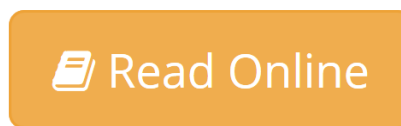


Black Hawk Down: The History of the Battle of Mogadishu

By Charles River Editors



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*Includes pictures *Includes an explanation of the action, what went wrong, and an analysis of who was to blame *Includes online resources, footnotes, and a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents “The Somalis were a curious bunch. For every armed person, there were fifty unarmed just standing around, often right next to the guy firing at us.” – Michael Goffena, a Black Hawk pilot If it was the dawn of a new world order in the 1990s, it was one of American unilateralism. Throughout the decade, America’s unrivaled power and the globalization of the world through technology like the Internet offered Americans a sense of security and a belief that the United States could accomplish anything. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States was the world’s only remaining superpower, and communism around the world began to decline. Moreover, since communism in the Soviet Union was not defeated by outside military force but collapsed from within, its draw as an alternative system to western capitalism and democracy was seriously weakened. 10 years after American Marines were killed in the notorious barracks explosion in Beirut during Lebanon’s Civil War, American special operations forces were sent to Somalia at the behest of President Bill Clinton as part of “Operation Gothic Serpent”. The goal set for the American forces was to capture Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid and thus prevent him from continuing to perpetrate violence. There is an ancient and oft quoted Somali saying that in many ways sums up the outside perception of Somalia, a race that appears unchangeably wedded to warfare and internal conflict: “Me and my clan against my nation. Me and my family against the clan. Me and my brother against the family. Me against my brother.” Somalia crept into the general global consciousness during the early 1990s as yet another distant and incomprehensible bout of African warfare began to generate news images of biblical famine, but even that conflict may have been lumped in with the others if not for an unexpected turn of events in October 1993. On October 3, 1993, a small force conducted an operation in Mogadishu to arrest two of Aidid’s leaders, but they were pinned down as they sought their way out. In the attack, 18 Americans were killed, and the Americans lost two Black Hawk choppers, and as if that wasn’t enough, footage circulated of a few soldiers’ bodies being mutilated and dragged through the dust for a crime no greater than attempting to feed the hungry masses and protect a nation from itself. The attack later formed the basis for the movie Black Hawk Down, but in its immediate aftermath, President Clinton ordered the

withdrawal of American forces days later. Somalia seemed to have taught Clinton a lesson in unilateralism, because he refused to stop the genocide in Rwanda the following year. It seemed he had learned that the U.S. could not intervene anywhere at any time. Black Hawk Down: The History of the Battle of Mogadishu chronicles the story of one of the most notorious events of the 1990s. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Black Hawk Down like never before, in no time at all.

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Black Hawk Down: The History of the Battle of Mogadishu By Charles River Editors **Bibliography**

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