

## Clinton's rhetoric on Somalia: A Burkian reading from a diplomatic perspective

By Mustafa Taha

American University of Sharjah

This paper examines Clinton's rhetorical strategy on Somalia, particularly his Oct. 8, 1993, speech. The paper uses Kenneth Burke's dramatistic pentad to unveil Clinton's motives. Clinton reasoned that the U.S. forces were in Somalia to save Somalis from the specters of anarchy and starvation. But the transformation of the U.S. mission from a humanitarian endeavor to nation-building caused many problems for the Clinton administration. On Oct. 3, 1993, the failed U.S. attempt to arrest Aidid, a faction leader, resulted in the downing of two Blackhawk helicopters and the killing of 18 U.S. soldiers. In response to an eroding public support and the Republican demands for terminating the U.S. intervention in Somalia, Clinton pulled the U.S. troops out of the country in March 1994. This paper suggests that in his speech Clinton did not spell out all the facts because he did not want to draw more criticism.

Key words: International relations, U.S. presidents, public diplomacy, Somalia, Kenneth Burke, presidential rhetoric, nation-building