

THE FEASIBILITY OF DJIBOUTI AS AN INTERMEDIATE STAGING BASE FOR U.S. LAND FORCE OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**A Monograph
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for U.S. Land Force Operations in the Middle East

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ABSTRACT

THE FEASIBILITY OF DJIBOUTI AS AN ISB FOR U.S. LAND FORCE OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, by MAJ Michael J. Talley, 57 pages.

As the United States (U.S.) sustains the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and the prospect of invading Iraq looms imminent, there remains a pressing need for viable intermediate staging bases (ISB) in the Middle East to conduct decisive military operations. Recent policy changes and attitudes by the region's predominantly Muslim inhabitants have limited the US's choices for staging operations within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (AOR). Djibouti's geography, infrastructure, and capacity to accommodate a sizable military formation make it an ideal operations and logistics hub.

The country's pro-Western stance and support for United Nations (UN) peace support initiatives and humanitarian civic actions illustrates the potential for a cooperative arrangement involving U.S. forces. Djibouti may offer the regional combatant commander a significant advantage through greater operational reach and increased flexibility in operational design. Destroying *Hammás* strongholds in Sudan, neutralizing oppressive warlords in Somalia, or preparing to conduct offensive operations against rogue nations are all likely scenarios for U.S. land forces, and Djibouti may be the optimal launch pad.

The study provides an overview of Djibouti and the Horn of Africa region by examining its historical background, socio-economic structure, political system, religious and cultural idiosyncrasies and the impact on military operations. It also defines optimal ISB standards and discusses the country's ability to support military operations. Finally, the study analyzes current regional disparities that affect U.S. and global interests and the likelihood for U.S. military intervention.

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CHAPTER 1

WHY DJIBOUTI?

As the United States (U.S.) sustains the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and the prospect of invading Iraq looms imminent, there remains a pressing need for viable intermediate staging bases (ISB) in the Middle East to conduct decisive military operations. Recent policy changes and attitudes by the region's predominantly Muslim inhabitants have limited the US's choices for staging operations within the area of responsibility (AOR). Djibouti's geography, infrastructure, and capacity to accommodate a sizable military formation make it an ideal operations and logistics hub.

The country's pro-Western stance and support for United Nations (UN) peace support initiatives and humanitarian civic actions illustrates the potential for a cooperative arrangement involving U.S. forces. Djibouti may offer the regional combatant commander a significant advantage through greater operational reach and increased flexibility in operational design. Destroying *Hammás* strongholds in Sudan, neutralizing oppressive warlords in Somalia, or preparing to conduct offensive operations against rogue nations are all likely scenarios for U.S. land forces, and Djibouti may be the optimal launch pad.

The monograph is intended to assess Djibouti's capacity as an ISB for U.S. military operations in the Middle East. The study will use the following three criteria and supporting evidence to evaluate the country's feasibility.

The first criterion assesses Djibouti's feasibility by tracing its historical background, socioeconomic structure, politics, religious, and cultural idiosyncrasies to

gain an appreciable understanding of the region and how these factors will impact military operations. The information will also provide an estimate of the country's tolerance towards the U.S. and its political and military objectives. This section of the monograph introduces the study and sets the conditions for a more in-depth analysis, in subsequent chapters, of Djibouti's feasibility as an ISB. The research will also determine Djibouti's ability to support regional conflicts by assessing current operations in the Middle East and potential theater operations to determine advantages and disadvantages of staging from Djibouti.

Using measurable criteria, such as port depths and berths, airport runway and movement on the ground (MOG) capacities, and existing communications architecture, the study will analyze how Djibouti is able to support military operations. The research will draw current operations information from military publications and Internet sources, to include the Global Command and Control System-Army (GCCS-A) and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) computer networks.

The second criterion, acceptability, will identify the standards for an ISB through joint and Army doctrine, military journals and publications, regional command staff estimates, military personnel, and civilian contractors with recent deployment experience. The author will consult subject matter experts through direct contact and official correspondence with focused and structured interviews. The purpose of this methodology is to compare and contrast successful ISB models with Djibouti to assist in determining its feasibility. Acceptability includes identifying U.S. goals and interests in the region through national administration policies and declarations, the National Security Strategy (NSS), and applicable Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA).

The third criterion evaluates Djibouti's suitability by examining infrastructure and geographical data from the Global Command Communications System-Army (GCCS-A) and U.S. CENTCOM networks, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and World Fact Book software, published theses, books, periodicals, and various internet sources. This aspect of the research is essential to determine the country's capacity and ability to accommodate U.S. land forces.

The study will also assess after-action reviews from recent U.S. Marine Corps training exercises based in the region. Sources for future regional operations include the *National Security Strategy* and *National Military Strategy*. The research will attempt to identify potentially hostile factions within the region and determine likely actions against U.S. forces and the force protection measures required to counter acts of terrorism and sabotage. Finally, the research will determine if Djibouti's feasibility as an Intermediate Staging Base prospect for U.S. land force operations in the Middle East.

Assessing the feasibility of Djibouti as an ISB for U.S. land force operations in the Middle East is of direct importance to the concepts of operational art and operational design. The Bush administration's aggressive stance on prosecuting the GWOT and ousting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein makes the probability of U.S. military intervention in the region very likely in the near future. Conversely, world opinion is largely opposed to such action and the likelihood of regional players such as Yemen, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia accommodating U.S. military operations is doubtful. The prospering relationship between the U.S. and Djibouti is paving the way for possible future operations in the region, and military planners would be remiss not to consider it as a primary ISB in the construct of military operations in the Middle East.

“The operational level of war is where campaigns and major operations are conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within a theater area of operation.”¹ It links the tactical employment of forces to strategic objectives. Using military forces to achieve strategic goals through design is operational art. Operational design allows commanders to use resources efficiently to achieve strategic objectives and shapes the situation for tactical actions. It includes employing military forces and arranging their efforts in time, space, and purpose. A viable ISB affords operational and tactical commanders an opportunity to gather information on the area of operations, train, and finalize plans for deployment. It provides a logistics support base for deploying units in transit to a combat theater or other missions.

Recent Pentagon studies estimate a minimum required force package of 300,000 troops to invade Iraq and overthrow Hussein.² The ability to accommodate such a large number of land forces and combat systems in addition to supporting air strikes may overwhelm potential host nations. One of the courses of action cited includes Turkey, Kuwait, and Qatar as possible staging bases.³ The complexity of religious and cultural allegiances may alter the political position of these countries and subsequently be factored into the operational design. Planners must consider alternate and supplemental ISB locations and install branches and sequels for the waffling of unpredictable allies. Djibouti may provide such an alternative.

¹Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO], 14 June 2001), 2-5.

²Strobel and Landay, "Planning for Invasion of Iraq," *Kansas City Star*, 26 July 2002, A-1.

³bid.

The proximity of the ISB to the area of operations must also be considered in the operational design. An ideal ISB is located at an area that provides a multinodal transportation hub where road, rail, and air transport converges--Djibouti possesses such an infrastructure. Operational art is translated into operations plans through operational design. Djibouti's feasibility assessment may give the U.S. a viable options for staging a campaign in the Middle East.

Djibouti is a developing African country located on the shore of the Red Sea. It gained independence from France in 1977 and is governed by an elected president and parliament. Approximately two-thirds of its population of 650,000 reside in the capital, also called Djibouti (or Djibouti City). The country is strategically located among Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia and borders the critical Strait of *Bab el Mandeb*. In the past, the government of Djibouti has assisted the deployment of U.S. forces in the region by allowing military units to stage from the country. This fact was demonstrated when U.S. military aircraft used the Djibouti International Airport from 25 January to 23 February 1999, to support a potential noncombatant evacuation of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Djibouti also served as an interim medical support base for victims of the USS *Cole* attack. Wounded U.S. service members received treatment at the French hospital in Djibouti before evacuation to Germany for definitive medical care. Most recently, Djibouti has been cooperating in the U.S.-led GWOT. Several hundred American troops have been stationed at *Le Monier* barracks since April 2002. A large contingent of

Special Operations Forces (SOF) is also based at *Le Monier*, likely pre-positioned to hunt for al-Qaida terrorists in nearby Yemen.⁴

Djibouti's air and sea facilities have proven their value to U.S. military force projection and operations in and around the region. The country's airfield served as part of a strategic air bridge for operations in Somalia. Additionally, the capital city possesses port and fuel storage facilities capable of receiving various U.S. naval vessels. Djibouti's pro-Western orientation and long standing French presence, permits the U.S. important access to support facilities for crisis response.⁵

The Red Sea and Horn of Africa subregion includes the African countries on the Suez Canal, Red Sea, and *Bab el Mandeb*. Close ties with countries in the Horn allow access to these critical sea lines of communications (SLOCs) for transit from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Djibouti enjoys a stable political climate, thanks in part to the large French military presence based in country; however, Djibouti's international borders are very porous and lightly patrolled. In particular, Somalia, Djibouti's neighbor to the south, is believed to be a haven for terrorists and other insurgent elements. Continuing instability in Somalia and Yemen presents the potential for internal unrest in Djibouti, which has large ethnic Somali and Yemeni populations. In addition, neighboring Ethiopia and Eritrea recently concluded a settlement to a long-running border dispute, and nearby Yemen is pursuing a struggle against potential terrorists. Civil unrest or armed conflict in

⁴Robert Schlesinger, "U.S. Special Forces Develop Base Amid Secrecy," *Boston Globe*, 12 December 2002 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news>, Internet; accessed on 13 December 2002.

⁵U.S. State Department, *Foreign Policy Papers* [document on-line] available from <http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/training/FMTR2002/IIa>, Internet; accessed on 30 July 2002.

neighboring countries could disrupt air travel to and from Djibouti or otherwise negatively affect its security situation.

The Horn of Africa continues to suffer from decades of economic chaos and political instability. In Somalia, international humanitarian relief efforts slowed the effects of the recent famine, but these results are only temporary without political reconciliation by the Somalis themselves. Similarly, a decade of civil discord in Sudan produced a level of suffering in the southern portion worse than Somalia. While international relief organizations attempt to ease this suffering, Sudan's central government continues its efforts to suppress the population in the south and to support global terrorism at the expense of working toward reconciliation.⁶

In 1991, the fall of the Siad Barre and Mengistu governments in Somalia and Ethiopia caused Djibouti to face national security threats due to the instability in the neighboring states and a massive influx of refugees estimated at 100,000 from Somalia and Ethiopia. In 1996, a revitalized organization of seven East African states, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), established its secretariat in Djibouti. IGAD's mandate is for regional cooperation and economic integration.⁷

In 2000, Djibouti played a key role in the search for peace in Somalia by hosting the Somali Reconciliation Conference. Djibouti also hosted the Arta Conference, which brought together various Somali clans and warlords. Djibouti's efforts to promote reconciliation in Somalia led to the establishment of the Transitional National Government (TNG) in Somalia. Djibouti hopes the TNG can form the basis for bringing

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

peace and stability to Somalia. The United Nations Security Council has recently expressed its strong support for efforts by the government of Djibouti to restore peace and stability in neighboring Somalia. Despite the trying conditions, Djibouti continues to progress as an independent nation while developing close ties to the West.⁸ As the Horn of Africa continues to struggle with turmoil, a stable, more democratic Djibouti will remain a vital recipient of U.S. military training assistance programs.

Djibouti's proactive attitude toward the United Nations (UN) and the U.S. illustrates the potential for a cooperative arrangement involving U.S. forces. The regional strife is prevalent, and the prospect of using Djibouti as an ISB for peace operations is a legitimate, if not inevitable, possibility. This would clearly provide U.S. land forces with a significant advantage in preparing for combat and peace operations. Prolonged operations of this nature tend to deteriorate combat effectiveness as demonstrated recently in Afghanistan. Djibouti could also serve as an R&R sanctuary for troop rotations while accommodating additional logistics nodes, to include intermediate aviation maintenance and combat support hospitals. Djibouti would provide greater operational reach with a reduced logistical footprint in the area of operations. "ISBs are normally located within the theater of operations and outside the area of operations (AO)."⁹

As the U.S. prepares for a sustained war against terrorism and the possibility of invading Iraq remains clear and present, there will be a pressing need for access to ISBs

⁸Ibid.

⁹Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, 3-57.

in the Middle East to conduct decisive military operations. Creating advantages for the land force by gaining the initiative is a component of the operational art. An ISB selected for its capabilities and strategic location may prove decisive in the GWOT or in an offensive operation against Iraq. The research will determine Djibouti's feasibility for these types of operations and recommend or disqualify its use for Middle East campaign planning and its utility within the framework of operational art and design.

CHAPTER 2

DJIBOUTI: A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH?

Historical Background

The Republic of Djibouti gained its independence on 27 June 1977. It is the successor to the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, created in the early nineteenth century as a result of French interest in the Horn of Africa. The recorded history of Djibouti goes back thousands of years to a time when the inhabitants traded hides and skins for the perfumes and spices of ancient Egypt, India, and China. Through close contacts with the Arabian Peninsula for more than 1,000 years, the Somali and Afar tribes in this region became the first on the African continent to adopt Islam.¹

Rochet d'Hericourt's Shoa region expedition marked the beginning of French interest in the African shores of the Red Sea. Further exploration by Henri Lambert, French Consular Agent at Aden, and Captain Fleuriot de Langle led to a peace treaty and cooperative agreement between France and the sultans of Raheita, Tadjoura, and Gobaad. The French purchased the Port of Obock from the sultan of Gobaad in 1862. Growing French interest in the area took place against a backdrop of British activity in Egypt and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In 1884, France expanded its protectorate, to include the Gulf of Tadjoura and the Somaliland. A French port was established at Djibouti in 1887, and quickly became a major coaling station for French ships bound for Asia and the Indian Ocean. The completion of the railway to Addis Ababa thirty years later made Djibouti the main gateway for Ethiopia's international trade. France and

¹The League of Arab States, "Military Powers," *The Defense Encyclopedia* 2 (February 1987): 7-14.

Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia established boundaries of the protectorate in 1897.

Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I validated the agreements in 1945 and 1954.²

The administrative capital was moved from Obock to Djibouti in 1896. Djibouti, which has a navigable natural harbor and ready access to the Ethiopian highlands, attracted trade caravans crossing East Africa as well as Somali settlers from the south. The Franco-Ethiopian railway, linking Djibouti to the heart of Ethiopia, was begun in 1897 and reached Addis Ababa in June 1917, which further facilitated the increase of trade.³

During the Italian invasion and occupation of Ethiopia in the 1930s and during World War II, constant border skirmishes occurred between French and Italian forces. The area was ruled by the Vichy (French) government from the fall of France until December 1942, when French Somaliland forces broke a Vichy blockade to join the Free French and the Allied forces. A local battalion from Djibouti participated in the liberation of France in 1944.⁴

On 22 July 1957, the colony was reorganized to give the people considerable self-government. On the same day, a decree applying the Overseas Reform Act (*Loi Cadre*) established a territorial assembly that elected eight of its members to an executive council. Members of the executive council were responsible for one or more of the territorial services and held the title of minister. The council advised the French-

²Department of State, "Djibouti (11/01)," [article on-line] available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>; Internet; accessed on 30 July 2002.

³Ibid.

⁴Tom J. Farer, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1979), 14-15.

appointed governor general. In a September 1958 constitutional referendum, French Somaliland opted to join the French community as an overseas territory. This act entitled the region to representation by one deputy and one senator in the French Parliament and by one counselor in the French Union Assembly.⁵

The first elections to the territorial assemble were held on 23 November 1958, under a system of proportional representation. In the next assemble elections (1963), a new electoral law was enacted. "Representation was abolished in exchange for a system of straight plurality vote based on lists submitted by political parties in seven designated districts. Ali Aref Bourhan, allegedly of Turkish origin, was selected to be the president of the executive council."⁶

French President Charles de Gaulle's August 1966 visit to Djibouti was marked by two days of public demonstrations by Somalis demanding independence. On 21 September 1966, Louis Saget, appointed governor general of the territory after the demonstrations, announced the French government's decision to hold a referendum to determine whether the people would remain within the French Republic or become independent. In March 1967, 60 percent chose to continue the territory's association with France.⁷

In 1975, the French government began to accommodate increasingly insistent demands for independence. In June 1976, the territory's citizenship law, which favored the Afar minority, was revised to reflect more closely the weight of the Issa Somali. The

⁵Department of State, "Djibouti (11/01)."

⁶Ibid.

⁷International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study Guide* (Washington, DC: International Business Publications, USA, 2000), 29-31.

electorate voted for independence in a May 1977 referendum, and the Republic of Djibouti was established on 27 June 1977. The rising pressure of independence brought an Issa politician named Hassan Gouled Aptidon to prominence. Gouled successfully fought those within his own Issa ethnic group who sought union with Somalia. He argued the Afar community out of its reluctance to break the French connection. He became Djibouti's first president at independence and was reelected as the sole candidate in national elections in 1981 and 1987. His party, the *Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès* (Popular Rally for Progress), was formed in 1981 and declared Djibouti's only political party until the early 1990s. It has been the ruling party since its inception. Gouled negotiated a treaty that authorized France to maintain its military bases in the country. The French military presence, in addition to enriching Djibouti, allowed the country to remain unscathed by the wars in the Horn of Africa throughout the late 1970s and 1980s.⁸

Djibouti is France's largest foreign military base and plays host to several thousand French military personnel, including the 13e Demi-Brigade de la Légion Étrangère (13e DBLE--13th Half-Brigade of the Foreign Legion). The sizable French presence in the country guarantees the survival of the Gouled regime, which has been threatened by internal and external organized opposition, in addition to the instability of its larger neighbors: Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. In 1991, a merger of three Afar groups launched a major assault on the regime under the rubric of *Le Front pour la Restauration de L'Unité et la Démocratie* (Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy [FRUD]). After two years of fighting, the Government inflicted a series of

⁸Ibid.

significant military defeats on FRUD. In May 1993, Gouled was reelected as president. FRUD then split into a number of mutually antagonistic factions, one of which moved to arrange a political settlement with the government. With French backing, the government gradually restored control, and the conflict concluded with a peace accord in December 1994.

Gouled's party, the *Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès* formed an alliance with the progovernment faction of FRUD to contest the National Assembly elections held in December 1997 and won all the seats.⁹ The main opposition party, *Parti de Renouveau Démocratique* (New Democratic Party [PRD]), failed to gain any representation despite attracting 20 percent of the vote. Gouled resigned in the spring of 1999, shortly before the most recent presidential election (figure 1). Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, a Somali, assumed the leadership of the RPP/FRUD alliance and was elected President of Djibouti 8 May 1999.¹⁰

Guelleh defeated his sole rival, Moussa Ahmed Idriss of the PRD, by three to one, in a recent poll.¹¹ The other FRUD faction, controlled by Ahmed Dini, continued to launch sporadic attacks against the government from its bases in the far north of the country until the spring of 2001. A comprehensive Peace Accord, which effectively ended the civil war in Djibouti, was signed on 12 May 2001. Abroad, Djibouti has taken a major interest in the upheavals in its two large neighbors and Eritrea. Given its small, independent status, Djibouti often seeks to play the role of honest broker in regional

⁹International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study Guide*, (Washington, DC International Business Publications, USA, 2000), 29-31.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., 31.

disputes--most recently the 1998 Eritrea-Ethiopia border war. Peace has been and remains the symbol of the Djibouti government policy.



Fig. 1. Photograph of President Ismail Omar Guelleh. Reproduced from *Mainichi Interactive Daily News*, "Djibouti: Celebrating 25 Years of Independence," by H. E. Rachad Farah; [document on-line] available from <http://mdn.mainichi.co.jp/national/0206/0627djibouti.html>; Interenet; accessed on 30 November 2002.

Greater than half of Djibouti's 560,000 inhabitants live in the capital city. The indigenous population is divided between the majority Somalis (predominantly the Issa tribe, with minority Issak and Gadaboursi representation) and the Afars (Danakils). All are Cushitic-speaking peoples, and nearly all are Muslim.

Djibouti has its own armed forces, including a small army, which expanded significantly during the young nation's civil war years. The country's security is also assured by the continued presence of some 3,400 French troops, which includes an 800-man French Foreign Legion unit.¹²

¹²The League of Arab States, "Military Powers," *The Defense Encyclopedia* 2 (February 1987): 7-14.

Population

Based on linguistic criteria, the two largest ethnic groups are the Somali and the Afar. Both groups adhere at least nominally to the Sunnite branch of Islam and speak related, but not mutually intelligible, eastern Cushitic languages. The Afar (Denakil or Danakil) speaks a language that forms a dialect continuum with Saho. Saho-Afar is usually classified as an Eastern Cushitic language of the Afro-Asiatic language phylum. The Afar lives in the sparsely populated areas to the west and north of the Gulf of Tadjour. This region includes parts of several former as well as extant Afar sultanates. "The sultans' roles are now largely ceremonial, and the social divisions within the traditional Afar hierarchy are of diminished importance."¹³

The Somali (Issa)

The Somali, who also speak an Eastern Cushitic language, are concentrated in the capital and the southeastern quarter of the country. Their social identity is determined by clan-family membership. More than half of the Somali belongs to the Issa; whose numbers exceed those of the Afar. The Issa, of the *Dir* clan-family, comprise about 40 percent of the total population, while the Afars form roughly 35 percent. The remaining Somali are predominately members of the Gadaboursi and Issaq clans.¹⁴

Somali people of Africa occupy all of Somalia, a strip of Djibouti, the southern Ethiopian region of Ogaden, and part of northwestern Kenya. Except for the arid coastal area in the north, the Somalis occupy the nomad regions of plains, coarse grass, and

¹³International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study Guide*, 98-99.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

streams. They speak a language of the Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic (formerly Hamito-Semitic) family.

In the fourteenth century, Arabs converted the Somalis to Islam. They began their expansion southward from the arid steppes to their present borders, which overflow what was traditionally known as Somaliland. Although three great divisions of Somalis exist, roughly corresponding to the northern, central, and southern parts of the region, they demonstrate considerable cultural unity.¹⁵

The basis of Somali society is the *rer* (large, self-contained kinship group or clan), consisting of a number of families claiming common descent from a male ancestor. "A Somali has obligations both to his *rer* and to the loosely defined tribe of which his *rer* is a part. Government of the *rer* is markedly patriarchal, although the chief is chosen by a group of elders who counsel him."¹⁶

The Somalis are primarily nomadic herdsmen who, because of intense competition for scarce resources, have been extremely individualistic and frequently involved in blood feuds or wars with neighboring tribes and peoples. Their conception of Islam is vague, and religious practices are dominated by the worship of ancestral saints.

A second category of Somalis are the townspeople and agriculturists of the urban centers, especially along the coast of the Horn of Africa, where intense and prolonged intimacy with the Islamic tradition has rendered the culture highly organized and religiously orthodox and where geographic position has turned the townspeople into commercial middlemen between the Arab world and the nomadic tribes of the interior.¹⁷

¹⁵Frances Linzee Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti* (Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, Ltd., 2000), 420-421.

¹⁶International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study*, 98-99.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 99.

The Afars

The Afars are descendants of Arabian immigrants in the third century B.C. They are the first of the present inhabitants of Ethiopia to perpetuate their pastoral life into full-scale nomadism. They inhabit northeastern Ethiopia and in Djibouti, where, with the Issas, they are the dominant people. Denakil is the name used by surrounding tribes to identify them. Amharic Adal, Arabic Denakil people of the Horn of Africa, speak Saho, a language of the Eastern Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic (formerly Hamito-Semitic) family.¹⁸

The Afars' subsistence economy depends on livestock, especially goats, some camels, and more rarely, cattle. There are some exceptions, such as fishermen in the coastal areas and agriculturists in the Assau Oasis. The Afars also mine and export salt.

Proud, highly individualistic, and feared by outsiders, the Afars are organized in patrilineal kin groups. Cooperation in larger units, such as subtribe or tribe, is induced only by warfare against other tribes or neighboring peoples. Two distinct classes, the Asaimara ("Red Men") and Adoimara ("White Men"), constitute the landowning, titled nobles and the lower-class tenants, respectively.¹⁹

Age-set societies exist wherein people of the same age group are subject to a chief who settles disputes among them. Beyond this, legal procedure consists of the rules for compensation for adultery--a system of fines to the injured husband and revenge for homicide. "Blood feuds are a principal, perennial, and costly occupation, except among the few sultanates, notably at Assaud, in which despotic law is backed up with an

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

army."²⁰ The Afars are nominally Muslim, but even a slight degree of orthodoxy in practice is attained only in the coastal regions and in the sultanates. "The nomads of the interior are lax, and though they hold Islam in great esteem, their own practices are imbued with earlier Cushitic religion."²¹

Analysis

Although the Issas and Afars have coexisted without major conflicts, tensions between them have always been subtle. In the selection of the cabinet, efforts have been made to maintain a careful balance between the two communities, and there is a tacit understanding that as the president is an Issa, the Prime Minister should be an Afar.

On several occasions the Afar have accused the Issa of nepotism and tribalism. They feel they have been discriminated against since independence. The first Prime Minister, Ahmed Dini Ahmed, an Afar, resigned his post just six months after taking office, complaining of "tribal repression."²² During the 1982 general election, the *Centre d'information sur Djibouti*, based in Paris, accused Gouled of withdrawing the franchise of some voters in the Afar region. In 1988, when Gouled toured the interior of the country, the Okal of Yoboki, a close relative of the Prime Minister, complained that the Afar were underrepresented in the civil service and the army. In 1989, Afars, protesting against alleged discriminatory government policies, clashed with security forces at Tadjoura. These protests and complaints reveal the underlying tensions between the Issa

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Samuel M. Makinda, *Security in the Horn of Africa* (London, England: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992), 50-59.

and Afar, which have been amplified by the fact that the principal antigovernment groups consist mainly of Afars. In January 1991, the government claimed that there had been an abortive coup masterminded by Ali Aref, Chief Minister of the territory, before independence in 1977.²³

FRUD is also Afar-dominated, but the government, eager to obtain French military assistance, has persistently portrayed it as a group of "Ethiopian mercenaries."²⁴ FRUD has become a symbol of resistance and salvation for the people of the northern towns of Obock and Tadjoura. In 1991, FRUD claimed to have more than 2,000 guerrillas deployed to the north and south of Djibouti City. FRUD has a nine-member executive council and a thirty-seven-member central committee.

Most of Djibouti's political problems have sprung from ethnic tensions created by the rivalry between the major groups, the Issas and the Afars. Although these problems may be viewed in terms of Djibouti's present difficulties, they have deep historical roots. Djibouti's location at the crossroads of traditional migration routes among Egypt, Sudan, and the Middle East led it to have a population which consists of a minority of Afars, with cultural leaning towards Ethiopia, and a majority of Issas, whose cultural links are with Somalia. Colonial powers drew up boundaries without taking account of ethnic divisions. As a result, Djibouti has been faced with the problem of how to weld the two communities into a single nation.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

Geography, Climate, and Natural Resources

Djibouti is divided into three principal regions: The coastal plain, the volcanic plateaus, and the mountain ranges (figure 2). The coastal plain is deeply indented by the Gulf of Tadjoura and rises inland 200 meters above sea level. The volcanic plateaus are located in the country's southern and central expanses, rising from 300 to 1,500 meters. These plateaus are bordered by sunken plains and lakes, which are some of the lowest surface elevations in Africa. The northern mountain ranges elevate to over 2,000 meters at Mount Mousa. The land is bare, dry, and desolate, marked by sharp cliffs, deep ravines, burning sand, and thorny shrubs. Several sandy-bottomed streams flow in the mountain region, and a subterranean river, the Houmbouli, is an important source of water.²⁵

The climate is extremely hot, with mean daily maximum temperatures at Djibouti City ranging between 84 degrees Fahrenheit in January and 106 degrees Fahrenheit in July. From late summer to the end of March, sea winds bring rain from the Indian Ocean, averaging less than five inches annually along the coast to approximately twenty inches inland.²⁶ Most of Djibouti is barren desert, and the vegetation consists of low-lying thorn scrub and some grasses. There are some permanent wooded areas in the mountain regions. Less than 1 percent of the land in Djibouti is arable, and only about 9 percent is available as pasture or rangeland.²⁷

²⁵Gordon, 423-424.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

The only external surface water resources come from Ethiopia, through the border Lake Abbe in the western part of the country. The resource cannot be fully utilized because of its high salt content. Groundwater recharge is limited to the infiltration of water in the wadis and is closely linked to the frequency of floods, the infiltration conditions in the wadis, and the permeability of the substratum. The groundwater resources are difficult to prospect and extract due in part to excessive salinity. Agricultural water comes from shallow wells, tube wells, or springs. Crops can only be grown under irrigation, which in general takes place in the cooler season from mid-November to May.

Economy

The economy is based on service activities connected with the country's strategic location and status as a free trade zone in northeast Africa. Two-thirds of the inhabitants live in the capital city; the remainder is primarily nomadic herders. Scanty rainfall limits crop production to fruits and vegetables, and most food must be imported. Djibouti provides services as both a transit port for the region and an international transshipment and refueling center. It has few natural resources and little industry. The nation is, therefore, heavily dependent on foreign assistance to help support its balance of payments and finance development projects. An unemployment rate of 40 percent continues to be a major problem. Per capita consumption dropped an estimated 35 percent over the last seven years because of recession, civil war, and a high population growth rate, to include immigrants and refugees. Additionally, renewed fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea has disturbed normal external channels of commerce. Faced with a multitude of

economic difficulties, the government has fallen in arrears on long-term external debt and barely meets the stipulations of foreign aid donors.²⁸

Djibouti's fledgling economy depends on a large foreign expatriate community, the maritime and commercial activities of the Port of Djibouti, its airport, and the operation of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad. During the civil war, there was a significant diversion of government budgetary resources from developmental and social services to military needs. France insists that future aid be conditional on an overhaul of Djibouti's dilapidated state finances in conjunction with International Monetary Fund (IMF). Agriculture and industry are little developed, in part due to the harsh climate, high production costs, unskilled labor, and the limited natural resources. Only a few mineral deposits exist in the country, and the arid soil is unproductive--89 percent is desert wasteland, 10 percent is pasture, and 1 percent is forested. Services and commerce provide most of the gross domestic product.²⁹

Djibouti confronts a national water scarcity problem, and consequently its nonurban population does not have adequate accesses to potable water supplies. This situation causes adverse consequences for the population's medical supplies, which yields poor results for the population's health and standard of living. Thus, the government is committed to implementing in collaboration with the World Bank staff a long-term program for the development of potable water supplies for the nonurban population. As in other sectoral programs, the government will seek to promote private sector solutions

²⁸ International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study Guide*, 12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

to the water scarcity problem and to ensure that appropriate pricing policies are put in place.

Regarding the national power and telecommunications sectors and the urban water sector, the government will delegate development in these sectors to their private sector owners with collaborative oversight provided by the new regulatory agency.

"However, in view of Djibouti's water scarcity problem, the government will, through its regulatory role, ensure a sustainable use of the aquifers utilized by the urban water utility by requiring that its private sector owners implement a water pricing policy that would conserve this scarce resource."³⁰

Telephone facilities in the city of Djibouti are adequate, as are the microwave radio relay connections to outlying areas of the country. Submarine cable networks to Jiddah, Suez, Sicily, and Singapore provide international communications, in addition to two satellite earth stations: Intelsat (Indian Ocean) and Arabsat regional microwave radio relay telephone networks. There is also a cellular telephone network enabling the country to have Internet services. Radio and television broadcast stations are quite basic with only one AM, two FM, no short wave stations, and one television station with five low-power repeaters. There are thirteen main telephone lines per 1,000 people. The population owns approximately 35,000 radios and 17,000 televisions.³¹

³⁰Ibid., 78.

³¹Ibid., 14.

Transportation

Djibouti's most important economic asset is its strategic location on the shipping routes between the Mediterranean Seas and the Indian Ocean--the republic lies on the west side of the Bab-el-Mandeb, which connects the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Its port remains an important container shipment and transshipment point on the shipping lanes transiting the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. It also functions as a bunkering port and a small French naval facility. The decision by the Saudi Arabian government to improve its own port facilities in Jeddah and Ethiopia's decision to promote its port at Assab recently have decreased the volume of economic activity for the Port of Djibouti.³²

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad is the only line serving central and southeastern Ethiopia. The single-track railway, a prime source of employment, occupies a prominent place in Ethiopia's internal distribution system for domestic commodities such as cement, cotton textiles, sugar, cereals, and charcoal.

Heavy transit trade traffic to Ethiopia requires increased maintenance and rehabilitation outlays for the main transit road and the port, thus, expanded financial resources for these purposes need to be identified. In August 1999, the government implemented a road user charge equivalent to US \$1 per ton of cargo payable by all trucks (registered locally and abroad) upon exit from the port in order to provide resources for a road maintenance fund. These resources are committed on a priority basis to fully repair the main road link to Ethiopia.³³

³²Department of State, "Djibouti (11/01) "[article on-line]; available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>; Internet; accessed on 30 July 2002.

³³International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study*, 79.

The government, in cooperation with the World Bank, intends to provide technical assistance to improve the economic efficiency of the road user charge by formulating it in terms of a truck axle load charge rather than the per ton cargo charge. Overweight trucks involved in the expanded transit trade have accelerated deterioration of the main highway. The maximum legal load limit is now thirteen tons per axle with substantial penalties for violations.³⁴

Principal exports from the region transiting Djibouti are coffee, salt, hide, dried beans, cereals, and other agricultural products. Djibouti itself has few exports, and the remainder goes to Ethiopia and northwestern Somalia. Djibouti's unfavorable balance of trade is offset partially by invisible earnings, such as transit taxes and harbor dues. The city of Djibouti has the only paved airport in the republic. Djibouti has one of the most liberal economic regimes in Africa, with almost unrestricted banking and commerce sectors. Military and economic agreements with France have produced continued security and economic assistance. Economic links with Arab states, Japan and China have also been welcome.

Because Djibouti is greatly affected by events that occur in Somalia and Ethiopia, relations are delicate. With the fall of the Said Bare and Magnets governments in Somalia and Ethiopia in 1991, Djibouti found itself faced with national security threats due to neighboring instability and a massive influx of refugees estimated at 100,000. In 1991, Djibouti hoped to play a key role in the transition process toward peace in Somalia by hosting the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, and the republic's role in assisting Ethiopia's redevelopment will likely increase in the near future. As a result of

³⁴Ibid.

such regional conflict, ties to other states and organizations that are more removed from tensions of the Horn of Africa are particularly valued.³⁵

Population and Social Factors

Djibouti's main assets are its strategic location on the Horn of Africa, its harbor and associated infrastructure, and its access to relatively rich fishing waters. However, Djibouti's strategic location is also the cause of its problems. Djibouti attracts populations from other countries in the region because it offers relative peace and stability and employment opportunities with salaries paid in hard currency. Immigrants and refugees place a tremendous burden on already weak social services and economic security.

Djibouti is rated as a lower-middle-income country, with an average per capita income of \$780 (U.S.) in 1993; however, estimated living standards are distorted by the high cost of living and a well-paid civil servant community. Most Djiboutians live at the subsistence level and living standards are more comparable with those in Ethiopia than with those in non-African countries with similar per capita GDP levels. GDP per capita in 1993 prices fell from \$1,505 (U.S.) in 1978 to \$854 (U.S.) in 1991. The situation further deteriorated in 1991 as the economy experienced a series setbacks, namely: a sharp inflow of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia because of the 1992-94 armed conflict between the Issas and the Afars and increased competition from Eritrea in providing transport services to the region. Concurrently, the government of Djibouti began to incur increasing deficits (internal and external) that led to a one-year stand-by

³⁵Ibid., 23.

arrangement with the IMF. This arrangement's objective was to stabilize the fiscal situation.³⁶

Poverty Assessment

Poverty in Djibouti is high. In 1996 about 45 percent of Djiboutians was living in households with adult equivalent expenditures below the level necessary to provide basic needs. Ten percent were estimated to live in extreme poverty, that is, they could not afford to buy the food necessary to maintain a minimum level of caloric consumption. Including the homeless and nomads would increase the percentage of households living in poverty and extreme poverty. Poverty is more widespread in Djibouti's rural areas and in the urban areas outside Djiboutiville than in the capital city. "The incidence of extreme poverty is more than seven times higher in rural areas (45.1 percent) than in Djiboutiville (6.2 percent)."³⁷ Refugees, nomads, the homeless, to include street children are highly impoverished and vulnerable groups. Although refugees living in camps benefit from food aid and free health care and education, they face a difficult situation and describe themselves as having lost everything, including their identity. War and poor rainfall have changed the nomad's normal patterns of transhumant behavior. Nomads cope by engaging in small-scale border trade and by receiving help from relatives living in the urban areas. The street children, natives of Somali or Ethiopia, live in dire poverty. They left their countries because of war or poverty, but have few chances to break the

³⁶Ibid., 90.

³⁷Ibid.

cycle of poverty. Unable to attend school, they cope by taking odd jobs and foraging from waste disposals.

The poor are characterized by the absence of purchasing power, low human capital accumulation, and poor standards of living. Most households in Djibouti are able to escape poverty because of their earning from employment. Fifty-five percent of the very poor live in households where no member is employed. These results underscore the importance of job creation in Djibouti.

Poverty, illiteracy, and low educational attainment are strongly correlated. The educational system, although free, is burdened by the needs of Djibouti's young population. For many, formal education ends with early childhood training at local *Quran* schools. Primary schools are run by the state and by Roman Catholic clergy. Advancement to the secondary level in the public system is limited by the size of state facilities. A small vocational training program is offered, but no postsecondary educational institutions exist. Less than one-fifth of the adult population is literate.³⁸

The literacy rate is approximately 57 percent, but the poor, women, and elderly are a significant disadvantage in literacy skills. The poor have an illiteracy rate of 64 percent, but even in the most affluent 20 percent of Djiboutian households, 37 percent of individuals are illiterate. The gender gap is wide, with 73 percent of the male population literate versus 45 percent of the women. Enrollment ratios show that educational attainment is not likely to improve substantially in the near future. Children begin school

³⁸Ibid., 101.

relatively late. Approximately one-out-of-four children starts school after the age of nine, and they begin leaving school when they are fourteen.³⁹

Health indicators are below regional standards. Life expectancy at birth is low at forty-nine years. The infant mortality rate, at 114 deaths per 1,000 live births, is one of the highest among Middle-Eastern and Sub-Saharan countries. Diarrhea and malnutrition together constitute the leading cause of death among children under five. Respiratory infections associated with chronic malnutrition are the second leading cause of mortality. High maternal mortality, estimated at 740 deaths per 100,000 live births, can be attributed to high fertility rates, anemia caused by malnutrition, and the widespread practice of female genital Mutilation. In addition, to endemic problems, tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, and AIDS exist.⁴⁰

Appropriate sanitation facilities and clean water are necessary to reduce the incidence of diarrheal disease and preserve the environment. Lack of access to water is clearly correlated with poverty. Households belonging to the richest quintile are seven times more likely to be connected to the ONED (the network that supplies tap water directly to houses) than households belonging to the poorest quintile. A large percentage of poor households purchase water from water trucks. This water costs four times the price paid by richer households connected to the ONED network. Sanitation indicators are substandard. In Djibouti, more than 40 percent of households lack proper drainage

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 99-101.

system for used water. The situation is particularly dangerous in the densely populated areas of Djiboutiville where most of the population lacks proper sanitation services.⁴¹

⁴¹International Business Publications, *Djibouti: Country Study Guide*, 92.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT DOES *RIGHT* LOOK LIKE FOR AN ISB?

A Doctrine-Based Template

"An ISB provides a logistics support base for deploying units in transit to a combat theater or other mission."¹ The area is a multinodal transportation hub where road, rail, and air transport converge with an airstrip that accommodates strategic aircraft, such as C-5s and Boeing 747s. The use of an ISB during deployment provides the regional combatant commander many advantages over deploying directly from home station. The ISB becomes more important as the distance from home station and the likelihood of hostilities increase. The commander can finalize his plans, gather additional intelligence, and conduct rehearsals and briefings in the ISB. ISBs provide an opportunity for units to redistribute and finalize their loads and for soldiers to recuperate after the long trip from their home station. The commander may choose to locate the reaction force at the ISB or use it as a safehaven.² The Department of State is responsible for coordinating with the ISB government. Using the ISB as a staging point for launching forces into another country can pose significant political problems. Doctrinally and in accordance with recently acquired tactics, techniques and procedures, a suitable ISB qualifies with the following capabilities:³

¹Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 54-40, *Area Support Group* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1995), 4-1.

²Headquarters, Department of the Army. Field Manual 90-29, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1994), 4-1 - 4-4.

³James J. McDonnell, "Lessons Learned From the Taszar Staging Base," *Army Logistics Management College* [article on-line] available from <http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/MarApr02/MS754.htm>; Internet; accessed on 21 August 2002.

1. Facilitates aircraft or ships used in deployment and re-deployment operations. Airfields have required runway length and ramp space. Ports have sufficient harbor depth, berthing space, material handling equipment (MHE), and staging areas.
2. Contains adequate electrical grids to allow effective communication with JTF and Regional Combatant Command headquarters, and embassy.
3. Contains adequate facilities for billeting, messing, and sanitation requirements of the force.
4. Contains repair and refuel capability for aircraft used in the operations.
5. Contains storage facilities for perishables, petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL); and supply classes V and VIII as required.
6. A reasonably secure area that minimizes force protection requirements.
7. A supportive populace and government that supports UN initiatives.

Road Network

The Djiboutian Ministry of Defense and the national police force share the responsibility for road safety in Djibouti. Landmines are known to be present in the northern districts of Tadjoureh and Obock. In addition, there are reports that there may be mines in the Ali Sabieh district in the south.

The two international main supply routes (MSR) to Djibouti City via Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, and Yoboki, Djibouti, are in poor condition due to heavy truck traffic on both roads. The presence of many heavy trucks on those routes demands that drivers remain vigilant. Major roads outside the capital are paved, but lack guardrails in some areas, and railroad crossings are not clearly marked.

Roads in Djibouti City and elsewhere in the country are narrow, poorly maintained, and poorly lit. Excessive speed, unpredictable local driving habits, pedestrians and livestock in the roadway, and the lack of basic safety equipment on many vehicles are daily hazards. Speed limits are posted occasionally but are not enforced. The stimulant drug *khat* is widely used, particularly in the afternoons, creating another traffic hazard.

Djibouti has 3,067 kilometers of roads, but only 412 kilometers are paved; the remaining roads are comprised of gravel or dirt. A tarred road extends from Djibouti to Kikhil City, Yoboki, and Galafi, on the Ethiopian border and connects with the main Assab-Addis Ababa highway. A secondary road connects Obock and Tadjoura with Randa and Dorra in the northern interior. The two main international routes to Djibouti City are in poor condition due to heavy truck traffic. Major roads outside the capital are paved, but lack guardrails in some areas. Railroad crossings are poorly marked. Street signs on the main truck routes are labeled in English and French.⁴

Rail System

The Djibouti railroad has been strategically and commercially important to Ethiopia since the end of the nineteenth century when the French and Ethiopian emperor designated Djibouti as the official outlet of Ethiopian commerce. As a result, a railway was constructed between Djibouti and Addis Ababa. This railway was completed in 1915 and is vital to Djibouti's economy.⁵

⁴Military Traffic Management Command Transportation Engineering Agency (MTMCTEA); available at <https://www.tea.army.mil/index.htm>; internet; accessed on 13 December 2002.

⁵Ibid.

Djibouti has approximately 100 kilometers of one-meter gauge track. The Addis Ababa Railroad is the only line that serves Djibouti and central and western Ethiopia. Overcrowding, poor maintenance, and sporadic criminal activity characterize rail travel in addition to occasional landmines disrupting rail services.

Port of Djibouti

The Port of Djibouti is located west of the Gulf of Aden and south of the entrance to the Red Sea in east Africa. This modern deep-water port is ideally situated for monitoring sea traffic in the southern end of the Red Sea, the *Bab al Mandeb* Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean. The port has twelve berths and a container terminal. The port has been modernized and serves as a transit hub for the region and an international transshipment and refueling center. Since the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea, there has been an increase in port trade as a result of the transfer of Ethiopia's foreign trade from Eritrea to Djibouti.⁶

The maximum draft for the entrance to the inner harbor is eleven meters, including a two-foot clearance for ships. The maximum draft for ships calling on the port is 10.36 meters. The maximum draft for vessels bunkering and tankers is twelve meters. Tidal variation is approximately three meters. The port is capable of accommodating large, medium speed, roll-on, roll-off (LMSR) ships at maximum draft. The LMSR design draft range is nine-to-eleven meters. The port is also fast sealift support (FSS) capable, but not at maximum draft (twelve meters). FSS can call on the Port of Djibouti with reduced loads. Quays 14 and 15 are the most optimal berths for FSS and LMSR

⁶Ibid.

vessels (figure 3). The port has adequate connection to local roads linking to major highways. Wharves and warehouses have rail spurs that connect to the line accessing the port from Addis Ababa. The port contains roughly forty acres of open storage in the main port and fourteen acres in the Container Terminal. 366,000 square feet of covered storage is available and "rail served."⁷ Petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) facilities, to include bunkering and POL reception facilities are available.

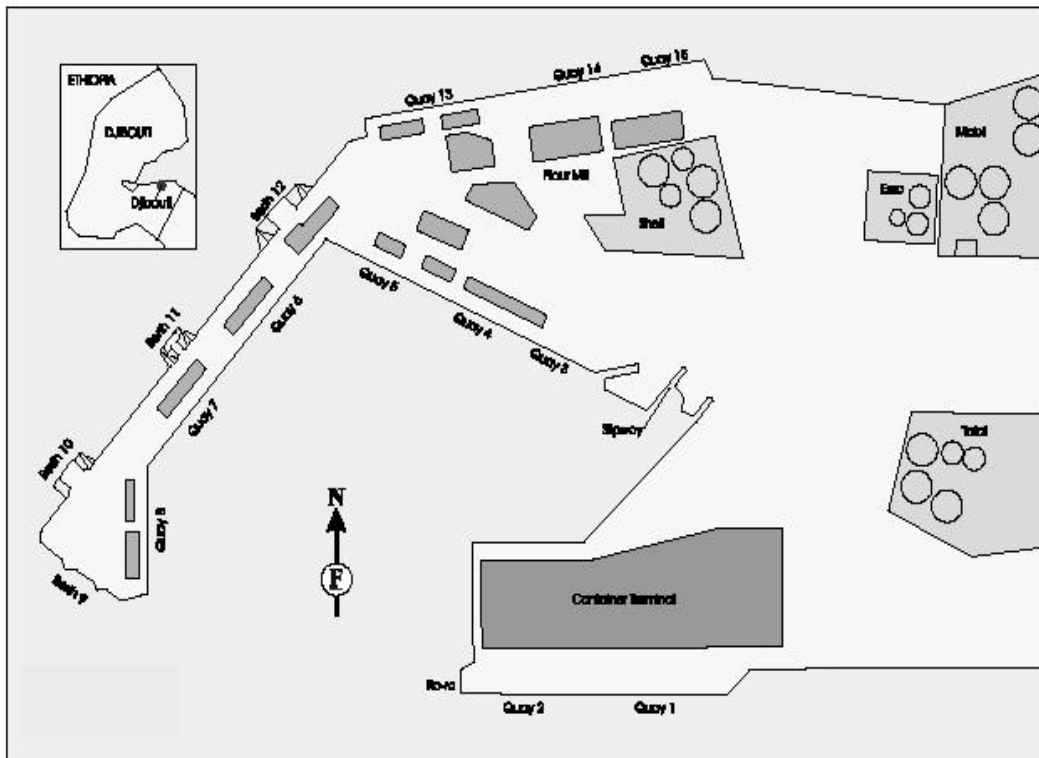


Fig. 3. Port of Djibouti. Reproduced from MTMCTEA [website] available from <https://www.tea.army.mil/index.htm>, Internet; accessed on 13 December 2002.

⁷Ibid.

Specialized materials handling equipment (MHE), to include container cranes, 88-ton mobile cranes, rubber-tired gantry cranes, Hyster lift trucks, and various forklifts are located on the container quay. Table 1 depicts total port estimated throughput based on short tons per day (STON/day).⁸

Table 1a. Total Port Estimated Throughput

Breakbulk (3 percent):	3,250 STON
RORO (75 percent):	9,680 STON
Container (20 percent):	12,190 STON
Barge Ship Mix (2 percent):	16,640 STON

Table 1b

Berth	Berth Length (ft)	Berth Depth (ft)	Breakbulk Throughput (STON/day)	RORO Throughput (STON/day)	Container Throughput (STON/day)
Quay 1	590	26	0	0	6,100
Quay 2	721	39	810	3,230	6,100
Quay 5	787	22	0	0	0
Quay 6-7	1,148	23	0	0	0
Quay 8	662	23	0	0	0
Quay 13	688	31	810	3,230	0
Quay 14-15	1,302	39	1,630	3,230	0

Source: MTMCTEA [website]; available from <https://www.tea.army.mil/index.htm>, Internet; accessed on 13 December 2002.

⁸Ibid.

Air-Staging Facilities

There are twelve airports in country with only two having permanent surface runways. Ambouli Airport is the only international airport in Djibouti located approximately seven kilometers from the Port of Djibouti. The airport affords suitable runway lengths for C-141B, C-5, C-130, C-17, KC-10, and KC-135 aircraft. Runway conditions and airfield lighting is reported adequate, with precautionary guidance to C-5 and C-17 taxiing and parking restricted on two of the ramps. Ambouli Airport MOG is reflected in table 2.

Table 2. Ambouli Airport MOG

Category	C-130	C-141	C-17	C5	KC-10	KC-135	Narrow Body	Wide Body
AMC Parking	3	1	1	1	1	1		1
Working	1	1	1	1	1	1		1

Ambouli Airport MOG based on data collected from Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) Planner Report; available from <https://www.afd.scott.af.mil>; Internet accessed on 18 December 2002. Working MOG shows how many aircraft can be processed during military operations based on parking capacity and equipment made available by the airfield manager or host nation.

One other airport Chabelley is capable of accommodating military operations with additional modification. Chabelley runways are suitable for C-130 and C-17, but unsuitable for C-141B, C-5, KC-10, and KC-135 aircraft due to runway width and narrow taxiways which inhibit turnaround capability. Additionally, Chabelley is not equipped

for night operations.⁹ A U.S. economic support fund of \$4 million is allocated for airport security.

U.S.-Djibouti Relations

Relations between the U.S. and Djibouti can be described as cooperative. In April 1977, the U.S. established a Consulate General in Djibouti. The U.S. Consulate General's status was raised to embassy following the Republic's declaration of independence. The first U.S. Ambassador to the Djibouti arrived in October 1980. In June 1992, The U.S. and Djibouti formed defense articles and related military training agreements.¹⁰

The assessed threat level for Djibouti rose in February 2001. Al-Ittihad al-Islamia (AIAI), an al-Qaida supported offshoot, maintains a presence in Djibouti and is reported to have planned attacks against U.S. interests in the Horn of Africa. In response to this threat and terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September 2001, President Guelleh created the national antiterrorism committee (CNLT). This committee, under the chairmanship of the justice minister, Ismael Houmed, coordinates the efforts of various governmental departments to prevent and fight against terrorism.¹¹

While Iraq, Libya, and Sudan maintain embassies in Djibouti, the government does not appear to support any terrorist activities undertaken by groups linked to these states. Politically, Djibouti follows the policy of mainstream Arab states, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Djiboutian government cooperates with the U.S. in apprehending,

⁹TACC Planner Report [document on-line]; available from <https://www.afd.scott.af.mil>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2002.

¹⁰Department of Defense, Country Handbook: Djibouti, Publication DOD-2630-DJI-032-02, missing publisher info December 2002, 52-53.

¹¹Ibid.

convicting, and punishing individuals responsible for terrorist acts. In a recent interview Roble Olhay, Djibouti's ambassador to the UN stated, "This war is fighting terrorism together, and we are part and parcel of that coalition. As long as there are threats and fears to rid this world of elements not toeing the line, every country has a responsibility."¹² Djibouti's support for the U.S.-led GWOT remains extremely proactive; however, the Geulleh administration has expressed frustration with the lack of U.S. development aid for Djibouti.

¹²Associated Press, "Djibouti Residents Welcome U.S. Terror-Fighting Forces," *Fox News*, available at <http://www.foxnews.com.html>; internet; accessed on 20 September 2002.

CHAPTER 4

CURRENT OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

For the first time since American troops withdrew from Somalia after a bloody firefight in the streets of Mogadishu, the U.S. military is rebuilding its combat power in the Horn of Africa. The primary objective is to put U.S. forces in position to strike cells of al-Qaeda in Yemen or East Africa. The Pentagon has also begun to use Djibouti to train its forces in desert warfare--skills that could be applied in Washington's campaign against terrorist groups or on the battlefields of Iraq. Several hundred U.S. troops have been stationed at *Le Monier* barracks since April 2002. The number has steadily increased to approximately 2,500 since October 2002. According to DOD officials, over 400 of the U.S. forces are Special Operations Forces (SOF) sent to Djibouti to pursue terrorists operating from the region.¹ Djibouti is close to Yemen, an al-Qaeda/AIAI haven and suspected hideout for those responsible for the USS *Cole* attack. It is located just north of Somalia, where groups sympathetic to al-Qaeda have been reported. It is also close to Kenya, where terrorists carried out a suicide bombing at a hotel frequented by Israeli tourists in November 2002.

In December 2002, the headquarters for Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-Horn of Africa arrived in Djibouti.² General Tommy R. Franks, Commander, USCENTCOM, said that a the troop buildup was intended to allow the U.S. to broaden its security assistance to regional allies, while remaining poised to attack terrorists. He

¹Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Move Commandos to East Africa," *The New York Times*, available at <http://www.nytimes.com>; internet; accessed on 21 September 2002.

also stated, "It's tied to the global war on terrorism; however, you choose to think about them in a great many countries in the Horn of Africa: Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Yemen."³ The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), commanded by Colonel Richard Mills, conducted a combined live fire exercise (CALFEX) using Djibouti's modern ranges in preparation for high intensity conflict September to December 2002. Germany deployed approximately 1,000 troops to Djibouti as well as three frigates and one tanker to the Red Sea. British troops conducted an exercise in early 2002, and Spain contributed fifty soldiers in support of Task Force 150, a naval unit that patrols Africa's eastern coast.⁴

The military is not the only organization that has found Djibouti to be a convenient launching pad. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted classified missions from an airfield in Djibouti using the Predator unmanned aerial vehicle. CIA missions include attacks against al-Qaeda operatives using the Predator in October 2002.⁵

Bereft of oil or valuable resources, the impoverished nation of Djibouti has long been a desirable base for Western militaries. Put simply, what Djibouti offers is location. It is close to Yemen and near the *Bal el Mandeb* Strait, a critical choke point where the Red Sea meets the Gulf of Aden. The sea-lanes near Djibouti are particularly crucial, since they are used for commercial shipping and to transport American war materiel to

²Major General John F. Sattler, USMC, DOD News Briefing, *U.S. Department of Defense Transcript*, 10 January 2003.

³Eric Schmitt, "U.S. to Add to Forces in Horn of Africa," *The New York Times*, available at <http://www.nytimes.com>; Internet; accessed on 31 October 2002.

⁴Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Turns Horn of Africa Into a Military Hub," *The New York Times*, available at <http://www.nytimes.com>; internet; accessed on 2 December 2002.

⁵*Ibid.*

the Persian Gulf. Djibouti has other advantages for the U.S. military as well, including a serviceable airport and harbor. The country is accustomed to the presence of Western military forces and is politically stable.

"We need to be where the action is,"⁶ stated Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld during a December 2002 visit to the region. He also said, "There's no question but that this part of the world is area where there's action. There are a number of terrorists, for example, just across the water in Yemen and the southern part of Saudi Arabia. These are serious problems."⁷ Djibouti is perfectly situated for dealing with such problems--located where the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden meet, it is one hour by sea from Yemen, Osama bin Laden's ancestral home and probable AIAI base of operations. It also shares borders with Ethiopia and Somalia, two countries known as sanctuaries for al-Qaeda fighters fleeing Afghanistan and having susceptibility terrorist influence.

Building on a concept he articulated in a June 2002 speech at West Point, President George W. Bush has adopted a new emphasis on preemption in his administration's National Security Strategy (NSS).⁸ Preemption, defined as the anticipatory use of force in the face of an imminent attack, has long been accepted as legitimate and appropriate under international law. In the new NSS, however, the administration is broadening the meaning to encompass preventive war as well, in which

⁶Robert Schlesinger, "In Djibouti, U.S. Special Forces Develop Base," *Boston Globe*, available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org>; Internet; accessed on 12 December 2002.

⁷Ibid.

⁸President George W. Bush, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point," *White House*, 1 June 2002, available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov>; Internet; accessed on 18 October 2002.

force may be used even without evidence of an imminent attack to ensure that a serious threat to the United States does not "gather" or grow over time. The strategy also elevates preemption in importance, and visibility, within the tool kit of U.S. foreign policy. A physical military presence postured in Djibouti to defeat such threats certainly meets NSS criteria.⁹

With the continued buildup of U.S. forces in the region, tiny Djibouti has emerged as the staging area for Washington's campaign against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups in the region. Djibouti is also a telling example of a problem that has bedeviled the Bush administration's war on terror: the struggle to harmonize its own military goals with the needs of countries it uses for military operations. While civilian aid has traditionally been a way to gain sympathy for the American presence in foreign lands, this is one place where the U.S. is not making much of a parallel effort. This is an important gap because the Horn of Africa is where terrorists have made inroads. Djiboutian officials have expressed increasing frustration and disbelief that U.S. assistance has not addressed the country's most critical needs.

President Bush's first NSS presents his vision of "a distinctly American internationalism." Media reports focused on the Strategy's support for preempting emerging threats militarily, but the 31-page document covers a far broader set of issues. At its core, the Strategy calls for the United States to use its "unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence" to establish "a balance of power that

⁹President George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, date [document on line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>; Internet; accessed on 18 October 2002.

favors human freedom" and to defeat the threat posed by "terrorists and tyrants."¹⁰ These themes will likely resonate with the American people, who believe that the United States should play a leading role in making the world a safer and better place. As the world's only superpower and a major humanitarian aid donor, the United States has a critical role in shaping the response to these emergencies. Whether or not the Bush administration decides to maintain American leadership in this area, it will have to develop firm guidelines for humanitarian action in the cases it chooses to address.

Last year Washington allocated a mere \$8.7 million in assistance for its new ally in the GWOT. Much of the assistance is intended to upgrade Ambouli Airport, a future hub for military operations. Only a small fraction is intended to meet the nation's pressing humanitarian and development needs. Djibouti, in fact, is such a low priority for assistance that the Agency for International Development, the foreign aid arm of the U.S. closed its Djibouti office in 1995. Djibouti is not the only case where Washington has taken what critics say is a narrow view of how to pursue its antiterrorism campaign. In Afghanistan, for example, the U.S. did not expand and deploy the international peacekeepers in cities throughout the country, but kept them close to Kabul. The proliferation of civil wars over the past decade has produced a growing number of humanitarian emergencies that require international attention.

The Horn of Africa's humanitarian situation is a major area of concern. Refugees and internally displaced persons driven by drought, endemic famine, and political strife burden aid agencies and regional governments. Some of the specific factors fueling the region's humanitarian crisis includes the Sudanese civil war, continued Eritrean-

¹⁰Ibid.

Ethiopian border friction, clan and militia violence in Somalia, and economic stagnation in many states of the Horn of Africa. With refugees come concerns of unregulated movements of extremists and weapons. Extremists in the Horn region will continue to use the shadow of refugee movements to cover their presence and activities. If the humanitarian situation worsens, governments that are supporting the GWOT may decide to limit their support.

The Bush administration would benefit from a policy review to formulate guidelines, particularly a set of criteria to guide its decisions on the level of U.S. engagement during humanitarian and human rights emergencies. The guidelines should address those circumstances where measured U.S. investments early in a crisis might prevent it from expanding into one requiring large-scale U.S. military intervention and should examine when gross violations of human rights will prompt a U.S. response.

While Djibouti has promised not to deny U.S. requests for support, the approval process could wane considerably to leverage pressure for U.S. funding. As U.S. forces increase in the region, the U.S. will likely continue to be pressured to provide food aid and health and education assistance in return for continued Djiboutian cooperation in the GWOT.

APPENDIX A

LITERATURE REVIEW

Doornbos, Martin. *Beyond Conflict in the Horn*. Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1992. 243 pages.

Beyond Conflict is a comprehensive assessment of the conditions necessary for recovery and development in the Horn of Africa. It is a concerted effort by experts from the countries comprising the Horn, international specialists, and Non-government Organization Representatives. The study addresses the systemic problems in the region and the challenges faced with fixing it.

Farer, Tom J. *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa: the Widening Storm*. New York, NY: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1979. 183 pages.

War Clouds on the Horn of Africa by Tom Farer traces the history of the Horn from the colonial period to the bloody conflicts that currently ravage its inhabitants. He argues that U.S. policy for the Horn is inadequate because it will not achieve our humanitarian or strategic aims. In his judgment, given a more cooperative and imaginative approach to the Horn's problems by interested outside parties, a peace of accommodation can be achieved. He sees Ethiopia and Somalia as real nations with governments that function and leaders who are making serious efforts to solve problems of poverty and underdevelopment. The Eritrean liberation movement has also managed to build the foundation of new society according to Farer. His detailed analysis suggests why accommodation will require governments in the region and outside powers alike to re-orient their objectives and rethink their policies. The thesis targets policy-makers, students, and concerned citizens.

U.S. Army War College Faculty. *New Dynamics in National Strategy*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975. 293 pages.

The book opens with a forum for debate on national security and includes ecological and economic interdependence as prime factors in developing the framework for explanation of security policy. Several contemporary challenges to the power of the U.S., with significant impact on security, include provision of energy resources, constraints on freedom of the seas, and possible use of raw material in new forms of conflict.

The Middle East is depicted as an arena of diminishing former Soviet Union successes and where the Suez Canal is seen as a political advantage for the U.S. The compilation concludes with an analysis of the influence of world powers in the region. *New Dynamics* targets political scientists, economists, students, and policy-makers.

Commercial Data International. *Country Review: Djibouti 1998-1999*. Houston, TX: Commercial Data International, Inc., 1998. 78 pages.

The U.S. State Department provides an in-depth and up-to-date detailed report on Djibouti as an independent state. Provides objective and timely background information on political, economic, and business trends.

Gordon, Frances Linzee. *Lonely Planet: Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti*. Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, Ltd., 2000. 522 pages.

The Lonely Planet Travel Guide provides country overviews that provides data on geography, boundaries, coastline, population, climate, religions, ethnic divisions, and languages. It contains practical advice for independent travelers, to include local transportation and ideal places to lodge. It also offers details of the region's tribes and languages. This guide explores the region's national parks, historical sites, tribal villages, modern cities and old monasteries. It gives the visitor practical information on safety and health care. The Facts about the Destination sections give background information ranging from history to weather. It includes a number of small maps, detailed background information, and descriptions of sights both on and off the beaten path.

Maurer, John H. et al. *Military Intervention in the Third World*. New York, NY: Praeger Special Studies, 1984. 239 pages.

Maurer et al demonstrate that the U.S. must be prepared to face a broad spectrum of threats, ranging from low level violence of intrastate conflict and terrorism to a major conflict against the armed forces of the Middle Eastern regimes and their clients. Since there is no single scenario that can serve as the basis for planning a military intervention in the "Third World," the U.S. must possess armed forces that can flexibly respond in an unanticipated crisis in order to enforce its political aims. The authors argue that the U.S. cannot be indifferent to the political, social, and economic developments that are rapidly changing the dynamics of the world. The series of essays demonstrates the complexities of the third world countries and the enormous challenges facing the U.S. foreign policy-makers and defense planners.

Koburger Jr., Charles W. Jr. *Naval Strategy East of Suez, The Role of Djibouti*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1992. 114 pages.

Charles Koburger, a French Naval Officer, has properly stressed the advantage of Djibouti's strategic position, emphasizing the Red Sea as an extension of the Suez Canal. He defines the role played by the French National Navy in Djibouti's development. The dramatic events that have shaken Ethiopia and Somalia, the arrival of large numbers of refugees fleeing from starvation and civil war, present Djibouti with alarming problems. The book follows an essentially historical, chronological progression that focuses on Djibouti as a Naval base. The author, in typical French fashion, is quick to point out his country's paternalistic presence and how it protects the small republic and preserves its

independence to facilitate regional stability. What would Djibouti-- or for that matter, the world, do without French influence and culture?

Makinda, Samuel M. *Security in the Horn of Africa*. London, UK: Brassey's for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992. 80 pages.

Samuel Makinda is concerned with strategic questions concerning the Horn of Africa--not just the military aspects of security, but with social and economic sources and political and moral implications of the use and existence of armed forces. He points out that the problems of each country comprising the Horn are closely interrelated and directly influence the difficulties of each. Problems in Ethiopia, for instance, could have repercussions in Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan. The issues that have undermined stability in the region--self-determination, authoritarian rule, lack of political legitimacy, etc., are challenges faced by most African states. Moreover, given the close links between the Horn and the Middle East/Gulf region, instability in the Horn is likely to affect perceptions of the balance of power in the Middle East. Makinda also depicts the Horn as a clear example of how some security problems have been exacerbated rather than mitigated by the end of the Cold War.

Korany, Bahgat; Noble, Paul; Brynen, Rex et al. *The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World is a collective work with its main argument emphasizing the linkage between the problems for national security and problems arising in the context of state-building and societal development. The authors examine how state-society relations as well as resource levels affect a country's national security. They argue that many of the most serious security challenges Arab states confront may not be restricted to the narrow realm of physical security, but includes the imperatives of social and economic development. The authors focus on the changing regional security environment, underdevelopment as a source of regional insecurity, and the impact of regional militarization on Arab society and politics.

Kendie, Daniel. "Which Way the Horn of Africa: Disintegration or Confederation?" *Urahamu* 22 (1994): 22 pages.

Daniel Kendie highlights the countries of the Horn of Africa: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Sudan. He argues that they have to grapple with destabilizing developments including disintegrative ethnicity, primordialism or nationalism, predicated upon demands for ethnic self-determination. He offers solutions for economic stability and concludes that there are some possibilities for cooperation amongst the countries of the Horn. Kendie suggests that they can benefit from the experiences of the East African Economic Community by avoiding their mistakes of the past.

Catoire, Richard G. "A CINC for Sub-Saharan Africa? Rethinking the Unified Command Plan." *Parameters* 30, no. 4 (winter 2000-2001): 15 pages.

Commander Catoire's thesis is that U.S. strategy and policy for Africa does not adequately reflect the continent's changing geopolitical landscape, nor do they realistically establish the magnitude of U.S. security interests in the region. He argues that the challenge of balancing resources against U.S. interests to realize the best use of limited assets is a key role of a unified command. Catoire recommends the U.S. Central Command be re-structured and further advocates the creation of a unified or sub-unified command exclusively for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Henze, Paul B. *The Horn of Africa, From War to Peace*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1991. 248 pages.

Paul Henze's *The Horn of Africa, From War to Peace*, treats the entire Horn as a whole, stressing interactions among Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti and their relations with neighboring countries in the Middle East. The author summarizes the history of the region from earliest times to the nineteenth century and then concentrates on Russian and American involvement. Developments following World War II, when Sudan and Somalia joined Ethiopia as independent states, form the core of the book. Using statistical analysis, Henze demonstrates how arms supplied by the former Soviet Union to each country stimulated poor relations between them and caused internal political and economic deterioration. The author sees development of a strong underground economy linking the whole region as a hopeful response to political deterioration. He concludes with two chapters offering prescriptions for political and economic recovery leading to restoration of peace and progress.

Gurdon, Charles **et al--must include all names**. *The Horn of Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994. 123 pages.

The Horn of Africa draws together major contributions from some of the world's leading experts in an analysis of the political and economic dimensions of this turbulent region as a whole. Advocates and opponents discuss the central theme: the actual and potential break-up of the Horn's formerly unitary states.

Pagonis, William G. *Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 1992. 248 pages.

LTG Pagonis served as one of General Schwarzkopf's deputies and commanded the 22nd Support Command during the Gulf War. He explains in detail how the Army was able to successfully conduct sustainment operations from the beginning to the end of the 17-month deployment. Pagonis recounts the daunting challenges he and his colleagues faced in supporting 550,000 troops with over 7 million tons of supplies. He lays out the Gulf War's operational design and addresses decision-making at the highest levels of command and how it effected sustainment and operational reach. *Moving Mountains* is a real world lesson in how effective management and strong leadership play in the success of an organization facing major operational challenges.

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The review provides objective and timely background information on political, economic, and business trends in the region.

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Koburger, Charles W. *Naval Strategy East of Suez: The Role of Djibouti*. New York: Praeger Press, 1992.

A French Naval Officer's account of the strategic importance of Djibouti based on the French occupation and experiences in the region

Makinda, Sam. *Security in the Horn of Africa*. London: Brassey's International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992.

The study cites the interwoven economies of the countries comprising the Horn of Africa as the linchpin for regional stability and future progress and reports a rise in security issues since the end of the Cold War.

Pagonis, William G. *Moving Mountains*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1992.

A detailed account of logistics lessons learned during the Gulf War--paints a picture of what to expect (operationally) before, during, and after a major conflict. Good insight for ISB planning.

St. Veran, Robert . *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1981

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Catoire, Richard G. "A CINC for Sub-Saharan Africa? Rethinking the Unified Command Plan." *Parameters* 30, no. 4 (winter 2000-2001).

Naval commander's recommendation to restructure CENTCOM into sub-unified command that accounts for Sub-Saharan Africa. His assessment is that the AOR is too large and complex and should be sub-divided.

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