

# The Horror, the Horror of Somalia

BY JAMES YOHE  
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The events in Somalia remind me of Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*. Man's battle with the evil inside him and the evil of nature is the main thesis of the book. Conrad believed that civilization and work were the only things keeping the two evils, which his character Kurtz called horrors, apart and preventing people from returning to barbarism. The setting of his novel was a riverboat on the Congo River. Sending American troops into Somalia reminds me of the riverboat's trip into the jungles of Africa.

Government plays a large part in civilization. The people of Europe and the United States were able to develop civilizations and economies due to their

societies respect for private property. Absolute monarchies were prevented from raping and pillaging their subjects due to the beliefs in the private property rights of individuals held by the public.

While beliefs in the rights of individuals to be secure in their property have waned in America, we still have the history of a property rights-based system of government. When people own property, this makes them more aware of their right of self-ownership and makes life more valuable. We had the benefit of weak fragmented governments in Europe during the 400 years prior to this century, and here in America prior to the progressive movement, which were vital for these thoughts to develop. Africa, and specifically Somalia, have not.

Somalia has a history of colonial rule and brutal puppet governments. Somalia's last ruler, Mohamed Barre Said, was

nothing more than a looter who sold his nation's services to the highest bidder. Somalia was a client state of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 80's.

Foreign aid, used to gain the support of this tyrant, was used by Said to pay people like Mohamed Farrah Aidid to suppress the people of Somalia. The United States government is responsible for helping a despot rape his nation and turn it into war-torn chaos. With this sort of past, how could a Thomas Jefferson or a John Locke come along and explain limited government and natural rights to a population with only looters and puppets for rulers?

Somalia is a land where property rights are not respected and life has little value. To send American troops into this land of violence and bloodshed, to restore "order," is a large task. American troops in Somalia remind me of Conrad's character Mr. Kurtz.

Kurtz was sent into the jungles of Africa to trade for ivory. He was a man known for his taste and culture, before he was sent into the jungle. After losing communication with Kurtz, the company he worked for sent a riverboat up the river to find him and bring him back. After a long journey, Kurtz is found.

What they find is not Kurtz the well-cultured man they sent into the jungle, but Kurtz the savage. Without European

civilization, Kurtz lost his culture and respect for human life and convinced the natives he was a god. He led them in barbarous attacks on other tribes and hanged the heads of rebellious tribesmen on spikes outside his hut.

Sending American troops to fight a meaningless civil war in an uncivilized chaotic country, where the bodies of their enemies are stripped and dragged naked through the streets, is no place for American troops

trained to fight in conventional wars to be. In order to win this war, they would have to learn to fight it. If they do learn to fight in Somalia and win, I don't know if we'll want them back.

**"The United States government is responsible for helping a despot rape his nation and turn it into war-torn chaos."**

# Techno-dependency; addicting drugs for the next century

BY DONOVAN STELZNER  
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Part one of a two-part series

Imagine for a few moments. It is the year 2035. Time to unwind from a long day at the office.

You enter a small 10x10 room in your brand new home that is completely whitewashed. Floors, ceilings, walls—all a flat, lacquered white.

"Computer," you say. "Activate hologram entitled 'Iceland.' Set time dilation parameter at 0.6, sensory option at 85 percent, length of simulation 1.0 hours. Begin program."

Instantly, the room is transformed into a mall scene—in Las Vegas. "Nice," you think, "computer glitch No. 17 for the month."

"Computer, reload program 'Iceland.' Execute with previously set parameters when ready."

"Reloading," the controller vocalizes. Five seconds seems like an eternity to you as three shoppers in the hologram shopping mall pass right through you. Your sister, the software's developer, had already warned you about some problems in the image materialization process of a few random objects that were supposed to be solid.

The room is soon filled with images of hot springs spouting up from pockets of ice. You are safe, perched high above on a ledge. Good. Exactly where I left off yesterday.

All is so real, yet so illusionary. You are now in your own little world of your own creation. Unless the universe comes to an end within the next hour, the program will run its course, and, when you finish, you will step out of the holosuite and into the hallway toward the kitchen to prepare yourself some dinner.

Totally unknown to you in another sector of society, virtual reality modules are being sold on

the black market. (In the mid-21st century, software pirating and reverse engineering of hardware is a lucrative business for anyone who has the brains and guts to do it.)

In this market, the room-size modules are still a bit too expensive for most; the headgear is the preferred medium for those who want something cheaper. For crackheads left over from the drug wars, this was the drugless high—still just as addicting, just as dangerous as the now old-fashioned designer drugs.

Among depressed people, this new technology poses perhaps the greatest danger. Persons dissatisfied with their condition, or lot in life, could create, within a holographic simulation, a new life, perhaps with new family, friends and identity, even to the point of losing total contact with the "real" world by looping the program into an infinitely long experience.

Some people would become so psychologically melded to the simulations that to remove someone from this set of stimuli might be homicidal...or, at least, could

render the subject insane or suicidal. Mental wards in private and state hospital will have, in many cases, filled to capacity with patients diagnosed with hologram-induced schizophrenia and other ailments of the mind.

People from all countries of the world are crying out for a solution. Those who have lost loved ones and former addicts to what was once thought of as a toy are

**"For crackheads left over from the drug wars, this was the drugless high—still just as addicting"**

becoming politically active in their communities, their states, their nations. Politicians are challenged to find a rational solution to this problem, but the issues involved in finding this solution proved to be a harder and more complicated task to delve through than was first realized.

Donovan Stelzner is a *Rebel Yell* staff columnist. The second part of his

Techno-dependency column will appear next Thursday.

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get together now so that we have time to marshal our arguments and positions before we once again are set back by confusion, division, and derision.

If we work together, we can be one of the best universities in the country. But to reach our potential we have to realize that the president can't do it all. If the last biennium is any indication, we've reached a size where the president may be a minor player in the whole production. We all have to lobby and push in concert toward the university we can and should become. Everyone must do their part and help carry the load. That's what I'd say, if I was the president.

Dr. Blythin is a teacher, researcher, and administrator at UNLV. This is his 17th presidential campaign letter in the *The Rebel Yell*.

## Letters to the Editor

**Organized Crime in Las Vegas**

Dear Editor:

It is a shame that organized crime exists in Las Vegas. Organized crime in Las Vegas is not identified by the terms, "Mafia," nor "Cosa Nostra." The word "Mafia" derives from the vulgarization of a mid-19th century Italian play entitled, "I Mafiosi" ("Cosa Nostra" was an invention mentioned to the U.S. government in 1963 by a semi-literate Italian gangster named Joseph Valachi). Nor is what we see

in Las Vegas identified by the sociologist's theoretical superstructure of organized crime as being similar to corporate America but with deadlier role models.

Organized crime in Las Vegas today is better described as loosely-knit pockets of criminal group members who use extortion and bribery in developing, controlling, and monopolizing territories of illegitimate enterprises such as prostitution, narcotics, and gambling from which profitable tribute is exacted and sometimes invested in legitimate business. One of the most obvious examples of its poison is

not far from the UNLV campus and concentrated near the intersection of Cambridge and Twain. There prostitutes and drug dealers operate openly from a well-known weekly rental property.

So only one two-part question remains: which criminal group or groups control the territory near UNLV's campus, and do any of the characteristics described above explain the ineffectiveness of police in dealing with the problem?

My main purpose in writing this letter is to caution UNLV's students, and other young people against frequenting the area mentioned. If you should find yourself there, it is recom-

mended that any cordial comment by people on the street be ignored, in other words, avoid eye contact and keep walking. And remember, because of the danger, only a fool would be there at night.

Robert Ivori  
Doctoral student/investigator

**The Rebel Yell welcomes your comments and letters to the editor. To be run in the paper they must be signed or they will not be run, no exceptions. Letters can be dropped off at MSU 302**