

Mogadishu and the immediate vicinity. After inspecting these sites, the teams forcibly entered the premises of a long suspected weapons storage depot and, in the ensuing confrontation, two Somalis loyal to General Aideed were killed. Shortly after, 27 UN peacekeepers were killed in what appeared to be a carefully planned ambush.

The attack on the inventory team led to UN Security Council Resolution 837 of 6 June 1993 which provided the mandate for the next phase of disarmament in Somalia, a **coercive** one focussed particularly on General Aideed and his militia who were believed to be responsible for the attack.

In other parts of the country, however, the cooperative approach to disarmament continued.<sup>68</sup> The Cease-fire and Disarmament Committee, with representatives from all 15 political factions functioned moderately well in certain areas. Many Commanders operating outside Mogadishu stressed the importance of cooperative relations with local authorities and pursued cooperative disarmament with some degree of success including the establishment of weapons free zones and *ad hoc* agreements for carrying and storing arms.

In Mogadishu UNOSOM II took the military initiative and in a series of carefully planned precision air and ground military actions, disabled or destroyed weapons located in three previously authorized storage sites as well as one clandestine facility. The success of these operations encouraged others which took place in an atmosphere of ever increasing violence. Heavy casualties on both sides resulted and ordinary Somalis previously sympathetic to the UN's efforts began to rally behind General Aideed.

On 3 October while on a mission to capture senior members of Aideed's militia, 23 US Army rangers were killed, 75 others wounded and a US helicopter pilot shot down and captured together with a soldier from UNOSOM II. Although the United States initially responded by increasing its firepower in Mogadishu, resulting in the successful apprehension of 740 suspected Aideed followers, this was very shortly followed by the announcement of its intention to withdraw its forces completely from Somalia by March of 1994, to restrict their involvement in the meantime to force protection missions and to concentrate on political negotiations with the Somali factions.

This change in US policy secured the release of the hostages taken in the Ranger incident but it also spelled the end of the coercive disarmament phase and began the pattern of troop withdrawals by key UN member states that ultimately necessitated the termination of UNOSOM II.

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<sup>68</sup> See for example, the discussion by Cox, *op cit.* at pp.127-128.