Continuing Somali Violence May Delay U.S. Withdrawal

By Daniel Williams and Jon S. yard
THE WASHINGTON POST

An upsurge of violence in Somalia this week has prompted U.S. military planners to reconsider the timing of the withdrawal of U.S. troops and leaving a larger number of combat troops in Somalia than previously planned, U.S. sources said Thursday.

The possibility of a greater U.S. combat presence to augment a planned international peacekeeping force under United Nations command raises the prospect that the United States may attempt to play a more significant role in maintaining order in Somalia than anticipated.

"I think recent events indicate that it is going to be a lot more difficult for the government of the Somali Federal Republic," said a senior U.S. military officer said. "What you're seeing may be of some considerable size for an extended period of time."

Thus far this week, U.S. forces have, according to Pentagon officials, flown 22 combat missions in support of the Mogadishu operation.

Once this week's operation began, however, a second U.S. force was sent in to support the effort. The demonstration that U.S. forces have been deployed largely peacefully, with only scattered instances of injuries despite using tear gas and rubber bullets, has used only a fraction of the previously trained Mogadishu force.

The U.S. military was not prepared to discuss how many troops are involved in the rescue operation.

President Boutros Boutros-Ghali urged the Serbs to make concessions at the talks, which have been suspended since December.

"We've had things we've prepared to throw on the table," the official added, "but I don't see more combat troops in the country as "a "holy grail" of what we're prepared to consider."

Among the administration's stated objectives in intervening in last December was creation of a "secure environment" for delivery of food to starving Somalis. Such an environment, the official said, would give peaceable political activists room to emerge under the shade of a U.N. peacekeeping mission.

Thurzd, U.S. officials, discussing Somalia's "holy grail," said they expect further serious outbreaks of violence. As a result, they expect the operation of a U.N.-led peacekeeping operation will be delayed beyond its scheduled completion date in mid-April.

Nonetheless, some officials regarded the current situation as a symptom of success, not failure.

As military planners in Somalia have been reduced by U.S. forces on arms caches, the officials said, U.S. forces are working to hinder control of major ports and roads. Clashes, mainly a threat to U.S. forces and the international community, are under control.

Police arrested senior BJP leaders as they encouraged followers to defy the ban on the rally. Party President Murli Manohar Joshi was arrested on Wednesday. Police voluntary piled into police buses, asking to be arrested when they learned their leaders had been arrested.

The airdrops have only "intermittent success," said an official of the U.N. with access to classified intelligence reports. "I think we are now at what we were afraid was going to happen.

"I don't see how it would facilitate the talks," "The principal thing is control to the United Nations, he added, "and it is to see if we can build enough depth, however, creates problems for American forces left behind, he said.

Indian Police Holt Hindu Rally, Shut Down New Delhi

Riot police arrested thousands of anti-government Hindu demonstrators and fired tear gas and rubber bullets on thronging Thursday in one of the thorniest security crackdowns imposed on this city in recent years.

As a Hindu fundamentalist party tried to hold a massive rally in downtown New Delhi, blocking roads leading into the city, turning sports stadiums into garrison forts, authorities tightened controls over and around major government buildings with razor-wire commandos. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which seeks to transform the constitutionally secular India into a Hindu state, has been arrested as many as 2.5 million people to demonstrate for elections to replace the government.

With the tight police controls and preventive arrest of many BJP supporters, though, the BJP assembly only a few thousand protesters at the rally. Party president V. N. Krishna Reddy ordered Thursday's heavy crackdown — with an estimated 75,000 police and paramilitary officers deployed in the capital — after having been forced of failing to act decisively enough to prevent the Ayodhya clash.

Police arrested senior BJP leaders as they encouraged followers to defy the ban on the rally. Party President V. N. Krishna Reddy ordered Thursday's heavy crackdown — with an estimated 75,000 police and paramilitary officers deployed in the capital — after having been forced off failing to act decisively enough to prevent the Ayodhya clash.

Police arrested senior BJP leaders as they encouraged followers to defy the ban on the rally. Party President V. N. Krishna Reddy ordered Thursday's heavy crackdown — with an estimated 75,000 police and paramilitary officers deployed in the capital — after having been forced off failing to act decisively enough to prevent the Ayodhya clash.

Police arrested senior BJP leaders as they encouraged followers to defy the ban on the rally. Party President V. N. Krishna Reddy ordered Thursday's heavy crackdown — with an estimated 75,000 police and paramilitary officers deployed in the capital — after having been forced off failing to act decisively enough to prevent the Ayodhya clash.

Police arrested senior BJP leaders as they encouraged followers to defy the ban on the rally. Party President V. N. Krishna Reddy ordered Thursday's heavy crackdown — with an estimated 75,000 police and paramilitary officers deployed in the capital — after having been forced off failing to act decisively enough to prevent the Ayodhya clash.