



REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

REGIONAL CONFLICT AND SUPERPOWER RIVALRY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE
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Clerk of the Senate

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

Regional Conflict and Superpower Rivalry in the Horn of Africa

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MAP 1—THE HORN OF AFRICA



Terms of reference

On 4 December 1980, at its first meeting during the last Parliament, the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence combined the Sub-Committee on Southern Africa and the Sub-Committee on the Middle East into a new Sub-Committee on Southern Africa and the Middle East. The terms of reference for the new Sub-Committee were:

- That the Sub-Committee consider, investigate and report to the full Committee on the significance of events in Southern Africa, with particular reference to the economic, political, social and strategic implications for Australia.
- Monitor the political, economic and strategic situation in the Middle East and peripheral countries, and report on any significant events and their possible effects on Australia.

On 8 September 1981, the Sub-Committee's title was altered to 'Sub-Committee on Middle Eastern and African Affairs', and its terms of reference were altered to read as follows:

- Monitor the Middle East and peripheral countries, Africa, and the Indian Ocean, and report to the full Committee from time to time on significant developments.

On 19 August 1982 the Sub-Committee agreed to undertake the following inquiry under the above terms of reference:

- Examine the geo-political situation in the Horn of Africa and peripheral countries, and report to the Parliament, through the full Committee.

Parliament was dissolved on 4 February 1983. On 24 May 1983, at its second meeting during the present Parliament, the Joint Committee re-established the Sub-Committee. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee should continue with its general terms of reference for the time being, and proceed with the inquiry into the Horn of Africa commenced in the previous Parliament. This Report deals with regional conflict and super-power rivalry in the Horn of Africa and is based upon evidence and information collected by the Sub-Committee on Middle Eastern and African Affairs. (See also Preface, and Chapter 1—General Introduction—for information on the preparation of this Report.) A Report entitled 'The Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid to the Horn of Africa' was tabled in the Senate on 15 December 1983 and in the House of Representatives on 2 March 1984. The Sub-Committee on Middle Eastern and African Affairs ceased operations on 8 December 1983.

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Abbreviations, Acronyms and Glossary

ADAB	Australian Development Assistance Bureau
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
ANLM	Afar National Liberation Movement
Anya-Nya	Equatorial rebels in southern Sudan
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
COPWE	Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (also 'COWPE')
Dergue	(Ethiopian) 'Committee'. See also 'PMAC'
EDM	Eritrean Democratic Movement
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
EEC	European Economic Communities
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
ELF/PLF	Eritrean Liberation Front/Popular Liberation Forces
ELF/RC	Eritrean Liberation Front/Revolutionary Command
ELM	Eritrean Liberation Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front (formerly 'Forces')
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ERA	Eritrean Relief Association
ERC	Eritrean Relief Committee
ERCCS	Eritrean Red Cross and Crescent Society
FDLI	(Djiboutien) Front Democratique pour Liberation de Djibouti
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
Kebeles	(Ethiopian) locally elected associations
LPAI	(Djiboutien) Ligue Populaire Africaine pour L'Independence
LRCs	League of Red Cross Societies/or LICROSS, League of International Red Cross Societies
MAAG	(United States) Military Assistance Advisory Group
MEISON	Mela Etiofia Socialist Netanake (All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement)
NFD	(Kenyan) Northern Frontier District
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PMAC	(Ethiopian) Provisional Military Administrative Council (formerly Committee)
POMOA	(Ethiopian) Provisional Office for Mass Organization Affairs
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RDF	(United States) Rapid Deployment Force
RPP	(Djiboutien) Rassemblement Populaire pour le progres
RRC	(Ethiopian) Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SALF	Somali Abo Liberation Front
SDR	Somali Democratic Republic
SNM	Somali National Movement
SOSAF	Somali Salvation Front

SRC (Somali) Supreme Revolutionary Council
SRSP Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party
SSDF Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SWA Southwest Asia
SYC Somali Youth Club
SYL Somali Youth League
Shifta bandit
TLF Tigray Liberation Front
TPLF Tigray People's Liberation Front
UN United Nations Organization
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSO United Nations Sahelian Office
US United States of America
WSLF Western Somali Liberation Front

Preface

The first draft of this Report was originally prepared by the former Sub-Committee on Middle Eastern and African Affairs, which ceased operations in December 1983. The original draft included material on humanitarian aid and development assistance provided to the Horn of Africa. At a meeting on 16 November 1983, the Joint Committee decided to proceed separately with a report on these issues. A Report entitled 'The Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid to the Horn of Africa' was subsequently tabled in the Senate on 15 December 1983 and in the House of Representatives on 2 March 1984.

At a meeting on 7 December 1983 the Joint Committee agreed that a draft report on the regional conflicts and the involvement of the superpowers should be prepared for the Joint Committee's consideration when Parliament resumed at the beginning of the 1984 sittings. Two members of the former Sub-Committee on Middle Eastern and African Affairs, Senator Sibraa (formerly Chairman of the Sub-Committee) and Senator Hill, undertook to prepare a Draft Report, in consultation with the Chairman of the full Committee, Mr Morrison, for consideration by the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee agreed to the Report in its present form at a meeting on 4 April 1984.

PART 1—INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

General Introduction

THE HORN OF AFRICA

1.1 Although the Horn is remote from Australia, its strategic significance for the industrialized West lies in its proximity to the oil rich Middle East and the transport routes to and from the Middle East to the industrial oil consuming countries. Australian concerns in the Horn have principally involved the provision of humanitarian aid to the victims of droughts, wars and famines. The Horn's strategic significance is of interest to Australia also, however, because of our interest in the projection by major outside powers of naval deployments into the Indian Ocean.

1.2 The purpose of the Report is to inform those interested in African affairs of the relevant background to the current conflicts and problems in the Horn.

1.3 For the purposes of this Report the Horn of Africa comprises Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia. The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East and African Affairs, whose original task it was to prepare a draft Report for the full Committee, required it to report upon peripheral countries as well. This has been done only in so far as peripheral countries are relevant to the core countries. It will be noted that, throughout the Report, more mention of Kenya and Sudan is made in this connection than of other countries on the periphery.

1.4 In Appendix A to the Report a brief resume of the government, economic base, population and other relevant facts are listed in respect of the countries on the Horn.

APPROACH TAKEN

1.5 The Report does not examine the issues and developments on a strictly country by country basis. Generally speaking, the Report is an integrated analysis—very few of the major issues and developments in the Horn are discrete, or relate to or happen solely within one country alone. On the other hand, issues such as the struggle for Eritrean independence are clearly separable from the Ogaden conflict. Accordingly, these are treated separately although common themes running through the Report, and which underlie and provide a background against which many of the troubles of the Horn should be seen, are the legacy left by colonial boundaries and the colonial occupation; the grinding poverty in which most people live; and the conflict between ethnic and national groups both within and between countries.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

1.6 The Report is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic and explains how this Report has been produced. Chapter 2 describes recent internal

political events in Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti, and provides the background for the ensuing chapters, which deal with separatist and liberation struggles. Chapter 3 describes the general ethnic and national diversity of Ethiopia. Chapter 4 describes the Eritrean conflict and Chapter 5 describes Somali irredentism, with particular reference to the conflict over the Ogaden between Ethiopia and Somalia. Chapter 6 describes the relations between the countries of the Horn and their near neighbours, including the members of the OAU. Chapter 7 describes the recent history, significance and prospects for the involvement of the major outside powers in the region, which are the United States, the Soviet Union and France. Because an attempt has been made to make each Part of this Report self-contained there is some duplication of information where it has been thought necessary.

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

1.7 In gathering information about the Horn of Africa, the Sub-Committee was assisted by those who presented written submissions and gave oral evidence (see Appendixes B and C). Many of these were very evidently the product of extensive research and effort, and the Committee expresses its gratitude. The Sub-Committee heard some of the authors of these submissions, as well as officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs, in private and in *in camera* session. In writing the Report, extensive use was made of the facilities of the Parliamentary Library.

1.8 As with previous Reports, visits to the region under review by members of the Sub-Committee greatly assisted the deliberations on a draft Report and the questioning of witnesses during public hearings.

1.9 The Committee thanks all the Departments and Departmental officers who provided information and technical assistance to the Sub-Committee.

Chapter 2

Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti: A short description of recent internal political developments

(See also Appendix A : The Countries of the Horn : Some facts and figures)

INTRODUCTION

2.1 This chapter, while it attempts to be a self-contained description of internal political developments in the countries under review, should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Report. (For a detailed discussion of the problems confronting Ethiopia in respect of ethnic and nationalities issues see Chapters 3, 4 and 5.)

2.2 The relevance for the internal political situation of the involvement of the Soviet Union and the United States is significant. In Ethiopia, Soviet advisers and the presence of the Soviets' Cuban proxies are a factor in the continuance in power of the present government—the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC or 'Dergue'). If it were not for Soviet bloc military assistance to the PMAC, the latter's capacity to confront the Eritrean and ethnic rebellions would be in greater jeopardy than it is now. In Somalia the viability of President Siyad Barre's regime could be placed in jeopardy were it not for substantial aid from the West and Arab countries. In Djibouti, the French presence allows a security of territorial integrity and an accommodation between the Afars and Issas to continue which may not otherwise be possible. The intervention and involvement of outside powers is, therefore, a crucial element in the understanding of the internal political situation in each country.

ETHIOPIA

2.3 In assessing the current political situation in Ethiopia, the Sub-Committee was able to draw on a number of different sources for its information. These included submissions made to the Sub-Committee which were in the main hostile to the PMAC; the Department of Foreign Affairs, which obtains most of its reports on the Horn from the Australian High Commission in Nairobi; academics who have visited the area; and scholarly and learned journals and the Press. Firsthand experience was provided through two members of the Sub-Committee having visited Ethiopia on the Australian Parliamentary delegation which visited Africa in 1982.

2.4 The most significant events in recent central Ethiopian history were the decline and ultimate fall from power of Emperor Haile Selassie and the subsequent struggle for power by various leftist groups leading to the ultimate ascendancy of the PMAC or 'Dergue'. A wave of mutinies broke out in February 1974 arising from discontent about corruption at a time of famine, calls by a new class of urban dwellers for constitutional reform, repression of nationalist rebellions, and because of the increasing dichotomy between an essentially backward looking feudal regime and an increasingly radical outlook expressed by the educated, and radical urban movements comprising teachers, workers and students. For a time during 1974 a succession of new Ministers and Prime

Ministers was appointed to appease the calls for reform. Meanwhile the left, and in particular the Marxist left, were clearly intensifying efforts to grab the initiative and become the 'vanguard' of the revolution. By June 1974 a newly formed 'Co-ordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army' commenced organizing itself for a bid for power. While characterizing itself as leftist, and co-opting elements of the radical left, the move by the Committee was later to be seen, with hindsight, as a move to pre-empt other, and some more radical, elements of the Marxist left from wresting power from the relics of the decaying imperial regime.

2.5 On 12 September 1974, Haile Selassie was finally deposed. He died in detention eleven months later. The Constitution was abrogated later in September, and Parliament dissolved.

2.6 A succession of events between 1974 and 1978 saw struggles between a number of leftist groups for control of the revolutionary process, and the ultimate prize of government. Those struggles were to be fought out among a number of civilian Marxist groups, Marxist led unions and army factions. The struggle, and the ultimate victory of the army faction led by Lt Col. (formerly Major) Mengistu Haile Mariam, provides in some way a degree of understanding of the present internal policies and foreign policy outlook of the present central Ethiopian Government, especially in relation to the PMAC's policy of keeping the door open to relations with the West.

2.7 In the months immediately following the February 1974 revolutionary activity, the newly appointed Prime Minister, Lij Endalkatchew Makonnen, was confronted with a popular movement which included the Confederation of Labour Unions, the Ethiopian University Teachers' Association, the Ethiopian Students' Association and members of the Air Force and the Engineering Corps of the Army calling for, with some variations, a 'popular people's revolutionary government'. Such a 'popular' provisional government was seen as a transitional step towards the establishment of a socialist State.

2.8 By May 1974 the Government of Makonnen, at a time when there seemed to be a lack of direction in revolutionary activity, attempted to stem the revolutionary tide with a crackdown on striking unionists. Striking unionists were arrested and peasants demonstrating in Addis Ababa for land reform were shot at.

2.9 By April 1974 the Co-ordinating Committee of the Armed Forces (already being called the 'Dergue') which comprised middle and junior ranking officers supported by the general soldiery was prepared to exert its increasing influence. Having already dismissed members of the Imperial Cabinet, the Dergue had already begun to establish a power of its own independent of the formally appointed government. In a submission to the Sub-Committee, Mr George Wilson, Editor of *Middle East-North Africa News* wrote:

Initially, the Dergue swore allegiance to the Emperor who by now was virtually powerless and confined to his palace. It attempted to pass itself off as merely some kind of 'watchdog' group, enforcing 'popular will' on the Mekonnen cabinet. By June, however, after the Dergue had completed the process of arresting all the officials of the Imperial regime, the Dergue presented the Mekonnen government with a list of demands including that they be consulted by the Government on all political decisions and that one of their military supporters, Major General Aman Andom, be appointed Chief of Staff.⁴

2.10 When the Emperor was finally deposed on 12 September 1974, the Dergue renamed itself the 'Provisional Military Administrative Council', substituting the word 'Council' for 'Committee', and assumed the full powers of the State. The Dergue elevated Lt Gen. Aman Andom to Head of State and Chairman of the Dergue. At this stage the PMAC's ideological position was not detailed aside from its slogan of 'Ethiopia First'.

2.11 Aman Andom was confronted with an upsurge in the Eritrea conflict soon after his accession to the office, and toured the Eritrean front. While he told the Eritreans that the Revolution would resist Eritrean independence, he lifted some restrictions on the populace in Asmara, Keren and some other cities, and ordered the release of some political prisoners. A dispute erupted within the Dergue about the policy towards Eritrea against a background of suspicion towards Aman's motives, since he was himself an Eritrean. Aman and two other Dergue members were shot in November 1974. At the same time fifty-seven former high-ranking military and civilian officers were shot without trial. It was after this event that the present leadership in Ethiopia began to emerge.

2.12 A new figurehead Chairman of the Dergue was chosen, Brig. Gen. Teferi Banti, who also became Head of State. The two vice-Chairmen of the Dergue, Major (later Lt Col.) Mengistu Haile Mariam and Lt Col. Atnafu Abate, were the real power in the PMAC although they by no means had total control.²

2.13 During this time the Dergue was faced with a number of challenges to its authority from the left, and there was considerable argument about the future course of the Revolution. In one view:

The PMAC began to see itself as the vanguard of the Ethiopian revolution and, under the influence of left-wing intellectuals returning from abroad, it opted for a socialist model to replace the feudal regime of Haile Sellassie which it had so successfully pulled down.¹

2.14 On the other hand, the Sub-Committee was told in evidence:

The Dergue, while repressive and authoritarian, seemed receptive to radical ideology and anti-feudal and anti-imperialist rhetoric. They attempted to side-step the issue of popular political power by a 'bonapartist' seizure of the revolution's leadership, which they hoped to get away with by both agreeing to the radicals' demands for political transformation, and by co-opting or actually eliminating their leftist civilian opponents.⁴

2.15 Ethiopia was declared a socialist state on 20 December 1974. By the end of January 1975 over 100 companies had been nationalized or partially taken over. In March 1975 all rural land was nationalized followed by all urban land some months later.

2.16 Both submissions to the Sub-Committee and the literature available to it on the events in the aftermath of the 1974 Revolution emphasize the relationship between the new regime and the United States and Israel. Leftist opposition to continued links with the United States was resisted by the new government at first because of the regime's dependence on American arms and aid. For its part

... the US Government reacted calmly to Ethiopia's nationalization of foreign investment and the PMAC's request for further military assistance in 1975 was favourably received because, as a State Department official explained to a Committee of Congress, United States policy makers believed that "this long-time relationship is worth preserving".³

2.17 However, as a result of information appearing in the Western press about the brutality and savagery of the Ethiopian Revolution, "considerable criticism of the Dergue's Marxist predilections was voiced in US Congressional circles".⁵

2.18 In an agreement of 15 July 1975 the United States undertook to close its communication base at Kagnaw near Asmara by the end of the year, most of its important functions being transferred to Diego Garcia.

2.19 Despite obvious disquiet in the United States about the increasingly leftward tilt of the Ethiopian regime, it was not until 1977 that matters were brought to a head. In that year the United States stopped a delivery of \$US 100 million of arms to Ethiopia, which required Ethiopia to immediately turn elsewhere for military assistance, faced as it was with Eritrean gains in the north, three or four significant rebellions

in the provinces, and the increasingly effective and credible Somali threat in the east and south.

2.20 In April 1977 Ethiopia decided to cut ties with the United States and, after having made some tentative moves to establish closer relations with China, Mengistu travelled to Moscow.

2.21 According to 'relatively reliable Western intelligence estimates', in June-July 1977 the Soviet Union started to supply Ethiopia with T-34, T-54 and T-55 tanks (some of which were brought in from Aden), armoured personnel carriers (APC) and SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles, M1-8 helicopters, 140mm rocket launchers and self-propelled guns.⁷

2.22 This apparent willingness by the Soviets to fill the vacuum in Ethiopia after the United States had been obliged to leave saw the Somalis intensify the conflict waged by the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). Somali troops entered the Ogaden in an attempt to wrest ethnic Somali territory while Somali military superiority lasted. Whatever the underlying motives for the timing of Somali actions, they were to see an immediate and massive infusion of Soviet bloc support for Ethiopia, among the consequences of which were as follows:

- A decision by the Soviet Union initially to try to court both Somalia and Ethiopia, but eventually opting for Ethiopia on the apparent grounds that it was a greater strategic asset.
- The consequent massive airlift of approximately 15 000 Cuban troops and military equipment into Ethiopia to assist in the war against the Somalis in the east and south and the Eritreans in the north.
- The forging of an accommodation between the Somalis and the United States, and the expulsion of the Soviets together with their communications station at Berbera, to be replaced by the Americans.
- The use by the Soviets of the Port of Massawa and naval facilities on the Dahlak Islands. (See also Chapter 7 for a more detailed account of the involvement of the outside powers)

2.23 Despite the growing influence of the Soviet bloc in Ethiopia, considerable disension existed within senior ruling circles as to the extent doors should remain open to the West. Throughout the period 1976 to 1980, divisions were apparent between various groupings within and outside the Dergue as to both the form of socialism that should be established, the closeness to the Soviet Union that should be attained, and the need for Western assistance for economic development.

2.24 By mid 1976 the Dergue had accepted in general terms the pro-Soviet political line of the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON). The alliance forged between MEISON and the Dergue saw the eventual elimination of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) which had insisted on the establishment of a civilian government and argued for Eritrean independence. Although in an early period the Dergue allowed political debate to proceed through the press among various revolutionary groups, the Government finally silenced the debate, including the contributions from MEISON. During 1976 the PMAC established the Provisional Office for Mass Organization Affairs (POMOA). POMOA incorporated within its ranks MEISON and three or four other leftist splinter groups, and was encouraged by the PMAC to attack the EPRP. This turn of events led to increasing violence, especially in the streets of Addis Ababa, with the EPRP turning to urban terrorism. The culmination was the now infamous 'Red Terror' of March and April 1977.

2.25 The Sub-Committee was told in evidence that:

- At the height of the Red Terror, some 30 000 political prisoners were in detention, according to the General Secretary of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, who fled to Sudan in 1977.⁸
- It was estimated an average of 100 people were killed in Addis Ababa every night, their bodies being left in the streets for public viewing the morning after, according to Amnesty International and Jean-Claude Guilleband, *Le Monde* journalist.⁹
- From the time the PMAC seized control of the Ethiopian revolution to the end of 1977, it is estimated that approximately 30,000 have died from executions, murders or torture at the hands of the PMAC or the Kebeles (locally elected associations).¹⁰

2.26 The magnitude of the human rights violations in Ethiopia was corroborated in a submission by the Australian section of Amnesty International.

2.27 The Sub-Committee was also told in evidence that:

- Although the 'Red Terror' was reported to have tapered off in late 1978, Amnesty International still accuses the PMAC of the following practices as late as 1982:
- Detention without trial for political prisoners, failure to account for prisoners who have 'disappeared' after arrest or abduction.
 - Extra-legal execution of political opponents, torture of detainees, involving the following methods: solitary confinement in cramped, unlit, windowless cells, dipping of prisoners' bodies into hot oil, raping of female prisoners of various ages, the insertion of bottles or heated iron bars into prisoner's vagina or anus, tying of weights to the testicles, tearing out of finger and toe-nails, trussing of prisoners in contorted or suspended positions, and severe beating of the soles of the feet.¹¹

2.28 The period from 1978 onwards saw the increasing consolidation of power by the PMAC in general, and by the faction led by Lt Col. Mengistu in particular.

2.29 The question of the full embrace of Marxism and a clear direction for domestic and foreign Ethiopian policy remained, and still remains unresolved, political parties not having been allowed since 1977. Various politically oriented groups still existed after the Terror, however, and the PMAC continued to co-opt such civilian revolutionary fervour as was left. MEISON had taken over the leadership of the POMOA and the Kebeles and these were providing critical support only, of the PMAC. The PMAC decided on its own 'pre-party formation', 'Abyot Seded', or 'Revolutionary Flame' in the last half of 1977. After many members of the military made it clear they did not approve the pro-Soviet bias of 'Abyot Seded' a further grouping was established to replace it. This new formation is known as the Commission for Organizing the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE). COPWE leadership overlaps with the leadership of the Dergue in an apparent attempt to keep it as a supportive apparatus and to encourage civilian participation in government.

2.30 The PMAC, or Dergue, is now apparently in firm control of the capital Addis Ababa. At the domestic political level it is not clear what philosophy the Dergue is pursuing except that it is populist socialist, and vaguely Marxist. To the extent that it is socialist and Marxist it is not clear whether it has taken a reactive or positive position towards the establishment of Marxism. Its equivocation in allowing the establishment of a thoroughgoing Marxist political party suggests that the military is anxious to retain power at the expense of more civilian involvement. On the other hand the establishment of COPWE could be a peculiarly Ethiopian way of introducing a political philosophy and process that is perceived to be suitable for Ethiopia. The political pendulum that has swung towards the Soviets and just as diametrically away from them under African governments which have remained in power throughout, could happen in Ethiopia as well. Countries such as Egypt, the Sudan and Somalia come into this

category. On the other hand the Dergue's apparent ambivalence towards the establishment of a fully fledged Marxist Party may be a way of encouraging the non-Communist West to think that just such a turnaround is possible, encouraging in turn economic assistance, and discouraging Western support for Somali claims in the Ogaden and support for the Eritrean and other ethnic rebellions.

2.31 A more plausible explanation for the uncertainty of Ethiopian foreign and domestic policy may be that the Dergue, which is apparently dominated by the Amharas, is conscious of the pre-eminence it enjoys as the major force to be reckoned with by the major powers if one of the latter hope to gain the ascendancy in the Horn. At present the Addis Government, by keeping a door open to both East and West, is able to achieve massive military assistance from the Soviet bloc while at the same time it receives significant non-military aid from the US, the EEC and various international organizations.

2.32 Although the questions of Ethiopia's relations with other countries on the one hand, and the uncertainty surrounding the establishment of a Marxist political party on the other may be two discrete issues, the latter uncertainty is a pointer to the general uncertainty of both domestic and foreign Ethiopian policy. In relation to domestic policy the failure to make a decision on the future of COPWE apparently reflects a variety of views about the future direction of Ethiopia's system of government, within the Army, the PMAC and COPWE itself.

2.33 In April 1982 it was reported that the Dergue was planning the restructuring of the All-Ethiopia Peasant Association to consolidate the influence of COPWE. This was seen as part of a process towards preparing for civilian rule.¹² Speculation continued throughout 1982 that COPWE was to be transformed into a permanent political party with a central role in the Ethiopian political process. During the second Congress of COPWE earlier this year, however, Colonel Mengistu spoke of his disappointment at COPWE's previous inability to recruit and attract the support of the working class and peasantry, but was pleased with recent progress in this respect, expressing himself satisfied with the 'quantity and quality' of members.¹³ It was after this conference, and after Mengistu's speech, that speculation began that the formation of a political party would finally take place in 1984. The Ethiopian Ambassador told members of the Committee that a political party would be formed in 1984.¹⁴ In March 1984 Mr Dawit Wolde Ghiorgis, Head of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, while on a visit to Australia, said that the formal structuring of a party organisation was only a matter of months away. Civilian rule would then replace military rule and a constitution would be adopted. Large posters on the walls of Addis Ababa now proclaim 'Forward with the establishment of the Working Class Party'. The central argument appears to be how closely COPWE should evolve into a party on the Soviet model.¹⁵ The decision, it can be assumed, will have a bearing on Ethiopia's relations with the Soviet Union, and by implication, other countries, including Western countries.

2.34 Meanwhile, the PMAC is in the process of relaxing its controls over foreign investment and is moving to the orderly compensation of foreign companies which have been nationalized. In addition it has been reported that:

One of the main reasons why President Mengistu Haile Mariam and other leading nationalists are trying to dilute diplomatically the Soviet connection, is Ethiopia's balance of payments deficit which has grown inexorably since the revolution, with about \$2 billion now owed to the Soviet Union. Further military campaigns against Eritrea and the need to keep a large, well-equipped army to deal with other minority problems will mean further dependency on the Soviets unless funds can also be tapped from the West.¹⁶ (For a discussion of Ethiopia's financial position and aid requirements see the Committee's Report entitled 'The Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid to the Horn of Africa.')

2.35 For the moment there does not appear to be any major danger of the PMAC losing its grip on power in Ethiopia. The major challenges are coming from Eritrea, the Ogaden and Tigray province. These nationalist and ethnic rebellions are discussed in detail in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

SOMALIA

(For a detailed description of Somali irredentism, see Chapter 5—Somali irredentism and the Ogaden conflict)

2.36 Comprehensive information on the internal political situation in Somalia, as with Ethiopia, is not easily obtained. The Sub-Committee was furnished with a number of submissions from Australians who had worked in Somalia on aid projects and from others which provided some insight. Resort was also made to learned and scholarly journals. As was the case with Ethiopia, the Sub-Committee during its deliberations, had the benefit of one of its members having travelled to Somalia on the Parliamentary Delegation to Africa in 1982.

2.37 The present Republic was formed on 1 July 1960 through the merger of the former British Somaliland Protectorate with the UN Trust territory and ex-Italian colony of Somalia. For a considerable time prior to independence Somalis in all areas where they reside, including the Ogaden in Ethiopia, the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya, and Southern Djibouti, expressed a desire to be united in one nation. The Pan-Somali ideal has remained the overriding issue in Somali politics ever since. In British controlled Somaliland a group of young activists formed the first modern Somali political movement, the Somali Youth Club (SYC), which by 1947 had become the 25 000 strong Somali Youth League (SYL), and which emphasized a Somali national consciousness.

2.38 The ethnic Somali communities in the former NFD and in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, have been the main focus of Pan-Somali aims.

2.39 The British failure to act upon the findings of the British Commission on the NFD, subsequent British policy to hold to that decision, and Kenya's implacable opposition to cede ethnic Somali territory after Kenya became self-governing in June 1963, have been the major causes of conflict between Kenya and Somalia since. The Commissioners, consisting of a Nigerian judge and a Canadian General found on their visit during October 1962 'that the Somali, whom they estimated made up 62 per cent of the NFD's population, almost unanimously favoured secession from Kenya with the object of "ultimately" joining the Somali Republic'.¹⁷

2.40 Somalis have never accepted the ceding by Britain and Italy of the ethnic Somali populated Haud and Ogaden regions to Ethiopia. After the Italian defeat at Adowa at the hands of Menelik's forces in 1896, Abyssinia and the competing European powers in the area, Italy, France and Britain, found it convenient and necessary to accept areas of separate control, if not legal sovereignty. It was apparently necessary for each European power to cede Somali territory to prove each country's respective friendship with Abyssinia, Britain in particular needing such a friendship because of the Mahdist Rebellion in Sudan:

Britain on her part desirous to placate Menelik and enlist him as an ally against the Mahdi Rebellion in the Sudan, surrendered to him some 25 000 square miles of Somali territory in the Haud part of what is now generally referred to as the Ogaden. However, it was not until 1934 when an Anglo-Ethiopian boundary commission attempted to demarcate the boundary that the Somalis became fully aware of the transfer of territory. Somali outrage was followed by resistance which was forcibly suppressed.¹⁸

2.41 In the aftermath of the expulsion of Italy from the Horn, Britain concluded an agreement with Ethiopia in 1942 which restored full sovereignty to Ethiopia and confirmed its pre-war boundaries. The failure of Britain in 1960 either to incorporate the Ogaden or cede the NFD of Kenya became an issue with Somalis which remains to this day.

2.42 The outcome of the agreements which led to the dispersal of ethnic Somalis in four separate countries was to be the major factor in Somali politics when independence was gained on 1 July 1960. (See also Chapter 5: Somali irredentism and the Ogaden conflict).

2.43 While in the period after independence there were cleavages between the political elements which had developed under the former Italian colony and British Trusteeship which were exacerbated by tribal rivalries, a national identity was sufficiently developed to provide a viability for the new state which compared favourably with the polyglot nature of the Ethiopian Empire:

The Somalis are as culturally uniform as the Ethiopians are mixed. From Djibouti in the north to Kenya's Tana River in the south, they speak a common language, enjoy a rich oral literature centred on poetic forms, organise communal life around similar, egalitarian social institutions, distinguish themselves from their Bantu and Nilotic neighbours by emphasising a genealogy stretching back to an original Arab ancestor, and manifest a powerful devotion to Islam. These cultural factors as well as the millennial occupation of contiguous territory and at least 500 years of intermittent conflict with the Christian occupants of the Ethiopian plateau make for an undisputable shared sense of nationhood. That sense has survived long associations with Hamitic kinsmen who border them on three sides: the Afars/or Danakils in the north and the various branches of the Gallas in the west and south. Surviving as well the political divisions imposed initially during the colonial scramble and partially sustained—in some ways aggravated—through the era of decolonisation, that sense now constitutes the root of the Somali problem.¹⁹

2.44 Upon independence other political parties merged with the Somali Youth League to form a government:

Dr Abdirashid Ali Shirmarke . . . was chosen as the first Prime Minister . . . As the executive leader the new premier soon formed a government, which set the pattern for the next nine years, consisting of a judicious balance of northern and southern members representative of all the main Somali clans.²⁰

2.45 While the perceived need to extend the boundaries of the new state of Somalia was a unifying factor in the first eight years of Somalia's political history, this factor for unity evaporated by the time of the 1969 elections, a guerilla war within the NFD and Ogaden having gradually ceased, and a detente with Ethiopia and Kenya having been achieved.

2.46 At this point political turmoil in Somalia itself began to boil over—over one thousand candidates, reflecting disparate tribal and clan affiliations, contesting the 123 seats of the Parliament.

With the resources of the State at its disposal, and with considerable gerrymandering, the SYL again secured victory and Muhammed Haji Ibrahim Egal was reappointed as Premier. The usual clan coalition Government was formed; and at the first meeting of the new assembly, with a single exception, all the other members of the house crossed the floor to join the Government, hoping thus to participate in the spoils of office . . . ²¹

2.47 Despite this illusion of unity:

. . . the Government and the Assembly were in reality no longer effectively representative of the public at large. Public discontent was aggravated by the complaints, often fully justified, of the hundreds of disappointed candidates, and by the increasingly autocratic style of rule assumed by both the President and Premier.²²

2.48 On 19 October 1969 the former Prime Minister, and by then President, Dr Abdirashid Ali Shirmarke, was assassinated. On the eve of the Assembly election for his successor, the Army seized power and a Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) was formed from among army and police officers. The country was renamed the Somali Democratic Republic, and the President of the SRC, Major-General Siyad Barre, became titular Head of State.

2.49 Despite promises to return government to civilian democratic rule and a program to weld the country together, partly through the breaking down of tribal divisions and the elimination of corruption, the present form of the regime did not really commence to take form until the first anniversary of the Revolution.

2.50 A former high ranking officer of the Siyad regime described the significance of the first anniversary announcements as follows:

The first decisive events in the transition from a purely military regime to a quasi-revolutionary regime occurred at the first anniversary of the coup in the form of a Second Charter which dropped references to elections, and substituted scientific socialism as the ideology of the regime. This coincided with the expansion of the security services with the assistance of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. The declaration of the Second Charter was not preceded by public debate or by any indications of the forthcoming fundamental change. One can therefore only speculate on the link between the proclamation of scientific socialism and the desire of the regime for Soviet support.²³

2.51 Scientific socialism (which in Somali literally means wealth sharing based on knowledge) was accompanied by national programs against corruption and tribalism and a general mobilization of the population behind the regime through propaganda. Nationalization proceeded steadily over the next few years, extending to medical services, schools, banks, electricity and transport services, the control of exports and imports, and land.

2.52 According to I.M. Lewis²⁴ a major reorganization of government took place in July 1976. This saw the establishment of a Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) and the replacement of the SRC by the Party's Central Committee.

2.53 A new constitution drawn up by the SRSP was endorsed by a referendum of the people, more than 99% of voters approving the proposal. The number officially given as voting in favour exceeded the total population of Somalia.²⁵ The Constitution provided for an elected People's Assembly and a one party state. The new assembly opened on 14 January 1980 when President Siyad Barre was elected unanimously for a six year term.

2.54 The Pan-Somali issue had remained relatively dormant as a major factor in domestic Somali politics since the late 1960s, however, events in Ethiopia during April and May 1977, the breakdown in US/Ethiopian relations, the subsequent Soviet/Ethiopian accommodation; the attainment by Djibouti of Independence in June, the supply of Ethiopia by the Soviets with a great many weapons, and a number of perceived, if temporary, Ethiopian weaknesses and the then superiority of Somali forces, saw Somalia again address the question as to how best to help the ethnic Somali population in the Ogaden:

With tacit and cautious support from the SDR, the Western Somali Liberation Front launched the whirlwind advance which, by late September 1977, brought its forces to the gates of Harar in the wake of the retreat by the demoralised Ethiopian forces. Russia now rallied to Ethiopia's defence mounting a massive airlift of sophisticated military equipment with Russian and East German military advisers, and Cuban and South Yemeni combat troops. Inevitably Somali-Soviet relations rapidly deteriorated. The anticipated breach occurred on 13 November, less than a month after the successful rescue of the hijacked Luftansa jet at Mogadishu airport which opened the door to an unprecedented influx of Western aid.²⁶

2.55 Initial success during the Ogaden campaign raised the stocks of the Siyad regime, and caused a great deal of rejoicing in Somalia.

2.56 The massive assistance subsequently received by Ethiopia from Cuba and the Soviets managed to re-establish Ethiopian control in the major centres in the Ogaden. The Somali decision to all but terminate ties with Moscow on 13 November 1977, and the failure of the West, and the United States in particular, to fill the vacuum in military aid combined to weaken Somalia's military drive. By 15 March 1978, Somalia announced that it had withdrawn its forces from the Ogaden.

2.57 Despite some further successes by the WSLF and the allied Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF), it was clear during 1978 and 1979 that Ethiopia had gained a considerable ascendancy *vis a vis* the official Somali armed forces.

2.58 Although the withdrawal of Somalia from the conflict could have expected to present problems for the Government, the President launched, in the wake of these events, a series of liberalization measures which served to appease Western opinion and increase popularity at home.

2.59 An unsuccessful coup attempt in October 1978 indicated that opposition did exist, however, and dissidents of the Majerteyn Darod clan, which had formerly provided a majority of the country's leaders, sought refuge in Kenya and Ethiopia where they formed the 'Somalia Salvation Front' (SOSAF).

2.60 The Somali Government's problems have increased in the years since the withdrawal of Somali troops from the Ogaden. Refugees, who now are estimated to number one in three of the population, largely as a result of the Ogaden conflict, served to place great strains on the economy despite aid contributions from the West and international agencies.²⁷ Although some refugees have returned to the Ogaden, these problems together with resettlement programs for refugees and falling exports, served to create difficult problems. Charges have increasingly been made of nepotism, tribal and clan preference and authoritarianism.

2.61 In 1981 a former high ranking official of the Siyad regime stated that:

After twelve years of a military regime under the authoritarian leadership of General Mohamed Siyad Barre, Somalia faces an economic stagnation, paralysis of its governmental institutions, and a deepening political crisis. President Siyad's response to the multi-faceted problems and growing opposition to his rule has been both cynical and artful. In his October 1980 speech, for instance, he sought to misrepresent the internal opposition to the regime and camouflage his attempts to reinforce the weakening tribal dynasty.²⁸

2.62 Although the inference of the official that the Siyad regime was about to collapse or be overthrown, the Siyad regime continues in office. Organized and official resistance has been formed, however. Reports throughout 1982 and early 1983 referred to continuing anti-government activities of SOSAF, and later by the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and to internal opposition to the Barre regime. In early 1982 Somalia's eighth army mutinied after the execution of several senior officers who were accused of collaboration with the SOSAF. In February 1982 violent clashes were reported after large scale arrests and subsequent demonstrations in Northern Somalia.²⁹ It was reported that the fighting followed the trial of 37 university teachers and students for possessing anti-government literature. Three were sentenced to death.³⁰ Further clashes in the North were reported in May 1982 involving the newly formed Somali National Movement (SNM).³¹ In June several senior Ministers were arrested for treason. In December 1982 the Ethiopian based SSDF voiced its objection to US-Somali military exercises and said in a broadcast statement:

President Reagan should be aware of the opposition forces' capacity to plant bombs in Mogadishu and their capacity to reach targets anywhere. . . And we intend to do so.³²

2.63 Further difficulties for the Government have occurred since March 1983 when the Government banned the importation and cultivation of the narcotic 'qat'. Reports in March 1983 also referred to further conflicts around Hargeisa involving the SNM.³³ The ban on qat adversely affected Kenyan farmers who grow qat for export to Somalia.³⁴ Qat is a popular drug in Somalia, and the leaves are chewed by groups of people in social and business situations, as Australians might use alcohol. There is a fear that if qat is banned the birth rate may rise substantially and the illicit consumption of alcohol might increase.

2.64 The growing strength of the opposition to the Barre regime was referred to in reports that the Somali National Movement and the Somali Workers Party had merged with the Somali Salvation Front to form the SSDF in October 1981. In September 1982 it was reported that the SSDF exceeded not more than 5000 including up to 1000 defectors from the Somali Army. The leadership Committee of the SSDF includes elements from a range of clans and tribes in Somalia different from the present Siyad regime.

2.65 The Siyad regime's difficulties in confronting the SSDF and other local opposition³⁵ are made more difficult because of its current policy of conscription and the problem it has in obtaining arms from overseas, and once having received weapons, the difficulty it has in maintaining them and training men to use them. According to recent reports China is having trouble teaching Somalis how to maintain their MiG aircraft, and making them operational.

2.66 Throughout this period of continuing opposition, the Barre regime has been undergoing some internal reorganization. While it was reported that President Siyad Barre had released ex Prime Minister Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal from prison on 9 February 1982 along with other political detainees,³⁶ it was clear that other elements of opposition were being thoroughly dealt with (see above). In March, however, the martial law restrictions which had been in force since October 1980 were lifted. At the same time the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) was disbanded, and the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) given greater prominence in running the country's affairs. These events were accompanied by a major reshuffle of senior ministers.³⁷ President Siyad Barre was re-elected for a new five year term as Secretary-General of the SRSP on 4 August 1982.

2.67 According to *The Economist* of 24 July 1982 unrest in Somalia itself was brought to a head early in 1982 in the northern towns of Hargeisa and Burao.

2.68 In putting this unrest down, the Somali army caused more than 100 civilian deaths according to foreign eyewitnesses, and thousands were imprisoned. Political protest has been swiftly put down. The prisons now house several of President Barre's former colleagues.

2.69 Although guerrilla groups claim from time to time that President Barre's government is close to collapse, they deny they are being assisted by Ethiopia: to say otherwise would lose them support within Somalia. President Barre has sought diplomatic support against Ethiopia from the Organisation of African Unity and has asked the United States for urgent military assistance. He also visited Egypt in mid 1982 and asked President Mubarak for help.

2.70 Despite reports of the imminent dangers to the Siyad regime in 1982, the regime remains in power and the immediate threat seemed to recede during the first half of 1983. This may have been due to Ethiopian policy. During 1982, the SSDF, whose viability depended on considerable Ethiopian support, posed a genuine threat along the Ogaden border. It appeared at the time, however, that any further successes would depend on Ethiopian support. The Ethiopians were then deliberating as to whether to push home this advantage and attempt to topple the Siyad regime, or to satisfy their advantage just gained. It seems they may have opted for the latter

although they still occupy some Somali territory and the towns of Goldogob and Balambale near the border. (See also Chapter 5, paragraph 5.45.)

DJIBOUTI

2.71 On 19 March 1967 a referendum was held in French Somaliland which asked the question 'Do you want the territory to be a part of the French Republic, with a governmental and administrative statute devised according to the basic principles that have been explained to you?'. The results of the plebiscite, according to Robert Tholomier, author of *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa*, had 'one curious aspect':

... the number of "no" votes corresponded almost exactly to the total Issa and Somali voters and ... the "yes" votes closely reflected the total of European, Arab, and Afar voters, with a disparity of only about 1800 ...²⁴

2.72 The recent political history of Djibouti (formerly called the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas, and prior to that, French Somaliland) has reflected this division between the Afars and the Issas.

2.73 The population is almost evenly divided between ethnic Somali Issas, and the Afars, the former having a slight predominance. Both are Muslim Cushitic speaking peoples with a traditionally nomadic economy and close affinities despite frequent rivalry. The Afars inhabit the northern part of the country, the Somalis the southern, and both populations extend across the frontiers separating the Djibouti Republic from Ethiopia and Somalia.²⁵

2.74 Djibouti became independent on 27 June 1977, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, a Somali politician and Ligue Populaire Africaine pour L'Independence (LPAI) leader becoming President. Ahmed Dini, an Afar and Secretary-General of the LPAI, was chosen as Prime Minister.

2.75 The Djibouti Government was quick to emphasise its 'Arab' identity and sought good relations with its Arab neighbours across the Red Sea. The integrity of the new Republic's borders was in large part dependent on the continued presence of the French garrison of 4000 at Djibouti. Many were concerned about the consequences should the French leave. A further 10 000 French citizens reside in Djibouti. In the event, Western nervousness about the security of oil supplies from the Middle East during the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the French presence continue, and a French naval presence was bolstered in the general area, operating mainly out of Djibouti. The United States Navy also uses Djibouti's port facilities.

2.76 Political violence erupted during the year after independence, the major factors being Afar complaints of discrimination, the continuing close relations with France and the government's alleged pro-Somalia policies. The first Presidential elections were held in June 1981 resulting in a victory for Hassan Gouled, representing the single party—the Rassemblement Populaire pour le progres (RPP). The Afar dominated Front Democratique pour Liberation de Djibouti (FDLD) rejected the result from its headquarters in Addis Ababa. In October 1981 a one party state was established.

2.77 While Djibouti is not a major protagonist in the conflicts on the Horn, it is a victim of the Ethiopian/Somali conflict and has been an object of Somali irredentism. The country is very poor with an arid terrain consisting largely of rock strewn desert wastes. Its population is approximately 310 000, half of whom live in Djibouti; the port and rail-head from Addis Ababa.

2.78 The Ogaden conflict of 1977-78 saw the Addis-Djibouti railway disrupted twice by Somali guerilla activity which brought the port to a standstill. In 1977 the new government announced that dealing with the strain of the refugees from the Ogaden

conflict was the first priority. Between 30 000 and 45 000 refugees are present in Djibouti, a country which is not self-sufficient in food production. Half of the refugees are estimated to be in the camps Dikhil and Ali Sabieh near the border, 5000 in the urban slums, and a number of unregistered refugees are scattered throughout the country. Most of the refugees are Oromo, Somali and Afar. There are also minorities of Eritreans and Tigreans.

2.79 In 1981 it was reported that:

An injection of 10 000 nomads during the 1978 Ethio-Somali war, coupled with the closing of the railway, brought the brittle Djibouti economy to the brink of collapse. From that moment on, the government has tended to leave the refugees in the hands of external agencies, but it has not shown any sign of closing its borders to further influxes.²⁶

2.80 This position has now changed and Djibouti is attempting to repatriate refugees to their country of origin. While Djibouti has traditionally relied on the French for economic aid and security, the French are becoming less popular with Djiboutien youth, and Saudi Arabia now rivals France as the major donor of aid. While the Saudis are happy for the French to remain in Djibouti, the Djiboutiens may, if their sense of nationalism develops, raise the cost of the French presence. Immediately after independence, Djibouti attempted to promote light industry in the country but because of high labour costs due to the existence of the expatriate French population, this plan failed. Plans for Djibouti to become a major export port for African countries in the interior also came to little.

2.81 Djibouti relies on the Saudis and the French therefore, for such economic benefits as it is able to obtain, its own intrinsic economic wealth being minimal. The economic benefits obtained have, in turn, a bearing on Djibouti's place in the scheme of superpower involvement on the Horn: Djibouti's policy currently favours Western interests. Djibouti's concern about the Ethiopian-Somali conflict was illustrated by its Foreign Minister offering to mediate between the parties during a visit to Mogadishu in mid 1983.

2.82 The elections held on 21 May 1982 for the National Assembly saw the first such elections held since 1977. These were held under the system of a one party state which had existed since October 1981. President Gouled obtained a 91 per cent turnout of the 86 000 voters which was regarded as popular approval of his policies. No demonstrations or opposition were evident during the election.²⁷ Although it is hard to judge the actual popularity of a one party state regime, Gouled seems to enjoy widespread support.²⁸ In October 1982 it was reported that some 45 members of two Djiboutien opposition groups based in Ethiopia, and representing the Afars, were to return home taking advantage of an amnesty offered by the Government.

CHAPTER 2

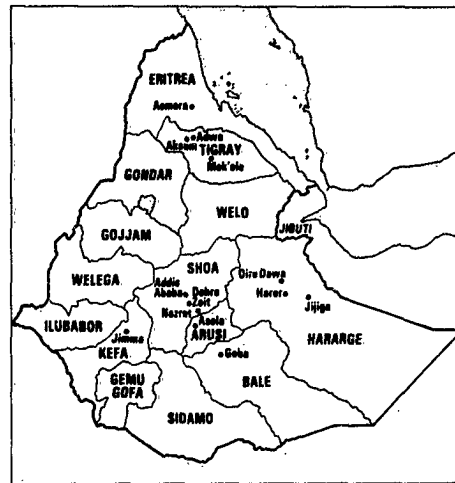
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MAP 2: ETHIOPIA: PROVINCES AND MAJOR TOWNS



ETHIOPIA: Provinces and Major Towns

Reprinted from Fred Halliday and Maxine Molynaux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, NLB, 1981.

PART II—REGIONAL ISSUES AND CONFLICTS

Chapter 3

Nationalist movements and ethnic rebellions in Ethiopia

(For detailed descriptions of the situations in Eritrea and the Ogaden, see Chapters 4 and 5)

INTRODUCTION

3.1 *The local conflicts on the Horn are due in large part to the ethnic diversity of Ethiopia, and the fact that territorial boundaries are inconsistent with the distribution of ethnic groups. Ethnic Somalis are present in Southern Djibouti, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and the former Northern Frontier District of Kenya. Eritreans, who themselves are made up of a number of different ethnic groups, obtained a national identity during their territory's occupation by Italy and Britain during the colonial period of African history, and yet are now incorporated inside Ethiopia. The Afars, who inhabit the pastoral lands alongside the Red Sea are present in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Northern Djibouti. The Oromos, the majority of whom are found in the South Western administrative regions, are scattered throughout Ethiopia and are the largest single ethnic group in the country.*

3.2 This chapter is devoted mainly to ethnic and national rebellion in Ethiopia aside from the Eritrean and Ogaden problems. The latter two are dealt with in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

ETHIOPIA

3.3 *Ethiopia, within its current territorial boundaries, is a conglomeration of a variety of ethnic groups speaking over 100 languages. Ethiopia has been the crossroads of several human migrations, and these are still continuing as illustrated by the recent refugee crises resulting from war and famine. In the dissected plateau of central Ethiopia, groups of people have lived in relative isolation from each other, a factor which contributes to a situation in which over 250 different languages and dialects are spoken. The differences between those peoples who use the plough on the northern plateaux, those who use the hoe in the south, and those who are nomadic pastoralists in the far north and south east adds an occupational dimension to the cultural variety. In addition there is a division of the population as between Coptic Christians, Moslems and animists. According to UN population projections, Ethiopia is expected to have 35 million people by mid 1985. Other sources say a census, scheduled to have been conducted at the end of 1983, would reveal a population of approximately 42 million. (cf. Appendix A)*

3.4 Communications between different parts of Ethiopia, and between the capital Addis Ababa and the various regions, are poorly developed. In 1974 there were 14 000 miles of road, only 1250 of which were asphalted. Only around a third of the roads were all weather roads. Three quarters of the country's farms were over half a day's walk from the nearest road, and forty per cent of the population were more than two day's walk from the nearest government or educational centre. In 1974 there were only 50 000 cars or trucks in the country.

3.5 The dominant groups in recent Ethiopian history have been the Amharic speakers who are mainly Coptic Christians of the central plateau, the more northerly Tigrinya speakers, a language which is similar to Amharic, and who are again mainly Coptic Christians but include a significant minority of Moslems in Eritrea, and the Oromo (or Galla) peoples who are mostly Moslem, and who occupy the Bale province and are also spread throughout the south and central areas.

3.6 There are no precise figures for ethnic groups because no census has been carried out. Other groups of significant size which have recognizable identities include the Tigre (who populate the far north west of Eritrea and are distinct from the Tigrinya speakers (Tigreans) of the northern Ethiopian plateau), the Afars who populate the coastal strip from Massawa down to and including northern Djibouti, and the Ogaden and Haud Somalis (who are discussed in Chapter 5). A number of other groups have been involved in struggles which are ethnic in character, notably in Wallo, Gojjam and Wollaga provinces.

3.7 In speaking of the Amhara, Oromo and Tigreans, Professor Preston King, who provided the Sub-Committee with a tape recorded submission, stated in a paper he gave to the Eighth National Conference of the Australian Institute of International Affairs in 1980:

There is rivalry between these three groups, but the future of the country, like its past, lies basically in their hands together. The element that is geographically most central and most cohesive is also that which has traditionally proved most clearly dominant—the Amhara. The Tigreans are both geographically and linguistically proximate to the Amhara; the Ethiopian state in its earliest form was in fact founded by them. Together the two groups constitute roughly one-third of the entire population. The Amharic language is reckoned to be spoken by at least half of the population; it is also the earliest vehicle of instruction in primary schools, up to the seventh year. The Oromo (Galla)-speaking peoples are more numerous than Amhara and Tigreans together but they are less cohesive than either alone or both together. The Oromo, at 40% of the population, are spread throughout the country, and have adapted differently, depending upon the setting. Whereas those in Shoa Province (about 4% of total population) are predominantly Christian cultivators, and intermarry with the Amhara-Tigreans, most elsewhere are not and do not.¹

3.8 The Tigreans, Afars and Oromos, together with the Ogaden Somalis and the various nationalities who make up Eritrea are the most significant identifiable groups who have developed coherent policies seeking autonomy and self-determination. In 1977 the Ethiopian Government reported that it was facing revolt in twelve of its fourteen provinces.² One study of recent developments has concluded that:

At the beginning of the 1980's, therefore, the issue of provincial autonomy and of separation remained an urgent one throughout much of the non-Amhara areas.³

3.9 Two opposing themes were brought to the attention of the Sub-Committee in written submissions on the viability of the Ethiopian State. Professor Preston King told the Sub-Committee:

You ask about the viability of the Ethiopian state. Ethiopia has a special place in Africa and in the thinking of Africans however much they may dislike Ethiopia or Ethiopians on an individual level or in certain circumstances. Ethiopia's ethnic diversities and the difficulties stemming from this diversity is no more problematic. It is problematic enough but it is no more problematic than that of Angola or of Zaire, or of Nigeria, or indeed Sudan. In other words, pretty uniformly the larger countries become in the African context, the more diverse ethnically do they become too and the more difficult does the task of mediating between the different ethnic units within the system as a whole become⁴

and

Africa like Asia and Europe represents the Old World. What one has is a panoply of languages and local communities which have existed for a long time in their geographical

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areas. A neutral ruler like Bokassa in the Central African Republic or Amin in Uganda can reasonably easily be got rid of. If their behaviour is unduly outrageous they deserve to be got rid of but one cannot likely entertain the prospect of a major country with the significance of Ethiopia's for Africa suddenly having its entire shape altered for whatever reasons. It is obvious that there is ample room for Ethiopia to behave rather better than she has done. It will also be obvious that under pressure as she is now and has been, there is little prospect of such an alteration taking place. In fact it appears to me that it is close to criminal to encourage smallish groups within the Ethiopian political ambit to take up arms against her when the prospect of these moves being successful is very, very limited indeed. There are always sectors in the community which if you give them sufficient aid will be prepared to fight against the centre and this will be true in Kenya or in Nigeria just as much as in Ethiopia, not to mention Sudan, or Zaire or Angola or Mozambique, or some of the other countries.⁵

3.10 A different view was given to the Sub-Committee by Lord Avebury in his letter to the Chairman on 14 January 1983:

I think that one of the major problems in the Horn of Africa has been that there has been minority rule in Ethiopia for the past 100 years. In the normal course of events the mass of the people in the country would have been able to change this situation, probably through a series of armed struggles. Exactly what form the present-day Ethiopia would have taken is open to question, but probably some sort of federation might have emerged. Unfortunately, the Amhara minority, represented by the imperial regimes from Menelik to Haile Selassie and now by the Dergue, who are over 80% Amhara, have been able to maintain their control of the country through the intervention of outside forces. In the immediate post-war years it was the west, and particularly the United States, who armed Haile Selassie and enabled him to consolidate his position in Eritrea, which he had forcibly annexed in 1962. US arms also enabled him to hold down the opposition in Tigray and Western Somalia in particular. Without this aid, there is no doubt that Haile Selassie would have faced very serious problems from the Eritrean resistance and, indeed, in spite of it, the EPLF were able to take over most of the country with the exception of Asmara and Massawa by the time the Soviets intervened in 1977.

It was also the British Air Force which quelled the Woyanne Revolt in Tigray in 1953.⁶

3.11 Various proposals by successive Ethiopian governments to stem the tide of revolt in the provinces have included, on the one hand, offers of greater regional autonomy, and, on the other, a greater degree of control from the centre. Various programs to increase the economic prospects of provincial peoples have been tried, especially in respect of agriculture and during periods of drought. Some of these latter reforms have met with resistance from the Amhara of Shoa Province, as have other conciliatory gestures towards provincial peoples. During the period since the PMAC acceded to power, there has been discussion as to what extent to grant regional autonomy, with the 'centralists' apparently winning out, as evidenced particularly in relation to policies towards Eritrea. The apparent success of the Eritrean movement for self-determination has been seen as encouraging other, separatist movements. While the spokesmen and literature of the various ethnic liberation groups claim continuing and successful opposition to the central Ethiopian Government, the Government contests these assertions. Nevertheless the Head of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Mr Dawit Wolde Ghiorgis, while saying in March 1984 that the security situation in Ethiopia had improved, acknowledged that there were still sporadic incidents of opposition.

TIGRAY

3.12 Tigray Province occupies approximately 100 000 square kilometres between Eritrea and inland provinces in northern Ethiopia. (The Tigreans are a separate ethnic

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and linguistic group from the Tigre speaking peoples of the Sahel in the north eastern coastal plain (the Sahel) and the western lowlands (Bani Amir) of Eritrea—the Tigre. There is some confusion about the nomenclature of these two groups, the Sahel peoples sometimes being called Tigray. In this report 'Tigrean' is used to describe the Tigrinya speakers of the central Eritrean plateau and around Aksum in Ethiopia (Tigray); 'Tigre' to identify the Tigre speakers of the Sahel and Bani Amir. Tigray provinces' Tigrinya speaking population of 5 000 000 are overwhelmingly Coptic Christians. The Tigrinya speakers also extend into the central highlands of Eritrea, and this accounts for the close connection between the two peoples. Tigray province contains the city of Aksum, seat of the Aksumite Empire which ruled over large areas of Ethiopia from the First to the Seventh Century AD.

3.13 There have been occasional outbreaks of regional violence in Tigray province since the Second World War. The province has been a region which has suffered regularly from the vagaries of droughts and famine and from the ravages of human plunder because of the armies which pass through it from time to time. Until this century it was normal for armies on the march to live off the land, and Tigray was often en route to somewhere else, and not always the object of conquest itself. Even now, Ethiopian armies on their way to Eritrea are obliged to pass through Tigray province, and the peasant army of the 1974 Revolution, like the armies of more ancient times, was prone to regard plunder as its prerogative. The obligation of the Ethiopians to pass through Tigray is said to be one reason for Eritrean encouragement of Tigrean guerilla activity. Forced conscription into the Ethiopian army does little to discourage disenchantment with the central Addis Ababa government and in turn encourages separatist feelings.

3.14 The factors of drought, Imperial decisions to hive off parts of Tigray to other provinces during the 1950's, and alleged neglect of the local economy have added to local dissatisfaction with the central Addis Ababa Government. Many Tigreans have become refugees from this poverty stricken province, elsewhere in Ethiopia itself, and also 90 000 in the Sudan where it can be assumed many have found themselves in an active political milieu among other refugee groups from the Horn.

3.15 The grinding poverty, where infant mortality is at a rate of over 30 per cent, is illustrated by the following:

The signs of malnutrition are everywhere present as swollen-bellied children run to their mothers to thrust a hungry mouth to an empty breast. The incidence of disease, primarily malaria and tuberculosis, is increased with the low nutritional standards, while the dusty dry climatic conditions give rise to chronic eye infections. Outside of the towns, there has never been any government medical service, and even in the urban areas, the four hospitals, equipped with only 14 medical and 106 paramedical personnel for almost five million people, are now used mainly for military purposes, offering medical care to but a small percentage of the civilian population who make up an estimated fifteen percent of all inpatients.

Small villages are bordered by huge graveyards, testimonials to the average life expectancy of 30 to 35 years. Women, perpetually in a state of pregnancy, give birth to children who, as soon as they can walk, assume responsibility for watering and grazing the livestock. Only 3.6 percent of the children who survive infancy are able to go to school, while most live on to repeat the cycle of generations before them.⁴

3.16 It is against this historical background and landscape that the farmers and pastoralists who make up the bulk of Tigray's population find themselves within Ethiopian sovereignty.

3.17 After the 1974 Revolution the former Governor of the Province, Ras Mengesha Seyoum, organised a Tigray Liberation Front (TLF), which later joined with the Royalist Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) which tied down Government forces for a considerable time in the west and northwest after the Revolution.

3.18 In 1976 a faction of the TLF commenced independent activity with a program which professed to be based on Mao Tse Tung thought. This new organisation, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) called for a 'new democratic revolution', the overthrow of feudalism, opposition to the 'colonial domination' established by Meneik, and support for the EPLF in Eritrea.⁵

3.19 The numerical size of the TPLF is difficult to determine. The EPLF has augmented the TPLF in particular actions and from 1976 onwards has provided logistical support from inside Eritrea. It has been estimated that the size of the TPLF grew from a few hundred guerrillas operating in 1976 to several thousand by 1980.¹⁰

3.20 In September 1980 the Ethiopians launched a major offensive. The tactics used were similar to those used in Eritrea. These included the employment of Soviet made helicopter gunships, infantry sweeps through the countryside, the attacking of villages with rocket, napalm and cluster bombs.

3.21 The 1980 offensive, another in March 1981, and droughts during 1973 and 1981, have led to the displacement of thousands, some fleeing to the west of the province. Aid and humanitarian assistance have had difficulty in reaching areas of most need when channelled through Ethiopian organisations, many of the most needy living under TPLF control. One report in 1981 claimed that the TPLF controlled 50 per cent of the rural countryside and 75 per cent of the population, although the figures are not verifiable.¹¹

3.22 Australian awareness of the problems in Tigray is limited. Some Western aid does reach TPLF controlled areas through the Relief Society of Tigray (REST). Claims by sources critical of Ethiopian policies make the same claims about misuse of aid as the Eritreans do in respect of aid channelled through Ethiopia. An example of such a claim is the allegation that the Ethiopian Army has been discovered using grain supplies marked 'Gift of the European Community'.¹²

3.23 The TPLF attempted to draw world attention to their plight in April 1983 when they kidnapped ten foreign aid workers. The aid workers were working in Korem where a food aid program was in progress to assist about 42 000 people who had taken refuge there. The kidnapers were reported not to have harmed the relief workers, the object of the kidnapping being to expose them to the desperate situation in Tigray. Among those kidnapped was an Australian doctor, Charles Douglas, who had been working in Ethiopia for the New South Wales Branch of the Save the Children Fund. The victims of the kidnapping were ultimately released unharmed.

3.24 The Tigray insurgency is the next most intractable problem for the Ethiopians after Eritrea and the Ogaden. Reports in May 1983 of a major Ethiopian offensive which had commenced in mid February involving 40 000 troops indicate that the Addis Government is having considerable difficulty in maintaining its rule in the province.¹³

THE OROMOS

3.25 Between thirteen and fifteen million Oromos live in Ethiopia, making up approximately 40 per cent of the population. While most Oromos are Moslem, a small percentage are Copts, especially those who have intermarried with the Amhara of Shoa Province. The Oromos are centred in the fertile southern provinces, principally Bale, but are also spread throughout Ethiopia. Although some Oromos speak of an area called Oromia, there is considerable overlap between Oromo occupied provinces and those that belong to other Ethiopian groups on the one hand, and parts of the Ogaden claimed by Somalia on the other.

3.26 Although peasant revolts occurred throughout the 1960s, modern Oromo dissent seems to have made its most forceful appearance in the years immediately following 1977 when a number of Oromo intellectuals who participated in the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 were purged. In addition, the Oromo were, like many other groups, victims of the 'Red Terror'. The commencement of Somalia's attempt to win the Ogaden in 1977 provided additional impetus to the Oromo insurrection, and a more active Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). There are reports of this period which maintain that the Ethiopian response was similar in brutality to that in Eritrea and Tigray. Another factor was the alleged dispossession of land of Oromo peasants, and the resettlement of Amhara on this land. The Ethiopian Government maintains that the resettlement of people from drought prone areas to more agriculturally reliable areas is done to ameliorate the poverty and starvation endemic in the north of the country. 200 000 people had been resettled by early 1984, and the Government foresees a need to move four million. Oromo activists see this as a political exercise, designed to disperse and weaken opposition to the central Addis Ababa government. These factors, together with natural disasters, including a devastating famine, drought and cattle plague, have caused a large number to become refugees, some in other parts of Ethiopia, the bulk in Somalia, and some as far away as Sudan.

3.27 Although because of their geographical spread and differences of clan and dialect the Oromo have not had any recognizable political or social institutions to provide coherence to their cause, the OLF nevertheless seeks the establishment of a People's Democratic Republic of Oromia. Its program opposes Amharic domination, is vaguely socialist and stresses Oromo culture and language.

3.28 The OLF has at times combined with the Somali-Abo Liberation Front (SALF) which in turn, during the Somali Ogaden campaign, fought Ethiopian forces at the same time as the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and regular Somali forces were doing so. The SALF played a significant role in the eastern mountain region during 1977, and has an office in Mogadishu.

3.29 The Amhara and the Oromo have been traditional enemies. Although the Oromo, as at present organized, do not alone constitute a viable threat to the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, they would do so if sufficient of them were to become mobilized against the Addis Ababa Regime. Their future actions as the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia will greatly affect the viability of any central government.

THE AFARS

3.30 Another ethnic rebellion which is of significance to the stability of both Ethiopia and Djibouti is that of the Afars. The Afars are mostly nomads who populate the coastal strip along the Red Sea (south eastern-Eritrea) south of the port of Assab, and the northern section of, and inland from, Djibouti.

3.31 The two identifiable movements representing Afar interests are the Afar Liberation Front (ALF), which calls for independence for Afar occupied territory; and the Afar National Liberation Movement (ANLM), which seeks a measure of autonomy but stops short of seeking secession. The ALF is the stronger of the two, and is conservative in its policies relative to the PMAC. There are a number of Afar refugees from Ethiopia now located in Djibouti. On the other hand many Afars who are dissatisfied with the domination of Djibouti policies by the Issas have, from time to time, sought refuge in Ethiopia.

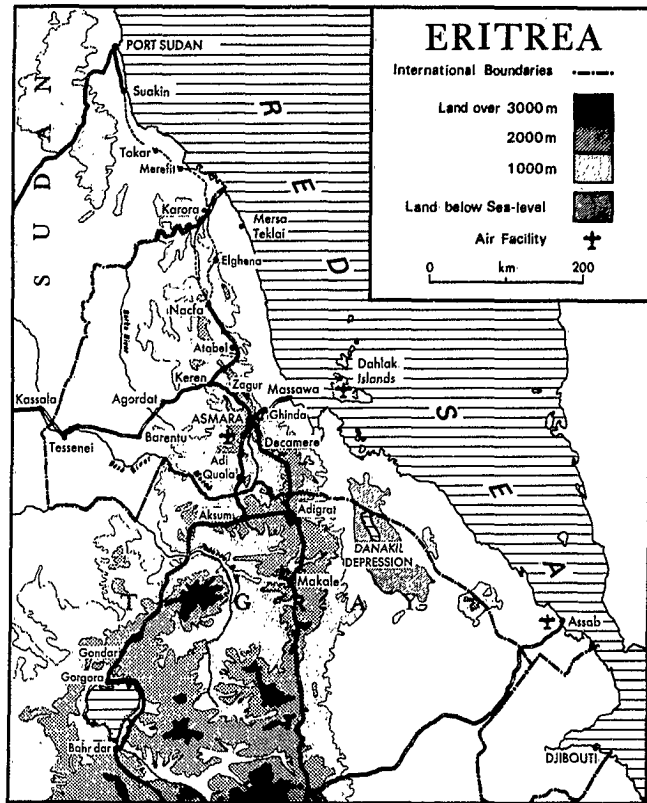
3.32 The setting up, on 24 March 1983, of an Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities, and announcements at the same time that Colonel Mengistu's government planned to draw up a constitution, was a recognition of the central Government's concern with the problem confronting it concerning the relationship between the Amharic, Tigrayan, Oromo, Somali, Eritrean and other nationalities which make-up Ethiopia.¹⁴

CHAPTER 3

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(Complete details of each source are supplied where first cited.)

1. Preston King, 'Center/Periphery: Ethiopian Imperatives', Paper delivered to Eighth National Conference, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Canberra, 28-30 March 1980.
2. See Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, NLB, London, 1981, p. 156.
3. Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, p. 157.
4. Preston King, Transcript of tape recording provided to the Sub-Committee, p. 5.
5. Preston King, Transcript of tape recording, p. 6.
6. Lord Avebury, Submission No. 30, p. 3.
7. Lord Avebury, Submission No. 30, p. 4.
8. 'Tigray: Forced Labour but No Relief', *Horn of Africa*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 30.
9. See Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, p. 206.
10. Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, p. 205.
11. See 'Tigray: Forced Labour but No Relief', p. 29.
12. 'Tigray: Forced Labour but No Relief', p. 29.
13. Information from a commercially available survey of African affairs which is supplied to subscribers on a confidential basis.
14. See *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 15 April 1983, p. 6764.



Source: Based on map provided by Eritrean Relief Committee, Sydney

Chapter 4

The struggle for Eritrea

INTRODUCTION

4.1 The great majority of evidence presented to the Sub-Committee supported the concept of independence for Eritrea. This evidence was critical of the policies and activities of the Ethiopian Government in Eritrea. The Sub-Committee made a number of efforts to obtain evidence from the Ethiopian point of view in this matter but was largely unsuccessful. In this regard members of the Sub-Committee were pleased to have discussions with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 14 September 1983. The Sub-Committee was anxious to provide the Ambassador with the opportunity of putting his government's view on the question of Eritrea. The Sub-Committee had earlier arranged for the Department of Foreign Affairs to pass the Ambassador a letter which invited him to comment on the matters under consideration. The Ambassador replied on 11 August 1983 giving his government's views on the Eritrean question and on a number of other matters.

4.2 Eritrea occupies the most northerly and north easterly parts of Ethiopia, bordered on the west and north by Sudan, and on the East by the Red Sea. In the extreme south it has a border with Djibouti. Its climate varies from a desert coastal plain in the east to temperate highlands in the centre, and levelling off to lowlands of savannah in the west. Its main ports are Massawa and Assab. Other major towns and cities include Asmara, the capital, Keren and Agordat, all on the railway link inland from Massawa. Another major centre is Naefa in the northern Sahel.

4.3 In the highlands the majority of Eritreans are settled peasants, in the coastal areas the main groups are pastoral nomads, while in the western lowlands nomads and semi nomads live next to settled cultivators in the Gash and Setit river valleys.

4.4 Compared with Ethiopia, Eritrea is highly urbanised, approximately twenty per cent living in the major towns and cities. This reflects a higher rate of manufacturing industry than in Ethiopia, which grew during the period of colonial occupation. The more advanced state of economic development in Eritrea as compared with Ethiopia has been the cause of some fear and resentment among people of the latter. A comparison could be made with the attitude which has traditionally characterized that of Nigerians generally to the Ibo. The total population is about three and a half million. A census has not recently been conducted. The figures for the various nationalities which made up Eritrea were estimated by the British in 1952 to be as follows:

Table 4.1: Nationalities in Eritrea

(Based on British administrative statistics for 1952)

Tigrinya	524 000
Tigre	329 000
Saho	66 000
Bilaln	38 000
Danakil (Afar)	33 000
Barya	15 000
Kunama	22 000

Source: Pool, D. *Eritrea: Africa's Longest War*, Anti-Slavery Society, London, 1982, p. 11.

4.5 Some of the linguistic groups which inhabit Eritrea also live in Ethiopia, notably the Tigrinya speakers (Tigreans) and the Afars. The Eritrean argument regarding their claim to nationhood is not based on ethnic homogeneity, but on the basis of colonial boundaries and the sense of nationhood that developed during the colonial occupation.

4.6 Eritrea's importance to Ethiopia lies in its strategic location, it often having been occupied by Sudanese, Arab and colonial forces over the centuries. Currently its strategic importance is enhanced by its proximity to the oil rich Middle East and its location adjacent to the Suez shipping route. It is important to Israel and Saudi Arabia because of their use of the Red Sea for shipping. In addition, Ethiopia would be landlocked if it did not have access to Eritrean ports. This is generally regarded as one of the most crucial reasons for Ethiopia's desire to incorporate Eritrea. Acknowledgement of Eritrea's strategic importance by the superpowers is underscored by the use the Soviet navy makes of Massawa and the adjacent Dahlak islands.

CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS OF PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY

4.7 The Eritrean and Ethiopian arguments concerning the right of Eritrea to independence revolve around different interpretations of the pre-colonial historical association, the colonial experience of Eritrea under the Italians, the actions of the Four Powers after the Second World War, the actions of the UN, the actions of the Ethiopians since UN Resolution 390A(v) of 1950, the economic viability of Eritrea, the feeling of nationhood among the Eritrean population, the consistency of the concept of Eritrean national independence with OAU policy and the UN Declaration on Human Rights and right of colonial peoples to self-determination.

4.8 Although the Committee is not in a position to pass judgment on conflicting interpretations of Ethiopian and Eritrean history, it is nevertheless clear that acceptance of the common assumptions that abound about African history in general, and about the Horn in particular, is not necessarily a sound starting point for the study of African affairs or the development of policies with respect to them. Any policies, for example, that are developed on the basis of an assumption that Ethiopia has a sound historical basis for its territorial claim over Eritrea should be treated with caution.

4.9 The following examples of conflicting interpretations of Eritrea's historical associations with Ethiopia provide evidence of that need for caution.

4.10 A popularly accepted view of Ethiopian history, and one which has great bearing on the question of Eritrea's national status, is that the Ethiopian nation state has a long and continuous history dating back well before Christ. In this view the present nation of Ethiopia, and by inference its present status and boundaries, are an extension of this historical continuum. In this view Ethiopia is unique in Africa in this respect, and especially unique as compared with neighbouring countries on the Horn. An interpretation uncritical of the official Ethiopian position appears in Europa Publications' *Africa South of the Sahara 1982-83*:

Ethiopian history dawns in the bright yet shadowy glory of the Aksumite Kingdom (established perhaps half a millennium before the birth of Christ), which gave way in the early Middle Ages to the Ethiopian medieval state, known in Europe as the Land of Prester John, and regarded with much interest as the only Christian Kingdom in Africa or Asia. By the nineteenth century, however, the powers of the monarch had been usurped by the nobles, and the empire had largely disintegrated into several semi-independent provinces, whose rulers often fought among themselves. Memories of a great and glorious past were none the less not forgotten, and cultural contacts, largely through the Church, were preserved.

Indeed, recognition of the country's former greatness and unity provide the background for the rise of Emperor Tewodros II (1855-68), the protagonist of modern Ethiopia.¹

4.11 Another view was presented in a paper attached to the submission provided by the Eritrean Relief Committee (ERC) in evidence before the Sub-Committee. To give the Ethiopian argument, the paper, entitled 'Eritrea and Ethiopia: The Pre-colonial Period' by Dr David Pool, quoted from an official Ethiopian history:

History attests that the northern part of Ethiopia, especially the region now called Eritrea, has been the cradle of Ethiopian civilization . . . When the Axumite civilization reached its apogee from the fourth to the eighth century A.D., the Eritrean region was an integral part of Ethiopia . . . it played a leading role in maintaining the cohesion of the country . . . Hence up and until the second half of the nineteenth century the strong link between the Eritrean region and the central government has never been severed.²

4.12 'The Asmara Manifesto' which was appended to the Ethiopian Ambassador's letter of 11 August 1983, included a number of assertions about the historical unity of the Eritrean region and Ethiopia:

If we for a moment take a glance at the objective history of Ethiopia, which testifies to its unity, there is no gainsaying that at least from as far back as 500 B.C., the northern region has been the cradle of the civilization of the whole of Ethiopia. It is clear to any one that it was during the Axumite civilization that flourished in northern Ethiopia that the Ethiopic Alphabet attained its present form and as the vehicle for written geez, made immense contribution to the development of education, literature and culture and generally to the progress and expansion of civilization.

Beginning in 1885, Italian colonialism infiltrated our northern region and controlled it partially. It is a historical fact that until 1890 when the colonialists gave that part of the country the name Eritrea, the region used to be known as the Maritime Province and its administrator as the "Bahre Negash".

This in brief is the history. Until the end of the 19th century, when European colonialists and particularly Italian colonialists, seized parts of the coastal area of Ethiopia and imposed their colonial rule over the region, there was no period at all when Eritrea was separated from Ethiopia and when Ethiopia had lived without Eritrea.³

4.13 In 'Basic Documents of the Ethiopian Revolution' published by the Provisional Office for Mass Organisation Affairs; Agitation, Propaganda and Education Committee, Addis Ababa, May 1977, a document was produced entitled: 'Policy Declaration of the Provisional Military Government to solve the problem in the administrative region of Eritrea in a peaceful way'. The document begins as follows:

It is an indelible historical fact that the northern region of Ethiopia, called Eritrea for the last 87 years, had been the seat of the history, culture and administration of ancient Ethiopia. However, because of its location along the Red Sea and the strategic importance of its sea coast, the northern region of Ethiopia had been coveted by various forces during the last few centuries.

Powers like Turkey, Egypt, Italy and then Britain, who wanted to control the Red Sea and East Africa, have often sought to carve out Eritrea out of the rest of Ethiopia. In this effort, they made use of religious, nationalistic and standard of living differences among the peoples of the region. In the process, the people were subjected to various colonial administrations. The Italian colonial and fascist regime used the Eritrea Region as a base and as a bridgehead of the invasion of other parts of Ethiopia.⁴

4.14 In a paper attached to the ERC's submission, Dr Pool summarized his contrary interpretation of Eritrean and Ethiopian history as follows:

A) Eritrea has had a history distinct from Ethiopian Empires.

B) Ethiopian empires have varied in nature and extent over the last 1500 years.

A) i. Eritrea was only part of the Axumite empire and that empire, other than at the level of myth and culture, had no territorial connection to successive Ethiopian empires;

ii. All of Eritrea, except the highlands—Hamasin, Serai and Akalai Guzai—were either independent, or subject to the payment of tribute to non-'Ethiopian' empires subsequent to the fall of Axum. The Dankalia area was independent until it was divided between Menelik and the Italians in the 1890s. Western Eritrea was subject to the Funj and the Egyptian Sudan;

iii. The Eritrean highlands were subject to tribute to an Ethiopian empire only for limited periods. During the period after Axum (8th to 14th century), they were controlled by independent Beja Kingdoms. From the fourteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth a resurgent Amhara empire established dominance. From that time onward, the highlands were either under rulers who were in a tributary relationship to the independent rulers of Tigrai [read Tigray] province, or independent local rulers.

B) There was no continuity of Ethiopian state or rule. Axum differed in geographical location from the empire of Amde-Siyon and his successors. From the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century there was not one Kingdom in Ethiopia but multiple kingdoms, which ruled independently and in the nineteenth century even conducted their own foreign affairs. At times there were several king of kings.

A further general question needs to be raised. Can the sporadic extraction of tribute from the Eritrean plateau be a basis for sovereignty, in the twentieth century, over an area five times more extensive? Can the sporadic appointment or ratification of local rulers in the plateau by an independent ruler of Tigrai [Tigray] provide historical justification for political control?

4.15 The Committee confines its comment on the historical arguments to the following: Any claim by Ethiopia over Eritrea on the basis of continuous historical association is arguable, and in any event is not a basis for determining the wishes of the Eritrean people in the 1980s.

4.16 The Committee also observes, having regard to the constraints on its ability to check the details and minutiae of academic papers, that the Eritrean case, as presented in submissions and in the documents it was provided with and referred to in submissions, is well argued. The Committee notes however, that an extended argument from the Ethiopian perspective was not forthcoming in evidence aside from documents provided by the Ethiopian Ambassador.

4.17 Among the documents and books presented to the Sub-Committee which supported the Eritrean case were: Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe and Bereket Habte Selassie (eds), *Behind the War in Eritrea*, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1980; *The Eritrean Case*, Proceedings of the Permanent People's Tribunal of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples: Session on Eritrea, Milan, Italy, May 24-26, 1980, Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, Rome, 1982; *Bibliography on Eritrea*, Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, Rome, 1982; David Pool, *Eritrea: Africa's Longest War*, Revised Edition, Anti—Slavery Society, London, 1982.⁶

THE EUROPEAN COLONIAL PERIOD, ITS RELEVANCE AS AN ARGUMENT FOR STATEHOOD, AND THE POLICY OF THE OAU

4.18 The interpretation placed on European colonial period is great significance to the Eritrean argument that Eritrea should be an independent sovereign state. The argument is generally put in similar terms to the following:

... Eritrea did not exist as a unified political entity, either independently or incorporated into another state, prior to its creation as an Italian colony in January 1890 any more than did the vast majority of other presently existing African states. The Italians retained

their colony until their defeat in April, 1941 by the British. Eritrea then became a British colony in fact, if not in name, until September 1952 when it was federated with Ethiopia by virtue of Resolution 390 (V) of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

In all that adds up to 63 years of European colonial rule: a heritage Eritrea shares with virtually all African states, not only qualitatively but also quantitatively, insofar as present states existed as unified colonial states within relatively well defined borders for an average of 60 to 80 years. The qualitative aspect of this common heritage which Eritrea shares with other former European colonies is the historical fact that the territorial extent, and consequently the ethnic composition, of European colonies was determined almost exclusively by the balance of power between colonizing countries and other considerations germane only to the colonial powers. As a result, with one exception—Somalia—all African states, Ethiopia included, are multi-national and are defined by externally fixed borders which take almost no account of local ethnic, geographical or economic realities.⁷

4.19 It is also argued that because Eritrea was a self-contained colonial unit, its right to independent national status is consistent with the policies of most Third World countries, and the countries of Africa in particular.

4.20 As is stated in the often quoted work by Tom J. Farer, entitled *War Clouds on the Horn Africa: A Crisis for Detente*:

As the Eritreans have argued often and well, this is not another instance of attempted revision of colonial boundaries. This is not Biafra, Katanga, or, for that matter the Ogaden. Eritrea was a self-contained colonial unit and therefore can itself rely on the principle of the sanctity of colonial boundaries which is holy writ in the Third World, above all in Africa.⁸

4.21 A contrary argument is put in 'The Asmara Manifesto', which sees the colonial period as an accident of history:

This historical fact is that the northern part of Ethiopia has contributed its share to the rise and growth of classes and the consolidation of feudal oppression and exploitation. The fact is not that Ethiopia had seized "Eritrea" as a colony as the secessionist bandits proclaim.

And after the Eritrea Region, by an accident of history, fell victim to colonialism, the struggle waged for freedom and territorial integrity had the ultimate goal of uprooting colonialism from the entire soil of Ethiopia and the conclusion of this struggle with the victory of the Ethiopian people which would only further cement and renew the already existing unity. No other interpretation can be given to it.⁹

4.22 According to the Eritreans, there is some inconsistency between the policy of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in respect of colonial boundaries in general and in respect of Eritrea in particular. The Department of Foreign Affairs referred to the OAU's declarations on this matter in evidence before the Sub-Committee on 7 June 1983 (see Chapter 6, paragraphs 6.36 and 6.37 for text).

4.23 The Eritrean question poses a dilemma for the OAU in relation to its policy towards colonial boundaries (or the boundaries as at the point countries achieved independence) on the one hand, and its determination to maintain the territorial integrity of existing states, as they now are, on the other. Implicit in the 1963 and 1964 decisions of the OAU to regard the current boundaries as sacrosanct was the recognition that African states had come into being in their present form through the process of European colonization. Ethiopia did not come into that category, however, never having been a colony in the same way as other African countries.

4.24 Eritrea's fate was decided by the UN in 1950, when its former status as a discrete European colony was not regarded, of itself, as a sufficient pre-condition to justify its becoming a sovereign nation. The OAU's decisions in 1963 and 1964 reflected a desire to create a firm basis for intra-African relations from that time forward. If Eritrea's future was to have been decided after 1964, that is, after the creation of the OAU and

its early pronouncements on sovereignty and frontiers, Eritrea would have satisfied OAU criteria for status as a sovereign nation. Ironically for the Eritrean nationalists, European relinquishment of Eritrea came, in one important sense, not too late in history, but too early.

4.25 The argument that the territorial integrity of countries as at 1963 must be maintained thus supersedes the argument that colonial boundaries should be the basis for nationhood on the apparent grounds that dismemberment of Ethiopia would set an unfortunate precedent for the rest of Africa.

4.26 The argument that Eritrean independence would mean dismemberment of Ethiopia and that this would in turn provide an inspiration to secessionists in other African countries is met with arguments such as the following:

Eritrea is not a secessionist ethnic group, but a country whose population, which itself comprises many different groups, has a national consciousness, and who, having evolved their national consciousness through a period of Italian and British colonialism, are now fighting for independence from Ethiopian colonialism.¹⁰

4.27 Furthermore, it has been argued by the United States academic Professor Farer, in supporting the Eritrean argument, that:

Some extremists for continued aid to Ethiopia rest part of their case on the allegedly dangerous precedent of an Eritrean victory. It would, they insist, encourage latent secessionist movements throughout Africa. Countries would unravel at a terrible cost in blood and aborted development.

The truth is that we know extraordinarily little about the "teaching effects" of particular moments in the stream of history . . .

and

Arrayed against the bloody quiddity of Ethiopian policy in Eritrea, the bad-precedent argument is exposed as a mass of airy speculations. Perhaps that is one reason why it enjoys little prominence in official justifications for boosting military assistance and licensing increased cash sales to a government employing brutal and illegal means in pursuit of a morally problematic end.¹¹

4.28 In the evidence made available to the Sub-Committee, it would appear that the Eritrean case for national status is inconsistent with the letter of OAU policy, but is not inconsistent with the historical basis for that policy. Eritrea became a recognizable entity in the same way as most other African states—as a result of European colonial administration of a defined area. The fact that OAU headquarters are in Addis Ababa, that there is a fear that tampering with current boundaries and that independence for Eritrea would encourage secessionist groups in Africa, are reasons why the OAU has not formally confronted this issue, despite Eritrean attempts to have the matter raised at successive OAU meetings. Only sovereign member states can place issues for consideration on agendas for OAU meetings, and Eritrea does not have this status. It is not in Ethiopia's interests to have the matter examined in any depth.

THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE FOUR POWER COMMISSION

4.29 Subsequent to the allied defeat of the Italians in East Africa in 1941, the British assumed responsibility for the administration of Eritrea. During this time, the Eritreans claim that the idea of Eritrean nationalism continued its evolution.

4.30 In the Italian Peace Treaty agreed to on 15 September 1947, it was agreed that Italy's colonies should be jointly disposed of by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom,

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the United States and France within one year. If the four parties were not able to agree, the matter was to be referred to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation. Ultimately, because of the failure of the Four Powers to agree on the future of Italy's colonies, a UN Commission of Investigation was established, to report on conditions within the colonies and the wishes of their inhabitants.

4.31 G.K.N. Trevaskis, a former officer with the British Administration in Eritrea, described the difficulties in ascertaining the views of the local population. Mentioning that much time was wasted by the Four Power Commission in futile argument about minor matters of fact, Trevaskis noted:

There was even less prospect of agreement when they turned to the task of ascertaining the wishes of Eritrea's inhabitants. Each political party claimed the support of the overwhelming majority of the population. How was the Commission to find out the truth? The difficulty was that there was no tried or accepted method of consulting the population acceptable to the Commission. The population's official spokesmen were the chiefs and Advisory Council members but, being appointed by the Administration, their views would be suspect. Anything in the nature of a plebiscite would be impracticable. A large part of the population was nomadic and, apart from other difficulties, there would be no time to publicize details of procedure and carry out a registration of voters.¹²

4.32 In the event, the Four Powers were unable to agree as to how to dispose of Eritrea. Each of the Powers had individual views as to what the population wanted. Pool, quoting a Top Secret Foreign Office Document, J26, FO 371/63175, maintains that F.E. Stafford, the British representative on the Four Power Commission, had written in 1946 that a majority of Eritreans favoured independence.¹³

4.33 Trevaskis records that:

The Council of Foreign Ministers met to examine the Commission's report in September 1948. Their discussions revealed the differences which a divided report had foreshadowed. The British shelved their previous proposals and now proposed that Eritrea should be placed under an Ethiopian administration for ten years; as a safeguard for the Italian minority and Moslems they also proposed that an advisory council should be set up to assist the Administration, which would comprise representatives of Italy, a Moslem state, and non-colonial Powers. The Americans proposed the immediate cession of Dankalia and of the two plateau divisions of the Serai and Akelli Guzai to Ethiopia, leaving the fate of the remainder of the territory to be decided twelve months later. The French, not unexpectedly, stood firm in favour of an Italian trusteeship, though they were ready to concede Ethiopia an outlet to the Red Sea through Assab. And, finally, the Russians, after first renewing their former proposals for an Italian trusteeship, suddenly startled the others by coming out in favour of a collective international trusteeship, the very proposal which they had rejected as impracticable when it had first been made by the Americans. No agreement was possible. On 15 September 1947 the Four Powers washed their hands of the problem and referred it to the United Nations.¹⁴

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

4.34 After the failure of the Four Powers to come to an agreement, the third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations considered the matter in April 1949. A plan later known as the Bevin-Sforza Plan, was considered by the First Committee (the political committee) at the Third Session between 6 April and 13 May 1949. The Plan was the proposal of the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Sforza. The Plan envisaged the cession of the western part of Eritrea to Sudan, the rest of Eritrea to be incorporated in Ethiopia, within certain guarantees for minority rights and the return of former Italian settlers. The Plan fell through against a background of opposition from the Soviet Bloc, and Iraq, and from the Eritreans themselves, and the question was postponed until the Fourth Session.

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4.35 In September 1949 the Fourth Session of the United Nations resolved that a Commission should be established to:

... ascertain more fully the wishes and the best means of promoting the welfare of the inhabitants of Eritrea, to examine the question of the disposal of Eritrea and to prepare a report for the General Assembly, together with such proposal or proposals as it may deem appropriate for the solution of the problem of Eritrea.¹⁵

4.36 The Commission subsequently established comprised representatives of Norway, Guatemala, South Africa, Pakistan and Burma. The Commission visited the territory between 14 February 1950 and 6 April 1950, a period subsequently regarded by Eritrean nationalists and their supporters as far too short to come to any well-founded conclusions. The Report was subsequently considered by the UN General Assembly in September 1950.¹⁶ The Commission conducted its inquiry against a background of violence in Eritrea between those seeking independence and those seeking union with Ethiopia. According to Trevaskis, in determining the views of Eritreans:

... the United Nations Commission did no more than carry out casual observations of rival political gatherings at each centre and address random questions to persons whose representativeness it had no means of checking.¹⁷

4.37 The various members of the Commission arrived at different conclusions as to what should be Eritrea's fate. The Pakistani and Guatemalan delegates maintained that independence should come about after a period of UN Trusteeship, after which the Eritreans could make a decision as to whether to unite or federate with Ethiopia, or opt for independence. The Norwegian delegate proposed union with Ethiopia, but acknowledged that the western province should continue for a time under British administration, after which it should be allowed to choose between union with Sudan or Ethiopia. The South African and Burmese delegates proposed that Eritrea should be a self-governing unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown.

4.38 The Seventh Session of the United Nations came to consider the Commission's Report in September 1950. On 2 December 1950 it adopted a resolution similar to the South African and Burmese proposal by 46 votes to ten.¹⁸

4.39 It is noteworthy that during the 1950 UN debate the Soviet Union proposed complete independence for Eritrea in conformity with the UN Charter. This vote is often contrasted by the Eritreans with Soviet assistance to Ethiopia since 1975 in the suppression of the Eritrean independence movement.

4.40 The UN General Assembly, in Resolution 390 A (v), agreed that:

1. Eritrea shall constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown.
2. The Eritrean Government shall possess legislative, executive and judicial powers in the field of domestic affairs.
3. The jurisdiction of the Federal Government shall extend to the following matters: defence, foreign affairs, currency and finance, foreign and interstate communications, including ports . . . The jurisdiction of the Eritrean Government shall extend to all matters not vested in the Federal Government including the powers to maintain the internal police, to levy taxes to meet the expense of domestic functions and services, and to adopt its own budget . . .
5. An Imperial Federal Council composed of equal numbers of Ethiopian and Eritrean representatives shall meet at least once a year and shall advise upon the common affairs of the Federation . . .
7. The Federal Government, as well as Eritrea, shall ensure to residents in Eritrea . . . the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental liberties including the following . . .
 - a) The right to life, liberty and security of person; . . .
 - b) The right to life, liberty and security of person; . . .
 - c) The right to freedom of opinion and expression . . .¹⁹

4.41 Consequent upon the UN adopting this Resolution, Sr Eduardo Anze Matienzo was appointed UN Commissioner charged with drawing up a Constitution for Eritrea.

4.42 The terms of Resolution 390 A (v) and the subsequent requirement that any constitution be consistent with it has been the subject of much criticism and resentment by the Eritreans and their supporters.

4.43 In a document supplied to the Sub-Committee by the Australian Eritrean Relief Committee, the alleged inherent inconsistencies of Resolution 390 A (v) are referred to:

The preamble of the Resolution which set out the supposed rationale is a travesty of justice. It reads, *inter alia*:

Taking into consideration (a) the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants of Eritrea, including the views of the various racial, religious and political groups of the provinces of the territory and the capacity of the people for self-government; (b) the interests of peace and security in East Africa; (c) the rights and claims of Ethiopia based on geographical, historical, ethnic or economic reasons, including in particular Ethiopia's legitimate need for adequate access to the sea . . . Desiring that this association (of Eritrea with Ethiopia) assures to the inhabitants of Eritrea the fullest respect and safeguards for their institutions, traditions, religions and languages, as well as the widest possible measure of self-government . . . etc. (emphasis added).

The inconsistency inherent in this legal language is evident. How can "the interests of peace" be secured when a basic condition has been denied, i.e. the exercise of the right of self-determination of the people, which right the United Nations arrogated to itself? How could a World Body that took into consideration "the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants of Eritrea" arrive at a decision which denied these wishes? Was it necessary to fabricate (or to endorse the Ethiopian fabrication of) "historical reasons", in order to advance the interests of Ethiopia? Was Ethiopia's "legitimate" need for adequate access to the sea in itself sufficient to cause the denial of the right to self-determination to the Eritrean people? Ethiopia is not, after all, the only nation which has a need for access to the sea.²⁰

4.44 Sr Matienzo, in attempting to comply with the United Nations Resolution, and at the same time satisfy to the fullest extent possible the differing requirements of Eritrean and Ethiopian wishes, had been confronted with a great many problems.

4.45 During Sr Matienzo's visit to Eritrea, various Eritrean political groupings had clearly conflicting views as to how they saw the new federal arrangement. The Democratic Bloc and the Moslem League of the Western Province, while divided among themselves, hoped that Eritrea's link 'should be no more than a tenuous formality'.²¹ The Unionists shared a similar, if not identical view with the Ethiopians—that federation would leave full control, in practice, in the Emperor's hands. Trevaskis records that only the 'small and inactive Liberal Unionist Party had any sincere desire for Federation'.²²

4.46 Among other problems that Sr Matienzo encountered, were differences over language. While the Ethiopians argued that Amharic should be the sole official language of Eritrea, the Democratic Bloc maintained that Eritrea should have its own flag and that its official languages should be Tigrinya and Arabic. There were also differences over the position of Head of the Executive Government, and whether there should be an Ethiopian appointed as Governor-General. Among a multitude of other differences of opinion was what form the Parliament should take, and whether it should be bicameral or unicameral.

4.47 At this point Sr Matienzo referred the problem of drafting a Constitution to three distinguished jurists, including Sir Ivor Jennings. Jennings was evidently well aware of the dilemma of how to work out a Constitution 'for a democratic state federally united with Ethiopia', Ethiopia, of course, being anything but democratic.²³

THE ADOPTION OF A CONSTITUTION AND ELECTIONS FOR AN ASSEMBLY

4.48 While Sr Matienzo and the lawyers were applying their minds to the problems of drafting a Constitution, the British Administration made preparations for an election to an Assembly. The Administration adopted a system whereby direct election would be held by secret ballot in the two major towns of Massawa and Asmara. Elsewhere, village and family groups would elect representatives in the traditional way to regional electoral colleges which would in turn elect regional representatives by secret ballot. By a Proclamation of 29 January 1952, elections were to be held in March 1952 for 68 seats of approximately 15 000 electors, each generally conforming with a recognizable social grouping.

4.49 The elections were held in an atmosphere free of violence in which voting rates of 100 per cent were recorded in rural areas, and 88 per cent in the urban constituencies. Of the 68 seats contested, the Unionists won 32, the Democratic Bloc eighteen, and the Moslem League of the Western Province fifteen. Minor parties and an independent held the remaining three seats. The result was an equal division between Moslem and Christian delegates. The Parties reflected differing views of what should be the appropriate status of Eritrea within the Federation. The Democratic Bloc favoured as little Ethiopian control over internal affairs as possible. The Unionist Party, while pro-Ethiopian, had amongst its members a growing number who were determined that Eritrea's interests should not be entirely subordinated to Ethiopia's. Somewhere between these views stood the Moslem League which held the balance of power in the Assembly. It was this Assembly which ratified, on 10 July 1952, the draft Constitution, which was subsequently ratified by Emperor Haile Selassie on 11 September 1952.

4.50 The new Constitution permitted Eritrea to have its own flag and official languages, Tigrinya and Arabic. It also provided that the Ethiopian Government be the Federal Government and that Ethiopia be represented by a Governor-General in Eritrea. The Governor-General was given the power to promulgate legislation passed by the single Assembly, and was able to render his opinion on any legislation that might involve 'international responsibility'. The Emperor was denied the power he had sought to appoint all executive officials. The legislature was to elect a President, a Chief Executive and the latter appointed secretaries to head Government departments. Executive appointed judges were to be free of legislative and executive control. Other officials of the Government were to be appointed by a Civil Service Commission. The Ethiopians had lost many of the powers they wished for, and their proposals for no Eritrean flag and for Amharic to be the official language were rejected. The Unionists in the Assembly apparently accepted this constitutional arrangement as inevitable, and acquiesced in a compromise which all Eritrean parties could live with. It seemed to guarantee autonomy. The transfer took place on 15 September 1952.

THE UNDERMINING OF ERITREAN AUTONOMY AND THE ABROGATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

4.51 The period of Federation is described in 'The Asmara Manifesto' as follows:

... Although unity was the only objective for which the unionist association, which truly reflected the wishes and aspirations of the masses of the region stood, the United Nations, in defiance of the popular request for unity, set up a federal administration owing to the conflict of interests that prevailed among the imperialists at the time.²¹

4.52 The eleven year period from the inception of the new constitutional arrangements on 11 September 1952, until the abrogation of federalism in November 1962 saw the diminution of Eritrean autonomy. This process is described below. The diminution of Eritrean autonomy culminating in the abrogation of the federal constitutional arrangement is a matter of strong criticism by Eritrean nationalists.

4.53 A range of activities which were designed to undermine Eritrean autonomy and the federal idea commenced early after 1952 with the active encouragement and intervention of the Ethiopians according to the literature available to the Sub-Committee and the evidence placed before it. Although it must be acknowledged that there was little by way of evidence placed before the Sub-Committee which gave the Ethiopian point of view, what does seem clearly apparent is that the Ethiopians had no interest in seeing the federal structure agreed to by the UN work in practice.²⁶

4.54 In a book written by the former Political Secretary to the British Administration, *Eritrea—A Colony in Transition 1941-1952*, G.K.N. Trevaskis wrote of the potential for Ethiopian annexation:

It must be remembered that Ethiopia has always contended that Eritrean autonomy was impracticable, and that full and complete union alone would meet the needs of the two countries. Eritrea's dependence on Ethiopian charity may seem to justify this attitude in the past and to provide sufficient excuse for Ethiopia if she should now exploit her position as patron to bring about the union she has always demanded. That she might be tempted to do so is understandable. With an Ethiopian Governor-General and an Ethiopian garrison in the territory, with Ethiopian control of the broadcasting services, and with Eritrea dependent on Ethiopian financial aid, she has the means of paralysing any Eritrean Government and of putting an end to any semblance of Eritrean autonomy. She would, however, be ill-advised to do so. As senior partner in the Federation, Ethiopia has a right to expect Eritrea to follow her leadership loyally; in return for financial and other aid she has a right to expect Eritrea to listen to her advice and be considerate of her interests. What she cannot legitimately demand or expect is Eritrean subservience.²⁷

4.55 During the period of formal Federation, political parties and trade unions, recognised by the Constitution, were dissolved. The elections held in 1952 were to be the last elections held democratically where individuals stood on behalf of a political party. Later elections in 1956, after a temporary suspension of the Eritrean Assembly, did not allow parties to operate. Newspaper editors were arrested and newspapers were suspended. The jurisdiction of the Ethiopian courts extended into Eritrea. In 1956 Amharic was made the national language of Eritrea and proclaimed as the only language for public offices, schools, law courts and business documents.

4.56 In mid 1955, Tedlu Bayru, the Chief Executive of Eritrea, resigned his post after the Parliament, in May 1954, had asked him to inform the Ethiopian Government that unless Eritrean autonomy was guaranteed and the United Nations resolution systematically applied, the UN would be asked to intervene.

4.57 According to literature provided by supporters of the Eritrean liberation movement, much of the undermining of Eritrean autonomy was not only encouraged and incited by the Emperor, his Chief Administrator and the Ethiopian garrison in Asmara, but by the Eritrean Assembly itself. It is therefore a moot point as to whether this undermining of the Federation was due solely to Ethiopian encouragement and incitement, or whether there was indeed a mood for union with Ethiopia among the local Eritrean populace and their representatives. The Eritrean liberation movement claims any activities of the Assembly which undermined autonomy were undertaken as a result of bribery and coercion. Certainly some of the votes recorded seem curious. A particular instance is the final vote which saw a group of politicians vote themselves and their 'State' out of existence and vote to replace what should have been a democratic

and participatory political system with a remote Ethiopian Constitution which confirmed the Emperor's

. . . supreme power over the whole executive government, the armed forces and the conduct of foreign affairs, and at the same time recognised his special position regarding the legislation and the judiciary. Laws regarding government organization could be promulgated by the Emperor without need for parliamentary consent, and on most other matters he can legislate by decree . . . he continued to hand down judgement as the final court of appeal.²⁹

4.58 The Eritreans claim that their argument that these moves towards incorporation were an Ethiopian inspired and executed process is given force by the lack of economic development in Eritrea during the period 1952-1962.

4.59 According to one source:

The Eritrean share of customs and excise was expropriated by the Ethiopian government. Pressure was put on foreign investors to invest in Ethiopia rather than Eritrea, even though the latter was more economically developed, had a higher literacy rate and a skilled working class. Factories were actually closed and transferred to Ethiopia, with the consequence that many Eritreans seeking employment moved to Ethiopia. The Federal government abrogated the agreement between Fiat and the Eritrean government to establish a factory in Decambare and the agreement with SADAU for the establishment of a hydro-electric scheme involving cotton plantations and a textile factory in the 1954-55 period. Textile, tanning and earthenware factories were relocated in Addis Ababa. Certain supply industries—such as matches—became private monopolies of high Ethiopian officials.³⁰

4.60 The panel of legal experts consulted by the United Nations Commissioner, Sr Matienzo, had stated that:

. . . it does not follow that the United Nations will no longer have any right to deal with the question of Eritrea. The Federal Act and the Eritrean Constitution will still be based on the resolution of the United Nations and that international instrument will retain its full force. That being so, if it were necessary to amend or to interpret the Federal Act, only the General Assembly, as the author of that instrument, would be competent to take a decision. Similarly, if the Federal Act were violated the General Assembly would be seized by the matter.³¹

4.61 Despite the view of the panel of legal experts, the United Nations has never reviewed the abrogation of the 'Federal Act'. Part of the Ethiopian case for abrogation and its moral authority for incorporating Eritrea in a unitary system of government was the fact that, in 1962, the Eritrean Assembly itself accepted the Ethiopian announcement of annexation of that year. Regardless of whether the Assembly did accept annexation without coercion the panel of legal experts' view would appear to indicate that such an action would still be subject to the UN's purview. The Eritreans, for their part, maintain that the actions of the Assembly were conducted in an atmosphere of siege:

For, in addition to bribery, the Eritrean police, under the autocratic command of their chief, had done most of the intimidation needed to secure the requisite "votes". But the imperial strategists wanted to make assurance doubly sure. They did not trust the Eritrean police even as commanded by their henchman. Thus the police which held the Eritrean Assembly virtually under siege was itself under siege by a larger and better armed Ethiopian army.

POLICE TERROR AND A "LEGISLATIVE ACT" AT GUN POINT

Richard Greenfield has asserted in a book published a little over two years after the annexation, that there was no vote taken in the Eritrean Assembly, and that instead the Eritrean Chief Executive (a hired hand) simply read a prepared statement. Greenfield, who was a close observer of the scene at the time, suggests that no vote had even been taken. He has recently reiterated this, adding that his assertion has not been contested.

But even if there had been voting, it would still be null and void, *inter alia*, due to the absence of an essential legislative pre-condition: freedom to exercise the voting right voluntarily. Long before the "voting" day, several of the patriotic members of the Assembly who were known for their independence leanings, were subjected to police harassments. Some were even arrested and beaten up. Others forcibly brought to the Assembly following a period in which they were absent from the Assembly . . . The Eritrean Assembly was itself filled with a number of police armed with machine guns and placed at strategic positions visible to "voting" members of the Assembly.³²

4.62 The Eritreans further argue that the act of annexation was internally inconsistent and illegal because of the provisions of the Eritrean Constitution. Article 91, entitled 'Compliance with the Federal Act and the principles of democratic government' provided:

1. The Assembly may not, by means of an amendment, introduce into the constitution any provision which would not be in conformity with the Federal Act.
2. Article 16 of the Constitution, by the terms of which the Constitution of Eritrea is based on the principles of democratic government, shall not be amended.³³

The argument advanced in documents placed before the Sub-Committee is that:

If amendment of Article 16 is precluded, then a fortiori abrogation of the whole structure is null and void.³⁴

4.63 An opposing view of the act of union expressed by the Eritrean Assembly is given in 'The Asmara Manifesto':

Although the conflict of interest that existed at the time between the imperialists hindered the fulfillment of the wish of the people of Eritrea, and unity was suspended at the federation level for a few years, the people of the Eritrea Region through a popularly elected assembly, fully realized their cherished wish for union, thereby irrevocably affirming their historical unity with the Motherland, and once and for all destroying the vestiges of colonialism.³⁵

THE LIBERATION FORCES IN ERITREA

4.64 The development of the liberation forces which are at present fighting the Ethiopians in Eritrea has been very complex and reflects the ethnic, social and religious complexity of Eritrean society.

4.65 The Moslem League of the Western Province, which originally favoured independence, the Liberal Progressive Party and the Pro-Italy Party in the 1940s together became the independence bloc during the Four Power Commission of Inquiry. It was their clear task to influence the Commission to recommend independence for Eritrea. It was stated in the literature available to the Sub-Committee that a great deal of Italian money was spent converting members of the Unionist Party to the cause of independence. In this they failed, and during 1950 a split emerged in the Moslem League and Liberal Progressive Party, and incipient Italophobia within the latter saw many seek an accommodation with the Unionists. As was stated earlier, it seems clear that the Unionists, or at least a substantial number of them, understood union to mean a great deal less than the complete incorporation of Eritrea within Ethiopia.

4.66 These were the parties that were to form the basis of the parties which emerged to take the seats in the Eritrean Assembly in 1952—the Liberal Unionist Party, the Democratic Bloc (formerly the Independence Bloc) and the Moslem League of the Western Province.

4.67 The increasing acquiescence of the Assembly in Ethiopian abrogation of autonomy, especially after the disappearance of political parties in the Assembly after 1956, saw a number of leading figures who favoured independence go abroad. In exile, a

coalition of these forces established the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) in 1958, with its headquarters in Cairo.

4.68 A number of factional differences in the ELM resulted, in 1961, in a group of ELM members forming a new organization—the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). Between 1961 and 1965 a number of differences emerged between various factions of the ELF, particularly between guerrillas in the field and those in exile, and between those who fought in the five different nominated zones of activity dominated by the ELF Supreme Council. Despite attempts to unify the various factions, success was not forthcoming, and in July 1970, a number of guerrillas formed the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (later Front) (EPLF). Although the EPLF was initially dominated by Tigrinya speaking Christian highlanders, by 1972 'both fronts had attained more of an ethnic and regional balance'.³³

4.69 During 1970 a further schism developed within the ELF which saw the creation of the ELF General Command. In February 1972 the ELF General Command and the EPLF joined forces temporarily against the ELF during the civil war which then raged. After the civil war was halted in October 1974, the ELF and EPLF engaged in a tentative form of military co-operation. The Leader of the ELF General Command, Osman Sale Sabbe had, by September 1975, become head of the EPLF's 'Foreign Mission'. In this position he had attempted, apparently without consulting the EPLF in Eritrea, to sign a merger agreement with the ELF in Khartoum on 9 September 1975, after prior consultation with ELF leaders in Baghdad and Beirut. A March 1976 meeting between the EPLF and the Foreign Mission in Khartoum saw the parting of their ways. This was despite pressure from Sabbe, who withheld money from the EPLF to encourage them to acquiesce in the agreement:

Sabbe put tremendous pressure on the EPLF to accept the Khartoum Agreement: he stopped sending arms and other supplies to the guerrillas. On March 23, 1976, the Foreign Mission and an EPLF delegation met in Khartoum and, unable to resolve their differences, severed their relationship. The Foreign Mission tendered its resignation; however, it refused to divide any of the arms, money, or other goods it had collected in the name of the EPLF. This split left the EPLF politically isolated: on the one hand from the ELF and Sabbe, and on the other from virtually any source of foreign material. The principle of self-reliance would take on new, vastly increased meaning from this time onward.³⁴

4.70 Out of these struggles emerged the three major groups carrying on the struggle of the Eritrean independence movement today. They are the EPLF, which is strongest in the central highlands, the central coastal areas around Massawa and north to the Sudanese border and which is the only organization with fighters permanently in the field; the ELF which until the mid to late seventies was influential in Dankalia along the coastal strip and in the western lowlands; and the ELF/PLF, which has been active in a corridor within ELF territory from Agordat in the western lowlands to the Sudanese border. Some areas of the western lowlands and the south of the highlands have seen overlapping ELF and EPLF control.³⁷

4.71 Although Marx, Lenin, and Mao Tse Tung are standard reading for EPLF members, the Front is, according to its own literature, at a stage in its development where to call itself a Marxist-Leninist Party would be premature³⁸ The EPLF as an organization places a great deal of emphasis on 'self-reliance', in the form of their famous 'barefoot doctors', the sharing of food and possessions, and the organization of social and economic activities, including especially the growing of crops. The EPLF, according to evidence and documents available to the Sub-Committee, concentrates its attention on the struggle within Eritrea, and there is apparently no charismatic leader. From its evident contacts with world-wide Eritrean Relief Committees and other like aid organizations, it gets its message across to the western world where a number of exiles live who are active in the promotion of the Eritrean case. The EPLF must find its

professed leanings towards Marxism-Leninism somewhat confusing when its Ethiopian enemies and their Soviet Bloc allies are doing their best to suppress them. From evidence presented to the Sub-Committee, the majority of the arms used by the EPLF in the field consist of weapons captured from their Ethiopian adversaries.

4.72 The ELF is distinguishable both in its ideology and program from the EPLF. The ELF does not emphasize the importance of a 'proletarian vanguard' and a 'socialist path' in its literature, and it has been apparent that neither is the concept of 'self-reliance' of such importance. Over the years the ELF has received considerable support from Ba'athist Iraq and Syria. The ELF, in a pamphlet issued in 1978, stated:

Our relation with the Arab nation is not an emotional or superficial, but militant, organic, historical and cultural one based on bonds of the joint destiny, mutual and common interests, and solidarity in face of menace and aggression.

and

The liberation of the Eritrean people is interrelated to the security of the Arab nation.³⁹

4.73 In his letter to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee of 14 January 1983, Lord Avebury provided the following appraisal of the respective strengths of the ELF and the EPLF:

- (a) The ELF has not been engaged in military operations since 1977. During the Soviet-backed offensive in 1978, they did not take part in the attempt to defend Eritrea, but took advantage of the situation to attack the third group in Eritrea at that time, the ELF-PLF of Osman Sale Sabbe. In January 1980, they were driven out of Barka Province (the only area in which their forces were present) and are now all in Sudan. At that time there were about 3000 ELF 'fighters'. Today there are no ELF fighters in Eritrea. The ELF-PLF is also purely external.
- (b) EPLF are now the only liberation movement with forces in the field. They are divided into two main sections:—
 - (i) Fighters in the Eritrean People's Liberation Army. Not all are actually engaged on the battlefronts, but many are involved in manning the services in the liberated areas.
 - (ii) Militia The militia are responsible for defending their own villages and do not normally take part in military operations unless the Ethiopians attack their areas. Militia are organised clandestinely even in areas under Ethiopian Government control.

I do not have an exact figure for the size of these forces, but believe that the two forces together number some 70 000 people.⁴⁰

4.74 Other reports maintain that the ELF and the ELF/PLF have some areas of influence within Eritrea, although most acknowledge that most of their guerrillas are now in refugee camps in Sudan. Despite conflicting reports about the precise nature of the presence and areas of influence of the ELF and the ELF/PLF inside Eritrea, it is clear that the EPLF is now in a position of undisputed dominance among Eritrean liberation groups.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ETHIOPIA SINCE 1962

4.75 The gradual emergence of a credible opposition to Ethiopian annexation had international manifestations in 1969 when the ELF gained considerable publicity from a series of highjackings. Ethiopia was required to declare martial law in Eritrea in 1971 following the death of its Military Commander there.

4.76 Ethiopia appeared to be gaining the upper hand during 1972, when it adopted a number of anti-guerrilla tactics, including the establishment of fortified villages. It was stated in evidence that at this time the Ethiopians were receiving considerable aid and

military advice from the United States and Israel. The civil war between the ELF and the EPLF made the task of the Ethiopians easier.

4.77 In 1974 the EPLF and ELF co-operated in an attack on Asmara, the Eritrean capital, taking advantage of the unsettled situation in Ethiopia itself during the Revolution. The Ethiopians succeeded in recapturing Asmara by February 1975, only to be removed again by 1977. Most towns then fell to the ELF, pushing from the west, and the EPLF from the north.

4.78 A number of negotiations took place during this period, but were unsuccessful, the Ethiopians offering a measure of regional autonomy, while the EPLF insisted on independence. The May 1976 nine point peace plan issued by the PMAC, which promised a measure of regional autonomy, was the first of a series of proposals put forward by Ethiopia.⁴¹ (See also later Sub-chapter—Negotiations.)

4.79 While the Eritrean forces enjoyed considerable successes in 1977, the Ethiopians re-invaded with 100 000 troops, many fresh from ejecting the Somalis from the Ogaden. The EPLF and the ELF faced the Ethiopians separately. The Ethiopians were successful on this occasion in pushing the EPLF to a small pocket of territory around Nacfa in the north, pushing the ELF to the far west, and in recapturing Asmara, Massawa and the coastline. It was on 22 November 1980 that the EPLF issued their proposal for negotiations which sought a referendum at which the options of full independence, federation or some form of regional autonomy be put to the people. This was seen as a significant softening of the Eritrean position.

4.80 During 1980 and 1981 the civil war again erupted between the EPLF and the ELF, resulting in the ELF being largely driven out of the country, most seeking refuge in Sudan.

4.81 Early 1982 saw the commencement of Operation Red Star when a major Ethiopian offensive achieved some limited successes in capturing more towns in the south and centre of Eritrea. According to the Eritrean Relief Committee, the Ethiopian offensive was frustrated by the EPLF 'and was a disaster for the Dergue and its backers leaving behind over 12 000 dead'.⁴²

4.82 One major object of Operation Red Star was to capture the town of Nacfa held by the EPLF, which had become of major symbolic importance despite the fact that the town was largely rubble from previous battles, but by May 1982 the Ethiopian advance was halted four kilometres short of this objective. The sixth offensive took place against a background of EPLF assertions of massive Soviet involvement. These included charges that at least two Soviet Generals were said to be directing battlefield operations, aided by an estimated 2000 military advisers, more than 200 of whom were said to be serving in the field. Sources in Khartoum were reported as saying that Field Marshal Dimitrov was now in overall control of strategy and operations against the EPLF.⁴³

4.83 Another phase of the Ethiopian offensive was expected to have begun in October 1982⁴⁴. However, although intense fighting has been reported from time to time, the Ethiopians do not appear to have made any substantial gains. Furthermore, a number of press reports indicated an apparent change in the Ethiopian approach in which there were hints that for them a political rather than a military solution may be the preferable option. During 1982 intensive discussions were taking place in Arab countries to seek a lasting alliance between the ELF and EPLF. As at the middle of 1983 the position from the Eritrean point of view was that while the EPLF controlled most of the countryside and some towns in the north, Ethiopian control extended not much further than over the major towns, including Asmara and Massawa, the major roads in the south, and the Dahlak archipelago. The Sub-Committee was told in evidence on 7 June 1983 by the Department of Foreign Affairs that the EPLF provided by

far the greatest number of guerillas operating in Eritrea, although it was said that the ELF were still present in the west on the Sudanese border.⁴⁵ Another witness told the Sub-Committee that 'You hardly hear of the other organizations . . . other than the EPLF'.⁴⁶ The Department was of the opinion that the percentage of countryside controlled by the Ethiopian Government was 80 per cent to 90 per cent⁴⁷ while Eritrean liberation sources claimed EPLF control over a similar proportion of territory.

4.84 In a letter to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on 14 January 1983, Lord Avebury said that the EPLF was the only liberation movement with forces in the field. Lord Avebury said that the two categories of EPLF members, 'fighters' and 'militia', estimates to number 70 000, were arrayed against the 92 000 strong Ethiopian force, which comprised Asmara garrison forces 60 000, Naefa front 17 000, eastern (coastal) front 15 000. This figure rises greatly when the Ethiopians are engaged in a major campaign. Lord Avebury quoted a *Guardian* article which stated that more than 1000 Ethiopian troops had deserted to Sudan after the February 1982 offensive.⁴⁸ Other reports stated that a great many Eritrean fighters were laying down their arms and coming over to the Ethiopian side. The Department of Foreign Affairs stated that the morale of the EPLF was not very good:

. . . because they are fairly confined, as I said, to the areas to northern Nakfa and west of Berentu. I suppose some indication of that is the fact that a number of guerillas have accepted the amnesty and have come in to Asmara to give themselves up to the Ethiopian authorities. When I was there in 1981 some 600 guerillas were in a returnee establishment in Asmara.⁴⁹

4.85 Another source, which is regarded as fairly reliable by the Department of Foreign Affairs, claimed that the EPLF and ELF fought a series of clashes during 1982, but that the ELF was no longer a strong military force. Approximately 3000 ELF fighters were being held in camps on the border. The ELF, however, remained a significant political force, appealing to broad Eritrean nationalism, having strong support in the refugee camps, and the backing of Iraq and Syria. The ELF/PLF led by Osman Sabbe also retains substantial support in the refugee camps, and maintains links with Saudi Arabia. The source put EPLF strength at 10 000 fighters on 6 October 1982 plus several thousand more in neighbouring Tigray Province. Tigray Peoples Liberation Front Forces (TPLF) were put at 4000. The EPLF and TPLF work closely together.⁵⁰

4.86 The relative strengths and military positions of the Eritrean Liberation Forces of the EPLF the ELF the ELF/PLF the ELF-Revolutionary Command (ELF-RC), and other smaller groups opposed to Ethiopian forces are the subject of widely differing views. It was reported in February 1983 however that the ELF the ELF/PLF and the ELF-RC signed an agreement on 10 January 1983 to work out a joint Constitution. It is believed Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries sought the accommodation denying assistance to them until such an accommodation was reached. The combined strength of these forces is estimated to be approximately 4000-6000. Apparently the conservative Arab States support the ELF and its splinter groups opposed to the EPLF because of its strength in Moslem areas of Eritrea, and because of its emphasis on nationalistic ideology as opposed to the EPLF which is nascently Marxist-Leninist. Nevertheless the EPLF still maintains a small office in Jeddah⁵¹. The Saudi interest in the ELF has come at a time when the ELF can no longer rely on as much financial assistance from Iraq because of its war with Iran or from Syria because of its closeness with the Soviet Union which in turn is closely allied with Ethiopia.

4.87 In May 1983 a lull in the fighting in Eritrea was reported during a major Ethiopian push in Tigray. It was reported that the lull may have meant preparations were under way for another major Ethiopian offensive. The Sub-Committee received information from the ERC in June and September that fighting had again taken place

on a large scale. Dr Mike Toole gave evidence to the Sub-Committee on 5 September 1983 after just having returned from three weeks inside EPLF controlled Eritrea. He corroborated assertions of the Eritrean liberation movement and their supporters that the EPLF controlled a large wedge of territory in Eritrea from the Sudanese border down through the central highlands. Further activity has been reported in early 1984 with the EPLF claiming gains around the town of Teseney near the Sudanese border. There were also reports that another major Ethiopian offensive was expected. Contrary to EPLF claims the Ethiopian Government maintained in March 1984 that 95 per cent of Eritrea was under its control while acknowledging that there were occasional problems on the Sudanese border.

NEGOTIATIONS

4.88 A number of reports referring to offers of negotiations and secret contacts between the parties have appeared since 1975. The Ethiopians are reported to have made an offer of Eritrean independence in September 1975, minus Assab, which would have given them a corridor to the Red Sea.³⁴ This offer was said to have been rejected and not repeated. In 1976 the Ethiopians first offered their nine point peace plan which included a proposal for regional autonomy. This offer was also rejected. In 1980 the EPLF was no longer pressing for unconditional independence, but put forward a proposal which asked for a referendum at which Eritreans would be given a choice of opting for full independence, federation, or a form of regional autonomy.

4.89 The Eritreans have consistently sought that independent observers be present at any talks. The Ethiopians were reported in October 1982 to have been prepared to accept such a proposition and it was further reported that the Sudanese were acting as an intermediary between the two sides. The Eritreans have been suspicious of Ethiopian initiatives and talk of negotiations in recent years as they claim the Ethiopians usually use them as a screen for military preparations and offensives.

4.90 An article in *Le Monde* of 29/30 May 1983 reported that there appeared:

... to be a glimmer of hope with the continuation in Rome of negotiations so hush-hush and ticklish that both sides are denying them. Considering the fact that similar initiatives have repeatedly come to nothing in the past, these must be treated with the greatest circumspection. But nearly four months of discussions would appear to have already permitted opening a debate on the questions of sounding Eritrean opinion, though under what conditions it has apparently not yet been determined.³⁵

Le Monde speculated that the Ethiopians may be willing, after the failure of the recent offensives, to concede that 'a military solution is out of the Ethiopians' reach and there will have to be negotiations with the EPLF . . .'. The Australian ERC has denied that such negotiations took place, claiming the story was circulated by the Ethiopian Government to weaken EPLF morale in the field.

4.91 The Sub-Committee was unable to ascertain whether serious talks between the main protagonists in the Eritrean conflict have taken place in recent years. The major difficulties to talks being held appear to be a complete lack of commonality between the positions taken by both sides, and the apparent belief by each that a military solution, at least until recently, has been within reach.

4.92 The EPLF position seeks the right of the Eritrean people to 'self-determination'. The Eritrean Relief Committee recommended that the Australian Government:

Support the peace plan proposed by the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front which calls for a cease fire and an internationally supervised referendum for the people of Eritrea to decide between full independence, federation or region autonomy.³⁴

4.93 While 'The Asmara Manifesto' notes the rights of nationalities in Ethiopia, including the right to secede as well, it only recognizes this right under certain circumstances:

Since the basic contradiction in class society is that between classes and since the oppression of nationalities can be solved through the abolition of class contradictions, the support given by communists to the right of nationalities to secede is determined by whether it promotes or retards the class struggle.³⁵

4.94 It is quite clear that, from the Ethiopian standpoint, contacts with Eritrean Nationalists, while they have been attempted, have been attempted with no acknowledgement of the Eritreans' wish or right to self-determination. For the Ethiopian side, independence for Eritrea is not now a negotiable option.

ACCUSATIONS ABOUT ETHIOPIAN CONDUCT

4.95 Many submissions cited Lord Avebury as the source of their information about Ethiopian conduct of the war, or at least to give credence to their accusations. In a speech delivered to the House of Lords on 7 June 1982 Lord Avebury referred to a number of aspects of the war. In commencing his speech, Lord Avebury began by summarizing the situation as he saw it:

Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and wounded by Soviet weapons, including napalm and poison gas. Millions of people have been forced into exile by the armed conflicts waged by Russia's satellite, Ethiopia. Millions more have been displaced internally within Ethiopia as a result of these conflicts. Agriculture has been neglected causing widespread starvation and malnourishment. Development has been halted because of the diversion of resources into military operations on a huge scale.³⁶

4.96 Accusations regarding napalm and nerve gas were referred to by a number of witnesses. Mr John Larkin of Melbourne, who visited EPLF held territory in Eritrea in 1981, told the Sub-Committee in evidence:

I think the war is everything to all of them because the bombing which takes place from both tanks and the air is totally indiscriminate. In fact the civilians cop it sometimes more than do the fighters, as the fighters are more equipped to cope with these things when they happen. But the civilians really get it—their crops get burned, the water is poisoned and their flocks get blown up. Again, that sort of thing is fairly well documented. I saw enough people in the Solommo camp, among the disabled people, with napalm burns and so on and I saw x-ray photographs of the effects of what they call a cluster bomb—you are all familiar with those things—where there are millions of fine microscopic needles which enter the body and go very slowly towards the main organs. It is a very painful thing. There is no doubt about it, in many ways there are many similarities to Vietnam except that this war has not been publicised like Vietnam has.³⁷

4.97 Ms Val Browning, a nurse who has worked extensively in the Horn of Africa since 1977 described a number of acts alleged to have been committed by the Ethiopians. Claiming the Ethiopian war in Eritrea is an 'anti-people' war, Ms Browning said that the countryside is littered with napalm and anti-personnel bomb shells, and that in the central and southern highlands, shelling has been so extensive that over 500 villages had been destroyed.

4.98 In addition, crops had been sprayed with phosphorous and napalm, and water wells poisoned in western and northern Eritrea. In relation to nerve gas, Ms Browning told the Sub-Committee:

In June, 1980 while I was attending the International Conference on Refugees in Khartoum, Sudan, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) claimed the Soviet Union were stock piling nerve gas in Asmara for use in a forthcoming offensive.

Later in July, 1980 while travelling in Sahel (Northern Eritrea) I by chance met a woman who had fled from Asmara two weeks before and was making her way to the Sudan. She told me she had been part of a four person clandestine group who had discovered the consignment of gas cylinders, protection masks, Mi24 helicopter gun ships and other military equipment at Asmara airport. They had informed the EPLF and since dispersed and fled to become refugees.

Also during that visit, where ever I went I saw Eritreans with large quantities of home made gas masks made from cotton cloth and household charcoal. They had an extensive program to teach people how to best protect themselves in the case of nerve gas attack.

Following this the EPLF joined with the Eritrean Relief Association to launch a world wide campaign to publicize the threat of the use of the gas and to protest to world authorities.¹⁴

4.99 There seems to be sufficient substance in the allegations about human rights violations in Eritrea to warrant Australia seeking an official explanation from the Ethiopian Government. The Committee considers that the Australian Government should seek to ascertain the truth of the allegations.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT

4.100 A major problem facing the Eritrean liberation movement is the lack of support it has gained internationally at government level. Despite devoting two and a half pages to the question of 'Diplomatic Support' in its submission, the ERC was only able to cite one example where the representatives of sovereign countries had passed a resolution in support of Eritrean independence. According to the ERC, the Organization of the Islamic Conference Meeting held at Taif in Saudi Arabia in January 1981 passed a Resolution in support of Eritrean independence. There were seventeen African States at the Conference, all of whom endorsed the Resolution, according to the ERC.¹⁵

4.101 In the past, Arab support for the Eritrean liberation movement was directed primarily through the ELF. Since the demise of the ELF, Arab support seems to have declined. Somalia, however, does recognize the EPLF and recently hosted a visit by the Foreign Minister and another high ranking member of the Politbureau.

4.102 Other international recognition, while strong in some European countries, such as France, Belgium and Norway, has not been manifested in the actions of governments in international forums.

4.103 In quoting the Quarterly Review of the International Commission of Jurists, the ERC provided a useful summary of the problem facing the Eritrean liberation movement in this context:

Of all the people who, since the Second World War, have been victims of great power rivalries and ambitions, perhaps the one with the greatest consideration is the people of Eritrea. Nevertheless no nation has yet been willing to raise the issue of the rights of these people in the United Nations. The truth is that the Eritrean question is a source of embarrassment both to the UN itself and to almost all interested parties.¹⁶

4.104 One of the major effects of the war which concerns the international community and Ethiopia's neighbours has been the huge number of refugees fleeing Eritrea to Sudan, to a lesser extent, Djibouti, and to other more distant countries. (For a detailed account see the Committee's Report on 'The Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid to the Horn of Africa'.)

CHAPTER 4

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(Complete details of each source are supplied where first cited.)

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3. 'The Asmara Manifesto', January 31, 1982, Asmara, pp. 12-13.
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25. 'The Asmara Manifesto', p. 14.
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34. 'The Asmara Manifesto', p. 12.
35. Richard Sherman, *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution*, Praeger, New York, 1980, p. 44.
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37. Precise details of current control by the different groups is very difficult to ascertain. The EPLF now maintain they are the only group with significant forces inside Eritrea.
38. See Richard Sherman, *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution*, p. 51.
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41. See Attachment No. 1 to Ethiopian Ambassador's letter to the Sub-Committee, dated 11 August 1983.
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56. House of Lords, *Official Report*, Vol. 431, No. 98, 7 June 1982, col. 73.
57. *Evidence*, 7 June 1983, p. 33.
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59. Eritrean Relief Committee, *Submission No. 26*, p. 12.
60. *Quarterly Review of the International Commission of Jurists*, No. 26, June 1981, as quoted by Eritrean Relief Committee, *Submission No. 26*, p. 12.

Chapter 5

Somali irredentism and the Ogaden conflict

THE EUROPEAN AND ETHIOPIAN DIVISION OF SOMALI TERRITORY

5.1 Reviewing the period 1898-1920, when the 'Dervishes', led by Sayyid Muhammad Abdille Hassan, sought to unite all Somalis of East Africa and the Horn against the encroachments of European and Ethiopian colonization and Christianity, Professor I.M. Lewis stated:

From the Somali point of view, the events of the period had merely further consolidated the partition of Somaliland, but, despite this, Sayyid Muhammed's vain struggle had left in the Somali national consciousness an ideal of patriotism which could never be effaced and which was to inspire later generations of his countrymen.¹

5.2 From the end of the nineteenth century Somalis have made up the overwhelming ethnic majority in what is now the Somali Republic. In addition they constitute a little more than half the population of Djibouti, the majority of the population in the Ogaden and Haud region of eastern Ethiopia, and are the major population group around and east and north of Kenya's River Tanya. The boundaries of these countries are thus inconsistent with the spread of ethnic Somalis, and resulted from a number of agreements, treaties and negotiations towards the end of the 'scramble for Africa', between Italy, France, Britain and Ethiopia at the turn of the century.

5.3 Britain's original intentions in the area were to safeguard its colony in Aden, to gain an area which could produce food, mainly mutton, and to keep other powers from the area, notably France. Britain encouraged Italy's presence for this latter reason.

5.4 Early agreements concluded by Britain with Ethiopia exacted a promise of fair treatment for ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden and the Haud should Ethiopia insist on its sovereignty. Those agreements were ambiguous in their acknowledgement of both Somali rights and Ethiopian sovereignty in a region which for the time being was administered by Britain. Britain was anxious to safeguard the livelihood of nomadic Somalis so that they could graze their stock in traditional areas across international boundaries. Further south Italy had been obliged to conclude a treaty, after its defeat at the hands of the Ethiopians in the Battle of Adowa of 1896, and ceded a great deal of Ogaden territory to Ethiopia inhabited by ethnic Somalis. Despite legal encroachments on ethnic Somali territory during these years, it was not until after the Second World War that Ethiopia attempted to administer the territory effectively.

5.5 Writing of Ethiopian control during Haile Selassie's reign, I.M. Lewis has commented:

More remote still were the ethnic cousins of the Oromo, the Afar and Ogaden and other Somalis in Harar Province on the very periphery of the empire. The Amhara presence in these regions was, as we have seen, primarily limited to military garrisons, the veritable 'beaugeste' outposts of empire.²

5.6 The succession of conflicts involving the Italians, British, Ethiopians and the Dervishes did not alter substantially the boundaries as tentatively drawn at the turn of the century. The European powers then anticipated the collapse of Ethiopia, and in 1906 concluded an agreement which was designed to maintain the political and territorial status quo in Ethiopia, recognized each country's sphere of influence therein, and acknowledged the Ogaden as Italy's sphere of influence.

5.7 After the Second World War when the new Somali nation was to be formed from the Italian Trusteeship in southern Somalia and the British Somaliland Protectorate, Ethiopia was to be able to argue successfully for its sovereignty over the Haud and the Ogaden by reference to these early agreements. This was to be despite the disagreement of Ogaden and Haud Somalis, and the argument of local British officials who were sympathetic to them.

THE BEGINNINGS OF PAN-SOMALISM UNTIL INDEPENDENCE

5.8 After the decline of the Dervishes in 1920 Somali nationalism was slow to manifest expression or coherence, despite the formation in Aden, during the 1920s, of the Somali Islamic Association. In the British Protectorate a Somaliland National Society was formed in the mid 1930s which incorporated in its aims the unification of Somali people and territories.

5.9 In 1943 the Somali Youth Club (SYC) opened at Mogadishu. The purpose of this Club was to abolish the debilitating clan rivalries which stood in the way of viable Somali unity, and to establish a concept of nationhood. The Club also had a strong religious bias and contained representatives of most clan groups as well as religious figures. In 1946 the British estimated the Club had more than 25 000 affiliates.

5.10 Impetus was given to the Pan-Somali idea by the British Foreign Secretary in 1946 when he said the best interests of the Somalis would be served if the then existing union of Somali territories, all under British control aside from Djibouti, were to be continued. The four powers which were to be charged with the responsibility of determining the future of Italy's colonies could not reach agreement on this or other issues. Ultimately the General Assembly of the United Nations, addressing itself solely to the question of the disposal of the former Italian colony within the context of its then boundaries, was to vote to entrust it to Italian administration under UN supervision for ten years from 1950, when it would gain independence.

5.11 By 1947, after the Somali Youth Club's change in name to the Somali Youth League (SYL), this organization had developed a number of moderately nationalistic principles which emphasised the need for unity of Somalis beyond tribal and clan divisions. By the late 1940s the SYL's policy consistently called for the bringing of all the Somali territories under a single government. It was Abdillahi 'Ise who was the main spokesman for the SYL during these years and who was to be Somalia's first Premier after self-government in 1956. Most other political parties which evolved during the 1950s in the British Protectorate and the Italian Trust Territory were also wedded to the idea of bringing all Somalis together in one nation. Just prior to independence in 1959, a National Pan-Somali movement was formed of Somalis in both the Protectorate and the Trust Territory which included delegates of all parties. The organization's Charter embraced the aim of campaigning for the independence and unification of all the Somali territories.

5.12 During the 1940s and 1950s, and particularly after independence for Somalia became imminent due to the deadline set for it by the UN as 1960, Somali Nationalism and Pan-Somalism were given greater impetus by an Ethiopian statement that the Somali people were part of the 'Great Ethiopian Family' and that the future advancement of Somalis lay with Ethiopia.' In the context of British and Italian negotiations regarding the boundaries of the soon to be independent former colonies, the

statement invited parallels with Ethiopia's position late in the last century. In 1891 Menelik had circulated a document to the European powers containing the following:

Ethiopia has been for fourteen centuries a Christian island in a sea of pagans. If Powers at a distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to be an indifferent spectator.'

5.13 It is the Somali perception that Ethiopia acquiesced in, and itself became and continues to be, a party to colonialism, that has been at the base of their expressed objection to present Ethiopian territorial boundaries.

5.14 Despite British misgivings about handing over British administered territory in the Haud to Ethiopia prior to independence, the Colonial Secretary explained to the House of Commons in 1955 that it was impossible to undo the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty. This treaty had been augmented by agreements in 1942 and 1944 which did not allow for the future protection of ethnic Somalis, or anticipate their secession from Ethiopia should this prove desirable. Thus hamstrung by a legal agreement, the British were unable to agree to Somali wishes for the incorporation of this area in the British Protectorate. An April 1956 mission to Addis Ababa by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs failed in an attempt to buy back the disputed territory. The 1942 and 1944 agreements, which had been made after Italian conquest of Ethiopia and their ultimate expulsion from East Africa by the allies, had also ceded the formerly Italian controlled Ogaden to Ethiopia, despite the latter's never having effectively controlled it. Negotiations which took place between Ethiopia and Italy during Italy's trusteeship failed to convince the Ethiopians that there should be a boundary arrangement which took account of the ethnic Somali factor relating to the distribution of clans across boundaries. The Ethiopians insisted that frontiers should be determined on the basis of an Italo-Ethiopian treaty of 1908.

5.15 As at Independence in mid 1960 the Somalis had failed to incorporate Somali territory in the Haud and Ogaden into the Republic. The fact that ethnic Somalis were incorporated in Ethiopia was the legacy of accommodations reached at the turn of the century between the European powers and Ethiopia, at a time when the creation of independent African countries based on colonial boundaries was not contemplated. Ethiopia, which had maintained its sovereignty throughout except for the short period of the Italian conquest, was to be able, in the post-colonial period, to use its independence and a reliance on legal interpretation of treaties entered into in a different era, to maintain its claim to territories over which it had never exercised effective administrative control. Against this historical and legal basis for Ethiopian sovereignty was the nationalist, ethnic and 'moral' argument of the Somalis which sought the incorporation of all ethnic Somalis in the one nation. After Independence, the Somalis would also press their claims with respect to their cousins in Djibouti and Kenya, colonies which had been carved out of Africa in an era when national and ethnic composition of the territories was not considered for colonial administrative purposes.

5.16 During discussions on a constitution in the Italian Trusteeship it was decided to incorporate wording to anticipate not only the union of the British and Italian administered territories but also all ethnic Somali territory. The new constitution thus gave a very fundamental expression to Pan-Somali aims which had been a continuous manifestation of Somali nationalism since the 1940s. Shortly after independence in 1960 the new Prime Minister, Dr Abd ar Rashid wrote:

Our misfortune is that our neighbouring countries, with whom, like the rest of Africa, we seek to promote constructive and harmonious relations, are not our neighbours. Our neighbours are our Somali kinsmen whose citizenship has been falsified by indiscriminate boundary 'arrangements'. They have to move across artificial frontiers to their pasturelands. They occupy the same terrain and pursue the same pastoral economy as ourselves. We speak the

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same language. We share the same creed, the same culture, and the same traditions. How can we regard our brothers as foreigners? Of course we all have a strong and very natural desire to be united. The first step was taken in 1960 when the Somaliland Protectorate was united with Somalia. This act was not an act of "colonialism" or "expansionism" or "annexation". It was a positive contribution to peace and unity in Africa.⁵

PAN-SOMALI QUESTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

5.17 As well as the ethnic Somali territory incorporated in Ethiopia, the new Somali Government, immediately following Independence, turned its attention to bringing the Somalis in French Somaliland and Kenya within the one Somali nation.

5.18 It became apparent during the ensuing years that any attempt to court ethnic Somalis or succeed in securing French acquiescence in the incorporation of southern Djibouti would be unsuccessful. Prior to Djibouti's independence, a combination of French and Afar opposition to Somali claims for independence were to make it clear that such an idea was not possible. Later, in the period leading up to Independence in June 1977 and just afterwards, there appeared to be enough of an Afar/Issa accommodation to make Somali claims largely irrelevant. Despite early claims after Independence by Afar politicians that the ethnic Somali President Gouled was pursuing too much of a pro-Somali policy, later events have seen the Djibouti Government steer a carefully neutral policy in the conflict between its much larger neighbours Somalia, with whom a majority of its population share ethnic affinity, and Ethiopia, on whom Djibouti relies for its economy as a major Ethiopian port and which is the dominating military power in the region. The success of Pan-Somalism in respect of Djibouti depends, as elsewhere, on the desire for the people themselves to be a part of the Somali nation. There is no clear manifestation of this in Djibouti, which relies on the substantial French garrison to dissuade potential enemies from outside. Somalia is less inclined to push its claims in respect of Djibouti because the latter clearly contains a majority of Issas, or ethnic Somalis, which goes some way to satisfying the desire for self-determination for Somalis.

5.19 The situation of the ethnic Somalis of the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya caused difficulties for the British administration between 1960, when Somalia gained her independence, and 1963, when Kenya gained hers. The question of the future of the NFD became a major preoccupation of the new Somali Government and it was clear that support was forthcoming for union with Somalia among the Kenyan Somalis themselves. Ethiopia strongly opposed incorporation of the NFD into Somalia, and the Emperor's visit to Moscow in 1959 which resulted in a \$US 100 million dollar loan, underlined the way successive Ethiopian governments were to signal to outside powers the danger of doing anything which may offend Ethiopia. Various options to accommodate the ethnic Somali desire for union with Somalia were canvassed in the late 1950s, and early sixties, including one by the NFD delegation to the Lancaster House Conference of 1962 which sought that:

... before any further constitutional changes affecting Kenya were made, autonomy should be granted to the area which they represented as a territory wholly independent of Kenya, in order that it might join in an act of union with the Somali Republic when Kenya became fully independent.⁶

5.20 Despite the findings of the Northern Frontier District Commission of 1962, which estimated that 62 percent of the NFD's population was Somali, and that these almost unanimously favoured secession from Kenya and ultimate union with Somalia, the aspirations of the Somalis were to founder.

5.21 The Ethiopian disapproval was evidently a major consideration. But the Kenyans themselves, as well as the Ugandan and Tanganyikan Governments, opposed secession. As well as these Commonwealth countries, any move to allow secession could have alienated African opinion generally.

5.22 The Somali concept of national unification ran counter to the process of national unification which had taken place in Africa:

For the general problem elsewhere in Africa is the construction of nations from the polyglot and polytribal territorially defined states, with their arbitrary frontiers, which are the legacy of colonialism. This difference between Somali nationalism and African nationalism elsewhere, however, while of academic interest, would in itself hardly have been important enough to isolate the Somali people at the bar of Pan-African opinion. The real difficulty lay in the conflict between the Somali aim to unite with their kinsmen across the frontiers of Kenya and Ethiopia, and the passionate attachment of the new African leaders to such colonially defined boundaries. To Kenya and Ethiopia, and by analogy elsewhere, the Pan-Somali movement threatened African territorial sovereignty.⁷

5.23 Kenya independence was won in December 1963 with the disputed territory within its sovereignty. The British determination not to transfer or cede the NFD had led to the severance of diplomatic relations between the Somali Republic and Britain on 12 March 1963. Despite some attempts at accommodation between the new Kenyan Government and the Somalis after Kenya's independence, the two countries were not able to reconcile their views on the matter. The Somali desire for the incorporation of the NFD area has continued ever since and was, during the mid 1960s, augmented by armed rebellion in the NFD itself against the Kenyan authorities. The strained relations between Kenya and Somalia over this question have seen a coinciding accommodation between Ethiopia and Kenya, despite clear ideological differences. (See also Chapter 6, Relations between the countries of the Horn and their near neighbours and Africa).

5.24 Somali insistence on its claims in Kenya and Ethiopia was to lead to its isolation from the African Community and African opinion. It was, however, from time to time, to galvanise and unify the people behind successive governments in Mogadishu.

5.25 Despite the consistency of the underlying principles regarding ultimate unification, assistance provided to liberation groups, and a brief skirmish in the Ogaden in 1964, more dramatic manifestations of Pan-Somalism lay dormant until 1974, when the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown.

THE OGA DEN CONFLICT

5.26 The overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie and the ensuing turmoil in Ethiopia, fighting on the Eritrean front, and the need to mobilise Somali opinion behind the government in Mogadishu, were all probable factors in the re-emergence of strong Pan-Somali sentiments in 1974 and afterwards.

5.27 In addition, ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden became more active from 1974 onwards in pressing their claims for independence of the Ethiopian Government, particularly in the wake of the repression of all opposition including that of nationalities by the PMAC. A brief border skirmish in 1964 had resulted in a clear victory for Ethiopia, but by 1976 Ethiopia was becoming increasingly nervous at the prospect of Somali military strength. Since 1963 the Somali Democratic Republic had been gradually building up its armed forces. While prior to this period Ethiopian forces had been regarded as the best and largest in Africa, save for Nigeria, the Revolution had caused chaos. In addition, the United States had, after the Revolution, wound down military assistance

considerably, although it still maintained a large Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) before and through 1975.

5.28 Somalia's Army, which consisted of 5000 badly equipped soldiers in 1963, was by 1975, as a result of considerable Soviet and Cuban assistance, in a position to deploy 22 000 men, 250 tanks, over 300 personnel carriers, and Somalia had, by African standards, a modern, if small, air force.

5.29 It is clear that the Somali Government, now better armed and equipped to extend its territory, was being pressured by the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), which included Muslim Oromo, Arussi and Ogaden elements. Many Somalis, including the President himself, had relatives inside Ethiopian territory. The increasing guerilla activity and consequent Ethiopian response was thus a matter about which many Somalis were aware.

5.30 Ethiopian nervousness at the prospect of war in January 1976 can perhaps be gauged by a document then issued to African Heads of State then meeting in Addis Ababa. In the document entitled 'War Clouds on the Horn of Africa', the Ethiopians documented what they saw as the growing number of border incidents between Somalia and Ethiopia, and stated that Somalia 'has made a decision to go to war against Ethiopia immediately!'

5.31 During 1977 a number of dramatic events were not only to create the setting and see the commencement of the Ethiopian-Somalian war in the Ogaden, but also to see a complete realignment of super powers on the Horn. (See also Chapter 7, The intervention and involvement of major outside powers). By the spring of 1977 the United States Government of President Carter was urging a negotiated settlement of the Eritrean dispute against a background of increasing hostility to the methods used by the Ethiopians to suppress the insurgency. The withholding of arms from Ethiopia by Washington saw a further deterioration of relations between Washington and Addis Ababa at a time when Oromo guerilla forces had gained control of Bale province in the central-south. In April 1977 the Ethiopians asked the US to close its installations, including the Kagnew communications Station near Asmara. Meanwhile the Soviet Union had, since 1974, been attempting to court the Ethiopians without upsetting their Somali allies. In March 1977 Fidel Castro had tried to mediate between the Somalis and Ethiopians, suggesting the creation of a Marxist confederation around the Red Sea. This was rejected by the Somalis however, who were becoming evidently more cautious in their dealings with the Soviet bloc, perhaps through the influence exerted by conservative Arab governments, including Saudi Arabia. Somalia had joined the Arab League in 1974, and this can be assumed to have increased its leadership's exposure to Arab opinion. The Saudis were reported to have encouraged the Somalis to lessen their dependence on the Soviets by replacing Soviet with Saudi aid, and included an offer of funds for the purchase of arms from the West.⁹ It is reasonable to speculate that at this time, while the Soviets would have preferred to enjoy friendly relations with both Somalia and Ethiopia at the expense of the United States, if a choice had to be made, they would opt for Ethiopia, especially since the accession to power of Mengistu's Marxist oriented regime.

5.32 The increasingly close ties between Moscow and Addis Ababa became more concrete in June-July 1977 through the supply of T-34, T-54 and T-55 tanks (some of which were reported to have been brought across from Aden), personnel carriers, SAM anti-aircraft missiles, 140 mm rocket launchers and self-propelled guns.¹⁰ Even though the first of this equipment was transferred to the Gondar and Gogjam regions in the north¹¹ it was still apparently an influence on Somali and WSLF actions.

5.33 This action followed a crucial meeting between Mengistu and the Soviet leadership in Moscow in 1977 which set the scene for the imminent realignment of Moscow

behind Ethiopia rather than Somalia. The apparent Addis Ababa/Moscow *rapprochement* seems to have been a factor in the Somali action to escalate the fighting in the Ogaden—it is generally conceded that Somalia would have to move quickly to recover the Ogaden before Ethiopia again became the dominant military power.¹²

5.34 With Ethiopian forces preoccupied with other challenges to Addis Ababa's authority in the north, the Ogaden was left relatively undefended in the middle of 1977. By late May the WSLF and, reportedly, Somali irregulars, were making advances in the Ogaden and in July were joined by the Somali Army. In August Siyad Barre visited Moscow to seek Soviet approval for his point of view but was rebuffed.

5.35 An *Izvestia* article published on 16 August 1977 stated that even 'the plausible excuse of implementing the principle of self-determination' did not justify Somalia's action and:

... fighting is going on between regular units of the Somalian Army and Ethiopian troops . . . It is a fact that hostilities are taking place in Ethiopian territory and that it is Ethiopia and no other country that is the victim of armed invasion . . . Armed intervention is in crying contradiction with the principles of the UN Charter and the Charter of the OAU. To justify such a violation by a desire to implement the principle of self-determination is to mislead the broad African public.¹³

5.36 Nevertheless, the Soviets attempted to mediate between the two countries throughout this period. It was not until Somalia renounced a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviets on 13 November 1977, and broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba that the full weight of Soviet military might was to be brought to bear on the conflict on the side of Ethiopia.

5.37 During the Somali offensive, WSLF and Somali forces had, by October 1971, reached the perimeters of Harar and Dire Dawa, and were seeking military supplies to consolidate their position against the expected Ethiopian counter-attack.

5.38 The Parliamentary delegation which visited Ethiopia in July 1982 was told by the Ethiopian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Gedle-Giorgis, of the Ethiopian perspective of events:

... the Minister explained Ethiopia's alliances. Before 1977 it was a reliance on the United States for arms and military training. During the war with Somalia, with Somali forces close to Addis Ababa, the United States had refused further assistance and Ethiopia turned to the Soviet Union and Cuba. This assistance was quickly provided and Ethiopia was able to repel the Somali forces. The Minister stressed that Ethiopia could have pursued the Somalis to Mogadishu; it did not, as it is not expansionist.¹⁴

5.39 While Ethiopia was becoming increasingly desperate at the Somali advance, and Djibouti, which had gained independence in June, nervous at this show of Pan-Somalia power, Somalia itself was increasingly isolated in the world arena. The OAU mediation committee, which had been set up to mediate the Ethio-Somalian dispute at a meeting in Libreville between 5 and 9 August 1977, reconfirmed the inviolability of African frontiers and condemned all forms of political subversion.¹⁵ It also became clear that the United States would not immediately fill the vacuum left by the Soviets in Somalia, a State Department spokesman having said on 1 September 1977 that the provision of arms to Somalia would 'add fuel to the fire we are interested in putting out'.¹⁶

5.40 It was against this background that the events which followed Somalia's diplomatic break with Moscow took place. Between November 1977 and February 1978:

... the Russians mounted an airlift of heavy armour and men which involved some 225 planes, about 12 percent of the entire Soviet transport fleet, the launching of a control satellite and, on U.S. estimates, strengthened the Ethiopian forces by up to 1 500 Soviet advisers and 10 000 Cubans.¹⁷

5.41 Aside from the implications of the Soviet Union's capacity to project power a long way from Europe, the immediate effect was to ensure a successful Ethiopian push against the Somalis. With this massive Soviet and Cuban military assistance, and important logistical assistance from Kenya (the rail link with Djibouti having been severed), the Ethiopians were able to defeat the Somali Army at Jigjiga. Despite some Arab (and Iranian) support for Somalia as the tide began to turn in Ethiopia's favour, the major Ethiopian offensive launched in January 1978 with the help of Cuban manned tanks saw, by March 1978, the Somali withdrawal from Ethiopian territory. On 9 March 1978 President Siyad Barre announced that all Somali forces were being withdrawn from Ethiopian territory at the request of the United States. There were fears at the time that Ethiopian forces may press their advantage and continue their advance into Somalia. There are some reports which infer that the Soviets restrained their Ethiopian allies in this regard. Stories among Somali soldiers reported that the Soviets were a restraining influence in the Ethiopian treatment of Somali prisoners.

5.42 Since the conclusion of the Ogaden war Somalia has been in no position to again press her irredentist claims. The continuing Soviet and Cuban presence in Ethiopia, and United States refusal to provide sufficient military aid to Somalia to again mount a credible offensive, have meant no further major significant contest between Ethiopian and Somali regular troops, although both countries remain on a war footing. Various guerilla troops such as the WSLF and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF) have been active however, and Ethiopian and SSDF troops were reported to have crossed into Somali territory in 1982 and continue to maintain their positions.¹⁸ In January and February 1984 the conflict in the Ogaden was still simmering. In response to an alleged WSLF derailment of a train, Ethiopia bombed towns near the Somali-Ethiopian border.

5.43 Ironically, it was the Somali, rather than the Djiboutien, Government which closed Djibouti's border on 9 January 1983, because of activities by the Somali National Movement (SNM). This suggested Somalia was more fearful about the activities of its ethnic cousins in Djibouti, rather than the reverse.¹⁹

5.44 For the moment it appears that on the Ethiopian and Djiboutien fronts, Somali irredentism is being pushed back inside the borders of Somalia itself. On the other hand, the fact that opposition to the Mogadishu regime operates both out of Ethiopia and Djibouti underlines the spread of ethnic Somalis across international boundaries on the Horn. Despite the current weakness of the Somali regime at present, Kenya and Ethiopia nevertheless maintained the pressure on their Somali neighbour by issuing a joint statement in Addis Ababa on 24 January 1983 condemning Somalia's 'expansionist activities'.²⁰ This followed a number of offers and counter offers by Lt Col. Mengistu and President Barre during 1982 to negotiate their differences, but these have come to nothing.

5.45 Because of the continuing tension between the two countries, Djibouti made an offer to mediate the dispute in July 1983, when the Djibouti Foreign Minister visited Mogadishu.²¹ In January 1984 it was reported that Senagal's former President, M. Leopold Senghor, on behalf of a Khartoum meeting of African Socialist parties, visited Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan in an attempt to bring about direct talks between Somalia and Ethiopia over their differences. Egypt also attempted to mediate between Ethiopia and Somalia in January and February 1984. Egypt's President Mubarak visited Sudan, Somalia and Kenya, and Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bhutros Ghali, visited Ethiopia. Despite these efforts, no progress towards creating a less hostile relationship between the two countries has been made.

5.46 In relation to the conflict between Somalia and its neighbours, particularly Ethiopia, over regions inhabited by ethnic Somalis, the Committee notes that maintenance of present boundaries is OAU policy despite the spread of ethnic groups across such boundaries.

5.47 The Committee is concerned about the continuing disagreement between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden because of the suffering the conflict is causing the people of the Ogaden and the refugee problem it has created. Australia has been asked for, and has given, substantial assistance to the refugees. It is in Australia's interests, therefore, to seek a peaceful resolution to the underlying cause of the conflict and suffering and the resultant refugee problem.

5.48 One of the major effects of the Ogaden conflict and the Ethiopian reconquest of the territory has been the creation of a massive refugee problem in Somalia, and the instigation of resettlement programs in Ethiopia itself. These are discussed in the Committee's Report on 'The Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid to the Horn of Africa'.

5.49 A major question arising from the Ogaden war has been the role and presence of the superpowers in the region and this is discussed in detail at Chapter 7: The intervention and involvement of major outside powers. The implications of the Ogaden conflict for the Region and Africa generally are further discussed in Chapter 6: Relations between the countries of the Horn and their near neighbours and Africa.

CHAPTER 5

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, Longman, 1980, p. 91.
2. I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, pp. 248-249.
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4. Cited in I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 54.
5. Quoted in I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 179.
6. Report of the Kenya Constitutional Conference 1962, Command 1700, HMSO, London, 1962, p. 11.
7. I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 196.
8. Quoted by Thomas L. Hughes in the Foreword to Tom J. Farer, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1976, p. vi.
9. See *International Herald Tribune*, 4-5 June 1977.
10. Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Horn of Africa', p. 23, (N.P.).
11. See Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, NLB, 1981, p. 246.
12. See I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 233; Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Horn of Africa', p. 1-3; and Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, p. 246.
13. Quoted in Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Horn of Africa', footnote 48, p. 53.
14. Official Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Africa, July-August 1982, p. 26.
15. See Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Horn of Africa', p. 28.
16. Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Horn of Africa', p. 29.
17. James Mayall, 'The Battle for the Horn: Somali Irredentism and International Diplomacy', *The World Today*, Vol 34, No. 9, September 1978, p. 341.
18. *Evidence*, 5 September 1983, p. 93.
19. *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 15 February 1983, p. 6694.
20. *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 15 February 1983, pp. 6694-5.
21. *Africa Research Bulletin*, July 1-31, 1983.

5.41 Aside from the implications of the Soviet Union's capacity to project power a long way from Europe, the immediate effect was to ensure a successful Ethiopian push against the Somalis. With this massive Soviet and Cuban military assistance, and important logistical assistance from Kenya (the rail link with Djibouti having been severed), the Ethiopians were able to defeat the Somali Army at Jigjiga. Despite some Arab (and Iranian) support for Somalia as the tide began to turn in Ethiopia's favour, the major Ethiopian offensive launched in January 1978 with the help of Cuban manned tanks saw, by March 1978, the Somali withdrawal from Ethiopian territory. On 9 March 1978 President Siyad Barre announced that all Somali forces were being withdrawn from Ethiopian territory at the request of the United States. There were fears at the time that Ethiopian forces may press their advantage and continue their advance into Somalia. There are some reports which infer that the Soviets restrained their Ethiopian allies in this regard. Stories among Somali soldiers reported that the Soviets were a restraining influence in the Ethiopian treatment of Somali prisoners.

5.42 Since the conclusion of the Ogaden war Somalia has been in no position to again press her irredentist claims. The continuing Soviet and Cuban presence in Ethiopia, and United States refusal to provide sufficient military aid to Somalia to again mount a credible offensive, have meant no further major significant contest between Ethiopian and Somali regular troops, although both countries remain on a war footing. Various guerilla troops such as the WSLF and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF) have been active however, and Ethiopian and SSDF troops were reported to have crossed into Somali territory in 1982 and continue to maintain their positions.¹⁸ In January and February 1984 the conflict in the Ogaden was still simmering. In response to an alleged WSLF derailment of a train, Ethiopia bombed towns near the Somali-Ethiopian border.

5.43 Ironically, it was the Somali, rather than the Djiboutian, Government which closed Djibouti's border on 9 January 1983, because of activities by the Somali National Movement (SNM). This suggested Somalia was more fearful about the activities of its ethnic cousins in Djibouti, rather than the reverse.¹⁹

5.44 For the moment it appears that on the Ethiopian and Djiboutian fronts, Somali irredentism is being pushed back inside the borders of Somalia itself. On the other hand, the fact that opposition to the Mogadishu regime operates both out of Ethiopia and Djibouti underlines the spread of ethnic Somalis across international boundaries on the Horn. Despite the current weakness of the Somali regime at present, Kenya and Ethiopia nevertheless maintained the pressure on their Somali neighbour by issuing a joint statement in Addis Ababa on 24 January 1983 condemning Somalia's 'expansionist activities'.²⁰ This followed a number of offers and counter offers by Lt Col. Mengistu and President Barre during 1982 to negotiate their differences, but these have come to nothing.

5.45 Because of the continuing tension between the two countries, Djibouti made an offer to mediate the dispute in July 1983, when the Djibouti Foreign Minister visited Mogadishu.²¹ In January 1984 it was reported that Senegal's former President, M. Leopold Senghor, on behalf of a Khartoum meeting of African Socialist parties, visited Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan in an attempt to bring about direct talks between Somalia and Ethiopia over their differences. Egypt also attempted to mediate between Ethiopia and Somalia in January and February 1984. Egypt's President Mubarak visited Sudan, Somalia and Kenya, and Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bhutros Ghali, visited Ethiopia. Despite these efforts, no progress towards creating a less hostile relationship between the two countries has been made.

5.46 In relation to the conflict between Somalia and its neighbours, particularly Ethiopia, over regions inhabited by ethnic Somalis, the Committee notes that maintenance of present boundaries is OAU policy despite the spread of ethnic groups across such boundaries.

5.47 The Committee is concerned about the continuing disagreement between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden because of the suffering the conflict is causing the people of the Ogaden and the refugee problem it has created. Australia has been asked for, and has given, substantial assistance to the refugees. It is in Australia's interests, therefore, to seek a peaceful resolution to the underlying cause of the conflict and suffering and the resultant refugee problem.

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Chapter 6

Relations between the countries of the Horn and their near neighbours and Africa

ETHIOPIA

6.1 Ethiopia's relations with its near neighbours other than Djibouti and Somalia are influenced by, among other things, the following considerations:

- The need to discourage Somali claims on the Ogaden.
- The attempt to suppress support of the Eritrean movement and separatist struggles.
- The general need for both military and non-military aid.
- The perception of Muslim hostility to a succession of Amhara (mostly Coptic Christians) dominated governments, and the need for assistance in facing the perceived Muslim hostility.
- The presence of a large refugee population in Sudan.

ETHIOPIA AND KENYA

6.2 Ethiopia's relations with Kenya, and to a lesser extent Djibouti, have been conducted in the context of a common fear of Somali irredentism. (For a discussion of Pan-Somali aims see Chapter 5) Kenya has been particularly forthcoming in this regard despite having had successive governments which can be described as conservative relative to Ethiopia's. Kenya's concern is Somalia's claim to the former colonial Northern Frontier District (NFD) which is largely populated by ethnic Somalis. Common concern about Somali ambitions have seen close relations between Kenya and Ethiopia since Kenya gained independence in 1963.

6.3 In 1964, the year following Kenyan independence, Kenya and Ethiopia signed a military pact. 1964 was the last time Somali and Ethiopian troops had fought a serious engagement over the Ogaden prior to the Ogaden War of 1977-78. The 1964 pact between the countries was signed in the face of overt Pan-Somali claims over Kenyan and Ethiopian territory.

6.4 The precise nature and extent of the support given by Kenya to Ethiopia during the 1977 Ogaden War is not known. However, Mr Munyua Waiyaki, Kenya's Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated in March 1978 that Kenya had given material support to Ethiopia promising:

Kenya will give total support to Ethiopians in their struggle to protect their independence, integrity and unity.¹

6.5 Some reports speculated that Kenyan support included use of airspace, transshipping facilities at Mombassa because Ethiopian access to Red Sea ports had been cut off, and trucks to transport goods overland.

6.6 The fact that Kenya has at times been at odds with both Tanzania and Uganda has probably been another consideration in its close association with Ethiopia.

6.7 A major concern of Kenya's since independence has been with economic prosperity and a rationalization of economic organization with her neighbours. The East

African Community which existed prior to 1977 can be cited as an example of this concern. Kenya's need for markets has seen her seek mutual economic co-operation with, at times, Sudan and Somalia, as well as Ethiopia, but it has been mainly with Ethiopia that she has had success. Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan have been meeting regularly recently to improve trade and communications. Djibouti also attended the 1981 Ministerial Council meeting.²

6.8 Despite the existence of United States bases in Somalia and Kenya, and the close association both have with the Americans, Kenya's and Ethiopia's common concerns about Somalia's claims on their respective territories continues to sustain the basis for their close relationship.

ETHIOPIA AND ISRAEL

6.9 Ethiopian policy towards Israel has traditionally been against the mainstream of Third World opinion. Ethiopia has been described as a Christian island in a Muslim sea, and while the description is an oversimplification, Ethiopia's ruling elites have been drawn largely from the Coptic Amhara during this century. This, together with traditional support by Arab countries for Eritrean independence and for Somalia, has caused deep suspicion of the Arab Middle East. Israel on the other hand, is clearly short of allies in the Middle East/Horn/North Africa region and has naturally been pleased to count Ethiopia as an ally and friend since the former's creation. The existence in Ethiopia of a small ethnic group, the Falasha, whose religion is a derivation of Judaism, and who claim descent from Israel, has been an additional, and sometimes complicating factor in the relationship, as was the claim of Haile Selassie's family to have been descended from King Solomon.

6.10 Israel's access to the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea and the Straits of the Bab el-Mandeb has probably been the most significant of all the factors influencing Israel's desire to have a close association with Ethiopia.

6.11 The involvement of Israel in Ethiopia has been greatest in the field of military assistance and training, especially in relation to Eritrea. This Israeli assistance continued after Ethiopia finally accepted OAU policy and broke off diplomatic relations in 1973, and after the Revolution of 1974.

6.12 According to one source:

From 1962 onwards Israeli advisers trained the Emergency Police, an elite counter-insurgency group of 3100 men established to operate in Eritrea.³

6.13 The submission of the Eritrean Relief Committee corroborated this assertion.⁴

6.14 Various reports claim that Israeli technicians and advisers remained in Ethiopia throughout the Ogaden War until April 1978. The final decision of the Ethiopian Government to terminate its association with Israel is believed to have occurred after General Moshe Dayan had acknowledged the Israeli presence in February of the same year.⁵

6.15 The Israeli association with Ethiopia had been useful in its conflict with the Arabs for it helped to protect the southern seaward approaches to Israel through the Red Sea. In addition it has been claimed that:

It is not widely known that the historic Israeli victory in the Six Day War [1967] was in the first instance made possible owing to the use of Ethiopian airfields, from which Israeli jets took off that famous Monday morning thus approaching from an utterly unexpected direction.⁶

6.16 Despite a reported official ban of August 1977 on the use of the word 'Zionism' in any paper, the Ethiopian Government is now openly critical of Israel in

some circumstances. When the Australian Parliamentary Delegation visited Ethiopia in July 1982, the Ethiopian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Feleke Gedle-Giorgis described Israel's involvement in the Lebanon as genocide.

6.17 Contacts are maintained between Ethiopia and Israel as revealed by the Delegation being told of discussions between the two countries regarding the Falashas, for example. The Foreign Minister told the 1982 Australian Parliamentary Delegation that the position of the Falashas had improved since the Revolution. He believed that Falashas who had gone to Israel had faced discrimination and had returned. According to the Minister what the Falashas wanted most was assistance with schooling, housing and food rather than to leave Ethiopia.⁷ In this connection the Australian Union of Jewish Students maintained that a number of Falashas desired to leave Ethiopia, but found it difficult to do so, and proposed that the Australian Government should do whatever it could to assist them.⁸

6.18 While it seems clear that Ethiopia's current policy towards Israel is a critical one in line with OAU policy, it is not as strident as those of the hard line Arab States. Ethiopia's attitude towards Israel is complicated by the support it receives from Libya and the PDRY on the one hand, and the support the Eritreans and Somalis receive from other Arabs on the other.

6.19 There are some suggestions that the Israeli-Ethiopian connection in terms of military assistance may recently have been resurrected. A report in February 1983 stated that during Israel's invasion of Lebanon it captured the EPLF's office in Beirut. The report speculated that an Ethiopian delegation then visiting Israel may have been allowed access to captured documents. The report stated that Israel had recently 'increased' its military instruction to the Ethiopian army.⁹

ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN

6.20 Ethiopian relations with Sudan have been complicated by the separatist struggles within the respective countries for a number of years. The Ethiopian Government's traditional perception of itself as basically a non-Muslim country on the one hand, and the traditional political ascendancy of the Northern Sudanese Muslims over the Christian and animist south on the other, add a religious flavour to relations between the two countries.

6.21 During the 1960's Ethiopia had given tacit support to the Anya-Nya insurgency in Sudan's south while Sudan supported the ELF in northern Eritrea. Ethiopia has also accused Sudan of supporting opposition groups in Ethiopia itself. After the Anya-Nya revolt subsided in 1972, Sudan nevertheless continued to support Eritrean independence. President Nimeri accused the Ethiopians of complicity in an attempted coup against himself in 1976, and in the aftermath, Sudan gave greater encouragement to the ELF and to the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) which opposed the PMAC and operated in Ethiopia's western provinces.

6.22 An OAU 'good offices' committee encouraged the two countries, with some success, to settle their differences during 1977. Relations improved during 1980 when Lt Col. Mengistu visited Khartoum, and President Nimeri visited Addis Ababa. Relations were normalized, air links re-established and a joint border commission was set up again and Sudan undertook to restrict Eritrean freedom of operation across its borders.

6.23 Nevertheless the Sudan-Ethiopia relationship was to remain tense for a number of reasons. The greatest number of Eritrean refugees live in camps in the Sudan, and provide a refuge for guerillas from the fighting. The Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) openly operates from headquarters in Khartoum, and while the matter of

aid and relief is carefully separated from the military and guerilla activities of the EPLF, there is no doubt that the activities of the ERA are the main source of knowledge in western countries of the plight of the Eritrean people. The support of a number of Arab countries for the Eritrean liberation struggle might be a factor in Sudan's reluctance to deny the Eritreans any freedom of movement either within the Sudan or across the border into Eritrea.

6.24 Sudan's attitude towards Ethiopia must also be influenced by the perceived threat of Libya to both itself and neighbouring Egypt. Libya is a party to the Aden pact of 1981, the other co-signatories being Ethiopia and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). The accommodation between Sudan and the United States, United States military training using Sudanese facilities, and the close relations Sudan now enjoys with Egypt and Saudi Arabia all indicate a pro-western and anti-Soviet position. This position does not assist its relations with Ethiopia because of the latter's close association with the Soviet bloc countries.

6.25 Recent Ethiopian-Sudanese relations have been characterized by successive contradictory statements and actions. On 12 March 1982 a Sudanese government official claimed that Ethiopia had been plotting with Libya to assassinate Sudanese leaders and sabotage the economy. At the end of May 1982, despite these accusations, it was reported that Sudan and Ethiopia had agreed to expel 'all dissidents and secessionist elements' from their respective countries who were working to the detriment of the other. Despite this agreement it is clear that since the agreement was signed, ERA and EPLF personnel are able to cross the Sudanese/Eritrean border without difficulty, and that the agreement related principally to propaganda activities of Eritrean groups in Khartoum. In June 1982 it was reported that Sudan had invoked its mutual defence treaty with Egypt, and that discussions were under way for Egyptian troops to help patrol Sudan's 1200 mile long border with Ethiopia, following a number of reports of Libyan/Ethiopian supported sabotage, including that in March 1982 referred to above.¹⁰

6.26 A report in May 1983 suggested there may again be trouble between Sudan and Ethiopia. According to a BBC correspondent, recorded on ABC Radio, there was talk in May of the Sudanese channelling aid to the Tigray People's Liberation Front. According to the report, this raised the spectre of Ethiopia again supporting rebels in Sudan's Christian south.¹¹ Reports in early October 1983 told of renewed fighting in Sudan's south with some insurgents seeking refuge over the border. Christians in the South have recently been expressing violent opposition to the strict enforcement of Islamic law now being applied by the Nimeri government. The Ethiopian government claims a large number of Southern Sudanese sought refuge in Ethiopia during 1983. While estimates of 30 000 were reported in 1983, Mr Dawit Ghiorgis, head of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, claimed in March 1984 that the figure had reached between 80 000 and 100 000.

6.27 The Sub-Committee was given *in camera* evidence which maintained that the two issues of Eritrean liberation and revolution in Sudan's south balance each other in terms of Ethiopian support for southern Sudanese rebels and Sudanese tolerance of the Eritreans. It was also stated that it would be a 'devastating action' for the Eritreans if the Sudanese were to close the Eritrea-Sudan border.¹²

ETHIOPIA, LIBYA AND THE PDRY (ADEN PACT)

6.28 Since the 1974 Revolution, Ethiopia has forged close links with the PDRY on the Arabian Peninsula across the Red Sea, and with Libya in North Africa. During Somalia's Ogaden offensive in 1977, Soviet tanks and armour were lifted from Aden to

the Ethiopians. The involvement of the PDRY became clear during Ethiopia's reconquest of the Ogaden when South Yemenis together with Cubans, were reported to have been directly involved in the fighting. The culmination of Libyan and PDRY military assistance was the signing, by the three countries, of the Aden Agreement in May 1981. The Sub-Committee was unable to acquire precise details of the Agreement but it is clear that it involves an element of mutual assistance in the event of external threats. Promises were made by Libya of material aid to assist Ethiopia militarily, although this has not been forthcoming. There are, however, some Libyan military personnel on the ground in Ethiopia. It is widely assumed that the pact has been encouraged by the Soviets as it recalls similar proposals put to the Ethiopians and Somalis by the Soviets and Cubans in 1977.

6.29 The PDRY's attitude towards the Eritrean conflict did a somersault after the Ethiopian Revolution. Before 1974 the PDRY had been a major base for the Eritrean movement. By 1979 the PDRY's President explained that the previous policy of support for the Eritreans was because Haile Selassie's regime was supported by 'reaction and imperialism', whereas in 1979 the PDRY opposed 'any movement aimed at expansion or separation' and the PDRY was 'for the unity of nationalities in the Horn of Africa'.¹³

6.30 From Libya's point of view, its support of Ethiopia despite the latter's suppression of Muslims in Eritrea and the Ogaden, can be seen as a means of outflanking its enemies Egypt and Sudan.

ETHIOPIAN-ARAB RELATIONS

6.31 In general Ethiopia does not enjoy good relations with the Arab world with the notable exceptions of Libya and the PDRY. Nor has it ever enjoyed other than hostile relations with Iran, which has traditionally supported Somalia. Ethiopian/Egyptian relations are strained because of Egypt's close relations with the United States and Egypt's having allowed United States' military exercises on its soil. A complicating factor is the existence of a large number of Coptic Christians in Egypt who maintain links with Ethiopia's Copts. In recent times there has been some anti-Coptic agitation in Egypt which has not always been unambiguously denounced by the Egyptian Government. Egypt's close relations with Sudan, which in turn provides succour to Eritrean rebels, is another factor placing strain on the relationship, as is the reasonably cordial relationship enjoyed by Egypt and Somalia.

6.32 The conservative Arab states, principally Saudi Arabia, are hostile to the Ethiopian regime and some support the Eritrean struggle for independence. Saudi fears of communist expansion in its region reinforce this hostility. Syria and Iraq have traditionally supported the Eritrean independence movement, principally through the ELF because of its Muslim base.

6.33 The EPLF also receives support from Arab sources and its adoption of Arabic as well as Tigrinya (as opposed to Amharic) as the official languages in the areas under its control have been said to be, in part, a decision to satisfy Arab countries of the Arab element in the liberation struggle.

ETHIOPIA AND THE OAU

6.34 Following a number of attempts to create an organization which would bring together all independent African nations for a variety of purposes, and which could enable them to identify and overcome common problems, a conference held in Addis

Ababa in 1963 by 32 African Foreign Ministers decided to form the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In 1964 the first meeting of the Assembly of Heads of State was held in Cairo, and in the same year a Permanent Secretariat and Headquarters were established in Addis Ababa. The headquarters of the OAU in Addis Ababa has meant that Ethiopia's role in the Organization is perhaps greater than it might otherwise be. The decision to make Addis Ababa the headquarters was made at a time when Haile Selassie was regarded as the elder statesman of African politics, his position having a unique aura because of his long reign in a country which had claimed independence throughout the period of European colonial rule, except for a brief time during the Italian occupation.

6.35 Two important decisions of the OAU have been relied upon by Ethiopia to justify its stand in relation to Eritrea and against Somalia in the Ogaden.

6.36 The OAU Charter agreed to on 25 May 1963 states, as among its 'Principles' in Article III, the following:

The Member States, in pursuit of the purposes stated in Article II, solemnly affirm and declare their adherence to the following principles:

3. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence.
4. Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration.

6.37 At the Heads of State meeting held in Cairo between 17 and 21 July 1964 a Resolution was passed on border disputes which reaffirmed paragraph 3 of Article III above, and 'solemnly declared':

that all member States pledge themselves to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence.¹⁴

6.38 In OAU forums Ethiopia has been able to rely on the OAU Charter and the 1964 Resolution when insisting on its right to maintain its present borders. As a consequence Somalia has not succeeded in having its case sympathetically heard by the OAU. The Eritreans have not been able to have their case listed on OAU agendas because they do not constitute a nation state within the terms of the OAU Charter as currently interpreted. The Eritrean argument that Eritrea itself became an entity under Italian colonial rule, which in other circumstances would have given it the same basis for nationhood as many other African countries, and the Eritrean liberation movement's claim that Ethiopia is itself a colonial power (albeit an African one), has produced no formal response among OAU members.

6.39 Ethiopia's association with the OAU is therefore a comfortable one, and the only interventions by the OAU in the Somali-Ethiopian disputes have been those of mediation and arbitration, or condemnation of Somali claims.

SOMALIA

6.40 Compared with Ethiopia, Somalia has been unsuccessful in cultivating good relations with its near neighbours, principally because of its irredentist aims.

SOMALIA AND KENYA

6.41 Even prior to Kenya's independence in 1963, it was clear that relations between Somalia and Kenya after independence would be difficult. The colonial Northern Frontier District (NFD) was, in 1962, claimed by Somalia, and the Commonwealth Commissioners who were sent to Somalia in 1962 concluded that an estimated 62 per

cent of the NFD's population were Somali and that these 'almost unanimously' favoured secession from Kenya with the ultimate objective of joining Somalia.¹⁵ (For a detailed description of this aspect of Somali claims, see Chapter 5.) The decision of Britain not to cede the NFD to Kenya despite pressure from the Kenyan Somalis themselves provided the basis for the poor state of relations which has existed between Somalia and Kenya ever since.

6.42 In the years following Britain's failure to implement the findings of the Commission on the NFD question, a guerilla campaign was waged by ethnic Somalis with clandestine support from Somalia. Despite Kenyan attempts to forge friendly relations with the Somalis, including proposals for economic co-operation, successive Somali governments insisted on promoting the Pan-Somali ideal, partly with a view to appease significant elements outside government who maintained a constant pressure on the Government to do so. An example of this pressure occurred in the 1969 election after the then Somali Premier, Muhammed Haji Ibrahim Igal, had met President Kenyetta, and agreed to normalize relations, and find a peaceful solution to Somali-Kenyan differences. Demonstrators in the streets of Mogadishu accused the Premier of a 'sell-out'.¹⁶

6.43 After the Revolution of 1969 the new regime of President Siyad Barre was a willing proponent of the idea of uniting Somalis in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

6.44 While the major theatre of conflict in the Ethiopian-Somali dispute was in the Ogaden, in mid 1977 the north-east region of Kenya was affected, and a Kenyan border police post was attacked by about 3000 Somali insurgents.

6.45 The tension between Somalia and Kenya has had repercussions for the latter's relations with Uganda, and has been influenced by Kenya's relations with Tanzania. By late 1976:

Kenya's relations with her neighbours - except Ethiopia and Sudan - had deteriorated considerably. In fact, early in that year, Kenya was virtually on a war-footing with Uganda after Uganda's dictator Idi Amin, who was also being armed by the Soviet Union, had laid claim to the whole of western Kenya. At the same time, Kenya's relations with Somalia reached its lowest point since 1967, and there were rumours in the country that Amin's claim was deliberately calculated to divert Kenya's attention from her old security pre-occupation with Somalia while Somalia made moves to take north-eastern Kenya. That year also marked a major turning point in Kenya's relations with Tanzania; there was considerable hostility between the two, and that led to the closure of the Kenya-Tanzania border early in 1977. That is partly why Kenya could not cut ties with Ethiopia.¹⁷

6.46 As described in the previous sub-chapter, the Somali claims on Kenya have been the underlying reason for the close relations enjoyed between Ethiopia and Kenya.

6.47 Kenya has recently attempted to forge closer and more friendly relations with Somalia.¹⁸ A common fear of Soviet gains in the Horn, and a common presence of US facilities on the soil of each country, could be expected to enhance the prospects of such an accommodation. However, it appears that if Somalia is to live in peace with its neighbours, it will first have to renounce its claims on their territory. It is evidently not enough for the Somalis to have changed their Constitution in 1979 to pursue Pan-Somali ambitions by peaceful means. Relations have, nevertheless, improved since 1980 in the face of OAU pressure on Somalia over its irredentist claims, especially in respect of the Ogaden. In mid-1981 President Barre met President Moi and announced that Somalia had no territorial claims on Kenya. An agreement was subsequently reached to co-operate in joint patrols of the border region to dampen *Shifita* activity, and an agreement was reached in November 1981 relating to co-operation in the field of communications. Mr Sam Makinda, who gave evidence to the Sub-Committee on 5 September 1983, suggested that because Kenya is now close to both Ethiopia and Somalia, there is

a possibility that it could use its good offices to ease the tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia.¹⁹

6.48 The state of Somalia-Kenyan relations is of relevance to the United States with its air and naval facilities in both countries. The Report of the US House Foreign Affairs Staff Study Mission to the Horn of Africa in 1980 concluded that US access agreements with the two countries has injected the United States into difficult regional issues, the resolution of which could 'negatively impact' on US vital interests on the Horn. The Report stated that:

Kenya reflects a tolerant but highly skeptical view regarding the wisdom of the United States access agreement with Somalia. That attitude is evidenced more in terms of regret than anger and is expressed in troublesome concern over 'a friend becoming the friend of our enemy'. Somalia's claim to territory in northeast Kenya and periodic military attacks have produced a deep hostility between the two countries. Convinced that there is no such thing as a 'defensive' weapon, Kenyans remain apprehensive that Somalia may some day use United States-supplied arms against them. That concern could constrain the ability of the United States to work at levels of maximum effectiveness in Kenya.

Despite basic ideological differences, Kenya has cultivated good bilateral relations with Soviet-supported Ethiopia in an effort to offset their mutual adversary, Somalia. The arrangement (security deletion). Kenyan animosity toward Somalia is described as universally visceral.²⁰

SOMALIA AND THE OAU

6.49 Somalia has been notably unsuccessful in pursuing its interests through the organs of the OAU, or in gathering any broad African support for its position *vis a vis* Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. Part of Somalia's difficulty has been the unequivocal stand by the OAU on the question of border disputes and the fact that this policy suits the purposes of Ethiopia and Kenya admirably (see sub-chapter on Ethiopia and the OAU).

6.50 Throughout the history of the OAU the question of Somalia's claims on the Ogaden have often been the subject of consideration by the Organization itself and various of its specialist committees.

6.51 Somali interest in the OAU reached a peak after 1974 when the annual OAU meeting was held in Mogadishu. In the years immediately following this meeting, which had been chaired by President Siyad Barre, the Somalis appeared to become more involved in the issues of 'colonialism' and 'neo-colonialism'. This enthusiasm became entwined and gave a new impetus to Somalia's aim of gathering all Somalis within the same country and correcting what they saw as the false boundaries negotiated by colonial European powers both between themselves, and with imperial Ethiopia. The Somali interpretation of OAU rhetoric on the question of neo-colonialism and colonialism was not, however, shared by other African countries, and the Somalis have never been able to convince even a significant number of them that Ethiopia was a party to the old European colonialism, or a neo-colonialist power in relation to its control of the Somali populated Ogaden.

6.52 Somalia's disagreement with mainstream OAU opinion over this issue has had a number of wider consequences. As it became clear during the latter stages of the Ogaden war that Ethiopia would regain its territory, Somalia made a number of appeals to Western countries for military aid and support. These were turned down, and it was clear at the time that a major consideration of the United States and British Governments was a desire not to offend OAU doctrine in respect of the inviolability of existing borders.

6.53 Professor I.M. Lewis, who provided a submission to the Sub-Committee, has noted in his book, *A Modern History of Somalia* that:

The African . . . emphasis on *territorially* defined, polyglot and ethnically heterogeneous states tipped the balance in favour of the pre-colonial Ethiopian model, itself reminiscent of the multi-national Habsburg empire. Independence and the post-colonial era saw, inevitably, a further stress placed on frontiers which, as President Nyerere once expostulated, were so ridiculous they must be sacred. Hence the commitment of the Organization of African Unity to the inviolability of the colonial frontiers and the pronounced frontier fetishism of contemporary African states.

and

With such powerful structural vested interests involved, it was scarcely surprising that in 1977, as in an earlier decade, there was little African enthusiasm for the Somali cause which threatened to undermine the prevailing Ethiopian pattern of African states. If the principles of self-determination had to be denied to part of the Somali people this, many argued, was a small price to pay for keeping firmly shut the Pandora's box of problems which, if unleashed, would jeopardize the stability of a whole continent—and certainly unseat many African leaders.²¹

6.54 Somalia continues to be the odd man out in Africa on the question of the sanctity of colonial boundaries. The OAU Good Offices Committee, which was appointed to look into the Ethiopian/Somali dispute in 1980, confirmed Ethiopian sovereignty over the Ogaden. In June 1981 the OAU Assembly endorsed this view, every member state agreeing save Somalia itself.²²

6.55 On 25 May 1982 the OAU Charter Review Committee proposed the inclusion of the principle of the inviolability of state frontiers at the time of independence into the OAU Charter itself.²³ On 21 October 1982 President Siyad Barre stated that the OAU had become riddled with confusion, estrangement and confrontation after difficulties emerged about the holding of the 1982 Summit in Tripoli.²⁴ A conference was finally held in Addis Ababa between 6-11 June with only Libya absent. The conference was opened by the outgoing Chairmanship, President Moi of Kenya, and the new Chairman, Lt Col. Mengistu was elected by acclamation. The prominence of Kenya and Ethiopia in bringing the OAU together again after the troubles over Chad, the Polisario and other factors in 1982 did not augur well for Somalia's hope for a change in OAU attitudes to its dispute with the two countries.

SOMALI-ARAB RELATIONS

6.56 The fact that Somalia is a Muslim country, as opposed to Ethiopia whose governments have recently been dominated by the predominantly Christian Amhara, is a major factor in the Somali/Arab relationship. Since the 1974 Revolution in Ethiopia, increased Soviet influence there, and the United States presence in Somalia, conservative Arab countries appear to have become concerned about a Communist Ethiopia providing a base for Soviet gains in the adjacent region. Saudi attempts to replace the Soviet Union as Somalia's major donor during 1977 have been referred to elsewhere in this Report. Conservative Arab states have also expressed fears about the Cuban presence in Africa generally.

6.57 Despite this good foundation for Arab/Somali relations, the conservative Arabs have not acceded to all of Somalia's wishes. Attempts in July 1982 by the Somali Foreign Minister to obtain arms from a number of Arab countries were not successful. The links that Somalia maintains with Egypt, the Gulf States, and Saudi Arabia have not resulted in the amount or level of military assistance sought by the Somalis. It has been speculated that the United States and its Arab allies see the possibility of Ethiopia

removing Cuban troops if it can be assured of Somali inability to threaten its borders. (See also Chapter 7, paragraph 7.31.)

6.58 The 1981 Arab Summit in Fez, while it agreed to 'extend support' to Somalia to help it maintain its sovereignty, called on both Ethiopia and Somalia to respect each others' sovereignty after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia. (During 1982 Ethiopian troops were reported to have taken the towns of Goldogob and Balamale, with the help of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) some miles inside Somalia.)²⁵

DJIBOUTI

6.59 Djibouti's relations with its neighbours are influenced, like Ethiopia's and Kenya's, by a fear of Somali irredentism. Their major means of dealing with this threat has so far been to encourage the continuance of the French naval presence and 4000 man garrison. Djiboutien politics are now dominated by the ethnic Somali Issas, and it is perhaps for this reason that strong links are now maintained with the Arab world. Djibouti's role as the major port for Ethiopia, however, means it maintains close links with Ethiopia. Saudi Arabia now competes with France as the major source of aid. Saudi Arabia's interests in Djibouti are influenced by Djibouti's strategic position in relation to ingress and egress from the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb as well as through the assistance Saudi Arabia has traditionally given to poor Muslim countries.

CHAPTER 6

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(Complete details of each source are supplied where first cited.)

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2. *Evidence*, p. 94, 1983.
3. Fred Halliday, 'US Policy in the Horn of Africa: Aboullia or Proxy Intervention?', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 10, September-December 1978, p. 21, quoted in Ayoub, 'The Horn of Africa', (N.P.), pp. 38-39.
4. Submission No. 26, p. 5.
5. See *Sydney Morning Herald* of 8 February 1978, and Colin Legum, 'The Horn of Africa', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol. 55, No. 8, January 1979, p. 13.
6. W. Scott Thompson, 'The American-African Nexus in Soviet Strategy', *Horn of Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January-March 1978, p. 43.
7. See Official Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Africa, July-August 1982, pp. 26 and 27.
8. *Confidential Submission*.
9. Information from a commercially available survey of African affairs which is supplied to subscribers on a confidential basis.
10. *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 15 June 1982, p. 6445.
11. ABC Program News Commentary: 'The Sudan', Philip Jones, (BBC), 31 May 1983. The introduction of Islamic law in September 1983 has seen further impetus given to the rebels in the Christian and animist south. Anyana Two guerilla activity has apparently grown coincident with the introduction of Islamic law. The Sudanese have, at the same time, accused Ethiopia of complicity in the increased guerilla activity, and, in late 1983, accused Ethiopia of massing troops on the border (see 'Counting the Cost', *New African*, February 1984, pp. 28-29).
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14. For texts of Resolutions, see Martin Minogue and Judith Molloy (eds), *African Aims and Attitudes: Selected Documents*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1974.
15. See I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, Longman, 1981, p. 191.

16. See I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History* . . . , p. 203.
17. S.M. Makinda, 'Conflict and Accommodation of Somalia in the Horn of Africa . . .', p. 36.
18. See S.M. Makinda, 'Conflict and Accommodation in the Horn of Africa . . .', p. 38.
19. *Evidence*, 9 September 1983, p. 94.
20. *U.S. Security Interests in the Persian Gulf*, Report of a Staff Study Mission to the Persian Gulf, Middle East, and Horn of Africa, October 21—November 13, 1980, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs U.S. House of Representatives, March 16, 1981, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1981, p. 45.
21. I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, pp. 250-251.
22. See Attachment 5 to letter to the Sub-Committee from the Ethiopian Ambassador.
23. *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 5, 15 June 1982, p. 6445.
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PART III—SUPERPOWER RIVALRY

Chapter 7

The intervention and involvement of major outside powers

PERCEPTIONS OF THE HORN'S IMPORTANCE

7.1 The Horn of Africa countries attract the interest and involvement of major outside powers, not because of inherent wealth or resources, or because of their intrinsic importance, but primarily because of their strategic location in relation to the great oil producing areas of the Middle East, and the transport routes from those areas to the West. (See the Committee's Report on The Gulf and Australia of 1982 for a more complete description of the importance of the Gulf oil producing region.) This chapter is limited to a discussion of the involvement of the Soviet bloc countries, the United States and France. The relations of regional powers with the countries of the Horn are dealt with in Chapter 6.

7.2 The burden of protecting Western interests in the Middle East falls mainly on the shoulders of the United States. A report commissioned by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1980 perceived the situation to be as follows:

U.S. strategic, political, and economic interests in the Persian Gulf are longstanding, inter-related, and growing.

Developments in the region in the late 1970's have substantially altered the strategic and political environment of the Persian Gulf areas to the detriment of the free world's security interests. The most crucial developments include:

Continued Western dependence on Persian Gulf oil;

— The fall of the Shah and the impact of ongoing events in Iran on other states in the region; and

— The persistent growth in Soviet military capability, coupled with increased Soviet military activities in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Ethiopia, and Libya.¹

7.3 From the point of view of the United States Executive Government, the importance from a strategic perspective was placed before Congress by Secretary of Defense, Caspar W. Weinberger, at the commencement of 1983:

The United States maintains vital interests and important relationships with friendly states in the *Near East/Southwest Asia*. In addition to the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, we deploy naval forces in the Indian Ocean. Our objectives in this region are:

— To preserve and protect the independence of states in the region, including both Israel and friendly Arab nations, from aggression and subversion; to help secure a lasting peace for all the peoples of the Mideast; to prevent the spread of Soviet influence and the consequent loss of freedom and independence it entails; and to protect Western access to the energy resources of the area, and to maintain the security of key sea lanes to this region.²

7.4 From a Western perspective, any gains by the Soviet Bloc on the Horn must also have implications for the rest of the African continent. Soviet gains in the Horn have, resulted in the establishment of military facilities, and have relevance for the fear the United States has of Soviet penetration of all African States. The importance of the

Horn to the United States must also be seen in this context, and its importance therein can be gauged from the following statement by Mr Weinberger:

In Africa, our objectives are:

- To assist African countries that are the targets of subversion, and to support the independence and stability of friendly governments; to maintain and, as required, expand access and transit rights in pro-Western African states for the deployment of U.S. forces; to work to deny or reverse similar access and transit to the Soviets; and to preserve access to important mineral and petroleum resources.³

7.5 United States concern about Soviet gains in Africa in general and in the Horn in particular were referred to by the former Secretary of State, General Alexander Haig, when he told the US State Foreign Relations Committee that Soviet activities in Afghanistan and Africa had led to concern for the safety of 'the lifelines of Western access to new materials', adding that he thought the victory of the Soviet and Cuban backed MPLA in Angola was 'the start of the slippery slope that brought about subsequent Soviet risk-taking in Ethiopia and the Ogaden, in the Horn in general, and Southern Yemen and Northern Yemen'.⁴

7.6 Soviet perceptions of the importance of the Horn of Africa are not as readily available. Many statements that have been made refer, in the general context of policies for Third World countries, to the need to assist people in Third World countries against colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation. Another perception by the Soviet leadership is that it is a duty of the Soviet Union to support revolutionary movements. In the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan an article appeared in *Novoye Vremya* which stated, in part, as follows:

The question arises: What is the international solidarity of revolutionaries? Does it consist only of moral and diplomatic support and verbal wishes for success, or does it also consist, under justified, extraordinary conditions, in rendering material aid, including military aid, all the more so when it is a case of blatant, massive outside intervention.

The history of the revolutionary movement confirms the moral and political rightness of this form of aid and support.⁵

7.7 Although the Soviets have recently declared that they have an interest in supporting revolutionaries in other countries, there are clear inconsistencies in their approach to issues on the Horn. For while the Soviet Union voted in 1950 for independence for Eritrea, it now sides with 'Socialist Ethiopia' against the Marxist EPLF. In addition, the Soviets have supported Ethiopia in this context while supporting and supplying Syria with military equipment while it in turn has traditionally supported the Eritreans.

7.8 Many observers who have traced the course of Soviet policy in the Third World in general, and in Africa and on the Indian Ocean littoral in particular, have noted changes in that policy since the 1950s. The general thesis is that since the 1950s there has been a general change in policy from supporting independence and guerilla groups professing a commitment to socialism, communism or anti-imperialism. Since that time a policy has evolved where the Soviets have sought to establish good relations with countries despite the fact that they may be relatively conservative. The aid given to pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, and more recently, to Kenya, can be cited as examples. It would seem that for the moment Soviet policy in Africa is calculated at winning as many friends as possible and that ideological compatibility, while preferable, is not a precondition for the provision of aid and involvement.⁶

7.9 Soviet perceptions, as stated in official literature, also refer to the need to protect the Soviet Union (and friendly nations) from the United States' strategic threat world-wide. The Soviet perception, as stated, is that the United States has for a long

time encircled the Soviet Union through a number of alliances and bases. In this perception the United States has a global reach and its power is of global dimensions, and to meet this the Soviets are obliged, similarly, to increase their military, and especially naval strength world-wide, and to demonstrate and actually have a global reach comparable to the United States. The best known exponent of this view in the context of the expansion of Soviet naval power has been Admiral Sergey Gorshkov.⁷ These general views have practical implications for Soviet policy in the Horn of Africa where until 1977 they maintained a naval facility at Berbera, and since the diplomatic swapover of 1977, they have gradually increased their naval presence on the Dahlak Islands and Massawa in Ethiopia. Air and naval facilities have for many years been maintained in Aden, and use is also made of the PDRY's island of Socotra. These developments around the Horn are of relevance to the Middle East, both in respect of the oil producing Gulf and in respect of the Arab/Israeli dispute. Both of these oblige the United States to maintain a powerful military capability in the area. On the other hand the Soviet presence in the Horn can be seen as reactive, and as an attempt to maintain a strategic and military balance with the United States in the region.

7.10 The Soviet response to President Carter's address to Congress on 23 January 1980, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan makes it clear that the Soviets will act to protect their perceived interests in the general region with the projection and use of military power. President Carter had stated:

Let our position be absolutely clear: an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.

7.11 In a response which was regarded as having the endorsement of the Soviet leadership, the Director-General of TASS said:

The United States, it appears, has 'the right' to regard the Persian Gulf, which is thousands of miles away from the American shores, as a sphere of 'U.S. vital interests', and even to use military force to preserve the American monopolies' hold of the area.

As for the U.S.S.R., Washington believes that it has no right to insure its security interests in the neighbouring Afghanistan.⁸

7.12 In view of the Soviet Union's clear objective of attaining a position of global reach, it is not necessary to state whether the Soviet naval presence on the Horn and at Aden is pre-emptive or reactive to the Western presence in the wider Middle East and East Africa. It is safe to state that the Soviet presence is calculated to project power into a region which is vital to the Western economies because of their reliance on Persian Gulf oil. A Soviet capacity to disrupt oil production in a time of crisis, or to disrupt its transportation or supply, would be of great value in a broader confrontation with the West, or one that may occur in Europe.

7.13 The reason for the Soviet presence in the Horn and Aden in particular can also be explained by referring to its inability to secure access to ports elsewhere in the Persian Gulf/Southwest Asia region. The only other possibilities are Iraq, where vessels would be obliged to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, Iraq's ports are vulnerable as shown in the Iraq/Iran war. India is loath to allow significant porting by any great power naval vessels, consistent with its policy of encouraging a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean and its declared policy of non-alignment. Ethiopia and the PDRY are therefore the only options east of the Mediterranean and proximate to the Middle East as providers of port facilities.

7.14 The view that the Soviet naval and military presence was reactive was referred to in evidence. Mr Michael Little, Editor of *New Africa News*, told the Sub-Committee in his submission that Western interests in the Horn were related to the defence of the

Persian Gulf area and shipping routes around the Cape and through the Suez Canal. This according to Mr Little,

... is matched by the determined efforts of Soviet military strategists to attain the ability to challenge Western lifelines in the event of global hostilities between the superpowers.⁹

7.15 The French interest in the Horn is in many ways similar to other Western interests because of the importance of the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East. The French, like the United States, have a force which is capable of rapid deployment, consisting of 20 000 men. It can be assumed that Africa and the Middle East are areas where such a force is most likely to be needed. The French maintain a significant naval presence in the Indian Ocean, and while there is little in the way of joint exercises with other Western naval forces, or much in the way of co-ordination, the French presence in the region can be regarded as part of the general Western military and naval capability in the area. The French naval presence is centred on Djibouti. A garrison of 4000 troops is also maintained at Djibouti, and its continued presence has been sought by Djiboutiens as a protection against possible Somali invasion. The status of Djibouti as a former colony still economically dependent on France is a factor which distinguishes the French presence on the Horn from that of the Soviets and the United States. Djibouti is of critical importance in relation to access to Suez, Sudan, western Saudi Arabia and Israel, as it occupies a section of the south western shore of the Bab el Mandeb chokepoint at the entrance to the Red Sea.

7.16 In a submission to the Sub-Committee, Abdullahi H. Ayan summarised what can be accepted as the generally acknowledged view of the Horn's strategic importance, and reflects the assumption underlying most views on this subject provided in the submissions and evidence:

The Horn's importance lies in that it is adjacent to the Middle East and juts close to the Persian Gulf. It flanks the oil rich states of Arabia, controls the narrow straits of Bab el Mandeb. It practically dominates the Gulf of Aden and that part of the Indian Ocean through which oil tankers constantly move. On the basis of these factors alone it stands out as a major geo-political area.¹⁰

7.17 In response to the Sub-Committee's request for comment on this topic, the Department of Foreign Affairs provided the following statement, in evidence, from an Australian perspective:

The first comment to make, perhaps, is on the strategic importance of the Horn, how important it is, or whether it has been given an exaggerated position of strategic importance. I think its position has changed, as has that of other parts of the world, with technological and communications developments. It is situated on one of the accesses to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. I am afraid I do not have with me precise figures reflecting the change in the importance of the Suez Canal in world trade, but it is generally a diminishing importance. Accordingly the strategic significance of the Horn area declines in accordance with the importance of the Suez Canal. The area is on one of the boundaries of what is generally described as the Middle East region. That is a region of undoubted strategic importance in global terms; important to Australia for a whole series of reasons; important to the super-powers. And by some definition, the areas which border a major strategic area take on by that fact a certain significance for themselves. But what I think we are seeing in the Horn area is an interest by super-powers and great powers not so much wishing to take a position of influence in the region for its own sake as being in a position to deny access and advantage to the opposing superpower.¹¹

THE DIPLOMATIC 'SWAPOVER' OF 1977

7.18 During 1977, and more particularly, after the commencement of hostilities between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden, Ethiopia, which had previously relied on the West, principally the United States and Israel, for military assistance, turned to the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other Soviet bloc countries. Somalia, which had previously had a close relationship with the Soviet Union, and allowed Soviet air and naval forces to operate from its territory, turned away from the Soviet Union and sought assistance from Western, and conservative Arab, countries. The event was marked by the severance by Somalia of its close relations with the Soviet Union on 13 November 1977 after Soviet support for Ethiopia in the Ogaden war. (For more discussion of these events in the context of the Ogaden War, see Chapter 5: Somali irredentism and the Ogaden conflict.)

7.19 Prior to 1977 the Soviet Union had gradually increased its influence and presence in Somalia. From Independence in 1960 it had provided military aid, and from the time of the 1969 Coup and the accession to power of President Siyad Barre, relations had become considerably closer. On 12 July 1974 it was announced that a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation had been signed between the two governments. The effect of the consequent close relations between the two countries was significant. Between 1963 and 1977 the Somali Army had grown, with Soviet and Cuban assistance, from an ill-equipped force of 4000 to a well-equipped and well-trained force of 22 000. Somalia gained a small but quite significant air force by African standards. By the time the Somalis were ready to attempt to take the Ogaden, they had at their disposal 200 T-34 and 50 T-54/55 tanks, and 300 armoured personnel carriers. Its 2700 man airforce had 66 combat aircraft including 10 IL-28s, 44 MiG-15s and 17s, and 12 MiG-21s, although spares were short and not all equipment serviceable.¹² Considerable economic aid was given in the form of fishing industry assistance and agricultural and resettlement programs.

7.20 In turn the Soviets were granted base facilities at the port of Berbera, and a military airport and two communications facilities which opened in 1972. The port's significance for the Soviet Union was not always clear to the United States. However, it was clear that its function was for missile handling. In 1975, James Noyes, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, told a Congressional hearing:

The indications are presumably that they are ship to ship missiles, a type of missile that is very delicate and needs a great deal of repair and work to keep it functioning properly. Instead of taking them all the way back to the Soviet Union, it is simply a matter of efficiency and convenience...¹³

7.21 The port of Berbera and other facilities on Somali soil augmented Soviet facilities at Aden, Socotra and Iraq during this period, and can be assumed to have enhanced their global reach in respect of the Middle East, the Horn, East Africa and the Indian Ocean. During this period Somalia also received substantial aid from China, primarily infrastructure development, and from the European Community.

7.22 Prior to 1977 Ethiopia had relied on the United States, other Western sources and Israel for its military support. From the mid 1960s until 1976 the United States supplied Ethiopia with \$US 350 million in economic aid and \$US 278.6 million in military assistance. Until 1962 nearly all US military aid to Sub-Saharan Africa went to Ethiopia. Between 1962 and 1969 70 per cent of this aid was given to Ethiopia. These included a variety of medium and light tanks, personnel carriers, and aircraft. In addition, some thousands of Ethiopian military personnel were trained in the United States. Prior to the 1974 Revolution, however, Ethiopia accepted, from time to time, significant aid from Moscow. As early as 1948 the Soviet Union had built and staffed a

hospital in Addis Ababa. In 1959 the Soviets provided a loan of over \$US 100 million. In 1967 Ethiopia's only oil refinery was built by the Soviets at Assab.

7.23 Despite the accession to power in Addis Ababa of an apparently pro-Marxist regime in 1974, there was no immediate move by the regime to cut ties with Washington and to establish closer ties with Moscow. Explanations include an Ethiopian realization that both United States military and non-military aid was more valuable and suitable to Ethiopia's needs than Soviet assistance and weapons, that the Soviet Union was still entrenched in neighbouring Somalia, and that, in any event, there was considerable debate within the ruling circles of the regime as to what direction the Revolution should take.

7.24 The United States, during this period, had the use of a communications facility near Asmara and the use of some airfields. The Kagnew facility, named after an Ethiopian contingent which fought in Korea, had been negotiated in 1953 for a period of 25 years. The installation formed part of a world-wide circuit of the United States global radio communications network, and was described by the Ambassador to Ethiopia during the period 1963-1967 as 'the only such military installation in Black Africa'.¹⁴ Kagnew's significance is generally thought to have become less as the new installations at Diego Garcia were progressively brought into operation.

7.25 Events leading up to the switch in alliances moved very slowly until March and April 1977. On 14 March 1977 Fidel Castro arrived in Addis Ababa on a surprise visit against a background of continuing concern in Washington circles about human rights violations in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Castro attempted to mediate between the Ethiopians and the Somalis over the Ogaden question. Castro proposed a type of Marxist Federation around the Red Sea to include Ethiopia, Somalia and PDRY, but the proposal was rejected by President Barre. On 23 April 1977 Ethiopia announced the closure of four United States installations in Ethiopia and more than 300 Americans were expelled. The US Administration responded by formally halting \$US 100 million worth of arms deliveries, including 20 F5-4 aircraft. In the ensuing months the Soviets attempted to mediate between the Somalis and Ethiopians over deteriorating relations between the two countries. With apparent Soviet unwillingness to support Somali claims over the Ogaden it was clear that President Barre was looking around for other avenues of support, including the Saudis. During a May 1977 visit to Moscow, Mengistu had courted the Soviets with the offer of Massawa as a naval base. By August it was clear that an OAU effort to mediate over the Ogaden had failed, and as fighting became more fierce, Ethiopia broke off diplomatic relations with Somalia. The next day saw the announcement of a joint Ethiopian/Kenyan statement condemning Somali aggression. During these events Somalia maintained its links with Moscow as it was clear little support would be forthcoming from the United States, which had announced on 1 September that it would not supply arms to Somalia in view of the fighting in the Ogaden.

7.26 There was evidence during October and November of Soviet and Cuban assistance for Ethiopia by way of the provision of armoured vehicles as it became clear that the Somalis were making substantial gains in the Ogaden. Because of this aid, Somalia, on 13 November 1977, abrogated the 1974 Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, ordered all Soviet advisers out of the country, and required a reduction in Soviet Embassy personnel. At the same time it broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba.

7.27 The events which followed provided the most dramatic incident of the swapover when the Soviets airlifted arms, advisers and Cuban troops to assist the Ethiopians on the Ogaden Front. (See also Chapter 5.) The airlift supplied an estimated \$US 1 billion of equipment, including tanks, artillery and tactical aircraft.¹⁵

7.28 The significance of the airlift has been described as the Soviets having been able to demonstrate:

... that they could airlift several divisions, with heavy equipment, into the Middle East and Eastern Africa and support them on a sustained basis, without access to seaports. Moreover, because of the diversity of the routes flown, some without permission, the Soviets indicated that there were enough friendly countries, e.g. Yugoslavia and Libya, and sufficient range of the heavy IL-76 transports that denial of overflight rights was no longer a barrier to regional access.¹⁶

7.29 The massive aid provided to the Ethiopians by the Soviet Bloc and Cuba enabled the Ethiopians to drive the Somalis out of the Ogaden by March 1978. On 20 November 1978 Ethiopia and the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation.

THE PRESENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE UNITED STATES, AND OTHER FORCES

THE PRESENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES

7.30 A report commissioned by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs saw the Soviet presence on the Horn of Africa and the adjacent Middle East area as a threat to Western interests in the region and to countries friendly to the West.¹⁷ While the magnitude of the Soviet presence on the Horn should not perhaps be overstated because of an apparent disposition of both the United States and the Soviets not to increase the level of armaments in the area,¹⁸ the Soviet and Cuban presence in Ethiopia has been substantial:

By 1982 the assessment is that the USSR had given approximately \$2 billion to \$3 billion worth of weapons to Ethiopia and air lifted some 10 000 to 12 000 Cuban troops between November 1977 and January 1978. There are some 2000 Soviet advisers and 500 Bulgarian advisers as well as some Libyans and southern Yemenis present to bolster the Ethiopian forces. In addition, the Soviets provided arms and training for construction services. The two Cuban brigades have continued to help protect the Ethiopian frontiers in the Ogaden and they probably provide logistical and other support for the Ethiopian campaigns in Eritrea. In 1979 the estimate of Cuban military personnel was 16 500.

Soviet maritime aircraft are based in Asmara and undertake patrol missions from there. In addition, the Soviets have been allowed to establish a naval base in the Dahlak Islands. The floating dock that was in Somalia has now been transferred to Dahlak and there have been reports of Russian submarines using these facilities. This facility has some disadvantages in that it is within the bottleneck of Bab el Mandeb and is therefore one that could easily be hemmed in, in time of major conflict. The Economist in June 1981 estimated that Ethiopia gets \$3.5 billion worth of aid including cheap oil, from the Soviet Union every year.¹⁹

7.31 Lord Avebury, in his letter to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee in January 1983, said that there were still 15 000 Cuban troops in Ethiopia:

... and a number of Cuban technicians and military personnel attached to the Ethiopian High Command, which consists of one third Russians, one third Cubans and one third Ethiopians. At the same time, other East European states, notably East Germany, are deeply involved in Ethiopia. The East Germans control matters of security and the prisons (although the prisons themselves have been built by Cubans) and there is no doubt that they have introduced a number of alien and unacceptable practices into the area. Other countries, like Bulgaria and Hungary, are providing technical assistance. In November, the Derue also had discussions with the Yugoslavian Government about the supply of arms and it is likely that they will receive military assistance from that quarter as well.²⁰

While Cuban troops have been present in Ethiopia in substantial numbers since 1978, press reports during early 1984 maintained that their numbers were declining. A report in *The Washington Post* in March cited diplomatic sources as estimating that between 2000 and 3000 Cuban troops remained in Ethiopia.

7.32 Of Soviet arms transferred to Sub-Saharan African countries during the 1970s, only Angola has received anywhere near the amount transferred to Ethiopia.²¹

For the numbers of 'Soviet bloc, Cuban and Chinese military personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa—1978', see Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Soviet Bloc, Cuban and Chinese Military Personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa—1978¹

Country	Total	USSR and Eastern Europe ²	Cuba ³	China
Angola	20,300	1,300	19,000	—
Equatorial Guinea	290	40	150	100
Ethiopia	17,900	1,400	16,500	—
Guinea	330	100	200	30
Guinea-Bissau	205	65	140	—
Mali	195	180	—	15
Mozambique	1,130	230	800	100
Other	1,330	500	485	345
Total	41,680	3,815	37,275	590

1. Number of persons present for a period of 1 mo or more during 1978. Rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Mainly Soviets. Among Eastern Europeans, most are believed to be East Germans.
3. Includes troops.

Source: Hearings before the Sub-Committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Sixth Congress, First Session, October, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 29, November 13 and 14, 1979. US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1980, p. 48.

7.33 In addition to military personnel, the Soviets and other countries have maintained large contingents of aid and 'economic technicians'. The extent to which Ethiopia has hosted these personnel in the African context can be seen from the figures in Table No. 7.2.

Table 7.2: Soviet Bloc, Cuban and Chinese Economic Technicians in Sub-Saharan Africa—1978¹

Country	Totals	USSR and Eastern Europe ²	Cuba	China
Angola	9,910	1,400	8,500	10
Ethiopia	1,400	650	500	250
Gabon	75	10	—	65
Gambia	75	—	—	75
Ghana	175	95	—	80
Guinea	1,035	700	35	300
Guinea-Bissau	405	265	85	55
Kenya	30	25	—	5
Liberia	210	10	—	200
Madagascar	200	—	—	200
Mali	1,025	475	—	550
Mauritius	15	—	—	15
Mozambique	1,270	750	400	120
Niger	160	10	—	150
Nigeria	1,750	1,625	—	125
Rwanda	60	10	—	50

Country	Totals	USSR and Eastern Europe ²	Cuba	China
Sao Tome and Principe	260	20	140	100
Senegal	500	100	—	400
Sierra Leone	310	10	—	300
Somalia	3,050	50	—	3,000
Sudan	755	125	—	650
Tanzania	1,365	165	200	1,000
Zambia	5,645	125	20	5,500
Others	7,525	1,020	1,090	5,415
Total	37,225	7,640	10,970	18,615

1. Number of persons present for a period of 1 month or more during 1978. Rounded to the nearest 5.
2. More than half are Soviets, nearly 1,000 are believed to be East Germans.

Source: Hearings before the Sub-Committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1980, p. 47.

7.34 A comparison of the figures for economic technicians of 'aid personnel' on the one hand, and of actual project aid in dollar terms on the other allows for a conclusion to be reached that the number of personnel on the ground is not necessarily a good indication of the aid effort. In 1979 a witness before the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs commented:

What is particularly striking is the minuscule amounts of aid even for states espousing scientific socialist ideologies: in 1976 and 1977, countries such as Ethiopia, Benin, Mozambique, and Congo-Brazzaville received quite inconsequential amounts of new economic aid. Mozambique, apparently, is required to pay itself the salaries of the numerous East European technicians serving in the country.²²

7.35 The Soviet Bloc presence in Ethiopia is significant for the stability and viability of the central Addis Ababa Government, and its ability to keep control over the Ogaden in the south east and to maintain pressure on the Eritrean and Tigrean movements in the north.

7.36 The Soviet Union voted against the federal solution to the Eritrean issue, as contained in UN General Assembly Resolution 390A(v) adopted on 2 December 1950, and supported instead the concept of an independent Eritrea. Despite this early approach to the Eritrean question, it is clear that the Soviets are assisting the Ethiopians in attempting to suppress Eritrean national aspirations. While it is difficult to gauge the extent of Soviet assistance, and whether the Soviets are directly involved²³ the Eritreans claim a very substantial Soviet involvement. The Eritrean Relief Committee claimed that in 1978 the Soviets directly intervened against Eritrea 'commanding' the offensives with over 120 000 heavily armed Ethiopian troops, that Soviet warships had been used on the Eritrean coast, that the Russians have supplied chemical weapons, and that Ethiopian troops were backed by 2000 Russian combat advisers during the sixth offensive.

7.37 Despite some Soviet assistance for the Ethiopians against Eritrean nationalists, the Cubans have been loath to become directly involved in the fighting. The Cubans appear to have been deployed mainly in the Ogaden, and while they have therefore not been directly involved in the fighting in Eritrea, the Eritreans claim that their ability to fight the Ethiopians would be greater if no Cubans were in Ethiopia at all. They maintain that while the Cubans are holding the line in the Ogaden, Ethiopian troops are freed to fight in Eritrea.

7.38 In the Ogaden it is clear that the Soviets and their allies have been happy to be identified with the Ethiopian side of the dispute with Somalia. The massive airlift of Cuban troops and armaments between November 1977 and January 1978 was to assist the Ethiopians in this struggle against Somalia. The invasion of Ethiopian territory by Somalia was condemned by a majority of African States, and it can be assumed that in helping Ethiopia, the Soviets were looking for approbation from a wider African audience than just the Ethiopians themselves. During the Ethiopian reconquest of the Ogaden, Cuban piloted MiG aircraft and armed tanks took part in direct fighting with the Somalis, and, it can be assumed, were a significant factor in driving the Somalis out. The operation was allegedly directed by General Grigory Barislov, former head of the Soviet military mission in Somalia.²⁴

7.39 Two lesser known aspects of the Soviet actions and involvement in the Ogaden conflict point to an apparent desire, or at least a desire to be seen, to be acting responsibly. Prior to Somalia gaining its independence Haile Selassie had made some references to the advantages to Somalis should they opt to live within Ethiopia.²⁵ If this statement, together with other evidence of Ethiopian lack of regard for Somali national status represented a continuing view in Ethiopian ruling circles, the Soviets were not about to facilitate the giving of expression to that view during the Ogaden conflict. As the Ethiopians gained the upper hand in the dispute it was clear that they could have advanced until they reached Mogadishu should they have wished to do so. In this context the Soviets promised that the Ethiopian advance would be halted at the border, and it was.²⁶ In addition the Soviets are reported to have been a moderating influence in the treatment of prisoners.

THE PRESENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE

7.40 While the Soviet Union is clearly the major military supporter of Ethiopia, it was stated in submissions made to the Sub-Committee that Western countries, by remaining providers of non-military aid, augment Soviet aid, and in turn allow the Ethiopian Government to both remain in power and pursue its policy of suppressing the Eritreans and nationalities within Ethiopia.

7.41 The Eritrean Relief Committee told the Sub-Committee:

With arms coming from Russia, the ailing Ethiopian war economy is heavily backed by economic aid from the USA. The US is hoping that history will repeat itself and that they will replace the Russians in Ethiopia. (The Russians were expelled from Egypt, Sudan and Somalia.) That is one we don't hear very much in the western press about the fascist crimes the Dergue is committing every day against the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia. The US support has not only been confined to economic aid but has also given the Dergue spare parts for its military trucks in 1980. Israel is also believed to be the go-between with the Dergue and the US. Israel was actively backing the Dergue as was revealed by Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, in 1978. The Dergue was embarrassed at the revelation and relations are said to have cooled since then.²⁷

7.42 In respect of European aid, Lord Avebury, in an address to the House of Lords widely referred to by other witnesses, argued that the provision of non-military aid to Ethiopia assists the Ethiopian war effort:

... we should stop all aid to the Derg and encourage others to do the same. Astonishingly, EEC aid to Ethiopia during 1980 amounted to 32.2 million dollars, and the Derg received another 33.9 million dollars through the bilateral programmes of member countries, with Germany as the largest contributor with 13.9 million dollars and Britain giving 4.4 million dollars. It does not seem to be appreciated that this aid does not help to relieve the sufferings

of poor peasants but it does help to nourish and sustain the Ethiopian war effort, sometimes even directly, by going straight to the troops in the front line. I have with me photographs taken by a distinguished Swedish journalist, Mr Goran Assbring, whom I met in Eritrea, taken on the battlefield in 1980, showing the gifts of the EEC and UNICEF which have come into the hands of military forces of Ethiopia and have been used to feed their own troops.²⁸

7.43 Aside from this Western, including United States, humanitarian aid to Ethiopia, the largest United States presence in terms of military involvement is in Somalia.

7.44 During the Ogaden conflict, and after the Soviets backed Ethiopia in the conflict, the Somalis sought United States military assistance and support. In September 1977 President Carter had refused to supply Somalia with arms because of the fighting in the Ogaden. During this time Kenya had expressed fear of Somali ambitions because of the ethnic Somali presence in the former Northern Frontier District. On 2 March 1978 President Carter told a Kenyan delegation visiting the United States that the United States and Britain would ensure that Kenya had 'adequate defense capabilities'. It is clear that from the time Somalia broke with the Soviets the United States has not been prepared to arm Somalia to the extent that the latter would wish,²⁹ and there is an apparent American unwillingness to upset the Kenyans, or to be drawn into or encourage a conflict with the clients or proxies of the Soviets in Ethiopia. A study by the staff of the United States House Foreign Relations Committee saw the following difficulties in the US presence in Somalia:

The United States-Somali facilities access agreement of August 22, 1980, ended a decade of strained relations. Although the agreement is intended to support U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, it inherently generates other implications for U.S. foreign policy. First, it injects the United States into the difficult Horn issue. Second, it tests longstanding friendly relations with Kenya. Third, it places the United States in a potential direct conflict with the Soviet Union, which has close relations with Ethiopia.³⁰

7.45 In the wake of the diplomatic swapover, the United States-Somali Facilities Access Agreement negotiated in August 1980 provided for US use of Somali facilities at Berbera and Mogadishu in exchange for a total of \$US 53 million in economic aid and \$US 40 million in foreign military sales credits in the ensuing two years.³¹ The Somalis saw this arrangement as providing a counterbalance to the Soviet presence in Ethiopia and had expectations of a wider commitment from the United States, something which has led to 'disappointment and frustration' because of Congressional insistence that the agreement cited above include a condition that regular Somali forces be removed from the Ogaden.³²

7.46 Although the port of Mogadishu is available to the US Navy, the major asset is at Berbera where there is a limited port facility and an air base. Berbera is over 960 kilometers closer to the Persian Gulf than Mombasa and Diego Garcia. It is vulnerable to attack, however, from nearby Soviet bases 280 kilometers away at Aden. The Somali airbase at Berbera, built by the Soviets, has a good four kilometer runway, fuel storage, open space for pre-positioning, and bunkers. There is, however, a lack of water, electricity, and air defence capability. The United States had, at the commencement of 1983, appropriated \$US 54 million for improvements to facilities in Somalia.³³ The emphasis that the United States places on countries near or on the way to the Persian Gulf in relation to its Rapid Deployment related strategy can be seen, in the context of facilities access, from Table 7.3:

Table 7.3 Military Construction Funding for Rapid Deployment—Related Facilities* (\$ Millions)

Location	FY 1980-83 Appropriated
Egypt (Ras Banas)	91
Oman	224
Kenya	58
Somalia	54
Diego Garcia	435
Azores (Lajes)	67
Other locations	—
Total	929

* Does not include planning and design costs.

Source: Report of the Secretary of Defence, Caspar W. Weinberger to the Congress on the FY 1984 Budget, FY 1985 Authorization Request and FY 1984-88 Defense Programs, February 1, 1983, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., p. 203.

7.47 In addition to those facilities, the United States has used Somalia for its Rapid Deployment exercises in 1981 (Bright Star) and 1983 (Jade Tiger). In the Jade Tiger exercise air defence training was undertaken in Somalia. Other countries which provided facilities for the exercises were Egypt, Oman and Sudan. These exercises are described by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff as follows:

... US capabilities to conduct effective combat operations in SWA [Southwest Asia] are enhanced through joint and combined exercises such as BRIGHT STAR, GALLANT KNIGHT, JADE TIGER, and GALLANT EAGLE. A continuing, fully funded, comprehensive exercise program is essential for the Command to establish credibility with allies, friends, and potential adversaries, in a region where US presence is minimal.³⁴

7.48 The facilities to which the United States has access in Somalia augment facilities and pre-positioned troops and materiel in Diego Garcia, Oman, Egypt and Kenya. US naval ships also visit Djibouti. Although the Chiefs of Staff describe the US presence as minimal, in Somalia its presence can be seen as having the effect of denying the Soviet Union a base, which was well used by its Indian Ocean fleet. An additional advantage to the US *vis a vis* the Soviet Union is that the floating dry dock and other naval facilities that it has, and has transferred from Berbera, to the Dahlak islands and Massawa are, to some extent, choked up by the Bab el Mandab. In general terms, the United States presence in Somalia is continued because of US strategy in relation to what is defined as Southwest Asia. In this context the Joint Chiefs of Staff see Australia's support as follows:

In support of security in Southwest Asia, Australia contributes naval deployments and aviation patrols in the Indian Ocean.³⁵

Royal Australian Navy Ships have called at both Somalia and Kenya over the last few years.

7.49 In March 1982 President Siyad Barre visited Washington to discuss his country's economic and military needs. After meetings with President Reagan and the Secretary of State, President Siyad Barre described the meetings as satisfactory but the

amount of assistance as unsatisfactory. It was reported at the time that the US Government had requested approval for \$US 90 million to \$US 95 million in military, economic and food assistance for Somalia from Congress.³⁶ Later in the month Somalia expelled a Bulgarian diplomat for allegedly interfering with Somalia's internal security.³⁷ The joint exercises of Somali forces with the RDF in late 1982, and emergency airlifts of military supplies after Ethiopian/SSDF border incursions suggest that the United States is encouraging the view that it is a credible friend and ally, but is careful not to supply the Somalis with sufficient arms for them to be able themselves to undertake offensive operations against their neighbours.

7.50 In the broad context of the protection of Western interests in the Southwest Asia region, and more particularly in the Persian Gulf/Middle East, a number of West European governments send naval patrols to the Indian Ocean, including the West Germans, Italians and British. The French, as mentioned above, maintain a naval presence based at Djibouti, and have a garrison of 4000 troops there as well.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF MAJOR OUTSIDE POWER INVOLVEMENT

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ETHIOPIA, AND THE USE MADE BY REGIONAL COUNTRIES OF OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

7.51 The Soviet presence in Ethiopia, the United States presence in Somalia and the French presence in Djibouti have been outlined previously in this Report, as has the influence their presence has on regional conflicts. The United States and the Soviet Union have access to facilities in the nearby region. The Soviets have access to the Port of Aden and air facilities in the PDRY. They are large suppliers of military equipment to Libya. At various times Soviet ships and aircraft have used facilities in Iraq, but the situation there is now complicated by the Iraq/Iran war. Soviet ships visit a number of Indian Ocean ports. They also have the use of airfields in Afghanistan. The proximity of the Horn to the Soviet Union is an advantage it enjoys over the United States, as was demonstrated in late 1977 during the airlift of equipment to Ethiopia. Parts of the Horn of Africa are within range of the Soviets' SS20 missiles.

7.52 The United States has access to facilities in Oman, Kenya, Egypt, Diego Garcia and, as the need arises, in a number of Gulf States. This is part of the United States' strategy of enabling rapid deployment of troops to the oil producing areas of the Middle East. It can be assumed that in a time of crisis it could rely on air facilities in Israel. In addition it has used facilities in Sudan.

7.53 These assets are, however, not directly related to the Horn of Africa, but are part of the extension of the global reach of each country, especially in relation to Southwest Asia generally, and the oil producing Middle East and Persian Gulf in particular.

7.54 It might be a reasonable assumption to make that of the Horn countries, Ethiopia is the one with which each of the superpowers most wishes to have friendly relations. Ethiopia, because of its dominating geographical position on the Horn and its large population, is the major regional power. Ethiopia is apparently aware of the importance outside powers place upon it, and Ethiopian diplomacy has for years attempted to exact the maximum advantages out of its position. As far back as 1959, pro-Western Ethiopia, which had contributed troops to fight in Korea and had accepted the United States Kagnew Communications Base on its soil, had nevertheless accepted a \$US 100 million loan from the Soviets, together with other aid. In the period until 1976, immediately after the Revolution, Ethiopia still accepted military hardware

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and non-military aid from the United States and the West despite the Marxist predilections of its government. It continues to be a beneficiary of substantial aid from the EEC, and to a lesser extent from the United States. It is often said that the present Ethiopian Government is keeping the door open to the West in the event that it may follow the example of Sudan, Egypt and Somalia and return to a pro-Western position. A factor which Ethiopians are said to be aware of is that Western aid is far preferable for economic development than anything the Soviets can, or are willing to, provide. On the other hand, the failure of the Mengistu Government to institute a fully operational civilian Marxist political party can be seen as reticence on the part of the Ethiopians to fully embrace Soviet style Communism. The Department of Foreign Affairs told the Sub-Committee that the establishment in 1979 of the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE), which is as far as the Government has gone in this regard,

... is a compromise between Mengistu and his supporters on the one hand and his Soviet advisers on the other.²⁸

7.55 Another interpretation of the ideological orientation of the regime in this regard was provided by Professor Preston King who told the Sub-Committee:

In regard to question 15 where you indicate that the slowness of the process of forming an Ethiopian Communist Party is deliberately slow, that Mengistu is not in a hurry to establish a Communist Party, I think this is almost certainly correct. He has no interest in doing that per se. What he needs is not to be isolated before another power which is not isolated and which could attack him and, of course, come out triumphant in the end. The Ethiopians have their own history and a very distinct sense of history. These are not people who on the whole are ideologue. They may be firm, they may be tough. This is reasonable enough but the suggestion that they are errant intellectuals who have become married across the board to an abstract doctrine like Communism seems to me to be so much nonsense and very unrealistic as an assessment of circumstances in the area. Obviously, so I should have thought, neither Mengistu nor any leader there of any substance who has had any experience in handling men and affairs at that sort of level could be concerned to alienate the West in a setting where she is so vulnerable to the West and in terms of Eritrea, traditionally has depended so much upon her. Where possible, presumably the concern of Mengistu would be to establish reasonable ties, possibly not terribly amicable ties, but certainly reasonable ties with the West. As long as he has reason to suppose that he is at risk from the West, then naturally enough one cannot expect that he would desert the only party which has come to his aid in a time of crisis in the past.²⁹

7.56 The process of the formation of a Communist Party is watched closely by outside observers of Ethiopia in an attempt to gauge the future direction of Ethiopia's internal political development and foreign policy. The significance placed upon this process should be seen in the context of the events immediately after the Revolution. During that period, as described in Chapter 2, a number of political parties and organizations formed, some with the encouragement of the PMAC. A succession of these came to threaten the authority of the PMAC and were forcibly disbanded. It is plausible that the current PMAC does not want to create another political organization which will threaten its sole authority. It is equally plausible that, if a separate Marxist political party were to emerge with widespread support, the present Ethiopian Government policy of keeping a door open to the West could be threatened, as it was by leftist groups during the years 1975-77. As has been pointed out earlier in this chapter and elsewhere in this Report, a number of charges have been made by witnesses critical of the present Ethiopian Government, that Western aid to Ethiopia underwrites both Ethiopian purchases of Soviet military equipment and also the suppression of errant nationalities within its boundaries. Whether or not these charges are sustainable, it is apparent that Ethiopia is keen to maximize military and economic aid from any source

regardless of political orientation, and that this policy continues a theme apparent in Ethiopian external diplomacy which pre-dates the 1974 Revolution. In addition, it must be recalled that Ethiopians do have a long history, and the leadership a very strong appreciation of their historical antecedents. Thus Ethiopian policy, and the development of the Ethiopian State, will be determined by the Ethiopians themselves in what they see as their best interests, regardless of the countries with whom they may be aligned from time to time. (See also Chapter 2, paragraph 2.33.)

7.57 Successive Somali Governments have also attempted to exact as much military and economic aid from all sources. From the early 1960s the pre-revolutionary Government sought aid from the Soviet Union as well as from the West, notably from Italy and Great Britain. Initially, as now, a number of countries were asked to give Somalia military aid, but were loath to give a great deal, for to do so may assist the realization of Somalia's irredentist ambitions. Nevertheless, military aid was given, the Somalis constantly seeking the best deal. In 1962 the NATO countries offered Somalia a package in which the United States, Italy and West Germany would provide approximately \$US 10 million in equipment and armaments and would assist in training a force of 5000 to 6000 soldiers. The Somalis, in turn, would agree not to receive military aid from other sources.

The offer remained pending for almost a year until it was rejected coincident with the government's announcement that it had accepted a Soviet-authored alternative valued at about \$US 32 million.

Although the specific terms of the Soviet-Somali military aid agreement were not published, its principal dimensions were generally understood to be as follows. The Soviets would train and equip with modern weapons a 10 000-man armed force, including a small air wing using jet planes. Most of the program cost would be treated as a grant with the remainder to be repaid over a twenty-year period.³⁰

7.58 The 22 000-man army which came into being in Somalia after deepening Soviet and Cuban aid following the 1969 Revolution, and which enabled Somalia to take the Ogaden briefly in 1977, may provide a rationale for other powers not to provide such substantial military assistance in the future. The Soviets were not the only power to offer aid in the period immediately prior to Somalia's Ogaden offensive, and it is clear that, during 1977, as the Soviets were becoming increasingly nervous about the Somali army they had created, the Somalis were overt in their consideration of Saudi offers to replace the Soviets as their major donor. Despite the Somalis' current close association with the United States, the continuance of this relationship remains precarious. The Somalis have voiced frustration at the inadequacy of US military aid ever since the break with Moscow in November 1977 and have been rebuffed by most Western nations in relation to the alleged magnitude of their refugee problem following the Ogaden war and drought of 1977-78. These factors, and the continuing Somali commitment to 'Scientific Socialism', do not augur well for a long-term and stable association with the Western Bloc.

7.59 The only constant in Horn countries' relations with major outside powers has been Djibouti's association with France. Recent French policy towards Ethiopia provides some substance to the assumption that Ethiopia is the country on the Horn the major outside powers least wish to offend. Prior to coming to power in France, the French Socialist Party had a policy which supported Eritrean Independence. Since coming to power that policy has not been pursued by the Government (as distinct from the extra parliamentary party), after threats by President Mengistu to cut off diplomatic relations and the expulsion of ten French diplomats and their families on 4 March 1982.³¹

7.60 Despite the dominating geographical position and population of Ethiopia, and its perceived importance on the Horn, Somalia has the important asset of having its

ports open to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. This factor compares favourably with the position of Ethiopian ports, which are in the Red Sea, and vessels using them are obliged to pass through the narrow neck of the Bab el Mandeb.

EFFECT OF THE PRESENCE OF OUTSIDE POWERS ON REGIONAL CONFLICT

7.61 One analysis of conflicts on the Horn states that many important aspects of regional conflicts are not due to, nor have been significantly influenced by, the direct involvement of outside powers:

At first sight, indeed, it would seem that external forces were remarkably absent from the course of events in the Horn. The very lack of a strong colonial past in Ethiopia, and the low level of foreign investment, were distinguishing features of the ancien regime. When the crisis developed in 1973-4, the USA, although allied to Haile Selassie for three decades past, was unable and disinclined to play a significant role in events, either for or against the revolution. Nor, on the other side, did any identifiable external forces play a role in the revolutionary upsurge of 1974 or the subsequent evolution of PMAC disputes. The irredentist proclivities of the Somali government were, for their part, generated by the history and social structure of Somalia itself. Whilst the Somali government sought foreign assistance, there is no direct sense in which Somalia could be seen as having acted at the behest of others, of having done something it would not otherwise have done. The Eritreans too were nobody's clients: whilst deriving military sustenance from outside, their movement was a product of the manner in which Ethiopia itself had subjugated the former Italian colony, and was given a new impetus by the policies of the post-revolutionary Ethiopian regime. It was inevitable that those opposed to one or other of the local actors should seek to deny its indigenous genesis. Yet, whilst each actor sought assistance from outside, and whilst the capacity of these actors was certainly enhanced by the assistance received, each was nonetheless implanted within the social formations and the history of the Horn itself. It was the character of this implantation that primarily determined how these forces were able to advance their respective causes.⁴²

7.62 While it can be argued that the European colonial period, which saw the drawing of territorial boundaries inconsistent with ethnic boundaries, underlie some of the disputes in question, direct outside intervention has not been a factor in the conflicts over such boundaries once they were determined. There was a long period therefore, during the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s when the causes of the conflicts were fundamentally local. It was only when the Soviet bloc provided massive aid to the Ethiopians in 1977, after the latter's territory was invaded by Somalia, that an international dimension became directly apparent in the conflicts on the Horn. It should be noted however, that the previous military aid given to Somalia by the Soviet Union, allowed Somalia to field a formidable army. It also allowed the Somalis engage in a campaign in the Ogaden, something the Soviets did not approve of, and attempted to stop. The massive Soviet aid came in late 1977, that is, after events which occurred of regional origin. The Ethiopian revolution itself was fundamentally a locally inspired event, and it was only after it had taken place that Soviet intervention in the internal direction of the Ethiopian political process is argued to have taken place.

7.63 The limited extent of outside influence on the underlying and historical causes of conflict on the Horn having been stated, it is now necessary to analyse the extent of influence of the outside powers..

7.64 The significance of the presence of the major external powers in the Indian Ocean region as seen from the perspective of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence in its Report of 1977 was as follows:

While many littoral states object to the presence of the superpowers in the region and want to see it become a Zone of Peace free from superpower rivalries etc., there is no united practical plan between them which is persuasive enough to put into effect such a concept. Many do not want just one superpower to dominate the region and there are other states which fear that the withdrawal by both superpowers will create a void and start a competition between the strongest regional powers to dominate the region and threaten its security and stability.⁴³

7.65 *Aside from the Soviet Union having armed Somalia to an extent where it was possible to take the Ogaden in 1977, the major powers appear to be interested in minimising the possibility of regional conflict on the Horn. The United States has, since 1977, clearly stopped short of arming the Somalis again to an extent where they could threaten the Ethiopian or Kenyan military, despite a current agreement to provide \$US 60 million worth of armaments. The French presence in Djibouti deters Somali claims in that direction. On the other hand the Soviets are credited with limiting the Ethiopian offensive against the Somalis in 1977 and 1978 to Ethiopian territory at a time when Ethiopian troops could conceivably have continued their push as far as Mogadishu.*

7.66 *Apart from this moderating influence on regional affairs, competition for influence between the major powers continues. The Aden Pact of 1981, between Ethiopia, Libya and the PDRY can be assumed to have had Soviet encouragement. The support offered and given by conservative Arab governments to Somalia is assumed to have had the encouragement of the United States. Although this competition exists, it appears credible that both the Soviet Union and the United States do not wish to provoke a confrontation between their clients or allies or themselves in the region.*

7.67 *A case contrary to the above analysis in significant respects was presented in evidence to the Sub-Committee by supporters of Eritrean independence and those sympathetic to Somalia. This view contended that Ethiopian policy on the nationalities questions and the Government's brutality would not have been possible if Soviet military power and United States and Western non-military aid had not been forthcoming.*

7.68 *Lord Avebury, in his letter to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee made the following comments in relation to the outside powers' dealings with the present Ethiopian Government:*

The arrival of the Soviet Union on the scene, has of course, escalated the war against the Eritreans and the other groups who are in opposition to central government in Addis Ababa. In particular, the use of Soviet fighter-bombers and gunship helicopters against civilian targets has held back the liberation forces who might otherwise have occupied many of the major towns by now.

At a political level western countries have also aggravated the situation. It seems that many governments see change in Ethiopia only in terms of a change in the Amhara leadership in Addis Ababa. Indeed, they cannot conceive of negotiating with any other group. Hence we find, for instance, the West Germans wooing various sections of the Dergue in the hopes that they will eventually rally enough support to evict the Soviet Union and bring Ethiopia to the west. The truth is that even if they were to succeed in doing this, it would not change the internal situation at all and all the various conflicts would continue. The west therefore has to look for a broader solution if they want to see peace in the Horn of Africa. There cannot be a solution within the present framework of the Ethiopian state.⁴⁴

7.69 The Editor of *New Africa News*, Mr Michael Little, told the Sub-Committee in his submission, that:

The interests of all the peoples and countries in the Horn of Africa region would be best served by the cessation of all foreign intervention in the local disputes of the area, the dismantling of all foreign bases, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops.⁴⁵

7.70 Other authors of submissions supported this general contention. Mr Abdullahi H. Ayari submitted:

That all Soviet and U.S. military bases in the Horn should be dismantled and Cuban troops withdrawn.

Mr Ayari added, however,

That in the short term disequilibrium in military strength (caused by the Soviets) in favour of Ethiopia be corrected, so that the people of Eritrea and the Ogaden and the Republic of Somalia are better able to defend themselves against Ethiopian rulers' atrocities.⁴⁶

7.71 Valerie Browning expressed the following views:

Since Ethiopia remains utterly impoverished, to be able to maintain its massive army and fight 4 continual wars, it is utterly dependent on foreign aid—military and economically. Currently, it can only be said that Soviet military aid and massive Western economic aid permits the wars to continue. Certainly too, in so doing it can be said that this serves the purpose of the two super-powers. Although the USA lost its military CIA installation in Eritrea, Kagnew Station in 1978, they have since established naval facilities in Kenya (Mombasa), Somalia (Berbera) and have an agreement with the Sudan. Indeed, to regain Ethiopia would complete their entire strategy.

The USSR for its part has built a military base in the Dahlak Islands off the coast of Eritrea and at the moment has military supremacy in Ethiopia.

To end these wars super-power involvement must be halted and dismantled throughout the region . . .⁴⁷

7.72 A view distinctly contrary to the bulk of the evidence in this regard was provided by Mr Sam Makinda, who saw the presence of the major outside powers as a stabilizing influence in the region, especially in Ethiopia. Mr Makinda argued that without Soviet assistance Ethiopia would have fallen apart. If this were to happen, pressures could be put on Sudan's south and Kenya would lose its north eastern province to Somalia.⁴⁸ Mr Makinda, a Kenyan, summarized by saying ' . . . the unity of Ethiopia depends on outside help. It is that unity which also helps the other countries maintain their integrity in the region'.⁴⁹

CHAPTER 7

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(Complete details of each source are supplied where first cited.)

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3. Caspar W. Weinberger, Report to Congress, p. 18.
4. Quoted in Raymond W. Copson, Congressional Research Service, 'Africa: Soviet/Cuban Role', Issue Brief Number IB78077, 12 February 1981, p. 8. For a more detailed statement of US African policy as at 1979, see 'Prepared Statement of Hon. David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs,

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6. For analyses of the development of Soviet policy in this regard, see Kim C. Beazley and Ian Clark, *Politics of Intrusion, The Superpowers and the Indian Ocean*, Alternative Publishing Co-operative Ltd, Sydney, 1979; Copson, op. cit.; and Statement of M. Crawford Young, Professor, University of Wisconsin at Madison, Hearings before the Sub-Committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives (see footnote 4), pp. 78-79.
7. See for example, Gorshkov's statement soon after the Cuban missile crisis, 'the Soviet Navy is obliged to be prepared at any moment and at any point of the globe to secure the protection of the state interests of our State', quoted in Kim C. Beazley and Ian Clark, *The Politics of Intrusion . . .*, p. 117.
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9. Submission No. 7, p. 9.
10. Submission No. 17, p. 5.
11. *Evidence*, 11 November 1982, p. 3.
12. See International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1976-77*, London, 1977, p. 44. Quoted in M. Ayoob, 'The Horn of Africa', (N.P.), p. 14.
13. Quoted in Kim C. Beazley and Ian Clark, *The Politics of Intrusion . . .*, p. 121.
14. See Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, NLB, London, 1981, p. 217.
15. See Lawrence Whetten, 'The Soviet-Cuban Presence in the Horn of Africa', *RUSI*, Vol. 123, No. 3, September 1978, p. 41.
16. Lawrence Whetten, 'The Soviet-Cuban Presence in the Horn of Africa', p. 41.
17. See *U.S. Security Interests in the Persian Gulf*, (see footnote 1), pp. 7-8.
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19. Department of Foreign Affairs, *Evidence*, 11 November 1982, p. 82.
20. Submission No. 30, p. 7.
21. See Hearings before the Sub-Committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives, (as cited in footnote No. 4), p. 68.
22. Statement of M. Crawford Young, University of Wisconsin at Madison, Sub-Committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives (as cited in footnote No. 4), p. 84.
23. See Department of Foreign Affairs, *Evidence*, 11 November 1982, p. 10.
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25. See Chapter 5: Somali irredentism and the Ogaden conflict.
26. See I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 239.
27. Submission No. 26, p. 6.
28. Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, Official Report, Vol. 431, No. 98, 7 June 1982, col. 76.
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31. *U.S. Security Interests in the Persian Gulf*, p. 50.
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34. *United States Military Posture*, FY 1984, prepared by the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, p. 57.
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40. Tom J. Farer, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1976, p. 98.
41. Conversation between Regis Debray and members of the committee and *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 15 April 1982, pp. 6399-6400.
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44. Letter to Senator Sibra, Submission No. 30, dated 14 January 1983, p. 4.
45. Submission No. 7, p. 9.
46. Submission 17, p. 10.

47. Submission 25, pp. 14-15.
48. See Evidence, 5 September 1983, pp. 103-104.
49. Evidence, 5 September 1983, p. 104.

By order of the Committee

THE HON. W. L. MORRISON, M.P.
Chairman

4 April 1984

Appendixes

Appendix A

THE COUNTRIES OF THE HORN: SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

Capital: Djibouti

Area: 21,783 sq km

Borders: Ethiopia to the west and north; Somalia to the south.

Population: 310,000 as at mid 1980 (UN estimate). Indigenous population evenly divided between Afars and Issas (the latter in a slight majority). Also Arabs (40,000), French (10,000), Somalis, Indians, Ethiopians, Greeks, Armenians, Italians, Sudanese and Chinese.

Religion: Predominantly Muslim.

Climate: Average annual rainfall less than 125 mm. High tropical temperatures and humidity during monsoon season.

Landscape and Vegetation: Volcanic desert—barren, arid terrain, consisting of volcanic rock strewn desert wastes, with occasional patches of arable land, salt lakes and pans. Continuous vegetation apparent in upper part of basaltic range of high altitude (1200 metres) only. Mangroves on the coast and doum palms in inner plains are characteristics.

Government: Republic and one party state. A new Chamber of Deputies elected in 1982. President: Hassan Gouled Aptidon.

Armed Forces: 2400 (1981). French garrison at Djibouti of 4000. French naval presence.

Economy: Nomadic pastoralism at subsistence level (half population). Provides port through hinterland rail link for Addis Ababa. Hopes to become entrepot port. Free enterprise, including banking especially welcomed.

Diplomatic Relations with Australia: Australia does not have diplomatic relations with Djibouti. Australia's High Commission in Nairobi has visiting, reporting and consular responsibilities in respect of Djibouti.

SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

Capital: Addis Ababa—located within the Shoa Administrative Region, not far from the geographical centre of the country.

Area: 1,223,600 sq km (including Eritrea).

Borders: Ethiopia's western neighbour is Sudan; to the South it shares a border with Kenya; and to the east and south-east lie the Republic of Djibouti and Somalia. To the north-east Ethiopia has nearly 1000 km of coastline along the Red Sea, and offshore from Massawa, the northern port, are the Dahlak Islands.

Population: Reliable information unavailable due to lack of population census. Figures based on estimates. Population projected to reach 35 million by 1985 (UN), but other sources estimate a current population of 42 million. Fifty per cent of population are aged 19 years and under. Seventy per cent of population are 29 years and under. Distribution: Seventy per cent settlements in highlands, thirty per cent on land below 2000 metres. Land over 2000 metres is free from malarial mosquito, a factor contributing to non-occupation of lowlands which are suitable for farming. Oromos are the largest individual ethnic group (approximately) 40 per cent, followed by Amhara and Tigreans.

Language and Culture: Seventy five distinct ethnic groups. Over 100 languages spoken. Migration of peoples from Arabia brought linguistic and cultural development in shape of Semitic languages; Nilotic people on Western borders; Bantu in the South. Highly dissected landscape, influenced the emergence of groups of people living in comparative isolation which contributed to development of a large number of dialects. Official languages Amharic/English.

Religion: Approximately 35 per cent Muslim. Approximately 10 million members of Ethiopian Orthodox Union Church, the official church of Ethiopia. Over 200 000 members of Roman Catholic Church and others. Also a number of animists in south west.

Climate: Ethiopia lies within the tropics but wide range of altitude produces considerable variations in temperature. Traditional zones: the Dega—the temperate plateaux, the Kolla—the hot lowlands, and the intermediate frost-free zone of the Woyna Dega.

Rainfall: Rainy season over most of country during June, July and August. Generally, climatic conditions described as well-watered highlands: 1000 mm of rain per year (with the exception of Eritrean and Tigrean plateaux) and dry lowlands: less than 500 mm per annum (with the exception of Baro and Akobo River plains in the south-west).

Landscape: Highlands and plateaux of high average elevation with difficult access and sharply distinct from adjoining regions. Characteristics: steep scarps along the coasts and at irregular intervals inland; rift valleys. Structure often makes road and rail construction difficult with an almost total absence of navigable streams.

Soils: Formed from plateaux basalts young and rich; conditions superior to most African countries. Decomposition of volcanic rocks has produced reddish brown clay soils and black cotton soils on high plateaux suitable for crops. Crystalline rock areas less favourable. Alluvials from Nile, Awash and other rivers provide the finest soils, but cover a small area.

Vegetation: Natural vegetation of coniferous forest on plateaux and highlands largely disappeared. In south-west Ethiopia broad-leaved rainforest including coffee-bush. Above the tree-lined plateaux are wide expanses of grassland. Grain crops grown on highlands. In the lowlands, dependent on rainfall there is a range of dry-zone vegetation, limited areas of desert through thorn scrub to savannah.

Natural Resources: Gold, iron ore, copper located in Eritrean Plateau. Potash deposits located awaiting exploitation. Exploration for petroleum unsuccessful but some oil seepages and strikes of natural gas offshore from Massawa have been recorded and more recently promising oil strikes in the Bale Administrative Region. Hydro-electricity power potential due to high rainfall and precipitous relief; a number of plants in operation south of the capital along the course of the Awash River.

Government: Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), known as the Dergue. Independence 'since antiquity'. Head of State: Lieutenant-Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Armed Forces: Regular army 75 000 (1981); navy 1500; airforce 3500 with over 100 combat aircraft. Paramilitary: 169 000—mobile emergency police of 9000; People's Militia 150 000; People's Protection Brigades 10 000. Armed Forces augmented by Soviet bloc advisers and Cuban troops.

Economy: At least 80 per cent of Ethiopians are involved in agriculture, mostly at subsistence level. Main export: coffee. Animal products provide 5 to 7 per cent of total exports.

Diplomatic Relations with Australia: Australian Ambassador to Ethiopia resident in Nairobi. Ethiopian Ambassador to Australia resident in Tokyo.

SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Capital: Mogadishu

Area: 637 657 sq km

Borders: Ethiopia to the north and west, Djibouti in the far north, Kenya in the south-west.

Population: 4 637 000 (UN estimate 1980). Large nomad population and refugee influx make figures unreliable. An estimated influx of 1.3 million refugees arrived from the Ogaden after 1977. Somalis are overwhelmingly the principal ethnic group. Smaller ethnic groups comprise Bantu, Asians, Arabs, Indians and Pakistanis.

Religion: Islam is official state religion. Most Somalis are Sunni Muslims. With the long tradition of trading connexions with the Arabian Peninsula, the Somalis were converted to Islam.

Climate: Hot on high ground and along coast during June-September. Poor rainfall rarely exceeding 50mm in favourable regions. Rainy seasons are March to June and September to December followed by dry season. Temperature and rainfall are influenced by the south-west and north-west monsoons.

Landscape and Vegetation: Most of the terrain consists of dry savannah plains, with a high mountain escarpment in the north facing the coast. Juba and Shebelle are the only permanent rivers, irrigating the rich agricultural land between them. Sorghum, millet, maize and bananas and citrus fruits are grown. Vegetation predominantly shrub, bush and grass. Some regions have been denuded of trees. In the Haud region and extreme south, vegetation is thick. In most parts of the country grass and plains are plentiful. Overgrazing and erosion have damaged the fertility of the land and conservation measures are required.

Minerals: Some reserves of iron ore, gypsum, uranium and other minerals have been located. Petroleum exploration has proved disappointing.

Economy: Four hundred thousand hectares under cultivation—sugar cane (domestic use) and bananas (export), maize, sorghum, cotton, millet, sesame and peanuts. Pastoralists provide subsistence needs for seventy five per cent of the population and furnish export trade in livestock, hoof, skins and clarified butter. Cultivators provide subsistence quantity of maize, sorghum and millet grown in large expanse of territory between the Juba and Shebelle Rivers. Production of mutton, skins and hides, clarified butter and other livestock products is rising.

Industry: Is small in scale, based on agriculture. Meat and fish processing, textiles and leather goods.

Government: Somali Democratic Republic. Independence 1 July 1960. Political party: the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP). Legislative body: the People's Assembly. President: Major-General Mohamed Siyad Barre.

Armed Forces: 62 550 in 1981 plus paramilitary border guards, 20 000, members of People's Militia and Police Force numbering 8000.

Diplomatic relations with Australia: Australia's High Commission in Nairobi has visiting, reporting, consular and trade responsibilities in respect of Somalia. Somalia's Ambassador to Australia is resident in Beijing.

Appendix B

LIST OF WITNESSES

ABRAHAM, Mr F.—Co-ordinator, Eritrean Relief Committee, (pp. 96-107) (1982)
 ACTON, Mr J.A.H.—Foreign Affairs Officer Class 3, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 2-22 and pp. 24-41) (1982)
 BROWNING, Ms V.—Private capacity, (pp. 68-95) (1982)
 COLLINSON, Ms P.A.—Projects Administrator, Community Aid Abroad, (pp. 150-163) (1982) (also in camera) (1982)
 CONKEY, Mr H.—Member, Eritrean Relief Association, (pp. 3-24) (1983)
 DALELLEW, Mr T.—Field Director, Ethiopia, World Vision, (in camera) (1982)
 EDWARDS, Mr C.A.—Assistant Secretary, Africa and Middle East Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 2-22 and pp. 24-41) (1982)
 GREET, Mr R.J.—Acting First Assistant Secretary, International Organizations, Refugees, South Asia, Africa, Middle East Division, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 45-90) (1983)
 HODGE, Mr P.H.—Acting Assistant Secretary, Program Planning and Review Branch, Australian Development Assistance Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 45-90) (1983)
 JOHNSTONE, Ms D.K.—Officer, Department of Foreign Affairs on secondment to ESSO under the Public Service Board Interchange Program, (pp. 45-90) (1983)
 KAHSAL, Mr. T.—Member, Eritrean Relief Association, (pp. 3-24) (1983)
 LARKIN, Mr J.C.—Private capacity, (pp. 25-44) (1983)
 MAKINDA, Dr S.—Private capacity, (pp. 92-113) (1983)
 MAYNE-WILSON, Mr W.—Head, Policy and Plans Section, Defence Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 24-41) (1982)
 NEUHAUS, Mr M.E.K.—Foreign Affairs Officer, Central and Southern Africa Section, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 45-90) (1983)
 NUR, Dr A.O.—Private capacity, (pp. 44-67) (1982)
 OSULLIVAN, Mr N.P.—Projects Director, Community Aid Abroad, (pp. 150-163) (also in camera) (1982)
 PATEMAN, Mr R.—Private capacity, (pp. 108-128) (1982)
 ROSS, Mr N.R.—Head, Humanitarian Aid and Non-Government Organizations Section, Australian Development Assistance Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 45-90) (1983)
 SHEPPARD, Mr J.P.—Head, Central and Southern Africa Section, Department of Foreign Affairs, (pp. 45-90) (1983)
 SNELL, Ms B.F.—Somali Refugee Health Unit, Ministry of Health, Somali Democratic Republic, (pp. 130-149) (1982)
 TOOLE, Dr M.—Private Citizen, (pp. 114-137) (also in camera) (1983)
 WALKER, Mr R.—Director, Research and Development Division, World Vision, (in camera) (1982)

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**OTHER PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO ASSISTED THE
SUB-COMMITTEE:**

African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific

Ambassador of the Somali Democratic Republic to Australia, H.E. Professor Sharif Salah Mohamed Ali

Ambassador Designate of Socialist Ethiopia to Australia, H.E. Brigadier General Afework Atlabachew

Mr Dawit Wolde Ghiorgis, Head, Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. (Discussion with Senator Hill, 8 March 1984)

Professor Preston King, School of Political Science, The University of New South Wales