

# MOVIE REVIEW: **BLACK HAWK, THUMBS DOWN**

by Alex Sanchez

About an hour and a half into *Black Hawk Down* I started to wandering to myself "is there really any reason at all to see this movie?" The film was void of any educational value except perhaps the fact that two American Black Hawk helicopters were shot down, eighteen American soldiers lost their lives and so did nearly one thousand Somalis. Which, I would venture to say most people already knew this before they saw the movie. Also, crucial information about exactly why we were involved in Somalia along with a Somali point of view (God forbid) and why the mission failed were completely missing from the two and a half hour movie. It would not be a stretch to say that *Black Hawk Down* is the

educational equivalence of *Top Gun* (appropriately made by the same producer of *Black Hawk Down*).

As for entertainment value, *Black Hawk Down* again falls short. With a running time of two and a half hours one would hope to see a little more than just gun fights and

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carnage however, this is not so. Under the excuse of keeping the movie as real as possible its makers subject the audience to constant battle, but to little effect; I seriously doubt anybody in the audience felt any empathy for the film's characters. All of this is much in part due to the serious lack of character development. Except for one brief scene where an American soldier cherishes a picture of his family before his capture, none of main characters (of which there are many) show any signs of humanity.

The movie was shot so objectively that there was no suspense, mood or substantial urge to continue watching the film.



Another disturbing item was the distortion of the actual events that took place in Somalia which the filmmakers claim they steadfastly held to. It is a fact that many of the dead in the Somali battle were innocent women and children, some killed accidentally and some not. Despite this fact, not once is there a scene that depicts an American soldier killing any innocent civilians, even by accident. In fact, the film goes out of its way to portray the soldiers as kindly by sparing even enemy soldiers' lives. If it was at the least the film's goal to portray the real horrors of war, why is this crucial part

missing?

One cannot help but mentioning that before the picture was released it was privately screened by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Oliver North, and others whose "suggestions" were taken into consideration before the final edit was released. Of course, looking back upon the career of *Black Hawk Down*'s producer; Jerry Bruckheimer and director; Ridley Scott explains many of the movie's short comings. Mainly, films such as *Gone in Sixty Seconds*, *Hannibal*, *Pearl Harbor* and *Gladiator* (to name the most recent titles) explain *Black Hawk Down*'s more than slight tendency to prioritize style over content and sell the soldiers' story short.

All in all, *Black Hawk Down* proved to be little more than a military vehicle that precipitated neither thought nor entertainment on a very substantial subject at a very crucial time.

## ***Enduring Freedom... and Cluster Bombs", Continued from page 1***

Many "military" targets such as government buildings, civilian radio stations, and military hospitals are located in or near residential areas, which receive a heavy dose of bombing themselves. To cite only one example, on October 19th, U.S. planes flew over Tarin Kot in Uruzgan in the early evening; they returned after everyone had gone to sleep, unloading bombs directly on the residential area instead of on the Taliban base, at least two miles away. An Afghani who was present commented, "We pulled the baby out. The others were buried in the rubble. Children were decapitated. There were bodies with no legs. We could do nothing. We just fled."

Another very real threat to Afghanis is the widespread use of cluster bombs, which are also often conveniently concentrated in residential areas. The Mine Action Center reported that the food packages and cluster bombs were dropped in the same areas. Both are colored yellow, and it is not uncommon for children to get a hold of the bomblets believing that they contain food.

On November 4th, the U.S. turned up the heat by dropping two BLU sub-atomic bombs, which destroy everything in a 600 yard radius and result in a mushroom cloud, on Taliban bases. A third subatomic weapon was dropped on November 23rd (during Ramadan) in Kandahar. A countless number of Afghanis have fled their homes to seek refuge from the bombing. The American assault on Afghanistan has caused 70 percent of the people in three major cities to flee. Thousands of refugees are starving because it is so difficult for aid to reach them under fire.

It is ironic that the "war on terrorism" is justified by the Government and it's apologists because the Afghanistan state harbors and trains terrorists within it's borders. Within American borders exists the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly known as SOA), which has trained more terrorists than Al Qaeda. Would that be reasonable justification for bombing Georgia?

So far, Bush's idea of an *enduring* freedom has, for thousands of Afghanis, applied only one definition of enduring: "To suffer patiently." The word's other meaning, "lasting," is yet to be seen; if it entails any more of Bush's "liberation," however, one has no reason to believe it to be little more than a myth.