

Last forces leave Somalia

MOGADISHU, Somalia—U.S. Marines backed out of Somalia and into the sea Thursday with the remnants of a multinational force that fed starving thousands but failed to conquer chaos.

The Marines escorted the final U.N. forces from Mogadishu's shores, a quiet end to a two-year intervention that began with a televised invasion and ultimately cost \$2 billion and the lives of more than 100 peacekeepers.

The last peacekeepers were hurried to warships offshore. The move of 1,500 American and 350 Italian marines from a small beach cove back to their ships ended at 12:59 a.m. today.

"U.S. and Italian Marines completed the extraction of United Nations forces and their equipment from Somalia," Defense Secretary William Perry said in a statement Thursday in Washington. "I want to thank the U.S. forces and their commanders for a job well done."

A Pentagon official said the withdrawal had been completed ahead of schedule, and that no American ships or aircraft would remain in the area. "Our plan is to withdraw our force as soon as possible," the official said.

U.S. Marines landed Monday to protect the evacuation of 2,400 Pakistani and Bangladeshi peacekeepers, the last in a multinational force that once totaled 38,000 troops from

21 countries.

The withdrawal was delayed several hours when a ferry chartered to pick up the Pakistanis was rammed by a tugboat, damaging its cargo doors. As the doors were being repaired, port officials found their only gangplank was missing, apparently looted.

"Just give us ropes and we'll climb aboard," one Pakistani officer said. A makeshift gangplank was jury-rigged from shipping con-

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U.N. Secretary-General

tainers, and the ship left after a three-hour delay.

U.S. Marines shot at least two Somali militiamen who fired at Americans from a pickup truck Thursday.

The Horn of Africa nation has lacked a government since former dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991. In the years since, despite numerous mediation attempts by the United Nations, Somali factions have been unable

to bridge their differences and unite under one government.

Despite its failure to solve Somalia's political problems, the multinational intervention did end the widespread starvation that, together with war and disease, killed 350,000 Somalis in 1992.

But it came with a cost. More than 100 peacekeepers and 42 American troops died, and the operation drained \$1.66 billion from U.N. coffers. It ended without removing Somalia's main obstacle to peace — its intransigent warlords.

Tops among them was Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who once carried a \$25,000 U.N. price on his head and subverted peacekeepers' efforts more than any other Somali.

After Pakistani peacekeepers withdrew from the airport Wednesday, hundreds of looters had barely an hour before Aidid's militia roared in on stripped trucks mounted with weapons to claim the facility as their prize.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said international efforts to bring peace and humanitarian aid to Somalia will continue. "The U.N. will not abandon Somalia," he said.

He added, though, that the feasibility of aid would depend on the cooperation of Somali leaders.

UNICEF investigating possible corruptions

UNITED NATIONS — The U.N. Children's Fund is investigating claims that some members of its Kenya staff funneled money to phony aid groups and falsified medical and charge receipts.

UNICEF has suspended 10 staff members while it investigates, including the current and past heads of its Kenya office, said Karin Sham Poo, the deputy executive director of the New York-based organization.

"In the 10 years that I have been here, this is the largest case of individuals involved in improprieties or mismanagement," Sham Poo said Thursday.

She said it was unclear how much money may have been involved.

"I do not think we are talking about millions," she said.

Seven members of UNICEF's Kenya office were suspended with pay after a November audit uncovered irregularities, Sham Poo said.

The seven were not accused of any wrongdoing, but UNICEF sent its top auditor, Johanna Strieck, to Nairobi to begin a wider investigation in Janu-

ary. As a result, three additional staff members and one of the staffers punished in November were suspended without pay.

Sham Poo said some of the four were accused of falsifying expense and medical claims.

Strieck's investigation is expected to be completed later this month.

Auditors were investigating charges that UNICEF was "allocating funds to activities that were not approved," that staff members were improperly hired and that money was given to fake aid groups, Sham Poo said.

Each UNICEF country office is audited every three years.

UNICEF, with a \$1 billion annual budget, feeds and provides water and medical aid to children in 140 countries. The agency helps immunize millions of children each year.

The largest contributor is the United States, which gave \$135 million last year. Private donations from Americans amounted to another \$21 million.

News... in a Minute

O.J.'s alibi testimony questionable

LOS ANGELES — The witness who was supposed to give O.J. Simpson an alibi testified Thursday she can't be sure what time she saw his Bronco outside his home. She acknowledged that a defense investigator tried to feed her times beneficial to Simpson.

In grueling cross-examination, Rosa Lopez was caught in a contradiction over whether she ever filed for unemployment and acknowledged she testified last week that she made airline reservations when she hadn't. Lopez, a former housekeeper for a Simpson neighbor, labored through a line of questioning in which she couldn't recall the time, date or even the season in which she spoke to defense investigator William Pavelic. She said she only knew it was in 1994. "Do you have a hard time remembering time?" asked Deputy District Attorney Chris Darden.

"If I don't have it written down, how can I remember?" the Spanish-speaking Lopez replied through an interpreter.

Grilled on the details of her meeting with Pavelic in Simpson's office, Lopez said she didn't give a specific time that she saw Simpson's Bronco parked outside his Brentwood estate the night Simpson's sex-wife and her friend were murdered.

The time Lopez said she saw the Bronco is critical since prosecutors have alleged the murders were committed about 10:15 p.m. and Simpson used the Bronco to drive to the murder scene two miles away.

States could decide not to pay for abortions for rape victims

WASHINGTON — States could opt out of providing Medicaid-funded abortions for victims of rape and incest under a measure approved Thursday by the House Appropriations Committee.

As part of a GOP spending cuts package, the panel voted 33-21 — largely along Republican-Democratic party lines — to reverse the Clinton administration's policy of mandating that states use Medicaid funds to buy abortions for poor women who have been victims of violence.

"All over this country, persons who are involved in state funding have been petitioning the Clinton administration, urging it to correct this misinterpretation," Rep. Ernest J. Istook, R-Okla., said of the proposal.

Istook said the administration had misread a 1993 law adding rape and incest to saving the life of the mother as exceptions to an 18-year-old prohibition on the use of federal funds to pay for abortions.

But opponents called Istook's measure a major rollback of abortion rights aimed at those who are most vulnerable.

"States rights are just a smokescreen to hide the fact that this amendment would deny poor women who are victims of rape and incest the right to an abortion," said Rep. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y.

The administration last year notified states they must begin providing abortions to poor women in cases of rape and incest and warned they could lose some Medicaid funding if they

did not. At the time, 30 states were not using Medicaid funds to pay for abortions for victims of rape or incest.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich threw his support behind Istook's measure on Wednesday after initially telling reporters the rape and incest exceptions were "a legitimate condition in the Medicaid program."

He later issued a statement saying he supported the amendment.

He complained that the Clinton administration's interpretation of the 1993 legislation to require states to provide taxpayer-funded abortions had overruled existing state law.

Democrats said Republicans were trying to repay conservative, anti-abortion forces who helped fuel their victory at the polls in November.

British trader's luck ends in Frankfurt

FRANKFURT, Germany — The British trader whose gambles led to the collapse of Britain's oldest investment bank was several steps ahead of a Singapore arrest warrant and almost home when police caught up with him Thursday.

Nick Leeson was escorted off a flight from Malaysia and detained by German police while authorities waited for an extradition request and arrest warrant accusing him of mis-handling money and other charges.

Leeson repeatedly told police he wanted to return to Britain, where his employer, Baring Brothers & Co., was trying to figure out how one man could lose an estimated \$1 billion and bring down the 232-year-old bank in a matter of weeks.

In its first comment on the case, Singapore's fraud squad said Thursday it was investigating a complaint by Baring Futures that the 28-year-old Leeson "committed offenses of forgery."

It said the Baring complaint was made to police Monday, four days after Leeson and his wife, Lisa Simms, had already fled their luxury condominium in Singapore, leaving newspapers at the door and laundry drying on the balcony.

The couple drove across the border into Malaysia, where they spent the night, then went on to a ritzy resort in Kota Kinabalu, about 900 miles away on the island of Borneo.

Malaysia's Daily Express newspaper said Leeson went to Royal Brunei Airlines office in Kota Kinabalu on Tuesday, asked for the next available flight to Europe and paid \$1,500 cash for the tickets.

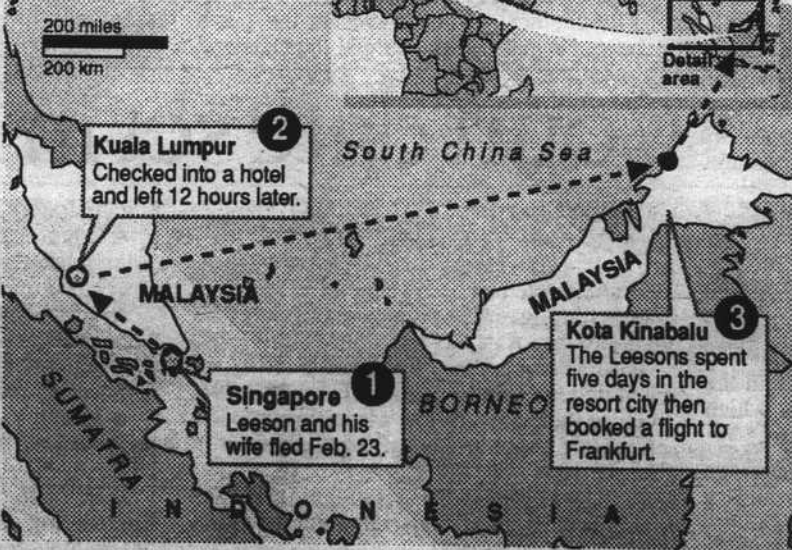
The couple's newly hired lawyer, Eberhard Kempf, said Leeson would probably spend the night in Frankfurt prison before he was taken before a judge Friday where he was expected to fight on extradition request.

Ms. Simms was released and flew to Britain.

Baring Brothers trader Nicholas Leeson was taken into custody Thursday. He faces extradition to Singapore, where he allegedly brought down the revered British bank.



Nicholas Leeson



AP/Wm. J. Castello

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