer of 30,000 US troops for an as-yet unspecified UN force to facilitate the delivery of more free food aid. The seeds for Operation Restore Hope (ORH) had been sown. The operation was, from its inception, a recipe for disaster. As Shalom (1993a: 25) stressed, what Somalia needed in November 1992 were the skills of a patient negotiator like Mohammed Sahnoun. Instead, the US sent in the Marines.

Operation Restore Hope

Bush's offer was quickly accepted by the UN, and on December 3 the UN Security Council endorsed, by 15 votes to none, Resolution 794, which authorised the use of "all necessary means", including military force, to achieve a secure environment for the distribution of relief supplies (Lycett 1993a: 18). The basic rationale for the intervention was that 70-80 per cent of food was being looted, and that no food could enter the country as the port in Mogadishu had been closed by the warring factions (Keesing's November 1992: 39182; Keesing's December 1992: 39225; de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 2,4).

Of vital importance was the fact that much of the rationale for ORH was based on a UN report written by Ismat Kittani (Makinda 1993: 69).[24] The report was tabled at a UN Security Council meeting on November 25 and asserted that 80 per cent of food aid was being looted.[25] Kittani, however, had only arrived in Somalia on November 8 (Keesing's November 1992: 39182) and his claim was disputed not only by the NGOs but even by UN agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP).[26] As for the port, it was, indeed, closed to the UN but not to the ICRC and agencies which operated under a different negotiating system with the factions that controlled the port. Not surprisingly, the UN was, by now, regarded by the Somalis with suspicion and contempt (Malik 1993: 17; Bonner 1993: 54).

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in Somalia and elsewhere were run with clear loyalties and definite links to Western authorities. Furthermore, because their brief (such as famine relief) was overtly non-political, their role in aiding the moral rearmament of the West was far from evident.

24 For this and many other reasons, Kittani was generally considered to have been "a disaster" in Somalia (Lewis 1993: 9). See also Ricciuti (1995: 32).

25 Interestingly, such high rates of looting had not bothered the US Government when it gave food aid to Barre's regime. For more details see Hunter (1992-3: 53) and Poh and Rosset (1995: 5).

26 De Waal and Omaar (1993b: 4) noted, however, that the WFP did not make this public - instead, they justified their silent endorsement by saying "we were never asked to correct it." They added that the 80 per cent figure was later repeated as fact by Boutros-Ghali and the US State Department. How the media dealt with this claim will be a factor in my media analysis.

Thus, as de Waal and Omaar (1993b: 5) stressed:

> *The situation in Somalia on the eve of the intervention was portrayed in unrealistically pessimistic colours. At the time, this served to justify the intervention ... [later, it served] to exaggerate the improvements that [had] occurred since.*

Bush, who by November 27 had lost the 1992 US Presidential election, claimed he made the offer of troops to assist the effort to feed the starving, (Keesing's December 1992: 39225) yet he wanted the US troops out by January 20, 1993 (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 5). This was a short time span indeed to solve a serious problem.

Operation Restore Hope - Hidden Agendas?

While Bush's alleged humanitarian motivation may be accepted - and, indeed, was accepted by many commentators who noted Somalia's lack of resources and its absence of strategic value to the US - it is essential to consider some alternative propositions regarding the implementation of ORH. To begin with, Bush's sudden concern for humanitarian action must be questioned. Bush's record as a politician was, as Shalom (1993a: 22) described, exceptional for its "remarkable indifference to human suffering" in Central America, southern Africa and Iraq. Falk (1993: 18), too, noted that:

> *Bush's prior political record was devoid of humanitarian concern, and there was no evidence of any recent awakening to the tragedy of human suffering ... Bush's sponsorship [of ORH] should have been a signal from the outset that more or less was involved.*

Why did Bush wait so long before he did anything substantial in Somalia, and then suddenly implement a massive "rescue" operation without consulting a single Somali? It must be remembered that there had been many calls during 1992 for intervention in former Yugoslavia - calls which were constantly resisted by the Bush Administration. Furthermore, as Sudarshan (1993: 11), Roberts (1993: 17), Malik (1993: 16) and Richards (1993: 20) all noted, there were comparable disasters and suffering during 1992 in such places as Sudan, Angola, Mozambique and Kurdistan - but these disasters had generally been ignored by most governments, politicians and international organisations. That indifference was consistent with the attitude adopted by the UN, the US and the rest of the world community towards Somalia as it lurched from crisis to crisis throughout 1991 and 1992. The sudden, and dramatic, change in response to the Somali crisis in November 1992, reflected in ORH, was evidence enough that the so-called "humanitarian" motives for ORH should be examined more closely.

Much of the motivation for ORH was, I believe, hidden behind changes in world geopolitical relationships following the end of the Cold War. After World War II the negative impact of colonialism and imperialism had reduced the legitimacy of Western power in the developing world, a legacy the USSR exploited during the Cold War (Richards 1993: 20-21). Since the collapse of the USSR, however, this situation has changed, and the subsequent rise of neo-liberal social and economic thought in the 1990s has emerged unchallenged as a political discourse. At the same time, the blame for social and economic disasters caused by capitalism has been shifted to the "inefficient" and "corrupt" developing and/or ex-communist world (Richards 1993: 21). This has provided the capitalist world with, as Richards (1993: 21) described:

> *... unexpected opportunity to rehabilitate its past ... The failure of the various radical experiments in the Third World now serves as a vindication of the West ... [and] has allowed the rhetoric of Western imperialism to make a comeback (Richards 1993: 21).*

Richards (1993: 22) also noted how the end of the Cold War has caused a corresponding collapse of the "old world order" - a general Western alliance bound together by an anti-communist philosophy.[27] As this alliance has crumbled, and Japan and Western Europe have asserted their economic might, the US's former role as unquestioned world leader has been under challenge. Thus, it can also be argued that ORH was conceived as a way for Bush and the US to re-assert its global authority and international leadership (and deter potential Western rivals) through a display of its military might (Richards 1993: 19-23; Malik 1993: 17; Crawford 1993: 17; Roberts 1993: 16-19; Shalom 1993a: 21; Clarkson 1993: 27-29).[28]

The so-called "humanitarianism" also served to act as a cover for what was basically a foreign intervention in the affairs of a developing nation - and, generally, as an alarming precedent for future conflict resolution in any nation which challenged the status quo of the dominant hegemonic powers (Richards 1993: 22; de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 57; Malik 1993: 17). As one commentator observed, ORH "is meant to soften up [the US] for more interventions under the New World Order" (*New Internationalist* March 1993: 29). Not surprisingly, Richards (1993: 22) concluded that "the fate of the Somalis [in early 1993 was] ... of no concern to Washington".

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[27] By this, Richards (1993: 20) referred to organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

[28] In the end, noted Shalom (1993b: 16), the failure of ORH meant the Pentagon did not get the boost it wanted. Yet, he argued, it has made the penchant for US unilateralism greater than ever. For further discussion, see Shalom (1993b: 16).

ORH also violated all principles and contracts enshrined in the UN charter, particularly Article 2(7), which explicitly banned the UN from interfering in the internal affairs of member states without permission from the ruling authorities in that state (Falk 1993: 19; Clarkson 1993: 28; Sid-Ahmed 1993: 10-13). As Sid-Ahmed (1993: 10-13) observed, the UN used the rationale that, as Somalia had lost its ability to govern itself, it had lost its sovereignty, but made the obvious point that this could not justify neo-colonialist interference in Somalia.[29]

Why, then, would the UN attempt to justify ORH? As Clarkson (1993: 27) described, the UN in the 1990s was less and less an international body and more and more "a useful front through which the Western powers can demonstrate their authority". The UN, he noted, was a US invention intended to make US hegemony and power appear like international co-operation, and that the end of the Cold War had removed the constraint on the US to do as it saw fit (Clarkson 1993: 27-28).[30] Similarly, an African expert in international law observed:

> *The UN is coming more and more to look not like an autonomous actor in international relations, but like a rubber stamp for decisions taken by the White House, in consultation with certain other Western capitals [such as London] (cited in Clarkson 1993: 28).*

Roberts (1993: 16-19) and Hume (1993: 5) formed slightly different conclusions re UN/US motives for ORH. While also recognising the growing "Western moral consensus" behind such interventions, they argued such consensus had occurred not because of anything *within* Western society but because of the absence of any external (in particular, socialist/Marxist) alternatives. Thus the Bush Administration in the US, along with governments in London, Paris and other Western nations, generated the atmosphere and scope for foreign interventions to distract attention from the growing crises that were affecting their societies, such as rising crime, permanent unemployment and urban decay. In other words, noted Roberts (1993: 18-19), for Bush:

> *... it is far easier to be seen to do some good in Iraq or Somalia than to deal with the problems [in the US] ... it is only on issues such as Somalia that any positive consensus has been created. That is why no Western government wants to be left out. The fact that numerous competing humanitarian missions are getting in each*

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[29] In any case, the rationale and conclusion reached by the UN were both highly debatable.

[30] What the US could or could not do through the UN was, however, constrained by the decisions made within and after the due processes of US politics, a minor point which Clarkson failed to mention. Pilger (1994: 225-227), however, observed that the UN, under the "Washington-approved" Boutros Ghali, has appointed a number of key neo-liberal Reagan Administration officials, such as former attorney-general Richard Thornburgh, to senior positions within the organisation. Such political manipulation, Pilger (1994: 225) noted, has contributed to the "reform" of the UN to allow it to support "humanitarian" interventions, when wanted by Washington.

> *other's way in Somalia is neither here nor there. It is enough to feed the Western public with a few pictures of grateful children receiving aid packages.*

Similarly, Hume (1993: 5) described the "crisis" in the world's capitalist political systems. Consequently,

> *As both Bush and Clinton have discovered, in the 1990s it is a lot simpler for an American president to look resolute and authoritative in downtown Mogadishu than to do so in south central Los Angeles (Hume 1993: 5).*

De Waal and Omaar (1993a) mirrored these arguments, describing ORH as "philanthropic imperialism" and arguing the "humanitarian" mask merely served to legitimise intervention elsewhere taken for wholly different motives, such as safeguarding high military spending or boosting political support at home (1993a: 54). As such, ORH was,

> *... an important strategic precedent for the way in which the US, and to a lesser extent the European countries, use the UN to have their way with the world ... Somalia was an easy and timely test for this new weapon of international control (de Waal and Omaar 1993a: 54).*

In this regard, foreign intervention in the developing world, once considered as imperial aggression, was now sold as a "moral obligation" (Furedi 1994: 18). Similarly, Hume (1993: 4) observed that what was once called "imperialism" was now called "peacekeeping". This meant international criticism of UN interventions such as ORH was muted, as the UN was seen to be involved in Somalia as part of "a global crusade for peace". Such views, however, served to obscure the initial causes of the problem in Somalia.

Thus, it can be argued that the "humanitarian" rationale for intervention in Somalia was simply a smokescreen - a "false mask" motivated and shaped by the global interests of the US and, when it suited, US allies such as the UK and other Western European powers. Hence, ORH can be seen both as a method to boost political support and consensus for US politicians and institutions at home and to re-assert US global hegemony abroad. The cloak of "humanitarianism" could also deflect attention from the causes of the Somalian famine, predominantly rooted as they were in that same US global hegemony.

Interestingly, George Bush's assertion that ORH was nothing but a humanitarian mission was accepted at face value by most commentators, including liberals and pacifists (Roberts 1993: 18-19; Shalom 1993a: 22; Hume 1993: 5). The "hidden agenda" arguments noted above could, however, have been overshadowed in the urgent debate and desire to be seen to be "doing something" in Somalia. Yet the fact that the very nature

of ORH was completely inappropriate for the situation in Somalia in late November 1992 posed a further challenge to the so-called "humanitarian" motivation for ORH.

The Inappropriate Nature of Operation Restore Hope

One aspect of this latter argument was noted by Shalom (1993a: 21), who stressed that the US military was not trained for humanitarian objectives and that US$275 billion, which was the amount of the US Government's annual expenditure on the military, was a lot of money to spend on feeding starving Somalians. He and Alter (1992: 33) offered the rationale that, with the end of the Cold War, there had been considerable US domestic pressure on the Pentagon to cut its gargantuan budget. In response, the Pentagon had increasingly promoted its "humanitarian" abilities and actions as a justification for maintaining its bloated size. Of course, noted Shalom (1993a: 21) with delicious irony, the US$275 billion that the US spent for its "humanitarian relief force" also financed, as a fringe benefit, a military machine that could invade any nation that challenged US leadership.

Furthermore, Shalom (1993a: 22) pointed out that the Pentagon had been extremely selective as to where it initiated "humanitarian" missions. This theme was also explored by Richards (1993: 22), Malik (1993: 17), Sid-Ahmed (1993: 10-13) and Falk (1993: 18), who all noted that the US hierarchy chose Somalia as the country in which to intervene - and not Bosnia, Peru, Burma, Mozambique, Sudan or some other "disaster" area - as this was the least complicated and easiest choice. The Pentagon's sudden desire to intervene in Somalia was explained by Shalom (1993a: 22) thus:

> *What made the Somalia pleas resonate [in November 1992], after many months, where other humanitarian appeals were resoundingly dismissed, was that in this case there were no important US interests opposing US intervention, and one important interest - legitimising the US military - that would be served by the intervention.*

A truly independent, properly-trained, international UN humanitarian force could possibly have been useful in situations such as the Somalian famine. But the absence of such a standing UN force was deliberate,[31] as Shalom (1993a: 22-23) argued:

> *A standing UN force might mean that international troops could be sent to enforce rulings of the International Court of Justice, such as that barring US-sponsored*

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[31] This is reflected in the Catch-22 situation that, for the UN to assemble a standing force - even without US troops or command - enormous amounts of money were needed. But as Clarkson (1993: 28), among others, noted, the major UN members ensured such money would not be forthcoming by withholding UN dues. At July 1992, the amount owed to the UN was US$1 billion - with the US share half that.

> *attacks on Nicaragua ... [or protecting] Panama or Grenada from US invasion ... Far better from the point of view of the US to maintain its own military forces, to be used in the name of the UN when convenient and unilaterally when necessary.*

Not surprisingly, then, all troops for ORH, US and non-US,[32] were under US command and the operation was designed and run by the US military (Shalom 1993a: 23) - hardly a "UN" operation.

De Waal and Omaar (1993b: 49-57) also highlighted the inappropriate nature of ORH, arguing that several necessary questions should have been considered and resolved before the military intervention proceeded. These included: was ORH the last option, after all other measures had failed?; was there an accurate evaluation of humanitarian needs?; was ORH neutral and accountable?; and, most importantly, could military forces do the job, as well as addressing the wider strategic problems in Somalia? They concluded that none of these questions were resolved for ORH. They also noted that ORH was mainly concerned with simply protecting food supplies[33] and was never designed to address wider, long-term concerns such as boosting public health, fine-tuning relief or assisting Somalis to rebuild the economy so they could help themselves. Furthermore, the ORH military forces were not trained to solve humanitarian problems or aid in conflict resolution in Somalia. Not surprisingly,

> *... the demands made upon Western armies by politicians and constituents at home, for quick fixes and low casualties, made it difficult for [ORH personnel to carry out humanitarian tasks] ... Military intervention is no substitute for diplomacy, and does not solve diplomatic problems. Instead, intervention merely changes the diplomatic agenda ... [and will probably] make problems less soluble ... Sending in the marines is a satisfyingly dramatic something, but the respite it gives is extremely brief (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 54, 56-57).*

Similarly, Kevin Cahill, a US doctor with 30 years experience in Somalia, warned in early 1993:

> *Changing a humanitarian effort into a security action may offer a temporary respite from the pain of frustration, but it reflects an approach that, while gratifying the short-term needs of the healer, fails to resolve the problems of the patient ... and imposes a transient mirage of well-being that simply cannot be sustained (cited in Shalom 1993b: 17).*

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[32] Other countries which committed troops to ORH included Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Italy, Kuwait, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, the UK and Zimbabwe. The US, however, committed the vast majority of troops for the initial stages of the operation. For troop numbers, see Makinda (1993: 73).

[33] As discussed previously, this was just one small element of fighting famine, and the large-scale availability of food was the one problem *already solved* when ORH was announced in late November 1992.

Poh and Rosset (1995: 1-5) also highlighted ORH's narrow but erroneous agenda of delivering and protecting further food supplies - even though increased food aid was no longer needed. As a result of this inappropriate policy, prices for local grains in Somalia, which in October 1992 had reached a desired equilibrium, became severely depressed, making it uneconomical for Somali farmers to continue working. Consequently farmers abandoned their lands, exacerbating long-term problems, and joined the line for free food handouts. Poh and Rosset argued (1995: 5) that the UN, through the NGOs, should have bought local grains to supplement food aid to avoid depressing prices. This was not part of ORH's agenda, however, because,

> *The institutional structure of food aid [makes] such a life-saving transaction impossible: the US Government pays [NGOs] only to deliver free American food ... [This] weakens [local] commercial food distribution channels, drives local farmers off the land, and ultimately creates long-term dependency on US agricultural commodities ...[Food aid] remains an industry built for ... furthering US interests (Poh and Rosset 1995: 4-5).*

Much of the blame for the inappropriate nature of ORH could be traced to the fact that Somalis had no involvement whatsoever in the operation - an appalling and patronising oversight. De Waal and Omaar (1993b: 42) found that not only had the UN and the US not consulted with Somali people about the desirability and implementation of the intervention, but that US NGOs such as CARE, the International Rescue Committee and the US International Medical Corps, which had all called for intervention, had not consulted any of their own Somali staff about their decisions. As Somali staff at CARE said:

> *We were not asked then, or since, what we think. They (the foreign aid workers) believe that every Somali is just a part of these factions, whether they work for CARE or any of the other agencies ... There were no meetings with Somalis working at CARE, not even with the most senior staff. Nor are we ever consulted about political issues (cited in De Waal and Omaar 1993b: 42).*

Falk (1993: 19), too, noted the total disregard for Somali participation in ORH:

> *Even during the earliest phases of the venture, Somalia was treated as a backdrop for an operation in which Somalis were denied any role other than as passive observers and supposed beneficiaries. Such a neglect of the indigenous people partly expressed a colonial disregard and partly the conviction that military capabilities were the decisive factor in political restructuring. In both respects, Somali views were irrelevant, and their participation unnecessary.*

Falk (1993: 19) concluded that this lack of consultation was one of the major reasons why ORH was, eventually, a disastrous failure. That Somalis were not consulted speaks

volumes about the "humanitarian" rationale so often quoted for ORH. The description by Somali Osman Abdilahi[34] of ORH was, therefore, not surprising:

> *The Americans [in ORH] did not have any idea of what they were doing in Somalia at all. They did not make use of the previous experience of their people who had lived in Somalia; people who knew the culture, who knew how the people thought, who could have brought about something [positive] with this sort of operation ... The whole [ORH] thing was a media charade. You see, when there is a complete breakdown of law and order in a country, just going there and giving away a few bags of foodstuff and then going away doesn't change the situation. ... [ORH] was just a waste of money and time. They didn't consult with Somalis; they didn't consult with anybody. They concentrated on a tiny percentage of the people, like the warlords. And they [the warlords] were part of the problem; they were not the solution to the problem.*

As a result, the tragedy of the Somali people, which, as a result of foreign interference in the region, had been unfolding for more than 130 years, was set to worsen.

Operation Restore Hope Begins

Not unexpectedly, many people working for the NGOs in Somalia, and even some UN officials, were dismayed and alarmed at the prospect of the UN intervention when it was announced (Keesing's November 1992: 39182). One UN official noted:

> *The [ORH] operation stinks of arrogance. All this bullshit about 80 per cent of food being looted - it's all very stage-managed by the US ... this whole operation is a test case for future conflict resolution. It's as if the US had a new vaccine they wanted to test. Now they have found an animal to test it on (cited in Malik 1993: 17).*

The inappropriateness of the whole operation was perfectly illustrated as ORH began on December 8 in the laughable, and totally unnecessary, amphibious landing by the US Marines on the beach at Mogadishu. This was done in the glare of the spotlight of the world's media,[35] which had been alerted as to the landing details by the Pentagon (Shalom 1993a: 23). Disgruntled Pentagon officials noted that an Army airborne division should have begun the operation but that, as the Marines had missed out on significant action during the Gulf War, and their existence was threatened by budget cuts, "service politics" won the day (Waller 1992: 39; Alter 1992: 33). The decision would prove

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[34] Interviewed by the author of this thesis. See Appendix A for more discussion.

[35] Media representatives on the beach included reporters from US and UK newspapers, such as the *New York Times,* and camerapeople from US television networks, which televised the landing live to prime-time audiences in the US and even attracted a review by The *Washington Post's* television critic. For more details, see the *New York Times* (December 10, 1992: A1), the *Guardian* (December 12, 1992: 1), and *The Times* (December 12, 1992: 15).

disastrous in the long run. Nevertheless, ORH did, at first, appear to establish peace in Mogadishu and improve food deliveries. The situation, however, was soon to deteriorate.

The Effects of ORH - Somalia December 1992 to May 1993

After the US Marine landing on December 8, some 22,000 US troops and 7,000 non-US troops were deployed in key towns and food distribution centres throughout south-western Somalia (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 4), as part of the US-led United Task Force (UNITAF) component of ORH. Although there were some teething problems, natural in such a large operation, initially ORH did achieve some progress. A semi-peace was established in Mogadishu, the city's airport and port were reopened, (although military deliveries took precedent over relief supplies throughout December and January), many of the protection and extortion rackets were stopped, the looting of food virtually disappeared and a high-level meeting was organised for Addis Ababa in March (*Africa Events* November 1993: 21; de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 5).

At first, too, most Somalis welcomed the intervention, hoping it would end the insecurity in Somalia. However, once they realised how poorly prepared the ORH troops were, and saw the mistakes they made, public opinion went swiftly against the intervention.[36] Many of the mistakes were the result of the lack of consultation with Somalis, a policy which continued after ORH was launched. This resulted in many Somalis becoming sceptical about US motives, as well as bewildered, bitter and demoralised (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 28, 43). As one Somali professional said: "You cannot imagine our humiliation, our mental depression [at the lack of involvement]" (cited in de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 43).

The situation in Somalia began to worsen almost immediately after ORH began. On December 10, only two days after the first landing of UNITAF troops, two Somalis were shot dead by French forces at a roadblock (Keesing's December 1992: 39225). Within a week, gun-toting *mooryaan* began to reappear on the streets of Mogadishu, and incidents of armed assaults, robberies and even factional fighting sharply increased in number (Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 5). Yet this was nothing compared to the increase in fighting in south-west Somalia - an increase which can be directly attributed to the nature of the ORH intervention.

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[36] For further discussion on Somali attitudes to ORH and how they changed, see De Waal and Omaar (1993b: 43), *Africa Events* (November 1993: 21) and the interview with Osman Abdilahi (Appendix A).

As mentioned previously, the US Marine landing had been an inappropriate option with which to launch ORH. Shalom (1993a: 23) noted that an airborne start would have meant other Somali cities could have been "occupied" at virtually the same time as Mogadishu. Instead, UNITAF forces took a week to reach famine-plagued Baidoa, usually only a 4-hour drive away, and were extremely cautious in their operations. Security in the town during that week deteriorated rapidly as militiamen and their technicals fled there in advance of, and after, the UNITAF landing in Mogadishu. Aid workers cited by de Waal and Omaar (1993b: 6) said the delay cost many lives.

Other previously quiet areas, such as Mudug and Kismayu, also experienced havoc from the fleeing militia forces, and NGO relief operations there, in Baidoa and in other areas were severely disrupted by the chaos. As the militiamen indulged in a killing and looting spree, many NGO workers themselves fled, causing a further deterioration in the situation (de Waal and Omaar (1993b: 6; Shalom 1993a: 23). ICRC warehouses in previously safe areas were looted, and deaths of non-Somalis (aid-workers) increased - to say nothing of the deaths of Somalis, which by March 1993 numbered over 200 (Poh and Rosset 1995: 1). ORH also disrupted long-term arrangements between Somali guards and NGOs, while the rush of many people, including farmers, to already overcrowded feeding areas led to an increase in deaths from disease (Shalom 1993b: 13-14). Ironically, when UNITAF forces did eventually secure these areas, they proceeded to distribute food with much media-related fanfare, while the NGOs and the Somalis working for them were ignored (Shalom 1993b: 13).[37]

Thus, instead of a simultaneous and well-planned beginning to ORH in several key places, the operation had begun haphazardly, exacerbating problems and causing unnecessary deaths. Much of the consequent chaos could possibly have been avoided if there had been some dialogue with the Somalis themselves. That there was so little would also lead to serious long-term complications for Somalia. For example, Bush's original plan for US involvement in ORH was limited to securing food relief.[38] Rake (1993b: 14) noted that this meant US troops were not going to be involved in any attempt to disarm the warlords or achieve any long-term political objectives. This attitude was reinforced by Bush's Special Envoy in Somalia, Robert Oakley, who continually gave excuses for not intervening, even though many Somalis saw a necessary link between effective

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[37] See, for example, the *New York Times* (December 16, 1992: A1, A10; December 17, 1992: A1, A11). For more discussion, see Chapter Eight and Appendix D.

[38] Menkhaus and Lyons (1993: 5) noted that Boutros-Ghali had wanted the US-led UNITAF to disarm Mogadishu as a precondition for ORH - a request refused by Bush.

disarmament and Somalia's rehabilitation (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 28).[39] Yet, as Rake (1993b: 15) stressed:

> *If the UN had disarmed all the warlords the moment they had intervened in Somalia in December 1992, Aidid and all the other trouble makers would have long since been politically castrated and cast into the dustbin of history.*

Instead, Oakley arranged a high-level meeting in late December between Aidid and Mahdi, the two people most responsible for the considerable death, destruction and famine in Mogadishu and surrounding areas.[40] This, noted Lewis (1993: 11), was the result of typical Eurocentric preoccupation with hierarchical political structures totally different to the Somali system, and gave both warlords an enhanced legitimacy they did not deserve. A Somali driver in Mogadishu spoke for many when he said:

> *Everyone agrees that these men have caused so much unnecessary suffering in this country. We understand that the US embassy had to deal with these men. But did the embrace have to be so fast, so public? They are all war criminals in my view ... Why didn't the US embassy also invite religious leaders, elders, women, professionals when Aidid and Mahdi met, to let these men know that these are the people they have stolen power from? (cited in de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 30).*

Under intense pressure, including attacks by gunmen against US forces, the US finally decided to change tactics in January, and began patrolling streets more aggressively and disarming gunmen. The disarmament initiatives were so haphazard and unbalanced, however, that they were counterproductive, and by February the situation in Mogadishu and other areas, such as Kismayu, began to deteriorate seriously (Keesing's January 1993: 39225; Menkhaus and Lyons 1993: 5; de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 23-27). Falk (1993: 20) summed up the results of the *volte-face* over disarmament:

> *One of the hardest lessons for imperial sensibilities to absorb is the realisation that military superiority cannot be translated into political results, although the attempt to do so can leave a trail of blood. This is the clear lesson of Somalia ... but there is no reason to believe that it has been learned by those who designed the fiasco in Mogadishu.*

By February, the conduct of the UNITAF forces was coming under increasing scrutiny, particularly by the Africa Rights organisation and the Mines Advisory Group. A detailed report by Africa Rights found "blatantly abusive behaviour" by troops of UNITAF (and

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[39] For examples of some of Oakley's excuses, see de Waal and Omaar (1993b: 28-29); they also noted that many of Oakley's comments were racist and tasteless - such as stating that the US would not intervene if it was "Somalis killing Somalis" - which led to much anger and resentment among the people of Somalia.

[40] For a more detailed examination of the crimes and human rights abuses committed by Mahdi and Aidid during 1991 and 1992, see Amnesty International (1993b: 5-7).

their successors UNISOM II), and detailed killings of unarmed civilians and bombings of civilian houses.[41] The report noted these were not cases of "undisciplined actions by individual soldiers, but [stemmed] from the highest echelons of the command structure" (de Waal and Omaar 1993c: 1). These developments, (the troops' behaviour and the new US policing policy), led to an increase in Somali deaths, and Aidid, among others, spying an opportunity to increase his social standing, began a wide-ranging and popular campaign against foreign interference in Somalia. Consequently, noted Rake (1993b: 14-15):

> *Aidid has become the "scarlet pimpernel" of Somali nationalism defying the foreign forces that want his blood ... [Somalis] give their support to Aidid, not because they support the power-crazy, bloodthirsty warlord, but because he is a symbol of Somali defiance against foreign interference.*

By March, even the UN was admitting that the situation was bad. A UN report of March 11 stated:

> *Theft and extortion continue wherever security forces are not patrolling. In some areas secured by UNITAF, looting of food supplies at village level is occurring. Roving armed gangs have also led to worsening insecurity and heightened tensions in rural areas, the north-east and along the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya (cited in de Waal and Omaar 1993b: 8).*

In fact, violence continued in the 40 per cent of Somalia where UNITAF forces were stationed up to, and after, May 1993, yet Oakley continued to maintain that the problem of clan warfare was "virtually gone" (cited in Shalom 1993b: 16). In addition, the much-heralded Addis Ababa agreement signed in March 1993, which set up a Transitional National Council (TNC) to run Somalia for the next two years, was attacked by many Somali intellectuals for including warlords such as Aidid (Amnesty International 1993b: 3).[42] De Waal and Omaar (1993b: ii) summed up the string of errors in Somalia:

> *There has been little substantial progress towards political reconciliation. Too much of the emphasis has been on the need to secure quick agreements, without the necessary preparations. The importance of encouraging reconciliation at the regional level before proceeding to a national conference has been entirely neglected, despite pressure from Somalis ... The encouragement of civil society has remained at the level of rhetoric. Key groups within society, such as women, humanitarian workers, professionals and traders, have remained marginal to the political process ... [In addition], local voluntary organisations, [which] have been at least as important as international agencies in emergency relief in Somalia, [have been] treated with disdain ... [even though] supporting the self-help efforts of the affected*

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41 For a more detailed examination of human rights abuses by the UN forces in Somalia, see de Waal and Omaar (1993c).

42 Indeed, the agreement was dismissed by de Waal and Omaar (1993b: ii) in May 1993 as "liable to unravel at any moment" - a prophecy proved correct by October 1993.

> *communities is ... a more effective form of famine relief than bringing in relief food (de Waal and Omaar 1993b: ii, 35).*

In addition, the UN had by May 1993 made no attempt to enforce an international arms embargo on Somalia and reduce the continuing flow of weapons into the country via Kenya and Ethiopia (*New Internationalist* December 1992: 26; Lewis 1993: 14). The *qat* trade also continued to flourish uninterrupted throughout the period of ORH, feeding the addictions of the gun-toting *mooryaan* and other militiamen and providing a stable financial base for Aidid and other warlords (Lewis 1993: 14-15).[43] The terrible situation also allowed Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia to spread, encouraged by Sudan, Iran and Saudi Arabia (Lewis 1993: 14). In short, Somalia in May 1993 was in a mess, as Poh and Rosset (1995: 5) summarised:

> *With the presence of foreign troops, Somalia turned into a nightmare: the civil war worsened and crime and violence increased. It became more dangerous - rather than less - for [NGOs] to operate feeding centres, because it became clear to participants in the local power struggle that [certain NGOs] were not apolitical ... [In addition] providing food aid in a disaster is only one element in solving a larger problem. Foreign occupation and the assumption of the role of government by foreign agencies are not solutions to a problem created largely by superpower meddling in local politics in the first place.*

Similarly, de Waal and Omaar (1993a: 54) noted the ironic situation Somalia's people found themselves in:

> *[The famine has] brought Somalia's poor back into contact with the international community which had helped create the economic, social and political conditions that made the internal strife virtually inevitable.*

Throughout the rest of 1993, and through 1994 and 1995, the intolerable situation created by the foreign interference detailed in Chapters Four and Five would deteriorate further. By March 1996, between 7,000 and 10,000 Somalis had been killed by the US military,[44] and Somalia had still not recovered from the effects of disintegration and destruction, and remained in the hands of the warlords (*New Internationalist* March 1996: 25).

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[43] Lewis (1993: 14-15) observed that the Kenya-Somalia trade in *qat* was worth more than US$100 million, and that *qat* flights continued to enter Somalia even when all other food relief flights were cancelled.

[44] These figures were contained in a letter to the author from Noam Chomsky, who was quoting the editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine. The editor also noted that only 34 US soldiers were killed. The Somali death toll as a result of ORH has also been estimated to be as high as 15,000. For more details of this claim, see Appendix A.

Conclusion

Certain parts of Somalia in May 1993 were in an even more dire situation than when ORH had began with such fanfare six months previously. This chapter has argued that ORH was merely the latest episode in a long saga of interference in the affairs of the Somali people. Before ORH began, all signs indicated that the worst of the famine situation was over, thanks to the heroic efforts of the Somali people and the few humanitarian organisations that cared to consult with them. This delicate internal situation was destroyed by the sudden and ill-conceived UN operation to "Restore Hope", whose rationale was very different from the "humanitarianism" so readily accepted. The nature and design of ORH meant it was concerned predominantly with the one problem *which had already been solved* in the famine areas of Somalia - the provision of food - and, consequently, was entirely inappropriate for the situation which existed at the time of the intervention.

In total, then, the factors behind the famine were complex, resulting from a long process of social, political and historical interactions. Particularly significant was the record of foreign interaction with Somalia from 1860 to 1993 - a record of interference, cynical manipulation, arrogance and indifference. The famine was a political, rather than a natural, disaster, and in the country's hour of greatest need, foreign governments and the wider international community failed to provide assistance appropriate for the alleviation of the situation but pursued a self-serving agenda.

Whether such conclusions were drawn by the three newspapers I study in this thesis will form a central part of my analysis of the media coverage of the famine. In taking a general neo-Marxist approach, I see these newspapers as part of the broader superstructure that exists within capitalist societies to reproduce the conditions which favour the dominant elites. As such, my approach is likely to reveal a compliant, non-critical, pro-US and/or pro-UK attitude within this media towards the situation in Somalia.[45] As Hunter (1992-93: 53) has observed, the US media, by the beginning of 1993, had already begun to smother the overt and covert political realities behind the tragic situation in Somalia with tales of sentiment and self-congratulation. Malik (1993: 16), too, noted the simplification of Somalia in the UK media as,

> *A land where millions starve while warlords pillage and kill. A country in which bandits and common criminals loot Western aid before it can reach those dying from hunger. A nation of anarchy in thrall to ruthless gunmen.*

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[45] The degree to which this attitude is prevalent, however, will not be the same in all three newspapers, as their political economies are considerably different. For more discussion, see Chapter Six.

Whether the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* simplified and distorted the situation in Somalia to favour a certain reading of the events and issues surrounding the 1992-3 famine will be analysed in Chapters Seven and Eight. Chapter Six contains an outline of the methodology and general theoretical framework to be used in my analysis.

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The mainstream media, whether print or broadcast, produces a copious amount of news output on countless subjects every day. To examine the entire Western media coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine is, therefore, well beyond the range of this thesis. Consequently, I have limited my analysis to three newspapers, two in the UK, the *Guardian* and *The Times*, and one in the US, the *New York Times.*[1]

In this chapter, I outline the methodology and theoretical framework used in researching this thesis. This methodology consists of a news content analysis of the three newspapers' coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. I outline the strengths and weaknesses of this method of analysis, and why this method is a suitable tool of analysis for this thesis. The themes to be examined in the analysis are presented, as well as justification for the selection of the particular time-frame used for the study. I then argue why I selected the three particular newspapers as the basis for my analysis, and incorporate an investigation of their ownership and structure. This is closely related to one of the major themes developed in Chapter Two, and is a vital factor in determining, explaining and interpreting the type of coverage the three newspapers presented of the 1992-3 Somalian famine.

News Content Analysis

The investigation of this thesis consists predominantly of a qualitative[2] news content analysis - though there is some quantitative analysis as well - on the coverage of the

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[1] Readers of this thesis may note that I italicise and capitalise the word "the" when I refer to The Times but not when I refer to the Guardian or the New York Times. This is because it is normal practice in the media industry not to capitalise the "the" in the newspaper's title. The capitalisation of the "the" in The Times is an exception.

[2] Qualitative methods, like any research technique, have certain and defined sets of assumptions and beliefs, as part of the more interpretivist position within theories of knowledge. Importantly, this includes the recognition of a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever-changing, (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 6), and emphasises a view of the scientific process as generating working hypotheses rather than immutable empirical facts, and the importance of viewing the meaning of experience and behaviour in context and in its full complexity (Henwood and Pidgeon 1993: 16). In other words, it emphasises that observers of the world are not detached, independent and value-free, as the oppositional, more positivist position states. Thus, there is no guarantee that the conclusions reached by the author of this thesis would be duplicated by a different researcher studying the same subject and same newspapers, and using the same qualitative techniques. Nevertheless, I have chosen

1992-3 Somalian famine by three major Western newspapers, the *Guardian* and *The Times* from the UK and the *New York Times* from the US. Reliance on quantitative analysis has been the more "traditional" method of news content analysis but, as van Zoonen (1994: 69) has noted, a study which concentrates on quantitative data prevents the researcher from reading "between the lines" of media output and conducting an interpretation beyond the manifest level of meaning.[3] A qualitative analysis, then, allows for a reading of the text which, as discussed in Chapter Two, examines not simply the texts' denotative meaning but also its connotative meaning and how this is a manifestation of ideology.[4] As the rationale of this thesis is to explore how the political economy of the media affects what is and isn't regarded as "news", and how that "news" is reported, a qualitative analysis is an excellent method by which to conduct this examination.

In conducting such an analysis, I undertake a "resistive reading" of the text, as outlined in Chapter Two. This involves an approach using semiotics, as also discussed in Chapter Two, to decipher what I believe is the "meaning" of the text, what it is "saying", beyond

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this method as I believe the media, and the world in which it operates, are social constructs. For more discussion, see de Vaus (1991), Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Henwood and Pidgeon (1993).

[3] Nevertheless, as McQuail (1994: 236, 278) noted, there has been no consensus on how best to analyse media texts and, as a result, there was no one "superior" method of content analysis, as each, or a mix of both, was essentially good for different purposes. As discussed further on in this chapter, however, I believe a predominantly qualitative analysis, with some reference to quantitative analysis, is the best approach for achieving my objective in this thesis. For more discussion on the shortcomings of the "traditional" approach, see McQuail (1994: 277-278).

[4] While denotative meaning is a relatively simple concept to grasp, connotative meaning is a complex phenomenon and, furthermore, is extremely subjective. It is a very useful term to use, however, to bring the concepts of political economy and ideology into discussions on the texts' "meaning". For example, one can discuss how ideology and its social codes and conventions can "force" members of an audience to arrive at a common understanding of a text. Furthermore, as Fiske (1992: 153) observed, it can assist in making visible "the ideological meanings which normally lie unacknowledged in communication. Ideological meanings are so persuasive because they do not draw attention to themselves, they give themselves the status of the taken for granted, the natural". As discussed in Chapter Two, ideology works by making certain signifiers associate with certain signifieds in such a way that an "objective" meaning is created. An examination of this phenomena, through a study of the political economy of the media, is, therefore, useful in understanding how ideology works in influencing how we understand the events in our life and, in this thesis' case, the events which occur in the developing world. Moreover, as Kelly (1994: 97) summarised, "all texts are immersed in ideological meaning and the intended interpretation is reliant on a familiarity with what is ideologically part of that particular society ... Ideology provides the audience with the substance from which it decodes messages, but it is much more than this. It is a frame of reference, a 'mind-set' that enables members of a society to make sense of the world in a similar fashion". Indeed, Fiske and Hartley (cited in O'Sullivan *et al* 1994: 287), suggest that ideology is the third order of signification, after denotation and connotation, and that the way the various connotations and "myths" of a culture come together to "make sense" was evidence of this ideology, an "underlying, invisible, organising principle". A wide-ranging and extensive discussion on the different semiotic approaches to textual analysis, and how semiotic meaning is generated, is beyond the scope of this thesis, which concentrates on how the political economy of the media is relevant to development studies. Instead, this thesis employs simply my very subjective "resistive reading" approach to try and deduce whether, if at all, certain ideology exists in the texts, and whether that ideology is a factor of the political economy of the newspapers in question. For more discussion on semiotic approaches to textual analysis, and the semiotic concepts of paradigms, syntagm, metaphors and metonyms in working to create meaning, see Fiske (1982),, Silverman (1983), Morgan and Welton (1986) and O'Sullivan *et al* (1994).

the literal meaning "objectively" present in the text (or sign).[5] In other words, a predominantly qualitative analysis conducted through a "resistive reading" concentrates on uncovering what I regard as the concealed and latent "meanings" in the texts, meanings which cannot be directly read from numerical data.[6] Only little weight is given to procedures of sampling, as a quantitative content analysis provides no answers as to the "meaning" of the texts. A qualitative and "resistive" reading of the text allows for the investigation not only of the relative frequency of, but also the links and relationships between, elements of the text, and what is omitted, exaggerated or taken for granted (McQuail 1994: 276).[7]

This method, therefore, allows me to demonstrate if, in my view, the media have presented the news reports on the famine to favour one reading of the famine over others. It allows for a thorough examination of the degree to which the three newspapers covered, or failed to cover, what were, in my view, the most important aspects of the famine, as set out in Chapters Four and Five.[8] This method, then, allows me to theorise as to the extent to which, if at all, ideology and systematic bias, both factors of political economy, exist in the texts.[9]

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[5] As such, and as discussed in Chapter Two, it involves an interpretation, by me, of the text's meaning, through the introduction and activation of conventions or codes about the text which have been established within my culture and are understood by me. In other words, it is a very subjective interpretation. This factor is discussed further on in this chapter.

[6] In this regard, it is more useful for a critical approach to deconstructing the text and, not surprisingly, was the general method through which Herman and Chomsky (1988), Chomsky (1989), Kellner (1992), Mowlana *et al* (1992), Parenti (1993), Cohen and Solomon (1993) and the Glasgow Media Group (1976, 1980, 1982), among many others, conducted their research. As McQuail (1994: 259) observed, most critical approaches have used this method to examine "news" because of its ideological significance in defining the social world and the world of events. For more discussion, see McQuail (1994: 258-262).

[7] In other words, the methodology allows for a study that describes media content and applies it to a cultural meaning of content. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Two and in footnote 4, a connotative semiotic investigation of the texts can demonstrate how the newspapers have utilised culture and ideology in shaping the texts' "meaning". In this regard, a qualitative news content analysis can shed light on those who produce and transmit a set of messages. Thus, the media's wider "political economy" can be brought into a study of the text. The political economy of the developed world's media, and how it affects coverage of the events in the developing world, is, of course, the basis of discussion for this thesis. For more discussion, see McQuail (1994: 247-248).

[8] As mentioned in Chapter Four, there is, of course, no absolutely "correct" version of the events in Somalia during the period to be examined. This thesis, however, has necessitated the construction of a version of the famine's causes, and the world's responses to that famine, in order to proceed with a news content analysis. That version has been outlined by me, the author, as objectively as possible, although it has been impossible not to incorporate my bias in references and interpretations. I am confident, however, that the historical context and record of the famine's events and issues, as outlined in Chapters Four and Five, is a fairly balanced reflection of the "real".

[9] In this regard, ideological power can be demonstrated through an analysis of what was and wasn't reported, and how it was reported, as this affects what a story "means". As discussed in Chapter Two, what a story "meant" was dependent on the selection and/or withholding of "facts", which emphasised a particular side of a story. This, in turn, was dependent on the particular medium's political economy.

The conclusions reached through such a methodology are, however, problematical and must be qualified. First, it should be recalled that, as discussed in Chapter Two, the "resistive reading" model of textual analysis recognised that the "meaning" of a text was not fixed. Texts were not transparent, nor did they have a clear or unambiguous meaning. The reader of a text, then, was the sole arbiter of what was the meaning of a text. Thus, all conclusions outlined by me in this thesis as to the "preferred" meaning of the text - that is, the meaning the producers of the text were wishing to impart - are purely subjective. At the same time, my "decoding" of the text is problematical and also extremely subjective. It is how I, and I alone, have deconstructed the text.[10] Thus, any conclusions are limited to my understanding and interpretations of the three newspapers' coverage of the famine and, as discussed in Chapter Two, may not co-incide with those of the wider audience.[11] This is because the audience can, and does, actively participate in constructing its own "preferred" meaning of the text.

Another important qualification to note is that I have approached the texts from an extremely subjective position in that, for the qualitative analysis, I critically compare the quantity and quality of coverage with my knowledge and understanding of the causes of the famine, and the world's response to it, as outlined in Chapters Four and Five.[12] Thus, the historical, political and social account of the famine constructed in Chapters Four and Five forms the basis and background from which I undertake the analysis of the three newspapers' text. This account, however, is also extremely subjective, as it encompassed using certain resources and sources that were compatible with my personal bias. Another account of the famine using different resources and sources, researched by, say, a US Army General, might prove very different from my own. Consequently, a qualitative news content analysis of such an account might produce findings different from my own.

My conclusions are also limited by the practical limitations of the range of my research. Given that my analysis is limited to three newspapers, it is problematical to deduce that

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[10] I discuss these qualifications because it is essential that any researcher recognise their own biases before, during and after conducting a qualitative analysis. As Strauss and Corbin (1990: 18) noted, qualitative research involves "step[ing] back and critically analys[ing] situations ... and think[ing] abstractly". Nevertheless, as discussed above, I believe qualitative methods are the best basis for my analysis.

[11] Thus, it ignores concepts of text acceptance/negotiation/rejection, resistive reading, intertextuality and polysemy within the *wider* audience. In other words, it fails to recognise the decoding skills of experienced audience members, who are capable of distinguishing between fiction and reality and can learn about social reality from the most unlikely content (McQuail 1994: 256-257).

[12] Furthermore, I am analysing the text using a very critical approach, as I have been influenced by those theorists who have critically examined news production in the mainstream Western media. Importantly, it is this critical and analytical stance which, through writing this thesis, I hope to encourage in readers involved in, or interested in, development. For more discussion, see the concluding chapter, Chapter Nine.

other mainstream media presented their coverage of the famine in the same general way. In addition, the themes, (identified below), which I investigate are also placed within a limit, and this fact has consequences as to the extent to which the results of my analysis can be generalised (van Zoonen 1994: 70). Thus, the qualitative news content analysis of the three newspapers narrows my possible conclusions to a relatively limited range. Nevertheless, this method allows me to attempt to examine how the three newspapers presented their coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. In addition, no matter what approach to content analysis is used, whether quantitative, qualitative or, as in this case, an unequal mix of both, there will most likely be a gap between research conclusions and the perceptions of both the creators of the text and its audience.[13]

In sum, then, the qualitative analysis is conducted, and the conclusions based on its findings articulated, solely on the basis of my interpretation of the meaning of the text. This might not correspond exactly with the meaning intended to be conveyed by the author of the text, nor with the interpretation of its meaning by other readers. As discussed previously, however, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine whether my "resistive reading" of the texts is or is not similar to that of general readers of the three newspapers at the time of publication or at any other time. It is also beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct an analysis among producers of text to determine what that "preferred" meaning was.[14] Nevertheless, I believe my research, in the context of development studies, is still useful in providing a framework to allow the reader to consider the wider implications of the political economy of the Western mainstream media when analysing Western press reports of events in the developing world. Such an outcome would mean that one of the main purposes of this thesis had been achieved - to convey to the general reader, and particularly to those involved in development studies and those formulating development policies, the need to treat mainstream newspaper coverage of events in the developing world with caution.

In conducting the qualitative analysis, a consideration of the coverage by the three newspapers of certain themes is essential. As discussed above, however, the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the coverage of these themes forms only part of the analysis. The methodology also involves the quantitative and qualitative analysis of text content other than that encompassed by the identified themes. This is necessary to determine the

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[13] As van Zoonen (1994: 73) stated, "traditional" content analysis, while not beyond considerable criticism, could yield valuable results in certain contexts and for certain purposes if cast within a solid theoretical framework. This is what I hope to achieve by incorporating some discussion of my quantitative findings within my predominantly qualitative analysis. For more discussion on the limitations of news content analysis, see McQuail (1994: 235-280).

[14] In other words, it is problematical to state that my deconstruction of the text is conclusive and irrefutable evidence of explicit media bias in the newspapers considered.

extent and degree, if at all, to which the three newspapers misrepresented, distorted and trivialised their coverage of the famine. Before consideration is given to the importance of these factors, a general discussion of the themes to be examined is undertaken.

Historical, Social and Political Themes for Analysis

In Chapters Four and Five, I explored the important historical, social and political factors in the causation of the famine and the world's response to it. In my contention, these aspects are the key to forming an adequate understanding of the famine, and have been differentiated into 14 themes, identified below. I believe adequate discussion and consideration of these themes in the three newspapers' coverage of the famine to be the vital clues in deducing whether these newspapers constructed their reports to favour one reading of the disaster over others, what that reading was, and why it was constructed. Thus, the extent to which the three newspapers devoted attention to these themes and the thoroughness of their discussion of these themes are crucial components of my news content analysis.

In undertaking the news content analysis, I have gathered every article on Somalia appearing in the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* from June 1, 1992 to May 31, 1993. I have chosen the starting point of June 1 because, before mid-1992, there had been little coverage of the unfolding tragedy in Somalia in the Western media. In late July, 1992, however, the world's media "discovered Somalia ... with a vengeance" (*World Press Review* October 1992: 11).[15] As one AP reporter observed, journalists descended on the country "*en masse*, howling for information, phone lines and beds" as Somalia, overlooked by editors for months, had become a "story" (Rosenblum 1993: 24-25). By June 1993, however, Somalia had ceased to be a big international news story, particularly with the handing over of the UN forces in Somalia from US to UN control in May 1993.[16] As Rosenblum (1993: 38) observed, Somalia was by then "old news" and the media scrum deserted the country as quickly as it had arrived.[17] For these reasons, I

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[15] *The Times*, the *Guardian* and the *New York Times* were no exception as regards this behaviour. Prior to June 1, 1992, very little attention had been given to the tragedy of Somalia in the three newspapers, even though the situation in the country had been deteriorating seriously since October 1991. The *New York Times*, for example, ran only 17 articles concerning Somalia in the 182 days from January 1, 1992 to May 31, 1992 (New York Times Index 1992: 1106). Similarly, *The Times* ran only 20 articles during the same time period (The Times Index 1992: 1130). This contrasted sharply with the massive increase in coverage after July 1992. For more discussion of the lack of attention given to Somalia in the world's media before mid-1992, see Roles (1992), Guleid and Davies (1993), Rosenblum (1993: 12, 24-38) and Baird (1994a).

[16] As Roberts (1993: 18) noted in June 1993: "Six months ago Somalia was world news. Today, it is just a dim memory". For more discussion of the lack of attention given to Somalia in the world's media after mid-1993, see Rosenblum (1993: 38) and Baird (1994a).

have limited my content analysis to the period between June 1, 1992 and May 31, 1993 - one calendar year.

I then examine to what extent each theme is investigated and reported within the articles. Conversely, I also examine to what extent, if at all, the text contains other information or analyses beyond the bounaries of these themes. In both regards, the analysis examines:

> a) the style, ordering and organisation of the articles,
> b) the degree and quality of attention given to the themes, and the extent to which different or contrary interpretations of the famine's historical, social and political aspects are promoted,
> c) the "accuracy" of "facts" used within the articles,[18]
> d) the use of particular words and language,
> e) the use of Western sources,
> f) the use of Somali sources,
> g) the extent to which certain "facts" and interpretations have been selected and exaggerated and other "facts" and interpretations omitted,
> h) the extent to which complex issues have been simplified and assumptions questioned.

Thus, the presentation of particular "facts" by the three newspapers, their placement on the page, tone of the writing, use of repetition, omissions and the analytical framework within which the text is placed are some of the factors taken into consideration in my news content analysis.[19] In essence, then, my examination is of the quality, rather than quantity, (although this is important), of the news reports. As Herman and Chomsky (1988: 35) described,

> *A propaganda approach to media coverage suggests a systematic and highly political dichotomisation in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests. This should be observable in dichotomised choices of story and in the volume and quality of coverage.*

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[17] In this regard, it is worth recalling, as discussed in Chapter Three, the view of de Waal (1990), who observed that coverage of the 1982-5 famine by the Western media was dependent, in part, on it fitting into "Western perceptions of famine" - that is, images of "massive death from starvation".

[18] In this regard, I examine not only whether the facts given are accurate in themselves but also whether they are sufficient to constitute an adequate account - their completeness - of the famine, rather than merely an account of one version of the famine (McQuail 1994: 254). This, once again, is problematical, as completeness is difficult to measure, but for the purposes of this study the "accuracy" of the "facts" is concerned with the relevance of the facts offered vis-a-vis the important historical, social and political aspects of the famine. Thus, what is "accurate" is measured against my construction of the events (outlined in Chapters Four and Five and, therefore, incorporating my bias in their construction), as well as internal consistency within news texts. Therefore, any bias and "inaccuracy" in the texts identified by me is *subjectively* identified. For more discussion, see McQuail (1994: 253-255).

[19] This was the basis of Herman and Chomsky's news content analysis, (Herman and Chomsky 1988), used when applying their propaganda model to a study of the US media.

Chapter Seven examines the coverage by the three newspapers of the causes of the famine. The essential causes, as discussed in Chapter Four, are encompassed in the following themes:

1) The legacy of colonialism, including partition of the Somali lands, and the people within them, into five separate imperial and administrative entities, the imposition by the UK, Italy and France of inappropriate, centralised state structures on what had formerly been a decentralised society, and the destruction of the fine balance that had previously been achieved by the Somali people with their environment.

2) The inappropriate political, social and economic systems bequeathed to Somalia by the colonial powers at independence. Related considerations include the costs of reunifying British and Italian Somaliland, and the widespread support for the *coup d'état* of Siad Barre in 1969.

3) The legacy of the Cold War, including the deliberate arming and support of Siad Barre, at first by the USSR between 1969 and 1978, and then by the US between 1978 and 1990. This includes recognition that, without this support, Barre could not have survived as dictator of Somalia for 21 years, during which time he fostered deep divisions within Somali society. Related considerations include the futile wars over the Ogaden, the cynical *volte-face* by the USSR and US over Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977-78, and the legacy of the Cold War arsenals stockpiled in the Horn of Africa.

4) The sudden withdrawal of support by the US for Barre in 1990, following the end of the Cold War and the developments in the Gulf War. This includes recognition that this act was the catalyst for Barre's overthrow and the beginning of the anarchy and chaos which engulfed Somalia.

5) The destitution of much of Somali society, in particular the agricultural farmers of the Rahanweyn and Digil clans, as a result of US-imposed prescriptions and strategies for development contained in the World Bank/IMF-designed structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Related considerations include the fact that the famine was not simply related to food availability but to the ability of people to pay for food, and the fact that the famine was the consequence of the long-term agricultural, economic and social disintegration of Somalia, a disintegration predominantly engineered by foreign interference in the nation's affairs.

6) The civil wars in Somalia during 1991 and 1992. Of special consideration will be the fact that the wars which erupted in Somalia following Barre's overthrow in January, 1991, were more a consequence of the deep divisions fostered by Barre and surreptitiously encouraged by the US than of any other factor.

The coverage by the three newspapers of the following important issue is also considered in Chapter Seven:

7) That the anarchy, chaos and famine were confined to the south-western areas of Somalia, and that in Somaliland and other parts of Somalia there was relative peace and, importantly, no famine, as a result of local peace initiatives and appropriate local social and economic development programmes.

Chapter Eight considers the coverage by the three newspapers of the world's response to the famine. These issues, as discussed in Chapter Five, are encompassed in the following themes:

1) That only certain Western NGOs, such as the ICRC, succeeded in providing relief in Somalia because they consulted and worked with Somalis and Somali NGOs, such as the Somali Red Crescent. Related considerations include the low rate of food aid looting experienced by these NGOs.

2) That other Western NGOs and agencies, such as CARE and the UN, failed in their mission to provide adequate relief, not because of the interference of the gangs of Somali "warlords" or other hindrances, but because they did not adhere to the working guidelines established by NGOs such as the ICRC and, therefore, experienced high rates of food aid looting.

3) That the UN, the US, the EC, the OAU, the Arab League and the rest of the world community completely ignored Somalia during 1991, and made only perfunctory attempts at assistance during most of 1992, despite repeated warnings and pleas for assistance by certain NGOs. Related considerations include the cynical manoeuvres of the US Government and George Bush regarding the provision of relief aid, especially in the weeks before, during and after the Republican Convention in August 1992.

4) That the UN/US decision to initiate Operation Restore Hope (ORH) was taken in November 1992 when the death rate was falling, NGOs such as the ICRC were working efficiently and the worst of the famine was well and truly over. This includes recognition that the stated rationale of ORH to provide further food aid from December 1992 onwards, (after Mohammed Sahnoun and the NGOs had recommended a discontinuation of food aid delivery in October 1992, to be replaced by a fine-tuning of the relief effort), was completely flawed. Other considerations include the reporting of the degree to which food aid was being looted, particularly the allegation that 80 per cent of food aid was being looted, the major reason cited by the US and UN to initiate ORH.

5) That the alleged "humanitarian" motivation for ORH was questionable, especially considering the dismal humanitarian record of George Bush, the US military and the US Government in Somalia, and elsewhere, before and during the famine, and the "fact" that there were many other areas in the world demanding similar assistance which had been completely ignored.

6) That ORH was completely inappropriate, in particular the dispatching of a military force, trained predominantly to kill and maim, to perform a function of relief assistance in a civil conflict. This was a situation where the US military, unlike NGOs such as ICRC, SRC and MSF, had no knowledge or experience.

7) That there was a lack of consultation with Somalis before, during and after the implementation of ORH.

The working hypothesis of this thesis is that the Western media's coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine concentrated on superficial descriptions of the famine and did not present the causes of the famine, and the world's response to it, in the wider social, political and historical context as outlined in Chapters Four and Five. Furthermore, the working hypothesis suggests that the Western media presented few positive images of

Somalia and Somalian efforts to alleviate the famine, and that they highlighted, with little criticism, Western efforts to alleviate the famine. Through an exhaustive news content analysis, I demonstrate to what extent, if any, the coverage of the crisis by three mainstream Western newspapers concurred with, of differed from, the hypothesis developed in Chapters Two and Three. This hypothesis stated that the Western media, because of its political and economic nature, constructed stories about events, such as famines, in the developing world in such a way as to favour one reading of the event over others, and that this reading would generally support the interests of the elites who dominated the developed world's States and private activities. Because of their bias such media generally presented negative and distorted images of the developing world.

It must be stressed here that the three newspapers selected for this study constitute only a tiny proportion of the total Western media. Thus, the study ignores the work of broadcasting mediums such as radio and television. I believe, however, that newspapers potentially constitute the best *daily* medium for providing serious and penetrating coverage of major international events as only newspapers have the news space available to regularly carry long news articles as well as in-depth analytical and discursive pieces such as "opinion" articles and editorials/leaders.[20] Conversely, the broadcasting media, due to their tighter daily deadlines and the time-constraints imposed on them, are more concerned with the "immediacy" of a news story, especially as they can provide "live" sound and, in the case of television, "live" pictures of an event.[21] These media, and particularly television, therefore, usually tend to forego more extensive analysis of the historical and social context and background of events. [22]This is why I have chosen newspapers to form the basis of my study.

There are, however, thousands of newspapers I could have chosen for this thesis and, once again, the three newspapers examined represent only a tiny proportion of the entire Western print media. In the following section I outline why I believe the three newspapers chosen represent an interesting and varied selection of the Western press.

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[20] As Dorman (1986: 441) noted, it was in the news columns where bedrock public opinion about events in the developing world was formed. I am a firm believer in this statement, as a result of my own observations about public reaction to news events. I also believe, however, that "opinion" articles and editorials play an important and vital part in "manufacturing consent", by reinforcing the general "slant" favoured in the news columns.

[21] Of course, the broadcasting media can, and occasionally do, provide "in-depth" documentaries on complex developing world issues and events. Importantly, however, these are rarely, if ever, contained within actual "news" reporting on television and radio news programmes, because they are, as mentioned above, subject to time and more "immediate" deadline constraints.

[22] As the Glasgow University Media Group found in their studies (1976; 1980; 1982).

Why *The Times*, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian?*

The three major Western newspapers examined in this thesis, *The Times*, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*, have been selected because they represent not only the so-called "quality" broadsheet[23] print media from the perspectives of two different countries but also because they are supposed to represent opinion from across the political spectrum. In this regard, *The Times* is regarded as a "conservative" newspaper, the *New York Times* as a "centrist" newspaper and the *Guardian* as a "liberal" newspaper, and, importantly, these positions are supposedly closely related to their individual political economies.[24] Consequently, the newspapers constitute three different media sources representing three supposedly distinct "points-of-view", and their coverage of the same event provides a useful base for applying the hypothesis developed in Chapter Two.[25]

Furthermore, the three newspapers chosen covered the 1992-3 Somalian famine predominantly through the reports of their own foreign correspondents, rather than, as was the case with many other newspapers,[26] by carrying reports from the international press agencies.[27] I believe that, as a general rule, stories written by a newspaper's own

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[23] "Broadsheet" newspapers are generally, but not always, aimed at a fairly highbrow market. They have pages which are usually twice the size of those of "tabloid" newspapers, which are generally, but not always, more downmarket. Moreover, it is worth acknowledging here the argument that the study of "broadsheet" newspapers was less relevant than the study of "tabloid" newspapers, because of the latter's typically much higher circulation and market share. Indeed, in the UK in 1995-6, the share of circulation for the *Guardian* was only 2.8 % and for *The Times* was only 4.8 %, while the corresponding figures for *The Sun* and *Daily Mirror/Record* were 29 % and 23.6 % respectively (Williams 1996: 39). Newspapers such as *The Sun* and *Daily Mirror/Record,* however, usually devote very little, if any, of their daily news coverage to subjects such as African famines, concentrating instead on the Royal family, sex scandals involving politicians and football. For these reasons, and also for the issues discussed previously and in footnote 25, I have concentrated on "broadsheet" newspapers.

[24] In other words, their ownership and structure. This is discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

[25] In using the term "quality" to describe these newspapers, I make implicit reference to Chomsky's belief (1991: 28) that these newspapers are directed to what is termed as the "political class" - the more educated, wealthy and articulate part of the population that act as cultural, political and economic managers. As a result, such media have the complicated task of instilling "proper" attitudes that serve as a mechanism of indoctrination in the interests of power (Chomsky 1991: 28). This means that such media have to present a picture of the world which is tolerably realistic for their target audiences, who include people making important decisions regarding developing world countries. Importantly, however, these decisions have to benefit those who wielded power, so the reality presented has to be a specific kind of reality (Chomsky 1991: 28). Thus, these "elite" newspapers perform a more critical function in reproducing society than the "popular" media, such as the tabloid newspapers. Furthermore, as Chomsky (1991: 28) observed, the task of the popular media, including tabloid newspapers, and television sport, network news and sitcom programmes, was to "divert the population, to make sure they don't get any funny ideas in their heads about participating in the shaping of public policy". Consequently, deconstructing and analysing the text in these three newspapers represents a difficult and complex process and is best achieved through a qualitative news content analysis.

[26] Such as those in New Zealand.

[27] *The Times,* the *Guardian* and the *New York Times,* did, however, occasionally take reports from the news agencies.

correspondents show an awareness of their newspaper's discourse, (or are written with a view to their newspaper's discourse), while stories provided by agency services are more general and less analytical.[28] The structure and ownership of the three newspapers would, according to the hypothesis developed in Chapter Two, affect what their foreign correspondents reported about the famine. The correspondents who reported on the famine included the *Guardian's* Mark Huband, *The Times'* Sam Kiley and the *New York Times'* Jane Perlez, Donnatella Lorch and Diana Jean Schemo.[29]

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is essential to present an examination of the ownership and structure of the three newspapers. As the general hypothesis developed in Chapter Two stated, media structures in capitalist societies were influenced by their size, ownership and profit orientation to produce stories which favoured a certain point of view over others.[30] Thus, information about size, structure and profit orientation provides "clues" as to how the three newspapers approached and developed their coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine.

Ownership and Structure of *The Times*

The Times, along with its "sister" paper the *Sunday Times*, was acquired by the (then) Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation in 1981.[31] This acquisition, in addition to Murdoch's other UK media assets, such as the *Sun* and *News of the World* newspapers, meant News Corporation had one-third of all newspaper circulation in the UK (*New Internationalist* June 1994: 18). Moreover, News Corporation is one of the world's largest multinational media conglomerates. It controls two-thirds of all newspapers in Australia, half in New Zealand (through control of the Independent Newspapers Limited group), as well as owning newspapers and magazines in the US, Fiji, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere - more than 200 in all (Curran and Seaton 1988: 86; *New Internationalist* June 1994: 18; Williams 1996: 5, 48). In addition, News Corporation is the 17th largest media conglomerate in the US. It owns and controls the fourth-largest television network in the US (Fox), the major US movie studio, 20th

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[28] This is a personal observation taken from many years working as a reporter and sub-editor on newspapers and magazines in Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

[29] Significantly, most, if not all, of the correspondents were based in Nairobi, capital of neighbouring Kenya, and not in Somalia. The majority of their reporting on the famine, however, was from within Somalia.

[30] The first and, I believe, most important, of the five "filters" outlined in the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky (1988: 3-14).

[31] Murdoch later renounced his Australian citizenship when he voluntarily took up US citizenship in the late 1980s to circumvent US media laws which prevented foreigners from acquiring large proportions of US media conglomerates. This has not affected Murdoch's ownership and control of News Corporation's considerable media interests in Australia.

Century Fox, newspapers such as the *Boston Herald* and the *New York Post* and magazines[32] such as *TV Guide,* the biggest-selling title in the US, *Seventeen* and *New York.* (Curran and Seaton 1988: 86; Bagdikian 1992: 21-22, 41, 241; *New Internationalist* June 1994: 18; Williams 1996: 5, 48).

Other companies in which News Corporation has either a controlling or a significant interest include the Seven television network in Australia, the satellite television systems BSkyB in the UK, Foxtel in Australia, Globo and Canal Television in Latin America, and Star Television and Zee TV in Asia, the Reuters news agency in the UK, the book publishers HarperCollins[33] in the UK, US, Australia and New Zealand, Viking and Penguin in the UK, the *Financial Times* newspaper and *Economist* magazine in the UK, CBS/Fox video (the world's largest distributor of videocassettes), Mushroom Records and the Australian Airline Ansett (Curran and Seaton 1988: 86; Bagdikian 1992: 241; *New Internationalist* June 1994: 18; Williams 1996: 5, 48). In the UK, Murdoch's media empire has grown even stronger since the passing of the 1990 Broadcasting Act.[34] Indeed, with such a huge global reach, Murdoch, as Curran and Seaton (1988: 86) observed,

> *... has now acquired a greater potential influence over the global flow of information than anyone in the history of the Western media.*

Furthermore, Murdoch's status as proprietor has had a significant influence on the "news" reported by *The Times.* Before 1983 *The Times* was known as an "establishment" newspaper but it was well-respected and did not always support the Conservative Party in the UK; indeed, it constantly changed loyalties between the Conservatives and the Labour Party. Since 1983, however, it has shown unwavering loyalty to the Conservative Party (Curran and Seaton 1988: 80).[35]

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[32] Murdoch's magazine empire in the US is second only to that owned by Time Warner, the largest media firm in the world (Bagdikian 1992: 23).

[33] Which, in turn, owned Angus and Robertson, Bartholomew, Harper Collins Religious, Thorsons, Times Books, Unwin Hyman, Acquarian Press, University Tutorial Press, Geographica, Invincible Press, Golden Press, The Lamp Press, Dinosaur Publications, Grafton Books, Harvill Press, Mayflower Books and Turnstone (Williams 1996: 37).

[34] This is because Murdoch has used this enormous influence to support right-wing politicians, such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. They have, in turn, returned the compliment by ensuring Murdoch receives special treatment from media regulatory bodies, and this special treatment has enhanced Murdoch's ability to acquire or extend the reach of his newspapers, magazines, movie companies and television networks (Bagdikian 1992: 245). The 1990 Broadcasting Act in the UK, for example, exempted Murdoch's five national newspapers and his BSkyB satellite television system from the cross-media ownership restrictions placed on other national newspaper groups and commercial television (Williams 1996: 5). For other examples of such favourable treatment, and instances of Murdoch's influence over politicians, see Bagdikian (1992: 41, 244-245) and Williams (1996: 5, 45).

[35] Murdoch has not supported conservative political parties *per se* but rather those parties which will help him further his own general interests. Thus, he supported the Labor Party in Australia during

When Murdoch purchased *The Times* and the *Sunday Times,* there was considerable concern he would overtly intrude into their editorial line, given his record of editorial interference in his other UK newspapers.[36] Although Murdoch claimed he would not interfere, he was forced to place independent directors at Times Newspapers (Curran and Seaton 1988: 81). This did not mean, however, that Murdoch was prevented from indirectly influencing the newspapers' editorial content. Harold Evans, the editor of *The Times* at the time of Murdoch's purchase, recalled the processes by which Murdoch interfered in editorial decisions in 1981-82, to create an aura which was,

> *... one of bleak hostility to Edward Heath and the Tory rebels, and contempt for the social democrats. He did this by persistent derision of them at our press meetings and on the telephone, by sending me articles marked worth reading which espoused right-wing views, by jabbing a finger at headlines which he thought could have been more supportive of Mrs Thatcher ... and through the agency of his managing director [Gerald] Long*[37] *(cited in Curran and Seaton 1988: 82).*

In addition, Murdoch actively fomented dissension and tension between the editor and the staff, and this and other pressures eventually forced Evans to resign in 1983, to be replaced by first one then a second conservative editor, each more right-wing than the previous one (Curran and Seaton 1988: 82).[38] The result of this and other interference by Murdoch[39] on his newspapers was, as Williams (1996: 67) observed:

> *... the development of a corporate consensus about the way [Murdoch's] organisation runs, the values it espouses and inculcates into staff, and the type of people it chooses to employ.*

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much of its 13 years in office between 1983 and 1996. This is an example of hegemonic forces at work; while Murdoch, as a wealthy, asset-owning capitalist, would have views which, by and large, were those of the general ruling class elite, this has not meant he has been in total agreement with that same elite over furthering their common interests, especially when they clash with his own.

36 Particularly the *Sun* and the *News of the World*, which Murdoch acquired in 1969. For details of Murdoch's overt interference in the editorial content of these newspapers, see Curran and Seaton (1988: 80-81).

37 Long, for example, would bombard Evans with memos containing reprimands such as: "The Chancellor ... says the recession has ended. Why are you having the effrontery in *The Times* to say that it has not?" (Curran and Seaton 1988: 82).

38 Murdoch's right-wing credentials were never better demonstrated than when, in 1986, he moved the Times Newspapers group from its Fleet Street base to the new, purpose-built printing plant at Wapping, East London, deliberately breaking the printers' union in the process. Ironically, many commentators in the UK believed the introduction of lower-cost new technology would reform the press by allowing the entry of new (and left-wing) titles into the marketplace. This has since proved to be a false dawn. For more discussion of these issues, see Jenkins (1986), Curran and Seaton (1988: 96-97, 106-109) and Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom Media Manifesto (1996: 1-4).

39 As described by Williams (1996: 66-68).

In considering these factors, I am interested in whether *The Times'* coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine will be highly consistent with the hypothesis of explicit media bias, particularly towards the developing world, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

Ownership and Structure of the *New York Times*

The *New York Times*, which, according to Bagdikian (1992: 25), is the "most influential paper in America", is part of the 18th-largest media conglomeration in the US, the New York Times Company (Bagdikian 1992: 21-25).[40] The company owns and controls the *New York Times* and 26 other newspapers but, significantly, also has interlocking ownership and directorships with several other large and influential companies in the US. These include Merck (pharmaceuticals), Morgan Guaranty Trust (banking and finance), Ford Motor Company (automobiles), Bristol Myers (pharmaceuticals), Charter Oil, Johns Manville, American Express (banking and finance), Bethlehem Steel (steel processing and manufacturing), IBM (communications), Scott Paper (paper and newsprint manufacturing), Sun Oil and First Boston Corporation (finance) (Bagdikian 1992: 25; Parenti 1993: 29).

The importance of interlocking ownership and directorships is illustrated by the fact that, under US law, a director of a company is obliged to act in the interests of his/her company. Yet, as Bagdikian (1992: 25) noted,

> *It has always been an unanswered dilemma when an officer of Corporation A, who also sits as a director of Corporation B, has to choose between acting in the best interests of Corporation A or of Corporation B. Interlocked boards of directors have enormously complicated potential conflicts of interest in the major national and multinational corporations which now control most of the country's media.*

I would argue that this structure restricts the *New York Times'* ability to report more than one side of a story, particularly if certain versions of events are critical of the companies. Furthermore, these companies have a vested interest in maintaining the social and economic relations existing in US capitalist society. There may be competing thoughts and ideas about how to go about achieving this, or conflict between the companies as they compete for capitalist power and control, and this hegemonic struggle may be reflected in the media discourses in the *New York Times*. Interestingly, the *New York Times* is regarded in the US as a centrist or vaguely liberal newspaper.[41] Yet, considering the size

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[40] Herman and Chomsky (1988: 6) noted that in December 1986, the New York Times Company had total assets of US$1.4 billion, while total revenue in 1986 totalled US$1.56 billion.

[41] See Herman and Chomsky (1988) for a detailed discussion and rejection of these descriptions. See also Bagdikian (1992).

and ownership structure of the New York Times Company, and its interlocking relationships with the above listed giant industrial, chemical, financial and manufacturing conglomerates, it will be a matter of considerable interest whether the *New York Times'* coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine will be, like that of *The Times,* highly consistent with the hypothesis of explicit media bias developed in Chapters Two and Three.

Ownership and Structure of the *Guardian*

As a nominally independently-owned newspaper, the *Guardian* represents the most "liberal" strand of mainstream media opinion in the US and UK.[42] Its constitution is designed to maintain the "liberalism" of one of its founding editors and proprietors, C. P. Scott, who edited the paper from 1872 to 1929. This is because the proprietors of the newspaper are the members of the Scott Trust,[43] a self-selecting group with "liberal" views who demand that the newspaper's management be in sympathy with what is known as the "Guardian outlook" - in other words, "liberalism" (Jenkins 1986: 212-213; Schlesinger 1994: 12-13).[44] Interestingly, Scott and the *Guardian's* founder, John Edward Taylor, who at the time were proprietors of a number of other newspapers, determined to devote the profits from those newspapers to the preservation and maintenance of the *Guardian* as a newspaper broadly on the left of the political spectrum. Since World War II, this has meant from the profits of the *Manchester Evening News* (Jenkins 1986: 213). Consequently, Jenkins (1986: 213) observed:

> *Though the company as a whole might not be in business to make money, by definition it could not lose it ... the Scott Trust needs secure reserves to make propaganda, though the trustees would never put it so crudely.*

Thus the *Guardian*, unlike every other national newspaper in the UK, is the only one not controlled by a single boss (Baistow 1985: 3; Schlesinger 1994).[45] At present the Scott

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[42] By "liberal", I do not mean in the economic sense of favouring free trade and other free-market economic dogma but in the sense, as defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary, of being open-minded and not prejudiced, and not strict, rigorous or, (of interpretation), literal. In this regard, it is left-leaning but not leftist, as it is left-leaning in relation to almost all other large, mainstream daily newspapers in the UK and US. This is a personal view arrived at after many years of observation of newspapers in the UK and US.

[43] For more detail on why ownership of the *Guardian* was passed from the Scott family to the Scott Trust in the years after the death of C. P. Scott, see Schlesinger (1994: 9).

[44] As Charles Scott, (cited in Schlesinger 1994: 12), a trustee for over 20 years, stated: "It is desirable that [trustees] would be the sort of people who would read the *Guardian*, or in some way be sympathetic to the *Guardian*. I don't think anyone with strong right-wing views would be appointed to the Trust. We would fight shy of very political people for the reason that they might want to impose their views". Trust members include members of the Scott family, staff (the largest group) and "external" members (Schlesinger 1994: 10-15).

[45] The structure of the Trust has provided a safeguard against a take-over of the GMG's holdings or any part of them (Schlesinger 1994: 25), an important buffer considering the concentration of media ownership in the UK throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Significantly, the *Independent*, which was

Trust owns all the ordinary shares in the Guardian Media Group (GMG) plc, a multi-media holding company split into two divisions. One, the National Newspaper Division, comprises only the *Guardian* and the (Sunday) *Observer*. The other, the Publications and Communications Division, includes the GMG's other holdings, including the *Manchester Evening News*, other regional, country and free newspapers,[46] supermarkets, television production houses, printers and trading magazines (Schlesinger 1994: 26)

The *Guardian*, then, has a considerably different ownership structure from that of *The Times* and the *New York Times*. This fact, however, will not necessarily be reflected in the type of reporting by the newspaper on the 1992-3 Somalian famine. As discussed in Chapter Two, the size, ownership and profit motive of the mainstream media was only the first of five "filters" in Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model and, therefore, the other four "filters" could potentially affect what the *Guardian* regards as "news". Moreover, the *Guardian's* ownership structure may be atypical compared to that of *The Times* and the *New York Times*, but the newspaper is still owned by generally wealthy people and the GMG, as a company in a capitalist economy, is based on capitalist principles and has a duty to make a profit (Schlesinger 1994: 24). In this regard, the *Guardian* has been fully integrated into the economic and political structures of the UK. It has survived as a nominally left-leaning, highbrow newspaper through cross-subsidy support, but it is still under pressure not to lose money from the increasingly diversified GMG,[47] despite the nominal policy of non-interference from the Scott Trust.[48] Importantly, too, as a mainstream newspaper it is left-leaning but not leftist. The newspaper may, therefore, structure its stories to promote the interests of elites but in a less marked and wholesale way than *The Times* and the *New York Times*.[49] Considering these aspects, I am interested in whether the *Guardian's* coverage of the 1992-3 Somalian famine will be only moderately consistent with the hypothesis developed in Chapters Two and Three.

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launched in 1986, was, until very recently, independently-owned. The financial pressure of some worse-than-expected results led, however, to the newspaper being sold in the early 1990s to the Dublin-based International Newspapers, headed by the Irishman Tony O'Reilly. For more details of the *Independent's* rise and fall as an independently-owned newspaper, see Jenkins (1986: 218-219), Wintour (1989: 259-261), Williams (1996: 47-50) and Sanders (1996).

46 Indeed, the GMG is the seventh-largest local and regional newspaper publisher in the UK, with weekly sales at January 1995 of more than three million (Williams 1996: 56).

47 Some of these pressures are outlined by Schlesinger (1994: 24-25).

48 For more details of this policy and its effects, as well as the occasional but growing tendency for the Trust to intervene, see Schlesinger (1994: 3, 18-23).

49 Furthermore, as the only "liberal" quality broadsheet in the UK, and one of only two left-leaning daily newspapers in the UK, (the other being the Labour Party-supporting *Daily Mirror*), the newspaper may, taking a very cynical view, construct its stories with a left-leaning or "liberal" slant to maintain its share of a niche market.

Conclusion

A qualitative news content analysis, then, provides an excellent means to test the hypothesis developed in Chapters Two and Three, based predominantly, but not entirely, on Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. Through this analysis, the overall quality of the coverage given to the 1992-3 Somalian famine by the three newspapers selected can be examined. This analysis begins in Chapter Seven, which examines how the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* covered and reported on the causes of the famine.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAUSES OF THE SOMALIAN FAMINE

Introduction

This hypothesis of this thesis, which I outlined in Chapters Two, Three and Six, is that two of the three newspapers to be examined in this study, *The Times* and the *New York Times*, being, as they are, owned by large, capitalist organisations with an important profit imperative, construct their stories in a way which represents the general interests of their wealthy and elite owners and, when these do not conflict, the general interests of public and private elites. The hypothesis also postulates that the third newspaper to be examined in this study, the *Guardian*, controlled by an independent and nominally left-leaning Trust, constructs its stories differently, in a way that occasionally conflicts with the hegemonic viewpoints of the elites. Considering the effect of these differing political and economic positions, my interpretation of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, which takes into account the influence of hegemonic conflict within society on what is regarded as "news", suggests to me that *The Times* and the *New York Times* will *generally* play down or ignore the influence of external political and economic factors, such as colonialism, neo-colonialism and the Cold War, on the long and complex series of events which created the conditions for famine in Somalia in 1992-3. At the same time, it suggests the *Guardian* will *occasionally* examine this influence in more detail.

This chapter examines, on a predominantly qualitative level, the coverage by the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* of the Somalian famine's causes, with regard to the six themes I identified in Chapter Six as the vital historical, political, social and economic preconditions for famine in Somalia in 1992-3. The coverage by the three newspapers of another important issue related to these themes, that the famine was confined to the south-western corner of Somalia, is also investigated. This examination will show that, by the explicit use of certain techniques, such as selective reporting, the failure to communicate certain information and the use of emotive language, the newspapers produced texts which, from my understanding of them, worked actively to favour certain readings of the crisis over others, although these texts were not always identical in all three newspapers.

Quantitative Aspects of Coverage of the Causes of the Famine

During the calendar year from June 1, 1992 to May 31, 1993, 120 articles in the *Guardian,* 148 articles in *The Times,* and 250 articles in the *New York Times* were published about the 1992-3 Somalian famine.[1] Following my analysis of these articles, to determine the extent to which each newspaper quantitatively covered the themes identified in Chapter Six with regard to the causes of the famine, I have totalled the percentage of articles in each of the three newspapers which at least partially mentioned each theme and presented them in Table 7.1.[2]

Table 7.1
***Guardian, The Times* and *New York Times* coverage of the six themes identified as contributing significantly to the 1992-3 Somalian famine.**

	Guardian	*The Times*	*NYTimes*
Theme 1 - Legacy of Colonialism	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Theme 2 - Inappropriate Systems Inherited	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Theme 3 - Legacy of the Cold War (1)	10.8%	3.4%	8.4%
Theme 4 - End of Support for Barre in 1990	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Theme 5 - Destitution of Somali Society (2)	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%
Theme 6 - Wars due to US Support for Barre	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%

Notes:
(1): As regards Theme Three, no article in *The Times* was analytical, while only 5 of the 13 articles, (thus 4.2% rather than 10.8%) in the *Guardian* and 3 of the 21 articles, (thus 1.2% rather than 8.4%) in the *New York Times* were analytical. All the others were descriptive and/or superficial and did not engage in serious or critical analysis of the legacy of the Cold War.
(2): As regards Theme Five, only 2 of the 4 articles, (thus 1.6% rather than 3.2%) in the *Guardian* mentioned US support for Barre.

From Table 7.1 it can be seen that in all three newspapers, but particularly in *The Times* and the *New York Times,* very little of the total coverage was devoted to the six identified major causes of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. On a quantitative basis, then, all three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* generally failed to consider that the West played a role in creating the conditions for famine in Somalia.

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[1] For a full list of the dates, page numbers, titles and writers of the articles that appeared in the three newspapers about the 1992-3 Somalian famine, see Appendix B. When articles are referred to in the text, only the date and page number are noted. The author and title of the articles are detailed in Appendix B. A letter after the date, (such as August 24, 1992b), means that two or more articles were published in the same newspaper on the same day. Once again, these articles are identified in detail in Appendix B. It should also be noted that many of the articles examined for this chapter and Chapter Eight included text that incorporated more than one theme. Consequently, there was an overlap between many, if not all, of the articles and the various discussions contained within the qualitative analysis.

[2] In other words, the percentages referred to in the table are the percentage figure, (articles discussing each theme), with regard to the total number of articles about Somalia which appeared in each newspaper.

There was no discussion whatsoever in *The Times* and the *New York Times,* for example, of how Western colonialism, the sudden US withdrawal of support for Barre in 1990 and the US role in creating the conditions for the civil wars in Somalia contributed significantly to famine causation in Somalia in 1992-3. There was, however, some, if minimal, discussion of these issues in the *Guardian.*

The initial finding, then, is that the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* generally failed to examine and explore what I considered were the most important factors in the complex processes that led to the famine. In other words, there was little, if any, discussion of the overt and covert political and external causes of the famine, many of which were rooted in the unequal relationship between the developed and developing world, and in the particular mechanisms of power relationships that operated in that developed world. Thus, the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* fixed and limited the premises of their debate in such a way as to omit almost all information about the causes of the famine that had the potential negatively to affect the interests of the elites who dominated the State and private activity in the developed world. Such quantitative findings were very consistent with the general hypothesis of this thesis that was outlined in Chapter Two, particularly the idea that the media in the developed world actively omits, or fails to consider, certain "facts" surrounding a news event, and that the decision to omit these "facts" is based on their potential to negatively affect the general ideals of the owners of such media.

More importantly, however, the theories of explicit media bias considered in Chapter Two also stated that patterns of propaganda, (that is, coverage of an event which favoured the views and opinions of the owners of media, which, in turn, usually favoured the views and opinions of State and other ruling elites), would be observable not only through the quantity of what was and wasn't said but also in the *quality* of what was said. The above quantitative analysis, then, while useful in presenting an introductory picture of what *wasn't* reported by the three newspapers, does not provide a satisfactory base for analysing what *was* reported and *how* these reports were presented and framed. To discover and examine these factors, it is essential to undertake an in-depth qualitative analysis of the texts. This has necessitated, as outlined in Chapter Six, a "resistive reading" of the texts to argue what, in my opinion, the texts were trying to "say". Throughout the remainder of this chapter, my interpretations of the meaning of the texts is presented. I invite the reader to consider my interpretations, but it is up to him/her

whether to agree or disagree with my understanding of what the meanings of the texts were.[3]

Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of the Causes of the Famine - an Overall Assessment

My qualitative analysis of the coverage by the three newspapers of the causes of the famine also revealed an observable pattern of political and systematic dichotomisation in news selection. In this regard, it was clear that what was more important than the "sins of omission", highlighted in the quantitative analysis, was the exaggeration of certain other "facts" and interpretations of the crisis,[4] often based on subjective sources, which generally served to promote the aims and interests of the newspapers' owners. Importantly, particularly with regard to *The Times* and the *New York Times,* these interests were also, more often than not, consistent with the general interests of certain powerful groups within the UK and, especially, the US, as I will demonstrate. In other words, there was a slight differentiation between the *Guardian* and the other two newspapers as to what was reported and how it was reported. In *The Times* and the *New York Times,* the reporting of the causes of the famine was highly distorted in that US complicity was ignored and, at the same time, presentation that emphasised Somali incompetence and helplessness was favoured. Stories were constructed in such a way as to assign blame for the famine on the Somali people themselves, in particular through the emphasis on the civil wars that broke out in Somalia during 1991 and 1992. While these events were critical in creating the preconditions for famine, they were not placed within any wider social, political or economic context. As a result, the cause-and-effect links between external political and economic factors and the enormous upheavals in Somalia that immediately preceded the famine were disregarded.

This distortion was achieved through particular news selection, emphasis and tone, which meant that articles about the famine in *The Times* and the *New York Times* consisted mainly of descriptive and superficial simplifications. Such reporting, in my view, severely limited the range of debate so as not to challenge dominant views about global relationships. Certain stories, such as those concerning the destruction caused by the "warlords" and their "marauding gangs" of teenagers,[5] couched in emotive language,

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[3] As I discussed in Chapter Six, the "resistive reading" model of textual analysis recognised that the "meaning" of a text was not fixed. In other words, texts were not transparent, nor did they have a clear or unambiguous meaning. The reader of a text, then, was the sole arbiter of what was the meaning of a text.

[4] Such as the idea that the US Government had little to do with causing the famine, or that neo-colonialism, in the form of a UN "trusteeship", would be a suitable solution to Somalia's problems.

[5] Contained, for example, in *The Times* of August 6, 1992a, (p. 8).

greatly exaggerated the significance of these situations as the primary reason of the famine. The constant highlighting of such situations out of context also served to deflect attention from the external political and economic causes of the famine, which were rarely, if ever, examined. This technique, coupled with the general portrayal of the chaos as somehow Somalia's "fault", produced a dominant discourse in these two newspapers which favoured a reading of Somalia and the Somalis in an extremely negative and unfavourable light.[6] Also common was the tendency to excuse superpower involvement with Barre as somehow "necessary", and to portray the US as having been innocently "played along" by the dictator. These presentations conveyed the idea that the US was blameless for the crisis.

The reduction by *The Times* of the Somalian crisis to the most basic simplifications was well exemplified in the editorial about the famine on August 20, 1992b, (p.11), which reinforced the sensationalist descriptive accounts of the famine in the general news reports. The editorial, which is illustrated in Figure 7.1, stated:

> *No independent nation in modern times has collapsed into such squalor, chaos and misery as Somalia. The pictures show a suffering almost unimaginable. Stick-thin bodies, covered in flies, lie moaning in the gutter waiting to die. Babies are so famished that their hanging skin looks like old leather. People are reduced to eating their clothes. While murderous factions raid the dwindling food stocks, a quarter of all those under five are reported to have died. The UN plan is to send in enough food to stop people fighting each other in order to eat. There is no fear of ruining local markets: they no longer exist. Those who can still move have fled, with one in every six now a refugee abroad. But once free from dependence on the squabbling gangs of teenagers and crippled former soldiers who loot the ships and food depots, people may gradually regain their strength. They cannot resume their normal work. The country has no water, electricity, law or government. Even tribal loyalties have broken down.*

In this editorial, some "facts" were omitted, such as the US role in supporting Barre, support which, as I argued in Chapter Four, was instrumental in enabling Barre to foster and intensify ethnic divisions in Somalia. At the same time, other "facts" were exaggerated, such as the idea that the "nation" had collapsed, when this was the case only in the south-west of the country. As a result of these omissions and exaggerations, a text was presented which favoured one reading over others, one which was more suitable to the interests of elites such as the US Government. Yet the article begs the question: Why? Why were squabbling gangs of teenagers and crippled former soldiers looting? Why did the country have no water, electricity, law or government? Why had tribal loyalties broken down? *The Times'* response to such questions was simply "war". Such

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[6] The *Guardian* was almost equally guilty of such misrepresentations, compensated somewhat by printing the occasional article which at least made an attempt to examine the famine's wider political, social and economic context.

RESCUE FOR SOMALIA

The United States has begun a massive food lift to Somalia, as part of a belated global effort to prevent more than a million people dying of starvation. In co-operation with the United Nations relief agencies, America and its allies will attempt to flood the country with food, taking supplies directly to the heartland to avoid the clogged ports and the ravages of marauding armed gangs. Distribution will be protected by 500 UN troops, authorised to open fire on anyone attacking the convoys.

By comparison with the UN involvement in Yugoslavia and Cambodia, the operation is small and cheap. Much more will be needed. Somalia has ceased to exist as a functioning country. Its people will not survive unless the UN sets up what amounts to an old-fashioned protectorate. This is an appropriate function for the UN as an adjunct to a relief operation.

No independent nation in modern times has collapsed into such squalor, chaos and misery as Somalia. The pictures show a suffering almost unimaginable. Stick-thin bodies, covered in flies, lie moaning in the gutter waiting to die. Babies are so famished that their hanging skin looks like old leather. People are reduced to eating their clothes. While murderous factions raid the dwindling food stocks, a quarter of all those under five are reported to have died.

The UN plan is to send in enough food to stop people fighting each other in order to eat. There is no fear of ruining local markets: they no longer exist. Those who can still move have fled, with one in every six now a refugee abroad. But once free from dependence on the squabbling gangs of teenagers and crippled former soldiers who loot the ships and food depots, people may gradually regain their strength. They cannot resume their normal work. The country has no water, electricity, law or government. Even tribal loyalties have broken down.

Bringing in food is therefore just a beginning. If chaos is to subside, somebody must assume virtually all functions of government: the repair of the ruined infrastructure, the running of hospitals, the re-establishment of agriculture, the opening of schools and markets. There is strong world support for such intervention. African countries have railed at the West for turning a blind eye for so long. The big powers, they argue, created the catastrophe by flooding the former government of Siad Barre with weapons when the Russians and the Americans were trying to outmanoeuvre each other in the Horn of Africa.

So far the record of the UN has compared poorly with that of international charities. For seven months this year the UN withdrew from Mogadishu, while the Red Cross and bodies such as Save the Children tried to carry on. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN secretary general, berated the West for ignoring Somalia, but UN aid throughout Africa has been marked by bureaucracy, tardiness, in-fighting and negligence.

While private charities and individual governments may be more effective in delivering aid, only the UN can nowadays confer on itself the legitimacy needed to run a country. Even then it will have to tread warily, working nominally through whatever pretence of government exists. In Somalia's case, this presumably means the dominant force in the civil war. Advisers and experts will have to be "attached" to Somalia, rather than posted to rule there as quasi-colonial administrators. Everything must be done in close co-operation with regional bodies: the Arab League, the Islamic Conference and the Organisation of African Unity which sent a peacemaking mission to Liberia when that country was also devastated by civil war. Even assuming the rival gangs agree to a truce, rebuilding Somalia will take years.

As Sir Philip Goodhart says in the letter alongside, Britain, a former colonial power, has a particular responsibility to offer its expertise and long-term support; so has Italy. At a time when independence is extolled as the basic right of any nation, entrusting a country to outsiders is a last resort. But such is the horror of Somalia today that only UN trusteeship in all but name can save the country from self-inflicted genocide.

Figure 7.1
Editorial in *The Times* on August 20, 1992b, (p.11).

simplifications fitted into the conventional discursive code of Western society that war created havoc and suffering. That war was often the direct result of the actions of the elites within Western societies, and/or a function of the unequal relationship between the developed and developed world, did not fit into a conventional code in this regard, as it was a non-hegemonic viewpoint. Consequently, *The Times* promoted the concept of "war" as the answer, thus ignoring the factors already referred to, such as the role of Western powers and global capitalism. That these factors were not examined was evidence, to me, of an explicit media bias in *The Times* that was related to the political economy of this newspaper.[7]

Similarly, the *New York Times* also consistently published descriptive and simplified accounts of the war and the famine, without examining the issues and reasons behind such events. On August 23, 1992, (Sec.1, p. 3), for example, a report by Jane Perlez observed that Somalis fleeing from the war/famine constituted Africa's largest group of refugees but there was a complete lack of sociological or historical context presented about this alarming situation. Instead, the article, illustrated in Figure 7.2, simply noted that,

> *The Somalis are being driven out by clan-based fighting and hunger that have overwhelmed the nation since its dictator for 21 years, Mohammed Siad Barre, was ousted in January 1991.*

These superficial and distorted accounts were often reinforced by editorials, such as that of July 23, 1992, (p. 22), which, in place of analysis or criticism of US involvement in causing the famine, limited the hegemonic debate to what the US would do about it. The aforementioned editorial, illustrated in Figure 7.3, postulated, for example, that:

> *War, drought, the collapse of civil authority: these are the malign toxins that threaten the very existence of Somalia ... a third of Somalia's more than 4.5 million people are likely to starve to death within six months. A third of a country! Small wonder a Red Cross worker exclaimed in despair: "Here is hell". Worse, this hell is man-made, the result of a clan-based civil war waged by roving gangs of teenagers ... Could more be done to stop the fighting and feed the famished? Absolutely. But fearing a quagmire, the big Western states have averted their gaze.*

Again, what has caused the "collapse of civil authority"? Why is the civil war "waged"? Why are there "roving gangs of teenagers"? To examine such questions would have been detrimental to the imperatives of the State and other elites and was, therefore, beyond

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[7] At the same time, I would argue that it also reflected the power of hegemony, contained within that political economy, to "persuade" readers to consider a certain view of the conflict, in that certain "facts" and interpretations about "war", both in general and in this case, were communicated while others were discounted.

In the Desperation of Somalia, Even the Proud Flee

By JANE PERLEZ
Special to The New York Times

DOBLE, Somalia, Aug. 20 — For 18 months, Sheik Bukkah Malim, hung on in his country, watching with grief as brothers, sisters and children were killed in the civil war. Then as plundering gunmen made food perilously scarce for the survivors, he did what he thought he would never consider.

He boarded a rusty bus with his two wives and eight children and rode a 200-mile, bandit-ridden route, joining a million other Somalis who have fled the chaos and famine that have destroyed their homeland.

"No food was coming in, and because of the guns, we were too afraid to go the market to look for food," said Sheik Bukkah, a Muslim religious leader with red hair and a beard. He arrived today in this hot, sandy stretch of no man's land just beyond Doble, the last settlement in Somalia before the Kenyan border. "Every clansman has a gun in Somalia," he remarked.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, which is caring for most of the Somali refugees scattered through Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen, says that Somalis constitute the biggest single refugee group in Africa in proportion to population.

Grasping at the idea of a million refugees, Panos Moumtzis, the United Nations commission's spokesman, remarked, "It's a staggering number."

The Somalis are being driven out by clan-based fighting and hunger that have overwhelmed the nation since its dictator for 21 years, Mohammed Siad Barre, was ousted in January 1991. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that 1.5 million Somalis in the country are at risk of starvation.

By Foot, Bus and Dhow

The most common escape hatches are the land routes to Kenya and Ethiopia. Here, as many as 1,000 people stagger to the border daily. More recently, those who are better off, like Sheik Bukkah, have been arriving by bus. Somalis are also fleeing in decrepit dhows and other vessels to the Kenyan coast, to Djibouti and across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen.

Two or three dhows a week usually seek permission to dock in Kenya, Mr. Moumtzis said. Last week, the Kenyan Government rounded up 2,000 Somalis living in the capital, Nairobi, the spokesman said. Those with Kenyan Government identity cards were released. Almost all the others were sent to refugee camps.

The planned United States airlift has as part of its mission the delivery of food to Somali refugees in northern Kenya, as well as to Kenyans suffering the effects of drought.

The main land entry point into Kenya from Somalia is patrolled by Kenyan soldiers. Through scrub country 10 miles to the west lies the Liboi refugee camp, with 45,000 Somalis.

Liboi is one of seven camps for the Somali refugees in Kenya, and like most it suffers from security problems. Some of the Somalis sneak through the border with weapons at night, avoiding the scrutiny of Kenyan soldiers who are supposed to disarm them. An ambulance used by the French-based medical group Doctors Without Borders was hijacked from the camp hospital last week, apparently by armed refugees, officials said.

Many of the Somalis arrive weak from hunger or with infected wounds. Many die along the way. The wealthier bring goats, cattle or camels.

Today, Sheik Bukkah and his family were among 482 new refugees. They brought with them 160 white goats. Refugee officials arranged — as they do every day — for the animals to be trucked to the outskirts of the Liboi camp so that the refugees, many of whom are nomads, can retain the herds for a time when they might return home.

Many others are bereft of almost everything. Abdi Kadir Mohammed Adam, a 39-year-old farmer, arrived with two wives and five children. Three other children had perished from starvation en route, he said.

The 180-mile journey from his small farm near Mareire had taken two months. "My harvest was looted and we were living off wild fruit," he said. "We came because of starvation." About two weeks into their trek, they became so weak that they stayed in a village for a month and begged for food to gain strength. Then, he said, the family was lucky enough to get a ride.

Where Fear Becomes Fright

Mr. Adam belongs to an ethnic group of third- and fourth-generation people from Tanzania who are considered outcasts by the Somalis. They have been among those most victimized.

Perhaps most telling was the lost hope of Sheik Bukkah. He had lived in Kismayu, a port south of Mogadishu, for the last five months in the belief that he might have an easier time there. He said he was a member of the Darod clan, the same group as Mr. Siad Barre, the deposed President. The Darods live in fear of the leader in southern Somalia, who is a member of the Hawiye clan.

In the last several weeks, Kismayu has degenerated into fierce, sporadic fighting, which has resulted both in the repression of members of the Darod clan and in severe shortages. Last weekend, about 600 tons of food brought in by the United Nations was looted.

"We were living in a camp for the displaced run by the Red Cross," Sheik Bukkah said. "But the food was getting less and less. We heard very good stories about the treatment here so we decided to come."

When would he return to Somalia? "Not for a very long time," he said.

Fiona McDougall for The New York Times

Refugees from Somalia arriving Thursday in Nairobi, Kenya. They were awaiting transportation to one of seven refugee camps.

The New York Times

Africa's single largest group of refugees are fleeing from war and starvation in Somalia.

Figure 7.2
Article in the *New York Times* on August 23, 1992, (Sec.1, p.3).

The Hell Called Somalia

War, drought, the collapse of civil authority: these are the malign toxins that threaten the very existence of Somalia, a husk of a country on the Horn of Africa. As Jane Perlez of The New York Times reports, a third of Somalia's more than 4.5 million people are likely to starve to death within six months. A third of a country! Small wonder a Red Cross worker exclaimed in despair: "Here is hell."

Worse, this hell is man-made, the result of a clan-based civil war waged by roving gangs of teenagers. The violence erupted after the overthrow last year of Somalia's longtime strongman, Mohammed Siad Barre, who played on cold war rivalry to amass a huge arsenal of weapons.

Could more be done to stop the fighting and feed the famished? Absolutely. But fearing a quagmire, the big Western states have averted their gaze. And unlike the Ethiopian famine in 1984-1985, which also occurred during a civil war, there have been no Live Aid concerts, no chorus of pop stars singing "We Are the World."

Granted, Somalia competes for the world's attention with the slaughter in Sarajevo, the plight of Iraqi Kurds, the life-threatening droughts elsewhere in Africa and a global AIDS plague. And diplomats have seized on the particulars of Somalia to justify an inadequate United Nations humanitarian effort.

Somalia has no functioning government. Fighting persists despite a cease-fire in the capital, Mogadishu, whose de facto master is a capricious warlord named General Adid.

Citing this chaos as a pretext to do little, the Security Council voted to send only 50 unarmed U.N. military observers to monitor the cease-fire and speed the delivery of food and medicine. This token force was the most the Bush Administration felt it could prudently support.

Some U.N. officials, Ms. Perlez found, believe that more food could be airlifted into the interior even with this limited presence. Some Americans, notably Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, favored sending 500 armed peacekeepers to back up the biggest-ever International Red Cross relief operation.

But Somalia's agony underscores a more basic need: an effective, mobile U.N. peacemaking force, strong enough to quell the warlords.

Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has called for the formation of just such a force, consisting of volunteers, available on 48-hour call from U.N. members. But with the exception of France, the big Western powers have shown little interest in his suggestion. And George Bush, the New World President, has said nothing about this proposal, or about Somalia. Meantime, a third of a country inches toward the grave.

Figure 7.3
Editorial in the *New York Times* on July 23, 1992, (p. 22).

consideration. Yet the article did voice criticism of the "big Western states" over a perceived lack of action, giving the impression that it was being impartial and "objective". The criticism, however, was mild and trivial compared to criticism that might have been made had the non-hegemonic view been accepted, a view which, as presented in Chapter Four, postulated that the "hell" was directly the result of the action and policies undertaken by elites in those "big Western states". As discussed in Chapter Two, the failure to look at the broader causes, together with the article's illusion of impartiality, aided groups attempting to control hegemony as these techniques framed the terms of debate in such a way as to limit the possibility of non-hegemonic interpretations being made by the reader.

The Times and the *New York Times,* then, in these and most of their other articles, presented a dominant discourse that generally reflected the interests of their owners and other ruling elites. Why did this occur? As I argued in Chapter Two, the mainstream media in capitalist countries such as the US and UK were not "free" to report on all angles of an event or issue but, instead, were constrained by political and economic structures to produce "news" which favoured one reading of the event or issue. The processes by which these structures constrained the so-called "freedom" of the press were described in the propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky (1988), and briefly outlined in Chapter Two. Importantly, this model postulated that, as a result of five factors which explicitly served to "filter" what was regarded as "newsworthy", the media in capitalist societies only produced "news" which worked to favour the reproduction of the dominant ideologies of capitalist societies.

There was and is an interlocking class relationship between the owners and controllers of mainstream media, such as *The Times* and the *New York Times,* and the general power structure in capitalist societies, such as the UK and US. It was this relationship which explicitly worked to produce in these media "news" which reproduced the relationships of production in these societies. Furthermore, this relationship meant that the quality and quantity of the "news" produced with regard to coverage of events and issues in developing world was often dependent on its ability to further the interests of ruling elites in the developed world. Thus, coverage which did not assist these elites, such as that which highlighted how blatant self-interest was the major determining factor of US foreign policy with regard to the developing world, or which revealed details of the unequal and exploitative nature of corporate Western penetration and involvement in the developing world, was not, in general, produced.

Consequently, certain techniques, such as those described above, were explicitly used by *The Times* and the *New York Times* to "distort" reporting on the causes of the 1992-3

Somalian famine. This reporting emphasised that the actions of Somalis alone predominantly caused the famine. At the same time, stories which emphasised the contribution of the West, whether governments, corporations, businesses and/or other elites and power groups, in the causation of the famine were rarely, if ever, printed by *The Times* and the *New York Times*. These distortions served elites in the West by not only feeding into Western stereotypes about the causes of African famines, (stereotypes which emphasised that famine was solely or predominantly the result of factors internal to the country afflicted), but also by deflecting attention from the complicity of Western governments, institutions and corporations, and their policies and attitudes, in creating the conditions for such famines. Consequently, there was also no need to have to explain and elaborate on issues such as global inequality or developed world exploitation of the developing world.[8]

Furthermore, there were virtually no "alternative" or "non-hegemonic" views appearing in these two media, reflecting not only how their political and economic positions defined what was and wasn't "news" but also the lack of hegemonic debate within these newspapers and within the elites of wider US and UK society as to the causes of the famine. No benefit would be forthcoming from communicating the contribution of the West, whether through governments, corporations and/or other power elites, in the causation of the famine. In other words, no benefit would be forthcoming from presenting critical discourses about the particular way the world was economically and politically structured. Consequently, this information was not imparted by *The Times* and the *New York Times,* both of which, not having to contend with different views among hegemonic forces, instead constructed their particular one-sided versions of what *did* cause the famine.

Thus, what these newspapers did and didn't report, and how it was reported, was, in my view, a reflection of their owners' vested interest in global capitalism and in maintaining the status quo between the developed and the developing world, a status which also favoured the elites and power groups of the developed world. In other words, the subjective distortion of events, achieved through the omission and exaggeration of certain "facts", was entirely consistent with the predictions of this thesis' interpretation of the propaganda model. It also backed up the general arguments of other explicit media bias theorists such as Parenti, Pilger and Bagdikian, who, as discussed in Chapter Two,

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[8] This, of course, was similar to the conclusion of the study into the Western media coverage of the 1982-5 Ethiopian famine reached by Brett (1988). As discussed in Chapter Three, Brett deduced that the coverage removed all notion of Western responsibility and replaced it with charity, emotional manipulation and developing world blame, ensuring that there was no need to explain the effects of global inequality, or the unequal distribution of the world's resources, on famine causation.

emphasised that stories in the Western mainstream media would generally favour established power and be responsive to the needs of Western governments and elites.

The *Guardian,* on the other hand, while concentrating, like *The Times* and the *New York Times,* on descriptive accounts of the war and its results, did publish a few articles which made an attempt to report on the pertinent historical, social, political and economic factors which caused the famine. Thus, there was some, but not significant, discussion of how the social, political and economic relationships between the developed and the developing world negatively affected Somali society. This included reports which drew a direct link between these relationships and the enormous upheavals in Somalia that immediately preceded the famine. In other words, the *Guardian,* unlike *The Times* and the *New York Times,* managed to report in varied detail on some of the themes and issues considered in this chapter. While the factors and issues concerned were complex, the *Guardian*, in a number of fine pieces, demonstrated that concise and penetrative summations of these factors were achievable within a newspaper article. An excellent example was Mark Huband's superb report on the historical background of the famine, published on August 7, 1992b, (p. 19) and illustrated in Figure 7.4.[9]

Importantly, then, the coverage in the *Guardian* was not representative of a fixed and all-powerful dominating ideology being "imposed" by a homogeneous ruling elite on its readers. The *Guardian*, unlike *The Times* and the *New York Times, occasionally* constructed its stories to favour a reading that was mildly critical of the role of governmental and industrial elites from countries such as the US in creating the conditions for famine in Somalia. But why did "opposition" voices and non-hegemonic views appear beside more dominant views appear within a mainstream newspaper such as the *Guardian,* circulating in a capitalist state such as the UK? As discussed in Chapter Six, the economic structure of the *Guardian* was, in my view, different from those of almost all other mainstream newspapers in the developed world in that the newspaper was not owned or controlled by a wealthy individual or a large and powerful industrial conglomerate. As a result, the "strength" of the first of the propaganda model's five "filters" affecting what was and wasn't "news" in the *Guardian* was diluted, particularly as there was no wealthy individual or group controlling the newspaper with the covert and overt influence to impose a certain, often narrow, view as to what could or couldn't be published.

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[9] Other notable examples were August 31, 1992, (p. 19), November 28, 1992b, (p. 23), December 24, 1992b, (p. 18), and February 3, 1993, (p.19). Importantly, such articles refuted the claim that the constraints of news making processes on "news" production worked implicitly to reproduce existing power structures in capitalist societies, as argued by theorists such as Hall, Fowler, Fishman and Gans. In other words, journalists *could,* if they wanted to/were allowed to, produce "news" which challenged society's institutional orders, irrespective of the processes of news form and production.

The superpowers supplied the arms and inspired the conflict. **Mark Hùband** traces the roots of a famine

The disintegration of Somalia

SOMALIA's disintegration from a tenuously united nation state into a war-torn patchwork of fiefdoms controlled by clan chiefs is Africa's, and perhaps the world's, most vivid example of the devastation bequeathed to developing countries by the end of the cold war and the end of superpower interest in the Third World.

Throughout Africa, dictators who clung to power by promoting the strategic importance of their impoverished states in the eyes of the Eastern and Western power blocs are now finding their former backers departing amid lukewarm calls for improvements in human rights, economic reforms and political liberalisation.

In Somalia these calls are too late. Aid agencies estimate that 1.5 million people are close to starvation. The entire country is reliant on food aid brought in to ports and across isolated land borders. The Red Cross alone is feeding 700,000 people at camps throughout the country, camps where at least one fifth of the population is dying every day.

The north and south of the country are equally devastated. Even in the southern, well irrigated farming region along the Shabelle River people are, in the words of one relief worker, "dying like flies" despite the fields overflowing with crops.

In a country which until a year ago was largely self-reliant in food, it is politics which lies at the heart of the starvation.

Throughout his repressive 23-year dictatorship, Somalia's former president Mohamed Siad Barre, who was overthrown by invading rebel forces in January 1991, exploited the country's geographical position as a way of attracting aid from first the former Soviet Union, and later the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Within three years of his seizure of power in 1969, Somalia was faced with the most severe drought in its history. At their height, famine relief camps housed over 250,000 people.

Barre, who had embarked on an ideological path of "scientific socialism", exploited his links with the USSR to ease the plight of famine victims by using Soviet airplanes to carry out an airlift of 140,000 people who were relocated to less affected areas. These measures resulted in a relatively low estimated death toll of 18,000. At least 20,000 have so far died during the current catastrophe, at a time when there is no serious drought.

Superpower interest in Somalia blended in well with the conflicts that Somalia's clans had fought with their neighbours since well before the cold war.

Simultaneously, the use of Soviet military personnel and aircraft during the 1972 famine heralded a massive increase in the army's reliance on the USSR, led to the Soviet development of the northern port of Berbera, the provision of enormous supplies of Soviet weapons and the arrival of 6,000 Soviet military advisers.

Chief among the regional conflicts was Somalia's claim to parts of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, ceded to Ethiopia by Britain in 1954, where many Somali Ogadenis continue to live. Heightened nationalism following Somalia's independence from Britain and Italy in 1960 brought the Ogaden issue to the fore. In 1974 Lt Col Mengistu Haile Mariam seized power in Ethiopia. Soviet influence in that country increased after Mengistu announced his intention to introduce strict Marxist ideology and expelled the United States. This increased pressure in Somalia to grab territory in the Ogaden.

Barre secured promises of financial assistance with which to buy arms for the Ogaden campaign from Saudi Arabia, on condition that he re-establish closer ties with the West. In 1977 he expelled the Soviet military advisers in the hope of securing Western aid for the war.

But these promises were not made quickly enough for him to secure a victory in the Ogaden, though he continued to support the Ogaden secessionist movement, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), until peace talks in 1988.

Somalia's entry into the Western bloc was fully assured once its territorial claims to parts of northern Kenya had been rescinded. Despite the Soviet presence in Ethiopia, the US was reluctant to support Somalia over the Ogaden because it was afraid of upsetting Kenya. The Kenyan secessionist movement, the Northern Frontier District Liberation Front (NFDLF) had its offices in Mogadishu until the beginning of the current civil war in Somalia.

Rapprochement between Kenya and Somalia allowed the US to incorporate Somalia within its Persian Gulf strategy, developed in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

In August 1980, a defence pact was signed which gave US troops access to the air and naval facilities at the Soviet-built port of Berbera. US financial aid poured in, including, by April 1987, money for weapons purchases. Military ties were strengthened, as they were with Italy and Egypt. The latter was the main US ally in the region alongside Saudi Arabia.

But, disappointed with the scale of US military assistance, Barre re-established ties with the USSR in 1988. He also sought arms from Libya, and from September 1988 was receiving substantial arms supplies from Tripoli. The latest Libyan consignment — 40 tonnes of weapons — arrived after Barre's fall and quickly found its way into the hands of the clan chiefs who have been fighting each other since his overthrow.

Barre's rapprochement with the superpowers was as much a denial of the realities of internal Somali politics as it was an act, at least by the Western powers, of atrocious opportunism. It is only now that the fallout from superpower interest in Somalia is being felt, long after the European and American embassies have been evacuated and the US troops gone.

It is seen most clearly in the nature of the power hunger among the clans who have dismembered the country, and in their determination to pursue the rivalries and territorial claims which Barre gave the impression of having resolved as a way of securing Western aid and military hardware.

Fighters in the coalition Somali Liberation Army (SLA) which is currently fighting incursions from northern Kenya led by Barre's son-in-law, General Sayeed Morgan, have renamed southern parts of the country Jubaland, the name it had under British rule.

Under the British, the area stretched as far as Kenya's Tana River, raising fears among Kenyans that elements within the SLA will revive the territorial dispute over northern Kenya which was resolved by Barre in order to gain access to Western arms.

Numerous among the SLA are Ogadenis who settled in the Juba (sic) area. The deputy to the SLA leader, General Mohamed Farah Aideed, is the chairman of the Ogadeni-dominated Somali Patriotic Movement, Lt Col Ahmed Omar Jees. The ascendancy of the Ogadenis during the past year of civil war has done little to diminish fears of renewed claims to the Ogaden, particularly during the current disappearance of Ethiopia as a unified state as a result of internal divisions within the forces which overthrew Mengistu last year.

Somalia's total disintegration into clan-held territories is largely a result of Barre's exploitation and encouragement of clan rivalry throughout the eighties, a tactic he could pursue due to his access to foreign aid and weapons by paying off his allies and killing his enemies. His manipulation of the clans, and the centring of power around himself and his Marehan clan, created the false unity reliant on dictatorship by which he, like other African leaders, stored up future instability.

A measure of how catastrophic the political situation facing Somalia now is lies in the nature of the political impasse which has led to the breakdown of all national institutions.

While there has been traditional distrust between the Hawiye clan of Gen Aideed and Barre's Darod, the enmity which has been at the heart of the past year's fighting is new. The division of Mogadishu and the enmity between the self-styled president, Ali Mahdi Mohamed's Abgal, a sub-clan of the Hawiye, and Gen Aideed's Habargidir, another sub-clan of the Hawiye, is unprecedented in the history of the Hawiye, the biggest clan in the country.

Now the weapons bought by Barre — the T-54 and T-55 Russian tanks and Korean and Romanian rockets and AK-47 rifles — ostensibly to fight the cold war and retain unity by supressing dissent and keeping himself in power, are being turned on Somalis themselves.

What Somalis are now left with is the inter-clan fighting encouraged by Barre and a fear of what the deadlock will mean for the future of the country. To battle out their disputes, they are armed with some of the most sophisticated weapons in Africa.

Simultaneously, the superpowers who readily supplied the hardware for the destruction from which they themselves were unlikely to suffer, have gone.

The question which few outside Somalia seem now to be asking is what can be done for a cold war sideshow once the main players have left the stage?

Figure 7.4
Article in the *Guardian* on August 7, 1992b, (p. 19).

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Two, there exists in capitalist societies hegemonic and non-hegemonic viewpoints which compete for hegemonic dominance. Thus, counter-hegemonic views could, and did, resist the dominant ideologies which, themselves, were competing with each other. This competition was occasionally reflected in the mainstream media. Importantly, however, the ownership structure of the *Guardian* meant the overt and covert ideological imperatives, influences and pressures to present the world from a certain, (pro-Western, pro-capitalist), point of view were not as marked as within *The Times* and the *New York Times*, with their more typical political economies. Thus, non-dominant views which challenged the hegemonic "taken-for-granted" views of the ruling elites within UK society occasionally could be published in the *Guardian* . This phenomena was consistent with Gramsci's notion, as discussed in Chapter Two, that hegemonic conflict occurred in societies such as that of the UK. As my interpretation of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model predicted, then, the *Guardian*, with a different political economy from that of *The Times* and the *New York Times*, occasionally and "selectively" reported non-hegemonic views, reflecting the notion that the ideological forces within capitalist society were not static but competing with each other. Consequently, Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal could, for example, receive space to air their opinions which challenged much, if not all, of the "mainstream" view.[10]

Nevertheless, the majority of the *Guardian's* reports were, like almost all those of *The Times* and the *New York Times,* predominantly descriptive accounts of the war and its results, demonstrating that even this newspaper, with its so-called "liberal" credentials, still favoured reports which did not highlight the role of foreign interference in creating the conditions for the famine. Detailed analyses of the external political and economic causes of the famine were concentrated in a tiny percentage of the 120 articles on the topic published in the *Guardian* between June 1, 1992 and May 31, 1993. For the most part this newspaper, like *The Times* and the *New York Times,* gave greater weight to "facts" and interpretations about the causes of the famine which promoted the general interests of the wealthy and powerful within the UK than to other, more counter-hegemonic, "facts" and interpretations. One of the more blatant examples of this was the article by Edward Pearce on December 9, 1992c, (p. 20), which presented a gross simplification of the situation in Somalia in late 1992. In this article, which is reproduced in Figure 7.5, Pearce stated:

> *The reality will have to be either faced up to or brutally set aside that great parts of the recently independent world, [such as Somalia], do not work ... The pattern, of which Somalia is the extreme example, is for ordinary authority to shift from legality and despotism of the most stupid and destructive kind, then to tribal*

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[10] See, for example, their article in the *Guardian,* titled "Diplomacy preferred to armed force", on December 5, 1992c, (p. 10).

> *factionalism which in turn becomes simple criminal gangsterism in the hands of the very young and very armed ... You can only put to rights a country as thoroughly smashed up as Somalia by ruling it.*

Though this summary might or might not be accurate, by not placing such descriptions within a wider context, (one, for example, that examined the external forces which caused Somalia to "not work", become "thoroughly smashed up" and collapse under "tribal factionalism"), the negative phrases used perpetuated stereotypes of developing world incompetence and hopelessness and reinforced Western prejudice. Moreover, this is to say nothing of the article's offensive, neo-colonialist tone.[11] Why did the *Guardian* favour such views, albeit not to the same extent as *The Times* and the *New York Times?*

As discussed above, the atypical political economy of the *Guardian* only diluted, to a limited degree, the "filter" premises of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. In this regard, the *Guardian,* as discussed in Chapter Six, was still a newspaper based on capitalist principles and the all-important profit motive, existing in a capitalist economy and Western society. Moreover, the Trust members were predominantly white, well-educated and generally affluent people, under pressure not to allow the newspaper to make a loss. In other words, the *Guardian* was fully integrated into the market structure of that Western, capitalist society and, therefore, was dependent on, and influenced by, its relationships with government and the *general* operations and ideologies of Western, capitalist society. Furthermore, the "worth" and "saleability" of the newspaper, and itsholding company, was also dependent on advertising, (for much of its revenue), and on government and corporate sources, (for "news" which was "credible" and "reputable").

The *Guardian*, then, was constrained, albeit to a lesser extent than *The Times* and the *New York Times,* by the economic and political structures within which it operated as to what it regarded as "news", just as my hypothesis predicted. Consequently, only limited space was given to reports in the *Guardian* that articulated non-hegemonic "facts" and opinions. Furthermore, these articles were often placed in non-prominent positions within the newspaper's pages, a deliberate framing intended to reduce their potential impact on the reader.[12] Indeed, most of the *Guardian's* reporting on the causes of the famine was

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11 Indeed, another example of a country which, according to Mr Pearce, "does not work" was Mozambique, a nation which, like Somalia, has suffered greatly from outside interference in its affairs, including colonialism, neo-colonialism, Cold War manoeuvres and SAPs. For more discussion on the terrible effects of external interference in Mozambique's affairs, see Finnegan (1992).

12 With regard to the aforementioned article by Omaar and de Waal, for example, the story was placed at the foot of the page with a much smaller headline and general "presence" than another larger article on the same page about Somalia, which rather emotionally emphasised that Somalia was in the "thrall of rival warlords".

An immodest proposal

Commentary

Edward Pearce

IT IS a pleasant thought that if the world is afflicted with overpopulation, ready measures exist to mend this condition. If people die in sufficient numbers, our unnecessary anxiety about their extravagant increase is readily assuaged. This is a working of the hidden hand, one carrying an open razor. The life of a Somali villager weighs to a truly philosophical mind no more than the freedom of a Hong Kong citizen to Sir Percy Cradock, something obstructing the smooth progress of real people with means and power. His problems can easily be managed, any two horsemen of the apocalypse can take care of them on a consultancy basis.

The philosophical mind knows that Mr Bush's involvement in Somalia is a piece of showmanship and irrelevance. Dying, after all, is what these people do best. Are there not sound reasons drawable from Adam Smith to suggest that they should concentrate on it, proceeding on most favoured nation terms to do all the dying they can until, leaner and fitter, they find their own level? Mr Bush, to any philosophical mind, is tinkering; he believes in the semi-socialist heresy of meliorism, that things can be made better by governments doing things."

He is also, for many Guardian readers, engaged in the alternative heresy of imperialism. Have we not lived through the 35 years since Kwame Nkrumah was set free to govern the Gold Coast as Ghana, 30 years since an exquisitely treble-crossing de Gaulle pulled France out of Algeria? Are not self-determination, decolonisation and the end of empire certain, good things for which words have been shed in Trafalgar Square and resolutions unanimously carried at Caxton Hall? To argue that civil authority in Somalia is British housing estate joyriding gangs armed with sub-machine guns and killing the people they do not cause to starve, is an intolerable intrusion upon a central principle about which serious thinkers have written seminal articles.

No one precisely says these things, but everyone is influenced by them and they underwrite the sustained failure of Europe's attitude to the beaten-to-death tenth world at its estate gates. The dovetailing of brute indifference and high-minded witter is unnerving.

Let us be clear. Mr Bush is right — in principle if not in detail — to send great numbers of troops into Somalia to make possible the provision of food to that country. He has no discernible wrong motives — the innocent desire to go out with credit for doing something effective is not a wrong motive — he seeks no oil and not much glory, the United Fruit Company is not evidently involved. He is wrong, though, in one essential particular: those troops should not expect to come back within weeks rather than months. They should expect to be in Somalia for a decade.

The reality will have to be either faced up to or brutally set aside that great parts of the recently independent world do not work. To Somalia add Ethiopia, Mozambique, Liberia; the others are lining up. The pattern, of which Somalia is the extreme example, is for ordinary authority to shift from legality to despotism of the most stupid and destructive kind, then to tribal factionalism which in turn becomes simple criminal gangsterism in the hands of the very young and very armed. Climate plays some part, the collapse of government a greater one, with over-population doing its bit, then the TV cameras move in and we all feel anguished for minutes on end.

You can only put to rights a country as thoroughly smashed up as Somalia by ruling it. Whatever the sensibilities of the UN, the one effective means for restoring life is to restore order and you can't do that by bringing the boys back after Christmas.

The gangs who are symptom and cause, whose actions bring about the deaths of innocent villagers by the hundred thousand either denied food or massacred outright, must be put down, which is to say enough of their members must be killed. There is a simple moral choice: the villagers who are truly innocent of anything, or the people now terrorising them. All smartness, all cocktail wisdom is for neglect, for a knowing indifference, a refusal to "turn the clock back to the days when we sent gunboats". The clichés of evasion sit warm on the oven-hob. And smartness and cocktail wisdom pay their dues by combining quantities of undeliverable aid with the treble-locking of their own gates against the horror of "economic refugees".

We would never say it, we are much too sophisticated for such simplistic utterances, but everything boils down to a clear understanding of one relationship: "The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, He made them high and lowly and ordered their estate." We are the practitioners of a global humbug which echoes the Victorian class system but flinches from their brutal candour. We also pay unacknowledged honour to the favourite social philosopher of the Victorians, Herbert Spencer, who believed that the unfit would die and should get on with it. Lacking such skunk-like clarity of purpose, we send help — Band-aid in every sense — nutritional first aid, but wring our hands about the real problem. There has to be, if we are resolute, a return in some form to the policing and day-to-day administration of the backward countries which political correctness with macabre untruth calls "developing".

We have, of course, contributed to the misery. David Steel spoke in the Commons about AK47 rifles available in Maputo for two dollars. The vileness of the gangs is balanced only by the vileness of the arms trade. I have never understood why Paul Henderson should be a hero, no matter how badly his friends in government let him down. He sells machine tools to despots so that poor men conscripted or harangued into uniform, can kill each other. Prison sounds like the right place for Mr Henderson.

We have also given support to awful regimes which have made the starvation and calamity likely. Wasn't Siad Barre a bulwark against communism, communism as represented by Mengistu Haile Mariam, progressive element and ally of the peoples' democracies? We meddled then, East and West, 10 to 15 years ago, with a vengeance.

The sort of meddling suggested here would have none of the trappings or the false pride of empire, no feathered hats and no Kipling. It would be a practical job of small soldiering, followed by a de facto magistracy and the supervision, first of aid, then of rebuilding — through irrigation, small scheme production and trade access, everything that should happen if development is not to be the lie of the century.

There is a sensible case for confining such an operation to one country staying, taking trouble and getting it right. And Somalia, uncomplicatedly dying for want of law and food, is the natural country. It is a matter of doing the troublesome, unthinkable, obvious thing.

Figure 7.5
Article in the *Guardian* on December 9, 1992c, (p. 20).

constructed to reflect the general interests of those dominating private activity and government within UK capitalist society although, for the reasons outlined above, this bias was nowhere near as pronounced and observable as in *The Times* and the *New York Times*.

In summary, then, all three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* constructed their coverage to favour an emphasis on superficial descriptions of the famine rather than to discuss and analyse its complex causes. In addition, the generally negative image of Somalia and the Somalis which, in my view, emerged as the "preferred" meaning of the text, was compounded because previous reporting on events in Africa in the mainstream Western media, as discussed in Chapter Three, had been so meagre and inadequate. Thus, the shallow reporting, particularly in *The Times* and the *New York Times,* about the famine's causes could not be set against considered or positive news about Somalia either in the three newspapers or in other sectors of the mainstream Western media. This was because, as also discussed in Chapter Three, such "news" was not considered "newsworthy", as it performed no noticeable function in furthering the interests of the owners and controllers of such media, or the interests of the wealthy and powerful in those Western societies.

To provide the reader of this thesis with the evidence from which I made the above assessment, I now present a detailed recording of my qualitative analysis of the coverage by the three newspapers of the famine's causes. Before proceeding, however, I should point out that, for reasons of space and clarity, and in consideration of the huge volume of material examined, only selected sections of the findings have been discussed in detail in this chapter. The first of these is the coverage by the three newspapers of the legacy of colonialism, while coverage of Theme Three and Theme Six is also presented in this chapter. The details of my qualitative and quantitative news content analysis of the other themes discussed in this chapter can be found in Appendix C.

Qualitative Aspects of the Coverage of Theme One - The Legacy of Colonialism

As discussed in Chapter Four, the colonial period in Somalia lasted for more than a century. During this time the Somali people were divided and came under five separate spheres of influence, the fine balance between the Somali nomads and their environment was irreversibly upset and the administrative apparatus of centralised states was imposed on what had formerly been a decentralised society. These factors were, I believe, significant background developments to the famine yet the *Guardian* made reference to them in a mere 1.7 % of its stories and, incredibly, *The Times* and the *New York Times*

did not consider them at all in their respective reports on the famine between June 1, 1992 and May 31, 1993. In other words, 100 years of Western colonialist control over the lives and affairs of the Somali people was almost completely ignored by the three newspapers.

This theme was discussed in two out of a total of 120 *Guardian* articles, and only one of the two examined the legacy of colonialism in depth. This article was written by Martin Woollacott,[13] who warned on February 3, 1993, (p. 19), that Western intervention in Somalia was a risky proposition considering that "everything the West has done in Africa it has done in a hurry, under the distorting play of international rivalries".[14] The scramble for Africa, wrote Woollacott, was a "botched up set of bargains" among the colonial powers at Berlin, and "was such a murderous muddle as was the scramble *out* of Africa between 1957 and 1968". Woollacott continued by stating that other crises in Africa during 1992-3, including outbreaks of violence in Zaire and Angola, were similar to the chaos in Somalia in that they "were legacies of Cold War meddling and before that of colonial mismanagement".[15] My understanding of such phrases was that they expressed a highly critical view of colonialism, in that they highlighted the negative outcomes of historical Western involvement in Africa.[16]

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[13] Martin Woollacott wrote two of the very few articles, out of the total output from all three newspapers, that, from my reading, actually criticised the role of the West and capitalism in both creating the conditions for famine and failing adequately to respond to it. These articles, both published in the *Guardian,* appeared on November 28, 1992b, (p. 23) and February 3, 1993, (p. 19).

[14] The other article, which appeared on September 15, 1992b, (p. 1-3), in the *Education Guardian* section, a tabloid lift-out aimed predominantly at schoolchildren), discussed the famine's link to colonialism in a general article outlining how the "world's worst humanitarian disaster" had come about. The article mentioned, albeit uncritically and descriptively, the divisions created between the Somali people as a result of the establishment of the five different colonial entities.

[15] This article also highlighted the inappropriateness of both the political system bequeathed to Somalia at independence in 1960, and the "quick fix" nature of ORH. It was a rare piece of incisive and analytical journalism on the crisis in Somalia.

[16] These references to the negative effects of colonialism on Somalia were in stark contrast to other articles in the *Guardian.* For example, some articles talked at length about the 1977-78 Ogaden War, whose root causes lay in the colonial partition of the Somali lands. By failing to report on any of these causes, they failed to outline the main reason *why* a country as poor as Somalia would want to expend scarce money and resources on such a war. In other words, the colonial legacy of a people divided and now desirous of reunification was not considered as an important motive in prosecuting the war. Instead, the war was presented and framed as merely a "regional dispute" (August 31, 1992, p. 19) or a "regional conflict" caused by "heightened nationalism following Somalia's independence" (August 7, 1992b, p. 19). By the failure to present and analyse external reasons for the "disputes", such articles with their explicit phrases and framing implied that the war was a product of internal factors only, and that Somalis were militaristic, aggressive and incapable of solving such "disputes" peacefully. Another article, (December 5, 1992b, p. 10), criticised the "emptiness" of Somalia's "proud boast" that the country was made up of a single tribe by highlighting how this had not prevented the clan in-fighting. Yet factors such as the imposition by the colonising powers of five separate centralised administrative structures on an essentially homogenous, nomadic people, who had lived relatively peacefully until the arrival of the European powers in the 1860s, should have been raised before the above conclusions were drawn. Similarly, it was reported on December 24, 1992a, (p.20), that Italian troops in ORH were "unpopular" among Somalis because of Italy's colonial involvement in Somalia. There was no examination of the nature of this involvement, leaving the reader to only guess at it. What the above articles indicated, to me, was a tendency by the *Guardian* to

What was even more interesting than this almost total lack of recognition by the three newspapers of the role colonialism played in creating the conditions for famine in Somalia in 1992-3 was the attempt by *The Times* and the *New York Times* to publish stories that, from my understanding, explicitly promoted neo-colonialism as the solution for the crisis in Somalia. This was evidence, in my opinion, that the propaganda model worked as a double-edged sword. *The Times'* Sam Kiley, for example, wrote on December 15, 1992c, (p. 9), that Africa was "crumbling under tribal pressures caused by boundaries drawn with a disregard for ethnicity by the outgoing colonial powers" but proposed, in an interesting piece of imperialist and patronising Orwellian doubletalk, that "UN troops should be sent in". In other words, the view being expressed, from my understanding, was that the West might have been partly responsible in creating the disaster but that they had the ability to solve it as well, a highly debatable assertion. Similarly, *The Times'* editorial of August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), felt compelled to argue for an "old-fashioned protectorate" under UN auspices which it considered was the "appropriate" response to the crisis and without which "[Somalia's] people will not survive". There was no evidence presented as to why this would be the case. The choice of the word "appropriate" was also telling, as protectorate status for Somalia was, in my view, only "appropriate" for one group: the powerful governmental and industrial elites in the developed world who stood to benefit. Furthermore, through its use of the adjective "old-

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impress that colonialism was *not* a factor in the disintegration of Somalia. In this vein, *The Times* also alluded to the role colonialism played in creating the chaos in Somalia but made no attempt to analyse or discuss this in detail. On September 1, 1992, (p. 7), for example, an article described efforts, the first in more than a century, by a group of *ugas,* (literally, "kings" or, more specifically, traditional Somali chieftains - in this case, the ugas of the Hiraan region around the town of Belet Huen), to re-establish authority over their clans in an attempt to end the violence in Somalia. Their authority, obviously, for better or worse, no longer existed, but *The Times* did not feel compelled to explain why. This indicated, to me, an explicit reluctance adequately to relate the colonial history of Somalia, since it might have raised some questions that had the potential to embarrass those elites in the West who had benefited from that history. Then, on December 2, 1992c, (p. 12), Sam Kiley asked how Somalia, with a "natural claim to nationhood" through being composed of the one tribe speaking the same language and practising the same religion, could "collapse to the point at which the world feels an obligation to save it from itself?" A powerful question, indeed, which was not met with any acknowledgement that the world which Kiley portrayed heroically as feeling it had to "save" Somalia was the same world which had embraced colonialism, in Somalia and elsewhere, and had, as I argued in Chapter Four, extracted from Somalia, by its colonial practices, much of its wealth while, at the same time, destabilising its society. Consequently, these colonial practices had, as far as I could establish, been a major contributor to Somalia's "collapse". Such conclusions, however, could not be reached if the relevant factors were not considered. In other words, these articles, both in the *Guardian* and *The Times,* illustrated to me how the manipulation of certain "facts" could affect the reading of a story. Questions were posed asking how Somalia could have "collapsed", but there was no attempt to link this situation with "facts" detailing the role of Western colonialism in creating the "collapse". Such selective reporting, on top of the almost total absence of what I would describe as "critical" reporting of this issue, meant the framework of analysis was distorted to exclude factors which might have indicated the existence of an unequal relationship between the developed and the developing world. Such selections and omissions reduced the reader's ability to deduce that the West might bear some responsibility for much of the chaos in Somalia.

fashioned", the article portrayed colonialism as a quaint and benign administrative arrangement.

Such techniques of manipulation were, in my assessment, consistent with a propaganda machine aiming to suppress the idea that neo-colonialism would be exploitative of Somalia and Somalis. On December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), *The Times* was at it again, claiming that Somalia should be placed under a UN "trusteeship" as this was the only way to ensure "lasting peace" in the country. Again, by framing the story in such positive terms, *The Times* was actively presenting an idealised view of neo-colonialism, highlighting that "lasting peace" would be its probable outcome. This bright conclusion was, in my view, debatable, especially when the record of Western colonialism in Somalia had been, as my research from Chapter Four indicated, one of brutal and blatant exploitation and destruction. In other words, implications contained in these stories were what I would regard as outright distortions, particularly given the history of past colonialism which highlighted that such solutions were far from "appropriate" for Somalia. Thus, the coverage presented in *The Times* was, in my view, an enthusiastic endorsement for established Western power vis-a-vis its social, economic and political relationship with Somalia.

In this regard, the *New York Times* also presented what I would describe as propaganda favouring elite groups within the West, by highlighting the "fact" that colonialism had been, and neo-colonialism would be, beneficial for Somalia. On August 30, 1992, (p. A12), for example, an article by Jane Perlez asked how the Somali state could have imploded when "it possessed the basic ingredients for a cohesive nation?" She did not discuss the effects of colonialism but quoted a staff member of the US Embassy in Kenya who, alarmed at the anarchy in Somalia,[17] postulated an outcome of the chaos:

> *We could end up with Africa the way it was before the colonialists came, divided into tribal enclaves.*

The article added that the staff member, along with other (unnamed) "experts", was very worried about such a trend. Perlez did not challenge these assertions nor did she state why this was worth worrying about nor did she consider that this outcome might not be disagreeable for many Somalis. Thus, through the use and face-value acceptance of the interpretations of Western sources connected to Western elites and power groups, such as the US Government, the article implied that the possible return of pre-colonial political

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[17] As with the vast majority of the coverage of the famine in the three newspapers, this article describes the entire length and breath of Somalia, including Somaliland, as having "devolved into anarchy". For more discussion of this debatable statement, see Chapter Four and the "Other Important Issues" section further on in this chapter.

and social structures composed of tribal groupings was in some unspecified way of major concern, and that the Western-style centralised nation state, complete with colonial boundaries, was a far more desirable outcome.

Why was this assertion given such excessive respect? The unquestioned belief in, and reliance on, such sources, despite their obvious bias and desire to promote the self-interest of their superiors, was one of the major "filters" identified in Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. They argued that such a filter operated to explicitly affect the shape and slant of "news" in favour of elite interests. This process had also been described by many of the other media theorists considered in Chapter Two. In this regard, information drawn from sources with the same vested interests in reproducing society as the owners and controllers of mainstream media was favoured by such media. Furthermore, as Herman and Chomsky (1988: 21-22) noted, the large public information bureaucracies of the powerful "subsidised" the mainstream media by making the "gathering" and, therefore, "production" of news easier. Consequently:

> *The large entities that provide this subsidy become "routine" news sources and have privileged access to the gates. Non-routine sources must struggle for access, and may be ignored by the arbitrary decision of the gatekeepers. It should also be noted that in the case of the largesse of the Pentagon and the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy, the subsidy is at the taxpayer's expense, so that, in effect, the citizenry pays to be propagandised in the interest of powerful groups such as military contractors and other sponsors of state terrorism.*

The aforementioned article, then, was a fine example of the explicit "filtering" effects of news production at work.[18] In addition, as Parenti (1993: 195) observed:

> *Without saying a particular story is true or not, but treating it at face value, the press engages in the propagation of misinformation - while maintaining it is being merely non-committal and objective ... [Yet] the media rarely give us a range of information and views that might allow us to form opinions contrary to the official ones that permeate the news.*

Significantly, the notion of the alleged "benefits" of neo-colonialism contained in the article was reinforced by "opinion" pieces and other articles in the *New York Times* that also worked to favour a reading which pushed the interests of elites within the capitalist state. These articles called for some form of UN "trusteeship" or even a US intervention without UN approval and framed their analysis to promote such solutions as the only way

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[18] For more discussion on the explicit bias of the mainstream media in favouring "official" sources, and its affects, see Herman and Chomsky (1988: 18-25) and Parenti (1993: 194-198).

to alleviate the crisis.[19] Anthony Lewis, for example, demonstrated what was, to me, a blatant neo-imperial attitude on November 20, 1992, (p. 31):

> *No genius is required to know what has to be done to save those human beings. Force - military force - must be used to protect the relief effort from the gangs.*

The author, of course, failed to consider whether the Somalis believed "military force" would save them or not. The question must be asked whether Mr Lewis had a vested interest in promoting military solutions. What such articles illustrated was, in my view, a very clear pro-military ideology in that non-military solutions were not even on the agenda. Another ideology of the elites, in this case neo-colonialism, was also clearly on display on November 4, 1992, (p. 30), in an editorial which stated: "If the only alternative to anarchy [in Somalia] is a UN trusteeship, then the security council needs to ponder that course". Solutions, other than neo-colonialism, to the problems of Somalia appeared to be non-existent as far as the *New York Times* was concerned. This newspaper, then, as the above article highlighted, again and again faithfully transmitted the ideas of the elites who would benefit from them.[20] What such articles implied was that alternative solutions to the crisis which excluded the involvement of wealthy and powerful Western groups and corporations and included the involvement of Somali civic leaders and elders in the peace and reconciliation process would not work and were, therefore, beyond consideration and discussion.

Thus, through the omission of any discussion of the role of colonialism in creating the conditions for famine, the three newspapers, particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* presented a weak historical overview of Somalia's colonial past and disregarded any possible cause-and-effect link between *that* past and the enormous upheavals in Somalia that immediately preceded the famine.[21] At the same time, *The Times* and the *New York Times* also published a number of stories that, from my understanding, attempted to promote certain ideologies, such as neo-colonialism. These policies, if implemented, as these two newspapers argued they should be, would have been consistent with the general interests of elites within the capitalist world, as they promoted the idea that Western corporate, military and governmental penetration of the developing world would be beneficial to the concerned parties. In other words, the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* constructed their coverage in such

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[19] These included the articles of July 23, 1992, (p. 22), November 4, 1992, (p. 30), November 19, 1992, (p. 27) and November 20, 1992, (p. 31).

[20] For discussion on the idea that there was an alternative to UN trusteeships and/or interventions, see Chapter Five and the "Other Important Issues" section later in this chapter.

[21] The two articles in the *Guardian* which did at least mention colonialism made only a minimal attempt to make this link.

a way as to present the viewpoints of the dominant elites with regard to colonialism, neo-colonialism and the 1992-3 Somalian famine in an extremely favourable light. Importantly, this was achieved through the explicit processes of news production which, as discussed in Chapter Two and earlier in this chapter, determined that "news" served a vital ideological function by reproducing the relationships of production in capitalist society. Moreover, the lack of hegemonic conflict between these elites with regard to their views on colonialism and neo-colonialism was demonstrated.

Similar patterns of distortion were observable in the coverage by the three newspapers of Theme Two.[22] However, more non-dominant viewpoints appeared in the three newspapers with regard to Theme Three, the coverage of which is now considered.

Qualitative Aspects of the Coverage of Theme Three - The Legacy of the Cold War

As was illustrated in Table 7.1 earlier in this chapter, the quantitative measure of coverage of Theme Three was very low, even if higher than the measure for coverage of Themes One and Two. With regard to quality of coverage, this consisted predominantly of shallow and superficial descriptive text, without any form of political or social context. Except in the case of the *Guardian,* there was minimal analysis of the Cold War legacy in creating the conditions for the 1992-3 famine. The *Guardian,* however, did make some attempt to place the famine in a historical context by discussing the support given by the USSR and US between 1969 and 1990 to the brutal regime of Siad Barre. *The Times* and the *New York Times,* on the other hand, either played down or minimised the role of the USSR/US in arming and supporting a tyrant, or emphasised the vital "strategic value" of Somalia for the US in fighting the Cold War.

Such reporting was, again, consistent with the general hypothesis developed in Chapter Two. Significantly, it was also closely related to one of the most powerful ideologies of the twentieth century for Western elites. This was the hegemonic ideology and religion of anticommunism which determined that the Cold War was "necessary" and "justified" to fight to "contain" or "stop" communism. Why did this have such a strong effect on the production of "news"? As Herman and Chomsky (1988: 29) stressed: "Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the specter haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status, [while] the Soviet, Chinese and Cuban revolutions were traumas to Western elites". In other words, communism

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22 See Appendix C for details of the qualitative analysis of this theme. In summary, on a quantitative level, Theme Two was discussed in 2.5 % of articles in the *Guardian* and not discussed at all in *The Times* and the *New York Times.*

represented a distinct threat to the property interests and political, economic and social power of elites in capitalist societies and, therefore, positive stories about it were strictly off the mainstream media's agenda. Consequently, if the triumph of communism was the worst imaginable result, the support of fascism abroad could be justified as a lesser evil (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 29).

This view was reflected in the coverage by the three newspapers of the legacy of the Cold War. Indeed, Herman and Chomsky (1988: 29-31) identified the anticommunism ideology in their propaganda model as one of the most potent of the five "filters" affecting news production.[23] In what way, however, was the Cold War "necessary" and, therefore, usable as an explicit ideological mechanism for producing a certain angle to the "news"? Chomsky (1992: 9) provided a succinct answer:

> *According to conventional understanding, the Cold War has been a confrontation between two superpowers ... The orthodox version [of this understanding], which is overwhelmingly dominant, holds that the driving factor in the Cold War has been virulent Soviet aggressiveness, which the US sought to contain. On one side of the conflict, we have a 'nightmare,' on the other, the 'defender of freedom.'*

In other words, the Cold War was justified as it sought to prevent destructive Soviet expansionism which was, as hegemony had asserted, a permanent policy on the table of Soviet Governments and one to be feared and resisted by "democratic" and "free" Western societies at all costs.[24]

These ideological constraints, then, were, I believe, the main mechanisms which caused the coverage by the three newspapers of this theme to be, on a qualitative level, so poor and weak. Overall, this coverage was again constructed to favour a certain reading over others and, in *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, that reading was consistent with the interests of certain elite groups, for the reasons outlined above. The *Guardian,* however, did publish some articles that were *not* consistent with these views. In total 13 (10.8 %) out of its 120 articles could be considered to have at least partly mentioned the legacy of the Cold War as having played a role in causing the famine, although only five (representing 4.2 % of 120 articles and not 10.8 %) of these 13 articles provided insightful background analysis.[25] This, again, was evidence that the

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[23] The power of this ideology to shape the news was also illustrated by Bagdikian (1992), as discussed in Chapter Two.

[24] For further discussion of this dominant view, and the power of this ideology on US society and the US media, see Chomsky (1992: 9-68) and Herman and Chomsky (1988: 29-31).

[25] These were August 7, 1992b, (p. 19), August 31, 1992, (p. 19), November 28, 1992b, (p. 23), December 24, 1992b, (p. 18), and February 3, 1993, (p.19). Of these, an excellent article by Mark Huband on August 7, 1992b, (p. 19), managed to incorporate a number of issues relating to the legacy of the Cold War in creating the tragedy of Somalia within a concise 1476-word article.

Guardian's atypical political economy allowed some publication of existing UK non-hegemonic views. These views, however, were competing with the more dominant views of the elites, which hence received far more news space.

This dominance of the hegemonic view was reflected in the remaining eight (representing 6.6 % of 120), of the 13 articles referred to in the previous paragraph. These were identified as having made some reference to the legacy of the Cold War. These articles merely mentioned the supply of arms, or the "support" and "backing" given to Barre, by the USSR/US, without qualifying or critically examining the political, historical or social context in which these events occurred.[26] For example, the eight articles described how the clan factions used the weapons supplied during the Cold War to inflict destruction in Somalia without examining *why* the factions actually initiated their conflicts. Thus, these articles made a descriptive and superficial link between the civil war and the superpowers without offering a more direct link, and a more thorough and critical analysis, of *how* the destructive *legacy* of superpower Cold War manoeuvres contributed to the civil wars in Somalia. The articles did not highlight US policy between 1978 and 1990 of supporting Barre and, given his policies, how this support consequently led to the deep divisions within Somalia's clan-based society.[27] This lack of adequate analysis was important because most of the articles, in not only the *Guardian* but also in the other two newspapers, were descriptive accounts of the famine which made constant reference to the impact of the clan-based civil wars in having created the conditions for the disaster. One example of such discourse in the *Guardian* was the article by Mark Huband, published on September 18, 1992, (p. 11), which stated:

> *The reputedly all-powerful Gen [sic] Aidid, waving his silver-tipped cane, walked among the starving people [in Bardera] and told them to sit down. But they completely ignored him. Most did not even appear to recognise the man who started the war which has led to their long, slow deaths.*

Interestingly, however, the article noted that Barre "exploited [Somalia's] geographical position as a way of attracting aid" from the USSR, US and Saudi Arabia. It did not consider the proposition that the USSR, US and Saudi Arabia exploited Barre in their "aid" programs. At the very least, this "exploitation", as far as my research indicated, was a two-way process. To me, such framing meant the article played down the blame attributable to these countries in giving "aid" that, moreover, was almost exclusively of a military nature. This was evidence, in my view, that the *Guardian* was only taking this non-dominant view to a certain point, so to speak, reflecting my hypothesis that the newspaper was still restrained by its political economy, being, as it is, owned by a company within a capitalist economy and fully integrated into that economy's structure.

[26] These were July 7, 1992b, (p. 20), August 3, 1992, (p. 22), August 18, 1992, (p. 8), November 27, 1992c, (p. 20), December 8, 1992, (p. 12), December 9, 1992a, (p. 1), January 9, 1993c, (*Guardian Weekend* p.14-15, 38), January 12, 1993b, (p. 22)

[27] This issue is also discussed in the Coverage of Theme Six section further on in this chapter.

Again, such framing and emphasis implied to me that the Somalis themselves were solely responsible for the outbreak of the wars and the subsequent famine.[28]

Other *Guardian* articles also discussed the USSR/US's support for Barre but constructed the stories in such a way as to place almost all the blame for the country's destruction on Barre. This was achieved through a framework of analysis which concentrated on Barre's reign of terror between 1978 and 1990 with the implication that the US was somehow tricked into supporting the dictator! On December 12, 1992d, (p. 13), for example, David Hurst wrote that blame for the famine must be placed "in equal part" on Barre and on the superpowers because Barre, in addition to playing along with the superpower game, indulged "in other characteristically Third World forms of misrule". While this might or might not have been the case, it ignored the "fact" that, given Barre's unpopularity following the military defeat in the Ogaden in 1978, it would have been extremely difficult for him to have remained in power for a further 13 years if he had not had US support. It also ignored the "fact" that Barre's regime collapsed following the withdrawal of US support for him in 1990 - surely, not a co-incidence. If the reader had been provided with such information, a very different reading, implying that the US was directly responsible for the crisis in Somalia, would most likely have been made.[29]

Another article, (*Education Guardian*, September 15, 1992b, p. 1-3), noted how the USSR and the US had each been, at certain periods during the Cold War, Somalia's "protector". This word, in this context, implied that Somalia had benefited in some undescribed way from the superpowers. Yet the "fact" that almost all this "protection" for Somalia had been in the form of military assistance to a dictator was not noted, nor that much of this military "protection" had been used by Barre against his own people. The article also failed to state from whom or from what Somalia was being protected. Most probably from Ethiopia, another client state of the superpowers! Thus, the USSR armed Somalia to "protect" it from US-backed Ethiopia, while the US armed Ethiopia to "protect" it from the USSR-backed Somalia, until the mid-1970s, after which time the situation was reversed! The language used and the framework of analysis, I believe, reduced the ability of the reader to conclude that the Cold War and the type of "protection" it provided was anything but beneficial to Somalia and its people. It was, however, consistent with the hegemonic and "taken-for-granted" views about the "necessity" of the Cold War, views which had been prime influences in shaping the geo-political

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[28] Another explicit and concise example of this framing was the article on Thursday October 29, 1992, (p. 22).

[29] Furthermore, it implied to me that Barre, a corrupt dictator of a poor and impoverished country, had as much influence over the superpowers with regard to their actions in Somalia, as the superpowers had over Barre, a highly debatable assertion as far as I am concerned.

relationships between the developed and developing worlds since the end of World War II.

The quality of the coverage of the legacy of the Cold War in *The Times* and the *New York Times* was, in my assessment, far lower. In *The Times,* five (3.4 %) out of 148 articles could be considered to have at least partly mentioned the legacy of the Cold War as having played a role in causing the famine but all five were descriptive in content, merely mentioning the existence of arms in Somalia or the supply of arms to Barre by the USSR/US without any reference to the political, historical or social context.[30] Again, such a limited framework of analysis served only to play down US and Western complicity in causing the famine. A typical report was that of July 6, 1992, (p. 11), which described how British-made weapons had "begun to surface" in Somalia after being obtained by the exiled Barre and his supporters in Kenya, a UK ally and capitalist state.[31] There was no further, let alone thorough, investigation of the sources of these supplies, such as any consideration that UK arms exports to Kenya might have been diverted by a corrupt Moi regime to Somalia.[32]

Importantly, such investigation would not have been in the interests of many elites in the West, as Kenya was, (and still is), a pro-Western regime, while the subject of Western arms exports to the developing world might have raised difficult and awkward questions for the large, (and profitable), Western arms manufacturers. This at a time when, as Baird (1994b: 5) noted, falling UK Government defence budgets have meant UK arms manufacturers have had to rely increasingly on sales to the developing world to maintain those profits as well as their influence on government defence policies. If UK arms exports to the developing world were reduced or curtailed, the profits and influence of the UK "defence" industry might be correspondingly reduced or curtailed, which, in turn, might negatively affect the economy.[33] This was not in the interests of the owner of *The Times,* Rupert Murdoch's News International, which, as outlined in Chapter Two, had an economic and political imperative to prevent discussion of "sensitive" matters, such as

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30 These were July 6, 1992, (p. 11), July 14, 1992, (p. 13), August 7, 1992, (p. 8), August 20, 1992b, (p. 11) and August 29, 1992, (p. 8). The article on August 20b did actually raise the point that the superpowers "created the catastrophe" in Somalia, but worded the article in such a way as to present it as the opinion of African countries. *The Times'* article did not offer support for this opinion. The fact that the dominant image in the West of the people in the developing world, as discussed in Chapter Three, was overwhelmingly negative and one of inferiority, reduced, in my view, the potential strength of the African countries' argument for the reader.

31 This claim was repeated on August 29, 1992, (p. 8).

32 Daniel Arap Moi has been President of Kenya since 1978 and, as Miller (1984: 88, 91) observed, has since openly embraced a pro-Western course for his country. For more discussion on the corrupt and repressive nature of Moi's regime, see Wamwere (1996). See also Miller (1984: 88-148).

33 For more discussion on the importance for Western arms manufacturers of arms exports to the developing world, and how this export drive has played a major role in prolonging and worsening conflicts in the developing world, see Baird (1994b: 4-7).

the relationship between "defence" spending and the state of the economy. For these reasons, I believe deeper investigation of the "facts" in the aforementioned article was beyond the bounds of possibility for *The Times'* journalists and editors, constrained, as they were, by the overt and covert ideological forces pressuring them to present the "news" in a way which would not harm the interests of the newspaper's owner.

Moreover, in the absence of any detailed examination of the Cold War legacy for Somalia, other articles in *The Times* were constructed to favour a reading that Barre was a leader of a developing country who had been backed by the US in good faith but who had abused the support.[34] Such presentation reduced US complicity in the destruction of Somalia and this was an interpretation of the Somalian crisis which US governmental elites, concerned for the preservation and maintenance of US global hegemony, would most likely have endorsed. Yet, as discussed in Chapter Four, the US gave Barre sufficient military aid to allow him not only to stay in power long after he had lost popular support following his defeat in the Ogaden desert in 1978 but also to inflict numerous and horrendous human rights abuses on his subjects. *The Times* also published articles that, from my reading, tried to shift the blame for the crisis onto the Somalis, to deflect attention from the role the governmental and military-industrial elites in the West had played in creating the crisis. On August 29, 1992, (p. 8), for example, an article by Sam Kiley which outlined moves by General Aidid's forces to obtain arms detailed how Aidid's forces were "looking for arms salesmen in an attempt to break the UN embargo" on arms sales to Somalia. The article did not elaborate on where these "arms salesmen" would obtain the weapons to be onsold to mercenaries such as General Aidid.[35] This meant there was no need to consider the possibility that "arms salesmen" might actually obtain weapons from Western suppliers and that those suppliers were often subsidised by

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[34] On August 6, 1992b, (p. 11), for example, an editorial claimed Barre's "cruel, corrupt and tribally divisive" regime was "inexcusably tolerated by the West". My understanding of such a phrase was the West was not directly connected in any way to Barre. This article, therefore, implied to me that the West had little or nothing to do with the actual cruelties of the regime. Then, on December 2, 1992d, (p. 12), a profile on Barre stated how he had ruled with USSR/US "backing". The article, however, did not elaborate on the nature of this "backing", and there was no direct and clear link made between Barre's "excesses" and that "backing". Such simplifications, in my mind, were an explicit attempt to absolve the USSR and US governments, and the West, of any blame for the creation and prolongation of the crisis.

[35] The article also quoted a "Western ambassador" as saying: "It seems incredible that anyone is trying to get arms into Somalia". There was, however, no attempt by Kiley to expand on this quote and detail what I believe the ambassador was alluding to - that arms imports into Somalia had already played a major role in prolonging and worsening the crisis. Thus, there was also no discussion of the "fact" that the death and destruction which Barre rained on Somalia was due to foreign, (predominantly US), arms exports to a bloody and ruthless dictator, or of the "fact" that the US could turn a blind eye to such atrocities for the sake of Cold War geopolitics, especially as these geopolitical concerns, as the power of Western hegemony had dictated since the end of World War II, were of fundamental and paramount importance. In my mind, the failure to introduce these discussions into the debate was entirely consistent with the general predictions of the explicit bias media theories discussed in Chapter Two, and further evidence of my hypothesis.

Western governments. Coverage of such considerations might, again, lead to awkward questions being raised in the UK about the nature of, and accountability for, UK arms exports to the developing world and, consequently, negatively affect the size, strength and robustness of the UK "defence" industry and, subsequently, the UK economy.[36] These considerations were well beyond the limit of acceptable hegemonic debate and, therefore, were not aired by *The Times.*

Similarly, Kiley quoted Boutros Boutros-Ghali, (January 7, 1993a, p. 10) as saying:

> *There are Somali leaders who are still under the impression that Somalia is of strategic importance ... this is no longer true, as it was during the Cold War. The international community could say 'Enough is enough' and walk away.*

This statement was not challenged by Kiley, not unsurprisingly considering it was a classic example of an accepted and "taken-for-granted" hegemonic view *par excellence.* This view, as I interpreted it, determined that it was "necessary" for the "international community" to tolerate/support the blatant human rights abuses of Barre from 1978 to 1990 because of some undefined "strategic importance".[37] *The Times* could not define this "strategic importance" because, as my outline in Chapter Four indicated, it benefited only the "international community"[38] and not the Somali people. A demonstration of the inanities, immoralities and selfishness of the Cold War, as they related to Somalia, might reflect badly on the governmental and industrial elites in the West who perpetrated them and, therefore, they could not be the topic of acceptable discourse.[39]

The *New York Times* similarly failed to examine this legacy critically. In this newspaper, 21 articles out of 250, (representing 8.4 %), alluded to the legacy of the Cold War as having played a role in causing the famine, but only three of these articles, (i.e., three out of 250 or 1.2 %), analysed the topic within a political context. Even within these three articles, however, "facts" which reflected adversely on the interests of certain elite groups within US society were, in my view, either distorted or placed in a position that would

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[36] For the reasons outlined previously.

[37] In this regard, it was related to the general hegemonic view, outlined earlier in this chapter, which argued that all acts were "necessary" in the "strategic" Cold War "fight" against the USSR.

[38] Again, the choice of this phrase was interesting. In this context, (placed within phrases and words such as the last line of the extract), the term "international community" implied that there existed a group of nations and people who now concerned themselves with advancing the common good, and would no longer accept human rights abuses in countries such as Somalia. Such an optimistic representation was, in my view, highly debatable, especially considering the past and present human rights record of this "international community".

[39] The acceptance and promotion of such "taken-for-granted" hegemonic views meant that, in my reading of what the article was trying to imply, in 1988, when more than 60,000 Somalis had been massacred in Hargeisa, Barre's Western backers had obviously been justified when they failed to say "enough is enough" and failed to intervene because Somalia had "strategic importance" that was, in some unspecified way, far more vital to some unspecified person/s or organisation!

reduce their impact on the readership, these techniques again reflecting the active role of the media in limiting the issues and terms of debate.[40] This process was most evident in the third of these articles, (February 6, 1993b, p. A21), in which the influence of the Cold War on Somalia was discussed but with the text slanted to favour a pro-US and anti-USSR reading of that influence.[41]

Of the remaining 18 articles which made some allusion to the legacy of the Cold War, 14 were totally descriptive in content with only very brief references to the question of arms in Somalia or to the supply of arms to Barre by the USSR/US or to the "support" and "backing" given to Barre by the USSR/US.[42] There was no analysis as to the political,

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[40] For example, in one of the articles, (December 9, 1992d, p. A16), there was detailed discussion of the weapons supplied to Somalia, but this concentrated on the "fact" that more arms were supplied by the USSR and its Eastern European and Libyan allies than by the US. Such an emphasis, to me, served to reduce US complicity and feed into conventional codes and hegemonic moral and political attitudes which promoted the idea that the communist states had been somehow "evil". This was consistent with the anticommunism "filter" of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. More incredibly, however, the article faithfully and unquestioningly repeated a Pentagon claim that the US supplied Somalia with only US$35m in "lethal assistance" between 1981 and 1989 and not the US$600m in military aid which, as my research indicated, was a more probable figure. This was a fine example of the acceptance at face-value of "facts" produced by people who had a vested interest in promoting a very narrow point of view. Again, why was it accepted so readily? Furthermore, the article was predominantly concerned with the possible danger US troops might face from Somalis armed with weapons provided by their own government, a concern which reflected a limited hegemonic debate between elites in the US as to the wisdom of sending troops to Somalia. (The limited range of debate about ORH in the *New York Times* is discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight). There was little explicit link between the supply of those arms and the chaos in Somalia. In another article, (February 21, 1993a, p. A3), Diana Jean Schemo wrote: "Though clashes between clans would occasionally erupt [before 1960], it was largely the weapons supplied by the superpowers during the cold war that led to the country's breakdown". From my understanding of this sentence, a distinct and explicit link between the actions of the superpowers and the famine in Somalia was being alluded to. Yet this concise summary, which begged for elaboration and critical discussion, was placed near the end of a very long story describing the chaos in Somalia and was not explored in any detail, thereby reducing its impact. This was, I would conclude, further evidence for this thesis' hypothesis in that non-dominant views could occasionally appear in the mainstream media but they would often be framed and positioned in such a way, as a result of the overt and covert influence of the greater hegemonic power contained within the political economy of such media, to minimise their ability to inform and influence the reader.

[41] This report argued that the US Government's moves to begin supporting Barre in 1977 were part of Jimmy Carter's attempts to build "constructive new relationships" with Third World countries, but the use of such a positive adjective, which implied that there were equal benefits for both parties concerned, was, as I argued in Chapter Four, only suitable when referring to the US and a very small number of people in Somalia. Suffice to say it was hardly "constructive" for the vast majority of the Somali people, as my research in Chapter Four indicated. Furthermore, the report claimed the chaos in Somalia began with the 1974-76 revolution in Ethiopia, which demolished US-USSR détente in the Horn of Africa and "brought on" the bloody Ogaden War. In my understanding of such an argument, Cold War manoeuvres in distant developing world regions were presented as somehow beneficial to the two nations concerned, (Ethiopia and Somalia), and the ending of this convivial arrangement with the "demolition" of détente was to be much regretted. There was no mention of the role of colonialism in creating the conditions for the war, nor of the role of US support for Barre between 1978 and 1990 in creating the chaos in Somalia. Discussion of these points might have changed the "preferred" meaning to one which was more critical of the US and the West.

[42] These articles were July 12, 1992, (p. A12), August 2, 1992b, (Sec. 4, p. 6), August 26, 1992a, (p. A4), August 30, 1992, (p. A12), November 16, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), November 16, 1992b, (p. A17), December 2, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 4, 1992a, (p. A1, A14), December 14, 1992a, (p. A1,

historical or social contexts[43] so that, again, attention was deflected from the vital role US governmental and military-industrial elites played in contributing to the chaos in Somalia.[44] The remaining four articles were constructed to favour a reading that US Government policy of arming Barre was justified by highlighting the "strategic" value of Somalia to the US in fighting the Cold War.[45] Once again, this was a "taken-for-granted" hegemonic view encompassed within a conventional discourse and code of thinking. Yet it was published without qualification despite its extremely subjective nature and the "fact" that the policy had caused immeasurable Somali suffering.

On October 4, 1992, (p. A16), for example, the *New York Times* argued that, because Somalia was a "Cold War asset", this was sufficient reason for weapons to be "given" to Somalia.[46] From my reading, the article was implying that the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Somalis as a result of the use of these weapons was but an unfortunate side-effect of a policy - that is, the prosecution of the Cold War - that, in the past, had been deemed "necessary". The power of that ideology, (related, as discussed previously, to that of anticommunism), was embodied in these four articles which were shaped to fit the dominant hegemonic views and understandings of why the Cold War was fought. Indeed

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A8), December 25, 1992, (p. A11), January 2, 1993, (p. A1, A2), January 5, 1993a, (p. A1, A7), January 14, 1993b, (p. A5) and February 21, 1993c, (Sec. 4, p. 6).

[43] On November 16, 1992b, (p. A17), for example, Barre was reported as having been "supported" by the USSR/US between 1969 and 1990, but no elaboration was forthcoming as to what the term "supported" meant. No mention was made, for example, of the role the provision of USSR/US arms played in obliterating opposition to Barre. As such, the term conveyed to me that the arrangement was beneficial to the Somalian people in some undescribed way. In a more trivial context, the weapons were reported on August 26, 1992a, (p. A4) and August 30, 1992, (p. A12), as having been "left behind" by the departing superpowers, this choice of words again, in my opinion, playing down and distorting the explicit role the US played in deliberately arming a bloody dictator.

[44] In this regard, there were also four other, slightly different, articles in the *New York Times,* (July 23, 1992, p. A22, January 8, 1993c, p. A24, February 6, 1993b, p. A21 and March 3, 1993, p. A6), which played down the role of the USSR/US in the establishment and maintenance of the Barre dictatorship. In these articles, it was a "crafty" Barre, (January 8, 1993c, p. A24), who "played" the US and USSR "against each other" (March 3, 1993, p. A6). In my reading of text with such tone and framework, this implied that the superpowers were innocently strung along by a cunning Barre into providing him with weapons. In addition, the article on February 6 discussed the defeat of Barre in the 1977-78 Ogaden War and placed the blame for the anarchy in Somalia solely on that defeat. No mention was made of the US support for Barre after that humiliating 1978 defeat, support that, as my research outlined in Chapter Four indicated, was instrumental in giving Barre the means to maintain his dictatorship for another 13 years. A further two articles, (December 15, 1992b, p. A8 and December 23, 1992c, p. A6), implied that the gun culture existing in Somalia in 1992-3 was in some way part of the indigenous culture. In both articles, these "facts", which were little more than racist generalisations, were attributed to foreign sources and not challenged.

[45] These were July 19, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 8), October 4, 1992, (p. A1, A16), November 4, 1992, (p. A30) and November 29, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 16).

[46] Again, the choice of words, and the context within which they have been placed, was significant. To me, they implied that, because Somalia was an "asset" to the US, Somalia benefited by being given the means with which it could, presumably, defend itself against communist enemies and intruders. That the vast majority of the Somali people would hardly benefit from such "support", Barre being a dictator and, therefore, more than likely to use these arms to rule and control his subjects, was not discussed. In other words, it was hardly a benefit for the Somali people that the US Government considered their country to be an "asset"!

another article, (December 6, 1992f, Sec.4, p. 1), actually implied that the Cold War had been a *positive* influence on Somalia by stating:

> *As countries crumble without the stabilising glue of the Cold War to hold them together, their peoples are turning more frequently to outsiders for salvation.*

From my understanding of this article, countries like Somalia were now falling apart because the influence of the Cold War in somehow keeping them "stabilised" was now gone. This article, however, like almost all those printed in the *New York Times* about the famine, did not consider the notion that it was the Cold War that had sewn the seeds for this disintegration. As such a notion would emphasise that the Cold War had been a *negative* influence on Somalia, it was not taken into account. Furthermore, it would have made a mockery of any idea that the Somalis could want the "stabilising glue" of US support for a murderous dictator. Thus, the implied message of the article was, in my opinion, a misrepresentation of quite galling proportions, made more preposterous by the inference that only in "outsiders" did Somalis see any hope for "salvation". Furthermore, "salvation" was not defined, while the tone of the article implied that the *New York Times* did not view "outsiders" as neo-imperialists determined to exploit the country to further their own interests as they might very well do, considering the arguments outlined in Chapters Four and Five. The *New York Times,* then, has, again, slanted a story to make it consistent with the views and interests of its owners, views and interests that co-incide with the dominant views and interests of other elites in the capitalist West.

As with Themes One and Two, then, "news" selection, treatment and presentation in *The Times* and the *New York Times* with regard to the legacy of the Cold War was closely correlated with the promotion of the interests of the owners and controllers of these two newspapers. These interests did not conflict with, and indeed were a reflection of, the general interests of Western elites, particularly those connected with the government and military sectors of capitalist societies. In other words, there was little hegemonic debate among elites concerning how the Cold War should be viewed. Moreover, the hegemonic power contained within these two newspapers' political economies generally prevented the publication of non-hegemonic views about the Cold War as it affected Somalia. The different and atypical political economy of the *Guardian,* however, meant that in this newspaper *some* stories were published which attributed some responsibility to these elites for the famine.

Similar patterns of quality and quantity of coverage by the three newspapers were found in relation to Theme Four, the consideration of the nexus between the sudden US withdrawal of support for Barre in 1990 and the crisis, and Theme Five, which

considered the "fact" that the destitute state of Somali society in 1992-3 meant that the problems of food shortages in Somalia were exacerbated into a major famine crisis. A short summary of the treatment of these themes is now presented.

Summary of Qualitative Aspects of the Coverage of Themes Four and Five

As discussed in Chapter Four, US support for Barre was withdrawn in 1990 not because of concern over his brutal dictatorship and his disregard for human rights but because the end of the Cold War and developments before, during and after the 1990-1 Gulf War had meant Somalia had become superfluous to US foreign policy and US global interests and needs. As well, the US-imposed strategies for development contained in the World Bank/IMF-designed structural adjustment programmes, (SAPs) had changed agricultural practices. This meant that the famine was more a consequence of the long-term agricultural, economic and social disintegration of Somalia, a disintegration predominantly engineered by foreign interference in the nation's affairs, rather than of actual food shortages. Yet the coverage given to these important and external historical, political and economic factors behind the famine was, in the case of *The Times* and the *New York Times,* virtually non-existent and, in the case of the *Guardian,* minimal, with only a few articles being published on these important issues.

The quality and quantity of the coverage given by the three newspapers is presented in more detail in Appendix C. Suffice to say here that the meagre quantity and poor quality of coverage given to Theme Four, for example, by the three newspapers, but by *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, again demonstrated an almost complete lack of interest in examining the causes of the famine in any context.[47] Such reticence, and the differences in the quantity and quality of coverage between the *Guardian* and the other two newspapers, was consistent with the political economies of, and the relative interests of the owners of, the three newspapers. With regard to Theme Five, however, all three newspapers displayed a distinct lack of interest in establishing any sort of link between poverty and the famine.[48] Poverty was a fundamental factor that determined the extent to which food shortages caused outright starvation among Somalis. Explaining poverty, however, would have meant having to explain the economic and political relationships between the developed and the developing world. As this had the potential to paint global capitalism in the most unfavourable light, and to harm the interests of those governmental and private elites who profited from the existing relationship, the

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[47] In summary, on a quantitative level, Theme Four was discussed in 8.3 % of articles in the *Guardian* and not discussed at all in *The Times* and the *New York Times.*

[48] In summary, on a quantitative level, Theme Five was discussed in 0.8 % of articles in the *Guardian,* in 0.6% of articles in *The Times* and in 0.4 % of articles in the *New York Times.*

mechanisms of the propaganda model determined that all three newspapers would be disinclined to attempt such explanations for the reasons outlined previously. Significantly, there was far more inclination among the three newspaper's reporters to suggest that drought or the chewing of *qat* by teenagers was a more important contributing factor to the famine.[49]

Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of Theme Six - the Civil Wars in Somalia 1991-1992

The examination of coverage by the three newspapers of Theme Six - the Civil Wars - revealed similar patterns of quantity and quality of coverage to those detailed regarding coverage of Themes One, Two and Four. As outlined in Chapter Four, the civil wars in Somalia during 1991 and 1992 were the direct cause of the anarchy and chaos which brought on the severe food shortages that led to famine in parts of Somalia in mid-1992. These wars, however, did not occur in a vacuum and, as far as my research indicated, the outbreak of civil war in Somalia following Siad Barre's overthrow in January, 1991, was more a consequence of the deep divisions fostered by Barre and surreptitiously encouraged by the US, than of any other factor. The *Guardian* considered this "fact" worth reporting in a mere two articles,[50] while *The Times* and the *New York Times* once again failed to discuss this "fact" even once. What was more telling than this quantitative finding, however, was the quality of what was reported about the war.

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[49] Yet, as discussed in Chapter Four and in Appendix A, drought played virtually no part in the 1992-3 Somalian famine. Furthermore, the idea that the famine was due to the destructive activities of *qat* chewing youths *per se* ignored the social dislocations which had occurred in Somalia as a result of external interference in the nation's affairs and that caused this misuse of the drug. In other words, there was, again, no analysis as to *why* the *qat* was chewed in such enormous quantities by so many teenagers, such usage being so at variance with the more traditional usage of the drug, where it was chewed in small quantities by men in quiet social gatherings. Nor was there any discussion about the comparative ease with which *qat* flights were made, when relief agencies such as the ICRC experienced great difficulty in arranging aid flights. Furthermore, there was no recognition that Kenya, as a capitalist and pro-US state, could have been pressured by the US and UK governments, had they desired it, to crack down on the *qat* flights.

[50] One of these was Mark Huband's excellent analysis of August 7, 1992b, (p. 19), which noted the link between Barre, increased clan divisions and US support for Barre. The other article was a feature on Somali writer Nuruddin Farah, (April 3, 1993, p. 29), buried in the Guardian's arts pages and, therefore, placed in a position in the newspaper where it would have a minimal impact. This article consisted of a long review of a new book by Farah and only briefly discussed how the novel blamed "the complex and debilitating collusion of donor governments, multinational companies and local ruling elites in sabotaging [Africa's] autonomy". Another two articles, (November 28, 1992b, p. 23, and December 5, 1992b, p. 10), discussed the role of Barre in fostering increased clan divisions but did so without putting it in a wider context by mentioning the US support for Barre. In other words, US Government complicity in creating the conditions for famine in parts of Somalia was not considered, as to do so would have involved a major challenge to established political power. This was impossible under the premises of the propaganda model, for the reasons outlined in Chapter Two and earlier on in this chapter.

All three newspapers primarily attributed the causes of the 1992-3 Somalian famine to a "war" based on "clan rivalries". Moreover *The Times* and the *New York Times,* in particular, constructed much of their coverage of the famine to favour a reading that ascribed blame for the disaster solely on a "civil war" that, apparently, had no causes or essential preconditions. These two newspapers did not offer any critique of the thesis that external influences, in particular the role of the US in supporting Barre from 1978 to 1990, had anything to do with the outbreak of this war. This did not meet the test of utility to elite interests in the US Government and military and, as such, was not a hegemonic view. Therefore, it was not "news". Yet, as I argued in Chapter Four, it was this support for Barre which allowed the dictator to divide the Somali clans and create the conditions that eventually led to the war. Only the *Guardian* made any effort to discuss this factor although, again, critical analysis was minimal, and was far outweighed by descriptive accounts of the acts, (the fighting) and results, (famine), of the civil war.[51]

In other words, the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* in discussing the impact of the civil wars on the famine, presented their coverage without placing it in a wider context by analysing the issues, events, politics and history behind the conflict. Such a news slant, in my opinion, constituted a major attempt by the three newspapers, but by *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, to "manage" the news they produced to either exclude from consideration as much as possible the role of Western governmental and military-industrial organisations and elites in fanning the fires of war in Somalia, or to exonerate these agencies, for the reasons previously outlined. At the same time, the three newspapers also offered zero coverage of Somalian attempts to mediate the crisis. Considering the context of such reporting this led, in my opinion, to the favouring of a text which conveyed an extremely negative image of Somalia as a backward country disintegrating because of the bloody actions of some of its people. "Clan fighting" was a concept presented without any context, and this conveyed the impression that the problem derived from some sort of "weakness" in the Somali psyche. That destruction on the scale that occurred in Somalia in 1992, as a result of "clan fighting", had never been experienced in Somalia during former periods of "clan fighting", was not an issue for *The Times* and the *New York Times* or, in most instances, for the *Guardian.*

What was "news", then, reflected the imperative of mainstream US and UK media operations to not pose a threat to US and UK economic and political elites. Hence, all three newspapers deflected potential threats by presenting the civil wars as a problem

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[51] This, again, was a reflection, I would argue, of the atypical political economy of the *Guardian* which meant there was less hegemonic resistance to non-hegemonic views.

completely of Somalia's making and achieved this presentation through descriptive reporting that failed to place the "facts" in any sort of context.[52] The *Guardian,* for example, emphasised the role of the civil wars in Somalia during 1991 and 1992 in creating the conditions for famine in 28 articles, (or 23 % of the 120 articles on the topic and seven times the coverage given to Theme Six). But none of these articles analysed, in any way whatsoever, *why* the wars had begun and were occurring. In 10 of the articles, the devastation and starvation in Somalia was simply the result of "war", "civil war", "civil strife", "internal conflict", "heavy fighting" or "political unrest".[53] As no factors or reasons were presented to explain the "war", "civil war", "civil strife", "internal conflict", "heavy fighting" or "political unrest" presented, the use of such words, in this context, emphasised a very negative image of Somalis as aggressive and antagonistic.[54]

The remaining 18 articles stated in some detail that the destruction had been caused by fighting between feuding clans and/or mentioned that the clans had been fighting Barre but had splintered following his overthrow in January 1991.[55] No cause was given for the "lawlessness" (July 27, 1992, p. 11; January 4, 1993a, p. 20) and "volatile political situation" (December 12, 1992, p. 9), in Somalia. Again, such negative descriptions presented without a wider political context portrayed, to me, that the Somalis were brutal and/or uncivilised, especially as such descriptions were extremely negative. Similarly, there was no reason offered for the existence of "feuding warlords", (November 27, 1992a, p. 1), even though they had been "former allies" (December 9, 1992a, p. 1), or for the "fierce fighting" resulting from the USC "split" (December 8, 1992, p. 12). In essence, what was being demonstrated here was the power of the newspaper's ideology and political economy to create, through exaggerations, omissions, interpretations of the "facts" and use of certain phrases, a preferred "meaning" and understanding of the fighting that appeared "objective" but actually favoured elite groups. In other words, descriptive simplifications which accorded with the general processes of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model were the order of the day. A typical example appeared on December 12, 1992, (p. 7):

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[52] The exceptions were the two articles in the *Guardian* referred to above.

[53] These were June 26, 1992, (p. 12), July 30, 1992b, (p. 20), August 3, 1992, (p. 22), August 8, 1992a, (p. 10), August 18, 1992, (p. 8), September 15, 1992a, (p. 9), September 26, 1992, (p. 11), November 16, 1992, (p. 11), March 4, 1993, (p. 12) and April 29, 1993, (p. 22).

[54] Indeed, on September 26, 1992, (p. 11), Mark Huband emphasised that the war "had no ideological basis", conveniently ignoring, as I contended in Chapter Four, that it was the competing ideologies of the US and USSR which had been a major catalyst in creating the conditions for war in Somalia.

[55] These were July 11, 1992, (p. 14), July 27, 1992, (p. 11), July 30, 1992a, (p. 22), August 5, 1992, (p. 20), August 7, 1992a, (p. 9), August 10, 1992, (p. 22), August 11, 1992, (p. 18), August 22, 1992, (p. 10), September 18, 1992, (p. 11), November 25, 1992b, (p 10), November 27, 1992a, (p. 1), December 8, 1992, (p. 12), December 9, 1992a, (p. 1), December 12, 1992a, (p. 1), December 17, 1992, (p. 9), December 29, 1992, (p. 7), January 4, 1993a, (p. 20) and March 9, 1993, (p. 11).

> *The two [Aidid and Mahdi] turned on each other after joining forces to oust the former dictator, Mohammed Siad Barre, in January 1991. Their power struggle caused much of the bloody chaos behind the famine which has killed more than 300,000 Somalis.*[56]

While the above paragraph contained certain "facts", other "facts", such as the role of the US in creating the conditions for the "power struggle", were omitted. In other words, ideological power and political economy have served to emphasise a particular side of the story, (that the war's causes were solely internal). In this regard, other stories were constructed to favour a reading that pushed the blame for the famine in Somalia totally on the "warlords",[57] again ignoring the many external factors which led to the involvement of men such as General Aidid in fighting a war.[58] Furthermore, almost all of the above articles included descriptive accounts of the outcomes of the war, such as the famine, while a further five articles were predominantly descriptive accounts of these outcomes.[59] In these articles, classical cliched images of starving African children were presented without any explanation of the reasons behind their distress. While many of the stories were powerful and moving, their failure to provide context by connecting the events with some of the underlying external causes meant that the articles favoured a reading about the causes of the famine which emphasised negative images of African helplessness and despair.[60] Such an interpretation also had the potential to deflect attention and criticism from the foreign policy of the US, a staunch ally of the UK.

In *The Times,* too, there was considerable attention given to descriptive reporting of the role the 1991-2 civil wars in Somalia played in creating the conditions for famine without any analysis as to the factors behind the wars. In total, there were 39 articles (26.4 %) which discussed the contribution of the war to the famine,but only in a superficial way. Blame for the famine was placed on "war", "anarchy" and/or "clan feuding", with the

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56 A similar simplification appeared on July 30, 1992a, (p. 22): "After the overthrow of the Marxist dictator, Mohammed Siad Barre, in January 1991, the victorious United Somalia Congress split into warring factions. Their conflict devastated Mogadishu and splintered the country along clan lines". Note how Barre was described here as a "Marxist" dictator, even though he had been supported by the US from 1978 to 1990. Significantly, Barre was never described, in any one of the 518 articles from all three newspapers examined for this thesis, as a "fascist" or "rightist", titles which had the potential to reflect badly on the premises of US foreign policy. The failure to use such terms indicated the one-sided nature of the reporting on Barre.

57 Such as on September 18, 1992, (p. 11).

58 In addition, another article, (July 9, 1992, p. 11), described the fate of Somalis fleeing Somalia for Yemen, without offering any explanation of why they were fleeing.

59 These were August 6, 1992, (p. 1), September 5, 1992, (Guardian Weekend, p. 20-21), September 7, 1992, (p. 1), October 29, 1992, (p. 22) and February 9, 1993, (p. 11).

60 This was also evident in the very negative headlines used in these articles, which included "Somali town waits to die as warlords feud" (October 29, 1992, p. 22), and "Despair in the villages beyond Hope" (February 9, 1993, p. 11). The latter headline suggested that the entire population of a town were passively resigned to their fate, an image of helplessness and hopelessness which did not allow for the possibility of any Somali resistance or strength of character.

factors behind such descriptions not articulated. The range of possible meanings was thereby limited to exclude Western involvement and complicity. Nine of the articles, for example, postulated that the destruction and starvation in Somalia was predominantly the result of "war" without discussing in any way whatsoever the reasons behind this "war".[61] Thus, starvation was due to "growing chaos" (February 2, 1993, p. 13) and a "confused situation" in Somalia, (August 15, 1992, p. 8), after the country "collapsed" into "civil war" (March 5, 1993, p. 11), a war "which is the root cause for the deaths of at least 350,000 people" (January 6, 1993, p. 11). Such simplifications conveyed the impression that the causes of the war had been internal. Indeed, *The Times* chose not to take such simplifications one step further and elaborate on the "root cause" of the war because, to do so, would entail harsh criticism of Western foreign policy in Somalia, strictly taboo under the terms and conditions of functional propaganda necessary in this case. For the same reason, *The Times* chose not to elaborate on what caused "anarchy" and "the collapse of law and order", (blamed as the cause of the famine in five articles),[62] or what caused "clan divisions" and "fierce fighting" between "tribal gangs", (blamed as the cause of the famine in 25 articles).[63] Once again, such choice of words, together with limited context and framework of analysis, meant that the war and the motivations behind it were highlighted as strictly internal.

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61 These were August 15, 1992, (p. 8), September 4, 1992, (p. 6), November 24, 1992a, (p. 6), December 4, 1992, (p. 17), December 12, 1992b, (p. 11), December 24, 1992, (p. 8), January 6, 1993, (p. 11), February 27, 1993, (p. 13) and March 5, 1993, (p. 11).

62 These were August 1, 1992, (p. 7), September 7, 1992, (p. 8), September 9, 1992, (p. 11), September 17, 1992, (p. 12) and November 28, 1992, (p. 1).

63 These were July 6, 1992, (p. 11), July 27, 1992, (p. 8), July 29, 1992, (p. 11), August 4, 1992, (p. 8), August 6, 1992b, (p. 11), August 7, 1992, (p. 8), August 8, 1992, (p. 7), August 17, 1992, (p. 8), August 18, 1992, (p. 8), August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), August 29, 1992, (p. 8), September 5, 1992, (p. 8), September 8, 1992, (p. 7), September 16, 1992, (p. 13), September 23, 1992, (p. 11), October 19, 1992, (p. 10), November 27, 1992, (p. 13), December 2, 1992c, (p. 12), December 2, 1992d, (p. 12), January 5, 1993, (p. 9), January 8, 1993, (p. 11), January 16, 1993, (p. 11), February 20, 1993, (p. 17), April 26, 1993a, (p. 13) and May 5, 1993, (p. 14). Instead of connecting the war to outside interference, these reports, as I assessed them, concentrated on simplifications and ignored the many complex and external factors, issues and motivations. On August 7, 1992, (p. 8), for example, Sam Kiley explained the split in the USC as being due to "fear of domination by another [clan] sub-group", without detailing how this fear had evolved. Similarly, a May 5, 1993, (p. 14), report stated that the famine arrived because "clan warfare destroyed much of the country's crops", without stating what the forces and motivations were behind such acts. Moreover, Sam Kiley ascribed blame on April 26, 1993a, (p. 13), to "Somalia's confusing clan structure, which is at the root of a civil war and a famine", without demonstrating why this "confusing" clan structure had not caused such destructive and massive civil war and famine before 1992. Kiley obviously had some trouble with ascribing blame because on January 8, 1993, (p. 11), he claimed that "bandit elements" had been "the root cause of the famine". Importantly, blame could be laid at the feet of one or all of these scapegoats, (as I would term them, in this case), because in that way attention could be deflected from those who, I believe, were the real culprits in flaming the fans of war: the organisations and elites that controlled political, social and economic power in the West.

The constructions within the above 39 articles, as well as a further five articles[64] that were predominantly descriptive accounts of the results of the war, (the famine), revealed, in my view, a deliberate attempt by *The Times* to "manufacture" a picture of a nation suffering immeasurably from the chaos and anarchy of war and of a people helpless in the face of the warlords' guns. In this regard, all external influences which played a role in creating and sustaining the war were ignored or not considered worth reporting, by *The Times*. The coverage was, in other words, focused, through the omission of certain "facts" and exaggeration of others, to deflect responsibility for the famine away from the actions of certain elites in the West and, instead, to promote a propaganda line that the wars were a result of internal Somalian factors only. Significantly, this propaganda line, again, did not challenge the pillars of economic, social and political power in the UK.

The *New York Times,* like *The Times,* did not report on the causal link between US support for Barre, which allowed him to divide the Somali clans, and the subsequent clan fighting. Again, superficial descriptions of the contribution of the war to the famine predominated in the newspaper's coverage of the famine, appearing and dominating the text in 67 articles, (26.8 %). Of these, 15 articles articulated that "war" caused the famine, and often described in detail the results of that "war" without presenting any analysis as to *why* there was a "war", or *why* there were "rundown, gun-ridden cities and towns" (December 25, 1992c, p. A11) and general "lawlessness" (December 27, 1992b, Sec. 1, p. 10) in Somalia .[65] The other 52 articles did mention that the wars were due to divisions along Somali clan lines but did not elaborate on the root causes for those divisions or on the reasons behind the split in the USC.[66] Again, by not considering

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64 These were August 13, 1992b, (p. 9), August 14, 1992, (p. 7), August 31, 1992b, (p. 5), September 2, 1992, (*Life and Times*, p. 1) and November 24, 1992b, (p. 1).

65 These were June 27, 1992, (p. A4), July 19, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 8), July 25, 1992, (p. A1, A4), August 26, 1992b, (p. A5), September 9, 1992, (p. A8), December 1, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), December 9, 1992d, (p. A16), December 10, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 13, 1992f, (Sec. 4, p. 16), December 14, 1992a, (p. A1, A8), December 25, 1992c, (p. A11), December 27, 1992b, (Sec. 1, p. 10), February 14, 1993a, (Sec. 1, p. 22), March 27, 1993, (p. A3) and March 29, 1993, (p. A5).

66 These were July 6, 1992, (p. A2), July 12, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), July 20, 1992, (p. A3), July 23, 1992, (p. 22), July 31, 1992, (p. A9), August 2, 1992a, (Sec. 4, p. 16), August 13, 1992, (A1, A9), August 15, 1992, (A1, A2), August 16, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), August 17, 1992, (p. A1, A5), August 18, 1992b, (p. A18), August 19, 1992, (p. A3), August 23, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 3), August 26, 1992a, (p. A4), August 28, 1992, (p. A3), August 29, 1992, (p. A4), August 30, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), September 4, 1992, (p. A1, A6), September 6, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 20), September 23, 1992, (p. A3), October 4, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 16), November 2, 1992, (p. A1, A8), November 9, 1992, (p. A3), November 20, 1992, (p. A31), November 27, 1992c, (p. A14), November 28, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), November 29, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 16), December 1, 1992c, (p. A24), December 6, 1992d, (Sec. 1, p. 14), December 6, 1992h, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 36), December 7, 1992a, (p. A1, A12), December 8, 1992b, (A1, A18), December 9, 1992e, (p. A16), December 11, 1992a, (p. A1, A22), December 12, 1992a, (p. A6), December 13, 1992a, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 14), December 23, 1992a, (p. A6), December 25, 1992a, (p. A10), December 29, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), December 31, 1992a, (p. A1, A8), January 1, 1993, (p. A1, A8), January 3, 1993, (Sec. 1, p. 3), January 4, 1993a, (p. A1, A6), January 5, 1993a, (p. A1, A7), January 10, 1993, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 6), January 14, 1993a, (p. A4), January 17, 1993b, (Sec. 4, p. 1, 5), January 18, 1993, (p. A3), February 9, 1993, (p. A10), February 24, 1993,

external factors, such reporting implied that the war was a function of internal factors only. A typically weak and descriptive report creating this impression was that of July 19, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 8):

> *Relief officials predicted ... that a deep famine would strike Somalia because the intense fighting made the delivery of food extremely difficult and dangerous. Since then, continued warfare has driven people from their homes and fields, destroyed the nation's agriculture, and brought desperate hunger and want.*

But what caused the "fighting" and "continued warfare" that brought "hunger and want"? Why was Somalia "carved into fiefdoms of clan warlords" (July 6, 1992, p. A2) in the "vacuum" (August 26, 1992a, p. A4) after Barre was overthrown? Such questions were certainly not answered within the simplifications presented on January 3, 1993, (Sec. 1, p. 3):

> *In January 1991 ... Barre was ousted, and the country fell into warfare between factions. The result was a country divided into territorial enclaves, with the fighting driving farmers and herders from their land and worsening famine. In stages, Somalia collapsed into anarchy, with no government structures or impartial police force.*

Again, why were there "factions" in Somalia, why did they "divide into territorial enclaves" and why were there "no government structures"? These questions cried out for elaboration yet none was forthcoming. Elaboration would have meant having to explain why the supposedly "democratic" US Government supported a murderous dictator and allowed him to create such deep clan divisions, and this might raise disturbing questions about the conduct of US foreign policy and harm elite governmental interests in the US. Elaboration was, therefore, not on the *New York Times'* agenda. Moreover, superficial descriptions of a "clan-based war" did not necessitate an analysis of underlying causes.[67] Such selective reporting also served to place the blame for the war on the Somali people themselves, by conveying the idea that many Somalis were bloody war-mongers. The

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(p. A7), April 11, 1993, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 16-17, 38-40), May 2, 1993a, (Sec. 1, p. 16).

67 Another point worth considering here is that in 11 further *New York Times* articles which detailed the civil wars in Somalia, mention was made of the warring and bloody activities of Mohammed Said Hersi, (Siad Barre's son-in-law and former defence minister, and also known as General Morgan), particularly in his bloody efforts to take control of the towns of Bardera and, in particular, Kismayu in late 1992 and early 1993. Yet, as discussed in Chapter Four, General Morgan in these attempts used arms obtained illegally from Kenya, a major US and UK ally in Africa. No connection was noted, nor was it postulated that the US or UK governments should have been pressurising Kenya to stop the supply of weapons to General Morgan. Again, this was evidence to me of a consistent propaganda line that existed within the general discourse of the *New York Times*, a line which wished to play down the role of Western elites in causing and prolonging the wars and the famine. These 11 articles were October 23, 1992, (p. A1, A8), October 28, 1992, (p. A6), November 2, 1992, (p. A1, A8), November 9, 1992, (p. A3), November 16, 1992, (p. A1, A6), December 29, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), January 26, 1993, (p. A3), January 28, 1993, (p. A4), February 24, 1993, (p. A7) and March 18, 1993, (p. A7).

general tone of this reporting, then, on top of a further five articles which predominantly focused on the despair in Somalia,[68] was evidence, to me, of a distinct tendency by the *New York Times* to paint Somalia and the Somalis in the worst possible light. At the same time, it served a useful role for elites by deflecting attention from other possible causes of the war - a desirable outcome of institutionalised propaganda.

Thus, my qualitative research has so far revealed that what was and wasn't reported in the three newspapers about the causes of the famine was generally directly related to the political economies of such media, as well as to the conflict over hegemony. Before this qualitative research is summarised, however, consideration needs to be given to the issue of the location and extent of the area of famine and anarchy. This was important given that the 1992-3 famine, as discussed in Chapter Four, was confined to one small corner of Somalia and that, at the same time, in Somaliland[69] and other parts of Somalia, there was relative peace and, importantly, no famine, as a result of local political and social initiatives and appropriate local social and economic development programmes.

Quantitative and Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of the Issue of the Famine's Extent and Location

With regard to reporting on the famine's causes, I believe that the three newspapers had a responsibility to acknowledge that the famine was specific to one region. This was because the degree to which the three newspapers reported on the issue of famine location would have an important bearing on the overall quality of their coverage of the causes of the famine and on the world's response to it. On a quantitative basis, however, the coverage given to this issue was, again, minimal, and is presented in Table 7.2.[70]

From Table 7.2, it can be seen that, on a quantitative level, all three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, devoted very little of their total coverage to the issue of the famine's location.[71] On a qualitative level, however, all three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, conveyed the impression that the famine, chaos and anarchy engulfed the entire country.[72] Their

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68 These were September 13, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 20), December 8, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), January 2, 1993, (p. A1, A2), January 24, 1993a, (p. 16) and May 30, 1993, (p.).

69 That is, the former British Somaliland. As such, this section also considers whether the three newspapers recognised that this area had declared independence from the rest of Somalia.

70 Significantly, this followed the pattern that was generally observable in the quantitative level of coverage of the themes considered above.

71 The quality of what little coverage they did present is discussed in Appendix C.

72 In total, 20 articles, (representing 16.6% of 120 articles), in the *Guardian*, 40 articles, (representing 27% of 148 articles), in *The Times*, and 31 articles, (representing 12.4% of 250 articles), in the

articles, in general, made little or no reference to the "fact" that the famine, anarchy and chaos was confined to an area of no more than a quarter of the country. In other words, they ignored, and, therefore, reduced the ability of the reader to acknowledge and interpret the significance of, the positive development achievements in the rest of the country.

Table 7.2
***Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* coverage of the issue of the famine's extent and location.**

	Guardian	*The Times*	*NYTimes*
Famine confined to S.W.Somalia (1)	6.6%	2.7%	0.4%

Notes:
(1): Only three of the eight articles in the *Guardian* referred to here, (thus 2.5 % rather than 6.6 %), mentioned that the famine was confined to south-west Somalia *and* that the north was peaceful due to local initiatives, while only two of the four articles in *The Times* referred to here, (thus 1.35 % rather than 2.7 %), mentioned that the famine was confined to south-west Somalia *and* that the north was peaceful due to local initiatives.

What was particularly alarming about such coverage, and the many outright distortions which were contained within it,[73] was its tendency to sensationalise the situation in Somalia through a choice of negative words and phrases that, as I understood them, emphasised that the entire country was completely ruined. In the *Guardian* on July 20, 1992b, (p. 20), for example, an editorial thundered that "Somalia and the Somalians barely exist" and that "in Somalia, there is no government except the gun law of sub-clans and local gangs". Commentary in *The Times* included descriptions of Somalia as being a "shattered" (July 6, 1992, p. 11) and "ravaged" (August 6, 1992b, p. 11) nation, which had collapsed into "geno-suicide"[74] (July 14, 1992, p. 13) and "rubble" (August 12, 1992, p. 14).[75] Quotes, such as by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, were often used in *The Times* to back up the debatable assertion, implied by such language, that the whole country was in chaos.[76] The general misrepresentation by the *New York Times* of the

New York Times, stated, or at least implied, that all of Somalia was experiencing famine and chaos. The qualitative aspects of these articles are discussed in more detail in Appendix C.

[73] I argue this based on my research outlined in Chapter Four.

[74] The use of the word "geno-suicide" was interesting, as suicide was an act usually attempted and/or achieved without assistance. Thus, to me, "geno-suicide" implied that there were no external forces involved in the processes which resulted in the 1992-3 famine in Somalia.

[75] The writer of most of these powerful descriptions, Sam Kiley, had set the tone for much of his reporting on Somalia on June 27, 1992, (p. 10), when, in covering the murders and rapes of Somalis on a refugee boat fleeing Mogadishu, he stated: "In a country with no system of law and order, or any other form of administration, rape is so commonplace it is merely considered a hazard of being female". The report was written from Nairobi, and no corroboration was offered for the racist and generalist claims within it. Nevertheless, such statements, to me, portrayed Somalia as little more than hell and most, if not all, Somali men as rapists.

issue of the famine's location and extent could be summed up in the headline it employed on October 4, 1992, (Sec.1, p.1,16), which thundered: "Chaotic Somalia Starves as Strongmen Battle". To me, this implied *all* the people throughout *all* of Somalia were starving as strongmen battled it out in a Somalia that was *completely* chaotic.[77] Such impressions were observable in earlier articles in the *New York Times,* such as that on July 23, 1992, (p. A22), which stated that the chaos was so widespread that it "threaten[ed] the very existence of Somalia".[78]

Such reporting was conducive to the established interests of Western elites by fostering the idea that the situation in Somalia was so widespread and drastic that equally drastic measures were required to "save" the country from what it was implied would be total destruction. At the same time, the stories were, I believe, aimed at convincing readers that the people of Somalia were incapable either of self-governance or of devising their own solutions to their enormous problems.[79] In this respect the *Guardian's* coverage differed from that of *The Times* and the *New York Times* as the latter two newspapers reinforced their earlier misrepresentations and distortions by also constructing within the aforementioned articles text which promoted and, later, lauded Western solutions to the crisis.[80] Such articles, in my view, represented explicit efforts at perpetrating the myth that only the West[81] had the capacity to "solve" problems of development and underdevelopment in the developing world. They also perpetrated the myth that the

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[76] For example, on December 1, 1992a, (p. 13), Boutros Boutros-Ghali was quoted as saying ORH was justified because of "the absence of any organised government in Somalia". Yet, as I argued in Chapter Four, there *were* organised governments in many parts of Somalia in late 1992. As the propaganda model predicted, however, Boutros-Ghali's assertion was not challenged by *The Times*. Once again, why were assertions from pro-Western institutions such as the UN given such uncritical respect?

[77] An "alternative" headline might have read: "Some starve as strongmen battle in SW Somalia".

[78] See also the article on August 12, 1992, (p. A19), a discussion about which is included in Appendix C.

[79] In this regard, I would also argue that the mainstream media in the West had the benefit of already existing cultural codes when promoting such meaning in their texts and messages. This was because the majority of the people in the West were already generally misinformed about the resourcefulness and adaptability of people in the developing world, in that the predominant image of such people in the Western world's media, as discussed in Chapter Three, was already one of helplessness and despair.

[80] In the *New York Times'* article of December 6, 1992f, (Sec.4, p.1, 3), for example, the journalist, Elaine Sciolino, wrote the following text based, more than likely, on information supplied from US Governmental sources: "Both Robert M. Gates, the Director of Central Intelligence, and Brent Scowcroft, the national security adviser, have explained to [George Bush] in private that the famine-stricken country will be incapable of governing itself for some time, and that the UN may have to take it over as a 'protectorate' ". The statement was not challenged or qualified. In other words, Sciolino has accepted at face-value the opinion of US Government elites - that Somalia was ungovernable and needed a neo-colonialist protectorate - as an objective "fact", despite the subjective interests the sources most likely represented. Such reporting, in my opinion, was an attempt to mobilise public opinion in favour of US foreign policy as regards Somalia. For more examples, see Appendix C and Chapter Eight.

[81] In this regard, and as discussed in Chapter Five, I am taking the view that the UN is little more than a rubber stamp body for the views of the governmental elites of the US and, to a lesser extent, other Western nations such as the UK and France.

knowledge, intellect and resourcefulness of people in developing nations such as Somalia were not adequate to provide solutions for "disasters" such as famines.

This selective and slanted reporting served elites in the West in a number of ways, especially through its general emphasis that solutions could come only from proposals generated by people and institutions in the West. If Somali solutions to the crisis, as practised successfully in Somaliland and other parts of Somalia, were made known to the general public in the West, then objections might be raised if neo-colonialist or military solutions were proposed by Western elites as the appropriate response to the crisis. Hence, knowledge of them needed to be suppressed. Furthermore, the promotion of neo-colonialist/military solutions was useful in generating the idea that interference and penetration by the UN, (read US, UK and other Western governments), and, by extension, multinational corporations, was and would be in some way beneficial to the Somali people concerned. The message was that the "West was Best" and knew the most efficient and suitable way to deal with this and other crises in the developing world.[82]

Thus, through gross misrepresentations, such as accentuating the chaos in one part of the country and implying that the entire country was suffering, and omitting or playing down references to the positive peace initiatives and organisational developments in the north by local Somalis, *The Times,* the *New York Times* and, to a far lesser extent, the *Guardian,* exaggerated the extent of the suffering within Somalia and gave strength to Western calls for foreign intervention as the way to "save" the country. Such dominant media discourses were, again, a reflection of the hegemonic power of all three newspapers to determine what was and wasn't regarded as "news", and how that "news" was shaped.

Conclusion

In considering the coverage by the three newspapers of the causes of the 1992-3 Somalian famine, then, the above predominantly qualitative analysis revealed that *The Times* and the *New York Times* dealt with the long and complex series of historical, social, political and economic events and factors which created the conditions for the famine at a superficial and descriptive level only,[83] while the *Guardian* made at least

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82 This also suited Western elites because it was consistent with the idea that "development" could only mean development in a Western context, especially as advanced by modernisation and neo-liberal development theories. In other words, such articles promoted a pro-Western, pro-industrialist ideology of "development". For more discussion of the pro-Western ideology of development, see Sachs (1992a: 4-6 and 1992b: 7-9).

83 This, too, despite the fact that they were from different countries and supposedly represented opinion from differing political spectrums. Significantly, on a quantitative level, non-dominant views regarding Themes Three and Five, and the "fact" that the famine was confined to south-western

some attempt at in-depth analysis. The three newspapers, but in this respect the *New York Times* in particular, also demonstrated a general lack of research effort in failing to report that the crisis was confined to one corner of the country, and that the rest of the country was relatively peaceful. By these techniques, *The Times,* the *New York Times* and, to a lesser extent, the *Guardian,* constructed their coverage to minimise the role of the West in causing the famine while, at the same time, giving the impression that the famine was predominantly the result of factors internal to Somalia. Moreover, as the hypothesis of this thesis predicted, such coverage, particularly that of *The Times* and the *New York Times,* generally served to promote the aims and interests of the newspapers' owners and, by extension, certain powerful groups within Western societies. In this regard, the quality of coverage by the three newspapers of the famine's causes was, as discussed in Chapter Two, generally related to the political economies of the newspapers.

In reflecting on such findings, it is worth recalling Masterman's view (1986: 108), as discussed in Chapter Two, that what is omitted from the media's agenda cannot easily enter the general consciousness. If the coverage presented by the three newspapers, and especially *The Times* and the *New York Times,* (whose political economies were most typical of mainstream Western print media), was a fair indication of how the overall mainstream Western media covered the famine's causes, then I would argue an adequate understanding of the role of public and private elites in creating the conditions for famine in Somalia in 1992-3 would not be, and was not, understood by the general public in the West.[84] Furthermore, the emphasis on Somali incompetence and helplessness meant that the eventual proposal to alleviate the famine - Operation Restore Hope - was accepted with barely a murmur of protest by that same general public.

Yet scenarios such as ORH, which propounded the idea that the solution for Somalia's drastic underdevelopment problem could only come from the West, as the Somalis themselves were too helpless and, indeed, "undeveloped" to deal with the crisis, were, as I discussed in Chapter Five, completely unnecessary and inappropriate. Can the general public in the West be blamed for not realising this? In general, I believe not. As discussed in Chapter One, the portrayal in the media in the developed world of the developing world was *always* one of chaos and ineptitude (Piza *et al* 1987: 3), which created the

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Somalia, did appear. On a qualitative level, however, as discussed in this chapter and also presented in Appendix C, these were deliberately presented in such a manner, and contained within a general framework of analysis that was almost always supportive of the "taken-for-granted" dominant views, that their impact was, in my opinion, almost minimal.

84 The findings also mirrored the contention of Alvarado *et al,* (1987: 218-219), as discussed in Chapter Three, that the Western media, while focusing on swollen-bellied babies and pitifully thin adults, rarely offered an account of how and why such terrible sights emerged.

impression that people in the developing world did not, and could not, conceive of models of development that suited them (Pilger 1994: 71).

Indeed, "West is Best" was a catch phrase which, as I believe this chapter has indicated, encapsulated much, if not all, of the coverage by the three newspapers, and especially *The Times* and the *New York Times.* If, however, the mainstream media had provided a more balanced and in-depth analysis as to the famine's causes, it could be argued that public pressure against the solution offered - ORH - might have been sufficient for ORH to have been called off or, at least, modified. This critical analysis was, as I have demonstrated in this chapter, generally absent within the coverage of the famine's causes by the three newspapers. In the following chapter, I extend the hypothesis of this thesis to analyse the coverage by the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* of the world's response to the famine, and how that may have affected the public's support of, or objection to, ORH.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE WORLD'S RESPONSE TO THE SOMALIAN FAMINE

Introduction

In Chapter Seven, I examined the coverage by the three newspapers of the causes of the 1992-3 Somalian famine. In this chapter, I extend that hypothesis to consider the coverage by the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* of the world's response to the famine, with regard to the seven themes I identified in Chapter Six.

Quantitative Aspects of Coverage of the World's Response to the Famine

Of the 120 articles in the *Guardian*, 148 articles in *The Times*, and 250 articles in the *New York Times* about the 1992-3 Somalian famine, many dealt with how the world community responded to the crisis. Following my reading of these articles, to determine the extent to which each newspaper quantitatively covered the issues surrounding this response as identified in Chapter Six, I have totalled the percentage of articles in each of the three newspapers which made at least partial reference to each theme and presented this in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1
***Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times* coverage of the seven themes identified with regard to how the world responded to the 1992-3 Somalian famine.**

	Guardian	*The Times*	*NYTimes*
Theme 1 - NGOs working with Somalis	1.6%	2.0%	1.6%
Theme 2 - NGOs not working with Somalis	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Theme 3 - World ignored crisis in '91 and '92	16.6%	8.1%	5.6%
Theme 4 - ORH begun when famine over	4.2%	0.7%	1.2%
Theme 5 - Suspect humanitarian motive	1.6%	0.7%	1.2%
Theme 6 - ORH inappropriate	3.3%	4.0%	2.8%
Theme 7 - Somalis not consulted about ORH	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%

From Table 8.1 it can be seen that, on a quantitative level, all three newspapers devoted some, but with regard to some themes occasionally little or none, of their total coverage to the seven themes identified as illustrating how the world responded to the famine. Again, differences in quantitative coverage between the *Guardian* on the one hand, and *The*

Times and the *New York Times* on the other, were observable. Interestingly, however, in some cases these differences were not as marked as had been the case with regard to the causes of the famine. For example, the degree of coverage of Themes One and Six was similar but there was a greater degree of variation in the treatment of Themes Two, Five and Seven. Furthermore, as far as my reading indicated, *The Times* and the *New York Times* failed to comment on two themes only, Themes Two and Seven, whereas they had failed to comment on four out of the six themes relating to the causes of the famine.

An initial assessment of this quantitative analysis might conclude that the three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, limited their framework of debate generally to exclude any critical discussion of how the West reacted to the famine. This assessment relates to articles published both before late November 1992, when the crisis was all but ignored by the West, and after this date when, as I argued in Chapter Five, the grossly inappropriate and potentially dangerous Operation Restore Hope was launched. To properly qualify this assertion and to discuss what *was* reported by the three newspapers with regard to how the world responded to the famine, it is essential to consider the results of my qualitative analysis.

Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of the World's Response to the Famine - an Overall Assessment

As revealed in the qualitative analysis, the three newspapers, in particular *The Times* and the *New York Times,* generally did not examine critical perspectives with regard to how the world responded to the 1992-3 Somalian famine. In other words, there was little, and often no, effort made by *The Times* and the *New York Times* to include within their agendas balanced and in-depth debate and discussion about many aspects of the Western aid effort, such as Operation Restore Hope. The *Guardian,* in contrast, undertook a relatively broader analysis by, occasionally, critically debating and investigating these aspects. My qualitative analysis of the three newspapers' coverage of the world's response to the famine, however, revealed, yet again, a distinct pattern of news selection and emphasis that actively distorted the "facts" surrounding this response. Significantly, too, this pattern was predominantly similar to that described in Chapter Seven, in that the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* constructed their coverage in a way that, more often than not, worked to promote the interests of the owners of these newspapers. At the same time these interests, particularly with regard to *The Times* and the *New York Times,* rarely conflicted with the interests of the ruling public and private elites in the developed world.

In *The Times* and the *New York Times,* this distinct pattern in qualitative news coverage was aptly demonstrated in their deliberate omission of certain "facts". For example, there was, in general, very little, if any, discussion on the dreadful performance by certain NGOs, such as CARE, and by certain countries, such as the US, in failing to provide adequate relief assistance to Somalia throughout 1991 and 1992.[1] There was also virtually no recognition of the heroic efforts of the Somali people in dealing with the crisis. Such issues were not "news". At the same time the two newspapers, I believe, deliberately emphasised and praised the relief effort undertaken by George Bush around the time of the Republican Party Convention in August 1992. This was done through the exaggeration of the extent and effectiveness of this operation, framed within a discourse which excluded discussion about both the minimal effort of the US prior to this date and how Bush might have been using this effort for his own political agenda. There was also no questioning of why the US was suddenly acting to provide aid when the situation in Somalia, while severe, was not appreciably worse.[2] In other words, these two newspapers actively distorted the nature of the Western efforts by exaggerating the scale and effectiveness of these minimal and belated US, and UN, relief aid missions. This distortion was compounded by the playing down or omission of many other "facts" which highlighted the callous attitude of the US towards the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, such as the obstructive tactics taken by US governmental representatives in the UN Security Council over proposed peacekeeping operations, tactics which served to minimise and delay their implementation.[3]

As a result of these distortions in *The Times* and the *New York Times*, a one-sided picture was presented that, from my understanding of it, postulated that the US was extremely concerned about the crisis in Somalia and that a solution to the crisis could not be found among the people and resources of the country itself. The accuracy of such a picture, particularly the positive image projected of the efforts by the US Government, was, however, highly debatable, especially considering my research outlined in Chapter Five. Moreover, the explicit production of such distortions in *The Times* and the *New York Times* made a mockery of any claims these two newspapers had of journalistic

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[1] In this regard, I would argue that the poor US record was particularly bad considering that this country had a special responsibility for providing relief because of its close historical and political links with Somalia from 1978, as noted in Chapter Four.

[2] Later, there was no criticism or follow-up of the US Government's decision, as outlined in Chapter Five, to cancel this relief effort after one of its planes was shot at.

[3] Interestingly, at first glance it did appear that *The Times* and the *New York Times* presented some incisive and penetrative analyses of the poor performance of the world community with regard to its response to the famine. More in-depth qualitative analysis, however, revealed that most of this criticism emanating from these two newspapers was directed at the UN rather than the US. In this regard, I would argue that, in terms of hegemony, the UN was comparatively "weaker" than the US Government, and, therefore, attacks by *The Times* and the *New York Times* on this "easier target" served to deflect criticism from US governmental elites with regard to their record in Somalia. This is discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

credibility and highlighted the bogus notion of "objectivity". This active distortion was readily identifiable in the editorial in the *New York Times* on August 18, 1992b, (p. A18), which stated:

> *High marks to President Bush, and to whoever nudged his pen, for ordering the Pentagon to airlift food to millions of starving people in Somalia ... urgently needed aid is now en route, and Somalia's capricious warlords will have to contend with UN guards and the US Air Force ... to say nothing could be done, that Somalia was too messy and remote, would have been a shameful, unthinkable abdication. The new measures should sober belligerents and begin to comfort the afflicted. After similar humanitarian missions in Kurdish Iraq ... the US armed forces will gain precious experience in what may be an increasingly needful role.*

In this article, President Bush was praised and given "high marks". Yet why hadn't Bush been given "low marks" for ignoring Somalia during 1991 and the first eight months of 1992? Why hadn't Bush been given "low marks" for his support of Barre during his murderous excesses of the late 1980s? Why was the aid being sent by the US "urgently needed"? If such factors had been considered, the tone of the editorial might have been changed to one that lambasted the Bush Administration for the "shameful, unthinkable abdication" of responsibility for Somalia. Such a conclusion, however, was potentially harmful for US governmental elites and, as I argued in Chapter Two, this meant it was beyond the narrow limits of dominant paradigms considered "worthy" of debate in the *New York Times.*

This is because, as also argued in Chapter Two, in capitalist societies such as the US and UK, mainstream media, such as *The Times* and the *New York Times,* usually form part of larger corporations and industrial conglomerates. While such entities have distinct structures and diverse interests, they also share similar political and economic goals and have reciprocatory links among themselves and with other sectors of the economy. Consequently, pro-business and pro-government ideologies that promote the interests of capital are, in general, sacrosanct. Furthermore, the profit-making ability of the media is reliant on the receipt of a constant flow of information from institutions such as the US Government as well as on advertising. For these and other reasons articulated in Chapter Two, media such as *The Times* and the *New York Times* are constrained by the relationships of production in the UK and US to present the "news" in such a way as to serve the interests of the economic and political structures within which these media operate. The choice, framing and context of the "facts" presented in the above extract

reflect the constraints imposed by the *New York Times'* political economy with regard to what was and wasn't "news".[4]

Thus, the US Government's poor relief record in Somalia throughout 1991 and 1992 was generally not "news" in *The Times* and the *New York Times* as it served no function for elites in the US and UK. What was "news" in these newspapers did serve these elites in that it generally emphasised that Somalia, for some unexplained reason, was in a mess, and that the Somalis were too helpless and hopeless to formulate and then implement their own solutions to the problems in their country.[5] In other words, what was "news" worked to favour a reading which suggested that a solution to the Somali crisis could only come from the West.[6] The result of such exaggeration, omission, distortion and framing in news selection was a dominant media discourse in *The Times* and the *New York Times* that worked to favour a reading that some form of foreign intervention in Somalia was both desirable and necessary.

Not surprisingly, then, when the major Western response to the famine, Operation Restore Hope (ORH), was announced, the overt and covert ideological forces within *The Times* and the *New York Times* determined that certain circumstances surrounding the operation would not, in general, be criticised. *The Times* and the *New York Times* did not, for example, elaborate on concerns that the decision to begin ORH in late November was unnecessary, or that the alleged "humanitarian" motivation was suspect. Indeed, far more alarmingly, these two newspapers added further distortions to their reporting by enthusiastically accepting at face-value the stated motives, rationales and objectives offered by US governmental and military elites with regard to ORH. Why were these views transmitted so readily? The propaganda model's "filters" explain this explicit bias in news production. As Herman and Chomsky (1988: 18) noted: "The [mainstream]

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[4] There was further evidence of this in the remark, published in the aforementioned editorial and included in the extract reprinted above, that the US armed forces had been engaged in "similar humanitarian missions" in Kurdish Iraq. At the same time, this article discounted any acknowledgement of the fate of those same Iraqi Kurds who had been the recipient of this "humanitarian" assistance in mid-1991. As Richards (1993: 20) noted, these people had been repeatedly attacked by forces from the US's Nato ally, Turkey, in the 18 months since this supposedly noble mission had ended. Why was this development not pointed out? Why was the *New York Times* not articulating its utmost concern for the Iraqi Kurds now? That these questions and considerations were not published was, to me, further evidence to support the basic premises of the propaganda model. The Iraqi Kurds no longer served any useful function for ruling elites in the US and, therefore, as the propaganda model predicted, they were off the media agenda.

[5] For example, there was not a single report in these two newspapers which articulated Somali proposals for solving the crisis. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Seven, there was virtually no elaboration in these two newspapers on how and why much of Somalia, apart from the famine zone in the south-west of the country, was without famine and relatively peaceful and stable.

[6] This reading was also observable in the *Guardian*, albeit to a lesser extent, reflecting its different, and atypical, political economy. An assessment of my quantitative analysis of the *Guardian's* articles with regard to the world's response to the famine is discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interests". In other words, while monetary imperatives might be part of the reason for obtaining information from certain powerful sources, the fact that the viewpoints of these sources are, in general, consistent with those of the owners and proprietors of such media, is the main, and explicit, reason why these sources are used so often and without question.

Consequently, instead of levelling severe and deserved criticism against ORH, which, as I argued in Chapter Five, was a belated, unnecessary, militaristic and inappropriate US/UN intervention, these two newspapers uncritically lauded and praised ORH and, by extension, US foreign policy. In other words, a distorted image of ORH as "appropriate" and "necessary" to alleviate the suffering in Somalia was, I believe, explicitly created. As I contended in Chapter Five, ORH was an intervention designed to boost the image of the US military as "humanitarian". This image would help protect the massive US military budget from cutbacks by a hostile US Congress, under pressure to reduce military spending as a result of the end of the Cold War. These cutbacks threatened the needs not only of the US military but of their associated major power groups, such as defence contractors. A downturn in this vital and profitable sector of the economy would, in turn, threaten not only the profitability of media companies which maintained interlocking interests with defence companies but also the economy at large, and would also highlight the dangerous and wasteful corporate military ethos. Furthermore, the concept of a Western-initiated and controlled "rescue mission" served the owners of the media by helping to promote corporate values and the idea of Western superiority, while, at the same time, deflecting attention from the unequal and exploitative nature of developed world/developing world relationships. In addition, as also argued in Chapter Five, ORH reinforced US global hegemony in the face of challenges contained within the growing economic might of Japan and the industrialised countries of Western Europe, set a useful precedent for future conflict resolution in any nation which challenged the aforementioned US global hegemony, and served to deflect attention from domestic matters in the US and UK.

The distorted image presented of ORH also served ruling elites by obscuring the initial causes of the problem in Somalia. In this regard, Hume (1993: 5) observed that,

> *... the UN interventions are widely accepted at face value, as international peacekeeping operations ... [but] the notion that the UN Security Council are peacekeepers, while the Somalis ... are the aggressors, turns the truth on its head. From this perspective, the responsibility for war and suffering can be shifted on to some of the poorest and least powerful peoples on Earth, who can be blamed for creating the world's problems.*

In other words, the distortions surrounding the intervention were consistent with the constraints on news selection and treatment imposed by the newspapers' political economies. This conforms with the contention of Herman and Chomsky (1988: 87-142), and Dorman (1986: 430-431), that the main premises and ideologies of US foreign policy would be uncritically accepted and promoted by newspapers with these political economies while, at the same time, there would be very little questioning of the strategic goals of the US Government with regard to its relationships with the developing world. This was because the aims and objectives of such policy were generally in the interests of the wealthy and powerful owners of this media, in that they served to promote the reproduction of the relationships of production in capitalist societies such as the US. As ORH served this function, a consistent pattern of news selection in favour of ORH was observable.

One of the more interesting features of this position was the noticeable tendency in *The Times* and the *New York Times* to replace critical interpretations of the stated aims and objectives of ORH with a blatant propaganda line. As critical interpretations could not, as previously argued, be transmitted by a client media, these two newspapers presented a picture of ORH as what I coded was the TINA solution - that is, There Is No Alternative. Inconvenient "facts", such as the view of many of the relief agencies that the worst of the famine was well and truly over by late November 1992, when ORH was proposed and then initiated, did not get in the way of this propaganda line. To achieve this distortion, however, explicit criteria in news selection, tone and emphasis were required, in order to be able to ignore, discount or minimise alternative or critical opinion about the desirability or otherwise of ORH for the great majority of the Somali people. This explicit "news" slant was duly accomplished by both *The Times* and the *New York Times* which constructed their coverage to favour a reading of ORH as the only option for the crisis in Somalia.

Many articles in *The Times,* for example, carried comments and rationales about ORH by "official" Western government sources as well as dubious data that backed up their argument, all presented generally without critical commentary. One of the most incredible was the story by Martin Fletcher and Michael Binyon printed on December 2, 1992a, (p. 12), which outlined British Government plans to "warn" the SCF and other agencies that it intended to "strong[ly] support" ORH. The report continued:

> ***Whitehall officials said they would urge any aid agencies still opposing intervention to think again. They said the attempt to negotiate with local warlords was not working, and 80 per cent of aid was not getting through.***

From what I understood of this article, relief agencies in Somalia were going to be told by the UK Government to accept ORH or else, yet these State threats passed without comment. Why were they made? As for the claims that attempts at negotiating were "not working" and that 80 per cent of food aid was being looted, I would argue, on the basis of my research for Chapter Five, that such assertions were nothing more than distortions, misrepresentations and outright lies propagated by US and UK elites.[7] That they were transmitted without investigation by *The Times* was evidence of the explicit effects of the "filtering" of news production as described in the propaganda model. Similar one-sided and wholesale support for ORH was to be found in the *New York Times*. The pro-ORH propaganda line was demonstrated in a concise and explicit manner on December 1, 1992c, (p. A24 - see Figure 8.1), in an emotive editorial that completely overestimated the negative extent of the crisis in Somalia at that time:

> *The realities [in Somalia] are ghastly, and the choices limited ... A thousand or more people are dying each day, and up to two million lives are at risk ... there is no alternative to the threat or use of force if food is to reach those trapped in a chaotic clan war.*

From what I understood from my research, however, "a thousand people or more" were *not* dying each day in December 1992, and two million lives were *not* at risk. Moreover, there *were* alternative ways to distribute food to needy people than the "threat or use of force". As discussed in Chapter Five, NGOs such as the ICRC, which moved more food and fed more people than any other group or organisation in the crisis, did not need the "threat or use of force" to achieve their relief objectives of providing food to those "trapped" by the war. Choices, then, were *not* limited. Furthermore, the military of the US and other countries participating in ORH were *not* trained in dealing with situations such as that which existed in Somalia in late November 1992. Relief agencies such as the ICRC were trained for such situations.[8]

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[7] Significantly, on the same page and date, *The Times* predicted that the death toll in Somalia "may reach a million by Christmas", (December 2, 1992c, p. 12), an outrageous claim which was not referenced to any person or organisation. Who made this claim, and why was it published as a "fact"? Interestingly, *The Times* obviously had some trouble in determining the seriousness of the situation in late 1992 because, a day earlier, (December 1, 1992b, p. 17), an editorial in *The Times* had claimed two million Somalis were "seriously at risk of dying". Furthermore, why were similar "factual" claims by "official" sources, such as Boutros Boutros-Ghali's statement in *The Times* the previous day, (December 1, 1992a, p. 13), that ORH "was the only way to stop armed bands disrupting aid supplies", also published without any critical investigation?

[8] Similar distortions were contained in the article published in the *New York Times* on November 29, 1992, (Sec.1, p.16), which thundered that ORH was necessary to rescue the Somalian relief effort because it was "in danger of collapsing". This statement was anonymously attributed to "aid officials". From my understanding of such an article, the entire Somalian rescue effort would fall apart, and, consequently, untold thousands of Somalis would starve, if ORH troops were not sent to Somalia. Yet this was contrary to the far more optimistic assessment of the famine situation in Somalia in late 1992 that I outlined in Chapter Five.

Do It Right in Somalia

President Bush is right to offer as many as 20,000 U.S. troops to a United Nations rescue operation in Somalia. The realities there are ghastly, and the choices limited. Famine and a chaotic clan war have put an entire people in peril. It is intolerable and unthinkable to remain aloof while teen-age hoodlums impede the delivery of emergency food and medicines.

A thousand or more people are dying every day, and up to two million more lives are at risk. As Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali soberly informed the United Nations yesterday, there is no alternative to the threat or use of force if food is to reach those trapped in a chaotic clan war.

Yet there is also a need to do it right. Somalia is not the only humanitarian crisis; think of Bosnia or Liberia or the Sudan. The danger is that a well-intended but ill-planned operation in Somalia could fix the wrong kind of precedent or, even worse, backfire.

A very big operation has been sprung on Americans during a distracting holiday, without a clear statement of short- and long-term goals. It is happening without adequate consultation with Congress or President-elect Clinton.

Fortunately, Mr. Bush still has time to repair these deficiencies, thereby doing right for posterity as well as Somalia. Specifically, he can:

Define a principle for humanitarian intervention. Military intervention is justifiable in Somalia not simply because civil order has collapsed or because force is more likely to succeed against Somalia's youthful looters than against, say, Serbian-trained irregulars in Bosnia. Rather, collective use of force is needed because famine threatens an entire population, all other peacekeeping efforts have failed, and a rapid response is imperative.

Set a timetable. The way to avoid a dreaded quagmire is to fix a deadline for renewal of troop authorizations that are written into any Security Council resolution. This accords with the Secretary General's own preference for a brief intervention followed by conventional peacekeeping operations.

Sign up more allies. It is said that Canada and Pakistan have already agreed to join a U.N.-sanctioned rescue under U.S. command. The Europeans and other African states should be enlisted as well. Given Somalia's bitter colonial legacy, an intervention dominated by Americans carries huge political risks, and meager rewards.

Give the U.N. a bigger military role. Ideally, Somalia could be the testing ground for a genuine multinational operation under U.N. command. No doubt Mr. Bush has judged it easier to get broad support at home by insisting on U.S. command in the field. That seems shortsighted. If Americans don't want to be the global cop, they will someday have to give the U.N. greater military authority.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali is reconciled to a reasonable second-best solution: Permit U.S. command, but require more accountability to the Security Council.

Involve Congress. Getting a nod from leaders in Congress, as Mr. Bush has, is no substitute for getting a mandate. The same President who sought legislative support for Desert Storm now has a chance to do the same for rescue in Somalia.

Define the goals, now. The obvious and urgent short-term goal is humanitarian — to get food and medical supplies to those who need it. This leads inescapably to a wider goal of disarming the warring factions so that, even after foreign forces depart, food can be distributed. The best approach would be to buy the arms. Mr. Boutros-Ghali has called for forcible disarmament if necessary — a step that would require hard thought by American leaders.

The long-term goal is for the U.N. to help Somalis build a new society. If other nations believe that such a purpose is neither feasible nor desirable, better to air the arguments now rather than incur reproaches later.

Mr. Bush has an opportunity, in his waning days in office, to sort out the anguishing dilemmas posed by an unruly world and define America's role therein. That would wrest something positive from the tragedy of Somalia.

Figure 8.1
Editorial in the *New York Times* on December 1, 1992c, (p. A24).

The Times and the *New York Times* were also more than enthusiastic in uncritically presenting and defending the alleged "humanitarian" rationale and principles of ORH. The peak manifestation of *The Times'* acceptance of and support for these factors was the editorial of December 9, 1992d, (p. 17), illustrated in Figure 8.2 which, under the positive headline, "Gentle Giant", trumpeted that there was "nothing ill-defined or ambiguous about America's stated purposes in Somalia". ORH, it continued approvingly, was a "novel experiment" which showed that:

> *... [US] force can be used under the UN umbrella, to help non-white, Muslim people, and not just where vital [US] interests are at stake. In this sense, it is an important test of international determination to use the opportunities created by the end of the Cold War.*

This implied that the US viewed the end of the Cold War as providing numerous "opportunities" to help people throughout the world, a highly debatable contention considering the self-serving interests of past US foreign policy. Furthermore, why was there no debate about the potential dangers of this situation, such as the possibility that the US could do as it wished under the "new world order", especially as the USSR was no longer in a position to counter US moves?[9] The hegemonic idea that ORH was a grand "humanitarian" gesture and, as such, had no hidden agendas, was also taken up with patriotic flag-waving gusto by Thomas L. Friedman in the *New York Times* (December 5, 1992b, p. A1, A4). Friedman described ORH as,

> *... a turning point in American foreign policy: for the first time American troops are entering a country uninvited, not to shore up an anti-communist regime, protect American wealth or stifle a strategic threat, but simply to feed starving people.*

This implied that the US Government and military were, for the first time, acting not according to their interests but according to an overriding moral imperative, a quite

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[9] Interestingly, this editorial also articulated a positive link to the Gulf War by claiming that Bush worked to develop ORH "with an energy recalling his successful mobilisation of an international coalition against Iraq". From my reading of this phrase presented in such uncritical context, both the war against Iraq and ORH were positive and successful acts typifying international co-operation. Obviously, *The Times* did not consider that this same US-led coalition had led to one of the greatest slaughters in the history of warfare, and that one of the results of this slaughter was the greatest ecological disaster in history. For more discussion about these issues, especially the concept that the Gulf War was a "slaughter", see Mowlana *et al*, (1992: 51-63), Chomsky (1994b: 8-26, 232-233), Pilger (1992 :85-150) and Kellner (1992).

GENTLE GIANT

America needs allies for the long haul in Somalia

Despite suggestions to the contrary, there is nothing ill-defined or ambiguous about America's stated purposes in Somalia. With the full support of president-elect Bill Clinton, President Bush ordered the deployment of American forces because, without immediate relief up to a quarter of a million Somalis could be dead by the new year, and perhaps a million more in months to come.

That relief, it has been abundantly clear for months, was not going to reach them unless order was forcibly restored and a "secure environment" created for aid operations. America, said Mr Bush, could not right the world's wrongs, but American involvement was essential: no other country had the capacity to land up to 28,000 men with the requisite speed and firepower to dominate Somalia's warring clans and freelance teenage extortionists.

He is right. But, the benefits of this novel experiment in the use of American force must outlast the withdrawal of US troops if the mission is to succeed in its humanitarian aims. The definition of success is that lives must not be saved only to be lost next year: armed mayhem must not be temporarily suppressed, only to take hold again when the Americans withdraw.

Mr Bush intends America's role to be that of "catalyst"; his military chief, Colin Powell, who has likened the operation to sending in the cavalry, hopes that the cavalry can start handing over to UN sheriffs within a month. Washington insists that it has no business with any eventual political settlement: that is work for the UN. These careful self-imposed limits on American intervention are politically well judged. The practicalities may turn out more complex.

Mr Bush has done his best to minimise the risks of a lengthy American military involvement. With an energy recalling his successful mobilisation of an international coalition against Iraq, he has taken care to see that America is in good company. He has the unanimous backing of the UN Security Council, persuading even China to suspend its rooted suspicion of armed intervention. Yesterday Russia indicated that it may join a dozen countries which are either part of the US operation or ready to contribute to the UN peacekeeping force that America wants to hand over to.

But UN peacekeepers will not be equipped to disarm Somalia's clans and teenage gangs, or find and destroy heavy weapons hidden in the bush. Without rounding up every kalashnikov in the country, Operation Restore Hope will have to do more than deliver food and medicine: it must render Somalia policeable. Mr Bush's suggestion that American forces might have withdrawn by January 20, inauguration day, may be no more than a bow to his successor: it should not become an inflexible deadline.

Beyond the immediate prevention of starvation, the broader purpose of America's mission is to show that force can be used, under the UN umbrella, to help non-white, Muslim people, and not just where vital American interests are at stake. In this sense, it is an important test of international determination to use the opportunities created by the end of the Cold war.

Lack of American staying power could rebound badly on Washington. Its readiness to rush into Somalia would then seem to others like a feint, to compensate for its reluctance to douse the far fiercer fires in Bosnia. To the incoming American president, an ambiguous outcome in the Horn could serve as deterrent to action which may be needed to avert the danger of widening war in southern Europe. But America is most likely to stay the course if Washington is convinced that the responsibility for success is being shared. Other governments must accept the division of labour implicit in Washington's strategy, and start work with the UN on policing and the still longer haul of reconstruction. They have every interest in ensuring that America does not regret its decision to play the role of gentle giant.

Figure 8.2

Editorial in *The Times* on December 9, 1992d, (p. 17).

remarkable turnaround in policy.[10] That the journalists and editors of these twonewspapers could believe that US foreign policy had undergone such a complete change was, in turn, a quite remarkable display of face-value acceptance of a rationale offered by a ruling elite group. Why was this done? Where were the investigative reports and journalistic cynicisms which could have posed a challenge to such bold pronouncements? Why were there no similar "humanitarian" initiatives in Bosnia and the Sudan? Where was the discussion about the appalling humanitarian record of Bush and the US Government in Somalia before November 1992, and in areas such as Central America and the Middle East? And why was there no discussion whatsoever concerning the "fact" that not a single Somalia had been asked or consulted about the aims, nature or procedures of ORH?

Again, the wholesale promotion of the stated aims and objectives of powerful elites and the absence of critical investigation of these aims and objectives represented, as I argued in Chapter Two, a distinct and, I believe, deliberate campaign of institutionalised propaganda by these two newspapers to "manufacture consent" about the advantages of ORH. This was reinforced by the deliberate omission of other "facts" which had the potential to highlight ORH's disadvantages. Importantly, as Herman and Chomsky (1988), Parenti (1993), Dorman (1986) *et al* outlined, this overt propaganda campaign served to mobilise support for US foreign policy and US military thinking with regard to the Somalian situation in late 1992. ORH involved the US Government and military promoting a full-scale military solution not only to "sell" the Pentagon's weapons and armies as "humanitarian", (while at the same time ensuring those forces did not face budgetary cutbacks), but also to reaffirm the position of the US as the dominant and hegemonic force in George Bush's so-called "new world order" in the face of challenges from other industrial powers.[11] The manufacture of consent about ORH was, therefore, in the interests of public and private elites in the US and UK and, consequently, was necessary to reduce the potential for public opposition to the intervention.

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[10] In the same article, Friedman, (as the aforementioned editorial in *The Times* articulated four days later), made a positive link to George Bush's war on Iraq, stating that the invasion of Iraq "marked the first time since the Korean War that American troops led a coalition abroad to uphold the UN Charter and the principle of the sanctity of international borders". There was no discussion by Friedman on why the US had not led a coalition abroad in the years since the Korean War "to uphold the UN Charter and the principle of the sanctity of international borders" in places such as East Timor, Nicaragua, Grenada and Panama, countries which had all been invaded either overtly or covertly by US forces or by forces equipped, trained and supplied with US assistance. For more discussion, see Pilger (1994), Chomsky (1992) and Chomsky (1994b: 12-14, 24, 131-136).

[11] Importantly, too, it should be recognised that the UK was, and still is, a very close ally of the US. As such, the general aims of US foreign policy, particularly with regard to Somalia, were consistent with the general aims of the UK's policy. Thus, *The Times* generally supported the US Government's propaganda line about ORH as it was similar to that of the UK Government.

This is not to say that there was no debate in the two newspapers with regard to the pros and cons of ORH. The extent and context of this debate was, however, generally limited to discussions about the logistics and methods of the intervention and the need to "do it right", or to concern that it was "not in the interests of the US" rather than any outright objection to the intervention itself.[12] In other words, hegemonic conflict among ruling elites in the US was reflected in the pages of *The Times* and the *New York Times,* as my interpretation of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model predicted. Importantly, this gave the impression that real opposition to ORH had been aired in these newspapers, and that debate about ORH in *The Times* and the *New York Times* had been "balanced" and "objective". Moreover, this illusion of objectivity served to deflect attention from the fact that the stated "humanitarian" rationale for ORH was not questioned by the two newspapers in any way.[13] Other non-hegemonic viewpoints about ORH, such as that it shouldn't have been launched at all, or that more food aid was not needed, were absent, as were the opinions of the Somali people themselves or agencies such as the ICRC. In other words, non-hegemonic views and opinions were not considered for inclusion within the discourse of *The Times* or the *New York Times.* By ignoring critical voices, these two newspapers implicitly supported the ideologies of US Government and US military elites, and this, in turn, helped work towards mobilising public opinion in support of the intervention. Hegemony, then, as Piza *et al* (1987: 2) noted and, as my hypothesis predicted, had worked to highlight what was important to the public interest and what was not, and what was known by the public and what was not.

But what of the coverage by the *Guardian* of the world's response to the famine? With regard to the respective performances of the Western aid agencies in delivering aid, the *Guardian's* coverage was, on a qualitative basis, generally poor. Its coverage was constructed to favour a reading that, in general, portrayed the Somalis in a most unfavourable light, and was achieved by the emphasis, without context, on the "fact" that large amounts of the aid organisations' relief supplies were being looted. There was little, if any, discussion of the "fact" that the vast majority of the Somali people did not engage in the looting but were more often than not risking their lives to contribute to the aid

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[12] ORH was attacked, for example, in the *New York Times* by Michael R. Gordon on December 6, 1992c, (Sec.1, p.14) and by Clifford Krauss on December 7, 1992d, (p. A13). Significantly, what both these articles outlined were US concerns that ORH was "not in [the] interests of [the] US". Probably the high point of criticism of ORH in the *New York Times* was the debate within the editorial of December 4, 1992d, (p. A30), which was limited to the speed with which ORH would proceed, and warnings to the US and UN not to "muddy" the mission. What exactly this term meant was not outlined. There was also considerable hegemonic debate within elites in the US and UN, and reflected in the pages of *The Times,* (such as on December 3, 1992, p. 11 and December 4, 1992, p. 17), over the so-called objectives of ORH, rather than ORH itself. This often consisted of conflict between Pentagon officials, who did not believe the "job" could be done by January 20, as Bush wanted, but thought it would take "months" (December 5, 1992b, p. 9).

[13] Indeed, the *Guardian* also completely swallowed this stated rationale. This is discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

effort. In this regard, the coverage of these issues by the *Guardian* was, on a qualitative basis, only marginally better than that of *The Times* and the *New York Times.* Yet there was a distinct qualitative difference between the *Guardian* and the other two newspapers with regard to a number of other issues concerning the world's response to the famine. For example, the *Guardian,* unlike *The Times* and the *New York Times,* printed *some* criticism of the poor US relief effort in Somalia throughout 1991 and 1992. It also *occasionally* published articles that represented very critical analyses of ORH. In these articles, the inappropriateness of ORH was discussed as well as the improved famine situation in late November 1992, although such discourse often stopped short of outright and direct criticism of the decision to implement ORH.

Again, as discussed in Chapter Seven, I believe the occasional publication of such non-hegemonic views in the *Guardian* was a reflection of that newspaper's atypical political economy. The ownership structure of this newspaper differed from the more typical ownership structure of newspapers such as *The Times* and the *New York Times* in that it was not owned by a wealthy individual owner, or by a overwhelmingly large industrial conglomerate with concentrated and interlocking links with companies in sectors of the economy such as oil or defence. In this regard, there was not a direct and overwhelming imperative to construct stories which presented the world from a particularly narrow perspective, or the perspective of an owner with rigid views such as, say, Rupert Murdoch. Consequently, the overt and covert constraints of the first "filter" in Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model affecting what was and wasn't news were diluted somewhat. This meant that non-hegemonic ideas which undoubtedly existed in UK society and were competing with the hegemonic views could, occasionally, be regarded by the newspaper's editors and journalists as "news".

This also meant that the *Guardian* did not accept at face-value many of the interpretations regarding the world's response to the famine offered by certain elite groups. Thus, when discussing the alleged amount of food being looted by the "marauding gangs" in Somalia, the *Guardian* at least *occasionally* published articles that criticised the notion, articulated by the US and UN - based on the report written by Ismat Kittani after only two weeks in Somalia - that 80 per cent of food relief was being looted. This figure was often used by the US and UN to justify ORH but was hotly disputed by the ICRC and experts on Somalia such as Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal. This non-hegemonic opinion was, then, printed in the *Guardian* but was rarely, if ever, printed in *The Times* and the *New*

York Times which, instead, repeated Kittani's claim as an undisputed "fact" *ad nauseam* until it became a virtual "truth".[14]

Again, however, there was a limit to the extent to which the atypical political economy of the *Guardian* would publish such non-hegemonic views. Kittani's claim that 80 per cent of food aid was being looted was, for example, given much more news space than the non-hegemonic opinions of the NGOs that were actually delivering the food.[15] Articles in the *Guardian* articulating critical or cynical views were far fewer in number than those that articulated positive and praiseworthy views about ORH, by highlighting, for example, the "massive starvation" that awaited Somalis if nothing was done. This was a reflection, I believe, of the fact that the atypical political economy of the *Guardian* only diluted the strength of the first of the propaganda model's five "filters" affecting news production. The *Guardian* was, to some degree, affected by the other four filters, in that it was still dependent on advertising for much of its income, was still dependent on "official" sources for information, was still affected by general hegemonic criticism of its editorial line and was still affected by the general ideologies of the capitalist society in which it operated. Consequently, the weight and power of hegemonic opinion could, and did, gradually minimise the quantity of non-hegemonic opinion about ORH it published, and hence marginalised its influence. Thus, the *Guardian's* coverage favoured a reading that emphasised, for example, that the decision to begin ORH was correct, although this endorsement was not as marked or as observable as that of *The Times* and the *New York Times*.

In many instances, the *Guardian's* coverage of the world's response to the famine was, in general, similar to that of *The Times* and the *New York Times,* for example with regard to the supposed "humanitarian" motive for ORH. As I outlined in Chapter Five, this "humanitarian" rationale was highly suspect, particularly considering the appalling humanitarian record not only of Bush but also of the US Government and military, both in Somalia and elsewhere. Yet the *Guardian,* like *The Times* and the *New York Times,*

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[14] In this regard, the 80 per cent figure, along with misrepresentations about the breadth and extent of suffering within Somalia as revealed in Chapter Seven, was used repeatedly in the many articles in *The Times* and the *New York Times* which were, I believe, constructed to favour a reading that implied that ORH was necessary and the best and only solution to the crisis in Somalia in late 1992. This served elite public and private interests in the West - which, as discussed previously, set up ORH as a vehicle to protect the Pentagon's budget from cuts and boost the forceful image of US military might - on two crucial fronts. First, it helped create support for ORH among the general public in the West by overstating the degree of suffering in Somalia in late 1992. Second, it later helped to deflect criticism of ORH by exaggerating the degree to which ORH had been successful and had "helped" Somalia.

[15] Indeed, the *Guardian* obviously regarded the UN Security Council report as accurate and reliable, as it reported the 80 per cent figure several times, (November 27, 1992a, p.1, November 27, 1992c, p. 20, December 3, 1992a, p. 1, December 3, 1992b, p. 20), even though it contradicted the non-hegemonic and what I would consider were the more substantial views of those in Somalia, such as the ICRC.

was, in my opinion, more than enthusiastic in disseminating this alleged motive without criticism or analysis. In the *Guardian* of December 3, 1992b, (p. 20), for example, an editorial articulated positive interpretations of George Bush and his motives by observing:

> *The horror of Somalia seems to have touched a genuine nerve of compassion: Mr Bush may seek to end his White House years bathed in a kinder light.*

Similarly, Edward Pearce wrote on December 9, 1992c, (p. 20),[16] that:

> *Mr Bush is right - in principle if not in detail - to send great numbers of troops into Somalia to make possible the provision of food to that country. He has no discernible wrong motives - the innocent desire to go out with credit for doing something effective is not a wrong motive - he seeks no oil and not much glory.*

The only concern for Pearce was how long ORH troops would stay. In these and many other articles, which used similar positive tone and language framed in such a way as to convey the impression that Bush was acting solely for "humanitarian" reasons, no irony was noted. In this regard, the *Guardian,* like *The Times* and the *New York Times,* displayed an incredible degree of subservience to the "official" rationale, which implied that there was absolutely no US self-interest involved in ORH. This was an odd interpretation since it espoused the view that the main factor driving US foreign policy throughout modern history had suddenly been remarkably reversed.

Suddenly to believe that US foreign policy was no longer driven by US self-interest required, in my view, a remarkable degree of discipline on the part of the three newspapers. But why did the *Guardian,* despite its atypical political economy, accept this view as readily as did *The Times* and the *New York Times?* To me, this acceptance reflected the power of the "new" hegemonic view that the US and other hegemonic Western governmental elites, no longer driven by the imperatives of the Cold War, had suddenly changed their foreign policy directions and were now primarily concerned with positively redefining Western objectives under the code name of the "new world order". As discussed in Chapter Five, this resulted in terms such as "imperialism" being transmitted into more neutral or passive terms, such as "peacekeeping" or the "moral obligation" of "humanitarian intervention". Furthermore, as Richards (1993: 20) noted:

> *The attempt to depict American foreign policy as driven by altruistic concerns is not new ... What is new today, however, is the apologetic consensus which uncritically accepts the humanitarian rhetoric of Western diplomacy as good coin*

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[16] This article was illustrated in Chapter Seven.

The strength of this new hegemonic view was so powerful that it was widely accepted and, as a result, printed without question in all three newspapers, despite their differing political economies.

In summary, then, with regard to the coverage by the three newspapers of the issues surrounding the world's response to the famine, there was a slight but significant differentiation in news selection and reporting between the *Guardian* and the other two newspapers examined for this thesis. This reflected the different political economies of the three newspapers. The five "filters" of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model operated to cause the "news" to be shaped to favour a viewpoint that promulgated dominant ideologies. This viewpoint, however, was not the only one disseminated, due to the influence on the "news" of hegemonic conflict between dominant elites and those who held counter-hegemonic views. Again, this explicit bias in news production was achieved in a manner generally similar to that observed and outlined in Chapter Seven, with regard to the coverage by the three newspapers of the famine's causes. To provide the reader with the evidence on the basis of which I made the above assessment, I now present a more detailed record of part of my qualitative analysis of the coverage by the three newspapers of the world's response to the famine.

Summary of Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of Theme One and Theme Two

As discussed in Chapter Five, Western NGOs such as the ICRC and SCF were able to operate such successful food relief operations only because of the co-operation of, and contributions by, the Somalians themselves and Somali NGOs. These NGOs experienced low rates of food aid looting. Yet this "fact" was almost completely ignored in the reports by the three newspapers, being discussed by the *Guardian* in only 1.6 % of 120 articles, by *The Times* in only 2 % of 148 articles, and by the *New York Times* in only 1.6 % of 250 articles.[17] At the same time, all three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, highlighted the "heroism" of agencies such as the ICRC for continuing their relief efforts in the face of extreme danger in Somalia without making even the slightest allusion to the important role Somali people and organisations were playing in assisting these NGOs.[18] Although the efforts of such NGOs were undoubtedly heroic and praiseworthy, such reporting meant the local Somali contribution to the relief effort was either played down or completely ignored.

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[17] For a more detailed outline of the qualitative coverage given by the three newspapers to Theme One and Theme Two, see Appendix D.

[18] In *The Times* of August 6, 1992b, (p. 11), for example, an editorial praised the ICRC and SCF for "heroically stay[ing] on" in the face of danger in Somalia, without discussing the extreme danger Somali people placed themselves in by continuing to work, often as volunteers, for these agencies.

Such selective reporting was compounded by the coverage given by the three newspapers to the related Theme Two. Of the three, only the *Guardian*, in one report, managed to outline the factors behind the poor performances of certain relief agencies, such as CARE, which were, as I outlined in Chapter Five, their poor working practices.[19] Furthermore, all three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* gave much more positive attention to the overall Western aid effort, even though much of it was belated and obviously related to furthering Western political objectives. Contributions of the Somalis to the relief effort were virtually ignored. All three newspapers, but particularly the *New York Times*, also gave increased coverage to reports emphasising the high degree of looting by some Somalis.[20] Due to the failure of the newspapers to draw a direct causal link between the poor working practices of agencies such as CARE, which ignored or discounted any input from the Somalis, and this food looting, there was a potentially reduced ability of the reader to understand *why* this looting occurred, and *why* NGOs and agencies such as the ICRC could distribute food with minimal looting. With very few "balancing" articles or considered news portraying Somalis as helping in the relief effort, the overall result of such sensationalist articles was, once again, to marginalise and stereotype the Somalis and portray them in a very negative light. Thus, the dominant image was one of a country dominated by groups of people who ruthlessly hunted down and stole relief aid, which the West had supplied, dispatched and was now seeking to distribute to a helpless and hopeless people.

Thus, the reporting was slanted through the exaggeration of certain events, such as the looting, and the omission of other information, such as the fact that the vast majority of the Somali people did not engage in looting but were more often than not risking their lives to contribute to the aid effort. For what reason was the Somalian contribution ignored? This slant gave a distorted image of the Somalis and the situation in Somalia at the time and was, I believe, evidence of a deliberate tendency to highlight and promote an idea of Western heroism and general organisational ability and, at the same time, to dehumanise the Somalis and foster the idea that they were incapable of organising and running their own aid effort. In other words, the constant hegemonic refrain that the

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[19] These organisations did not work with or consult with Somalis over the direction of the relief effort, while organisations such as the ICRC coordinated their planning with Somali community leaders and worked with a much more co-operative attitude towards the Somali people.

[20] For example, there was constant and repetitive reference to the looting of relief supplies, as described in the *New York Times,* by "warring gangs" (December 6, 1992b, Sec.1, p.14), "greedy gunmen" (November 27, 1992b, p. A14), and "teenage hoodlums" (December 1, 1992c, p. A24), all of whom were presented as being "the single biggest obstacle to ending the starvation" (October 4, 1992, Sec.1, p.1,16), under headlines such as "Donors find much Somali aid stolen" (February 9, 1993, p. 10). The use of such language and turn of phrase was, in my view, highly inappropriate, as it implied that the *entire* relief effort was being wrecked by the actions of Somalis.

"West was Best" and knew how to deal with crises in developing countries in Africa emerged as one of the dominant discourses in the text of all three newspapers, but particularly in *The Times* and the *New York Times.*

Furthermore, the "news" produced served an important function for public and private elites by mirroring and reinforcing conventional hegemonic understandings of what occurred in an African famine and, as such, fed into Western stereotypes about Africa and Africans. These stereotypical images stressed the "value", "superiority" and "importance" of Western ideas and concepts of "development" with regard to the developing world while, at the same time, they served to deflect attention from the exploitative nature of corporate Western penetration and involvement in the developing world. *The Times* and the *New York Times,* in particular, promoted this pristine view of the West by constructing their stories in such a way that, from my understanding of them, the helplessness and despair of the Somalis could only be alleviated by the great white "helping hand" of the Western relief organisations. In other words, the Somali people, as Dorman described (1986: 419-421), were "shortchanged" by this media in their efforts to alleviate the famine and marginalised as helpless and despairing bystanders.

Thus, the dominant media discourse in all three newspapers, but particularly in *The Times* and the *New York Times,* emphasised the "impossibility" of continuing the aid effort. This ensured minimal resistance to the increasing calls for "foreign intervention" to "save" Somalia.[21] In this regard, the relative difference between the *Guardian* and the other two newspapers in terms of qualitative coverage of these themes was marginal even though still observable, for the reasons previously discussed. This differentiation, however, was far more pronounced with regard to Theme Three.

Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of Theme Three - That the World ignored Somalia in 1991 and made only Perfunctory Attempts at Assistance in 1992

As discussed in Chapter Five, the UN, the US, the EC, the OAU, the Arab League and the rest of the world community completely ignored Somalia during 1991 and made only perfunctory attempts at assistance during most of 1992, despite repeated warnings and pleas for assistance by certain NGOs. Interestingly, the *Guardian* provided extensive and serious coverage of this theme while *The Times* and the *New York Times* also provided

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[21] Only the fine article by Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal in the *Guardian* on December 5c, 1992, (p. 10), in which they discussed the efforts by Somalis to initiate famine relief, and connected these efforts to the very low rates of food looting experienced by the ICRC and SCF, presented positive images of the Somali people.

relatively extensive coverage. At first glance, then, it appeared that these findings contradicted the general predictions of this thesis. A more extensive examination of the quality of this coverage, however, revealed that the latter two newspapers concentrated their criticisms of the world community's response to the famine on the UN, the comparatively "easy" target. There was little criticism of Somalia's former Cold War ally, the US. Instead, these two newspapers constructed their coverage to focus attention and praise on the "ambitious" and "huge" US aid effort, and made no attempt to report that the US had done nothing to aid Somalia in the previous two years and was, therefore, more than partly responsible for the onset of the disaster.[22]

This observable distortion in *The Times* and the *New York Times* was more in line with the predictions of my hypothesis. In this regard, *The Times* and the *New York Times,* did not make criticisms of the US because, I believe, this would have reflected badly on the image that US elites wanted to project to the world. The US, as the world's only remaining superpower, was to be portrayed as a responsible and caring "global cop". Such an image would serve US governmental elites, and governmental elites in the UK, a US-ally, by deflecting criticism from US and UK imperialist actions in the developing world. In this regard, missile attacks on "troublesome" countries such as Iraq, which challenged US global hegemony and power, could be defended as, say, "teaching Saddam a lesson". Similarly, overt and covert US Government efforts to support dictatorial but pro-capitalist regimes, such as that of Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, could be described as, say, efforts at "encouraging democracy". In other words, the US and George Bush could be explicitly presented by newspapers such as *The Times* and the *New York Times* in such a way as to suggest, as Kellner (1992: 65) noted, that they were "strong and honourable defenders of international law and order".

How, and in what way, then, were the distortions with regard to this theme achieved in *The Times* and the *New York Times?* The response of the world community to Somalia's plight throughout 1991 and 1992 had been so poor that even these two newspapers had to attribute blame to somebody or something. It was the UN, however, and not the US, which bore the brunt of this blame and criticism, although, on very rare occasions, the US was also criticised. Moreover, criticism of the UN's poor performance never entailed discussing the idea, as I argued in Chapter Five, that the UN was not an independent player in world affairs but was, now more than ever, little more than a rubber-stamp authority for the US. In this regard, the world community, (predominantly the UN, and *very occasionally* the US), received at least some degree of criticism for

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[22] This is to say nothing of the contribution US support for Barre had made to sowing the seeds for the disaster which, as I argued in Chapter Seven, was rarely considered worth reporting as "news" in *The Times* and the *New York Times.*

their handling of the Somalian situation in 12 articles (8.1 %) in *The Times* [23] and 14 articles (5.6 %) in the *New York Times* .[24] Even then, the criticism was, I would contend, explicitly framed in such a way as to play down its impact. Passive and neutral language was used by *The Times,* for example, in the editorial of February 2, 1993, (p. 20), which noted: "Aid agencies were warning in early 1991 that there should be swift action to save a wrecked country. Nothing happened". Thus, no specific blame was levelled at any one country or institution. Criticism of the US here would have changed the slant of the story to one which was unacceptable to US Government elites and, therefore, criticism, (such as that in *The Times* on September 5, 1992, p. 8), was unacceptable for publication under the premises of the propaganda model. In this article, news space was given to UK Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, who attacked the world's "slow" reaction to the famine but made no mention of the UK's virtually non-existent contribution.

In the *New York Times,* too, the placement of much of the criticism served to minimise its impact on the reader. The article on August 13, 1992, (p. A1, A9), for example, placed the claims of Mohammed Sahnoun, that the UN was starting to act "nine months too late" in Somalia, towards the end of a long story. Furthermore, only one of the 14 articles, (October 30, 1992, p. A7), emphasised the more critical point that Somalis had died needlessly because of the slow start by the UN to the aid effort. At the same time, many of these articles which attacked the UN record in Somalia were framed in such a way as to highlight, in the most positive way possible, the belated and often minimal aid efforts of the US. On October 31, 1992, (p. A2), for example, a report which noted that a number of UN agencies had fled Somalia for 15 months from January 1991 added that:

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[23] These were July 29, 1992, (p. 11), August 6, 1992b, (p. 11), August 13, 1992a, (p. 9), August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), August 25, 1992, (p. 7), August 31, 1992a, (p. 5), September 5, 1992, (p. 8), October 30, 1992, (p. 16), December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), January 1, 1993, (p. 11), February 2, 1993, (p. 20) and April 26, 1993b, (p. 11). As mentioned above, most of these concentrated on the poor performance of the UN. There was very little, if any, criticism of the US, apart from the article on August 25, 1992, (p. 7), in which were outlined the scathing criticisms that relief agencies were directing towards the US for the belated and ill-advised aid effort it had announced in August.

[24] These were July 23, 1992, (p. A22), July 25, 1992, (p. A1, A4), August 13, 1992, (p. A1, A9), August 16, 1992, (Sec.1, p.12), August 22, 1992, (p. A1, A4), September 7, 1992, (p. A1, A5), September 20, 1992, (Sec.4, p.4), October 28, 1992, (p. A6), October 30, 1992, p. A7), October 31, 1992, (p. A2), December 2, 1992d, (p. 23), December 6, 1992f, (Sec.1, p. 1, 3), December 28, 1992b, (p. A15) and January 4, 1993, (p. A1, A6). As previously noted, most of these articles, (particularly the reports of September 7 and January 4), attacked the UN, (and, occasionally, the Arab countries), but did not criticise the US. One exception was the fine article on August 22, 1992, (p. A1, A4), which gave extensive coverage to criticisms of both the UN and US relief efforts, as well as to attacks on the timing of the new US relief effort, launched at the same time as the Republican Party Convention. A further article, (August 30, 1992, Sec.1, p.12), neutrally noted that after the fall of Siad Barre in January 1991, Somalia vis-a-vis the US "did not move beyond the realm of the [US] Assistant Secretary of African Affairs ... until [July 1992]".

When [these UN agencies] did return, [it was] in some instances [because they had been] embarrassed into doing so by criticism from the United States.

This implied that the US was a heroic watchdog ensuring that the world community played its proper part in assisting Somalia. This distortion could not have been constructed if attention had been given to the fact that the US had ignored Somalia to the same extent as the UN agencies.[25] If the atrocious record of the US had been discussed, the idea of the US Government and military playing the role of the good "global cop", as discussed above, would have been seriously compromised.

In this regard, both *The Times* and the *New York Times* presented a number of other articles which were generous in their attention to, and praise of, sections of that same world community which had belatedly offered some assistance in mid-1992.[26] In other words, the two newspapers exaggerated and overestimated the extent of this relief effort while not presenting it in context by discussing the possible motives behind such a concerted effort. There was no discussion of the fact that the suffering, though severe, was by that time not appreciably worse, or that the previous aid effort from such countries and institutions as the US and UN had ranged from minimal to non-existent. Importantly, such information had the potential to cast suspicion on the motives behind

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25 More than six months later, on May 2, 1993, (Sec.1, p.16), the *New York Times* reported that the much-trumpeted "generosity" of donor nations such as the US towards Somalia in August, 1992, was more talk than action, noting that of the US$150 million in relief aid pledged by donor nations at that time for Somalia, only US$14 million had been delivered. This reflected the contention of Cohen and Solomon (1993: 72-86), outlined in Chapter Two, that non-hegemonic "facts" and interpretations were, more often than not, published so far after the event in question that they had no chance of making a difference to public perceptions. As I argued in Chapter Two, such examples of "investigative journalism" were belatedly published by such media as the *New York Times* to convey the impression that they were "objective" when, in most cases, in-depth and critical analysis of events and issues at the time they were occurring, were rarely undertaken. At these times, when it really counted, such media faithfully swallowed the "official" propaganda line.

26 There were 17 of these articles, (11.5 %) in *The Times:* June 27, 1992, (p. 10), July 25, 1992, (p. 12), August 4, 1992, (p. 8), August 17, 1992, (p. 8), August 18, 1992, (p. 8), August 19, 1992, (p. 8), August 20, 1992a, (p. 8), August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), August 21, 1992, (p. 9), August 22, 1992, (p. 9), August 24, 1992, (p. 8), August 29, 1992, (p. 8), September 9, 1992, (p. 11), September 16, 1992, (p. 13), November 24, 1992a, (p. 6), November 27, 1992, (p. 13) and December 9, 1992c, (p. 13). As for the *New York Times,* there were 25 such articles (...%): July 20, 1992, (p. A3), July 28, 1992, (p. A6), July 31, 1992, (p. A9), August 2, 1992, (Sec.4, p.16), August 13, 1992, (p. A1, A9), August 15, 1992, (p. A1, A2), August 17, 1992, (p. A1, A5), August 18, 1992a, (p. A4), August 18, 1992b, (p. A18), August 19, 1992, (p. A3), August 23, 1992, (Sec.1, p.3), August 26, 1992b, (p. A5), August 28, 1992, (p. A3), August 29, 1992, (p. A4), September 1, 1992, (p. A16), September 4, 1992, (p. A1, A6), September 6, 1992, (Sec.1, p.1, 20), September 9, 1992, (p. A10), September 14, 1992, (p. A8), September 15, 1992, (p. A10), September 18, 1992, (p. A10), October 23, 1992, (p. A1, A8), November 20, 1992, (p. 31), November 26, 1992a, (p. A1, A10) and November 27, 1992a, (p. A1, A15). The report in the *New York Times* of November 27, about the possibility that as many as 20,000 US troops might be sent to Somalia, noted: "So far the UN has sought the consent of rival armed clans before deploying troops to oversee the distribution of supplies, but has largely failed to contain the marauding bands that in effect control the country". This report did not indicate how New York-based UN bureaucrats obstructed Sahnoun's efforts to negotiate with the clans, nor that the deployment of 3,000 troops was publicly announced before Mr Sahnoun, or any Somali, had even been consulted.

these sudden efforts, to highlight the lack of relief effort in other trouble spots around the globe, such as Bosnia, and to raise the idea that other "glorious causes", such as the Gulf War, were not initiated solely to assist the local people. Thus, extremely positive and uplifting phrases were used to describe the UN and, in particular, US relief efforts.

On August 4, 1992, (p. 8), for example, *The Times* uncritically reported on what it described as the UN's "huge" relief operation in Somalia, unreservedly and enthusiastically praising the "ambitious" (August 17, 1992, p. 8; August 18, 1992, p. 8), "big" (August 20, 1992a, p. 8), "massive" (August 20, 1992b, p. 11) and "huge" (August 22, 1992, p. 9) US relief operation.[27] Words such as "belated", "late" or "politically motivated" were never used in any of these articles to describe the US and UN operation.[28] Again, this was evidence, to me, of an explicit framing of the "news" to embellish it with a certain "meaning", one which praised the efforts of US Governmental elites, for the purposes previously enumerated.[29] The *New York Times* used similar methods to exaggerate the relief efforts of the world community, particularly the US, that were initiated around mid-1992. On August 19, 1992, (p. A3), for example, the US was portrayed positively as a "watchdog" while, at the same time, a claim by a US official that the US regarded the UN's strategy in Somalia as "failing" was not challenged or qualified. The troublesome idea that US strategy in Somalia could not "fail" because it had not until then existed was not considered important by the *New York Times*, unless one counted doing nothing as a strategy![30]

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[27] These same two articles, (as well as that of August 19, 1992, p. 8), also noted how "thousands of Somalis [had already] starved to death" but, again, no connection was made between this and the non-existent US relief programme to that date.

[28] The article in *The Times* of August 20, 1992a, (p. 8) also used positive and uplifting language to describe US troops as "rushing" to get airstrips ready for aid planes. This same article also noted that: "Hundreds of babies and children died across Somalia yesterday as logistical problems held up the start of a big American relief effort to feed the starving millions in the ravaged nation". This might or might not have been the case but did hundreds of babies and children die across Somalia because of "logistical problems" or because countries such as US, which had a special responsibility to Somalia, had done nothing from late 1990, the time it abandoned Somalia, to mid-1992? There was seemingly nothing "logistical" about the absence of any type of "big" American relief operation during these years of US indifference to Somalia. In this regard, it was not surprising that *The Times* on November 27, 1992, (p. 13), chose to describe UN plans to send troops to assist in the aid relief in positive terms as an "extraordinary action".

[29] Two further articles in *The Times*, (August 21, 1992, p. 9, and September 9, 1992, p. 11), discussed the UN plans to send additional UN troops to Somalia, in addition to the 500 already there. In these there was no discussion about whether the Somali factions and people had been consulted about this "offer". Instead, an unnamed UN "team of experts" was given considerable space to air their belief that UN troop numbers should be boosted. Somalis were not asked their opinion, nor was there any elaboration on whether there were any Somalis among these "experts". Again, this was evidence of the effect on the "news" produced as predicted by one of the "filters" of the propaganda model, that of sourcing mass media news from powerful elites.

[30] Other "feel good" stories presenting positive images of the belated US aid effort in mid-1992 and published by the *New York Times* included that of August 13, 1992, (p. A1, A9), which stated: "The White House said in a statement 10 days ago that it supported the dispatch of UN troops to Mogadishu to alleviate the disaster and that Washington would contribute "generously" to the cost". Yet, as I argued in Chapter Five, the White House, through the UN Security Council, had vetoed the

Significantly, there was some elaboration of this theme, including outright criticisms of the US, in 20 articles (16.6 %) in the *Guardian.*[31] More importantly, the incisive and penetrative criticisms of US and UN policy were *not* offset, in general, by a more noticeable campaign, in these and other articles, of positive and laudatory assessments of US and UN policy. [32] Consequently, non-hegemonic opinion and interpretations were published. Typical of some of the excellent analytical pieces in the *Guardian* with regard to coverage of this theme was the excellent report by Mark Huband on August 31, 1992, (p. 19), in which he not only attacked the US aid effort but also postulated that there might be ulterior motives behind it:

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sending of troops five months earlier because of the cost. Why was there no interest in detailing this "fact"? Furthermore, the *New York Times* did not even begin to suggest that the sudden US interest in the famine in Somalia in August, 1992, might have something to do with the Republican Convention or the massive media attention the disaster was now receiving. Instead, US foreign policy trumpet-blowing became more and more the norm, as in the editorial of September 1, 1992, (p. A16), which noted triumphantly that: "The US Cavalry has finally arrived in Somalia, bringing food and sympathy to a people beset by civil war and famine". The word "finally" did not receive any elaboration in this generally upbeat piece, written in a tone which I would regard as more appropriate for a Hollywood western. Similarly positive public relations for US Government actions in Somalia was conveyed in such dramatic headlines as: "US delivers tons of food to Somalia" (August 29, 1992, p. A4). Headlines which suggested that such deliveries were too little, too late, were, not surprisingly, unsighted. Indeed, evidence of the explicit unwillingness of *The Times* or the *New York Times* to articulate in significant detail any sort of criticism of the US Government's relief record in Somalia was contained in the article in the *New York Times* of October 28, 1993, (p. A6). Buried in the middle of a long story about Mohammed Sahnoun, the report stated that US aid flights had, at that time, been cancelled for two days, because one of their planes had been hit by small arms fire. As far as I can establish, no further aid flights were conducted by the US after this "incident" until ORH was launched. Yet incidents of this type never deterred organisations such as the ICRC from continuing their aid flights. This inconvenient information was never analysed by either newspaper. Similarly, the report of September 6, 1992, (Sec.1, p.1, 20), discussed "political and logistical" problems holding back the US and UN relief effort without acknowledging that the ICRC had, with local help, been able to overcome these problems. In contrast, the *New York Times* article of August 15, 1992, (p. A1, A2), noted without irony that the US was now "joining the effort to prevent starvation in Somalia", via a "special" airlift, and Bush's comments that the US was "calling upon other nations to join us in this urgent and important effort to alleviate starvation". Similarly positive PR continued on August 17, 1992, (p. A1, A5), with happy descriptions of Somalia as the "beneficiary" of this US aid. Much space was also given to the "urgent" UN aid plans of mid-1992 (July 28, 1992, p. A6). No question as to why this aid was "urgent" was suggested.

31 These were July 9, 1992, (p. 11), July 11, 1992, (p. 14), August 5, 1992, (p. 20), August 7, 1992a, (p. 9), August 14, 1992, (p. 17), August 17, 1992, (p. 8), August 18, 1992, (p. 8), August 31, 1992, (p. 19), September 2, 1992, (p. 16), September 4, 1992, (p. 9), September 10, 1992, (p. 10), September 14, 1992, (p. 8), September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian*, p. 1-3), October 13, 1992, (p. 8), October 30, 1992, (p. 13), November 25, 1992, (p. 10), November 28, 1992b, (p. 23), December 5, 1992c, (p. 10), December 12, 1992d, (p. 13) and January 9, 1993c, (*Guardian Weekend,* p. 14-16). As mentioned above, these reports, unlike those of *The Times* and the *New York Times,* contained detailed criticism of the US aid effort. Nevertheless most of these reports concentrated on criticisms of the UN. Moreover, the report of August 18, while discussing "the year of neglect by the world community" towards Somalia, was generally an upbeat piece about the US aid effort. Furthermore, the *Guardian* relegated the story of October 13 which detailed the UN's astonishing concession that they had "been a year late in reacting to the Somalia famine" to a minor two-paragraph place in the "News in Brief" section.

32 It might be argued that, because the *Guardian* was a UK newspaper, its political economy was irrelevant as a factor constraining attacks on US public elites. I would disagree with this argument, as *The Times* was also a UK newspaper and it showed little, if any, interest in exploring criticisms of the US aid effort.

> *It is difficult to look at the US humanitarian effort to Somalia without wondering why it is being done ... The muddled organisation [of the US effort], the sudden interest in a famine the world - and certainly the US Government - has known about for months, the sudden availability of food to a former Cold War ally just as an election in the US is drawing closer, all build up a rather shady picture of White House motives.*

In this and similar articles in the *Guardian,*[33] then, explicit criticism was levelled against the UN and, more significantly, the US, with regard to their abysmal record in Somalia throughout 1991 and 1992. This was a reflection not only of the existence and weight of counter-hegemonic opinion within the UK with regard to this record, but also of the weaker constraints for the *Guardian* against publishing such opinion.[34] Again, the difference in the relative patterns and quality of coverage between the three newspapers was further evidence to back up the hypothesis of this thesis.

In sum, then, two of the newspapers examined in this thesis, *The Times* and the *New York Times,* generally presented a distorted picture of the situation in Somalia with regard to performances by the West, including the US and UN, in providing relief. That

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[33] Such as Mark Huband's article of August 5, 1992, (p. 20), in which he highlighted the dreadful performance by the UN in Somalia, and included much discussion about the "unprecedented criticism" the UN operations in Somalia were receiving for "the slowness of its response to the country's needs", which had "worsened the catastrophic situation" in Somalia. Rakiya Omaar, (August 14, 1992, p. 17), also criticised the UN, pointing out that the UN had "abandoned" Somalia in January 1991 even though smaller organisations such as the ICRC and SCF had "stayed put". Then, on September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian*, p. 1-3), particular note was made of the US role in watering down the UN's aid plans in March 1992, while another fine piece by Mark Huband on January 9, 1993c, (*Guardian Weekend,* p. 14-16), carried details of how the US aid effort of 146,000 tonnes of food, announced with much fanfare in August, 1992, had, by January 1993, still not materialised.

[34] This is not to say there was no evidence of an attempt within the *Guardian* to "muddle" the criticism of the US and UN. The *Guardian* published six reports which detailed UN and/or US and/or EC aid plans and made no reference to previous UN/US neglect of Somalia. (These were July 30, 1992a, p. 22, August 8, 1992b, p. 10, September 4, 1992, p. 9, September 7, 1992, p. 1, November 16, 1992, p. 11, and December 2, 1992, p. 8). Thus, on September 4, 1992, (p. 9), Michael Simmons outlined the EC's "unprecedented plans" for aid without noting that the EC had done nothing for the two years prior to this announcement and, therefore, was guilty of an "unprecedented" abdication of responsibility for a terrible crisis. On December 2, 1992, (p. 8), Michael Simmons again, along with Hella Pick, wrote uncritically of the "UN commitment to Somalia's humanitarian crisis". Two other articles, (August 12, 1992, p. 8, August 13, 1992, p. 7), discussed the success of Mohammed Sahnoun in obtaining the agreement of the Somali faction leaders for the deployment of 500 troops, without mentioning the delay in the implementation of the initiative. Without doubt, Mohammed Sahnoun was a heroic figure in the UN debacle in Somalia and his achievements generally deflected attention away from the UN's dreadful performance in Somalia. More importantly, a further four articles, (July 30, 1992b, p. 20, August 11, 1992, p. 18, August 29, 1992, p. 8 and September 2, 1992, p. 16), discussed the agreement of the UN Security Council to send an additional 3,000 armed personnel to Somalia, without mentioning that Mohammed Sahnoun had not even discussed this proposal with representatives in Somalia. An article on July 30, 1992b, (p. 20), actually questioned Mr Sahnoun's insistence on negotiating with Somalis for extra troops, stating in a neo-imperial tone: "Mr Sahnoun still [insists that bringing in extra troops] must be done with the co-operation of the [Somali] factions, but the question of compulsion has to be faced". Similarly, on August 11, 1992, (p. 18), Sahnoun was denounced as "clearly at odds with a growing body of opinion which regards a UN military presence as the only option [and no negotiations]". Somali opinion about this neo-colonial "option" was not canvassed.

picture generally played down these poor performances and, in contrast, overwhelmingly praised what little effort was made. The *Guardian,* on the other hand, while also playing down these poor performances to some degree, did not, in general, exaggerate the extent and usefulness of what little aid the West did provide. The decision by the West in late November, 1992, to implement a gigantic aid effort code-named Operation Restore Hope, would, for the reasons outlined below, provide even more evidence to back up my hypothesis.

Summary of Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of Themes Four, Five and Seven

The grandly-titled Operation Restore Hope represented the main response to the crisis in Somalia conducted by the major Western Governments and organisations, such as the US, the UK and the UN. As I argued in Chapter Five, however, ORH was an extremely poor option for Somalia in late November 1992. At that stage, the worst of the famine was over, and a number of relief organisations were calling for a "fine-tuning" of the relief effort. The function of ORH in providing more food aid, then, was unnecessary. As I also argued in Chapter Five, ORH was completely inappropriate in that the armed forces of countries such as the US were not trained to provide humanitarian relief in crisis situations such as that which existed in Somalia in late November 1992. Furthermore, there was no consultation with Somalis over the nature of or implementation of the intervention. The qualitative coverage of these factors by the three newspapers indicates that a noticeable emphasis in news selection and framing was again evident.[35]

For example, in all three newspapers, but in *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, there was very little coverage questioning the decision to begin ORH, or highlighting the contention that more food aid was not needed.[36] Instead, the "official"

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[35] For a detailed account of the qualitative coverage by the three newspapers of these themes, see Appendix D. It is also worth noting that the three newspapers, as well as most Western media, massively increased their coverage of the crisis in Somalia in late November, 1992, when ORH was first announced. As Rosenblum (1993: 38) observed: "More newspaper space and air time were devoted to Somalia in the first days of Operation Restore Hope than during the entire previous year, in which at least 300,000 people had starved to death". To me, this exaggerated attention to a Western response when so little attention was given to the Somali response further distorted the coverage presented by the three newspapers.

[36] The lack of criticism of ORH in the *New York Times* was not surprising considering that demands for some form of "intervention" had been prevalent in many articles published in the newspaper before ORH was announced, despite the falling death rates in Somalia. In this regard, the newspaper's pro-neocolonialist tendencies were exposed. The editorial on November 4, 1992, (p. A30), for example, stated: "If a ... UN force is needed [to stop the fighting disrupting relief shipments], then get it. If UN intervention means looters risk being shot, that is a risk they bring on themselves. And if the only alternative to anarchy is a UN trusteeship, then the Security Council needs to ponder that course". This was the beginning of a long campaign to promote the neo-colonialist option as the only way to solve the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Leslie H. Gelb wrote on November 19, 1992, (p. A27), that Bush "should not duck the mass slaughter and starvation of Somalia's civil war and then dump

reasons behind that decision, sourced from politicians in Washington and New York, were, in general, passed off without comment or question. At the same time, the feelings and opinions of relief agencies in Somalia, such as the ICRC and the SCF, not to mention those of the Somalis themselves, were, in general, ignored and, consequently, marginalised.[37] Only the *Guardian* printed *occasional* criticism of the decision to launch the intervention. The little questioning of ORH in the other two newspapers was limited to discussions about the logistics of the intervention.[38] In this regard, what appeared to be real debate about ORH in these two newspapers was merely hegemonic conflict among powerful elites over the conduct of the operation. This reflected their complete acceptance of the "desperate" situation in Somalia and the alleged 80 per cent rate of food aid looting, as claimed by "official" US and UN sources.

Furthermore, all three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, generally failed to consider that ORH was a completely inappropriate response to the crisis in Somalia. There was no discussion or recognition that, even if the alleged "humanitarian" motive was genuine, the military force of 30,000 foreign troops was trained predominantly to maim and kill, not to perform a function of relief assistance in a civil conflict. Such situations were the speciality of relief agencies such as the ICRC, SCF and MSF. The general tendency in all three newspapers, but in *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, was to give a positive gloss to the activities of the ORH troops by highlighting actions such as the delivery of food. This emphasised the short-term achievements of ORH, but these were not put in any context by discussing how certain NGOs, such as the ICRC, were undertaking these activities as well as initiating necessary and more *appropriate* long-term relief work, such as the relatively "unglamorous" fine-tuning of the relief effort. Furthermore, there was little recognition

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the problem on Bill Clinton", thereby implying that Bush had not been "ducking" Somalia for the past two years. The neo-colonialist tone was also evident in this article which demanded that US forces "intervene immediately" in Somalia "without waiting for UN approval". And without waiting for Somali approval, no doubt. Gelb gave UN ineptitude and the UN showing "almost no interest in the Somali nightmare" as the basis for US intervention as if there was no alternative and as if the US had not shown this same lack of interest. The case for intervention was continued on November 20, 1992, (p. A31).

[37] For example, the American Friends Service Committee, a small US NGO which had been working in Somalia for 10 years, issued a statement, (cited by Chomsky in a letter to the author), saying that "on the basis of this direct experience [in Somalia] and our knowledge of the country and its people", ORH was a "grave mistake" which "may be counterproductive in the long if not the short run", as it was interrupting and disrupting the processes of reconstruction that "have been undertaken among traditional leaders facilitated by Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun of the UN and others, to try to build peace from below". Such views and statements were not considered worth reporting by the three newspapers.

[38] In the *New York Times* on November 30, 1992, (p. A9), for example, an article made it clear that the idea of the intervention was fine, the only question to be considered was how the Somalian aid problems were to be addressed. Debate within the *New York Times* article of December 1, 1992b, (p. A10), was limited to the acceptability or not of exposing US soldiers to "risks" in Somalia, but not to the acceptability of exposing Somalians to the "risks" of having 30,000 troops sent to their country.

that many of ORH's "achievements", such as the delivery of food aid, had either already been accomplished by, or were only possible now because of the work of, relief agencies such as the ICRC.

Such reporting fostered the impression that ORH was a success when it was inappropriate, and this inappropriateness would be the prime reason for the worsening of the situation in Somalia. When this deterioration began to occur, all three newspapers, but, again, *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, presented the negative effects of ORH as an unfortunate and unforeseen side-effect of a "necessary" intervention. This conveyed the impression that the mistakes of ORH, which began to become apparent in early January and by February were so common and obvious they could not be ignored, were *not* the result of the completely inappropriate ORH military intervention into Somalia. Why was this slant given? Why did *The Times* and the *New York Times* compound their earlier distortions and one-sided coverage by not criticising the militaristic nature of ORH in later articles, even when the failures of the mission were becoming obvious? Indeed, positive and uplifting stories continued to be published by these two newspapers even when, by as early as February, 1993, ORH appeared about to fail.[39]

A distinct pattern of reporting was also noticeable in the coverage by the three newspapers of Theme Seven. In this regard, only one article, in the *Guardian,*[40] discussed the notion that the Somalis were neither asked if they wanted, nor consulted about, ORH. In place of such considerations, a number of articles, particularly in *The Times* and the *New York Times,* promoted the idea that the Somalis welcomed ORH.[41] This might or might not have been the case but there was an important distinction to be made here, which none of these articles attempted, concerning the fact that, even if Somalis had welcomed the

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39 For example, an article in *The Times* on February 27, 1993, (p. 13), stated optimistically: "An unprecedented military expedition on purely humanitarian grounds, ORH is perhaps the most stark example of the powerlessness of the international community to bring order to the growing chaos across the African continent which has followed the end of the Cold War". In other words, the inappropriateness of ORH was disregarded, and the effect of Cold War manoeuvres by the US and USSR on creating the "growing chaos" in Africa was ignored. Similarly, when ORH had obviously failed, an article in *The Times* on April 26, 1993b, (p. 11), uncritically detailed UN plans to "reshape" ORH and turn Somalia "into a UN-mandated territory in all but name". This alarming development and change to ORH was not challenged, nor were the views of Somalis gathered to establish their feelings about facing this blatant form of neo-colonialism. In this regard, not a single item in any of the three newspapers discussed the "fact" that, by May 1993, when ORH was transferred from US to UN leadership, at least one thousand Somalis had been killed and probably many more, (Chomsky 1994b: 275-276), and that the ORH forces were "aggressive, violent and often racist" and "often engaged in human rights abuses against the local population" (de Waal and Omaar 1993c: 3).

40 This was the critical article about ORH by Rakiya Omaar and Alex De Waal which appeared on December 5, 1992c, (p. 10).

41 See, for example, *The Times* of December 9, 1992a, (p. 1).

idea of the intervention, this did not mean they welcomed the *practice.* Consequently, the views of the Somali people were, once again, distorted and, essentially, marginalised.

I believe that such selective reporting was explicitly favoured to deflect attention from any idea that ORH was inappropriate and, by extension, to limit debate as to whether there were other factors motivating the military and governmental elites, especially in the US, with regard to the launch and execution of the intervention. It should be noted, however, that there were *some* counter-hegemonic views and opinions regarding these two themes appearing in the three newspapers, particularly the *Guardian,* which, again, reflected the conflict between hegemonic and non-hegemonic forces with regard to the intervention, as well as the relative constraints between the three newspapers with regard to the degree to which non-hegemonic views could be articulated. On the whole, however, the reporting in all three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, was generally positive about the decision in late November, 1992, to implement a military solution for Somalia's problems. In other words, the ideological slant in the coverage, caused by the structure and nature of ownership of these newspapers and their relationship to capitalism in the US and UK, served to promote the views of public and private elites, for the reasons outlined earlier in this chapter. Importantly, as the hypothesis of this thesis has argued, such views were consistent with the general views of the owners of the three newspapers. This slant was, in general, also prevalent in the coverage by the three newspapers of the alleged "humanitarian" motive behind ORH.

Qualitative Aspects of Coverage of Theme Six - The "Humanitarian" Motive of ORH.

The stated motive for ORH by the UN and US was that it was a "humanitarian" mission on behalf of the starving of Somalia. Yet, considering the research presented in Chapters Four and Five, such claims could hardly be taken seriously. The "humanitarian" record of the US Bush Administration and the US military in Somalia, both before and during the famine, was appalling. President Bush, along with the leaders of previous US Governments, had shown absolutely no "humanitarian" concern for the Somalis killed and maimed by Siad Barre with tacit US "support" between 1978 and 1990. During this time, the torture, oppression and outright slaughter of Somalis, such as the 1988 bombing of Hargeisa and Burao in which 60,000 mainly unarmed civilians were killed, did not engender "humanitarian" concerns in the White House and the Pentagon. In addition, as I argued in Chapter Five, the chaos and resulting starvation in Somalia during 1991 and 1992 also did not elicit "humanitarian" concern from the US Government and military. At the same time, there were many other areas in the world demanding similar "humanitarian" assistance which had been completely ignored by the US.

Nevertheless, despite the many counter indications, and the warnings and complaints from relief agencies such as the ICRC, the three newspapers examined in this thesis generally transmitted and promoted the official line with minimal criticism or debate. Furthermore, the three newspapers constructed many of their stories of December 1992 and January 1993 to favour a reading that would laud the US Government and US military for their "humanitarian" actions. Such acceptance of the "official" line by the three newspapers demonstrated an alarming lack of journalistic cynicism, and was entirely consistent with the predictions of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model.

Evidence in the three newspapers of this explicit support for the proffered propaganda line of the US Government was plentiful. In the *Guardian,* for example, 17 articles discussed and unquestionably praised the "humanitarian" aspect of the intervention without offering any criticism.[42] Martin Walker began the charge, (November 27, 1992a, p. 1), describing ORH positively as an "extraordinary offer" involving 30,000 US troops "enforcing stability in famine-wracked Somalia" which would "restore order and establish relief zones". Yet, as I argued in Chapter Five, these zones had already been set up by NGOs such as the ICRC, while "order" had been established in the north and north-west of Somalia without any need for foreign military forces. This story also quoted a US official as stating: "We continue to be very concerned about the situation in Somalia". Why did Walker make no effort to acknowledge the irony of this concern? Moreover, on the same day, (November 27, 1992c, p. 20), a *Guardian* editorial lauded the "enormous humanitarian advance" that ORH would represent by offering the prospect that "food and medical supplies might reach some of the people they are actually intended for". The "fact" that NGOs such as the ICRC were achieving this without military assistance was conveniently ignored. The editorial also noted that "perhaps George Bush would like his presidency to end on a strong humanitarian note". Again, this was a remarkable statement considering Bush's prior humanitarian record.[43]

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[42] These were November 25, 1992b, (p. 10), November 27, 1992a, (p. 1), November 27, 1992c, (p. 20), November 28, 1992a, (p. 12), December 1, 1992, (p. 12), December 2, 1992, (p. 8), December 3, 1992b, (p. 20), December 4, 1992, (p. 22), December 8, 1992, (p. 12), December 9, 1992b, (p. 11), December 9, 1992c, (p. 20), December 16, 1992b, (p. 19), December 18, 1992a, (p. 1), December 31, 1992a, (p. 11), January 4, 1993c, (p. 18), February 5, 1993, (p. 12) and March 3, 1993, (p. 10). The editorial of December 3b stressed positively that ORH was a "dynamic" act by the US as it "offered an immediate means to address appalling famine". This ignored not only the "fact" that the famine was waning but also that the US action, considering the US inaction throughout 1991 and much of 1992, was anything but "immediate". The report of December 4 reflected the hegemonic conflict in the US over the possible gains for the US from the intervention, giving the impression that there was some debate in the *Guardian* with regard to the motives behind ORH when there was virtually none.

[43] What debate there was in the *Guardian* about ORH's "humanitarian" credentials was often limited to comment, (such as on December 1, 1992, p. 12), about whether ORH's "admirable principle[s]" would extend to Bosnia and other "trouble spots around the globe". This report also postulated that the duty of the US, "as the only superpower [left, is] to provide the UN with the muscle and vision to establish a global peace". That uninvited, unnecessary and inappropriate invasions of foreign countries

The *Guardian* even went as far as to publish a long article by noted US "hawk" Henry Kissinger, (December 16, 1992b, p. 19), who stressed the "noble" objective of the "humanitarian" principles behind ORH and asserted that, with the end of the Cold War, the US "should fight primarily for humanitarian and moral values, not simply for its own interests".[44] The *Guardian* did not just leave it to right-wing, militaristic US politicians to praise the "humanitarian" principles of ORH, however. Simon Tisdall continued in that vein on December 31, 1992a, (p. 11), stating:

> *The intervention is seen by many [in the US] as an appropriate use of American power to do good quickly, and perhaps as the first example of how Mr Bush's much-ridiculed "new world order" might work in practice.*

Just who, exactly, were the "many"? For what reasons did they feel the use of armed forces in a famine situation was "appropriate"? And why were the considerable reservations and doubts about whether ORH would actually "do good", either "quickly" or otherwise, not discussed? Again, such selective reporting conveyed the idea that the principles behind ORH were rock solid, and served to limit oppositional and counter-hegemonic debate.[45] Why was this done?

The Times, too, was not shy in praising the "humanitarian" aspect of the intervention without question or criticism.[46] The elite view of the situation was addressed early,

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by the US were now accepted by the *Guardian* as a crusade for "global peace" indicated a quite remarkable capacity for doublethink. It was no surprise, then, that the following assertions by George Bush could appear unchallenged in the *Guardian* on December 5, 1992a, (p. 1): " 'The US alone cannot right the world's wrongs, but some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement,' Mr Bush said ... 'Only the US has the global reach.' ... To reassure Somalia ... President Bush declared: ... 'We respect your sovereignty and independence' ". The "fact" that the US had not respected the "sovereignty or independence" of nations such as Vietnam, Chile, Nicaragua, Grenada and Panama as part of its "global reach" was not raised.

[44] Kissinger went on to say: "In fact, moral purpose has motivated every American war this century". This, supposedly, included the Vietnam War, the hegemonic view of which, as Herman and Chomsky (1988: 169), summarised, purported that the US "intervened in the service of generous ideals, with the goal of defending South Vietnam from aggression and terrorism and in the interest of democracy and self-determination". This view, as Herman and Chomsky (1988: 169-252) concluded, was faithfully transmitted by the US media. For a more critical view of the role and motivations of the US in Vietnam, see Pilger (1989: 171-287, 481-492).

[45] The *Guardian* also left little doubt as to its view of George Bush, stating in an editorial on January 4, 1993c, (p. 18), that: "[For Bush], merely doing something in Somalia, when others would not, took some nerve and imagination".

[46] This was observable in 18 articles: November 28, 1992, (p. 1), December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), December 2, 1992b, (p. 12), December 2, 1992c, (p. 12), December 2, 1992e, (p. 12), December 4, 1992, (p. 17), December 5, 1992a, (p. 1), December 5, 1992b, (p. 9), December 7, 1992, (p. 11), December 9, 1992b, (p. 13), December 9, 1992d, (p. 17), December 11, 1992b, (p. 15), December 16, 1992a, (p. 1), December 16, 1992c, (p. 16), December 29, 1992b, (p. 8), January 7, 1993b, (p. 10), February 20, 1993, (p. 17) and February 27, 1993, (p. 13). The report of December 2b articulated the "cautious welcome" of NGOs such as OXFAM and SCF towards ORH. This ignored the fact that the *idea* of ORH was very different from the *practice*, and that OXFAM and SCF had been pressured by the UK Government not to attack ORH. Most of the other reports were full of unqualified praise

through an editorial on December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), which observed that the UN was "contemplating the invasion of a member state", but alleviated concerns about this by adding: "For humanity's sake, governments must set aside their fears of setting precedents for external intervention. So desperate is Somalia's plight". The uncritical promotion of this view in accordance with the general requirements of the propaganda model necessitated not only minimal questioning of the motive but also outright applause, which was duly delivered by *The Times* on December 5, 1992a, (p. 1). In this report, the humanitarian ideals of ORH were lauded as a force "to prevent mass starvation" in Somalia even though, as I argued in Chapter Five, this had been prevented already by the NGOs.[47] Moreover, what little debate there was about ORH in *The Times* concentrated, (as in the article of December 2, 1992c, p. 12), on how long the US troops of ORH would be "committed" to the "humanitarian recolonisation" of Somalia.

There was also a concerted and explicit campaign in the *New York Times* to laud the "humanitarian" principles behind the intervention in the face of the many alternative and oppositional opinions and challenges to such claims outlined in Chapter Five and summarised above.[48] Indeed, the manufacturing of consent for the "humanitarian" angle

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for the "humanitarian" nature of ORH. On December 16a, for example, a report lauded the US intention "to end the war and feed two million starving people", while that of December 16c noted that ORH "is an essentially humanitarian initiative".

[47] On the same day, (December 5, 1992b, p. 9), *The Times* published what, in my view, was virtually a PR release by the US military. For example, the Marines of ORH were presented in a very positive light via uplifting descriptions of the planned start of ORH on the Mogadishu beaches as "the sort of amphibious assault the Marines are famous for". Infamous for, too, when aggressively invading the shores of countries such as Panama and Grenada. This same article also observed that troops from countries such as Egypt and Morocco would be part of ORH, and that this would "give the American-led operation an international appearance and counter Third World fears of American colonialism". This, to me, was an implicit recognition, then, by *The Times* that many countries had doubts about the "humanitarian" motives behind ORH. The tone and framing of the article, however, suggested that the inclusion of these troops would counter those fears and render them irrelevant. Thus, they were not explored or discussed in detail by *The Times* in this or any other article.

[48] This was observable in 34 articles: November 27, 1992a, (p. A1, A15), November 28, 1992b, (p. A6), November 28, 1992c, (p. A6), November 29, 1992, (Sec.1, p.16), December 1, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), December 1, 1992c, (p. A24), December 2, 1992c, (p. A18), December 4, 1992a, (p. A1, A14), December 4, 1992c, (p. A14), December 4, 1992e, (p. A31), December 5, 1992a, (p. A1, A4), December 5, 1992b, (p. A1, A4), December 5, 1992d, (p. A5), December 5, 1992f, (p. A18), December 6, 1992b, (Sec.1, p.14), December 6, 1992c, (Sec.1, p.14), December 6, 1992f, (Sec.4, p.1,3), December 7, 1992a, (p. A1, A12), December 7, 1992c, (p. A13), December 7, 1992d, (p. A13), December 8, 1992d, (p. A18), December 9, 1992a, (p. A1, A16), December 9, 1992b, (p. A1, A16), December 9, 1992f, (p. A17), December 10, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 10, 1992d, (p. A18), December 10, 1992e, (p. 26), December 13, 1992e, (Sec.1, p. 16), December 20, 1992d, (Sec.4, p.3), January 1, 1993, (p. A1, A8), January 2, 1993, (p. A1, A2), February 1, 1993b, (p. A7), February 24, 1993, (p. A7) and May 4, 1993, (p. A24). The report of December 1c was typical of the TINA, (There Is No Alternative), attitude the *New York Times* took to ORH, claiming the "choices were limited" and that Bush's "humanitarian" offer was "right". The report of December 13e was a "vox populi" of US citizens giving their "thumbs up" to the operation on the basis of its "humanitarian" grounds. The headline ran: "Seared by faces of need, Americans say 'How could we not do this?' " Many of the comments were racist and most were uninformed, which was to be expected considering that those interviewed were 20,000 miles from Somalia and relied on the mainstream media for much of their "information" about ORH and the crisis in Somalia.

by the *New York Times* began enthusiastically on the very day after US troops were "offered" to Somalia, with the report of November 27, 1992a, (p. A1, A15), noting the "grave concern" of the White House for Somalia and also quoting the following from a US military official: "How can [the US military] stand by and allow mothers and children to become piles of bones without it saying something about your humanity".[49] This from a representative of the same institution that massacred thousands, if not millions, of women and children in bloody and unnecessary wars in Vietnam and elsewhere.[50] Consideration of such matters was beyond the bounds of the expressable.

Instead, the *New York Times* continued to "plug" the idea that ORH was necessary to save the "ailing Somali relief effort" (November 29, 1992, Sec.1, p.16), a viewpoint far more amenable to elite interests. Indeed, the institutionalised and deliberate propaganda in favour of the US Government's purported motive for ORH was increasingly noticeable after December 4 when ORH was officially given the go-ahead. From then onwards, the *New York Times'* reports become even more laudatory of the US-led initiative and, indeed, were positively gushing in their admiration.[51] Not surprisingly, then, Jane Perlez, (December 20, 1992d, Sec.4, p.3), could write of how ORH "seemed to be largely devoid of ulterior political motives" even though her article implicitly

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[49] This article also pointed out that ORH was the first US military operation in Africa since George Bush "briefly sent 255 marines to secure the US Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia" three years previously. Considering the condition of most of Africa, and the crises in countries such as Liberia, Mozambique and the Sudan, this was hardly a shining example of the "grave concern" the US Government had for Africa, but this very relevant point was not seized upon by the journalists at the *New York Times*. Again, this was evidence, to me, of an explicit bias in news production.

[50] For elaboration of this claim, see Herman and Chomsky (1988: 169-252) and Pilger (1989: 171-287).

[51] In this regard, Paul Lewis gushed on December 4, 1992c, (p. A14), that: "The decision to send a force to Somalia marks a landmark in the development of humanitarian law". On the same day, (December 4, 1992e, p. A31), Anthony Lewis trumpeted: "In a world without menace from another superpower, the US military must be ready to act against mass murder - which breeds hate and revenge, [and] menaces stability". It took considerable hide to portray the greatest agent of mass murder in history, the US military, as the force to "act" against it in Somalia, as well as to note that "stability" was threatened in Somalia but apparently not in Bosnia, Liberia, Mozambique, the Sudan and elsewhere. Furthermore, what "stability" meant exactly was not defined; indeed, it has been rarely, if ever, defined in the mainstream media. No explanation was offered either as to why the demise of the Soviet "menace" meant the US military was somehow now the moral "supercop" of the planet. As Richards (1993: 20) noted, this lack of explanation was not surprising, "given that there is no logical link between the two. Why should Western powers which were clearly driven by *realpolitik* in the past have suddenly come over all humanitarian today?" Michael Wines, (December 6, 1992b, Sec.1, p.14), also faithfully relayed the "strictly humanitarian" rationale, offered by a Bush aide, that ORH was "forced by a steady decline in [Somalia's] military and social condition that began in mid-October and reached a peak [in late November]", a fascinating assessment considering NGOs such as ICRC, with massive field experience in Somalia, were reporting the opposite. Wines also noted that ORH, with the aim of replacing pictures of starving Somalians with images of American troops handing out food, meant "Mr Bush would leave the White House a contented man". Presumably, the many hundreds of thousands of people killed, maimed or injured as a result of Bush's warmongering in places such as Panama and Iraq did not concern Bush or Wines. Then, on December 9, 1992a, (p. A1, A16), a report talked in detail of how ORH was solely an operation "to deliver food to the starving of Somalia".

demonstrated that ORH did, indeed, have political motives.[52] Not surprisingly, then, the extent to which debate surrounded ORH in the pages of the *New York Times* was limited to banal discussions about if and how the "humanitarian" principles of ORH could or would be extended to other similar crises in places such as Liberia, the Sudan or Bosnia.[53] Consequently, hegemonic conflict among ruling elites in the US was reflected in the pages of the *New York Times,* giving the impression that real opposition to ORH had been aired in the newspaper when, from my reading of these articles, there was no debate whatsoever, for example, about ORH's "humanitarian" rationale.

The nature of the alternative views to the blatant propaganda in the three newspapers also made interesting reading. Criticism in the *Guardian* was limited to a mere two articles (1.6 %), one of which articulated an Arab opinion and the other a Somali's opinion of the "humanitarian" motive.[54] Thus, the only time the so-called "humanitarian" motives of ORH were questioned in the *Guardian* was when the views of non-Westerners were presented, an extremely rare event. There were also two critical articles on this theme in *The Times.* One of these, by Ben Macintyre on December 10, 1992e, (p. 18), attacked "the way the US Government has chosen to portray ORH" while not actually challenging the "humanitarian" rationale behind ORH. Macintyre continued:

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[52] For example, Perlez noted that the US convoys to feed the starving "were more a symbolic show for the world's television cameras than any serious effort to get a steady stream of food moving". Yet such acts were not regarded by Perlez as evidence of a "political motive" behind ORH.

[53] For example, the editorial of December 5, 1992f, (p. A18), after lauding the "good intentions" of George Bush and the "powerful humanitarian case" he made for ORH, asked: "By what principle can America grant or deny intensive help to stricken peoples anywhere? The Bush doctrine seems a recipe for endless intervention by an unwilling global cop; it needs further definition". In other words, the editorial writer believed "humanitarian" interventions might be launched throughout the globe by the US. There was not even a hint of a suggestion that the US completely and deliberately ignored all other "humanitarian" crises before November, 1992, in places such as Liberia, the Sudan or Bosnia, and that, therefore, the professed US Government motive that ORH was "humanitarian" was highly suspect. In this regard, three other articles briefly discussed the notion that "humanitarian intervention" in Somalia was an "easier" option than implementing such missions in places like Bosnia. These were December 1, 1992b, (p. A10), December 6, 1992g, (Sec.1, p.19) and May 2, 1993b, (Sec.4, p.1,4). As the report of May 2b articulated: "Mustering a mandate for intervention was not difficult for an outgoing President, for Somalia presented few of the pitfalls that surrounded other horrors beckoning for an American response". Such articles, then, hinted at the idea that there were, perhaps, other factors motivating the US Government and military to intervene in this crisis and not the others, particularly considering that the US had completely ignored all other humanitarian crises before and since. Yet, no such "ulterior" motive was ever suggested by these articles, which quietly accepted the stunning turnaround in US foreign policy as an attempt to "do some good" (May 2, 1993b, Sec.4, p.1,4). The report of December 6g, however, took this debate to new heights of absurdity, in a raving examination of whether the "Bush doctrine" of "humanitarian intervention" was a "doctrine" or a "policy".

[54] One, an article by David Hurst on December 12, 1992d, (p. 13), briefly referred to *The Jordan Times'* response to ORH, which stated: "By what moral, political or nutritional criteria does the US send troops to save women and children in Somalia as it persists in an embargo of Iraq that brings death, malnutrition, disease and, ultimately perhaps, a generalised breakdown of Somali dimensions?" In the other, on April 3, 1993, (p. 29), buried deep within in the *Guardian's* arts pages, Somali writer Nuruddin Farah questioned the purity of the "humanitarian" motives of ORH, with his "scepticism rooted in an awareness of the bitter legacy of decades of outside intervention in the Horn of Africa".

> *The decision to send troops to Somalia was born out of the emotive footage of starving people and armed bandits, and the grand humanitarian gesture thus launched will be played out for and in front of the cameras ... Of all the areas of the world rent by civil war and famine, America chose to help Somalia for two reasons: the situation is far less dangerous than, say, the Sudan, Mozambique or Bosnia, and it makes better television. The outgoing Bush administration needed to make a gesture, for the starving people of Somalia certainly, but also to restore hope in America and the Republican Party ... By trying to pretend [ORH was a war], the American Government has exposed a creditable, life-saving enterprise to ridicule, and shot itself in the foot.*

From my understanding of his argument, Macintyre was implying that ORH was a worthwhile cause which the US Government "plugged" for all the PR value for its military and itself it could get. There was no consideration by Macintyre that the US Government saw in the Somalian famine a possible PR vehicle for the military and the US, as I believed considering my research outlined in Chapter Five, and then constructed ORH as a cynical exercise to exploit that possibility.[55]

There were also some questioning of the "humanitarian" motive in three articles (1.2 %), in the *New York Times* but, in two of them, non-hegemonic opinion was marginalised through the framing and placement of the said articles.[56] The reaction engendered by the other, (December 28, 1992b, p.A15), an "opinion" piece by Nuruddin Farah, the Somali writer, said much for the "consent" which, as I have argued in this chapter, was manufactured in the US by the media. Farah wrote:

> *As a former colonel, a pan-Africanist - above all a Somali national who is bitter - I confess that I find it extremely difficult to get myself psyched up to put my faith in*

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[55] The other article was that of December 10, 1992c, (p. 15), in which French Defence Minister, Pierre Joxe, was quoted as asking: "Why intervene in Somalia when there are 30 other Somalis which no-one is doing anything about". Interestingly, Mr Joxe was posing this question as part of his objection to French troops being used in ORH.

[56] On December 21, 1992a, (p. A1, A13), for example, a pacifist leader expressed "scepticism about whether the food delivery is the only goal" of ORH, while a professor said he was "bothered by the [US] military's use of [ORH] to reinforce the presupposition that we need a big military". Moot and powerful points, but these were placed near the end of a long story, stretching over two pages, which elicited the views of noted US pacifists. All those quoted, (apart from the said pacifist leader and professor), backed ORH, despite their previously outspoken views against US military actions abroad. As a result of such deliberate framing, the impact of the non-dominant views was weakened. The report, headlined "Reshaping pacifism to battle anguish in reshaped world", was also a classic example of the "vox populi" method of asking people for their views to support a cause already explicitly shaped by the media as a "great crusade". Furthermore, those interviewed were not "experts" in the Somalian situation but, because of their previous anti-military stance, their views added considerable weight to the idea that ORH was a "moral" and "humanitarian" mission. The views of the relief agencies, and those who specialised in the Horn of Africa, were not considered. The views of representatives of the SCF and MSF agencies were considered in an article published on November 28, 1992d, (p. A6), in which spokespeople for both spoke out against the supposedly "humanitarian" operation. Again, however, these comments were completely marginalised by their "burial" at the foot of the story, which itself was surrounded by articles that were generally positive and praising of the intervention.

the genuineness of a gesture of goodness originating in areas of the globe with a history of imperialist domination.

Many months later Farah, (cited in the *Guardian* on April 3, 1993, p. 29), described how "shocked" he had been by the response in the US to this article, adding: "I was accused of ingratitude. American friends I'd known for 25 years wouldn't talk to me, because I'd pointed out the obscenity of that photo-opportunity". This was strong evidence of the degree to which the US public "bought" the "humanitarian" propaganda line offered by the US Government and faithfully and explicitly transmitted, with barely a whisper of inquiring debate, by a compliant media.

In summary, then, the three newspapers did not elicit critical debate with regard to the stated "humanitarian" motive for ORH but, instead, praised the US for initiating it. In other words, the three newspapers constructed their stories to promote the views of certain public and private elites by favouring a reading that suggested ORH was a "humanitarian" operation in response to the crisis in Somalia. Why were such distortions favoured? As I argued in Chapter Five, these were consistent with the Pentagon's attempt to find a new *raison d'être* for the armed forces and their related defence industries in the post-Cold War world in which there was considerable pressure on the defence budgets of countries such as the US. They were also consistent with the idea, as also argued in Chapter Five, that the US Government used the idea of "humanitarian intervention" to deflect attention from crises at home and to boost domestic political support while reinforcing US global hegemony abroad. The uncritical promotion of the "humanitarian" motive, (the hegemonic view), in all three newspapers also reflected the strength and consequent widespread acceptance of that hegemonic view, particularly as it virtually "drowned out" counter-hegemonic opinions about this motive. Furthermore, it also reflected the limited degree to which the political economy of the *Guardian* differed from those of *The Times* and the *New York Times*.

Conclusion

In considering the coverage by the three newspapers of the world's response to the famine, then, the above predominantly qualitative analysis revealed that *The Times* and the *New York Times* did not, in general, critically attack the poor performances of the US and its Western allies in providing relief or the major Western response to the crisis, ORH. The *Guardian,* in contrast, occasionally criticised both the performances and the response, its atypical political economy affecting, to a limited degree, what it considered was "news". In this regard the *Guardian,* for example, published criticism of ORH by respected relief agencies with considerable experience in Somalia, (such as SCF and

ICRC), and by those few people, (such as Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal), with expert knowledge of Somalia and the problems of famine in the Horn of Africa. Yet these views were given relatively little coverage and credence in this newspaper. Furthermore, they were virtually ignored in *The Times* and the *New York Times*, which, like the *Guardian,* gave more space to the views of the US Government and the UN whose record in Somalia was incompetent at best and appalling at worst.[57]

In summary, the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* compounded their generally poor coverage of the famine's causes by constructing their coverage of the world's response to the famine to promote the views of certain public and private elites. In this regard, the crucial role of the US Government in creating and prolonging the crisis in Somalia was played down or ignored, the limited role it played in alleviating the famine in mid-1992 was exaggerated, and the belated and inappropriate "rescue " operation it initiated, solely for its own economic and geo-political interests, was wholeheartedly praised. Importantly, this emphasis was, in general, consistent with the ideals and interests of the owners and proprietors of these newspapers, in that it promoted the status quo in the US and UK with regard to social, economic and political relationships within those countries and between those countries and the developing world. Again, this was consistent with the hypothesis of this thesis, and highlighted the overt and covert links between the mainstream media and ruling elites in capitalist societies.

Significantly, the distorted images described in this chapter were consistent with the one-sided views of Africa that were, as I summarised in Chapter Three, held by many people in the West as a result of constant Western media misrepresentations of the developing world. The implications for the developing world of the continued promotion of such misrepresentations in the Western media is discussed in more detail in the following, and final, chapter of this thesis, Chapter Nine.

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[57] It is worth noting here that, for her trouble in publicly opposing ORH, Rakiya Omaar was summarily dismissed by her employer, the human rights group Africa Watch. This was yet another indicator, perhaps, of the strength of hegemonic power. Her co-worker and fellow Horn of Africa specialist, Alex de Waal, reigned in protest at this move. For more details see Lycett (1993b: 18).

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Summary of Research

At the beginning of this thesis, I postulated that the assumptions many people in the developed world have held, and still hold, with regard to the people, societies, events and issues of the developing world should be questioned. I stated this because much of the information on which these assumptions have been based has, I believe, been transmitted by the mainstream media. These media, as I have argued in this thesis, have not presented balanced and even-handed accounts of events and issues in the developing world but, instead, have explicitly distorted their coverage by concentrating on disasters and crises. Furthermore, through the presentation of one-sided stories and stereotypical images, which have alleged incompetence, helplessness and guilt against people in the developing world with regard to these disasters and crises, the media has promoted the idea that the West has played no part in their creation. At the same time, there has been very little analysis of the underlying causes of these disasters which are often rooted in the actions and policies of the ruling Western elites.

I have also argued that the main reason for the production of this distortion could be traced through an analysis of the political economy of the mainstream media in the West. Such analysis has revealed that the political and economic structures within which the media operate mean that there is no freedom of investigation by the media. Instead, the mainstream media serves a specific ideological function by explicitly presenting a certain view of the "news" which, in general, serves to integrate people into the institutional structures of capitalist society.[1] The factors and processes determining this explicit production of "news" were summarised in Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, which I have used as the theoretical base for the analysis conducted in this thesis. The constant conflict over hegemony between hegemonic and non-hegemonic forces, however, has meant that challenges to the dominant ideological assumptions existing in a society have occasionally appeared in the mainstream media. Because of this, I have modified the propaganda model to theorise as to why these challenges have appeared and to postulate that what the mainstream media regard as "news" has not been as narrow and one-sided as the propaganda model has suggested.

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[1] This was because the owners and/or controllers, including both wealthy individuals and industrial conglomerates, of this media, while often having diverse interests, shared a number of certain values pertaining to economic and political goals.

I have then set out to test this hypothesis by examining, via a predominantly qualitative analysis, how three mainstream Western newspapers, the *Guardian* and *The Times* in the UK and the *New York Times* in the US, covered the 1992-3 Somalian famine. Significantly, my analysis has found that the three newspapers did, indeed, distort the events and issues surrounding both the causes of the famine and the world's response to it. Furthermore, this distortion, in general, has explicitly served to promote the interests of the ruling elites in the US and UK by advancing the idea that only internal factors caused the famine and that the unequal and exploitative nature of Western capitalism with regard to the developing world was not a factor. In generally playing down the role of Western colonialism and neo-colonialism in creating the famine, the three newspapers have also exaggerated the role of Western governments and mainstream organisations in responding to it. The distortion has also served elites by generally advancing the idea that the militaristic and inappropriate Western response to the famine, ORH, was a necessary and grand "humanitarian" gesture on the part of Western governments. This has been vital in suppressing the idea that ORH was initiated to re-assert US global hegemony abroad, and boost political support and consensus for US politicians and institutions, such as the high-spending military, at home. The distorted coverage, then, has served ruling elites in the US and UK by working to deflect attention from the causes of the famine which were predominantly rooted in that same aforementioned US global hegemony, as well as by disguising the underlying aims of the West's main response to it.

In addition, my analysis has revealed that there was a slight, but significant, differentiation in the production of these distortions between the *Guardian* and the other two newspapers examined in this thesis. In this regard, *The Times* and the *New York Times,* with political economies most typical of mainstream Western media, have been, in general, more affected by the five "filters" as described in the propaganda model. Consequently, *The Times* and the *New York Times* constructed their coverage of the famine, via an observable pattern of news selection, tone and framework of analysis, to favour a certain reading of the "facts" surrounding the crisis over others. This coverage uncritically promoted the status quo in terms of the relationships of production and the dominant ideologies in the capitalist societies in which they were located. In other words, these two newspapers, in general, have explicitly played down the unequal and exploitative nature of developed world foreign and economic policies with regard to the Somalian famine, and have presented few critical and penetrative analyses of the world's response to it, in particular the appalling relief record of the US Government during 1991 and 1992, and ORH.

In contrast, the *Guardian* has critically examined, albeit only to a limited degree, the role of the West in causing the famine and has presented more penetrative analyses of the world's response. This included discussion of the US Government's appalling relief record in Somalia during 1991 and 1992, as well as critical examination of the necessity and appropriateness of ORH. This differentiation, I have argued, has been a consequence of the atypical political economy of the *Guardian,* owned by an independent and nominally left-leaning trust. This has meant that the relative strength of the first "filter" of the propaganda model has been diluted, resulting in a reduced imperative to print stories which promoted a narrow and generally pro-capitalist view. Consequently, this newspaper has occasionally incorporated into its discourse non-dominant and non-hegemonic viewpoints which had obviously existed in UK society. Nevertheless, as I discussed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, the *Guardian* has still been affected by the economic and political structures in which it operates, with the result that its stories generally favour the aforementioned distortions, even if not to the same extent as the other two newspapers. Consequently, for example, with regard to the alleged "humanitarian" rationale for ORH proffered by George Bush and the US Government and military, all three newspapers have shown a total lack of interest in examining or questioning this rationale, reflecting its hegemonic strength as a "taken-for-granted" view.

Hegemonic conflict in the US and the UK has meant non-dominant facts surrounding the famine have also appeared in *The Times* and the *New York Times*. As predicted by the working hypothesis developed in Chapter Two and Chapter Six, however, the *Guardian* has published more, and given greater attention to, non-dominant opinions than *The Times* and the *New York Times*. Nevertheless, articles promoting non-hegemonic interpretations of the events and issues surrounding the famine have formed only the tiniest minority of the 518 articles examined in this thesis. In other words, the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times*, have set the premises of their discourse in relation to the famine to portray Somalia, and the actions of Somalis, in a very negative and unfavourable light. Importantly, these findings have been consistent with the many previous analyses of developed world media coverage of events in the developing world, as discussed in Chapter Three.

Implications and Recommendations for Development Policy

But what relevance does such analysis have for Development Studies?[2] As discussed in the introductory chapter, I chose the particular event examined for this thesis to

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[2] With regard to my research and the conclusions I draw, I should stress that I have assumed that the coverage by the three newspapers examined would be representative of the coverage by the mainstream Western media, and that coverage by the *Guardian,* in particular, would be representative of coverage by

demonstrate to those people in the West who work in development, or are interested in development issues, that Western media interpretations of development issues in countries such as Somalia should be approached with extreme caution. Encouraging the questioning of assumptions about the people and politics of the developing world would, I believe, assist in the formulation of development policies and the initiation of development programs more appropriate to the actual circumstances of, and involving input from and implementation by, the relevant populations. In this regard, my analysis has been significant in that it revealed that, in the situation of the Somalian famine, the three newspapers covered the topic not from the point of view of Somalia and the Somalis but from the point of view, in general, of the newspapers' owners. The coverage has been almost completely Western and elitist.[3]

Moreover, the negative effects of this distorted coverage had been compounded by previous one-sided and poor quality coverage by the mainstream Western media of African news, with coverage having been concentrated on "disaster" stories, as described in Chapter Three. This Western perspective and compromised coverage meant, I would contend, that ORH aroused little opposition from the West and was launched with general Western consensus even though it was an inappropriate and dangerous response and actually contributed to the worsening of the crisis.

Had mainstream Western media reporting of the 1992-3 Somalian famine been more balanced and objective, and had greater prominence been given to dissenting views, for example about ORH, what would have been the response of the Western public? This is impossible to determine, but the fact remains that there *was* considerable opposition to ORH, most notably from those people, such as Rakiya Omaar, and those organisations, such as the ICRC, with knowledge and experience of famines in the Horn of Africa. Their views, however, contradicted the "official" propaganda lines of the ruling elites and, therefore, were not regarded as sufficiently "mainstream" to receive the coverage they deserved.[4] Instead, the distortions already discussed were disseminated.

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the more "liberal" sectors of the mainstream Western media. Of course, the limitations of MPhil thesis research have meant that I have examined only a tiny proportion of the coverage of the topic by the mainstream Western media. As a result, it is impossible for me to conclude positively that the entire mainstream Western media produced coverage of the famine similar to that of the *Guardian, The Times* and the *New York Times.* It is also, as discussed previously in this thesis, impossible for me to determine that what I interpreted as the "preferred" meaning imposed by the producers of the text in the three newspapers was that which was intended to be imposed, or that which was understood by the readers.

[3] A Somali viewpoint might have emphasised that ORH was unnecessary and inappropriate, or that Somalis were capable people who could articulate and formulate their own solutions to the crisis without Western help or intervention. A Somali viewpoint might also have highlighted the enormous damage that outside interference had caused to the fabric of society in Somalia.

[4] This is to say nothing of the views of Somalis, which were also not "mainstream".

The "false" image produced by the three newspapers, but *The Times* and the *New York Times* in particular, was significant, then, because it produced real and potentially dangerous consequences. The danger in the continual media production of "false" images of events and issues in the developing world was noted by Pilger (1994: 70), who stated:

> *Public attitudes [in the West] flow from both perspectives and omissions. Unless prejudice is countered, it is reinforced. Unless misconceptions are corrected, they become received truth.*

Similarly, Parenti warned of the dangerous effects of distorted news images on the creation and manipulation of public opinion. He argued that, through the media's explicit omissions and exaggerations of certain news topics and items, people in the West rarely received information about events and issues in the developing world, (and elsewhere), that contradicted the dominant viewpoints. As a result, a "mainstream" view emerged in society, with any challenges to that view likely to be resisted by the said society. Parenti stated:

> *If much of our information and opinion intake is filtered through our previously established mental predispositions, these predispositions are often not part of our conscious discernment but of our unexamined conditioning. Thus, rather than being rational guardians against propaganda, our mind-sets, having been shaped by prolonged exposure to that very same propaganda, may be active accomplices (Parenti 1993: 22).*

With regard to the Somalian famine, my contention is that, if the contribution of the West in creating the conditions for famine in Somalia during 1992-3 had been presented in more critical detail, and if the ORH proposal had been subjected to thorough and ongoing analysis by the mainstream Western media, the Western public *might* have become more vociferous in their opposition to ORH and, consequently, the worsening of the Somalian tragedy *might* have been avoided. This contention is, of course, debatable especially considering the strength of stereotypes and distortions about the developing world already embedded in the general Western psyche. In this regard, I believe my thesis has opened up an avenue for further research, in the form of detailed audience surveys and investigations of the power of public attitudes. Such research would be extremely useful, I believe, in determining to what extent, if any, public perceptions of the events and issues in the developing world, as formulated as a result of Western media reports, have affected governmental and non-governmental development policy.

One of the most important implications of my research, I believe, is that it highlights the need for an immediate change in attitude to the developing world by Westerners. Not only those working in development but the general public as well need to become far more critical in their readings of the mainstream media if "mistakes" such as ORH are to be

avoided. Westerners, by virtue of the democracies in which they live, *supposedly* have the ability to at least influence development policies enacted by Western governments and large Western agencies such as the World Bank. Furthermore, as they provide much of the funding to NGOs, they have a considerable ability to influence the direction and attitudes of these NGOs. In other words, awareness of the distortions perpetrated by the media can lead to the formulation of public opinion based on the realities of the relevant situations.

Of course, it would be preferable to have "fair" and "balanced" coverage of developing world situations, such as the Somalian famine, in the mainstream media rather than to have to encourage critical readings of the coverage provided. I believe, however, that such "fair" reporting will not materialise in the foreseeable future, particularly as media ownership, as discussed in Chapter Two, becomes increasingly concentrated in the hands of wealthy individuals or huge corporate and industrial conglomerates. What recommendations could be made on the basis of the above considerations? I would contend that, to begin with, critical reading skills *must* be encouraged among, and taught to, all development workers. At the same time, these workers need to be made aware of the range and availability of genuine "alternative" views. Development agencies, for example, could, and should, subscribe to "alternative" media, particularly that existing in, and/or emerging from, the developing world, and their employees, not to mention all those interested in development and development issues, should seek out the views of local populations. Only on the basis of full knowledge of local society and conditions can beneficial development policies be formulated, and the past mistakes in the name of "development" be avoided.

The danger for people in the developing world when Westerners fail to realise how the Western media manipulates developing world events and issues has been well summarised by Falk (1993). In considering how the Western media covered the Somalian famine, Falk (1993: 19) stated:

> *We are told these days that image is everything, and what is evident here is that the manipulation of images displays a total disregard of whatever the reality of [the situation in Somalia] may be. Beyond this, ... the global media net conforms to the shift in official policy without even pausing to note the clash of images. Thought-control on a voluntary basis seems characteristic of how sensitive information is treated by the media, suggesting an emerging coalition between global market forces and leading states whose role is to provide military protection in the event of challenge, a pattern foreshadowed in the Gulf War.*

In other words, a failure to acknowledge these mechanisms of "thought control" will further strengthen the "emerging coalition" as described in the extract, a coalition which

will lead, I believe, to a further deterioration in the quality of life in the developing world. In summary, then, there is a pressing need for all people in the West, not simply those working in development or interested in development issues, to become aware of how the political economy of the media operates to limit discourse in favour of the wealthy and powerful and other ruling elites. Unless this awareness is raised, there will be little acknowledgement of the unequal social, political and economic relationships that exist between the developed and developing worlds, and little demand for changes in Western governmental and non-governmental development policy and attitude with regard to the developing world.

A Lesson for Journalists, too?

Journalists, too, need to assess their concepts and assumptions about the developing world in order to be better able to resist the often subtle forces existing within mainstream media organisations to produce copy that favours certain, (that is, pro-Western), readings. As de Waal (1990: 140) noted:

> *The peculiar difficulties in reporting famine include too heavy a reliance on individual's subjective perceptions or non-perceptions, and sheer luck. Visiting journalists without expertise in assessing famine are prone to fall back on personal observations and intuitions that may be far from accurate, and their editors' decisions about whether and how to run their stories may be based on an even less informed attitude.*

In other words, journalists need to be made aware that, by simplifying stories about developing world disasters, such as African famines, on the whims of their editor/s, there is a danger that their "false" and "inaccurate" images may have very real consequences for the people they are writing about. Journalists also need to give greater consideration to the opinions and views of Africans, and particularly educated Africans, when writing about disasters in Africa. Such coverage would, I believe, lead to stories which discussed and analysed Africa in a far more "balanced" and "accurate" way. In addition, these stories would be more likely to portray African people as skilled, resourceful, intelligent and independent, and would focus on the economic, political and social forces conspiring to undermine Africa, such as neo-colonialism. There would be fewer of the cliched and, ultimately, dangerous stories about Africa as naturally political unstable and not economically viable. In other words, fewer stories about Africa that were colonialist images from the West. As de Waal (1990: 139) stressed:

> ***Press attention to famines in Ethiopia and Sudan is essential. However, it is also essential that the coverage is politically informed. Over-hyped naively `humanitarian' reporting can be as bad as no repòrting at all.***

Of course, writing a "politically informed" story will be easier said than done, considering the overt and covert ideological forces described and analysed in this thesis which constrain what a journalist can or can not write. Self-censorship, as I described in Chapter Two, was, and is, a very powerful force. If, however, journalists can be made more aware of the part they play in perpetuating the dominant ideologies, this *may* lead to an increase in pressure from within Western news organisations for more "balanced" coverage of the events and issues in the developing world. If this could be achieved, even to a minimal extent, it could provide a basis for sound development education for the general public in the West. As Southey (1995: 4) noted:

> *We need to work on new ways of stopping at least the level of [African] disaster[s] and we also need to give a greater priority to helping people understand what is happening in the world.*

If consistently weak and systematically biased reporting of disasters in Africa continues to be the norm, however, development education strategies will continue to be weakened.

Critical Readings and Appropriate Development

This thesis, then, has attempted to provide a useful analysis for the benefit of those working in, and those interested in, development, as well as for the Western public, to permit them to read critically Western media representations and misrepresentations of the developing world. This will, hopefully, enable them to question their assumptions about what constitutes an "appropriate" response to a development problem, and what development policies should consider. It is, I believe, only when people in the West realise that the images of the developing world within mainstream Western media reports are not accurate reflections of events and issues but instead one-sided distortions, that development practitioners, and those interested in development, can understand the issues that are vital prerequisites to formulating development policy. As de Waal (1990: 140) noted:

> *There is very little analytical coverage of African famines in the [Western] press ... Accurate and timely portrayal of famines in [Africa] ... remains a challenge. Before it is met, too many relief programmes will continue to be sadly inappropriate, and rural people will remain needlessly vulnerable to famines.*

The challenge is there for the Western media. This, however, is unlikely to be met, particular if ownership of the mainstream media continues to become increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few. The importance of learning critical reading skills, or sourcing information about the developing world from the alternative media, can not, therefore, be underestimated.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH OSMAN ABDILAHI

Mr Osman Abdilahi is a Somali who was formerly a colonel in the Somalian Army and an *aide de camp* to the Minister of Defence. When the war in Somalia began to worsen in the early 1990s, Mr Abdilahi fled the country with his family to Kenya, before finally settling in New Zealand in 1995. He was interviewed by the author of this thesis in April, 1996.

Somali society is very different to society in New Zealand. What are some of the unique features of Somali society?

Even within Africa, Somali society is different. In sub-Saharan Africa, there's a lot of diversity within each nation state, and you have different tribes, different languages, different cultures. [These people] adopted the concept of the nation state quite easily, although they do have problems. But Somalis are more individualistic; nomads don't have a system where you pay somebody. People volunteer for things. Even when there was clan conflict, nomads would volunteer to fight and they [the volunteers] would assign a commander on the way to the fight. So they are very individualistic people; thus they had a lot of problems adapting to the idea of the nation state. Somali society is very, very different from [other African societies] and Somalis have nothing in common even with their neighbours in Africa.

Oral poetry is also part of our culture - it is great in Somalia. Within Africa, we have the richest oral poetry you can think of. We use it to mobilise people; we use it to express ourselves; we use it to tell stories; we use it for many things. It plays a very central role in Somali culture.

And how important is Islam?

Islam, when it spread over the world, evolved into different flavours. Most of the Islam that went to Somalia was Islam in its purest form and Somalia is 100 per cent Muslim. But it really infused completely with Somali culture. So there's no difference between the religious culture [in Somalia] and the Somali culture. It has become one. There's also the new ideology of Islam - the so-called fundamentalism. Due to the problems the country experienced with the [Barre] government in the late 1980s, and especially now with the complete breakdown [in south-west Somalia], there's been a rise in fundamentalism in Somali movements.

[Part of the reason for this is that] in the 1980s Somalia started implementing World Bank policies [such as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)], and there was a lot of structural adjustment. Many people lost their jobs and there was a lot of unemployment. So many people who had finished their compulsory education didn't get a job and, in a Third World country like Somalia, the motivation for many was that after they'd finished at least they'd be able to get a job. And the government was the major employer. So people really started feeling the bite of living and the low income. As I said, Somalis, through their culture, are very different. They have a system of informal social welfare, where clans may support each other, not only in war but also in difficult times during peace times. [The SAPs] started straining this informal system. And with the problems, people naturally tended to turn to their god. Plus there is a lot of fundamentalist literature coming from rich Arab countries and it really infused in Somalia.

Has the position of women in Somalia been affected by recent events?

No. The position of women in Somali is far better than their counterparts in Africa and other Third World countries. Somali women do, like their counterparts in Third World

countries, experience inequality sharing the burden of work and domestic work. But due to the nomadic life there's very little domestic work to be done. Going to look for water, which takes about 10 to 20 days a return trip, and watering the animals, which for a camel needs one drum of water to be taken from a deep well - all these things are male jobs. And during the struggle for independence, Somali women really took a great part. But they will always be at a disadvantage because they have to look after their kids. And when problems [such as famine] come, it really affects the women more than it affects the men. The women, the children and the elders are the first to go.

But are Somali women powerless?

No. During the [Barre] government the wives of the powerful officials helped run the country from behind the scenes.

And what of everyday Somali women?

In a place like Somalia where there is no formal business sector, and most of the business is informal, more than half of business is carried out by women. There aren't many [women] in the government but they do really take part [in Somali society].

What factors do you think were responsible for igniting the war which created the famine?

The war was building up for a long time, since Somalia went to war with Ethiopia in the 1970s. During that war there was a lot of [troop] mobilisation and we had a lot of soldiers and weapons outside the government institutions. Immediately after the soldiers came back from the war there was a lot of dissatisfaction with the government. An attempted coup in 1978 was crushed by the government. Some of those responsible for the coup went to Ethiopia to form liberation movements and started fighting the government via guerrilla warfare in 1979. The war in Mogadishu was a culmination of all this.

Switching from the Russians to the Americans happened during the Ethiopian War. When Somalia decided to go to war with Ethiopia [it was over] a territorial dispute [which had its roots in] colonisation. But the Russians then switched over to the Ethiopians because the Ethiopians had more to offer in terms of resources than the Somalis. After that the Somalis had no alternative but to move towards the Americans.

And what of the so-called warlords?

Somalia is very different from other countries, especially within Africa, because Somalia is a very homogeneous society. We speak the same language, have the same religion, it's 100% Muslim. We all speak Somali - we don't have any other language. But we have a very extensive clan system, which was exploited during the era of colonialism to mobilise opposition against the colonialists. The same principles applied again when the Somali rebels started fighting against the government. Once this was mobilised on a clan-based concept, the warlords did not have the power to dismantle them. They had been driven by these forces which had been mobilised through the clan system.

One thing you should know is that the famine was not really widespread. It happened in specific areas. Even before the war, these areas were peopled by Somali clans who were mainly semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural. The rest of the Somali people are pure nomads. This is the character difference between these two people. The nomads are outgoing and warrior-like, and are always under constant environmental problems. But the agricultural people stay in one place and do not get involved in clan conflicts. When the war broke out against the government they did not take part, which put them at a disadvantage because they were not mobilised or organised. They were also not represented within the government during [Barre's regime]. That left them without leadership. They did not take part in the struggle itself against the government, so they did not get any weapons, and

when this whole thing [the conflict between the warlords] broke out there were people who were left defenceless and with nothing. And all the food they could grow and collect was just taken away from them, and that's what caused the starvation.

So the famine had little to do with drought?

No, not really. The people who live around [the inter-riverine] area, most of their farming is subsistence farming, there is nothing big-scale. They live on that very well and they have a lot of animals, such as camels and goats. But during the fighting they were robbed of all these things and it left them with very few options.

What did you think of Operation Restore Hope as a response?

The Americans [in ORH] did not have any idea of what they were doing in Somalia at all. They did not make use of the previous experience of their people who had lived in Somalia; people who knew the culture, who knew how the people thought, their attitudes, things like that - people who could have brought about something [positive] with this sort of operation. The attitude of Jonathan Howe [the UN Special Representative in Somalia from May 1993, when the US-led multinational UNITAF was handed over to the UN-led UNISOM-II] did not help. The Algerian, Mohammed Sahnoun, who had this position sometime before him [Howe], had some concept on how to work in such an environment and started talking to the elders. He went to the root of the problem, while Jonathan Howe started dealing with the warlords and giving them more credit than they had.

Do you think ORH ever had any chance of succeeding?

Of course. With the right policies and the right attitude it had a lot of chance of succeeding. But only succeeding in postponing starvation - [as for] restoring the country to political stability, they didn't take the initiative.

What sort of initiatives should ORH have taken?

When the Americans came in they used a lot of force, which intimidated the warlords, most of whom were ready to give up their weapons and sit down and negotiate. But when they saw there was a lot of waffling [with ORH] the warlords came to realise the Americans were not really willing to sacrifice anything or do anything forcefully. The warlords then just turned away from negotiation.

Do you think people in Somalia wanted ORH?

You've got to look at it from a different perspective. In Somalia, you don't have a people's perspective, you have a clan perspective. You have a big division. One person will see [ORH] as a good thing, the other will see it as a bad thing. But mostly those perspectives that have come to the attention of the international community have been expressed by dominant clans within the struggle. Most of the people thought the American intervention would lead to the stopping of the war and Somalia would have a genuine chance of restarting all over again.

So when did people start turning against the Americans?

Originally, there was a welcoming attitude towards the Americans' policies. But soon after the warlords found they could exploit the international concern, especially as it was concentrated around Mogadishu and everything was happening within Mogadishu, less than 1 per cent of the total country. During the war between Mahdi, Aidid and the US, Mahdi was supporting the US not out of any love for the Americans but because the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The whole [ORH] thing was a media charade. You see, when there is a complete breakdown of law and order in a country, just going there and giving away a few bags of foodstuff and then going away doesn't change the situation. Now the same people are in the same position as two or three years ago, before the UN spent US$3 billion on them. [Famine may] happen again, and this time the people won't have the [media] cameras to draw attention to their plight.

Do you think ORH was initiated for solely humanitarian purposes?

If you talk to the Somalis in the clans affiliated with General Aidid, they will tell you "No, the Americans had an ulterior motive". But other people will tell you something different. But with the humanitarian motive - either you've got to remove the causes of the problem in the first place, or keep on sustaining the humanitarian aid, which will take a very long time.

Looking at the way things have developed, Somaliland seems to be doing quite well. They have their problems - there's still some insecurity around the regions - but they have finally managed to improve this. They still don't have any [international] recognition. It's only in Mogadishu and Kismayu where the problems are concentrated. The rest of the country is running fairly smoothly.

Yet the image we received from Somalia seemed to indicate the whole of the country was in chaos.

It wasn't! It was only in Mogadishu and Kismayu. All that money the UN spent was only in Mogadishu and its environs, which was unfair to the rest of the country, where there's peace and stability and where the elders have worked hard to bring about security. At this moment 79 per cent of the country is in full security. You don't need protection, you don't need anything. You live freely and you just go about daily business like any other day. And this was the same during the famine and when ORH was being implemented. Around Mogadishu and its environs the war effort was really concentrated because, as in most Third World countries, most of the infrastructure and facilities were located in the capital city. And that's why the [warlords] were fighting [there].

The UN can't make the excuse [that they based their operations around Mogadishu] because they wanted to use the Mogadishu port facilities. Somalia has got 3,000 kilometres of seashore with natural harbours everywhere [along it]. They didn't need [Mogadishu]. The UN had an opportunity to do more than what they did. [ORH] was just a waste of money and time. They didn't consult with Somalis; they didn't consult with anybody. They concentrated on a tiny percentage of the people, like the warlords. And they [the warlords] were part of the problem; they were not the solution to the problem.

When Boutros-Ghali arrived at the UN, a lot of people looked up to him; especially as he was an African. But there was also this fear that he might think he knew more about the problems in Africa than Africans, and interfere more in the [situation] than another person who would go cautiously. This was a fear expressed in Somalia. Boutros-Ghali came to Somalia and met Somali officials and said "I know this problem, I can solve it". But he went there unprepared and took inappropriate initiatives to solve problems that he didn't know anything about. The result was the loss of money and lives.

The Americans keep yapping about the Americans who died there. But the latest officials from the Independent Commission on Somalia, headed by a Zimbabwean judge, show that 15,000 people were killed during the UN intervention.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES EXAMINED

The *Guardian* (120 articles)

(Day, page, title, authors/agency [if known]).

1992: June (1 article):

26, (p. 12): *40m 'are facing hunger' in Africa,* Foreign Staff.

July (5 articles):

9, (p. 11): *Somali exodus engulfs Yemen*, Deborah Pugh.
11, (p. 14): *Somalis die 'forgotten' by world,* Reuter.
27, (p. 11): *Question mark over future of Boutros-Ghali*, Mark Tran.
30a, (p. 22): *Population dying like flies, UN officials warn*, Mark Huband.
30b, (p. 20): *Tragedy in parallel*, Editorial.

August (17 articles):

3, (p. 22): *Hunger flows from the barrels of Somali guns,* Mark Huband
5, (p. 20): *Relief teams criticise UN plan to halt Somali food aid,* Mark Huband.
6, (p. 1): *Death beyond understanding,* Mark Huband.
7a, (p. 9): *UN team arrives to force open Somali aid corridors,* Mark Huband.
7b, (p. 19): *The disintegration of Somalia,* Mark Huband.
8a, (p. 10): *Millions 'could die in Somalia'*, Michael Simmons.
8b, (p. 10): *Gunmen feast as children starve,* Reuter.
10, (p. 22): [No title], Mark Huband.
11, (p. 18): *UN set to send troops to guard Somali aid convoys*, Mark Huband.
12, (p. 8): *Somalia to let UN guard aid convoys,* Mark Huband.
13, (p. 7): *Mogadishu 'secure for emergency aid'*, Mark Huband.
14, (p. 17): *What Somalia needs now,* Rakiya Omaar.
17, (p. 8): *UN 'failed to blow whistle' to avert Somali famine,* Jane Perlez.
18, (p. 8): *US works on how to feed Somalis,* Mark Huband.
22, (p. 10): *Somalia's vanquished and outsiders flee to city of hungry,* Mark Huband.
29, (p. 8): *UN observers wounded in Somalia*, Mark Huband, Mark Tran.
31, (p. 19): *Why Africa is in agony,* Mark Huband.

September (12 articles):

2, (p. 16): *The UN up against it,* Editorial.
4, (p. 9): *Drought puts 40m African lives at risk,* Michael Simmons.
5, (*Guardian Weekend,*p.20-21): *Outlaw Country*, Mark Huband.
7, (p. 1): *Somali town lies down to die as famine proves the great leveller,* Mark Huband.
9, (p. 7): *UN troops will face Somali bandit threat to food aid,* Mark Huband.
10, (p. 10): *Relief workers in Somalia reject US troops,* Mark Huband.
14, (p. 8): *UN troops move into Mogadishu,* Mark Huband.
15a, (p. 9): *Key Somali faction welcomes UN troops,* Mark Huband.

15b, (*Education Guardian*, p. 1-3): *Somalia*. [No byline].
17, (p. 21): *Their lives in her hands*, Tessa Williams.
18, (p. 11): *Only the fittest are fed as Somali relief flights deliver too little too late,* Mark Huband.
26, (p. 11): *Islamists come to fore in Somalia*, Mark Huband.

October (5 articles):

6, (p. 10): *Clash at Mogadishu's airport frightens relief flights away*, Reuter.
13, (p. 8): *UN admits fatal delay in Somalia,* Michael Simmons.
16, (p. 10): *New outbreak of fighting hampers Somali aid effort,* Mark Huband.
29, (p. 22): *Somali town waits to die as warlords feud,* Mark Huband.
30, (p. 13): *Boutros-Ghali nominates new famine envoy for Somalia,* Mark Huband.

November (9 articles):

14, (p. 14): *Aid agencies condemn UN as raiders seize convoy,* Michael Simmons.
16, (p. 11): *Warships race to rescue of 3,000 Somalis in famine vessel,* AFP.
25a, (p. 10): *Former envoy attacks UN role,* David Sharrock.
25b, (p. 10): *Senators urge US flights for Somalia,* Mark Tran.
27a, (p. 27): *30,000 US troops may get aid role,* Martin Walker.
27b, (p. 12): *Somali troop plan alarms aid staff,* Michael Simmons.
27c, (p. 20): *Bush sends the troops,* Editorial.
28a, (p. 12): *Clinton cautious over sending US units to Somalia,* Martin Walker.
28b, (p. 23): *Rambo's boot has no place on Somalia's door,* Martin Woollacott.

December (38 articles):

1, (p. 12): *UN chief urges force to help Somalia,* Martin Walker, Mark Tran.
2, (p. 8): *Britain to give US forces in Somalia logistical help,* Hella Pick, Michael Simmons.
3a, (p. 13): *US foresees 120-day stay in Somalia,* Martin Walker.
3b, (p. 20): *Mercy and a complex mission,* Editorial.
3c, (p. 21): *How to save starving Somalia,* Said Samatar.
4, (p. 1, 22): *UN votes to send troops to Somalia,* Martin Walker, Mark Tran.
5a, (p. 1): *US troops in Somalia will do God's work, says Bush,* Martin Walker.
5b, (p. 10): *Uneasy landfall for US Marines,* Mark Huband.
5c, (p. 10): *Diplomacy preferred to armed force,* Rakiya Omaar, Alex de Waal.
7, (p. 10): *France tries to ease Somali deadlock,* Mark Huband, Lucy Hannon.
8, (p. 12): *Troops in Somalia on 'long-term' basis,* Simon Tiddall, Mark Huband.
9a, (p. 1): *Somalia force wades in,* Mark Huband.
9b, (p. 11): *US soldiers prepared for unfamiliar role in Somalia,* Simon Tisdall.
9c, (p. 20): *An immodest proposal*, Edward Pearce.
10a, (p. 13): *Media moves in ahead of assault force,* Keith Richburg.
10b, (p. 22): *Gunfire greets US Marines in Somalia,* Mark Huband.
11, (p. 8): *French kill two at Mogadishu checkpoint*, Mark Huband.
12a, (p. 1): *Somali foes agree to truce,* Mark Huband.
12b, (p. 12): *Herbal high that is crippling Somalia,* Mary Gooderham.
12b, (p. 12): *Women angry at East End's legal trade,* David Pallister.
12d, (p. 13): *Divided Muslim peoples yearn for a new Saladin,* David Hurst.
14, (p. 20): *Death rate doubles in Somali city frightened to plant for the future,* Mark Huband.

15a, (p. 1): *Resentment of foreigners flares as Somali youths beat woman for sleeping with French troops,* [No byline].
15b, (p. 20): *US reluctant to disarm gunmen,* Martin Walker, Mark Huband.
16a, (p. 11): *German airmen celebrate Somali rescue role in style,* Richard Sia.
16b, (p. 19): *Thin blue line for a world cop,* Henry Kissinger.
16c, (p. 20): *US-led convoy heads for stricken Somali town,* Mark Huband.
17, (p. 9): *Looters lurk among starving as Marines move in,* Mark Huband.
18a, (p. 1, 18): *Germany to send troops to Somalia,* Anna Tomforde.
18b, (p. 18): [No title], Reuter.
18c, (p. 16) *Beyond Germany,* Editorial.
22, (p. 7): *Somalia move arms from city,* Reuter.
24a, (p. 20) *Somalia mine kills US civilian,* Mark Huband.
24b, (p. 18): *Through US sunglasses darkly,* Andrew Buckoke.
29, (p. 7): *Warlords lift 'green line',* Agencies.
30, (p. 7): *US cracks down on eve of Bush visit to Somalia,* Reuter.
31a, (p. 11): *Smug Bush wings into Somalia amid US backslapping,* Simon Tisdall.
31b, (p. 16-17): *Troubled world,* [No byline].

1993: January (16 articles):

2, (p. 10): *All smiles as Bush takes his leave of Somalia,* Reuter.
4a, (p. 20): *Unicef withdraws staff after British aid worker is shot dead,* Mark Huband, John Ezard.
4b, (p. 1, 20): *UN chief forced to flee Somalia by angry mob,* Hella Pick.
4c, (p. 18): *To the President's credit,* Editorial.
6a, (p. 9): *Boutros-Ghali's claims belie Somali stalemate,* Hella Pick.
6b, (p. 9): *Northern leaders coy about change of heart over talks,* Andrew Cohen.
8, (p. 9): *Somali leaders near agreement,* Hella Pick.
9a, (p. 10): *10 days at the sharp end,* Hella Pick.
9b, (p. 10): *Marines raid arms market,* Foreign Staff.
9c, (*Guardian Weekend,* p.14-16): *War games,* Mark Huband.
11, (p. 9): *Marines kill Somalis in gun battle at embassy,* Agencies.
12a, (p. 20): *Somalia and the hint of peace,* Editorial.
12b, (p. 22): *Troops raid Somali weapons bazaar,* Mark Huband.
14, (p. 12): *US Marine killed as Somali peace negotiations founder,* Reuter.
18a, (p. 18): *UN to take command of Somali peace mission 'within weeks',* Reuter.
18b, (p. 18): *West shows little inclination to address Africa's litany of woes,* Hella Pick.

February (8 articles):

3, (p. 19): *Nightmare on the horizon,* Martin Woollacott.
5, (p. 12): *UN drags feet on Somalia handover,* Keith Richburg.
9, (p. 11): *Despair in the villages beyond Hope,* John-Thor Dahlburg.
16, (p. 11): *25,000 to patrol Somalia,* Reuter.
22, (p. 7): *Somalia needs $253m in relief,* AP.
23, (p. 11): *Irish aid worker killed in Somalia,* Reuter.
25, (p. 24): *US denies task force troops killed nine in Somali riots,* Reuter.
26, (p. 12): *US admits it shot rioters in Mogadishu,* Francis Mollongwa.

March (5 articles):

1, (p. 8): *Somali relief agencies denounce US,* Mark Huband.
2, (p. 10): *Somalia aid staff fearful of US exit,* Mark Huband.

3, (p. 10): *US envoy admits failure to control Somali crime,* Mark Huband.
4, (p. 12): *Warlords pledge Islamic law for Somali Muslims,* Mark Huband.
9, (p. 11): *Women wage war in Somali town split by terrorism,* Mark Huband.

April (3 articles):

3, (p. 29): *Bitter crumbs, sweet and sour milk,* Geoff Grandfield.
9, (p. 11): *'Killer' of Somalia aid worker named,* Keith Richburg.
29, (p. 22): *A half-baked apple pie left at the aid feast,* Marguerite Michaels.

May (1 article):

3, (p. 6): *Doubts cloud UN rebuilding of Somalia,* Mark Huband.

The Times (148 articles)

1992: June (1 article):

27, (p. 10): *Gang kills 70 and rapes women on Somali refugee ship,* Sam Kiley.

July (5 articles):

6, (p. 11): *UN observer team arrives in Somalia to mixed reception,* Sam Kiley.
14, (p. 13): *Killing jokes down at the gun market,* Sam Kiley.
25, (p. 12): *Somalia proposal,* [No byline].
27, (p. 8): *Stranded Somalis get food,* James Shimanyula.
29, (p. 11): *UN threatens use of force to safeguard Somali airlift,* Sam Kiley.

August (24 articles):

1, (p. 7): *Somali exiles find haven in bush,* Sam Kiley.
4, (p. 8): *Orphaned Somali children wait for their turn to die,* Sam Kiley.
6a, (p. 8): *UN team aims to prevent pillaging of Somali aid,* Reuter.
6b, (p. 11): *Force for humanity,* Editorial.
7, (p. 8): *Armed Somali youngsters cheer arrival of relief team,* Sam Kiley.
8, (p. 7): *Peace force rejected by general,* Reuter.
11, (p. 8): *UN team considers division of Somalia,* Jonathan Clayton.
12, (p. 14): *UN will employ force to protect food aid for starving Somalia,* Sam Kiley.
13a, (p. 9): *Mogadishu factions accept UN troops,* Sam Kiley.
13b, (p. 9): *Somali lepers count their blessings,* Sam Kiley.
14, (p. 7): *Teenage gunmen hunt food in Somalia,* Sam Kiley.
15, (p. 8): *America will fly US troops to Somalia,* Sam Kiley.
17, (p. 8): *Somali gunmen loot UN food and fuel,* Foreign Staff.
18, (p. 8): *US team clears way for airlift to Somalia,* Foreign Staff.
19, (p. 8): *Somalia infant toll rises,* Reuter.
20a, (p. 8): *Babies die as airlift to Somalia is delayed,* Reuter.
20b, (p. 11): *Rescue for Somalia,* Editorial.
21, (p. 9): *UN urged to use force to protect Somali aid,* Sam Kiley.
22, (p. 9): *Kenya says airlift can go ahead,* Reuter.
24, (p. 8): *Food airlift to Somalis under way,* Richard Walker.
25, (p. 7): *Relief workers fear US Somali aid could provoke bloodbath,* Sam Kiley.

29, (p. 8): *Somali warlords hoard weapons as US airlift begins,* Sam Kiley.
31a, (p. 5): *Charity pins Somalia aid 'shame' on UN,* David Watts.
31b, (p. 5): *Elders find rich pickings among misery of camps,* Sam Kiley.

September (14 articles):

1, (p. 7): *Somali clan chiefs try to restore order,* Sam Kiley.
2, (p. 1): *Between the guns and the gratitude,* Alice Thompson.
4, (p. 6): *Vision of Somali hell made reality,* Sam Kiley.
5, (p. 8): *Hurd says Somalia aid was too slow,* Reuter.
7, (p. 8): *Gurkhas sought as guards in Somalia,* Sam Kiley.
8, (p. 7): *Somalia's gunmen demand food as price for protection,* Andrew Hill.
9, (p. 11): *Somali clan will defy UN over cash grip on airport,* Sam Kiley.
14, (p. 9): *EC agrees on Somali base to oversee relief effort,* Michael Binyon.
15, (p. 9): *Troops arrive,* [No byline].
16, (p. 13): *Looter's add to Somalia's suffering,* Sam Kiley.
17, (p. 12): *Marines sent,* [No byline].
21, (p. 13): *Relief groups fear aiding dogs of war,* Sam Kiley.
23, (p. 11): [No title], AFP.
30, (p. 16): *Actress finds a slice of hell in Somalia,* Kate Alderson.

October (4 articles):

5, (p. 11): *How civil wars end,* Editorial.
19, (p. 10): *Model appeal,* [No byline].
26, (p. 12): *Flights stopped,* AFP.
30, (p. 16): *Saddam's ex-envoy is UN chief in Somalia,* James Bone, Sam Kiley.

November (4 articles):

24a, (p. 6): *Lift off,* [No byline].
24b, (p. 6): *Helping hand,* [No byline].
27, (p. 13): *Somali agencies reject 30,000 US troops,* James Bone, David Watts.
28, (p. 1): *Somali leader backs US offer,* James Bone, David Watts.

December (47 articles):

1a, (p. 13): *UN plea for troops to end Somali anarchy,* James Bone, Martin Fletcher.
1b, (p. 17): *Shoot to feed,* Editorial.
2a, (p. 12): *US troops ready to land in Mogadishu,* Martin Fletcher, Michael Binyon.
2b, (p. 12): *Charities welcome military,* James Landale.
2c, (p. 12): *Gunmen fire at children on a road of terror,* Sam Kiley.
2d, (p. 12): *How the factional warlords line up,* [No byline].
2e, (p. 12): *Protectorate status may follow aid plan,* James Bone.
3, (p. 11): *Somalis fight for land before US troops arrive,* Sam Kiley, James Bone.
4, (p. 17): *UN gains firm grip on American led forces in Somalia,* James Bone, Martin Fletcher, Charles Bremner, Sam Kiley.
5a, (p. 1): *Bush says Somalia aid is 'God's work',* Martin Fletcher, Michael Evans.
5b, (p. 9): *Bush sends troops into Somalia to protect food airlift,* Martin Fletcher, Sam Kiley, John Best, Foreign Staff.

7, (p. 11): *UN leader hints at interim rule,* James Bone, Michael Evans.
8, (p. 8): *Somali fight for control of food store leaves 50 dead,* Sam Kiley.
9a, (p. 1): *Marines bring mercy at the end of a gun,* Martin Fletcher, Sam Kiley.
9b, (p. 13): *Americans embrace the moral certainties of Somali crusade,* Ben Macintyre.
9c, (p. 13): *US landing opens battle over looting,* Michael Evans.
9d, (p. 17): *Gentle giant,* Editorial.
10a, (p. 1): *Looters battle in Somali town,* Sam Kiley, Martin Fletcher.
10b, (p. 15): *Cheney is angered by 'media farce',* Martin Fletcher.
10c, (p. 15): *Paris takes credit for Somali aid mission,* Charles Bremner.
10d, (p. 15): *Welcome for marines soured by attacks on relief agencies,* Sam Kiley.
10e, (p. 15): *The networks have landed,* Ben Macintyre.
11a, (p. 1): *Bandits besiege Somalia aid workers,* Sam Kiley.
11b, (p. 15): *French kill two Somalis at Mogadishu roadblock,* Jamie Dettmer.
12a, (p. 11): *Somali warlords sign pact to halt fighting in US-brokered deal,* Sam Kiley, Jamie Dettmer.
12b, (p. 11): *Intervention fails to raise hopes in village of dying,* Sam Kiley.
12c, (p. 12): *Pacifying the warlords,* Ioan Lewis.
14, (p. 9): *US Marines braced for reprisals from Somali rebels,* Jamie Dettmer, Foreign Staff.
15a, (p. 1): *Somali woman beaten for 'fraternisation',* [No byline].
15b, (p. 9): *Americans at odds over disarming Somali clans,* Sam Kiley, Foreign Staff.
15c, (p. 9): *Western aid opens new age of colonisation,* Sam Kiley.
16a, (p. 1): *Gunmen strike as Baidoa awaits aid,* Sam Kiley.
16b, (p. 16): *Gunship escort US column to famine centre of Somalia,* Sam Kiley, Foreign Staff.
16c, (p. 16): *Frisson of unease in French ranks,* Alexandra Frean.
17, (p. 17): *Gunmen surrender to US and French troops in Baidoa,* Sam Kiley.
18, (p. 9): *US accused of 'Al Capone' tactics in Somalia,* Sam Kiley, Martin Fletcher.
19, (p. 9): *Pentagon braced for casualties in Somalia,* Jamie Dettmer, Foreign Staff.
21, (p. 8): *Marines land relief in city of looters,* Martin Fletcher, Foreign Staff.
22, (p. 9): *Americans watch Mogadishu warlords roll their rockets out of own,* Foreign Staff.
23, (p. 8): *Bush plans to visit American troops in Somalia next week,* Foreign Staff.
24, (p. 8): *Somali mine claims first American casualties,* Sam Kiley.
26, (p. 8): *Americans hunt for Somali 'bad guys',* Sam Kiley.
28, (p. 6): *Americans near their relief goal in Somalia,* Francis Kerry.
29a, (p. 1): *US president to see in Somalia's bright 1993,* Foreign Staff.
29b, (p. 8): *Warlords embrace and tell Somalis conflict has ended,* Samir Douaihy, Jamie Dettmer, Foreign Staff.
30, (p. 9): *Somali aid workers shot dead,* Foreign Staff.
31, (p. 12): *US imposes Mogadishu clampdown,* Reuter.

January (19 articles):

1, (p. 9): *Bush delivers end-of-term pep talk to Somalia force,* Sam Kiley, Foreign Staff.
2, (p. 1, 10): *For one child, a battle is lost,* Sam Kiley.
4a, (p. 1): *UN chief flees Mogadishu mob,* Sam Kiley.
4b, (p. 7): *'Vietnam syndrome' blurs US vision in Somalia,* Sam Kiley.
4c, (p. 7): *Father says aid worker's altruism cost him his life,* Tim Jones.

5, (p. 9): *Cheney says Somalia remains 'too nasty' for quick US pullout,* David Watts, Sam Kiley.
6, (p. 11): *War overtakes drought as key hunger cause,* Sam Kiley, Foreign Staff.
7a, (p. 10): *Somalis agree to talk - and fight,* Sam Kiley.
7b, (p. 10): *Black troops feel tug of their roots,* Mark Fritz.
8, (p. 11): *American tanks destroy Somali warlord's arsenal,* Sam Kiley, Foreign Staff.
9, (p. 10): *Somali warlords sign accord,* Foreign Staff.
11, (p. 9): *Somali factions agree ceasefire,* Foreign Staff.
12a, (p. 10): *Weapons seized by marines,* Foreign Staff.
12b, (p. 10): *Somalia aid,* [No byline].
13, (p. 12): *US Marine killed in Mogadishu,* Foreign Staff.
14, (p. 13): *Gunmen step up attacks on US troops as talks collapse,* Jamie Dettmer, Foreign Staff.
16, (p. 11): *Red Cross halts aid after worker is killed,* Eve-Ann Prentice, Foreign Staff.
26, (p. 13): *Marine life thrives on Somalia's coast where relief protection started,* [No byline].
27, (p. 11): *Marine killed in Somalia,* AP.

February (11 articles):

1, (p. 10): *Threat to peace,* AFP.
8, (p. 10): *Blast kills six,* Reuter.
16, (p. 12): *UN to take command in Somalia,* Reuter.
19, (p. 10): *Troops to leave,* Reuter.
20, (p. 17): *Early aid saves lives,* Editorial.
23, (p. 9): *Irish nurse killed in Somali ambush,* Foreign Staff.
24, (p. 12): *US orders forces of Somali warlord to quit key port,* Reuter.
25a, (p. 15): *Somalia's euphoria over foreign intervention turns to rage,* Eve-Ann Prentice.
25b, (p. 15): *Warlord's supporters attack US troops in Mogadishu riot,* Christopher Burns.
26, (p. 11): *Mogadishu clashes halt relief,* Africa Correspondent.
27, (p. 13): *Mogadishu clashes threaten to delay pullout by marines,* Sam Kiley.

March (10 articles):

3, (p. 11): *Somalia vow,* Reuter.
4, (p. 13): *Somalia aid teams angered by envoy,* Sam Kiley.
5, (p. 11): *UN prepares to assume sole charge of governing Somalia,* James Bone.
6, (p. 11): *Somalia envoy,* [No byline].
15, (p. 11): *Class apart,* Reuter.
18, (p. 12): *Somali warlord walks out of UN talks as fighting resumes,* Sam Kiley, Foreign Staff.
22, (p. 8): *Leper home shelters orphans,* Reuter, AP.
27, (p. 13): *Peace troops,* [No byline].
29, (p. 10): *Somali warlords agree peace pact,* Reid Miller.
30, (p. 13): *Somalis hail peace accord,* Reuter.

April (7 articles):

3, (p. 12): *Soldiers held,* Reuter.
7, (p. 11): *Conduct unbecoming,* AP, Reuter.
15, (p. 15): *Somali killed,* Reuter.
21, (p. 10): *Germans return to global role with troops for Somalia,* Roger Boyes.

26a, (p. 13): *UN forces braced for Somali attack,* Sam Kiley.
26b, (p. 13): *America seeks shake-up of UN agencies in Somalia*, Sam Kiley.
27, (p. 14): *Marines hand over to UN,* Reuter.

May (2 articles):

4, (p. 12): *UN takes up tough role in Somalia,* Reuter.
5, (p. 14): *Can Somalia ever be saved?* Sam Kiley.

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1992: June (1 article):

27, (p. A4): *Yemen will admit Somali refugees,* AP.

July (8 articles):

6, (p. A2): *UN truce observers reach Somali capital,* AP.
12, (Sec.1, p.12): *UN observers delay visit to Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
19, (Sec.1, p.1,8): *Deaths in Somalia outpace delivery of food,* Jane Perlez.
20, (p. A3): *UN observer unit to go to Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
23, (p. A22): *This hell called Somalia,* Editorial.
25, (p. A1, A4): *UN head proposes expanded efforts for Somali relief,* Seth Faison.
28, (p. A6): *Security Council supporting UN Chief's plan on Somalia,* [No byline].
31, (p. A9): *US says airlifts fail Somali needy,* Jane Perlez.

August (18 articles):

2a, (Sec.4, p.16): *The scourging of Africa,* Editorial.
2b, (Sec.4, p.6): *The disaster begins to sink in,* Jane Perlez.
7, (p. A2): *UN meets with rival factions in Somalia,* Reuter,
12, (p. A19): *Somalia's plagues,* Anna Quindlen.
13, (p. A1, A9): *Somali warlord agrees to allow UN to protect its relief supplies,* Jane Perlez.
15, (p. A1, A2): *With UN's help, US will airlift food to Somalia,* Michael R. Gordon.
16, (Sec.1, p.12): *UN let the Somali famine get out of hand, aide says,* Jane Perlez.
17, (p. A1, A5): *As much of a nation starves, a young Somali grasps life,* Jane Perlez.
18a, (p. A4): *US troops prepare for Somalia aid airlift,* Reuter.
18b, (p. A18): *Finally, help for Somalia,* Editorial.
19, (p. A3): *First of US relief planes for Somalia lands in Kenya,* Jane Perlez.
22, (p. A1, A4): *US encounters snags in airlift to aid Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
23, (Sec.1, p.3): *In the desperation of Somalia, even the proud flee,* Jane Perlez.
26a, (p. A4): *Amid Somalia's frenzy, family fights to survive,* Jane Perlez.
26b, (p. A5): *UN chief asks a force of 3,500 for Somalia,* Reuter.
28, (p. A3): *Accord reached, Somalia airlift will start today,* Jane Perlez.
29, (p. A4): *US delivers tons of food to Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
30, (Sec.1, p.12): *Barrier to Somali unity: clan rivalry,* Jane Perlez.

September (14 articles):

1, (p. 16): *A Foreign Legion for the world,* Editorial.
4, (p. A1, A6): *Theft of food aid is a business in starving Somalia,* Jane Perlez.

6, (Sec.1, p. 1, 20): *Officials say Somali famine is even worse than feared,* Jane Perlez.
7, (p. A1, A5): *No easy fix for Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
9, (p. A10): *UN to take further steps to aid Somalia's hungry,* [No byline].
13, (Sec.1, p. 20): *Disease joins death and famine in Somali tragedy,* Jane Perlez.
14, (p. 8): *UN delays drops of food in Somalia,* AP.
15, (p. A10): *Armed UN troops arrive in Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
16, (p. A10): *2,400 US Marines on the way to Somalia,* AP.
18, (p. A10): *US offering plan for Somalia relief,* Paul Lewis.
19, (p. A4): *A plane hit, US halts airlift to Somali town,* AP.
20a, (Sec.1, p. 10): *Somali fighter wants US Marines to leave,* AP.
20b, (Sec.4, p. 4): *A diplomat matches wits with chaos in Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
23, (p. A3): *Somalis rediscover hope in a handful of seeds,* Jane Perlez.

October (7 articles):

4, (Sec.1, p.1, 16): *Chaotic Somalia starves as strongmen battle,* Jane Perlez.
14, (p. A5): *Relief workers driven from 2 Somali towns,* Reuter.
23, (p. A1, A8): *Hungry Somalis still die but crops grow, too,* Jane Perlez.
28, (p. A6): *UN relief official quits in dispute with headquarters,* Jane Perlez.
29, (p. A16): *Somalis try a food centre without gunmen,* Jane Perlez.
30, (p. A7): *UN envoy to Somalia says his ouster is official,* Jane Perlez.
31, (p. A2): *Aide's departure another blow to UN in Somalia,* Jane Perlez.

November (21 articles):

2, (p. A1, A6): *Food piling up in Somali port as many starve,* Jane Perlez.
4, (p. A30): *Don't forsake Somalia,* Editorial.
9, (p. A3): *A Somali place that even the alms givers fear,* Jane Perlez.
13, (p. A5): *UN Somalia envoy dismayed over aid,* Jane Perlez.
16a, (p. A1, A6): *How one Somali family, some of it, survives,* Jane Perlez.
16b, (p. A17): *Cold War wreckage,* Anthony Lewis.
19, (p. A27): *Shoot to feed Somalia,* Leslie H. Gelb.
20, (p. A31): *Action or death,* Anthony Lewis.
22, (Sec.1, p. 18): *UN urges warlords to open Somali port,* AP.
26a, (p. A1, A10): *Bush ready to send troops to protect Somalia food,* David Binder.
26b, (p. A10): *UN is outraged,* Reuter.
26c, (p. A10): *UN halts shipments,* AP.
27a, (p. A1, A15): *Washington seeks conditions on plan for Somalia force,* Clifford Krauss.
27b, (p. A14): *Somalia aid workers split on troops,* Jane Perlez.
27c, (p. A14): *UN chief to ask use of force to back Somali aid,* Paul Lewis.
28a, (p. A1, A6): *US plan to guard convoys is backed by Somali general,* Jane Perlez.
28b, (p. A6): *Somali aid plan is called most ambitious option,* Michael R. Gordon.
28c, (p. A6): *UN weighs terms by US for sending Somalia force,* Paul Lewis.
28c, (p. A6): *Europeans cautious,* William E. Schmidt.
29, (Sec.1, p.16): *US move might save ailing Somali relief effort,* Jane Perlez.
30, (p. A9): *Somali clan chief says he backs aid,* Jane Perlez.

December (104 articles):

1a, (p. A1, A10): *UN's chief requests new force to ease the Somalis' misery now,* Paul Lewis.
1b, (p. A10): *US assesses risks of sending troops to Somalia,* Eric Schmitt.
1c, (p. A24): *Do it right in Somalia,* Editorial.
2a, (p. A1, A18): *Thievery and extortion halt flow of UN food to Somalis,* Jane Perlez.
2b, (p. A18): *UN council essentially agrees to US command in Somalia,* Paul Lewis.

2c, (p. A18): *Doubts at the CIA,* Elaine Sciolino.
2d, (p. A18): *Buy up the Somalis guns,* Raymond Bonner.
3, (p. A1, A14): *Key UN members agree to US force in Somalia mission,* Paul Lewis.
4a, (p. A1, A14): *UN backs a Somalia force as Bush vows a swift exit; Pentagon sees longer stay,* Michael R. Gordon.
4b, (p. A1, A14): *Expectations in Somalia,* Jane Perlez.
4c, (p. A14): *First UN goal is security; political outlook is murky,* Paul Lewis.
4d, (p. A20): *Intervention in Somalia,* Editorial.
4e, (p. A31): *Changing the rules,* Anthony Lewis.
5a, (p. A1, A4): *Bush declares goal in Somalia is to 'save thousands',* Michael Wines.
5b, (p. A1, A4): *Crossing a line, and redrawing it,* Thomas L. Friedman.
5c, (p. A1, A4): *Anxiety and fear in Somalia in the waiting for US forces,* Jane Perlez.
5d, (p. A5): *US is sending large force as warning to Somali clans,* Michael R. Gordon.
5e, (p. A5): *Goodbye tears mix with hope of adventure,* Ronald Sullivan.
5f, (p. A18): *What's the goal in Somalia?* Editorial.
6a, (Sec.1, p.1,14): *Effort to get food out to Somalis falls prey to arms and frustration,* Donnatella Lorch.
6b, (Sec.1, p.14): *Aides say US role in Somalia gives Bush a way to exit in glory,* Michael Wines.
6c, (Sec.1, p.14): *Envoy asserts intervention in Somalia is risky and not in interests of US,* Michael R. Gordon.
6d, (Sec.1, p.14): *US role is not to disarm, aide to a top Somali insists,* Jane Perlez.
6e, (Sec.1, p.15): *UN says Somalis must disarm before peace,* Paul Lewis.
6f, (Sec.4, p.1,3): *Getting in is the easy part of the mission,* Elaine Sciolino.
6g, (Sec.4, p.19): *Not set in stone,* Leslie H. Gelb.
6h, (Sec.6,p.36-9): *The casualties,* James Natchwey.
7a, (p A1, A12): *Guns, greed and khat define a once-graceful Somali city,* Jane Perlez.
7b, (p A12): *Mogadishu port opens to allow some food deliveries,* Donnatella Lorch.
7c, (p A13): *Huge ships carry supplies to the Marines,* Eric Schmitt.
7d, (p A13): *A few in Congress advising caution, or vote, on Somalia,* Clifford Krauss.
8a, (p. A1, A18): *Somalia famine no different; children are first to die,* Jane Perlez.
8b, (p. A1, A18): *40 killed in fighting as Somalia awaits American's arrival,* Donnatella Lorch.
8c, (p. A8): *From Gulf to Somalia; General marches on,* Eric Schmitt.
8d, (p. A8): *Big test for small force; logistics of Somali aid,* Michael R. Gordon.
8e, (p. A24): *The world's only other cop,* Editorial.
9a, (p. A1, A16) : *US forces arrive in Somalia on mission to aid the starving,* Jane Perlez.
9b, (p. A1, A16): *Ready for a battle, troops storm beach but find no enemy,* Eric Schmitt.
9c, (p. A16): *US orders relief workers indoors for 48 hours,* Donnatella Lorch.
9d, (p. A16): *Americans will find Somalia full of arms provided by superpowers,* Michael R. Gordon.
9e, (p. A17): *Somali clans planning last grab for advantage,* Jane Perlez.
9f, (p. A17): *Painting nations blue,* Paul Lewis.
9g, (p. A17): *Live, and in great numbers: It's Somalia tonight with Tom, Ted and Dan,* James Barron.
10a, (p. A1, A18): *Somali capital mostly peaceful; gunmen retreat from Marines,* Jane Perlez.
10b, (p. A18): *US sees good security,* Michael R. Gordon.
10c, (p. A18): *TV army on the beach took US by surprise,* Michael R. Gordon.

10d, (p. A18): *French fault 'circus' coverage of the arrival of US troops,* Alan Riding.
10e, (p. A26): *Two tough tracks in Somalia,* Editorial.
11a, (p.A1,A22): *Somali gunmen, pushed away from capital, take terror inland,* Jane Perlez.
11b, (p. A22): *2 Somalis killed in clash,* Eric Schmitt.
11c, (p. A22): *Next goal for the military: dealing with realities,* Michael R. Gordon.
11d, (p. A22): *Somali welcome aside, the Marines are jittery,* Eric Schmitt.
11e, (p. A23): *UN wants Somalia disarmed before US leaves,* Elaine Sciolino.
12a, (p. A6): *2 Somali factional leaders pledge to end the fighting,* Jane Perlez.
12b, (p. A6): *Aid officials in Somalia take an optimistic view,* Donnatella Lorch.
12c, (p. A6): *Pentagon says killing of 2 Somalis may have been accidental,* Michael R. Gordon.
13a, (Sec1,p1,14): *US helicopters destroy vehicles in Somali clash,* Eric Schmitt.
13b, (Sec1, p.14): *Marines and Somalis: 2 worlds meet,* Donnatella Lorch.
13c, (Sec1, p.14): *Photographer's hard day: robbed, berated, stoned,* AP.
13d, (Sec1, p.14): *UN chief says letter to Bush outlines US commitment to disarm Somali gangs,* Paul Lewis.
13e, (Sec1, p.16): *Seared by faces of need, Americans say, 'How could we not do this?'* Peter Applebome.
13f, (Sec4, p.16): *But who'll disarm the thugs?* Editorial.
14a, (p. A1, A8): *Where a war has bred famine, green Somali fields offer hope,* Jane Perlez.
14b, (p. A8): *General is wary of sending force to Somali interior,* Jane Perlez.
15a, (p. A8): *Unpaid for 3 years, a Somali still directs traffic,* Donnatella Lorch.
15b, (p. A8): *Must US strip a land of guns,* Jane Perlez.
15c, (p. A9): *Somali peacekeepers to need US support troops,* Michael R. Gordon.
16a, (p.A1, A10): *Troops in Somalia close in on goal of aiding hungry,* Eric Schmitt.
16b, (p. A10): *Beaten Somali woman is held as prostitute,* AP.
16c, (p. A11): *Foreign units by the dozen and all 'elite',* Eric Schmitt.
17, (p. A11): *Marines escort food to hungry,* Donnatella Lorch.
18a, (p.A1, A10): *Gunmen reappear in Somalia, renewing security concerns,* Jane Perlez.
18b, (p. A10): *A walk in the sun, where the heat is the enemy,* Donnatella Lorch.
19, (p. A3): *US general sees expanded role on Somali weapons,* Eric Schmitt.
20a, (Sec1, p.16): *Getting food to the Somalis takes civil-military fusion,* Jane Perlez.
20b, (Sec1, p.16): *Red Cross won't use US troop escorts in Somalia,* Donnatella Lorch.
20c, (Sec1, p.16): *Bush's envoy visits Somali town and forces scout it as next target,* Eric Schmitt.
20d, (Sec.4, p.3): *Somalia, we are here! (Now what do we do?),* Jane Perlez.
21a, (p.A1, A13) *Reshaping pacifism to fight anguish in reshaped world,* Peter Steinfels.
21b, (p. A12): *Marines and Somali troops meet warily but peacefully,* Eric Schmitt.
21c, (p. A12): *UN food convoy arrives in Baidoa,* AP.
21d, (p. A12): *Better late than never, aid organisations say,* Sam Dillon.
22a, (p.A1, A14): *Somali women stride ahead despite the scars of tradition,* Donnatella Lorch.
22b, (p. A14): *Militias in Mogadishu begin pullout of armed vehicles,* Eric Schmitt.
22c, (p. A15): *UN chief faults US again on disarming Somalia,* Paul Lewis.
23a, (p. A6): *Somalis assert Marines have to secure villages,* Jane Perlez.
23b, (p. A6): *Bush will visit troops in Somalia,* David E. Rosenbaum.
23c, (p. A6): *A general says armed vehicles will be seized on sight in Somalia,* Eric Schmitt
24a, (p.A1, A6): *American is killed in Somalia by mine planted by clans,* Jane Perlez.
24b, (p.A6): *US plans a transfer,* Eric Schmitt.
25a, (p. A10): *Marines reach Bardera, but not famine victims,* Donnatella Lorch.

25b, (p. A10): *They keep the supply funnel to Somalia open,* Eric Schmitt.
25c, (p. A11): *Snake bite in Somalia? See soldier's guide,* Michael R. Gordon.
26, (p. A5): *American troops bear gifts on a human scale,* Jane Perlez.
27a, (Sec.1, p.10): *Army team's 'marketing' job is selling US role,* Donnatella Lorch.
27b, (Sec.1, p.10): *US-led force prepares to enter 2 Somali towns,* AP.
27c, (Sec.4, p.6): *Somali culture holds surprises, some pleasant, for American GI's,* Eric Schmitt.
28a, (p. A4): *Disarming Somalis gains in priority,* Donnatella Lorch.
28b, (p. A15): *Praise the Marines? I suppose so,* Nuruddin Farah.
29a, (p. A1, A6): *Witnesses report a Somali massacre before US arrival,* Jane Perlez.
29b, (p. A6): *Rival Somali leaders meet in capital and pledge to halt fighting,* Donnatella Lorch.
30, (p. A3): *Shootings in Somalia reflect rising tension for US troops,* Donnatella Lorch.
31a, (p. A1, A8): *Somalia 1992: Picking up pieces as famine subsides,* Jane Perlez.
31b, (p. A8): *Marine force in Somali capital intensifies security for Bush visit,* Alison Mitchell.

January (36 articles):

1, (p. A1, A8): *Bush sees victims of Somali famine,* Jane Perlez.
2, (p. A1, A2): *President visits centre of crisis in Somali town,* Alison Mitchell.
3, (Sec.1, p.3): *UN chief seeks basis for peace in Somalia today,* Alison Mitchell.
4a, (p. A1, A6): *Angry crowd of Somalis disrupts visit to Mogadishu by UN chief,* Alison Mitchell.
4b, (p. A6): *Its man slain, Unicef pulls out,* Kenneth B. Noble.
4c, (p. A6): *At UN compound, in due course, Marines ride to rescue.*
5a, (p. A1, A7): *In an armed land, Somalis live and prosper by the gun,* Alison Mitchell.
5b, (p. A7): *US army investigating killings in a Somali port,* Alison Mitchell.
6, (p. A3): *Somali faction leader criticises UN peace effort,* Paul Lewis.
7, (p. A6): *Somali warlord's area is attacked by Marines,* Reuter.
8a, (p. A1, A8): *400 US Marines attack compound of Somali gunmen,* Kenneth B. Noble.
8b, (p. A8): *Somali factions take a tentative step towards reconciliation,* Paul Lewis.
8c, (p. A24): *Disarming Somalia, sort of,* Editorial.
9, (p. A3): *US Marines seize arms and close Somali market,* Alison Mitchell.
10, (Sec.1, p.1,6): *US troops begin a drive to expand hold on Mogadishu,* Alison Mitchell.
11, (p. A5): *Legislator faults UN over Somalia,* Alison Mitchell.
12, (p. A3): *Troops in Somalia raid big arsenal,* Kenneth B. Noble.
13a, (p. A1, A8): *A new question in Somalia: when does free food hurt?* Alison Mitchell.
13b, (p. A9): *US force suffers first combat death in Somalia,* Eric Schmitt.
14a, (p. A4): *School bell rings in Somalia, for the lucky few,* Alison Mitchell.
14b, (p. A5): *Somalia clans hold talks on a joint police force,* Kenneth B. Noble.
14c, (p. A6): *Grieving in New Jersey town for Marine killed in Somalia,* Evelyn Nieves.
15, (p. A9): *Islamic militants, pushed aside, express anger in Somalia port,* Kenneth B. Noble.
16a, (p. A2): *Somalia factions sign a truce pact,* Reuter.
16b, (p. A2): *Red Cross operations halted,* AP.
17a, (Sec.1, p.6): *6 Somalis killed as bandits clash with GIs,* Alison Mitchell.
17b, (Sec.4, p.1): *It's never fair to just blame the weather,* Sylvia Nasar.
18, (p. A3): *Marines in Somalia try to rebuild a town council,* Alison Mitchell.
20, (p. A3): *First Marines leave Somalia, a signal to the UN,* Alison Mitchell.
24a, (Sec.1, p.16): *Fifth horseman of Somalia: stealing,* Alison Mitchell.

24b, (*New York Times mag*, p.54): *Gunmen, $150 a day,* Jane Perlez.
25, (p. A7): *3 deaths in Somalia may halt port visit by European group,* AP.
26, (p. A3): *US attacks rebels in Somalia; Marine is slain later,* Diana Jean Schemo.
28, (p. A4): *Somali warlords recruited (It's the price of peace),* Diana Jean Schemo.
30, (p. A6): *Somali to release prisoners of war,* Diana Jean Schemo.
31, (Sec.1, p.14): *Somali sweep shows GI role shift,* Diana Jean Schemo.

February (20 articles):

1a, (p. A7): *Somali police, back on duty, with US aid,* Diana Jean Schemo.
1b, (p. A7): *In Somalia, now it's the UN's turn,* Editorial.
2, (p. A6): *Hope left behind in Somalia by disillusioned US Marines,* Diana Jean Schemo.
6a, (p. A5): *200 Somali youths stone American troops,* [No byline].
6b, (p. A21): *How Somalia was left in the cold,* S. J. Hamrick.
7, (Sec.1, p.3): *As hunger ebbs, Somalia faces need to rebuild,* Diana Jean Schemo.
9, (p. A10): *Donors find much Somali aid stolen,* Diana Jean Schemo.
13, (p. A1, A4): *Most US troops will leave Somalia by April in UN plan,* Eric Schmitt.
14a, (Sec1, p.22): *On Mogadishu's 'green line', nothing is sacred,* Diana Jean Schemo.
14b, (Sec1, p.23): *US Somalia pullout worries relief workers,* Diana Jean Schemo.
16, (p. A1, A6): *Amid 'Hatfields and McCoys', Marines disarm the Somalis,* Diana Jean Schemo.
19, (p. A8): *US van attacked in Somalia,* [No byline].
20, (p. A, A4): *Boy's death in Somalia tests uneasy US role,* Diana Jean Schemo.
21a, (Sec1, p.3): *Nearly everything in Somalia is now up for grabs,* Diana Jean Schemo.
21b, (Sec1, p.3): *US Marine kills a Somali carrying knife and running,* AP.
21c, (Sec4, p.6): *The world moves on Somalia; the warlords move faster,* Diana Jean Schemo.
24, (p. A7): *US tells clan's forces to leave Somali port,* AP.
25, (p. A1, A9): *Rioting by warlord's supporters creates havoc in Somali capital,* Diana Jean Schemo.
26, (p. A1, A9): *Somali warlord's supporters on rampage for second day,* Diana Jean Schemo.
27, (p. A4): *US and Nigerian troops halt Somali shootings,* Diana Jean Schemo.

March (12 articles):

1, (p. A6): *Worry in gunless Somalia aid offices,* Diana Jean Schemo.
2, (p. A2): *Sweep for weapons in Somali port brings relief operations to a halt,* Diana Jean Schemo.
3, (p. A6): *US envoy to Somalia says American mission has been achieved,*
4a, (p. A3): *UN chief sees Somalia force shifting in May,* [No byline].
4b, (p. A3): *Another soldier killed,* AP.
5, (p. A6): *Marines begin Somali shooting inquiry,* Donnatella Lorch.
6, (p. A3): *Marine cites fear in shooting of 2 Somalis,* AP.
12, (p. A4): *GI's storm the beach to get away from it all,* Donnatella Lorch.
18, (p. A7): *Talks on Somalia suspended by UN,* Donnatella Lorch.
27, (p. A3): *UN will increase troops in Somalia,* Paul Lewis.
28, (Sec.1, p.15): *Pact on Somalia reported by UN,* AP.
29, (p. A5): *Somalia's leaders reach agreement,* Donnatella Lorch.

April (4 articles):

7, (p. A6): *Powell is in Somalia to assess relief effort,* AP.
11, (*New York Times mag,* p16-7, 38-9): *Body language in Somalia,* Diana Jean Schemo.
26, (p. A11): *UN will take over in Somalia next week,* AP.
30, (p. A10): *US plans to leave troops to back UN Somalia unit,* Michael R. Gordon.

May (5 articles):

2a, (Sec1, p.16): *As UN prepares for Somalia command, rebuilding is most urgent task,* Donnatella Lorch.
2b, (Sec4, p.1,4): *Declare victory, hand off, slip out, cross fingers,* Diana Jean Schemo.
4, (p. A24): *A big second step in Somalia,* Editorial.
5, (p. A5): *US General hands over relief operation in Somalia to UN,* AP.
30, (Sec1, p.14): *Ravaged Somali valley reviving in a wary peace,* Donnatella Lorch.

APPENDIX C

DETAILS OF COVERAGE BY THE THREE NEWSPAPERS OF THE CAUSES OF THE 1992-3 SOMALIAN FAMINE - THEMES TWO, FOUR, FIVE AND SEVEN

Coverage of Theme Two - The Inappropriate Political, Social and Economic Systems bequeathed to Somalia in 1960

The Guardian

Only three (2.5 %) out of the 120 articles in the *Guardian* made at least partial acknowledgement to the inappropriate political, social and economic systems bequeathed to Somalia by the colonial powers at independence in 1960 as having played a role in causing the famine. An article in the *Education Guardian* section on September 15, 1992b, (p. 2), mentioned that colonialism had, in 1960, left the new country of Somalia with two distinct legal, tax and administrative systems, as well as a political system that was open to domination by one party. The article also placed the 1969 *coup d'état* in some context, saying Barre's action "was one of the many coups in Africa as the post-independence governments tried to tackle the corruption and economic problems that colonialism had caused". On January 6, 1993b, (p. 9), in a 16-paragraph story by Andrew Cohen on the secession of Somaliland from Somalia, one paragraph reported on the 1960 unification of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland, and included the comment: "Many Somalilanders [people of the former British Somaliland] still regard the union as a mistake". This statement was not developed further, although Cohen did later mention the 1988 carpet-bombing attacks on Hargeisa, initiated by Siad Barre in retaliation against Somali National Movement (SNM) moves towards independence. Then, on February 3, 1993, (p. 19), Martin Woollacott warned that Western intervention in Somalia was a risky proposition considering it was "Western intervention that created the ramshackle African state system and has compounded its problems".

These few *Guardian* attempts to report on the pre-Barre era as part of the historical context of the famine stand in contrast to the occasional article which tended to portray the famine as somehow due to the nature of the Somali people and, as such, the Somali people's own "fault". In other words, these articles implied that the causes of the famine were inherent in the Somali psyche and had nothing to do with colonialist or post-colonialist history. For example, David Hurst wrote on December 12, 1992d, (p. 13), that the crisis was due to the Somalis' "own short-comings" as Muslims. This statement was not developed or qualified or backed up with any "facts". The occasional tendency of the *Guardian* to push the blame for the crisis on the Somalis themselves can be further illustrated in the Mark Huband article of March 3, 1993, (p.10), when the US Special Envoy to Somalia, Robert Oakley, was quoted as saying: "[Somalia] is never going to be violence-free; this country has always had a violence problem". This generalisation was not challenged by Mr Huband.

The Times

Of the 148 articles in *The Times,* not one made even the slightest mention of this theme.

The New York Times

Not one of the 250 articles in the *New York Times* critically discussed this theme. Like the *Guardian*, the *New York Times* offered the occasional article which tended to shift blame for the famine towards the Somali people, thereby portraying the Somalis in a negative and unfavourable light. On February 21, 1993a, (p. A3), for example, a UN

official, when asked about future prospects for Somalia, was quoted as saying: "Whatever Somalia becomes will be what the Somali people want it to be". The article continued: "[This] is a refrain echoed by almost every foreign political or military officer stationed here". Thus, the article and the quotes contained no acknowledgement of any past or present outside influence on the direction and form of Somalia's political developments.

Coverage of Theme Four - The End of US Support for Barre in 1990

The Guardian

There were only four articles (8.3 %) in the *Guardian* which at least partly acknowledged and discussed the sudden withdrawal of US support for Barre in 1990, following the end of the Cold War and the developments in the Gulf War, as being the catalyst for Barre's overthrow and the beginning of the anarchy and chaos which engulfed Somalia and triggered the 1992-3 famine.

These were August 7, 1992b, (p. 19), November 28, 1992b, (p. 23), December 24, 1992b, (p.18) and April 3, 1993, (p. 29). The latter article was a profile on Somali writer Nuruddin Farah buried among the Guardian's arts pages. Martin Woollacott, (November 28, 1992b, p. 23), summed up this theme concisely when he wrote:

> *Somali society regressed badly under Barre, and the US assisted in the process. First it sustained him, while making no serious attempt to persuade him into reform, and then, abruptly, it undercut him as the contest with the Soviets dwindled away and [the military base at] Berbera's value seemed dubious.*

Interestingly, two of these four stories were by "opinion" commentators, while another was contained within a profile of Somali writer Nuruddin Farah. Thus, regular reporter Mark Huband discussed this theme in one article only, that of August 7, 1992b, (p. 19). Furthermore, it would seem that the *Guardian* did not consider such concise and penetrative analysis acceptable on a regular basis, as it made no appearance in the remaining 116 articles on the famine, particularly those which appeared after late November, 1992. This was the date when the US-inspired ORH was launched with general praise from the three newspapers, but particularly *The Times* and the *New York Times,* as discussed in Chapter Eight.

The Times

Not one item in *The Times* made even a partial reference to the sudden withdrawal of US support for Barre in 1990 as having been a contributing factor to the famine.

The New York Times

Again, like *The Times,* the *New York Times* did not, in any article, critically report on this theme.

On August 30, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), however, Jane Perlez wrote:

> *When the Cold War ended, Mr. Siad Barre found himself deserted, the intense interest by the superpowers replaced by indifference as his repressive regime began to teeter in 1990 under pressures from clans that he had brutally excluded from power.*

But was it pressures from clans that caused the regime to teeter? From my understanding, Barre would most likely have been overthrown following the Ogaden *debacle* of 1977-78. That he remained in power another 13 years was directly attributable to US support for his regime from 1978 and 1990. Yet Perlez turned this around completely. The clans

might have exerted pressure on Barre in 1990 but opposition to his regime had existed for more than a decade, and Barre had "brutally excluded" these clans from power only with tacit US support. That the pressures were now sufficient for the Barre regime to "teeter" was a reflection of the withdrawal of US support for Barre in 1990 *when the US no longer needed Barre*. As Perlez did not make this inconvenient "fact" clear, the article implied that the US was merely an indifferent spectator as Barre's regime "teetered". Why did Perlez not elaborate on *why* clan pressure was not enough to bring down Barre before 1990 and the end of the Cold War? Why did Perlez not discuss how Barre "brutally excluded" the clans from power? Again, news selection and framing has served to favour a certain reading of the situation in 1990 over others, to one which played down the explicit US role in creating the famine.

Coverage of Theme Five - The Destitution of Somali Society

The Guardian

Only one (0.8 %) of the 120 articles in the *Guardian* at least partly discussed the destitution of Somali society as having played a role in causing the famine. On July 30, 1992b, (p. 20), an editorial stated: "Agriculture [in Somalia] has been largely destroyed and those starving are mostly the rural poor who have fled to the main towns". The descriptive nature of the editorial, however, meant it did not examine *why* agriculture had been largely destroyed and *why* there was a rural poor underclass.

There was no discussion in the *Guardian*, then, and indeed in the other two newspapers examined in this thesis, of the effect on Somalia of such factors as the imposition of the US-imposed strategies for development contained in the World Bank/IMF-designed structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). In other words, there was no recognition that rural poverty, and the famine that resulted from it, was the consequence of the long-term agricultural, economic and social disintegration of Somalia, a disintegration predominantly engineered by foreign interference in the nation's affairs.

Interestingly, however, there was a report in the *Guardian*, (January 18, 1993b, p. 12), which quoted an Algerian official of the Economic Commission for Africa, Layashi Yaker, as saying that poverty in Africa was due to "the state of the world's economy, and the failure of the world's richer countries to implement constructive and generous development policies". In the context of the article blame was not placed at the feet of the Western policies, contained in the IMF/World Bank-designed SAPs, that deliberately discriminated economically against Africa. A further article, (the excellent analysis by Mark Huband, "The Disintegration of Somalia", on August 7, 1992b, p.19), while not mentioning Theme Five in any way, did note, however, that "the current catastrophe [has occurred] at a time when there is no serious drought".

The latter article was especially interesting as there were eight other articles in the *Guardian* , (representing 6.6 % of 120 articles, or six times the amount of coverage given to Theme Five), which mentioned the effects of the alleged drought, or the combination of war *and* drought, on the famine! These were June 26, 1992, (p. 12), July 11, 1992, (p. 14), July 30, 1992b, (p. 20), August 8, 1992a, (p. 10), September 4, 1992, (p. 9), September 15, 1992a, (p. 9), September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian*, p. 3) and December 9, 1992c, (p. 20).

On September 4, 1992, (p. 9), for example, Michael Simmons wrote of the millions of people facing starvation from drought not only in the "tragedy" of Somalia but also across southern Africa, where a real and very serious drought *was* occurring. The choice of word "tragedy" reinforced the notion that the famine in Somalia was due to an "act of God" - drought - and was inevitable. Yet the severe drought in southern Africa from 1992 to 1993 did not lead to mass starvation. Indeed, another article about the drought in southern Africa by Julian Pettifer, which appeared in the *Guardian* two weeks later, (*Environmental Guardian,* September 18, 1992, p. 27 - note: this is not one of the 120

Guardian articles), noted that in southern Africa there had "not so far" been the acute famine experienced in the Horn of Africa. This article appeared under a typically negative headline, "Africa's drought of despair", but, more interestingly, the author did not offer any suggestions as to why southern Africa had "not so far" experienced famine. Yet, in Zimbabwe, this had been because the Zimbabwean Government had "brought in huge amounts of food via South Africa". (See the *New York Times*, April 23, 1993, p. A3). The point here is that, even if there was drought in Somalia, which there wasn't, that would not have led to famine if there had been a stable Government unaffected by massive outside interference. Furthermore, the people in Somalia would not have starved if the traditional methods of coping had not been destroyed by colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Interestingly, the *Guardian* noted on September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian* p. 3), that: "[The drought] is worse [than those previously] because most of the country's coping mechanisms were destroyed by 20 years of dictatorship". A moot point, but the nation's "coping mechanisms" also included health care, education, welfare, transport and other government services which had been drastically cut by Barre at the behest of the IMF and other foreign banking and financial agents. This meant that the Somalian poor would starve whether the drought was causing the famine or not.

The shifting of blame towards the Somali people can be noted in a number of reports in the *Guardian* which conveyed the impression that the famine was due to the chewing of the drug *qat.* There were at least seven reports which described the effects of *qat* without placing the stories in any sort of context. These were August 3, 1992, (p. 22), August 22, 1992, (p. 10), September 5, 1992, (*Guardian Weekend,* p. 21-22), December 14, 1992, (p. 20), December 12, 1992b, (p. 12), December 12, 1992c, (p. 12), January 9, 1993c, (*Guardian Weekend*, p. 14-16). Again, these represented seven times the amount of coverage given to the destitution of Somali society. Taken with the seven articles which linked the 1992-3 famine, in part, to drought, these 14 articles represented 14 times the amount of coverage given to Theme Five. An example of how the use of *qat* was reported without context was the article by Mary Gooderham on December 12, 1992b, (p. 12). Gooderham wrote:

> *[The] exploding use [of qat] in Somalia in the last three decades ... has proved shattering. Qat has crippled the economy and enervated a generation. It exacerbates the present culture of guns and violence.*

The other articles took a similar line, negatively portraying the Somalis and their high use of the drug and citing this as the cause of anarchy and chaos in Somalia.. Yet the increasing use of *qat* has come about through the sense of hopelessness and despair experienced by a people and a society destroyed by the decades of foreign interference in their affairs, via colonialism, neo-colonialism, superpower support for Barre and the imposition of the SAPs.

The Times

Of the 148 articles in *The Times,* only one (0.6 %) partly discussed the destitution of Somali society. An article on January 16, 1993, (p. 11), quoted a British aid worker discussing why people were dying of starvation in places where food was for sale:

> *"It is possible to get fat in a famine area", [the aid worker] said. "This may seem strange, but the markets have plenty of food, it is just that people do not have the money to pay for it".*

This quote gave some indication that poverty, rather than actual food shortages, was by far the biggest killer in the crisis. It may be an obvious point but, if people had enough money, they could afford to pay for imported food. Explaining *why* this poverty existed, however, was apparently a far more complex task than merely ascribing the cause of the

famine to war, acts of god or rampant looting. Instead, *The Times,* like the *Guardian*, retreated to simple explanations, such as war and the weather. A total of five articles, (3.3 % - or five times the amount of coverage given to Theme Five), discussed the role of the supposed drought in creating the conditions for famine. These were July 27, 1992, (p. 8), August 4, 1992, (p. 8), August 15, 1992, (p. 8), December 4, 1992, (p. 17) and December 24, 1992, (p. 8).

The New York Times

Of the 250 articles in the *New York Times,* only one (0.4 %) partly discussed this theme. The article, on January 17, 1993b, (Sec. 4, p. 1, 5), was a rare *New York Times* analysis of the political causes of famine. The article stated:

> *Typically, as thousands die [in a famine], there's enough food in the country to go around or enough money to import it. Disaster strikes because the poorest, most downtrodden members of society suddenly can no longer afford to buy food, usually because of sudden unemployment or a surge in food prices.*

Yet, no reason for the existence of such huge numbers of poor and downtrodden people was offered. Furthermore, the article was full of contradictions. Earlier in the article was written the following:

> *[The famine in Somalia was] a man-made disaster, an avoidable economic and political catastrophe. The kind of famine that struck there - created by clan warfare, not by crop shortages or endemic poverty - is the rule, not the exception.*

Thus, the article has, at first, discounted the effects of poverty on the famine, then, later, has stated that poverty does play a part. More typically, the article did not discuss what actually *caused* the poverty in the first place. Poverty simply existed. Furthermore, the article listed "the absence of democracy, [and the resulting] wars, corruption and government reluctance to admit problems" as the causes of the starvation. The major role played by the US in fostering this "absence of democracy" was not deemed important enough for the *New York Times* to include in this list. Another article, by Jane Perlez, (September 4, 1992, (p. A1, A6), implicitly recognised that poverty caused some Somalis to make a living by buying/selling stolen food but, again, a specific link between poverty and famine was not part of Perlez's analysis.

The *New York Times* was also very concerned with highlighting the contribution of the alleged drought towards the famine. A total of 20 articles, (8 % - or 20 times the amount of coverage given to Theme Five), mentioned drought as having, at least in part, caused the famine. These were June 27, 1992, (p. A4), July 12, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), July 19, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 8), July 23, 1992, (p. 22), July 31, 1992, (p. A9), August 2, 1992a, (Sec. 4, p. 16), August 2, 1992b, (Sec. 4, p. 6), August 16, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), August 17, 1992, (p. A1), August 18, 1992b, (p. A18), August 19, 1992, (p. A13), August 29, 1992, (p. A4), September 6, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 20), September 14, 1992, (p. A8), November 16, 1992, (p. A6), November 20, 1992, (p. A31), December 9, 1992a, (p. A16), December 14, 1992b, (p. A8), December 15, 1992a, (p. A8). Interestingly, the *New York Times* could never quite figure out to what extent the drought caused the famine. While most articles discussed the effects of "drought", on July 19, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 8), the drought was described as a "severe" drought. By December 9, 1992a, (p. A16), however, it was a combination of war and, "to a lesser extent", drought.

A further two articles (0.8 %) detailed the *qat* flights from Kenya, and/or described the destructive effects of the drug on Somali society. These were December 7, 1992a, (p. A1, A12) and January 24, 1993b, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 54).

Coverage of Theme Seven - the Extent and Location of the Famine

The Guardian

Of the 120 articles in the *Guardian,* five articles, (4.2 %), at least partly identified that the geographical location of the famine was confined to the south-western areas of Somalia. These were August 8, 1992a, (p. 10), August 14, 1992, (p. 17), December 3, 1992b, (p. 20), December 24, 1992b, (p. 18) and February 16, 1993, (p. 11). As such, they did not acknowledge the value and importance of the local systems of government, such as the alliance of traditional elders and local leaders, in asserting authority and generating peace. Indeed, on February 16, 1993, (p. 11), the *Guardian* reported:

> *The US-led [ORH] force has made no attempt to extend its mission into northern Somalia, which was largely spared from the famine that has killed 300,000 Somalis over two years.*

In other words, the article implied it was little more than good luck that other parts of Somalia were spared the terrors of the south, thereby playing down the initiatives by the northern Somalis.

A further three articles, (2.5 % - making a total of eight articles, representing 6.6 %), also recognised that, in Somaliland and other parts of Somalia, there was relative peace and, importantly, no famine, as a result of local political and social initiatives and appropriate local social and economic development programmes. These were December 3, 1992c, (p. 21), December 5, 1992c, (p. 10) and January 6, 1993b, (p. 9). Significantly, two of these articles were by Somalis; Said Samatar on December 3, 1992c, (p. 21), and Rakiya Omaar, (with Alex de Waal), on December 5, 1992c, (p. 10). This demonstrated the value of local (developing world) knowledge when reporting on events in that developing world. The practice by Western reporters of relying on their own observations and interpretations of events in the developing world, and reporting on them in Western newspapers, is, I believe, open to influence by the journalists'/newspapers' ethnocentrism. At the same time, I accept that a well-informed Western reporter, with intimate knowledge of a developing country and access to well-informed commentators in that country, can also provide a concise and non-patronising summary of events in the developing world.

Interestingly, only the article of January 6, 1993b, (p. 9), recognised that Somaliland had declared independence from the rest of Somalia. At the same time, no *Guardian* maps of Somalia showed Somaliland as a state separate from the remaining lands; that is, Somalia. Only one map, (December 5, 1992, p. 10), illustrated that the famine was confined to the south-western corner of the country.

By contrast, 20 articles (16.6 %) stated, or at least implied, that the famine, chaos and anarchy engulfed the entire country. These were July 11, 1992, (p. 14), July 30, 1992b, (p. 20), August 5, 1992, (p. 20), August 7, 1992a, (p. 9), August 7, 1992b, (p. 19), August 11, 1992, (p. 18), September 5, 1992, (*Guardian Weekend*, p. 20-21), September 15, 1992a, (p. 9), September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian*, p. 1-3), December 1, 1992, (p. 12), December 3, 1992a, (p. 13), December 5, 1992b, (p. 10), December 7, 1992, (p. 10), December 9, 1992c, (p. 20), December 12, 1992b, (p. 12), January 4, 1993a, (p. 20), January 9, 1993a, (p. 10), (January 9, 1993c, *Guardian Weekend,* p. 14-16), January 18, 1993b, (p. 12) and February 2, 1993, (p. 7).

In these articles, the chaos in the south-west of the country was presented as destroying "every aspect of government and organisation" (September 15, 1992b, *Education Guardian*, p. 1-3) in the "shattered country" (January 9, 1993c, *Guardian Weekend*, p. 14-16), and rendered the *qat* trade as "the only institution still functioning in Somalia" (December 12, 1992b, p. 12). Indeed, Somalia was a "famine-stricken country" (December 7, 1992, p. 10) where "violence, hunger, desperation and humiliation in the

eyes of the world are the basic instincts governing everyday life" (December 5, 1992b, p. 10).

The Times

Only two articles in *The Times* partly discussed the geographical location of the area of chaos and famine. These were August 31, 1992b, (p. 5) and December 21, 1992, (p. 8). A further two articles, (1.3 % - making a total of four articles representing 2.7 %), discussed the question of location as well as recognising that stability and good administration were features of Somaliland and other parts of Somalia. These were December 12, 1992c, (p. 12) and February 20, 1993, (p. 17). In the latter, an editorial, *The Times* recognised that "Somaliland has built up a durable local administration" and that it had "a coherent central government that is trying to provide services and security". Most of the maps of Somalia, which appeared in approximately one-quarter of the 148 articles in *The Times,* did not illustrate that Somaliland had declared independence, the exceptions being the maps of August 12, 1992, (p. 14), December 2, 1992, (p. 12), December 19, 1992, (p. 9), December 21, 1992, (p. 8) and January 1, 1993, (p. 9). Only one map, (December 10, 1992d, p. 15), implied that the famine was confined to south-west Somalia.

By contrast, 40 articles (27 %) mentioned, or at least implied, that the famine, chaos and anarchy engulfed the entire country, thereby ignoring, and reducing the impact for the reader, of the positive development achievements in the rest of the country. These were June 27, 1992, (p. 10), July 6, 1992, (p. 11), July 14, 1992, (p. 13), July 29, 1992, (p. 11), August 1, 1992, (p. 7), August 4, 1992, (p. 8), August 6, 1992a, (p. 8), August 6, 1992b, (p. 11), August 7, 1992, (p. 8), August 11, 1992, (p. 8), August 12, 1992, (p. 14), August 15, 1992, (p. 8), August 18, 1992, (p. 8), August 20, 1992a, (p. 8), August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), August 21, 1992, (p. 9), August 22, 1992, (p. 9), August 24, 1992, (p. 8), August 25, 1992, (p. 7), August 31, 1992a, (p. 5), September 4, 1992, (p. 6), September 5, 1992, (p. 8), September 7, 1992, (p. 7), September 8, 1992, (p. 7), September 9, 1992, (p. 11), September 14, 1992, (p. 9), September 16, 1992, (p. 13), September 23, 1992, (p. 11), October 19, 1992, (p. 10), December 1, 1992a, (p. 13), December 2, 1992c, (p. 12), December 2, 1992e, (p. 12), December 9, 1992c, (p. 13), December 12, 1992a, (p. 11), January 2, 1993, (p. 1, 10), January 5, 1993, (p. 9), January 9, 1993, (p. 10), March 5, 1993, (p. 11), March 15, 1993, (p. 11) and April 26, 1993a, (p. 13).

On August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), for example, *The Times* asserted: "[Somalia] has no water, electricity, law and government. Even tribal loyalties have broken down", a claim repeated on December 2, 1992e, (p. 12). On September 8, 1992, (p. 7), Somalia's economy was reduced to "food aid and aid workers", and by December 2, 1992c, (p. 12), "most of the religious and social structures [in Somalia], including familial relationships", had collapsed. This had worsened, in the eyes of *The Times*, by January 2, 1993, (p. 1, 10), when Somalia had reached "total social and economic collapse".

More serious were the allegations, carried within much of *The Times'* reporting, that the only way peace could be restored to Somalia was through Western solutions or ideas. On April 26, 1993a, (p. 13), for example, Sam Kiley wrote:

> *UN officials take over responsibility for the foreign troops in Somalia next month. Mark Walsh, head of the UN negotiators in Kismayu, said if they failed to keep the peace [in Kismayu], "the whole house of cards would come down across the country".*

The quote was not challenged by Kiley. With few references in *The Times'* reports to the fact that Somalis in most of the country could quite satisfactorily "work together", thereby preventing "the whole house of cards" coming down "across the country", such

journalism implied that the Somalis would have to be convinced by the West of the benefits of peace, or that there was no possibility that Somalis could achieve peace.

The New York Times

Of the 250 articles in the *New York Times,* only one article (0.4 %) at least partly discussed the question of famine location. This was on September 23, 1992, when Jane Perlez, in a totally descriptive article, wrote that "much of central and southern Somalia remains mired in famine". No articles, however, could be considered to have at least partly recognised that in Somaliland and other parts of Somalia there was relative peace and, importantly, no famine, as a result of local political, social and economic initiatives and developments.

Like *The Times*, however, the *New York Times* appeared far more concerned with stating, or at least implying, that the famine, chaos and anarchy engulfed the entire country. This was done in 31 articles (12.4 %): July 12, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 12), July 19, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 8), July 20, 1992, (p. A3), July 23, 1992, (p. A22), July 25, 1992, (p. A1, A4), August 2, 1992, (Sec. 4, p. 6), August 7, 1992, (p. A2), August 12, 1992, (p. A19), October 4, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 1, 16), November 2, 1992, (p. A1, A8), November 19, 1992, (p. A27), November 27, 1992, (p. A14), November 28, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), November 29, 1992, (Sec. 1, p. 16), December 1, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), December 1, 1992c, (p. A24), December 3, 1992, (p. A1, A14), December 5, 1992a, (p. A1, A4), December 6, 1992f, (Sec. 4, p. 1, 3), December 6, 1992h, (New York Times Magazine p. 36), December 9, 1992f, (p. A17), December 10, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), January 1, 1993, (p. A8), January 3, 1993, (Sec. 1, p. 3), February 1, 1993b, (p. A7), February 2, 1993, (p. A1, A9), February 14, 1993a, (Sec. 1, p. 22), February 21, 1993a, (Sec. 1, p. 3, February 26, 1993, (p. A1, A9), March 3, 1993, (p. A6) and March 29, 1993, (p. A5).

One report by Donnatella Lorch, on the peace conference in Addis Ababa, (March 29, 1993, p. A5), stated that it provided hope for "the first form of government [Somalia] has known for more than two years". Similar claims were made by Alison Mitchell on January 3, 1993, (Sec. 1, p. 3), when she reported on the latest UN efforts to "restore civil authority to a country that has been without a government for two years". An editorial, (February 1, 1993b, p. A7), even implied that clan warfare was more prevalent in the north when it claimed: "[Somalia is not] a functioning country. Clan warfare still rages, especially in northern regions". A report on August 12, 1992, (p. A19), also played down the achievements in the rest of the country:

> *[Africa's] troubles seem like Old Testament plagues, irresolvable and inevitable ... There are no easy solutions for a nation of nomads who have been prevented from planting crops by the ravages of civil war, a country that has almost no government aside from village elders in dying towns.*

Aside from disregarding the progress in the north, such articles suggested the famine and chaos was somehow "inevitable" in Somalia and other parts of Africa, ignoring the outside influences of colonialism, neo-colonialism and superpower rivalry in creating that famine and chaos. Moreover, the journalist's ignorance was revealed when she stated that it was *nomads* who had been prevented from planting crops! Then, on December 5, 1992a, (p. A1, A4), the chief of the US armed forces, General Colin Powell, was quoted as saying the US "will keep an eye on the north" and decide later "whether a similar military effort [to ORH] is needed to assure the safe passage of food and medical aid there". That the north would supposedly benefit from such military "aid" was taken for granted by the *New York Times*, with the "fact" that there was no famine and no fighting in the north not even investigated or considered. What was important was that the north had to have an "eye" kept on it by the concerned US Army, because obviously the Somalis there were incapable of organising any "aid" for themselves and, of course, they would be crying out for it at the first sign of trouble.

Indeed, some of these articles went out of their way to emphasise how the entire country was engulfed by chaos and used this "fact" to construct stories that supported some sort of outside intervention to "solve" the "crisis". On December 9, 1992f, (p. A17), for example, Paul Lewis quoted a UN Security Council spokesperson as claiming "the magnitude" of the Somalian conflict constituted "a threat to international peace and security", and that this justified outside intervention. That a famine, (the worst of which at that stage was well and truly over), in one corner of an impoverished country in the Horn of Africa could represent such a "threat" was a preposterous suggestion, but one allowed to pass without comment by Lewis. The *New York Times* also suggested that an "entire people [was] in peril" (December 1, 1992c, (p. A24), as a result of "the evaporation of all Somali governing authority", (December 3, 1992, p. A1, A14).

Furthermore, approximately one-third of the 250 stories which appeared on Somalia in the *New York Times* carried a map of Somalia. Of these, however, only one, (October 4, 1992, Sec.1, p.16), differentiated between Somaliland and Somalia, and only three, (December 9, 1992, p. A17; December 12, 1992, p. A6; December 20, 1992, p. 16), illustrated the fact that the famine was confined to the south-western corner of Somalia. None of the other published maps of Somalia specifically acknowledged the existence of Somaliland or that the famine was confined to the south-western corner of Somalia.

APPENDIX D

DETAILS OF COVERAGE BY THE THREE NEWSPAPERS OF THE WORLD'S RESPONSE TO THE 1992-3 SOMALIAN FAMINE - THEMES ONE, TWO, FOUR, FIVE AND SEVEN

Coverage of Theme One - that only certain Western NGOs, such as the ICRC, succeeded in providing relief in Somalia because they consulted and worked with Somalis and Somali NGOs.

The Guardian

Of the 120 articles in the *Guardian,* only two (1.6 %) at least partly discussed this theme. On September 17, 1992, (p. 21), in the *Guardian Women* section, an interview by Tessa Williams with an American relief nurse who had worked in Somalia mentioned the role of Somali workers in running the Western-financed feeding programmes, describing their efforts as "vital". This article, while highlighting and paying tribute to the Somali health workers, did not link this "vital" role with the relative success of NGOs such as the ICRC in their feeding programmes. This link was, however, established in the fine article by Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal on December 5c, 1992, (p. 10), which also connected this link to the very low rates of food looting experienced by the ICRC and SCF.

In contrast, 13 articles (10.8 %, or six times the above amount) praised the efforts of Western NGOs, in particular the ICRC, for their relief efforts in face of extreme danger in Somalia, without discussing the vital role Somali people and organisations played in assisting these NGOs. These were August 3, 1992, (p. 22), August 5, 1992, (p. 20), August 6, 1992, (p. 1), August 8, 1992a, (p. 10), August 10, 1992, (p. 22), August 22, 1992, (p. 10), September 2, 1992, (p. 16), September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian,* p. 3-5), September 18, 1992, (p. 11), October 16, 1992, (p. 10), October 29, 1992, (p. 22), November 25, 1992a, (p. 10), January 9, 1993c, (*Guardian Weekend,* p. 14-16).

On August 8, 1992a, (p. 10), for example, an article on the SCF's efforts in Somalia stated: "British aid workers and others were risking their lives to deliver the thousands of tonnes of food which had arrived", without elaborating on who the "others" were. Typical also of this type of reporting was the article of September 15, 1992b, (*Education Guardian,* p. 3-5), which stated:

> *The British charity Save the Children Fund (SCF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have braved a fast-deteriorating security situation to aid Somalia and publicise the emergency.*

While all the above "facts" are "true", they have not been placed in context, as the efforts of Somalis in solving their problems have been completely minimised. Instead, the emphasis, (as on October 16, 1992, p. 10), was on the "fact" that Somalis were "totally reliant" on Western aid organisations.

The Times

Only three articles (2%) in *The Times* discussed the premise of Theme One. An interview with a British SCF worker, (September 2, 1992, p. 1), revealed that much of the "hands-on" SCF aid work in Somalia was "done by the Somali supervisors and local staff", who were "wonderful" and "very honest". On August 25a, 1992, (p. 7), an article about US plans to increase aid to Somalia highlighted criticisms by the ICRC of the haste of this decision, especially considering the fact that the ICRC's relief operations "had taken months of careful negotiation with the warring factions in Somalia". Then, on August 31,

1992b, (p. 5), a story about a SCF feeding centre praised the efforts of a "Somali volunteer" in overcoming local corruption, and emphasised how vital the re-establishment of traditional authorities in Somalia was as a way of overcoming the problems in the country. This article, however, was predominantly concerned with the efforts of the SCF and ICRC, and their western workers, in providing relief. In doing so, this story also implicitly illustrated the importance of consultation with Somalis in the setting-up and co-ordination of the foreign aid programmes.

There were at least 10 articles, however, which heaped praise on NGOs such as the ICRC, and/or their Western workers, without putting this praise into its proper context by outlining the contribution of Somalis to the operations of these NGO. These were August 6, 1992b, (p. 11), August 12, 1992, (p. 14), August 13, 1992a, (p. 9), August 13, 1992b, (p. 9), August 15, 1992, (p. 8), August 20, 1992b, (p. 11), November 24, 1992a, (p. 1), November 24, 1992b, (p. 1), December 16, 1992b, (p. 16) and January 4, 1993c, (p. 7).

On August 29, 1992, (p. 8), for example, an article quoted a US military man, involved in flying aid to Somalia, describing the SCF as "the real heroes of [the Somali] tragedy", and thereby conveying and highlighting the impression of Western heroism.

Rather than discuss the contribution of Somalis to their own aid effort, *The Times,* in four other articles, gave space to the efforts of Western politicians and "celebrities" publicising the famine. These included articles featuring actor Audrey Hepburn on September 30, 1992, (p. 16), model Iman on October 19, 1992, (p. 10), British Minister for Development Baroness Chalker on November 24, 1992a, (p. 1), and actor Sophia Loren on November 24, 1992b, (p. 1). It should be noted, however, that Iman had been born in Mogadishu, and had fled Somalia with her family when she was 17.

Although all efforts to increase Western awareness of the famine should not in themselves be criticised, the amount of space given to the above-mentioned Westerners conveyed the impression the Somalis were incapable of dealing with the situation, and that only through Western assistance could the disaster be solved. Indeed, these patronising articles were often accompanied by pictures of the "celebrity" either nursing or giving food to a starving child, with the caption in the case of Sophia Loren, (on November 24, 1992b, p. 1), beginning with the words "helping hand".

The New York Times

Only four articles (1.6 %) in the *New York Times* discussed the premise of Theme One. On December 20, 1992b, (Sec.1, p.16), an excellent report by Donnatella Lorch emphasised the high regard Somalis had for the ICRC because of its co-operative attitude, and linked this to the low level of food aid looting experienced by this NGO. Earlier, on August 28, 1992, (p. A3), Jane Perlez discussed how the ICRC had undertaken "carefully negotiated agreements with various clan organisations" to ensure the aid got through. The article of December 2, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), however, aptly demonstrated how the placement of a "fact" could affect the reading of a text. This article was predominantly concerned with the failure of the UN to distribute food aid in Mogadishu without encountering high levels of looting. Only two paragraphs, placed near the end of the long 31-paragraph story, contrasted these efforts with the consulting-with-Somalis attitude to food aid utilised by the ICRC. As a result, the positive image of the cooperative ethics of the ICRC and their Somali co-workers was diminished. Similarly, the report of July 19, 1992, (Sec.1, p.8), mentioned, almost in passing, at the very end of a long 54-paragraph story, the "fact" that a ICRC shipment was unloaded in a procedure that went "fairly smoothly with the help of about 900 armed men from various political factions who are paid in food to protect the consignments from ... armed and hungry men". By burying these details at the very end of a story which emphasised the role the ICRC was playing in alleviating the famine, the contribution of the local Somalis to the relief effort was completely minimised.

A further two articles noted the involvement of Somalis in the overall relief effort but did not link this to the relative success and failure of certain parts of the overall aid effort. These articles were December 13, 1992, (Sec.1, p. 20) and December 22, 1992a, (p. A1, A14).

In contrast, 19 articles highlighted and/or praised the role of the ICRC and similar NGOs without mentioning the Somali involvement in their operations. These were July 12, 1992, (Sec.1, p.12), July 25, 1992, (p. A1, A4), August 2, 1992a, (Sec.4, p.16), August 13, 1992, (p. A1, A9), August 16, 1992, (Sec.1, p.12), August 17, 1992, (p. A5), August 19, 1992, (p. A3), August 22, 1992, (p. A1, A4), August 29, 1992, (p. A4), September 6, 1992, (Sec.1, p.1, 20), September 7, 1992, (p. A1, A5), September 23, 1992, (p. A3), December 7, 1992a, (p. A1, A12), December 8, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 9, 1992c, (p. A16), December 21, 1992d, (p. A12), December 31, 1992a, (p. A1, A8), January 1, 1993, (p. A1, A8) and February 7, 1993, (Sec.1, p.3).

On August 2, 1992a, (Sec.4, p.16), for example, it was "[Western] voluntary agencies" which were "marshalling support for Africa". Once again, this statement might have been a "fact", but the *New York Times* selected this "fact" while ignoring the "fact" that Somalis, too, were also "marshalling support for Africa". Much was also made of the "fact" that the ICRC was "for 18 months the only major relief agency working in Somalia", (September 7, 1992, p. A1, A5), while, once again, the factors behind this "fact" were ignored. By late December, (December 31, 1992a, p. A1, A8), with the famine waning, it was "the tenacity of a handful of relief organisations, particularly the ICRC, [which] eventually eased the tragedy at the epicentre of the Somali famine", and not the "tenacity" of their largely Somali workforce.

One article actually criticised the methods of the ICRC in hiring private gunmen to guard food aid. Jane Perlez, on November 27, 1992b, (p. A14), described this situation as "bizarre", yet in the case of those NGOs that worked carefully with the Somalis, this method proved most effective in ensuring the vast majority of the relief aid got through. A more apt adjective, perhaps, would have been "flexible", "effective" or "adaptive", rather than "bizarre", which gave the impression the method chosen by the ICRC was rash, stupid and, ultimately, unworkable and doomed to failure.

Coverage of Theme Two - Western NGOs and agencies that failed in providing relief because they did not work with Somali people

The Guardian

Only one article (0.8 %) in the *Guardian* discussed the premise that certain Western organisations, such as CARE and the UN, failed in their mission to provide adequate relief, not because of the interference of the gangs of the Somali "warlords" or other hindrances, but because they did not adhere to the working guidelines established by NGOs such as the ICRC. Once again, it was contained in the excellent article by Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal on December 5, 1992c, (p. 10), which underlined the important contribution indigenous writers of origin, or Western experts on a country, can make to Western media reports of the developed world.

Another Somali, Said Samatar, also made note, (on December 3, 1992c, p. 21), of the "egregious misconception" that "Somalia is a country crawling with warlords". Samatar continued: "In the entire country, there is only one - General Aidid - worthy of the name ... [and] only so long as he can lead looters to the next village for booty can he count on [his followers'] support. The moment he is deprived of the power to raid, his opportunistic followers are likely to desert him". Thus, Samatar made implicit reference to the "fact" that the key to providing relief without that relief being looted was to deny opportunities for the "warlord's gangs" to loot. Samatar did not mention that this was best achieved through the cooperative work practices of agencies such as the ICRC.

The *Guardian* was, unfortunately, far more preoccupied with detailing how the "warlord's gangs" were engaging in rampant looting of relief supplies, without putting such "facts" in context by stating *why* some NGOs experienced high rates of looting while others experienced minimal rates. In total, 11 articles (9.2 %) detailed instances of looting. These were July 30, 1992a, (p. 22), August 3, 1992, (p. 22), August 5, 1992, (p. 20), August 8, 1992b, (p. 10), August 17, 1992, (p. 8), August 29, 1992, (p. 8), September 9, 1992, (p. 11), December 12, 1992a, (p. 1), November 14, 1992, (p. 14), December 12, 1992a, (p. 1) and April 29, 1993, (p. 22).

On November 14, 1992, (p. 14), for example, Michael Simmons reported on the ambush of 34 trucks belonging to CARE, without detailing in any way the poor record CARE had in working and co-operating with Somalis. Similarly, on September 9, 1992, (p. 11), Mark Huband described in detail the efforts of CARE in delivering and distributing aid in Bardera. Not only did this article give the impression that the Somalis of Bardera were totally helpless and dependent on foreigners, but it also generated very negative images of Somalia by emphasising the theft of food relief by people in Bardera. The other reports typically contained generalisations such as: "Food supplies have been hijacked and stolen by the teenagers who dominate the [warlord's] armies" (July 30, 1992a, p. 22), which, while a "fact", has, again, not been put in its proper context. The continued reference to the looting painted Somalis in an extremely negative light, while Western incompetence in creating the conditions for this looting was virtually ignored. The *Guardian* also carried a report, (September 15, 1992a, p. 9), in which the president of CARE, Philip Johnston, called for UN troops to "move in and run Somalia". The *Guardian* did not challenge this assertion, despite the fact Mr Johnston was based in Washington. In addition, no coverage or space was given to any Somali opinion or reaction to this call.

The Times

Of the 148 articles in *The Times,* not one article discussed the premise of Theme Two. Instead, *The Times* published 16 stories which concentrated on the looting of relief supplies carried by Western organisations. These were June 27, 1992, (p. 10), July 6, 1992, (p. 11), July 29, 1992, (p. 11), August 4, 1992, (p. 8), August 6, 1992a, (p. 8), August 12, 1992, (p. 14), August 17, 1992, (p. 8), September 8, 1992, (p. 7), September 9, 1992, (p. 8), September 16, 1992, (p. 13), September 21, 1992, (p. 13), December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), December 2, 1992a, (p. 12), December 5, 1992b, (p. 9), December 21, 1992, (p. 8) and May 5, 1993, (p. 14).

Again, this resulted in a very negative portrayal of Somalis and Somalia. By not balancing these articles with reports on how and why certain Western organisations experienced only low levels of looting, or with reports of everyday Somalis going about their daily business, a negative image was created of a nation consisting of little more than "marauding gangs" (August 6, 1992a, p. 8). Thus, on December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), an editorial thundered:

> *Attempts by the UN and private aid agencies to co-operate with the "authorities" have meant, in practice, begging warlords for permission to save their countrymen from starving.*

Just which "private aid agencies" they were was not revealed. Similarly, Sam Kiley wrote on August 12, 1992, (p. 14):

> *Food aid has been hijacked regularly by warring factions and either distributed to their own men or sold on the open market.*

No differentiation on which NGOs and agencies had had their food stolen, and which NGOs and agencies had not had their food stolen, was offered by Kiley. By December 5, 1992b, (p. 9), Kiley was, I assume, totally convinced of the "fact" that no NGO in

Somalia could distribute food without widespread looting, unquestioningly relaying a statement by George Bush that "armed gangs had made conventional relief work impossible" in Somalia. Obviously, the ICRC, SCF and MSF, along with their Somali counterparts, had not been conducting "conventional relief work".

The New York Times

Not one article in the *New York Times* discussed the premise of Theme Two. In contrast, 43 articles emphasised the looting of relief supplies, particularly those delivered by the US agency CARE, without putting this looting in any sort of context. These were September 4, 1992, (p. A1, A6), September 6, 1992, (Sec.1, p.1, 20), October 4, 1992, (Sec.1, p.1,16), October 23, 1992, (p. A1, A8), October 28, 1992, (p. A6), October 29, 1992, (p. A16), November 9, 1992, (p. A3), November 20, 1992, (p. A31), November 22, 1992, (Sec.1, p.18), November 26, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), November 26, 1992b, (p. A10), November 26, 1992c, (p. A10), November 27, 1992b, (p. A14), November 27, 1992c, (p. A14), November 28, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), November 29, 1992, (Sec.1, p.16), December 1, 1992c, (p. A24), December 2, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 4, 1992a, (p. A1, A14), December 4, 1992d, (p. A30), December 5, 1992a, (p. A1, A4), December 5, 1992c, (p. A1, A4), December 5, 1992f, (p. A18), December 6, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.1, 14), December 6, 1992b, (Sec.1, p.14), December 6, 1992h, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 36), December 7, 1992a, (p. A1, A12), December 7, 1992b, (p. A12), December 8, 1992b, (p. A1, A18), December 9, 1992a, (p. A1, A16), December 10, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 10, 1992e, (p. A26), December 12, 1992b, (p. A6), December 18, 1992b, (p. A10), December 20, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.16), December 21, 1992c, (p. A12), December 25, 1992a, (p. A10), December 27, 1992b, (Sec.1, p.10), December 27, 1992c, (Sec.1, p.10), January 1, 1993, (p. A1, A8), February 9, 1993, (p. 10), April 30, 1993, (p. A10) and May 2, 1993, (Sec.1, p.1, 4).

On September 4, 1992, (p. A1, A6), the theft of UN-delivered food from the Mogadishu port was described, but there was no discussion on the ICRC practice of skirting this problem by bringing in their food via a number of different ports along the Somali coastline. On November 9, 1992, (p. A3), Jane Perlez detailed the looting of aid being delivered by a UN agency and CARE. No elaboration on the poor performance of these agencies, and their failure to work with Somalis, was noted. Anthony Lewis went further on November 20, 1992, (p. A31), describing how "thugs" had "stop[ped] the relief effort in Somalia", a strange comment considering the ICRC and SCF were still quietly and efficiently distributing grain in Somalia. Similarly, the report on December 27, 1992c, (Sec.1, p.10), stated:

> *The [ORH] troops were dispatched after widespread looting made it impossible for international relief agencies to provide food.*

Once again, the "fact" that certain international relief agencies such as the ICRC found it quite possible to provide food was not an issue for the *New York Times*. Donnatella Lorch also reported in detail the looting by "rival gunmen" of aid delivered by CARE on December 6, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.1, 14), without highlighting the "fact" that it was CARE's work practices that created the conditions for this looting.

Coverage of Theme Four - the decision to initiate Operation Restore Hope when the worst of the famine was over

The Guardian

There were five articles in the *Guardian* which at least partly discussed the premise of Theme Four. These were November 27, 1992b, (p. 12), November 28, 1992b, (p. 23), December 5, 1992c, (p. 10), December 7, 1992, (p. 10), December 9, 1992a, (p. 1) .

Few of these stories actively criticised the decision to implement ORH, despite the "fact" that it was not needed. Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal, (December 5, 1992c, p. 10), pointed out that most of the food aid in Somalia was not being looted, contrary to US and UN reports, a "fact" also highlighted by SCF and relayed by Michael Simmons on November 27, 1992b, (p. 12), and Mark Huband on December 9, 1992a, (p. 1).

Interestingly, there were three other articles that attacked the weak arguments behind the launch of ORH, but they appeared in the *Guardian* well after ORH had begun - in other words, too late to make a difference. These were January 9, 1993c, (Guardian Weekend, p. 1-3), February 3, 1993, (p. 19) and April 29, 1993, (p. 22). The report of April 29, 1993, (p. 22), pointed out that more food aid was not needed in December 1992, but then added: "Looting [rates] ... ranged anywhere from 40 per cent to 100 per cent". The report did not source this claim, nor did it illustrate why such a large range would, or could, occur.

In contrast, 15 articles were constructed to favour a reading that emphasised that the decision to begin ORH was correct. This was done, for example, by highlighting the "massive starvation" that awaited Somalis if nothing was done. These were August 6, 1992, (p. 1), November 27, 1992a, (p.1), November 27, 1992c, (p. 20), November 28a, 1992, (p. 12), December 1, 1992, (p. 12), December 2, 1992, (p. 8), December 3, 1992a, (p. 13), December 3, 1992b, (p. 20), December 4, 1992, (p. 1, 22), December 5, 1992a, (p. 1), December 8, 1992, p. 12), December 9, 1992c, (p. 20), December 16, 1992b, p. 19), December 18, 1992c, (p. 16) and February 26, 1993, (p. 12).

A number of these articles emphasised the "fact" that 80 per cent of food relief was being looted, even though this claim was based on a report written by Ismat Kittani after only two weeks in Somalia and was hotly disputed by not only the NGOs but also the UN agencies in Somalia. The report of December 3a, 1992, (p. 13), for example, had, in its second to last paragraph, a quote from the Lutheran World Federation NGO warning of the dangers posed by ORH to the relief operations in Somalia, after what was another generally upbeat article about ORH that included the "fact" that "as much as 80 per cent of relief supplies are being stolen by the warlords". By early August, (August 6, 1992, (p. 1), the *Guardian* was highlighting "the largest scale theft of foreign emergency aid experienced by donors anywhere in the world in recent years". This might or might not have been a "fact", but it did not necessarily mean that 80 per cent of the food aid was being looted. The *Guardian* also published very high death rate statistics for November/December, despite the "fact" that death rates had fallen significantly since September.

In addition, the newspaper had some trouble in deciding how many Somalis were actually dying. Thus, the reports of November 27, 1992a, (p.1) and November 28a, 1992, (p. 12), claimed "up to a million" Somalis faced starvation, while an editorial on November 27, 1992c, (p. 20), claimed "250,000 Somalis will die" without more food aid. Yet the report of February 26, 1993, (p. 12), noted that the purpose of launching ORH in December 1992 was to halt "the looting of food aid for an estimated two million staving people". The ICRC's opinion of how many people faced starvation in December, 1992, was not elicited by the *Guardian*.

This article of November 27, 1992c, (p. 20), also announced that "the situation in Somalia is deteriorating rapidly", thereby implying there was no alternative but to hail ORH, which it boldly announced was "a dramatic reversal in American policy". The *Guardian* then went on the TINA (There Is No Alternative) offensive, with a number of articles giving unqualified support for the UN, the US military and ORH. On December 1, 1992, (p. 12), for example, Martin Walker and Mark Tran did not challenge claims by UN chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali that "there was no alternative" to ORH "in the context of deteriorating security" in Somalia. What debate there was, (as on December 8, 1992, p. 12), was primarily limited to the methods and logistics of the intervention, rather than the intervention itself. In addition, an article on December 5, 1992a, (p. 1), implied that ORH

would "stave off mass starvation", despite the "fact" that this had already been achieved by agencies such as the ICRC, with Somali help.

Not surprisingly, then, noted American "hawk" Henry Kissinger could write, (December 16, 1992b, p. 19), of the "wave of approval" for ORH; certainly, if the supposedly liberal *Guardian* was not objecting, then who would? After all, the opinion of the Somalis themselves apparently didn't count as worth including in any of the newspaper's reports.

The Times

Only one article (0.7 %) in *The Times* discussed the premise of Theme Four. On November 27, 1992, (p. 13), an article by James Bone and David Watts outlined the fears held by the SCF over the proposed ORH, with SCF quoted as saying ORH would make it "impossible" for relief operations to continue.

In contrast, 15 articles were constructed to favour a reading that suggested there was no alternative to ORH for "saving" Somalia. These were September 23, 1992, (p. 11), October 30, 1992, (p. 16), December 1, 1992a, (p. 13), December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), December 2, 1992a, (p. 12), December 2, 1992c, (p. 12), December 3, 1992, (p. 11), December 4, 1992, (p. 17), December 5, 1992b, (p. 9), December 9, 1992b, (p. 13), December 9, 1992c, (p. 13), December 10, 1992, (p. 15), December 12, 1992b, (p. 11), December 21, 1992, (p. 8) and May 5, 1993, (p. 14). Thus, even as late as May 5, 1993, (p. 14), *The Times* was claiming ORH was set up "to put an end to the looting of food aid ... which [was one of] the main cause[s] of famine".

The Times had also made unsubstantiated claims about the amount of food allegedly being looted, ranging from 50 per cent (September 23, 1992, p. 11; December 9, 1992c, p. 13), to 80 per cent, (December 1, 1992b, p. 17; December 21, 1992, p. 8), and equally wide-ranging and unsubstantiated claims about the death rates, ranging from 500 people a day, (December 12, 1992b, p. 11) to 1,000 a day, (October 30, 1992, p. 16). Consequently, it was no surprise when *The Times* claimed, as on December 10, 1992, (p. 15), that:

> *Mass starvation caused by the regular theft of entire convoys of food prompted America's "invasion by consent".*

That "consent" was not elicited from the Somalis themselves was not considered important. Furthermore, such stories conveyed the impression that looting caused starvation. Yet, there was no consideration given to the "fact" that there had been looting in Somalia because there had not been enough food, and because Somalis were not consulted about certain NGOs' relief efforts. Interesting, too, was the article by Sam Kiley and James Bone on December 3, 1992, (p. 11), which reported that death rates were falling in Baidoa, and noted how Mogadishu was "flooded with food" and that rice was selling at 5p a pound. Yet, instead of arguing against ORH, this article continued to push the "fact" of heavy looting, claiming food was so cheap in Mogadishu because almost all the food aid was being looted by the city's merchants, and, therefore, it advanced the rationale of ORH without questioning these "facts".

In addition, many of these articles simply outlined reservations about the methods of the operation, rather than ORH itself. A report on December 4, 1992, (p. 17), for example, aired a UN official's concerns that ORH troops land all over the country at the same time, rather than just in coastal cities. Often, though, articles would praise ORH in the face of what would be a "logistical nightmare" (December 9, 1992b, p. 13).

The New York Times

There were three articles (1.2 %) in the *New York Times* which at least partly discussed the premise of Theme Four. The report of November 28, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), clearly

discussed the "fact" that death rates had plummeted in Somalia, implying that ORH was unnecessary, while airing ICRC concern that the US/UN estimate that 80 per cent of food aid was being looted was "overstated". Then, on January 24, 1993b, *(New York Times Magazine*, p. 54), in virtually the only example of excellent and serious analysis that appeared in the *New York Times* in the year covered by this thesis, Jane Perlez stated that:

> *The Marines ... got to Mogadishu when the worst of the famine was over ... despite a lot of looting, the aid agencies and an American airlift from Kenya had pushed enough food into badly off areas in the months before so that by December the starvation had eased.*

Of course, this article was not published when ORH was first proposed and then initiated. Indeed, most of Perlez' earlier articles carried a string of dubious "facts", or "facts" out of context, which completely contradicted her assessment of January 24.

There was also a story on February 9, 1993, (p. A10), which, in the second-last paragraph of a 32-paragraph story, detailed how the provision of too much free food aid would prove devastating to Somalia's farmers. The placement of this "fact", in a story published more than two months after ORH began, meant that its impact was completely minimal. Similarly, an article on December 29, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), noted briefly that: "It has become clear that because so many of the hungry died before the foreign forces arrived, emergency food is perhaps a less critical issue than was originally outlined". Yet this "fact" was common knowledge in late November to many of the relief agencies operating in Somalia. The *New York Times,* however, gave no coverage to such vital pieces of information when it really mattered - that is, in late November/early December - when ORH was proposed and begun. Similarly, criticisms by relief agencies of ORH received some coverage in the *New York Times* in January, (such as on January 12, 1993, p. A3, and January 13, 1993a, p. A1, A8). The latter article noted how the massive food aid brought in by the ORH troops had so depressed the price of food in Somalia it was uneconomical for local farmers to continue growing food, and added:

> *This is the paradox of famine and famine relief. The international charity that stopped starvation eventually can become a problem in itself, threatening to destroy what little remains of the local farm economy.*

Such "facts" are, therefore, presented as a "paradox", as if it were an unfortunate and unforeseen side-effect of ORH, when, in "fact", a number of relief agencies had warned in late November that more food aid was not needed and that ORH would create problems like these. These fears were given minimal-to-zero coverage by the *New York Times* during this period. Thus, there were no articulate reports criticising ORH at the time, reports which could have assisted in rallying public opinion against the proposed intervention. Similarly, the excellent report by Jane Perlez on January 24, 1993b, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 54), referred to above, was a month too late to make a significant impact.

There was also a "guest" article by Raymond Bonner, (December 2, 1992d, p. 23), which offered some mild criticism of ORH, generally claiming that it was a "noble", but misguided, policy. There was no actual discussion of any of the considerations of Theme Four.

In contrast, 27 articles (10.8 %) appeared that suggested that ORH was necessary to alleviate the disaster in Somalia. These were August 26, 1992a, (p. A4), October 28, 1992, (p. A6), November 26, 1992b, (p. 10), November 27, 1992a, (p. A1, A15), November 27, 1992b, (p. A14), November 28, 1992b, (p. A6), November 29, 1992, (Sec.1, p.16), November 30, 1992, (p. 9), December 1, 1992b, (p. A10), December 1, 1992c, (p. A24), December 2, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 2, 1992b, (p. A18), December 3, 1992, (p. A1, A14), December 4, 1992, (p. A1, A14), December 4, 1992d,

(p. A30), December 5, 1992a, (p. A1, A4), December 5, 1992d, (p. A5), December 6, 1992b, Sec.1, p.14), December 6, 1992e, (Sec.1, p.15), December 8, 1992d, (p. A18), December 8, 1992e, (p. A24), December 9, 1992a, (p. A1, A16), December 11, 1992c, (p. A22), December 12, 1992b, (p. A6), December 14, 1992b, (p. A8), December 18, 1992b, (p. A10), December 25, 1992a, (p. A10). The report of November 26, 1992b, (p. 10), noted that "70 to 80 per cent" of food aid was being looted. Interestingly, another report, (on October 31, 1992, p. A2), noted that only 40 per cent of food was looted, and sourced this claim to "aid workers". These same aid workers were not asked their opinion about looting rates when the UN and US began quoting this 80 per cent looting figure in late November/early December 1992.

The report by Michael Wines, (December 6, 1992b, Sec.1, p.14), was typical of the deference the *New York Times* gave to "official" rationales for the intervention, which ignored most of the "facts" of Theme Four:

> *In fact, it was not until after the [US Presidential] election that [US Government] Administration and UN experts began to regard the situation [in Somalia] as so dire that only military force could change it.*

That the relief agencies would all but agree with such "facts" was not discussed. Indeed, this same article backed up the official line with the "fact" that "only 20 per cent of aid shipments were reaching starving citizens". The claim that 80 per cent, or "almost all the food [in Somalia]" (August 26, 1992a, p. A4), had been looted, was repeated in the *New York Times* from August *ad nauseam*, and, therefore, became virtually an undisputed "truth". Thus, a US official could be quoted as saying, (November 27, 1992b, p. A14): "You can't tolerate 80 per cent of the food being stolen. It's an outrage", without any discussion by the *New York Times* that such a claim was nothing short of an outrage itself. In the same way, a statement by George Bush, relayed without comment by the *New York Times* on November 27, 1992a, (p. A1, A15), claimed that looting left the US "with no recourse but to respond more aggressively to prevent more deaths". This meant the troops of ORH, but neither the aid agencies nor the Somalis were asked by the *New York Times* whether there was any other recourse apart from this proposal.

A number of these 27 articles also detailed the lower death rates in Somalia but did not develop this "fact" by suggesting that a major rationale for ORH had been proved to be "false". The report by Donnatella Lorch on December 18, 1992b, (p. A10), for example, noted:

> *The Baidoa the marines saw today was markedly different from that of a few months ago. In September, more than 300 people died of starvation and disease here every day; now the daily toll is down to about 60.*

This report did not, however, link this "fact" to any suggestion that ORH was not needed, and that the relief agencies were doing a very good job and did not require 30,000 troops to "help" them.

Hegemonic debate among US elites was also reflected in the *New York Times*, giving the impression of a diversity of opinion but, in reality, mirroring debate about the aims and methods of ORH rather than the intervention itself. The article of November 28, 1992b, (p. A6), for example, detailed the US Government view that ORH had been the "most ambitious" of three "options" considered as the best way to solve the crisis in Somalia, yet the other two "options" were also forms of foreign intervention. There was no actual criticism of the ORH "option". The high point of *New York Times* criticism of ORH was the debate within the editorial of December 4, 1992d, (p. A30), which was limited to the speed with which ORH would proceed, and warnings to the US and UN not to "muddy" the mission, whatever that meant.

Coverage of Theme Six - the complete inappropriateness of ORH

The Guardian

Only four articles (3.3 %) in the *Guardian* discussed the premise of Theme Six. Once again, it was Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal, (December 5, 1992c, p. 10), who most concisely and clearly illustrated this theme, warning that US forces may "create a larger problem than they can solve" and arguing for the reinstatement of Mohammed Sahnoun "rather than imposing 30,000 US soldiers". They added that the military make-up of ORH meant that the US military would "likely ... negotiate with the warlords", an act which would legitimise "the very men whose policies have prompted the intervention by US soldiers. When US forces withdraw, there will be a vacuum similar to that when Siad Barre was driven out in 1991. It will be worse than square one". These predictions were, unfortunately, all realised. Such accurate predictions once again demonstrated that experts on Somalia should have been utilised more within Western media reports of the Somalian crisis, rather than rely totally on, as Omaar and de Waal also stated in this article, "reports from tourists who flit in and out of the country". This also demonstrated the worth of permanently locating foreign correspondents in the world's trouble spots, (as Somalia was from 1990 onwards), rather than editors assigning them on brief visits. The former situation would, of course, go against the grain of the profit motive so imperative for newspapers such as *The Times* and the *New York Times* operating in capitalist countries such as the UK and US.

Another excellent summary on the inappropriateness of ORH was provided by Andrew Buckoke on December 24, 1992b, (p. 19), who observed that "marines are not trained to be diplomatic" and noted that, after less than a month of ORH, the marines had already shown signs of "insensitivity". Then, on January 9, 1993c, (*Guardian Weekend*, 14-15, 19), Mark Huband attacked the overtly aggressive nature of the military element of ORH. More belated criticism of ORH came on March 1, 1993, (p. 8), when a report by Mark Huband detailed relief agency accusations that the US military were "deliberately concealing the failures of [ORH in Somalia] and exaggerating its successes".

In addition, the editorial of January 12, 1993a, (p. 20), observed that ORH had cleared some breathing space for operations, but that the violence in Somalia had "to some extent been displaced elsewhere". This "fact" was not developed in what was a generally praiseworthy editorial for the military-style ORH intervention. There was also some criticism, (such as on December 9, 1992a, p. 1 and December 10, 1992a, p. 13), about the ridiculous ORH "Marine invasion" on the beaches of Mogadishu, and about the equally ridiculous mainstream, and particularly US television, media coverage of the event.

In contrast, 18 articles (15 %) in the *Guardian* concentrated on bland descriptions of the start of ORH and its subsequent "achievements", such as the delivery of food aid, even though many of these "successes" had either already been accomplished by, or were only possible now because of the work of, relief agencies such as the ICRC. These were December 2, 1992, (p. 8), December 3, 1992b, (p. 20), December 7, 1992, (p. 10), December 9, 1992a, (p. 1), December 10, 1992b, (p. 22), December 12, 1992a, (p. 1), December 15, 1992b, (p. 20), December 16, 1992a, (p. 11), December 17, 1992, (p. 9), December 18, 1992, (p. 18), December 24, 1992a, (p. 20), December 29, 1992, (p. 7), December 31, 1992a, (p. 11), January 2, 1993, (p. 10), January 8, 1993, (p. 9), January 9, 1993b, (p. 10), February 5, 1993, (p. 12) and February 22, 1993, (p. 7).

The report of December 9a, 1992a, (p. 1), for example, highlighted a ORH-arranged meeting between Aidid and Mahdi, adding that "it could end the year-long conflict between the two former allies", an extremely optimistic prediction. In other words, the attention lavished on the warlords at the expense of tribal elders in these hastily arranged peace talks was portrayed in these articles as ORH "successes" when, in "fact", such actions merely legitimised the brutal leadership of the warlords. Indeed, praise for the US

military's "skills" as a relief agent begun as early as December 3, 1992b, (p. 20), with an editorial noting that ORH was "a chance [for the US military] to show new skills", which was exactly the sort of deception the US military was trying to pass off to defect pressure to reduce its budget. It continued on December 15, 1992b, (p. 20), with a report describing US troops as triumphantly being "on their way" to relieve "beleaguered famine victims and aid workers" in Baidoa. The "fact" that Baidoa was "beleaguered" because of the ORH troops landing in Mogadishu, forcing bandits inland to terrorise towns like Baidoa, was not discussed. Instead, descriptions by ORH troops that the Somalians were being "liberated" were accepted without comment by the *Guardian,* (such as on December 17, 1992, p. 9), while the "fact" that food left by ORH troops was immediately looted, (as reported on December 18, 1992, p. 18), did not elicit any doubt about the appropriateness of the military-led operation. By December 24, 1992a, (p. 20), the *Guardian* was carrying reports of the "pacification" of villages in Somalia. In Vietnam, the "pacification" programme was the ordering by US troops of local people to follow their instructions without debate or exception (Pilger 1989: 191-196; Herman and Chomsky 1988: 180, 203-204, 215-216, 225). No irony was noted. Then, on December 31, 1992a, (p. 11), Simon Tisdall wrote that:

> *... despite warnings from some aid workers and agencies that the intervention would be counter-productive, the American forces have proved fast and highly effective in securing relief supply routes.*

This might or might not have been the case, but it is significant to note that this report was written from Washington, thousands of kilometres from where the relief operation was supposedly proceeding so successfully. Furthermore, Tisdall presented his story in such a way as to suggest this short-term success was "proof" that ORH would be a success overall. That short-term gains were presented as such, with ORH in existence for little more than a month, ignored the "fact" that there would be long-term results of the intervention. Such possibilities, and any thoughts that they may be counter-productive, were, inexplicably, ignored by Tisdall. ORH was only rarely criticised, and was still being praised as late as February 22, 1993, (p. 7), when it was obvious long-term problems arising from it would affect the country. On that date, the *Guardian* chose to highlight how ORH had permanently "crushed" clan fighting in southern Somalia and "had escorted relief shipments to famine-devastated areas". That clan fighters might soon emerge again to attack ORH troops and Somalis themselves was obviously beyond the realms of possibility.

In addition, another 11 articles (9.2 % - making a total of 29 articles and 24.2 %) concentrated on describing the negative effects of ORH as an unfortunate and unforeseen side-affect of a "necessary" intervention. These were December 14, 1992, (p. 20), December 15, 1992a, (p. 1), December 16, 1992c, (p. 20), December 30, 1992, (p. 7), January 4, 1993a, (p. 20), January 4, 1993b, (p. 1, 20), February 9, 1993, (p. 11), February 25, 1993, (p. 24), February 26, 1993, (p. 12), March 3, 1993, (p. 10) and March 4, 1993, (p. 12).

In other words, such articles conveyed the impression that the mistakes of ORH, which began to become apparent in early January and by February were so common and obvious they could not be ignored, were *not* the result of the completely inappropriate ORH military intervention into Somalia. Within days of ORH's launch, an article on December 15, 1992a, (p. 1), about Somalis attacking and beating a Somali woman for allegedly sleeping with ORH troops, did not contain any link that the "flooding" of Somalia with thousands of Western, and particular non-Muslim, troops would cause such problems. By January 4, 1993b, (p. 1, 20), when UN chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali was attacked in Mogadishu, those attacking him were described as an "angry mob". Such language conveyed a negative image of the protesters, who, it could be argued, were genuinely and understandably resentful of ORH and the UN. In other words, the views of Somali protesters were debased and not considered, as they were merely the actions of an "angry mob". The same day, the death of British aid worker Sean Devereux, (January

4, 1993a, p. 20), was considered to be the work of Somali factions "unhappy" about the changed circumstances in Somali following ORH. Again, the destabilising effects of the inappropriate ORH were not developed or debated in this article.

Then, on February 9, 1993, (p. 11), John-Thor Dahlburg, (writing for the *Los Angeles Times,* but carried by the *Guardian*), wrote of continued starvation in Somalia but added:

> *None of this is supposed to be happening. For almost two months now ORH has confronted Somalia's famine with the enormous resources of US-led military forces, UN agencies and private charities ... Sadly, the military intervention in December may have actually worsened the lot of [some Somalians].*

Any consideration that throwing 30,000 troops trained for international warfare at a famine situation was a completely inappropriate strategy was notably absent. Mistakes caused by ORH were merely a "sad" by-product of a noble cause. Similarly, when unconfirmed reports claiming ORH troops had killed nine Somalis during a protest were aired, the article of February 25, 1993, (p. 24), quoted a US official saying the protests were triggered by "false information" that the US were taking sides in Somalia. That might or might not have been so, but the protests and alleged deaths were but another bitter consequence of ORH. This point, for some unfathomable reason, was, again, not developed.

The next day, (February 26, 1993, p. 12), the *Guardian's* report detailed the US military's acknowledgement that it shot at Somalis. The report described the "rampaging crowds" and "rioters". In other words, local people protesting were treated in a negative manner. The results of their actions were described in detail, which deflected attention from any idea the protesters might be legitimately angry. Furthermore, there was no suggestion as to *why* they were protesting. There was also no recognition that this was the beginning of increasing chaos in Somalia, a legacy of the inappropriateness of ORH which relief agencies, such as the ICRC, had warned would happen. Despite the growing anarchy, US Special Envoy Robert Oakley was quoted on March 3, 1993, (p. 10), as saying that, because of ORH, "the problem of clan warfare and the penchant for indiscriminate violence are gone". A truly amazing statement, but one that was not questioned by the journalist, Mark Huband. The next day, (March 4, 1993, p. 12), an article detailing increased Muslim fundamentalism in Somalia did not suggest ORH and other Western interference in Somalia might be the cause; instead, "a possible rise in Muslim fundamentalism was among the many reasons for sending the [ORH] force, in the hope that stability would prevent its emergence"!!

The Times

There were six articles (4 %) in *The Times* which at least partly discussed the premise of Theme Six. These were December 12, 1992a, (p. 11), December 12, 1992c, (p. 12), December 16, 1992b, (p. 16), January 4, 1993b, (p. 7), January 8, 1993, (p. 11) and March 4, 1993, (p. 13).

In one, the article of December 16, 1992b, (p. 16), the arrogance of the ORH leaders in claiming "all the glory" in the Somalian relief operation was exposed, thus:

> *Relief agencies were told by [US Special Envoy] Oakley that the number of flights bringing food into the famine-stricken town would increase immediately and to prepare to distribute food in remote villages under guard of [ORH troops]. "That's a bit rich. What the hell do they think we have been doing for the last six months", asked [an aid agency official].*

There was, however, no attempt to link this to any suggestion that ORH was inappropriate. Again, the framing of the non-hegemonic viewpoint had diminished its power. Similarly, in the article of January 4, 1993b, (p. 7), Sam Kiley detailed some of

the "flaws" of ORH, such as negotiating with the warlords and messing up the pre-ORH security agreements between the NGOs and Somalis, without actually claiming ORH was inappropriate. Interestingly, this article also observed that it was the "Vietnam syndrome" that was blurring the "US vision" in Somalia, in that the US feared getting too deeply involved in Somalia because it might not be able to "emerge with credit". Such reporting and headlines perpetrated the "fact" that the US military were in Vietnam, as in Somalia, for some moral purpose. Yet, as Chomsky (1994b: 94) has observed, Vietnam Syndrome was "a disease with such ominous symptoms as opposition to aggression, terror and violence, and even sympathy for their victims. These 'sickly inhibitions against the use of military force,' as the symptoms were described by Reaganite intellectual Norman Podhoretz, were thought to have been cured by the glorious triumph over Grenada [and, later, Iraq in the Gulf War]".

There was also belated but very strong criticism of the militaristic nature of ORH in the article of March 4, 1993, (p. 13), which detailed the anger aid agencies were directing towards ORH, particularly because ORH had "started a strong xenophobic feeling among the Somalis". One further article, (December 11, 1992a, p. 1), discussed the anger aid workers in Baidoa felt at ORH starting in Mogadishu only, and the resultant increase in death rates in Baidoa. There was no attempt, however, to expand on the idea that ORH might be inappropriate; instead, the construction of the article favoured the reading that these set-backs were but a temporary aberration. There was also mild criticism of the tactics and direction of the military aspect of ORH in the article of December 16, 1992c, (p. 12). ORH was attacked for being "rushed" but was not attacked as being inappropriate.

In contrast, 20 articles described the activities of the ORH troops in a positive light, by concentrating on actions such as the delivery of food, or presented the ORH intervention in a generally supportive way. These were December 1, 1992a, (p. 13),December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), December 4, 1992, (p. 17), December 9, 1992a, (p. 1), December 9, 1992d, (p. 17), December 15, 1992c, (p. 9), December 17, 1992, (p. 17), December 18, 1992, (p. 9), December 21, 1992, (p. 8), December 22, 1992, (p. 9), December 23, 1992, (p. 8), December 28, 1992, (p. 6), December 29, 1992a, (p. 1), December 29, 1992b, (p. 8), January 2, 1993, (p. 1, 10), January 7, 1993b, (p. 10), January 9, 1993, (p. 10), March 5, 1993, (p. 11), March 15, 1993, (p. 11) and April 27, 1993, (p. 14).

For example, on December 1, 1992a, (p. 13), at the start of the intervention, James Bone and Martin Fletcher noted that:

> *[UN chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali] said that intervention by a multinational force was now the only way to stop armed bandits disrupting aid supplies to the famine-stricken nation.*

The assertion that a military intervention was the only way to deal with bandits in Somalia was not challenged. In this regard, the editorial of December 1, 1992b, (p. 17), praised the military aspect of ORH, arguing that "if only force will save Somali lives, [then] force should be used". There was little discussion on whether force actually *was* the only method available to save Somali lives. By December 9, 1992a, (p. 1), a very prominent front page article by Martin Fletcher and Sam Kiley was so positive in its descriptions of the US troops of ORH one might have suspected a US military press release had been reprinted *sans* any changes whatsoever. A triumphant pro-military banner screamed, "US troops sweep in before dawn to rescue starving Somalis", while a sub-heading noted that the Marines were "welcomed as saviours". The landing at the Mogadishu beach was a "well-drilled operation", while the arrival of the troops "could not come soon enough for the few aid workers still [in Mogadishu]". Similarly, ORH military aeroplanes were a "breathtaking and welcome sight" (December 15, 1992c, p. 9).

By December 18, 1992, (p. 9), US troops were described by Fletcher and Kiley as arriving in Baidoa to "restore order". That order needed to be restored in Baidoa in the

first place because of the bungled beginning of ORH was not discussed. The positive PR for ORH continued along a seasonal theme on December 22, 1992, (p. 9), with triumphant descriptions of ORH troops "strik[ing] out from Mogadishu" to establish ORH "in three more starving towns by Christmas". By December 28, 1992, (p. 6), *The Times* was announcing proudly that the US was "near [its] relief goal in Somalia". A month in Somalia and somehow the US had achieved its self-defined "relief goal". That such a "goal" was hardly adequate to deal with the more important and pressing long-term problems in Somalia, which needed to be addressed immediately, was not discussed. Perhaps, though, this was because, as the headline of December 29, 1992a, (p. 1), thundered, Somalia in 1993 faced a "bright" year, due, no doubt, to ORH.

The ultimate pro-military article, however, was the story of March 15, 1993, (p. 11), which discussed the role of American soldiers teaching Somali children in a Mogadishu refugee camp. The notion that actual teachers might prove somewhat better equipped and trained to handle this sort of assignment was absent among the text of what was yet another virtual US military public relations piece. Similarly, a US military official was quoted on April 27, 1993, (p. 14), as saying the positive transition in Somalia due to ORH had been "almost unbelievable". That this claim could pass without comment by *The Times* was, to me, an "almost unbelievable" feat of equal scale.

In addition, another 18 articles (making a total of 38 articles, representing 25.7 % of 148), described the negative effects of ORH, such as the tensions escalating into violence between ORH troops and Somalis, but these articles were constructed and framed in such a way as to convey the impression that these effects were not due to the militaristic nature of ORH. These were December 8, 1992, (p. 8), December 10, 1992d, (p. 15), December 11, 1992b, (p. 15), December 14, 1992, (p. 9), December 15, 1992a, (p. 1), December 15, 1992b, (p. 9), December 24, 1992, (p. 8), December 26, 1992, p. 8), December 31, 1992, (p. 12), January 1, 1993, (p. 9), January 4, 1993a, (p. 1), January 5, 1993, (p. 9), January 14, 1993, (p. 13), January 26, 1993, (p. 13), February 25, 1993a, (p. 15), February 25, 1993b, (p. 15), February 27, 1993, (p. 13) and April 26, 1993b, (p. 11).

Reporting of the chaotic side-effects of ORH began on December 10, 1992d, (p. 15), with Sam Kiley detailing how attacks on Marines had "soured" their welcome, among a generally very positive piece on ORH straight out of the US Government's public relations machine. Then, when two Somalis, (the first of many thousands of victims of the intervention), were killed by French ORH troops, debate was limited in the article of December 11, 1992b, (p. 15), to neo-colonialist arguments over "what powers US troops should assume they have over Somalis".

Then, when the report of December 24, 1992, (p. 8), observed that in Mogadishu "relations between [ORH] troops and locals [were] deteriorating", and that "large numbers of foreigners [were being] threatened by armed men", there was no analysis as to *why,* nor was there any suggestion that such occurrences were a predictable consequence of such unnecessary, heavy-handed and inappropriate military solutions. Instead, simplified and trivial reports of conflict between the US troops and "Somali 'bad guys'" began to appear, as on December 26, 1992, (p. 8). The inappropriateness of ORH could now be deflected by highlighting Somali "bad guys" as the cause of the intervention's failures, even though this was what the military solution was supposedly going to be so effective in dealing with! By January 26, 1993, (p. 13), a clash between ORH troops and Somalis which left 42 locals dead or injured, but left not a single ORH casualty, barely rated a paragraph. Such slaughters were still not an example for the journalists on *The Times* that a military intervention was inappropriate for Somalia's needs.

In addition, at the very end of another article, (December 12, 1992b, p. 11), Sam Kiley observed that food flights to Baidoa had been disrupted by "the closing down of air space over Baidoa by the US military". This was due to US military concerns for the safety of

US ORH troops. Thus, the safety and health of the starving was a secondary concern, but this salient point was not developed by Kiley.

The New York Times

There were seven articles (2.8 %) in the *New York Times* which at least partly discussed the premise of Theme Six. These were December 2, 1992, (p. 23), December 4, 1992, (p. A1, A14), December 11, 1992a, p. A1, A22), January 20, 1993, (p. A3), February 14, 1993b, (Sec.1, p.23), March 1, 1993, (p. 6) and April 11, 1993, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 16-17, 38-40).

Of these, Raymond Bonner's article of December 2, 1992, (p. 23), was at what was probably the limit of dissidence permitted by the *New York Times*. Bonner suggested there might be alternative methods to help Somalia rather than sending in troops. Importantly, however, Bonner did not attack the militaristic ORH *per se,* and added that, if his suggestions didn't work, then troops should be sent. In somewhat similar vein, Jane Perlez's article of December 4, 1992, (p. A1, A14), detailed the expectations of Somalis over the intervention, and presented the views of aid workers and Somalis concerned over the prospect of ORH turning sour because of differing expectations between the Somalis and the ORH leaders, but this article did not in any way suggest ORH might be inappropriate.

Then, in the article of January 20, 1993, (p. A3), a report about the first US troops to leave Somalia after the start of ORH carried a quote from a US soldier:

> *"I really don't think we should stay here at all", [the soldier] said. "It's really not our place. As far as the US military presence, we're done here. There's nothing left for us to do. It's a humanitarian mission and we're combatants".*

In other words, the framing of the article implied that ORH operations up until that time had been necessary. There was no actual suggestion that the military nature of ORH was inappropriate from day one. Indeed, most of the quotes from other soldiers referred to in this article were favourable opinions of the US military operation in Somalia. Criticism of ORH was more poignant, albeit rather belated, on March 1, 1993, (p. 6), with an article by Diana Jean Schemo discussing the concern of NGOs about the falling security in Somalia that had resulted from ORH.

In addition, criticism of how the US military manipulated the media coverage of ORH's start was discussed in four articles. These were December 9, 1993g, (p. A17), December 10, 1992b, (p. A18), December 10, 1992c, (p. A18) and January 24, 1993b, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 54). On December 9, 1993g, (p. A17), for example, there was criticism of the Pentagon's "skilful attempt ... to redefine the public's image of the military in the post-cold-war world". Similarly, the article by Jane Perlez on January 24, 1993b, (*New York Times Magazine*, p. 54), discussed now television "had to be there" to record the Marines arriving on the beaches of Mogadishu because they were "American-doing-good-for-the-starving-Somalis Christmas images". These articles, however, were constructed to favour a reading that suggested the US military had tried to make public relations capital out of a worthwhile cause. There was no suggestion that the US military had conceived ORH first and foremost as a public relations exercise and not as a mission to aid starving Somalians.

Interestingly, two articles published before ORH was conceived, (September 13, 1992, Sec.1, p.20, and October 23, 1992, p. A1, A8), detailed how disease was replacing famine as the biggest killer in Somalia, yet this "fact" was not incorporated into the 45 articles in the *New York Times* that were generally praiseworthy of ORH.

These were November 27, 1992a, (p. A1, A15), November 29, 1992, (Sec.1, p.16), December 4, 1992e, (p. A31), December 5, 1992a, (p. A1, A4), December 5, 1992b, (p.

A1, A4), December 8, 1992c, (p. A18), December 9, 1992a, (p. A1, A16), December 9, 1992b, (p. A1, A16), December 10, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), December 10, 1992b, (p. A8), December 10, 1992c, (p. A18), December 10, 1992e, (p. A26), December 11, 1992d, (p. A22), December 12, 1992a, (p. A6), December 13, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.1, 14), December 13, 1992e, (Sec.1, p.1, 16), December 13, 1992f, (Sec.4, p.1, 16), December 15, 1992b, (p. A8), December 16, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), December 17, 1992, (p. A11), December 19, 1992, p. A3; December 20, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.16), December 20, 1992c, (Sec.1, p.16), December 21, 1992b, (p. A12), December 21, 1992c, (p. A12), December 22, 1992c, (p. A15), December 23, 1992a, (p. A6), December 24, 1992b, (p. A6), December 26, 1992, (p. A5), December 27, 1992b, (Sec.1, p.10), December 29, 1992b, (p. A6), December 31, 1992a, (p. A1, A8), January 1, 1993, (p. A1, A8), January 2, 1993, (p. A1, A2), January 7, 1993, (p. 6), January 8, 1993a, (p. A1, A8), January 9, 1993, (p. A3), January 10, 1993, (Sec.1, p.1, 6), January 12, 1993, (p. A3), February 1, 1993a, (p. A7), February 7, 1993, (Sec.1, p.3), February 16, 1993, (p. A1, A6), March 3, 1993, (p. A6), May 4, 1993, (p. A24) and May 5, 1993, (p. A5).

These 45 articles concentrated on positive and triumphant discussion of the ORH operations, and the vital role of the US military within those operations. Debate was limited to how the US military would undertake the mission, while there was no recognition within these stories that the predominant function of the US military was to wage war.

(Indeed, two other articles, on August 15, 1992, p. A1, A2 and August 18, 1992b, p. 18, which appeared in the *New York Times* before ORH began, detailed how the US military had engaged in "humanitarian missions" before ORH and how "successful" these missions were. The article of August 18, 1992b, p. 18, for example, observed that "after similar humanitarian missions in Kurdish Iraq and Bangladesh, the US armed forces will gain precious experience [in Somalia] in what may be an increasingly needful role". Thus, the *New York Times* was uncritically falling into the Pentagon line that the US military could play a useful role in "humanitarian" missions, thereby ignoring the "fact" that the US military was neither equipped nor trained for such a role, and that relief agencies were far more suitable for such missions).

There was also no recognition in the aforementioned 45 articles of the role of the NGOs in providing aid and co-ordinating much of the ORH aid effort. The tone was set on December 9, 1992a, (p. A1, A18), with an article detailing the beginning of ORH headlined: "US Forces arrive in Somalia on mission to aid the starving". The next day, (December 10, 1992c, p. A18), the *New York Times'* reporting was little more than pure US military public relations, with the article praising the "textbook operation" of the Marines as they raced ashore at Mogadishu "to check the beach for mines and hostile defenders". The landing, the report continued, gave the Marines:

> *... an opportunity to show off their amphibious skills, something they were unable to do during the Persian Gulf War because of concern over mines and casualties.*

In other words, there was unqualified praise for the way the Marines had begun ORH, but not even a thought was given to the "fact" that the "amphibious skills" of the Marines were completely inappropriate for what Somalia needed, and that the Marines possessed none of the "skills" needed to deal with this or any other famine situation. Similarly, the story of December 11, 1992d, (p. A22), was another interesting pro-ORH piece. The story concentrated on portraying Somalia and Somalis in the most negative possible light, (the country was described as a "nightmare"), thereby conveying the impression that ORH was justified as the situation was so bad. The report of December 13, 1992e, (Sec.1, p.1, 16), was a "vox populi" among citizens from "middle America" about ORH, with the article carrying a number of quotes from, among others, soldiers, who praised the "important" use of the military in ORH and talked excitedly of the "changing role" the military could play in a post-Cold War world. By December 16, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), the

lavish PR for the US was in full swing; cried the headline: "Troops in Somalia close in on goal of aiding hungry [in Baidoa]"! Never mind that the NGOs were doing the same, and had been also feeding the hungry for the previous two years, and that more food aid was not needed, and that the US troops had taken a week to cover the four-hour journey from Mogadishu to Baidoa. Instead, there were "cheering crowds" in Baidoa, despite the "fact" that the death rate there had risen again, as mentioned in this article. There was, of course, no attempt to link this "fact" with ORH.

There was a similar positive and praiseworthy article the following day, (December 17, 1992, p. A11), with an equally positive headline, thus: "Marines escort food to hungry". By December 20, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.16), the tack had changed somewhat, with the headline: "Getting food to the Somalis takes civil-military fusion". Such headlines/articles conveyed the impression that the use of the military was absolutely necessary in undertaking the task of "getting food" to starving Somalians. There was more pro-US military discourse on December 31, 1992a, (p. A1, A8), with a long feature by Jane Perlez detailing how the US was "picking up the pieces" in Somalia, and that the stationing of US Marines in the country had "added the element of security" that was "critical to longer-term success". Once again, the results of an operation that had been in existence for little more than a month were being presented as evidence that long-term problems in Somalia were well on their way to being solved, and that ORH was not creating any problems, long or short term, of its own.

There was also an interesting quote from George Bush in the article of January 2, 1993, (p. A1, A2), in which Bush's visit to Somalia was detailed:

> *The President referred several times to the eventual replacement of US forces by UN peacekeeping troops, although he sought to assure the famine victims that they would not be left helpless.*

This statement was not challenged by the *New York Times.* In other words, there was no other relief effort that was working, and could work, in Somalia, apart from operations run and controlled by the military. Operations such as, of course, ORH! By March 3, 1993, (p. A6),the *New York Times* was still unquestionably accepting US military claims, such as US Special Envoy Robert Oakley's assertion that the US mission "had been achieved". There was no debate over whether what the US military thought was "mission accomplished" was what the NGOs or the Somalis themselves regarded as a successful mission. There was even praise for ORH as late as May 4, 1993, (p. A24), with an editorial claiming:

> *An international force led by the US has created a secure environment for delivering relief supplies. Millions of Somalis now live in relative peace as violence has abated. And Somalis themselves have taken the first steps to reconstruct a shattered society.*

Thus, Somalia was in "relative peace", despite the "fact" that ORH had created incredible tension and chaos throughout the southern part of the country. This editorial also ignored the "fact" that the "first steps" to reconstruct Somalia had very successfully been taken long ago in the north and in Somaliland.

There were also six other articles, (December 5, 1992e, p. A5; December 13, 1992b, Sec.1, p.14; December 18, 1992b, p. A10; December 25, 1992c, p. A11; December 27, 1992c, Sec.4, p.6 and March 12, 1993, p. 4), which were virtual "travel" features, concentrating on the "adventure" the US troops were facing, (December 5, 1992e, p. A5), or on trivial issues such as the danger US soldiers faced from snakebites (December 25, 1992c, p. A11). Significantly, the article of March 12, 1993, (p. 4), published at a time when ORH was patently failing to achieve much in Somalia, detailed the frustration of US troops and contained a number of racist and neo-colonialist statements. The Marines noted, for example, that the Somalis "only care about themselves", thereby

conveying the impression the mission failed due to the selfishness of the people ORH was supposed to help. There was no discussion here that the Somalis were neither asked, nor consulted, about ORH. In addition, four articles, (December 7, 1992c, p. A13; December 8, 1992d, p. A18; December 25, 1992b, p. A10; and December 27, 1992a, Sec.1, p.10), concentrated on the massive logistics behind the operation. Again, such articles, by detailing the effort the US military was making, conveyed positive images of the "humanitarian" nature of the US armed forces. Ironically, the report of December 27, 1992a, (Sec.1, p.10), detailed the vital role the US military's marketing personnel played in "selling" the intervention to the Somalis. With the constantly positive coverage in the *New York Times*, there was probably no need for US marketing personnel to "sell" the intervention to the *New York Times* and other sections of the US mainstream media!

In addition, another 18 articles (making a total of 63 articles representing 25.2 %) detailed problems caused by ORH, such as the increase in tension and violence, but these articles did not attempt in any way whatsoever to link these "facts" with the "fact" that ORH was an inappropriate operation for assisting Somalia. These were December 8, 1992b, (p. A1, A18), December 18, 1992a, (p. A1, A10), December 22, 1992b, (p. A14), December 24, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), December 29, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), December 30, 1992, (p. 3), January 4, 1993a, (p. A1, A6), January 15, 1993, (p. A9), January 16, 1993b, (p. A2), January 26, 1993, (p. A3), January 31, 1993, (Sec.1, p.14), February 2, 1993, (p. A6), February 20, 1993, (p. A1, A4), February 21, 1993c, (Sec.4, p.6), February 25, 1993, (p. A1, A9), February 27, 1993, (p. A4), March 2, 1993, (p. A2) and May 2, 1993b, (Sec.1, p.1, 4).

On December 29, 1992a, (p. A1, A6), for example, a report by Jane Perlez detailed massacres in Kismayu before the arrival of ORH troops. Although the report noted that the massacres were the direct result of inter-clan political manoeuvres to prevent certain clans aligning themselves with foreign forces, there was no consideration by Perlez that the massive infusion of foreign troops in Somalia was the wrong option in dealing with the crisis. The *New York Times* continued on a different tack on January 31, 1993, (Sec.1, p.14), concluding that a bumbled ORH operation was merely "an object lesson on good intentions gone awry". There was no consideration by the journalist, Diana Jean Schemo, that no matter how good the intentions were, sending 30,000 soldiers to run a famine relief mission was a completely ridiculous act. By February 2, 1993, (p. A6), with ORH not even coming close to dealing with the overall problems in Somalia, the headline read: "Hope left behind in Somalia by disillusioned US Marines". The article spoke of the "vision" the US military had for Somalia, and their failure to implement this "vision" was blamed not on the inappropriate nature of ORH but on the Somalis themselves:

> *"I figured they would be happy to see us come here to help them", said [a US soldier] ... "But some of them didn't want us to help".*

In other words, any thoughts that ORH was inappropriate were not considered. Furthermore, now that many of the Marines were starting to leave and the number of ORH troops in the country was falling, Somalia had no "hope". Only within a military solution was there, apparently, any chance for "hope" in the country. On February 20, 1993, (p. A1, A4), when the killing of a small boy by a US Marine should have demonstrated even to the *New York Times* that it was inappropriate to send thousands of US troops to a foreign and alien environment, the newspaper could only describe the incident as an example of the US military's "uneasy" role in Somalia. And even when relief operations were brought to an entire halt as a result of the ORH intervention, (as described on March 2, 1993, p. A2), there was no thought given whatsoever to suggestions that the military option of ORH was not the right way to deal with the problems in Somalia.

(Moreover, an article on December 9, 1992c, (p. A16), discussed how NGO relief workers were ordered to stay indoors for 48 hours at the start of ORH. There was no

discussion that vital relief work, conducted by people and organisations with the proper knowledge and experience to deal with the situation in Somalia, was being disrupted by an intervention that was beginning in a patently ridiculous manner on the beaches of Mogadishu).

Coverage of Theme Seven - that Somalis were neither asked, nor consulted, about ORH.

The Guardian

Only one article (0.8 %) of the 120 articies in the *Guardian* discussed this very important point. Yet again, this was the fine article by Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal on December 5c, 1992, (p. 10), which stated that:

> *Despite the existence of many Somalis with expertise, humanitarian commitment, and accountability to ordinary people, there was not even a pretence at consulting a single one [about ORH].*

The Times

Not a single article in *The Times* discussed this theme in any way.

The New York Times

As in *The Times,* not a single article in the *New York Times* discussed this theme in any way.