

Starving Africans desperate for relief

Somalia gets help with 'Operation Restore Hope'

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When I thumb through the channels on my remote control television, I sometimes stumble upon images of starving African people. Most often I find them on channel 10 or 20.

Usually the shows consist of Sally Struthers wading through a desperate mass of Africans. She wears an expensive dress and speaks as though she's asking Daddy to forgive Meathead. Struthers' performances most often give me the feeling that the production is being sensationalized. Really, is it possible to feed a family on a few cents a day?

But lately, I have been finding the starving Africans on channels two, six and eight. It seems that 1,000 Somali citizens are dying each day, and it seems that 300,000 Somalis are already dead and 1.5 million are on the verge of death. It also seems that efforts to get food and medicine to the Africans have failed because feuding Somali clans and bandits (gangs) have been stealing the food for themselves.

I hear that the entire country of Somalia is at war. Nobody has told me what the war is really about, but from what I can gather, there are several factions (gangs) shooting at one another for food and territory and stuff like that. I guess, out of all the gangs, there are two major gang leaders—a guy named Abdulrahman Tour commands the northern half of the country, while a guy called General Mohamed Farrah Aidid controls the southern half of the capitol.

Anyway, the Somali image is almost the same as the Yugoslavian image—a lot of desperate shots of warring and star-

vation being broadcast on the nightly news. The same kind of images that I've been able to build an immunity against since the L.A. riots.

Everything was going fine; I figured that sooner or later Bob Geldof or Peter Gabriel or somebody would see the news broadcasts and do some relief concert and then everything would be cool in the world again. I would feel good because I could catch a good concert and donate some cash for a shirt and help the Somalis in the mean-time.

Then, all of the sudden, I discovered that we (the U.S.) are planning some military action to get relief to the Somalis. This was surprising because it goes against the current policy of just letting the desperate nations kill themselves off. Apparently, we are planning to use an amphibious unit of Marines to capture the international airport at Mogadishu so other troops and equipment can arrive safely.

The mission is being authorized by the 15-nation Security Council. It is being called "Operation Restore Hope." It will be a U.S.-led multinational event. It seems like a very well thought-out mission that (considering the inexperience of the Somali gangs) will most assuredly succeed.

All things considered, I feel fine about this plan to help the starving Somali citizens.

But whenever I hear about American-led relief efforts overseas, I'm compelled to think about the relief needs here at home. I think about our inner-city citizens that are suffering because their communities have been taken over by gangs. I think about the African-American mother who is afraid to let her children go

outside after dark because of the danger on the streets of her community. I think about the African-American child who won't eat dinner tonight because her mother is numbing the pain of poverty with the dose of heroin she bought instead of food. I can't help but think of a generation of African-Americans stricken with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and other related afflictions.

I'm thinking that if it is entirely possible to effectively relieve a country such as Somalia, then it should be entirely possible to relieve American cities that are suffering from the similar sort of dilemma, such as L.A.

What if we (the U.S.) were to set up a Marine amphibious assault unit out in the Pacific Ocean along the coast of California? We could set up the

101st Air Assault Division in Arizona to act as support. We could even go so far as to have General Colin Powell command the exercise.

I'm sure that by utilizing America's best and brightest, we could invade L.A., rid the area of gangs and secure the city so that we can bring relief to all the citizens suffering inside the gang controlled areas. I'm sure that there must be some old plans lying around the Pentagon that we could use for this mission.

In fact, I'm thinking that American intervention in Somalia will be the final big-victory for the Bush administration. I feel that they (the Bush administration) will be demonstrating in Somalia what they had intended to do for American domestic problems in the next four years had they

won the election. Didn't Bush promise that James Baker would be an economic czar?

It has always appeared to me that the best thing that could happen to a struggling nation was to be invaded by the Americans. So maybe the best thing that could happen for America is for America to have Americans invade America.

I think that the Clinton transition team will be watching the Somalia military exercise closely. According to plans, if everything is done correctly the Somalia mission will be initially completed by inauguration day. Who knows? We may just get the exciting first 100 days that the Clinton/Gore campaign promised.

Then again, maybe we'll just get a lot of concerts on television. I'll buy a shirt or donate a few cents per day.



Holiday shopping season upon us

Yes, folks, that time of the year is here again—it's holiday shopping season. It's the time of year that people do the one thing that boosts the national economy, SHOPPING!

And like most years before, this season's line of material goodies promises to be a deus. The shopping centers of the cosmos will be busier than Grand Central Station trying to push their sales above those disappointing figures that the last two years set.

Maybe it's President Clinton. Maybe it's Madison Avenue (that is creating the absolute skyrocket in our economy). But whatever the case, whip out your credit cards, arm those checkbooks, and prime your pens, it's holiday shopping time again (and has been since Dec. 26, 1991!)

There are material goodies to buy, and some not to buy. So why worry about what to buy when I have taken the worry out of it for you with the

1992 categorical list of "Material Goodies Not To Buy."

What not to buy: Stuff that might induce violence (example: My First AK-47, Candy Halcyon), stuff that might be cheaply made, stuff that isn't the major brands (hey, this is Christmas! A time NOT to be cheap!), stuff with sexy overtones (we are not getting our moral fiber!), stuff that harms the

environment major-league (minor-league damage can be reversed, if I've heard correctly), politically-incorrect stuff (this is the society of political correctness, don't you know?)

This is obviously going to be the best year to do your shopping since the 10-year party of the 1980s.

Do not believe the misconception that the holiday shopping season began the day after Turkey-Parade-Pigskin Day. (Thanksgiving for those of you who haven't figured it out yet) because that is not the



The World Beat

by Eric St. Anthony's

truth. It began on the day after Christmas, the official day of shoppers.

(Note to the reader: This was my light-hearted look at this holiday shopping season. If what I said didn't come out right in your opinion, I did the best I can. If you want to put in your opinion on this, don't be afraid.)

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