

## U.S. Marines bring peace to Somali capital

### Troop commanders looking to objectives farther inland

WASHINGTON — U.S. commanders in Somalia are monitoring intelligence reports of fighting among rival clans in outlying areas but expect no delay in expanding operations beyond Mogadishu, senior Pentagon officers said Wednesday.

Lt. Gen. Martin L. Brandtner, who is overseeing the operation in the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters at the Pentagon that the 1,700 Marines in Mogadishu were preparing to seize their next objective: Baidoa, an outpost in the center of the famine zone 200 miles northwest of the capital.

The chief of intelligence for the Joint Chiefs, Rear Adm. Michael W. Cramer, said there had been factional fighting in recent days in several towns where U.S. troops are headed later in the operation to provide security for relief supplies.

Cramer estimated that the four major factions in Somalia have between 12,000 and 28,000 men under arms. Their weapons include

mortars, 107mm recoilless guns, rocket launchers, 7.62mm machine guns, 105mm artillery pieces, anti-air missiles and many smaller arms such as AK-47s and grenades.

"Our assessment of no organized resistance in Mogadishu is holding," he said, adding that it was too early to know whether there would be opposition elsewhere.

Brandtner said that by Thursday, the commander of Operation Restore Hope, Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston, would arrive with his support staff in Mogadishu.

Cramer said U.S. intelligence sources had reported shooting in "inter-clan" clashes in Baidoa as rival factions contest for territorial advantage.

"That . . . seems to have subsided," he said, adding that security conditions in Kismayo, a seaport in the extreme south of Somalia, were "not as good" as elsewhere.

MOGADISHU, Somalia — U.S. Marines freed the capital from the grip of warring gunmen Wednesday, and opened the way for mighty air convoys of soldiers and supplies to revive Somalia's starving interior.

The first mercy flight to Mogadishu hours after troops stormed ashore brought in powdered formula for famished children and adults.

The Marines' next goal was to seize inland airstrips from bandits so that big U.S. transports can fly in tons of life-giving grain where it is needed most. The first of thousands of Army troops for the mission were to arrive Thursday, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said in Washington.

Somalis crowded hillsides and jammed into the airport to welcome the 1,800 Marines who brought Mogadishu one of its most peaceful days since civil war broke out two years ago.

Reporters saw youths riding in one pickup truck dismount two machine guns and stow them on the floor as the pickup approached a Marine checkpoint.

Mogadishu was in a festive mood for Marine Landing Day. Youths perched on stacks of red, white and blue grain sacks to watch Marines dig foxholes.

After seizing the seaside airport and the harbor in uncontested land-

— "I've been waiting for this day for so long."  
— Tanner  
UNICEF worker

ings at dawn, the Marines took up positions at three checkpoints leading into the city.

Three Marines entered the dented iron gates of the deserted U.S. Embassy and hoisted the flag on a wobbly pole amid a litter of rusting typewriters. The \$50 million embassy was looted down to the rope on its flagpole after being evacuated last year.

Officials also raised U.S. flags on both sides of the Green Line separating the two warring clans in the capital. Old Glory went up over a liaison office in south Mogadishu and over the former U.S. ambassador's residence in the north.

For the first time in weeks, a World Food Program-chartered plane flew in 17 tons of a powdery mixture of sugar, beans, flour and vitamins given to babies and malnourished people. It was quickly unloaded and taken to warehouses.

Before the Marines' arrival, such food convoys were guarded by militiamen. Often there were clashes with other clans, or the food was stolen.

"I've been waiting for this day for so long," said Victor Tanner, a UNICEF worker. "This airport usually is a pretty nasty place, but the town today is like after a Sunday football game."

About 300,000 Somalis have died of starvation, disease and warfare in the past year, and 2 million are threatened with famine.

A last-minute orgy of looting and shooting early Wednesday forced the United Nations to evacuate 15 foreign aid workers from the closed port of Kismayo, 270 miles to the south.

In the capital, a civilian employee was shot in the arm outside U.N. headquarters in Mogadishu. There was no word on who was responsible.

Marines fired some warning shots, detained several Somalis and seized a few machine guns or rifles, but American officials had no reports of troops firing at anyone or being fired upon.

One of the main warlords, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, urged his followers "to cooperate with our guests from the outside world to save our people."

"To cooperate," he said, "We need not hold guns in the streets."

About 70 people died in fighting in Baidoa earlier in the week, but the fighting died down and 19 flights have gone into the city in the past two days, according to Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams.

## Successful secretive shuttle mission ends in California

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — Space shuttle Discovery landed Wednesday, but a leak of toxic thruster gas kept its five astronauts sealed inside the craft following a week-long military mission.

The leak delayed post-landing operations but did not endanger the crew, NASA said.

The astronauts had to stay in their spacesuits as the ground crew worked more than two hours in protective gear to get the fumes to dissipate. Crews normally leave shuttles in 40 minutes to an hour.

The substance was identified as nitrogen tetroxide. The leak was in a left-side nose jet used for maneuvering in orbit. The trouble was detected just before Discovery dropped out of orbit for a diverted landing in California.

The landing was diverted because of low

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— Reightler  
Mission Control

clouds in Florida but the shuttle still had to plunge through clouds here before touchdown.

NASA's last shuttle mission of the year, which deployed a secret Pentagon satellite, touched down at Edwards Air Force Base at 12:43 p.m. A red, white and blue drag chute popped open and slowed the spaceship as it rolled down the base's concrete runway.

Recent storms had left standing water on

much of Edwards' normally dry lakebed, making its runways unusable.

"Great job!" Mission Control's Ken Reightler told shuttle commander David Walker and the crew. "Thanks for your contributions to our nation's defense. Also thanks for taking such good care of Discovery."

The shuttle was waved off from a planned landing at Kennedy Space Center because clouds

were forecast. Weather turned out to be good at the Florida runway, according to center director Robert Crippen, and a fat, gray cloud lay in Discovery's path for descent to Edwards' runway.

NASA prefers to land at Kennedy because it usually takes a week and more than \$1 million in expenses to bring the shuttle back to Florida.

Discovery was launched Dec. 2 and the astronauts deployed the Defense Department satellite soon after reaching orbit.

The crew spent the rest of their week in space conducting military experiments involving laser communications and photography.

An experiment for studying the tracking of space debris had to be canceled when a battery failure prevented the crew from ejecting six metal balls into space from the payload bay.

## Religious rampage continues in India

NEW DELHI, India — Rioters wielding hatchets and homemade bombs rampaged throughout India on Wednesday in a third day of religious violence. Reports said nearly 700 people died in Hindu-Muslim fighting, including 200 on Wednesday alone.

Zealots, acting in the name of religion, left a trail of brutality and desecration as they battled over the demolition of an ancient mosque by Hindu extremists on Sunday.

Since then, Bombay's massive slum district, Dharabi, a patchwork of Hindu and Muslim colonies, has become a war zone. Nightly raiding parties attack neighboring colonies with knives, hatchets, Molotov cocktails and light bulbs filled with acid.

Army units, with shoot-on-sight authority, were sent to assist police in enforcing a curfew in the city of 12 million, India's largest and the hardest hit by the religious violence.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party called a general strike to protest the arrest of its leaders, who are charged with instigating the demolition of the mosque in the northern holy town of Ayodhya.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao met leaders of the National Front, a leftist opposition coalition, to appeal for an alliance against the Hindu nationalist party in an attempt to quell the violence. He accused the Bharatiya Janata of "extreme perfidy" by encouraging the zealots who tore apart the mosque.

Rao's Congress Party falls short of a majority in parliament, and he appeared to be suggesting a broadened coalition to isolate the Bharatiya Janata.

The National Front previously had blamed Rao for letting hundreds of thousands of Hindu fanatics into Ayodhya and demanded that he quit.

Devout Hindus believe the 430-year-old mosque stood on the ruins of a prehistoric Hindu shrine marking the birthplace of Rama, an important god in Hindu mythology.

The mosque's destruction prompted widespread savagery and destruction in India and in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh.

## British royals call it splits

LONDON — She gets the town house, he keeps the country house, the kids will shuttle between homes at Christmas. And each one gets a crown.

Confirming years of gossip and tabloid headlines, Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced Wednesday that they were separating, but had no plans to divorce.

"This decision has been reached amicably and they will both continue to participate fully in the upbringing of their children," said the announcement from Buckingham Palace.

A palace spokesman said Diana will keep the couple's apartments at Kensington Palace in London. Charles will retain the Highgrove estate in Gloucestershire, and stay with his grandmother, the Queen Mother, at Clarence House when in London.

Prince William, 10, and Prince Henry, 8, will divide their Christmas holidays between their parents, the palace indicated.

Such a separation for the heir to the throne is unprecedented in this century. In the last century, Queen Victoria's son and successor Edward VII had a series of extramarital relationships despite an apparently congenial marriage to Queen

Alexandra, but the couple remained together until his death in 1910.

Prime Minister John Major told the House of Commons there was no reason why Diana could not be crowned queen — assuming that the couple stayed married and Charles, 44, lives long enough to succeed his 66-year-old mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

A divorce would not prevent Charles from taking the throne, but if Diana were no longer his wife, she could not be crowned queen.

Tabloid newspapers have gleefully described both Charles and Diana having romantic conversations with outsiders.

Former Prime Minister Edward Heath said the announcement of the split "must be one of the saddest announcements made by any prime minister in modern times."

"We could now be witnessing the end of the monarchy and the reigning queen could possibly be the last," said maverick left-winger Dennis Skinner, who said the monarchy had pushed "the self-destruct button."

Major retorted: "We live in a monarchy and, if I may speak personally, I hope and believe we always will."

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